

Mount Vernon Gazette

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 21, 2010



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

New Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber board members Frank Flaherty, Casey Nolan and Daniel Rinzel. Not present for the photo were Vanessa Wheeler and Jay McConville.

Chamber Elects New Board Members

The Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce elected five board members at its annual meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 19 at the Mount Vernon Inn. They are: Frank Flaherty, business development manager for ServiceMaster Clean of Alexandria, Ft. Washington, Md. and Washington, D.C.; Jay McConville, vice president with Chandler/May, Inc.; Casey Nolan working with the Clark organization where his current responsibilities include directing and managing day-to-day development activities for the military housing privatization project at

Fort Belvoir; Daniel Rinzel, a partner with the law firm of Redmon, Peyton & Braswell, LLP in Old Town Alexandria, and Vanessa Wheeler, co-owner of Holly Woods & Vines, an award-winning garden center on Richmond Highway.



Former Lee District Supervisor Joe Alexander talks with the current Lee Supervisor Jim McKay at the reception before dinner last night in the Mount Vernon Inn.



Clem Gaillot and Mike Whitfield talk with local author Carl Sell. Sell was promoting his latest book, "Franconia Remembers Joe Alexander." The Gaillots paid for the printing of this volume of "Franconia Remembers" and all proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the Franconia Museum.



Karen Hacker and Pat Gaillot.

Can't Park That Here

New parking restrictions to go into effect next month.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Is your vehicle longer than 21 feet? Higher than 8 feet or wider than 102 inches? Does it weigh more than 12,000 pounds? If so, you'd better find another place to park it.

"My neighborhood is a fairly blue-collar area, and so we've got a number of residences where people park their work vehicles at home," said Spring Bank resident David Dale, who is co-chairman of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. "The problem is that some of these houses have one parked in the driveway and three in the street."

Under the old rules, commercial vehicles over 12,000 pounds were forbidden from street parking. But now that the Fairfax



This vehicle would be in violation.



This vehicle would not be in violation.

COURTESY OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Helping in a Time of Need

Fairfax County Search and Rescue Teams are in Haiti.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE GAZETTE

Following the 7.0 earthquake in Haiti, Fairfax County's Urban Search and Rescue Team (Virginia Task Force 1) was sent last week to look for and rescue victims.

Under the auspices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a 72-member team left last Tuesday night, Jan. 12, arriving the next day. And it quickly achieved success.

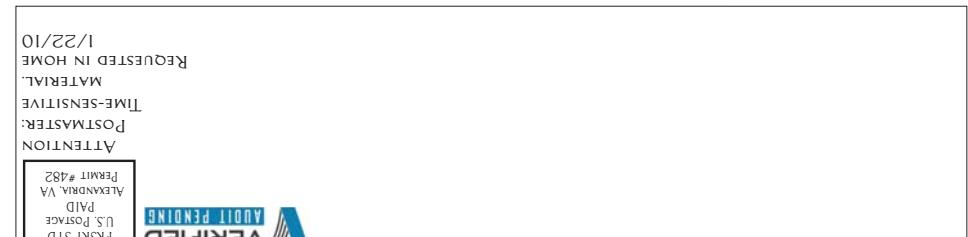
"We had a save Thursday morning [Jan. 14]," said county Fire and Rescue Depart-

ment spokesman Dan Schmidt. "A U.N. security officer of Estonian descent was detected in a rubble pile and extricated in good condition by members of Virginia Task Force 1. And that's the essence of why firefighters do what they do — they want to save lives. So when they did, it was an incredible, adrenaline-booster for them."

But with the situation there still so dire, said Schmidt, "The USAID asked us to send a second team, and County Executive Anthony Griffin and Fire Chief Ron Mastin approved the request." So a 42-person contingent left Thursday, Jan. 14, arriving early Friday morning.

It's comprised of two doctors, structural engineers, paramedics, specialists in search-and-rescue and hazardous materials, plus a search canine and handler. The structural engineers include rigging specialists who

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County Search and Rescue Teams in Haiti

FROM PAGE 1

help shore up unsafe areas using block and tackle, plus other methods, so firefighters can continue to extricate people.

"The federal government funds all costs associated with training and deployment," said Schmidt. The team will be in Haiti, 10-14 days, while other firefighters fill in for them here. They flew on a chartered aircraft, with their bags of personal items, while a second plane carried their equipment, such as jackhammers, cameras, listening devices, concrete-cutting saws and medical supplies. Water and military MREs (meals, ready-to-eat) also went along.

"This team deployed to Haiti in November 2008 for a school collapse, and many of those same members are returning," said Schmidt. The team's first mission was in December 1988 when it responded to an Armenian earthquake with a small, technical-rescue team. Since then, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team has been deployed all over the world, including to Kenya, Iran, Taiwan, Turkey, Oklahoma City and the Pentagon after 9/11. It also responded after Hurricanes Katrina and Isabel.

LAST THURSDAY, team members reported to the county's Fire and Rescue Academy throughout the day. Some were accompanied by family members; each brought one red and one yellow bag. Lt. Diron Powell — who works at the Franconia, Kingstowne, Springfield and West Springfield stations — helped them check in.

Each person's bags had be less than 90 pounds total for the two, and Powell made sure they contained all the necessary gear. Filling the red bags were uniforms, toiletries and personal items. The yellow bags were stuffed with operating gear such as flashlights, batteries, gloves, safety glasses, hearing protectors, rain gear, insect repellent and hand cleaner.

Team members went through several, check-in stations. They started with medical and passport checks and turned in their cell phones, keys and pagers. Deputy Fire Chief Mike Reilly, of Centreville's Virginia Run community, worked as the mobilization manager, in charge of sign-in reception, food, equipment and getting everything to the departure point.

"I coordinate with the Family Support Services Team (FSST), making sure people get a checklist of everything required of them," he explained. "If something's missing — such as their shot card, ID or equipment — they'd be non-deployable. So they come to me and I see that their issue is handled." Reilly also had a canteen unit bring the members hot and cold beverages and ordered dinner for them from Firehouse Subs.

Teresa MacPherson of Catlett is the canine search specialist. She's not a member of the fire department, but has been on the team since 1993. Her partner's a 5-year-old black Labrador named Banks.

"We were in Haiti in '08 for the school collapse," she said. Before Banks begins a



From left: Rescue squad officer Rodney Vaughan and hazmat specialist Mark Menton, who works the Alexandria-Lorton corridor, confer about the deployment.

search, MacPherson unclips his leash so he's unencumbered. "We don't want any snagging," she said. "He can go places we can't. I say, 'Go find,' and he starts looking for live, human scent in the rubble. He covers a lot of area in a short amount of time. Where he finds the strongest scent, he starts barking; then someone will start searching."

MacPherson was eager to leave and get busy. "We train hard for this," she said. "We want to go and help."

Lt. Rodney Vaughan is a rescue squad officer on the team. Formerly of Centre Ridge, in Centreville, he now lives in Gainesville and has been a team member since 1998. He responded to numerous hurricanes, including Katrina, plus Taiwan in 1999 and Iran in 2003. In Haiti, eight to 10 people will be assigned to him.

"When Technical Search locates victims — through listening devices, dogs or hearing them yell out — we'll confirm how deeply they're embedded," said Vaughan. "For example, they could have been on the first floor of a six-story building that collapsed, so we coordinate the rescue effort."

"If we need heavier equipment than we have, we'll work with heavy riggers, de-layering [debris] 'til we get to them," he continued. "We're not going to stop 'til we get to them."

THEY'LL probably work in 24-hour shifts, to start, with down time, here and there. Normally, half the team would work days, and the other half, nights. But, said Vaughan, "Due to the amount of work, it's 'round the clock now."

He, too, helped with the mobilization, "pushing paperwork, getting everything in order," and looked forward to "getting down there and doing what we train relentlessly to do — rescue people. It's a lot like a soldier trains for a war — not that you want

let it bother us."

Vaughan will miss his two daughters and wife Erica, though. But, said Erica Vaughan, "I'm so proud of what he's doing. He's been training to do this and I hope he'll save some lives." She said she never gets used to his deployments and worries about him while he's gone. But, she added, "I know he's in the Big Man's hands and [the fire department] does a good job of keeping us updated."

Technician Kevin Dabney of Vienna has been on the team more than 10 years. A rescue specialist, he helps with team organization and works under the Task Force leaders, Fire Chiefs Jim Strickland and Robert Zoldos.

"I'll command others to do search and rescue, and we'll help in any way we can," said Dabney. "We're 100-percent self-sufficient and don't need anything from the local government."

After receiving a geographical location to search, the Command and General Staff Team that Dabney's on determines which people should go where and sees that they're properly equipped. It also handles safety, logistics, medical, planning and operations matters.

We ask, 'Is there medical transport? Where do we send survivors?' said Dabney. "What about security issues — are there roadblocks?" So behind the scenes, there's a whole lot of work."

When they hear of possible survivors needing rescue, first a small reconnaissance team assesses whether it's a workable location. Then, if it's a go, six to 80 people — including medical personnel, technical search specialists, dogs and structural engineers — would respond. The size of the response depends on the size of the site and the suspected number of victims needing rescue.

SINCE THE FIREFIGHTERS communicate by radio, Lt. Wes Rogers's specialty is also crucial. Rogers, of Oak Hill, works in communications in the Massey Building in Fairfax and also on the USAR team.

"I set up repeaters, enabling the radios to talk further than line of sight," he said. "Depending on the terrain, we could have a 4-mile range. I'll also set up satellite communications to talk to our Operations Center at the Fire and Rescue Academy and will establish communications with our USAR team already in Haiti."

Typically, team managers receive radio updates about the victims, plus the status of the search teams — where they are, if they're all right and if they need anything.

Last Thursday, Rogers could hardly wait to get there already and start helping. "Everybody here has that attitude," he said. "I'm proud of the team; everybody works together and we all want to save some lives."

Squad officer Richard McKinney of Fair Oaks is captain of the Frying Pan station. He's a 30-year member of the fire department and has been on Task Force 1 since its inception.

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The team members' red and yellow bags are piled on the floor at the Fire and Rescue Academy prior to being loaded on a truck for transport to the airport.

one — but when that time comes, you want to be able to put it to good use."

Vaughan said they'd all "done this enough" so that they can quickly assess whatever situation they encounter and proceed accordingly. Hardest, he said, was wanting to get there as fast as they could, but understanding that it takes six to 14 hours to assemble all the gear, get the plane ready and the equipment on board.

"It's a huge undertaking — and we'd like it done in 30 minutes," he said. "Then, once we're on the ground, the physical work and sleep deprivation will eventually take a toll on us. But when we're working, we don't

OPINION

Many Numbers Point to Needs

Challenging times as we commemorate vision of Martin Luther King Jr., inaugurate new governor.

Unemployed, uninsured, homeless, hungry. While on a percentage basis, Northern Virginia is better off than most of the rest of Virginia, in raw numbers, we have more people here who are unemployed, more people here who lack health insurance, more people who spend parts of most months without enough food on the table, more people who are homeless.

Some sobering numbers as we celebrate the day of hope and aspiration that is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Sobering statistics as we inaugurate a new governor who has many good ideas, but no plans for new revenue. Cuts in the state budget will affect everyone in Virginia, even those who are not needy.

In November, more than 68,000 unemployed people were looking for full time work here in Northern Virginia, according to the Virginia Employment Commission, up from just under 50,000 in November, 2008.

Later this month, officials and advocates will conduct the annual "point in time" census of homeless. Last January, there were 1,730 homeless people in Fairfax County at the "point

EDITORIAL

in time" count, more than 1,000 of those are members of families, most of the adults with jobs. In the City of Alexandria, there were 360 homeless people. In Arlington, 527 homeless, about 200 of those were people in families.

According to the latest U.S. Census numbers, from 2008, there were about 200,000 people (under 65) in Northern Virginia without health insurance. These are people who can't get preventative care, can't get routine care for minor illnesses.

In Arlington County 38,018 or 21.1 percent of the population lacked health insurance. That number jumped to 62 percent of those living below 200 percent of poverty line.

In Fairfax County, 149,642 people or more than 16 percent of the population lacked health insurance. In the City of Alexandria, 22,399 people lack health insurance, or 18.2 percent of the population. In the City of Fairfax, 3,685 people lack health insurance, or 18.8 of the population.

Another measure of need, and a way of identifying concentrations of poverty, is to look at students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals in public schools.

In Alexandria more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced meals.

In Arlington, more than one-third of students are eligible for free or reduced meals.

More than 37,000 students in Fairfax County Public Schools are eligible for free and reduced meals, that's 22 percent of the student body. And the needy students also tend to be concentrated in particular schools. For example, some schools, like Wolf Trap Elementary, had no students qualifying for free or reduced meals. Then consider Graham Road Elementary, with more than 78 percent of its students qualifying for free and reduced meals, Lynbrook Elementary with more than 76 percent of its students qualifying; Mount Vernon Woods, more than 75 percent; Mount Eagle more than 74 percent. The uneven distribution showed dozens of schools with very high rates of poor students lumped together; dozens with poverty rates in the single digits.

Food for thought. These numbers don't indicate a tiny population of needy people, they indicate a region with ongoing problems of "haves" and "have-nots." Those 15-30 percent of our populations in local jurisdictions who "have not" are about to have quite a bit less as the state and local budget processes move forward.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ten Cents Makes Sense'

To the Editor:

Michael Lee Pope's Jan. 14 article, "Able to Spare a Dime?" misses one very important point. He failed to mention that the Board of Supervisors could increase the tax rate by 10 cents, earmark those monies to save our school system and do so without increasing the average tax bill.

Property taxes are calculated on the value of your home and in Fiscal Year 2011, the average value of a home in Fairfax County is expected to decline (as it has in past years). Therefore, the board could increase the tax rate by 10 cents and the average tax bill would not increase. Indeed, the board increased the tax rate last year and our bills remained essentially the same.

Meanwhile, Supervisor McKay's concerns about the fate of other programs in the county are well founded. He and the board have some very tough decisions to make. But the message our campaign seeks to convey is that, aside from public safety, there is no more important priority than education. The program cuts that are being recommended by Superintendent Jack Dale will set our school sys-

tem back 10 to 15 years. They will have ripple effects that we can't even imagine. And, even when the economy starts to turn the corner and the revenues start picking up, you will not be able to go back and easily re-instate all day kindergarten or freshman sports or foreign immersion programs. The damage will have been done. There are other county programs that can be turned "on and off" a little easier.

The supporters of the "Ten Cents Makes Sense" campaign believe our children should not be penalized because they happened to be attending school during this economic crisis. We have offered our solution to this problem and urge the board to give it serious consideration.

Ron Fitzsimmons

President
Mount Vernon High School
Academic Boosters Corp

Living Within One's Means

To the Editor:

If there is one thing that I learned during my recent run for delegate in the 44th Legislative

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 5



New Officers INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital has new auxiliary officers for 2010. They are, seated from left, Charlotte Rexroad (Recording Secretary), Pat Staffieri (Historian), Eda Morris (Corresponding Secretary), Elsie Plues (Vice President), and, standing from left, Marion "Barney" Barnwell (President), and Harold "Jack" Piper (Treasurer).

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 4

District it is that things are not always as they appear when it comes to the budget. Recently I have had the opportunity to attend several briefings on this year's Fairfax County education budget, and following that I have done a bit of study on my own. As I said, things are not exactly as they appear, and the call for more taxes is misguided.

First, it is important to note that there is, in fact, a significant shortfall in funds for the education budget this year. Education is clearly a top priority for our citizens, and adequately resourcing our schools is vital to our community. It must also be noted, however, that contrary to the political line of the day this shortfall did not happen overnight. It is the result of decades of poor planning and a lack of fiscal responsibility, the combination of which has caused us to be unable to respond to the current economic environment. Citizens should understand this as they evaluate the validity of the announced draconian cuts to education programs that, just coincidentally, are the most visible and controversial. A failure to address the imbalance of state funding plus more than 10 years of growth above the rate of inflation has combined with a continued adherence to unsustainable employee compensation strategies to put us in this situation. Cutting one year of little Junior's freshman football will not put us right.

Instead of demanding new taxes, we should instead demand leadership and honest solutions from our county representatives. Scaring parents with a "bait and switch" strategy of cutting highly visible programs and then calling for emergency tax increases is a tired trick, and we deserve better from our leaders. More effective would be a firm commitment to address the systemic problems in our budget. Unfortunately I am not hearing that commitment. Here are a few points for people to consider:

* True, due to the recession there are fewer funds available for all kinds of government programs. It is not true, however, that this shortfall (about \$33.5 million of a \$2.3 billion school budget) is the driver of our education budget woes. If it were, we could survive without drastic cuts.

* The fact is that the driving factor is the nearly \$100 million increase in costs associated with employee and retiree benefits and health care. Our county is using the "General Motors Model" of employee compensation which guarantees that, regardless of rev-

enue, these costs will continue to rise with no end in sight. As a businessman I know that when revenue falls and employee costs go up, you have a big problem. Well, we have a big problem. We can cut every extracurricular program we have and never offset these rising costs — costs that are for the most part on autopilot thanks to poor leadership in years past.

* Finally we need to realize that, despite best efforts to make us think otherwise, the school budget does not exist in a vacuum. In tough times we can maintain our level of education spending in the county only by addressing the entire budget — and that is exactly what we should do. We all enjoy the services that are provided by the county. If we don't have the money, however, we need to accept that some of these services will, at least temporarily, be halted. The answer is not more revenue, it is a commitment to live within our means across the entire county budget.

There are no easy solutions, and many competing voices calling for support. Our representatives work incredibly hard on complex issues for little compensation. Still, I think we need a new generation of leaders who are not afraid, or worse not willing, to level with the people. We need to define our priorities, live within our means, get our fair share from the state, and address the systemic problems in our outdated business model. If we do not, we will always be, in the unfortunate words of one government representative at a recent meeting, "begging our representatives to raise our taxes." I'm not ready to beg, I'm ready to hear and support real solutions that put Fairfax County back on the path to fiscally responsible government.

Jay McConville
Mount Vernon

Cut Consultants Not Sports

To the Editor:

Although there is no question that the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) system is facing a tough budget situation, any shortfall would be much less than the \$116 million "projected" by FCPS if they properly manage expenditures in 2010. FCPS budgets historically underestimate carryover revenue from the previous fiscal year, which is shown as a beginning balance in the budget year. For example, last May the School Board approved a FY10 budget with a beginning balance of \$28 million. They are now disclosing a FY10 beginning balance of

\$118M, a \$90M difference in available revenue! Given that the FY10 budget was approved toward end of FY09 when final expenditures should have been easily forecasted, FCPS either purposefully underestimated the carryover or cannot perform basic budget execution, either one of which is unacceptable service to County taxpayers. That \$90M could have been used to give FCPS employees a well-deserved cost-of-living increase while still providing some relief to taxpayers by reducing the County transfer. FCPS is up to their old tricks again in its proposed FY11 school budget. They are now estimating \$2.273B in FY10 expenditures, \$70M more than the \$2.203B contained in the approved FY10 budget. For example, why are they now proposing to spend \$93.6M in supplies and materials when they only spent \$70.1M in FY09, or \$29.6M in contracted services versus \$20.4M in FY09? How about operating at the expenditure level originally approved and "saving" the \$70M to carry over into FY11 to mitigate the projected revenue shortfall? For that matter, instead of saving \$1.8M by eliminating freshmen and other sports, or \$2.8M by eliminating foreign language in elementary schools, how about cutting some of the millions proposed for contracted professional services. Perhaps because they know cutting sports and languages will get the public riled up while cutting consultants won't. As a father with children in three separate Fairfax County schools, I am appreciative of the education they receive, and support giving the school system the necessary resources to continue providing that quality education. However, don't ask your dedicated teachers to forego cost-of-living raises and residents to pay more in real estate taxes without holding the line on expenditures. Otherwise, you will drive the middle class away and there won't be anybody left to educate.

Mark T. Welch
Alexandria

Trade Cadillac For a Chevy

To the Editor:

Neighborhood activists and our elected officials seem to be united on one point — in the midst of a deep recession, they want to add layers of taxation to the current burden instead of making responsible budget decisions.

Our newly elected Del. Scott

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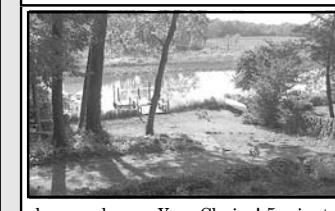


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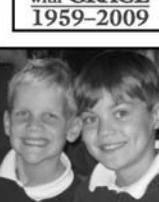
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OPINION

Working on a Special Transportation District

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE DELEGATE

Wednesday, Jan. 13 marked the beginning of the 2009 legislative session. After our swearing in, I was assigned to the Cities, Counties and Towns Committee (CC&T) and the Science and Technology Committee.

Fairfax County frequently does not have the authority or flexibility it needs to make decisions and provide services to 1,000,000 people.

RICHMOND REPORT
Fairfax County to provide it with the tools that it needs to maintain our quality of life in Fairfax County.

The Science and Technology Committee

will put me in a position to continue to grow the Northern Virginia Technology Industry. This sector has probably been the number one contributor of high-paying jobs in Northern Virginia. I am hopeful that we can work to bring those kinds of jobs to the U.S. 1 Corridor and our community.

On Wednesday, I also introduced 17 pieces of legislation. The first bill I introduced was a resolution (HJ 119) authorizing a committee to study the creation of a special transportation district to fund improvements from U.S. 1 from Crystal City to Dinwiddie, Va. The General Assembly approved a similar district in 1989 to improve U.S. 58 from Norfolk to Abingdon. Since the construction of I-95, U.S. 1 has seen much improvement around it, but not to the road itself. I am hopeful that taking a regional approach to funding our main

road will result in funding for improvements such as widening, rail, and transit.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board decides what road improvements are funded in Virginia. Currently, its regional members are required to live in transportation districts that followed 1930 congressional district lines. Population has changed a bit since then. Today, Northern Virginia has 1 of 11 votes, but 27 percent of the population. Three districts have 62 percent of the state's population. I have introduced legislation requiring membership to be based upon present congressional district lines so that when transportation improvement decisions are made, Northern Virginia has its share of seats at the table.

I also introduced legislation on a number of other topics that I will discuss in future columns or you can locate more information on my Web site — www.scotturovell.org. I have also created a series of tools that you can use to comment on my legislation, comment on other issues or legislation, request a meeting, request a tour of the Capitol, or seek help on an issue with State Government. You can also follow my blog scotturovell.blogspot.com for my views on issues and events as they occur in Richmond.

Your input is very important to me as we move forward — please comment early and often!

On Saturday, Jan. 23, at 10:30 a.m., I will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting with Sen. Todd Puller at the Mt. Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, to take your input and questions. Your input is very important to me as we move forward — please send your comments early and often!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 5

Surovell attended a meeting of the West Potomac High School PTA on Jan. 12, and was heard to favor raising the County business professional occupational license (BPOL) tax and adding a restaurant meals tax. Funny, during his campaign, I never heard him mention these tax increases. I attended two of his debates and received enough campaign literature (from the three candidates) to line 100 bird cages, but I don't recall ever hearing him suggest these tax increases. What Mr. Surovell needs to do is to make all best efforts to change the State appropriation formula by which for every dollar we send to Richmond, we receive about 19 cents back in transportation benefits. He also needs to seek more than the 25 percent funding we receive from Richmond for our school system. If he is unsuccessful, the answer is budget cuts, not more taxes.

Mr. Surovell has a similar position to that of our own Mount Vernon supervisor, Gerry Hyland. Last year, he proposed having a referendum for a meals tax and his Board of Supervisors colleagues turned him down. He has indicated he is not deterred and will try again. Meanwhile, Supervisor Hyland is also a proponent of raising the BPOL tax. The Mount Vernon Council (MVCCA) proposed a resolution last year recommending raising the BPOL tax in Fairfax County. During the debate, when it appeared the proposed resolution was going down to defeat, Supervisor Hyland asked to be recognized and implored the MVCCA to table the resolution until he could try to obtain more support from the Board of Supervisors. The MVCCA in its wisdom (for once) voted

down the resolution. So much for Supervisor Hyland's oft-stated contention that he has erected a "fire wall" between his office and the MVCCA. When he wants them to take a position in line with his views, apparently there is no "fire wall."

This brings us to the efforts by Mount Vernon resident Ron Fitzsimmons, as reported in the Jan. 14 Mount Vernon Gazette, to seek a 10 cent increase in the real estate tax rate to be dedicated solely to address the projected shortfall in the County School System Budget. Supervisor Hyland would not go on record for the article supporting Mr. Fitzsimmons' proposal, but Supervisor Jeff McKay of the Lee District made it clear he would oppose any effort to earmark a real estate tax increase for any particular budget item. The most interesting thing about the article is what it didn't say: Mr. Fitzsimmons is a member of Supervisor Hyland's staff. Does Supervisor Hyland support his staffer's efforts? It would be interesting to know.

The one thing left out of all of these proposed tax increases is the question of whether their proponents have conducted any dynamic analysis of the effects of those tax proposals. I haven't heard that this has been done. Concerning the BPOL tax, have any of them conducted a study to determine (1) how many businesses will refrain from locating in Fairfax County when the tax is raised; (2) how many businesses will leave Fairfax County if the tax is raised; (3) how many businesses will lay off employees as a result of the increased expenses resulting from tax increases; and (4) how many businesses will refrain from hiring new employees as a result? Concerning the proposed meals tax, will it change the eating habits of restaurant customers? Will customers take their business elsewhere? Will the resultant lost business drive restaurants into bankruptcy? Will new restaurants be less likely to locate here? Until such time as dynamic analysis is performed, it is irresponsible of our politicians to propose raising our tax burden. Talking about spending other people's money is easy. Performing appropriate due diligence before doing

so takes a little more effort. Relatively low BPOL taxes and the absence of a meals tax are two factors that make Fairfax County a jurisdiction looked upon favorably by businesses looking for a location where they can conduct business profitably (and employ our residents and add to the County tax base).

From 2000 to 2008, our County Budget rose about \$500 million more than necessary to do to keep up with the increase in the Consumer Price Index. Had the County contributed to a rainy day fund during that time instead of just spending all of the money during prosperous times, perhaps we wouldn't be looking at a \$300 million budget deficit to be eliminated this spring. Difficult choices will have to be made including cutting programs from the budget affecting the quality of our schools and services taxpayers have grown to expect. We all want a "Cadillac" school system but perhaps, in the short term, until the economy rebounds, it's going to have to be a "Chevy."

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Support More Funding

To the Editor:

For the first time in anyone's memory, Fairfax County Public Schools is in the midst of a perfect storm. On the revenue side, the country is in recession, state revenues are down, and county home values have fallen. This year we are educating 4,000 more students than last year, with \$20 million less. The situation would be even worse had we not received nearly \$50 million in federal stimulus funds — and those funds will run out in a year. The new Governor and the General Assembly have to cut \$4 billion just to balance the state budget. The County Board of Supervisors funded the schools this year at the same level as last year — despite our increased enrollment — and threatens either the same or lower funding next year.

On the spending side, enrollment is up dramatically and the number of our neediest children — who cost more to educate — is growing even faster. In response, over the past two years, the School Board and Superintendent have taken prudent measures to control costs, including cutting central administration by 15 percent, and streamlining and consolidating programs.

However, when we spend 85 percent of our budget on instruction, there is a finite limit to what we can cut without impacting teaching and learning. And the cuts that save the most money — freezing pay and raising class sizes — are both counterproductive and unsustainable. But that is where we have to cut to get to the numbers needed to balance our budget.

And so we face a crossroads. We can keep cutting — freshman sports, elementary band and strings, full-day kindergarten, more teaching positions that will raise class sizes, and again freezing all pay. Or we can advocate for the funding we need to maintain the world class school system that is not only nationally renowned, but which also fuels the economic engine that drives the county, and which contributes to the abundant quality of life we moved here to enjoy.

The School Board will make its choice on Feb. 4 when we will adopt a budget that seeks the resources we need to serve all 174,000 children who will walk through our doors next September. But then it is up to others — the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Board of Supervisors — to decide whether we actually get those resources. You have a unique opportunity to affect the future of our children, schools and our community. Please join us in letting our elected officials know that you support Fairfax County Public Schools, and want those elected officials to provide us with the resources we need to maintain our very successful system. We invite you to learn more at www.fcps.edu and step up to let your voice be heard.

Kathy Smith
Chairman, Fairfax County School Board

Write

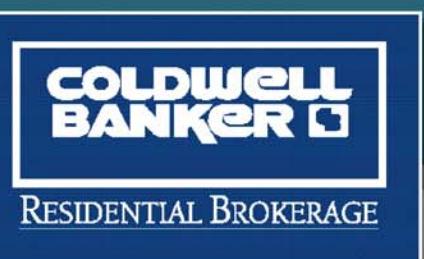
The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue. Send to:

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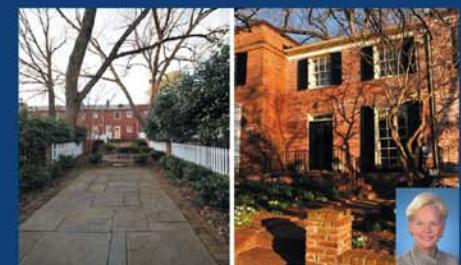
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SATURDAY/JAN. 23

Design a Planting Plan. 9:30-11 a.m.

Learn to plant your next garden. Cost is \$16/person. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Call 703-642-5173.

Town Meeting. 10 a.m. to noon. State Sen. Toddy Puller and Del. Scott Surovell will discuss legislative activities in Richmond. At Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria.

Wellness/Get Organized Day. 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Start the year off right by learning organizing tips and strategies to keep you and your home organized, speak to wellness professionals about your fitness and wellness goals, and shop for great deals at the Habitat ReStore of Northern Virginia. At the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, 7770 Richmond Highway.

Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction. 5-8 p.m. For Mount Vernon High School Girls Basketball. Tickets are \$5. See a student athlete from the girls basketball team or contact Terry Henderson at 703-619-3146 or Terry.Henderson@fcps.edu.

Effective Prayer for the Economy. 3:40 p.m. With speaker Sarah Hyatt, CSB. A free lecture/workshop with childcare provided. At the First Church of Christ Scientist Mount Vernon, 1509 Collingswood Road, Alexandria. Call 703-768-2494.

Food History Symposium. 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Fee: \$50. "Food for Thought: A Food History Symposium." The series of lectures will examine public markets, pottery

vessels, bakeries, chocolate, and African-American foodways, with an emphasis on Alexandria and the Chesapeake region. At The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Register at www.alexandriahistory.org or by calling 703-838-4994.

JAN. 26, FEB. 6, 16

Alexandria Academy Admissions Open House. 6:30-8 p.m.

The Academy invites parents of students entering grades 5-8 in 2010 to come meet the Headmaster and learn more about the Academy's classical curriculum. At 400 South Washington Street, Old Town Alexandria. Call Thomas A. Soule at 703-342-6545.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 27

New Metropolis Lecture Series. 7

p.m. Melissa Keeley, assistant professor, Geography and Public Policy and Public Administration, George Washington University, will present Developing Urban Green Infrastructure Policy: A D.C. Case Study. At the Virginia Tech Alexandria Center, 1021 Prince Street, 3rd floor conference room. Contact Kris Wernstedt, 703-706-8132 or krisw@vt.edu.

SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Java Jolt Archaeology Event. 10

a.m. Jack Hranicky, former chair of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission, will present "The Sandy Hill Adena Cache of Dorchester County, Md.," an illustrated lecture. At the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 North Union Street,

#327, in Old Town, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4399 or e-mail ruth.reeder@alexandriava.gov.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Book Talk. 2-4 p.m. The topic is "Searching." Two authors, Nicole Burton and Solveig Eggerz, will discuss how the theme of searching is depicted in their books. At St. Elmo's Coffee Pub Inc., 2300 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-739-9268.

Commonwealth Academy Open House. 1-4 p.m. Learn about its award winning college-prep program for students with learning differences and AD/HD. Grades 4-12. Meet with faculty and staff and tour the school. At the Commonwealth Academy, 1321 Leslie Avenue, Alexandria. Call 703-548-6912 or go to www.CommonwealthAcademy.com

THURSDAY/FEB. 4

Statewide Application Assistance Workshop. 10 a.m. to noon. Free.

Presented by the Virginia Commission for the Arts. Program Coordinator Cathy Welborn and Arts-in-Education Coordinator Elizabeth Cantile will provide an overview of grant programs. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-0035 or 804-225-3132 or visit www.arts.virginia.gov.

SATURDAY/FEB. 6

Grow Underwater Grasses. 10:30

a.m. to noon. Learn to grow underwater bay grasses at home for later planting in the Potomac River. At the Buddie Ford Nature Center, 5750 Sanger Ave., Alexandria. Register at www.cbf.org/grasses.

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NEWS

New Parking Restrictions Approved

FROM PAGE 1

County Board of Supervisors has approved a new set of restrictions, neighborhood residents throughout the county will start seeing some changes. Aside from the limitations on length, weight and width, the amendment to the county's existing code includes changes that clarify some vague passages and

"A lot of these changes are going to make it easier for us to identify violators so we can enforce and prosecute them," said Lt. Michael Wall of the Mount Vernon District Station. "We are going to have a one month grace period before we start enforcing the new rules."

POLICE OFFICIALS and county leaders warn that some vehicles might get caught up as unintentional victims of the new restrictions. For example, some large-scale trucks and sport-utility vehicles might exceed the eight-foot height restrictions. Yet Supervisor Jeff McKay says the new county code is not as

restrictive as possible under the authority granted by the Virginia General Assembly.

"Your typical Suburban is not going to be in violation," said McKay, adding that he feels the new rules are long overdue. "The neighborhood groups were pleading for help because they didn't want their streets to be turned into commercial parking lots."

The new code goes into effect Feb. 1. Officers say they will be responding to complaints and issuing warnings to those found to be in violation of the new code. Some vehicle owners will need to find other places to park their commercial vehicles — a victory for neighborhood groups that have long complained about the increasing presence of commercial vehicles parked along neighborhood streets.

"I can't go to a civic association or a homeowners group without hearing complaints about this," said McKay. "The previous code didn't do anything to solve the problem, and I think this is a change that frankly should have happened 25 years ago."

Helping in a Haiti's Time of Need

FROM PAGE 3

"We'll search buildings, going in void spaces and looking for trapped people," he said. "USAID will tell us which buildings and areas to check." What makes it so dangerous, said McKinney, is the unknown. "You really don't know what you're getting yourself into," he said. "Once an earthquake's destroyed a building, it's unstable." But he's glad to do what he can and he likes the camaraderie among the people on

the team. "Most of them I've known, my whole career, so they're just like a second family," he said. He's been with them to Oklahoma City, Taiwan and the Pentagon after 9/11.

Toughest, said McKinney, is "the death and seeing people at their worst." But he finds satisfaction in "the chance of finding someone alive — or even finding deceased people so their families can have closure."

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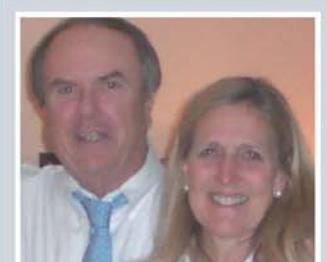
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**3321 WESSYNTON WAY
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Beautiful home features 5BR, 3BA, 2 Frpl, wood & bamboo floors, fab master bath, large eat-in kit w/ ample cabs & lots of counter space. There are also separate dining, family, rec and all purpose rooms. Large picture windows bring the sun & the outside in. A patio, gardening shed, attached garage & wonderful landscaping complete the picture.

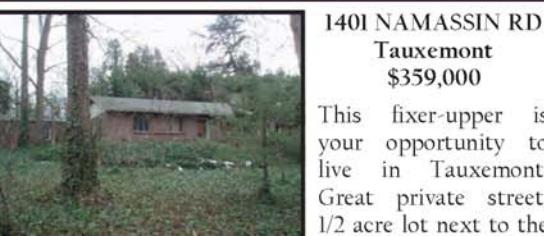
Norma Stratton 703.966.0756



**7029 BEDROCK RD
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\$589,000**

CLASSIC COLONIAL ON CORNER LOT! The 2-story foyer welcomes you into this 4BR, 2.5BA 2-lvl in convenient Woodstone; mins to METRO, OT & Ft Belvoir. Updated gourmet kit, updated baths, newer roof, paint & more! 2-car gar & 2-season screened porch on a no-thru street, makes this a perfect home for family & entertaining!

Kim Muffler 703.282.7739



**1401 NAMASSIN RD
Tauxemont
\$359,000**

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**9316
Allwood Drive
\$540,000
Stunning!**

Home features bright, open floor plan with soaring cathedral ceilings in the main living area. This fabulous property has been substantially updated and is in absolutely impeccable condition. Gleaming hardwood floors, track lighting, finished lower level, garage and much more. Gorgeous setting on half acre tract fronting a quiet street in the heart of Mount Vernon.



**7501
Park Terrace Drive
\$1,150,000
Stunning!**

Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie style, this 1.18 acre property sits on a bluff overlooking acres of parkland with seasonal river views! Heart of redwood features, large room sizes, high ceilings and expansive glass window walls capture the natural beauty of the grounds. Off GW Pkwy just 3 miles from Old Town. (Adjoining 1.18 acre available for \$975,000.)



**4401
Jackson Place
\$475,000
Special Value!**

Spacious brick home on gorgeous half acre lot with open floor plan, hardwood floors, family room with fireplace, covered parking and extra driveway space. Fabulous custom deck overlooks magnificent level grounds. Rare opportunity to find a well maintained Mount Vernon home for under \$500,000!



**RIVER TOWERS
6621 Wakefield Dr
#317 - \$242,500**

LIKE NEW CONDO updated, immaculate 2BR/1.5BA - newly refin wood flrs, freshly painted, updated kit, baths - appliances & convector replaced - great amenities incl pool, tennis, clubrm, basketball, garden plots & picnic areas - deli, convenience store - condo fee include utilities.

Franki Roberts 703.898.0840



**2711 MOSBY STREET
Alexandria City
\$1,095,000**

GORGEOUS COLONIAL WITH LAND! This lovingly renovated 5BR, 2BA home has tons of space and an additional lot too! Stunning gourmet kitchen w/top-of-the-line appliances. 4 finished levels, gleaming hardwood floors & a 2 car garage complete the picture.

Anne Hambley 703.946.7266



**1732 W ABINGDON
DRIVE #202
Alexandria -
\$250,000**

POTOWACK CROSSING! Well-kept 1BR condo. Spacious open floor-plan. Lots of updates & custom built-ins. Stainless steel appliances, crown moulding. New flooring throughout. A must see!!!

Martha Deal 703.622.6797



**1208
Tatum Drive
\$850,000
Villamay!**

Magnificent Colonial in exceptional condition on one of prestigious Villamay's nicest streets! Three finished levels, large room sizes, updated kitchen and 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.



**4816
Stillwell Avenue
\$525,000
Renovated!**

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!



**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.



**2805 CAMERON
MILLS ROAD
Alexandria
\$619,000**

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**COMMERCIAL
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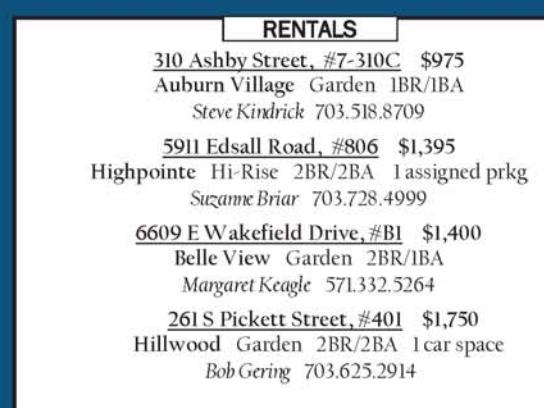


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6009 E Wakefield Drive, #B1 \$1,400
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Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264

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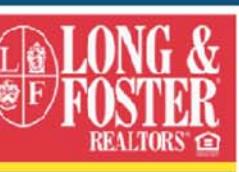
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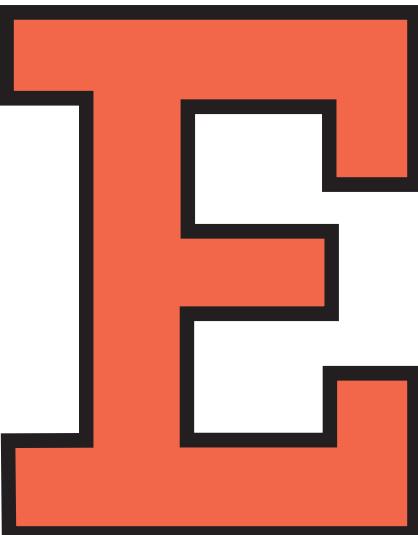
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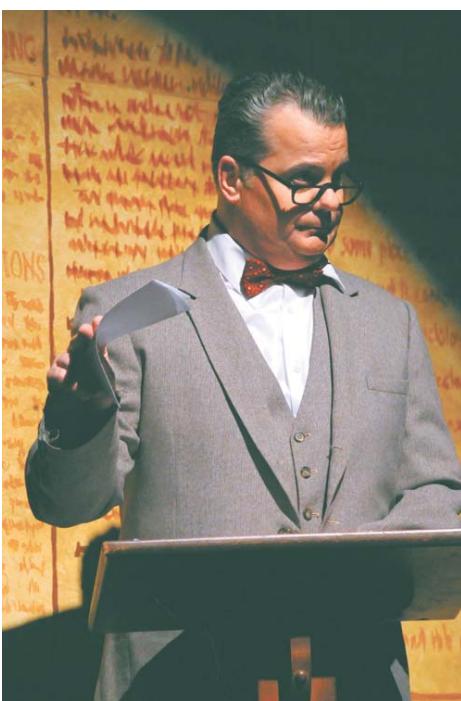
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COURTESY OF DOMINION STAGE

Tom Flat as the narrator in Dominion Stage's production of "Reefer Madness."

Alexandria's Winter Boutique Shopping Event Set for Feb. 6

The Sixth Annual Boutique District Warehouse Sale, a one-day clearance spectacular featuring high-end boutique merchandise, will be held at the George Washington Masonic Memorial from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 6.

The most serious fashion fans line up in the early morning hours to get the first look at top label merchandise from renowned stores like Hysteria, Periwinkle, Mystique Jewelers, Treat, Gossypia, Apple Seed, Lawrence Miller and Company, Stanton Gallery, Bella, Red Barn Mercantile, the Christmas Attic, and local jewelry designer Queen Bee Designs. This year, Old Town's famous kitchen boutique La Cuisine joins the lineup, along with Diva, Mint Condition, and Pink and Brown. Diva and Mint Condition are both upscale consignment boutiques while Pink and Brown offers organic fiber children's clothing.

THEATER

A Comedy and a Musical

Gunston Arts Center's two theaters are busy.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

The new year's theater season is in full swing with two new shows playing in Arlington County's Gunston Arts Center. The American Century Theater is reviving the 1950s stage comedy "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" in the smaller space, the flexible black box known as Theatre Two, while Dominion Stage mounts the quirky small musical take-off of 1930s anti-marijuana propaganda, "Reefer Madness" in the larger Theatre One.

"Success" is the kind of straight forward stage comedy that flourished on Broadway in the middle of the last century. It is author George Axelrod's attempt to capitalize on the success of his first Broadway comedy, "The Seven-Year Itch," by looking at the problems a playwright has trying to come up with a second hit play. In this case, he turned to the classic tale of Faust striking a deal with the devil in exchange for his soul. The twist was that the devil was a theatrical agent willing to guarantee success for 10 percent — not of the author's income but of his soul.

With plenty of opportunities to lampoon the culture of show business in the 1950s, Axelrod's script is both clever and funny. He populates the piece with characters that are caricatures of Hollywood and Broadway types including a buxom blond in the Jayne Mansfield mold (Mansfield actually originated the role both on stage and in the movie version which followed), a shifty and devilish agent, a milquetoast of a writer with no talent whatsoever (says the agent/devil: "We're not talking talent here, we're talking success!") and even an adonis-like athlete.

Donald Osborne is almost two dweebish as a writer of magazine articles who'd sell his soul for 1) money, 2) the love of the sexiest woman he knows and 3) success as a screenwriter. His twerp of a character lacks either a sense of naive decency or underlying charm that could justify the audience caring about him.

HOWEVER, Osborne is surrounded by cast members who tear into their characters with style. Kari Ginsburg is as funny as she is sexy as the blond bombshell of a starlet while Steven Levens is smooth and slick with just a hint of shifty as the devil/agent quite reminiscent of "Damn Yankee's" similar character, "Mr. Applegate," who sells baseball success for the same type of deal. (It is interesting to note that both "Damn Yankees" and "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" opened in the same year, 1955.)

John Tweel does a particularly smooth job of building the character of the playwright who faces the same problem Axelrod was facing when he tried to top the success of his first hit, and Craig Miller's portrayal of a prototypically self-absorbed studio boss is very funny in the scene where the devil



COURTESY OF DOMINION STAGE

Tom Flat points to Joel Piper in Dominion Stage's production of "Reefer Madness."

seduces him with the prospect of receiving an Academy Award.

Just down the hall, in the 460-seat proscenium style Theatre One, Tom Flat leads the cast of "Reefer Madness" through its camp, single-gag romp of a musical take-off. Flat plays the 1930s high school teacher who, with the help of his school's drama club, stage the story of drug-induced degradation that befalls a clean cut, all-American couple when they give in to the temptation of the devil weed! In the process, Flat plays most of the adult roles as well, and he does so with a sense of panache that often sparks an otherwise rather lackluster evening.

With an on-stage band of six and enough wireless microphones for the lead performers but not for the chorus of supposedly drugged-out zombies, there is a mismatch in the sound that plagues the production. The featured players bring a variety of skills to the mix but musically the musical never really takes off. Choreographer Catherine Oh, on the other hand, comes up with a number of nifty moves that are within the capabilities of the chorus as well as the leads.

Joel Piper throws himself into the role of the clean-cut kid gone wrong whose love for Mary Lane (a pert Jaclyn Young) is overcome by his addiction to "Mary Jane." Michael Reed is at his best in the non-musical sequences as the pot dealer (he also doubles as Jesus in a brief hallucinatory number) and Amy Baska is his "mol." Sam Nystrom pulls a nifty series of comic bits as a stoned student fixated on a balero, the Latin American ball and cup toy.



DENNIS DELORIA/THE GAZETTE

Donald Osborne toasts agent/devil Steven Levens in the American Century Theater's production of "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?"

Where and When

The American Century Theater's "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" plays Thursday - Saturday at 8 p.m. and Saturday - Sunday at 2:30 p.m. through Feb. 6. Tickets are \$26 - \$32 and can be ordered at 703 998-4555 or online at www.americancentury.org. Dominion Stage's "Reefer Madness" plays Thursday - Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. through Jan. 30. Tickets are \$15 and can be ordered at 703 683-0502 or online at www.dominionstage.org.

CALENDAR

ONGOING

The Kingstowne Area Artists' Association (KAAA) is looking for new members. The club meets once a month to network, socialize, learn from each other and participate in opportunities to show and sell its work. All visual artists, professional or hobbyists are welcome. Go to www.kingstowneartists.com. The group meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Kingstowne Active Adult Center, 6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria. Contact Ginny Wywyj at duchessducky@msn.com or Nancy Hannans at nancyhannans@yahoo.com.

The Del Ray Farmers Market is now open year round — located at the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and Oxford Avenue in Del Ray. During the winter months the market will be open 9 am to noon each Saturday. The Del Ray Market farmers that will be there are Smith Meadows meats, eggs, fresh pasta and sauces; Amish cheese, yogurt, bakery goods, eggs and jams and jellies; winter vegetables; fancy nuts; pralines; and bakery goods. Any questions, contact Pat Miller at pmiller1806@comcast.net.

Ms. Senior Virginia America is searching for candidates statewide for this year's May Pageant, which will be held Thursday, May 6 at the Lee Center Kauffman Center, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria. Doors will open at 1:30 p.m. Showtime is 2-4 p.m. Admission is free with a donation of \$10. A deadline for entries will be Feb. 8. Call 703-978-3663 and directions at 703-838-4343. The current Ms. Senior Virginia America, Maureen Ribble, will end her reign in May. The Pageant showcases women age 60-plus who live in Virginia and are U.S. citizens.



SATURDAY/JAN. 23

American Balalaika Symphony. 7:30 p.m. Presents "Bright Winter Moon: Songs and Dances from the Russian and Ukrainian Heartland." Under the direction of Peter Trofimenko. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NVCC, Alexandria Campus, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Tickets \$20/advance, \$25/door. Visit www.ABSorchestra.org or call 703-351-1331.

FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

Tea Dances. 1-3:15 p.m. Group class from 1-1:30 p.m. Ballroom, Latin and Swing music. \$11/person. At the Dance Studio Lioudmila, 18 Roth Street, 2nd Floor (off Duke Street), Alexandria. Call 703-751-8868.

SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

Storytelling Sessions. 2 p.m. Children enter a world of fantasy and fables when costumed interpreters weave three tales together during Mount Vernon's storytelling session, "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon," at Historic Mount Vernon in the Hands-

On History Room in the Donald W. Reynolds Education Center. "Once Upon at Time at Mount Vernon" is included in regular Estate admission: adults, \$15; youth ages 6-11, \$7; and children under 5 are admitted free.

THURSDAY/JAN. 21

Civil War Dance Class. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Cost is \$12. Learn the waltz, polka, Virginia Reel and more from an expert. In preparation for the Civil War Ball on Jan. 23. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Visit www.gadsbystavern.org or call 703-838-4242.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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THEATER

NOW THROUGH JAN. 24

"Nuts" by Tom Topor. Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m., Jan. 22–23; plus Sun. matinee at 2 p.m. Jan. 24. At Lee Center for the Performing Arts, 1108 Jefferson Street in Old Town, Alexandria. Tickets are \$16/general; \$14/seniors and 18 and under; \$12/groups of 10 or more. Call 703-838-2880 or visit www.portcityplayhouse.com.

NOW THROUGH JAN. 30

"Reefer Madness." 8 p.m. Sunday matinee at 2 p.m.. Cost is \$15. Inspired by the original 1936 film of the same name, this musical comedy takes a tongue-in-cheek look at the hysteria caused when clean-cut kids fall prey to marijuana. Hosted by Dominion Stage. At Gunston Arts Center, Theatre One, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. Go to www.dominionstage.org. Reservations can be made online or by calling 703-683-0502.

JAN. 23 TO MARCH 14

"Puss 'n Boots." Adapted by Ramola D from the French fairy tale by Charles Perrault. Saturdays and Sundays at 12:30 p.m. Additional performances: Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20; March 6 at 3:30 p.m. For ages 4 and up. Tickets are \$12/advance, \$15/door, \$10 for parties of 10 or more. Presented by Synetic Family Theater, 4041 Campbell Ave., Arlington in Shirlington Village. Call 800-494-8497 or www.classika.org

FEB. 9 TO APRIL 4

"Sweeney Todd." At Signature Theatre. Tickets are \$52 to \$76. Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. There is no "Sweeney Todd" performance on Saturday, Feb. 13 at 2 p.m. Call Ticketmaster at 703-573-SEAT or go to www.signature-theatre.org.

NOW THROUGH FEB. 6

"Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" 8 p.m. nightly; Saturday/Sunday matinees 2:30 p.m. Sponsored by the American Century Theater. At the Theater Two, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. Tickets are \$26-\$32. Tickets can be ordered online at www.americancentury.org or by calling 703-998-4555.

NOW THROUGH FEB. 7

"Stick Fly." Tickets are \$25 to \$66. A comedy at Arena Stage in Crystal City that explores the role of race and privilege in the African-American social aristocracy. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. At Arena Stage in Crystal City, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Visit www.arenastage.org, by phone at 202-488-3300.

NOW THROUGH MARCH 7

"I am My Own Wife." Andrew Long plays all 33 characters, from Charlotte, her aunt and her father, SS commanders and Stasi officials, to international reporters and the playwright himself. Showtimes are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Presented by Signature Theater in the ARK Theater. Tickets are \$47-\$71, and are available by calling Ticketmaster at 703-573-SEAT or visiting www.signature-theatre.org.



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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 13

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

Dare to Dream Fund-raiser. 8:30-11:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Alexandria Jaycees to help keep Camp Virginia Jaycee open. At the American Legion, 400 Cameron St., Alexandria. Tickets are \$10. If you are unable to attend, but would like to make a tax deductible donation to the Camp, please write a check to "Camp Virginia Jaycee" and mail to Alexandria Jaycees, PO Box 1836, Alexandria, VA 22313.

Civil War Ball. 8-11 p.m. In Gadsby's Tavern ballroom. \$45/advance; \$50/door. Period attire, either civilian or military, is encouraged. In preparation for the Ball, dance classes will be offered at Gadsby's Tavern Museum from 7:30-9:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Jan. 14, 21. Learn the waltz, polka, Virginia Reel and more. Cost is \$12/each of \$30 for the series. Call 703-838-4242. Visit www.gadsbytavern.org.

Free Yoga Class. 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. In celebration of National Yoga Day USA. Guests are encouraged to donate to Soles4Souls, the international shoe charity. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum in Alexandria. Visit www.soles4soulsfundraising.org/abellayoga.

Yoga Workshops. Free. Yoga for Rookies from 2-3:30 p.m.; Yoga Open Flow from 4-5:30 p.m. At Body in Balance Center, 1423 Powhatan St., Unit 7, Alexandria. Call 703-518-4434. Register at www.bodyinbalancecenter.com.



JAN. 23-24

"Mint Condition." Jan. 23 at 8 p.m.; Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. Jane Franklin Dance and Washington Saxophone Quartet perform in a shared evening. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Tickets are \$28 - \$16 can be purchased by phone 703-933-1111 or at www.janefranklin.com

SUNDAY/JAN. 24

Classical Pianist Sara Leila Sherman. 4 p.m. Free. The recital will feature solo piano works from German, French and American composers. The program includes Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat Major Op. 110, Gabriel Fauré's Nocturne for Piano No. 6 in D flat major Op. 63, and Samuel Barber's Sonata for Piano Op. 26. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Old Town Alexandria.

MONDAY/JAN. 25

Haitian Benefit Dinner. At Mango Mike's, The Island on Duke Street. Has agreed to donate 25 percent of dinner sales to Save the Children, which has worked with Haiti for 25 years.

Tavern Toddlers. 10:30 a.m. to noon. Open playtime for toddlers. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Cost is \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, or purchase a 5-week pass for \$30. Call 703-838-4242. www.gadsbytavern.org

TUESDAY, JAN. 26

Alexandria Singers Auditions. 7 p.m. At the Lincoln Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St., Alexandria. Email: audition@alexandriasingers.com or visit www.alexandriasingers.com.

JAN. 28, FEB. 4 AND 11

18th Century Dance Classes. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Learn the dances of Jane Austen, George Washington, and Abigail Adams in Gadsby's Tavern Museum's historic ballroom. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street. Cost is \$30/series or \$12/class. Call 703-838-4242.

FRIDAY/JAN. 29

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SATURDAY/JAN. 30

Musical Extravaganza. 4 p.m. Free. Celebrating Alexandria's Sister City, Helsingborg, Sweden. At Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria.

SUNDAY/JAN. 31

Winter Dance Showcase. 1-6 p.m. At Dance Studio Lioudmila, a local dance studio specializing in competitive and social Ballroom Dancing. Features 20 different dances by amateurs and professionals. At 18 Roth St., Alexandria. Call 703-751-8868 or email:

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— Robert & Luciana Duvall



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— Darrell Green, NFL Hall of Fame

Photo by © Cameron Davidson

Redfearn, Copeland Play Well for WP in Loss

Turnovers cost West Potomac against T.C. Williams.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Head coach David Houston III and the West Potomac boys basketball team entered Tuesday's game at T.C. Williams with a plan. Facing a Titans team which hasn't lost a Patriot District game since the 2004-05 season, the Wolverines wanted to pressure the Titans' 1-2 scoring punch of Ryan Yates and Billy Rowland while moving the ball around and getting quality shots of their own.

West Potomac battled, pulling to within four late in the fourth quarter. But while the Wolverines competed, the team's 21 turnovers and a big fourth quarter from Rowland were too much to overcome.

Rowland scored 10 of his team-high 19 points in the final period and T.C. Williams pulled away with a late 9-0 run en route to a 62-52 victory at the Garden.

Defensively, West Potomac limited Yates and Rowland to a combined 20 points entering the fourth quarter and forced 21 turnovers for the game. Offensively, Martez Redfearn attacked the basket and Daryl Copeland was knocking down perimeter shots. The Wolverines led 30-29 early in the third quarter and cut an 11-point fourth-quarter deficit to four in the closing moments.

But West Potomac missed several opportunities by turning the ball over 21 times and got into foul trouble late. Eight of Rowland's 10 fourth-quarter points came



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac boys basketball coach David Houston III talks to the Wolverines during their season opener against Mount Vernon on Dec. 5.

from the foul line. The Titans were 11-of-13 from the line in the final period.

"[Our players] followed the game plan ... we just turned the ball over too many times," Houston said. "[T.C. Williams] caused them. It's not like we just threw the ball out of bounds on our own. They're a good team, but I thought we played well enough, outside of those turnovers."

REDFEARN SCORED a team-high 19 points, including eight in the fourth quarter. Redfearn scored inside to cut the Titans' lead to 51-47 with 2:40 remaining. The 6-foot-6 Rowland answered with a two-handed dunk at the other end, but Redfearn scored once again moments later, cutting the T.C. Williams lead to four with 2:07 to play. But West Potomac wouldn't score again

until Shakil White banked in a 3-pointer moments before the final buzzer sounded.

Copeland did much of his damage early, scoring 13 of his 15 points in the first half. The 5-8 point guard tied the game at 19 with a 3-pointer with 4:47 remaining in the second quarter. He gave the Wolverines a 22-21 lead with another triple one minute later. He knocked down 1 of 2 free-throw attempts in the closing seconds of the first half to pull the Wolverines within one at 29-28.

"They weren't afraid," Houston said of Redfearn and Copeland. "They're scorers. ... Redfearn, he took the ball to the bucket. He didn't settle for jumpers. Copeland, we got him free on a couple jumpers and he was in rhythm. I thought both of them were pretty much in rhythm."

But while the Wolverines had their moments of execution, turnovers stopped them from getting over the hump. They turned the ball over six times in each of the first three quarters. T.C. Williams outscored West Potomac 18-8 in the third quarter, including an 11-0 run, to take a 47-36 lead into the fourth.

"I think we played good," Copeland said. "We just started rushing and turning the ball over. We've just got to limit our mistakes. ... I was feeling good. I had confidence."

Keeyvn Hankins score seven points and Terrell Ward added six points for the Wolverines, who fell to 8-6 overall, 4-3 in the Patriot District.

T.C. WILLIAMS IMPROVED to 9-2, 7-0 in the district, but head coach Julian King was not pleased with his team's effort. He said he was hoping for an inspired group after Saturday's 21-point home loss to national power Montrose Christian.

"Just our lack of energy and motivation after a 21-point loss at home in front of a large crowd, it's amazing to me that we didn't come out [and even if we were] making mistakes, [we were making them] going 100 mph," he said. "We're just lackadaisical with everything and assume we're always going to pull it out at the end. It's not going to work like that [all the time]."

West Potomac beat Woodson 57-51 on Jan. 14 and lost to Lake Braddock 64-59 on Jan. 13. The Wolverines travel to face Lee at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

"We wanted to win. There are no moral victories out of this," Houston said of the loss to T.C. Williams. "We came here to win, flat out. Last year, we came in here [and] we played them, same guys, and we lost by [31 points]. A year later, we came in here and we had them on the ropes. ... The only thing I take out of it is we'll see them again."

5 Qs with West Potomac wide receiver/point guard Daryl Copeland

5Qs:

Q: You play football and basketball. Which do you prefer?

A: I prefer basketball because I played that first.

Q: Who is your favorite artist?

A: Probably Lil' Wayne.

Q: What is the farthest from the Washington D.C.-metro area you have traveled?

A: I went to Las Vegas and played in [an AAU] basketball tournament.

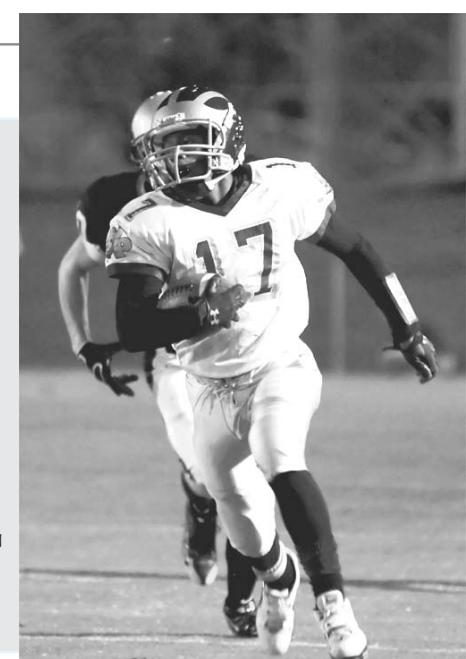
Q: What is your favorite food?

A: Cheesburgers.

Q: What do you do when you're not playing basketball?

A: I just watch college basketball.

— JON ROETMAN



SPORTS

Majors Come Back To Edge Falls Church

Robert Smith hit a running lay-up at the buzzer to give the Mount Vernon boys basketball team a 66-64 win over Falls Church on Tuesday at Mount Vernon. The Majors outscored Falls Church 27-12 in the fourth quarter, improving their record to 11-3, 6-1 in the National District.

The Majors had four players score in double figures, led by 19 points from Smith. Skylar Jones scored 16 points — all in the second half — and Sean

Stewart and Jesse Konadu each added 10. Konadu recorded seven steals, Smith dished out five assists and Jones and De'quan Doyle each grabbed five rebounds.

Jones did not play in the first half. Head coach Alfonso Smith said in an e-mail he had hoped to rest Jones, who recently suffered an ankle injury, but was forced to play him after trailing by double digits at halftime.

Mount Vernon lost at district newcomer Hayfield 64-55 on Friday. Hayfield is undefeated and sits atop the district standings. Jones scored 18 points and grabbed seven rebounds against the Hawks. Konadu scored 16 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Stewart finished with 11 points and Smith added 10.

The Majors beat Edison 62-46 on Jan. 13. Konadu scored 23 points and grabbed nine rebounds. Jones scored 20 points and Smith added 10.

Mount Vernon hosts Washington-Lee at 7:45 p.m. Friday.

MV Girls Blow Out Falls Church

The Mount Vernon girls basketball team cruised to a 64-8 win at Falls Church on Tuesday, improving its record to 8-4, 6-1 in the National District. TiTi Gray led the way with 16 points for the Majors. Tracy King scored 15 points and Jasmine McDonald added eight. Eleven different Majors scored.

Mount Vernon defeated district newcomer Hayfield 54-37 on Friday and lost to Edison 64-50 on Jan. 13. Edison sits atop the National District standings.



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The Majors travel to face Washington-Lee at 7:45 p.m. Friday.

West Potomac Girls Lose to TC

The West Potomac girls basketball team lost to T.C. Williams 60-48 on Tuesday, dropping its record to 1-10, 1-6 in the Patriot District. The Wolverines lost to Woodson 78-35 on Thursday and to Lake Braddock 48-43 on Jan. 13. West Potomac hosts Lee at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

MV Baseball Camp Approaching

The 2010 Mount Vernon High School baseball camp for ages 7-18 will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Jan. 24, 31 and Feb. 7 at the Mount Vernon Field House. The cost is \$125 for three sessions.

For registration information, go to mountvernonsports.org or contact Luke Sable at lcsable@fcps.edu or by calling 703-405-5497.

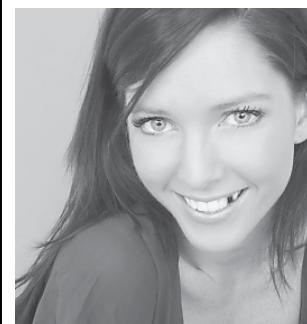
MVHS Dinner and Auction

Mount Vernon High School Girls Basketball 11th Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction will be held on Saturday. Tickets are \$5. See a student athlete from the girls basketball team or contact Terry Henderson at 703-619-3146 or Terry.Henderson@fcps.edu.

Fort Hunt Softball Registration

Registration for Spring Softball is available. Prior to registering a child for a Fort Hunt Spring sport, review the Spring 2010 Season information for the sport. See the "Softball" link at the top of the fhya.org Web site for information on the softball program. Register online at fhya.org. For questions about the spring softball season, contact Commissioner Ilene Dranoff (fthuntsoftball@yahoo.com).

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NEWS

Putting Students in Tight Spot

Fairfax's average class size bumps up against physical and legal constraints.

By JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

Increasingly large classes in local schools could begin to threaten student safety as well as student learning, according to school officials.

Fairfax County Schools Superintendent Jack Dale said local class sizes are getting to a point where officials will have to be careful about going over the maximum capacity allowed in some classrooms.

"Quite frankly, we are getting to the point in some schools where we are pushing the envelope in terms of the fire code," said Dale, during a budget presentation to the Fairfax County School Board Jan. 7.

Schools are being forced to cram 35 to 38 students into classrooms that were built to a 28-person capacity, said Dean Tistadt, Fairfax County Public Schools chief operating officer.

"If it is an older high school or an older middle school, we have some concerns about whether they can fit all the students into the classroom that they need to fit into the classroom because of building and fire code reasons," said Tistadt.

DALE SAID the school system does not have classes exceeding room or building capacities currently.

"There is nothing in violation now. We would never do that because I am not going to sit here and violate the fire code," said Dale.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department said they have received no complaints about violations in public schools. The department has a "pro-active" approach to investigating county facilities, including public schools, though officials said the inspections are not necessarily done on a regular schedule.

"If we received a complaint about a school, we would investigate it immediately. ... We do inspect the school periodically but they also have their own inspectors," said Dan Schmidt, spokesperson for the fire and rescue department.

If officials discover a class is too large for the room where it is scheduled to take place, they often move that section to a larger space, like a small lecture hall or assembly meeting room, he said.

"Sometime you have to move classes into a larger room that might not be the best space for that subject," said Dale.

IN SPITE OF CONCERNs about class size, Dale has suggested raising Fairfax's average class size by one student during the 2010-2011 school year as a way of closing the system's budget gap of \$100 million to \$200 million. By increasing the average

class by one student, the school system saves approximately \$17.1 million, according to budget documents.

The Fairfax County School Board has raised the average class size twice in the last two years in order to make up for past financial shortfalls.

"People are not going to be happy to see another increase in class size," said Dale.

CLASS SIZE is likely to go up even more next year if the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors does not give the school system the extra \$57.8 million Dale has requested, he said. Without the extra funding, Dale and the school board will be forced to bump the average class by more than one student in 2010 and 2011.

In March, the county supervisors decide on a budget, defined primarily by the real estate property tax rate, and announce the county's total transfer to the school system. The school board will then make its final decision about spending cuts, including whether to raise average class size again, in April.

Several school board members fear that Fairfax County will either freeze or cut the school budget from where it was last year in order to avoid raising taxes. If the county were to hold the schools budget to its present level, the school system would be have to make approximately \$160 million in cuts.

"If we have to cut \$160 million, there is going to be a lot of pain. If we have to cut \$160 million, we are going to have to increase class size," said School Board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill.)

PARENTS have been complaining to the county Council of Parent Teacher Associations about students having to sit on everything from radiators to bookshelves because some classrooms do not fit enough desks for each student to have their own.

"I have seen photos of classes that are so packed with desks already, there is no place to put some of the students," said Michelle Menapace, the parent organization's president.

Several Fairfax classes already exceed the teacher-to-student ratio laid out by the Virginia Department of Education in state regulations.

The commonwealth's "standards of quality" in education call for the teacher-to-student ratio in an average kindergarten class to be one to 24. In Fairfax, the ratio is one to 26.25, according to this year's budget documents.

State regulations also call for a teacher-to-student ratio of one to 24 for first-through third-grade classes and one to 25 for fourth and fifth grades. According to budget documents, Fairfax County is maintaining a staffing ratio of one-to-26.25 students in grades first through six this year.

Fairfax school officials said the school system calculates their student-to-teacher ratio differently than Virginia's Department of Education and that Fairfax is not in violation of state regulations, even if the budget documents suggest they are.

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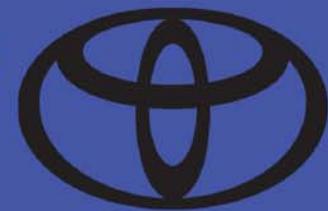
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