

Mount Vernon Gazette

25 CENTS

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

JULY 16, 2009

Deeper Cuts for Schools

Bleak financial outlook for 2010-11.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

The 2009-10 school year hasn't even started yet, but Fairfax County Public Schools is already warning the public to prepare for deeper budget cuts in 2010-11.

Many families are upset about the increase in average class size in Fairfax County Public Schools coming this fall. School Board members said the increase is necessary to deal with a shortfall in funding.

"I think the key question we have to ask ourselves is 'what are we going to stop doing?'"

— Superintendent Jack Dale

"We will not be able to eliminate that budget gap by just increasing class size. Even if we increased the class size by 11 students, it will not go away," said Susan Quinn, the school system's chief financial officer.

Fairfax schools receive approximately 70 percent of their financial support directly from Fairfax County, which relies heavily on local real estate taxes for revenue. With the crash of the real estate market, Fairfax property values plummeted last year and officials expect they would continue to decline further this coming year, leading to lower tax collections.

According to a school system pre

SEE SCHOOL BOARD, PAGE 3



Taylor Gailliot and Caroline Menna.



Andrew Flak and Chanukah Jane Lilburne.

In Performance

"Anthing Goes" by Cole Porter will be performed by the Blessed Sacrament Church Youth Group, July 16, 17 and 18 at Bishop Ireton High School. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on Saturday at 2 p.m.

For reservations, call 703-998-6100 ext 20. For directions to the school, visit www.bishopireton.org.



Chanukah Jane Lilburne and the fan ensemble.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

Rising Hope Church Burglarized

Thieves were in and out within four minutes.

Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church was robbed early Tuesday morning, with burglars making off with a \$3,000 plasma television set and doing as much as \$10,000 in damage to the building. Pastor Kerry Kincannon said they entered and exited within the span of four minutes.

"They obviously knew exactly where they were going and what they were doing," said Kincannon. "These are people who knew the lay of the land."

Outside the church, milk crates had been piled on top of each other to gain access to

a window that was smashed open. Discarded clothing was used to prevent broken shards of glass from cutting the intruders. A pad lock preventing access to the sanctuary was broken apart. Kincannon said that the theft comes at a time when the

SEE RISING, PAGE 3

Bearing The Burden

Should county raise taxes on gross receipts paid by businesses?

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Like most builders, Rick Genuario has lost business activity in the current economic downturn. Fortunately, though, he hasn't had to lay off any employees from Genuario Construction, the family business that has been in operation since 1969. But the sluggish real-estate market and frozen credit lines have created a hardship for builders and developers across Fairfax County. That's why the prospect of tripling the business tax he pays to Fairfax County at this time seems like a far-fetched idea for expanding municipal revenues.

"This would make it much more difficult to stay in business, especially in the current environment," said Genuario. "And it would also affect charitable giving at a time when it's needed the most."

This is why he's opposed to a recent proposal of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations to increase a range of levies on business and professional occupations licenses

SEE BEARING THE BURDEN, PAGE 3

"Let's face it — nobody likes to pay taxes. But we've got to find a way to increase revenues."
— Katherine Ward, co-chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations

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permeate this sun-drenched, three-bedroom, three-and-half-bath, center-hall brick residence located on a corner of Yates Gardens. With warm wood floors, a living room fireplace and nice detailed woodwork, this handsome home offers beautiful formal rooms for entertaining, and a delightful family room overlooking a patio garden.

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Cold Case Yields Hit in Vegas

Former cop indicted for abduction after 19 years; wife's murder remains under investigation.

BY KEN MOORE
THE GAZETTE

Almost 20 years after he was first arrested for abducting his estranged wife, Bruce Webster, 68, is scheduled for trial once again, in August.

Fairfax Circuit Court Judge Robert J. Smith denied Webster's request to have his bond reduced and be released from custody last Friday, July 10.

Webster, a former officer with the Fairfax County Police Department, is accused of abducting his wife, Joann Webster, 44, in May 1990 and on New Year's Day 1991.

The two were involved in a "messy" divorce, according to Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Katherine E. Stott. Bruce Webster threatened to kill his wife if she didn't turn over property claims, Stott said.

On New Year's Day 1991, he used his revolver and a boning knife to abduct her a second time, Stott said.

Joann Webster escaped from his car at a 7-Eleven store parking lot in Prince William County where another customer helped her hide.

Bruce Webster was first arrested on Jan. 7, 1991.

BUT FIVE DAYS BEFORE his scheduled preliminary hearing in juvenile and domestic relations court, Joann Webster was found murdered in her home on the 8600 block of Sacramento Drive in Mount Vernon

on Feb. 16, 1991, according to Fairfax County Police. "Webster did not appear in court and a warrant charging him with failure to appear was issued. Webster left the area and could not be located," according to Fairfax County Police.

Joann Webster's homicide case remains under investigation. Cold case detectives opened a new investigation into her murder in 2007, according to Fairfax County Police.

Cold case detectives arrested Webster for the abductions after interviewing him in Las Vegas in January and April of this year. He has been charged with two counts of abduction and use of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

In May 2009, a Fairfax County grand jury indicted Webster for two counts of abduction.

WEBSTER WAS FORCED to resign from the police department after a lengthy and "serious" internal affairs investigation in 1990, said Stott.

Webster has been secluded from other inmates in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, according to information presented during the short hearing last Friday. Webster has no prior record, said his defense attorney, Dawn M. Butorac, of the Fairfax County Public Defender's Office.

He is estranged from his children, according to Stott.

Las Vegas police and the FBI's Washington Field Office assisted Fairfax County Police in the investigation of the case.

Katherine Tyson Dies in Car Crash

Katherine Tyson was known to many in the Mount Vernon community as a committed environmental activist, a leader in the Unitarian Universalist Church and a dedicated student at Boston University, where she recently graduated. But her life was cut short in a car crash last week in Colorado as she was returning from the Unitarian Universalist annual General Assembly in Salt Lake City. She was 21.



Katherine Tyson

"We are completely devastated, as are our friends at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church and the many people who knew and loved our daughter," said parents Karen and Herb Tyson in a written statement.

A native of Mount Vernon, she was a 2006 gradu-

ate of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and a National Merit Scholar. In May, she graduated cum laude from Boston University, where she studied mathematics and statistics. She planned to begin graduate studies for a doctorate in biostatistics in September.

She was active in the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, where she served on church committees, sang in the choir and frequently played the piano for worship

services.

Family members described her as interested in photography, music, baking, writing, computers and running. She was a Girl Scout for 13 years and held a second-degree black belt in karate.

School Board Consider Cuts for 2010

FROM PAGE 1

sentation, the county expects a 10 percent drop in residential property values and an 18 percent drop in commercial property values.

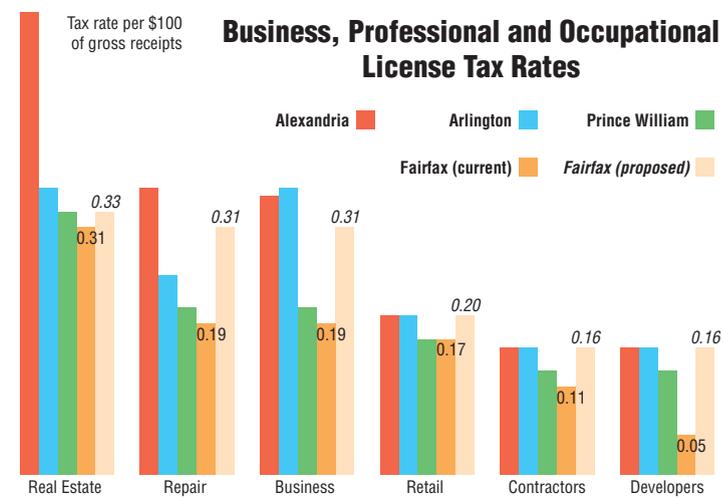
Lower property assessments would impact the amount of taxes the county collects for next year's budget and the amount of money it would ultimately be able to transfer to Fairfax County Public Schools.

Even if the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors opted to impose a vehicle registration fee and raise the real estate property tax rate 11 cents per \$100 of assessed value next year, the county would still face a spending deficit of \$89.5 million, said Quinn.

If the supervisors add no new fees or taxes, staff projects they would have to find about \$315 million to cut out of their budget. This would be on top of

the additional \$200 million the school system said it needs, leaving a joint shortfall between Fairfax schools and the rest of county government of about \$500 million in 2011. At best, county officials told Fairfax County Public Schools to expect a "flat transfer" of \$1.63 billion, the same amount of money the school system has received from Fairfax for the last two years. "The only way to find \$200 million is to make cuts in staff. When we talk about cuts in staff, we really mean cuts to programs. ... Our programs may no longer be world class if you start cutting staff," said School Board member Brad Center (Lee) at work session with staff June 13.

"I think the key question we have to ask ourselves is 'what are we going to stop doing?'" said school superintendent Jack Dale in response.



GRAPH BY LAURENCE FOONG/THE GAZETTE

Bearing the Burden

FROM PAGE 1

— known as BPOL taxes. Fairfax County's BPOL taxes are lower than many other nearby jurisdictions, including Arlington, Alexandria and Prince William. And because the commonwealth's Dillon Rule restricts the kind of revenues jurisdictions have authority to raise, many members of the council thought raising the BPOL taxes would relieve pressure on residential property taxpayers.

"We felt it was worth bringing forward to the general membership for discussion," said Katherine Ward, co-chair of the council. "Let's face it—nobody likes to pay taxes. But we've got to find a way to increase revenues."

THE PROPOSAL WAS tabled last month to give Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerald Hyland an opportunity to get a sense of what his colleagues think on the issue. Meanwhile, opposition to the tax has been gaining momentum in the business community—especially the professions hit hardest by the recommended tax increases. Occupations that were hit the hardest include builders, developers, repair services and business services.

"Unfortunately, there's a feeling in the business community that there's an anti-builder and anti-developer mentality at the council," said Genuario, adding that certain professions were hit harder than others under the council's recommended changes. "Most businesses look

dimly on this tax to begin with."

For more than 20 years, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce has advocated for abolishing BPOL taxes because they tax gross tax receipts rather than profits. That means that a business could be losing business—or even in bankruptcy—and still pay a hefty tax simply for remaining operational. Many business leaders in Fairfax say the taxes are antiquated relics of a time when the county was a rural backwater populated mainly by farmers.

"You don't raise taxes on businesses when you're trying to create jobs," said Stu Mendelsohn, chairman of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce. "This isn't something that's just passed along to some faceless business. It's going to be passed along to consumers."

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY taxes constitute 70 percent of the county's revenues, causing many homeowners to feel that they carry an undue burden. And because the county has a limited taxing authority, it can't tax restaurant meals, cigarettes or cell phones the way a city can. As a result, many feel that bringing Fairfax County more in line to neighboring jurisdictions would be an equitable way to spread out the tax burden.

"Everybody seems to agree that Fairfax County needs additional sources of revenue," said Queenie Cox, a member of the council. "But what that source of revenue is has become a bone of contention."

Rising Hope Church Burglarized

FROM PAGE 1

church's mission had expanded because of the economic crisis.

"We've served twice as many people this year compared to last

year," he said. "So it's a shame that this kind of a thing can happen when we are trying to help people."

— MICHAEL LEE POPE



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414 Franklin Street - SPRING GARDENS
\$4,450,000 | Old Town Alexandria

Two hundred years ago, the port of Alexandria was known for its welcoming taverns for those arriving by ship, coach or horse. Among the Alexandria taverns of note was Spring Gardens. General George Washington was a visitor many times and on July 4, 1798 he recorded in his diary: "Went up to the Celebration of the Anniversary of Independence and dined in the Spring Gardens near Alexandria with a large company of the Civil and Military of Fairfax County." Today, Spring Gardens is one of Old Town's premier residences. Built in 1780, Spring Gardens is situated on a half acre of beautifully landscaped land and offers five bedrooms, four and a half bath, original wide plank pine floors, 5 fp's and a recently renovated kitchen with large adjoining family room. The brick carriage house includes a guest suite, game room plus two car garage. Recently reduced to \$4,450,000.

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The Mount Vernon Evening Lions Club members entertain 60 guests at the anniversary party held at Fort Belvoir Golf Club.

Lions Celebrate 10 Years

The Mount Vernon Evening Lions Club was chartered in June 1999. The club had worked in the community as a Lioness club and as an auxiliary club of the Mount Vernon District for many years before becoming a Lion Club. The Club presented the Melvin Jones Fellow to Lois Lowry, and Andrea Corsillo received the Lions of Virginia Humanitarian Award. Incoming president, Lion Karen Parker, was installed by International Director Lion Wayne Davis.

Community projects that the club did this past year included a baby



From left: Wayne Davis, international director; Karen Parker, president; and Joan Binsted, outgoing president.

shower for UCM, shawls for local nursing homes, clothing for local schools, provided eyeglasses to community members through the Fairfax Eye Clinic, sponsoring the sight and hearing screening van. The July dinner meeting will be held at Pema's restaurant on Tuesday, July 21. Interested persons may contact Andrea 703-960-4973.

Burglars Enter Home through Ceiling

On Thursday, July 9 at 2:15 p.m., a 14-year-old girl, who was home alone in the 7900 block of Audubon Avenue, was startled by an unknown man. He opened her bedroom door, saw the girl, turned and left the apartment. She was not harmed and nothing was taken from the apartment. An investigation revealed the suspect entered the home by crawling through a hole in the ceiling.

The suspect was described as approximately 6 feet 3 inches tall and 200 pounds. He was black, with black hair and unshaven. He was wearing a striped T-shirt, jean shorts and a black bandana.

On Wednesday, July 8, a 26-year-old man returned home just after 4 p.m. and discovered that someone broke into his apartment in the 7000

block of Elingham Circle. The victim saw a suspicious person leaving the building as he was arriving. An investigation revealed that nothing was taken and the suspect apparently gained entry through a hole in the ceiling. Detectives are investigating the possibility these two events are related.

The suspicious person was described as black, in his late 20s. He was approximately 6 feet 4 inches tall and 190 pounds. He was wearing brown pants and a long white T-shirt.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.



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PEOPLE

For July 4th

Emma Carter, 4, enjoys an energizing patriotic sno-cone before participating in the Wellington Civic Association's annual July 4 Parade. Emma and her brother, Landon, 1, were two of three winners in the five and under category.



PHOTO BY JOHN B. DALE

Exhibit for Family and Friends



Young artists and their families visited Art at the Center Tuesday evening June 16 for an exhibit of paintings, drawings, sculptures and mixed media pieces by 4- and 5-year-old art camp participants. Parents, siblings and friends enjoyed the opportunity to meet the artists and hear the stories of their creations. For more information on programs at Art at the Center, visit www.artatthecenter.org.

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SUNDAY JULY 19th
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DIRECTIONS: From I-495, Take exit 45A (VA-267 W Dulles Toll Rd) towards Dulles Airport. Take exit 9B (VA-28 N Sully Rd). Exit on VA-606 West exit (Old Ox Rd.) Turn Left at Trade Center Place.

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Storck No Longer Board Chair

Dan Storck stepped down from his post as Fairfax County School Board chairman July 9. He will continue to serve as Mount Vernon District's School Board member at least until his term expires in 2011.

Unlike the Board of Supervisors, School Board members appoint their own chairman.

Storck had served in the position since 2007 and has represented Mount Vernon on the School Board since 2004.

Sully District School Board member Kathy Smith took over for Storck this month. Braddock District School Board member Tessie Wilson will continue to serve as vice-chairman.

School Board members are not officially affiliated with political parties, but the Fairfax County Democratic Committee endorsed both Storck and Smith. Wilson is one of only two people endorsed by the Republican Party on the 12-member board.

— Julia O'Donoghue

Mayfield Joins SFDC

Loretta Mayfield has been named marketing manager at the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation. Mayfield started her career with newspaper and radio advertising in the Midwest. She was a marketing specialist with the Department of the Army in Germany and a district marketing manager for Sodexo, at George Mason University Dining Services. She also spent six years as a customer advocate for mainframe software contracts with the Department of Defense at CA, Inc. Most recently she provided web design, print design and marketing through Mayfield Marketing in Northern Virginia.

PEOPLE

The Fairfax Library Foundation Board of Directors held its annual meeting on June 16, to elect **Susan C. Harman**, the associate director of the Northern Virginia Community College Educational Foundation, to serve as secretary. This term was vacated mid-term by Susan C. Thorniley, Coordinator for Library Information Services for Fairfax County Public Schools, who became that of an ex-officio director upon accepting her role as the chairman of the Fairfax County Public Library Board of Trustees. The transition began on July 1 just as the library system incurs a 15 percent budget cut from tax-based funding.



Mount Vernon teenager **Katie Sargent** is featured on the recent cover of the DC's "Downtowner." Katie just finished her junior year at Mount Vernon High School, where she is an honors student in the International Baccalaureate, IB, program. She is captain of the MVHS cross country team, as well as being on the varsity swim and soccer teams. Katie has coached youth soccer with Gunston Microsoccer and is a swim coach at Mansion House Club for the past several years. She began modeling a year ago after winning several honors at the International Modeling and Talent Association, IMTA, event in New York last summer. She is headed to Los Angeles this summer to model for Vision LA and is represented by CH Models, Randy Cazz and Joey Hunter, out of New York.



Inova Mount Vernon Hospital recently named **Art Sivaslian** chief growth officer and assistant vice president of operations. Sivaslian's duties will include hospital planning, physician growth, and new and existing business ventures for the hospital, in coordination with Inova Health System.

Army National Guard Pfc. **Erika M. Martinez** has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C. She is the daughter of Gilma Martinez of Andrus Road, Alexandria. The private is a 2005 graduate of Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria.

Tara Murphy, who teaches sixth-grade at Mount Eagle Elementary School, has been named the 2009 Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) First-Year Teacher of the Year. In her first year as an FCPS teacher, Murphy found herself as Mount Eagle's only sixth-grade teacher — with 24 students, 19 of whom spoke English as a second language.

A significant number of those students had special needs or were eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Their reading levels spanned from second grade to eighth-grade levels. To meet the school's goals of having all students achieve at high levels, Murphy met the challenge by focusing on class building and teambuilding, creating teams of four students based on differing ability levels. With this framework, her students learned to support each other in class, exemplify their strengths, and get help when they needed it.

Alexandria resident Willard O. Jasper is the new vice chairman of the Fairfax County Public Library Board of Trustees for one year. Jasper has served as the Lee District representative to the board since March 2004.

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Community College To Lead the Way

Options for students looking for a way to get into top schools while saving money.

Northern Virginia Community College offers many local students of all ages an accessible and affordable path to success.

In the Connection this week, education reporter Julia O'Donoghue highlights one little known program at NVCC that the region's top students should carefully consider.

Competition is so steep to get into Virginia's top colleges and universities, like the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary, that students with excellent grades and SAT scores, plus many other accomplishments, still have been unable to win acceptance to the schools of their dreams.

But those students who really want a degree from a particular Virginia school can control their own fate by first enrolling at Northern Virginia Community College.

The process is not simple; students and their families must carefully study all of the requirements. But if a student gets their associate degree while taking the required classes set by the college where they would like to transfer, achieving the required grade point average, filing the letters of intent with the state college of their choice, then that student is guaranteed acceptance as a transfer student.

EDITORIAL

Students who make use of this program can graduate from a top Virginia college or university in four years, and they will have saved thousands of dollars in tuition along the way.

Another advantage of attending NVCC for two years is evident for the many students who have taken International Baccalaureate courses. NVCC will accept those classes (with passing test scores) for credit; then four-year

colleges will accept the NVCC credits. For many students, the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate credits they carry forward into college can save a full year of college, and college tuition, for some students saving as much as \$40,000.

NVCC also offers degree and certification programs in myriad fields that meet the needs of older students and students who are not headed for a four-year degree.

Demand is surging at NVCC, not surprisingly. The institution will need funding and flexibility going forward.

Read our story, Northern Virginia Community College "Guarantees," inside our July issue of our new monthly camps and schools section, A+: Education, Learning, Fun in this issue or online at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com. Click on "print editions online" in the red bar at the top of the page.

Let us know your thoughts and experiences.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Time for Summer Reading

BY A. L. WILLIAMS
THE GAZETTE

Summer reading can be a chore in high school years. With so much going on during the summer — both for fun and also college applications — such as summer jobs, community service, camps and sports, having a load of school work in addition allows little time to devote to pleasure reading. Reading books that are assigned often feels like a burden so you do not take as much away from it as a book you choose. Reading, and the ability to read well, is a very important part of our world. Reading is the only proven way to increase verbal SAT scores. A majority of all employers consider reading comprehension "very important" in high school graduates, but 38 percent say that the graduates are lacking in these basic skills.

ONE TEEN'S VOICE

(The Conference Board, "Are They Really Ready to Work?" - 2006). People who read are more likely to be a part of helpful civic or individual activities, including: volunteering, attending cultural events, and exercising (National Endowment for the Arts, "The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life" - 2006).

Reading among teens is on the decline; American youth between the ages of 15 and 24 spend an average of two hours a day watching TV, compared to just seven minutes reading (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "American Time Use Survey" - 2006). When we were in elementary school learning to read was a thrill for some, and a misery for others. But when reading became a constant requirement, and books of choice became less common, the excitement of reading lessened. Not necessarily because the desire to read was dampened, but because there simply is not enough time to get totally immersed in a story. The average reading scores from 31 industrialized nations, had American 15-year-olds ranked 15th, falling behind other rising superpowers such as France, Korea and Canada

(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Learning for Tomorrow's World: First Results from PISA" 2003).

Conversely, Cathy Noonan, Youth Services Manager at Sherwood Hall Regional Library said that she did not know whether teen readership was declining but that at her library books were currently flying off the shelves — but only since school let out. "Before summer, I could not fit one more book in the Young Adult section, but now they are half empty," she said. At Sherwood Hall, teen circulation is thriving this summer.

However, West Potomac student, Catie Liebeck — who loves to read — feels as though there has been a drop off in the amount of reading students do, and agrees that it's not the desire to read that's holding students back. But rather, it is the necessity to fulfill summer requirements while being a well-rounded student. We are expected to, and want to, do extra-curricular activities, which take up time where we could otherwise be reading. "There just isn't enough time in a day to do it all," said Liebeck. "I think teen leisure reading had declined because of all the summer assignments and assignments throughout the year; it is very hard for me to read a full book with everything else going on," she said.

This summer, try to find some time for yourself and read something you want to read. Reading is always more enjoyable when it is your choice. If you aren't sure, here are some suggestions from teens in your community.

"In the Time of the Butterflies" is both an enthralling and interesting novel. Written by Julia Alvarez, the story tells of four Spanish sisters under the dictatorship of Trujillo. Based on true events, the story talks of espionage, murder, gun smuggling and prison torture. Conversely, the book also speaks about love and various opportunities in life. The book is a very easy read and will be especially enjoyed by those who understand Spanish, for various phrases are in

LETTERS

Democracy's Success

To the Editor:

Democracy was in action on Saturday, July 11, a little more than a stone's throw from George Washington's home at Mt. Vernon. More than 70 local citizens met at the invitation of the Mt. Vernon Council of Citizens Associations to review the Mt. Vernon District Area Comprehensive Plan for Route 1 in Alexandria. The Charrette (workshop) involved seven groups of people who participated in 20-minute sessions reviewing potential development issues on Route 1, which will result in "nominations" for the plan. As a former planning commissioner, it was an extraordinary experience in participatory democracy. The organizers, should be congratulated for their outstanding organization, careful planning and dedication to the future of their community.

Ellen Boer

Become Informed

To the Editor:

Our elected officials will be more responsive to us if we keep informed on how they vote on issues and make our views known to them. You can do that with very little effort for U.S. senators and your congress

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Over \$15,000,000 Worth of Real Estate SOLD So Far this Year!



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\$598,900

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Motivated seller wants immediate sale! Exceptionally spacious 6 level home with huge potential features 4BR, 3BA, 2 half baths, possible 5th bedroom and 3,700 sq ft. Commercial grade kitchen with custom cabinets, top of the line stainless appliances and granite countertops. Swimming pool, fenced yard and deck too! Open Sun 1-4pm. S GW Pkwy, R Belle View Blvd, L Ft Hunt Rd, R Quander, L Colgate.



7114
Coventry Rd
\$548,500

1 Level Living!
Just minutes from Old Town, this unique property features classic bungalow charm combined with a striking addition across the entire rear of home. Spacious main level master suite, expanded gourmet kitchen with large breakfast area, updated baths and gorgeous half acre lot. Open Sun 1-4pm. S GW Pkwy, R Belle View Blvd, L Ft Hunt Rd, R Paul Spring Rd, R Coventry Rd.



1210
N Pegram St
\$1,351,500

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1100
Morningside Ln
\$975,000

The Perfect Lot!
Close-in dream home site! Rare, over full acre site off the GW Parkway just three miles from Old Town. Spectacular setting on elevated bluff with seasonal views of the Potomac River. A gorgeous site of this size just outside of Old Town is almost impossible to find! Take advantage of the best time in years to have a home built. (Potential to be subdivided into two lots.)



4307
Sheridan's Point
\$794,500

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!



9304
Allwood Drive
\$639,000

"Green" House!
Expanded and updated, this spectacular home features uniquely bright, open floor plan, soaring cathedral ceilings and updated kitchen and baths. Expansion was done with carefully selected natural materials to minimize environmental impact. Prime location on large lot in the heart of Mount Vernon's nicest neighborhoods. "One of a kind" home!



9316
Heather Glen Dr
\$775,000

Fantastic Price!
Classic Colonial façade with magnificent interior featuring glass walled addition across the rear. Meticulously maintained 4 BR, three level home is loaded with special features and upgrades. Stunning custom addition overlooks beautifully landscaped yard and the most spectacular custom pool you'll ever find! You won't believe that this extraordinary home can be yours for such a reasonable price!



9380
Mt Vernon Cir
\$3,500,000

Private Waterfront Estate!
Stunning value! Majestic Colonial custom designed to capitalize on panoramic water vistas from all four levels and dramatic riverfront swimming pool! Abundant superlatives include: Over 9,400 total sq ft, 4 levels, 5 BRs, 5.55 BAs, 7 fireplaces, stunning 2 level MBR suite, custom built-ins, dock with power lifts, the list goes on & on! Price slashed over \$200,000 to expedite sale!



4003
Belle Rive Terr
\$4,800,000

Riverfront!
Prime Mt Vernon location with the most breathtaking river views you have ever seen! Over 11,000 sq ft with five bedrooms including main level river view master suite with enormous luxury bath and huge closets. Extensive balconies, deck and roof deck capitalize on the majestic setting high above the Potomac River.



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.



9500
Ferry Hall Court
\$1,450,000

Dream Home!
Builder's loss is your gain! Originally priced at almost \$2,000,000 - just reduced another \$300,000 to create a once in a lifetime opportunity! Stunning model offers the best of everything: open floor plan, high ceilings, 6BR, 6.5BA, 3 finished levels, top of the line kitchen & baths, 3 car garage and more!



9403
Brambly Lane
\$975,000

Luxury Home! Special Financing!
10% down 30 yr fixed low rate makes it easy to purchase this luxurious brand new home by Wakefield Homes. Fabulous Mason model with bright, open floor plan loaded with upgrades and special features. House will be ready for its new owners by mid-August! Price + Special Terms - Best New Home Value in Alexandria!

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ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Alexandria and Mt. Vernon are full of consignment, antique & thrift shops.

BY ERICA KICAK-VANDERHOEVEN
THE GAZETTE

If you're looking for an out-of-the-ordinary bargain or if you've just cleaned-out the items in your closet that you never seem to wear, try checking out consignment shops in Alexandria, Del Ray, and Mount Vernon. You may fall in love with items that you could never find anywhere else. From children's goods at The Purple Goose to furniture at Reunions, there is a wide range to explore — if you take the time to look.

PURPLE GOOSE

2005 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria; thepurplegoose.com; 703-683-2918; open Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturdays 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Open Saturdays for consignment — no appointment required.

The Purple Goose is a children's boutique that sells "unique" new and used items, with a consignment section in the back of the store. Consignment clothing ranges in price from \$2.99 to \$24.99. It carries children's clothing from newborn sizes through size 7, as well as children's books, toys, furniture and accessories. The store has also begun to carry maternity accessories (but not maternity clothing).

DIVA DESIGNER CONSIGNMENT

116 Pitt St., Alexandria; divaboutiqueva.com; 703-683-1022; open Tuesdays through Saturdays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Diva Boutique is a consignment shop that specializes in designer clothing. It carries many of the same designer brands as department stores. Prices start at around \$10 and go up to \$500 for evening gowns. Diva also carries consignment designer shoes, handbags and other accessories, as well as new jewelry.

MINT CONDITION

114 S Royal St., Alexandria; 703-836-6468; open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sundays noon to 4 p.m.

Mint Condition is the newest of the Alex-

Where To Find Great Bargains



Hand-turned wooden tops by Patrick O'Brien at A Show of Hands at 2301 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray.



The staff of Not Too Shabby Consignments and Potomac West Interiors and Antique Gallery Sarah, CJ and Annyce. Not pictured is Susan. The Shops are located at 1515 and 1517 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray.



Potomac West Interiors and Antiques at 1517 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray.



Mint Condition is at 114 S Royal St., Alexandria.



Ann Donohue, owner of Reunions at 1709 Centre Plaza in the Fairlington Shopping Center.



Encore Consignment Shop at 110 S. Union Street in Old Town.



The Purple Goose at 2005 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray offers new and used clothing ... for the younger set.



Diva Designer Consignment is at 116 Pitt St., Alexandria.

andria consignment shops, opening last month. It carries women's high-end designer clothes, shoes, and accessories. Mint Condition targets a younger clientele than most consignment shops, carrying designer jeans but also featuring a section devoted

to business clothing.

Most of the items are in recent styles; little is over a year or two old. Prices stick close to actual retail value, starting at around \$25 up to designer handbags, which are priced in the \$100s.

ENCORE CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE

110 S Union St., Alexandria; 703-683-1756
Encore specializes in upscale women's clothing, carrying brand-name and designer

SEE BARGAINS, PAGE 13

ENTERTAINMENT



Samantha Mathis of Encore Consignment Shop.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

Hand-painted children's furniture at A Show of Hands at 2301 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray.



Not Too Shabby Consignment Shop at 1515 Mt. Vernon Ave. in Del Ray.

items priced over \$30 are lowered in price by 20 percent for each month that they remain in the store.

A SHOW OF HANDS

2301 Mt Vernon Ave., Alexandria; ashowofhands.biz; 703-683-2905; open Tuesdays and Wednesdays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday noon to 5 p.m.

A Show of Hands is a consignment art shop that supports local artists, some of whom are just starting out as well as more accomplished artists. Prices go from \$4 to the \$1,200 range. The store carries all kinds of art work, including paintings, jewelry, needlework, handmade cards, and various mediums of sculpture.

ELINOR COLEMAN VINTAGE MIRAGE

210 N Lee St Suite 201, Alexandria; vintagemirage.com 703-535-8200; open Wednesday through Saturday 1 to 6 p.m.

Elinor Coleman's Vintage Mirage carries clothing, jewelry, and unique decorations. The store's specialty is its vintage clothes and jewelry. It carries clothes and jewelry — from Victorian to contemporary.

Where To Find Great Bargains

FROM PAGE 12

clothing and accessories.

REUNIONS

1709 Centre Plaza, Alexandria; 703-931-8161; open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sundays noon to 5 p.m.

Reunions, described by its owner as an "antique gift shop" is located in the Fairlington Shopping Center. The shop is set up like a house, furnished with tables, rugs, lamps, and other antiques. Although Reunions specializes in furniture, it also has a selection of silver and china, and is branching out to include new jewelry items and handbags. Prices vary widely, as does the store's selection. There are modestly priced small gifts up through furniture, which can go as high as \$2,000.

NOT TOO SHABBY

1515 Mt Vernon Ave., Alexandria; nottooshabbyconsignments.com; 703-519-1951; open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

POTOMAC WEST INTERIORS AND ANTIQUE GALLERY

1517 Mt Vernon Ave., Alexandria, potomacwestantiques.com; 703-519-1911; Hours same as Not Too Shabby.

Not Too Shabby was opened as a second location for Potomac West antiques. Both stores carry the same selection of items, such as furniture, crystal, china, lamps, and jewelry. Not Too Shabby veers from the traditional antique shop fare with more eclectic items, such as vintage toys — than its counterpart. Consignment items can be found in Not Too Shabby as opposed to Potomac West.

There is a wide price range for the two stores, and furniture can cost up to \$2,000. All consignment

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Wednesday - All American Night

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Thursday - Italian Night

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Friday - Fish Night

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

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CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

The Third Annual Alexandria Film Festival is soliciting entries from U.S. and international filmmakers. The festival will be held Sept. 24-27 at the George Washington Memorial Masonic Temple. This year, the Film Festival is partnering with Withoutabox, the film industry's premier online service platform. To submit your film online, visit www.withoutabox.com/login/7816. All entries submitted through Withoutabox will receive an additional discount. For more information or to obtain entry forms and submission guidelines, visit www.alexandriafilm.org. Call 703-838-6348.

THURSDAY/JULY 16

Music at Twilight Concert. 7:30 p.m. Presented by the Ebenezer Baptist Church Evangelical Women's Choir. At Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Rd. Call 703-883-4686 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

Printmaking. 7-8:30 p.m. Adults can enjoy an evening out to explore monoprints, monotypes, collographs and found object prints. Visit www.artatthecenter.org.

Preschool Palettes. All ages. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Celebrate your child's flair for the artistic by transforming their unique creations into beautiful keepsake books! Call to register. 703-548-4092. Hooray for Books! Children's Bookstore, 1555 King St., Alexandria. www.hooray4books.com

Summer Quest Reading Program. 11 a.m. Keep your children reading through the summer with the Alexandria Library's Summer Quest program! This week, children ages 3 and older are invited to come to Barrett Branch Library (717 Queen St.) to enjoy messy outdoor fun that includes bubbles and coloring chalk. Free. Contact Lisa Springer at 703-838-4555.



THURSDAY/JULY 16

Dave Tucker Trio. 7-9 p.m. Free. Part of the Live Music at the Torpedo Factory. Early jazz and ragtime music featuring Dave Tucker on piano, Les Elkins on trumpet and Terry Brown on rhythm guitar. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565 or visit www.torpedofactory.org.

JULY 16-18

"Anything Goes." Show times are Thursday, July 16 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, July 17 at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday, July 18 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$8/adult, \$6/senior, student; \$7 and \$5 if reserved in advance. Call 703-998-6100, ext. 20, and leave message. At Bishop Ireton High School.

FRIDAY, JULY 17

"Twilight," the movie. Starts at dusk. Part of the Comcast Outdoor Film Festival. Food and beverage sales open at 7 p.m. At Ben Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive. Call 703-883-4686 or go to www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

Lantern Tours. Gadsby's Tavern Museum by candlelight with a costumed guide to experience the historic tavern and hotel before the advent of electricity. 7-10 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person,

ages 5 and up. The museum may be closed on some occasions; at 134 N. Royal St., call 703-838-4242.

Sounds of a Dixieland Band. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free concert at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy., Alexandria. Call 703-324-7469 after 6 p.m. for cancellation updates.

Alexandria Citizens Band. 7:30 p.m. concert. Jack Dusek, interim conductor. At Market Square, 301 King Street, Old Towne Alexandria. Call 703-339-6643 or go to www.band.alexandria.va.us.

Black Moon Tonic. 7-9 p.m. Family-friendly ice cream social. Free admission. Performing classic rock dance music. At Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Rd., Alexandria. Call 703-360-0033 or email bardsplay@aol.com.

Clover-College Park Day. Begins at 5:30 p.m. The Clover-College Park Civic Association is hosting 'Clover-College Park Day' at the corner of Cambridge and Vassar Roads. (Rain date is Saturday, July 18 at 5:30 p.m.) 5:30-6:30 p.m. Dedication of the new sidewalks on the 300 and 400 blocks of Cambridge Road. An official ribbon-cutting will take place. 6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st Annual Watermelon Eating and Seed Spitting Contest will take place at the corner of Cambridge and Vassar Roads. This is where President Gerald Ford called 'home' for more than 20 years.

SATURDAY/JULY 18

"Kung Foo Panda," the movie. Starts at dusk. Part of the Comcast Outdoor Film Festival. Food and beverage sales open at 7 p.m. At Ben Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive. Call 703-883-4686 or go to www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

Afternoon Tea Offering. 1-3 p.m. \$24.95/person. This is the first in a monthly series full of tiers of sweets and delicate teapots boasting aromatic loose teas. At Fontaine Caffe & Creperie, 119 S. Royal Street, Alexandria. Call 703-535-8151.

A World Away Storytime. Ages 3 and up. 11:30 am. Adventures are fun, whether they take place in the far-flung reaches of the globe or your own

backyard. Free. 703-548-4092. Hooray for Books! Children's Bookstore, 1555 King St., Alexandria. www.hooray4books.com.

"The President's Own" United States Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra performs. 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. Call 703-845-6156 or www.schlesingercenter.com.

Fort Ward Civil War Camp Day and Skirmish. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A day-long living history event highlighted by bayonet drills, cannon firing and skirmish drill. Admission is \$5 per adult and \$10 for families with children. At Fort Ward Park, 4301 West Braddock Road in Alexandria. Call 703-838-4848 or visit www.fortward.org.

SUNDAY/JULY 19

Fort Hunt Concert. 7-8 p.m. Vernonberg an Potomak Volksmusikblaskapelle (the Mount Vernon German Band) will present a free concert of authentic German music. At Fort Hunt Park. Visit www.mvbands.com or call 703-768-4172.

Jazz at Meade with Joel Holmes. 4 p.m. Holmes composes his own style of music, blending an array of traditional and contemporary jazz, gospel, R&B, soul, hip-hop, neo soul, funk, classical and pop. \$15 donation. At Meade Memorial Episcopal Church, 322 N. Alfred St., Alexandria. Call 703-549-1334. Go to <http://meadechurch.org>.

Architecture in the Afternoon Tours. 2 p.m. Discover the architecture of George Mason's home. This 90-minute tour explores the mansion's exterior and interior. At Gunston Hall Plantation, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. 703-550-9220 or <http://www.gunstonhall.org>.

1759 Conversations: Establishing Gunston Hall. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Enjoy a conversation with costumed interpreters portraying a member of George Mason's family or a visitor to Gunston Hall. At Gunston Hall Plantation, 10709 Gunston Rd., Mason Neck. 703-550-9220 or <http://www.gunstonhall.org>. Included in site admission: \$9, \$8 seniors, \$5 ages 6 to 18, younger free.



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SCHOOLS

Michael Fagan is the recipient of the 2009 Pamplin Leader Award at Mt. Vernon High School. The Pamplin Leader is a one-year, \$1,000 tuition scholarship to Virginia Tech. It is presented annually to a top student from each public high school in Virginia. It was established by Robert B. Pamplin Sr. (VT, Class of '33) and Robert B. Pamplin Jr., to acknowledge students with a record of outstanding academic achievement that is balanced with a commitment to community service and leadership experience.



Michael Fagan

West Potomac Academy is establishing a partnership with the new Copyright Alliance Education Foundation to help communication arts students learn to promote and protect their intellectual property. Students in Professional Television Production, Professional Graphics Studio, Music and Computer Technology, Dance, and Fashion Design will be offered membership in the Copyright Alliance.

William Johnson of Alexandria earned JROTC Promotions at St. John's annual JROTC Federal Inspection and Commissioning ceremony on Thursday, May 14. The position of cadet colonel was transferred from senior Andrew Riggott to junior William McNamara. Also promoted were five lieutenant colonels, eight majors, 17 captains, 10 first lieutenants and 12 second lieutenants from the Class of 2010.

Djidjoe "Coco" Agbeyibor of Alexandria, a electrical engineering and computer science major at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was recently selected to join the Bernard M. Gordon-MIT Engineering Leadership Program's Class of 2011. The program is a new educational initiative at MIT that combines leadership development with the rigor of the MIT educational experience. **Agbeyibor** — who graduated in 2007 from Mount Vernon High School — will develop his engineering leadership skills in the program.

Through Jan. 1, 2010, an unpaid internship program at **Mount Vernon** offers high school, undergraduate, and graduate students an introduction to archaeological methods and techniques in the field and the lab. Volunteers are also welcome. No previous archaeological experience is required. For more information, contact Curt Breckenridge 703-799-6303, cbreckenridge@mountvernon.org.

Three long-time Alexandria community organizations — the Rotary Club of Alexandria, the Goodwin House, and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra — recently collaborated to sponsor a music competition for juniors and seniors in area high schools. Six outstanding Alexandria student musicians participated in the Alexandria Rotary's annual Music Competition. Judging the competition, and then leading the students in a follow-up "Masterclass" one-on-one instruction, was Kim Allen Kluge, music director of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. **Annie Trimmer**, a flutist and a senior at West Potomac High School, was awarded the Rotary Club of Alexandria's Gold performance award and will now move on to compete in the Regional competition for the \$5,000 in music scholarships awarded each year by Rotary District 7610. While Trimmer took the top Gold honors, Silver performance awards went to three students at St. Stephens & St. Agnes School: **Kelly Bragg**, a vocalist; **Will Jakes**, a cello player, and **Ian McLeod**, a pianist. Bragg and McLeod are seniors and Jakes a junior. Bronze performance awards went to **Tia Norris-Towler**, a violin player who is a T. C. Williams junior, and to **Dorothea Kamara**, a senior at West Potomac High School.

Seven Alexandria residents have recently been named to the dean's list at Boston University for the Fall semester: **Erin T. Coffey**, **Patrick R. Fitzsimmons**, **Thao T. Nguyen-Le**, **Dale S. Placek**, **Benjamin B. Rhodside**, **William J. Tortolano IV**, and **Alison M. Yates**.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) health and medical sciences students earned a total of 26 awards at the HOSA (Health Occupations Students

of America) State Leadership Conference held recently in Williamsburg. The following students won first, second, or third place awards:

❖ **Robert Cordell** of Mount Vernon High School and West Potomac Academy, first place in Physical Therapy.

❖ **Ashraf Elmelik** of West Potomac High School and West Potomac Academy, first place in Clinical Specialty and second place in Extemporaneous Speaking.

❖ **Mara Perscheid** of West Potomac High School and West Potomac Academy, second place in Physical Therapy.

Norman Wallace, a sixth grade student and School Safety Patrol member at **Hybla Valley Elementary**, has been selected to receive the AAA National School Safety Patrol Lifesaver Award. Wallace will receive his award at the AAA Traffic Safety Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., in May. He was cited by bus driver Tammy DeFrees for pulling to safety a child who was about to cross the street in the path of a car. He has also been recognized by the AAA Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Safety and Education.

The following students were named to Winston-Salem State University Fall 2008 dean's list: **Marissa Terry** of Alexandria; **Malarie Younger** of Mount Vernon.

Annela Mary Levitov of Alexandria, a junior at Gettysburg College, has been placed on the dean's honor list.

Sara Frances Fry, of Alexandria, a junior at Gettysburg College, has been placed on the dean's honor list.

Mende Wentzel, of Alexandria, is among 10 JMU students that will train with Special Force soldiers as part of the ROTC Ranger Group.

Eight Ireton students, representing two teams, were invited to participate in the Economics Challenge State Championship at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond on April 1. They are **Billy Burns**, **D'Elia Chandler**, **Beau Dolan**, **Nathan Hahn**, **Tyler Hargett**, **Nathaniel Johnson**, **Fred McGrath** and **Steven Porter**.

William Muster of Mount Vernon graduated from Virginia Tech.

Fort Hunt High School **Class of 1979** is holding its 30-year reunion this summer during the weekend of Aug. 7 - 9. Visit fhhs79.com.

Lisa Starling, a fifth grade teacher at **Bucknell Elementary**, has been selected to attend the 2009 Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy at the Liberty Science Center in New Jersey.

The Mount Vernon's Regional Science Fair winners include:

❖ Alexander Weinberg - 1st place in Environmental Analysis; Alexander will also be competing in this Saturday's State Fair. Alexander also won Honorable Mention Certificate of Merit from the Geological Society of Washington.

❖ Chadwick Eason - 2nd place in Chemistry. Chadwick also won an Awards Ceremony Invitation and Tour of CIA Headquarters

❖ Kathryn Lucas - 2nd place in Environmental Analysis

❖ Charlene Belanger - 2nd place in Plant Sciences

❖ Christina Bolton - 3rd place in Environmental Analysis

❖ Victoria Skaggs - 3rd place in Environmental Management

❖ Katja Broecker - 3rd place in Environmental Management

❖ Jessica Kadle - Honorable Mention in Biochemistry

❖ Corintha Evans - Honorable Mention in Chemistry

❖ Rebecca Whitworth - Honorable Mention in Energy and Transportation

❖ Sarah-Marie Wood - Honorable Mention in Physics and Astronomy

❖ Farzana Olla - Honorable Mention in Plant Sciences

❖ Blake Barrow - Honorable Mention in Plant Sciences

All the winners posted at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/sciengfair/2009web.html>

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OPINION

Time for Summer Reading

FROM PAGE 8

the language. Although the book starts off slowly, I would most defiantly recommend "In the Time of the Butterflies" to anyone and everyone.

Brian Linnell,
West Potomac High School

"No way to Treat a First Lady" by Christopher Buckley offers yet another glimpse into the sadly-all-to-real world of politics and litigation. Accused of killing her husband, the president, Elizabeth MacMann finds herself with no one else to turn to but her jilted ex-boyfriend, now one of the best defense attorneys in the nation. All of this receives Buckley's, by now, highly refined sense of political satire to hilarious effect. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to pretty much anyone.

Griffin Voltman,
Gonzaga High School

"Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America" is a nonfiction book by Barbara Ehrenreich. The account is of a middle aged woman who decides to work in low paying jobs and then live completely off the earned wages; including paying for housing, transportation, and food in whatever city she was

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 8

man. Go to Congress.org and follow directions to enroll to receive their votes or you can email Megavote@mailmanager.net and request to receive the mega votes for your congressional district. You will receive the votes for the two U.S. senators and your congressman for your congressional district.

Since January 2009 I have received 11 two-page easy-to-read summary documents that lists bills and votes and upcoming issues to be voted on. Such information gives us the opportunity to comment on upcoming issues to our elected congressional officials. The following are a few examples of U.S. Senators Jim Webb's and Mark Warner's and Congressman Gerry Connolly's YES votes on issues:

- ❖ \$787 billion Stimulus bill
 - ❖ \$410 billion FY 2009 government budget
 - ❖ \$3.5 trillion FY 2010 government budget
 - ❖ Environment Cap and Trade
 - ❖ Funding for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq
 - ❖ Mortgage reform and lending practices
- You can get details about any of the issues by going on line at Congress.org and click on key votes.

Our elected officials respond when enough of us speak up and make our views known to them. So don't hesitate to sign up now to receive the mega votes to keep current on how your congressman and U.S. senators are voting on important issues. You'll be glad you did.

Frank Medico
Mt. Vernon

in. It was a really interesting book and it helped show the unknown difficulties of the life of a low wage worker. After a while it became a bit repetitive because the same difficulties arose in each city, but it was interesting nonetheless. I would definitely recommend it to others.

Caitlin Dougherty,
West Potomac High School

"Pygmy," the latest novel from the author of "Fight Club" proves Chuck Palahniuk is equally adept at writing comedy as drama. "Pygmy" is the story of Operative 67 (informally christened Pygmy), a foreign agent integrated into an American family under the guise of an exchange student, and his journey towards humanity. Though it is absolutely not for the faint of heart (one scene involves Pygmy preparing and serving a dog to his family), the narrative is engrossing and hilarious. Even the most dire moments have a glimmer of hope, and while the story line wraps a bit too succinctly for this reader's taste, it is none the less a brilliant (and somewhat cracked) story.

Catherine Ramos,
Columbia College

For more book reviews by teens all over the country check out <http://www.teenreads.com/>. Get lost in a book this summer.

Prepare for Safe Summer

To the Editor:

On Saturday, June 20, yet another child died of hyperthermia when left alone in a parked car. Two-year-old April Knight lived in Kentucky, and at the beginning of summer is already the 13th child in the U.S. to die in a hot vehicle this year.

How can we be sure this does not happen to the children and families in our own community?

The truth is summer may be a fun time of year, but it can present difficult, sometimes dangerous challenges for parents. From inconveniences like bug bites to tragedies like drowning and death, children themselves are often unaware of these issues or too young to understand. Fortunately, many of these accidents are preventable.

Parenting can be tough at times, and summer safety issues pose a special challenge. Luckily, there are resources dedicated to helping parents make the season both fun and safe. Visit the Parent Resource Center on SCAN of Northern Virginia's Web site at www.scanva.org – and look for the feature on summer safety. Reading through tips on kids in cars, preventing sunburns, water safety, finding supervision, and other topics in our summer safety section is an easy way to increase your knowledge and prepare for this season. Take time to learn more now, and keep summer the fun-filled time it should be for you and your children.

Diane Charles, Executive Director,
SCAN of Northern Virginia

Legion Baseball Hits Home Stretch

Local American Legion teams get set for this weekend's 17th District playoffs.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO
THE GAZETTE

After Alexandria Post 129 collected the last out Tuesday night in its 13-10 win over Post 1976 of Annandale, manager Robert Mannel gathered his team in left field at Frank Mann Field in Four Mile Run Park for a final talk.

Despite the threat of the lights going out following a three-hour baseball game, Mannel wanted to make sure his message was heard loud and clear. One of the most competitive seasons in recent memory for the American Legion 17th District is now over, the playoffs are here.

"You've got to be ready," Mannel implored his squad.

This year, the 17th District reworked its rules so that just six teams qualify for the postseason, rather than having all eight automatically advance. That means the top two teams get first round byes, while seeds three through six face off in what amount to play-in games.

With the top six teams in the league separated by just five games in the regular season, the one-loss elimination format means somebody good is likely going home earlier than expected. Post 129's victory Tuesday gave it a solid 14-9 record, good enough for

third place in the league.

NEARBY OLD TOWN Alexandria Post 24 also qualified for the playoffs this week, completing a late-season surge with two victories Tuesday night, defeating Post 130 of Falls Church, 5-4, in a shortened seven-inning affair. They followed it up with a dominant 17-0 win in the second part of the doubleheader.

Post 24, which features players from Mount Vernon, West Potomac, and Hayfield High Schools, closed the season with six-consecutive victories to finish with a 12-11 record, good enough for the fifth seed in the playoffs.

Manager Jim Glassman credits his team's recent hot streak to the improved play of West Potomac slugger Grady O' Hagen, pitchers Brett Schaeffer and Peterson, and Mount Vernon's Andrew Sable and Andrew Zumwalt.

"You can lose on any given day and that's what makes it exciting."

— Josh Knupp
of Alexandria Post 129

"Winning makes you happy and this has been the most fun we've had all season," said Glassman. "We started out slow, but now ... guys who want to play ball are playing ball and they're playing it well."

Post 129 consists of players from T.C. Williams, Edison, Bishop Ireton, and St. Stephen's/St. Agnes. The synergy between the top players of every school helps to create what can be an electric

atmosphere in the postseason, despite the general assumption that summer baseball is more laid back than the spring scholastic season.

"I would say high school playoffs get more publicity, but legion playoffs are more exciting," said catcher John Kane of Post 129. "There's fewer teams, and each team is built with the best players from the local high schools. You're looking at the highest competition in the area."

BUT IT'S THE PARITY within the league this season that has some foaming at the mouth in anticipation of Saturday. And it only takes looking at recent results to understand just how evenly spread the baseball talent is this year.

Post 130 of Falls Church currently has the best record in the 17th District with two regular season games remaining. And yet, Post 24 defeated them soundly Tuesday night behind a complete game shutout from pitcher Danny Peterson of West Potomac.

Post 129 had its hands full Tuesday night against Post 1976, the league's worst team. After jumping out to an early 12-2 lead, Post 24 watched it slowly evaporate before pitcher Tim Mannel came in to shut the door in the eighth and ninth innings to give Alexandria the 13-10 victory. Kane finished with two doubles and three RBIs, while third baseman Josh Knupp, second baseman Geoff Goff, rightfielder Dan O'Keefe, and starting pitcher Chris Cattaneo all collected two hits as well.

That, though, came on the heels of Monday night, when Post 24 routed its neighbors from Post 129, 14-1. It just proves how high



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

Chris Cattaneo of Alexandria Post 129 throws a pitch during his team's 13-10 win over Annandale Post 1976 Tuesday night. Post 129 finished the American Legion District 17 regular season with a 14-9 record.

the level of competition could be come this weekend.

"The teams this year are a lot better," said Knupp. Last year, there were two or three teams that didn't really have it every night, but this year you can lose on any given day and that's what makes it exciting."

Post 129 will likely face Springfield Post 176 in its play in game, while Post 24 will likely take on Vienna Post 180. Falls Church Post 130 and Arlington Post 139 will receive first-round byes. The winner of the 17th District tournament moves on to the state tournament beginning July 27.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Competitive Eating

Two weeks ago at the annual July 4th Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating contest, Alexandria resident Sonya "The Black Widow" Thomas set a new women's world record by devouring 41 hot dogs in just 10 minutes.

Introduced by over the top competitive eating emcee George Shea as "the Leader of the Four Horsemen of the Esophagus" two weeks ago, the 98-pound Thomas is the No. 5 ranked competitive eater in the nation with 29 world titles and records in more than 25 different competitions. She's nicknamed "The Black Widow" because of her ability to out eat men three and four times her size.

Thomas did not return a phone call seeking comment on her accomplishments, but here's a sampling of just some of her achievements within the world of competitive eating over the years.

- ❖ 8.4 pounds of baked beans in 2 minutes, 47 seconds

- ❖ 65 hard boiled eggs in 6 minutes, 40 seconds (take that Cool Hand Luke)

- ❖ 44 Maine lobsters (11.3 pounds of meat) in 12 minutes

- ❖ 11 pounds of cheesecake in nine minutes

- ❖ 446 Phillips crab cakes in 10 minutes

- ❖ 48 soft chicken tacos in 11 minutes.

Local Rock Climbing

Five local youths from the Sport Rock climbing teams in Alexandria and Sterling recently traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah to compete at the Sport Climbing Series Youth National Championship. Sasha Diguilian, Randy Fawcett, Peter Grill, Ada Saker, and Tegan Wilson earned invitations to the event through local, regional, and divisional climbing competitions. Four hundred boys and girls, ages 8-19, from across the United States took part in 10 different age and gender categories competing in both sport climbing or difficulty and speed climbing. The top finishers in each

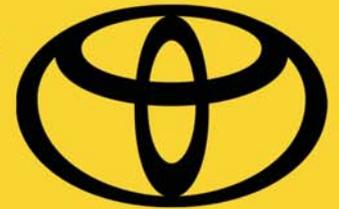
category receive invitations to join the U.S. National Climbing team and ages 14 and older receive invitations to the Junior World Championships in Valence, France in late August.

Sasha Diguilian of Alexandria placed second in sport climbing in her age category at the national competition. Diguilian has accumulated numerous climbing awards including three-time North American Continental Champion in her age group and placing fourth at the Junior World Championship in 2008. By placing second, Diguilian earns a spot on the U.S. National Climbing Team.

Wilson, 13, of Alexandria placed 4th in sport climbing and 5th in speed earning spots on both the U.S. National Climbing Team for sport and speed. A member of the National Team in bouldering, this is Tegan's second year to qualify for a place on the National Team for both sport and speed.

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