

Mount Vernon Gazette

25 CENTS

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

NOVEMBER 26, 2009



Guatemalan crafts were displayed on a table at the entrance to the church hall during the fair.



Anthropologist and co-founder of AYNi, Barbara Wolff, with her soon to be sister-in-law Kiersten Weissinger, sell textiles from Ayacucho, Peru and hand knitted scarves and hats (also knitted in Peru) at the bazaar. For more information on AYNi visit www.ayni-usa.org

Handmade Crafts

The annual Holiday Bazaar featuring handmade crafts was held Saturday, Nov. 21, at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church on Windmill Lane.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/
GAZETTE



Felted cards made by the villagers in the Santa Ana district of Ayacucho, Peru.

Fuller: 'The Worst Is Over'

Forum provides advice, help to business owners.

BY JEFFREY AARON
THE GAZETTE

Lorenzo Abella had a plan last week when he walked into a summit at Best Western designed to help small businesses survive and thrive.

He was going to stay for one of the scheduled three hours. If he didn't learn anything, "I would politely leave," said the part-owner of Pane e Vino Ristorante in Lorton.

Abella stayed for three hours and then some at the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation's first economic summit appropriately called "Surviving and Thriving in Today's Economy."

Five representatives from local, state, and federal agencies ranging from the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce to the Small Business Administration told 115 business owners how they can help their small business and noted economist Dr. Stephen Fuller told them what to expect economically now and in the future.

"The worst is over," Fuller said. "2009 was the worst year of this current business cycle. The economic environment is improving, but it will be a long haul before we feel good," he said.

Fuller, a professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, likened 2009 as one of the worst economic years since the Great Depression. Retail businesses will feel a recovering a little more slowly because they're more impacted by unemployment, he



Dr. Stephen Fuller sees steady, but slow, economic growth in the area.

said. They have to wait until growth occurs and more disposable income is generated.

The 69-year-old economist predicted that "2010 will be better than 2009 and 2011 will be better than 2010. Early 2011 we will have replaced everything we lost and 2011-12 will look like a normal year."

Among other illustrations, Fuller credits Enron, Madoff, and greed as the culprits in the downfall in the economy. "Greed took over and people took more and more risk. People threw wisdom out the door." But now "consumers are discovering maybe they don't need four flat screens TVs, maybe not even one," he said.

THE SFDC'S GOAL for this first-ever summit was to make small business owners aware of the services

SEE FORUM, PAGE 5

Sewing Support for the Troops

Group meets weekly to make adaptive clothing for injured service members.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Like many people, Sandra Edens has always wanted to find a way to use her talents for good. But her talent is sewing, and she never seemed to find the right match or opportunity for her capability. Then one day, she was reading "Citizen Airman," the official magazine of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. That's when it hit her. The April 25 issue featured an article on the creation of a group known as "Sew Much Comfort," an organization created to provide adap-

tive clothing for injured veterans.

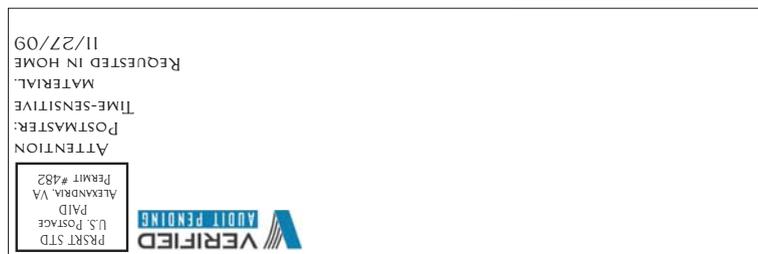
"I come from a military family," said Edens, who is a member of the Air Force Reserve. "So this was something that really spoke to me."

With military efficiency, Edens went to work. First she tracked down the founder of the organi-

zation and set up a meeting. Then she worked with other sewing enthusiasts to set up a nonprofit organization. By December 2005, she was hosting a weekly sewing circle in at her townhouse in Kingstowne. But the group became so popular that it eventually moved to Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church in February 2008.

"This is something that's ideally

SEE SEWING SUPPORT, PAGE 3





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And All That 'Ballyhoo'

New book describes "how life changed in the 1920s."

BY TODD GEORGE
THE GAZETTE

How did the aspect of personality play into the coverage?



Michael K. Bohn

When Alexandria writer Michael K. Bohn was researching his last book, 2007's "Money Golf: 600 Years of Bettin' on Birdies," he came across a memorable phrase used to describe the 1920's: "The Golden Age of American Sports." It was a decade that featured a constellation of vibrant personalities (most notably Babe Ruth) who enticed crowds to new stadiums, and brought a new breed of journalist to the sports pages.

Q&A Money poured in, and sports went national.

Bohn's new book, "Heroes and Ballyhoo," profiles 10 of these colorful athletes, and the marketing, promotional machinery and "ballyhoo" (hype resembling a carnival barker's pitch) that swirled around them and made them stars. Bohn says the book is "not just about sports heroes, it's about how life changed in the 1920s."

Why did the 1920s foster such a sports explosion?

There were three legs on the stool: one was postwar attitude by the people. They were tired of war and wanted excitement, and at the same time American productivity went up to the point where their disposable income increased. They weren't working 60 hours a week to make rent and food money. They had money to buy stuff with, and they'd buy cars and toasters and hair products and deodorant. And they'd start buying tickets to games. The second thing, through serendipity or good parenting or what have you, was the right kind of athlete showed up — colorful athletes who changed their sports.

The third part of it was the development of over-the-top reporting, sports writing and publicity. It was the golden age of purple prose. It was the first period where everything came together: money, publicity, sportswriters, public relations, and advertising. And historians viewed it the same way. It's really a story of American culture and American life.

That's part of the book's argument, that new forms of media promote these spectacles.

If you look at cable TV in the '80s and '90s, it was a similar thing. In the '20s, it was radio, and the complete stranglehold that sportswriters had in the newspapers. There was a huge increase in the quality of the sports writing: Grantland Rice, Damon Runyon. [Sports writers] used to be just hacks You had good storytellers show up in the sports section, publishers increasing their sports sections dramatically in size, and interesting people.

That was the beginning of modern sports writing, to look at the person and get beyond the scores. Up until then, they'd never quoted the athletes in their post game reports. You go back and look at the New York Times during the early 1920s, and they didn't have any sound bites from Babe Ruth when he'd hit a home run to win a game; they'd talk to the coach. So the whole idea of an athlete as a personality came to be in the '20s, and the sports writers responded by bringing color.

But the public knew about some controversies — boxer Jack Dempsey was heckled as a 'slacker' for dodging the draft, for example. Why were they considered heroes despite these questionable traits?

He was a compensatory hero for a lot of people. He represented a wild west that was disappearing. The bank clerk and the dry goods salesman looked to Dempsey as being what the country used to produce, a throwback to that. A lot of people made a big deal out of compensatory heroes — "Doing what I can't do" — and the promoters took advantage of that and used Dempsey's qualities to promote fights.

At one point in the book, when tennis star Helen Wills arrives in France, you refer to the hype as the "ballyhoo machine."

I used it as a metaphor for something like cranking out sausage. Everything was there: glamour, sports, color, personalities, publicity, and the wonderful heat in the south of France. That's what I meant by the phrase; all those factors went in the top of the machine, and the ballyhoo came out the other end.

You also mention that Babe Ruth's promoter, Christy Walsh, was the first sports marketer. What did he bring to the table?

Advertisers had long sought athletes and celebrities to endorse their products. Walsh figured out how to maximize that and leverage it and get more money out of it. Ruth was getting \$5 for a story about a game with local sports writers. Walsh figured out he could syndicate Ruth's account (which was ghost-written) to hundreds of newspapers, and totally magnify the income stream and the impact. Then he learned he could book

SEE ALL, PAGE 5



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY CHUCK KENNEDY

First Lady Michelle Obama passes out fruit to students during a lunch time visit to Hollin Meadows Elementary School.

First Lady Visits Hollin Meadows

First Lady Michelle Obama met with faculty members and students at Hollin Meadows Elementary School (grades K through 6) on Wednesday, Nov. 18. The school was receiving a USDA HealthierUS Silver School award for its "healthier school nutri-

tion" environment.

She and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack first held a roundtable discussion with school principal Jon Gates, other principals from the D.C. metro area, a science teacher, school district officials and parents of students.

Sewing Support for the Troops

FROM PAGE 1

sued for the church," said the Rev. Wollom Jensen, pastor at Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church. "Not only is the church a peacekeeping organization, we also have a tremendous amount of freedom that our servicemen and women help protect."

THE GROUP MEETS Tuesday nights at the church, which is located in Belle Haven. Members sew Velcro strips onto athletic shorts, T-shirts, pajama pants and boxer shorts. Some of the clothing items have Velcro on the left side, and others open from the right side. The group also creates clothing items that have Velcro strips on both sides. Some items are created by special request.

"Many of these injured service members have casts and bandages and tubes coming out of them," said Edens. "This gives some sense of normalcy, so they don't have to wear a hospital gown all the time."

In the past five years, the group has provided more than 85,000 pieces of adaptive clothing and comfort accessories. The clothing is provided at no cost to the veterans, and the sewing is done entirely by the hand of volunteers. The vast majority of the clothing constructed in Mount Vernon is sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, although Edens said her group has also sent clothing to Andrews Air Force Base, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We can't keep up with the demand," said Edens. "There's so much of a need for this

kind of clothing."

THE MOUNT VERNON group is only one of the many Sew Much Comfort groups that meet on a regular basis to construct adaptive clothing.

Overall, the nonprofit has about 1,700 volunteer seamstresses in the United States, Canada and Germany. Volunteers have shipped to 97 combat medical units, military hospitals, clinics and wounded warrior barracks. The organization also has a distribution center in Colorado, where unadapted clothing is sent to volunteers and adapted clothes are sent to service-members.

The nonprofit organization receives a wide range of letters, many of which open a revealing window into the lives of those recovering from the wounds of war. An Air Force colonel said the gift from Sew Much Comfort meant more than any visit from a congressional delegation or celebrity tour. A Marine colonel said he deeply appreciated the gift, although he might have a hard time persuading Marines to wear pink and purple. And the wife of an injured serviceman wrote to thank the group for the clothing her husband wore while recovering at Walter Reed.

"The clothes gave Chuck self-esteem and dignity," wrote Carren Ziegenfuss in a 2006 letter to the nonprofit organization. "Chuck had a number of other surgeries after his initial stay at Walter Reed, and his suitcase always contained the clothes from Sew Much Comfort."

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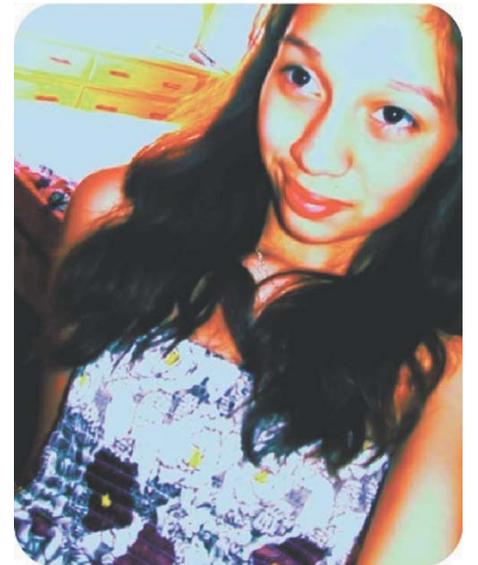
PEOPLE

Ramirez Wins Jewelry Design Competition

West Potomac Academy, working with business partner Evelyn Brooks Designs, offered its Fashion Design students the opportunity to design a West Potomac Academy (WPA) logo to be used in a WPA bangle bracelet and a WPA charm bracelet.



Cindy Ramirez's winning jewelry design.



Cindy Ramirez, a junior at West Potomac High School, won the Jewelry Challenge.

Students participated in the Jewelry Challenge under the guidance of Brooks and West Potomac Academy Fashion Design instructor Maggy Francois. Students worked on jewelry design concepts and used personal inspiration to create logos that included the WPA letters. Each student submitted detailed sketches showing creativity and originality; designs had to have the ability to be turned into jewelry. Each submission was accompanied by a written piece explaining the student's inspiration.

The winner of the Jewelry Challenge was Cindy Ramirez, a junior at West Potomac High School. Evelyn Brooks Designs will present

her with a \$100 gift certificate and a WPA bangle that features her winning design. Runners-up were Deborah Winbush, a senior at West Potomac High School, and Maria Ruiz, a senior at West Springfield High School. Each runner-up will receive a WPA charm bracelet.

Evelyn Brooks Designs is manufacturing the WPA bangle and the WPA charm bracelet, both containing the winning logo design. The bangle and the charm bracelet are currently for sale, and Evelyn Brooks Designs will donate a portion of the proceeds to the WPA Fashion Design program to sup-

port the annual Classroom in New York City trip, during which students will tour design studios and schools and work with some of the fashion industry's top designers.

Visit West Potomac Academy's Fashion Design classroom for an order form, or visit www.ebrooksdesigns.com/wpa.



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Forum: Economy Improving

FROM PAGE 1

agencies provide and put a face with a name, according to Loretta Mayfield, SFDC's marketing manager.

Howard Newman was one of those Richmond Highway business owners who met with Dave Fuller, the Business Services manager with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance.

Newman, who has owned Fast Signs of Alexandria, learned how he could make his company more attractive to the state almost overnight by making changes in how he markets his products to government.

"We expanded the range of our products by being more comprehensive," he said.

In short, Fast Signs has the capability of producing say widget AA1 but governments need widget AA2. Newman has always had the capacity for producing AA2 but didn't market his firm for the capability. Now that he has expanded his product line, he has made his business more appealing to government contractors.

"It was very instructive. I didn't expect that to happen," said the owner of the 18-year-old business.

The state's representative gave Newman "great ideas to work for VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation). People were anxious to help small businesses become as viable as possible."

Newman has owned the business since 1999. This

past year he has had to layoff one employee of five and reduced the number of hours the four remaining employees work.

Newman admits that marketing and advertising budgets are the first to go in any business that is suffering financially. "People aren't able to buy. If they don't advertise, we don't produce. Small businesses are hanging on by the skin of their teeth, but if you give up, you're toast," he said.

ABELLA IS responsible for the financial-end of his three-year-old family-owned restaurant in Lorton.

The summit was "timely because I'm trying to refinance some of our debt to move ahead and make it through these times," he said.

And he appears to be moving in the right direction. A bank representative was present at the summit and Abella met with him days afterward.

"That's the kind of quick response needed," he said. But in order to qualify for loans guaranteed by the SBA, Abella is going to have to hurry in order to meet the agency's Dec. 31 deadline. "I'm racing against the clock," he said, but confident he can provide his business plan and other paperwork on time.

SFDC is a public/private non-profit economic development corporation designed to provide assistance to existing and potential business on Richmond Highway with expertise in locations, demographics, property inventory, and financing information. It receives an annual budget of \$192,000 from Fairfax County.

"2010 will be better than 2009 and 2011 will be better than 2010."

— Dr. Stephen Fuller, economist

And All That 'Ballyhoo'

FROM PAGE 3

him on a barnstorming tour during the off-season, and generate income for Babe and himself — his 10 percent. It's just what IMG or any other sports marketer does today. They're using that model that Christy created, of selling words or appearances to the public, advertisers, or marketers for golf balls or running shoes.

What were sports like before the 1920s?

The main thing is there was no organized national sport before this, except baseball. There were hundreds of minor leagues — but it wasn't very organized and it wasn't very coherent nationally. There was no basketball to speak of; tennis and golf were viewed as country club sports. Golf didn't start in

SEE BOHN, PAGE 6

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OBITUARY

Peter Barretta Jr.

Peter Barretta Jr., 89, of Charlottesville, Va., died Monday, Nov. 16, 2009, after an extended illness. Col. Barretta, a former resident of Waynewood, a community in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria, was born Feb. 28, 1920 in Meadville, Pa., the oldest son of the late Rosalia and Pietro Barretta. He was preceded in death by his wife Edna G. Barretta of Charlottesville, Va., and three sisters: Elizabeth Sturm of Huntington, W.V., Marilyn Barisano of Nahant, Ma., and Cira Barretta of Arlington.

He is survived by his four children, Dr. Rosalie G. Barretta of Falling Waters, W.V., Elizabeth M. Barretta-Davis and her husband Reggie of Earlysville, Va., Peter A. Barretta III of Port Deposit, Md., and Patricia F. Steele and her husband Robert, along with their children, Marcus and Josephine Steele of Chapel Hill, N.C., his two sisters, Rosalie Fera of Meadville, Pa., and Anne Ambrose and her husband Leedy of Manassas, Va., and his four brothers, Sam and Joe Barretta of Venice, Fla., Ben Barretta and his wife Pat of Meadville, Pa., and Anthony Barretta and his wife Patty of Crozet, Va., along with many nieces and nephews.

Col. Barretta was a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, the Dominican Republic revolt and the Vietnam War, serving over 28 years in the Air Force, retiring in 1970. Col. Barretta was proud of his service to his country and was awarded numerous medals and commendations during his military career including the Bronze Star.

On his retirement from the Air

Bohn's 'Ballyhoo'

FROM PAGE 3

the United States until 1988; tennis had been around a little longer than that, but not anything to speak of. Tennis didn't take off until they moved the national championships out of Newport and down to New York City, where people could get to them on the subway, and more diverse people could get there. Then the West Side Tennis Club started building big stadiums to house the crowds.

Seven of the 10 stars you follow in the book were involved in individual sports — a couple each from swimming, golf and tennis, Dempsey in boxing — and only three from team sports. Do you think there was a particular appeal brought by the individual athlete?

There are other analogues to that during the '20s: Lindbergh as

Force in 1970, Col. Barretta became a member of the Antarctic Society and the American Polar Society. For the next 25 years he wrote feature articles, columns and book reviews for The Icecap News and other polar journals with an emphasis on polar aviation and scientific missions. A prolific writer, he was particularly interested in the Lost Squadron aircraft in Greenland and wrote extensively concerning the recovery efforts. Through his correspondence with scientists and explorers from many countries he amassed an extensive collection of polar cachets documenting many expeditions to the Antarctica.

After living in the Alexandria area for over 40 years, he and his wife Edna moved to Our Lady of Peace Retirement community in Charlottesville, in 2003.

Two viewings will be held at Demaine Funeral Home at 520 S. Washington Street in Alexandria, on Tuesday, Nov. 24 from 6-8 p.m. and Wednesday, Nov. 25 from 9-10 a.m. A memorial mass will be held at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25 at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mt. Vernon Hwy., in Alexandria. Final memorial services are scheduled later at Fort Myer Chapel at Arlington National Cemetery, Feb. 4, 2010 at 12:45 p.m., and a military funeral to follow. The family requests expressions of sympathy be made in the form of contributions to the Air Force Memorial Foundation, the Disabled American Veterans or a veterans organization of donor's choice.

the 'lone eagle' flying over by himself. There's a whole school of thought among sociologists and anthropologists, that America lost its individualism during the 1920s. They became factory workers instead of farm owners; they became a cog in the machinery. The American ideal up that point was that you could go out on the frontier, get your section of land, farm it, and do it all on your own. [Tennis star] Bill Tilden did everything by himself; no one is there to help him. Same way for golf and swimming.

There's some irony there, that the public could indulge fantasies about the individual and the past era of the frontiersman, while these heroes were being brought to them via a machine-like process — a national process to a na

SEE 'BALLYHOO,' PAGE 7

PEOPLE

'Ballyhoo'

FROM PAGE 6
tional audience.

That a system brought them an individual hero, cranked out like sausage out of a machine, there is an irony there. It probably continues, when you think about today's news media/sports conglomerate (and it's all intertwined), I think it's consistent with what was birthed in the 1920s.

How does our current sporting age compare to the '20s? Is it a direct outgrowth?

There are a hundred times more sports than there were, many more media outlets. It's become diluted. Most importantly — and this is probably the key — is there's no mystery anymore, and you need mystery to have heroes. There's no mystery anymore because everybody knows everything, all the time, as soon as possible, warts and all.

Is that why there can't be another "Golden Age"?

That was my point. There are too many cable TV shows, too many blogs, to have a mystery.

For a longer version of this discussion, go to www.connectionnewspapers.com.

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Every year between Christmas and New Year's, the Mount Vernon Gazette turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

E-mail: to PhotoAX@connectionnewspapers.com, or mail or deliver contributions by Dec. 4, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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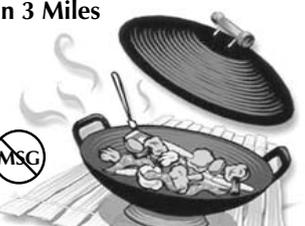
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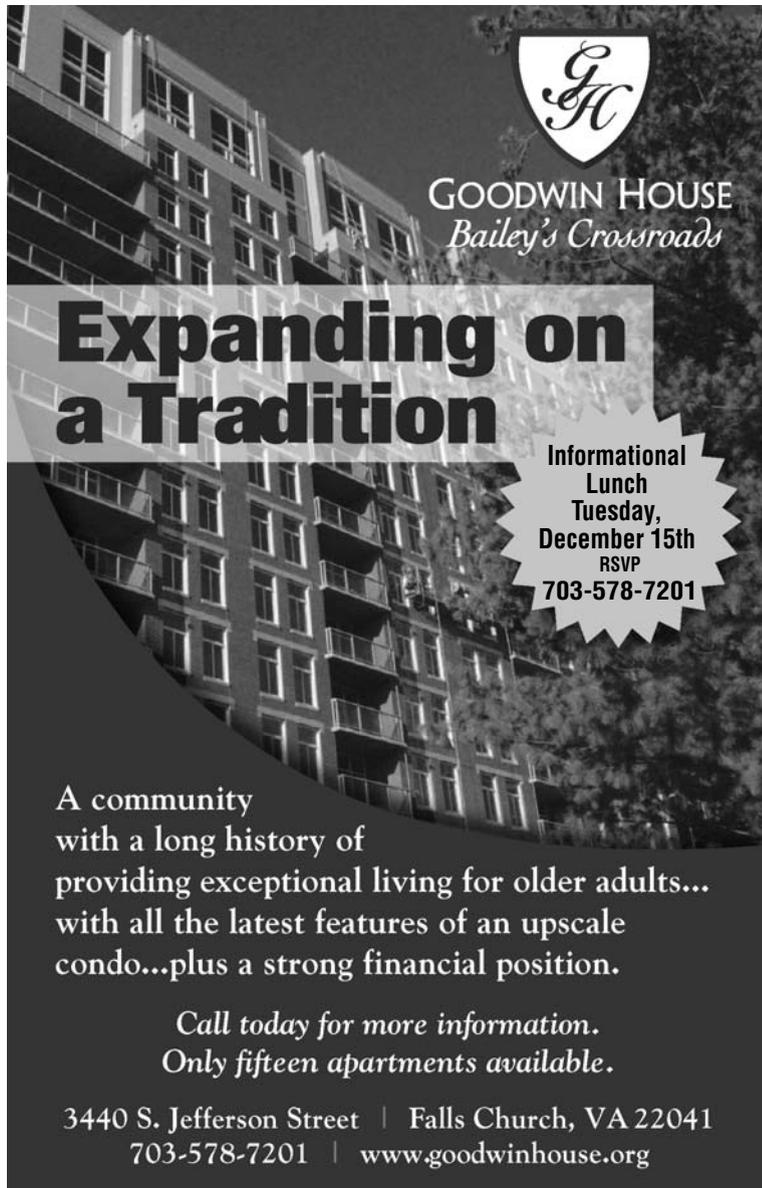


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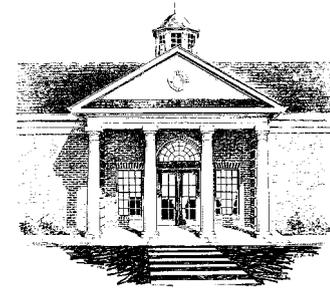
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OPINION

Give Locally

More local families in need right now than ever before; thankfully, most of us are in a position to help.

During 2008, more families across the country were without enough food during part of some months than at any time since 1995 when the U.S. Department of Agriculture began monitoring the extent and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households.

Last year, 17 million households in the United States were without enough food for some part of some months because they didn't have the money to buy food, up from 13 million households in 2007. That's 49 million people, up from 36 million in 2007.

The numbers are almost certainly higher now, as 2009 draws to a close.

The ongoing recession and loss of jobs are driving an ongoing surge of families turning to food banks here in Northern Virginia. There are more unemployed people in Northern Virginia than in any other part of the state, according to the Virginia Employment Commission. While the employment rate is lower here as a percentage of the population, this area still has by far the largest number of people unemployed.

In August, there were 69,770 unemployed people in Northern Virginia, with an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent. The rate was down from 5.1 percent in July, but up from 3.3 percent in August, 2008.

People have lost their jobs, are unable to find new ones. In some cases people who own homes are stuck, unable to sell their houses because the homes are worth less than they paid for them, and are facing foreclosure as well.

Families have used up their safety net, spent their savings. They find themselves without being able to put food on the table, and they turn to local food banks, food pantries, churches and other charitable organizations for their most basic needs.

Food pantries around the area have launched additional food drives to try to meet the need. Many local charities also offer winter coats and holiday gifts, and are also turning to the community to meet the rising needs.

With the holiday season underway, it's time to help.

— MARY KIMM

Where To Donate

- ❖ **United Community Ministries,** Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306 UCM's Food Pantry is open weekdays 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. the first Sunday of each month (except January, July and September, open on second Sunday). Enter through gates on right side of building, drive around to opposite side of building and ring bell at green door.
- ❖ **Food for Others** 2938 Prosperity Avenue, Fairfax, 22031 703-207-9173
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO),** 703-569-9160, www.echo-inc.org. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield weekdays from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 7 - 9 p.m.
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center,** 9518 Richmond Highway, www.lortonaction.org lcavolunteer@msn.com, 703 339-5161,
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank,** 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia. 703-541-3063, www.capitalareafoodbank.org Food donations accepted Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fully equipped with refrigeration and freezers, so can accept non-perishable food items, plus produce, any kind of meat or dairy products and frozen food.
- ❖ **Good Shepherd** in the Route 1 area, 703-768-9404
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center,** 703-339-5161
- ❖ **Koinonia Foundation,** 703-971-1991
- ❖ **The Campagna Center** in Alexandria 703-549-0111
- ❖ **ALIVE (Alexandrians Involved Ecumenically)** www.alive-inc.org
- ❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia,** Arlington, 703-521-9890

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A Connection Newspaper

West Potomac High Performs 'Sideways'

BY ELIZABETH GAMBAL
THE MADEIRA SCHOOL

CAPPIES REVIEW

Have you ever eaten an apple and thought that you might be biting into an unlucky child? Hopefully you haven't, but in West Potomac High's "Sideway Stories from Wayside School," there's a chance that

you might have! In this playful show, five elementary school children experience the highs and lows of school, from learning how to count, to learning that there's a possibility that Mrs. Gorf will turn you into an apple.

"Sideway Stories from Wayside

School" was originally written by Louis Sachar as a series of books and was later adapted to the stage by John Olive. The play is a series of vignettes based on chapters in the book that focus on five children on the 30th floor. You see, the builder of the school was supposed to build a one-story building with 30 rooms, but he built a 30-story building with one room on each floor. At the beginning of the play, evil Mrs. Gorf turns herself into an apple when a student holds a mirror up to her, so the 30th floor gets a new teacher, kind Miss Jewls. Unfortunately, Miss Jewls is later

kidnapped and replaced by Mrs. Gorf's son, the demented Mr. Gorf, and the class has to endure his cruel magic powers until they figure out how to break the spell and return Miss Jewls to her rightful post.

West Potomac High's production was commendable for its strong ensemble cast. The kids were always entertaining to watch because they always had animated facial expressions that were truly childlike. The set was very whimsical and colorful, with brightly

SEE 'SIDEWAYS,' PAGE 14

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Appreciate Support

To the Editor:

I want to thank the people of the Mount Vernon area for your vote of confidence when you elected me to represent you in Virginia's House of Delegates. Your support is humbling and inspiring and I am already working hard for you.

I could not have been elected without the "army" of volunteers who helped me. I am very grateful to the hundreds of friendly Mount Vernon people who opened their doors and talked to me about

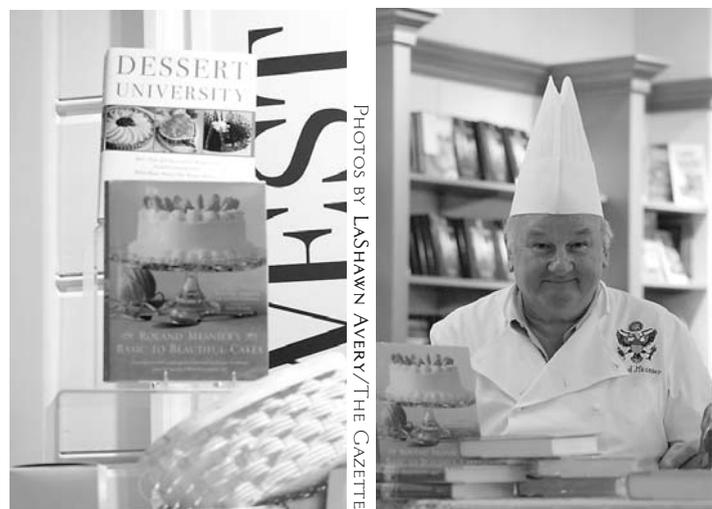
their concerns. I visited over 8,000 homes over the four-month campaign.

I also thank Jay McConville for his vigorous campaign and for putting our democracy to the test. Though we were opponents, I hope to continue my friendship with him and to receive his advice and suggestions.

We face a very difficult state budget environment in Richmond, but rest assured, I will work as hard as I can to address our needs and make our concerns a top priority of the legislature.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

A White House Memoir



Master pastry chief Roland Mesnier books, "Dessert University" and "Basic to Beautiful Cakes" are on display at the Mt. Vernon Estate gift shops.

Roland Mesnier signs his new book, "All the Presidents Pastries: Twenty-Five Years in the White House, A Memoir" at the Mt. Vernon Estate gift shops on Nov. 13.



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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

I look forward to your continued involvement in government and I hope you will stay in close touch with me. You can reach my local office at 571-249-4484 or by email at scottsurovell@gmail.com until I receive my official email.

I hope to see you in the community and invite you to visit me between Jan. 13 and March 13 in Richmond when the General Assembly is in session.

I loved walking our neighborhoods, making new friends and bringing people together. I will work hard to bring about workable solutions and good government for the 44th District.

Scott A. Surovell
 Delegate-Elect
 44th District
 Virginia House of Delegates

Write

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue. Send to:

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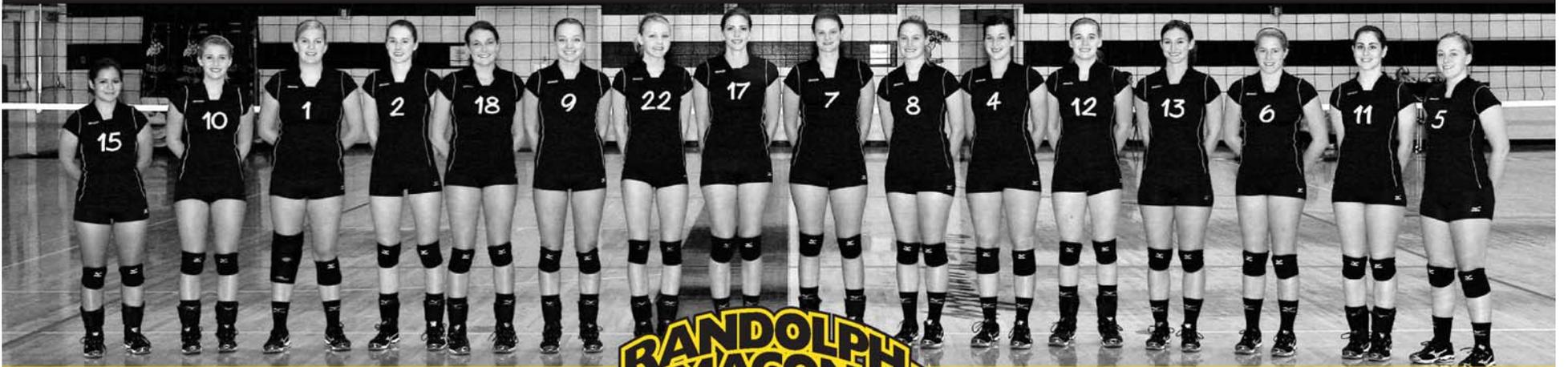
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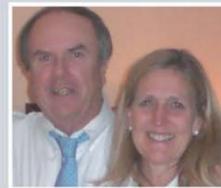


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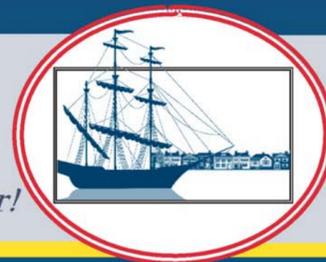
And thank you to Head Coach Bill Rogers for your outstanding leadership. Go Yellow Jackets!

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3706 Riverwood Court
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4413 Ferry Landing Road
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baths. MBR suite has private balcony which provides panoramic vistas of the area with seasonal river views. Elevated grounds afford the ultimate privacy with gorgeous custom pool.



4821 Stillwell Avenue
\$499,000

Curb Appeal!
Character abounds in this fabulous Cape Cod, lovingly maintained and significantly updated by its caring owners. Four bedrooms, two full

baths, hardwood floors, elegant trim detail, custom built-ins, updated kitchen and finished lower level. Gorgeous setting on magnificent half acre lot just steps to acres and acres of Fairfax County parkland!



4816 Stillwell Avenue
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Unique opportunity! Exceptionally large 5/6 BR home is located in a gorgeous setting on a 1/2 acre lot bordering acres of county parkland.

Renovated throughout, it features an updated kitchen, refinished hardwood floors, finished lower level, in-law suite and large deck. A recently remodeled home of this size in a premier setting creates a truly one of a kind value!



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owners & guests—the high cost items are done: windows, roof, gutters, doors. Private office for the work at-home professional. DIR: from Alex: S on GW Parkway, R Collingwood, cross Ft Hunt, L Riverside, R Cavendish, R Camden, L Childs.

Leah Chapla 703.929.4875



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4401 Jackson Place
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THEATRE

'Sideways'

FROM PAGE 8

...painted desks and a colorful tiled floor. Peppy music in between scenes really added to the child-like feel of the play.

Emily Woods and Ryan Walker stole the show as students Bebe and Myron, respectively. Woods bounced around the classroom and was always in character no matter what scene. Her portrayal

of Bebe was precious and believable. Walker's Myron was adorable, always pushing up his glasses, and trying not to pull Leslie's (Nell McKeown) pigtails. Toby Mananzan as Dameon had the audience laughing with his big grin and matter-of-fact remarks. Callan Memmo's Mrs. Jewls was lovely and had the audience smiling with her kind remarks.

Most of the costumes were simple and to the point. Tango instructor Miss Valoosh, however,

had a wonderfully colorful costume made by student Ella Robinson. The lighting was very bright and illuminated every character's face. Some scene changes seemed longer than necessary, but this problem provided only a minor distraction.

Overall, West Potomac High's peppy production was well-acted and ended with a great return to normalcy for the 30th floor. Remember to be careful whenever you eat an apple, though!



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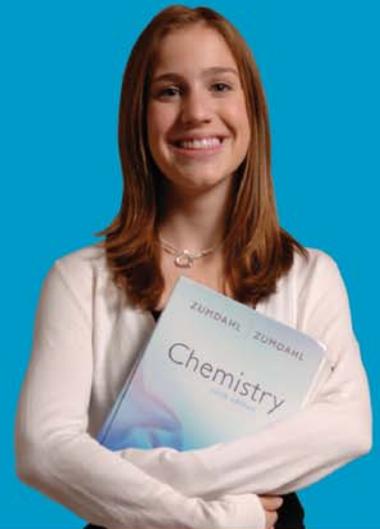
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Old Town Boutiques Offer Black Friday Bargains for All

Members of the Old Town Boutique District — a collection of 26 Alexandria-owned retailers — are teaming up once again to encourage area shoppers to buy locally and save. If you buy from one of the participating stores your receipt becomes an instant 10 percent off coupon redeemable at any of the other participating stores.

Some of the retailers may set a few restrictions, but there's no limit on the number of stores you can visit, or the amount of savings you can rack up. For example, if you buy something from Bloomers, you'll get 10 percent off at Red Barn Mercantile. Your full-purchase receipt can get you 10 percent off purchases at La Cuisine, Mystique Jewelers, The Christmas Attic and other Old Town stores too.

The offer is good only from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Black Friday, Nov. 27. "This is a really great way to save, get to know some of our local retailers and help the local economy all at the same time," said Kim Putens, co-owner of Bellacara and Bloomers. "We did this last year and it was a big hit with customers. This year, we have about 15 more stores participating. That means a greater selection and bigger savings on gifts for just about everyone on your list."

Visit www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com.

Holly, Woods and Vines Helps Deliver Christmas Spirit to Troop Families

Holly, Woods and Vines is proud to be the only location within the D.C. metro area to participate in the Trees for Troops program. This holiday season, Trees for Troops is expected to collect and deliver more than 15,000 real Christmas trees from across the nation to military families across the United States, as well as to soldiers serving overseas. Consumers will have the opportunity to purchase trees at Holly, Woods and Vines and donate them to Trees for Troops.

The collection and delivery of trees will take place Dec. 4-6. Consumers may make contributions to the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation at www.ChristmasSPIRITFoundation.org. Or visit www.TreesforTroops.org.

Holly, Woods and Vines is located at 8453 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Call 703-799-1607.

Roz White as Pearl Bailey

Club-style bio-revue plays MetroStage.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

A year ago, audiences enjoyed a short club-style performance by Roz White as Pearl Bailey at MetroStage. This year she's back doing the same material with a different jazz pianist but with pretty much the same effect — audiences having a good time. The biggest difference? The price. Last year a ticket cost \$35. This year it will set you back \$45 - \$50 to get in.

White runs through 16 of Bailey's signature songs ... every song was a signature song when Pearly Mae sang it. Her style was, to say the least, distinctive. The songs range from some of her early hits, such as 1946's "A Woman's Prerogative" and "Legalize My Name," both of which she introduced in her Broadway debut in "St. Louis Woman," right through "Hello Pearly," which gives a nod to her success leading the 1968 all-black cast version of "Hello Dolly" 22 years later.

Bailey had a unique blend of comic blues delivery and drew her audience's into her confidence with asides urging them to recognize her talent and her beauty. That she was talented is undeniable. She never became a parody of a sexy lady like, for example, Mae West, but as she aged she turned on the glamour and turned up the humor.

White can deliver these songs with style. That style isn't exactly a duplicate of Bailey's. After all, Bailey was often referred to as "inimitable." Many impersonators tried to capture that style, and some succeeded more than others, but what White is doing at MetroStage is more suggestion of a style than a spot-on impersonation. It sure is close enough to give you a feel for her subject's gifts.

A talented performer, White has appeared on this stage before under the direction of Thomas W. Jones II in "Two Queens, One Castle" and "Cool Papa's Party." Jones is again directing for this evening of Pearly-isms.

White is joined for a few of the numbers by William Hubbard in the role of Hot Lips Page, the trumpeter and singer who had accompanied Bailey in recordings of Frank Loesser's "Baby, It's Cold Outside" and the racy blues number "The Hucklebuck," both of which are included in this show. He acts as a combination partner and master of ceremonies with his own brand of charm and humor.

Three of the four jazz musicians who played in the quartet behind White/Bailey last year are back and each makes a solid contribution. The new face isn't all that new. It is William Knowles at the piano. He wrote the arrangements for the show last year and has appeared at MetroStage behind the singers in a number of jazz-inflected shows including the similarly structured club-style evenings of the music of Nat



COLIN HOVDE/THE GAZETTE

Roz White stars in "Pearl Bailey ... by Request" at MetroStage.

"King" Cole and Duke Ellington.

MetroStage has decked out its playing space as you might expect of a nightclub with a small stage for the combo and star. A two-step riser provides a spot for the star to stand in silhouette as Hubbard introduces her. The sound fills the small space nicely and there are even a few cabaret tables in front of the stage for patrons who wish to bring in a drink from the lobby concession stand.



Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway, and edits Potomac Stages, a

Where and When

"Pearl Bailey ... by Request" plays through Dec. 20 at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal Street, Old Town Alexandria. Performances are Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$45 - \$50. Call 703-548-9044 or log on to www.metrostage.org.

Web site covering theater in the region (www.PotomacStages.com). He can be reached at Brad@PotomacStages.com.



From left to right: Adrien Finlay, Executive Director, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra; Rosa Fullerton, Co-Chair 2010 SOLA Ball; Nancy Lasley, Co-Chair 2010 SOLA Ball; Adron Krekeler, Chair Live Auction; Karen Olson, Co-Chair Silent Auction; Leef Smith Barnes - Winner of the Name the Ball Contest; Sharon Walker, Co-Chair Silent Auction; and Tina Riviello, Artist of the original artwork for the 2010 Ball.

SATURDAY/MARCH 6

Le Moulin Rouge Ball. The 23rd annual Symphony Orchestra League of Alexandria (SOLA) Ball. At the Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City. Contact Jane Ring at 703-548-7454 or jring10@comcast.net. To purchase ASO concert tickets, contact their box office at 503-548-0885 or go to www.alexsym.org.

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Friday Dec 4, 7pm-9:30pm
Saturday Dec 5, 10am-6pm
Sunday Dec 6, Noon-4pm

FINE ARTS

NOW THROUGH JAN. 3

New Mythology/Tracey Clarke
 Tracey Clarke's otherworldly work pairs dramatic images with short narratives that both answer — and ask — questions. An artist's reception will be held Sunday, Nov. 22 at 4 p.m. On display at the Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-0035 or visit nvfaa.org.

NOW THROUGH DEC. 31

Gallery West Presents: The 30th Anniversary Celebration/Small Works Show

Join the members of Gallery West in a month-long celebration of the gallery's 30th year. The gallery is located at 1213 King Street in Old Town Alexandria's Boutique District, between Payne and Fayette. Shopping and fine dining are nearby.

The gallery is open from 11 – 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Images of work by the members are on view at the gallery's Web site: www.gallery-west.com. Call 703-549-6006.

NOW THROUGH NOV. 29

Scope Gallery — Table Talk. Over a dozen Ceramic Guild potters have been creating cups, plates, bowls and other serveware to complete a table and add originality and color to a holiday spread. The show runs now through Nov. 29, Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with Thursdays open until 9 p.m.; closed on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. The gallery is located on the ground floor Studio 19, 101 North Union Street Alexandria. Call Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.

NOW THROUGH DEC. 20



NOW THROUGH DEC. 7

Tory Cowles' Solo Exhibit, "Boing!"
 In Tory Cowles' latest series of abstract paintings, she strives to incorporate more interactive three-dimensional elements. Her work has always been light, playful, and joyful, but now the work invites the viewer to participate. Cowles is a resident artist at the Torpedo Factory Art Center. In The Art League Gallery: Daily, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sundays, 12 noon – 6 p.m.; Open Thursdays until 9 p.m.

Heavenly Dialogue: Photographs of Natural Occurrences. New Work by Lucy Herrman. A portion of the sales from this show will be donated to SHARE of McLean. At 2401 26th Road South, Arlington. Call 703-585-1705. Go to www.DualityContemporaryArt.com

Brett John Johnson. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except second Thursdays 2 to 9 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Street, #312, Alexandria. Call 703-683-2205.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Pandora's Box: Reception and Unveiling, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Jury talk at 7 p.m. Local youth from the new Charles Houston Recreation Center will create a large group artwork piece in conjunction with the Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery national exhibition Pandora's Box. The piece will be displayed at the Torpedo Factory and celebrated with a reception. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565, ext. 4 or go to www.torpedofactory.org. Open daily 10-6 p.m. and Thursdays until 9 p.m.

NOV. 30 TO JAN. 3

The Kiln Club Show. Runs Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with Thursdays open until 9 p.m. Scope Gallery is located at 101 North Union Street, ground floor Studio 19, Alexandria. Call the Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.

DEC. 8 TO JAN. 3

Size Matters: Two Shows-Two Jurors. Juried by Peg Koetsch and

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- November 27: City of Alexandria Holiday Tree Lighting
- December 4-13: Mount Vernon by Candlelight
- December 4: Del Ray Holiday Illuminarias — **NEW DATE!**
- December 5: 39th Annual Campagna Center Scottish Walk Parade
- December 5: Campagna Center's Holiday Designer Tour of Homes
- December 5: Burke & Herbert Holiday Boat Parade of Lights
- December 12-13: Annual Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours
- December 20: Holiday Favorites with the Colonial Handbell Ringers

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39th ANNUAL SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK WEEKEND

December 4 – 5, 2009

Parade: Saturday, December 5 at 11:00 am

Presented by The Junior Friends of The Campagna Center, The Saint Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C., and the City of Alexandria.

- Scottish Walk Parade
- A Taste of Scotland
- Heather & Greens Sales
- Holiday Designer Tour of Homes
- Children's Tea Party
- A Christmas Marketplace (Friday Only)



The entire Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend—including the Scottish Walk Parade—is hosted by The Campagna Center. All of the weekend proceeds benefit The Campagna Center's programs, helping children in Alexandria arrive at school ready to learn and ensuring their academic success. We rely on gifts from individuals and businesses to continue providing these outstanding services. For more information on how you can contribute to The Campagna Center's efforts, please visit www.campagnacenter.org or call (703) 549-0111.

For more information visit www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com or phone (703) 549-0111. Weekend events are Metro-accessible.

CALENDAR

THURSDAY/NOV. 26

Alexandria Turkey Trot. 10 a.m. At the Cora Kelly Recreation Center, 25 W. Reed Ave., intersection of West Reed and Commonwealth Avenues, in Alexandria's Del Ray community. The 5-mile race is cosponsored by the Del Ray Business Association (DRBA) and the DC Road Runners Club. The onsite entry fee — with two cans of food — is \$25 for adults 22 and over and \$20 for individuals aged 13-21 years. Children 12 and under can participate for \$10 at the door and two cans of food. Call Paul Coleus at 703-933-0520 ext. 203 or email paul@waterfordinc.com. Visit <http://www.dcroadrunners.org/sign-up/turkey>.

FRIDAY/NOV. 27

Music for the Clarinet. 8 p.m. Free. Presented by the U.S. Air Force Band Chamber Players. At the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

City Tree Lighting Program. 7 p.m. Entertainment features a message from the Mayor, a visit from Santa, a performance of Santa's Frosty's Follies by the Metropolitan Fine Arts Center, and caroling with a community sing along. At Market Square, 301 King Street, Alexandria. Sponsored by the City of Alexandria. Call 703-883-4686 or the Special Events Office at 703-746-5418.

NOV. 27-JAN. 6

Christmas at Mount Vernon. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The halls are decked for Christmas at Mount Vernon. Exciting additions include a dozen themed Christmas trees, historical chocolate-making demonstrations, and 18th-century dancing! \$15/adults, \$7/children ages 6-11, free for children under 6. At Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Call 703-780-2000 or www.MountVernon.org.

NOV. 27-29

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. 5-8 p.m. Mrs. Washington hosts 18th-century Christmas with candlelit walks, fireside caroling, and early American décor. Cost is \$18/adults, \$12/children under 11. At Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Call 703-780-2000 or www.MountVernon.org.

NOV. 27, 28, 29

"It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play." Six actors portray 43 voices in this visual recreation of a 1940's NYC radio station. Produced by ACCT. Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. At Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Tickets are \$9/adults, \$5/children 12 and below. Go to actonline.org or call 703-660-2611.

NOV. 28 TO DEC. 19

Alexandria Jaycees' Christmas Tree Sales. Hours are Tuesday to Friday, 6-9 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Trees priced from \$45-\$90. At the Safeway parking lot in Old Town, 500 South Royal Street, Alexandria. Call 703-866-7171 or visit www.alexjaycees.org.



BAO BAO ZHANG PHOTO

National Chamber Players artistic director and NSO cellist James Lee.

TUESDAY/DEC. 1

An Evening of Baroque Music: Works by Telemann and Bach. 7:30 p.m. The National Chamber Players will perform Sonata No. 1 in A major and the Tafelmusik Quartet in D minor by Telemann, and Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4. Free. At Pendleton Hall, Ainslie Arts Center, Episcopal High School, 3900 W Braddock Road, Alexandria. There will be a gallery opening and reception for Wildfires: Photographs by Youngsuk Suh, in the Angie Newman Johnson Gallery at 6:30 p.m. Go to www.episcopalhighschool.org, email arts@episcopalhighschool.org, or call 703-933-4135.

SUNDAY/NOV. 29

MVUC Presents. 7 p.m. DMA Piano Solo Recital, Khe Sin Khoo, Malaysia. A fourth year DMA piano performance from WVU, Morgantown. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church Chapel, 1909 Windmill Lane. Call 703-765-5950.

MONDAY/NOV. 30

St. Andrew's Day. 7:30 p.m. Kirkin of the Tartan Service. The service will include a blessing of the tartans and a bagpiper and will be followed by a reception with Scottish foods and beverages. At St. Andrew and St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Church, 402 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-683-3343. Visit www.standrewandstmargaret.org

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2

Country Music Open Mic night. 8-11 p.m. Novice and aspiring Country musicians — bring your instrument and a few Country songs and plug in at Nicks Open Mic night. Mics, PA and amps provided. Solos and bands welcome. Advanced sign ups and walk ins accepted. At Nicks Night Club Alexandria, 642 South Pickett St. Contact dwtolly@gmail.com.

Holiday Biz-aar. From 6-7 p.m., Enterprising Moms Networking and Shopping Hour; 7-9 p.m., Public Holiday Shopping Event. The Biz-aar will feature entrepreneurial moms selling children's apparel and accessories, organic home organizational solutions, handcrafted jewelry, children's hand-print and artwork preservation solutions, creative stroller covers. At Spill the Beans Organic Coffee and Chat House, Fort Hunt Centre, 1900 Elkin Street, Alexandria. Contact Carolyn Semedo at 703-395-6676 and visit <http://TheEnterprisingMoms.com>

THURSDAY/DEC. 3

Torpedo Factory Holiday Open House. 6 to 9 p.m. Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts as live music and refreshments get you into the holiday spirit at this annual bash! Guests are also invited to give back with a food drive benefiting Carpenter's Shelter. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Visit www.torpedofactory.org or call 703-

838-4565.
Holiday Concert. 7:30 p.m. NOVA Community Chorus, Dr. Mark Whitmire, Director, with the Alexandria Band. At the Schlesinger Concert Hall, Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. Call 703-845-6097.

DEC. 3-4

Holiday Market. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Shop for jewelry, purses, soaps and more. At St. Luke's Day School, 8009 Ft. Hunt Road, Alexandria. Call Tracey Navratil at 703-417-9219.

FRIDAY/DEC. 4

Holiday Luminarias. 6-9 p.m. Free viewing. Lit candles and Christmas trees line the streets, providing a holiday glow. In the Historic Del Ray District, Mount Vernon Avenue from Bellefonte to Hume Avenues.

ArtFest 2009 Open House. 6-9 p.m. Free. Exhibits, holiday sales and more. The event features 2D/3D exhibits, holiday ceramic sale, jewelry sale, wearable fiber art show and sale, music by Rew Smith Band, artist demos and food and drinks.

The Ceramic and Pottery Show and Sale will run through the weekend and will feature ceramic vessels and forms made by students and associates of The Art League that are perfect for holiday gift giving. Times are: Friday, Dec. 4, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 6, 12 noon-5 p.m.

The Jewelry Show and Sale, featured Friday and Saturday, will showcase a variety of jewelry to fit all tastes. Times are: Friday, Dec. 4, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. At the Madison Annex in Old Town Alexandria.

Parent's Night Out. Once a Month from 5-10 p.m. At Meade Episcopal Church, Alexandria. Meade staff will entertain kids ages 1-9 with age-appropriate educational theme activities. Cost is \$15/child (\$80 family maximum). Call 703-549-1334.

DEC. 4-5

Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk, Parade and Weekend. Free. Parade is Saturday, Dec. 5 at 11 a.m. Even dogs wear kilts during the annual Scottish Christmas Walk. Christmas Marketplace is Friday, Dec. 4 all day, George Washington Masonic Memorial. Taste of Scotland, Friday, Dec. 4, evening. Call 703-549-0111, or go to www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com.

The Nutcracker. Friday, Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5 at 2 and 6:30 p.m. Performance includes ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, lyrical and hip hop dance and gymnastics. Joint venture between West Potomac Academy and Alexandria Community Dance. At West Potomac High School. For tickets, contact Courtney Betzel at 703-718-2641 or cjbetzel@fcps.edu, or Jennifer Lissenby, Alexandria Community Dance director, at glisenby@verizon.net.

DEC. 4-6

Holiday Market at Del Ray Artisans. Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday noon to 4 p.m. Unique handmade fine arts and crafts from 16 local exhibitors and bake sale items to benefit Food for Others. Free. Go to www.TheDelRayArtisans.org. The Del Ray Artisans Gallery is located at the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4827.

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Wednesday - All American Night

Meatloaf, Chicken Fried Chicken. Va. Ham

Thursday - Italian Night

Lasagna, Chicken Alfredo, Calamari

Friday - Fish Night

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

Saturday -Steak and Chop Night

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

Sunday

Brunch served 7am - 2pm

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How To Choose a Contractor

By GERALD A. FILL

Hurricane Ida brought heavy soaking rain throughout the Washington metro area during the past several weeks. Especially vulnerable to water infiltration in basements are low lying areas such as that in the older sections of the Mount Vernon area (Bellevue, Fort

Hunt, Stratford Landing, Riverside Estates, Hollin Hall, Huntington, and other areas). Wet basements are not only immediately destructive but over the long term when neglected, may cause mold and mildew and may undermine foundations and create conditions for chronic wet basements which leak even when a minor amount of rainfall takes place in the near fu-

ture. In addition to being a health hazard homes with chronic wet basements may cause the resale value of the home to decline, and reduce the amount of livable space in the home.

What does a homeowner do when confronted with a wet basement? Here are some tips when and if you decide to find a permanent solution.

Tips for homeowners with wet basements.

First and foremost, don't panic and respond to contractors who may try and exploit your wet basement by offering expensive landscaping, outside excavation and wall sealing to the foundation, or sump pump installation.

ON AN EMERGENCY basis you

can do two things: (a) Rent or buy an inexpensive dewatering pump you can rent from a local appliance rental firm or purchase from a hardware store that you connect to a garden hose. It can pump any standing water out of your basement quickly and cheaply without hiring a contractor. And (b) rent or purchase a WetVac and vacuum up the standing water in your basement.

Second, make certain that you solicit advice and written proposals from more than one contractor no matter what advice you receive initially. In particular don't sign up with a contractor who says they are in the neighborhood and can begin the job the next day, or one who tries to pressure you in other ways, including offering a large discount if you sign immediately. Reputable contractors will not engage in those kinds of pressure tactics.

Third, ask for a written proposal that describes in detail what they are going to accomplish and why it is necessary to solve the problem.

Fourth, request a copy of their contractor's license and contact the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for complaints that are unresolved, and with the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission to make sure they are in good standing and have no outstanding unresolved complaints. The reason for the reference to "unresolved complaints" is that it is not uncommon for contractors who do a lot of work to from time to time have complaints filed against them. Some are serious and legitimate; others may not be. But the nature of the complaint, whatever it is, should be evaluated by the homeowner before selecting a contractor.

Fifth, ask the contractor for references and call or email them. Contractors are not going to willingly give you bad references; however, you may be able to learn something about the contractor through the conversation with the references. For example, do they finish what they commit in the contract, on time. A third way to check out a contractor is to look them up with the Washington Consumer Checkbook. The local library may have a hard copy on file. You may also contact them online. There may be a rating on the contractor listed with this organization which periodically evaluates various contractor specialties.

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Good Shepherd
Catholic Church

Mass Schedule

<p>Saturday Evening 5:00 pm; 6:30 pm (en Español)</p> <p>Sunday 7:30; 9:00; 10:30 am; 12:00 Noon 2:00 pm (en Español) 6:30 pm Mass (Starts Sept. 13)</p>	<p>Weekdays (Mass or Communion Service) 9:00 am (followed by Rosary)</p> <p>Children's Liturgy of the Word Sundays (Sept.-July) during 9:00 am Mass (English)</p> <p>Sign Language Interpreter Sunday at 9:00 am Mass</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8710 Mount Vernon Highway, Alexandria VA, 22309 Tel: 703-780-4055 Fax: 703-360-5385 www.gs-cc.org</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Loving as Christ loves, serving as Christ serves</p>
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Majors Look To Defend District Crown

Jones, Smith and Konadu to lead Mount Vernon while team's role players settle in.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

The conclusion of Monday's practice included confusion, frustration and a conditioning penalty for the Mount Vernon boys basketball team. Head coach Alfonso Smith watched quietly as players griped, ran out of position and missed an occasional layup.

Sound like a team in disarray? Don't worry, Mount Vernon fans. Smith is still the reigning co-Northern Region Coach of the Year and the Majors are still considered a front runner to repeat as National District champion. The adversity was all part of a learning experience as the team went through the "Liberty" layup drill for the first time this season.

The drill involves players passing and weaving their way to layups at each end of the court. Smith's goal for the Majors was 52 layups in 5 minutes. At first, the uncertainty of some led to the voicing of displeasure by others. But as time went by, the Majors started to work things out and the drill started to flow.

For the most part, Smith stood back and let his players work out their problems. In the end, the

team fell eight layups short of its goal, and had to run eight baselines. But in long term, some additional cardio would be a small price to pay for improved communication skills.

Mount Vernon is a talented group. If the Majors can maintain their composure and not beat themselves, there's no telling how far they could go.

"WHAT WE TRY to do is put them in a situation sometimes where we know that they're going to struggle a little bit," Smith said. "I try to give as little guidance [as possible] because I want some of our leaders to [step up]. ... [I] just let them work through it [and] allow the frustration to happen. As a coach, part of you wants to stop the drill when you notice that they're a little frustrated. But the reality is we're going to be in battles throughout the season where there's going to be frustration and we're going to have to work through it as a team."

Junior guard Jesse Konadu (5-foot-9) realizes the benefit of players working through their on-court troubles.

"Once game time starts, the coach is not going to be there to walk us through step by step," he said. "It was good to get [the ex-

perience] through practice."

Konadu, a two-year starter, teams up with senior Robert Smith (5-10), a three-year starter, to give the Majors an experienced backcourt. Each received honorable mention all-district accolades last season. Mount Vernon also returns National District Player of the Year Skylar Jones, a 6-4 forward who earlier this month signed with Division I Niagara.

"We're the three that have to lead this team," Smith said, "because we have the most experience on this team. [Our teammates are] going to look to us for help during the game."

NOW THE MAJORS have to establish where everyone else fits into the mix.

"Having your starting backcourt returning, as a coach, you feel good about that," Smith said. "Having a Division I player like Skylar Jones, you feel good about that. The key for us is really going to be how well some of the guys step into their roles."

Senior Dylan Bischoff (6-4) will start at center for the Majors during his first varsity season. Smith said Bischoff focused on playing soccer last season. Junior Logan Beougher (6-2) and his solid, 230-pound frame will provide the Majors with additional size inside.

Senior forward Sean Stewart (6-2) and senior guard Stann Hazlewood (5-9) will have increased roles this season.

SEE DEFENDING, PAGE 20

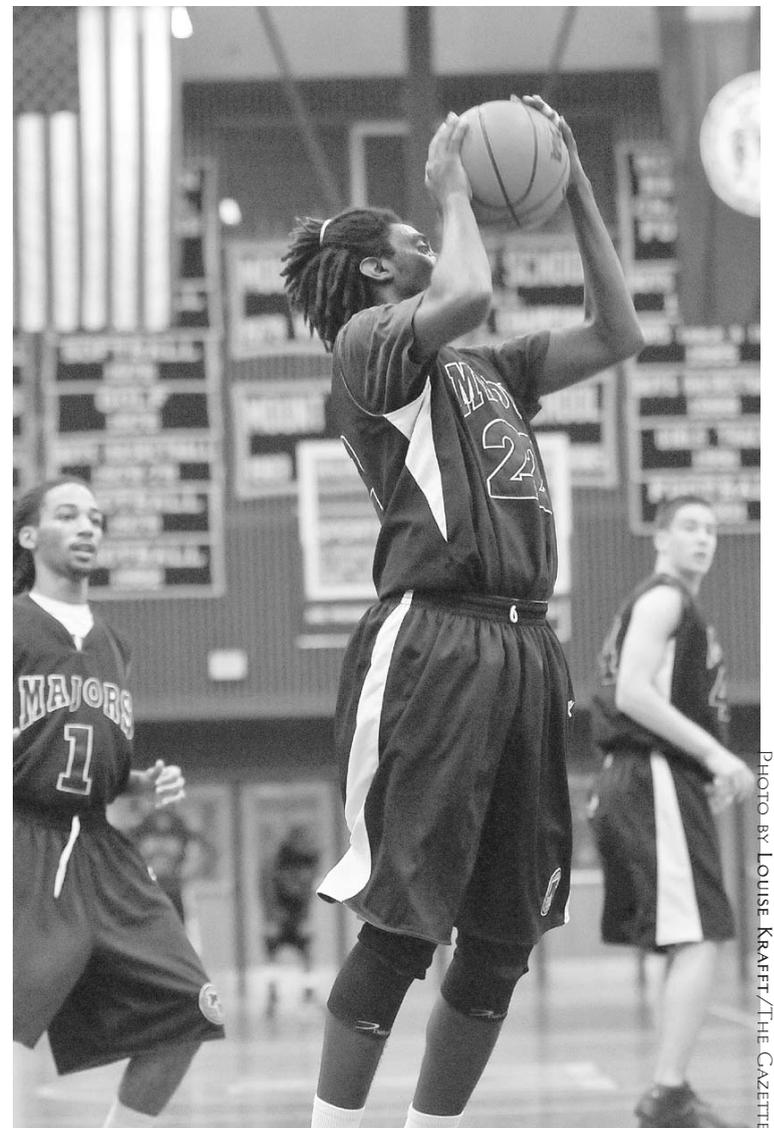


PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon head coach Alfonso Smith said senior Skylar Jones, with ball, needs to increase his leadership role this season. The 6-foot-4 Jones signed with Division I Niagara and was last season's National District Player of the Year.

SPORTS BRIEFS

West Potomac Graduate DeVar Excels in NCAA XC

Frank DeVar, son and Catherine Gorham and Rod DeVar, completed his cross country season at the University of Mary Washington. He took first place in the Capital Athletic Conference meet, second place at the Southeast Regional meet, and 16th place at the NCAA championships, and was named an All-American. Frank was coached by Don Beeby at West Potomac High School, and Stan Soper at UMW.

Frank will graduate from UMW this spring with a degree in English, and plans to attend graduate school, and then teach English and coach at the high school level.

Submit Youth Sports News

The local youth winter sports seasons are starting and the Gazette doesn't want any child's accomplishments to go unnoticed. To have youth sports items printed or posted on the Web, send the information

to Sports Editor Jon Roetman at jroetman@connectionnewspapers.com

Cheerleading Exhibition

The Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will host the Annual City-Wide Cheerleading Exhibition on Saturday, Dec. 12 at T.C. Williams High School beginning at 11 a.m. The exhibition features cheerleading teams from Charles Barrett, Charles Houston, Cora Kelly, Mount Vernon, Nannie J. Lee, Patrick Henry and William Ramsay Recreation Centers. There will also be special performances by the T. C. Williams High School cheerleaders and others.

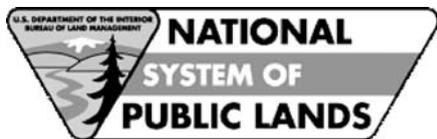
The exhibition features teams in three divisions: the pee wee, junior varsity and varsity divisions. Teams will display their skills and enthusiasm as they prepare for the main event, the cheerleading competition, in April of 2010. The April competition will be an invitational event with teams from the Wash

SEE SPORTS BRIEFS, PAGE 20



COURTESY PHOTO

Frank DeVar was named All-American at University of Mary Washington.



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SPORTS

Defending Their District Crown

FROM PAGE 19

While several Majors will have an impact this season, how Jones, the district Defensive Player of the Year last season, handles a new set of circumstances could have a lot to do with how well the Majors fare this season.

"He has to lead in a much bigger way than he's had to in the past," Smith said of the Jones. "The guys on the team are watching what he does. A lot of people in the region know [him] ... on a

first-name basis, so the expectations are going to be pretty high. He's going to get a lot of attention that he didn't get last year, where teams are going to gameplan for him. So he really [needs] to enlarge his teammates around him to make sure if teams key on him that we have so many other parts that can step up and do what needs to be done."

Mount Vernon went undefeated in district play last season and will likely get every opponent's toughest effort. Also, Hayfield, which

knocked the Majors out of the regional tournament on a buzzer-beating 3-pointer, joined the National District this season and figures to challenge Mount Vernon for the title.

"In my four years playing on the varsity, we've never beat Hayfield," Jones said. "Now that they're in our district, it's even more motivation to go out there and beat them."

Mount Vernon opens its season Dec. 2 against Paul VI at Woodson. The Majors' home opener is Dec. 5 against West Potomac.

SPORTS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 19

ington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland areas competing against the Alexandria teams.

Tickets will be on sale in advance of the exhibition at the neighborhood recreation centers as well as at the Lee Center Recreation Services Division Office now through 5 p.m., Dec. 10. Adult tickets for ages 13 and older are \$5; youth tickets for 6-12 years are \$2, and youth 5 and under are free. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$6 for adults and \$3 for children.

For more information on the cheerleading program and other youth sports programs, call the Youth Sports Office at 703-746-5402.

Winter Box Lacrosse Registration

The Beltway Box Lacrosse League is registering now for a boys high school and youth winter box lacrosse program beginning Dec. 19. Games will be played in Alexandria at the in-line hockey rink behind Francis C. Hammond Middle School. Divisions are boys high school varsity and JV and youth U-9/U-11, U-13, and U-15. A seven-game season is planned. US Lacrosse membership is required. Information is available at www.BeltwayBoxLacrosse.com.

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How To Choose a Contractor

FROM PAGE 18

LASTLY, do your homework by asking good questions about the underlying reason(s) why your basement is wet. There are four basic contractor specialties available to solve one or more problems which may or may not be able to solve your wet basement problem. Importantly, you may have a wet basement because of more than one problem.

The trick is for you to be aware that each specialty may offer you a solution that relies heavily on their specialty. Some may perform more than one specialty to solve your problem. For example: Landscapers will offer landscaping and drainage improvement as the solution. Is this the reason or a contributing reason that your basement leaks? Outside excavation companies will recommend expensive outside excavation and sealing of the foundation wall below grade as the solution to the wet basement. Is this the best solution to permanently solve your wet basement problem? Will the excavator issue a warranty for his work? Roofers will typically suggest that the gutters need cleaning, replacement, installing gutter "helmets," and downspout cleaning and downspout extensions as the solu-

tion. Is this the underlying reason your basement is leaking? Waterproofing contractors specializing in inside footer drains (subslab perimeter drainage installed and graded to a sump pump installation) as their remedy. Is this the best solution, or do you need landscaping and gutter cleaning too? Will the waterproofing contractor issue a warranty for his work?

Importantly, any one or a combination of these specialties may be the answer to your wet basement problem. Unless you are an expert in foundation problems, you are very likely to be well advised to get advice from at least two or three contractors which offer different types of specialized services. After listening to the contractors' estimates and reading their proposals you will have a sound basis for determining what is the best remedy for your wet basement. It is Buyer Beware out there and you need to do your homework to avoid spending money that will not solve your problem or spending more money than is necessary.

Editorial Note: The author, Gerald Fill, is a part-time free lance reporter for the Connection Newspapers. In the past he owned and operated a home improvement contracting company which specialized in foundation repair and waterproofing. This is his personal advice to homeowners experiencing wet basements due to the recent torrential rains.

MVHS Students Say They Can Dance

The MVHS Drama Boosters will present the first-ever Mount Vernon High School "So You Think You Can Dance?" contest Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. in the MVHS theater. This is a school-wide dance contest, with 21 contestants chosen at open auditions.

Judges from the community, who will score the 13 routines presented by the 21 dancers, will select the three highest scoring from which the winner will be chosen. The top three will dance a second time, and the audience will decide the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. Prizes will include cash and various gifts from local businesses.

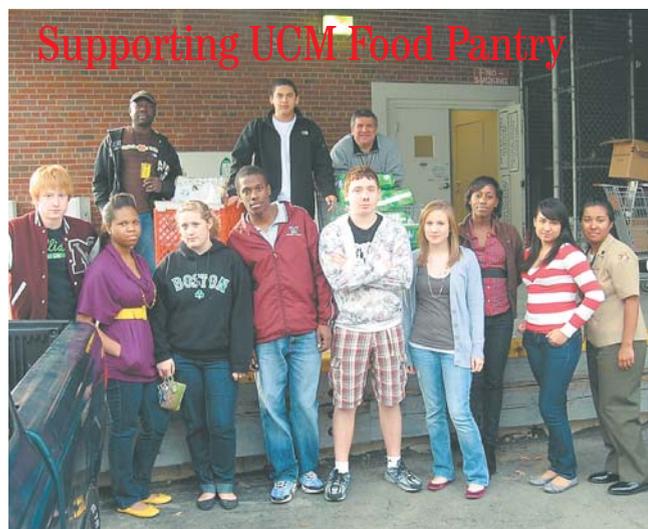
Tickets are \$7 at the door, but students can purchase tickets in advance for \$5. All ticket and concession sales will benefit the MVHS Drama Booster club, which provides a variety of support services to the theatre department.

Special musical performances by MVHS

students Marshall Cunningham and Jenna Kraynak will entertain the audience while the final votes are counted.

Student contestants are: Katelyn Arthur, Carson Meadows, Vernisha Colquitt, Sarah Locke, Robin Williams, Ryan Solivio, Savannah Frank, Dennis Mensah, Prince Baiden, Randall Golden, Andre Campbell, Donovan Rossavio, Chris Williams, Mikey Davidson, Sarah Marie Wood, Andrew McKellips, Zipporah Norton, Benjamin Gaston, Ian McKellips, Eric Myhre, and Bryan Azucena.

Judges for the event are: Lauren Bovi, FCPS teacher and former FCPS cheer coach, also a dancer and cheerleader for 20 years; Cece Lewis, FCPS teacher; Brittany Silvius, competitive dancer for 15 years; Charlene Aldridge, MVHS cheer coach; Vidki Woltz a MVHS special education teacher and choreographer for previous MVHS musicals; and Mike Higdon, actor in Off Broadway and Broadway shows.



The Student Government Association officers of Mount Vernon High School charged a can or a quarter as an entrance fee to the Homecoming Powder Puff football game on Oct. 13. They raised approximately \$271 and collected many canned food items. All items collected and purchased were delivered to United Christian Ministry's food pantry.

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21 Announcements

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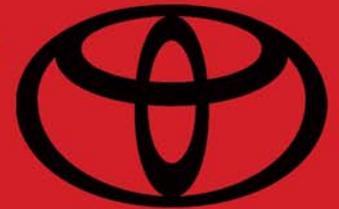
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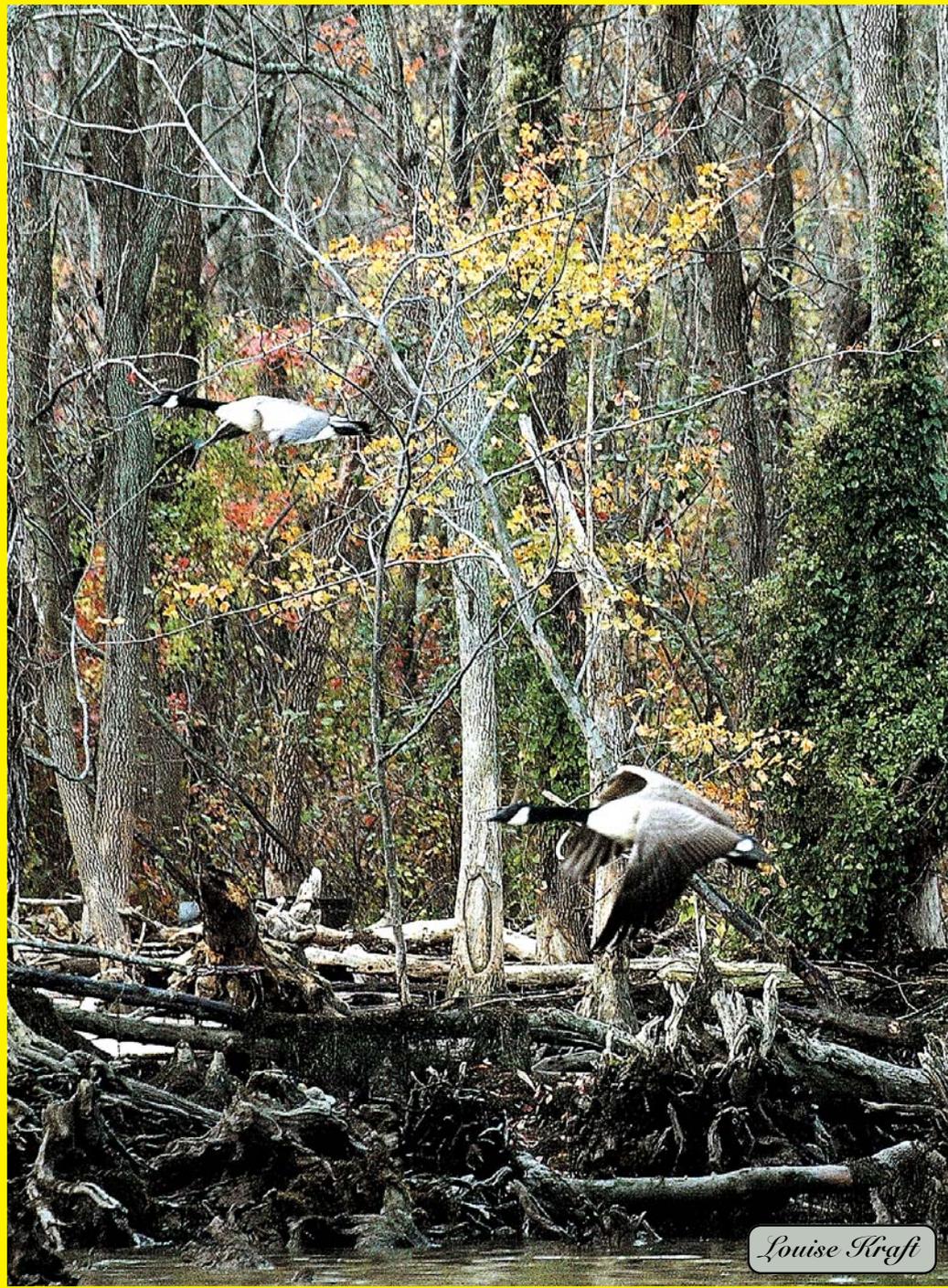


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