

Mount Vernon Gazette

25 CENTS

VOL. XX, No. 31

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

AUGUST 6, 2009



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

Jonas Munson conducts the Mount Vernon German Band in Schoen Kann Das Leben Sein.

Gathering for National Night Out

Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church celebrates National Night Out on Tuesday, Aug. 4.



Ian, Elizabeth and Temple Whitson stopped in for the neighborhood gathering.



Katie Moery and Hillary Davis enjoy root beer floats on the lawn.



Faye Higdon paints a balloon on Katie Moery. More photos at www.connectionnewspapers.com

North Hill Project Lingers

Despite compromise and years of waiting, little action at site.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

A quarter-century has passed since the plot of land known as North Hill was purchased by Fairfax County for the development of low income housing. Since that time, recessions have come and gone. A giant housing bubble swelled to capacity and burst. Arguments have emerged to preserve the entire site as green-space. Counter-arguments have been made to use the entire 33-acre site for affordable housing.

Yet little has transpired at the site.

"This has all taken way too

long," said Keary Kincannon, pastor at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church who has spent years pushing for affordable housing at the site. "I think the reason is that we are talking about something to help poor people, and poor people always get the crumbs."

Meanwhile, advocates for preserving trees at North Hill say the extended period of inaction has created a new set of problems. Environmental advocate Tim Berkoff says invasive English Ivy is choking several of the 100-year trees at the site. Although he tried to gain access to the site with a

SEE NORTH HILL, PAGE 5

Protecting Dyke Marsh

National Park Service allocates \$500,000 to fund an environmental impact assessment of the marsh.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Friends of Dyke Marsh are planning a 50th anniversary celebration on Oct. 4 to commemorate the passage of federal legislation designating Dyke Marsh as a National Wildlife Preserve.

"Fifty years ago, Congressman John Dingle [D-Mich], the longest



Dyke Marsh biologist Brent Steury.

serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives, introduced Public Law 86-41. The legislation mandated the restoration, preservation, and management of Dyke Marsh," said Glenda Booth, president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh.

U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8), in a House Floor Statement intro
SEE DYKE MARSH, PAGE 6

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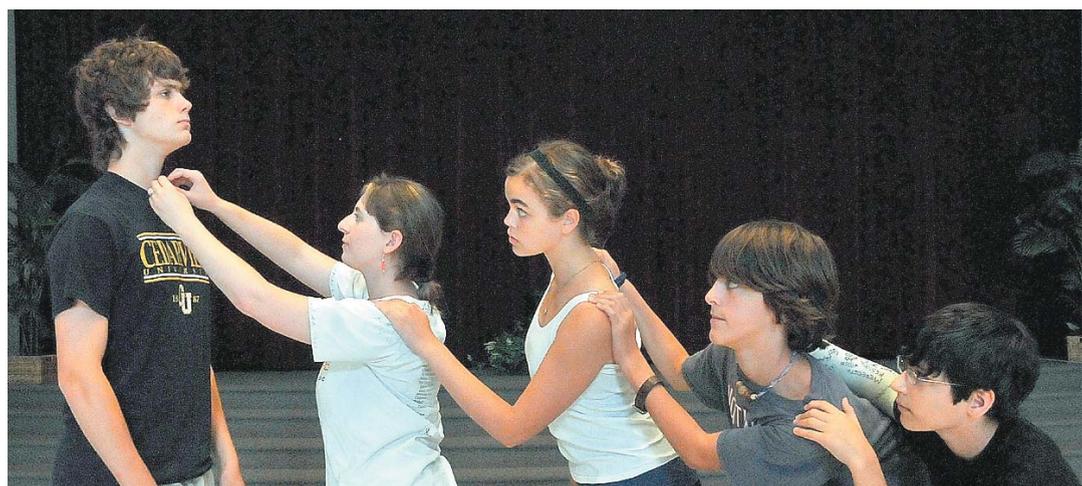


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PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

Mrs. Darling (Summer Anderson) under the watchful eyes of her children Wendy (Emily Hyland), John (William Ipsan) and Michael (Michael Schuenemeyer), adjusts the knot in Mr. Darling's (Jared Smithers) evening tie.

'Peter Pan' at Plymouth Haven

Rhearsals are ongoing in the Plymouth Haven Baptist Church hall off Fort Hunt Road. The crocodile is perfecting her moves, Captain Hook is working on his proper attitude, Peter Pan's free spirit is alive and the cast is just warming up for next week's opening. The show opens on Aug. 13 at 7:30 p.m.

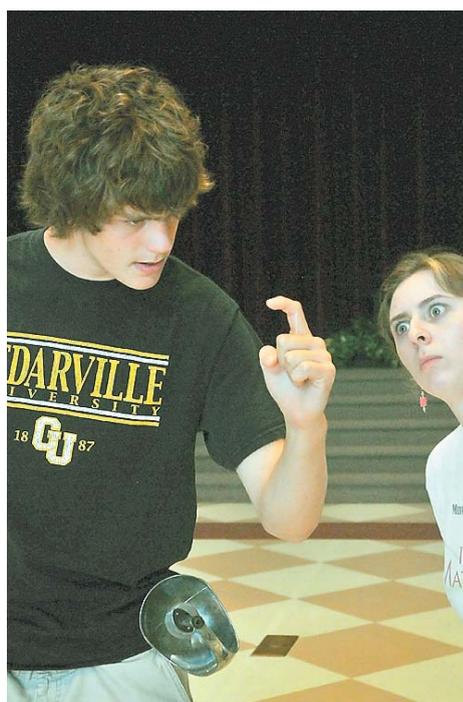
Performances go through the weekend: Aug. 13, 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m. There is a matinee on Sunday, Aug. 15 at 2 p.m.

The Plymouth Haven Baptist Church is located just south of Waywood Boulevard, off Fort Hunt Road at 8600 Plymouth Road.

Admission is \$8. For children under six, it's \$5.



Wendy (Emily Hyland) accepts a kiss from Peter Pan (Catherine Ipsan).



Captain Hook (Jared Smithers) talks with Smee (Summer Anderson) about the events leading up to losing his hand to the crocodile.



The crocodile practices her moves, keeping time to the alarm clock she swallowed years ago.

Newly Retired

Former West Potomac Principal Rima Vesilind cites character education as cornerstone of her success in improving academics.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE



Rima Vesilind

Bio

Rima Vesilind, retired principal, West Potomac High School

Family: Married, three children, three grandchildren

Education: Bachelor's degree in music education, University of Georgia; master's degree in education administration, George Mason University.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Band Director: 13 years
Assistant Principal: Garfield Elementary School, 4 years
Principal: Woodley Hills Elementary School, 5 years
Principal: West Potomac High School, 5 years

Recognition/Awards: Don Lacey Award, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals. Virginia Governor's Outstanding Example of Academic Achievement and Educational Leadership Award. This was for her work in mentoring a Richmond-area school. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Academic Performance Award; Virginia General Assembly Joint Resolution of Commendation.

When Rima Vesilind assumed the post of principal at West Potomac in 2004, there had been five different principals in the five previous years. In her own words, West Potomac "was a school in crisis with high discipline issues and a faculty and school community that felt abandoned." As she recalls, she created a positive and caring attitude within the faculty. The changed attitude within the faculty was in turn passed on to the student body. Her core principles of a cooperative caring attitude promoting respect and responsibility began to pay off.

The climate at the school soon began to change, and with it the academic achievement also improved. Students began to behave more respectfully and responsibly in class, and the discipline problems began to decline. Vesilind said that the West Potomac parents and community began to develop a better appreciation for the school. By one measure of progress, the SAT test scores improved 50 points by her third year as principal.

Ever the upbeat optimist, she has nothing but good things to say about her experiences at West Potomac High School and throughout her tenure in the Fairfax county public school system. When pressed to talk about frustrations and problems she answered that there were no problems that couldn't be solved. Her attitude is: That's what the job of principal was all about — solving problems.

VESILIND SUPPORTS the use of SOL requirements; however, she feels that the rigid test calendar requirements often end up being counterproductive for students, and hamstringing teachers and administrators.

"Some students are ready to take the SOL test early but have to wait until the one-year cycle arrives. A lot of valuable time and learning is lost for these students because the time requirement delays their moving on to other academic studies. Similarly, not everyone is ready to take the test exactly ac-

ording to a state-mandated calendar. For some taking the test too soon can result in unnecessary poor test scores and disappointment for the student and family." Vesilind feels the testing calendar rigidity needs to end; more flexibility to take the test when it is optimally to the advantage of the student will not detract from the goal of holding the student and school system accountable for meeting standards of academic achievement.

"Students don't learn at the same pace. We should recognize that fact of life in setting the test calendar requirement," she said. It was one of the more frustrating requirements for her as principal, and an area she would like the State Board of Education to

SEE RETIRED, PAGE 7



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North Hill's Divided Future?

FROM PAGE 1

group of volunteers who were willing to contain some of the invasive growth, he says his request was denied by the county's housing authority. County officials did not return phone calls asking for a confirmation of his request.

“Everybody talks about how important tree-save is, yet nothing is happening to address this issue,” said Berkoff. “These trees are being allowed to decline while everybody is arguing over the property.”

THE SAGA of North Hill begins nearly 25 years ago, when the county purchased the property with funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the development of low-income housing. As the project lingered, some began pushing for abandoning the original plans in favor of preserving green-space on Richmond Highway. As late as February, some were still lobbying for preserving 33 acres as a natural preserve.

“Environmentally we are losing tree cover, worsening stormwater management, and facing global warming,” wrote Spring Bank Community Association President David Dale in an e-mail to his neighbors earlier this year. “In spite of all these factors, the county housing authority is continuing efforts to clear 11 acres of woodland to build a mobile home park.”

After years of fighting between affordable-housing advocates and conservationists, Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland adopted a compromise two years ago. Since that time, he's maintained a position that he would like to see 11 acres set aside for affordable housing with the rest preserved for green-space. Hyland said that his position is likely to please nobody, although he feels it's the most responsible approach to the land-use dilemma.

“There has never been any other subject that has divided people more than North Hill,” said Hyland. “I feel like we've split the baby down the middle, and of course that doesn't make anybody happy.”

ALTHOUGH LITTLE outward progress is noticeable at the site, the wheels of government are slowly moving behind the scenes. The Fairfax County Park Authority is engaged in a process to gather citizen input on what people would like to see in a potential future park. And the Fairfax County Housing Authority is moving forward with plans to develop a



An example of the manufactured housing proposed for North Hill.

master development proposal for constructing 11 acres of affordable housing.

Meanwhile, other more controversial changes are taking place behind the scenes. This spring a coalition of religious organizations known as Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE) began pushing for the site to include rental housing for those who make 30 percent or less of the area median income. In May, Hyland agreed to setting aside 30 percent of the site for low-income rental, a move that angered community members who believe that the delicate compromise was based on all the properties being for sale rather than low-income rental — sometimes known as “section eight.”

“Shame on him,” said Katherine Ward, co-chairwoman of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. “There was never any discussion I can recall of any of these properties being anything other than homeownership.”

Ultimately, though, the development of affordable housing at North Hill could face a more pressing problem — funding. With the county facing declining revenue, affordable housing advocates are concerned that the project could have a hard time receiving any funding beyond planning and study. For those who have fought for low-income housing, the timing is particularly troubling because they say the affordable housing is needed now more than ever.

“The shelters are full, and there are people sleeping on the streets,” said Kincannon, a leading member of VOICE in Mount Vernon. “There is a huge need for this right now.”

Mystery Remains after Dog's Return

No charges made although owner still believes dog had been stolen.

BY ERICA KICAK-VANDERHOEVEN
THE GAZETTE

On June 23, Lorraine DiVacky recieved a call from Cross Roads Animal Care Center in Lakeridge Virginia saying that they had her dog. At first, DiVacky was in disbelief, not wanting to get her hopes up, but “As soon as they identified her as ‘the dog with the bump on her head’ [a characteristic specific to Shadow], I excitedly said ‘I'll come get her.’”

DiVacky and her 14-year-old gray and black terrier mix, Shadow, had been through quite a lot leading up to that point. Shadow had disappeared out of DiVacky's home on May 8, and a neighbor reported



Shadow

hearing male voices saying “Get the dog in the car.”

After her neighbor told DiVacky what she'd heard, DiVacky put all of her time and energy in the next few weeks into the search for Shadow, contacting the Fairfax County Police, putting up flyers offering a \$500 reward for the dog's safe return, getting a spot on ABC 7 news, and getting an article about the ongoing search for Shadow in this paper. It was at the support group for people who'd lost pets where

SEE MISSING DOG'S RETURN, PAGE 7



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For more information:

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Protecting Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

FROM PAGE 1

ducing the resolution said, "At the time [of the legislation's introduction] it was in danger of disappearing as a result of commercial dredging and dumping operations Since that time it now provides natural flood control, water quality enhancement, and aesthetic and recreational enjoyment for people of all ages."

According to Booth, Moran, Dingle and other public figures and friends of Dyke Marsh will be invited to join in celebrating the anniversary and "thank Congressman Dingle for his foresight and leadership in sponsoring this legislation."

AFTER YEARS of debate, analysis, and public outreach, the National Park Service is now conducting the first ever formal environmental impact assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The expectation by supporters is the analysis will provide the basis for a long-range plan of action to preserve and protect Dyke Marsh.

"This effort couldn't have come at a better time," said Booth. "We are hopeful that the assessment will result in recommendations for full restoration of the dredged areas [some dredged areas are 30 feet deep], elimination and control of invasive plants, removal of construction debris, and installation of erosion control measures, among other needed actions."

Threats to the marsh's environment continue. Brent Steury, supervisory biologist, National Park Service, and supporters of Dyke Marsh list the following continuing threats to the stability of the marsh: Stormwater runoff, nitrogen, poaching, hunting, motorboat traffic, Jet Skis, invasive plants, invasive fish (snakehead fish), and shoreline erosion.



PHOTO FROM NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This is a hoop trap to capture turtles.

Where Is Dyke Marsh?

The marsh is on the western shore of the Potomac River immediately south of the city of Alexandria beginning at Bell Haven Marina, and stretching south parallel to the George Washington Memorial Parkway 4 miles to Southdown road.

House Resolution 701

"Recognizes the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve of Fairfax County, Virginia, as a unique and precious ecosystem that serves as an invaluable natural resource both locally and nationally; celebrates the 50th anniversary of the federal legislation (PL 86-41) designating the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve as a protected wildlife habitat; expresses the need to continue to conserve and protect and restore this fragile habitat ... ; commends the Friends of Dyke Marsh for its longstanding commitment to promoting conservation and environmental awareness and stewardship for the next 50 years and into the future."

More Information

Online: National Park Service Web site: www.nps.gov/GWMP

(The U.S. National Park Service administers Dyke Marsh as part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP)). Friends of Dyke Marsh Website: www.fodm.org

By mail: The Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM), P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, VA 22307-7183.

On site at Dyke Marsh: Visit the kiosk at the head of Haul Road, the footpath that winds through Dyke Marsh to find notices and information from the National Park Service and from FODM.

On DVD: Available on loan at Fairfax County public libraries, or available for sale through Friends of Dyke Marsh is a film on DVD about Dyke Marsh, entitled "On the Edge."

What To Do at Dyke Marsh

Bird watching: Park Service literature and the Park biologist verify there are over 230 species which use the marsh. In the dead of winter, thousands of migrating waterfowl stop and rest or winter over along the shore. Most Sunday mornings there is a birdwatching tour organized by the Friends of Dyke Marsh. Check their Wweb site for planned activities (www.fodm.org) In addition, there are over 50 species of fish, 300 plant varieties, 6,000 different arthropods, 16 different reptiles, beaver, fox, rabbits, muskrats, and two pairs of nesting Bald eagles.

Recreation: Dorothy McManus, a member of Friends of Dyke Marsh, describes it as "a place of great beauty; an oasis of calm." Easily accessible and open to the public seven days a week, one can canoe, kayak, or sail along the marsh observing the wildlife found there. Also, from the parkway entrance to the concessionaire site, Bell

Haven Marina, one can walk along a southern footpath called "Haul road," which connects to a wooden raised walkway leading out to the marsh. This is about a half-mile walk that quickly places a visitor in a tranquil wildlife setting.

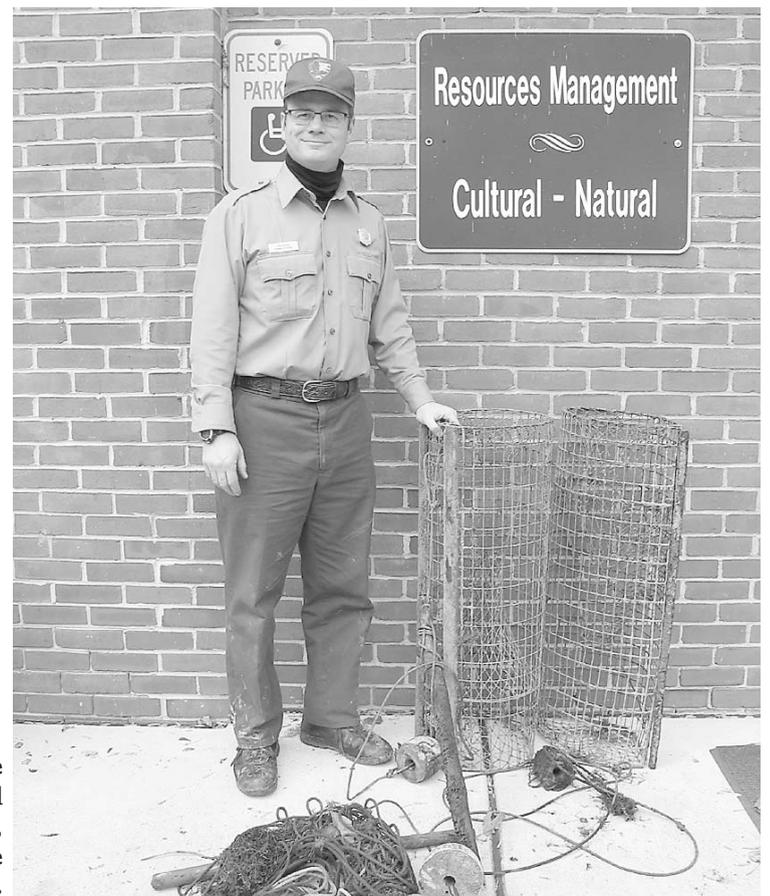
Boating: One can launch one's own boat at the Bell Haven Marina. Rental boats are available there as well. In the recent past there has been debate and some controversy about the continuation of the marina concession. However, Booth declares the management of the concession to be "respectful neighbors of the marsh." She also added that she would not like to see the marina expanded.

Picnic Grounds: When entering the Bell Haven Marina entrance off the parkway, there is a parking lot to the immediate left. This area is adjacent to a grassy picnic area along the Potomac river shoreline.



Trot lines — heavy monofilament with multiple hooks — are used for catching fish or turtles. One of the threats to the marsh's environment includes poaching.

These are unmarked fishing traps, set within the marsh.



Newly Retired

FROM PAGE 3
change.

THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW, Vesilind returned to the importance of character education — instilling in students and teachers alike the importance of promoting a culture of ethics in the classroom.

For example, at West Potomac she required all students to perform community service: 9th graders were required to spend 10 hours during the school year; 10th graders, 15 hours; 11th graders, 20 hours; and 12th graders, 30 hours of community service.

“No one ever complained about the requirement. Students selected their own community service project. Parents would tell me that their child was a different person after the community service experience; it changed dinner conversations, and changed attitudes about life,” she said. She believes that community service and an emphasis on character education should be required throughout the school system.

HER PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS were her efforts as principal in turning around two troubled schools: Woodley Hills Elementary School and West Potomac High School.

When she first arrived at Woodley Hills, it was dysfunctional. Teachers and administrative staff were not communicating with students and parents, and vice versa. Academic achievement was among the very lowest in the school system.

By working to change the attitudes of the faculty and working

to create a bond of trust with the students, the school’s atmosphere began to improve in a relatively short time and with it the students’ academic achievement also began to improve. Her view was that in a few years Woodley Hills Elementary School became a model of what can happen when teachers, students, and parents work together in a positive manner to achieve a common goal.

“The Woodley Hills Elementary School turnaround was one of my most satisfying experiences. It went from a high poverty, low performing school into a model of academic achievement, special education inclusion, and was recognized as a National School of Character,” she said. That designation made it the only school in Fairfax County to receive this prestigious national recognition, according to Vesilind. For this work she received several awards.

After five years at Woodley Hills Elementary, she then moved on to West Potomac High School where she applied the same principles of promoting a “collaborative climate in which respect, responsibility, hard work, and ethical decision-making” served as the cornerstone of her leadership approach.

In retirement, Vesilind looks forward to more time with her husband, a retired National Geographic writer and expert in Estonian culture and history. He serves as a cruise guide, and Vesilind looks forward to traveling with him on the Baltic Sea and to other places. In addition, she speaks about her grown children’s accomplishments and looks forward to spending more time with her three grandchildren.

Missing Dog’s Return

FROM PAGE 5

DiVacky got in contact with the person that she believes finally led to Shadow’s safe return.

At the end of a support group meeting, the leader of the group came to DiVacky and gave her the name of a woman that she described as a “pet psychic.” The “pet psychic” gave DiVacky suggestions. It was that very day that the shelter called to tell DiVacky that they had her dog.

When DiVacky arrived she says that Shadow “looked pretty well-groomed, she even had her nails clipped.” The shelter was able to contact DiVacky because Shadow had her rabies and Fairfax County dog registration tags on, which have a registration number on

them. Strangely enough, those two tags had been transferred to an all-new collar, but the other tags which identified her address and the name of her owner had been removed.

Although the shelter reported that the dog had been brought in by a young girl, DiVacky finds it frustrating that there is not enough evidence to punish anyone for Shadow’s disappearance. DiVacky also was frustrated because she felt “ignored” by the police department. “I realize that the police were busy and she’s just a dog, but still ...” After the dog was returned home, DiVacky brought a letter and a package of information on the case to the po

SEE MISSING, PAGE 20

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

South County Middle School Land Exchange

September 23, 2009

A public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. on September 23, 2009, in Room 106/107 at the Herry Building located at 12055 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax, VA. The hearing is being held to receive public comment on the proposed land exchange in Mount Vernon District between the Fairfax County Park Authority and Fairfax County Public Schools.

The park property consists of an approximately 40-acre portion of Laurel Hill Park, identified on the Fairfax County Real Property Identification Map as Tax Map No. 107-3 ((1)) parcel 19 (part). The Park Authority would exchange this property for an approximately 40-acre parcel owned by Public Schools, identified as Tax Map No. 98-3 ((1)) 25. The proposed land exchange will allow the South County Middle School to be developed adjacent to the existing South County Secondary School. This consolidation will provide public schools with opportunities for shared building and facility uses. The development of the middle school will also provide the Park Authority with an entrance into the new park site and 118 shared parking spaces for off-hour use by park patrons.

Public input on the proposed land exchange can be sent to the Fairfax County Park Authority until August 24, 2009. Anyone wishing to speak at the public hearing may call Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer at 703-324-8662 or send an email to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. Speakers may also sign up the night of the hearing. Written comments should be directed to David R. Bowden, Director, Planning & Development Division, Fairfax County Park Authority, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 406, Fairfax, Virginia 22035. Email comments should be sent to: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

703-324-8700 • ONLINE : www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks • E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least ten working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354

Lyme Disease And Rodents

To the Editor:

Reference your article on Lyme disease in your July 30 - August 5, 2009 Mount Vernon Gazette: I am as concerned about Lyme disease as anybody else, however, I am getting a little tired of it being linked so directly to culling the deer population (which is a whole different discussion).

The "deer tick" which spreads Lyme disease to humans is named for the deer mice (not deer) where Lyme disease comes from. It even says so in the link you graciously provided to the CDC (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme). "The Lyme disease bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, normally lives in mice, squirrels and other small animals. It is transmitted among these animals — and to humans — through the bites of certain species of ticks. In the northeastern and north-central United States, the black-legged tick (or deer tick, *Ixodes scapularis*) transmits Lyme disease."

I have read three articles in various local publications over the last few weeks linking control of Lyme disease to reducing the deer population. There are many good reasons for controlling the deer population, but this is not one of them. You can find deer ticks on most mammals, but if you want to control Lyme disease, try controlling the rodent population instead.

Leah Choudhury
Alexandria

Change Needed In Legislature

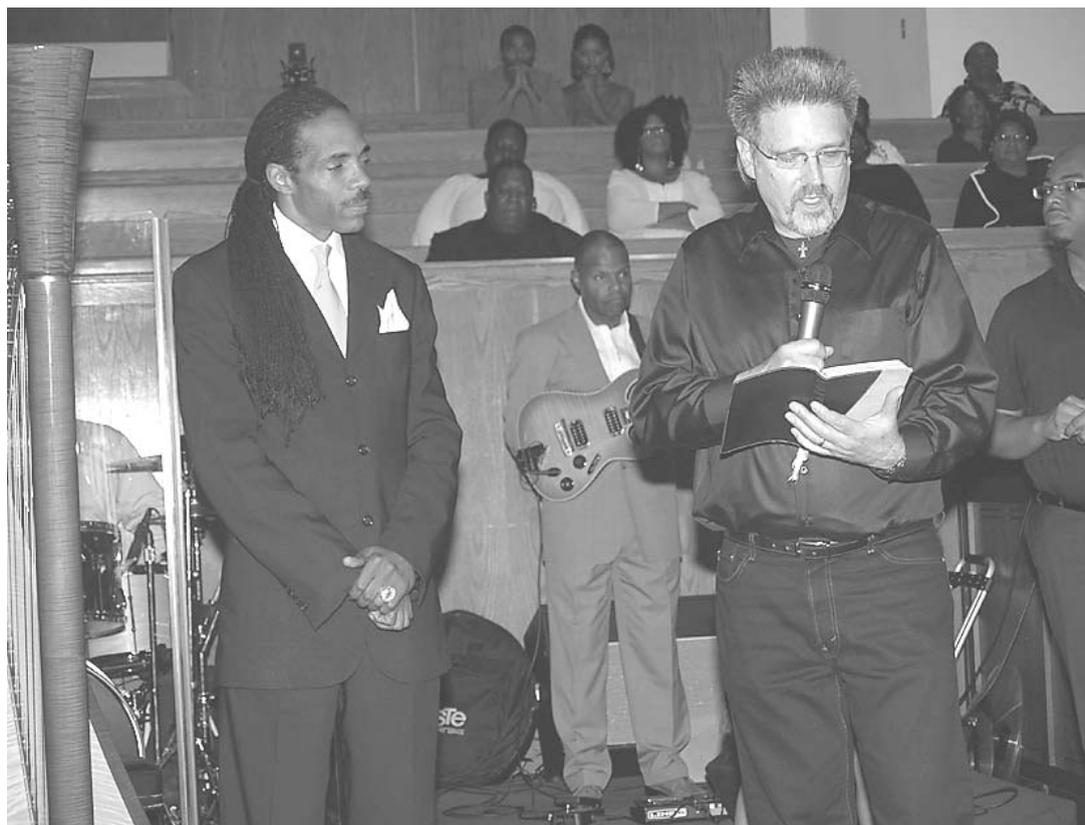
To the Editor:

I share the dismay of U.S. Rep. Jim Moran and many of my neighbors regarding the burden that the Base Realignment and Closure Act will place on the Rt. 1 corridor. Rep. Moran rightfully points to poor planning by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and a lack of federal funding for necessary transportation improvements.

The blame is only partly Washington's, however. Much of the fault lies with the General Assembly in Richmond.

Rt. 1 already looks like a parking lot on Saturday afternoons. With nearly 20,000 jobs moving to Ft. Belvoir, along with the opening of both the new hospital and the U.S. Army museum, Rt. 1 traf

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 20



Aiding Rising Hope

Internationally known jazz/gospel musician and harpist Jeff Majors packed the house at Bethlehem Baptist Church on the Route One corridor on Friday, July 31. The concert kicked off his fourth-annual "National Tour for the Homeless" and was a benefit to aid the ministries of Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church, which is located at 8220 Russell Road, Alexandria. More than \$12,000 was raised. The surprise of the evening was when multi-Grammy award-winner, and back-to-back Oscar nominee James Ingram walked in to hear the concert. When Majors recognized his presence in the audience, Ingram came forward and made up an impromptu song about Majors and his music.

McMansions Threaten Seniors

BY GERALD A. FILL

I imagine this. You have lived in your Mt. Vernon neighborhood home for 25 or more years. One morning you are awakened by the loud noise of heavy construction equipment. You look out the window to find to your surprise that a bulldozer is demolishing the home next door. One year later a huge new home is completed that is twice the size of your home, 40 feet high, that blocks your view of the nearby trees and meadows, robs you of your privacy, and landscaping that threatens to dump water into your basement. The price tag of the home is \$900,000. The last time you checked your home was worth half the price. In the following year you receive a real estate assessment notice which substantially increases your property taxes. This is an example of what confronts residents when huge new homes are built in Mt. Vernon (and other neighborhoods

THE NEW MIDDLE AGE

in Fairfax County) where small homes on small lots are the norm. These homes are referred to as "McMansions." There is no current county government policy to protect neighboring homeowners against the potential life-altering property tax impact of McMansions. This is especially onerous for those seniors who do not qualify for a property tax exemption based on income. High property taxes already threaten to push these seniors out of their homes. Without a change in real estate reassessment policies McMansions are likely to accelerate this forced exodus. Many of these same senior residents are already scraping by on fixed incomes. Some are sucking it up and paying the higher property taxes. Others, particularly those with limited financial means, and who may have suffered recent retirement savings losses, are sadly and reluctantly picking up and moving away. For decades these same Mt. Vernon seniors have conscientiously maintained their homes, paid their property taxes, voted in

support of numerous Bond Referenda for schools, parks, and libraries, and raised a family. Many wish to live out their retirement years in these same homes and neighborhoods. Absent board action to bring relief from property taxes for long time senior residents, the ripple effect of McMansions on property assessments is likely to accelerate the forced departure of seniors from their homes.

The Board of Supervisors is well aware of the negative quality of life impact of the McMansion — the "looming" phenomenon which alters the landscape and atmosphere of the neighborhood. In response, the board's approach thus far is to propose amending the residential zoning ordinance to limit the size of homes on small lots. A vote on the amendment is scheduled in September. It is supported by the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association and the Fairfax County Planning Commission. If enacted, builders would be prevented from the current practice of artificially raising the

SEE MCMANSION, PAGE 20

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

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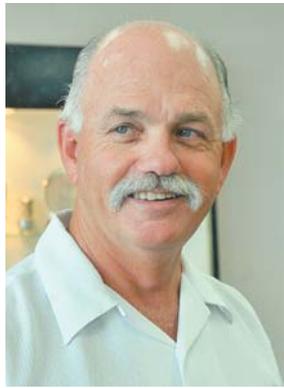
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ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

BY ANSLEY LABARRE
THE GAZETTE

Faberge egg-maker Ilya Abelsky stopped at King Street's B&C Jewelers last week to showcase his newest collection of patriotic eggs. The featured pieces were created in tribute to the Marine Corps, the first branch of U.S. military Abelsky is honoring in a line of eggs he created to highlight the military's sacrifice to the nation.



Nolan Forness

Russian-born Abelsky says he was inspired to create his newest line after becoming a U.S. citizen in the wake of Sept. 11. The craftsman also says he started with the Marine branch because they are typically called upon first for duty — a responsibility former Marine and B&C storeowner Nolan Forness can relate to.

"The Marines see their duty as a career," said Abelsky.

The craftsman traveled north from his hometown of Atlanta to visit the Marine Corps museum in Quantico and stop in Alexandria. B&C, which is celebrating its 56th year as an independent business in the Bradlee Shopping Center this month, has sold Abelsky's line for years with the intention of separating from mainstream jewelry products. Forness acknowledges the amount of attention the eggs receive from customers who appreciate their rare form.

"The customers love them for how delicate they seem but how tough they really are," said Forness.

Every egg is crafted by hand so that no two are exactly alike. Abelsky made his trip to continue public education about Faberge — a trade he associates with art more than jewelry. Through his investment in the craft, Abelsky simply wants to share his appreciation for the detailed work specific to Faberge. B&C sells the eggs from \$90 to \$450, but the designer says he doesn't mind if customers simply come to see his art without making a purchase. To Abelsky, the eggs' artistic value is one of a kind.

"They're all priceless," he said.

Faberge Eggs Go Patriotic

Russian egg maker Ilya Abelsky shows designs at B&C Jewelers.



Faberge-like pendants and lockets featuring iconic symbols of America are part of the patriotic collection created by Russian-born artist Ilya Abelsky.



A locket of the U.S. Capitol dome opens to reveal the Statue of Liberty.



Jewelry designer Ilya Abelsky at B&C Jewelers in the Bradlee Shopping Center.



A newly created piece of jewelry emblazoned with the Marine Corps insignia.

To Go

B&C Jewelry Store
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Shopping Center
3652 King Street
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703-379-6010
www.bcjewelers.net

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.

ALEXANDRIA FARMERS' MARKETS:

- * **Market Square**, 301 King Street, Alexandria. Saturdays, 5 am - 10:30 am, year round. Free parking in the Market Square garage during the hours of the Farmers' Market.
- * **Del Ray**, Corner of East Oxford & Mount Vernon Avenues, Alexandria. Saturdays, 8 a.m. - Noon, through the first Saturday in December.
- * **Upper King Street Fresh Farmers' Market**, King Street Gardens Park, 1806 King Street, Alexandria. Every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., through Oct. 29.
- * **West End Farmers' Market**, Ben Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive, Alexandria. Sundays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. through October.

Michael Jackson's Patent and Trademarks. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open exhibit of Michael Jackson's patent and trademarks. At the National Inventors Hall of Fame and Museum, Madison Building, 600 Dulaney Street, Alexandria, in the atrium. Call 571-272-0095.

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/AUG. 6

Jim Stephanson and John Previti. 7-9 p.m. Blues, swing and jazz-inspired tunes. Free. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, part of the Thursday

Nite Local Spotlight series. At 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565 or go to www.torpedofactory.org.

18th-Century Dance Classes at Gadsby's Tavern Museum. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Learn the dances of Jane Austen, George Washington, and Abigail Adams in Gadsby's Tavern Museum's historic ballroom. Dance master Corky Palmer will lead this fun and educational series of 18th-century English country dance classes in preparation for the Jane Austen Ball on Saturday, Aug. 15. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Alexandria. The cost for lessons is \$30 for the series or \$12 per class. Reservations are requested and can be made by calling 703-838-4242.

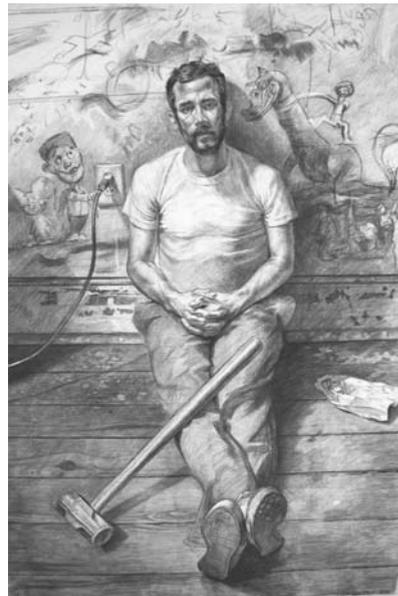
Concert at Fort Ward Park. 7:30 p.m. An all-Scottish night of music featuring the Northern Virginia Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and the Alexandria Pipes & Drums. Free. At 4301 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Call 703-883-4686.

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

Family Picnic and Bike Rodeo. 6:30 p.m. Learn about bike safety and safe routes to school, meet other parents living close by who want to form a student walking or biking group. At Samuel Tucker Elementary, 435 Ferdinand Day Drive, Alexandria. Call 703-933-6300.

AUG. 6-8

"Vanities" by Jack Heifner. At 8 p.m. A comedy directed by Herb Tax. From high school cheerleaders to independent women, follow Mary, Joanne, and Kathy through high school, college and into the "real" world ... and laugh yourself silly in the process! Featuring Natalie Christina (Mary), Carla Francischetti (Joanne), and Pamela Sabella (Kathy). At The Lyceum in Old Town Alexandria, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. \$15/general admission; \$10/seniors, students, retired or active military. Call 703-615-6626, www.zemfirastage.com.



In the Flesh II

The Torpedo Factory's Target Gallery is presenting In the Flesh II, a national exhibition of contemporary figurative art. The juror for this exhibition is Andrea Pollan from the Curator's Office in Washington, DC. There is a reception to meet the artists and the juror on Thursday, Aug. 13 from 6-8 p.m. with Pollan speaking at 7 p.m.

The artists' work in this exhibition employs the human figure to tell a story, make a social statement, explore the beauty and ugly distortions of the human form, examining the dark side of humanity; lush paintings, intricate drawings, disturbing photography and an exquisite fiber installation. Out of 830+ entries submitted by close to 300 artists from all over the country and the world, 27 works were ultimately selected to be a part of the exhibition.

The gallery will be open every day from 10-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10-9 p.m. on Thursdays. Go to www.torpedofactory.org.

**Jeff Markowsky - Mike's Dilemma
Charcoal on Paper - 44x30"**

FRIDAY/AUG. 7

Lantern Tours. 7-10 p.m. Tour Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St., by candlelight with a costumed guide to experience the historic tavern and hotel before the advent of electricity. Cost is \$5 per person, ages 5 and up. Call 703-838-4242 in advance to verify tour dates.

Alexandria Citizens Swing 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.

Wee Ones Storytime. Ages 0-2. 10:30 a.m. Join us in our storytime corner as we sing silly songs and read exciting stories! Free. Hooray for Books! Children's Bookstore, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Go to www.hooray4books.com. Call 703-548-4092.

SATURDAY, AUG. 8

Annual Irish Festival. Noon to 7 p.m. Entertainment features Brook Yoder; Pat Garvey; the Culin School of Dance; Pat Carroll; the Flying Cows of Ventry; the O'Neill-James School of Dance; The City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums; and the Lieutenant Colonel Dowd Division A. O. H. Color Guard, among others. Exhibits will highlight traditional arts, crafts, jewelry, paintings and souvenirs. Throughout the day, food and beverages will be available for purchase. Admission is free! Visit www.ballyshaners.org. At Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Call 703-883-4686 or visit www.ballyshaners.org.

Aretha Aretha to Perform. 7 p.m. Live Jazz. Also performing: Mike Gillispie (flute), Jon Ozment (keyboards), James King (bass), and Nasar Abadey (drums). At the closing night of "The Fine Art of

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

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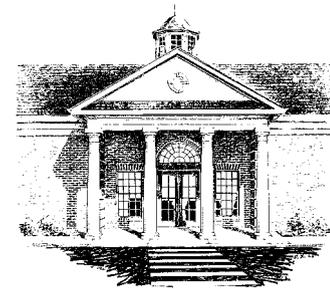
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Huge Price Cut!
Motivated seller wants immediate sale! Exceptionally spacious six level home with huge

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!



1100
Morningside Ln
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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
\$4,200,000
Riverfront!

Just reduced! 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.

STRATFORD LANDING!



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
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\$975,000
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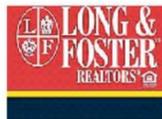
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10
Jazz" exhibition at the Alexandria Black History Museum. The Alexandria Black History Museum is located at 902 Wythe Street, Alexandria. \$20 tickets. Go to www.alexblackhistory.org or call 703-838-4356.

Friends Used Book Sale. Gems and finds for all readers. At Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Call 703-339-4610.

Building and Using Cold Frames. 9:30-11am. A cold frame is a protected plant bed used to extend the growing season. It can provide shelter for tender perennials; hardening off seedling plants, over wintering cold tolerant vegetables and summer rooted woody cuttings. Mary Frogale, staff horticulturalist talks about the many uses of a cold frame and tells you how to build one. \$15. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Call 703-642-5173 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/

Wee Ones Storytime. Ages 0-2. 10:30 a.m. Join us in our storytime corner as we sing silly songs and read exciting stories! Free. Hooray for Books! Children's Bookstore, 1555 King St., Alexandria. www.hooray4books.com. Call 703-548-4092.

SUNDAY/AUG. 9

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

AUG. 9-23

Bel Cantanti Opera Summer Music Festival. Two-week program for young professionals. Held in Westminster Presbyterian Church in

Alexandria. The festival will end with two performances of Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore and a performance of selected opera scenes and arias. Contact auditions@belcantanti.com to schedule an audition and reserve an audition slot. Call 301-266-7546.

SUNDAY/AUG. 9

"Precedence." 4:30 p.m. Contemporary dance styles with classical ballet by the Virginia Ballet Company. At the Ernst Community Cultural Center, on the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Tickets \$15. Go to www.virginiaballetcompany.org. Call 703 249-8227.

Summer Chamber Music Series. 3 p.m. Free. Members of Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic. Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria.

AUG. 10-14

Swimmers age 55 and older can swim at no charge at any of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's five waterparks the week of Aug. 10-14. Proof of age is required and hours at each park may vary. NVRPA's waterparks include Downpour at Algonkian Regional Park, Great Waves at Cameron Run Regional Park, Atlantis at Bull Run Regional Park, Pirate's Cove at Pohick Bay Regional Park and Upton Hill Regional Park. Visit www.nvrpa.org.

Bug-a-Boo Camp. 9 a.m. – noon. (7- to 12-year-olds) Butterflies and beetles, ants and arachnids, worms and wigglers! Explore the exciting world of bugs and their big jobs as pollinators and decomposers. Watch their life cycles unfold in gardens, woods, and

ponds. Make buggy crafts and learn buggy games. Fee includes light, nutritious snacks. \$150. Register through ParkTakes at 703-222-4664 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Call 703-642-5173 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12

Campagna Center Neighborhood Picnic. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Meet at the home of Rob and Lisa Krupicka, 409 East Alexandria Ave., Alexandria. Space is limited; RSVP to Thasia at twilliams@campagnacenter.org.

Preschool Palettes. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Preschool Palettes specializes in preserving your child's artwork "for keeps" and will be collecting book and print orders at Spill the Beans. At Spill the Beans Organic Coffee & Chat House, 1900 Elkin Street, Alexandria. Visit www.preschoolpalettes.com or call 703-307-3910.

AUG. 13, 14, 15

"Peter Pan." 7:30 p.m. with Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. Presented by Morningstar Productions. At Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, 8600 Plymouth Road, Alexandria. \$8/adult, \$5/student/child. Gina Smithers at Smithersgm@gmail.com or 703-577-3966.

AUG. 13-15

"Vanities" by Jack Heifner. At 8 p.m. A comedy directed by Herb Tax. At The Lyceum in Old Town Alexandria, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. \$15/general admission; \$10/seniors, students, retired or active military. Call 703-615-6626, www.zemfirastage.com.



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DINING

To Be Thai Offers Authentic Taste

By KRISTEN MCCARTHY
GAZETTE

To Be Thai Restaurant offers a niche where one can experience Thai culture through traditional cuisine.

Located in Huntington Gateway, owner Kanchana Phenghua started the restaurant in 2002. She came to America from Kanchanaburi, Thailand, to study international business and commerce at George Mason University in 1994. "I wanted to introduce the true Thai taste for the American people. I tasted Thai around town. It wasn't real Thai. I grew up cooking," said Phenghua.

She cooks the food and she runs the restaurant with her husband, Somchai Dulpimol. She chose Alexandria as the location for the restaurant because of the area's support for local businesses.

Inside the restaurant, Thai music is playing lightly in the background and Asian art work is displayed throughout the entry and dining areas.

Authentic Thai cuisine is featured on the menu. Two of the



Thai music and art fill To Be Thai Restaurant. Owner Kanchana Phenghua started the restaurant in 2002.

most popular dishes are the pad thai and thai dumplings. "All of the food I create is from my heart. It is very fresh, clean and original recipes," said Phenghua.

The most rewarding part of running the business for Kanchana is being able to connect with her customers. "I am very in touch with my customers. Many of them left Thailand during World War II. They know the Thai culture, the Thai food and they have good

memories of my country," said Phenghua.

Running a restaurant also has its challenges. Since the restaurant is somewhat hidden and not easy to see from the street, this has created some difficulties. "The location is somehow considered very good, but somehow very hidden," said Phenghua.

To Be Thai is located at 5970 Richmond Highway. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner is served from 5 to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday. To Be Thai is open on Saturday from noon until 10 p.m. and on Sunday from 5 until 10 p.m. Call 703-317-1166 or 703-317-0152 or visit www.tobethairestaurant.com.

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THEATRE

Some Strange Encounters Of a Reptilian Kind

Edward Albee's Pulitzer Winner "Seascape" At Gunston In Arlington.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

Edward Albee won the 1975 Pulitzer Prize in Drama (one of three he's pulled down) for a four-person play exploring the evolution of both personal relationships and species. Well, it's not quite a "four-person" play because two of the characters aren't human. They are some sort of lizard-like sea creatures who have emerged from the salty broth to try living on land.

Darwin tells us that once upon a time there must have been many individuals of sea-species that made that adventurous evolutionary leap at one time. But they would not have encountered an English-speaking human couple who are about-to-retire. It is the unique capacity of theater to spin such a story right in front of your eyes and the unique skill of Edward Albee to make all four of the individuals — reptilian and mamalian — interesting and identifiably individual.

The American Century Theater is reviving Albee's unique play, "Seascape" in Theater II of Arlington's Gunston Arts Center. Under director Steven Scott Mazzola, Annie Houston and Craig Miller take on the roles of the human couple who are in the midst of their own life-change as they approach retirement, and Brian Crane and Mundy Spears have donned costumes with huge swinging tails as the other "individuals."

Together, they explore not just the issues Albee raises but the unique flights of language that are a hallmark of any play by the author of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," "A Delicate Balance" and "The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?"

The humans don't meet the reptiles until late in the first act. The bulk of that act is devoted to the human couple's debate among themselves over what their life to-



MICAH HUTZ/THE GAZETTE

Edward Albee's "Seascape" runs now through Aug. 22 in Arlington.

gether should be like as the husband retires from employment and the wife no longer has her life dominated by child rearing duties. These two may have been enjoying a successful marriage in the past but they are at a key moment in the evolution of their relationship and are deep in argument over their future. He believes that they have "earned some rest" while she is anxious to find fulfillment in an adventurous future, perhaps traveling the world to always be living at a warm beach.

Albee uses these divergent views to raise questions about the purpose of life and the role of partnership in the mating ritual that is marriage. As is so often the case with Albee, however, he doesn't offer answers. Draw your own conclusions and relate them to your own existence.

With the arrival of the lizard-like couple (who, somehow, are quite fluent in English) the focus of the discussions widen to embrace great issues of the meaning of life itself. With specific questions going all the way from the meaning of "love" to the origin of the ritual of shaking hands, the text is full of typically stimulating Albeeisms.

The human pair has more complex complications than do the reptiles, and Houston and Miller do a good job of delineating them, although Houston's character's harping on her disappointments in her mate are a bit hard to take.

Crane and Spears avoid playing the reptilian couple for laughs, although they don't quite appear as

"emotionless" as the dialogue seems to imply they should be. That is not to say, however, that they don't get their fair share of laughs with Albee's wit. Exploring everything from the sex organs of mammals to reptilian reproduction with its thousands of eggs as opposed to the human's conception of three offspring, the discussions are intriguing.

Melanie Clark designed the costumes for the reptiles and Lynn Sharp-Spears the makeup. Together they found a way to have the reptiles not look like humans with green coloring but very acceptable as creatures from a prehistoric (by eons) age.



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

Where and When

The American Century Theater's revival of "Seascape" runs through Aug. 22 at Theater II in the Gunston Arts Center, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington. Performances are Wednesday – Saturday at 8 p.m. and Saturday – Sunday at 2:30 p. m. Tickets are \$25 - \$32. Call 703-998-4555 or log on to www.americancentury.org.

Local Families Promote Peace in the Middle East

Northern Virginia families are promoting trust, understanding, friendship, peace in the Middle East by hosting, pairs of leaders of the next generation, in Cyprus, a small island inhabited by Turkish and Greek-speaking communities for centuries. However for the past 35 years, they have been divided by UN Peacekeeping forces. So, more than a generation has grown up holding grievances toward members of the other community and with little or no contact between them.

From 1987 to 2007, many families in Northern Virginia hosted Protestant and Roman Catholic pairs of teens in their homes for four weeks in the summer to build friendship among those who would form the future of that divided land as part of the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI).

CFPNI ended with a large and emotional celebration in November 2007 because of the progress in Northern Ireland. No longer did teens need to come to the U.S. to



Mike Muir of Mount Vernon with Thailia and Idil from Cyprus in front of the Treasury Building during a recent storm.

build strong friendships with other teens from "the other side."

However, several families in

Northern Virginia active in CFPNI are now the foundation for a new Cyprus Friendship Program (CFP),

which is an all-volunteer modeled completely upon CFPNI and directed by Tamera Drozd of Vienna,

a former coordinator and multi-year host of the former program. It is a program of HasNa, Inc., a small 10-year-old U.S. non-profit that promotes peace in divided communities elsewhere in the world. HasNa's and CFP's chair of the board is Warren Muir of Mount Vernon, a 15-year host, former president, and former chair of CFPNI.

This summer CFP was launched with a pilot group of 10 pairs, all hosted in homes here this summer. While most of the 2009 host families were former participants in the former Northern Ireland program, the Cyprus Friendship Program is seeking to expand the program in summer 2010 in the area with the addition of more families, to the extent that it can raise charitable donations for the travel to the US. Contact Tamera Drozd (tamera@hasna.org or 703-255-1628). Charitable donations, all of which go for airfares and travel insurance, should be made out to HasNa-Cyprus Friendship Program, 2401 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 410, Washington, DC 20037.

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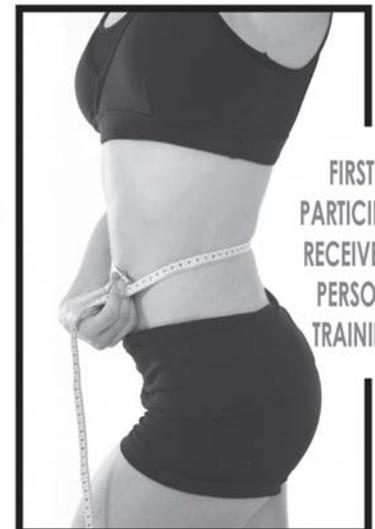
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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

fic will only get worse. We need real, long-term solutions to our transportation problems and extending Metro from Huntington and widening Rt. 1 have to be part of the discussion.

Toddy Puller, Kris Amundson, and Mark Sickles have been fighting for our fair share of transportation money for years and have obtained some limited improvements on Route 1, on the interstates, and the coming ground breaking of Mulligan Road through Ft. Belvoir. However, the funding for the Route 1 improvements that are needed the most to deal with this crisis — widening and mass transit — have been blocked at every turn by the Republican majority in the House of Delegates. Their latest shell game is McDonnell's plan to raid money for schools, colleges, and prisons by selling off the state's liquor stores and diverting sales tax money. We will only get relief with a change in the control of the House of Delegates. The last thing we need is more obstruction and "creative" financing schemes. The only way we can expect real solutions to start coming out of Richmond is by making the right choice in November.

Jenny Bouchard
Alexandria

Exactly How Many?

To the Editor:

I think the article ["\$3 Million for Route 1 Expansion," July 23] in the recent edition got a low-ball estimate of the impact on roads from the Army regarding their Wounded Warrior facility. The 228 patients cited in the article does not comport to the 412 patients projected for this facility published in the same edition of the paper as an "environmental impact notice." Just another example of Army prevarication.

Peter Christensen

Bipartisanship For Health Care

To the Editor:

At best, the health care reforms pushed by President Obama will do little more than exchange one set of problems for another set of even greater ones. At worst, it will do so while destroying what works in the current system. What works in American health care is a model for the rest of the world. However, skyrocketing costs, millions of uninsured and the unprincipled behavior of insurance companies are areas ripe for reform. Unfortunately, Obama's disdain for market-oriented solutions is just as troublesome as the bandit capitalism favored by some Republicans. Hardly a panacea, Obama's penchant for big government solutions will most certainly usher in a raft of new problems Americans will have to contend with when they get sick.

Obamacare will begin as a government-run insurance plan that will morph into a federalized single-payer system. In quick time, it will stifle medical innovation and inevitably lead to the rationing and denial of care by a government-appointed "committee of the unelected." Sooner rather

than later, we will live within a health care budget controlled by the rationing and denial of care based on guidelines established by bureaucrats in Washington. As I write there is a report out of Britain where, in a cost-cutting move, the government has announced it will be slashing the number of painkilling injections to those living with chronic back pain. Americans can expect the same — and worse — when treatment demands run up against budgetary constraints. Contrary to what Obama has said about not politicizing health care, his solutions will do just that. As Americans scramble for their share of the health care pie, Obamacare will further divide Americans into competing groups. Will those with HIV get a larger slice of the pie than Alzheimer patients because they are better organized and have a more effective lobby in Washington? Obama has also talked about controlling costs, yet his plan does nothing to rein in trial lawyers. Meaningful reform ought to include, if not start with, tort reform, because defensive medicine adds billions to the cost of health care each year. Trial lawyers, however, are big donors to the Democrat Party, and political considerations have the president and his party restricting their wrath to the insurance industry, and lately attempting to divert the public in that direction too. Besides, government-run programs are notoriously expensive and inefficient. In the Washington area, the cost of public education now exceeds \$14k per student! Under the stewardship of the government, health care costs will, without doubt, escalate beyond our wildest imaginations — i.e., witness Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, etc.

Particularly onerous, and completely unacceptable to the American people, is that Obamacare will compel taxpayers to finance abortion. What is simply a medical "choice" for some is murder to others. Those who support abortion have long argued that abortion should be a private matter between a woman and her doctor. So why force those who oppose abortion to pay for it?

The administration is in a rush to enact health care reform as quickly as it passed cap and trade and the stimulus bill. But ramming unread and little understood legislation through Congress is a form of shock and awe that Americans can do without right now. Congress should return to Washington and forge a bipartisan solution that fixes what is broken while preserving what currently makes American health care the envy of the world.

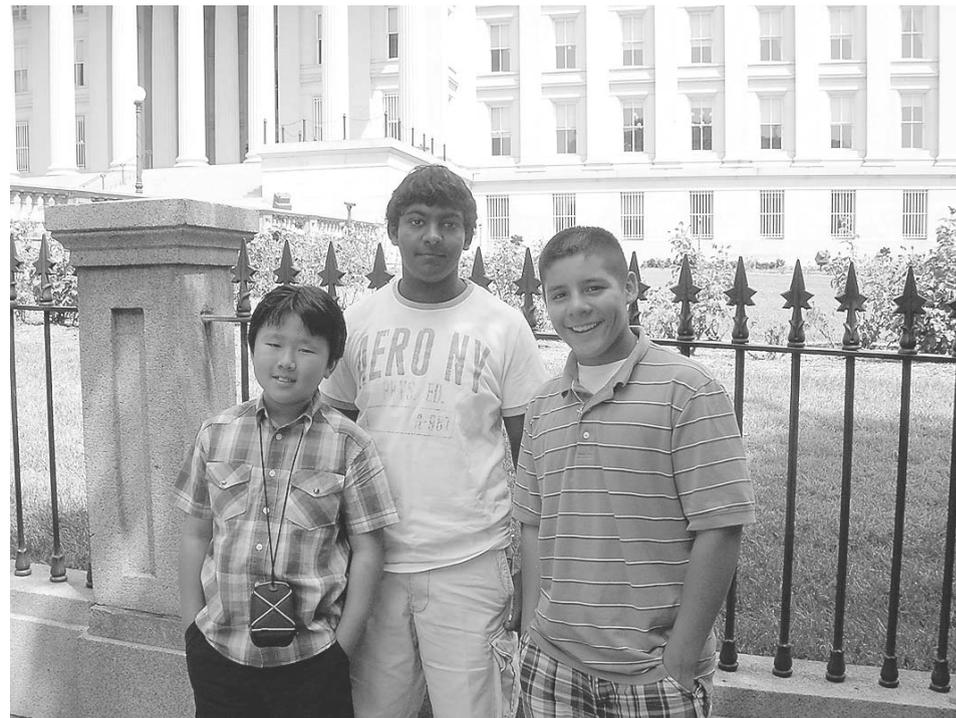
Thomas M. Beattie
Mt. Vernon

McMansions Threaten Seniors

FROM PAGE 8

ground level on a lot in order to build a large home often 40 feet high. More action to further limit the size of residential buildings on small lots is forthcoming, according to county officials.

However, the board's welcome action to curb the future size of McMansion's on small lots doesn't get at the current stark reality of the fundamental pocketbook issue. Seniors and others in these older small home



From left to right, Carl Sandburg Middle School students Ian Nakayama, Shil Patel, and Cristian Rivera visit the White House.

Sandburg Students Debut at White House

Carl Sandburg Middle School has been buzzing this summer. It started last school year when students, volunteers, and staff began rehabilitating an inner courtyard with vegetable gardens, wildflowers, butterfly houses, and ponds. In response to their efforts, the White House invited them to see the First Lady's Garden on July 28.

Thirty-five Sandburg students toured the gardens and the onions, peppers, lettuce, and tomatoes that feed the Obama family. In addition, students learned about the benefits of healthy eating to prevent obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among other diseases. The same message was brought to Carl Sandburg's campus in the fall with the launch of the Inner Courtyard. In addition to learning how to eat healthy and seeing where the food comes from, students will also participate in curriculum-oriented experiments generated in their seventh grade Life Science classroom and their eighth grade Physical Science classroom.

The courtyard is an 100 square feet by 100 square feet enclosed area. Within those grounds, the students will harvest 29 vegetable gardens and help maintain a native species garden, a butterfly garden, tulips, and tall grasses as well as two ponds, complete with fish, turtles and waterfalls. Students will harvest red worms for compost

and learn about the carbon and nitrogen cycles through hands-on activities in the courtyard. Students studying first ladies will learn about Michelle Obama's garden as well and Lady Bird Johnson's native species remediation gardens and Eleanor Roosevelt's victory gardens. Art classes will be adding mosaic bird baths and use the grounds for inspiration in water colors and sculptures.

Carl Sandburg's Parent Teacher Association, students, and volunteers have been the backbone behind the project. The PTA has funded the project while the students and parental and staff volunteers have worked to make continual improvements. With all of this momentum from the summer, Carl Sandburg will hold a volunteer day on Wednesday, Aug. 19 and also a grand opening ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 12. The grand opening ceremony will have activities for students, pictures of the White House event, and serve as a fundraiser for the new year. If interested in attending or volunteering, contact Tory Karg at victoria.karg@fcps.edu or 703/799-6100.

Missing Dog

FROM PAGE 7

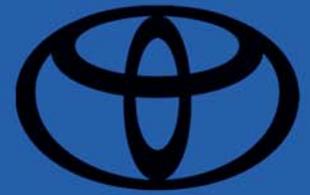
lice station for the detective who worked Shadow's case.

In the meantime, Shadow has adjusted to being home. "She still follows me," DiVacky says of her canine companion, "I try to sneak out of the room and I hear 'tic tic tic' and then she's right there. She's never more than two feet away." DiVacky is still more comfortable having Shadow nearby. "My yard is completely fenced but I don't let her out unless she's on an extended leash." DiVacky has plans to have Shadow microchipped later this month.

DiVacky now has made it her mission to inform other dog owners about what happened to Shadow. She has told her story to animal shelters and animal control.

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Gaelic Games Invade Alexandria

Hundreds turn out to show support for fast-growing Irish sports.

BY MARK GIANNOTTO
THE GAZETTE

Philip Melaku, 46, has worked for the Alexandria Parks and Recreation for 10 years now, but he witnessed a first within the makeshift wooden treehouse-like structure that serves as a scorer's table on the playing fields of George Washington Middle School this past Saturday.

He was working the scoreboard, keeping count as he had done for years supervising activities around the area, but on the grass in front of him there was no soccer or football game

as the goalposts and net would suggest.

Instead there were men and women — some with Irish accents — passing, dribbling, and even kicking a ball that should have been on a volleyball court through those uprights. This was Gaelic football; all part of an afternoon filled with

Gaelic games straight from the Irish motherland and transplanted to here in Alexandria.

"This is high action," said Melaku from his perch above the field as the D.C. Gaels girls' football team went against their counterparts from Baltimore. "It's definitely not what I was expecting, but it looks like fun."

MORE THAN 200 people showed up to George Washington Middle School to play or just watch what has become a fast growing sport for Alexandrian adults and children alike. When Jim Carmody first arrived in Alexandria from Kerry, Ireland in 1962, Gaelic games, and more notably Gaelic football, were a part of the innate Irish culture within the city.

But according to Carmody, immigration slowed during the 1970s and 1980s and the amount of people around the area playing the sport dropped precipitously. In 1988,

"It's a combination of soccer and basketball because everybody can handle the ball and there's an awful lot of passing."

— Jim Carmody



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE
Kevin Hailey (right) of the Michael Collins team based out of Alexandria goes for a jump ball.



Members of the D.C. Gaels and the Baltimore Bohemians go after a loose ball during last Saturday's Gaelic Games exhibition at George Washington Middle School.

Basics of Gaelic Football

The Field: Similar to a football or rugby field, except it stretches 130-145 meters long and 80-90 meters wide

Time: Matches consist of two 30-minute halves

Players: 15 players are on the field for each team

The Ball: Resembles a volleyball and similar to a soccer ball, but weighs more.

Rules: The ball can be kicked or hand passed. Throwing or picking the ball up directly from the ground is not allowed and one cannot move more than four steps without passing or kicking the ball. Tackling is allowed, but to a lesser extent than rugby. Shoulder-to-shoulder contact is allowed.

Scoring: One point for kicking or fisting the ball over the crossbar and through the uprights; three points if ball goes below the crossbar and past goalie.

❖ Hurling has similar rules and regulations except the ball may be played with the "hurl" or stick.

For more information, check out the Michael Collins Gaelic Football Club facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Michael-Collins-Gaelic-Football-Club/81583875046. Also, be sure to check out the Alexandria Irish Festival this Saturday at Waterfront Park beginning at noon.

though, Andrew Healy arrived in Alexandria looking for an "opportunity" to live the American dream like most transplants from abroad.

His perfect world, though, involved Gaelic football. Two decades later, there are nine Gaelic sport clubs around the area that comprise the Mid-Atlantic division, including the Michael Collins team based out of Alexandria that just came to fruition in April and already has 50 members.

"There was no football here whatsoever" when Healy arrived. "Now there's no reason it can't take off." Teams compete to qualify for the national championships, which are scheduled for Labor Day weekend in Boston this year. The D.C. Gaels ladies' team are the defending champions.

On this day, there were several matches of Gaelic football, hurling (a game played with sticks and a ball akin to American field hockey, but shares scoring and terminology with Gaelic football), and camogie (the female version of hurling). In Gaelic football, a team gets one point for kicking the ball through the football uprights and three points for getting it past the goalkeeper and into the soccer net.

"Irish football is fast and furious, you use every part of your body, hands and feet," said Healy in his thick Irish accent.

"It's a combination of soccer and basketball because everybody can handle the ball and there's an awful lot of passing," said Carmody. "You can't run with it, you get four steps ... you can't just catch and keep running."

IN IRELAND, the top Gaelic football players in the world will sometimes garner sta

SPORTS

Playing in Area's Oldest Junior Golf Tournament

Belle Haven CC hosts top local golfers at Bob Riley Junior Open.

BY MICHAEL K. BOHN
THE GAZETTE

Although the dog days of summer aren't the best time for golf in these parts, some of the area's best junior golfers put up some mighty fine numbers at the 87th annual Bob Riley Junior Open Aug. 3-4. Belle Haven Country Club hosted the tournament, which is one of the oldest junior events in the country.

Arlington's Garrett Fitzgerald won the 16-18 division with the tournament's low score of 71-71 - 142. His 2-under par total bested runner up Timothy Gregg of Bethesda by seven strokes. "My swing just clicked in the past two months," the recent Gonzaga graduate said afterward. "Everything came together during a trip to Scotland to play golf, and since then, I've been playing really well." Fitzgerald will attend Boston College in the fall and hopes



Tournament host and namesake Bob Riley congratulates the 16-18 division winner Garret Fitzgerald of Arlington.

PHOTOS BY
MICHAEL K. BOHN
THE GAZETTE



Alexandria's Danny Riley played in 87th annual Bob Riley Open, which is named in honor of his grandfather.

to make the golf team.

Mason Short of Waldorf, Md., won the 14-15 division with a two-day total of 73-72 - 145. Short, who isn't off the tee, won the 13 and under title in 2007 and now plays for St. Mary's Ryken High School.

In the 13 and under group, Alex Zakrzewski of Potomac, Md., won the title by two strokes over

Arlington's Addison Coll. Zakrzewski shot 77-78 - 155, and Coll, a rising freshman at Gonzaga, posted a solid 74 on the second day.

The Riley Junior Open is named in honor of a long-time junior golf activist, Bob Riley, an Alexandria resident and member at Belle Haven. The tournament began in 1922 as the DC Junior, and then

became the Junior Open in 1983 to allow all area juniors to enter. In 2004, the Washington Metropolitan Golf Association changed the name to honor Riley. He was the association's executive director from 1983 through 2003 and remains its director of junior golf. The Riley Junior Open is one of five highly competitive junior tournaments that WMGA sponsors

each summer.

Riley's grandson Danny was in the 14-15 field, and his first round 71 set off some high-pressure expectations in the family. His second round 83 dashed his hopes, but that's golf, as many say. However, Danny and his father Tom won low gross honors in Belle Haven's annual adult-junior championship on Aug. 2.

Hundreds Turn Out for Gaelic Games

FROM PAGE 22

dium crowds of more than 30,000 fans, but the sport remains strictly amateur even at the highest levels. Statistics show it outdraws even soccer as a spectator sport in Ireland. Healy thinks something to a lesser extent is possible here in the states since the sport is already popular in American cities with large Irish populations like New York, Chicago, and Boston.

Riley Moore, a 1999 West Potomac graduate, joined the Michael Collins team this past April after hearing about it when he was at Murphy's Pub, a Gaelic games sponsor, in Old Town. He grew up playing soccer, but soon realized he had found something unique. Now he practices two-three times a week at T.C. Williams High School with the rest of the team.

"There's a lot that goes into it," said Moore. "It's a lot more dynamic than any sport I've ever played. And it's not just for Irish-Americans, we've got a diverse group."

The key, though, to growing the sport is to get youth involved. This past Saturday, Bobby Mahoney, a member of the Michael Collins team held a youth clinic as part of the day's festivities. Fifteen children as young as four and five years old tried their luck at the sport. Watching from the sideline was Alexandria youth sports supervisor Mac Slover, who said he was in support of starting some youth programs through the city to "bring the sport forward."

"We would like to see this in the schools here and as a city sport and see this grow," said Mahoney. "It's kind of a secret, but I think it's about time to let it out."



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

Goalie Rosemary Riley of the D.C. Gaels controls a ball during a game of camogie, the female version of hurling.

SCHOOL NOTES

Rebecca Whitworth, an International Baccalaureate Middle Years program (IBMYP) certificate recipient and student at **Mount Vernon High**, wrote a novella for her IBMYP personal project, a requirement for students pursuing the certificate. Whitworth's project was chosen to be included on a CD published by the International Baccalaureate titled "50 Excellent Personal Projects," which includes projects from students around the world.

The FCPS Department of Communications and Community Outreach has awarded its quarterly WebStar Awards for January through March to the following schools: **Laurel**

Ridge Elementary, Carrington Crabbe, curator; **McNair Elementary**, Laura Jones, curator; **Stratford Landing Elementary**, Andrea Ricketts, curator; **Twain Middle**, Megan Farrelly, curator; and **Falls Church High**, Starlyn Comai, curator. WebStar Awards for the October through December quarter were presented to **Kent Gardens Elementary**, Rebecca Boyer, curator; **Mount Eagle Elementary**, Elisa Alexander, curator; **Terraset Elementary**, Heather Dix, curator; **Longfellow Middle**, Mary Reid, curator; and **Oakton High**, Cris Bradshaw, curator. Contact Nancy Moy at nancy.moy@fcps.edu .

BULLETIN BOARD

To have a notice listed in the Bulletin Board, e-mail gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Call Rebecca Halik at 703-917-6407 with questions.

11a.m. - 4 p.m. to collect school supplies.

SATURDAY/AUG. 8

Community Office Hours. 10 a.m. to noon. Del. Kristen J. Amundson will be holding Community Office Hours at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria.

Free School Physicals. 8 a.m. to noon. Space is limited and appointments are required. Call 703-698-2550. At Mt. Vernon Health Department, 8350 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria.

ONGOING

School supplies and backpacks are being accepted at United Community Ministries, 7511 Fordson Road, now through Aug. 17 in order for volunteers to sort supplies and pack backpacks. Molly Sackett, a UCM volunteer will be at Office Depot at Beacon Mall on Richmond Highway on Saturday, Aug. 8 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 9 from

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