

# Mount Vernon Gazette

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Inside: Holiday Gift Guide

25 CENTS

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

NOVEMBER 19, 2008

## 'A Child's Place:' Now Their Place

Young lives caring for younger lives — a learning experience.

BY CHUCK HAGEE  
GAZETTE

The old adage, "The more things change, the more they stay the same," could well be the motto of five teenagers now serving as counselors at "A Child's Place" day care center located in the Hollin Hall Senior Center. They were all once small charges of other counselors at that center.

Robin Flynn, Alexandra Serino, David Gililland, Samantha Cooper and Kristin Boward were all part of A Child's Place's population as small children. Now they are all high school seniors, except for Flynn, a junior, who spend their weekday after-

noons watching over 83 children with all that entails.

Children enrolled at A Child's Place range in age from pre-school through first grade — primarily three to six years old. And, they pose all the chal-



Former charges at Hollin Hall's day care center, "A Child's Place," David Gililland, Robin Flynn, Alexandra Serino, Samantha Cooper and Kristen Boward, now serve as counselors to children enrolled in the Mount Vernon facility.

lenges and rewards of that spectrum.

"We are their counselors and their baby sitters. We play with them, do art projects, watch movies, change diapers — all the things you would expect," said Serino, who hopes to attend college in Florida next year.

She is the only one of the group who is not a native of the Mount Vernon District area. She moved here as a small child from Florida and met the others at the Hollin Hall day care center.

"We all met each other here at A Child's Place years ago and now we are working here every afternoon from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. It can be a real challenge," said Gililland

who indicated he may continue there next year if he attends college in Northern Virginia.

**ENROLLMENT** at the center presently consists of 53 school age children and 30 pre-schoolers. The teenagers concentrate primarily on the children from kindergarten through first grade.

"Before I started working here I really didn't much care for small children. Now, I'm really into it," said Boward. "It really teaches you a lot of patience," added

SEE LEARNING, PAGE 8

## Hyland Injured In Accident

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerald Hyland sustained non-life threatening injuries in an automobile accident last weekend while driving to his farm in Accomack County, Va., according to a news release issued by his office Tuesday.

Injuries to his left leg and hip required surgery at the University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore, Md., on Monday, Nov. 17. He is expected to remain in that facility for several days while recuperating, according to his office.

It is expected that he will be transferred to undergo physical therapy for several weeks; he was recuperating well as of Tuesday afternoon, according to the news release.

Hyland was driving alone in his minivan when he was struck on the driver's side, just behind the driver's door, by another motorist, according to reports. No details, other than his injuries, were released by his office.

Inquires to Hyland's office as to the exact date, time and location of the accident were refused. Inquires to both the Accomack County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police were not able to verify any accident details.

Hyland would not accept a telephone call to his hospital room late Tuesday afternoon even though the person answering the

SEE HYLAND, PAGE 3

## 'Tis the Season: A 'Think Small' Shopping Guide

Looking at specialty shops around the corner.

BY CHUCK HAGEE  
GAZETTE

If ever there was a holiday season where spirits needed to be uplifted and smiles brought back to the faces of young and old alike this is it. And, there is no better place to find that certain something to accomplish that task than in small specialty shops.

They not only have gifts one cannot find in the big box and chain stores, they offer them with a neighborhood friendliness and knowledge of their products that seems to be only a distant memory in today's mass marketing world. For that special package under the tree come Christmas morning visit these holiday treasure troves.

In the Mount Vernon area there's nothing like Hollin Hall Shopping Center on Fort Hunt Road for one stop shopping with easy parking. And, one of the most complete stores in the small strip mall for just about every need, not just at the holidays, but throughout the year, is The Variety Store, 7902 Fort Hunt Road.

Well under way for its second 50-year run under the new ownership of Doug Bentley, The Variety Store, has it all from do-it-yourself decorating supplies to decorated gift boxes that need no wrapping.

Two of this year's "must have" offerings are musical and lighted gift bags. The musical bag sells for \$2.79 and the fiber optic lighted bag goes for \$4.69.

SEE SHOPS, PAGE 4



Ceramic figurines can create their own Christmas village at Hollin Hall Variety Store. See Gift Guide on Page 13



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## MarketWatch

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Almost 32,000 people bought homes in 1981 in the Washington metropolitan area\* when interest rates were shockingly high. Tell most people that fact today, when they are weighing whether to lock in an interest rate of 6.5% or wait until it drops, and they think you're nuts - or just plain wrong. Why in the world would that many people buy homes under those conditions? In our view, it says some very positive things about real estate, even when real estate is "bad."

- People have to live somewhere - and we're not being flippant. They may rent, they may share an apartment with a complete stranger, they may live with family longer than planned, they may own, or tragically may be in a shelter. There is no such imperative about stocks, bonds or banks.
- There is pride in owning a home that transcends the investment value of that home. There are tax benefits to owning a home as well.
- And yes, there are possible financial risks and rewards to homeownership. The average price of a home in Northern Virginia in the "dark days" of 1981 was \$100,000; in 1986, when mortgage rates averaged 10.2%, the average price was 20% higher. Sadly, right now we are experiencing the broad impact of declines in home prices in our area. But as with most investments, timing matters a great deal. Someone who purchased a home in 2000 is likely to have a very different financial picture than one who purchased an identical home in 2005 at the top of the market. Both will have lost value, but one has substantial equity while the other is likely to be "upside down."
- However, given the history of this area, if the one who is "upside down" today can hang in there, home values will climb again.

Today's economic conditions serve as strong reminders that there are no guarantees about any financial commitment. For those who took out loans they could not afford and/or bought at the top of the market, these are rough times. For those who rented in 2000 when they could have purchased, these may be rough times as well - because they lost the opportunity to build a lot of equity.

This is the third in a series of commentaries about the real estate market. We are absolutely convinced that there is no better place in this country to own a home than right here. If you'd like to know more, please visit our website [www.mceneaney.com](http://www.mceneaney.com) and click on "MarketWatch."

**THE REAL ESTATE MARKET IS GOING TO BE OK - REALLY.**

\*Washington, DC, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland, the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William in Virginia.

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## Two Arrested In Armed Robbery

**J**onathan Storck, 19, of 8512 Stable Drive, Mount Vernon District, and Edward Dawson, 19, of no fixed address, have been charged with robbery in an incident that occurred Oct. 19. They were arrested in the 6600 block of Tower Drive, Mount Vernon District, on Monday, Nov. 10, according to Fairfax County Police.

Their arrests stem from the robbery of two 19-year-old men that Sunday at approximately 8:48 p.m. in the 2700 block of Fairhaven Avenue. Police determined one

victim was contacted by an acquaintance to meet in the area of Lenclair Street and Tower Drive.



**Storck**



**Dawson**

When the victims arrived, one exited the car and was approached by two unknown males as he spoke to the acquaintance. One suspect brandished a handgun and forced the first victim to return to the waiting vehicle. The suspects then demanded property from both victims who complied, police reported. The suspects then fled the area on foot. There were no reported injuries.

Further investigation led to the arrest of Storck and Dawson. Storck was charged with robbery and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Dawson was charged with robbery.

Both suspects were transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. A robbery warrant has been issued for the acquaintance of the victim after police determined his alleged involvement.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS(8477) or call the Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

## Hyland in Car Accident

FROM PAGE 1

phone stated that he was out of the room and doing fine. No surgery details were available.

The Mount Vernon District office is open and operating. "He is in constant communications with his staff about Fairfax County business," according to the release. Get well cards may be sent to the office at the Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria VA 22306-3273.



The Patrick Cooper Jazz Group entertained throughout the evening.

## Toast to Hope

### Celebrating 20 years of SCAN of Northern Virginia.

**S**CAN (Stop Child Abuse Now) of Northern Virginia held a birthday party Saturday, Nov. 15, at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, celebrating 20 years. The evening was filled with music from the Patrick Cooper Jazz Group, gourmet food tasting from area restaurants, wine tasting from vintner sponsors and tables of gifts and getaways donated for the silent auction. All proceeds from the event benefit the work of SCAN of Northern Virginia

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE



SCAN founder David Cleary with his wife Carol.



Executive director of SCAN Diane Charles with Randy Taussig and Mary Phelps.

## Koger Pleads Guilty

Still faces charges including attempted capital murder of police officers in Fairfax County.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE GAZETTE

**J**effrey Scott Koger admitted to embezzling approximately \$3 million from 400 homeowner associations using 140 bank wire transfers, according to statement of facts filed Monday, Nov. 10 with his plea agreement in federal court in Alexandria.

Koger, 39 of Oak Hill, embezzled the money and invested funds in personal accounts and businesses he was involved in, including: \$733,000 in Jordan's 8 restaurant on Capitol Hill; \$374,960 to pay a contractor to remodel his Oak Hill house and the Tri-Fitness, Inc. facility in Annandale; \$40,000 for a down payment on a 2005 Chevrolet Corvette convertible; \$60,000 for a down payment on a house in New Mexico; and \$56,668 for windows and doors for his home.



SHERIFF'S PHOTO

**Jeffrey Koger**

Koger was the former chief financial officer of his father's real estate management firm, Koger Management Group, which filed for bankruptcy in July 2007. Robert Koger, the father, reported to the Fairfax City Police in November 2006 that he believed his son Jeffrey Koger had embezzled \$800,000, kicking off the investigation.

Jeffrey Koger pleaded guilty Monday, Nov. 10 in federal court in Alexandria to wire fraud and income tax evasion.

Jeffrey Koger, already jailed in Fairfax County Adult Detention Center on other charges, waived prosecution by indictment and consented that his plea agreement could continue Monday.

U.S. District Court Judge Leonie M. Brinkema is currently scheduled to sentence

SEE EMBEZZLING, PAGE 11

### More

See past coverage of the Koger investigation at [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com).



**A five-foot Santa is surrounded by an array of holiday keepsakes at Virginia Florist.**



**A ceramic "Gingerbread" house, surrounded by other holiday ceramic pastries and candy cane trees, make for colorful table decorations, can be found at Blossom Shop.**

# Looking at Local Specialty Shops

FROM PAGE 1

For those who like to wear their Christmas cheer there are holiday hats depicting Santa's elves, snowmen, and St. Nick. There is also a Christmas tree hat with a star on top that lights for the really venturesome. It sells for \$9.98. Other hats range from \$1.99 to \$4.29.

For home decorating there is everything from ready-made bows, to an array of ribbons, to garland, wreaths, baskets, strings of lights, and all the accessories needed to create an individualized holiday spectacular. The Variety Store is just that— something for every need whether during the holidays or in mid summer.

Next door at 7906 Fort Hunt Road is The Blossom Shop, a floral shop with a wide range of specialty gifts and items for giving and decorating. Owner Dorothy Trimmer also does personalized home and business decorating by appointment.

One item that immediately catches the shopper's eye is the illuminated 10-inch lighted snowmen and penguins that are the perfect addition to any home decorating efforts. When lighted they also have swirly snow within that constantly changes color. They are \$54 each.

Enhancing any holiday table for parties or family is a group of ceramic food imitations that include a full scale gingerbread house, candy cane trees, decorated cup cakes, and a wooden chocolate wreath. There are several decorated seven-foot trees throughout the shop that display an array

of items both on their branches and underneath.

Finally, there is The Gift Store, 7910 Fort Hunt Road, owned and operated by Deborah Bentley. It is home to some of the most unusual and spectacular music boxes in the region. This year's most recent addition is a large winter scene with a model train priced at \$127.50.

Other selections include a Merry Go Round at \$110 and a Roller Coaster at \$127.50. For that special stocking stuffer there are miniature music boxes with different winter and holiday scenes that play when the see-through top is opened. They sell for \$16.50 each.

Instead of the usual greens on the mantel, how about a holiday or colonial lighted streetscape. They can be found at The Gift Store for \$64.95 and \$24.95 depending on size.



**This hand-made Lincoln Memorial bookend is the perfect gift for the history buff in every family. Found at Virginia Florist.**

The perfect addition to any holiday decorating collection are the wood carvings of Harwood Creek by Jim Shore. Among those selections are decorative wooden trees at \$20.95, reindeer at \$24.94 and Santa seated on the chimney, taking a break from his annual rounds, at \$25.75.

**NOT TO BE OUTDONE** there are the shops in the Bellehaven Shopping Center on Belleview Boulevard. At the eastern end of that center is Hodges Galleries that, in addition to custom framing, has a wide array of unusual potential gifts. Their framing can also be done up



**A Westy Scottish Band is a perfect gift in keeping with Alexandria's Scottish Walk weekend. The large drummer is a cookie jar while the smaller figurines are coin banks. They can be found at Hodges Galleries.**

to within a couple of days before Christmas.

For anyone wanting to show off their "green" dedication during the holidays, Hodges Galleries has just the thing — recycled aluminum serving dishes that won't tarnish. Various pieces range from \$18 to \$85 and include such items as a large platter and an assortment of varying sized bowls.

For that Scottish Walk Weekend party there is a Westie Dog Band in full Scottish garb. The large Westie serves as a cookie jar and the two smaller dogs are banks. The jar is priced at \$40 and the banks at \$18.75 each.

The Gallery also has an array of ornaments and other potential gifts not readily found elsewhere. Their Pilgrim Ornaments, designed in Wisconsin and made by Thailand villagers go for \$10 each. Some are even on Christmas cards.

As with every holiday season, some of the

SEE VARIETY, PAGE 5

## Award-winning Editor Steps Down

**After more than four decades in journalism, Mary Anne Weber retires.**

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE

**E**ver since she walked into a news room of the Meriden Record as a sixth-grade student, Mary Anne Weber has been a journalist at heart. She landed her first newspaper job at the age of 16, with the editor warning her to "look older" when the out-of-town owner was touring the facility. Since that time, she has worked for wire services, daily newspapers, weekly newspapers and a magazine she founded to cover Suffolk County, N.Y. Now — after more than four decades in the business — Weber is retiring from her position as editor of three community papers owned by Connection Newspapers, including the Mount Vernon Gazette.



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

**A native of Yonkers, N.Y., Mary Anne Weber has been an editor at Connection Newspapers since 1995.**

"Mary Anne brings a humanizing and empathetic eye to what we do in a community newspaper," said Connection publisher Mary Kimm. "And she's got a great sense of humor."

Weber studied journalism and history at Marquette University, where she received a bachelor's degree in 1963. When a neighbor went on maternity leave from the local newspaper, Weber took her place as a proof-reader at the Southington News. As a senior in college, she was hired as a general assignment reporter for UPI — finding herself in the male-dominated world of journalism, where her feisty spirit and take-no-prisoners attitude led the way for countless women who followed in her footsteps.

"I remember having many arguments with editors about how women were presented in the news," said Weber, who has been with Connection Newspapers since 1995. "They wanted to refer to women by their husband's name, and I thought that was idiotic."

**AS A REPORTER** for the "women's page" for the Suffolk Sun in the late 1960s, Weber tried to expand the coverage beyond

SEE WEBER, PAGE 8

# Beacon Hill Bank Robbed

Employees of Commerce Bank located at 6615 Richmond Highway were robbed Monday, Nov. 17, shortly before 9 a.m., according to Fairfax County Police.

A man entered the bank, announced a robbery and implied he had a weapon, police reported. An undisclosed amount of cash was handed over and the suspect fled in a gray, Dodge Caravan with a wavy red and green design on the sides. It displayed Maryland license plate 336MO13, police reported. There were no injuries.

The suspect was described as a black male in his mid 30's, approximately 5 feet 10 inches tall, with a muscular build. He was wearing a black skull cap, black jacket and sunglasses.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS(8477) or call the Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.



The bank robbery suspect fled in this van, according to police.

## Variety of Gifts in Local Specialty Shops

FROM PAGE 4

most specialized, conversation stimulating gifts can be found at The Virginia Florist, 1632 Belleview Blvd. Again this year there is the five-foot Santa adorned in flowing robes and surrounded by various potential gift items.

For something more in line with the greenery symbols of the season there is a large evergreen reindeer with a colorful bow around his neck. And, in keeping with the present Wall Street bear market

there is a five-foot bear chef with his holiday apron.

In honor of the Abraham Lincoln anniversary, The Virginia Florist owner, Kevin Green, has brought in hand carved models of the Lincoln Memorial to be used as bookends. The one on display is perched atop a stack of antique books that complement the memorial miniature.

As well as offering a variety of floral possibilities for individual purchases, the shop also provides floral decorations to both businesses and private homes throughout the year as well as during the holidays.



Beginning January 4, 2009, Metro will not issue or accept paper transfers.



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**Alex/ Pinewood Lake \$292,500**  
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**Alex/Stratford \$649,000**  
**8400 Brewster Drive**  
An Absolute Cream Puff!! This lovely 4BR, 3BA Split has been updated & renovated from top to bottom-total turn key! Kit, baths, flooring, windows, landscaping, driveway, appliances, roof, painting-its all been done. Schools are Stratford Landing, Sandburg & West Potomac! 15 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 10 minutes to Old Town, 20-25 minutes to NTL Airport & Pentagon, all along scenic GW Parkway.



**Alex/Mt. Vernon \$599,900**  
**9326 Craig Avenue**  
Large brick 5BR, 3BA split with 2 car garage on .4 acre lot in lovely Mt. Vernon area with lots of trees. 2 fireplaces, energy efficient replacement windows, beautiful refinished hdwd floors on main level, new carpeting, landscaped fenced rear lot with huge deck off sunroom addition, freshly painted interior and exterior. Superbly priced so renovate kitchen/baths to your desire. Great commute in minutes to Ft. Belvoir, Alex, Old Town, DC/Pentagon.



**Alex./Mt. Vee Manor \$323,900**  
**8330 Hunter Murphy Circle**  
Great price for this lovely 2BR, 2.5 Bath brick front townhome in lovely Mt. Vernon community. Entire floor devoted to enormous owner's suite with soaking tub, separate shower, walk-in closet. Open floor plan, gas fireplace in family room, sun-filled spacious kitchen.



**Prince William/Four Seasons \$449,000**  
**17185 Four Season Drive**  
Gorgeous 3BR+loft, 3.5BA, 2 Car Garage Colonial backing to a wooded area in a 55+ community. Gourmet kit w/granite counters, extra large MBR, maple cabinets, stainless steel appliances, island, two wall ovens & cooktop. Cathedral ceils, hdwd flrs-main lvl, recessed lighting, beaut window treatments & plantation shutters, sec system & so much more. You must see to believe.



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# More Unlicensed Than Drunk Drivers

**W**hen the Fairfax County police set up a checkpoint over a weekend night, they are more likely to find people driving without a license than people driving under the influence, according to county executive Tony Griffin.

"Each police station has controlled stops in the district and they tend to arrest more people for not having an operator's license [than drunk driving]," said Griffin at the Board of Supervisors legislative meeting Nov. 14.

Fairfax County officers wrote about 5,440 tickets for driving without a license from October 2007 through September 2008. Of the eight precincts, the Mount Vernon police district garnered the most offenders in this area last year, with about 1,120 tickets issued for this problem.

Some elected officials suspect that some of the people caught driving without a license are undocumented workers because illegal immigrants are prohibited from acquiring driver's licenses in Virginia.

"Hundreds of people are getting pulled over and arrested for not having a driver's license. ...These are hundreds and hundreds of people who have never had a license, never had training" said Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust (D).

Foust suggested Fairfax County look into a state legislative initiative backed by the Town of Herndon, which has taken several aggressive steps to crackdown on illegal immigrants. The town government proposed a measure that would allow police officers to impound a citizen's vehicle if that person was caught driving with no license for a second time.

Some Fairfax County supervisors had reservations about the measure, partly because it was part of a Herndon legislative package focused on illegal immigrants that the county generally did not support.

Most supervisors wanted more information from the Fairfax County police about the problem before they backed a solution.

"I think this is a bit ominous. The owner and operator of the vehicle may not be the same," said Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D).

In an interview this week, Springfield Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R) said something should be done to address the issue.

Herrity said one of the problems is the fines for driving without a license are not high enough to deter people, until someone is caught for the third time. Since many people regularly driving without a license use aliases with the police, the offenders rarely rack up the three charges that trigger a harsher fine and penalty, according to Griffin.

Herrity would like the police to run a background check on all people pulled over for driving without a license. But the supervisor is not sure the checks, which are time consuming for police, should take priority over other law enforcement duties.

"Do you want to pull police officers off the street to do this?" said Herrity.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE



GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

**Police encounter more people driving without licenses than driving under the influence, according to a report this week. In the Mount Vernon police district alone, police issued 1,120 tickets for driving without a driver's license last year.**

## Put 'County Checkbook' Online?

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors backed away from an initiative to provide more transparency by itemizing county expenditures online when board members put together the county's 2009 state legislative package Nov. 14.

State Senators Ken Cuccinelli (R-37) and Chap Petersen (D-35) have already submitted a bill for next session that could require the creation of a searchable, detailed database of its budget and expenditures.

The measure is similar to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, which set up a free publicly searchable Web site for all federal contracts and grants over \$25,000.

President-elect Barack Obama and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Ok.) were leaders on the open government legislation. Former presidential candidate John McCain (R) was also one of its initial sponsors in the U.S. Senate.

After the federal law passed, several states followed with their own transparency laws, including Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (R) who posted her state's check register online.

"Other states have done this. We will monitor it and see how it has gone there," said county attorney David Bobzien.

Some county staff said they could think of examples where government would want to keep some of its payments "out of the public record."

"There are some downsides to doing this. We need to examine it. We need better answers," said county chairman Gerry Connolly (D).

But Springfield Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R)— who is running to replace Connolly — said he felt the county was dragging its feet on the issue. "For us not to be doing that is ridiculous. It has been done in a bi-

partisan fashion across the country," said Herrity.

## Connolly Favors Bail Out for Localities

U.S. Representative-elect and current Fairfax County chairman Gerry Connolly (D) indicated that he would advocate adopting an additional Economic Stabilization Act to give federal assistance to local governments.

"When you are looking at bailing out GM, Ford and Chrysler, how about bailing out us? There has to be aid to localities for the purpose of stimulus," said Connolly at a county board legislative committee meeting Nov. 14.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors also backed a resolution adopted by the Virginia Association of Counties that requested the federal government give money directly to localities and not only to state governments.

## Fairfax Students Report Depression

The percentage of Fairfax County Public School students reporting depression has fallen in the last seven years but still remains higher than the national average, according to the county's 2008 Youth Survey released Nov. 14.

Approximately 31 percent of the eighth, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Fairfax County who participated in the survey said they had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for weeks that they had stopped participating in some regular activities. The national average is for their peers reporting depression is 28.5 percent.

The number of Fairfax County students who say they have experienced depression has consistently dropped since 2001, when 35 percent of those surveyed said they felt the same symptoms.

The percentage of Fairfax students who have considered attempting suicide, about 14.5 percent, is around the national average, 14.7 percent, and has also dropped from its 2001 figure, 18.5 percent.

Those students who report a suicide attempt, about 3.5 percent, is approximately half of the nationwide figure of 7 percent.

About 35 percent of girls reported feeling sad and lonely to just 26 percent of boys. Approximately 18 percent of girls to just 11 percent of boys said they had considered suicide and the percentage of female students who said they attempted suicide, 4.7, was more than twice than of the boys, which hovered around two percent.

In terms of ethnic groups, Hispanic or Latinos appeared more prone to feeling depressed, 39 percent.

White students were the least likely to report depressive symptoms, according to the report.

Since 2001, all student ethnic groups in Fairfax County had seen a decline in feelings of depression, according to the survey.

But Dranesville District School Board member Janie Strauss cautioned people not to be too optimistic about the statistics.

The a nationwide drop in attempted and "successful" suicides among teenagers but the incidents of cutting — self-mutilation to relieve stress — have increased, she said.

Fairfax County chairman Gerry Connolly said he would like to see Fairfax County Public Schools train classroom teachers to spot early warning signs of depression or suicide in their students.

"My candid opinion is that we don't do this well. ... And there is a still a tremendous stigma attached to suicide," said Connolly. "A teacher who is trained a little bit could be a pivotal figure."

Help is available for anyone who depressed or considering suicide by calling CrisisLink at 703-527-4077, or 1-800-SUICIDE.

## Panel Recommends New Utility Fee

Fairfax County's Environmental Quality Advisory Council proposed a new storm water management impact fee during a Board of Supervisors meeting Nov. 17.

The county currently pays for storm water management through its general fund. The supervisors dedicate one penny of Fairfax's real estate tax rate, 92 cents per \$100 of assessed value, to the cause, which would amount to about \$21 million annually.

Due to budget constraints, the county has been using more of the funding from the storm water-dedicated penny to cover staffing and equipment, resulting in a 38 percent reduction in funding going to actual infrastructure upgrades.

The environmental advisory council would like to see a steadier stream of funding for storm water management, particularly in light of the county's projected \$500 million budget shortfall next year.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

# NEWS

## Guilty Plea in Mortgage Fraud

\$33 million owed.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE GAZETTE

Vijay K. Taneja, 47 of Fairfax, pleaded guilty Thursday, Nov. 13, to one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering in a \$33 million mortgage fraud case.

Taneja's company, Financial Mortgage, Inc. (FMI), originated and sold mortgages on residential properties in the metropolitan area. Before his company sold mortgages to financial institutions as long term investors, FMI used "warehouse lenders" to temporarily fund the mortgages before they were sold.

Taneja defrauded a series of his company's lenders and other long-term investors of \$33 million by creating fictitious loans with bogus loan closings; selling the same legitimate loan to multiple investors; and pocketing proceeds generated from refinancing loans when the money was intended to pay-off prior mortgages on the same properties, according to Dana Boente, acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Taneja's company filed for bankruptcy in June 2008.

Taneja is scheduled to be sentenced in federal court in Alexandria on Jan. 30, 2009.

### Properties Affected

Vijay K. Taneja used some of the following properties in his fraudulent schemes, according to court documents; property owners were unaware, and some properties were used repeatedly, defrauding different financial institutions:

North Pershing Drive, Arlington, \$627,883, Nov. 29, 2007  
Falkstone Lane, Alexandria, \$260,230, March 19, 2001  
Parenham Way, Alexandria, \$404,334, Nov. 30, 2007

He agreed to pay \$8,141,327 in restitution to Franklin Bank; \$5,637,293 in restitution to First Tennessee Bank; \$7,503,350 to Wells Fargo Bank; and \$11,880,321 to EMC Mortgage Corporation, according to his signed plea agreement filed in U.S. District Court in Alexandria.

The maximum penalty for conspiracy to commit money laundering is 20 years in prison, full restitution, three years supervised release and a \$500,000 fine.

The United States and the defendant agreed to recommend to the court that he be sentenced to 84 months incarceration, according to the plea agreement.

Special Agents of the FBI and the IRS conducted the investigation.

U.S. Attorney Stephen Learned is prosecuting the case.

### CRIME LISTINGS

Incidents reported through Oct. 31.

#### LARCENIES

**1600 block Belle View Blvd.**  
Cigarettes stolen from business.

**2300 block Huntington Ave.**  
Beer stolen from business.

**3800 block Laramie Place.** Cash  
stolen from residence.

**3300 block Lockheed Blvd.** Tire

and rim stolen from vehicle.

**7600 block Range Road.** Cellular  
phone stolen from residence.

**5900 block Richmond Highway.**  
Earrings stolen from business.

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# Learning To Care at Day Care

FROM PAGE 1

Cooper. When asked why they chose this over other possible jobs, their answer was unanimous, "Money, the convenience of the work hours, and proximity to their homes. But, primarily money."

The two worst things about the job? — changing diapers and being exposed to all the colds that seem to be synonymous with small children. "I was sick for several weeks because of all the cold germs," said Boward. "But, regardless of what they do you really get to like them," Serino said.

**MOST OF** the pre-school children spend the entire day at the center from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Other counselors take care of them during the morning and early afternoon. "Those counselors normally go home when we arrive," said Cooper.

The center, which is operated by Fairfax County,

is open all year. During the summer months there are a lot of educational and fun field trips for what the counselors call the secondary group — those of school age.

There is also an educational element to the job. It is not just glorified baby-sitting. "We all help teach the pre-school kids. We all watch all the kids. They are not divided into separate groups. It's a group effort," they agreed.

**"It can be a real challenge."**  
— David Gililand, day care counselor

Just then one of the children was heard having a temper tantrum outside the room where the five counselors were being interviewed. With an all-knowing look at each other they almost said in chorus, "There he goes again. We don't even have to look to see who it is."

Although it is named "A Child's Place," for these five 17- and 16-year-old teenagers it has become a place where childhood has been transformed into the responsibilities of adulthood. And, the rewards are not just monetary.

# Weber, Gazette Editor, Retires

FROM PAGE 4

society news and fashion reporting by writing about health issues and education trends. In the early 1970s she spent years researching a series of stories on the detrimental effects of Agent Orange, the herbicide and defoliant used by the United States military during the Vietnam War. After spending a decade as a reporter, Weber became managing editor of the Village Herald and the Village Times before launching her own magazine, known as "Suffolk," which published five issues in 1979.

"We were undercapitalized," she said, adding that the magazine had about 30,000 subscribers. "We really had no idea how much money it would take to start a magazine."

In 1989, she became press secretary to U.S. Rep. George Hochbrueckner (D-NY), a friend from church who had courted Weber for years before she finally took the job in the Long Island office. As a long-time journalist, Weber knew how to handle reporters on deadline and how to conduct research for the congressman. She stayed with the congressman until he was ousted by the "Contract with America" Republican sweep of 1994.

**THE NEXT YEAR**, Weber was hired at Connection Newspapers, where she has served as editor of several community newspapers.

"I think community newspapers are the future of journalism," said

## Journalistic Recognition

Some of Weber's Virginia Press Association Awards:

- ❖ **2007 First Place:** Excellence of Lifestyle or Entertainment pages for Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **2007 Third Place:** General Makeup, Overall Excellence for Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **2006: Second Place,** General Makeup, Overall Excellence for Alexandria Gazette Packet
- ❖ **2005: Third Place,** Page Design for McLean Connection
- ❖ **2004: First Place,** Public Service for "Dying to Drive" in Potomac Almanac
- ❖ **2004: Second Place,** Front Page Design for McLean Connection
- ❖ **2004: Second Place,** Special Editions, Children's Connection for McLean Connection
- ❖ **2003: First Place,** Election Coverage for McLean Connection
- ❖ **2003: Second Place,** Excellence of General Makeup for McLean Connection
- ❖ **2002: First place,** Special Projects, "Secession: Welcome to the State of Northern Virginia"
- ❖ **2001: First Place,** Special Edition, Newcomers and Community Guide for Vienna Connection
- ❖ **2000: Second Place,** Specialty Sections, real estate for Great Falls Connection
- ❖ **1999: First Place,** Special Projects, Local Election Coverage for Great Falls Connection

**"Mary Anne brings a humanizing and empathetic eye to what we do in a community newspaper. And she's got a great sense of humor."**

— Connection Newspapers Publisher Mary Kimm

During her time at McLean-based Connection Newspapers, Weber has won awards from the Virginia Press Association and the Maryland Press Association. She has mentored countless reporters and assistant editors with her quick wit, rigid adherence to deadline and sharp instincts. In retirement, she hopes to spend more time with her family and continue her work as a member of the Community Services Board.

"She knows her stuff," said Rebecca Halik, who worked as Weber's assistant editor. "She always knew who to talk to, and she obviously knows the community very well."

Weber. "They are the only place where you can find out about what is going on in your own back yard in the local community, and there will always be a place for that."

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# MOUNT VERNON BULLETIN

To have a notice listed in the Bulletin, e-mail [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with questions.

Clotilda (Tillie) Cassidy, branch manager of Weichert, Realtors' Alexandria/Belle View Office, has announced the start of its annual **holiday toy drive** to benefit a local non-profit organization. The community is invited to donate new, unwrapped toys from now until Dec. 14 at Weichert's Alexandria/Belle View Office, located at 1612 Belle View Blvd., during normal business hours. Additionally, the public can buy Whitehouse ornaments for \$17 at the office until Dec. 17. Proceeds will go to benefit the DVP. For more information about the toy drive or to place an ornament order call the Alexandria/Belle View Office at 703-765-4000.

The 33rd running of the **Alexandria Turkey Trot** is held each Thanksgiving morning in Alexandria's Del Ray community. This year's five-mile road race will be held on Thursday, Nov. 27 at 10 a.m. at the Cora Kelly Elementary School at the intersection of West Reed and Commonwealth Avenues. The entry fee — with two cans of food — is \$15 for individuals ages 13-21 years and \$20 for those age 22 and over. Children 12 and under can participate for \$10 at the door and two cans of food. The food will be donated to ALIVE, Inc., an ecumenical organization serving Alexandria families in need. Register online before Monday, Nov. 24 and save \$5. Visit [www.visitdelray.com/turkeytrot](http://www.visitdelray.com/turkeytrot). Online registrants also pay a \$1 per registration processing fee. Alexandria Turkey Trot T-shirts can be purchased online for \$10 each, for all ages, until November 24.

The **Alexandria Jaycees** will sell Christmas trees this season, with proceeds to benefit the Holiday Shopping Tour for underprivileged children. This year's lot will be open Nov. 29 until all the trees are sold. The location is the Safeway parking lot in Old Town, 500 South Royal St. The operating hours are Monday-Friday, 6-8 p.m. and Saturday/Sunday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Prices from \$45-\$90. For more details or for membership information, call the Jaycees' 24-hour recorded event line: 703-866-7171 or visit [www.alexjaycees.org](http://www.alexjaycees.org).

**Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's** transportation assistance program for older adults is in need of volunteers. All areas of the county are in need of volunteers. For more information, call Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Intake line: 703-324-5406. TTY:

703-449-1186. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa), or e-mail [DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Meals on Wheels** needs a flexible and organized volunteer in the Mt. Vernon area who can manage the schedule for Meals on Wheels drivers. For more information, please call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Intake Line: 703-324-5406, TTY: 703-449-1186. For information on additional volunteer opportunities visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa).

The **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Auxiliary** is currently accepting applications for adult volunteers. A variety of positions are available and every effort is made to match the volunteer's availability, interest and abilities. The hospital is located at 2501 Parker's Lane. Call 703-664-7260 or visit [www.inova.org](http://www.inova.org) for more information.

The **Fairfax County Police Department** is conducting their annual recruitment drive for their Auxiliary Police Officer Program (APO). Duties such as assisting with sobriety checkpoints, supporting training programs like the Sexual Assault Free and Empowered (SAFE) Class, conducting home security surveys and taking fingerprints at community events are just a few examples where APOs are needed. Applicants must be in good health, without a criminal record or history of drug use and not be an applicant for police officer in any jurisdiction. To learn more or sign up to begin the application process, call 703-280-0701 or [auxiliarypolice@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:auxiliarypolice@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**Mt. Vernon Meals on Wheels** is seeking a volunteer driver coordinator and a volunteer treasurer. For more information, please call Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Intake Line: 703-324-5406, TTY: 703-449-1186, e-mail [DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov) or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa).

The **City of Alexandria** is once again in search of a Colorado Blue Spruce, Leyland Cypress or other well-formed evergreen tree, approximately 25 to 35 feet tall, to serve as the City's official 2008 Holiday Tree. The City will remove the tree from the donor's property in mid-November and grind the stump at no cost. The tree will be decorated and displayed at Market Square (301 King Street) throughout the holiday season. Persons in the Washington metropolitan area who are interested in donating a tree should contact John Noelle, City Arborist, at 703-838-4999 or

e-mail [john.noelle@alexandriava.gov](mailto:john.noelle@alexandriava.gov).

The **Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club** helps the children of this area enjoy special educational and recreational trips, summer camps, and many other healthy activities. If you would like to give more service to the Mt. Vernon community, meet the first and third Wednesday of every month from 6-8 p.m. for dinner and a program at the Mount Vernon Country Club on Old Mill Road. Contact Bruce or Joanne Malkin at 703-360-7725 or [jbmalkin@verizon.net](mailto:jbmalkin@verizon.net)

**Driver Coordinator Needed** - Mt. Vernon Meals on Wheels is looking for a responsible volunteer in the Mt. Vernon area to manage the volunteer schedule for Meals on Wheels drivers. For more information, please call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Intake Line: 703-324-5406, TTY: 703-449-1186 or email [DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov). For information on additional volunteer opportunities with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, visit our website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa).

The **Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** is seeking persons who are diplomatic, assertive, and good communicators to serve as volunteer ombudsmen. Volunteers are assigned to a specific local nursing home or assisted-living facility in the City of Alexandria and make weekly visits, meeting one-on-one with residents. For further information and to obtain an application, call 703-324-5422, or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/LTCOmbudsman](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/LTCOmbudsman).

The **Northern Virginia Habitat ReStore**, located at 7770-G Richmond Highway, Alexandria (behind Gold's Gym), sells new and used building and home improvement materials to the general public. All proceeds benefit Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia. The ReStore is run by volunteers that dedicate their time and energy to the work of Habitat and we are in need of more volunteers. Call the store today at 703-360-6700 or stop by. For more information visit: [www.restorenova.org](http://www.restorenova.org).

Band musicians — young or old — bring instruments and play along with the **Mount Vernon Community Band** during their Tuesday evening band practices from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Mt Vernon High School Band Room. 8515 Old Mt Vernon Road. No auditions. Just sit in and play along even if you are "rusty." Music and music stands will be provided. Call Ed Smith 703-768-8278 or Eric Leighty 703-768-4172.



## Roy Rogers is Celebrating National Hospice Month in November.

A percentage of all fried chicken sales for the entire month will be donated to Capital Hospice from the Bellview Shopping Center, Woodlawn/Belvoir and Manchester Lakes locations. Join Roy Rogers in helping almost 900 patients every day who are living with a serious, progressive illness. On Nov. 13, Roy Rogers will be introducing our new BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich. So come on by, order some juicy fried chicken and grab a BBQ sandwich.

Happy Trails!

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## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RAFFLE SEASON FOR THE SPORTSMEN

The Fort Hunt Sportsmen's Association has concluded another successful Redskins' Tickets Raffle - the local club's 45th annual raffle. This year's raffle winner is Scott Hilliard (on photo right), a co-worker of Fort Hunt Sportsman Bo Rollins, presenting to Scott a pair of Redskins season tickets.



The Sportsmen would like to thank our generous sponsors. Without our sponsors, we would not be able to provide financial support to the numerous youth sports activities in the Fort Hunt area - up to and including - West Potomac High School sports teams. Those sponsors are listed here - with our special appreciation.

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## Stone, McCone III To Wed

Mr. Thomas Stone and Mrs. Enid Kozlowski of Madison, Fla. have announced the engagement of their daughter, Miss Meredith Stone, to Mr. Jonathan McCone III, son of Dr. and Mrs. Jonathan McCone Jr. of Mount Vernon.

Miss Stone is a 2005 graduate of the University of Florida and received her master's in education from the University of North Florida. She is currently employed by the Montgomery County School System as a fourth grade teacher at Bannockburn Elementary School in Bethesda, Md.

Mr. McCone is a 2003 graduate of Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Va., and Flight Safety International in Vero Beach, Fla. where he received all his aviation ratings. He is owner and chief pilot of Mid-Atlantic Charters, an FAA certified charter airline company based in Clinton, Md.

The couple will wed April 4, 2009 in Madison, Fla.



Meredith Stone and Jonathan McCone III

# Call for Student Gazette

Looking for writing and artwork by local students.

Every year, over the winter holidays, the Gazette turns the pages of one entire issue over to the contributions of local students.

As with previous years' issues, we will feature artwork of many kinds, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories, reflections and more. Artwork can include paintings, drawings or any media; photos of sculpture, ceramics or other works too large to submit are also encouraged.

**EDITORIALS**

We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled. Past contributions have come from children from nursery schools through those preparing to graduate from high school.

Sometimes an art or English teacher will assign a project and submit the work of an entire class, but individual submissions from any young person in the community are also welcome. We prefer digital submissions.

Please be sure to include the name of the artist or author, and include age, school attended and name of the hometown, along with a phone number to be used for verification purposes only.

## Here's a Stimulus Plan

Build rail to Dulles and other infrastructure projects.

Many localities are calling for their share of the federal bailout. It's not unreasonable, given that the economic slowdown means less revenue for localities at the very moment local citizens turn to their local governments for more help.

For a stimulus plan that would create jobs, give localities a boost and provide lasting benefits, the next phase of stimulus spending should involve dispensing funds to localities that have major projects, like rail to Dulles or school building and renovations, ready to go.

Rail to Dulles is not the only major (and

Mail, e-mail or deliver submissions to the Gazette by Dec. 5. Our address is 7913 Westpark Drive, McLean, VA 22102. E-mail to gazette@connectionnewspapers or call 703-917-6431 with questions.

sorely needed) transit project that has been languishing in a parsimonious and convoluted federal process waiting for funding. Let's spend \$150 billion paying for projects around the country that will put people to work right away, stimulate the economy via jobs and demand for goods and services, take cars off the roads.

Think what a boost it would be to the local economy to have most of the cost of such a project taken care of by the feds.

Do we have anything to show for the \$150 billion in stimulus checks mailed out to consumers a few hundred dollars at a time?

The federal government is spending inconceivable sums of money to help stabilize the economy. Let's spend some of it on something that will last.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM, 703-917-6416

# Youth Need To Play Role in Change

BY A. L. WILLIAMS  
THE GAZETTE

I am you, a typical teenager living in the Mount Vernon area. I have grown up here and in my years have shared and experienced numerous events, all contributing to the way I view my world and my community. As we've heard time and time again from the adults of our community, "we are the future." Cliché as this statement sounds, it holds a lot of truth; we are the future. And in a short time we will be the leaders and the executives of our community, and country. This is our world, now; and we need to have a positive voice in our community.

**ONE TEEN'S VOICE**

That is why I am writing, to be one voice and to share my thoughts, and through them your thoughts, and the news of our community, all from a youth's point of view. I am a high school student and like you have good and bad days.

I am concerned about my grades and sometimes I get agitated with my parents. I listen and try to be involved in the politics that surround us although I sometimes get confused by what they are saying. I get annoyed with my friends, I share grief with my friends and I celebrate with my friends. I often feel as though I know everything and then realize I don't. I like being independent but sometimes don't want the responsibility that goes with it. I am a teen, just trying to live and to understand. The thought of making a difference in the world is overwhelming, but the idea of making a change in our community is both possible and exciting.

**IN THE PAST DECADE** we have witnessed many events, some sad and scary. Early on, on Sept. 11, 2001, we learned how vulnerable we are when we watched the attack of the Twin Towers in New York, and more personally close to home, at the Pentagon, where families and neighbors work. Then in October of 2002, we were all affected by the D.C. Sniper; we felt both fear and inconvenience as many of our local and area activities were cancelled. In 2003 as a community we shared a loss of power when Hurricane Isabel flooded our houses and blew down trees. As summer ended and school began in 2005 were watched with horror as the reports of Katrina's effect on the Gulf Coast unfolded; although it wasn't in our immediate area, we again felt as though disaster could strike anywhere at any moment. In April 2007 we felt the pain of the Virginia Tech massacre as friends and neighbors were personally affected. And most recently we witnessed history being made with the election of the first African American President. As all of these events took place, we watched, and we may have cried or cheered, but they all took place without our control. All these events just hap-

pened, causing our lives to undergo never-ending changes. Every day we have a choice, we can be stopped by our past, or we can choose to work toward a better future. Over the last few months of the presidential campaigns we have repeatedly heard change is needed, change is coming. And we can be a part of it.

**WE CAN** start small — something as simple as smiling at others or volunteering in our community or maybe even reading a newspaper and becoming informed. All those things can start the wheels of change. Now is a good time to become aware of how our actions affect our future and the community we're creating. Christiane Amanpour, the chief international correspondent for CNN, said "what we do and say and show really matters." I agree, it does, we need to embrace the opportunities our country allows us, and voice our opinion. We as the youth of Alexandria, Virginia have the chance to make our voices heard; so let's do it.

Stay positive. Stay informed. Encourage your friends to read the paper. Sixty-six percent said that they never read the newspaper. Fifty Mt. Vernon-area teens were polled.

**Write**

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor  
The Mount Vernon Gazette  
7913 Westpark Drive  
McLean, VA 22102  
Call: 703-917-6431.

By e-mail: smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

**NEWS DEPARTMENT:**  
To discuss ideas and concerns,  
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A Connection Newspaper

# Embezzling from Virginia Homeowners

FROM PAGE 3

Jeffrey Koger in February. He faces a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison, \$500,000 in fines and full restitution, according to Acting U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente.

"The defendant took various actions to conceal his scheme from the homeowners' associations and their auditors," according to agreed upon statement of facts. "If the defendant received a complaint that money was missing from a particular homeowners' association account, he would provide a false explanation."

Jeffrey Koger also evaded \$775,273 in federal income taxes by failing to file personal income tax returns from 2003-2006, according to the Internal Revenue Service. In 2005, he received taxable income of more than \$810,257.

The IRS, Secret Service, FBI, Fairfax City, Fairfax County and Alexandria City police departments investigated the case, which

is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Hanly and Trial Attorney Caryn Mark, of the Department of Justice's Tax Division.

**JEFFREY KOGER ALSO FACES** three counts of attempted capital murder of police officers, two counts of aggravated maiming and five counts of use of a firearm in the commission of felonies in Fairfax County courts.

According to police reports and testimony at Koger's preliminary hearing in June, Koger stopped his 1990 Jeep Cherokee behind a taxicab stopped at a traffic light at the corner of Seminary Road and North Beauregard Street in Alexandria in the early morning of Feb. 2, 2008.

Koger got out of his Jeep, walked to the taxi driver's window, and fired several shots into the cab. The driver was seriously injured.

Koger shot two other men in another car, who escaped him by

SEE KOGER PLEADS, PAGE 23

## The New Holiday Inn & Suites Historic District Old Town Alexandria

### Presents a Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet

November 27, 2008

11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

\$19.95 per person

Advanced Reservations Required

625 First Street, Alexandria, VA 22314  
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Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Auxiliary  
Invites you to  
**JOIN US FOR THE 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LIGHTS OF LOVE CEREMONY**



LIVING TREES LIGHTED IN THE MEMORY OF LOVED ONES  
AND TO HONOR SPECIAL FRIENDS  
WILL BE LIT AT THE 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LIGHTS OF LOVE CEREMONY

**Saturday, December 6, at 5:00 p.m.**  
in the Hospital Main Lobby

**Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**  
2501 Parker's Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22306

Mount Vernon community family and friends are invited to join us and welcome the holiday season in a very special way.

Ceremony includes Festival of Music by the Mirage Advanced Women's Chorus and Cleve Francis, MD.

Reception follows in the cafeteria, where Santa will greet our young guests.

For more information on how you can support the 2008 Lights of Love, please call 703-664-7260.



Inova Health System is a not-for-profit healthcare system.

## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2008

# Shopping 'The Shops' — A Holiday Must

**A no-hassle holiday shopping trip from parking to check out.**

BY CHUCK HAGEE  
GAZETTE

Once again The Shops at Mount Vernon are a one-stop bonanza for any serious shopper this holiday season. There are items for every taste and every pocketbook.

Located at the southern terminus of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, just outside the entrance to Mount Vernon Estate, with free ample parking, The Shops offer gifts that will be cherished by any recipient for years to come. Many items are not just gifts, they offer the opportunity to bring history home for the holidays.

For any history buff one of the most spectacular offerings this season is the illustrated edition of Pulitzer prize winning author David McCullough's book "1776." This hardcover, coffee-table, 256-page book in its own red slip cover contains 140 images and 37 removable replicas of source documents, including a penned letter from George to Martha.

Priced at \$65, it is a must have for anyone who owns McCullough's 400-page novel that relates Washington's trials and tribulations prior to crossing the Delaware River that Christmas night, which changed not only American but world history. For those that do not have the New York Times best seller, "1776," it is also available at \$32 hardcover and \$18 paperback.

Also among The Shops' book offerings are

newswoman Cokie Roberts "Founding Mothers" and "Ladies of Liberty." The former is an intimate look at the patriotic women who played a crucial role in forming this new nation. The latter is a colorful blend of biographical information coupled with behind-the-scenes vignettes about the women, including first ladies, who blended their private lives and public roles.

Roberts' most recent treatise, the 481 page "Ladies of Liberty," is available only in hardcover at \$26.95. The 359 page "Founding Mothers" is available in both hardcover at \$24.95 and paperback at \$14.94.

**DURING THE RECENT** election cycle one of the most contentious issues was that of religion and its place in not only American society but also in American government. Separation of church and state is an ongoing debate from all angles and all inclinations.

Author Peter A. Lillback addresses that debate and attempts to clarify the line between separation of church and state and separation of God and government in his work "Wall of Misconception." It is priced at \$19.95.

One of the most unusual gifts at The Shops this year is the Byer's Choice Wooden Advent Calendar. This 15-inch by 18 and one half inch by three and one half inch three dimensional calendar bearing an image of the Mount Vernon Mansion was made exclusively for Mount Vernon. It sells for \$85. Twenty-four numbered doors allow for inserting small surprises to mark each day of advent until Christmas morning.

For those who prefer to give something edible, this year there is Mount Vernon's own private label peanuts. They come in their own Mount Vernon picturesque tins containing either roasted salted, honey roasted or peanut squares. Prices range from \$2.75 to \$6.95 per tin.

For that something special for that someone special there is an array of amber jewelry. Martha Washington's inaugural necklace was made of large pieces of amber which dates back to prehistoric times.

As usual The Shops have an assortment of antique jewelry from necklaces, to bracelets to broaches. Prices range from a few hundred to thousands of dollars. "However, this year we are not expecting large sales in this area given the economic situation," said Julie Mosley, director of retail, Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens.

New to the jewelry line this year is the line of pewter jewelry made in Maryland. Individualized bracelets in this line begin at \$19.95. "People are asking for more American made items this year," Mosley said.

In the area of fine china, there is an entire array of Mottahedeh china



PHOTOS BY CHUCK HAGEE/GAZETTE

**One of Mottahedeh China's many designs on display at the Shops at Mount Vernon.**

from the recently introduced "Prosperity" line, which was a favorite of George Washington during his bachelor days, to "The Society of Cincinnati" settings. Prices range from \$60 to \$385 depending on the design and number of pieces.

There are also porcelain creamware boxes that are designed to resemble the ceiling ornamentations within the various rooms of Mount Vernon Mansion. To complement this offering is the creamware ball designed specifically to hold a special packet of colonial potpourri from Maine. The ball sells for \$9.95 and the potpourri for \$16.50.

**ONE ITEM** that is only available at Mount Vernon and would make the perfect keepsake gift is the recently released bottle of Mount Vernon Whiskey from the newly reconstructed distillery adjacent to The Grist Mill. Selling for \$25, this limited edition boxed Vatted American Whiskey contains a 50 ML bottle of whiskey as well as a square, engraved shot glass.

On the fun side of the list is a stuffed camel for children known as George Washington Christmas Camel. A real live version will be at the Estate for the holidays. It seems that the father of our country had an attraction to exotic animals and plants. In 1787 he paid 18 shillings for a camel to spend the holidays at Mount Vernon to entertain the Washingtons and their guests.

For adults there is the George Washington bottle stopper that is also a snowball. It sells for \$7.50. And to get that bottle opened there is the George Washington cast iron bottle opener for \$10.95. Both of these items make perfect stocking stuffers.

And, last but far from least is the annual

must gift for all Mount Vernon enthusiasts — the 2008 official Mount Vernon ornament which is priced at \$18.95. This year's offering is double sided and celebrates the 150th anniversary of the saving of George Washington's home by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

One side features the Mansion's east front decorated with snowflakes, holly leaves, red

berries, and bows. The reverse is deep blue, with Washington's cipher, doves, red bows and the inscription, "Mount Vernon - Christmas

2008." It comes in a decorated gift box with an educational enclosure. For a more complete list of what's available visit [MountVernon.org](http://MountVernon.org).

**"People are asking for more American made items this year."**

— Julia Mosley, director of retail, Mt. Vernon Estate & Gardens



**Tri-cornered hats and play muskets surround the display of a Revolutionary War T-shirt in The Shops at Mount Vernon.**



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# HOLIDAY CALENDAR 2008

The Mount Vernon Gazette's Holiday Gift Guide will be available online in its entirety at [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com) under Mount Vernon Gazette entertainment. To have events be included in this section, e-mail [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com).

west.com or call 703-549-6006.

**Gather the Family at Woodlawn** runs Dec. 14, 21 and 28 at Woodlawn. Experience an 1820s Christmas with America's First Family before trees, Santa and stockings. Tours available from 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$15/person; \$5/grades K-12. Visit [www.woodlawn1805.org](http://www.woodlawn1805.org) or call 703-780-4000.

## Ongoing

**Martha Washington** hosts an 18th-century Christmas with candlelit walks, fireside caroling, and early American décor during **Mount Vernon by Candlelight**. The Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings (Nov. 28, 29, & 30; Dec. 5, 6 & 7; and 12, 13 & 14) from 5-8 p.m. Tickets may be purchased in advance at the Ford Orientation Center or through [www.MountVernon.org](http://www.MountVernon.org). Admission is \$18 for adults and \$12 for children.

Mount Vernon welcomes former White House pastry chef **Roland Mesnier** as he creates a gingerbread replica of George Washington's home from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. **Nov. 12 through Nov. 25**. The five-foot-wide and two-foot-tall gingerbread Mansion replica will be on display as part of the new *Christmas at Mount Vernon* daytime event, which begins on Nov. 28. Visit [www.MountVernon.org](http://www.MountVernon.org) for more information.

**Gallery West** presents "Small Works and Holiday Show and Silent Auction" through Jan. 4 at 1213 King St. Features a variety of art work by members in every size. Silent auction ends Dec. 8. Visit [www.gallerywest.com](http://www.gallerywest.com).

**The Alexandria Jaycees** will sell Christmas trees this season, with proceeds in part benefiting the chapter's holiday shopping tour for kids. The annual tree sales support the Holiday Shopping Tour for underprivileged kids and the chapter's general programming funds for community and leadership development. The **Holiday Shopping Tour** gives area kids a fun shopping day with funds provided and pizza party to follow, which allows them to purchase gifts for their families. This year's shopping event is set for **Dec. 13**. The Alexandria Jaycees tree lot is located in the parking lot at the Safeway on the corner of S. Royal and Gibbon Streets in Old Town Alexandria. **Tree sales run Nov. 29** until **Dec. 20** or when trees sell out). Lot hours are: Monday-Friday 6 p.m.-9 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sundays 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more details or for membership information, call the Jaycees' 24-hour recorded event line 703-866-7171 or visit [www.alexjaycees.org](http://www.alexjaycees.org).

**Tree Sale.** The Alexandria Police department Christmas tree sale begins on **Friday, Dec. 5** at the Alexandria Union Station parking lot (110 Callahan Drive). The official lot hours are: Monday-Thursday, 3-9 p.m.; Friday, 3-10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

p.m. This year's tree selection includes Scotch Pines, Douglas Firs, Fraser Firs, and Concolor Firs. They will range in size from 4 1/2 feet to 10 feet tall. Proceeds benefit the Alexandria Police Youth Camp.

**The Little Theater of Alexandria** will perform "Scrooge! The Musical" from Nov. 22-Dec. 21 at 600 Wolfe St., Old Town. Performances are **Wednesdays-Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.** Tickets are \$10/person and can be purchased at [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com).

The Alliance Dance Institute presents "**Nutcracker**" from **Nov. 29 through Dec. 28** in the Landmark Mall, 5801 Duke St. Performances are Saturdays and Sundays at 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. \$20/person. After the show, stay for photo opportunities. Visit [www.adidance.com](http://www.adidance.com) or 703-354-6000.

This Christmas, arrange for a **personalized letter from Santa Claus**, postmarked from the North Pole. The Alexandria Jaycees are offering customized letters sent directly to children from Santa for only \$5 each. The letter will also include a coupon to a child-friendly restaurant. Letter requests must be received by Dec. 8. Orders received after Dec. 8 will be postmarked from Virginia. For more information or to place an order, visit [www.alexjaycees.org](http://www.alexjaycees.org).

The American Horticultural Society hosts **holiday happenings** at its headquarters at River Farm. **From Dec. 1 to Jan. 16**, River Farm's grounds and estate house will feature lights, poinsettias, and other festive holiday decorations. All are welcome to visit and enjoy Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but note that the grounds will be closed from Dec. 25 through Jan. 4.

## Bazaars and Fairs

Throughout the holiday season, visit one of the many bazaars and fairs for unique gifts for family, friends and others on your list. A variety of items will be sold along with food and beverages.

### SATURDAY/NOV. 22

**Christmas Bazaar.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at St. Mary's School, 400 Green St. The Bazaar includes over 60 exhibitors/vendors, Santa's Workshop, crafts, bake sale, flea market, children's games and prizes, book sale. Free.

**Holiday Shop.** 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. Over 50 artisans in fiber arts, photography, wood, paper, metal, glass and clay; orchids; crafts from around the world; quilt raffle. Country kitchen with chutneys, baked goods, gingerbread house kits; enjoy a delicious lunch of soup, sandwich, cheese pie. Free.

**Floral Design Workshop.** 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Design a Thanksgiving centerpiece. \$48/person. 703-642-5173.

### THURSDAY, DEC. 4

**Scottish Christmas Walk Marketplace.** Noon-5 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Shop for a variety of holiday items. Visit [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com) or 703-549-0111.

**Heather and Greens Sales.** 7-9 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Purchase wreaths, garlands, flatwoods and more. Free. For more, visit [www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org) or [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

SEE BAZAARS, PAGE 20  
[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## TAKE METROBUS OR METRO RAIL

TO THE FREE KING STREET TROLLEY...



### SHOP, DINE & CELEBRATE

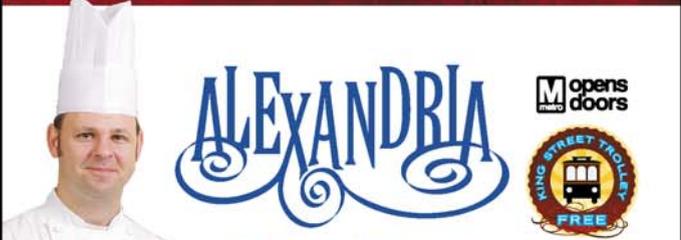
ON ALEXANDRIA'S HISTORIC MAIN STREETS

Nationally known for its early-American architecture, chic boutiques, art & antique galleries, award-winning restaurants, and historic attractions, Alexandria is your holiday vacation from the ordinary. **Getting here is easy:**

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- Free King Street Trolley with Frequent Stops between the King Street Metro and the Waterfront, Every 15 Minutes, 10am-10pm Daily

### 12 DAYS OF HOLIDAY GIVEAWAYS!

Go to the new [VisitAlexandriaVA.com](http://VisitAlexandriaVA.com) and register for the Access Alexandria emails. You'll be registered for a chance to win!



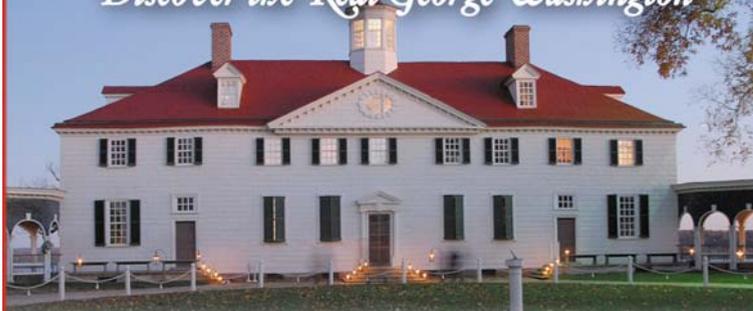
**VisitAlexandriaVA.com**  
703.838.5005

Metro-operated parking lots are free on weekends and federal holidays. SmarTrip® cards with full parking fee are the only accepted form of payment for parking (except metered parking). Visit the Trip Planner at [MetroOpensDoors.com](http://MetroOpensDoors.com) or call 202-637-7000 (TTY 202-638-3780).

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### Featuring 25 Galleries & Theaters!

OPEN EVERY DAY INCLUDING CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY  
LOCATED 8 MILES SOUTH OF OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

*Featured Special Event:*

### Christmas at Mount Vernon

NOVEMBER 28 - JANUARY 6, 9 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

A festive NEW daytime program with themed trees, a gingerbread Mansion, dancing, and a Christmas camel!

### Mount Vernon by Candlelight

FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY, 5-8 P.M.,  
NOVEMBER 28-30; DECEMBER 5-7 & 12-14

A traditional candlelit evening with Mrs. Washington, live music, and fireside caroling. Tickets on sale now at the estate and on [MountVernon.org](http://MountVernon.org). \$18 adults, \$12 youth.



**FIND MORE SPECIAL EVENTS & VISITOR INFORMATION**  
**AT MOUNTVERNON.ORG OR 703-780-2000**



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www.BobSkinnerHomes.org  
 Bob Skinner 703-585-6683



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www.susanmovesyou.com  
 Susan Haughton 703-470-4545

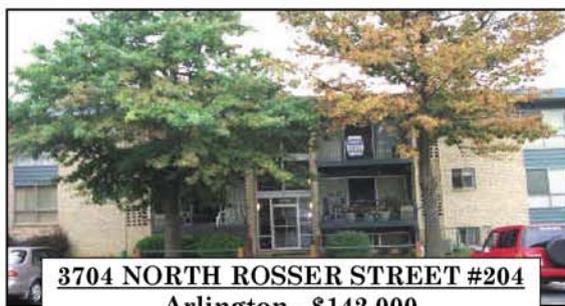


1804 MACADAMS PLACE  
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Wonderful Hollin Hall Rambler! Family room add., 2 FBa, open Kit & DR. LR w/FP. Large, very private backyard. Wayneswood School District. Walk to shops. Minutes to Old Town.



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Contemporary / Colonial TH in the heart of Arlington's Clarendon neighborhood; only 3 blks to METRO! Gourmet kitchen, 9' ceilings, huge Master bedroom suite w/ Jacuzzi bath & tile surround, great contemporary details throughout. Enjoy a cosmopolitan lifestyle amid restaurants & coffee shops . . . this is a "walker's paradise".



Jim Crowe 703-856-8244

## "The Giving Tree"



We would appreciate your help . . .

For 18 years the Long & Foster, Alexandria / Old Town Office has sponsored "The Giving Tree" as a Community Service Project for the Holiday Season. Here is how it works:

- \* Social workers in the Alexandria City Elementary Schools identify families and kids who have "fallen through the cracks" and are in desperate need of clothes, toys and other necessities this Holiday Season.
- \* Our agents "adopt" 50+ kids and purchase gifts to fulfill their "wish list" which has been provided by their families.

**You can also help by:**

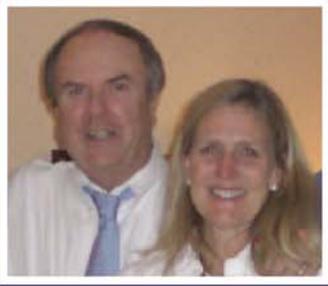
- \* Providing toys, games and children's clothes. Please wrap your gifts and attach a note letting us know if the present should go to a boy or a girl and the corresponding age and/or size.
- \* Making a monetary donation payable to Long & Foster's "The Giving Tree," which will be used to provide food certificates for families.
- \* Gifts, and monetary donations can be dropped off or sent to:

Long & Foster, Alexandria / Old Town Office, 500 Montgomery Street, #140, Alexandria, VA 2231

Together we can make this Holiday Season special for many children and their families. Thanks very much for your help!

If you have any questions, please give our office a call at 703.548.3700 and ask for Charlene Schaper or Bill Jourdan.

Note . . . all administrative and advertising costs for this program are underwritten by the agents of the Long & Foster, Alexandria / Old Town Office. This means that all of the gift and monetary donations go to the people in need.



# CHRIS WHITE

*Over \$4,800,000 worth of area real estate SOLD last month!*  
*Call today for a free market analysis of your home.*



**3601**  
**Riverwood Rd**  
**\$749,500**  
*Prestigious Gem!*  
 Updated Colonial in premier location near the river and neighboring homes that are selling for

\$3,595,850 and \$5,500,000! Owner spent \$175,000 in recent upgrades. Spectacular custom kitchen with granite, stainless & light maple cabinets, 4BRs, hardwood floors, updated and reconfigured baths, large screened porch, oversized garage and fenced yard. **Open Sun 1-4pm.** S GW pkwy, L Old Mt Vernon Rd, L Riverwood Rd.



**1700**  
**River Farm Dr**  
**\$1,975,000**  
*New Estate*  
*Just off Pkwy!*  
 Pre-construction opportunity on rare, exceptionally scenic 3/4 acre site

just minutes from Old Town near the GW Pkwy! Exquisite new home by leading builder to feature absolute luxury and virtually every modern amenity. Spectacular floor plan was designed to capitalize on the natural beauty of this gorgeous setting near the Potomac River. One of the last true estate opportunities in a prime close-in location!



**Brambly Ln**  
**\$969,900**  
*Only 1 Available at This Price!*  
 Pre-construction special makes this new luxury home available at a price that is simply

incomprehensible Same model sold a few months ago for over \$1,600,000! All the modern amenities: high ceilings, open floor plan, 4BR, 3.5BA, energy conserving features, oversize garage & more! Premier setting where neighboring homes sold for well over \$1,000,000! (Picture of similar home for illustration only.)



**4003 Belle Rive Terrace**  
**\$4,800,000**  
*Riverfront Estate!*

Prime Mount Vernon location with the most breathtaking river views you have ever seen! Over 11,000 sq ft of living space with five bedrooms including river view master bedroom suite on the main level with enormous luxury bath and huge closets. Dramatic river views from



every corner of the home! Extensive balconies, deck and roof deck capitalize on the majestic setting high above the Potomac River!



**9003 Patton Blvd**  
**\$479,000**  
*Stunning Value!*  
 Previously listed for \$633,500! Rare large rambler overlooking scenic country club

grounds. Main level MBR suite, upgraded roof, gas heat & hot water, full walk-out LL and 2 car carport. Sold in as-is condition. Awaits your finishing touches! Unique opportunity for investors - just 2 miles from Fort Belvoir - huge rental potential!



**1600**  
**Noral Place**  
**\$1,090,000**  
*New Home*  
*Ambiance!*  
 The best of both worlds: the open spacious feel of a modern home

combined with a premier location in the heart of the highly desirable Fort Hunt area! Popular Fairfax model by Wakefield homes offers exceptionally bright open floor plan, 4BR, 3.5BA, high ceilings, dramatic two story family room, gourmet kitchen and large garage. Gorgeous corner lot on quiet cul-de-sac!



**4212**  
**Dandridge Terr**  
**\$609,900**  
*Classic Center*  
*Hall Colonial!*  
 Great New Price!  
 Spacious 4BR home has master suite with private

bath, open kitchen/family room, granite counters in kitchen, updated baths, replacement thermal pane windows, hardwood floors, walk-out lower level and oversized 2 car garage. Prime location on large fenced lot on quiet Southwood cul-de-sac. **Offers encouraged.**



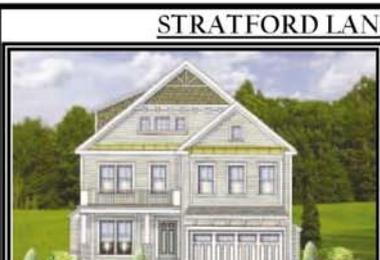
**6421**  
**Olmi Landrith Drive**  
**\$385,000**  
*Major Updates!*  
 Fabulous property in prime location just a few houses away from Belle

Haven's multi-million dollar mansions! Recent major updates include: new roof, thermal windows, special insulated siding, refinished hardwood floor & more! Large screened porch & fenced yard. Nothing like it for under \$400K this close to Belle Haven!



**4307**  
**Sheridan's Point**  
**\$899,000**  
*Georgian Colonial!*  
 Large Price Reduction! Classic Colonial in prime Mount Vernon

location. Home has a combination of location, size and features typically only available in \$1,000,000+ homes! 3 finished levels, open kitchen/family room, stunning master suite, dramatic sun room overlooking private fenced yard. Stately updated home is in pristine condition.



**8826**  
**Camden Street**  
**\$899,500**  
*New Home!*  
*Gorgeous Setting!*  
 There's nothing like it on the market today -

fabulous new Wakefield Home custom designed for this half acre lot overlooking acres of natural conservation land. Bright and open floor plan, high ceilings, granite countertops and two car garage. Pre-construction sale allows for maximum customization.



**8341 Orange Court**  
**\$398,500**



**2205 Belle View Blvd**  
**\$275,900**

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OPEN SUN. 1-4



**Alexandria**  
**\$293,000**

### LOCATION PRICE, CONDITION

This roomy 3BR condo has it all—the perfect commuter location along the river & bike trail & it's only minutes to Old Town, DC & Metro. Plus it's a great low price for a beautifully remodeled unit. Come see it!

Dir: Alex/Old Town, GW  
Pkwy S, R Belle View Blvd.

1100 Belle View Blvd #C-1

MARGARET KEAGLE



**Alex/Mt Vernon**  
**\$1,495,000**  
**CALIFORNIA  
DREAMIN'**

Fabulous custom built 1-level California style ranch on over 1/2 acre facing the bike trail & Pkwy. 4BR/3.5 updated Bas. Gleaming hdwd. Chef's kitchen w/custom maple cabinets, granite counters, JennAir top of the line SS appl., desk, 2 pantries, ceramic tile floor & backsplash. Dramatic solarium overlooks 50' gunite pool w/waterfalls, custom lighting & a 6-person spa. Private backyard is professionally landscaped. Oversized 2-car garage.

7910 West Boulevard Drive

RUTH GUIRARD 703.518.8758



OPEN SUN. 1-4



**McLean**  
**\$1,695,000**  
**EXCEPTIONAL  
MCLEAN  
COLONIAL**

JUST REDUCED—Don't miss out on this beautiful 3lvl classic colonial—Gorgeous setting backs to woods—cul-de-sac—Spacious rms—9' ceilings—Formal LR/DR—marble entry—deluxe kit w/island—Master Suite w/His & Her baths—Sitting rm w/FP, wonderful entertaining space, den—FF in walkout LL, lrg rec. rm—2-car garage & more! Just mins. from downtown McLean— it's a charmer—space for everything!

1025 Duchess Lane  
FRANKI ROBERTS 703.898.0840



OPEN SUN. 2-4



**Alexandria**  
**\$895,000**  
**PORTO VECCHIO  
WATERFRONT**

Spacious with high ceilings, 7th flr unit (2,245SF) with river views from all rooms! 3BR, 4 full tile baths, FP & open terrace. 24 hr. desk, limo service, pool, tennis, exercise and party rooms. A STEAL AT THIS PRICE! Priced below appraisal. Treat yourself to a rare opportunity! Make an offer!

1250 S. Washington St. #705

FRANCENA ALVAREZ  
804.690.1618



**Alexandria**  
**\$224,500**  
**MONTEBELLO  
VACATION AT  
HOME**

Community pool, tennis courts, fitness center, café and salon. Every conceivable luxury included with this 1 bedroom, 1 bath condo. This unit has an enclosed balcony, custom tile in kitchen and beautiful tiled foyer. Minutes to Metro.

5904 Mt Eagle Drive #509

KLANCI VANDERHYDE  
703.919.4460



OPEN SUN. 1-4



**Alexandria**  
**\$735,000**  
**CLASSIC  
BUNGLOW**

Updated & expanded 3BR, 3BA Bungalow with 2 story addition! Open floor plan, large eat-in kitchen, MBR suite with bath and generous closet, 2 main level BRs & recreation room with private bath. All new windows, HVAC, roof, appliances, plumbing, fixtures & refinished hardwood floors. Open front porch, deck, fenced yard & detached garage. Walk to shops, restaurants, & METRO!

107 E. Windsor Avenue  
EMILY CAPELLI 703.472.1282



**Alexandria**

### WATERFRONT PROPERTY

Newly listed 1BR/den has fabulous bridge & National Harbor view overlooking formal gardens, pool & Potomac River. 1100 SF, neutral décor & versatile floor plan allows conversion of den to formal dining room.

1250 S. Washington St. #507 \$525,000



2BR/library has prime, private location w/sunny exposure & stunning river & country club vistas. Gracious formal rooms, walls of windows & a huge solarium offer comfortable living on 1 level. Porto Vecchio amenities include 2 beautiful party rooms, Limo Svc, Kayak dock, Pool, tennis, 24-hr desk & excellent security.

1250 S. Washington St. #310 \$815,000

PAT TIERNEY 703.850.5630



**Alexandria**  
**\$1,229,000**  
**NEW PRESIDENT  
NEW PRICE!**

Move-in ready, spacious brand new home in Waynewood school district! 5600+ SF, 6BR/5.5BA, hdwds, custom trim package, gourmet kit, w/Wolf, Sub Zero, SS appl., granite, cherry cabinets. MBR w/FP, bonus fin. 3rd flr w/full BA, 9' ceiling in finished basement w/custom gym. Walk to neighborhood pool, shopping. Other models available, call for info.

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JILL DIPASQUALE  
571.436.8699



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**New on Market - Open Sunday 1-4**



220 Medlock Lane | \$549,000

Stylish Franklin model TH, over 2100 square feet on three levels, 3 BR, 2.5 BA, two family rooms, deck and patio. Delightful ambience, fresh paint throughout, hardwood floors, high ceilings, tasteful moldings, cozy gas log fireplace. Great curb appeal, metal roofing, garage plus driveway parking. Prime location, 1 block to fitness center & pool, free shuttle to Metro, et al. Photos on [www.paddockhomes.com](http://www.paddockhomes.com).

Vaughn & Diane Paddock | 703 628-2828 Cameron Station

**Just Listed**



6817 Oregon Lane | \$495,000

**Big and Beautiful** Located in a perfect spot for commuting, two metros, shopping and entertainment this 3 BR, 3 1/2 Bath town home with a three level bayed bump out is like new. Very well cared for waiting for the next owner to love it, the home boasts over 2200 square feet of well planned living space. Filled with light and graced with an open floor plan, a two car garage and upper and lower decks for outside enjoyment.

Eileen Casamo | 703 855-7233 Alexandria

**Open Sunday 1-4**



1209 Duke Street | \$575,000

**Old Town Classic**  
Circa 1846 brick TH gem, heart of Old Town with garage plus DW parking! Two levels, 2 BR, 1.5 BA. Warm hardwood floors, tasteful moldings, 2 fireplaces, updated kitchen with granite counters and SS appliances, neutral decor. Walk out to Georgetown patio and carriage house garage with bonus upstairs storage. Just blocks to King St Metro, Whole Foods, restaurants, et al. Photos on [www.paddockhomes.com](http://www.paddockhomes.com).

Vaughn & Diane Paddock | 703 628-2828 Old Town

**Open Sunday 1-4**



5062 Donovan Drive | \$447,000

**New Price**  
Pristine two level condo TH with garage, in prime Cameron Station location! 1500+ square feet, two master bedrooms plus den, two and a half baths, warm hardwood floors, new carpet, neutral decor. Designer touches throughout. Close to community fitness center and pool, coffee shop, restaurant, easy access to free shuttle to Metro. Photos on [www.paddockhomes.com](http://www.paddockhomes.com).

Vaughn & Diane Paddock | 703 628-2828 Cameron Station

**New Listing**



3306 Miller Heights Road | \$776,900

Almost nothing left undone in this terrific Oakton colonial in highly desirable neighborhood! Lovingly cared for with a wonderful open floor plan. Renovated kitchen and baths. Spacious family room with fireplace that opens to the kitchen PLUS first floor children's playroom addition. Four bedrooms up and LL den/bedroom with full bath ideal for au pair or guest suite. Private wooded setting.

Liz Bucuvalas | 703 626-8400 Oakton

**New Listing**



6071 Piney Woods Court | \$825,000

Only 3 years young with all of today's architectural features! Chef's kitchen with stainless steel appliances, 5 burner gas stove, granite counters, breakfast bar with counter space and a sunroom for informal dining - all open to two story family room. Formal dining room. Huge master bedroom suite with sun filled sitting area surrounded by windows and master bath has separate tub and shower. Enormous finished lower level with guest suite, den and recreation room. Two fireplaces. Located on lovely private cul de sac!

Liz Bucuvalas | 703 626-8400 Alexandria

**Price Reduction**



6154 Old Telegraph Road | \$799,000

Enjoy private country living in this 5 BD colonial on a quiet street backing to trees. This classic home features HW floors, enhanced moldings, gourmet kitchen with beautiful cabinets, large master suite with spa bath plus a dramatic two story entrance flanked by a formal DR and LR room lined with windows. A finished lower level rec room with 5th BR and private bath offer a separate front entrance for the independent teenager or au-pair.

Cathy D'Antuono | 703 518-6176 Wilton Woods

**New Listing**



6909 Duke Drive | \$261,900

Single family value located in popular and sought after zip code 22307. Three levels, three bedrooms, two full baths, hardwood floors, partially finished basement, yard, close-in area conveniently located near the beltway and the George Washington Parkway. Close to shopping, restaurants, the Mount Vernon Recreation Center and the Mount Vernon bike trail. Bank Owned.

Sherry York | 703 625-3377 Alexandria S

**Price Reduction**



4849 Gainsborough Drive | \$530,000

Great opportunity to acquire a 2 car garage w/ room to spare in Kings Park West. Home w/ large family room addition off the eat-in kitchen & opens to a large private backyard. Enjoy fenced yard, large shed and plenty of firewood for 2 fireplaces. Hardwood floors at main and upper levels, new CT at LL rec. room and exercise/den. Close to community pool, GMU, shopping and so much more...

Mac Suggs | 703 226-9938 Fairfax



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## Liberty Row Beauty

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



649 First Street  
\$1,285,000



### SELL, SWAP, LEASE?

This large 3600+ SF brick townhouse at Liberty Row in Old Town is so close to DC, airport, Capitol Hill and the center of Old Town. High ceilings, brick, wood floors, enclosed garden, garage, 3 BR plus separate guestroom, MBR with sitting room, recreation room, front parlor, separate large dining room, and perfect family room with gas fireplace! Kitchen centered between the breakfast room and family room. Sweeping staircase, a bright and sunny house. A brochure with floor plans is available... Owner is hoping to downsize and would consider swapping for a smaller place, leasing, or holding the financing for a sale! Contact Marie for details... MLM1606@aol.com

Marie Louise Meyer | 703-836-2080 Old Town

## Open Sunday 1-4

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



1203 Essex Manor Court  
\$1,499,000



Remarkable five bedrooms, four full and one half bath home on a large private lot with custom wood deck and mature trees. Grand foyer, formal living room and dining room, two story family room that opens to chef's kitchen with breakfast room and sunroom with vaulted ceilings and floor to ceiling windows. Designer colors, hardwood flooring / plush carpets. Dir: S on George Washington Parkway, right on Morningside Ln, left on Admiral Lane, left on Essex Manor. www.phyllispatterson.com

Phyllis Patterson | 703 518-6158 Wellington

## Just Listed

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



610 South Saint Asaph Street  
\$739,000



Circa 1840, this warm and inviting clapboard townhome features a delightful living room with gas fireplace and built-in book cases, a separate dining room with gas fireplace, an updated kitchen plus a wonderful first floor family room. Additional special features include original pine floors, a roof deck, a deep garden with brick patio, pergola with wisteria, garden shed plus off-street parking. The third floor can serve as a playroom, home office or plentiful storage. This very special home is the epitome of Old Town charm!

Donnan C Wintermute | 703 518-6156 Alexandria

## Model Home Condition

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



6406 Wood Haven Drive  
\$850,000



A new price on this "Like New", four/five bedroom, two and a half bath, two car garage, three finished levels above grade plus storage level, high ceilings, hardwood floors, new kitchen with granite and center island opening to large family room overlooking private deck and yard, designer carpet, master retreat, wine cellar, study, formal living room and dining room. Perfect! www.phyllispatterson.com

Phyllis Patterson | 703 518-6158 New Alexandria

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# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

## BAZAARS

FROM PAGE 14

### Holiday Pottery Show and Sale.

Noon-6 p.m. at The Art League in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Free. Purchase a variety of items by residents ranging from \$5-\$100. Visit [www.theartleague.org](http://www.theartleague.org) or 703-683-5358.

### FRIDAY/DEC. 5

#### Scottish Christmas Walk

**Marketplace.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Shop for a variety of holiday items, visit a café and buy heather and greens. Visit [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com) or 703-549-0111.

#### Heather and Greens Sales.

10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Try a touch of heather and greens to enhance holiday decorations with a Scottish flair. Purchase fresh heather bundles or a variety of wreaths, garlands, flatwoods and more. Free. For more information on the Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, visit [www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org) or [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

**Tree Sale.** The Alexandria Police department Christmas tree sale begins on Friday, Dec. 5 at the Alexandria Union Station parking lot (110 Callahan Drive). The official lot hours are: Monday-Thursday, 3-9 p.m.; Friday, 3-10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. This year's tree selection includes Scotch Pines, Douglas Firs, Fraser Firs, and Concolor Firs. They will range in size from 4 1/2 feet to 10 feet tall. Proceeds benefit the Alexandria Police Youth Camp.

**Art & Crafts Holiday Market.** 7 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Search through gifts created by more than 20 artist members and enjoy baked goods. Call 703-838-4827 for more.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 6

**A Christmas Marketplace.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Vendors sell unique, holiday gift wares in a boutique setting. Free. For more information on the Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, visit [www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org) or [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

**Heather and Greens Sales.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Try a touch of heather and greens to enhance holiday decorations with a Scottish flair. Purchase fresh heather bundles or a variety of wreaths, garlands, flatwoods and more. Free. For more information on the Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, visit [www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org) or [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

**Craft Sale.** Heritage Presbyterian Church is holding a craft sale "Made by the Bell" from 9 a.m.-noon at the church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. One hundred percent of the proceeds go to support Heritage Presbyterian Women's outreach programs for children and women. Call Jenny Kennedy at 703-360-9546 or visit [www.heritagechurchva.org](http://www.heritagechurchva.org) for more information.

**Art & Crafts Holiday Market.** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Search through gifts

created by more than 20 artist members and enjoy baked goods. Call 703-838-4827 for more.

### Emmanuel Episcopal Church

**Holiday Bazaar.** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at 1608 Russell Road. Free. There will be a silent auction, vendors, variety of items, children's activities and more. 703-683-0798.

**Holiday Pottery Event.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Schlesinger Center, 3001 N. Beauregard St. Free. Browse works by students of NOVA. Visit [www2.nvcc.edu](http://www2.nvcc.edu) for more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 7

**Art & Crafts Holiday Market.** Noon-4 p.m. at the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Search through gifts created by more than 20 artist members and enjoy baked goods. Call 703-838-4827 for more.

**Holiday Shopping Spectacular.** The Alexandria Commission for Women is holding a art and shopping spectacular from 3-6 p.m. at the Next Realty, 900 N. Fayette St. Purchase arts and crafts, jewelry, handbags and more from emerging women artists. Free. 703-838-5030.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 13

**Craft Sale.** Heritage Presbyterian Church is holding a craft sale "Made by the Bell" from 9 a.m.-noon at the church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. One hundred percent of the proceeds go to support Heritage Presbyterian Women's outreach programs for children and women. Call Jenny Kennedy at 703-360-9420 for more information.

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## Tree Lights On

A few areas in Alexandria are celebrating a community-wide holiday kick-off with tree lightings. Area tree lightings include various activities such as photos with Santa, receptions, caroling and more.

### FRIDAY/NOV. 28

**Tree Lighting.** City of Alexandria will hold a tree lighting from 7-9 p.m. The event includes musical entertainment with greetings from the Mayor and Santa Claus in Market Square, 301 King St. Free. 703-838-4844.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 6

**Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.** Begins at 3 p.m. with a holiday review featuring local school groups performing. Santa will arrive via boat dockside at the gazebo. Pets are welcome for photos as well. Boat parade starts at 5:30 p.m. Free. Visit [www.funside.com](http://www.funside.com) for more.

**Lights of Love.** The Inova Mount

Vernon Hospital Auxiliary will present the 26th annual Lights of Love program at 5 p.m. in the hospital's main lobby. For a donation of \$5 dedicate a light in memory of a loved one or to honor a friend, neighbor, or relative who has added joy. For a donation of \$100, dedicate a light in the tree-top star. Entertainment includes the "Festival of Music" by the West Potomac High School Soundations and songs by Dr. Cleve Francis, Inova MVH cardiologist and renowned vocalist. A reception in the hospital cafeteria will follow the program. The hospital is located at 2501 Parker's Lane, Alexandria. For any questions contact the Volunteer Services Office at 703-664-7260.

### Tree Lighting and Luminaria Display.

5:30 p.m. on Mount Vernon Avenue, followed by a tree lighting ceremony at 6 p.m. near the Mount Vernon Rec Center, located at Commonwealth and Mount Vernon avenues. Free. Visit [www.pwba.org](http://www.pwba.org), [www.funside.com](http://www.funside.com) or 703-683-2570.



The Alliance Dance Institute is again showing "The Nutcracker" in the Landmark Mall. Visit [adidance.com](http://adidance.com) for more.

SEE LIGHTS, PAGE 21

Join The

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FOR

## BREAKFAST & THANKSGIVING DINNER

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# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

## Family Events

Families can come together and enjoy a multitude of events geared towards families, from candlelight tours to a children's tea party.

### THURSDAY/NOV. 27

**Turkey Trot.** 31st annual Turkey Trot from 8:30-11 a.m. at Cora Kelly School. Runners are encouraged to bring non-perishable foods. \$10 on-line or \$15 on race day. Visit [www.pwba.org](http://www.pwba.org) for event information.

### THURSDAY/DEC. 4

**Children's Tea Party.** 3:30-5:30 p.m. at the Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. This special event features Santa Claus and children can have their picture taken with Santa. \$40/adult and child and \$10/each additional ticket. Visit [www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org) or [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 5

**Holiday Dinner Theater.** Alexandria Harmonizers Chorus presents "A Very Merry Musical" at 7:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 2932 King St. \$15/adult; children ages 6-12 are \$7; age 5 and under free. Enjoy favorite songs and a family meal with Santa. Reserved table seating. Visit [www.harmonizers.org](http://www.harmonizers.org) or 240-206-9626 for tickets.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 6

**Scottish Preview.** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. Includes bagpipe performances, Celtic music, military

living history demonstrations and more. Free. Call 703-838-4994 for more information.

**Santa Railway Express.** Ride with Santa from King Street Station to Old Town Manassas and back on two Fridays before Christmas. The train departs King Street Train Station in Alexandria at 1:25 p.m. and travels to Old Town Manassas Train Station. Passengers will disembark for holiday stories and treats. The train returns to King Street at 3:30 p.m. Buy tickets only at Whistle Stop Hobbies in Old Town. Visit [www.whistlestophobbies.com](http://www.whistlestophobbies.com).

**The Scottish Christmas Walk Parade.** 11 a.m. beginning at the corner of Wilkes and South Pitt Streets and ending at the Campagna Center. Over 100 Scottish Clans, pipe and drum bands, Scottish dancers and Santa Claus will march. Visit [www.scottishchristmaswalk.com](http://www.scottishchristmaswalk.com).

### TREE LIGHTING

FROM PAGE 20

### THURSDAY/DEC. 11

**Holiday Tree Lighting.** 5-7 p.m. at Hoffman Town Center. Free. The Alexandria Harmonizers will provide entertainment. Free. Gift card donations will be requested to help the wounded and their families at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. There will be raffles, free food and more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 14

**Tree Lighting.** 6:15 p.m. at the King Street Garden Park, across from the King Street metro. Enjoy a tree lighting, caroling, hot cider, cookies and a special guest. Free.

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My freshman year I took two semesters of black-and-white photography. I learned when you take a picture of something, it will never look exactly like that ever again. It's interesting to capture that one moment. It's frozen forever, the defining moment. That was one of our assignments in photography last year. We had to capture that one moment in time before everything changes. Just going through that exercise makes me look at life differently.

For my Co-Curriculum placement this year, I am helping teach children at an art center in Washington. I love my Wednesdays. I get to work with preschoolers in the morning on ceramics and drama. Then in the afternoon, I work with fifth graders in drama. They are so expressive. It's a great opportunity for them. For me, too. At the end of the day, I go to Starbucks with my fabulous supervisor. We get to talk about everything. It's amazing what you can learn about yourself through others.

”  
Alyssa

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## BUSINESS

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

**Eye2eye Optometry Corner**, an optical boutique, celebrated its grand opening on Nov. 14 at 1502 Mt. Vernon Ave. Meet the staff and enter to win door Prizes and raffles.

**Centura College's** Alexandria campus has received the 2007-2008 School of Distinction award from their national accrediting agency. Centura College's certifying organization, the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCT), has recognized the Alexandria campus as an institution committed to delivering quality educational programs and exceeding the rigors and expectations of their standards.

The **Habitat ReStore** of Northern

Virginia was awarded Best Retail Business of the Year by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce at the Annual Business Awards Dinner on Friday, Nov. 7.

The **Art League** was honored by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce with a special "Chamber Champion of the Arts" Award at the 2008 Business Awards Dinner, Nov. 7 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Old Town Alexandria.

Associated General Contractors of D.C., the local affiliate of Associated General Contractors of America, presented its Sustainability Award for Design/Build Construction to the **Hensel Phelps Construction Company** in recognition of their work on the T.C. Williams High School construction project.

**Stephanie Millner**, owner of Stephanie Millner Photography and Design in Alexandria, has earned the Certified Professional Photographer (CPP) designation from the Professional

Photographic Certification Commission.

Dougherty & Associates, Inc., announced the appointment of **Carolyn Lindsay Stirrett** as DAI's Controller. Stirrett brings 25 years of senior management experience to the position.

Virginia Commerce Bank announced the recent appointments of two senior officers. **Kerry J. Donley** has returned to the bank as senior vice president, Community Banking, focusing on business development in the Alexandria market. Donley had spent the last seven years of his 24-year banking career at VCB prior to his three-year tenure as athletic director for T.C. Williams High School. Donley has also been a public servant in Alexandria, having previously served on the City Council and as mayor of the City. **Paul P. Adams** has joined VCB as senior vice president, Commercial Real Estate Lending. Adams, a CPA, has over 20 years of in-market experience in real estate and commercial lending.



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### PEOPLE NOTES

**Army Spec. Ericka T. Collins** has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C. She is the daughter of Stephanie Beekman of Alexandria. Collins graduated in 2002 from Bishop O'Connell High School, and received a bachelor's degree in 2007 from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond.

**Benjamin Sprague Hewson**, the son of Tom and Deborah Hewson of Alexandria, has graduated from the University of Rochester. On May 18, 2008 at the 158<sup>th</sup> commencement, he re-

ceived a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. He was also a graduate of Mercersburg Academy in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

**Marine Corps Pvt. Taytra T. Todd**, daughter of Georgia T. Todd of Alexandria, recently completed the Marine Corps Basic Enlisted Supply Course. Todd is a 2006 graduate of The Potomac School of McLean, and joined the Marine Corps in July 2007.

**Army National Guard Spec. Joshua A. Price** has returned to 116th Brigade Special Troop Brigade, National

Guard Station, Fredericksburg, Va., after being deployed to an overseas forward operating base in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Price, a cannon crewmember with two years of military service. He is the son of Andrea K. and Eugene R. Price of Alexandria and received an associate degree in 2006 from Norwich University, Northfield.

**Army 2nd Lt. Gabriel L. LaMois** has graduated from the Army Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. LaMois' parents, Loyd M. and Eve L. LaMois, live in Alexandria. In 2003, the lieutenant graduated from Bishop Ireton High School, Alexandria, and received a bachelor's degree in 2007 from Virginia Commonwealth University.

### SCHOOL NOTES

**Three former West Potomac Academy students** have teamed up with their teacher to produce a documentary that explores the contributing factors that relate to and/or lead to homelessness among veterans. The documentary was scheduled for release on Veterans' Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11, on a platform Web site that includes corresponding journalism and a digital library of interviews. West Potomac Academy is one of six high school academies in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Nancy Mantelli, third-year teacher of Professional Television Production at West Potomac Academy, employed three of her award-winning student graduates to produce *Beyond the Wall: The Homeless Zone*. Wes Beale, currently a senior in Mantelli's class, is assisting in the post-production marketing for the film.

**The first FCPS Artist Teacher Exhibition** was on display from Nov. 3-15 at the Ernst Cultural Center at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. A total of 61 teacher-artists were represented by 86 artworks in the exhibition. These works were selected from over 300 submissions by juror J. J. McCracken, a local sculptor, performance artist, and adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. The Mount Vernon featured teacher-artists, with their schools were: Chris Klinke (Mount Vernon High), Marielle Mariano (Woodlawn Elementary), Kathi Stevens (Mount Vernon High), Aaron Stratten (high school resource teacher), Angela Williams (Hollin Meadows Elementary).

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# The 'Real Virginia' Has Spoken

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL  
CHAIR, FAIRFAX COUNTY  
DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

Fairfax County helped make history again on Nov. 4 by turning Virginia blue for only the second time in the 60 years since Harry Truman's last race. We have two Democratic U.S. Senators for the first time since 1970 and we have redeemed the 11th Congressional District for the first time since 1994.

Fairfax County has been building to this day by providing the absentee votes that turned the U.S. Senate blue at midnight on Election Day in 2006 and turning the first southern legislative chamber blue since Reconstruction in 2007 by winning two Senate seats in Northern Virginia.

Earlier this year, we took steps to professionalize our County Democratic Committee and donors responded by giving us the resources we needed to step up and get the message out. The hard work of all of our officers, executive director, interns, volunteers, and the extended cooperation and coordination that took place between the six campaigns operating in Fairfax County this cycle was extraordinary.

For most of my life, certain parts of this Commonwealth liked to refer to Northern Virginia as a different state. This year, people even stooped to calling us "Fake Virginia," or not "The Real Virginia." For years, Fairfax County has provided the jobs, economic growth, and tax revenue that has powered the budget for the entire state — now we also provide the votes. One would think after what "Fake Virginia" did to Jerry Kilgore and George Allen who virtually ignored Fairfax County during their campaigns, John McCain and Sarah Palin would have learned a lesson.

Our county is the most educated, diverse, wealthy, well-informed, and the largest jurisdiction in this great Commonwealth. Barack Obama and Joe Biden won a 109,222 vote margin out of Fairfax County. This is more than triple the 33,691-vote margin Fairfax County gave to John Kerry.

How much bigger was our turnout? In 2004, Fairfax County turned out at 73.8 percent. In 2008, we hit 78.8 percent. In 2004, we cast 53,488 absentee votes. In 2008, Fairfax County voters requested 107,145. Our absentee votes were greater than **the total** votes in all but six of the

137 independent jurisdictions in Virginia: Arlington County, Chesterfield County, Henrico County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, and Virginia Beach.

How important is Northern Virginia? If you subtract the 8th, 10th, and 11th Congressional Districts' results from the statewide totals, John McCain and Sarah Palin **won** Virginia. So what's the bottom line?

**It means that the Real Virginia has spoken.**

We have now proven in three straight statewide elections that the path to statewide office, and some might even say to winning the Presidency, passes right through Fairfax County. Statewide candidates who ignore Fairfax County do so at their own peril.

Fairfax County's voters can take time and enjoy our success of the last four years in changing our country. We are restoring hope and have just taken a big step to make our country that shining city on the hill that the rest of the world looks to as an example.

*Scott A. Surovell is chair of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee and a Mount Vernon resident.*

POETRY

## Primary Colors

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here  
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of flesh tone  
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it's mostly  
fall's fires  
burning  
on the walls  
of the Athenaeum

— PETER LATTU  
OCTOBER, 2008

# Enlist State Legislators for Social Justice

## Report from SALT's annual advocacy conference.

BY DEEDEE TOSTANOSKI

SALT (Social Action Linking Together) held its annual advocacy conference on Oct. 25 at St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church in Reston. Despite the rain, the conference was attended by an enthusiastic cadre of advocates anxious to learn how to impact the legislative process in Richmond on behalf of social justice concerns.

The keynote address was given by former Del. Vincent Callahan from McLean, who provided the group with an excellent grounding in the political realities of effecting change in the Commonwealth. He observed with disappointment the enormous decrease in collegiality over the past decade. He also clarified for the audience the criticality of engaging the money committees in any proposals, since the absence of funding will negate the best of ideas. He pointed out that there are 1,200 registered lobbyists in Richmond, targeting 140 legislators, emphasizing how important it is for legislators to hear from and see their constituents to balance out that influence. Delegate Callahan advised visiting legislators at home, prior to the beginning of the session in Richmond, as they are so overwhelmed once the session begins that it can be difficult to get their attention.

And finally, he encouraged the group to expand their network throughout the state, so that all legislators will be hearing from their active constituents on behalf of social justice.

**JEFF CARUSO** from the Virginia Catholic Conference defined advocacy as informing and persuading. As people of faith, he reminded us that our advocacy is grounded in love of God and love of neighbor, and will require both great patience and great persistence.

From a practical perspective, he encouraged the audience to build relationships with their legislators, attend home district meetings, town hall meetings, Catholic Advocacy Day in Richmond, and write letters to the editor. He also reminded the group that thanking legislators for their service, their time, and for votes that are in keeping with our social justice agenda is essential to the advocacy process.

Representatives from several of SALT's partner organizations also spoke in support of SALT's 2009 social action agenda. These included Communities of Faith United for Housing, Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness, and Virginia CURE. Darlene Palmer, a relative caregiver, provided the most compelling witness on the need for an increase to TANF benefits by sharing her personal story. Ms. Palmer and her husband became caregivers for four grandchildren due to domestic violence, and they have gone into significant debt due to the inadequacy of Virginia's TANF benefits.

Despite strong evidence that children in relative care are significantly more stable

than children in foster care, the disparity in state support is huge. Two children living with a single parent will receive \$320 in TANF payments. If these same children live in foster care, they will receive \$918 in monthly TANF payments. But if they live with their grandparents, these same children will receive \$254! Hearing about the realities of attempting to raise four grandchildren with such inadequate state support struck the hearts of everyone in attendance. Ms. Palmer closed her testimony by saying, "These children are our future. If we give them less, we can expect less from them."

**THE SALT** advocacy agenda for 2009 includes the following items: a rental assistance pilot project to be funded in part by federal TANF funds, a 10 percent increase in benefits to TANF recipients, and elimination of the lifetime ban on TANF benefits for former drug offenders. Combined, these legislative initiatives will provide a real solution for low-income Virginians in these

difficult times.

SALT's primary advocacy event is its annual "Home for the Holidays" greeting card campaign, which is managed through Catholic parishes and other faith congregations. SALT provides the language and the background information so that members of faith communities can write greeting card messages to their legislators in an organized manner. Most faith communities provide legislator addresses, collect the cards and send them jointly to the legislators in order to maximize their impact. The time commitment for individual parishioners is only three minutes, but the impact of these handwritten greeting cards is enormous.

If your parish has not participated in the "Home for the Holidays" card writing campaign, you should consider it now. To get further information on how to participate in the campaign, or any other information about SALT, go to [www.S-A-L-T.org](http://www.S-A-L-T.org), or contact John Horejsi, SALT Coordinator at [jhorejsi@cox.net](mailto:jhorejsi@cox.net).

## Koger Pleads Guilty To Embezzling

FROM PAGE 11

driving into the Fairfax County Police Station on Franconia Road.

Koger eventually fled in his Jeep to elude a Virginia State trooper. Koger crashed into a traffic control box in front of Springfield Shopping Mall, and got out of his car with a firearm in his hand.

When Koger fired his weapon, the trooper and Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority officers shot back, hitting Koger in the midsection. He was hospitalized with

life-threatening injuries, but recovered.

In August, Koger's defense attorney, Peter D. Greenspun, filed notice of Koger's possible intent to claim the insanity defense.

At Koger's preliminary hearing, Greenspun asked the trooper if Koger said anything after crashing his car.

Koger faces more than three life terms in prison if convicted in Fairfax County Circuit Court. His trial on those charges is currently scheduled for February, after his sentencing hearing in federal court.

# Open Homes, Open Hearts

One Alexandria woman exemplifies the struggles and rewards of being a foster parent.

BY DAVID SCHULTZ  
THE GAZETTE

**A**mada Wells is a happy, healthy three year old. She likes to watch Dora the Explorer on television and has a poster above her play area of someone she calls "Rock Obama." Her shyness around strangers is betrayed by an infectious, cherubic smile that she can't hide when she's feeling playful.

Amada is too young to remember that her life wasn't always this idyllic. When she was five months old, a social worker took her away from her birth mother and placed her into foster care. Amada's mother suffered from mental illness and was no longer able to take care of her.

She was placed with Katina Wells, a 35-year-old special education teacher at Barcroft Elemen-

tary School in Arlington. The day the Arlington County Foster Care Program contacted Wells was the day before the one-year anniversary of her father's death. She had taken time off from work to be alone when she got the call about Amada.

"Should I do this?" Wells asked herself. Even though Wells was still in mourning over her father, she decided to take Amada into her Alexandria apartment. When she went to pick Amada up, there was an instant connection. "Look, I'm here to take pretty good care of care of you," she told the five month old. "Please don't give me a hard time." Amada looked at her and nodded.

The next day, Wells contracted an intense stomach virus and was in and out of the bathroom all night. Despite being away from her mother in a new situation, Amada was peaceful throughout. "She'd be in her seat and she'd be wonderful," Wells recalled. "She slept all night. She really understood me."

**WELLS**, With a wide smile and a thick New York accent from her formative years spent growing up in the Bronx, is an example of the dedication and compassion that it takes to be a foster parent.

As the economy worsens, county officials predict that more and more children will be placed into foster care as a result of financial

**"I want her to know that her Mom loved her so much that she gave her to me because she couldn't provide care at the time."**

— Katina Wells



PHOTO BY DAVID SCHULTZ/GAZETTE

Three-year-old Amada Wells reads a book to her adoptive mother Katina.

SEE ADOPTED, PAGE 30

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## Majors' Win Streak, Playoffs End Abruptly

Lopsided loss to Stone Bridge doesn't spoil successful season.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO  
THE GAZETTE

**N**o coach wants the task of explaining away a blowout loss to end the season. But as Mount Vernon coach Tom Glynn talked to his team about the 42-0 loss it had just suffered at the hands of undefeated defending state champion Stone Bridge last Friday night, his message was simple.

**"We still finished the season 8-2, not a lot of people can say that."**

**— Mount Vernon coach Tom Glynn**

"This is who you're going to line up against next year," he told his team after it lost the Div. 5 Northern region semifinal game. What Glynn meant is that no matter how lopsided the defeat may have been, the juggernaut that is Stone Bridge isn't going anywhere fast. Mount Vernon now has a measuring stick for future success after making the playoffs for the second-consecutive season.

**"THEY SAW** what the playoffs are like," senior running back Kyle Ricks said as he walked off the field for the last time in his high school career. "(Stone Bridge) looks like they got us in the weight room, so now our underclassmen have to get in the weight room and get ready for next year."

The Majors kept things close in the early going against a team that hasn't lost a game since last September.

### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### Cross-country Border War

The annual Battle of the Potomac cross country race, pitting the top runners from Virginia and Maryland against one another, was held last weekend and four West Potomac students delivered standout performances, despite the wet conditions.

A week after finishing in the top-10 at the Virginia state cross country meet, junior Julianne Bigler came in sixth place with a time of 20:31. Before the race, Bigler was named captain of the Virginia team.

Junior Kelsey Rosenberg wasn't far behind, finishing with a time of 20:45, good for eighth place overall. Freshman Sarah Jane Underwood was also impressive, clock-

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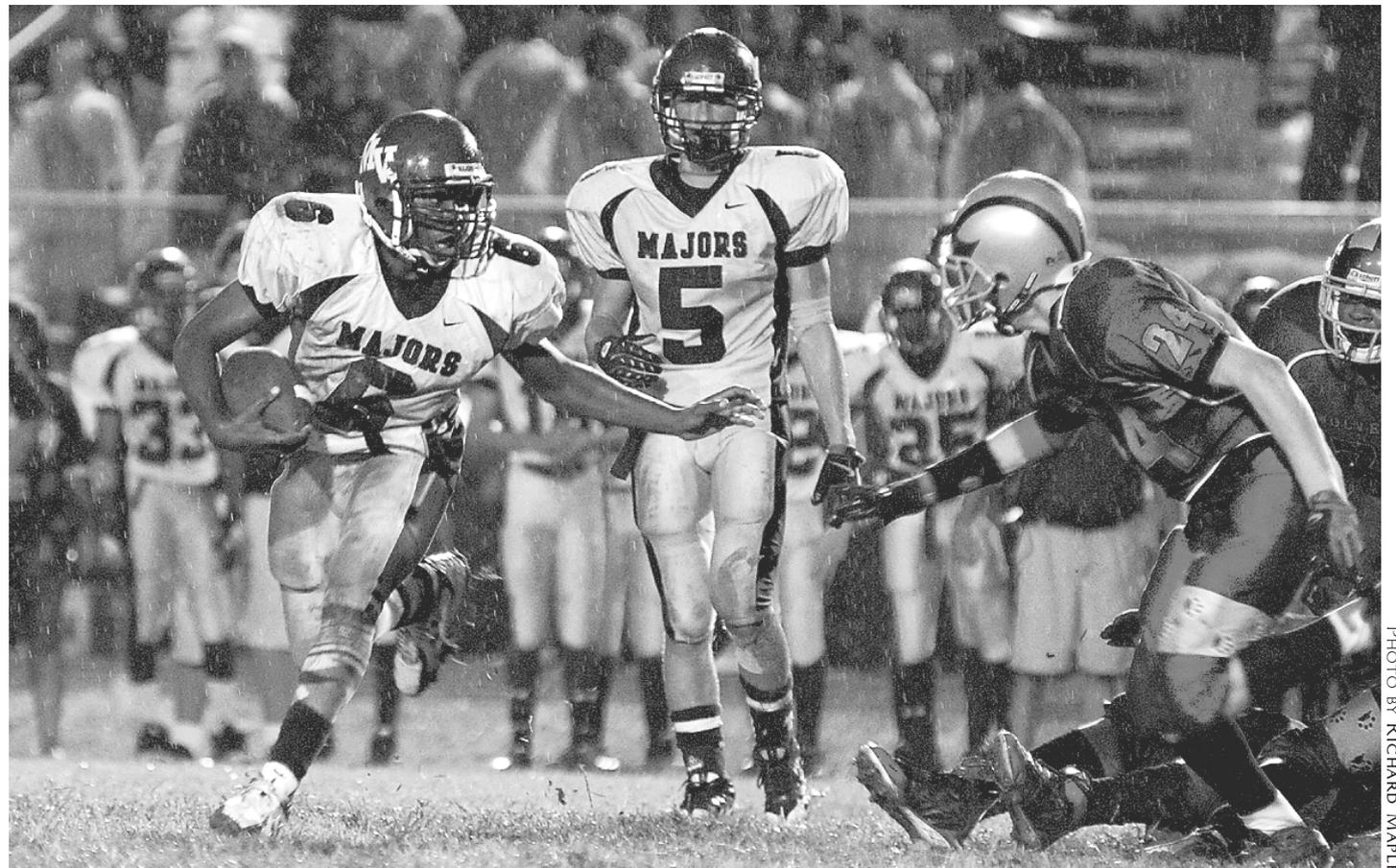


PHOTO BY RICHARD MAPLE

**Mount Vernon's Brian Green (No. 6) breaks out for a run in a game earlier this season against West Potomac. Running back Brandon O'Clisham (No. 5) did not play against Stone Bridge due to injury.**

Mount Vernon's defense was particularly stout, forcing an early fumble by Stone Bridge's Division-I bound running back, senior Daniel Allen, which was recovered by senior defensive back Biazek Hill.

Stone Bridge didn't score its first touchdown until less than 10 seconds remained in the first quarter, a notable achievement considering the Bulldogs have beaten opponents by an average score of 50-7 this season.

From there, though, it was all down hill for Mount Vernon (9-3 overall, 5-1 National District). The Majors couldn't sustain any sort of offensive rhythm, picking up just one first down the entire game. Stone Bridge's front seven, which features six players that

will be suiting up for ACC teams next fall, held Mount Vernon's powerful running game in check.

Ricks finished with just 22 yards, while quarterback and big play threat Brian Green was held to just one yard per carry. It was a frustrating night for Mount Vernon, who entered the game on a seven-game winning streak, but could muster just 71 total yards.

"In the beginning, we played a real good game," said Glynn. "The problem was we couldn't get anything moving on offense."

**THE LOSS WAS BITTERSWEET** for the team's 22 seniors, who have watched as the program rebuilt from a 1-8 season their

freshman year into a No. 3 seed semi-finalist in the northern region playoffs.

Part of the problem for the Majors on this night was the lack of some of those seniors. The Majors' starting running back, senior Brandon O'Clisham, was out with a concussion, while both of Mount Vernon's starting offensive tackles were also forced to miss the game with injuries.

That did nothing to dampen the mood of Glynn, who fully understands just how much of an impact this group has had on changing the culture around campus.

"People can say what they want," Glynn said of the season-ending blowout. "We still finished the season 8-2, not a lot of people can say that."

ing a time of 20:50 (12<sup>th</sup> place) and freshman Dale Lescher rounded out the group of Wolverine girls in the race, finishing in 16<sup>th</sup> place.

Because of their showings, Bigler and Rosenberg now move onto the Foot Locker South Regionals in Charlotte, which are scheduled to take place on Nov. 29.

#### Successful Raffle Season for Sportsmen

The Fort Hunt Sportsmen's Association has concluded another successful Redskin's Tickets Raffle — the local club's 45th annual raffle. This year's raffle winner is Scott Hilliard, a co-worker of Fort Hunt Sports

SEE SPORTS BRIEFS, PAGE 26



COURTESY OF JEFF BIGLER

**From left: Freshman Dale Lescher, junior Julianne Bigler, coach Don Bebbe, junior Kelsey Rosenberg, and freshman Sarah Jane Underwood at last weekend's Battle of the Potomac cross-country race.**

# West Potomac Loses Its 'Pop Pop'

Volunteer assistant coach left mark on Wolverine community.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO  
THE GAZETTE

**W**hen former West Potomac softball coach Dennis Day thinks about his old friend Bill Ambrose, his thoughts inevitably drift back to candy.

Ambrose, who was a volunteer assistant on the Wolverine softball team during Day's eight seasons as head coach (2000-2007), used to sit in the same spot of the West Potomac home dugout during games. As Day describes it, Ambrose sat in the back left corner of the bench every game with a can of soda, nervously pacing as he watched West Potomac on the field.

**"He was always there with a warm smile and a piece of butterscotch."**

**—former West Potomac softball coach Dennis Day**

Win or lose, though, once the girls walked off the field, they were greeted with a piece of candy straight from the pocket of the man they affectionately called "Pop Pop."

"He was always there with a warm smile and a piece of butterscotch," said Day.

But there will be no more sweet giveaways after the West Potomac High School community lost one of its beloved figures on Nov. 7. Ambrose died at the age of 74 after a six-year battle with a combination of lung, liver, kidney, and bone cancer, according to his daughter Patti Jones.

Friends and family who remember Ambrose best say his memory will forever live in the athletic facilities of the school, where he made an indelible mark on the students he coached and mentored.

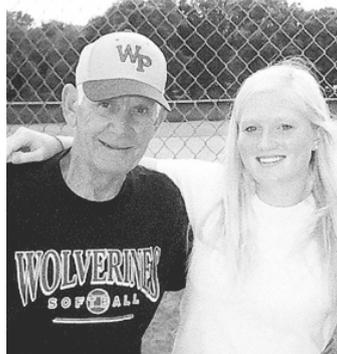
**BACK IN 2000** Ambrose had no intentions of being a full-time coach,



Volunteer assistant Bill "Pop Pop" Ambrose (top right) and head coach Dennis Day (top left) with the 2006 West Potomac softball team that went undefeated.

he just wanted to spend more time around his two twin grand daughters, Amy and Sarah Jones. So Ambrose, who was retired after a long career as a master carpenter for Heiman Construction, signed up as a volunteer coach for the girl's basketball team, which the two girls both played on. Later that spring, after a successful stint with basketball, Ambrose decided to help Day out on the softball field. From there, the student body just became attached to "Pop Pop", a name everybody called him.

"Even the principal," said Jones, who works as a secretary at West Potomac. "When he was in the hospital, he got hundreds of letters from players that had long been off to college."



**Bill "Pop Pop" Ambrose with West Potomac starting softball pitcher Elizabeth Crow.**

places like Myrtle Beach and Graves Mountain for tournaments.

Day described Ambrose's role as more than just a coach. Since, he was actually the grandfather to two girls on the team when he first started coaching, other players picked up on that dynamic. He served

Day first met Ambrose in 1996, but when he took over as head softball coach in 2000 the two didn't know each other well. But quickly the two formed a friendship and Ambrose began helping out during the summers when Day would coach a travel softball team. He also helped coach a girl's travel basketball team.

Jones said some of her father's greatest joys in life came from the road trips he took as part of those travel teams, going to

as a shoulder to lean on during tough times, giving advice when asked. Some players even had a tradition of touching his hat before they would take the field.

"He loved softball and loved being around the kids and loved being a part of it," said Day, who stepped down as West Potomac's coach in 2007. "For me, he was an unbelievable friend. It's just not going to be the same."

**AMBROSE DID** all this for little or no compensation. Jones said her father would only accept \$1 a year from the school for all the time he put in.

Ambrose was only able to make it to a couple games the past few seasons as his condition worsened, but there's no denying the impact he had on the West Potomac community and the West Potomac community had on him.

"He just had a ball with the kids," said Jones. "He loved going to the games and the practices. I really think it helped him get through the past few years."

## SPORTS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 25

man Bo Rollins, who presented Hilliard with a pair of Redskins season tickets.

The Sportsmen would like to thank their generous sponsors. Without the sponsors, the organization would not be able to provide financial support to the

numerous youth sports activities in the Fort Hunt area — up to and including West Potomac High School sports teams.

## Umpires Needed

The Northern Virginia Softball Umpires

Association is seeking new umpires for the 2009 season. The association is responsible for umpiring softball (fast-pitch and slow-pitch) recreation league games, VHSL/High School games and several tournaments in the Northern Virginia area. Umpires can earn \$23+ an hour. Flexible schedule based

on the individual's ability and availability during the week and weekends. NVSUA uses a Web based scheduling program. We provide in-depth training, which begins in January. Contact Judy Cole at JudyUIC@cox.net or 571-236-5744.

## HEALTH

# Medspa Winner To Receive \$4,000 Makeover

Salon provides dermatology services to female and male clients.

BY CHUCK HAGEE  
GAZETTE

**W**ant to win a \$4,000 makeover? Or know someone deserving of such a treat for the holidays? Radiance Medspa at 917 King St. in Old Town Alexandria is in search of that certain someone.

"We hope to provide a real uplifting service to someone in the community who is deserving and really needs a lift. Hopefully, someone who has had some hard luck and would really benefit from this service," said Radiance Medspa co-owner Catherine Corcoran.

The winner of the "Harvest Your Beauty Makeover Contest" will be chosen from an essay of 500 words or less written by the recipient or someone recommending a deserving recipient. Deadline for submission of the essay is Wednesday, Nov. 26.

It can be submitted on line to [cathy@radianceoldtown.com](mailto:cathy@radianceoldtown.com) or by mail to

Radiance Medspa, 917 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. If mailed, it must be postmarked Nov. 26, Corcoran said.

Radiance Medspa is a licensed medical facility specializing in skin care, according to Corcoran and her partner Barbara Toliver. Between them they have close to 80 years medical experience, she noted.

Corcoran is a licensed nurse practitioner and Toliver is a physician's assistant. The practice is overseen by Corcoran's husband Timothy Corcoran, M.D.

Prior to opening Radiance MedSpa, Toliver worked at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital in the emergency room. Corcoran was in nursing care at the Fairfax County South County Government Center. "We also worked together for nine years at a family practice in the area," Corcoran said.

"That's where we saw a lot of dermatology patients. We also saw a lot of the insurance problems faced by physicians today — insurance companies denying claims or not authorizing needed procedures. Our health system is broken," Corcoran said.

Radiance Medspa opened in April 2006. Consultations are conducted with each cli-

ent prior to instituting any procedure. "We determine with each patient what treatment they want or need," Toliver said.

"We have sent notices of the contest to all our clients. But, so far we have received only one response," Corcoran said.

"Our staff will read each of the entries and rate each story. We will make every effort to be as objective as possible. Entries

can be submitted either by the person hoping to win or by someone recommending someone else," Toliver said.

They estimated the value of the prize at approximately \$4,000. It consists of make up application, non-surgical medical procedures, teeth whitening, a massage, and a skin tightening procedure. It is the latter procedure that is the most expensive element, according to Corcoran.

"This contest is all about helping someone who really needs it. We want to give back to the community," Corcoran said.

**"We want to give back to the community."**

— Catherine Corcoran,  
co-owner, Radiance Medspa



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

**Catherine Corcoran, licensed nurse practitioner, and Barbara Toliver, a physician's assistant, of Radiance Medspa in Alexandria.**

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# Many Foster Children Being Adopted

FROM PAGE 24

stresses. "We're really worried about foster care," county spokesperson Kurt Larrick said. "With the economy, there might be a lot more parents who throw up their hands and just can't deal with it."

Rosemary Hubbard, administrator of Arlington's Foster Care Program, said that there are currently 160 minors in the county's custody. "Our mandate is to try to help the biological families to improve the situation so [their children] can go home," she said. "If we can't do that, we look towards their relatives and then our third goal would be adoption."

Ten of Arlington's foster children were adopted last year and 10 more are currently in the adoption process, Hubbard said. In some cases, foster parents can become the adoptive parents of their foster children.

This is the course of action Wells took with Amada. After serving as her foster mother for nearly three years, Wells officially became Amada's adoptive mother this weekend in a ceremony at the Arlington County Courthouse.

"[Amada] has blossomed because of the attention and unconditional love that Katina provides," Arlington County social worker Jenna Duffy said at the ceremony.

**BUT DESPITE** the finalization of the adoption, Wells said that there would still be a place in Amada's life for her biological mother. She took Amada to her biological mother's family reunion picnic recently. "I still want you guys in her life because I want her to know her family," she told Amada's biological mother. "There are things that you could explain to her that I wouldn't be able to."

While she retains all legal rights over Amada, Wells has given Amada's biological mother the option of seeing her once a month. "Sometimes she does and sometimes she doesn't," Wells said. "But I do want her to be in her life."

Hubbard said that having some kind of contact with a foster child's birth mother is "very important" in making the transition

for foster children less traumatic.

But maintaining a good relationship with Amada's birth mother hasn't always been easy, Wells said.

She can be very bitter towards Wells and often tries to tell her how Amada should be raised. But after taking a class in foster and adoptive parenting through the county, Wells knows not to take any of this personally.

A parent who had her children taken away from her explained to Wells why biological parents are often resentful towards their foster counterparts. "[It's] just because we can't find anything wrong with what you're doing," she told Wells. "When the child is taken away from the parent, the parent feels very guilty. We don't have anyone else to lash out at so we lash out at the person who's taking care of our child."

Wells tries to reach out to Amada's biological mother, even though she has no obligation to do so, because she wants Amada to know her identity as she grows older and to have a sense of background. "I want her to know that her Mom loved her so much that she gave her to me because she couldn't provide care at the time," she said.

**IT IS WELLS'** own background that spurred her to become a foster parent. When she was growing up in the Bronx, her cousin's sister was killed in a foster home after being beaten to death. "That told me that when I grew up and I was stable I would provide care for someone's child just to save their life so they wouldn't have to go through what my cousin's sister went through," Wells said.

Eleven years ago, Wells moved from New York to Northern Virginia to live with her sister. But only two weeks after she had left the Bronx, her sister kicked her out of her apartment after a disagreement. Knowing no one in the area and having no savings to fall back on, Wells moved into a homeless shelter.

"At first I was scared because you hear about these shelters in New York," she said. "But I was surprised. ... It was clean. It was really nice. You had to get out five hours a



PHOTO BY KURT LARRICK

**Judge Benjamin Kendrick finalizes Katina Wells' adoption of three-year-old Amada Wells.**

day to get a job. I was able to save money and not worry about having a roof over my head."

Wells spent a few months in the shelter and then moved into transitional housing, eventually finding her own apartment in Alexandria. She started her own successful in-home day care business and now works at Barcroft where she recently got a promotion.

"I had to go through that experience to make me what I am now," Wells said. "I didn't have to go to the shelter. I could have gone back to New York. But I didn't want to because ... I feel like I'd failed if I moved back."

**NOW WELLS** is the proud parent of a bright and loving three-year-old girl. At the adoption ceremony this weekend at the County Courthouse, Amada hid behind her new mother's leg as Judge Benjamin Kendrick recognized the two as a family in the eyes of the court.

"She's a model foster parent," Arlington County social worker N'Dorah Tarawally said. "I idolize her in a lot of ways."

Becoming a foster parent and adopting a child has impacted Wells' life just as much as it has Amada's. Wells said that she is looking to adopt more children and that her home will continue to be open to foster children who have nowhere else to turn. "I feel blessed," she said.

## Chamber: Putting a Child's Face on Giving

**P**utting an actual face to giving during the upcoming holiday season makes it very personal — and, hopefully, more rewarding to benefactors. That's the theory behind the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce change in their annual "Fill the Chamber Toy Chest" for 2008.

"In past years, we have placed empty boxes in businesses and have asked the community to "Fill the Chamber Toy Chest." These have been successful drives and we have appreciated the community's willingness to participate," said Holly Dougherty, Chamber executive director.

"This year, at the recommendation of the Program Committee, we are trying a new approach to caring for the children in our community. We are asking our members and the community at large to adopt children

in need for the holiday season," Dougherty said.

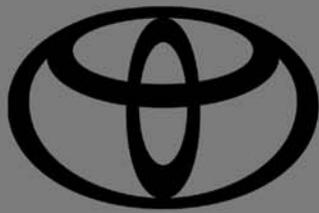
To accomplish this the Chamber is partnering with Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services and the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services to adopt children of families in need during the holiday season. In many cases, the gifts these children receive through this program may be the only gifts they receive for the holidays, according to the Chamber.

**TO IDENTIFY** families and children in need, the Chamber has posted their names on their Web site [www.MtVernon-LeeChamber.org](http://www.MtVernon-LeeChamber.org). They are asking members to "provide one or two gifts and/or pieces of clothing" for the children "adopted."

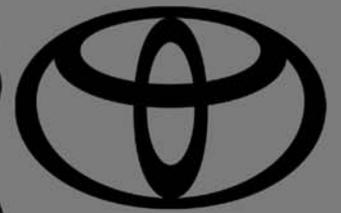
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