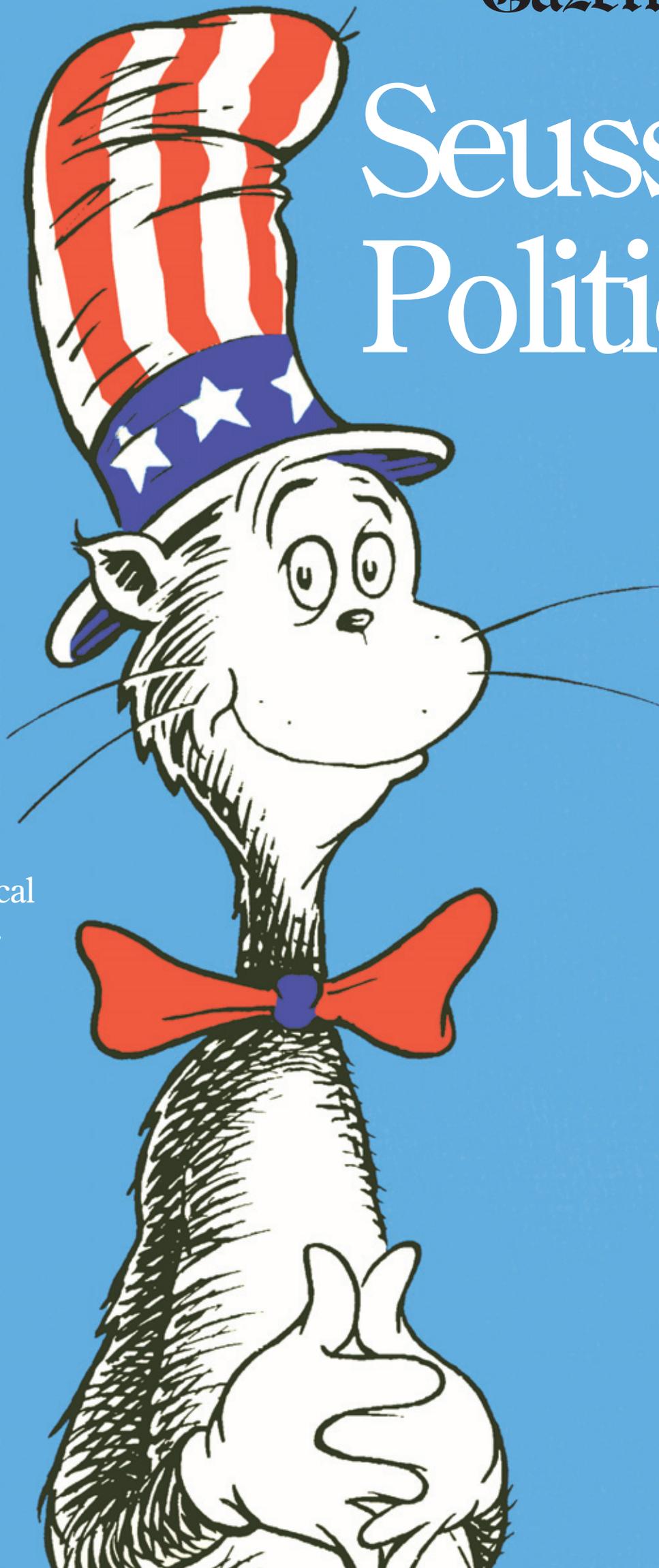


# Seussical Politics



# E

ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Some of Dr. Seuss's political  
cartoons are on display.

ART, PAGE 3

## FINE ART

# Art Is Ageless — As Is Talent

Artists from throughout the area prove art is beyond time.

BY CHUCK HAGEE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Poet George Herbert, in his work “The Temple, The Church, The Flower,” wrote “And now in age, I bud again.” That thought was generously on display last Sunday at Durant Recreation Center in Alexandria during a reception and awards ceremony for the 22nd Annual Juried Art Show, “Young At Art.”

Under the co-sponsorship of Senior Services of Alexandria and Goodwin House Foundation, the event showcased the works of 48 artists in a variety of creative mediums including photography. Of the 60 pieces on display three received top honors and five others honorable mention.

First Place went to Susan Walen for her multi-colored quilt entitled “Homage to Donna.” Richard Whiteley’s acrylic painting, “South Street,” which depicted a scene from Easton, Md., captured second place. And, Stephen Hung, a resident of Frederick, Md., took third place honors for his photograph, “Misty Great Falls.”

In addition to having their works on display each of the three top winners received cash awards of \$150 for first place; \$125 for second place; and \$100 for third place. The five honorable mention designees each received a \$25 cash award. Each year individual works are submitted in a wide range of mediums including oil, acrylic, water color, paper, textile, sculpture, and photography.

Honorable mentions went to Helen Dilley Barsalou’s water color “Autumn Foothills;” J. Fenimore Elliott’s photo portrait, “Samarkand Historian;” Darlene Kaplan’s Chinese Brush painting, “Peacocks at the Roast;” Mona Kauppinen’s pastel, “Firedancer;” and Peggy Wagner’s water color “School’s Out.”

Jurors for the show were Lynda Smith-Bugge and Pauline McDaniels, directors of the art centers at Goodwin House Alexandria and Bailey’s Crossroads, respectively. Smith-Bugge is a sculptor who has exhibited locally as well as in New York City and Sante Fe. McDaniels is a published writer, artist, actress, singer, and teacher. She taught art and drama locally for more than 20 years.

“No two shows are ever alike. We started with 100 plus submissions and from that evolved a theme and the works that best suited that theme,” McDaniels explained to the assembled crowd of artists, family, friends and art lovers.

“It’s not about promoting the best works. It’s about promoting all of you. We hope this exhibit encourages each of you. Do not stop creating,” she said.

“As an artist, myself, I often wonder why a particular piece gets chosen and another doesn’t. It has to do with many factors and not necessarily the quality of one piece over another,” Smith-Bugge said.

That advice not to stop creating was taken

to heart by Mike Martinez, a resident of Soldier’s Home in the District of Columbia whose painting of an American Indian Kachina Doll entitled “Big Horn Hunter” was on display. “I’ve been painting since I was a little boy, but didn’t actually get serious until I was 29 years old,” he said.

“I was born and raised in the Southwest but didn’t really start painting about that area until I came east. I will be showing my work at Gallery West since the Soldiers Home doesn’t really lend itself to being a good display locale,” Martinez said.

Hung has been an active photographer since high school but didn’t get serious about his talent until five years ago. “I like to hike and I’m really a nature photographer,” he said standing next to another of his photographs entitled “Morning Catch,” which focused on a large heron with a fish in its beak.

Another photo artist, Betty Baumgartner, had captured a “Rehobeth Sunrise” which was hung for the show. “I find the sunrise at Rehobeth always beautiful, even when it’s



raining. I’ve been on the beach with my camera dressed in rain gear,” she said.

“But, I’m old fashioned, I always work with film — never digital. My first camera was the old box camera. I like the feel of film and I find that the color is much better,” Baumgartner said.

Jenkins works in oil. She had a landscape on display entitled “Monongahela Forest” depicting the Monongahela River flowing through a mountainous area of West Virginia.

“Our artists range in age from their mid fifties to late eighties,” said Janet Barnett, executive director, SSA. The oldest artist displaying in this show is 88-year-old Annie King Phillips. Her entrant is a paper collage entitled, “A Froggie Would A Wooing Go.”

Supporting partners in presenting “Young At Art” include: The Alexandria Commission on Aging, The Campagna Center, Friends of the Torpedo Art Center, and Retired and Senior Volunteers Program. The exhibit is on display at the Durant Center until Oct. 24.



PHOTOS BY CHUCK HAGEE/GAZETTE PACKET

**Above, Susan Walen’s multicolored quilt entitled “Homage to Donna” was named first place winner at the 22nd Annual Juried Art Show “Young At Art.” On left, Richard Whiteley’s work in acrylic, “South Street,” was named the second place winner at the 22nd Annual Juried Art Show “Young At Art.”**

**“No two shows are ever alike.”**

**—Pauline McDaniels, “Young At Art” juror**

## New and Upcoming Exhibits

See “**Connections**,” featuring the nature etchings of **Lynida Terre** at the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. from **Oct. 5 through Nov. 30**. Call 703-768-2525.

See “**Dr. Seuss for President**,” at the P&C Fine Art Gallery, 212 King St. from **Oct. 4 through Nov. 3** featuring imagery from politically charged artworks, books and cartoons by **Theodor Suess Geisel**. Visit [www.pcart.com](http://www.pcart.com) for more.

See “**From our Trees Artistry is Revealed**,” a collaborative exhibit of work by members of the Del Ray Artisans and the Washington Woodworkers’ Guild from **Oct. 10 through Nov. 2** at the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave. Call 703-838-4827 or visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org) for more information.

**Multiple Exposures Gallery** presents “Vanishing Tibet: Danny Conant” from **Oct. 7 through Nov. 3**. Located in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. See the culture of Tibet. Free. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org) or 703-683-2205.

See the **Workhouse Gallery Art Show through Oct. 6** at the Workhouse Arts Center at Lorton, 9522 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Features artwork by Springfield Art Guild. Free. Visit [www.workhousearts.org](http://www.workhousearts.org) or 703-495-0001.

See “**Wrought Art**” through Oct. 25 at Fisher Gallery, 3001 N. Beauregard St. Browse fabricated mild steel by Terrence Gooding. Free. Visit [www.schlesingercenter.com](http://www.schlesingercenter.com) for more.

**Tyler Teaching Gallery** will host one of the largest international exhibits of crystalline pottery ever held. “**The Crystalline Spectrum: A Journey From Student to Master**” will open **Sept. 27 and continue until Oct. 22**. Located at 3001 North Beauregard St. Contact Schran at [wschran@nvcc.edu](mailto:wschran@nvcc.edu) or 703-845-6075.

## FINE ART

# If He Ran the Circus

Zany artwork and presidential politics collide in an exhibition featuring the works of Dr. Seuss.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Some people like to call the final stretch of the presidential campaign the “silly season,” and certainly the final election stretch brings a fair amount of frivolity. Yet none of the campaign-trail highjinks are nearly as entertaining as the work of Theodor Seuss Geisel, the artist popularly known as “Dr. Seuss.” Sure, his tongue-in-cheek post-humorous campaign for president might not have gotten as much press as the major parties that dominate the news. But that won’t stop the P&C Gallery on King Street from holding an official campaign kickoff party to inaugurate an exhibit called “Dr. Seuss for President.”

No, Dr. Seuss is not *really* running for president.

But exhibit organizers say the timing was just too good to pass up. After all, here we are in the midst of the craziest election season ever. Meanwhile, the Geisel’s artistic legacy has grown more complex in recent years since the artist’s death in 1991. The 1995 release of a coffee table book “The Secret Art of Dr. Seuss” illustrated that the man who created universally loved children’s books was also capable of crafting sophisticated oil paintings that were whimsical yet sophisticated. Then the 1999 publication of “Dr. Seuss Goes to War” revived the leftist political cartoons Geisel

## Politics and Prose

The P&C Gallery at 212 King St. will feature limited edition reproductions of artwork created by Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as “Dr. Seuss.” The exhibit, called “Dr. Seuss for President,” will be on display throughout October. An opening reception from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Oct. 4 will feature a speech by Bill Dreyer at 7:30 p.m.

created during World War II for the now-defunct New York magazine known as *PM*. Now his widow has authorized limited-edition recreations of his drawings, illustrations, paintings and sculptures.

**“His true genius was that his work is done with such finesse and humor that that few people even know he was being political.”**

— William Dreyer, curator of the Art of Dr. Seuss

“His true genius was that his work is done with such finesse and humor that that few people even know he was being political,” said William Dreyer, curator of the Art of Dr. Seuss. “He doesn’t hit you with a hammer, but you certainly get the message.”

**THE ART OF Dr. Seuss** is a project that was launched in 1997, allowing collectors to see and acquire lithographs, serigraphs and sculpture reproduced from Geisel’s original drawings and paintings. The Illinois-based Chase Group became the exclusive publisher, and Alexandria’s P&C Gallery became one of a select number of locations to sell the limited-edition works of art. For the last decade, visitors of all ages have been drawn to the whimsical collection celebrating the work of a man whose work is almost universally recognized.



One of Theodor Seuss Geisel’s political cartoons.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

“I think he was a genius,” said P&C gallery director Zoe Atarodian, adding that her favorite is “Oh, the Places You’ll Go.” “A lot of people grew up with Dr. Seuss, and so this is something they want to pass on to their children.”

In his career, Geisel created 44 children’s books, more than 400 political cartoons and hundreds of advertisements. It was a creative path he forged as a child, when he would create sculptures from animal parts his father would bring home from his job as superintendent of a Massachusetts zoo. Over the span of his career, he single-handedly created a new genre of art that falls somewhere between the surrealist movement of the early 20th century and the inspired nonsense of a child’s classroom doodles.

“Everybody can relate to Dr. Seuss, whether you’re young or old,” said Nathalie Johnson, art consultant at the P&C Gallery, adding that her favorite is “Horton Hatches the Egg.” “His fans span three generations now, and most people who come into the

gallery immediately recognize the art of Dr. Seuss.”

**THE EXHIBITION** “Dr. Seuss for President” was timed to coincide with the release of a cartoon known as “The Knotty Problem of Capitol Hill: Finding a Way to Raise Taxes Without Losing a Single Vote,” which is the first-ever political Dr. Seuss print edition. The works on display will feature politically charged artworks as well as 11 information panels offering an insight into the deeper meaning behind selected works of Dr. Seuss. For example, “The Lorax” is an argument for corporate responsibility and resource conservation; “Yertle the Turtle” was written to oppose fascism; “The Sneetches” offers a message of racial diversity; and “Horton Hears a Who” was a parable on democracy.

“With an election year upon us, we thought the timing was perfect,” said Dreyer, who will deliver a presentation about Geisel’s work at the opening reception on Oct. 4.

# Eclectic Local Rockers Play 100<sup>th</sup> Show at Iota

Middle Distance Runner hits the ground running with new bassist, new album.

BY ALISSA FIGUEROA  
GAZETTE PACKET

Chances are you’ve heard Middle Distance Runner. You just may not know it.

The Arlington-based band’s catchy melodies have been featured on a trailer for the new Disney documentary “Morning Light,” an HBO Signature Films Ad and, most recently, on the MTV Video Music Awards.

Next weekend local audiences will have a chance to hear those tunes live when the quintet performs its 100<sup>th</sup> show at Iota. They will perform songs from their upcoming

album, tentatively titled “The Sun and Earth,” and from their previous releases – 2006’s “Plane in Flames” and the aptly named “EP.”

Middle Distance Runner (MDR) is composed of Steve Kilroy (vocals/guitar), Allan Chappelle (guitar/keyboard), Erik Dean (drums), Jay Smith

(guitar) and Tony Acampora (bass). The group has been writing, recording and performing together since 2005. Acampora is

the newest addition to the group, replacing long-time bassist Ian Glinka, who relocated to Pittsburg just this summer.

## Where and When

Middle Distance Runner performs their 100<sup>th</sup> show on Friday Oct. 10 at 9 p.m. with New Rock Church of Fire at Iota Club and Café, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Admission is \$12. For more information visit [www.middledistancerunner.com](http://www.middledistancerunner.com).

This weekend’s show is the first Middle Distance Runner has played since January – excluding a weekend stint at South by

Southwest in Austin, Texas last March. The group is excited to play new songs they’ve been fine-tuning for months. They are also gearing up for their other upcoming shows later this fall at the College Music Jam, a “music marathon” in New York City that features hundreds of established and up-and-coming acts.

**MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNER’S 2006 DEBUT** was well-received by critics, and the group was selling out local venues throughout 2006 and 2007. In their July

SEE BAND, PAGE 8

# 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.

## ONGOING

On Mondays, Sept. 8 through Dec. 1 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., the Green Spring Gardens located at 4603 Green Spring Road, will be having **Yoga for Gardeners** for adults. The program will offer a series of classes featuring the Vinyasa method to increase your flexibility, strength, and endurance for gardening. \$ 66/ six-class sessions. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

Visit **George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill** through Oct. 31 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. See how whiskey got started. \$4/adult; \$2/child. Get discounts with admission to Mount Vernon Estate. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) for more.

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.

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.

Join City archaeologists and trained volunteers for an exciting program for kids of all ages at **Alexandria Archaeology Family Dig Days**. Monthly Family Dig Days will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. on the

grounds of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, in Alexandria. The 2008 dates are on Saturdays: Oct. 18. \$5/person and spots fill up fast. Call 703-838-4399 or visit [www.alexandriarchaeology.org](http://www.alexandriarchaeology.org) to reserve a spot.

On **Sundays** from noon-5 p.m., visit the Waterfront and see **history-inspired performances** near the Torpedo Factory; do a "meet and greet" of early Alexandria residents and travelers near the Waterfront and lower King Street. Free. Visit [www.historicalexandria.org](http://www.historicalexandria.org) for more.

On Mondays, Oct. 27, and Nov. 24 at 2 p.m. Green Spring Gardens will be having **Family Story Time** for children of all ages where there will be stories and activities. Free. For more information visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gspg)

On Mondays Sept. 8 through Oct. 27 from 2 to 4 p.m., the Green Spring Gardens will be having **Let's Grow kid's Gardening Program** where kids will enjoy sprouting seeds, growing vegetables, planting, flowers, exploring soil and other out door fun. \$ 70 /student. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

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-



**Pat McGee Band will perform with Andrew Ripp on Thursday, Oct. 9 at the Birchmere. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for more.**

2000.

Beginning on **Monday, Sept. 15** and continuing weekly through **Monday, Nov. 17**, Gadsby's Tavern Museum will be hosting its fall session of **Tavern Toddlers**. Tavern Toddlers features a weekly open playtime on Mondays, excluding Federal holidays, between 10:30 a.m. and noon. Each week costs \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, and additional people are just \$3. Pre-registration is not required, and single or multiple passes can be purchased

at the door. Gadsby's Tavern Museum is located at 134 North Royal St. For more information, call 703838.4242 or visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org).

enjoy stories, activities and craft. Free. 703-765-3645.

## FRIDAY/OCT. 3

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

**Wee Ones Story Time.** 2 and under. Free. 10:30 a.m. at Hooray for Books! 1555 King St. 703-548-4092 or [www.hooray4books.com](http://www.hooray4books.com). Enjoy some silly songs and stories as we explore

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**SATURDAY/OCT. 4**

**Country Fair.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Enjoy games, food, music and more. Free. 703-339-6572.

**Community Days.** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Harvest Church, 7401 Beulah St. Includes rides, food, drawings and more. Free. Visit [www.harvestchurchag.org](http://www.harvestchurchag.org) or 703-971-7070.

**Endless Summer.** 7 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church. Enjoy dinner by Outback Steakhouse and dancing. Call Karen for ticket prices, 703-768-9404.

**Watercolor Series.** 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn how to paint red flowers. \$65/person. 703-642-5173 to register.

**Dance Performance.** 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlessinger Concert Hall, 3001 N. Beaugard St. See the premier of Arlington-based Bowen McCauley Dance company's "O'Inner Voice with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Tickets range from \$36-\$60. [www.bmdc.org](http://www.bmdc.org)

**Civil War Explored.** Learn about the duties and skills of the artilleryman at Fort Ward, 4301 W. Braddock Road from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$2/adults; \$1/child. Visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org) or 703-838-4848.

**Music Performance.** 8 p.m. at Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 N. Beaugard St. Alexandria Symphony Orchestra will perform with Bowen McCauley Dance. Tickets range between \$20-\$80. Visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org) or 703-548-0885.

**City Tree Sale.** 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, 2911 Cameron Mills Road. \$30-\$45/tree. 703-838-4999.

**Yard Sale.** 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Washington Farm United Methodist Church, 3921 Old Mill Road. Free. Proceeds benefit outreach programs. 703-780-4696.

**Art on the Avenue.** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Mount Vernon Avenue. Browse through artists and craftspeople, food, music and more. There will be a train show at Mount Vernon Rec Center. Free. Visit [www.artontheavenue.org](http://www.artontheavenue.org) or 703-683-3100.

**Gallery Opening.** 6:30-9 p.m. at the P&C Fine Art Gallery, 212 King St. See "Dr. Seuss for President," featuring imagery from politically charged artworks, books and cartoons by Theodor Sues Geisel. Free. Refreshments will be served. RSVP to Kei at 703-698-8452.

**Seasonal Stories with Miss Cathy.**

10:30 a.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Center. Children ages 3-6 can enjoy fall stories. Free. 703-339-4610.

**Youth Roundtable.** 1-2:15 p.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Local teens will talk about topics that interest them. Free. Reservations encouraged, 703-838-4356.

**Election Kickoff Story Time.** Ages 2-6. Free. 11 a.m. at Hooray for Books! 1555 King St. 703-548-4092. [www.hooray4books.com](http://www.hooray4books.com).

**SUNDAY/OCT. 5**

**Craft Day.** 1-4 p.m. at the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. Children can get a "Squirrel Lee" tour and then do a Victorian craft. Bring an American Girl doll and gain free admission. \$2/child; adult free with child's admission. 703-548-1789.

**Community Days.** 10:30 a.m. at Harvest Church, 7401 Beulah St. Includes rides, food, drawings and more. Free. Visit [www.harvestchurchag.org](http://www.harvestchurchag.org) or 703-971-7070.

**Dance Performance.** 3 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlessinger Concert Hall, 3001 N. Beaugard St. See the premier of Arlington-based Bowen McCauley Dance company's "O'Inner Voice with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Tickets range from \$25-\$70. [www.bmdc.org](http://www.bmdc.org)

**Music Performance.** 3 p.m. at Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 N. Beaugard St. Alexandria Symphony Orchestra will perform with Bowen McCauley Dance. Tickets range between \$20-\$80. Visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org) or 703-548-0885.

**Scottish Heritage Fair.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fort Ward Park, 4301 West Braddock Road. Enjoy music, singing and more. Free. 703-838-4844.

**Art Reception.** 2-5 p.m. Come see "Connections," featuring nature etchings of Lynida Terre at the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be served. Call 703-768-2525 for more information.

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

**MONDAY/OCT. 6**

**Sondheim Performance.** 8 p.m. at Schlesinger Concert Hall, 3001 N. Beaugard St. Hear "Anyone Can Whistle." \$40-\$150/person. Visit [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org) or 571-527-1860.  
**Books and Ideas.** 7:30 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Discuss "Bridge of Sighs" by Richard Russo. Free. 703-765-3645.

**TUESDAY/OCT 7**

**Harvest Time.** 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Children ages 2-3 can enjoy stories, activities and crafts. Free. 703-971-0010.  
**What's New in Picture Books.** 7 p.m. at John

Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Adults can learn about new books. Free. 703-971-0010.

**WEDNESDAY/OCT. 8**

**Fall Lecture Series.** 7:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. See 18th century experiments performed. \$12/lecture or \$30/series of 3. Visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org) or 703-838-4242.

**Rising Words, Rising Images.** 11 a.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 9-12 can discuss "Walt Whitman" by Nancy Loewen and do a related activity. Free. 703-765-3645.

**THURSDAY/OCT. 9**

**Teen Volunteer Fair.** 5-8:45 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Meet community organizations needing volunteers. Children ages 12-18. 703-765-3645.

**Music Performance.** Hear Lori Grigsby & Sandy Moyer perform with Patricia Cooper at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. \$10/person. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or 703-548-0035.

**Recycling Event.** Drop off light bulbs, computers and peripherals and cell phones at Calvert Jones' headquarters, 5703 Edsall Road. Free. [www.calvertjonesgreen.com](http://www.calvertjonesgreen.com) for more.

**FRIDAY/OCT. 10**

**Lecture.** Noon at Market Square, 301 King St. Hear Don Wallingford speak. Free.

**Annual Memorial Service.** 11 a.m. at Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King St., Alexandria. Memorial service and wreath laying honoring the men and women of the Alexandria Fire Services. RSVP to [cemetery@ivyhill.org](mailto:cemetery@ivyhill.org) or 703-549-7413.

**Music Performance.** 8 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Camerata will sing with the Singing Sergeants. Free. Visit [www.usafband.af.mil](http://www.usafband.af.mil) or 202-767-5658.

**Gallery Opening.** 7-10 p.m. See "From our Trees Artistry is Revealed," a collaborative exhibit of work by members of the Del Ray Artisans and the Washington Woodworkers' Guild at the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave. Free. Call 703-838-4827 or visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org) for more information.

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

**SATURDAY/OCT. 11**

**Yard Sale.** The Alexandria Jaycees will hold a yard sale from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. at Anthony T. Lane Elementary School, 7137 Beulah St. Free. Browse a variety of items. Vendors may register online at [www.alexjaycees.org/yardsales.htm](http://www.alexjaycees.org/yardsales.htm). For updated rain date information call 703-866-7171.

**Perennials.** Learn to Garden with Perennials and woody plants with The Green Spring Gardens located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Design with Perennials: Time and Your Garden with Karen Rexrode. The class will combine both indoor and outdoor explorations. \$ 18/ adults. For more information and to register call 703-642-5173.

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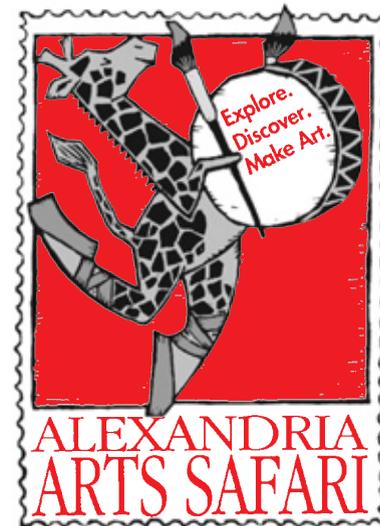


See this piece of artwork and others at the exhibit "The Crystalline Spectrum: A Journey From Student to Master" through Oct. 22 at the Tyler Teaching Gallery, 3001 N. Beaugard St.



SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8

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## THEATER

# ‘Jonah’: Ministry Versus Theater

New dinner theater focuses on message.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
 GAZETTE PACKET

A new dinner theater calling itself the New Horizons Theater has set up shop on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway near the intersection of Route 1 and has opened a new show, “Jonah Live On Stage.”

The company proclaims in its program that it is “not just a theater, it is a ministry.” Those who seek entertainment, cultural expression and social enlightenment – the traditional aims of the theatrical arts – in the place where those arts are practiced usually see it as something more than “just” a theater. Still, there is a long tradition of the use of theater to spread religious messages.

Good intentions, of course, buy much good will from an audience that approaches the entire experience as much as a combination sermon and church outing as a show. Still, even granting as much good will as possible, “Jonah Live On Stage” is a major disappointment.

This is the third production of the company, so the shortfalls of the show cannot be dismissed as start-up pains. What is more, the company has the talents of at least one professional who is a member of the national union of actors, Actors’ Equity, and another who has impressed in performances at other professional venues in Northern Virginia.

These talents can’t rescue this amateurish, if energetic, evening from being so visibly less than it aspires to be. This has to be attributed to the writer and director of the show who is also the artistic director of the company.

Chris McGriff’s script tells the biblical story of Jonah whose reluctance to support the destruction of Nineveh results in his being swallowed up by a great fish, and ultimately, vomited up on the shore, where he is finally shown that he has saved the city from the wrath of God.

Theatrical settings of biblical stories have been successful on stage, both in dramatic treatments such as “JB,” based on the story of Job, and in musicals. Just think of “Jesus Christ Superstar” or “Godspell.” But this musical, sort of a “Go Go Jonah,” fails to explore the interesting features of the characters and actions of the story in its quest to deliver its religious teaching.

McGriff places much of the action on something that appears to be a pirate ship, but which is plying commercial routes, taking a shipment of linen and wine to Tarshish. Jonah stows away on board to avoid his God’s wrath, but is taken by a band of thieves masquerading as a crew. They throw him overboard where the “great fish” finds him.

Much is made of the “special effects” which are featured in the production. Indeed, some advertisements refer to the show as “Jonah Live On Stage



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The crew of the ship for “Jonah Live on Stage Picnic.”

Whale Water And All.” While they do manage a satisfactory rain effect on the low-ceilinged stage and the set of the ship’s deck is well done, other effects and settings are lamentably amateurish, especially the use of a bubble machine to create the first storm effect and a single painted sheet to represent the belly of the beast.

Music and lyrics are by Daniel Spruill. His melodies are serviceable while his lyrics are simplistic and predictable. The tunes are supported by a highly amplified synthesized accompaniment and sung with gusto, if not always with an accurate sense of pitch by a cast of sixteen. Eight of the sixteen are children performing as “The Bad Assyrians” and they perform in the manner of an enthusiastic school class.

Jobari Parker-Namdar, who was impressive in his recent appearance at MetroStage in “The Stephen Schwartz Project,” is sadly underutilized here in the title role and David Lamont Wilson, who has been a feature among smaller professional troupes in the area for a number of years, mugs his way through the lame comedy as the captain of the sailing ship.

Only Quinten DeAnglio Warren as the ship’s first mate really manages to make much of his role, while a very young Anthony Davis (a sixth grader from Centerville) is a chipper King of Nineveh. However, at the performance reviewed, his microphone kept cutting out at unfortunate moments. This was especially unfortunate when it failed just as he was reaching the heights of oratory, declaiming “People of Nineveh – Hear my voice!” Most of the audience behind the front dinner tables couldn’t hear his voice.

The performance takes place on a stage set up at the end of a long meeting room called the Royal Room of the Agape Building, home of the Alternative Paths Training School of Alexandria and two local churches. The low ceiling doesn’t allow the elevation of the stage, and since the floor of the room is level, only about fifteen of the two hundred or more seats at round tables have a clear view of the action. A full buffet meal is offered prior to the performance.

Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway, and edits Potomac Stages, ([www.PotomacStages.com](http://www.PotomacStages.com)). He can be reached at [Brad@PotomacStages.com](mailto:Brad@PotomacStages.com).

## Where and When:

“Jonah Live on Stage Picnic” plays through Oct. 5 at New Horizons Theater, 5632-B Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Performances are Wednesday – Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3: p.m. Tickets are \$48 - \$53. Call 703-704-5790 or log on to [www.newhorizonstheater.com](http://www.newhorizonstheater.com).

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## THEATER

# Synetic Revives Georgian Epic

“Host and Guest” a reaction to war in the Caucasus.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
GAZETTE PACKET

Current events and cultural events can intersect in curious ways at times. The connection between the recent combat operations of Russian forces inside of the Republic of Georgia and the production that Synetic Theater has just opened in Rosslyn is concrete, dramatic and palpable.

It isn't just that the piece the company is performing is based on a classic Georgian poem, “Host and Guest” by Vazha Pshavela. It isn't even that the action of the story takes place in the forests of the Georgian Caucasus Mountains or that it deals with sectional hatreds and traditions of honor. Those things would be enough by themselves.

But the connection to the theater troupe itself is what makes the piece so compellingly timely.

Synetic Theater is a company headed by actor/director/playwright Paata Tsikurishvili, a native of Georgia, who, along with his actress/dancer/choreographer wife Irina, emigrated to the United States in 1997. Together, they have shaken up the local theater world. Many of the artists who work with them at Synetic are also from Georgia or the neighboring areas of the Caucasus.

When the war broke out in Georgia in August, the company was in preparation for their first show of the 2008-09 season which was to be a stage adaptation of the story from the classic silent horror film, “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.” But the members of the troupe simply couldn't concentrate on that project while war raged in their homeland. So, Tsikurishvili as the Artistic Director of the company made the decision to change the show they would present.

Six years ago, the company had had great success with this highly dramatic story of a Georgian Muslim who took into his home a Christian from a rival village and then defended him from harm from his outraged neighbors even at the expense of his own life. The 2002 production had been nominated for the Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Play, Outstanding Direction and Outstanding Choreography. It lost all three of those awards but only to another

production of their company which swept the awards, “Hamlet ... the Rest is Silence.”

Tsikurishvili decided to postpone “Dr. Caligari,” and instead, bring back “Host and Guest.” Synetic's performance style is unique, requiring incredibly disciplined physical work by an entire cast blending highly athletic dance moves with dramatic mime and a minimum of dialogue. The style requires intense preparation and the company typically rehearses its shows twice as long as most other companies do before opening night. Thus, the switch from “Dr. Caligari” to “Host and Guest” presented a real challenge.

The results now on stage at the Spectrum in Rosslyn are infused with the sense of concern the company has held for the homeland of many of the members. The strikingly effective set, costume and properties

design (including fabulous use of fog and wind) is by Georgi Alexi-Meskishvili, the chief designer of the Rustaveli Drama Theater and the National Opera in Georgia's capital of Tbilisi. The musical score which, is so much a factor in this dance-dominated production, is by Konstantine Lortkipanidze, a native of Tbilisi.

The role of the leader of the outraged neighbors is played with menace by Georgian State Institute of Theater and Film graduate Irakli Kavsadze.

Paata Tsikurishvili again directs and Irina Tsikurishvili again choreographs as well as starring as the wife of the host who takes in the guest. Unlike six years ago, however, Paata doesn't play the host. The title roles are played with superb intensity by Daqn Istrate and Ben Cunis, both veteran members of the Synetic troupe. Another major difference between the 2002 production and this one is the use of a new musical score by Lortkipanidze, a score which is atmospheric and viscerally dramatic.

The result, a one-act event that lasts just under an hour and a half, is an immersion into the emotions of a troupe responding to the trauma of war felt from half a world away, but felt with no less intensity due to the distance.

Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway, and edits Potomac Stages, a Web site covering theater in the region ([www.PotomacStages.com](http://www.PotomacStages.com)). He can be reached at [Brad@PotomacStages.com](mailto:Brad@PotomacStages.com).

## Where and When

The Synetic Theater's production of “Host and Guest” plays through Nov. 9 at the Rosslyn Spectrum, 1611 North Kent St. Performances are Thursday – Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 - \$40. Call (800) 494-8497 or log on to [synetictheater.org](http://synetictheater.org).

## THEATER LISTINGS

Know of something missing from our Local Theater listings? Send it to Alexandria Gazette Packet at [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is 2 p.m. the Thursday before publication. Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with any questions.

## Ongoing Events

See “Picnic” at Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., from **through Oct. 11**. Performances are Wednesdays-Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Visit [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com) for tickets.

See “This Perfect World” **Sept. 18 through Oct. 12** at Theatre on the Run, 3700 Four Mile Run Drive. \$28/Fridays and Saturdays and \$25/all other

performances. [www.chartertheatre.org](http://www.chartertheatre.org) or 202-333-2202.

See “**Fat Pig**” by Neil LaBute **from Oct. 17 through Nov. 2** at Gunston Theatre One, 2700 S. Lang St. Visit [www.dominionstage.org](http://www.dominionstage.org) or 703-683-0502 for times and tickets.

See “**Pearl Bailey...By Request**” at MetroStage on **Oct. 16 through Nov. 9**. Performances are Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 5 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$35/person. Visit [www.metrostage.org](http://www.metrostage.org) or 703-548-9044.

See “**Host and Guest**” **through Nov. 9** at Rosslyn Spectrum, 1611 N. Kent St. Performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sun-

days at 3 p.m. Tickets range between \$35-\$40/person. 1-800-494-8497 for tickets. Visit [arlingtonarts.org](http://arlingtonarts.org) for more.

See the “**Eleventh International Festival of Hispanic Theater**” **from Oct. 7 through Nov. 15** at Gunston Arts Center, Theater Two, 2700 S. Lang St. \$30/adult; \$25/student, senior. Visit [www.teatrodelaluna.org](http://www.teatrodelaluna.org) or 703-548-3092.

See “**An American Daughter**” **from Oct. 31 through Nov. 15** at the Port City Playhouse, 1108 Jefferson St. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays, with a Tuesday show on Nov. 11, at 8 p.m. Tickets range between \$12 to \$16. 703-838-2880 for tickets. Visit [www.portcityplayhouse.com](http://www.portcityplayhouse.com) for more.

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## MUSIC

# Popular Rock Band Returns to Area

FROM PAGE 3

2006 issue, Spin Magazine included one of the band's shows in their "101 Best Nights Out" review, which lists the top concerts to see across the country each month. Reviewers for the Washington Post, the City Paper and the blog DCist all identified the group as one of the most promising in the D.C. music scene.

MDR took full advantage of the exposure, touring up and down the eastern seaboard and rocking local stages

**"We realized we don't really answer to anybody. So we should do something we're all really proud of."**

— Steve Kilroy, Middle Distance Runner vocalist

to build a strong fan base. But despite their efforts, and the glowing reviews, the group was unable to get signed to a record label — a crucial step towards gaining wider recognition

and airplay for a band.

The nine month hiatus MDR has taken from performing has given the group a chance to reassess their approach. They've spent the time experimenting musically and refining their sound.

"We realized we don't really answer to anybody," said Kilroy. "So we should do something we're all really proud of."

Describing the group's style is difficult, even for the band members.

"Our go-to answer is that we sound like Radiohead and Blur," said Chappellear. Indeed, the band lists the British rockers as major influences, and comparisons between the three are replete in MDR's reviews. But their sound has morphed into some-

thing very different with their new album.

This time around the band is using more live-recorded studio tracks, which, according to Kilroy produce a more "organic, human sound quality." And they've started playing around with R&B beats.

"We've been listening to a lot of Sam Cook and Rolling Stones," said Kilroy. "So there's a lot more soul and Americana influence."

For the members of the band, this willingness to try new things and respond to different influences is one of the most exciting aspects of playing together.

"One of the benefits to this band is that we don't have a defined sound," said Chappellear. "We didn't set out to make any one style of music, so we don't have to feel obligated to make Brit pop or something like that. We can make R&B songs, we can make thrash rock."

"The dynamics are different," agreed Acampora. "You can do so many different things, musically, with this band."

This sentiment was echoed by the group's manager, JD Klipper, who has worked with Middle Distance Runner since February of 2007.

"I always love getting new material from them," he said. "I really never know what to expect because each one of their songs has a different flavor. [It] makes marketing the material fun and interesting."

The diversity of the D.C. rock music scene has helped cultivate this sense of creative freedom for MDR.

"We have a group of bands that we're all friends with, but none of us really sound similar," said Chappellear. "I think it's helpful, because you can be influenced by people who sound totally different."

"Yeah, nobody has to fit in to anything,"



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JD KLIPPER.

**Middle Distance Runner (from left to right): Erik Dean, Stephen Kilroy, Jay Smith, Allan Chappellear.**

added Kilroy. "There are cities where bands can't do much, because nobody takes anything seriously there except for one style of music, but D.C.'s not like that. And I'm happy for it."

What seems to drive Middle Distance Runner, however, has as much to do with their affection for one another as their passion for the music they make. When asked to name their favorite thing about playing in the band, "friendship" was unanimously the first response. The band's founding members — Kilroy, Chappellear and Dean — have been playing music together since

middle school, when they joined one of their teachers onstage at their eighth grade talent show. Even now, Kilroy and Chappellear share a rambling split-level on a quiet Arlington street with Smith.

Chatting with the group feels a bit like sitting in on a prolonged inside joke. They kid one another constantly, and actually, it's difficult not to laugh along. Perhaps this infectious energy is part of what's made Middle Distance Runner so appealing to area audiences. The band hopes to harness this power for their long-awaited return at Iota on Friday.

## CALENDAR

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED  
**ON THE COVER: Dr. Seuss's famous Cat in the Hat.**

### E Staff

**Editor:** Rebecca Halik  
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FROM PAGE 5

**Dyke Marsh.** 3 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Learn about the bird sanctuary, nature preserve and more. Free. 703-765-3645.

**Book Sale.** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Center. Browse through a variety of titles and more. Free. 703-339-4610 for more.

**Murder Mystery Dinner.** 7 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. Enjoy a three-course dinner and three murders. \$80/member; \$100/non-member. Register at [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org) or 703-838-4242 for more.

**SUNDAY/OCT. 12**

**Bazaar.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Woodlawn. Browse

through quilts, hats, scarves and more. Free. Lunch will be available. 703-780-4000 for more on the items.

**Music Performance.** Hear Lucy Kaplansky perform a Jay Votel tribute show at 7 p.m. at Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St. \$15/general; \$12/member. Visit [www.focusmusic.org](http://www.focusmusic.org) or 703-501-6061.

**MONDAY/OCT. 13**

**Columbus Day Fast & Furriest 5k.** 8 a.m. at Belle Haven Sailing Marina. Register at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) or 703-966-7202.

**Author Signing.** 4-6 p.m. at Mount Vernon Estate Shops. Joseph Ellis will sign copies of his book "Founding Brothers." Free, but books must be purchased from Mount Vernon. For more information, visit [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

**TUESDAY/OCT. 14**

**One, Two, Three - Let's Go.** 10:30 a.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Center. Children ages 13-23 months can enjoy number stories and activities. Free. 703-339-4610.

**WEDNESDAY/OCT. 15**

**Fall Lecture Series.** 7:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. Hear how billiards became important. \$12/lecture or \$30/series. Visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org) or 703-838-4242.

**Small Wonders.** 10:30 a.m. at John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive. Ages 13-23 months can enjoy stories. Free. 703-971-0010.

**Small Wonders.** 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 12-13 can enjoy stories and fingerplays. Free. 703-765-3645.