

Mount Vernon Gazette

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MARCH 18, 2010



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

90 Years Later Suffragist Mrs. Robert Walker came to life again Saturday morning, March 13, as reenactor Lynne Garvey-Hodge told her story to the AAUW meeting group at the Sherwood Hall Library. In 1917, Mrs. Robert Walker was president of the Baltimore Chapter of the National Women's Party. She picketed the White House with fellow suffragists that year carrying banners among them "How long must women wait for liberty?" Walker was arrested on July 14, 1917 and found guilty of obstructing traffic. A fine of \$25. was levied against Walker and the other protesters. The women refused to pay the fine and were sent to the Occoquan Workhouse in the Lorton prison. The sentence for Walker was 60 days. 123 women served time at the workhouse for demanding suffrage. The 19th Amendment passage was finally proclaimed on Aug. 26, 1920 after Tennessee voted in favor of women's right to vote. In 1952, Virginia ratified the amendment. Garvey-Hodge is the owner of The Canary Cottage Bed & Breakfast in Clifton.

Poorest Air Quality In Region? Here

And state is reducing monitoring stations.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Declaring Fairfax County's four air quality monitors redundant, the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) plans to eliminate using them, relying on its own single site in the Lee District.

DEQ issued an air quality siting report last week announcing that the four sites managed by Fairfax County — located in Mount Vernon, McLean, Chantilly, and

Mason — will no longer be needed as of June 30.

Responding to the state's decision, Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland said, "Discontinuing the use of the air quality monitors by the State DEQ is unacceptable. This is particularly true of plans to shut down the Mt. Vernon air quality monitor which has reported the highest ozone values in the region."

"After years of the state using our data along with theirs and others to report air quality results to the federal EPA in accord with the federal Clean Air Act standard, it makes no sense to all of a sudden

SEE AIR QUALITY, PAGE 24

Transparency Blackout

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

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

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

SEE TRANSPARENCY, PAGE 21

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West Potomac Band's March Madness

The West Potomac High School bands will perform their March Madness concert on Wednesday, March 24 at 7:30 pm in the Springbank Auditorium. This free annual concert features various marches, and is always a lively event, with guest conductors and guest musicians from the community.

During the concert, buckets will be passed to collect donations, and Steve Rice, the band director, conducts a live auction, with the winner given the opportunity to conduct the band as they perform "Stars and Stripes Forever."

All proceeds from the donations and the live auction go to the Christopher J. Cutting Memorial Scholarship Fund. This fund was established by Christopher Cutting's parents on Aug. 12, 1977 to commemorate Christopher's love for band music. Christopher Cutting was born Nov. 8, 1957 and died in a tragic accident July 31, 1977. He was a member of the Fort Hunt High School Band and served as drum major in 1976. This fund is a perpetual memorial to Christopher and provides financial support whereby other serious music students may have the opportunity to receive private instruction that is critical to musical excellence.

Bank Robbery in Penn Daw Area

Police are investigating a bank robbery that occurred on Tuesday, March 9 shortly after 11:30 a.m. A man entered the TD Bank, located at 6615 Richmond Highway, and approached a 22-year-old woman behind the counter. He implied he had a weapon and demanded money. The victim complied and the suspect exited with an undisclosed amount of cash. The victim did not require medical attention.

The suspect was described as black, in his 30s to 40s; about 5 feet 6 inches tall with a medium build. He was wearing a yellow construction hat, a dark sweat shirt, and blue jeans.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Employee Robbed at Gas Station

An employee of the Liberty Gas Station, located at 7501 Richmond Highway, was robbed on Friday, March 12. Around 8:37 p.m., a man walked into the store, pointed a gun at the 20-year-old man and demanded money. The suspect grabbed an undisclosed amount of money and fled on foot toward Arlington Drive.

The suspect was described as black, between 25 and 30 years old. He was about 6 feet 2 inches tall and between 225 and 260 pounds. He had brown eyes, short, black, hair in dreads and wore a black jacket and dark blue jeans.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Flood Updates for Public Safety

Although floodwaters are expected to recede soon, the public should still use extreme caution to avoid areas of standing water, mud, and/or obstructions along the Mount Vernon Trail and on many other park trails for at least a few days to a week or more, according to the National Park Service.

Commuters and recreationists who use the Mount Vernon Trail should consider alternate routes as some areas of the trail are still flooded and may be very slippery due to mud and silt. Visitors are asked to avoid areas of high water in open parks and respect all closures, as parts of trails and other low-lying sections of parks along the George Washington Memorial Parkway may still be closed.

For updated information, call 703-289-2500 from 7:45 a.m.-4:15 p.m. from Monday through Friday for details about Theodore Roosevelt Island, the Mount Vernon Trail, and many park sites located along the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Behind the Platters

Mount Vernon restaurants receive mixed reviews from health inspectors.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

When a state health-code inspector arrived at the Mount Vernon Inn back in December, he compiled a list of eight critical violations. Several of the violations were for a chlorine solution used to sanitize pots and pans, which the inspector said was too strong. One was for an empty paper coffee cup that had been left on a bottom shelf in the production area. Manager Bud Robertson described most of the violations as technical in nature, not the kind of thing that should bother diners at the restaurant at the edge of George Washington's plantation estate.

"It's true that we had eight critical violations in December, but that's misleading in a way," said Robertson. "My concern is that people will see this and assume we have some kind of problem with vermin when we don't."

The only violation that caused some concern to Robertson was the one involving temperature of a sauce that was to be used with turkey. The health-code rules say the temperature needs to drop to a certain temperature by a certain time in order to prevent the growth of bacteria. Robertson said that the Mount Vernon Inn missed the goal by a few degrees, and that the restaurant has now changed its policy to prevent that kind of problem from happening in the future.

"This is something we take very seriously," he said, adding that the kitchen recently received a \$150,000 remodel.

SINCE 1948, RESTAURANTS across Virginia have been subjected to health-code inspections. The documents are readily available online, including detailed information about specific violations and results of follow-up visits. The Consumer Affairs Committee Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Association recently selected a handful of restaurants and reviewed recent inspections. Chairwoman Queenie Cox said the experience taught her to pay more attention when dining out.

"I certainly pay a lot more attention to what my waiters and waitresses are doing now," said Cox. "I don't know what they're doing in the back, but at least I can keep an eye on them when they're out front."

According to the Virginia Department of Health, the most common violation is the improper handling of potentially hazardous foods, which must be kept in holding at specific temperatures. State officials say this is one of the most important aspects to the work of restaurant inspections because catching violators can save lives.

"Basically, we're looking for anything that might contribute to food-borne illness," said Cassandra Mitchell, an environmental supervisor with the Fairfax County Department of Health. "I would say the most common violation is holding food at incorrect temperatures."

FOR RESTAURANT OWNERS, the idea of a health-code inspector showing up unannounced is

Inspections

Restaurant	Inspection Month	Critical Violations	Non-Critical Violations
Mount Vernon Inn	December	8	0
Marino's Pizza & Sub	November	7	8
Mike's Italian	December	7	1
Cedar Knoll	December	6	18
Magic Wok	October	6	8
Pema's	January	5	0

SOURCE: Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association

Going Out To Eat?

Health-code inspections for every restaurant in Virginia are public documents, readily available online. To view reports from any restaurant, visit vdh.state.va.us.

a lingering anxiety. Each Virginia restaurant generally receives one to four inspections per year, depending on the complexity of the menu, how much food is made from raw products and how much is made in advance rather than cooked-to-order. Some restaurant managers say interpreting the health-code guidelines can be a subjective, changing with the whims of individual inspectors on a given day.

"Most of the violations are something simple, like the trash can should be here instead of there," said Beatrice Flores, manager at Cedar Knoll Inn on the Potomac. "Several of the recent violations were for having the wrong temperature in the dishwasher, which is not our fault because that's the responsibility of the company we lease the dishwasher from."

"Basically, we're looking for anything that might contribute to food-borne illness."

— Cassandra Mitchell,
Fairfax County Department of Health

As with many states, Virginia evaluates restaurants on critical violations and non-critical violations, with the more serious designation reserved for those that pose a direct or immediate threat to the safety of the food being served. Non-critical violations represent a failure of cleaning or maintenance. Reports from all inspections are available on the Health Department's Web site, but officials warn that the violations noted in the reports might not be as bad as they seem.

"It's a snapshot," said Mitchell. "Our bigger concern is catching the violators that make the same mistakes over and over again."

Health officials warn the inspection reports are merely a snapshot of the day and time of the inspection. On any given day, they say, a restaurant could have fewer or more violations than noted in the report. Other times, violations that are noted on the report are corrected during the inspection. In many cases, restaurants can acquire a large amount of violations when follow-up inspections are conducted after routine inspections, sometimes occurring after a day or two.

Different Kind of 'Young Professional'

Local children and teenagers launch their show business careers early in life.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

Think of the Helen Hayes Awards as the Washington D.C. professional theater community's local version of the Tony Awards. To be nominated for the honor means an actor gave one of the best performances or was part of one the best shows of the year in this region.

So the fact that Rachel Boyd was part of the Signature Theatre "Les Miserables" cast that won the Helen Hayes Award for outstanding musical ensemble last year is a big deal. And Rachel is now part of the "Show Boat" ensemble at Signature, nominated for the same award again.

The Fairfax resident has had the type of critical and professional success that many actors have to wait years to accumulate. But at only eight years old, she hasn't exactly been toiling away at her craft as a starving artist for years.

While another child might talk about joining the local soccer game, Rachel said she participates in professional shows because it is "cool." She doesn't get nervous when she is, for example, singing "Castle on a Cloud" as Cosette in "Les Miserables," despite the fact that it is one of the most recognizable musical theater moments of all time.

LOCAL THEATRES have a need for talented children and young adults to play age appropriate roles. And Northern Virginia is home to many families who invest time and money on talent agents, dance classes and voice coaches so their children stand a better chance of landing a role in a production



A Christmas Carol (Kent is in the center playing Tiny Tim)

at the likes of Arena Stage or The Kennedy Center.

If a child is lucky enough to be cast in a role, it can devour hours of both the child's and the parents' time, going to and from rehearsals and performances that can run four hours on a week night and up to 12 hours on the weekend. It can be exhausting for everyone involved.

"This is all new to me. I was in athletics growing up and I don't remember it taking up this much time. My daughter spends three or four times as many hours on a production than I ever did at sports practice," said Tom Weichbrodt, whose teenage daughter Angela was in "That Face" at the Studio Theatre downtown. The family lives in Belle Haven.

Most families said it is the child, not the family, who is the driving force behind devoting so much time and energy trying out and performing in professional productions.

"She goes to bed after a rehearsal or a show at midnight and gets up at 6 a.m. for school. I can't remember the last time she hung out with her friends. I don't know that many high school students who would be willing to give up time with their friends to

do anything," said Weichbrodt.

Still, some parents, particularly those with younger children, said they had a few reservations about getting their child involved in professional productions, which require being out late on several school nights.

When Kent Jenkins III, now 13 years old, was part of The Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of "Richard III" a few years ago, he had to perform in 72 shows in 74 days.

The demanding schedule caused Kent, who also plays sports, to drop off his ice hockey team for a good portion of the season. When the show was running that winter, Kent, as fourth grader, didn't step off stage until 10:30 p.m. and usually got home around midnight on school nights.

"It is a real, significant commitment of time and energy and you do worry if it is simply just too much. But what we have found is that he really enjoys doing the shows. It is a lot of fun for him and he handles all the work just fine," said Kent Jenkins Jr., whose son also starred as Tiny Tim for two seasons in Ford Theater's "A Christmas Carol."

In some cases, children also have more flexibility in their schedule because their families have chosen to home school them.

"I actually enjoy teaching her myself and it helps with the scheduling. If she on stage until 11, she doesn't have to turn around and get up at 7 a.m. the next morning. We can also accommodate the other actors in the show because we can do daytime rehearsals and stuff like that," said Lori Boyd, mother of Rachel Boyd.

Brian Reimer, now a sophomore at Georgetown Day School in Washington D.C., was also home schooled earlier and

said the flexibility benefited his interest in acting. Reimer also played Tiny Tim in Ford's "A Christmas Carol" and had a part in a Kennedy Center production of "Hecuba." "Because I was homeschooled I could go to extra rehearsals or early rehearsals and just watch the other actors, who were really really good at what they did, work," said Reimer.

OTHER PARENTS, like Jenkins, said their children benefit from attending school.

"Kent is very social and a very outgoing guy. He likes being in school and it wouldn't be right to deprive him of that experience," said Jenkins, who added that his son's school, Burgundy Farms Country Day School, had been very flexible about homework and other matters when Kent is in the middle of a show.

When Kent first started auditioning for professional shows, Jenkins said he was extremely concerned about the amount of rejection his son would receive and the toll that might take on his self esteem as a child.

"It was a big, big concern of mine. But happily, he figured out early on that he shouldn't take those things too personally and so he just kind of shrugs it off," said Jenkins.

Kent said he tries not to think about shows where he doesn't get call backs or gets a call back but ultimately doesn't get the part.

"The best way to handle it is not to think about it. Rejection doesn't mean you were bad. It just means that you weren't necessarily what they were looking for," said Kent.

There is no better insight for a child or a young adult into what it is like to try and make a living as a performer than to work on a professional production, said several students and parents.

At 13, Kent said his experience working with adult actors has made him doubtful about whether he would want to pursue an acting career. "It is certainly a fun hobby but pursuing acting as a career is really hard. You have look for work every few months and the pressure and the stress from that could get nerve racking," said Kent.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FORD'S THEATRE

Gift of Giving



Mr. and Mrs. Mauk speak with Dr. Sridharan Gururangan, director of Pediatric Clinical Services at Duke University Medical Center's The Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center, during the Gift of Giving benefit dinner at Belle Haven Country Club on Saturday, Feb. 20. All net proceeds will be donated to the center and designated for children's brain cancer research.



The Alexandria Choral Society performs during the benefit dinner to honor brain cancer survivor Holden Mauk, a 6th grader at St. Stephens and St. Agnes School in Alexandria.



Thomas Winburn, Dokken Shapero, Barrett Guess, Thomas Fleming, Andrew Farlow, Will Kaufman, Turner Schmidt, brain cancer survivor Holden Mauk, and Owen Early.

PHOTOS BY LASHAWN AVERY/THE GAZETTE

Writing about Alzheimer's

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Profile

MELVIN R. BIELAWSKI

Age: 83

Occupation: Retired

Family: Wife, Frances (the former Franciska Ponn, native of Berchtesgaden, Germany) who he has been married to since August, 1947

Children: Three sons: Robert, Gregory and David

Passion: Caring for his chronically ill wife, Frances

Most Recent Accomplishment:

Published memoir of life with his wife and caring for her while she battles Alzheimer's disease. The title of this 2010 book is: "Diagnosis: Alzheimer's: My Travels with Frances". Other published works include: "Secession;" "P.O.W. Camp 78, Zuffenhausen, Germany;" "A World War 2 ERA, German/American Love Story," and "The Corner".

Military Service: U.S. Army, medical corps service in Europe where he met and married his wife in Germany after the end of WW II. He points out that his marriage was one of the first American-German marriages allowed by General Eisenhower after the war with Germany ended. Previously, American soldiers were prohibited from marrying German nationals.



PHOTO BY GERALD A. FILL/GAZETTE

Frances and Mel Bielawski

Frances and her friend at the roadside and quickly realized that she was about to be run over by this out-of-control car. In the nick of time I pulled her out of the way and saved her life. That incident (she agreed to meet me in the village to go dancing) triggered over a half century love affair with Frances that continues today. It is a privilege and honor for me to care for her now when she needs me the most. For years she has been there for me, our sons, and others. Now it is my time for me to care for her. I am blessed with the good health and financial wherewithal to be in a position to care for her.

tion. The next thing that happened, in retrospect, was a miracle of coincidence. An Army sedan suddenly showed up while I and a friend were talking to

Melvin R. Bielawski, 83, of Mount Vernon is the author of a memoir, "Diagnosis: Alzheimer's: My Travels with Frances," published by Author House, 2010. His memoir is dedicated to his wife and all others afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, and intended to be an insight on his experiences with the disease and for anyone else coping with a loved one so afflicted. This memoir is available through the Hollin Hall Senior Center or the Sherwood Hall Library locally.

Q. You said that Frances was first diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six years ago. What prompted you to seek a doctor's diagnosis?

A. She was becoming very forgetful. Previously she was very organized and could multitask easily and effectively. It got to the point that she couldn't remember what she had done in the previous hour. She also began to get lost coming home here in Stratford Landing where she has lived for the past 40 years. A brain scan and MRI confirmed the diagnosis of initially as mild cognitive impairment. But this was merely the tipping point which eventually progressed to Alzheimer's. This was a terrible blow for her and all of her family. Throughout her life she was very active physically and socially. She was up until fairly recently the picture of good health both physically and mentally.

Q. What did you do then?

A. Our doctor recommended administering two drugs to slow or arrest the progression of the disease. Right now it is incurable. The best that can be accomplished is to slow its progression. I would like to think that early detection and treatment gave Frances and her family some precious time before she declined into her present state. Right now she doesn't recognize me or her sons, stopped reading, no longer is fully aware of her surroundings, nor can she interact with me or anyone else in any consistently coherent manner. The drugs she took were Aricept, and Namenda.

Q. What is the most painful aspect for you of her disease?

A. No recognition of me or her family. Sometimes she does, but more often than not there is little or no recognition of me, her family, or her surroundings. She is very confused about where she is, and what to do with herself. This disease robbed her of who she is, of her personality. Formerly, she was a loving, caring, and compassionate person. A joy to live with. We had a wonderful marriage and I cherish every moment of the memories I have had of our relationship, raising three sons, and enjoying life with her.

Q. How did you first meet her?

A. I first noticed her and was instantly smitten by Frances when I saw her at a roadside village area of Koenigsee in post- WW II Germany. At first, she would have nothing to do with me for, after all, she was a native of Germany and lived through a terrible war, and I was American and part of the occupa-

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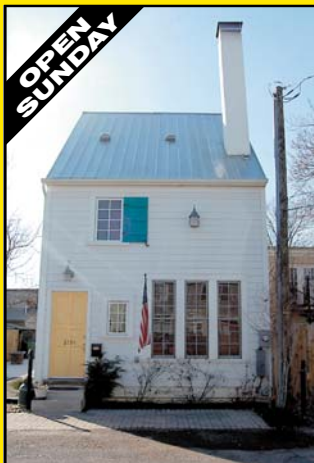
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An Opportunity To Treat Oneself

Local women open shop specializing in designer cakes, cupcakes.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

It may not be as ubiquitous as the latte, but the gourmet cupcake has definitely become commonplace in the Washington D.C. region.

Most of the area's high-end entertainment districts have at least one store that specializes in cupcakes. The list of local purveyors includes Red Velvet Cupcakery in Dupont Circle and Penn Quarter, Georgetown Cupcake in Georgetown and Bethesda, Baked & Wired in Georgetown, Hello Cupcake in Dupont Circle, Lavender Moon Cupcakery in Alexandria and Alexandria Cupcake in Old Town.

These shops are not particularly helpful for customers trying to tighten their belts, physically or metaphorically, during the recession. The decadent desserts are about the same size as cupcakes

found at the local PTA bake sale but usually cost between \$2 and \$4 per item.

Occasionally Cake, which opened in Mount Vernon in July, is not tremendously different from other upscale bakeries in the region.

Owners Sabrina Campbell and Marcia Crandall charge \$2.75 for a "basic flavor" cupcake and \$3.50 for a "specialty flavor" cupcake. The pair also creates one-of-a-kind, decorative designer cakes for patrons on a made-to-order that typically range from \$100 to \$200 in price but can exceed \$1,000.

But what sets Campbell and Crandall apart from other high-end cake shops is the location of their storefront.

While other gourmet cupcake outlets have settled amongst designer clothing boutiques and fine dining restaurants in communities with heavy pedestrian traffic, Campbell and Crandall opened up



PHOTO BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE/GAZETTE

Mount Vernon residents Marcia Crandall and Sabrina Campbell opened Occasionally Cake on Richmond Highway last summer.

Occasionally Cake in a strip mall on Richmond Highway, next to pizza parlor and across from a Roy Rogers fast food restaurant.

"People are very excited to have something new and upscale here. ... There is really nothing like us in Mount Vernon," said Campbell, who graduated from Edison High

School and has lived in the Mount Vernon area for the past eight years.

FAIRFAX COUNTY has struggled, in recent years, to attract high-end retail shops like Occasionally Cake to Richmond
SEE LOCAL WOMEN, PAGE 16

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OPINION

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.

EDITORIAL

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

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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— MARY KIMM,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Become An Umpire

To the Editor:

Some 15 years ago, I had a life-altering experience — I signed up to become a Little League umpire. Volunteer activity, supporting my son's interest in baseball — sure. But life-altering? Let me explain.

The original reason I signed up was to fulfill the volunteer requirement associated with registering my son to play. Like other parents, I felt I had a good understanding of the rules of baseball, and of course could accurately tell what

a ball and strike was from 30 feet away in the stands. In rapid succession, I learned that many of the ideas I had about rules amounted to urban myths — any doctor can tell you that the hand is not a part of the bat; in close plays, a tie doesn't go to the runner (there is no such thing as a tie.) I learned that coaches generally don't know the rules, and that they don't practice what to do in an infield fly situation. I learned that umpiring is a great way to keep in touch with neighbors, many of whom become life-long friends as a result.

But the most amazing thing I

learned was that becoming an umpire gives you a unique view of youth baseball and the children who play the game. Interestingly, the umpire is the only adult allowed on the field when the game is underway. Dressed as we are, you'd think that we'd stand out like sore thumbs. In fact, the exact opposite is true — umpires become invisible. The players forget we're there, and say things to each other that they'd never say if they remembered an adult was around. Some of it is just unguarded silliness, but more often than you'd think they convey a sense of real sportsmanship and friendship with

each other. They sometimes take the game too seriously, but most of the time, they are just having a good time. Youth is such a fleeting thing, and the pressures on young people seem to grow with every passing year. When my son was 12 and his team was playing for the championship, I told the team that in 10 years, they'd forget what the score of the game was, but they'd remember that it was a sunny day, the grass was green and they were playing baseball with their friends.

As the years went by, my son grew up, went to college, got a job. But my love of umpiring grew beyond an obligation into one of the things I most look forward to doing. It was a bond in my family that helped us weather the difficult parts of real life. I've seen a generation of fine young people begin to play baseball together, use the baseball experience to avoid some of the pitfalls of young adulthood, and grow into wonderful adults. I see some of them in Safeway and around Fort Hunt from time to time, and even though they are over six feet tall now, they still remember their days in Fort Hunt Little League and the games we participated in together.

Umpires are as essential to the game of Little League baseball as well attended fields and dedicated coaches. Yet today, not enough

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 10

\$2,200 Raised for Haiti

Mt. Vernon Jazzercisers raised \$2,200 for Partners in Health Stand with Haiti by staging a benefit dance-fitness class Feb. 20. According to Jazzercise instructor and benefit organizer Mindy LaBruno, Partners in Health will use the donations for medical care and medical supplies for thousands of homeless earthquake victims. Held at Hollin Hall Center, the event drew 57 participants. Above are: Dawn Patillo, Harmony Allen, Jenny Farrar, Mindy LaBruno, and Peggy Frydenlund. For more information on Jazzercise contact LaBruno at 703-765-0142.



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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

parents of young players are signing up to become umpires, preferring to stay in the stands and watch their kids play. Many worry that umpiring would be difficult, or too great a commitment of time. Some worry that umpiring is stressful with all the voices in the stands. Like my original view of the rules, nothing could be farther from the truth. Umpiring takes as much or as little time as you can give it. Umpiring makes coaches more effective. But most of all, umpiring allows you to become an impor-

tant and unique part of one of the most enjoyable parts of your children's lives.

I was talking to one of my fellow umpires before a game last fall, and he mentioned that he had set the goal that he would umpire until he turned 70, and that he had just reached that point. As I get older, I can live without a lot of things in life. But umpiring is not one of the things I am willing to give up.

If you have a child playing youth baseball, please consider becoming an umpire.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11



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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

Final Budget: Small Victories, Misplaced Priorities

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
DELEGATE (D-44)



The General Assembly on March 14 approved a two-year budget that abandons our core responsibilities and is fiscally irresponsible. I voted against it. While the budget, now with Governor McDonnell, reflects improvements made after many of us lobbied for our priorities and after our state senators pressed for some rationality, the final product was disappointing.

Before this session, \$7 billion had already been cut from the budget. We needed to find \$2.1 billion more to balance it as the state constitution requires.

Fairfax County received a record amount of money from the state and was only one of a handful of jurisdictions to receive any

increased education funding. While we won a victory for Fairfax County that was a small step in the right direction, I was deeply disturbed by \$250 million in reductions from statewide K-12 education.

The budget restored 250 Medicaid waiver slots for the disabled to be cared for in their homes, but also cut payments to health care providers by \$150 million. This will jeopardize coverage for Mount Vernon's low-income residents and increase rates for anyone with private insurance.

The Budget Conferees heeded my request to leave Mason Neck State Park open. However, they also "adjusted" retirement formulas, "borrowed" \$650 million in cash from the state retirement plan and promised to repay it with interest in the future. "Bor-

RICHMOND REPORT

rowing" from the retirement plans is why California is in a downward spiral and now paying its retirees with "IOUs." Many of us worry that Virginia's strong AAA bond rating is in jeopardy.

The budget also fulfilled the Governor's request of \$50 million for wine promotion, movie production and corporate incentives. These are not core government responsibilities when we are cutting education, public safety and safety net services like health care.

The House Democratic Caucus was given a 60-minute budget "briefing" along with 300 pages of amendments at 3 p.m. on Sunday with a vote scheduled for 5 p.m. Not only did I feel that this was unfair to legislators who had to vote responsibly, I thought it was an insulting way to treat the public. The people of Virginia were more interested in this budget than any

other of the last 80 years and the people had 120 minutes on a Sunday afternoon to evaluate 300 pages of changes and send legislators their views.

While many of us fought for two months to improve this budget and achieved some victories, I believe this budget was balanced on the backs of low-income people, the uneducated, the sick and disabled, state retirees, college students and their families and the criminal justice system. My grandfather who struggled through the Depression used to say you can pay a little bit now or a lot more later. Therefore, I and 23 other delegates voted "no."

I hope you will continue to share your views and suggestions. Please email me at DelSSurovell@house.Virginia.gov or call at 571-249-44TH (4484). Also check my blog (scottsurovell.blogspot.com). It is an honor to serve as your delegate. I hope to continue to earn your trust.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 10

Take the first step out of a sense of obligation. I guarantee that you will continue because it will give you much more than you can imagine.

John Donaldson
Alexandria

John Donaldson is a former president of Fort Hunt Little League, an Assistant District Administrator of the ten Little Leagues of Virginia's District Nine, but above all an active umpire.

Conflicting With Bylaws

To the Editor:

In an earlier letter to the editor, I made reference to Article VI, Section 6, of the MVCCA Bylaws, which states the following:

"In order to maintain the nonpartisan status and reputation of the Mount Vernon Council, no person who is an employee of, candidate for, or holding an elective or appointive policy-determining position with Fairfax County or who is an officer of a political party may serve as an officer or a member of the Board of Directors."

In the context of that Bylaw provision, I pointed out that at least two members of the MVCCA Board of Directors were members of the APR Task Force and that another was a member of the Fairfax County Wetlands Board. At the next MVCCA Council meeting after my letter had been published, Supervisor Gerry Hyland stood up and announced his view that the APR Task Force is not a policy-determining Board and, as such, he saw no issue with concurrent service on the MVCCA Board of Directors and the APR Task Force. My position was supported in a letter to the editor by former state Del. Frank Medico who pointed out that he had been involved in enacting the quoted Bylaw provision during his earlier tenure as an MVCCA co-chair.

No further mention was made of the

MVCCA Board member, Elizabeth Martin, who is also a member of the Fairfax County Wetlands Board (FCWB). If anyone doubts that membership on the FCWB is a policy-determining position in Fairfax County, one need only visit the following link on the Fairfax County website:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/environment/finallivingshoreline.pdf>.

The link is to a document titled "A Guide to the Applicant's Statement of Justification for Shoreline Alteration/Stabilization in Tidal Wetlands & Additional Submission Requirements." Within that document is a section titled "Wetlands Board Policies" and begins by stating "The Fairfax County Wetlands Board has adopted the following policies for considering applications for permits" Among the policies adopted by the FCWB are those directed to "Mitigation," "Compensation," "Determination of Wetlands Loss," and "Living Shorelines." There can be no further doubt that membership on the FCWB is a policy-determining position with Fairfax County.

So long as Ms. Martin remains as chairman of the MVCCA's Environment and Recreation Committee and, as such, is a member of its Board of Directors, by the MVCCA's own Bylaws, the MVCCA has forfeited the right to claim that it is a non-partisan organization of good reputation. Perhaps the 59-member organizations of the MVCCA should have something to say about this situation.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Don't Vote For Health Care

To the Editor:

An open letter to U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly.
Dear Representative Connolly:

I am writing to urge you to vote "No" on the senate health care bill being presented

to the House of Representatives for passage. This bill is bad for Virginia and bad for our country.

I have read the US Constitution many times. I assure you: The federal government has no right to revoke our freedom to choose how we care for ourselves and our families. It has no right to interfere with the free market system that has defined our economy since our founding. It has no right to collect our personal information. It has no right to force us to pay for medical procedures we consider immoral and reprehensible.

I and a majority of my fellow Americans are perfectly happy to fund our own health care such as we see fit. We are perfectly happy, in fact eager, to exercise charity towards others who are not as fortunate, but on our own terms. I object to the federal government forcing me and my family into programs in which I do not choose to participate nor do I wish to fund!

We can agree that there are problems with the current system. A government takeover is not the answer. Instead, let's look for solutions to the high cost of medical malpractice and other medical litigation. Let's repeal or eliminate the federal mandates that drive up the cost of and limit the innovation in pharmaceutical development. Let's encourage the free market to resolve the problem of coverage for pre-existing conditions. Let's trust individuals to take personal responsibility for their own health and wellness.

A yes vote by you on this bill guarantees that I and no doubt thousands of others in District 11 will work tirelessly to replace you with a congressman who truly represents the best interests of Virginia's District 11. The latest polls indicate that you are trailing your prospective opponent. I will personally do everything in my power to ensure that you are not a sitting congressman after the November 2010 election.

J Farnsworth
Constituent, Virginia District 11

What's Wrong With This War?

To the Editor:

I read all of the papers, watch television and listen to the radio, but I am having trouble understanding the war.

Maybe some knowledgeable member of Congress will help me out. I have always understood that the U.S. is the most powerful nation in the world. The Pentagon has over 25,000 educated and intelligent residents (excluding hundreds of thousands of highly paid consultants).

We have West Point, the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy turning out highly trained men and women every year. The oceans are full of our aircraft carriers, battleships and submarines.

We have over 700 military bases located all over the world. We have thousands of military aircraft, drones and cruise missiles positioned all over the world capable of striking within a moment's notice.

We have a tremendous number of factories manufacturing war equipment every day to provide our troops with all of the best equipment. Now our enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq have none of these things. These hostile forces consist of modest numbers of uneducated men clad in dirty sheets while living in caves and bombed out rubble, probably without electricity, or running water. Yet, they're able to kill and wound our men and women in significant numbers while bankrupting our Treasury!

What scares the hell out of me is, many of the countries in the world are larger and more populous and better armed than Afghanistan or Iraq. So, should the U.S. decide to attack and invade yet another country, perhaps "victory" would be even more elusive than ever before. And, theoretically they could defeat the U.S.

Wendel Allen
Alexandria

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

Solving Wet Basement Problems

Tips for the homeowner to avoid contractor rip-offs.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

The recent heavy snowfall and now the soaking rains in the Washington metro area has created flood conditions in many low-lying areas of northern Virginia and elsewhere in the metro region and now pose a myriad of maintenance problems for homeowners. Why? Because heavy snows and rain have saturated the soil.

The result is many area homes with basements will begin to collect water around the foundation. Check out your basement. Is your basement wet, flooded? Well, all you need to do is go to the phone book or go online and there are a number of landscapers, excavators, gutter and downspout specialists, and waterproofing contractors listed who will promise to solve your wet basement problem. Just call one up and invite them over to analyze your problem and do the work. Problem solved, right? Maybe, but wait.

Watch out for unscrupulous contractors willing to offer a solution at a high cost that may not solve your problem in the long run. So, what is a homeowner to do? The answer is don't panic, and perform the due diligence homework to make sure you are pursuing the right strategy to solve your wet basement problem permanently.

The trick is to select an ethical licensed contractor who can solve your problem and not be duped by contractors willing to take your money to do a job which may still leave you with a wet basement problem.

Beware of specialists in the landscaping, excavation, roofing, and waterproofing fields who propose their specialty as the key to preventing a wet or flooded basement — even if it is not the correct solution for your problem.

Here are some Dos, and Donts to keep in mind when preparing to solve your wet basement problem:

DO: Make certain that you and your contractor diagnose the problem accurately. A sewer back up or a flooded river coming in the front door is not going to be prevented in the future by a home improvement contractor. Floods caused by storm sewer back-ups are the responsibility of the government jurisdiction where you live. You can minimize the damage, but not solve it. However, if the gutter was clogged and overflowed into a stairwell or window well, or the ground was so saturated that the basement's cinder block walls oozed water, or the water cascaded over the top of a poured concrete wall, or through observable cracks in the foundation wall or floor then you have the basis for practical solutions that can be solved by you and/or a licensed contractor.

DO: Unless you are certain that you know

the source of the wet basement problem invite competitive bids by more than one type of contractor. It will be required by you, the homeowner, to select the right contractor to prevent the problem from happening again. It is buyer beware out there. Landscapers are going to swear that your problem is drainage and landscape related. The excavator is going to tell you that the only way to prevent the flooded basement in the future is to dig up and expose and reseal the outside foundation wall all the way to the footer. Likewise the waterproofer is going to say that you need a "french drain" (inside the basement; a subslab footer drain) that is graded to a sump pump as the only way to solve your wet basement problem. Each one may, depending on your situation, be correct.

So, what is a homeowner to do? You are not an expert. How to choose from among the different contractors out there? There is no magic bullet to this puzzle. Ultimately you will be faced with making a common sense decision based on the facts you gather and what bidding contractors say you need. Here are the steps to a good decision:

Step 1: Get more than one estimate from more than one type of contractor if you are uncertain as to the reason for the basement leak. Check references; licenses; ask whether your jurisdiction requires a government permit for the type of work they

are proposing.

Step 2: Do your own analysis while soliciting contractor bids; is it a maintenance-related issue: clogged gutters; downspouts, no downspout extensions, clogged or absent window wells, stairwells, or poor or non-existent backfilling against foundation walls. All of these lend themselves to either cleanup and maintenance actions, or specific installations. But, it may not require costly contractor installation.

Step 3: If the analysis doesn't result in a finding of specific maintenance issues then you are most likely looking at landscaping; excavation; or waterproofing and sump pump installation or a combination of these proposals. Some contractors may do all of the services required. In this case it is best to not only listen to the various contractor proposals but to also assess the warranty or guarantee that comes with their work. Is it in writing and is it specific to the work performed in the area it is to be performed? The difference between a warranty and a service contract is that a warranty should be unconditional and not require an annual fee or a transfer with title of the property fee. Read the warranty language carefully. Also, check out the contractor's service record carefully before selecting a contractor.

The writer was president of a Washington metropolitan area waterproofing contractor company from 1984-2005.



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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 11

Real Threat

To the Editor:

Climate Change is real and the threat to humanity is real. Do not impede efforts taken to ensure humanity's survival.

Michael Gary
Alexandria

BULLETIN BOARD

To have a notice listed, e-mail gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

MARCH 22-23

AARP Driver Safety Class. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$12/AARP members and \$14/non-AARP members. At Kingstowne Center for Active Adults, 6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria. Call 703-550-0134, TTY 711

TUESDAY/MARCH 23

Caregiving 101. 7-9 p.m. Learn about resources and get useful information to help you begin the caregiver journey. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 24

What Kids Don't Reveal, What Parents Need to Know. 7 p.m. Learn how to talk to kids and answer their questions about drugs and alcohol. Hear Joseph Califano, father of five and founder of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, talk about "How To Raise A Drug-Free Kid." At T.C. Williams Auditorium, 3330 King Street, Alexandria.

THURSDAY/MARCH 25

Supporting Caregivers of Veterans. 7-9 p.m. Find information on resources available to veterans and their caregivers. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Call 703-765-4573.

SATURDAY/MARCH 27

Open House. 2-4 p.m. At Alexandria Academy (400 South Washington Street Alexandria). Learn more about Alexandria Academy, a new independent classical day school opening for grades 5-8 in Old Town, Alexandria. Academy Headmaster Thomas Soule will be available to answer your questions. Visit www.alexandria-academy.org.

Civil War Sesquicentennial

Community Meeting. 9 a.m. to noon. At the North Lodge Room of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria.

TUESDAY/MARCH 30

BRAC and Beyond. 8:45-11:30 a.m. \$15/person in advance. Business seminar on stimulating business growth. Speakers include Austin Durrer, Chief of Staff for Congressman Jim Moran; Col. Mark Moffatt, Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation and BRAC at Fort Belvoir; and Bridget Bean, Director, Washington Metropolitan Office, Small Business Administration. At Best Western Mount Vernon, 8751 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. RSVP to 703-360-5008 or info@sfdc.org.

Joanne F. Domson, M.D., F.A.A.P. and Saba Samee, MD.

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- Eliminate outreach services for the disabled, homebound and senior center residents
- Reduce services for children and teens
- Cut the library budget by nearly 1/3 over two years
- Make per resident library spending for Fairfax County the lowest in the DC Metro area

Help Save Library Services

Sign our petition at <http://tiny.cc/fcpl>

Contact the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

- **Chairman, At-Large** — Sharon Bulova 703-324-2321 chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Braddock** — John C. Cook 703-425-9300 braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Dranesville** — John W. Foust 703-356-0551 dranesville@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Hunter Mill** — Catherine M. Hudgins 703-478-0283 hntmill@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Lee** — Jeff C. McKay 703-971-6262 leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Mason** — Penelope A. Gross, Vice Chairman 703-256-7717 mason@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Mount Vernon** — Gerald W. Hyland 703-780-7518 mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Providence** — Linda Q. Smyth 703-560-6946 provdist@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Springfield** — Pat Herrity 703-451-8873 springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Sully** — Michael R. Frey 703-814-7100 sully@fairfaxcounty.gov

Residents of Fairfax City contact the Mayor and City Council mayor&council@fairfaxva.gov

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Mindy Brubaker 571.242.9913
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3102 Waterside Ln

SOLD!



4821 Stillwell Ave

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1810 Hollindale Dr

SOLD!



8311 Mt Vernon Hwy

8600 PILGRIM CT
Alexandria
\$650,000

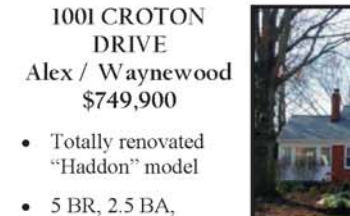
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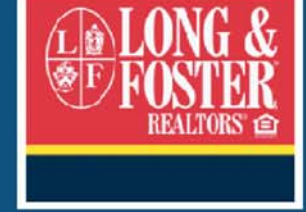
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Serving Up a Family Tradition for 30 Years

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

The Richmond Highway/Mt. Vernon area restaurant, Peking Duck, is approaching 30 years of service to Northern Virginia residents. Owners Duck and Joyce Chang have carried on a family tradition begun in Beijing, China seven generations ago by Duck Chang's descendants. Duck Chang named his restaurant, Peking Duck, after the house specialty. As a young man he apprenticed in his father's restaurant in Annandale. Then, almost 30 years ago, he purchased and renovated the property he now uses for his own Mt. Vernon area restaurant business. Working in his late father's award-winning flagship restaurant, Duck Chang's, fostered his dedication to providing high quality Chinese cuisine at reasonable prices. The Annandale restaurant continues to be operated by the Chang family: brother, Peter Chang, sister, Nancy Keung, and his mother, Amy Chang.



PHOTO BY GERALD A. FILL/GAZETTE

Duck and Joyce Chang

Q. What is your business and restaurant philosophy?

A. We are a family-oriented restaurant. Our customers are an extension of our family. We are very proud of the fact that the children of many of our longstanding customer's now frequent the restaurant as adults. Families choose our restaurant to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and other important family events.

Q. You said Peking Duck is your house specialty. What do you do to

make it so special?

A. My family and I buy our ducks from the same Long Island, New York farm for the past 38 years. They are superbly fed; slaughtered when they reach the ideal weight of between 6-7 pounds, at about 7 weeks of age, and shipped fresh to us. This step is an absolute must to ensure the quality of our Peking Duck specialty. This tradition began with my family in China where we owned a duck farm and supplied

ducks to several of our own restaurants in China. We understand that what goes into serving tasty duck begins on the farm. Also, I supervise the preparation of our ducks in the kitchen, the blending of the sauces, and I personally carve every duck served in the restaurant or in our carryout orders.

Q. What else do you do that makes your restaurant so special?

A. First of all we truly care about the quality of the food we serve. Our customers are our most important teachers. If a full plate comes back to the kitchen and the customer doesn't ask to take it home I want whoever notices the uneaten food — our servers, cooks, or dishwashers — to immediately let me or Joyce know so we can find out from the customer why the food wasn't eaten. If we make a mistake in the quality of the food we are serving we want our customers to tell us. Over the many years that attitude has helped us enormously, and developed a trusting partnership with our loyal customer base. In addition, I personally select and blend our spices, and the ordering of fresh vegetables and seafood every two or three days, as well as other ingredients. All this makes for personal hands on quality of food preparation tradition. We also will customize our food to accommodate those who have special dietary requirements. Chinese food, at its best, needs to be served fresh, and not carried

Profile

DUCK CHANG

Founded: Peking Duck Restaurant, 1981
7531 Richmond Highway
Telephone: 703-768-2774
Family: Wife: Joyce Chang
Daughter: Yannie Chang, 7 years old
Upcoming Community Service Event: Peking Restaurant is sponsoring a Restaurant Night on April 6. Part of the proceeds will be donated to United Community Ministries (UCM).

over to the next day menu offerings. We don't cut corners, and understand that fresh food and a clean quality kitchen that cares is essential to serving quality food on a consistent basis.

Q. The economy has been very tough on restaurants in the past two or three years; how has it affected your business?

A. It has suffered. The last few years our customer base has been smaller and our regulars have come in less frequently. However, our regular customers have been loyal to us, and that has been very important to our continued success through these tough times.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to say about your restaurant?

A. On behalf of my wife, Joyce, and my daughter Yannie, I want to thank all of my loyal customers who have over these many years continued to eat at our restaurant. We are very grateful and look forward to serving them quality food for many years to come.

Local Women Specialize in Designer Cakes, Cupcakes

FROM PAGE 7

Highway. The area is one of Fairfax's "revitalization districts," which means an extra effort is made to plan and attract development to the corridor.

Campbell and Crandall, both Mount Vernon residents, said they chose to move into space on Richmond Highway, in part, because it was close to their homes.

"I have kids and I am able to get to my house when I need to get to my house," said Campbell.

The women, who met while singing in a regional church choir, had also been creating and selling cakes out of Campbell's kitchen for approximately three years before they opened the store and many of their

originally clients lived locally.

"Our business grew solely from word of mouth at first. It was really weird when strangers started calling me to make cakes for them," said Campbell, who is not a professionally trained chef but did take a "cake decorating" course a few years ago.

"We started doing this before the cake shows got popular," said Campbell, referring to cable television shows that feature similar specialty cake shops.

Despite the current recession, Occasionally Cake has thrived, said the owners. The business has been able to pay Crandall, who quit her day job when the store opened, a full salary since last summer. They also recently hired an assistant baker from New

York City. In 2009, the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce also named Occasionally Cake "best new business."

"The community has been very very supportive of us. I have neighbors who come in and say they like buying our stuff because they like supporting a neighbor," said Campbell.

OCCASIONALLY CAKE'S proximity to Fort Belvoir Army Base has also been a boon to the business since it opened.

The women have appeared at a bridal show on the campus and were recently hired to prepare desserts for a military ball. Several individuals living on the base have also come in and request specialty cakes to

help celebrate military promotions.

"They throw really, really big parties for promotions and we do a lot of those cakes," said Campbell.

Other local institutions have hired Occasionally Cake recently. Campbell said the women made a cake replica of the Browne Academy for the local private school's annual fund-raiser. All aspects of the building model were constructed to scale and the replica was illuminated from the inside.

The Browne Academy piece, one of the women's more complicated assignments, took approximately 100 hours to complete and would have cost about \$3,000 if the shop agreed to do a cake like that again, said Campbell.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send announcements to the Mount Vernon Gazette, 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.

The National Honor Society at MVHS is accepting applications from March 15 through April 9. Students must have completed their freshman

year, have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 and must have demonstrated a commitment to service and scholarship. Additionally, each applicant must write a reflective essay and obtain recommendations from two current or former teachers.

The application packet is provided on the MVHS homepage. Alternatively, you can request an application packet by e-mail from Daniel.Coast@fcps.edu or Karen.Hertel@fcps.edu to obtain a fill-

able PDF form. This form can be filled in, printed and hand delivered to the IB offices at MVHS before the deadline of April 9.

Applicants will have their packets reviewed by a council of MVHS faculty and a notification about acceptance will be sent out to each applicant on May 7, 2010.

Visit the website, <http://www.nhs.us>

Samuel McCann, son of Daniel

McCann and Mary Jane Malinchak-McCann of Alexandria, was named to the dean's list at Ithaca College's Roy H. Park School of Communications for the fall 2009 semester with a GPA of 3.7.

Mount Vernon High School's Class of 1980 is gearing up for its 30th Reunion on July 31, 2010 at the Mount Vernon Inn at the Mt. Vernon Estate. To be added to the list, contact Leisa Gates Less: llscouter@aol.com, 281-536-3121

or Jennifer Julian Radcliffe: hood1984@aol.com, 703-968-3072.

Fort Hunt High School, Alexandria, class of 1980 announces its 30th reunion. Plans are under way for a fun-filled weekend in July 2010. Visit the web site to register and stay connected on all of the happenings. Go to fhhs80.com or email: fhhsclassof80@yahoo.com.

E

ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE



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

Cedric Williams' Nostalgia and Dereliction.

FINE
ARTS

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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107293

THEATER

Winners of The Watch Awards

10th Annual Washington Area Theatre Community Honors

The award ceremony was held Sunday, March 14, 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
- ❖ Outstanding Choreography - Christopher Dykton - Follies
- ❖ 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

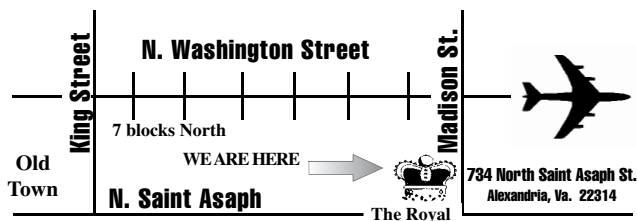
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CALENDAR

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



(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.

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 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,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 20

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Shop for Haiti

March 20

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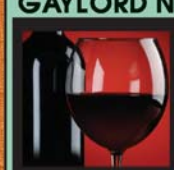
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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 19

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.



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

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 24

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 but appointments are preferred. 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 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 at 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.

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.

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OBITUARIES

Ralph D. Dunavant

Ralph D. Dunavant, Sr. died on Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010. He was born, April 15, 1922, in Stoneville, N.C. where he lived until he was hired by the Federal Government and moved to Washington, D.C. just before WW II started. In 1943 he was drafted into the Army Air Corp and spent the remainder of WW II in the South Pacific. He was assigned to the 419th Night Fighter Squadron of the 13th Air Corp in the Intelligence Section. After the war he returned to Washington, D.C. and resumed his Federal Government career while continuing his military service in the Air Force

Reserves. In 1948 he married Mildred L. Massey of Haines City, Fla.; they met during his Air Corp training in central Florida during the war. He returned to active military duty in 1950 for the Korean War and was stationed at a base in Florida.

After the Korean War he resumed his Federal Government career and remained in Florida until 1956 when he took an overseas government post in Frankfurt am Main, West Germany. While there he was a founder of the Bethel Baptist Church in Frankfurt am Main which was the first English language Baptist Church in the city. At the end of 1960 he returned to the United States and settled in Fairfax County where he

lived on Dawn Drive for 36 years, until 1996 when he moved to Manassas, Va.

Mr. Dunavant retired from the Air Force Reserves as a Major. He retired from the Federal Government after 35 years of service. He and his son opened American Printing & Paper Products, a print shop, in Manassas, Va. He worked at the shop every day until shortly before his death.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mildred M. Dunavant, his daughter, Angela K. Dunavant, his son, Ralph D. Dunavant, Jr., his daughter-in-law, Margo J. Dunavant and three grandsons, R. David Dunavant, Andrew S. Dunavant and Matthew J. Dunavant all of Manassas, Va. His funeral was Feb. 27 at Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center Street, Manassas, Va. Interment is March 10, 2010, in Arlington Cemetery, Arlington. Donations in lieu of flowers to the 419th Night Fighters Squadron.

Del., died peacefully Tuesday night, Feb. 23, 2010 in Milford, Del. at the age of 89. Born in Pontiac Michigan in October 1920 to Herbert Wilson and Linda Price, his family moved back to Delaware when he was just a couple months old.

Bill was a farm boy and was competitive in 4H. He grew up on several dairy farms in the New Castle area, which is where he developed his love of horses. He was a proud graduate of Newark High (1938) where he participated in Boys State and was elected governor for a day. Bill was an even prouder graduate of the University of Delaware (1942) and Blue Hen football. As a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at UD, he majored in business and marketing. Bill married Helen Fihelly of Philadelphia in 1947 and had 2 wonderful daughters, Carole and Marie. For most of Bill's professional career, he worked in corporate real estate for several major oil companies (Esso, Atlantic and ARCO) and lived in many cities all across Virginia (Salem, Roanoke, Virginia Beach and, last but not least, Alexandria) where Bill and Helen finally settled for 30-plus years.

Bill was an active member and officer in the Fort Hunt Sportsman's Association during the 1960s, '70s and '80s raising money for local youth sports. Upon retirement, Bill and Helen moved back to Delaware where they enjoyed a very full retirement with friends and family. One of the activities that filled their retirement was attending Blue Hen football games, both home and away, with their fellow UD fans. As Helen often said, "Bill came a long way from his farm days but he never forgot his roots." Bill is survived by his best friend and loving wife of 63 years, Helen, his daughter Carole Price White and husband Tony White (Oregon), daughter Marie Price Corbin (Texas) and grandson Kyle Corbin (Texas). A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 20 at 11 a.m. at the chapel of Melson Funeral Services, 38040 Muddy Neck Rd, Ocean View, Del., where friends may call after 10 a.m. Burial will be private. Bill would be honored if you wanted to make a donation to your local chapter of one of his favorite causes: Easter Seals, March of Dimes or the American Heart Association.

Online condolences can be sent by visiting www.melsonfuneralservices.com.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Transparency Blackout

FROM PAGE 1

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 questions 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 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 re-

lease.

"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."

SEE DOCUMENTS, PAGE 22

Herbert Wilson Price, Jr.

Herbert Wilson Price, Jr. (also known as My Friend Bill or Honest Bill or Pop Pop), of Milford,

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Documents State Law Shrouds Police

FROM PAGE 1

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 hap-

Secret Police?

❖ **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.

pened 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 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.

“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.”

Senior Trio To Play Key Roles for Majors

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon right-hander Mike Murdock was a first-team all-National District selection last season, when he helped pitch the Majors to a second-place finish in the district. Entering 2010, Murdock will once again be the ace of the Mount Vernon pitching staff.

What can he do to improve? "Every team has a staff ace," he said, "but you've got to have more than one pitcher to go anywhere or have a good, solid season. So it's just coming in every day with all the other pitchers, trying to make everyone better."

Ah, the sound of senior leadership.

Murdock, along with seniors Andrew Sable and Jimmy Woehrle, will play key roles in determining whether the Majors can get back to the National District title game. Sable, a two-time all-district selection at third base, moves to shortstop this season in an attempt to bolster the team's defense. Woehrle moves into the Majors' No. 2 starting pitcher role after spending his junior year as the No. 3.



Senior right-hander Mike Murdock returns as the ace of the Mount Vernon pitching staff.

The spotlight will be on the senior trio as head coach Luke Sable places an emphasis on pitching and defense.

"We've got to play good ... defense," Luke Sable said. "I'm a defensive-oriented coach. ... We want to stay in all the ballgames and be in a position to win ... the games 2-1, 3-2."

Murdock throws in the upper 80s and toes the rubber against most of the Majors' toughest opponents. Woehrle, a second-team



Mount Vernon senior Andrew Sable, a two-time all-district selection at third base, moves to shortstop this season.

all-district selection, throws in the mid-80s and will now face stiff competition moving into the No. 2 spot.

"Hopefully," Coach Sable said, "they'll stay healthy and be able to throw strikes and keep us in the games."

Andrew Sable played second base his freshman year and moved to third base as a sophomore. Two years later, he makes yet another position change, this time to short-



Senior right-hander Jimmy Woehrle moves up from No. 3 starter to No. 2 in the Mount Vernon pitching rotation.

stop. While he said he was comfortable at third, he's ready for the transition.

"I'm kind of looking forward to it," he said. "Being a senior leader, shortstop's kind of the leader of the infield, so I'm looking to help out."

Sable, who's verbally committed to George Mason, hit .390 last season and will bat third for the Majors this year.

Sophomore Kyle Quigley will be

the team's catcher. While he's two years younger than the team's top pitchers, Luke Sable said there won't be a problem with communication.

"We're expecting good things from [Quigley]," the coach said.

Sophomores Justin Boutin and George Palacio will compete for playing time at second base. Junior Collin Bowyer, a transfer from North Carolina, could see time in the outfield or on the mound. Junior Tre' Cook is the team's No. 3 starter.

Offensively, Coach Sable said the Majors will play small ball, relying on speed and an occasional bunt, to push across runs. However, junior third baseman Logan Beougher, listed at 6-foot-4, 265 pounds, will provide Mount Vernon with some power at the No. 4 or No. 5 spot in the batting order.

Mount Vernon travels to face Washington-Lee at 6 p.m. Tuesday. W-L and two-time defending district champion Yorktown each received votes in the first Northern Region coaches poll of the season. Mount Vernon was nowhere to be seen.

"We've got high expectations," Woehrle said. "Not much respect coming our way."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Aces Looking for Host Families

The Alexandria Aces Collegiate 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 wide variety of colleges and universities from throughout the United States. The league is regionally located in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore 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), win-

ning their 2009 league championship.

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.

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.

Five questions with West Potomac senior Martez Redfearn

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

A: Florida [for] AAU basketball.

Q: Who is your favorite basketball player?

A: [Miami guard] Dwyane Wade and [New Orleans guard] Chris Paul. ... I like to attack the basket — that's how I get my buckets. Dwyane Wade attacks the basket very strong. I compare myself to him. Chris Paul, I like his game. He always goes hard.

Q: What's your favorite food?

A: McChicken.

Q: When you look back,



what will you remember most about your time at West Potomac?

A: The Patriot District championship.

Q: Who's your favorite music artist?

A: Lil' Wayne. He always compares himself to the best, he always says he's the best, he's No. 1 and that's how I feel: I'm the best and I'm No. 1.

— JON ROETMAN

Air Quality in Mount Vernon Called Poorest in Region

FROM PAGE 1

decide that this data is not needed and that the DEQ is going to rely solely on the Lee District Park monitor for all of its air monitoring needs,” Hyland concluded.

Fairfax County, which has been footing the bill for what is a state responsibility, decided to discontinue its support of the four air monitoring sites as a cost-cutting move. The state’s decision places the county areas with among the highest ozone levels in Northern Virginia outside the monitoring network at a time when the federal EPA is on the verge of issuing more stringent national air quality standards for ozone.

Mount Vernon, which for years has had the poorest air quality in the region, will be, along with other county jurisdictions, the big potential loser in all of this from the perspective of local environmental advocates. State DEQ officials disagree, arguing that the Lee District Park site now, and once it is upgraded, will be adequate to cover monitoring in the county.

According to one Mount Vernon-area environmental advocate, Larry Zaragosa, “Elimination of air quality monitors that report some of the county’s highest ozone levels is at odds with the need to identify and report the highest concentrations.”

The region as a whole is not meeting



Data recordings from this air monitoring site in Mount Vernon will no longer be used by the state.



present national air quality standards for ozone; the new more stringent standard will compound the problem for the region to meet minimum air quality levels.

Charles Turner, director, Air Quality Monitoring at DEQ,

explained that the state intends to use different siting criteria and new, more up-to-date technology to meet new national air quality monitoring requirements.

REFERRING TO the impending more stringent air quality standard Leta Mach, Chair, Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), in a Jan. 27 letter to the U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, wrote: “MWAQC supports the range of reconsidered ozone standard, 60-70 parts per billion (ppb) as being more protective of human health and the environment.” But, Mach went on in her letter to forewarn of the difficulty to meet the new standard: “The new standard will be extremely difficult

to meet in the metropolitan Washington region.”... “That without U.S. EPA assistance to state and local governments to meet the new standards particularly as it relates to pollution that does not originate in our region, the task of meeting these new standards will be very difficult to achieve.”

While Fairfax County government has been in the forefront of efforts to monitor air quality Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Sharon Bulova

signaled a change in the county’s position in supporting air monitoring in light of revenue constraints. She has previously pointed out that the air quality monitoring responsibility is a state responsibility. Echoing the county’s fundamental support of air quality monitoring, Providence District Supervisor Linda Smyth is concerned enough that she reports the air quality ozone scale on her own Web site. Early warning of high ozone levels is important for residents who already are afflicted with emphysema, asthma, are elderly, and those with chronic heart conditions or other medical problems.

“Loss of the locally managed air quality monitors that have reported some of the county’s highest ozone levels is at odds with the need to identify and report the highest concentrations in the future,” said Zaragosa.

Ozone Levels

The federal EPA’s soon to be adopted proposal for a more stringent ozone standard than the one adopted in 2008 is based on the following:

- ❖ Scientific evidence of adverse respiratory effects in healthy adults at 0.060 ppm;
- ❖ Studies indicate that people with asthma are likely to experience more serious effects than healthy people;
- ❖ Studies indicate associations for a wide range of serious health effects and hospital admissions and premature mortality that extend below the current standard level of 0.075 ppm; and
- ❖ Estimates from the risk and exposure assessment indicate that important improvements in public health could be achieved by a standard more stringent than 0.075 ppm



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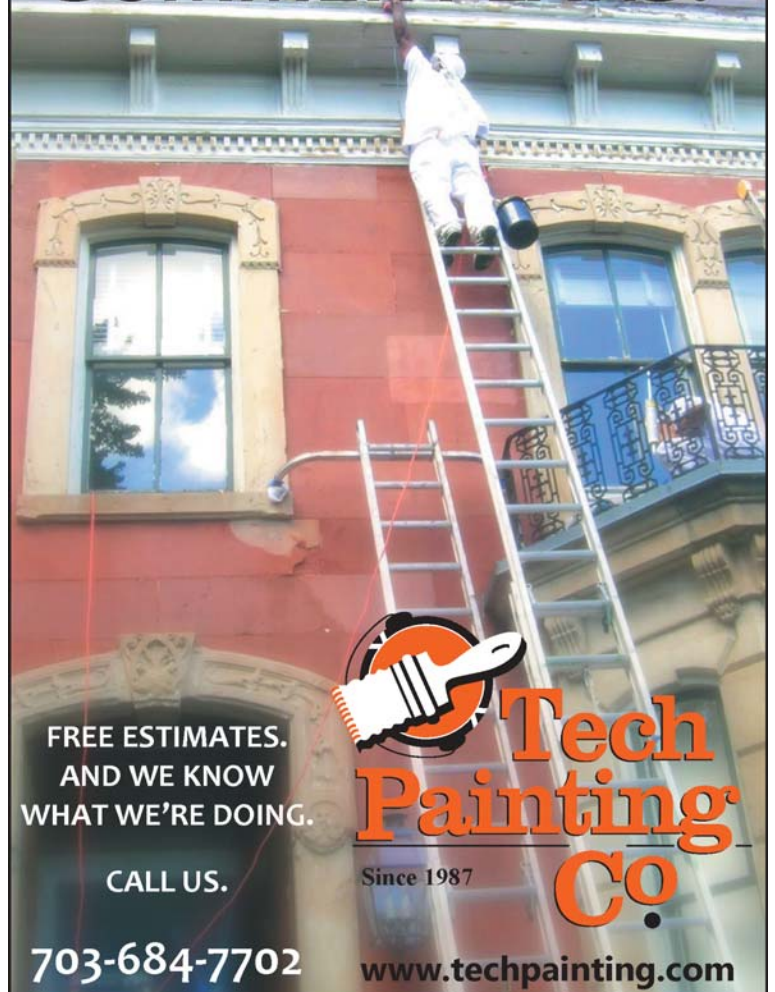
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