

Mount Vernon Gazette

25 CENTS

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

'Eyes on Nature'

Last week on Thursday evening, artist members of the Botanical Art Society of the National Capital Area hosted the opening of the exhibition "Eyes on Nature" at River Farm. Fifteen artists work is currently displayed. The work was juried by Lillian Fitzgerald or Lillian Fitzgerald Fine Art in Alexandria. River Farm is located at 7931 East Boulevard Drive off the George Washington Parkway in South Alexandria. Exhibit is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Exhibit coordinator Kathleen Brahney and society president Pamela Mason.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE



"Datura" by Vicki Malone



"One Pear" by Berit Robertson



"Pink Peony" by Karen Coleman

\$30 Million Later

Specialty care helps reshape Inova Mt. Vernon Hospital.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Over the last five years, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital has rebounded along with a new emphasis in specialty care.

Responding to the community's concerns and commitment to Mount Vernon Hospital, Inova's planners took steps to expand specialty offerings in behavioral health, rehabilitation, joint replacement, recruit additional doctors, renovate the hospital design to accommodate the new emphasis, and to reach out for referrals in the northern Virginia region.

The shift in emphasis from providing only traditional community hospital inpatient medical and surgical services to include specialty services, and recruiting additional doctors in the region has improved the financial outlook of the hospi

SEE SPECIALTY CARE, PAGE 6

Looking Back

Inova Health System had considered relocating Mt. Vernon Hospital.

"From 1980 - 2000, Mt. Vernon Hospital was losing millions of dollars annually," said Don Harris, Inova consultant in government relations.

"As recently as the year 2001 we were still losing money and began a plan to capture patient admissions coming from the growing communities in Lorton, Burke, and Woodbridge." "We also were looking to expand our outpatient service offerings to those communities south and west of Route 1." "This led to our thinking that it may make sense to relocate the present hospital site to somewhere south in order to make it more convenient to those targeted areas." However, once the Mt. Vernon community realized what was in the works, a citizen task force was immediately formed to suggest ways to keep Mt. Vernon Hospital at its present site, and to express their opposition to the relocation plan. Supervisor Gerry Hyland said in a recent interview: "Mt. Vernon Hospital is an enormously important anchor of the community and we did not want to see it relocated." Hyland said that his involvement in preventing the move of Mt. Vernon Hospital to another site is one of his most important efforts during his tenure as Mt. Vernon supervisor.

They're Fresh Out of College

New teachers in Mount Vernon pursue their dreams.

BY JEFFREY AARON
THE GAZETTE

When Katie Rippy was five-years-old, she lined her stuffed animals in a row and recited the alphabet. They didn't get it. When her twin brother and sister were born, she sat them down too and tried to teach them how to multiply and divide. They didn't get it either. But those "classes" she conducted early on were the defining moment she knew she wanted to be a teacher.

Fresh out of James Madison University with a bachelor's Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (minor in Secondary Education and History) and master's in Secondary Education (endorsement in Social Studies), the 23-year-old is one of a handful of new teachers in Mount Vernon.

Rippy, who grew up in Springfield, teaches world history and geography to sophomores and U.S. and Virginia history to juniors and some seniors at Mount Vernon High School.

"I've been asked by some employees who know



PHOTO BY JEFFREY AARON / THE ALMANAC

Katie Rippy started "teaching" when she was five-years-old. Now with bachelor's and master's degrees to her credit, this 23-year-old is making a career of it. She just started at Mount Vernon High School.

"I'm a teacher whether I have my hall pass," she said Saturday.

But she isn't asked that question by her students. "While there is only a small age difference between

SEE NEW TEACHERS, PAGE 4

Hyland Raises Concerns About River Weeds

Water plants have literally grown into being a nuisance and possible safety hazard this year for those who live and recreate along the Potomac River, according to Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland (D).

Watermen and people who live along the water in Mount Vernon told Hyland that hydrilla is spreading faster in the Potomac's coves and bays than they have seen in several years.

One Wessynton Community resi-

dent said hydrilla had become so thick in Little Hunting Creek that it is difficult for boaters to navigate. This resident also worried that the plants make it dangerous for people who decide to swim in these areas, wrote Hyland in a board matter he presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Monday, Sept. 14.

Since the 1980s, the United States Army Corps of Engineers has cleared hydrilla growing in several local creeks as part of aquatic plant

SEE RIVER WEEDS, PAGE 6

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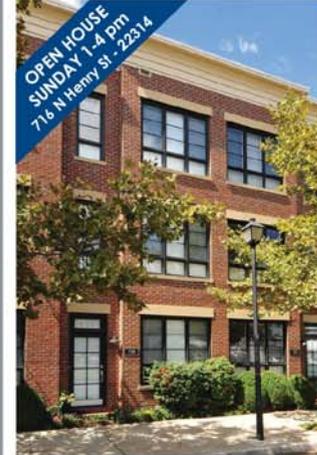


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Joining the Tea Party
On Capitol Hill



Mount Vernon residents Greg and Judy Gandee, and his daughter-in-law, Meagen Gandee participate in the Tea Party on the mall where they marched with others to share their opinion of the Obama administration.



PHOTOS BY CHARLES T. GANDEE

Mount Vernon residents Bob and Donna Crandall joined the Tea Party march this past week. As the sign indicates, the participants marched in opposition to the Obama administration use of tax dollars and other policies.

Council Approves Land Use Changes

Proposals now go to Planning Commission.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Approximately 50 people attended last week's Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations meeting, including 27 association presidents, who voted on proposed changes to the county's Comprehensive Plan.

With one exception, the votes were near unanimous. The council's nominations will be sent to the county planning and zoning office for their review and analysis, and eventually will be sent to the Planning Commission for its review and consideration. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing next year on the nominations prior to forwarding their recommended changes to the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Supervisors. Here are the vote results:

North Gateway Community Business Center:

Proposal: Multi-functional large-scale gateway to Mt. Vernon District with Visitors Center.

Vote: 26 yes; 0 no; 1 abstention

Kings Crossing/Penn Daw Community Business Center:

Proposal: Mixed-use town center with no "big box" type retail store such as Walmart, which has expressed an interest in the site.

Vote: 26 yes; 0 no; 1 abstention

Mt. Vernon Governmental Center Campus:

Proposal: To consolidate all the public facilities; expand such public facilities where appropriate, but promote a campus-like setting which maximizes green space. This includes the Inova Mount Vernon

Hospital; Whitman Middle School; Sherwood Library; Mt. Vernon Governmental Center which houses the Supervisor's offices and the Police Station; the Fire & Rescue Station; and the Justice Snowden Farm on Parkers Lane.

Vote: 22 yes; 1 no; 5 abstentions

Justice Snowden Farm, on Parkers Lane: Proposal: To allow the construction of two additional single family homes; and to revise the zoning to be consistent with the existing covenants.

Smitty's Lumbertaria, Route 1:

Proposal: To create a village town center with residential, office, and retail space; essentially to increase density for this 23 acre site.

Vote: 23 yes; 0 no; 4 abstentions

The former Mt. Vernon High School, presently leased by the Islamic Saudi Academy, which is scheduled to move to another part of the county after the lease is up.

Proposal: Use the existing main building for educational purposes; utilize part of the outbuildings space to house non-profit organizations.

Vote: 22 yes; 1 no; 4 abstentions

Dogue Creek Treatment Plant: Proposal: Preserve as open space those areas not in use by the county.

Vote: 22 yes; 0 no; 4 abstentions

Little Hunting Creek Treatment Plant: Proposal: Develop a nature pathway and boardwalk if and when the present use of the pumping station is no longer being utilized by the county.

Two Stratford residents spoke out in opposition to the proposal, contending that the affected neighborhood had not been sufficiently apprised of the proposal. H. Jay Spiegel,

one of the two Stratford residents, voiced his strong objections several times during the session. An amended vote introduced

by an authorized representative of the Stratford Landing Civic Association was defeated: 8 yes; 18 no; and 2 abstentions. Then the Special Committee's proposed APR nomination to the MVCCA President's passed by a vote of: 19 yes; 6 no; 2 abstentions.

Patrick Rea, co-chair of the MVCCA, said, "The particular Stratford resident who voiced repeated concerns during the presentation of the Special Committee's proposal at the President's meeting has no standing as his Civic Association's representative. This meeting was for the Council's Presidents to vote on the nominations. However, if the Stratford Landing Civic Association votes to object to the APR nomination as approved by the Council this evening the Council will reconsider the APR nomination proposal."

"... if the Stratford Landing Civic Association votes to object to the APR nomination as approved by the Council this evening the Council will reconsider the APR nomination proposal."

— Patrick Rea, co-chair, MVCCA

Hybla Valley/Gum Springs Community Business Center:

Proposal: Ensure that whatever is developed in this region is consistent with the Little Hunting Creek Watershed Management Plan; to utilize low impact development practices which will better control stormwater runoff.

Vote: 22 yes; 2 no; 0 abstentions
Beacon/Groveton Business Center:

Proposal: Any increased density in the area should be consistent with stormwater runoff recommendations.

Vote: 22 yes; 0 no; 0 abstentions

EARL FLANAGAN, the Mt. Vernon District planning commissioner, pointed out recently that this is the first time in recent memory that the MVCCA has proactively engaged in a public outreach effort, engaged major stakeholders in a discussion, and formulated a set of detailed proposals for changes in the Comprehensive Plan. The Mount Vernon Council had the benefit of two expert advisors. They were: Marianne Gardner, a member of the county's planning and zoning staff, and Bruce Leonard, a professional real estate planner and analyst in the private sector who provided pro bono advice to the Special Committee.

"The Mt. Vernon Council's effort is a wonderful example of bringing about a community bottom-up approach to land use planning," said Gardner. "The Council requested my office to provide the Special Committee on Strategic Planning with technical advice as to how to structure the proposals, explain how the comprehensive plan works, help the participants understand the planning nomenclature, what is eligible for nomination and what isn't, and how to do the research."

Leonard said, "I helped to organize the Charette. All in all it was a positive experience ... when the [public outreach and planning] process is applied appropriately it is a consensus building exercise. As a result the Committee's APR nominations were very responsible and have a good chance of being considered seriously ... and the communities' affected will be the beneficiary over the next several years."

New Teachers Pursue Their Dreams

FROM PAGE 1

me and my students, college makes that age difference irrelevant. [I'm] at a different level because of the education. The only worry that I have is that I look young," she said.

While at JMU, Rippy was told by some instructors and even veteran teachers that she had to be tough on the first day of school.

"Don't smile. Be stern. Show them you mean business they said. But that isn't my style. That's just not who I am," she said.

Instead, Rippy and her students talked. "We got to know each other."

Last week at the end of the first week of school, no one was asking whether she had taught before. "They said it seems like I've been doing this forever."

BEFORE Eric Kopacz entered Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, he knew he wanted to help people.

"I had a choice: to become a politician or a teacher. Seeing that politicians hurt more than help, I decided on teaching," said the 22-year-old, who also began his first year of teaching last Monday at Waynewood Elementary.

"Seeing kids learn and watching them grow is what I wanted to do," he said.

But his first day of fourth grade

teaching was unlike anything he learned in the three and one-half years in college.

"They said 'you have to be flexible,' but what does 'flexible' mean? I found out on my first day. Lunch starts at this time," he said pointing to his watch. "It ends at this time. Everybody leaves at this time. You need to roll with the punches. Let it happen and roll with the punches."

During the first week of school, he was sleeping on an air mattress in the laundry room of his sister's house. One of his stu-

dents asked him why he looked tired. "I told him if he tried sleeping on an air mattress for six hours a night for three weeks he'd be tired too." He has since moved into a house he shares in Clarendon.

The Bucks County, Penn. native moved about a month ago from Shippensburg, which "is in the middle of nowhere. It's about as rural as you could get. Kids there milk cows in the morning and then go to school."

There were few to no openings for teachers there. When he learned some positions were available in Fairfax County, he applied and was hired.

"I picked up my life and moved to Virginia," he said.

Now, after the move, sleeping on an air mattress, and the experiences of his first week of teaching,

"Seeing kids learn and watching them grow is what I wanted to do."

— Eric Kopacz



Eric Kopacz is fresh out of college and teaches fourth graders at Waynewood Elementary School.

Kopacz said he knows the meaning of the word "flexible."

AMANDA TROUT sees a very big difference between Johnson City, Tenn., where East Tennessee State University is located, and Alexandria, where she accepted her first teaching job following graduation.

The cost of housing, transportation, food, and entertaining are all more expensive here compared to Johnson City, which is one reason she lives in Herndon and commutes to Hollin Meadows Elementary as a first grade teacher.

So why choose Alexandria? "My husband brought me up here," she said. Married for less than a year, her husband is a graphic artist for the Washington Post.

Trout, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood education, experienced "just what I expected" during her first week of school.

"The kids were very excited to see each other. Some kids are a little homesick, others are afraid, while still others want to jump right in," she said.

At 25, the Tennessee native knew she always wanted to teach.

"I had good role models. I wanted to go to school because of them. I just gravitated toward it," she said.

FAIRFAX COUNTY Public Schools has 13,746 teachers; 912 of those were newly hired for the opening of the 2009-10 school year. Nationally, there were 22.4 newly hired teachers per school district in 2007-08 — the most recent figures available — ranging from an average of 2.1 new hires in districts with less than 250 to an average of 206.2 new hires in districts with 10,000 or more students, according to Kerry Gruber with the National Center for Education Statistics.

Summit for Businesses

In her first major initiative since being appointed as executive director of Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, Debi Sandlin readies plans for SFDC to host a Business Resource Summit for small businesses on Nov. 17.

The theme for the business summit is: "Surviving and Thriving in Today's Economy: Business Resource Summit."

The keynote speaker will be Stephen Fuller, director, Center for Regional Analysis, George Mason University

The SFDC is funded by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and is guided by a community-based Board of Directors. Its purpose is to assist businesses in identifying and procuring property to suit their needs, market the Route 1 corridor as an attractive commercial business environment, promote economic restructuring and develop urban design plans.

In a recent interview, Sandlin outlined the following initiatives:

- ❖ A quarterly business seminar focusing on issues impacting business growth.

- ❖ Developing a proactive marketing campaign to increase visibility of the Route 1 corridor.

- ❖ Improve relationships with county, business and civic organizations.

For more information, visit www.SFDC.org

— GERALD A. FILL

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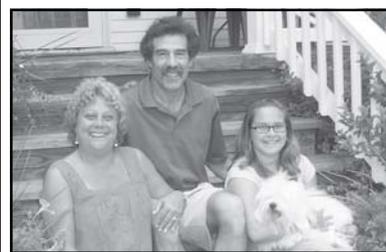
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NEWS



Denali Mason, 4, chalks the pavement. The "Big Chalk Draw" was held to prepare young students like Mason for their return to school.

'Big Chalk Draw'



Ryan Coneway, 6, and his brother Kevin, 4, help color the parking lot. Throughout the year, Art at the Center offers classes for youngsters to expand their creative thinking.



Youngsters expressed their creativity with sidewalk chalk during Art at the Center's "Big Chalk Draw" on Sept. 4. The Center's owner and former art instructor Kathryn Coneway said the event gave children the rare opportunity to play in a parking lot while letting loose through drawing.

PHOTOS BY ANSLEY LABARRE/THE GAZETTE

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that on Saturday, September 19, 2009, between 9:15 and 9:45 p.m. a very brief fireworks display will take place as part of a private event at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens. The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption.

To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via e-mail, write to Events@MountVernon.org



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Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO) nurse in attendance:
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CEO Barbara Doyle

PHOTOS BY GERALD A. FULL/THE GAZETTE

Specialty Care Helps Reshape Hospital

FROM PAGE 1

tal and, according to Inova representatives, it continues today.

Barbara Doyle, Inova Mt. Vernon Hospital CEO since 2006, said, "As a result of careful planning, expanded patient specialty services, recruiting additional doctors, administrative improvements, and new construction designs over the past several years, our 237 beds and services are now used in the following manner:"

- ❖ 140 beds: medical/surgical inpatients
- ❖ 67 beds: rehabilitation patients (stroke, brain injury)
- ❖ 30 beds: inpatient behavioral health unit
- ❖ 237 beds, total.

"In addition to our \$30 million investment in Mount Vernon Hospital over the past five years, in 2011, at a projected cost of \$27 million, we will begin constructing a Lorton Healthplex to serve initially as a 24-7 emergency clinic, laboratory, and imaging service. More serious acute care medical problems coming to the Lorton clinic will be referred to Mt. Vernon Hospital for follow-up," Doyle said. "We expect to begin caring for patients at the Lorton Healthplex by December, 2012. Later, the plan is to expand the services at this site to include an ambulatory surgery center; however, that remains as an option depending on the demand for our services."

Doyle believes Inova Mount Vernon Hospital should be thought of as both a local community hospital and a regional medical facility serving patients from Northern Virginia and throughout the region. "Not only are we drawing patients from the Washington metro region, but throughout the U.S." She cited the following specialty services that will continue to establish the Hospital's growing reputation as a regional medical facility:

❖ Dorothy Fisher Wound Healing Center: Includes two hyperbaric oxygen therapy units. Patients with difficult chronic healing problems (ex. diabetic ulcers, foot care, pressure ulcers, decompression sickness, tissue necrosis, infected skin grafts) are referred to this center by plastic surgeons and vascular surgeons, among others. The cCenter averages 6,000 outpatient visits annually.

❖ Inova Breast Care Institute (BCI): Inova Mount Vernon Hospital has applied for national accreditation for their (BCI) service. Factors that will determine accreditation include: accuracy of diagnosis; time it takes to see a doctor; time taken to complete a mammogram, speed of referral, etc.

❖ Radiology Center Improvements: On Oct. 19

the hospital will host an open house for the public to see the improvements made to this service. Over \$14 million in renovations have been completed in this area.

❖ Joint Replacement Orthopedic Program: Its record of excellence has been recognized nationally by the Joint Commission; a Gold Seal of Approval Award for its hip and knee replacement program, one of only four institutions in Virginia given this recognition.

❖ Emergency Room Reforms: A new process has been established in which a nurse practitioner is present daily to evaluate and treat patients with less acute medical problems.

Other patient care improvements include the purchase of emergency generator for \$5 million. Additional millions of dollars have been invested in the installation of electronic medical records system; MRI, \$2.1 million; CT scanner, \$1.2 million; new digital mammography equipment; heart telemetry monitoring system, \$1.2 million.

What financial challenges are ahead?

"Approximately 48 percent of our budget is derived from Medicare patient reimbursements; 10 percent from Medicaid reimbursements, and a small percentage of reimbursements derived from Tricare. Thus, approximately 60 percent of our reimbursements are derived from government-funded programs," said Doyle. "Looking at past reductions in government reimbursement, we have to be prepared for further potential cuts. This means we need to continue to look for more cost efficient ways to operate without, of course, diminishing the quality of care for our patients. I believe we are now doing just that here at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital."

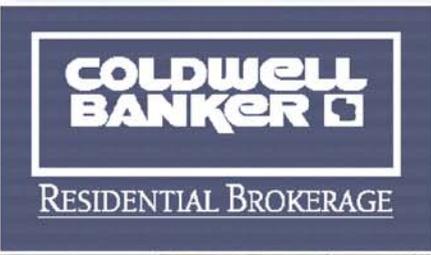
River Weeds

FROM PAGE 1

control program in Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. that was set up through an agreement with each state government and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. But last year, Virginia withdrew its funding from the program as a result of budget constraints, said Hyland.

At the urging of Hyland, the supervisors voted to reopen the discussion about water plant control with the Army Corps of Engineers and local council of governments.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE



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1822 CARPENTER ROAD
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OPINION

More Advanced Courses

More participation in upper level courses bodes well for students headed to college.

Fairfax County schools reported this week that about 20,000 students are taking at least one Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course this fall, an increase of 700 over last year.

Students benefit from participating in advanced level coursework in many ways. Coping with even one class with higher-level expectations helps in preparation for college classes. Completing advanced courses in high school is a good indication of a student's ability to complete college level work. While that ability is just one element of college success — organization, time management, discipline and more are major factors

— the confidence that comes with the experience is key.

Many students who have taken a full AP or IB program report an easier time with the academics of their first year of college, although there are no doubt plenty of other adjustments to make.

Students who take a full complement of AP or IB coursework also lay the groundwork for getting more out of college, and possibly paying less.

A good score on AP or IB exams can be counted for credit in some colleges, so a student with many advanced credits from high school can move directly into upper levels of courses when they arrive in college. And with

credit, some students are able to graduate in three or three-and-a-half years, potentially saving tens of thousands of dollars in the meantime.

Parents and students in schools that offer International Baccalaureate instead of Advanced Placement should know that students who successfully complete an IB course are likely to perform well on the related AP exam, and would be well advised to register to take that AP test. While most colleges accept an AP score of 3 or more for either credit or placement, some colleges are still less consistent about how they handle IB test results. Having the AP test score can make the process in college much simpler. High schools offering IB should also be encouraging their students to take the AP exams.

— MARY KIMM.

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Comparing Apples To Oranges

To the Editor:

A specious comparison, ["Tale of Two Schools - West Potomac outperforms state, nation in SATs, while Mount Vernon is below average," Sept. 10.] illustrates what's wrong with the testing mania afflicting American education: sound-bite headline journalistically, sound-bite methodology educationally.

SAT stands for Scholastic Aptitude Test, not Scholastic Achievement Test. A student's aptitude and achievement are apple and orange measurements. Aptitude measures reasoning ability and expectation of academic success; achievement measures what and how much a student knows given their life circumstance. Invidious confusion then comparison of the two can produce an untrue relation — a "tale."

Educational and sociological research has long since concluded that socio-economic status is a major component of so-called aptitude. It has nothing to do with character, a highly arguable fraction with innate ability. Abstraction facility and life circumstance are inextricably inter-

twined. Except to elaborate the obvious socio-economic differences the schools' principals amply cite, comparison of the scholastic aptitudes of West Potomac H.S. with Mount Vernon H.S. students is educationally useless at best, cynically detrimental at worst.

When the Gazette headline begins with "Tale," buyer beware. Attempting to foment controversy and disturbance by comparing the schools' apple aptitude numbers as though they were orange achievement measurements is a disservice to students, schools, and the community.

Rocky Curtis
Alexandria

Historic Moment

To the Editor:

On Thursday night Sept. 10, I had the opportunity to represent my community in what can only be considered an historic event. I have lived in the Mt. Vernon District pushing 70 years and my family in the District for nearly 75 years. In addition, I was born in the District and not many can lay claim to that.

In those years there have been three history making events. First, the creation of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) nearly 40 years ago.

Second, the election of Gerald Hyland as supervisor 20 years ago

and third, the Sept. 10 meeting of the MVCCA to vote on nominations for the upcoming Area Plan Review Process.

The first of these events has significantly forged the development of the Mt. Vernon District from a rural suburb where Route 1 was a two-lane highway to what it is today. What makes Sept. 10 an historical marker, is it represents a transfer of land use decisions from the hands of the developers, special interests and sometimes narrow-mindedness of various county agencies to where that decision belongs, squarely in the hands of the citizens.

Although the majority of the nominations were confined to the revitalization of the Route 1 Corridor, a few involved properties outside the corridor important in bringing the vision of a better District into fruition which also includes properties owned by the county. Through several months of public input meetings and melting together the concerns of many diverse groups into their nominations, the Council's Special Committee on Strategic Planning has done a remarkable job in garnering consensus. Consensus is always a key to progress and when the Council

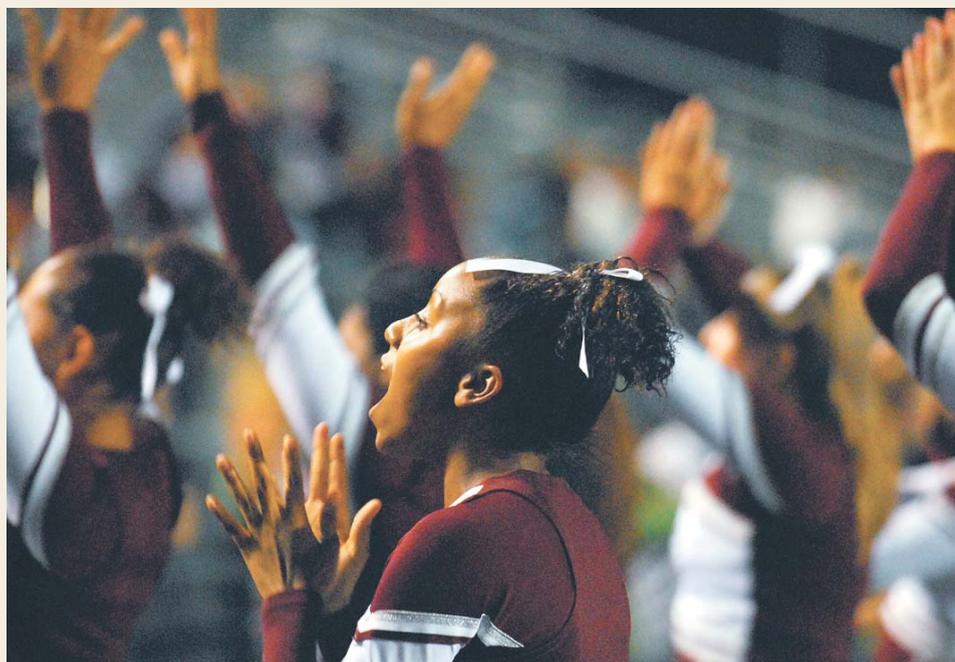


PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

Snapshot Sept. 11, 8:05 p.m.: Cheering on the Mount Vernon Majors at the football game against T.C. Williams Titans.

SEE LETTERS,
PAGE 9

Mount Vernon Gazette

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Newspaper of Mount Vernon

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

Board was asked the important question: "Do all the committees agree with the nominations presented here tonight" the answer was "yes." This is in itself historic given conflict of positions between committees over the years.

Historically the citizens have only been in the position of reacting to nominations presented by developers, special interests and in some cases, profiteers. Over the years the Council has been successful in mitigating some of the development, and has been instrumental in getting certain land use elements into the Comprehensive Plan, but the gains made were results of reactive strategy. The outreach to the citizens by the Strategic Planning Committee in order to achieve a proactive approach to land use issues which brought forth a consensus of citizen vision is revolutionary.

It has been said that one of the most important elements of the Revolutionary War was not only that we won the war, but that we decided to go to war. The majority of us living in the Mt. Vernon District who love it and respect it, should be grateful that this citizen dream for a better district was

given legs by the Special Committee but we should also feel inspired by the vote of the Council members to give that dream wings. This decision to transfer land use decisions to the people by the Council, who represents them, is indeed historic and in the end, there is no doubt this citizen vision will prevail whether it be this time around or next, the process can not now be reversed, the first step of citizen action has been taken. Collectively the citizens have chosen to advance their dream of a better Mt. Vernon District, and you have an opportunity, if not a responsibility, to participate in and strengthen the process. There will be several APR Task Force public meetings, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors public meetings, giving you ample opportunity to have a voice in the final outcome of the nominations. Traces of the past still connect the Mount Vernon District to the historic beginnings of this great nation, and as the District keeps pace with the times, we must still honor and remember its past. As the vision for the District's future is forged, I urge all of the residents of the District to participate in this exercise in democracy, make your own or collective con-

tributions to the vision, and by doing so, you honor the greatness of our historic past.

Dan Fisher-Burrier
Immediate past co-chair
MVCCA

Reform MVCCA

To the Editor:

I was one of over 20 signatories to a letter published in the Mount Vernon Gazette on April 2. Among the points raised in that letter, which concerned resolutions of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA), was that the MVCCA does not represent the views of the Mount Vernon community as much as they would like us to believe that to be the case. In subsequent letters to the editor from me personally, I have raised that point again.

There could be no better example of that fact than what happened last Thursday at the meeting of the MVCCA Council concerning proposed nominations for amendments to Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan. One nomination concerned the Little Hunting Creek Pumping Station. That

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 16

Elect Gail "for Rail" Parker



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November 3, 2009

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OPEN SUN!

9411
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\$975,000
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NEW PRICE!

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Stunning!
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4204 PICKERING PL.
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\$625,000

JUST LISTED NEAR MT VERNON! Stunning colonial on quiet cul-de-sac near the Mansion overlooks updated granite & stainless steel eat-in kitchen, adjoining family living room w/wood-burning FP. En-suite MstrBR. Finished bsmt w/ full BA. Hardwds.

THE CAREY TEAM
Sean Satkus 703.731.80-86
Kristin Smith 571.334.9050

ReneeSellsAlexandria.com
Renee Raymond 703.507.5330

1821 37th STREET, NW
Washington, DC
\$945,000

WELCOME HOME to this gorgeous Burleith home. Chef's kitchen has granite, SS, & built-in wine fridge. Formal dining rm directly off kit overlooks the fenced in patio. Cozy living room w/wood-burning FP. En-suite MstrBR. Finished bsmt w/ full BA. Hardwds.

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THE BEST OF PARK FAIRFAX! This coveted 'Madison' model boasts 2 bedrooms / 1 bath & gracious living space on 2 levels. Outstanding cul-de-sac location with convenient parking right in front of your door. All the amenities of ParkFairfax & quick commutes everywhere.

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WATERFRONT!

9380
Mt Vernon Circle
\$3,500,000
Private Estate!
Classic Colonial facade with magnificent interior featuring glass walled addition across the rear. Meticulously maintained four bedroom, three level home is loaded with special features and upgrades. Stunning custom addition overlooks beautifully landscaped yard & the most spectacular custom pool you'll ever find!

WATERFRONT!

9516
Mt Vernon Landing
\$2,900,000
Waterfront!
Waterfront homes rarely become available in Mount Vernon on the Potomac! This spacious custom Tudor was carefully crafted with the highest quality materials and planned with three levels of Pella window walls to maximize water views. Six bedrooms, five baths, full walk out lower level and many rooms with dramatic river views.

OPEN SUN 1-4

422 E. CUSTIS AVE.
Alex - \$685,000

CLASSIC DEL RAY FARMHOUSE on fab lg corner lot featuring 4BR/2FBA's. Newer addition w/upd kitchen & separate LR/DR. French doors to gorgeous deck & huge backyard.

Enjoy morning coffee on charming front porch & easy strolls to the 'Avenue!' DIR. from Braddock METRO R Mt Vernon Ave to R on East Custis to 422 on left.

Kim Muffler 703.282.7739

OPEN SUN 1-4

1122 POWHATAN ST
Alex / Old Town
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JUST LISTED! Move right into this completely renovated Old Town charmer. Featured on HGTV's Curb Appeal, the all brick 2BR/1BA semi-detached home shines from top to bottom. Highlights: gourmet kit w/granite & SS, HW floors, crown molding, prof. landscaped

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7800 ELBA ROAD
Hollin Hills
Contemporary
\$859,000

UPSCALE 2 level home w/4-6BR + den/office & 4FBA. LivRm w/gas fireplace - deluxe kitchen w/island - MstrBR suite w/spa bath - full finished walkout lower level w/masonry FP opens to brick patio w/seating & pond/fountain - FamRm features ceramic floor w/radiant heat - beautiful park-like landscaping backs to natural reserve - A very special home.

Frank Roberts 703.898.0840

8826
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Georgian Colonial!
Large price reduction! Classic updated Colonial in prime Mount 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!

4401
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OPEN SUN 1-4

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Bette Gorman, CRS 703.585.2235
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9500 Ferry Hall Court
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CONTRACT! **SOLD!**

9304 Allwood Drive
\$639,000

9511 Mt Vernon Landing
\$900,000

CONTRACT! **CONTRACT!**

7107 Colgate Drive
\$598,900

7116 Marian Drive
\$750,000

RENTALS

4104 Daniels Avenue #304 \$1,195
Annandale Garden Garden 1BR/1BA
Margaret Rahe 703.599.7527

5375 Harbor Court Drive \$1,450
D'Evereux West Townhouse 2BR/1.5BA 2 assigned prkg
John Randolph 703.307.4182

8859 Winding Hollow Way \$1,850
The Timbers Townhouse 4BR/3.5BA/1FP 1 assigned prkg
Kari Saathoff 703.343.5242

3600 South Glebe Road \$2,400
Eclipse on Center Park Hi-Rise
2BR/2BA 1 assigned / 1 garage prkg
Steve Kindrick 703.518.8709

OPEN SUN 1-4

272 MURTHA STREET
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Stunning 4 level end unit "Randolph" model. 3BR, w/4th level Loft, Hardwood floors, 2 car garage, rec room with FP, eat-in Kitchen with center island, and a deck! Great community amenities! METRO shuttle!

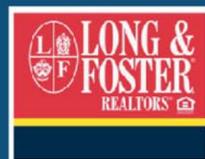
Derick Hammond 703.519.0184

OPEN SUN 1-4

6612 WAKEFIELD DRIVE #A2
Alex / South
\$272,000

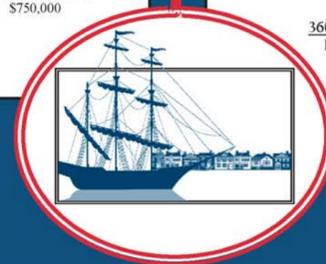
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The 2009 tour features five private residences filled with antiques and artifacts and two other properties in the historic district that have been restored, maintained, adapted and furnished for living in the 21st century. They are all located within a two-block distance of South Washington Street

(King to Franklin).

The tour features condos hidden in large expansive structures, former residences that are now businesses, and former businesses that are now fine residences.

Tickets are \$30 in advance/\$35 on the day of the tour. Check the web site www.TheTwig.org for details and exact locations. Proceeds from the tour help The Twig to complete a \$750,000 pledge for a state-of-the-art tertiary Twig Pavilion at Inova Alexandria Hospital, as well as help provide nursing scholarships.

Ticket may be exchanged on the Tour Day for the 68th Tour Booklet with maps and descriptions of the homes.

Exchanges and Tour day purchases maybe made at:

- ♦ The Twig Thrift Shop, 106 North Columbus Street;
- ♦ Ramsay House Visitor's Center, 221

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- ♦ The Lyceum Gift Shop, 201 South Washington Street.



House on South Columbus Street.

PHOTOS BY BETTY PROUTY/THE GAZETTE



200 block of South Columbus



800 block of Duke Street

Alexandria Symphony Opening Night 2009

*The Peasant celebrates with song and dance
The pleasure of the rich harvest,
And full of the liquor of Bacchus
They finish their merrymaking with slumber.*

— ANTONIO VIVALDI

Oh! The inspiration that springs from Nature! Throughout the ages Mother Earth and all Her elements have inspired poets to their pens, artists to their canvas and composers to their music. This year the **Alexandria Symphony Orchestra** celebrates this link between music and nature all season long with music by **Vivaldi, Beethoven, Brahms, Debussy, Mahler**, as well as Orff's **Carmina Burana**.

MUSINGS FROM
THE MAESTRO

The ASO's 2009-2010 "Inspired by Nature" season begins on Saturday, Sept. 26 at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center with Seductive Soundscapes. This evocative and dynamic program begins with "Summer" and "Autumn" from Vivaldi's **Four Seasons**. Inspired by four paintings of the seasons by artist Marco Ricci, these colorful concertos seek to bring each season to life. Vivaldi's masterfully descriptive music and accompanying sonnets were conceived to be an artistic tour de force, marrying the arts of painting, poetry and music. This extraordinary music was as new and exciting to people in Vivaldi's time as the release of an eagerly anticipated movie is for us today. In fact, if he were writing today I am sure he would have a rich career as a film composer!

Vivaldi's classic Four Seasons can be appreciated purely as music — the irresistibly toe-tapping, humming along, smile inducing music that it is. His sonnets and references to Ricci's paintings just make it all that much more enjoyable! Depictions of a faithful dog barking, the swarms of flies and hornets, walking precariously on ice in winter are not only ingenious but just plain funny! We will provide you with Vivaldi's sonnets so that you can revel in the music/sonnet relationship and find the playful and poignant stories for yourselves. All four of the Four Seasons will be presented through-



out our "Inspired by Nature" season. No matter how many times I have conducted or performed this music I never tire of its special charms and addictive beauty.

Our opening night Seductive Soundscapes program continues with **Respighi's Pines of Rome**. I am always struck by the majesty of the pine trees in Rome and no other composer has so beautifully and movingly captured their mystery with music as has Ottorino Respighi. This is highly evocative orchestral writing indeed! Orchestral musicians, conductors, and audiences love to play and hear this music because, as we say in the business, "it makes the orchestra 'sound'". Respighi calls for an extra brass choir to be offstage for added effect!

Back-by-popular-demand, **Carlos Rodriguez** will be performing **Gershwin's rousing Piano Concerto in F**, adding an exclamation point to this exuberant opening night. I look forward to seeing you at this glorious beginning and throughout the season as we bask together in the celebration of music "Inspired by Nature!"

See you at the Concert!

Kim Allen Kluge

Music Director,

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

Where & When

The ASO performs music of Vivaldi, Respighi, and Gershwin Saturday, Sept. 26 at 8 p.m. The concert takes place at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center (NOVA Alexandria Campus, 3001 Beauregard St.). Tickets start at \$5 for youth (8-18), \$20 for students, \$35 for seniors, and \$40 for adults. Free parking. Visit WWW.ALEXSYM.ORG or call 703-547-0885.



From South Columbus Street



The General's Club Condominium



500 block of South Washington

THEATRE

'The Foreigner' Generates Spontaneous Laughing

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

The Little Theatre of Alexandria turns to a tried and true, reliable comedy for its latest pleasurable piece of foolishness that generates loads of laughs five performances a week.

In "The Foreigner," playwright Larry Shue taps into the very human phenomenon that sees people giving lots of leeway to foreigners who may not know the niceties of local customs or understand the local language. Just how much can you get away with if everyone in the room thinks you don't know any better? And just how much might you learn if no one watches what they say in your presence? Shue's pretend-foreigner finds out in this contrived but delightful comedy.



Michael Reid (Rev. David Marshall Lee) and David James (Owen Musser).

PHOTOS BY SHANE CANFIELD/THE GAZETTE

MATTHEW HARTMAN combines charm and comedy as the title's "Foreigner." He's nearly sluggish in the early scenes when he's supposed to be so shy and withdrawn that he's panicked at the thought of conversations with strangers. But, when John McCracken, as his host for a three-day stay in a backwoods fishing lodge in Georgia tells the innkeeper (the high-energy comedian Mollie Wise) that he doesn't speak a word of English, his comic engine begins to get up a real head of steam.

The role gives Hartman plenty of opportunities for physical comedy, often bordering on classic mime. A highlight of the first act finds him matched with Nathan Tatro as a bright fellow whose been convinced that he is actually a dim bulb in an evil plot to steal his inheritance for nefarious purposes. The two engage in a delightful exchange of moves and expressions. Later, Hartman adopts a pretend-patois as his character fakes learning English in order to communicate with his new friends. The patois will sound familiar to fans of Robin Williams in the old television series "Mork and Mindy." That may be a bit distracting but is not an unreasonable comic choice for Hartman to have made.

Hartman remains the focus of the piece throughout the evening and has the skills to pull it off while others contribute in selected scenes. Wise and Tatro are impressive as are Nicole Goeden, as an innocent young woman being victimized by a plotting Michael Reid, and David James, as a bigot with KKK ambitions.

Director Frank Pasqualino keeps



Matthew Hartman (Charlie Baker) and Nathan Tatro (Ellard Simms).

the pace brisk and makes sure that the focus for each scene is clearly established precisely where the greatest comic payout can be had. The script itself is weighted down in the early going with lots of plot information that the audience must absorb, and Pasqualino can't quite overcome that burden. But he gets his cast beyond that and pulls out as many stops as possible for the second act.

New to the Little Theatre's stage is set designer/painter Erin Cumbo who continues the company's tradition of impressive, highly detailed sets. She has been tapped to design two more of the company's productions this season, the main December show, which is the holiday version of the "Plaid" series, "Plaid Tidings," and a more adult show, "Dog Sees God," that will play as an after-hours offer-

ing on the same evenings.

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 Foreigner" plays through Oct. 3 at the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street. Performances are Wednesday - Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 - \$18. Call 703-683-0496 or log on to www.thelittletheatre.com.



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September 24 - 27, 2009

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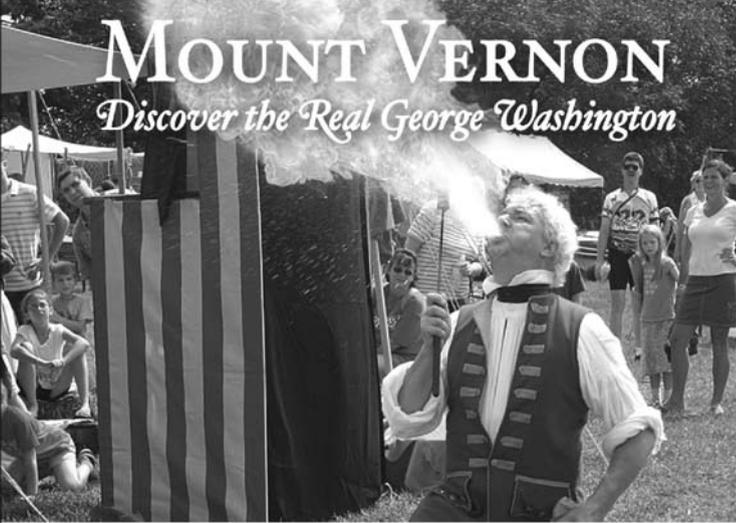
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CALENDAR

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

Photographing America with Jim Steele. 6-8 p.m. Chat with the photographer about all the photographic possibilities in Alexandria. At Morrison House, 116 South Alfred Street, Alexandria. For more, email Pamela.Cressey@alexandriava.gov.

Fall Book Sale. 4-9 p.m. At The Charles Barrett Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4555.

The Jefferson Street Strutters. 7-9 p.m. Enjoy traditional jazz and American popular songs from the early years of the 20th century. 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.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 18

Fall Book Sale. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. At The Charles Barrett Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4555.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Book-signing. 1 p.m. By former Alexandrian Laurie Cameron, a first-time author, co-wrote “The Ghost of Old Oak Way,” a mystery set in Alexandria, with her niece Laura Meagher of Plainfield, Ill. The book recounts the adventures of Eliza Hamilton, whose family owned The Bookshop in Alexandria during the Civil War. At Horray for Books, 1555 King St. Cameron,

Genealogist Char McCargo Bah. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free. Tells how she successfully traced descendants of people buried at Freedmen’s Cemetery and how these techniques



SUNDAY/SEPT. 20

Kim and Reggie Harris Perform. 7 p.m. \$18/general, \$15/members. At Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Contact: Kay at kay@focusmusic.org, 703-501-6061, or log onto FocusMusic.org.

can be applied to any family research. At the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4356 or visit www.alexblackhistory.org.

Annual Gala. 6-10 p.m. at River Farm. The American Horticultural Society gala’s honorary chair is Cathal Armstrong. 703-768-5700 ext. 127 for tickets.

Country Western Dance. 8:30-11 p.m. At Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. Bill Cole will be the DJ. Eileen Scott will teach the “Quarter to Six line dance and review the “My New Life” line dance beginning at 7:30 p.m., and Keith and Linda Buckle will review the “Chiquita” and Charleston Bump” couples specialty dances at 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 for NVCWDA members, \$12 for non-members, and \$5 for ages 16-20 with student ID. Visit www.nvcwda.org or call the hot line 703-860-4941.

Book Signing.

10 a.m. to noon. Author Laurie Cameron, who wrote “The Ghost at Old Oak Way,” a kid’s mystery set in Alexandria, visits Barnes and Noble, Potomac Yards, and Horray for Books from 1-2 p.m.

Author Connie Briscoe. 10:30 a.m. Will discuss her newest book, “Sisters and Lovers,” and celebrate 10 years with The Harambee Readers at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria.

On-Stage Alaska. 3:30 p.m. Free, multi-media Alaska travel presentation created to provide a glimpse of the history, scenic grandeur, wildlife and friendliness of the people to those planning an Alaska vacation. At the Lyceum. Call 703-650-5266.

Fall Book Sale. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At The Charles Barrett Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4555.

Family Fun Day. Features food, live entertainment, fun and interactive exhibits and activities. Sponsored by the Center for Alexandria’s Children. Held at John Adams Elementary School, 5651 Rayburn Avenue, Alexandria.

SEPT. 19-20

18th Century Craft Fair. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. More than 40 juried artisans will demonstrate their trades and sell their wares. Demonstrations, crafts and entertainment. At Mount Vernon. \$15/adults, \$7/ages 6-11; free for children under 5. Call 703-780-2000; 703-799-8697 (TDD); Visit.MountVernon.org

SUNDAY/SEPT. 20

18th-Century Fashion Show. 3 p.m. Be a part of the discussion that covers the fast-paced changes of clothing during the lives of the Carlyle House women in the later half of the 18th-century. Admission: \$10 for adults, \$5 for children. At the Carlyle House terrace. Reservations required, call 703-549-2997.

MONDAY/SEPT. 21

Wine Tasting. 5:30-7 p.m. Discuss the wine making process with Dan Dineen and Michael Kerrigan while sipping on bottles from Australia and New Zealand and snacking on light fare prepared by Fontaine Chef and Owner Kyong Yi. Priced at \$20 per person. At Fontaine Cafe & Creperie, 119 S. Royal Street, Alexandria. Call 703-533-8151.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 23

Virginia WPA Writers. Old Town resident David A. Taylor, the author of Soul of a People: The WPA Writers’ Project Uncovers Depression America, will discuss “The WPA Writers’ Project in Virginia,” and talk about the process of making the 1930s Virginia guidebook and some of the surprises you find there at 7:30 p.m. At the Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street in Alexandria. Go to www.alexandriahistorical.org or 703-683-2636. Free.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 24

Alexandria Film Festival Kickoff. 6-9 p.m. Up to a dozen “silent” films will show simultaneously throughout the building with live music enhancing the sensory experience. The 3rd annual Alexandria Film Festival will be at the Masonic Temple from Sept. 25 to 27, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. The festival includes high quality independent short and feature length films, documentaries, filmmaker panels and arts presentations. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565, www.torpedofactory.org.

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(Mass or Communion Service)
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West Potomac Boys Take First, Girls Second

Wolverines make statement at season-opening meet.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

The West Potomac boys cross country team entered Saturday's Monroe Parker meet with a goal in mind: make a statement through team success.

Mission accomplished.

The Wolverines finished first as a team with 122 points, 25 better than second-place Jefferson. Peter Stebbins was West Potomac's top individual finisher, placing 13th with a time of 16 minutes, 7 seconds.

"Winning as a team was definitely the main priority," Stebbins said. "It's nice to run fast, but it's better when it's the whole team involved."

Stebbins said his team was a personal best by eight seconds.

Khoki Bernier placed 15th for West Potomac, finishing with a time of 16:12. Ben Aleixo was 26th (16:27), Peter Coffey 33rd (16:35), Brady Corum 35th (16:40), Max Muir 38th (16:41) and Graham Kolle 40th (16:46).



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac's Kelsey Rosenberg runs on her way to a fifth-place individual finish Saturday at the Monroe Parker Invitational.

Stebbins said the Wolverines wanted to show off their abilities.

"I don't want to make it a rivalry, but we really wanted to come out and make a state-

ment [to] South County and Lake Braddock," he said. "They're our two district rivals and ... our two main goals are to win district and go to state. Since this is pretty much all the northern region, we really wanted to come out and make a statement ... [to] let people know we're kind of a force to be reckoned with this year."

Did they make that statement?

"Yeah, definitely," Stebbins said. "Hopefully."

THE GIRLS TEAM, led by a fifth-place individual finisher by senior Kelsey Rosenberg, came in second with 95 points, 18 behind meet winner Lake Braddock. Rosenberg posted a time of 18:39.05.

Julianne Bigler finished 21st for West Potomac, posting a time of 19:20.17. Sarah Jane Underwood was 22nd (19:22.69), Dale Lescher 23rd (19:24.34), Mackenzie Cate 24th (19:26.42), Colleen Boyle 31st (19:43.36) and Sami Miller 55th (20:24.01).

West Potomac assistant coach Jenn Dietz praised Rosenberg, who the coach said has battled iron issues.

"She's really pushed through a lot for the team," the coach said. "We needed someone up there in the top five and she did that for us. She's really stepped up as a senior. ... I think that made the difference in

us getting second place — having someone up there. We had a very strong pack in two through six, but we needed a front-runner and Kelsey stepped up and did that today for us."

Dietz said Wolverine coaches have challenged harriers to be more aggressive.

"I wanted to see them go out and compete and try to mix it up," she said. "That's what all the coaches have been saying this season. We want them to go out and try and win races and compete with people, but worry about who they're beating on other teams."

If the Wolverines could use some more motivation to succeed, look no further than head coach Don Beeby, who is in his 25th and final season coaching the Wolverines. While Beeby said he is looking forward to "turning the page" in his life, the Wolverines are looking to send their coach out in style.

Beeby was attending a wedding in Texas on Saturday, but he was updated about the Wolverines success. While West Potomac is off to a strong start, Beeby said the overall success of the team won't be determined until later in the season.

"The leaves are still green and it's still warm outside," Beeby said. "It counts in late October" and early November.

West Potomac Falls to 1-1 with Loss to Westfield

One week after blowing out rival Mount Vernon to open the season, the West Potomac football team lost to Westfield, 35-14, on Friday at WHS.

West Potomac (1-1) trailed 14-7 with less than a minute to play in the first half when the Wolverines had a punt blocked. The ball was recovered for a touchdown by Westfield (1-1), which entered the locker room with a 14-point advantage and eventually led 35-7 in the fourth quarter.

The Wolverines' first touchdown came in the opening quarter, when quarterback Colin Mathewson connected with Shawn Lee for a 35-yard score, tying the game at 7. Mathewson also threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to Jalen Dawson with 40 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter.

Mathewson completed 16 of 30 passes for 191 yards and was intercepted once. In two games, the senior completed 33 of 58 passes for 486 yards and six touchdowns in the Wolverines' no-huddle spread offense.

Receiver DeAndre Essex finished with two catches for 26 yards Friday. Essex caught eight passes for 194 yards and three touchdowns in week one.

Lee caught six passes for 71 yards against Westfield.

Running back Darel Layne carried 12 times for a team-high 68 yards.

West Potomac travels to face Chantilly (1-1) tonight.

Mount Vernon Shut Out by T.C. Williams

The Mount Vernon football team struggled on offense for the second straight game during a 33-0 home loss to T.C. Williams on Friday.

T.C. Williams (1-1) limited Mount Vernon's option offense to two first downs and 56 total yards. The Majors penetrated Titan territory only twice, getting no farther than the T.C. Williams 26-yard line.

Mount Vernon lost its opener to rival West Potomac, 42-3, during which the Majors were limited to six first downs and 46 total yards.

"We're a young team and we just haven't found our step yet," Mount Vernon coach Tom Glynn said. "We've got no swagger. We're just unsure of ourselves."

Mount Vernon (0-2) blocked a T.C. Williams punt in the third quarter and took over at the Titans 48-yard line. On the ensuing play, a Majors ball carrier gained 22 yards but fumbled the ball back to T.C. Williams at its own 26.

Kenneth Harris led Mount Vernon with 19 carries for 54 yards.

The Majors travel to face Edison (1-1) tonight.



PHOTO BY RICHARD MARPLE/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac quarterback Colin Mathewson, right, fires a pass while Wolverine lineman Matt Cunningham (71) prepares to block a Westfield defender.

Shorthanded Mount Vernon X-Country Opens Season

The Mount Vernon cross country team opened its season Saturday at the Monroe Parker Invitational.

Majors coach Willie Medley said several of his athletes did not compete due to attending college leadership camp. The boys finished 26th out of 26 teams and the girls did not record a team score.

The girls were without senior and No. 1 harrier Corinthia Evans. The battle for the No. 2 spot will be between sophomore Rachel Nelson and freshman Bridget Thompson. Evans placed fifth in Saturday's junior varsity race and Thompson was 37th in the freshman race, according to Medley.

Mount Vernon's top finisher in Saturday's varsity race was Regina Thompson, who placed 120th with a time of 22 minutes, 18.25 seconds.

"Overall, the performance of the girls, I'm pleased with where we are," Medley said.

On the boys side, senior Angel Medrano was the Majors' top varsity finisher, placing 90th with a time of 17:29. Medrano is Mount Vernon's

No. 1 boys harrier.

Andrew Perez competed in the junior varsity race but is slated to be the Majors' No. 2 varsity runner. Alex Kerr is the No. 3.

Medley said he just wanted to see his athletes finish their season-opening race.

"That gives us a base, a foundation for the rest of the season," he said.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

Pumping Station is located at the corner of Thomas J. Stockton Parkway and Londonderry Road deep within the Stratford Landing community. It would only impact the Stratford Landing community, yet the record is clear that Stratford Landing had no substantive knowledge concerning the proposed nomination until I found out about it on Aug. 28, and promptly brought it to the attention of the Stratford Landing Citizens' Association (SLCA) President.

The nomination was shepherded through the MVCCA by Stratford Landing resident Elizabeth Martin, a member of the SLCA Executive Committee (EC) who for a number of years has sought, in vain, community acceptance of her "vision" for the pumping station lands. Strangely, although the SLCA EC has met every month this year except August, it never took up the issue of the proposed nomination and apparently has been unaware of it until I brought it to the SLCA President's attention.

At the MVCCA Council meeting last Thursday, the SLCA asked the MVCCA Council to accept a friendly amendment to the proposed nomination stating that the SLCA would soon plan to conduct a referendum concerning the proposed nomination and asking the MVCCA to agree to withdraw the nomination if the referendum indicates opposition to the nomination on the part of the Stratford Landing community. SLCA made it clear that if the proposed amendment was not accepted, SLCA would oppose the proposed nomination.

The MVCCA Council first refused to accept the amendment as a friendly amendment and then voted against it on the merits. MVCCA Council opponents stated that it would be inappropriate to give an individual community association veto power over an MVCCA resolution. With that, the SLCA indicated its intention to oppose the proposed nomination and voted against it. Given the fact that Stratford Landing is the only community affected, one would think its views would be respected by the MVCCA. Wrong again. The MVCCA voted overwhelmingly to file the proposed nomination with the County over the objection of the only community affected.

The MVCCA was more concerned about preventing a community association from being able to veto an MVCCA resolution than it was concerned to respect the views of the only community affected by the resolution. Mount Vernon community residents beware — the MVCCA lurks out there advocating the views of those who currently lead it and cares not the least about whether the views of its leaders are rejected by the very communities or property owners it purports to represent and serve. (For example, Chairman Dhillon conceded that Burke & Herbert Bank & Trust Company and the owner of the adjacent service station on Sherwood Hall Lane were not notified concerning a proposed nomination affecting their properties.)

... As an aside, I sought to be recognized during consideration of the pumping station nomination. Chairman Dhillon asked

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 18

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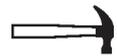
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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 16

Co-Chair Patrick Rea for permission to recognize me. Mr. Rea refused stating that if I wanted to be recognized, I should run for SLCA President. So much for the notion that MVCCA meetings are public meetings at which interested citizens are welcome to contribute their thoughts and views.

The MVCCA purports to represent about 60 community associations in the Mount Vernon District. We found out last week that although the MVCCA has received membership dues from the SLCA since the MVCCA's inception 40 years ago, it not only doesn't represent the interests of the SLCA, instead, it ignores those interests and acts contrary to them. Earlier this year, I made a Freedom of Information Act request that revealed 228 community associations in the Mount Vernon District. Thus, at best, the MVCCA represents barely one-quarter of the community associations in the Mount Vernon District. Hardly a monopoly.

The concept of the MVCCA is a good one. The current leadership of the MVCCA needs to be reformed or changed. The sooner, the better.

H. Jay Spiegel

(Editor's note: Due to space limitation, this letter was edited; text of Mr. Spiegel's letter can be found at www.connectionnewspapers.com.)

Work Together

To the Editor:

Former Republican Delegate Medico's letter in the Sept. 10-16 Gazette about the pending health care legislation proves one thing: he's against it and I'm for it.

I, a rather senior senior, am for it because I believe that each of us has a responsibility to our community to protect the weak, heal the sick, treat others as we would be treated. Today, millions of our citizens have no assured health care. Some 18,000 of our neighbors die each year because of lack of health insurance. That's one every half hour. That could be your child or your neighbor. Or you.

It is unlikely to be me or Mr. Medico because we, like 29 percent of other Americans, are already guaranteed government health care paid by Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, the military services or the prison system.

The United States, the richest nation in history, can provide the health insurance that every other advanced nation guarantees its citizens. We need the moral determination to do so.

Even Bob Dole, the Republican Senate leader who headed the defeat of the Clinton health bill in 1994, now says that it should have been enacted and is now working to support the Obama health care package.

Mr. Medico assures us that he is not opposed to the legislation moving through the Congress. But, in parsing his latest objections, the common sense conclusion must be that, in fact, he does oppose it.

I am glad to concede that my assumption that his gall bladder medical costs were covered by Medicare was incorrect since he explains that he does not have Medicare insurance coverage.

I'm sorry, however, that he is not covered so that he could know from personal experience, as I know, that no government offi-

cial ever interfered with my extensive medical care.

While his payment experience may have been "irrelevant", my Medicare experience was a very relevant refutation of the specter of "government" interference with doctor - patient relations.

Mr. Medico ticks off various proofs from the House Tri-Committee bill (H.B. 3200) that the legislation would mean a "government takeover of the health care system with troubling provisions that could adversely affect health care for Americans particularly for seniors."

It is rewarding to check these claimed proofs of a "government take-over" and "troubling provisions" that he cites. Readers who don't happen to have a printed copy handy can examine the House text at WWW.House.gov, click on "Find a bill" and insert H.B. 3200.

To save the reader some eye strain, here is the gist of Mr. Medico's citations.

Page 42, Sec 142; Page 29 (lines 4-16) and Page 87 (line 7) are all aspects of consumer protection for purchasers of health care insurance and the creation and management of the Health Insurance Exchange in which consumers could compare and shop for the insurance coverage best suited to their pocket books and needs. That's it. Not a government take over but government protection of the consumer.

Page 425-430 (sec 1233) would authorize payment to physicians for their counseling of patients, at their request, no more than once every five years, about advance directives, living wills, durable powers of attorney and other end of life options.

This is recommended by the AMA, AARP and Consumer Reports, among others. It makes good sense to help those who cannot afford to consult a private lawyer or physician about preparing for old age just as my wife and I have long done.

Mr. Medico also argues that "Medicare is going broke" and that paying the cost of the President's reform would suck money out of the already under-funded Medicare. That would mean a reduction in Medicare benefits to seniors. He also wants to "eliminate billions of fraud in Medicare payments."

In fact, both the House bill and the President are focused on eliminating that waste and fraud to help defray the costs of universal coverage.

In any event, Mr. Medico's claim about sacrificing Medicare is unconvincing. First, because the Democrats, who created Social Security and Medicare and have defended both from Republican attempts at privatization, would be the last to weaken one of their proudest achievements. Second, because the President pledged in his address to the Joint Session of Congress to protect Medicare as a "sacred trust."

This is the moment to tell our elected representatives to get behind the President to begin to correct our long standing failure to provide all of our citizens with the stability and security of health insurance that other modern nations have long enjoyed.

Thomas Fina

(Editor's note: Due to space limitation, this letter was edited; text of Mr. Fina's letter can be found at www.connectionnewspapers.com.)

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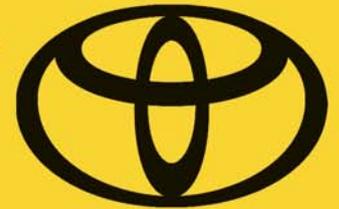
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