

Mount Vernon Gazette

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VOL. XX, No. 4

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

JANUARY 29, 2009



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

In Rehearsal The Drumline at West Potomac High School is in rehearsal for the upcoming Atlantic Indoor Association competition at the end of February. Last year the group came in third out of the 20 schools competing. The Drumline is in its third year at West Potomac and for the first time will compete in Dayton, Ohio later in the season at the Winter Guard International. Above, Music director Adam Foreman works with the students on a routine to leave the floor at the end of the performance.

'Ashley's Law' Legislation Under Attack

Puller bill may fall due to pending civil suit.

By CHUCK HAGEE
GAZETTE

State Sen. Linda T. "Toddy" Puller (D-36) has introduced Senate Bill 847 to address how emergency vehicles pass through busy intersections.

Dubbed "Ashley's Law," the legislation responds to the circumstances that led to the death of Ashley McIntosh the evening of Feb. 12, 2008 at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Boswell Avenue. As McIntosh was leaving Mount Vernon Plaza Shopping Center, with a green traffic light, her car was struck by a Fairfax County Police cruiser driven by Officer Amanda Perry.

Perry was reportedly answering a call about a fight in progress. She had the emergency lights on but not the siren, according to evidence presented during her criminal trial for reckless driving. When Perry's Ford Crown Victoria cruiser struck McIntosh's Toyota Corolla, McIntosh was ejected onto the rain-slicked roadway. She died later at Inova Fairfax Hospital.

Perry was found not guilty of the reckless driving charge brought by the Commonwealth in a non-jury trial with a visiting judge this past September. On Jan. 9, John McIntosh and Cindy Colasanto, parents of the late Ashley McIntosh and administrators of her estate, filed a \$6 million civil law suit against Perry claiming negligence and gross negligence.

SEE BILL OPPOSITION, PAGE 5

"I have tried to work with the police union to get agreement on the bill but they have informed me they are opposed."
— State Sen. Linda T. "Toddy" Puller (D-36)

VDOT Defends Route 1 Speed Proposal

Reaction follows opposition from Supervisors Hyland and McKay.

By CHUCK HAGEE
GAZETTE

Reducing the speed limit along the Richmond Highway corridor from the Capital Beltway to Fort Belvoir remains the aim of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), but they are willing to do more listening before any implementation.

That was the essence of a letter sent to Mount Vernon and Lee district supervisors Gerald Hyland and Jeffrey McKay by Morteza Salehi, district administrator,

VDOT. It was in response to a letter sent to him Dec. 19 jointly signed by Hyland and McKay protesting VDOT's second attempt to unilaterally lower the speed limit along the Route 1 corridor.

In their letter, the two supervisors called for VDOT to broaden their community outreach before initiating any speed reduction along the corridor. As McKay stated at that time, "I have not heard from one person who thinks that reducing the speed on the Route 1 corridor is a good idea."

SALEHI MAINTAINED in his response

that "during the past 10 months, VDOT staff has met with or has offered to meet with the following stakeholders: The Mount Vernon Council of Citizen's Associations; Fairfax County Chief of Police and Mount Vernon District Police Station Commanders; Fairfax County's Executive and staff from Fairfax County Department of Transportation as well as other county departments; Supervisor McKay and staff; Supervisor Hyland and staff; and the Lee District Associations."

He maintained that a primary reason for SEE SPEED REDUCTION, PAGE 7

For Children

Mount Vernon's assistant director of education Nancy Hayward (left) helps Mount Vernon interpreter Lindsey O'Connell, who's dressed in period costume, setup the organization's display at the Children's Inaugural Ball, held in the Historical Society of Washington building in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 18. The event was sponsored by the Every Child Matters Education Fund, a non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on making the needs and concerns of children a national political priority. See EveryChildMatters.org online.



PHOTO BY KJ MUSHUNG



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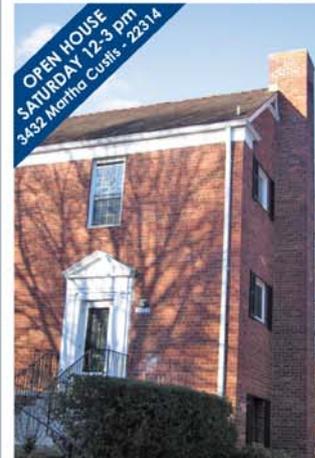


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PHOTO BY JERRY VERNON/THE GAZETTE

\$44,000 for UCM Several hundred Mount Vernon residents and businesses contributed \$44,000 and enjoyed the comedy of the Capitol Steps political satire group on Sunday at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Jefferson Davis Highway. Cynthia Hull, executive director of United Community Ministries, celebrates (from left) the fund-raiser's success with Joe Canny, UCM board president; Nancy Hawkins, UCM Friends president; Priscilla Flattery, Capitol Steps Benefit chair, and Kristin Keckeison, chair of the sponsorship committee. The funds will support UCM's services for individuals and families in need. UCM will hold its 40th Annual Gala on April 25 at Belle Haven Country Club in another effort to raise funds to meet increasing demand due to the declining economic environment. See www.ucmagency.org.

Parents Seek Help for Children with Disabilities

Howell warns against 'draconian cuts.'

BY STEPHANIE POWER
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Helen Hollis is a Fairfax County mother of two. Her daughter graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 2000 and her 22-year-old son has significant delays in his cognitive development ability, with autistic tendencies and some retardation.

Because of a Medicaid waiver received in July, Hollis' son now lives in a group home in Richmond called Hands of Unity. Hollis attended a General Assembly public hearing last week, Monday, Jan. 19, to speak up for those still on the waiting list to receive waivers.

Hollis had been on the waiting list since before age 10.

"We've had many peaks and valleys along the way," Hollis told legislators from the Senate Finance and House Appropriations committees. "We've had day-to-day behavioral challenges."

Hollis was one of 165 people who signed up to speak at the hearing, which gave the public a chance to address Gov. Tim Kaine's proposed budget cuts.

According to Del. Kirk Cox (R-66) of the House Appropriations Committee, 80 percent of the speakers spoke on the issue of Medicaid waivers, which provide at-home services and benefits for mentally retarded individuals.

The Medicaid waivers, known as mental retardation waivers, make services found in state institutions available for qualifying individuals inside their house. They help relieve the cost of keeping those individuals at home.

According to Cox, about 4,200 Virginians are currently wait-listed.

Cox filed House Bill 1853, which would eliminate the wait list for mental retardation waivers in 10 years.

"Each of our families is unique," Hollis said. "There are times when help is needed, when caring for a family and raising a disabled child to become the best that they can become."

Hollis said she is thankful for the



PHOTO BY STEPHANIE POWER/CNS

Helen Hollis went to Richmond to thank legislators for her son's MR waiver.

care her son is receiving. "The disabled child or children, teenagers or young adults deserve the resources to help them reach their fullest potential," Hollis said.

TO BALANCE Virginia's 2009 budget, legislators must cut nearly \$4 billion. Kaine's proposed cuts affect areas like education, transportation and health care.

State Sen. Janet Howell (D-32), a member of the Senate Finance Committee, knows how serious cuts to mental-health funding are.

"We're 48th among the states with what we do in public services, so to have to cut is just intolerable," Howell said. "We're trying to do as little damage as possible to public education and services."

Howell said that if Kaine's proposed cigarette-tax increase of 30 cents per pack is too tough to sell, the outcome will be "draconian" because Kaine earmarked the proceeds of the tax increase for health programs.

"We're cutting, literally, lifelines for people," Howell said. "If we don't get a substantial federal stimulus package for Medicaid, people are going to suffer and possibly die as a result."

Co-patrons of HB 1853 include Delegates Dave Marsden (D-41), David Poisson (D-32), Tom Rust (R-86), and Mark Sickles (D-43).

McKay Praises Mall Management

Parking decision eased inaugural crunch.

Lee District Supervisor Jeffrey McKay, during the Fairfax County Board of Supervisor's Monday meeting, introduced a Board Matter commending "the management of the Springfield Mall for how it handled the traffic and crowds during the early morning hours of Jan. 20," inauguration day.

"While the inauguration events took place in Washington, D.C., they also had a significant effect on Fairfax County, especially in those areas of the county with Metro stations. The county dedicated a signifi-

cant number of police resources to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station" where the parking lot was filled to capacity by 5 a.m. that day, McKay stated.

"At that point, Mall management made an on-the-spot decision to permit more than 2,200 vehicles to park on its premises. Our police have told that by doing so, the Mall helped to avert a difficult and potentially dangerous traffic and parking situation," McKay said.

"Thanks to Springfield Mall's quick and civic minded reaction, many more of our citizens were able to participate in this historic event," he said. In recognition of that action, McKay has requested that Michael Lowe, mall general manager, and his staff be invited to a future board meeting to be formally recognized.



Scholars Awarded

Two Mount Vernon High School students, Angel Hernandez and Devin Loftus, were both awarded full scholarships Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C., from the Posse Foundation. Angel received a full scholarship to attend Bucknell University, in Bucknell, Pa., and Devin was awarded a full scholarship to Sewanee: The University of the South, in Sewanee, Tenn. Angel and Devin are the third and fourth students from Mount Vernon to become Posse Scholars since the program began in 2002. Pictured are Esther Manns, Senior Class Principal at Mount Vernon; Devin; Angel; and Bridget Jackson, Career Center Counselor at Mount Vernon who attended the awards program held in Washington, D.C. at the Lansburgh Theater on Jan. 6.

Fort's Center Closes on Saturdays

Effective Feb. 2, Fort Belvoir's Visitors Processing Operations Center located at Tulley Gate will no longer be open Saturdays. Weekday hours remain Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The center issues Department of Defense vehicle decals, long-term temporary visitor passes and registers personal weapons permits for on-post residents.



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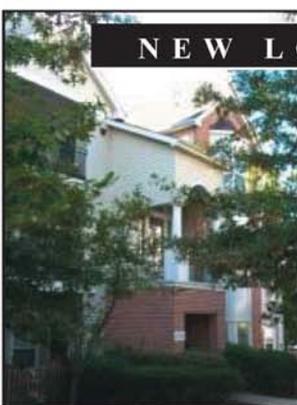


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Law Enforcement Opposes Bill

FROM PAGE 1

It was made clear by McIntosh, Colasanto and their attorney, Thomas Curcio, that the civil suit is solely against Perry and not against either the Fairfax County Police Department or the County of Fairfax. However, if a judgment is ultimately handed down, that bill will probably be paid by the county.

THE PRIMARY POINT of Puller's legislation is to increase the safety of those operating emergency vehicles and that of other drivers and pedestrians at intersections. It is an amendment to Sec.46.2-920 of the Virginia Code which calls for all emergency vehicles, police and fire, to:

* "Proceed carefully past any steady or flashing signal, traffic light, stop sign, or device indicating moving traffic shall stop

* "Proceed only if the speed of the vehicle is sufficiently reduced to enable it to pass a signal, traffic light, or device while maintaining that sufficiently reduced speed in order for the vehicle to stop as may be necessary."

It also states, "exemptions granted to emergency vehicles by subsection A ... shall apply only when the operator of such vehicle displays a flashing, blinking, or alternating emergency light or lights... and sounds a siren, exhaust whistle, or air horn designed to give automatically intermittent signals, as may be reasonably necessary."

In other words, operators of emergency vehicles would be required to slow at intersections and have both their emergency lights and siren or sound device operating when on an official call. Operation of the sound device warns other drivers of an approaching emergency vehicle when that vehicle may not be visible due. This was the case on Feb. 12, 2008, according to testimony in Perry's criminal trial.

The proposed legislation is being opposed by the Fairfax County Police Department, the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia Chiefs of Police Association, according to Puller. It is scheduled for a hearing before the Senate Transportation Committee on Thursday, Jan. 29, with opposing lobbyists working against it.

"I have tried to work with the police union to get agreement on the bill but they have informed me they are opposed. They have said it is not necessary and will cost too much to enforce," Puller said.

THAT OPPOSITION was verified by Marshall Thielen, president, Fairfax Coalition of Police, and Dana Schrad, executive director, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. Captain Steve Chumley, division commander, Division One, representing the Virginia State Police, would not comment claiming in was inappropriate while the legislation remained in negotiation.

Schrad told Puller in an email dated Jan. 16 she had spoken with Thielen, Chumley and Fairfax County Police Department Deputy Chief Suzanne Devlin and emailed Col. David Rohrer, chief, Fairfax County Police, about SB 847. "The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police is concerned that it unnecessarily increases the exposure to liability for both officers and police agencies," Schrad said.

"The VACP believes that the best way to address the concerns raised by your bill is through best practices in training and technology. We do have driver training programs in place in Virginia, but unfortu-

nately, we do not have adequate driver training track facilities or adequate funding to mandate a certain level of driver training statewide," she told Puller.

During Perry's criminal trial there was expert testimony from the officer assigned to oversee equipment maintenance that both the police cruiser and the technology within the vehicle to operate both the emergency lights and siren were in working order. He also testified that all officers receive training in the operation of these technological tools.

"I don't see the need for a fix to the existing law. The law presently on the books is more than adequate. There is nothing to be fixed. The present statute has worked well for departments throughout the state," Schrad said in an interview.

"Every police group is against this legislation. There is nothing wrong with the existing law," said Thielen while lobbying in Richmond Monday morning.

His primary objection to the proposed legislation was that it would force police officers to use their sirens when answering a call to a crime in progress. "We have bank robberies every week in Fairfax County. If officers had to have their sirens on that would alert the criminals they were on their way and they would either flee or take hostages," Thielen said.

"If someone is robbing a house at 3 a.m. and the officer has to use the siren it gives the criminal time to formulate a plan of action to either take hostages or ambush the police officers," he said.

Thielen would not say whether the coalition would be supplying either financial or legal support to Perry in the pending civil suit. However, if a judgment is handed down against Perry as a result of the civil action, Fairfax County will pay the judgment, according to Assistant County Attorney Robert Ross.

"As a County employee on duty at the time, Perry is covered by the County. It is an indemnification process. Where individuals are insured by insurance companies, the County acts as the insurance company for County employees," Ross said.

"Although the County and Police Department are not involved in any way in the civil suit, if all conditions are met at the conclusion of the suit, the County would pay the judgment, if there is one," he said.

PULLER MAY be meeting opposition from various police organizations, but she is getting support from others. "I support Senator Puller's Senate Bill 847, also known as Ashley's Law. This bill further serves the interest of public safety and should be enacted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerald Hyland.

That was buttressed by Jennis Strickland of Potomac Falls, Va., a former Los Angeles County firefighter. "I am astounded at the lack of formal safety procedures regarding red lights and sirens during emergency responses," he told Puller in a Jan. 20 email.

"We were trained to make full stops at red lights and stop signs before proceeding. It was incumbent on us to make sure it was safe to proceed at all intersections, even those without signals and signs. These policies and procedures were the result of a lengthy negative experience in which more lives were lost in transit than were saved upon arrival," Strickland said.

"Ashley McIntosh would be alive today if these rules and regulations were in effect in our state. It is both tragic and insane that local officials justify such wanton and needless loss of life," he said.

"The law presently on the books is more than adequate."

— Dana Schrad, executive director, VCPA



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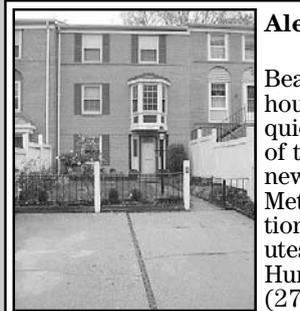
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Arrest Made in Abduction

James S. Williams, 47, was arrested at his home, on Rollins Drive, Friday, Jan. 23, by Fairfax County Police detectives and charged with abduction and sexual battery in connection with an incident that occurred Jan. 16. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center.



James S. Williams

At 6:45 a.m. the day of the incident, a 20-year-old woman was at a pay phone at 2800 Beacon Hill Road when she allegedly accepted a ride home from Williams, according to police. He drove a few blocks to the end of Elm Drive where he allegedly began touching her inappropriately, police reported.

'Baby Shower' To Aid Needy

Girl Scout Troop 446 is seeking "gently used" baby toys, packs of diapers and other baby items for their "Baby Shower" on Friday, Jan. 30, at Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The event will benefit Mondloch House, a non-profit organization that helps parents and children in need. To donate, call 703-360-9420.

SFDC Names Board Members

Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation has announced the appointment of four new members to its Board of Directors for 2009. They are: Katy Fike, McEneaney Commercial Real Estate, representing the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce; James Davis, Davis Keyboard Instruments, representing the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations; John Thillmann, vice president, Landmark Atlantic, at-large director, and Steven Blanco, assistant vice president and branch manager, Virginia Commerce Bank, at-large director.

Performing at Kid's Inaugural Concert

Members of Mount Vernon High School's Performing Choirs performed at the "Kids' Inaugural: We Are The Future Concert" on Monday, Jan. 19. The MVHS choirs sang back up for "High School Musical" star Corbin Bleu at the concert held at the Verizon Center in Washington. Michelle Obama and Jill Biden hosted the concert. It was the last scheduled public event prior to the Presidential Inaugural swearing-in on Tuesday of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. The concert honoring military families was broadcast from 8-9:30 p.m. Eastern Time on The Disney Channel, simulcast on Radio Disney, and streamed on Disney.com immediately following the telecast. It is still available for viewing on the Web site www.Disney.com.



Leading Auxiliary

The following volunteers at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Auxiliary were elected to office for the 2009 calendar year. From left to right: Christina Bailey, historian; Anna Dunn, corresponding secretary; Janice Pickering, recording secretary; Kathleen Caldwell, treasurer; Elsie Plues, vice president; Jimmi Barnwell, president.



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OBITUARY

Joe Shkrlac

Joe C. Shkrlac, 82, of Locust Grove, Va. died on Jan. 21, 2009 at his home. He was born on May 12, 1926 in Johnson City, Ill.

He is predeceased by his parents Joe Shkrlac and Rosie Pinter Shkrlac, his sisters Ann Panko, Mary Kresich, Louise Bennett and Matilda Vaughn and brother Mike Zabarac.

He is survived by his wife Virginia; sister Catherine Degorica of Marion, Ill.; step children Betty Burnett, husband Al of Dayton Beach, Fla., William Phillips of Alexandria, Deborah McCormack, husband Stephen of Culpeper, Va., and Robert Phillips of Locust Grove, Va.; as well as many grandchildren, nieces, nephews and dear friends.

As a young man, he was a stonemason in Johnson City, Ill. He was drafted into the United States Army where he served during WWII. After leaving the military he settled in Alexandria where he began his ca-

reer as an owner/operator of several Texaco Stations. In 2001 he retired after 38 years of service as an owner/operator of Woodlawn Texaco on Richmond Highway where he received numerous awards for excellent service to his community. Mr. Shkrlac was an active member of Good Shephard Catholic Church in Alexandria.

In 2001 he and his wife moved to Locust Grove, Va. where they both became involved in their community. Mr. Shkrlac joined Precious Blood Catholic Church in Culpeper, Va. He was an avid fisherman, hunter, NASCAR fan and a civil war enthusiast. He was a lifetime member of the NRA and a member of the Ruratsins of Lignum, Va.

A funeral mass was held on Tuesday, Jan. 27 at Precious Blood Catholic Church, Culpeper, Va. Burial followed in Culpeper National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to Family Care Home Health & Hospice, 610 Laurel St., Suite 2, Culpeper, VA 22701.

VDOT Cites Need for Speed Reduction

FROM PAGE 1

VDOT's desire to reduce the speed limit is that the nine-mile stretch from the Beltway to Belvoir "has experienced an average of 95 injury or fatal crashes per mile during a recent three-year period, a higher collision rate than any other corridor in the Commonwealth."

As a result of this statistic VDOT commenced a comprehensive corridor-wide safety study in 2005. That brought forth 400 individual recommendations for safety improvements, according to Salehi. "Many of the recommendations involved "quick-fix" changes

which VDOT has already implemented," he said.

"Adjustment to the speed limit is part of an overall package of improvements being implemented and planned to improve safety along the corridor," Salehi said. It is based on "a detailed speed study in three sections of Route 1" conducted in September 2007.

THAT STUDY recommended two primary speed changes for the corridor:

- ❖ Reduce the speed limit from 45 to 35 in the 7.5 mile stretch immediately south of the Beltway
- ❖ Reduce the speed limit from 50 to 45 in the 6.7 mile stretch between Old Mill and Furnace roads



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OPINION

Major Party Candidates Plea Their Cases

Why Vote for Bulova?

BY SHARON BULOVA
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS



Bulova

In my years as a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many people from all parts of Fairfax. I am gratified that people tell me that they have chosen to live here because they enjoy the excellent schools, exceptional public safety, and first rate business climate. They tell me that realize that is a good place to live, work, raise a family and grow old.

In the upcoming Feb. 3 election for the Chairman of the Board, the most important message that I hear from voters is that they realize the good things about Fairfax County haven't happened by accident. Voters know that we are one of the best managed jurisdictions of our size in the country because we have had public leaders who have paid attention, set priorities, made the tough decisions, and demanded quality in all that we do.

In the 21 years, I have served on the Board, I have chaired the budget committee for 17 of those years. I know that our budget is our most important statement of our values. We can say we are for something, but it we aren't willing to put resources there, we are misleading. I know that building the annual budget is a constant quest for the best balance between revenue and expenses. We have a AAA bond rating, and we also have schools that rank among the very best in the United States. We have welcomed diversity as a great asset, even though that same diversity has challenged us and some-time cost us more to provide the services people here need and de-

IN HER
OWN
WORDS

mand. We have worked hard to find the right balance.

Voters know that our Board works best when we work together. I have a long record of reaching "across the aisle" and working with people from all parts of the county to build consensus about priorities. Voters know that I have been a leader in developing new ways to get public input, connect public and private resources, and improve the quality of life for everybody.

Voters know that in the past I was one of the most consistent advocates for mass transit to help relieve our traffic mess. I was one of the early sponsors of the Virginia Railway Express (the VRE) and have spent the last ten years as an advocate for rail to Dulles.

Voters know that as Chairman of the Board, I will continue that civil consensus-building open and honest approach. I won't walk away from a problem because it is hard or because I didn't get my way. I will be the leader of the Board and will set the agenda, but I will always respect those who disagree.

Respectfully, I ask the citizens of Fairfax County for your vote on Feb. 3. I pledge that I will always work to keep Fairfax the place where people will want to choose to live, work, and play.

Vote Feb. 3

All Fairfax County polling places will be open on Tuesday Feb. 3 for the special election for Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to replace Gerry Connolly.

Why Vote for Herrity?

BY PAT HERRITY
REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS



Herrity

Campaigns are about highlighting differences, but I am confident we can agree on one thing: Fairfax County is a great place to live. For decades we have had the best schools and beautiful parks. We've had a Triple-A bond rating since 1975, and we have been the economic engine for the state.

Yet our future success is not pre-ordained. We currently face significant challenges. Most pressing is our \$650 million shortfall, the largest in our history and larger than all of our surrounding jurisdictions combined. We face this shortfall despite the fact that taxes on homeowners have doubled in the past seven years. County spending has exploded, growing the budget by a billion dollars beyond inflation and population growth, squandering the good times on misplaced priorities.

We've spent \$200 million in the past two years to buy government housing and have built a large housing bureaucracy that makes us among the largest landlords in the County. We're subsidizing housing for those making \$99,000 a year.

At the same time, our schools are in dire need of renovations and class sizes continue to increase. Teacher pay has dropped from highest in the region to sixth highest. Despite this, the School Board, with my opponent's support, wants to spend \$130 million on a fancy administration building.

Fairfax County needs a leader with tested financial skills, who knows how to read a balance sheet, how to say "no," and who will focus spending on priorities. I am a chief financial officer with an award-winning financial track record of turning around troubled companies. I am the only candidate for Chairman with the financial experience necessary to lead us out of this financial train wreck.

I am also a recognized leader in transportation. I sit on the operations board for VRE, and was leading the effort for telecommuting with the Northern Virginia Technology Council before telecommuting was an accepted concept. On the Board, I have led

IN HIS
OWN
WORDS

the efforts for both short-term and long-term improvements to the I-66 corridor.

Contrary to my opponent's accusations, I did not attempt to block the Dulles Rail project. In 2002, I filed suit against the project in order to ensure it was competitively bid, in an effort to save taxpayer money. To date, the project has never been competitively bid. I believe if it had, we would have been able to build a tunnel, the best option for Tyson's Corner, and still have met federal cost standards.

We can't afford to wait for Richmond to solve our problems. Thirty years ago when my father, Jack Herrity, was chairman of the Board, private-sector funding for transportation outweighed federal, state and local funding combined. Developers were held accountable for infrastructure improvements. We need to return to this kind of responsible leadership and creative solutions.

We also need to make our commercial tax base a priority. The commercial tax base was 27 percent but has now fallen to 17 percent, shifting the tax burden onto homeowners. It is important now more than ever for government to be responsive to the need for tax relief for residents. That is why last year I proposed a balanced budget that included an actual tax cut for homeowners. My budget also included an increase in education spending and more money for public safety programs than the budget passed by the Board.

I want my children to raise their children in a Fairfax County that is the best place to live, work, and play. I ask for your vote on Feb. 3.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue.

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LETTERS

Save Energy

To the Editor:

Thank you for publishing the great letters from Carl Sandburg Middle School students in the Mt. Vernon Gazette recently. It's clear that the kids at Sandburg realize that we must both tackle global warming, and that we have the means to do it.

Right now, in the Virginia Senate there are several bills that mandate a 19 percent reduction in energy use under consideration. The Governor's Commission on Climate Change worked hard this past year, and because of their work we have bills like SB 1447 that state that we must keep energy use at current levels through 2025.

If we save energy, we will not fund or build any new power plants. And unfortunately these plants don't only keep the lights on; they are also a huge source of pollution that is at the root of many health problems. They are also a huge contributor to global warming.

Please consider writing, emailing, and calling Senator Toddy Puller to let her know of your support for SB 1447. Let her know that you want to reduce the
SEE LETTERS, PAGE 18

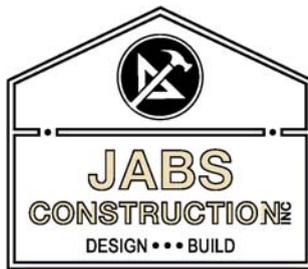
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5902 Mount Eagle Drive, Suite 1607/1608

\$859,500



Stunning views of the countryside from three glass enclosed terraces. This rare unit with 2545 sf boasts of 4 bedrooms, family room with its own bistro kitchen, 3 bathrooms, indoor parking and tons of upgrades. On-site swimming, tennis, bowling, restaurant and shuttle to Metro make this ideal place to call home.

(FX6904737)

5904 Mount Eagle Drive, Suite 1610/1612

\$675,000



Don't miss seeing this one of a kind unit with beautiful Potomac River views. This 2165 sf unit has 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, separate laundry room, garage and two balconies. It, too, comes with on-site swimming, tennis, bowling, restaurant and shuttle to Metro.

(FX6917536)

New Listing



13 East Myrtle Street | \$735,000

Move-in ready! This lovely 3 bedroom, 2 bath center hall colonial features formal living and dining, sunroom, garage, finished basement, and fabulous rear deck overlooking fenced backyard. Hardwood throughout main and 2nd floor, freshly painted, new windows, plus roof and chimney liner new in '06. Off street parking plus garage -- all within a few blocks to Braddock Road Metro!

Mark Souder | 703 518-2800

Rosemont

Rosemont Charm



4 West Rosemont Avenue | \$879,000

A classic Rosemont beauty on a great lot just blocks from the King St Metro. Comfortable, flowing floor plan with sunny living room leading to charming porch, large formal dining room, gourmet kitchen, powder room and family room that opens to private patio and yard. This three bedroom, two and a half bath home is an elegant renovation of a timeless classic. Dir: From King Street, turn north on Russell Rd, turn right on Rosemont Ave

Karen Leonard | 703 328-7041

Alexandria

Great Opportunity to Own



6286 D Rose Hill Court | \$199,000

This lovely 2BR 1BA condo in Heritage Hill is in immaculate condition and will impress the most discerning buyer. The condo features a traditional floor plan with separate living and dining rooms and a large balcony overlooking common grounds. With new carpet, newer HVAC and refinished parquet floors, it is ready for move in. Located in Rose Hill close to shopping, Metro and major commuter routes. Tired of looking at properties needing a ton of work, come see what pride of ownership really means.

Yvonne S. Croft | 703 973-1540

Alexandria S

New Listing



4717 31st Street #B2 | \$325,000

It's all been done! Two bedroom, one bath. Kitchen and bath renovation with granite and ceramic tile, new washer/dryer, HVAC, HWH and windows! Spacious, sunny, and located within Fairlington with amazing amenities and just minutes from I-95, Shirlington, and DC. Huge storage room/exercise room on lower level. Don't hesitate - this home nears perfection and is sure to capture your heart quickly!

Mark Souder | 703 518-2800

Fairlington Village

Old Town At It's Best



523 North Alfred Street | \$575,000
Just About Perfect!

Including the Price! This totally renovated 2/3 bedroom, one and a half bath Victorian Townhome is located in Old Town and is in move-in condition. There is nothing left to do! Kitchen, baths, floors, appliances, carpet, painting, partial roof, patio, HVAC, all renovated in the past few years. Most in 2008. Even a perfect Old Town location, close to Metro, shopping, restaurants, bike path, Starbucks, DC and Airport.

Linda Trinkle Wolf | 703 518-6165

Old Town

Spacious Rental



27 South Abingdon Street | \$2,250

Great Location -15 minutes to DC
Spacious three level townhome (2600 + square feet) close in. Only 15 minutes to DC. Three bedrooms, 2.55 baths. Two fireplaces, hardwood floors, backyard patio, gas forced air heat, and central AC, easy access to everything. Vacant and ready for new tenants. It won't last. Call Wil Roberts at 703 447-6556.

Wil Roberts | 703 447-6556

Alexandria

New Listing



2181 Jamieson Avenue #811 | \$379,900

Beautiful Condo at Carlyle Towers
Imagine how wonderful it is to choose whether to have your morning coffee on your enclosed porch or at your kitchen table in front of the window! The choice is yours in this wonderful unit. The 2 BR, 1 1/2 BA interior is elegant and neutral with hardwood floors, granite counters and marble baths. Also included is a w/d, garage parking, every possible recreational amenity and steps to metro. See photos at www.cbmove.com

Teddy Marchant | 703 402-0501

Carlyle Towers West

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409 North Columbus Street | \$799,000

Historic end townhouse full of character and light! Own a piece of history with this handsome brick townhouse and it's large rooms, wood floors, 12' ceilings, and 2 fireplaces. There are 3 bedrooms and 1.5 baths as well as a new roof, new zoned central air conditioning and the kitchen has been updated. Steps to shops and restaurants. From Washington and King Streets, north on Washington St, left onto Princess St, right onto N Columbus to 409. www.VirginiaRealEstate4u.com.

Bonnie Rivkin | 703 598-7788

Old Town

Great Value



7402 Elgar Street | \$404,500

Solid home in North Springfield with over 1900 square feet offers one level living in a convenient location. This home features three bedrooms, two baths, separate Living and Dining Rooms, table space in the kitchen, two sided fireplace, and a great fenced and landscaped yard with large wrap around deck. Separate In Law Suite.

Yvonne S. Croft | 703 973-1540

Alexandria S



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6406 Wood Haven Drive
\$825,000



Price Reduction

A new price on this "Like New", 4/5 bedroom, 2.5 bath, 2 car garage, 3 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! Directions: South on GW Pkwy, right on Belle Haven Rd, left on Potomac, left on Old Towne Rd, right on Wood Haven www.phyllispatterson.com

Phyllis Patterson | 703 518-6158 Alexandria S

Ready For Spring In Old Town?

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



649 First Street
\$1,050,000



A Great New Price!

Spectacular, large brick home on the edge of Old Town. Brick serpentine garden walls, garage parking, three to four bedrooms, four and half baths. Wood floors and high ceilings and quality throughout. Floor plan available. Freshly painted and ready to go! For more information, please contact Marie Louise Meyer at 703 836-2080. MLM1606@aol.com

Marie Louise Meyer | 703- 836-2080 Old Town

Newly Listed

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



610 South Washington Street
\$1,899,000



Just listed, built in 2006 this brick end town home has everything you could ask for. There are high ceilings and 4 levels of over 3300 finished square footage, reclaimed pine floors, a bricked-in yard with a detached 2-car garage, 4 fireplaces, including one of the roof top deck, custom plantation shutters and crown molding everywhere! There is a gourmet kitchen with Viking appliances, granite counters and cherry cabinets, 3 bedrooms, 4.5 baths and a lower level media room. Steps to shops and restaurants. Call for a private showing. Shown by appointment only. www.VirginiaRealEstate4u.com

Bonnie Rivkin | 703 598-7788 Old Town SE

New Listing

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



1816 Edgehill Drive
\$1,495,000



This Dutch Colonial has been expanded to satisfy gracious entertaining with spacious formal rooms as well as a generous country kitchen with adjoining family room, six bedrooms upstairs, and six full baths. Two staircases and multiple wood burning fireplaces add charm to the classic floor plan. The fully finished basement is complete with an additional kitchen, recreation room, library, full bath, and plentiful storage.

Mark Souder | 703 518-2800 Belle Haven

New Price! Open Sunday 1-4

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



227 North Lee Street
\$999,950



Beautiful 3 BR, 3 1/2 BA townhouse just steps from King Street and the scenic Old Town waterfront. This home effortlessly blends old and new to create the ideal living space! Handsome moldings, tray ceilings, hardwood floors, plentiful recessed lighting and many elegant details. The luxurious master bedroom suite features a bay window, gas log fireplace, and a shining marble bath with dual sinks, Jacuzzi and separate glass-enclosed shower. There are two additional "bedroom suites", an upper level family room, formal living and dining rooms and a sparkling eat-in chef's kitchen with granite. Two off-street parking places, and come Spring, look forward to enjoying the rooftop skyline from the sunny private patio!

Jane Cole | 703 682-5407 Old Town

New Listing - Open Sunday 1-4

PREVIEWS INTERNATIONAL



3837 North Tazewell Street
\$1,299,000

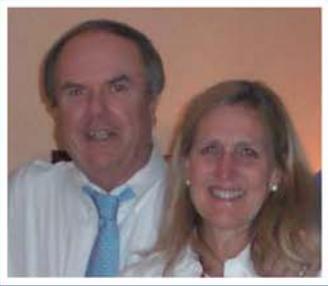


Gorgeous Colonial

Exquisite property, perfect for elegant entertaining as well as comfortable family living. Over 4800 sq ft, this lovely property offers gracious formal rooms with 9' ceilings, crown molding chair rail, beautifully finished hardwood floors, and built-in cabinets; gourmet chef's kitchen with top of the line appliances, 4 fireplaces, first floor family room, first floor office, 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths and 2 half baths, lovely master suite w/ a sitting room, large recreation room, private elevator, large private patio overlooking a wooded vista, 2 car garage. Fabulous location only 5 minutes from Chain Bridge.

Jeanne Warner | 703-980-9106 Arlington

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9405
Ferry Ldng Ct
\$795,000
Magnificent Setting!

Stately Colonial on highly desirable quiet cul-de-sac near the river.

Traditional exterior is complimented by bright, sunny interior opening to spectacular sun room. Large room sizes, updated baths, elegant trim detail, oversized garage and absolutely pristine condition on beautifully landscaped half acre grounds!



5304
Cedar Ct
\$398,500
Creekside Charmer!

Cozy 3BR, 1.5BA rambler on huge 1/2 acre lot bordering scenic Dogue

Creek. Home has been completely remodeled and updated by leading local craftsman. Stunning updated kitchen with maple cabinets, granite countertops & stainless appliances, LR with fireplace, bamboo floors, updated baths & more! Assessed by Fairfax County for \$439,500!



4300
Neptune Dr
\$497,000
Yacht Haven Opportunity!

Rare 3/4 acre corner lot in prestigious Yacht Haven Estates, one

of the Mount Vernon area's premier waterfront communities! Spacious home combined with exceptionally large building area provides limitless potential on this gorgeous level lot with access to Mount Vernon Yacht Club.



3232
Woodland Ln
\$649,900
Water Access!

Truly special home on 1/2 acre lot just steps from community water access! Bright,

open floor plan, 5BR, 3.5BA, updated eat-in kitchen, replacement thermal windows, oversized two car carport and major updated items. Stunning sunroom built in 2006 overlooks landscaped grounds in prime location just off GW Pkwy. Priced \$40,000 below tax assessment!



4212
Dandridge Terr
\$589,000
Prestigious Southwood!

Price slashed! A \$700,000 home for \$589,000! Nothing like it on the

market today! Owner paid \$699,900 in 2005 and added \$30K in upgrades. Classic Center Hall Colonial in pristine condition has three finished levels including full walk-out lower level. Oversized two car garage, gorgeous lot on cul-de-sac – stunning value!



3601
Riverwood Rd
\$749,500
Riverwood Gem!

Updated Colonial in premier location near the Potomac River

neighboring homes selling for \$3,595,850 and \$5,500,000! Owner spent \$175,000 in recent upgrades. Special features include: spectacular custom kitchen with granite, stainless and light maple cabinets, four bedrooms, hardwood floors, updated and reconfigured baths, large screened porch, oversized garage and fenced yard.



4203
Adrienne Dr
\$459,000
Updated Home!

Owner's job transfer creates a 'too good to be true' opportunity for this updated

home on 3/4 acre lot! High ceilings, thermal windows, updated kitchen & baths, gas fireplace, walk out lower level, new a/c unit, 2 car garage, 5 zone sprinkler system, custom deck with gazebo & hot tub overlook park-like setting. Nothing like it in the area close to this price!



4307
Sheridan's Point
\$879,000
Georgian Colonial!

Large Price Reduction! Classic updated Colonial in prime Mt

Vernon location. Home has a combination of location, size and features typically only available in \$1,000,000+ homes! Three finished levels, open kitchen/family room, stunning master suite, two bonus rooms on lower level and dramatic sun room overlooking private fenced yard. Just off the GW Pkwy – easy commute to DC!



1600
Noral Place
\$998,500
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!



Brambly Lane
\$969,900
FREE FINISHED BASEMENT FOR 1ST CONTRACT IN JANUARY – \$50,000 VALUE!
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! High ceilings, open floor plan, 4BR, 3.5BA, energy conserving features, oversized garage & more! (Picture of same model for illustration purposes only.)



8826
Camden Street
\$899,500
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.

CHRIS WHITE (703) 283-9028

LONG & FOSTER OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT • 400 KING STREET • ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

WWW.CHRISANDPEGGYWHITE.COM





OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

400 KING STREET • ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

703.683.0400 • WWW.LONGANDFOSTER.COM



OPEN SUN. 1-4

Alex/The Plaza
\$260,000
JUST LISTED

2BR/2BA garden condo in treed setting. Ceramic tile in LR & DR, individual tile looking linoleum in BRs & owner will offer carpet allowance for bedrooms. Newer appl. in kitchen w/beautiful cabinetry. Full size W/D in unit. Garage prkg. Community offers outdoor pool, tennis, sauna & gym. Close to shopping, restaurants & public transportation, EZ commuting. For more information call Brian & Jerry or visit www.brianandjery.com

807 Howard Street #122
BRIAN HONG/JERY BEAMER
703.929.5764



Old Town
\$2,100,000
POTOMAC WATERFRONT

Sea breezes and sunny water views make Fords Landing truly unique. This 4 level TH features

3/4 BRs, 3.55 BAs, gourmet kit/family room, formal living & dining, cozy hearth room w/ gas FP, river terrace & 2-car garage. Walk to shops & restaurants. By appt.

706 Fords Landing Way
RENEE REYMOND
703.507.5330
ReneeSellsAlexandria.com



OPEN SUN. 1-3



Alexandria
\$379,000

FAIRLINGTON MEWS GEM
Fabulous, rarely available 3-level Edgewood, All-

brick end townhouse. 1 bedroom, 2 full bath, hardwoods, huge MBR walk-in closet, den plus office, tennis court across street. At I-395 and King street.

4665 36th Street

JAN MUNNINGHOFF
703.201.3730



Alexandria
\$379,500

SERENE VIEW JUST LISTED

Do not miss this one! Large 1470

SF unit with balcony overlooking park setting & skyline view of the city. 3BR/2BA— Many updates throughout! MBR bath & gourmet kitchen will delight you! Garage prkg spot. Convenient location— Great security. Shown by appt. only!

200 N. Pickett Street #1207
LOUISE DEVERS 703.795.9944



Alexandria
\$289,900

BELLE VIEW

Bright 3 bedroom rarely available in

Belle View with new windows, almost new appliances, renovated bathroom and lots of kitchen cabinets. Don't worry about your king size bed! It fits beautifully! www.catherinefoltz@lnfre.com

6726 W. Wakefield Drive #A2
CATHERINE FOLTZ 703.626.6914



OPEN SUN. 1-4



Old Town
\$935,000

DON'T BE FOOLED...

by the modest façade. This is a wonderfully

spacious TH that has been expanded over the years. Built Circa 1820 it includes a 26' MBR, a large formal dining room with skylights, double parlors, heart of pine floors, 3 fireplaces, 3BR/3BA.

507 S. Fairfax Street

NORMA GANTS 703.408.2560



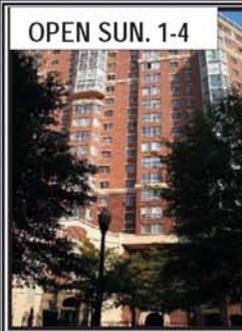
Historic Old Town
\$795,000

PITT MEWS GEM

Fabulous 3 bedrooms and 3.5 baths, all-brick townhouse with garage in Heart Of Old Town. Master bedroom with

loft, custom built-ins/wainscoting. Bright kitchen, L/R fireplace, hardwood floors including loft. 1 block to King Street, 4 blocks to River.

421 Cameron Street
PHILIP G. MATYAS
703.518.8727



OPEN SUN. 1-4

Alex/King St. Metro
\$459,900

EXCELLENT VALUE

2 master suites on either side of the unit. Hdwd flrs throughout main living area. Upgraded carpet & padding in sleeping areas. Updated kitchen. Enclosed balcony off of LR. BRs & balcony have city view & glimpses of the Potomac. Prkg, storage, the usual Carlyle amenities, shopping & restaurants of Old Town. For more information call Brian & Jerry or visit www.brianandjery.com

2121 Jamieson Avenue #2006
BRIAN HONG/JERY BEAMER
703.929.5764



OPEN SUN. 1-4



Alexandria
\$829,000

MODEL HOME LIVING!

Come see for yourself this well appointed, sun filled model home in close-in community of Cedar Knolls; minutes to Metro, Ft. Belvoir & Kingstowne. 3 fin. levels offer 4-5 BR's, 3.5 BA's, Chef's kitchen, formal rooms, luxury master suite, media rm & billiards rm, sun room, private deck, 2-car garage & much more. Dir: Telegraph Rd S, pass Van Dorn Bypass, R Clifton Knoll to 7032 on left.

7032 Clifton Knoll Court
KIM MUFFLER 703.282.7739



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Throughout February, the City of Alexandria and Mount Vernon Estate holds a variety of events to celebrate the birth of George Washington. For more information visit www.mountvernon.org or visitalexandriava.com. The following is a sampling of the events.

George Washington Comes to Dinner at Carlyle House

Saturday, Feb. 7 from noon-4 p.m.
Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St.
Regular admission price.
703-549-2997

A living history tour of the Carlyle House centering on Washington's visit to the house in 1760 for dinner after church. Stop and talk to John Carlyle and George Washington in the study and to servants and slaves setting up for dinner in the dining room, along with others.

'Walking with Washington' Tours

Sundays, Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 1:30 p.m.
Meet at the fountain at Market Square, 301 King St.
Free
703-991-4474
Walk the sites associated with George Washington.

The Cherry Challenge

Sunday, Feb. 1 through Sunday, Feb. 8
Participating restaurants including Bookbinder's, Finn and Porter, St. Elmo's Coffee Pub and Stardust.

Contact a restaurant to see if they are participating.

Each restaurant that is participating will create a menu item featuring cherries. Patrons vote for their favorite and the winning restaurant will be in the George Washington Birthday Parade, receive a plaque and a feature in "Washingtonian" Magazine.

George Washington Classic 10K Race

Saturday, Feb. 14 at 8:30 a.m.
\$30-\$35/person for 10K or \$10/person for 2K Fun Run
703-991-4474

Run a 10K or a 2K Fun Run, earn prizes, t-shirt and more. Benefits Alexandria Police Youth Camp.

Birthnight Banquet & Ball

Saturday, Feb. 14 at 5:30 p.m.
Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St.
\$100/banquet and ball; \$50/ball only
703-838-4242 Reservations required.

Be part of a re-enactment of the ball held in Washington's honor at Gadsby's in 1797. Colonial attire is not required.

Revolutionary War Re-Enactment

Sunday, Feb. 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road
Free
703-838-4848

Enjoy historic camp and tactical demonstrations throughout the day including a Revolutionary War skirmish between the Redcoats and the Colonial Army.

Worship at Historic Christ Church

Sunday, Feb. 15 at 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.
118 N. Washington St.
703-549-1450 or www.historicchristchurch.org
Free

George Washington was a member of this church. Honor the first President during services through reading the prayer he composed, laying a wreath in his memory and displaying the Washington Family Bible.

Breakfast and Meeting of Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association

Monday, Feb. 16 at 9 a.m.
Historic Distric Holiday Inn and Suites, 625 First St.
Price TBD
Hear guest speakers and enjoy a breakfast.

Wreath Laying Ceremony

Monday, Feb. 16 at 11 a.m. at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution
Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 321 S. Fairfax St.
Free
Colonial Military and civilians honor the soldiers of the Revolutionary War.

George Washington Birthday Parade

Monday, Feb. 16 from 1-3 p.m. from S. Saint Asaph Street at Wilkes Street to Queen Street and on.

Free
Enjoy the largest parade celebrating Washington's birthday in the U.S.

Free Open Houses

Monday, Feb. 16
Call for last tour time.
The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. 11 a.m. 703-838-4994.

Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 703-838-4242.

Friendship Firehouse Museum, 107 S. Alfred St. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 703-838-3891.

The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105-107 S. Fairfax St. 1-4 p.m. 703-838-3852.

Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 703-838-4242.

Lee-Fendall House Museum, 614 Oronoco St. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 703-548-1789.

Christ Church, 118 N. Washington St. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 703-549-1450.

George Washington Memorial Award Presentation

Saturday, Feb. 21 at 1 p.m.
George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive
703-991-4474
Free

The annual award is "presented to individuals who have promoted the virtues, character and vision of George Washington." The presentation will be followed by music, cake and more. The 2009 Recipient is General Dave R. Palmer, author of "George Washington and Benedict Arnold:



Explore the life of George Washington through a variety of events happening in February.

A Tale of Two Patriots" and "1794 America, Its Army, and the Birth of the Nation."

George Washington Symposium

Saturday, Feb. 21 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive
\$25/person includes luncheon
703-991-4474

"The Military Education of George Washington" will be the focus. Presenters will be Prof. Edward G. Lengel and historian Glenn F. William.

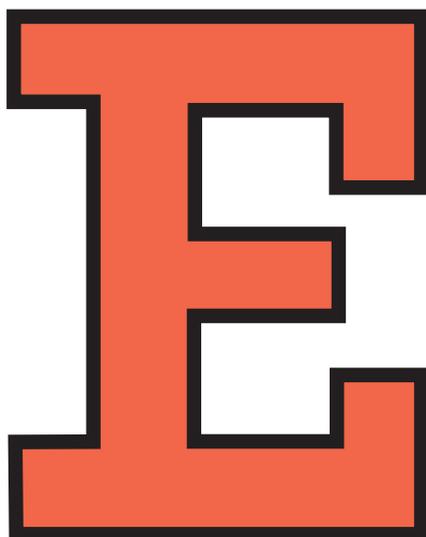
Tea with Martha Washington

Saturday, Feb. 21 at 3 p.m.
Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St.
Reservations required 703-838-4242.
Enjoy an 18th century tea including special blend of tea, pound cake, dried fruit and cookies.

George Washington Celebration Photography Contest

Deadline is March 31
Visit www.visitalexandriava.com for entry information

Amateur and professional photographers can submit photographs of George Washington Birthday celebration events, both past and present. Cash prizes for the winners.



ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE



Carlyle House offers the first event in the celebration, dinner with Washington.

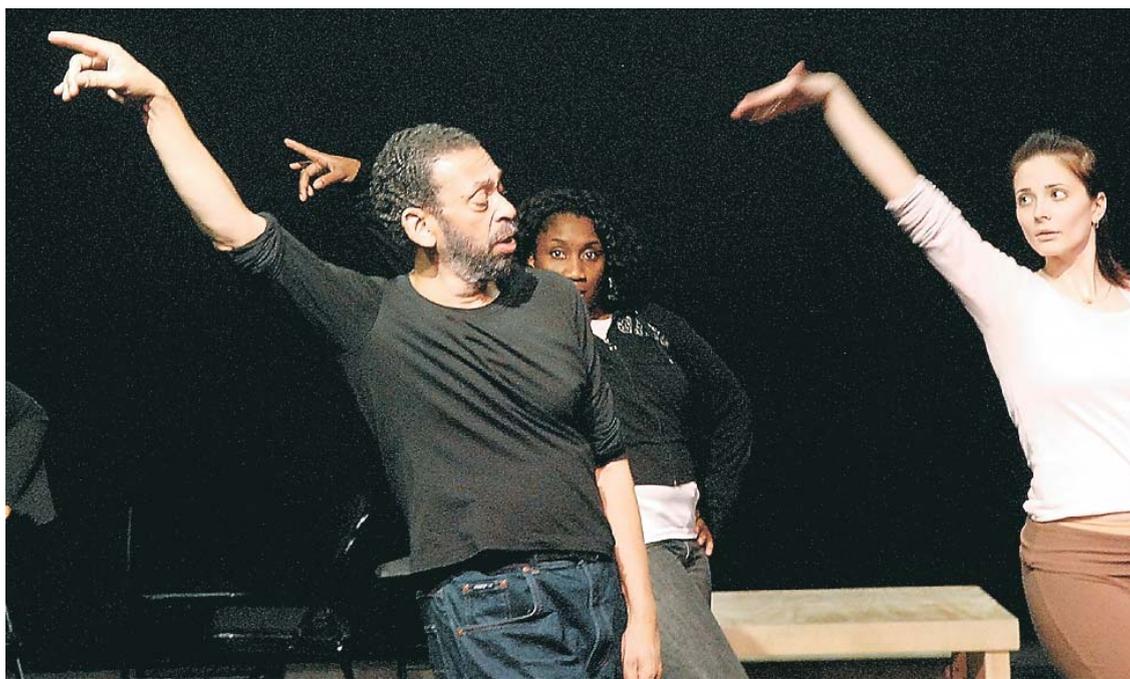


PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT

Dancer and choreographer Maurice Hines works out a routine with Gia Mora and Rosalind "Roz" White for the upcoming show at MetroStage "Cool Papa's Party." The show opens on Feb. 5.

Maurice Hines: Keeping MetroStage Tapping

BY CAROLYN GRIFFIN,
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, METROSTAGE

"Cool Papa's Party" covers 60 years of song and dance, against the backdrop of the world of entertainment — the political, the racial and the historic. MetroStage is premiering a new musical "Cool Papa's Party," an original work by Atlanta writer/director Thomas W. Jones II, with original music by William Knowles, beginning Feb. 5.

Dancer and choreographer, actor and singer, the legendary tap dancer Maurice Hines has joined Jones and Knowles and a cast of seven to choreograph this production, recreating the world of dance, tap and entertainment that spans the last century. "Cool Papa's Party" tells the story of a mythic figure in the world of entertainment in the tradition of Sammy Davis Jr.

Maurice Hines brings his own personal 60 years of dance and performing to the stage, reflecting the tradition of tap from the Nicholas Brothers to present

day tap icon Savion Glover. At age 65 Maurice Hines has been dancing since he was five years old, reflecting a history that includes dancing with younger brother Gregory, classes with the world renowned tap teacher and choreographer Henry Le Tang in Harlem, performing as the Hines Brothers then Hines, Hines and Dad (their father being an acclaimed drummer), debuting on Broadway when he was 11 years old, appearing in "Guys and Dolls," "Eubie," "Sophisticated Ladies," "Jelly's Last Jam," and "Uptown It's Hot" (for which he received a Tony nomination) on Broadway and in national tours, the film "Cotton Club," record recordings, and more.

Mr. Hines has thrilled the cast with stories of opening for Ella (Fitzgerald) at the Flamingo with friend and mentor Sammy Davis Jr. in the audience, his dozens of appearances with Gregory on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson, stories about his good friend Lena Horne, tales of Lola Falana and Sammy Davis Jr.

When he leaves us here in Alexandria on opening weekend, he heads straight for Las Vegas!

LOCAL THEATER

Know of something missing from our Local Theater listings? Send it to Mount Vernon Gazette at gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is 2 p.m. the Thursday before publication. Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with any questions.

Upcoming Events

Watch **"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"** by the Arlington Players **through Feb. 14** at Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 S. 2nd St. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. \$15/adult; \$12/senior, junior. Visit www.thearlingtonplayers.org or 703-549-1063.

See **"Mujeres al Poder (Kick-Butt Women)"** based on Lady Godiva by Jean Canolle at Gunston Arts Center, Theater Two, 2700 S. Lang St. **from Feb. 12 through March 7**. Tickets are \$20-\$30/person. Visit www.teatrodela luna.org or 703-548-3092.

Ongoing Events

"Les Miserables" is being performed at Signature's Max Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave **through Feb. 22**. Tickets range between \$65-\$87. Showtimes are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Visit www.signature-theatre.org or 703-573-7328.

Aldersgate Church Children's Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road, presents **"Aladdin Junior" Jan. 17, 23 and 24** at 7:30 p.m. and **Jan. 18, 19, 24 and 25** at 3 p.m. Visit www.acctonline.org or 703-660-2611 for tickets and reservations.

THE MUSIC LISTINGS

Know of a local venue that we don't have listed? Contact Rebecca Halik at gazette@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6407.

Austin Grill
801 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-684-8969.

Bangkok Blues
926 W. Broad St., Falls Church. Call 703-534-0095. <http://www.bangkokblues.com/>.

The Birchmere
3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Shows start at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

Clark Street Playhouse presents **"The Cherry Orchard" from Jan. 22 through Feb. 15** at the playhouse, 601 S. Clark St. Performances are Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets range between \$25-\$35/person. Visit <http://www.washingtonshakespeare.org/> for more.

"Cool Papa's Party" is at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. **from Feb. 5 through March 15**. Performances are Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. \$40-\$45/person. Visit www.metrostage.org or 703-548-9044.

Signature Theatre presents **"The Little Dog Laughed" from Jan. 13 through March 8** in the ARK Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. The comedy is not recommended for children. Tickets range between \$44-\$71 and are available along with information about the play at www.signature-theatre.org. Shows are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Port City Playhouse presents **"Veronica's Room" by Ira Levin from Jan. 23 through Feb. 8** with performances on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and a closing matinee on Sunday, Feb. 8 at the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. For tickets, visit www.portcityplayhouse.com or 703-383-2880.

Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., presents **"Greater Tuna" from Jan. 10 through Jan. 31**. Performances are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Visit www.thelittletheatre.com or 703-683-0496 for tickets.

Bistro Europa
715 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-549-0533.

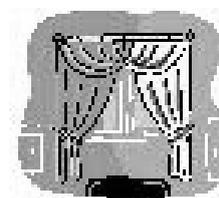
Cameron Perks
4911 Brenman Park Drive, Alexandria. All events are free. Visit www.cameronperks.com or 703-461-6900.

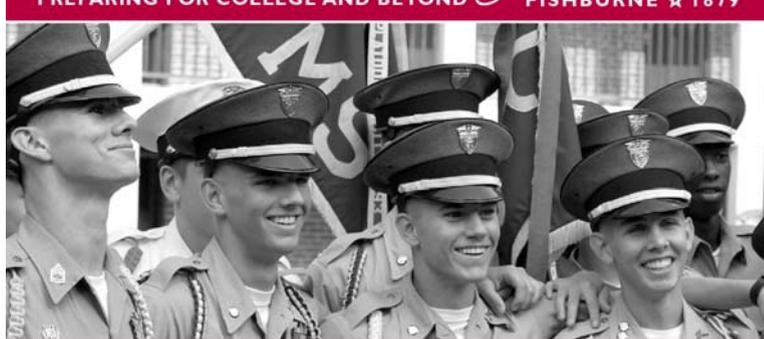
Caribbean Breeze
4100 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington. Call 703-812-7997.
Salsa Lessons every Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Calabash of Alexandria
7305 Richmond Highway, Alexan
SEE MUSIC, PAGE 17

CONNECTION
Photo Galleries
Now! Thousands of pictures of sports, graduations, current events and more—never published, but posted on the Web. Free for evaluation, available for prints.

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

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

Historic Mount Vernon welcomes all Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Club members (in uniform or wearing an official pin) to free admission during its *Scouting Days* program through Feb. 15, 2009. For more information, visit www.MountVernon.org.

La Muse, 108 N. Patrick St., collects and ships donations for www.AnySoldier.com every day of the year. Bring donations to La Muse and it will be packaged and shipped to soldiers. For ideas on what to donate go to: www.ShopLaMuse.net/Anysoldier.html or call 703-683-1696.

Historic Mount Vernon welcomes **Inauguration visitors** in January with 20 percent off adult admission. Visitors must print the coupon from Mount Vernon's Web site: <http://visit.mountvernon.org>. January is also the 250th wedding anniversary of George and Martha Washington, and on display Jan. 12 - Feb. 23 are Mrs. Washington's wedding slippers,

which have not been exhibited at Mount Vernon in over 30 years. \$15 for adults; \$7 for youth ages 6-11; and free for children five and younger. Visit <http://visit.mountvernon.org> or 703-780-2000.

The public can participate in the second annual "**Alexandria Recreation Games for Healthy Living**," **Jan. 10 through March 6**. An awards ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, at the Lee Center Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. To register, pick up an information packet at the Chinguapin Park Recreation Center, or online at www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services present free **dance workshops** at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, from 3:30-5 p.m. on Feb. 13,27, March 13,27, April 10,24 and May 8. To register, 703-324-4386.

Visitors can learn about slavery at Mount Vernon during **Black History Month** programs, wish "George Washington" happy birthday, view new objects on display from a Revolutionary War cannon in the "George Washington & His Generals" exhibit to Mrs. Washington's wedding slippers and gown pieces (through Feb. 23). For more information, visit Visit.MountVernon.org.

Woodlawn's Needlework exhibition is **March 1-31** at 9000 Richmond Highway. There will be demonstrations, lunch by Nelly's Needlers and more. See needleworks from around the world. Visit www.woodlawn1805.org or 703-780-

4000 for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 29

Cool Papa's Party. Enjoy a musical odyssey at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. Call 703-548-9044 for tickets.

18th Century Dance Lessons. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. Learn from instructors. \$12/class or \$30/series. Reservations recommended, 703-838-4242.

Story Time. 10 a.m. or 3 p.m. at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children ages 3-5. Free. 703-519-5900.

Book Sale. Noon-9 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Browse a variety of books. Free. 703-838-4566.

Short Story Discussion. 7 p.m. at Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Call 703-519-3498 for story titles. Free.

Storytime. 4 p.m. at Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Children ages 3-5 years. Free. 703-838-4555.

FRIDAY/JAN. 30

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30 a.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. Children ages 2 and under enjoy songs and stories. Free. Visit www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Book Sale. 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Browse a variety of books. Free. 703-838-4566.

Workshop. 7-9 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 2932 King St. Free workshop for parents and teachers. Visit www.celebratecalm.com for more.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 17



Shawn Colvin will perform with Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin and Buddy Miller on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 3, 4 at the Birchmere.

Help Your Child Do Better in School!

Make this your child's best school year EVER!

When it comes to helping kids with the new school year, no one does it better than Huntington. If your child struggles with homework, can't keep up with new classwork, or just wants to get ahead, call us. We can help. We can diagnose what is keeping your child from being his or her best and create a program of instruction tailored to his or her need. Just a few hours a week can improve your child's skills, confidence, and motivation.

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Burke, Fairfax Station
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Alexandria
Mt. Vernon, Lorton
703-541-2211

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The Royal Restaurant

(now smoke free)

"What's for Dinner?!"

You don't have to think too hard, let us solve this classic question.

In addition to our award winning menu, we have added some popular specials that add variety for everybody taste.

Real food, for real people at reasonable prices.

Monday - Kids Night

Burger Night (Kids eat 1/2 price) Each child must be accompanied by adult having entree.

Tuesday - Greek Night

Lamb Marinated and Roasted for 3 hours, Athenian Roast Chicken, Moussaka!

Wednesday - All American Night

Meatloaf, Chicken Fried Chicken, Va. Ham

Thursday - Italian Night

Lasagna, Chicken Alfredo, Calamari

Friday - Fish Night

Crab Cakes, Shrimp & Scallops over penne pasta with white sauce

Saturday - Steak and Chop Night

Prime Rib, Lamb, Surf and Turf, Pork Chops, and Moussaka

Sunday

Brunch served 7am - 2pm

Dine in or call ahead and your dinner will be ready for pick up.

Dinner hours 2:30-9:30pm
730 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 548-1616



Ample Free Parking

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 16

Music Performance. Alexandria resident Chris Gekker will perform at noon at the Summer School Museum, 17th and M Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. Hear poetry and music by Eric Ewazen, Katherine Gekker, Gail Collins and Stephen Brown, all with ties to Alexandria. Free.

The Boston Brass. 7:30 p.m. The brass quintet will perform in Springbank Auditorium at West Potomac High School, 6500 Quander Road, Alexandria. \$10/person. Seating is limited. To request tickets call 703-718-2586, or e-mail penelope.bauer@fcps.edu.

SATURDAY/JAN. 31

Magestic Eagles. 2:30 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe these birds and learn about their lives. Free. 703-339-2385.

Bay View Sunset Walk. 4 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe animals as they get ready for bed. Free. 703-339-2385.

Wild For Winter Waterfowl. 10:30 a.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Free. 703-339-2385.

Good Sports Storytime. 11 a.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. Children ages 2 and up enjoy songs and stories about touchdowns, goals, and more. Free. Visit www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Turn the Page. 10 a.m. at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Discuss "A Whole New Mind" by Daniel Pink. Free. 703-519-5900.

Time for 2s. 10 a.m. at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Ages 2-36 months can enjoy stories and more. Free. Registration required, 703-519-5900.

Saturday Stories. 10:30 a.m. at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. All ages can enjoy stories. Free. Registration required, 703-519-5900.

Book Sale. 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Browse a variety of books. Free. 703-

838-4566.

Movie Watch. 7 p.m. at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church. Watch "Fireproof" and have a discussion. Childcare provided. Free. 703-360-4370.

Workshop. 9-11 a.m. at First Baptist Church, 2932 King St. Free workshop for parents and teachers. Visit www.celebratecalm.com for more.

Book Signing. 1-5 p.m. at Waldenbooks, 5801 Duke St. Author Jamey Long will sign copies of his "Possum" books. Free.

SUNDAY/FEB. 1

Wintering Animals. 1 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Free. 703-339-2385.

Magestic Eagles. 3 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe these birds and learn about their lives. Free. 703-339-2385.

Wild For Winter Waterfowl. 10:30 a.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Free. 703-339-2385.

Music Performance. The Marine Band will perform music from 1961 at Schlesinger Concert Hall, 3001 N. Beauregard St. Free. Visit www.schlesingercenter.com or 703-845-6156.

THURSDAY/FEB. 5

Reception. 6-8 p.m. Exhibition: "A Radiant Spirit: The Journey of Mary Ellen Hendersen" from Feb. 5 through March 28 at Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Free. Visit www.alexblackhistory.org or 703-838-4356.

FRIDAY/FEB. 6

Music Performance. 5 p.m. at Carlyle House. Hear 18th-century music and enjoy a candle-lit tour. 703-549-2997 for tickets.

Music Performance. 7:30 p.m. at Bishop Ireton, 201 Cambridge Road. The concert band performs free. Visit www.usafband.af.mil or 202-767-5658.

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Galaxy Hut
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Iota Club and Café
2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington. Call 703-522-8340.

SATURDAY/FEB. 7

Magestic Eagles. 10:30 a.m. or 3 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe these birds and learn about their lives. Free. 703-339-2385.

Bay View Sunset Walk. 4 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe animals as they get ready for bed. Free. 703-339-2385.

Wild For Winter Waterfowl. 10:30 a.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Free. 703-339-2385.

Boutique District Warehouse Sale. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Browse items from local stores and more. Free.

Oral History Lecture. 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Char McCargo Bah will give a lecture about Freedmen's Cemetery. Free. 703-838-4356.

Awards Reception. 4-8 p.m. Gallery West, 1213 King St., presents the "National Juried Exhibition" from Feb. 4 through March 1. See works picked by Joey Manlapaz. Free.

Lecture. "Their Voices Can Be Heard, Part II: The Genealogist's Way of Doing Oral History" 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Free. Visit www.alexblackhistory.org or 703-838-4356.

SUNDAY/FEB. 8

Magestic Eagles. 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe these birds and learn about their lives. Free. 703-339-2385.

Wild For Winter Waterfowl. 10:30 a.m. at Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Observe swans, ducks and other waterfowl. Free. 703-339-2385 for more information.

Music Performance. David Roth, Cletus Kennelly and Lori Kelley will perform at 7 p.m. at Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St. \$15/adult; \$12/member or in advance. Visit www.focusmusic.org or 703-501-6061.

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FROM PAGE 15

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

total base load of energy, and also that it seems reasonable to provide utilities the same rate of return for investing in energy efficiency as they would receive for building new coal plants. A fair-rate of return will incentivize energy companies to utilize these technologies.

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Eleanor Whitaker
Mt. Vernon Citizens
for Sustainable Energy

Support Higher Cigarette Tax

To the Editor:

The current economic downturn is having a significant impact on regions across the globe and the Commonwealth is no different. Now, these economic ills are set to shift to the healthcare industry. Over the next few days, legislators in Virginia will be considering reductions in Medicaid payments, which would severely jeopardize the healthcare services you and your family receive.

While Gov. Tim Kaine's proposed cuts will save the Commonwealth

nearly \$55 million, the cost to healthcare providers in Virginia will be an astounding \$111 million. This is because the federal government matches state Medicaid spending in Virginia, so every dollar the state cuts, impacts patients and hospitals twice as much.

You may ask "Why should I care, I don't receive Medicaid?" Even if you are not a recipient of Medicaid, it is an essential safety net for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens — the elderly, disabled and children. It also causes the deductibles of insured patients to rise, and limits services the hospital can provide.

If the proposed cigarette tax is rejected, the potential cuts to healthcare services would be \$440 million. What would be impacted by \$440 million in Medicaid cuts?

Access to quality healthcare services could be put at risk because healthcare providers cannot absorb these enormous cuts in funding. The economic downturn has hospitals including Inova Mount Vernon Hospital delaying infrastructure improvements designed to serve the entire population and it increases the costs for us to borrow for these improvements.

Such negative effects would result in the loss of healthcare jobs throughout Virginia, but also im-

act many of our proposed expansion and renovation projects.

Inova is the second largest provider of Medicaid services in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As the primary safety net provider for Northern Virginia, these cuts have a direct impact on all services provided by Inova hospitals.

Without the passage of the cigarette tax, losses to Inova could total more than \$58 million. As you know, businesses are struggling and many are reducing benefits. People are losing their jobs, which increases Medicaid enrollment and causes hospital debt to rise.

Because Medicaid fails to cover the full cost of patient care, providers like Inova Mount Vernon Hospital need to shift costs in other areas of the hospital, which it has been doing for years. With the proposed cuts, the cost-shifting can not continue.

If the Medicaid cuts are approved, hospitals like ours will be put in an impossible position.

That is why I am asking that a strong message be sent to our legislators explaining what these potential cuts will mean for all Virginians.

Barbara Doyle
CEO, Inova Mount
Vernon Hospital

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Gloom and Doom for Area Gymnasts

Fairfax wants to cut girl's gymnastics to the dismay of both West Potomac and Mount Vernon teams.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO
THE GAZETTE

It just doesn't add up for Mount Vernon girl's gymnastics coach Linda Fischer that the year her team is the largest it has ever been may be its last.

Fischer, the Majors coach since 2000 and a gymnast herself at the school from 1994-1997, usually tries to keep her team to a manageable size by making cuts during pre-season tryouts, but this season decided to keep all 23 girls who came out.

With the Fairfax County School Board strongly considering a budget proposal that would eliminate funding for girl's gymnastics starting next season amidst a reported \$170 million shortfall. It has left Fischer with the unenviable task of explaining the situation to her suddenly robust team.

"I've told the kids time and time again, this is your last year," Fischer said at the Washington-Lee Invitational this past weekend. "It has been very difficult."

Although a final decision on the fate of girl's gymnastics won't be made until May, the fact that county officials have already amended their plan once — the original proposal called for the elimination of indoor track as well — without taking girl's gymnastics off the chopping block has created a gloomy outlook for the close to 200 members of the sport's community.

"It has been really sad because gymnastics is my sport and I don't do any other sports in high school," said Mount Vernon junior Meg Earley. "I'm not the only person that this is their only sport. There are tons of girls here that this is the only sport they do."

WHAT HAS MANY gymnastics coaches around the area irked is the reasoning behind Fairfax County's decision making. Bill Curran, the county's director of athletics, has characterized girl's gymnastics as a "dying sport" in high school with plenty of opportunities at the club level.

This logic is wrong, according to most coaches, because many of these club gymnasts have to practice all year-round and being able to compete at the high school level is their only opportunity to represent their schools and be recognized by their peers.

And of the four coaches interviewed Saturday, none had more than a couple girls on each squad that competed



This might be the first and last season for Mount Vernon freshman Mackenzie Vance to compete on the Majors' girl's gymnastics team with Fairfax County proposing to cut the sport because of an estimated \$170 million budget shortfall.

at the club level. Fischer said "maybe one" of her 23 gymnasts would be able to do club,

while West Potomac coach Pete Novgrad — who also is the coach at Edison, Jefferson, and T.C. Williams — said four of his 32 total gymnasts could do club if high school gymnastics is to be eliminated.

Carly Meyer, the gymnastics coordinator of the Arlington Aerials club program, said to even be a part of their recreational team, participants had to be a level four gymnast and "a lot of the high schoolers who do the sport are not equivalent" to that.

The club program is more exclusive and can

cost up to \$310 a month.

"High school gymnastics is not club," said Fischer. "To go to a club, they don't want to see someone that just does cartwheels and half my girls are just cartwheels and round-ups. They aren't back handsprings, no tucks. They're here to have fun."

Proponents of the sport say officials throughout Virginia should take into account Title IX issues and look towards cutting freshmen team programs, rather than seeking to eliminate an entire varsity sport. The Fairfax County School Board is holding an additional public comments hearing Wednesday night, after the Gazette's press time.

WEST POTOMAC CAPTAIN Cara

W-L Invitational Results

Although there was some concern over whether there would be another Washington-Lee Invitational in the future, it didn't seem to affect area gymnasts. In the team competition, West Potomac placed fifth while Mount Vernon placed sixth.

Leading the charge for the Wolverines was Julie Ruamthong, who was the highest-scoring West Potomac gymnast in the vault, beam, floor and all-around competitions. Sarah Woodward led the team in the bars event.

Mount Vernon's Katelyn Wakefield shined for the Majors, finishing best on the team in the all-around competition thanks in large part to an impressive score of 8.1 on the vault. Meg Earley was the strongest Major in the floor exercise.

The district tournaments for both Mount Vernon and West Potomac take place beginning next Monday.

Yaworske, a junior, wants to speak at that meeting because she feels the voice of those who actually benefit gymnastics isn't being heard.

"It seems like everyone is aware of gymnastics being cut but they don't seem to care as much as we do, obviously, because they don't do the sport," said Yaworske. "But do they realize this is making me lose my chances of competing for my school during senior year?"

Her coach, Novgrad, thinks all the negative publicity is also discouraging younger girls from coming out for the sport. He said a number of girls didn't come out for his teams this season because they thought the sport wouldn't be around much longer.

For now, though, everyone involved with area high school gymnastics can only hope for the best as what looks more and more like their final season moves along.

"I'm hoping they can keep it around," said Earley as she prepared for her floor routine last weekend. "I might still be able to do gymnastics, but it won't be the same if it's taken away."



Mount Vernon freshman Marchae Franklin finishes her floor routine during last weekend's Washington-Lee Invitational. The Majors have more girls than ever participating in the sport even though the team may not exist next season.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

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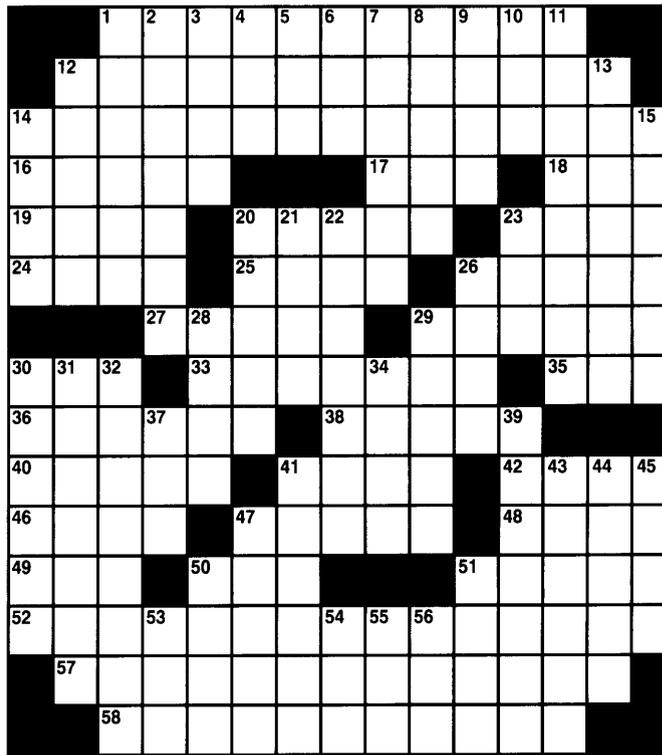
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NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 0416-3



Puzzle by John Wolting

ACROSS

- Court systems
- Bailed out, in a manner of speaking
- Principle of economy
- Individual shares
- It may be red or black
- Salutary site
- Move
- Influences
- Otter and others
- In bridge, the player on the dealer's right
- Fuse sound
- Depth charge target
- Cow
- Like the Godhead
- 14-Across, e.g.
- Hit, as a Texas leaguer
- Early Plains building material
- Bonds after splitting
- Amass
- Scrub
- Engender

- Top-selling pop group of the 70's
- Tanning need
- Works with visual effects
- Park place?
- Singer DiFranco
- Flight datum: Abbr.
- Like some statistics
- Become livid
- Commit oneself, in a way
- Leads

- One who gets high?
- Mud dauber, e.g.
- Experienced
- Cantors' places
- Dipsomaniac
- Port in Oregon
- Justice Dept. division
- Literary variant of Hindustani
- Be an accessory to
- Position
- Popeye's female foe in early comics

- White elephants, e.g.
- Stork with a featherless head
- Persian output
- Grand — ("Evangeline" setting)
- Untroubled
- Track event
- Lighter fill
- Uncomfortable neckwear
- Not impotent
- Two-tone treats
- Great —
- Curtainlike partitions, biologically
- T-shirt size: Abbr.
- Highest
- Café alternative
- Like some cats

DOWN

- Like a news bulletin
- Pronounced
- Buck passers?
- Motor —
- Capt. of industry
- Left end?
- 1990's Coca-Cola slogan
- Some stallions
- Has no life
- Mass. setting
- Deeply felt
- Poetic chapter

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

D	I	S	C	S	D	R	O	S	S	I	M	P
O	N	E	U	P	D	E	P	O	T	N	O	R
S	C	A	R	L	E	T	F	A	C	E	D	O
T	A	T	T	E	S	L	I	P	P	E	R	Y
					I	N	I	T	A	P	E	X
R	O	U	N	D	T	R	I	P	L	E	T	
A	R	P	I	S	A	L	L		R	E	P	O
S	C	O	L	D	V	E	E	N	I	X	E	D
P	A	N	E		E	N	A	T	E	I	T	O
					T	A	B	L	E	H	U	N
S	T	O	G	I	E		S	I	T	E		
T	O	M	O	R	R	O		G	R	I	E	G
U	T	A		B	A	K	E	D	H	A	M	L
D	U	H		A	T	R	I	A		L	A	I
S	P	A		G	E	A	R	S		S	N	E

SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT!

Be the first person to fax in the correct crossword puzzle answers, and we'll put your name here! Fax the completed puzzle, with your name, the puzzle number, and the time and date of the fax, to the Crossword Puzzle Desk, fax #703-917-0998.

The winner of puzzle #0415-3 is:

F. J. Pepper

Note: Due to space limitations, in some weeks the crossword may not appear. The next time it appears, it will be the next one in order, with the answers and winner for this puzzle.

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21 Announcements

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SPORTS

Taking Playoff 'Baby Steps'

Despite recent losing streak, West Potomac boy's still have time to right the ship.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO
THE GAZETTE

Even before the season began back in December, West Potomac boy's basketball coach David Houston III knew the last six games before the district playoffs began would be his team's most important.

With a team chock full of first-year varsity players, Houston had a plan in mind from the get go of preseason.

"The goal is to take the baby steps through the end of the year," Houston said at a practice in November. This team needs to just build every day and when the playoffs come, be at the highest level we can play and ride that through the playoffs."

But after losses to defending Virginia AAA state champion T.C. Williams, 68-37, last Friday night, and Lake Braddock, 59-45, on Monday night, it appears hatching the strategy and carrying it out do not go hand in hand.

"We haven't been playing our best basketball," said a frustrated Houston after Friday's loss to T.C. Williams. "But we still have more games left and they're definitely still important for preparing yourself for the postseason."

And although West Potomac (5-10 overall, 1-8 Patriot District) are now riding six-game losing streak heading into next Tuesday's match-up with South County, the Wolverines must remain afloat for seeding purposes.

That's the joy of high school basketball, everybody gets a shot at redemption once playoff season hits. And the Wolverines, led by junior Martez Redfearn and emerging sophomore guard Daryl Copeland, have the talent to play spoiler if they get the right breaks. That means winning at least a couple of their remaining five district games.

The last thing West Potomac wants is a first-round rematch with powerhouse T.C. Williams, whose win over the Wolverines Friday night was its 60th straight in Patriot District play. A favorable match-up increases



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac junior Keeyn Hankins goes for a block on T.C. Williams senior Marcus Via during last Friday's 68-37 loss for the Wolverines.

the chances of Houston's squad sneaking into the regional tournament despite a lackluster record.

"Every game is tough, so we're playing for positioning in the district tournament," said Houston. "And we're playing to find the right rotation and the right guys on the court. I do think we're getting better in a lot of areas."

THE SCRIPT IS REVERSED down Richmond Highway at neighboring Mount Vernon High School, where the boy's basketball team is in the midst of a 10-game winning streak following last Friday night's 72-51 victory over Washington-Lee.

Mount Vernon (12-4, 7-0 National District) has a two-game cushion over second place Stuart and Yorktown in the district race with just five games remaining, including two games this week.

While Mount Vernon has had a plethora of players step up in various games, the one constant throughout has been junior Skylar Jones, averaging more than 17 points per game. If the versatile forward keeps up his impressive pace, the Majors have as good a shot as any to make a run at the Northern Region title.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Softball Clinics

The T.C. Williams High School Softball Boosters are offering pre-season clinics for Alexandria softball players.

Pitching clinics will be held from 8 to 9 p.m. on Monday evenings, Feb. 2 and 9 in the auxiliary gym at the school, 3330 King St., Alexandria. T.C. Williams head varsity coach Jennifer Moshier will lead the clinics. The cost is \$15 for a single night.

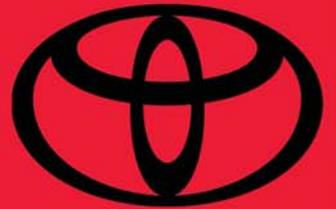
The boosters are offering two more softball clinics for Alexandria softball players on Saturday, Feb. 7 and 21. The clinics will

be led by T.C. Williams coaches Jennifer Moshier, Dan Cortright, Michelle Salmieri and Katie Frawley, who will provide instruction and practice time for throwing, catching, hitting and pitching. The clinics will be held in the auxiliary gym. Girls in grades four through seven should attend from 8 to 10 a.m., and girls in grades eight through 12 should attend from 10 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$15 for both Saturdays.

To register for the clinics, contact Moshier at jennifer.moshier@acps.k12.va.us. Each pitching clinic session will be limited to six players.

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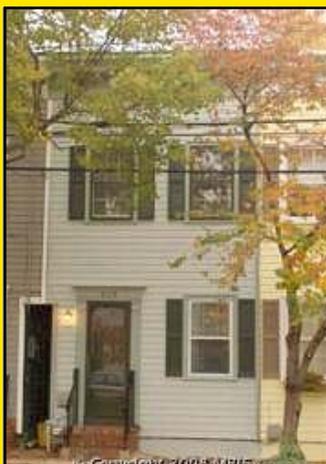
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