



They Won't Tell

Police departments in No. Virginia refuse to release public documents.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Secret Police?

The cop cruiser patrolling your neighborhood is operating in secret. And don't bother asking for documents detailing their activities because police departments in Northern Virginia routinely deny requests for incident reports. Police officials in Arlington won't even answer questions about their lack of transparency. It's all legal under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, which includes broad exemptions for police agencies. Local jurisdictions use their exemption in all cases, regardless of what the case is about or whether the case is open or closed.

"I don't think we have to justify it," said Alexandria Police Chief Earl Cook in an interview about access to public documents. "A lot of things can be said about transparency, that doesn't make it effective."

In a series of Freedom of Information Act requests to three Northern Virginia jurisdictions, police officials denied access to a wide range of public information. Alexandria police issued a press release including a mug shot when they arrested a burglar in Old Town last year, yet they won't release the incident reports leading to his prosecution or Fowler's arrest report. In Fairfax County, police officials said they were concerned sharing public information widely available elsewhere would have a chilling effect on victims and witness, although a spokeswoman acknowledged there's no evidence to bolster this claim. And the Arlington County Police Department refused to answer ques-

❖ **ALEXANDRIA:** In September, the Alexandria Police Department issued a press release announcing the arrest of Ralph Fowler, a man they charged with a series of burglaries in Old Town. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request, Alexandria officials refused to release incident reports detailing the crimes alleged in the press release. In an interview about availability of public documents, Alexandria Police Chief Earl Cook said he didn't think he needed to justify his department's lack of transparency.

❖ **ARLINGTON:** In July, the Arlington County Police Department arrested former Alexandria Police Chief David Baker and charged him with drunk driving. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request for the incident report, county officials charged \$24 for a one-paragraph summary of the document in which they misidentified the man they arrested. They later explained that Baker was correctly identified in the report, but they refused to release it, even now that Baker has served his sentence in the county jail. Arlington police officials declined a request to be interviewed about their commitment to transparency.

❖ **FAIRFAX:** In November, a Fairfax County Police Department officer shot and killed a motorist on Richmond Highway. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request, Fairfax officials declined to release the name of the officer who killed the man or share documents related to the incident. A spokeswoman for the Fairfax County Police Department said the agency is concerned that victims might be unwilling to report crimes if the department was more transparent, although she acknowledged she had no evidence to support that claim.

tions about their denial to release documents related to the drunk-driving arrest of a former Alexandria police chief — a case that's been fully adjudicated in the courts.

"I think Northern Virginia has

SEE DOCUMENTS, PAGE 3



PHOTO BY FRANK THORP V

"They love her so much, and she loves them," Frank Thorp writes. "They are the reason we are here and that makes it all worth it." From left: JeanBa, Jean Marie, Jillian, Milo — who first found Jillian in the collapsed house, and Frantz.

Returning to Haiti To Help

Frank and Jillian Thorp survived January earthquake.

BY SANDY LEVITZ LUNNER
GAZETTE PACKET

How can you really thank the people who saved your life?

For one young couple with Alexandria roots, the answer is to help them rebuild theirs.

Frank Thorp V, a freelance journalist, was researching a story in the mountains 100 miles north of Port-au-Prince when the earthquake hit on Jan. 12. He and his colleagues felt it and even noticed the mountains below start to bounce. But they had no idea how serious it was.

"About two hours later," Frank Thorp said, "somebody came to tell us that it had hit Port au Prince and leveled the capital, the central palace. And then we got really worried and headed right down there."

Frank Thorp's wife Jillian was acting director of Haitian Ministries Norwich Mission House in Port-au-Prince where she managed a staff of six and helped run the education program that served 136 students.

"I had just finished a meeting with my co-worker Chuck Dietsch and we were walking downstairs," Jillian Thorp recalled. "I was on my cell phone when the ground started to shake. Chuck

said, 'It's an earthquake,' and then everything came tumbling down."

Both Jillian Thorp and Dietsch were pinned in an area they estimated to be about three feet by five feet. They were injured, but their biggest concern was conserving whatever oxygen they had in that small space. Jillian Thorp still had her cell phone in her hand but wasn't able to call out.

"She said I'm stuck. We're in the front bedroom, please send help. And then the line went dead. It was terrifying."

— Frank Thorp

En route to Port-au-Prince, Frank Thorp finally reached his wife on her cell.

"She said 'I'm stuck. We're in the front bedroom, please send help.' And then the line went dead. It was terrifying."

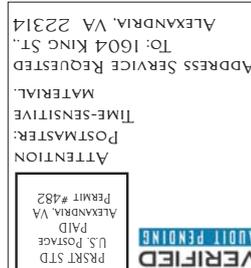
About three hours after the initial earthquake, two of the Haitian Mission House staff members arrived at the House to see if everyone was OK.

"And that's when the rescue effort to get us out started," Jillian Thorp said. "They came

back with tools and lights and were there for the next seven hours to get us free."

It took Frank Thorp and his colleagues more than six hours to get to Port-au-Prince from the mountains. Navigating through the city was nearly impossible so he jumped out of the pick up truck and ran the rest of the way to the flattened Mis

SEE COUPLE RETURNS, PAGE 7





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Democracy in Alexandria?

Don't like the idea of voting for City Council members in November? Keep it to yourself. Last weekend, Democratic council members rejected a proposal to conduct a referendum asking voters whether they prefer municipal elections in May or November. A decision has already been made, they said Saturday, and now it's time to move on.

"We are elected to make decisions," said Vice Mayor **Kerry Donely**. "I think we have studied this to death."

The dispute began shortly after the May election, when two incumbent Democrats were ousted from the City Council. Shortly after the election, lame-duck members of the all-Democratic council approved a controversial plan to move municipal elections from May to November. Critics said it was a cynical ploy to boost Democratic votes when attention would be focused on national and state elections. Supporters defended the move as a way to increase participation. This week, independent Councilwoman **Alicia Hughes** came forward with a plan to conduct a referendum on the issue.

"Let the people decide," said Hughes. "The people, not politicians, should rule."

No way, responded the Democratic majority, raising an endless stream of concerns. How would the referendum be worded? Is there enough time to seek a charter amendment before the next election? Would the United States Department of Justice have time to approve any potential change before voters headed to the polls? Ultimately, the Democratic majority concluded in a party-line vote, a referendum was not in order.

"I'm disturbed that we are even talking about this," said Councilman **Paul Smedberg**, a former chairman of the Alexandria Democratic Committee. "I hope we can tone down the rhetoric."

Another Bailout

Hold on to your wallet. Your residential tax bill could be going up even more than the hike suggested last month by City Manager **Jim Hartmann**. Last weekend, City Council members cleared the way for setting a maximum tax rate at \$1.8 for every \$100 of assessed property. If adopted, that would increase the average residential property tax about \$200. That's double the \$100 tax hike suggested by the city manager in February.

"Just because we are advertising it doesn't mean it will happen," said Mayor **Bill Euille**. "This just gives us some flexibility."

But council members are in a bind. During hours of public testimony at a public hearing last week, council members heard from people concerned about cuts to everything from community police officers to affordable housing. Restoring funding for cuts suggested by Hartmann would take money, and council members could turn to residential property taxpayers for a bailout.

"Having a spending increase at this time is just not acceptable," said Councilman **Frank Fannon**, who voted against advertising the higher tax rate. "I would hope we could finalize a budget that reduces spending from last year."

Council members are expected to finalize the tax rate in May.

Synthetic Remand

Investors who purchase buildings in historic districts have to put up with all kinds of restrictions. There are rules about everything from design aesthetics to the kind of windows that can be used and everything in between. Just ask **Craig Miller**, an Old Town resident who purchased a Queen Anne house on Patrick Street last year as a fixer-upper.

But when Miller suggested he replace the 1880s slate roof with a standing seam metal roof, the Board of Architectural Review balked. So Miller appealed that decision to City Council members, who took up the matter Saturday afternoon. During a discussion of possibly allowing a synthetic slate roof, attorney **Duncan Blair** suggested that **George Washington** used a faux-stone façade at Mount Vernon.

"He didn't live in Alexandria," responded Councilwoman **Del Pepper**. "We would have never allowed him to do that."

In the end, council members remanded the appeal back to the Board of Architectural Review for their consideration of synthetic slate.

— MICHAEL LEE POPE

Transparency Blackout

FROM PAGE 1

really taken this to an extreme," said Ginger Stanley, executive director of the Virginia Press Association. "I understand the need of law enforcement to protect an ongoing investigation, but there's also a public interest at work here."

THE CODE OF SILENCE has its roots in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, passed by the General Assembly in the 1968. The legislation includes a loophole large enough for a police cruiser to drive through it. Local governments have an exemption that allows for a complete blackout for "complaints, memoranda, correspondence, case files or reports, witness statements and evidence." These documents that reveal a wide spectrum of detailed information about police behavior, everything from how investigations are conducted to how conclusions are reached. The way that exemption is exercised in Northern Virginia, that means citizens have only faintest idea of how their police departments are acting on their behalf. The only information available is through summaries of the documents police refuse to release.

"It's a control thing," said Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Arlington-based Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. "And there doesn't seem to be any political will to do anything about it."

Ironically, the first paragraph of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act explains that all public records "shall be presumed open."

But that's not how it works.

Police departments in Northern Virginia have chosen to interpret the law in a way that starts from the presumption that they will never share incident reports — regardless of what the case is about or whether the case is open or closed. That means police departments in Northern Virginia act without the kind of public scrutiny that acts as a check on public-safety officials widely available in other states.

"Virginia is the outlier," said Charles Davis, executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, and professor at the Missouri School of Journalism. "These are documents that are available in most other states, but Virginia is unique in the level of closure."

Any legislative effort to undercut the broad exemption power would likely be opposed by groups such as the Virginia Police Chiefs Association. According to Dana Schrad, executive director of that organization, the association would rather see agencies work within the law and strike a balance between public disclosure and public safety. According to a law-enforcement guide to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act published by the association, the ability to withhold information also comes with the responsibility to not abuse that discretion.

"We encourage agencies to use their discretion in a judicious manner," said Schrad. "There may be situations where it's in the best interest of the public to release this information."

Yet police officials in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria have adopted what they call a "blanket" approach to using their exemption. That means they have decided to withhold any document they can,

making police officials in Northern Virginia open to the least amount of public scrutiny in America.

FAIRFAX COUNTY is the least transparent police department in Northern Virginia. Even defense attorneys in Fairfax complain that they have to get a court order to see police records that are routinely made available in the rest of Virginia. In contrast to Alexandria and Arlington, where prosecutors open their office to defense attorneys, the Fairfax commonwealth's attorney's office forces defendants to tie up court time and jump through bureaucratic hoops to get documents that are easily available elsewhere — even in Virginia.

"It certainly puts more of a burden on the defendant," said Jim Clark, a defense attorney who practices in Fairfax County. "I'd love to get every incident report, but that's not how things work in Virginia."

Nowhere is the lack of transparency on display more dramatic than officer-involved shootings. The most recent example happened in July, when a Fairfax

County police officer shot and killed a motorist on Richmond Highway. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request seeking information about the incident, Fairfax officials declined to release video footage of the shooting from police cruisers or copies of reports written in the wake of the shooting. Even the name of the officer remains shrouded in secrecy.

"Disclosure of the name is painful, but the greater good is transparency," said Jim Lay, an attorney who represented Alexandria police officer Carl Stowe after he shot and killed a teenager in 2006. "In my opinion, Fairfax County is exploiting the fact that there are insufficient requirements for public disclosure."

In January, Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Raymond Morrogh announced that he would not

be filing criminal charges against the officer who shot and killed David Masters, who was unarmed. A press release issued on Jan. 27 suggested that Masters disregarded police lights and sirens in the minutes before the fatal shot was fired. But the police department denied a request for public inspection of the actual reports. That leaves citizens of Fairfax County with an incomplete portrait of how their police department used deadly force on a well-traveled stretch of road.

"I would like to see all of this information disclosed eventually," said Dallas Shawkey, chairman of the public safety committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association. "It's important for the community to know what happened in this case and in any case that involves the use of deadly force."

Fairfax police officials say they are concerned that releasing documents that are widely available in other jurisdictions would have what they call a "chilling effect." Victims and witnesses might be more reluctant to come forward, they say, if they knew their information would become part of the public record. Yet when asked if she had any evidence to support that theory, Fairfax County Police Department spokeswoman MaryAnn Jennings said she wasn't aware of any.

"I don't know if there's evidence or not," said

"There may be situations where it's in the best interest of the public to release this information."

— Dana Schrad, executive director, Virginia Police Chiefs Association

A Disparate Solution

Do businesses use the city's transportation infrastructure more than people who live here? They might end up paying more for it under a new plan under consideration by the City Council.

Last weekend, council members cleared the way for a plan that would raise the commercial property tax rate higher than the residential property tax rate. The City Council has had the authority to charge an add-on tax since 2007, when the General Assembly approved a measure that would allow localities to raise money for transportation. Since that time, Alexandria has chosen not to hit commercial property taxpayers with a higher rate.

Until now.

Last weekend, City Council members approved an advertisement indicating they might be willing to consider the idea this year. That could put the commercial property tax rate at \$1.20 for every \$100 of assessed value when they approve a final tax rate in May. During a discussion of the issue at a Saturday public hearing, some council members said they weren't persuaded that adopting a higher tax rate on commercial property owners would necessarily discourage business from moving to Alexandria. In fact, said Councilman **Rob Krupicka**, just the opposite seemed to be the case.

"We've lost more than we've won," said Krupicka. "If anything, the data show they are more willing to be located where the infrastructure is more developed."

Not so fast, responded the business community. Alexandria Chamber of Commerce President **Tina Leone** said she's not buying the argument about economic development benefiting from higher taxes. Businesses don't use the transportation infrastructure any more than residents, she said, and raising taxes across the board would be a more equitable way of funding improvements.

"Look at all the empty storefronts on King Street," said Leone. "The businesses that are left are trying to come out of a recession, and we are going to hit them again?"

Oh Thank Heaven

Three 7-Eleven stores in Alexandria were busted last week for selling alcohol to minors. The sting operation was conducted by the Vice Narcotics Division of the Alexandria Police Department. Working with what police officials call "an underage police department volunteer," the vice squad hit 20 locations to see if clerks were willing to sell beer or wine to a minor without checking for an ID.

According to a press release issued by the Police Department, the volunteer youth was instructed to reveal his true age if asked. In 17 cases, he was. Yet three times, he was not.

Police brought charges against clerks who illegally sold alcohol to minors. All three of the stores who failed the business compliance checks are 7-Eleven locations, one on Mount Vernon Avenue, one on Lincolnia Road and one of Jordan Street.

"This is very serious," said 7-Eleven spokeswoman **Margaret Chabris**. "When stores do something that's illegal, they jeopardize their alcohol license as well as their franchise."

Gaga for Google

City officials have launched a full-court press to attract the attention of Google, the California-based high-tech giant now considering the city as a potential trial location for an ultra-high speed broadband network that would deliver Internet speeds more than 100 times faster than what most Americans have today. In an effort to show grassroots community support, city officials turned to — what else? — Facebook.

At press time, a Facebook page called "Google 4 Alexandria" had already logged about 700 fans. Officials are also encouraging residents to complete a survey available at the city's Web site. And those who want to make a personal pitch can do so at Mayor **Bill Euille's** State of the City Address this weekend, where cameras will be ready to record residents making the case for why Alexandria should be selected.

"We think the city is a good match for what Google is looking for," said city spokesman **Tony Castrilli**. "By the end of next week, we are hoping to have a couple of thousand Facebook fans to show the community's support for this."

— MICHAEL LEE POPE

BUSINESS



Helping Children in Haiti

Old Town Jazzercisers raised \$2000 for Save the Children Haiti Earthquake Emergency Relief Fund by staging a benefit dance-fitness class on Saturday, Jan. 30. According to Jazzercise instructor and benefit organizer Debbie Lynch, Save the Children will use the donations for the children of Haiti. Held at Nannie J. Lee Center, the event drew 45 participants. Whole Foods and Bruegger's Bagels provided refreshments for the event: students donated 30 door prizes for drawings.

More Doom and Gloom?

Positive trends in business growth seen as well.

BY GALE CURCIO
GAZETTE PACKET

John Renner, founder of Renner & Company CPA, doesn't see business picking up anytime soon. In a recent lecture about "Recession Recovery on the Ground," he said, "I'm usually more positive, but things are not good. The larger government contractors are losing contracts because other companies are cutting prices so much. Local businesses are still hurting and tourism is down. Hotels are booking but they are offering big discounts so there bottom line is still hurting."

Renner was one of three panelists who spoke at the opening event for "2010: A New Decade for Businesses in Alexandria," a continued initiative of the Business Leadership Council Distinguished Speaker Series held at the Campagna Center, chaired by Adron Krekeler.

Joining Renner was Christopher Campagna, partner at Tartan Properties, and Nora Partlow, owner and co-founder of St. Elmo's Coffee.

Campagna's view was not as dire and a chart drawn up by his company showed some of the positive effects: number of commercial real estate transactions up since 2008; growth of existing businesses; new leadership at Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and AEDP; and improved City management and the growing confidence in public school system.

However, he also has plenty of concerns and said, "I believe from where I sit that it [recovery] will be a very slow curve."

He likened the recession to the snowstorm and said, "It was an uncontrollable event that made us all hunker down. We came out, looked around, put on our boots and checked on our neighbors."

Both Campagna and Renner emphasized the need to help 'their neighbors,' and encouraged the group to "Buy Alexandria."

"Think about how lucky we are in Alexandria," said Campagna, referring to the fact that this area fares



PHOTO BY GALE CURCIO/GAZETTE

Business Leadership Council always attracts a large crowd.

better than the rest of the country.

However, he is concerned that the City of Alexandria gets too complacent and doesn't do enough to attract and keep new businesses.

"There is no real economic incentive for small businesses to come here; they [managers] expect things to happen organically. The single most powerful development tools are educational dollars. Companies are looking to locate where employees can live and send their children to school," said Campagna, who is passionate about universal early childhood education and pre-K.

Renner said, "The City cut expenses by \$19 million, but they have raised real estate taxes. The tax rates are higher here than in Arlington and Fairfax. A lot of firms are moving out because of the business licenses and taxes. The rainy day (and snowy day) has been here for a couple of years."

Partlow, who has a successful business, has started selling real estate. "I had to survive too," she said. "Customers are still coming, but instead of buying a large latte and muffin, they are buying a small cup of coffee and mini croissant. I still give customers free water and dog biscuits but it comes out of my bottom line."

The Business Leadership Council Distinguished Speaker Series are held once a quarter. To be added to the mailing list, visit www.campagnacenter.org or call 703-549-0111.

Concert To Raise Funds for Haitian Hospital

BY SENITRA MCCOMBS
GAZETTE PACKET

Enjoy the sounds of The Irish Breakfast Band and the sights of the 2006 “Best Irish Dancing School” winner — The Boyle School of Irish Dance — at Alexandria’s Westminster Presbyterian Church this Saturday at 7 p.m.

There is a \$10 minimum donation for adults and children are free. Tickets will be available at the door, but to RSVP contact

Janet Riksen at jriksen@wpc-alex.org or at 703-549-4766.

Westminster will collaborate with the Community Coalition for Haiti (CCH) to raise funds for the Hospital Bienfaisance de Pignon. Since it wasn’t damaged in the earthquake, it provides care for over 170,000 people in Haiti.

“They have been sending medical teams and medical supplies to places that were devastated as well as receiving patients from these places. At the concert, we will

be having one of the doctors from the hospital speak briefly to the audience.” Janet Riksen said.

While the Westminster congregation has been giving thousands of dollars to Haiti through the National Presbytery Disaster Assistance program, they wanted to do something special that would enable the entire community to join in the effort to benefit the Hospital Bienfaisance de Pignon.

In addition, Westminster also supports an orphanage and academy in Kenya.

Westminster’s local mission efforts include helping individuals with housing, Arlington Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless (AACH), supporting ALIVE!, Rebuilding Alexandria, Meals on Wheels and an array of local social service programs.

Riksen says that the mission-focused nature sets Westminster apart: “There’s just an enthusiasm for coming together as a community to support all sorts of missions from education to other mission needs I mentioned.”

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Visitors may go to the Welcome Center on campus between 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9-12 Saturday. There they will be given audio devices that enable them to walk all over campus while listening to an explanation of what they see.

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— LOIS KELSO HUNT



The Very Rev. Dr. Ian S. Markham teaching a class on campus.



The Virginia Theological Seminary

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Couple Returns to Haiti To Help

FROM PAGE 1

sion House.

After nearly 10 hours pinned beneath the rubble, Jillian Thorp was pulled from the pile of concrete, bricks and wood that had been the Mission House for Haitian Ministries.

"When I got out, it was hugs, it was tears — from Frank and the people who had tried to save me," Jillian Thorp described. "And just rejoicing that I had lived and what that meant. Not everyone survived this natural disaster, and for some reason I did and without serious injuries."

"It is truly unbelievable what the Haitians did to help," added Frank Thorp. "They left their homes that had been destroyed and their family members who had been injured, and devoted the entire night to getting Jillian out. I mean, we owe these people our lives."

A COMMUNITY RESPONDS

Less than 48 hours later, Frank and Jillian Thorp were back in Alexandria to hugs and tears of joy from family and friends.

Frank's mother is Maryellen Thorp, owner of The Healing Tree in Del Ray where she also lives. His father is Frank Thorp IV, Rear Admiral (Ret.), a resident of north Old Town. Jillian's sister, Kate Cook, is the service manager at Buzz Bakery on Slater's Lane. Her parents live in Connecticut.

But even before Frank and Jillian Thorp made it back to the states, friends were contacting their families to help.

"Once we learned about Frank and Jillian, the earthquake in Haiti went from being some remote tragedy to something everyone felt connected to," said Kevin Tyldesley, director of operations for the Neighborhood Restaurant Group (NRG).

Meanwhile, between visits to doctors and a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder specialist, Frank and Jillian Thorp were trying to figure out just how they could help their Haitian family.

"After a short time discussing it with our immediate families," Jillian Thorp said, "they understood. When I was trapped in a building, the Haitians risked their lives to save me, and there's nothing in my life now that I want to do more than repay that debt and relieve some of the suffering that they and their families are experiencing. And we thought, what a great way to repay that, by rebuilding the homes they lost in the earthquake."

With everyone's help, they established their non-profit organization called H.E.R.O. for Haitian Emergency Rebuilding Operation.

Christi Hart, who owns the Neighborhood Restaurant Group with Stephanie and Michael Babin, just happens to be Maryellen Thorp's neighbor and good friends with both of Frank's parents. NRG offered to host a fundraiser for the younger Thorps and H.E.R.O.

"On some level it was just like having a party, and as a restaurant group, we do that all the time."

Chefs from each of the NRG restaurants made food for the Jan. 20 event at Columbia Firehouse. Staff from all the venues volunteered and even donated their tips the H.E.R.O. There was a live band. And Frank and Jillian Thorp told their story.

"It's not as if people didn't know how to make a contribution to Haiti," Hart said. "But this gave them a way to feel connected — a unique experience instead of just donating online."

The event earned \$10,000 that night and another \$3,000 over the next few weeks. In all, fundraisers in D.C., Boston and Connecticut raised more than \$30,000 for H.E.R.O.



Frank and Jillian Thorp created H.E.R.O. t-shirts to help raise money.

BACK TO HAITI

Frank's parents report that their son and daughter-in-law returned to Haiti on Feb. 21.

"There was never a discussion about whether they would go back," Frank Thorp IV shared. "The discussions were always about when they would go back."

Maryellen Thorp is proud of Frank and Jillian's dedication to Haiti, but said her motherly instincts give her mixed feelings about them being back there.

"It's difficult," she said. "I know that's where their hearts are, and I respect their need to stay working with the people of Haiti. But at the same time, I'm concerned as a mother for their physical and emotional safety."

Frank's father described their commitment to help the people of Haiti as awesome.

"At the ages of 23 and 25 they have already become heroes. They went down to make a difference and a devastating earthquake was not going to stop them."

Both parents were moved by the community's response.

Frank Thorp IV mentioned how the neighborhood support — best demonstrated, he said, by the Neighborhood Restaurant Group — helped give the younger Thorps the strength to go back.

Maryellen Thorp said she was amazed by the level of caring not only from NRG, but from people in Del Ray including her clients who didn't even know Frank and Jillian.

"It brought everybody together in a way that otherwise wouldn't have happened," she said. "I think one of the wonders of humanity is that when a tragedy occurs people will mobilize to help and be there for other people and come together for a common cause."

POST SCRIPT FROM THE FRONT LINES

By e-mail, Frank Thorp writes that he has been covering news stories almost daily for a major network. Jillian Thorp works with a mobile clinic as their translator/triage coordinator and volunteers at the Red Cross while she looks for something more permanent.

After experiencing three 4.7 earthquakes within their first two nights back, they wondered if they had made the right decision. But then Jillian Thorp's old staff saw her and couldn't hold back the tears, and they knew they're where they need to be.

As for H.E.R.O., they are assessing what is viable and what the Haitian people want and need. Rebuilding is complicated right now due to rubble that has yet to be removed and buildings that need to be torn down because they are unsafe. The couple are discussing options with other organizations doing work there as well.

For more information or to make a donation, visit: <http://www.haitianheroes.org/>

For the latest news, read their blog: <http://goatpath.wordpress.com/>

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The Transportation Fix

No help on congestion just a small part of spreading pain from budget.

The Virginia General Assembly has adjourned. If for some reason your attention lapsed between the campaign for Governor (Gov. Bob McDonnell took office just two months ago) and now, you might expect a transportation plan as one of the outcomes of this assembly session.

Here is the transportation relief proposed and passed and likely to be signed: the maximum speed limit on some roads will increase to 70 miles-per-hour. This seems like it might violate equal protection standards, since there are very few hours of the day on any Northern Virginia's roads that getting above 55 is possible. Heck, most of us are really happy if traffic on the Beltway or 66 or 95 or Toll Road moves along

at 30 mph without frequent stops.

So in other parts of the state not dominated by congestion, vehicles will be moving faster.

In Northern Virginia, there will be even less money for even fewer efforts at relieving congestion.

The governor's commitment to fixing transportation, the center of his campaign that boosted him to an election victory even in Fairfax County (not Arlington or Alexandria) turned out to be far weaker than his commitment to eschew any new forms of revenue that might be needed to pay for such a fix.

Seriously, the Governor made no major proposal to the General Assembly on transportation.

EDITORIAL

Many, many people will face hardships that the rest of us can barely imagine because of the greatly pared down budget just passed in the General Assembly, especially people with disabilities of all kinds, working poor families, people who need mental health care, people who are struggling with addictions, families who can't afford health insurance whose incomes are just enough to keep them from getting assistance, etc.

Localities will press to raise property taxes so they can buffer some of the cuts to education, health care and the safety net passed along from the state.

Parents and students and teachers will feel the pain as school districts struggle to adjust priorities in ways that won't sit well.

And everyone who needs to get anywhere will sit in traffic, wait longer for buses, pay more for rides on public transportation of all kinds.

But don't forget that if you are lucky enough to drive through some of rural Virginia on an interstate, you'll probably get to go 70 miles-per-hour. That should compensate for some of the pain.

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It's a work in progress, but the Connection and sister papers Centre View, Alexandria Gazette Packet and Mount Vernon Gazette are now on Facebook at www.facebook.com/connectionnewspapers. Please become a fan.

— MARY KIMM.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Need Fiscal Responsibility

To the Editor:
In regards to your editorial, "Increasing Burden, But No Tools," you should realize that the City of Alexandria does indeed tax the income of business owners in the form of a Gross Receipts Tax. What makes this tax especially egregious is that even if your business had significant losses in a given year the business owner is taxed at the same rate — the tax is all based on gross receipts with no regards to expenses or losses. Call it whatever you like but the reality is that it is an income tax on small business owners like me. I have yet to see any special benefits specifically designed to help these very businesses grow or prosper. Neither the state nor the Federal government levies an income tax if the business owner showed a loss in that particular tax year.

Second, I often hear Northern Virginia complaining about how much money they send to Richmond and how little they receive in return. Let's consider the bigger picture for a moment. Consider how many federal income tax dollars are sent to Washington by all Virginians that disproportionately benefit the Northern Virginia economy which we all know lives or dies on Federal \$\$\$\$\$. This doesn't even take into account the legitimate gripe the rest of the

country could make regarding how much the D.C. metro area economy benefits from the entire nation's income tax dollar contributions.

Relative to many parts of the country Northern Virginia has it easy in good times and bad. Local governments have over time proven that they abuse and manipulate their current powers of taxation through constant tax rate fluctuations not based on any reasonable or fair percentage but instead based upon their ever increasing (always outpacing inflation) budgets. Our local governments claim to be providing 'needed services.' I claim they intervene in areas where the government has no business being — 'free' trolley rides on King Street, 'free' wi-fi in Old Town, children taking taxi rides to school and all on the taxpayer's dime.

I contend that your position on this matter is elitist. It would be similar to those of us in Alexandria who live in wealthier neighborhoods demanding more benefit from our higher tax contributions than those in the City who pay less taxes.

The last thing this economy and we as taxpayers need are more taxes. Instead we should demand our local governments show spending restraint and fiscal responsibility.

Neil E Wolfe,
Alexandria

More To Teen Wellness Center

To the Editor:
I am appalled at the biased, short-sighted, and irresponsible reporting. A title to induce shock and awe "Birth-Control Center Finds Home in TC" (Alexandria Gazette Packet, March 11, 2010), this article misses the whole issue by a long shot. Below is a copy of the letter that I submitted into permanent record for the city council meeting this past Saturday, March 13, 2010, and it presents actual issues regarding health care for our city's youth. Perhaps you could have had a much richer article supporting adolescent health had you asked a variety of health providers within the city; it's not all about birth control.

The Wellness Center Statement (March 13, 2010)

As the person on the front line of health for nearly 2,300 students every day, I am thrilled at the prospect of having The Teen Wellness Center in my hallway. Having the resource of the wellness center in our building will greatly enhance the health and well being of our students and give us unique opportunities to work collaboratively. Some of the major health needs that I see on a daily basis in the School Health Office include vision problems and the need for glasses, poor dentition, mental health issues such as depression and obesity, counseling for sexual behaviors and unplanned pregnancies, the need for health insurance to secure medical services, and of course all kinds of first aid.

Currently, students frequently need

to go to the teen clinic (as it is called today). Because we are a closed campus, students may not leave the building during the school day unless they are 18 years old or they have a written note from a parent or guardian.

Recently, one student presented to me with a shingles infection and needed treatment. Because of the nature of this virus, treatment must be started within 24 hours to achieve the best outcome and limit the potential of pain duration for up to 3 months. Thankfully, this student was 18 years old and could walk there. She did, however, miss about 1 1/2 hours of class. Had the wellness center been within the building, she would have lost much less instructional time.

I am also aware of students who cut whole days of school in order to be able to access the teen clinic services.

Another barrier to seeking services at the teen clinic is parental expectation for students after school. Some parents require their teenager to come directly home after school each day, thinking that this action will inhibit their child from engaging in risky adolescent behaviors. The reality is that adolescents inherently test the boundaries of behavior, and sometimes get into trouble. Accessing the physical and mental health care services at The Teen Wellness Center will help to address some of these risky behaviors before they become serious problems.

Immunizations are also an enormous issue here as we continue to enroll immigrants and foreign exchange students. Following the requirements from both the health department and the school board, students generally have three visits in which to receive a complete set of vaccinations (in SY 2010-2011, it will be four visits). Often times, students will miss whole days in order to get their shots. When the wellness center is located within TCW, they will be able to get their vaccines during lunch or in between classes and not miss valuable instruction time.

Finally, I would like to offer com

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 24

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Steven Mauren
Editor, 703-778-9415
smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

Michael Lee Pope
Reporter, 703-778-9437
alexandriagazette@yahoo.com

Steve Hibbard
Associate Editor, 703-778-9412
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CIRCULATION: 703-778-9427
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CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS, L.L.C.
Peter Labovitz
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Mary Kimm
Publisher/Chief Operating Officer
703-778-9433
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Jerry Vernon
Publisher/Executive Vice President
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

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OPINION

Budget Needed To Pass

BY CHARNIELE HERRING
DELEGATE (D-46)

I am pleased to report that my second year in Richmond has been both challenging and rewarding.

The biggest challenge was the budget. Over 2,000 constituents contacted my office through my survey, telephone and email. Generally, they made two things abundantly clear — they did not want taxes raised and they wanted to get as much money as they can for our public schools. On Sunday, the General Assembly passed a budget which was a compromise reached between the Democratic-controlled Senate and the Republican-controlled house. Unless taxes were raised, there was no way to fill the \$4.2 billion revenue shortfall without cutting programs. I voted for the budget because to have voted against the budget would have been a betrayal of my constituents and the causes that I fought for in Richmond.

RICHMOND REPORT

it would be fiscally irresponsible to raise taxes. Thus, it was necessary to make program cuts and at the same time adopt financial incentives to invigorate our economy by promoting small businesses and industries in Virginia. The budget we adopted Sunday does just that.

Second, with respect to public education I co-sponsored a budget amendment to lift the freeze proposed by Governor Kaine on the school funding formula known as the Local Composite Index which determines how much a locality receives from a state for its local school funding. As a result of the adoption of this amendment, the budget contains an additional \$29.5 million statewide for public schools which ultimately benefits schools in Northern Virginia including Alexandria City and Fairfax County. In sum, the budget cuts only \$250 million from Virginia's schools compared to the \$700 million proposed by the Republican House. Additionally, the budget avoids the reduced access to pre-k and at risk programs such as Head Start which was initially

proposed.

Third, I filed a budget amendment for homeless program funding and argued on the floor to restore funding for the homeless. Budget conferees informed me that because of my amendments and efforts on the floor they eliminated proposed reductions to homeless programs.

Fourth, with respect to medical assistance, the budget lifts the freeze on all community based waiver slots for Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAPs) which are used in determining the amount of Federal matching funds for State expenditures for assistance payments for medical care. Further, the budget restores respite care hours for waiver recipients including additional 250 waivers. This means that if you are providing home care for a mentally disabled individual and are waiting for assistance, there is a better possibility that you will receive the assistance you need.

I, of course, have some concerns with the budget. Among them are the drastic cuts in health care and

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 24

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Why Adults Need To Help Stop Bullying

BY LILLIAN BROOKS
ALEXANDRIA JUVENILE
COURT SERVICES UNIT

Memories of childhood experiences, whether profoundly positive or negative, can often have a lifelong impact. Everyone has their own personal experiences and stories about the trials and tribulations of growing up. Next to family, our childhood years is the time when friends and peers take the number one place in our lives. In adolescence, when all is well with peer relationships, all is right with the world.

But the reverse is true too. When a young person is consumed with being ostracized, shunned, intimidated or bullied by peers, everything else in that world falls apart. Youth who are victimized by bullies are often those who don't have many friends, are shy, or simply "do not fit in" with whatever is deemed cool. Adolescence is about conforming and the pressure to conform is very strong. A youth who is vulnerable to bullying is not viewed as conforming for a myriad of reasons so he/she will find ways to survive by avoiding the hurtful situation. There is no reason why a young person should have to deal with this problem alone and adults need to provide the needed support

for kids to talk about their experience before it gets out of hand.

When I was growing up, most bullying took place on the streets or at school but the goal was the same. The bullying would start out with verbal insults and then a group of other children would join in with the bully and laugh and make jokes at the expense of that child. Sometimes the behavior would escalate into a verbal or physical argument. In those days and even now, kids seem to have a natural ability to pick a good candidate for bullying.

The biggest challenge in today's world is that when a youth insults or makes fun of someone, he/she can do it in person or electronically. Cyberbullying is the modern day preferred communication by bullies because it is more impersonal and it can be done at all times - day and night - by cell phone or computer - text or email - and it is available.

In a 2006 a national telephone survey of preteens (6-11 year olds) and teens (12-17 year olds), it was discovered that 45 percent of preteens and 30 percent of teens had been cyberbullied while at school. For teens, 70 percent of cyberbullying occurred while they were at home. Most of the time there is an adult around when the cyberbullying occurs but the child refrains from telling the adult about it. I know from my experience with teens that they will not

readily talk to an adult because of what I call the "embarrassment factor." One thing that is worse than cyberbullying to a pre-teen or a teen is being embarrassed in front of their peers. So if the adult takes action to stop the bullying, the victim takes the risk of dealing with the "embarrassment factor." Lecturing does not work either. My husband's well-meaning parental technique was to give long lectures and somewhat outdated advice. This earned him the title of "Captain Obvious" during my daughter's teen years. Nevertheless, an adult or parent should take action that is swift and deliberate whenever they see or hear about bullying taking place. Here are some things that may work better than lectures.

Although we feel less sympathy for the bully, I can assure you that the bully has his/her own problems. Adults and parents should let the bully know that the behavior is unacceptable making it clear that there will be consequences if it continues. Depending on the relationship of the adult to the youth, the adult should find out the underlying reason for the bully's need or motive regarding the behavior. It is imperative that the bullying behavior, once recognized by an adult, be stopped right on the spot. I remember making a parent angry when I corrected her child at my daughter's soccer practice. The bullying did stop for a

while but because the parent did not want to acknowledge her child's inappropriate behavior, the bullying started up again. I often wonder about the child who was hurt by that experience. She eventually dropped out of the team.

Any parent, teacher or other concerned adult, who is aware of a child who is the victim of bullying, should be available to offer help and support. It is important to encourage the child not to respond to a bully, especially if it is done by email. Victims of bullying should save any inappropriate messages and block future contact on the email. When inappropriate language is used, parents should consider filing a complaint with the Internet provider. Parents should contact the school and ask that teachers, counselors and principles intervene by keeping a watchful eye on interactions between the bully and the victim at school so the behavior can be addressed. Parents need to review on-line communications by their child even though it may be uncomfortable.

Serious cyberbullying can rise to the level where the police should be contacted. Threats of violence or gang recruitment are examples of when adults and parents need to escalate the intervention. In some serious cases, parents of bullies can be sued in

SEE STOP BULLYING. PAGE 12

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OPINION

Stop Bullying

FROM PAGE 10

civil court if they fail to take action in their child's constant harassment. The bottom line is that parents and other adults have a responsibility to take action when they see or hear bullying taking place. Our youth are more exposed to bullying because of the various ways to communicate messages that are readily available. When a child is a victim of bullying, they become truant or they are bullied into joining a gang – two ways

to deal with the situation is to avoid the place where it is occurring and join a group who will claim to be your friends and protectors. Either of those choices will have life-long consequences. Let's make it so that the choice is to tell a responsible adult or a parent who will know what to do about it. This will help get out the message that any kind of bullying is never cool.

Lillian Brooks, J.D., is director of the Alexandria Juvenile Court Services Unit.



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One often reads about the art of conversation—how it's dying or what's needed to make it flourish, or how rare good ones are. But wouldn't you agree that the infinitely more valuable rara avis is a good listener?
—Malcolm Forbes

State Law Shrouds Documents

FROM PAGE 3

Jennings. "All I have is what our investigators and what our commanders and the police administration believe."

ARLINGTON COUNTY Police Department refuses to release the incident report for what may be its highest-profile arrest of 2009 — the drunk driving bust of David Baker, who was then the chief of police in Alexandria. Even now that Baker has served his five days in jail and the case is closed, police officials in Arlington refuse to release the report detailing what happened that humid July night. Through a spokesman, Arlington County Police Department officials declined to answer questions about its commitment to transparent government.

"I am in the corner of trusting our police department," said County Board member Barbara Favola, who was chairwoman when Baker was arrested. "If they push back I am not going to override them, and I don't think I could get three votes on the board to override them either."

Yet Baker's case highlights a number of ways police in Virginia hide their actions from public scrutiny. Did Baker receive special treatment because he was the chief of police in a neighboring jurisdiction and driving a city-issued vehicle? Who was the woman sideswiped by Baker, when his blood alcohol content registered at twice the legal limit that night? Did Baker try to use his position of power? The public may never know what the documents say about these questions because county officials refuse to release them even though they have the ability to

do so.

The actions of the Police Department in the wake of the arrest also raise a number of questions about the level of transparency in Arlington. In the hours after Baker's arrest, seven media organizations made public-record requests for the police report. County officials denied those requests, citing their exemption clause in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Instead of releasing the public document, Arlington officials offered a two-paragraph summary of the report for a fee of \$24. The four organizations that agreed to the fee received a two-paragraph summary that misidentified David Baker as Paul Baker and incorrectly stated that the arrest took place in 1995 instead of 2009.

"Public officials who try to hide information never look good," said Chip Watkins, an Arlington tax attorney who saw a copy of the document and speculated that the mistake was intentional. "Either someone was trying to cover up for him or they were just sloppy."

IN ALEXANDRIA, Police Chief Earl Cook has been on the job since August, after Baker resigned. As one of the three finalists for the job of top cop back in 2006, he was the highest-ranking deputy chief when Baker was forced to step down in the wake of his drunk-driving arrest. Then, on the day he was officially announced as City Manager Jim Hartmann's permanent selection for the job, Cook said that he would review the policy of shielding public access to documents that are widely available in other states.

SEE TRANSPARENCY. PAGE 14

OBITUARIES

Margaret Doris (Holloway) Johnson

Margaret Doris (Holloway) Johnson, age 86, of Sweetwater Golf & Country Club in Haines City, Fla., died March 12, 2010 of complications of Alzheimer's. She was born March 10, 1924 at Brandy Station, Va. Margaret was graduated from Osbourne High School in Manassas, Va. at the age of 16, then from the Garfield Memorial Hospital Nursing School in Washington, D.C. and served as an RN for four decades. Most of her adult life was spent in Alexandria where she was active at the Del Ray Methodist Church in Alexandria. She was married Sept. 8, 1947 to Matthew "Neil" Johnson who is surviving her along with three sons, Matthew N. Johnson, Jr. of Woodbridge, John E. Johnson of Haines City, Fla., and Martin H. Johnson of Clifton; six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. A visitation will be held on Thursday, March 18, from 2-4 and 6-7 p.m. at Cunningham Funeral Home, 811 Cameron Street, Alexandria, where funeral services will be held at 7 p.m. A graveside service will be held on Friday at 11 a.m. at Marshall Cemetery. www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

etery, Marshall, Va. Donations in lieu of flowers to an Alzheimer's research or care charity.

Robert Richard

Robert S Richard a government relations specialist in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Ga. died of pancreatic cancer Feb. 18, 2010 in Arlington at the age of 67. He was an Alexandria resident.



Mr. Richard moved to Washington in the mid-1960s, and did graduate work at American University in Economics and International Relations. He worked as a chief of staff to Rep. John W. Davis (D-GA) from 1970-74. In 1974, he created Richard & Company, a worldwide door to door delivery system for high priority, time sensitive materials, which stayed in operation until 1981. He next became media liaison to Rep. Jack Brooks' (D-TX) House Committee on Government Operations from 1981-87, followed by Legislative assistant to Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) from 1995-1998.

From 1998-2003 Mr. Richard was president of Gunston Associates, a lobbying firm which advised clients on defense, foreign trade and OSHA reform.

He then became a senior adviser for National Renewable Energy Practice at Reznick Group in Vienna, Va.

Robert Stephen Richard was a native of Atlanta, Ga., and graduated from Emory University with a BA in history.

Active in community service in Alexandria, Mr. Richard served on the board of directors of three institutions: Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Alexandria Seaport Foundation, and the local division of the American Heart Association.

His wife of 17 years, Sue Mathis Richard, died in 2002.

Survivors include his daughter Meredith Richard, 23, of Alexandria, his mother May Richard of Atlanta, Ga. and his brother L. Donald Richard of Atlanta, Ga.

The memorial service will be held Friday, March 19, at 11 a.m. at Christ Church in Old Town Alexandria.

A memorial fund has been set up to help his daughter with living expenses. Contributions may be sent to "Friends of Meredith," 303 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

LETTERS

What To Do About TC?

To the Editor:

I graduated from T.C Williams in 1999. Mr. Porter was the principal then. My 4-year-old daughter attends pre-school at T.C. I dread taking her every day. Kids are outside smoking. I never see any teachers or anyone of authority outside to control the students. The students that drive come speeding up the driveway. It is very scary. I also have a nine-year-old

son who will be going to T.C — that is if it gets any better. My point is that when I was in school, the teachers and the parents actually cared. If Mr. Porter were there none of this would be going on. There is no respect from the students for anyone. There were also many programs that we had that they don't have anymore. I hope there is something done before my children get to high school. This is crazy. What do we do?

Laura Benavidez
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NEWS

Transparency Blackout

FROM PAGE 13

"I think that's something that's going to have to be under review," Cook said when asked about the lack of access to public documents in Alexandria. "I did not disagree with the policy in the past, but I'm open to discussion about it. If we have a better way of doing it or if is going to serve the public better, perhaps we'll change that policy."

Seven months into his tenure, Cook has yet to launch a formal review. When asked about the issue now, he says he never intended to conduct one.

"I didn't have an idea in mind that I needed to release a report," said Cook. "What I was thinking in my mind is that I needed to review our processes to make sure we are doing those things that serves the community. And that's what I've been doing on an ongoing basis."

The lack of transparency in Alexandria is consistent, even in cases when the police are seeking publicity. For example, a series of high-profile burglaries in Old Town last summer led to an arrest of a man named Ralph Fowler. On Sept. 25, the Alexandria Police Department issued a six-sentence

press release along with Fowler's mug shot. Yet in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, Alexandria officials declined to release the incident reports leading to his arrest.

"As one who promotes and advocates transparency I personally don't have a problem with those documents being released," said Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille. "But I need to check with the proper authorities to see why they have such a hang-up."

Hartmann says the reason Alexandria refuses to release documents that are widely available in the rest of America is concerns about privacy. He says he stands by his police chief's decision against full disclosure of public documents – even in cases where the police have sought publicity by issuing press releases.

"The police chief has concerns about certain information in police reports associated with victims or witnesses that he feels needs to be protected," said Hartmann. "There are certain circumstances where it would be in the victim's or a witness' interest to not have their names divulged at a particular stage of a case."

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2 bedroom, 2.5 bath, hardwood floors throughout, renovated kitchen and baths. Off street parking, fenced backyard. 4 blocks to King St / Old Town shops and restaurants. EZ access to DASH and METRO.



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One of the most fabulous properties you will ever find. Home has been remodeled and updated throughout. Features include: skylights, stunning custom kitchen, hardwood floors, updated baths, 2 car garage, located on cul-de-sac.

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9316 Heather Glen
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Classic center hall colonial meticulously maintained offers many significant upgrades. Spectacular curved glass walled family room and fabulous screened porch both overlook amazing custom pool. Three levels, 4 bedrooms, updated kitchen, direct access to outside from lower level, 2 car garage and more!

NEW HOME!



5205 Polk Avenue
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Brand New Home!
Top quality luxury new home in prime West End Alexandria City location for under \$1,000,000! Bright and open floor plan, high ceilings, gourmet kitchen, luxury baths, 4BRs upstairs including stunning master suite and oversized side load garage. Prime location on rare almost half acre "in-town" lot. Pre-construction special allows for maximum customization!

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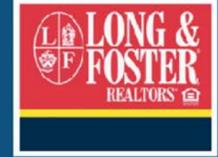

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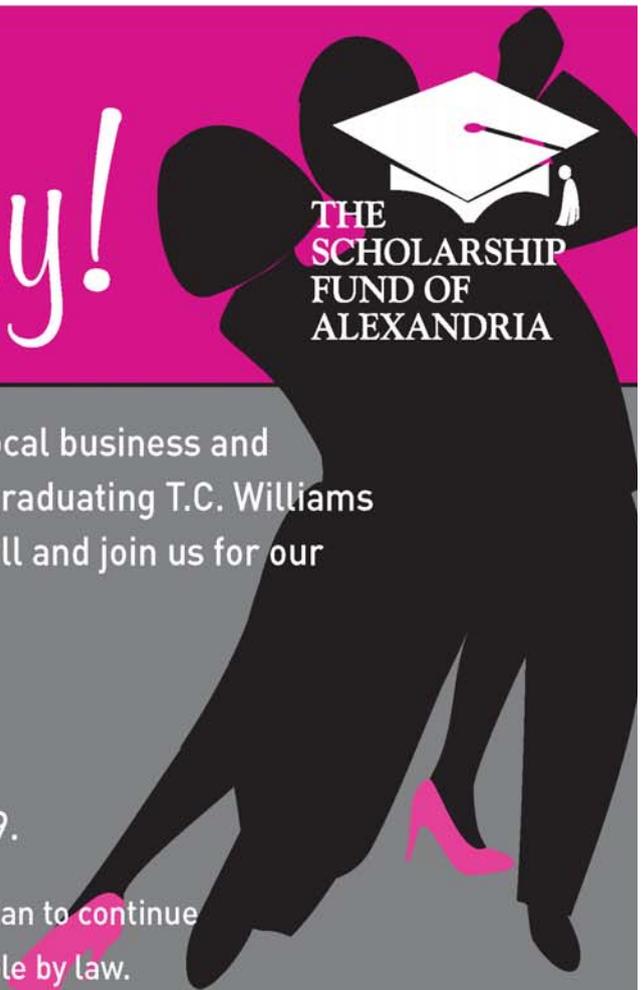
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Each year, Honor Roll support of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria Gala by local business and community members helps make higher education a reality for hundreds of graduating T.C. Williams students. Secure your reservations early by adding your name to our Honor Roll and join us for our

Splendid Fabulous Affair

—the SFA's annual gala dinner dance and auction on May 8, 2010. To become an Honor Roll donor call 703-824-6730 or visit www.AlexScholarshipFund.org/gala.php. Individual tickets go on sale March 29.

All proceeds from this event support need-based scholarships for ACPS graduates who plan to continue their education beyond high school. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.



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SATURDAY/MARCH 27

Sari to Skin. 7-9 p.m. A one-woman performance featuring Neelam Patel in celebration of Women's History Month. Tickets are \$15/person in advance or \$20/door. At Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria.



TUESDAY/MARCH 30

Sounds of the Saxophone. 7:30 p.m. Free. Presented by the Washington Saxophone Quartet. At Pendleton Hall, Episcopal High School, 3900 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Call 703-933-4135 or visit www.episcopalhighschool.org.

Huge Cast Fills Lee's Stage

Some 22 actors perform 1920's "The Front Page."

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

Ever wonder why you don't see professional productions of such marvelous old-time hits as the 1928 drama/comedy of a night in the press room of a Chicago courthouse, "The Front Page?" Simple. The script by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur calls for a huge cast by today's standards.

Who can afford to pay 22 performers at today's rates? Not professional theaters, that's for sure. Ah, but community theaters such as the Port City Playhouse can field such a small army because their performers are all volunteers. Still, it takes considerable resources to make a complicated show of this type work and director Roland Branford Gomez gives the project a sense of heft, if not a consistent sense of style.

The action takes place on a single set (that helps with the budget). It is the pressroom of the Criminal Courts Building in Chicago on a late spring evening as a gaggle of reporters wile away the hours awaiting an execution scheduled for the next dawn. How much is a gaggle? In this case, it is over half a dozen and the playwrights have given each a distinctive personality so it would be difficult to get away with fewer just to save money.

They play cards, they trade stories while one plunks away on a banjo and another tries to get some work done at his roll-top desk (the desk plays an important part in the plot after intermission). Various strange characters wander in and out, especially when things get frantic after the escape of the condemned man.

With 22 characters and only two hours of stage time in its three acts, the play doesn't give very many performers too much time alone in a spotlight. Instead, the show relies on rapid-fire dialogue, often with multiple characters talking at the same time. This kind of show requires a polished, well-practiced pace and here is where this production fails to live up to its potential. The confusion is not as disciplined as the script's authors obviously intended.

With many people talking over each other's lines, it is important that the lines that are most important to the plot or to the definition of a particular character's purpose in a scene are the ones that rise above the din so the audience can follow



Pictured are P Spencer Tamney — Wilson, Eleni Aldridge — Mrs. Schlosser, Will Monahan — Endicott, Brian Clarke — Murphy, Geoffrey Baskir — Schwartz, Jim Day — McCue and Cal Whitehurst — Kruger.

what is going on. Too often in this production, however, it is the throwaway lines that obscure plot points. As a result, the audience spends a lot of time trying to figure out what is going on rather than sitting back and enjoying the action.

While it is essentially an ensemble show, there is a principal character that constitutes a starring role. Reporter Hildy Johnson is anxious to get the evening over since he's about to leave on his honeymoon with his pretty bride played by Elizabeth Heir. Mark Lee Adams handles that role with a glint in his eye, a spring in his step and an energy not always matched by the rest of the cast.

In any theater company, it would be difficult to assemble an "all-star cast" when the cast has to approach the two dozen mark. In community theater that is even more difficult, but Gomez and the Port City Playhouse have the reputation for solid productions that draws some of the better community theater actors and actresses to their shows. As a result, this production benefits from the likes of Bonnie Jourdan as Hildy's potential mother-in-law, Jerry Morse as the sheriff who's career is in danger due to the escape of his prisoner, Ron Field as the Mayor who's concern over reelection outweighs any sense of duty, Ron Sturman as the clerk trying against considerable odds to deliver a reprieve from the Governor and Cary Cramer as the escapee.

Late in the action, James McDaniel joins the group as Hildy's editor out to make a name for his newspaper by scooping everyone else and manipulating events to make

an even more dramatic story. His arrival sparks the production to a higher energy level.

Another source of pleasure is the music played before the show begins, during intermission and as the audience files out. It sounds very much as if it might be vintage 1920s jazz recordings cleaned up through the magic of modern digital technology. In fact, it is all original music composed by Joseph Colombo.

But it is the gaggle of reporters that are the heart of the piece, most notably Will Monahan as a crotchety veteran, Jim Day as a hardened beat reporter, Brian Clark as a sharp-tongued scribe, Ted Culler as the persnickety owner of the roll-top desks and Cal Whitehurst as the musically inclined reporter. Their banter may well become better paced as they perform the show more times. It runs through March 28 at the Lee Center.



Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway and writes about theater for a number of national magazines. He can be reached at Brad@PotomacStages.com.

Where & When

The Port City Playhouse production of "The Front Page" is at the Lee Center for the Performing Arts, 1108 Jefferson Street with performances Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. There is a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday, March 28. Tickets are \$14 - \$16. Call 703-838-2880 or log on to www.telgo.com/pcp.

NOW THROUGH MARCH 25

Springfield Art Guild Art Show. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Works include oil, watercolor, photography, and mixed medium. At the Franconia Government Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Contact: Reggie Garrett, FGC Show Chair at reggiedrew@aol.com. Call 703-971-6262.

MARCH 26 TO MAY 9

FINE
ARTS

Cedric Williams' Nostalgia and Dereliction.

Artist's reception is Sunday, April 18 from 4-6 p.m. The hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday and during performances. At the Schlesinger Center Margaret W. & Joseph L. Fisher Gallery, at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Visit www.schlesingercenter.com.

NOW THROUGH MARCH 28

Garden of earthy delights: Pottery with flora and fauna. Monday through Sunday, 10

a.m. to 6 p.m., with Thursdays until 9 p.m. The Ceramic Guild at Studio 19, Torpedo Factory Art Center's Scope Gallery, 101 North Union Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-6288 or visit www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.

NOW THROUGH MARCH 31

Works from the Heart, Topics of Passion. Free. Artworks reflect that which comes from the heart. Subjects that touch, motivate, and move us to create, that which inspires. At the Gallery at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane,

Alexandria. Call 703-998-6260 or visit www.convergenceccf.net

APRIL 7 THROUGH MAY 2

Artist Gail C. Weyant Solo Show, "Storytelling Artwork." Straight Photography, Computer Enhanced Images, and Ceramics. At Gallery West, 1213 Duke Street, Old Town Alexandria. Artist's reception is Saturday, April 10 from 4-6 p.m. Hours are Wednesday to Sunday, 11-6 p.m.

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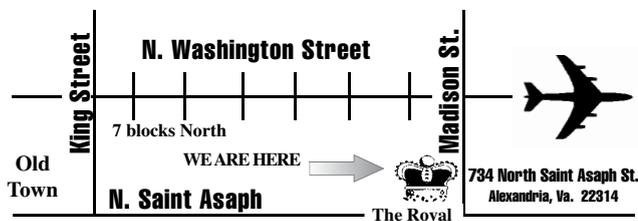
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THEATER

Winners of The Watch Awards

10th Annual Washington Area Theatre Community Honors

The award ceremony was held Sunday, March 14, 2010 at The Birchmere, Alexandria. Some 114 productions (32 musicals, 82 plays) were adjudicated in 2009. Thirty community theater companies participated in WATCH adjudication.

Little Theatre of Alexandria AWARDS (4)

- ❖ Outstanding Set Decoration in a Play - C. Evans Kirk - Art of Murder
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Play - Paul Morton - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - MYKE - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play - Mollie Wise as "Betty Meeks" - The Foreigner

NOMINATIONS (27)

- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Play - Liz Owens & Nancy Owens - Art of Murder
- ❖ Outstanding Set Decoration in a Play - C. Evans Kirk - Art of Murder
- ❖ Outstanding Set Design in a Play - C. Evans Kirk - Art of Murder
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Paul Morton - Greater Tuna
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Play - Jean Schlichting & Kit Sibley - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Direction of a Play - Frank D. Shutts II - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Paul Morton - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Play - Paul Morton - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Play - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Properties in a Play - Art Snow - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Set Design in a Play - Ken Crowley - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - MYKE - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Sound Design in a Play - David Hale - Gross Indecency
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical - Bette Williams - Gypsy
- ❖ Outstanding Music Direction - Christopher A. Tomasino - Gypsy
- ❖ Outstanding Direction of a Play - Roland Branford Gomez - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play - Jeffrey Clarke as "Dr. Hubert Bonney" - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play - Mark Lee Adams as "Dr. David Mortimore" - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Play - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Properties in a Play - Margaret Snow, Art Snow & Bobbie Herbst - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - Mary Hutzler - It Runs in the Family
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Play - Beverley Benda & Annie Vroom - Leading Ladies
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Gilda Sadighi - Leading Ladies
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Play - Gilda Sadighi - Leading Ladies
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play - Mollie Wise as "Betty Meeks" - The Foreigner
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Play - Chris Feldmann - The Foreigner
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - Erin Cumbo -

The Foreigner

Port City Playhouse

NOMINATIONS (2)

- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Play - J. Arthur Rodger - Curious Savage
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Bette Williams - Veronica's Room

Dominion Stage

AWARDS (1)

- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Play - Gayle Nichols-Grimes as "Ann Marwood Bartle" - Jeffrey

NOMINATIONS (3)

- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Play - Patsy DiBella Kreger & Eric S. Scerbo - Glorious!
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Renee Silverstone - Glorious!
- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Play - Gayle Nichols-Grimes as "Ann Marwood Bartle" - Jeffrey

Arlington Players

AWARDS (3)

- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical - Grant Kevin Lane - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical - Bette Williams - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Musical - Avery Burns - Follies

NOMINATIONS (18)

- ❖ Outstanding Choreography - Lisa Anne Bailey & Lauren Sinsheimer - Bye Bye Birdie
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical - Lory Levitt & Irene Molnar - Bye Bye Birdie
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical - Kat Brais - Bye Bye Birdie
- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Musical - Ryan Desmond - Bye Bye Birdie
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - Pete Silvia - Bye Bye Birdie
- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Play - AnnMarie Castrigno - Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Musical - Kathleen McCormick as "Buddy's Blues Sally" - Follies
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- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical - Grant Kevin Lane - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Direction of a Musical - Christopher Dykton - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical - Bette Williams - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Musical - Avery Burns - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Music Direction - John-Michael d'Haviland - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Musical - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - Bill Wisniewski - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Set Decoration in a Musical - Kate Roehr - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - Jared Davis - Follies
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Jared Davis - Follies

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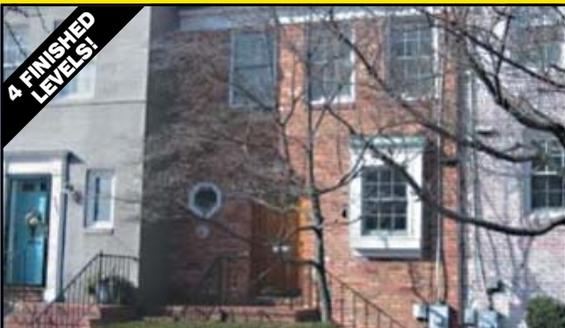


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MUSIC

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 Shows start at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

March 18: An Evening with Bobby McFerrin with Sam & Ruby
 March 19-20: The Average White Band
 March 21: David Wilcox and Patty Larkin
 March 23: Jonathan Butler
 March 24: Jack Ingram (Acoustic)
 March 25: Carrie Newcomer and Peter Mayer
 March 26: Jonatha Brooke and Lori McKenna
 March 27: Ashford & Simpson
 March 28: Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
 March 29: Anuhea & The Green
 March 30: Bob Schneider with Steve Palmer Band
 March 31: Robert Earl Keen with South Memphis String Band
 April 1: Le Serpent Rouge featuring Rachel Brice
 April 2: An Evening with Keller Williams
 April 3: Cleve Francis
 April 5: Vivian Green
 April 6: Keith Emerson and Greg Lake
 April 7: Lizz Wright
 April 8: Joan Osborne with Carsie Blanton
 April 9: Christopher Cross and Karla Bonoff
 April 10: Mid-Atlantic Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival
 April 12: Fourplay
 April 13: Todd Rundgren's Johnson featuring Kasim Sulton, Prairie Prince and Jesse Gress
 April 15: An Evening with Michael McDonald
 April 16: Lunasa
 April 17: Guy Clark with Anthony DaCosta



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• French or Polka Dot P/C	\$8.00
• Pedicure	\$25.00
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• Tweens: 13 to 14	\$25.00
• Add Curls or Flat Iron	\$15.00
• Bun	\$20.00
• Updo - 14 & Under	\$35.00
• French Braid	\$15.00

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For the month of April, a percentage of all London Bobbie proceeds will go to Autism Awareness and research.



CALENDAR

E-mail announcements to the Gazette, gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Photos and artwork are encouraged. Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

ONGOING

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.

Meditation Class. 10-11 a.m. every Sunday. Come enjoy a free group class on meditation instruction and practice. Class will be centered around calm abiding (shine/samatha). No experience is needed. All are welcome at the 3rd floor of Mindful Hands Gallery, 211 King Street. Visit <http://www.palyuldc.org/meditation.html>.

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.

THURSDAY/MARCH 18

March Luncheon. 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost is \$20. The Army Officers Wives Club of the Greater Washington Area. At the Koran Room of the Ft. Myer Officers Club. The featured speaker will be Donna Engeman, advisor for the Military's Survivor Outreach Services. Contact Wendy Gifford, 703-903-1542, or Ruth Howell, 703-941-1300.

Boris Arratia. 7-9 p.m. Free. Boris Arratia performs Latin American guitar with a twist of jazz. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565 or go to www.torpedofactory.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 19

Evening of Music for Flute, Cello, and Harp. 8 p.m. Free. Presented by the United States Air Force Band Chamber Players Series. At the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Spring Fling and Egg Hunt. Hosted by the Stratford Landing Citizens' Association. Short parade up Camden Street (from Cavendish St. to Stirrup Lane) at 2:30 p.m. and proceed into Stratford Landing Park for an egg hunt and games and crafts.

Swordsmen's Rendezvous. 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. \$6 admission. Program includes re-enactment of 18th-century swordplay and a display and discussion of 18th-century weapons. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Concert for Haiti. 7 p.m. Music and dancing by the Irish Breakfast Band and Boyle School of Irish Dance. 100% of donations will go to the Hospital Bienfaisance de Pignon through the Community Coalition for Haiti. \$10/adults, children free. At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Call 703-549-4766 or visit www.wpc-alex.org

Benefit for Haitian Relief. Ten Thousand Villages of Alexandria is hosting a benefit shopping day with 15 percent of the day's sales going to the Mennonite Central Committee, earmarked for Haiti. They will increase the donation to 20 percent for all items actually made in Haiti. At 915 King Street in Old Town



(From left): Bishop O'Connell seniors Catherine Callahan as the witch and Megan Meszaros as the baker's wife, and junior Connor Scully as the baker.

MARCH 26, 27, 28

"Into the Woods." Staged by Bishop O'Connell Theatre. Performances are Friday and Saturday, March 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 28 at 2 p.m. General admission tickets are \$10; students and seniors \$5. At 6600 Little Falls Road, Arlington. Visit www.bishopoconnell.org/theatre or call the box office at 703-237-1448.

Alexandria.

Moran Family Pancake Breakfast-Benefit. 8:30-10:30 a.m. For Jackson Dundon Recovery Fund at Mango Mike's, 4580 Duke Street, Alexandria. Call 703-299-0064 or mmoran@moranforcongress.org.

Behind the Counter Tour. 9 to 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$25, includes a light breakfast. At the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum at 105 South Fairfax, Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242.

Light Everlasting — Music of Faith, Hope and Love. 8 p.m. Presented by the 100-voice Fairfax Choral Society. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria campus of NVCC, 3001 North Beauregard St., Alexandria. Call 703-642-3277 or visit www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org or office@fairfaxchoralsociety.org.

Children's Book Fair. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Usborne Books and Lyceum staff will make history fun at this event. Kids can become history sleuths on a scavenger hunt and earn their own Museum Detective Badge. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria. Call 703-746-4994 or visit www.alexandriahistory.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 21

Masters of the Craft. 2 p.m. Free. Marine Chamber Orchestra performs with Capt. Michelle A. Rakers conducting. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NVCC, Alexandria Campus, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. Visit www.marineband.usmc.mil.

Men's Chorus Concert. 3 p.m. In support of the BEL Center (Bryant Early Learning), a preschool which serves mostly children from needy families. At the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Call Ron Brandt, 703-765-4779, brandtron@verizon.net.

Brass Quintet Concert. 4 p.m. Free. Alexandria Symphony Orchestra performs. Orchestral works arranged for brass quintet on the program range from Giles Farnaby's "Fancies, Toyes & Dreams" and Bach's "Contrapunctus IX" to the Procession

from the "Jupiter" movement of Gustav Holst's "The Planets." At the Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria.

Mt. Vernon Annual Crop Walk. 1 p.m. Walk with your neighbors 1.6 miles raising money for UCM and New Hope Housing. At Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, 8001 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Visit www.churchworldservice.org or contact Rosemary Kley, 703-719-6238.

MONDAY/MARCH 22

Salute to Women Awards Banquet. 6 p.m. At the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. E-mail Angela.Johnson@alexandriava.gov or call 703-746-5030 or visit alexwomen.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 23

"It's Only Natural." 6:30 p.m. At the Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center, 1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria. Call 703-745-5427.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 24

George Washington Lectures: The Four Key Women in His Life. 7:30 p.m. Professor Peter Henriques from GMU discusses the women in Washington's life — Mother Mary Ball Washington; First love Sally Fairfax; Wife Martha Custis; and friend, Eliza Powell. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Cost is \$12/person. At 134 North Royal Street in Old Town Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Author Thomas E. Crocker. 7:30 p.m. Discusses book, Braddock's March: How the Man Sent to Seize a Continent Changed American History. At the Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Go to www.alexandriahistorical.org or 703-683-2636.

THURSDAY/MARCH 25

Free Blood Pressure Screening. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Also medication reviews. At The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray, 2204 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Walk-ins are welcome. Call 703-836-1700.

The Mango Project. 7-9 p.m. Features the sounds of contemporary and Latin-Jazz, as well as a variety of jazz standards and musical treatment of well known pop, R&B, and smooth jazz selections. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565 or go to www.torpedofactory.org.

MARCH 25-27

Book Sale. Mount Vernon Unitarian Church. The book sale has been a fixture in the Mount Vernon/Alexandria/Fairfax community for many years with many thousands of books available for purchase. The books will be available in the "mansion" and in the "chapel" on the church grounds.

* On Thursday, March 25 the sale will be open from 1 to 5 p.m.

* On Friday, March 26 the sale will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Special on this day will be 1/2 price books all day in the Mansion.

* On Saturday, March 27 the sale will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Extra Special on this day will be \$5 for a bag of books in the mansion and 1/2 price books in the chapel all day.

The church is south of Alexandria off Fort Hunt Road. Follow signs at the intersection of Mason Hill and Fort Hunt Road. At 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-765-5950.

FRIDAY/MARCH 26

Music for Vocal Chamber Music. 8 p.m. Free. With members of the Singing Sergeants of the U.S. Air Force Band. At

George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

SATURDAY/MARCH 27

Yoga for Rookies. 10 a.m. Free Class. At The Body in Balance Center, 1423 Powhatan Street, Suite 7, Alexandria. Call 703-578-4434.

Fort Hunt Preschool Rummage Sale. 8 a.m. to noon. Features high-quality used infants', children's and maternity gear, including clothing, toys, games, books and furniture. At Fort Hunt Preschool, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria.

Great Rum Punch Challenge. 7 to 9:30 p.m. Enjoy different rum punch creations from local distilleries, restaurants and caterers and vote for your favorite. Tickets, which include admission (food and drink all evening), are \$50 per person, or \$100, which include admission and a special VIP pre-event tasting of Bacardi's special rums. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Old Town Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Celebrations Around the Globe. 4 p.m. Presented by the ACCT (Alexandria's City Community Theatre). At the Kauffman Auditorium at the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson Street, Old Town Alexandria. Contact Ms.Dilworth-Abdalla@703-746-5533

"JUMPPIN 4 JESUS." First Annual Double Dutch Tournament fund-raiser. To benefit the return, updated, and revised educational stage production of "Nefertiti 18th Dynasty." Visit www.biblestoriestheatre.org.

Sari to Skin. 7-9 p.m. A one-woman performance featuring Neelam Patel in celebration of Women's History Month. Presented by Empowered Women International. Tickets are \$15/person in advance or \$20/door. At Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Email events@ewint.org to RSVP.

SUNDAY/MARCH 28

Team F.W.I.K Fund-Raiser. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pamper yourself for the cure. 50% of sales will be donated to Team F.W.I.K. (Fabulous Women I Know) At Salon deZEN, 1008 King Street Alexandria. Call Salon deZEN, 703-549-1400. Visit www.fwik.org.

"Opera per Tutti." 3 p.m. Free. Italian Opera Choruses with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic. Pre-concert lecture at 2:15 p.m. At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria.

Snow Crab Legs and Shrimp Feast. 1-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Merrifield Lions Club. There will be a DeeJay. Advanced tickets are \$38/adults, \$40/door, \$15/children, and groups of 8 or more are \$36/person. At the Dunn Loring Fire Department, 2128 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. Call 703-255-2468 or email kdalton@london-ip.com.

The Dream Hour. 2 p.m. The U.S. Marine Band with Col. Michael J. Colburn conducting and Mark Shields, moderator. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NVCC, Alexandria Campus.



TUESDAY/MARCH 23

Mount Vernon Quilters Unlimited. 12:30 p.m. Nationally known quilter and author, Karen Kay Buckley will provide a lecture entitled, "To Border or not to Border." At Hollin Hall Sr. Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Visit www.quiltersunlimited.org/mtv.htm

Budget Needed To Pass

FROM PAGE 9

the deferment of funding of the state pension plan. However, the budget requires repayment of the deferment over 10 years including interest starting in FY 2013. The priority in formulating the budget was to make cuts in a way that

would cause the least harm. The approved budget achieves that goal.

It has been an honor to serve the 46th District. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at Delcherring@house.virginia.gov or www.charnieleherring.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 8

ments with regard to Fathers Kleinmann and Cregan's thoughts in last week's Gazette Packet. I agree with the fact that high school teenagers shouldn't be having sex, and I agree that single teen mothers are not a family. Because we understand that teens can make poor judgments at times that get them into trouble, I believe, too, that having a wellness center in the high school building breaks down barriers to their getting counseling before poor decisions are made. I want to prevent teen pregnancy with all my heart.

I am sorry that I could not attend today to offer this in person, but I work as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Virginia Pediatric Group, LTD. in Fairfax. It is my second job on Saturdays.

Thank you so much for supporting the creation of The Teen Wellness Center at TC Williams. I am proud to be part of a school system that values the role of health in educating the whole child.

Nancy Runton, MSN, CRNP
TC Williams High School
Health Office

A 'Transforming' Proposal For ACPS

To the Editor:

Your article "T.C. in Crisis" (Alexandria Gazette Packet, March 11) cites four options: close the school, fire half the staff, reopen as a charter, transformation (this meaning "a plan for reform"). This follows the Virginia Department of Education designating T.C. Williams as a "persistently low achieving school." This designation was earned for two consistent years of poor standardized testing results.

The article states that school officials have known for years that its "high poverty population" (whatever that means in the context of Alexandria's \$20,000 per student expenditure) lagged behind state-wide averages, but Alexandria had not been cited because those officials chose not to accept Federal money targeting that high poverty population. Hello? Is common sense so elusive in this matter that, for example, the rejected funds could not be used for, say, a non-bureaucratic tutoring program able to actually pay tutors to help teach to the oft-criticized Standards of Learning (SOL) and thus raise the target

group's score for the betterment of all? Or was the money left on the table because of officials' insistence on ignoring the SOL — and the longer-term needs of that high poverty community — in favor of providing (non tested) opportunities for creativity and self-expression?

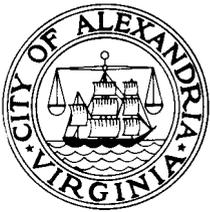
The fact that targeted money was available but unclaimed in the face of a long-standing problem should be viewed as the last straw of the continuing drain on property-tax-paying Alexandrians who finance most of the ever-increasing school costs. Rather than considering making T.C. Williams a charter school, which will undoubtedly continue to be influenced by those who have so short-sightedly led us to our current embarrassment, let's try this outside-the-box solution, which covers several of the four options: Let T.C. Williams, and all of Alexandria's Schools, be administered as part of Arlington's school system.

Stop screaming, please. No schools need be closed or moved, but we might not have to immediately build those new schools occasionally being hinted at by ACPS. Think about these advantages, among others: (1) Almost immediate cost savings for both jurisdictions as expensive but necessary administrative overhead is merged and consolidated. (2) No Alexandria school-based personnel are likely to be affected; certainly those with direct teaching positions would not be. (3) The administratively superior policies and practices of Arlington, with an essentially similar high poverty population, would be in control. (Why is Arlington superior? They were not cited, Alexandria was; and Arlington has more than one high school.) (4) The student populations and square miles covered by the merged system would be comparable to, or less than, nearby Fairfax County, Montgomery County, or Prince Georges County.

Economics of scale ought always be considered.

Stephen Newman
Alexandria

Legal Notices



NOTICE OF HEARING CARLYLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Carlyle Design Review Board will meet on

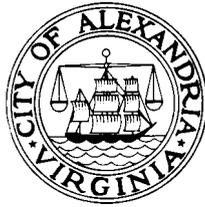
Legal Notices

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Conference Room 2000, City Hall, at 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The following items are on the agenda for this month's meeting:

1. DRB # 2010-0001: Block O (Carlyle Square II) – Amendment to previous approval, 601 Holland Lane.
2. DRB #2009-0002: Blocks 11 & 12 – Final DSUP Design, 2210 Eisenhower Avenue

The public is invited to attend this meeting. Individuals with questions concerning the meeting should call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703-746-4666.

Legal Notices



LEGAL NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2010 - 7:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia

Information about these items may be obtained from the: Department of Planning and Zoning, 301 King Street, Room 2100, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, telephone: (703) 746-4688

BZA CASE #2010-0006
103 E. OAK STREET
R-2-5, RESIDENTIAL
Scott Miller, owner: Special exception to construct a second story addition above the footprint of the existing house located 4.80 feet from the west side yard and install a roof above an existing front porch facing East Oak Street. If the special exception is granted, the Board of Zoning Appeals will be granting a special exception from section 12-102(A) of the zoning ordinance relating to physical enlargement of a non-complying structure.

BZA CASE #2010-0007
31 E. MAPLE STREET
R-2-5, RESIDENTIAL
Robert and Katie Williams, owners: Special exception to enlarge a one-story addition 3.50 feet from the west side yard. If the special exception is granted, the Board of Zoning Appeals will be granting a special exception from section 12-102(A) of the zoning ordinance relating to physical enlargement of a non-complying structure.

BZA CASE #2010-0008
1026 QUEEN STREET
CL, COMMERCIAL
Alabama Avenue, L.C. owner, by Stephen Kulinski, architect: Variances to construct a two story addition 8.00 feet from the front property line facing North Henry Street and 1.25 feet from the east side property line.

BZA CASE #2010-0009
3110 MOUNT VERNON AVENUE
CRM/U/M, COMMERCIAL
Avenue Food Company, t/a Del Merei Grille by Lonnie C. Rich, Esq.: Appeal challenging the Director's determination that the following development applications for the Calvert Development Project (Development Special Use Permit #2009-0006, Transportation Management Plan #2010-0002, Vacation #2009-0001, Master Plan Amendment #2009-0005 and Rezoning #2009-0003) are complete under Section 11-407(B) of the Zoning Ordinance.

BZA CASE #2010-0011
803 SECOND STREET
RB, RESIDENTIAL
Nancy Meyers, owner: Variance to install a residential curbcut in the secondary front yard facing Portner Road. If the variance is granted, the Board of Zoning Appeals will be granting a variance from section 12-102(A) of the zoning ordinance relating to physical enlargement of a non-complying structure.

BZA CASE #2010-0002
1510 ORCHARD STREET
R-8, RESIDENTIAL
William and Susanne Carnell, contract purchasers: Special exception to construct a 2 1/2 story rear addition 5.70 feet from the south side property line. If the special exception is granted, the Board of Zoning Appeals will be granting a special exception from section 12-102(A) of the zoning ordinance relating to physical enlargement of a non-complying structure.

Legal Notices



The City of Alexandria, Virginia

Notice of Proposed Budget For the Year Ending June 30, 2011

The City Manager has recommended a General Operating budget totaling \$534.1 million and an All Funds budget totaling \$655.4 million. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2011 to FY 2020 has been proposed which totals \$612.4 million in City Funding and \$627.7 million in All Funds for this ten year period, including \$82.3 million in proposed City funding for FY 2009 and \$87.7 million in All Funds. The proposed budget and CIP both address the City Council's Strategic Plan in providing to meet the goals of:

1. Quality development and redevelopment that is well planned and consistent with Alexandria's vision.
2. An integrated, multi-modal transportation system that efficiently and effectively gets people from point "A" to point "B."
3. A caring community that is diverse and affordable.
4. A strong local economy that is growing in varied small businesses and job opportunities.
5. A City that respects, protects and enhances the natural environment.
6. A City government that is financially sustainable, efficient and community oriented.
7. Public schools that are among the best in Northern Virginia (in partnership with the Alexandria Schools).
8. A safe community maintained by high quality public safety organizations and judicial administrations.

The proposed rate advertised below is the maximum rate that City Council may approve for use in Calendar Year 2010. City Council may decide to approve a lower rate, and has directed that this rate be advertised only to preserve flexibility. Such flexibility is needed to assess the possible impact on the City's budget of decisions made by the Virginia General Assembly, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and testimony on other possible funding needs requiring a higher real estate tax rate.

The proposed budget and CIP are available for public review in the City's libraries and online at: www.alexandriava.gov/budget

NOTICE OF PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

The tax rate that was proposed in the City Manager's budget was at a rate of \$0.973 per \$100 of assessed value to fund the FY 2011 Proposed Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program. For advertising purposes, the City Council has authorized a proposed general real estate tax levy on all property at the rate of \$0.993 per \$100 of assessed value. The general real estate tax rate may not exceed \$0.993, it could be less, and it will not be set until May 3, 2010.

The City Council has proposed an additional real estate tax levy on commercial property (not including commercial multi-family rental property) at a rate of \$0.03 per \$100 of assessed value. The real estate tax levy on commercial property may not exceed \$1.023, it could be less, and it will not be set until May 3, 2010.

The City of Alexandria proposes to increase the current property tax levies.

1. Assessment Decrease: Total assessed value of real property, excluding additional assessments for new construction, or improvement to property, is less than last year's total assessed value of real property by 6.83 percent.
2. Tax Rate Increase: The City of Alexandria proposes to advertise a real estate tax rate of \$0.993 per \$100 of assessed value. At a real estate tax rate of \$0.993 per \$100 of assessed value, the increase in the real estate rate would be 10.0%. Due to decreasing average assessments, the average residential tax assessment would increase approximately 4.5%. Individual general property taxes may, however, increase at a percentage greater than or less than the above percentage.
3. Proposed Total Budget Decrease: Based on the advertised real property tax rates and changes in other revenues, the total budget of the City of Alexandria (including the General Fund and all Special Revenue grant funds and other sources) will be greater than last year's by 3.5 percent.
4. Impact of Tax Exempt Properties: For 2010, the total estimated value of taxable and non-taxable locally and non-locally assessed real property within the City is \$36.6 billion, with \$1.1 billion as the estimate of the value of non-governmental tax exempt property, \$3.7 billion as the estimate of the value of governmental tax exempt property, and \$31.8 billion as the value of taxable property. The estimated amount of forgone annual real estate taxes from non-governmental tax exempt property is \$10.7 million at the proposed tax rate of \$0.973.

A public hearing on the increases will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2010, at 9:30 a.m., at the City Council Chamber of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia. The hearing shall be open to the public. The governing body shall provide persons desiring to be heard an opportunity to present oral testimony within such reasonable time limits as shall be determined by the governing body.

All persons wishing to speak to this issue may contact the City Clerk and Clerk of Council located on the second floor, Room 2300, City Hall, or may appear and be heard after completing a Speakers form before Council.

Persons with disabilities who wish to request accommodation for this public hearing should contact the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at 746-4550 (TTY/TDD 838-5056) prior to Monday, April 12, 2010, if possible.

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements, or who require language translation services to participate in the City Council meeting may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 746-4550. We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

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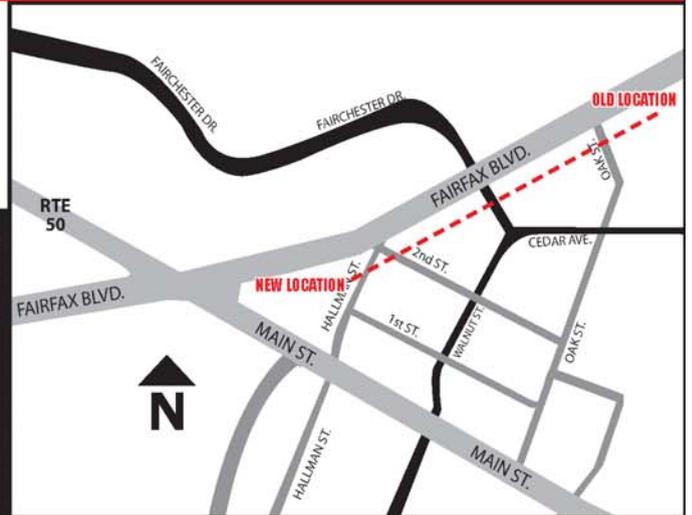
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Rookie Coach Wants Fresh Start for TC

Girls lacrosse program trying to move past problem-plagued 2009 season.

BY JON ROETMAN
GAZETTE PACKET

Caroline Van den Berg smiles when it's mentioned — sort of an awkward acknowledgement — but the rookie head coach doesn't dwell on it.

"It" is the controversy that surrounded the T.C. Williams girls lacrosse program last season. Multiple issues led to the firing of then head coach Jill Clacherty. The 23-year-old Van den Berg, a graduate of St. Stephen's/St. Agnes and Columbia University, took over the program this season and isn't looking back. The first-year coach said she did not address the team about last year's troubles and, with roster turnover leaving only two seniors, Van den Berg said the Titans are focused on 2010.

"We're starting fresh," she said. "We have a really young team [and] we're moving forward."

T.C. Williams opened its season with a 15-11 loss to Washington-Lee on Tuesday

at Howard Field. The Titans displayed some offensive firepower, led by six goals from junior midfielder Anjuli DeWakar, but their late rally fell short. Sophomore midfielder Tiana Barlow scored three goals for T.C. Williams and senior midfielder Justine Johnson added two.

While the Titans would have preferred a win, simply playing could be viewed as a plus.

"I think we played well for our first game [and] we can build off of everything," DeWakar said. "The fact that we scored 11 goals in the first game is pretty good. ... It's just a fresh start because we're coming in with new plays, new coaches, new players — it's kind of a building year, you could say, but it's just good to start off fresh."

DeWakar, along with seniors Katie Newsham and Johnson, are the team's cap-



Caroline Van den Berg enters her first season as head coach of the T.C. Williams girls lacrosse program.

tains. DeWakar and Barlow will likely be the Titans' 1-2 offensive punch.

DeWakar has "got great game sense, really, really good stick skills and heart," Van den Berg said. "She wants to be out there, she wants to win and she wants to play for her team.

... [Barlow is] fast as lightning."

Sophomore Jordan Cirenza is the Titans' goaltender. Junior's Carmen Lodato and Kimberley Rector and sophomores Elizabeth Aguilar, Wendy Calderon and Sarah

Phippen and freshman Sydney Trout play the attack position. Junior Samantha Donis and freshman Hannah Drexler are midfielders, and junior Gena Gillis, sophomores Michaela Lynott and Meghan Okonsky and freshman Charlotte Sackett are defenders.

"I think they played well," Van den Berg said of the Titans' performance Tuesday. "I think they showed a lot of hustle and a lot of really good effort. We definitely have things to work on but that's to be expected

for the first game of the season."

The Titans are back on the field tonight when they travel to face Edison at 7:15 p.m. While the new coach and her players get used to one another, Van den Berg said she is careful not to change everything the athletes are used to.

"We're starting fresh. We have a really young team [and] we're starting over."

— First-year T.C. Williams girls lacrosse coach Caroline Van den Berg

"Instead of having me run the warm-ups," the coach said, "I had the captains decide how to do the warm-ups because certain people do it certain ways. I don't want to mess up if they're into some sort of pregame ritual that they did last year."

Just don't expect many more references to the past.

"That was last season," Van den Berg said, "this is our new season."

SPORTS BRIEFS

T.C. Boys Win Lacrosse Opener

The T.C. Williams boys lacrosse team defeated Washington-Lee 6-3 on Tuesday during its season opener in Arlington.

The Titans led 4-0 at halftime before the Generals came storming back to cut the lead to one. T.C. Williams added a pair of late goals to pull away.

Robin Bomberger scored a pair of goals for the Titans. Ben Bilodeau, Kodie Richards, Kirk Cooper and Jay Whitmire each scored one goal for the Titans.

"We started out a little slow (it was our first full field game since our only scrimmage was cancelled)," T.C. Williams head coach Michael Mulherin said in an e-mail, "but picked it up in the second quarter."

The coach said goalie Cameron Lyons played well. T.C. Williams hosts Edison at 7:15 p.m. today.

Local Football Players Honored

Episcopal defensive back/quarterback Hunter DeButts was recognized on Sunday as the private school Player of the Year by the Fairfax County Football Hall of Fame at its 20th Annual Banquet.

Connor McCulloch of Alexandria Recreation was named the 75-pound National Youth Player of the Year.

T.C. Williams Spring Sports

The T.C. Williams baseball team will host Stonewall Jackson at 6 p.m. Monday at Simpson Field.

The Titans faced Wakefield on Wednesday for both teams' season opener. Results were not available before the Gazette Packet's deadline.

The Titan softball team's home opener is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Monday against George Mason at Boothe Park. T.C. Williams faced Chantilly on the road Wednesday. Results were not available prior to deadline.

The boys tennis team will host Lee and the girls will travel to Lee at 4:30 p.m. Friday.

SSSAS Baseball Hosts BI

The St. Stephen's/St. Agnes baseball team will host Bishop Ireton at 4:30 p.m. today.

Registration Now Open For New Spring Break Soccer Camp

The "Sev Gronlie Peace Camp" is a new soccer camp for elementary-aged children to be held at Carl Sandburg Middle School on the turf soccer field behind the school, March 29-April 2, 9 a.m.-noon. This spring break soccer camp is open to children in kindergarten-sixth grade at a cost of \$100 per child.

Each child will receive a T-shirt and Soccer ball thanks to donations by suppliers. Organizers have designated that 100 percent of the registration funds will go toward Youth Missions at Aldersgate Church. This camp is open to all elementary-aged children in the community. Online registration is now open for this camp at www.aldersgate.net.

5Qs

Five questions with T.C. Williams junior Anjuli DeWakar

Q: What location is the farthest you've traveled from the Washington, D.C. metro area?

A: I've been to India. My dad's from India, so we were visiting family. I also went to Prague this summer to watch the Lacrosse World Cup and play in the Prague Cup.

Q: Who is your favorite music artist?

A: I like Taylor Swift. I relate to all her songs.

Q: What's your favorite movie?

A: "The Notebook." It's girly. It's so cute with the old people and the story. I cry.

Q: Do you have a



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/GAZETTE PACKET

pregame ritual?

A: We just all go in the locker room and listen to music and joke. ... We listen to rap/hip-hop type stuff to pump us up.

Q: What's your favorite food?

A: I like Thai food.

— JON ROETMAN

SEE SPORTS BRIEFS, PAGE 27

SPORTS

FROM PAGE 26

School Receives Healthy School Award

For the first time in three years participating in the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) Healthy Kids Fun Run, George Mason Elementary School of Alexandria has received the Healthy School Award. Students and teachers celebrated their achievement during the award ceremony held at the school on March 4.

The award was presented to George Mason for its student participation in the Healthy Kids Fun Run held on Oct. 24. Having just 25 students take part in the one-mile fun run in 2007, George Mason's participation grew to 170 finishers in 2009 race, resulting in nearly 40 percent involvement of the entire student population.

In addition to the award, George Mason Elementary received a cash donation from Marine Corps Marathon sponsor, Family Magazine of Reston.

Wilson Bridge Half Marathon Set for Sept. 19

The destination half marathon will begin at the historic Mount Vernon home of George Washington in Alexandria and will end at the new National Harbor resort in Maryland. The 13.1-mile course will be USATF certified.

Registration can be found at www.wilsonbridgehalf.com. Entries will be limited to 4,000 starters for the inaugural running.

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SEE SPORTS BRIEFS, PAGE 28



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SPORTS

FROM PAGE 27

Summer Baseball Club of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League is seeking host families for the upcoming 2010 season. All that players will need is a place to sleep and access to a washer and dryer, the Aces take care of everything else. To volunteer as a host family, contact Aces Host Family Coordinator, Hilary Garner, at 202-216-8304, or e-mail Hilary at hilary@alexandriaces.org.

The Alexandria Aces are a part of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League (CRCBL), a wooden bat summer program made up of amateur players from a variety of colleges and universities from throughout the United States. The league is regionally located in the Washington, D.C./Balti-

more metropolitan area. Other teams in the league are Baltimore Redbirds, Bethesda Big Train, Herndon Braves, Rockville Express, Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts, Southern Maryland Nationals and Youse's Maryland Orioles. In September of 2009, the 'Cal Ripken, Sr., Collegiate Baseball League' officially changed its name to the 'Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League'.

During the Fall of 2009, the Redbirds franchise officially changed the geographical name of their franchise from 'Maryland' to 'Baltimore'. The Southern Maryland Nationals will be a new expansion franchise for the CRCBL in 2010. They were formerly called the 'Cardinals', were members of the Clark Griffith Collegiate Baseball League (CGCBL), winning their 2009 league championship.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send announcements to the Alexandria Gazette Packet, by e-mail to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos are encouraged. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

Peter Kraines of Alexandria, a senior majoring in apparel, housing and resource management, marketing management in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, was chosen to be a house supervisor at Virginia Tech for the 2009-10 academic year.

Matthew Quinn of Alexandria, a senior majoring in finance in the Pamplin College of Business, was chosen to be a house supervisor at Virginia Tech for the 2009-10 academic year.

Kathryn Steele of Alexandria, a senior majoring in international studies and French in the

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech, was presented the Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Memorial Scholarship.

Elaina Daoulas of Alexandria has earned placement on the Dean's List at Berklee College of Music for the summer semester of the 2009 academic year.

Wesley Rockwell Fleuchaus of Alexandria was designated a Sarah and James Bowdoin Scholar at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.

Alexandria resident Marjorie Glassco, daughter of Richard and Sarah Glassco, was inducted into Ithaca College's Oracle Honor Society in November. The fall ceremony honors students who have completed their first semester ranked in the top 5 percent of their academic schools. Glassco is a Drama (BA) major.



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21 Announcements 21 Announcements

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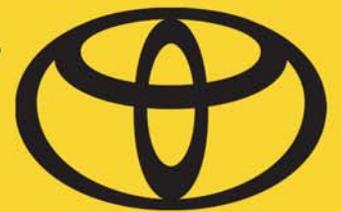
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