

Putt Putt Around Town

Miniature Golf is a hole in one
in Alexandria.

OUTDOORS, PAGE 3

E

ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

MUSIC

Harmonizers Sing Out

The Alexandria Harmonizers are celebrating their 60th anniversary this year. Friday night, the group performed in Market Square as part of the Alexandria Recreation Departments and the Commission for the Arts Summer Concert Series.

Their fall and winter schedule includes:

* "The Steamer Trunk" featuring "Road Trip" and "Premiere" Friday, Sept. 26 at 8 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 27 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road

* "A Very Merry Musical!" Friday, Dec. 5 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6 at 12:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. First Baptist Church of Alexandria, 2932 King St.

* Free concert at 2 p.m. at Market Square, 301 King St.

For more details and show tickets, go to www.harmonizers.org or call the Box Office at 703-910-4600. The Harmonizers are always looking for men who like to sing. Call 703-836-0969 for meeting location and chapter information.

PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE
On right, Friday evening, the Alexandria Harmonizers performed at Market Square in the last of the City's concerts this summer. On bottom right, Ken White leads the singers in a song from "The Little Mermaid." To the left is Dennis Ritchey, to the right is Chuck Hunter. Bottom left, music director Joe Cerutti leads the group in another classic.



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LEISURE

Foreign Films Available in New Venue

Fireflies in Del Ray works with library on film series.

BY BEN GEIER
THE GAZETTE PACKET

Lovers of obscure foreign films oftentimes find that locating copies of such cinema is the most difficult part of their hobby. The Duncan branch of the Alexandria Library and a Fireflies restaurant in Del Ray are showing recent foreign films as part of a program presented by the Duncan friends of the Library Society.

The film series, which started in October of 2007, has grown in popularity. Originally held at a different, smaller venue, after a few months enough people were showing up that the event was moved to the larger space at Fireflies.

"[The series is] a way to show people in the community that a library is not just books on a shelf," said Thom Downing, the Film Coordinator at the Duncan Branch. Downing explained that the series was originally to be shown in the library, but that he volunteered to work with the Friends of the Library Society and venue representatives to bring the events into the community.

"Not everyone who sees Dark Knight is going to come see some obscure French Comedy."

— Thom Downing, Duncan Film Coordinator.

Fireflies owner Dan Lichens noted in an e-mail that though people were initially surprised the events they have hosted have become very popular. He further explained that Fireflies, which hosts entertainment very frequently, is able to make sure everyone in the house can hear through the audio system and see on a 42 inch screen.

One of the biggest draws to the series is the fact that the films being shown are difficult to see in other places.

"The films that are selected are films that don't have a wide range of distribution," said Downing adding that the series is "a way for us to provide something that people

SEE FILM FESTIVAL, PAGE 8

A Hole Sport In One

Miniature golf continues to be a favorite.

BY ERIC J. GILMORE
GAZETTE PACKET

Maybe it's the menagerie of dinosaurs and elephants, fire pits and waterfalls, jokers and gargoyles, pirates and explorers, loopy-loos and right angles. Perhaps it's the rainbow hued balls littering the links, or merely the ridiculous addicting challenge of staying on par.

What draws us, as humans, to miniature golf, one of the staples?

More than its more professional uncle, the sport — or is it? — transcends age, gender and social background. The winding courses, often impossible to follow even with a map, are a destination for families, vacationers and couples. Heck, it's even spurned a professional industry.

Locally at TopGolf, located across the road from Edison High School and a favorite for professionals playing hooky, the Kingstowne golf complex has 36 holes spread over two 18-hole courses. The two par-60 courses are of varying degree of difficulty and possibly more importantly, both are themed, one catering to the mountains and the other a desert theme.

According to Terry Fife, the general manager of TopGolf USA, the golf complex accounts for approximately 6-8 percent of the total revenue. During the summer, the peak season, Kingstowne brings in 1,200-1,400 mini-golfers weekly.

"It's certainly a small piece of the pie, but it's also a very important piece as well," Fife said. "Our numbers have been consistent if not better this year over previous years both at the facility itself and in mini-golf. We're not seeing a decline."

However, economics are different throughout the miniature golf landscape, as exemplified by Herndon-based Woody's Golf Range, where owner Woody Fitzhugh maintains a driving range, putting green, batting cages and miniature golf course. His "Perils of the Lost Jungle" course includes

stoned-faced statues, snakes, alligators, treasure hunters and a T-Rex. Woody's is one of the most expensive courses (a regular round costs \$9.25), but is also interactive and has more attractions.

But Fitzhugh, who opens his course in mid-May and closes once school restarts, likens the experience to a movie — the better the theatre, the higher consumers are willing to spend. It translated to a record season in 2007, but with approximately 700 weekly visitors this summer, his numbers are down.

"I don't know whether last year was exceptionally good because of the weather or whether the economy has slowed down a little bit," said Fitzhugh.

"It's something the whole family can enjoy."

— Terry Fife, TopGolf USA

his summer home in Pinehurst, N.C. In 1926, New York City's first outdoor miniature golf course was built on a skyscraper roof.

A year later, businessman Garnet Carter built a miniature golf course on Lookout Mountain in Tennessee to attract patrons to his hotel and full-length course. After a while, the miniature course had become so popular, more people wanted to play on it than on the regulation greens, and eventually tramped the miniature grounds. Carter eventually discovered an artificial surface.

In short, miniature golf was no longer miniature.

By the fall of 1930, more than 25 million



A golfer walks across the 'green' at TopGolf USA in Kingstowne.

PHOTOS BY ROBBIE HAMMER/THE CONNECTION

MINIATURE GOLF'S origins can be traced to 1916, when James Barber hired architect Edward Wiswell to design a course behind

people were miniature golf fans and 50,000 mini-golf courses littered the landscape. The fad died off briefly, but experienced a re-birth in the baby-boom 1950s.

In some respects, however, miniature golf is as popular as ever; there are several trade associations: the US ProMiniGolf Association, the Miniature Golf Association, the Professional Miniature Golf Association and the World Minigolf Sport Federation among them. There's even a pro circuit, with Master's and U.S. Open events that attract players from around the world.

Miniature golf may not show up as an ESPN primetime special — the national championship was aired for four years, I promise — but the game is still played by millions every year with approximately 5,000 miniature golf courses throughout the country.

"First and foremost, it's something the whole family can enjoy. Realistically, there aren't too many activities where that's true," Fife said. "It's something the parents can look forward to because they can bring their children as well."



A selection of putters

Area Miniature Golf Courses

Name	Address	Phone Number
TopGolf USA	6625 S. Van Dorn St., Alexandria	703-960-8719
Cameron Run	4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria	703-534-3437
Upton Hill	6060 Wilson Blvd., Arlington	703-631-0550
Centreville Mini-Golf	6206 Multiplex Drive, Centreville	703-250-9124
Fountainhead	10875 Hampton Road, Fairfax	703-573-0444
Jefferson Falls	7900 Lee Highway, Falls Church	703-430-8337
Woody's	11801 Leesburg Pike, Herndon	703-339-6104
Pohick Bay	6501 Pohick Bay Drive, Lorton	703-281-6501
Oak Marr	3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton	703-339-3122
IronWood	8581 Cinder Bed Road, Springfield	703-569-0285
Lucky Duck	7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield	

FESTIVALS

Good Shepherd Hosts 33rd Festival

BY CHUCK HAGEE
GAZETTE PACKET

Live entertainment, children's rides, international food and beverages, and games all come to Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Highway, on Labor Day, Monday Sept. 1. It's the church's 33rd Annual International Festival.

With a mission to raise funds for local organizations and citizens in need, the festival was initiated 33 years ago by the Women's Council of Good Shepherd. Although admission is free, tickets must be purchased for raffle items, activities, rides, plants and flowers, food, early admission to the "White Elephant Sale," and other items at some booths, according to festival organizers.

"This International Festival is a celebration that our parishioners share with each other and the community in which we live. It is an opportunity for everyone in our community to come together at the end of the summer to spend the day with each other," said Reverend Charles C. McCoart, Jr., pastor, Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

"This event is nearly 100 percent volunteer driven and that's what makes it a success every year. In addition to the fun and

fellowship, it's a source of funding for charitable needs," Rev. McCoart said.

"The International Festival enables local charities to help those in need. Our goal is not only charitable fund raising, but also fellowship. Last year, the event attracted thousands of guests," said Lou Volchansky, Festival Co-chairman.

One of the big events each year is the "White Elephant Sale." The Plant Booth, Rose's Bakery and White Elephant sale purchases are by cash and carry only, according to Volchansky.

Early admission to the White Elephant event begins at noon and costs \$5. After 12:30 p.m. general admission to the sale is free.

Past organizations receiving festival funds included Good Shepherd Emergency Assistance, Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, United Community Ministries, Progreso Hispano, Inc., and Shepherd's Gate.

In addition to parking at the church, there is ample parking at near-by Mount Vernon High School, with shuttle service to the church starting at noon and ending at 6:30 p.m. All festival grounds and events are handicap accessible, according to organizers. There is also a first aid station on the grounds, according to church officials.

The 43 year-old Good Shepherd parish serves more than 3,000 families and 11,000 parishioners throughout Northern Virginia and the surrounding areas. For additional information about this event call 703-780-4055 or visit the Good Shepherd Catholic Church Web site at www.gscc.org.



Dancers from last year's event were having a good time dancing for the crowd.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE
KRAFFT/GAZETTE
PACKET

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NIGHTLIFE

Kloud 9 Performs

Kloud 9 are twin brothers who got their start singing in Church. They define their music as Smooth R&B mixed with a little smooth jazz. They will be performing three concerts at the Birchmere with Maysa on Friday, Aug. 29, Saturday, Aug. 30 and Sunday, Aug. 31. Visit www.birchmere.com for information.

Introduce yourself or the band:

Kloud 9 is twin brothers Kendall and Kelvis Duffie.

How did you get your start in music and how long have you been performing?

We've been singing most of our life. Our mother was a church musician and like most people we started singing in church. Our first professional introduction into the music business came while we were freshmen in high school back in Denver, Co. We met a producer by the name of Jerry Weaver (producer of Janet Jackson's first album and guitarist for Aretha Franklin) He heard a demo we recorded and took us under his wings for years. We credit him for giving us the tools we needed to go the next level.

If applicable, How were your musicians chosen?

Most of the musicians we use are players we've met through our work as Gospel record executives which we've both worked as over the past 12 years.

What is it that you love about performing?

The response it evokes from the people. We love making people smile, making them happy through the passion in our hearts—music.

What is your best memory when it comes to music?

Winning our first Award last year in Detroit at the SoulTracks Awards. We won best duo/group and also. Winning on the same night with our special friend Maysa Leak who also won her category made the night even more special.

Where is your favorite place to play, either publicly or personally?

Where ever there is one or more person who loves good quality soul music.

Best compliment about a performance?

People telling us how they appreciate the fact that we keep our music special and don't try to be trendy.

What is your favorite piece of music and



Kloud 9

why?

Michael Jackson's "Thriller." We love the songs and production. Anita Baker's "Rapture" for the same reasons.

Who would you love to play with? Why?

Stevie Wonder. He is all things musical, all things soulful and a huge inspiration to us.

Describe your sound:

Kloud 9 fits firmly in that grown and sexy style. it's Smooth R&B/Soul with a touch of Smooth Jazz.

Biggest musical influences:

The Jacksons, Anita Baker, Incognito, Stevie Wonder, The Isley Brothers, The Whispers.

Where have you toured?

America, South America, Europe and the Middle East.

Anything special about the upcoming show?

The Friday night show Aug. 29 is our birthday. We share that birthday with Michael Jackson.

Future plans:

We just completed a new project entitled "Enjoy The Ride." It's our bests work to date. It's releasing in the UK very soon and a March or April 2009 US release.

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Join us for the 5th event in our
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Please join us in welcoming Dr. Morton Sherman as the new Superintendent of the Alexandria City Public Schools.

Dr. Sherman will be talking to Chamber Members about his plans for the school system. Having received his doctorate in Educational Foundations from Lehigh University,

Sherman has extensive experience serving as superintendent in New Jersey and has spoken and written extensively on everything from children's mental health and student achievement to curriculum and staff development. He started in his new position on August 15th, 2008.



7:30-9:00 AM, Thursday, September 23rd at the Holiday Inn—Eisenhower Ave
 Member price—\$25/person, Non-Member price—\$35/person
Non-Members welcome!

For more information, go online to www.alexchamber.com or contact Special Events Coordinator Ashby Williams at 703.739.3808 or events@alexchamber.com.



End Note

Film Festival

FROM PAGE 3

can't get anywhere else."

The Library sweetens the deal for attendees by giving out door prizes provided by Film Movement, from whom the films are purchased, and Lonely Planet Books.

Film Movement is a company that sends out foreign films, which were unable to reach an audience stateside to subscribers of their program. In the case of the Library program, the subscription is sponsored by the Duncan Friends of the Library Society and the film is donated to the library after it has been viewed at Fireflies.

Though the series has been a great success, those involved understand that it will never attract

the audience that some feel the films deserve.

"Not everyone who sees Dark Knight is going to come see some obscure French comedy," said Downing.

Still, for those interested in the foreign and the different, the library and Fireflies restaurant will continue at least through January to provide someplace for these films to be seen.

The next film in the series will show on Saturday, Aug. 30 at 9 p.m. The film featured will be "The Grocer's Son" (*Le Fils de l'epicier*) presented in French with English subtitles. The film is a "French box-office hit about the coming-of-age of a man rediscovering life and love in the countryside" according to the press release.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 5

Freedom Walk. 9 a.m. at the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. Honor the victims of Sept. 11. Register online at www.americasupportsyou.mil.

Bridge Club. 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Beginners and advanced players age 12 and up. Free. 703-765-3645.

WEDNESDAY/ SEPT. 10

Spend the Day exploring Surreybrooke. The Green Springs Garden will be spending the day exploring a historic family farm in Middletown Maryland. The day will include a guided tour through the gardens, lunch, and shopping. \$65/ adults, lunch is included. Call 703-642-5173 for information.

Restaurant Night. 5-9:30 p.m. at the Carlyle Club, 411 John Carlyle St. Proceeds will benefit the Alexandria Red Cross. Visit www.thecarlyleclub.com or 703-548-8899 for reservations.

Rising Words, Rising Images. 11 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. "The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano" by Margarita Engle. Children ages 9-12. Free. 703-765-3645.

THURSDAY/ SEPT. 11

Stroll and Tea. Take a relaxing stroll through the gardens and tea at The Historic House with The Green Spring Garden's Garden Stroll and Tea which will be at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. From 1 to 3 p.m. Individuals and Groups are welcome. \$12/ individuals. Form more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 2-3 can enjoy stories and activities. Free. 703-971-0010.

Music Together. 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children up to age 5 can enjoy music and movement. Free. 703-765-3645.

MONDAY/SEPT. 8

Fall Crafts. 3:30 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 6-12 can enjoy after-school activities and crafts. Free. 703-971-0010.

Go, Dinos, Go. 10:30 a.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Children ages 24-35 months can enjoy stories and activities about dinosaurs. Free. 703-339-4610.

Monday Morning Discussion. 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Adults discuss "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" by Thomas Friedman. Free. 703-768-6700.

All Fairfax Reads. 7:30 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Discuss "The Uncommon Reader" by Alan Bennett. Free. 703-765-3645.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 9

What's New in Picture Books. 7 p.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Adults can learn about new books for preschoolers. Free. 703-971-0010.

Book Group. 7 p.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Call for title. Free. 703-768-6700.

PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER/
 GAZETTE PACKET

ON THE COVER: A family enjoys one of the many miniature golf courses that are offered in the area.

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- Buy tickets online: \$12 adults, \$10 children and seniors, children 2 and under free, weekend passes available

www.internationalchildrensfestival.org

The Arts Council of Fairfax County presents the International Children's Festival 2008



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