

Mount Vernon Gazette

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 27, 2010



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

At the Prom

At West Potomac High School's prom, Ryan Walter poses for a photo with Mardi Gras Mime Queen Amy Scutt.

MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 21

Test Scores: It's Complicated

A single number cannot tell a whole school's story, education advocates say.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

On last year's standardized tests, 95 percent of students at Stratford Landing Elementary School passed the language arts exams and 92 percent passed the math exams. At nearby Riverside Elementary

School, 93 percent of students passed the same language arts exams and 87 percent passed the math exams.

Numbers such as these can lead parents to conclude the Stratford Landing is a more successful or "better" school than Riverside. In fact, if you look across all the elementary schools in the Mount Vernon area, Stratford Landing has the highest pass rates for students on the language arts and math tests overall.

That may lead several people to conclude Stratford Landing is the highest performing elementary school in the local community. And several people may insist on looking for homes only in the Stratford

SEE LOOKING, PAGE 10

Garza: New Athletic Fee Could Affect Participation

Fairfax County School Board backs \$100 athletic participation fee.

BY JON ROETMAN
AND JULIE O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

The success of Mount Vernon High School's athletic programs begins with the ability of students to participate. If a pay-to-play scenario causes turnout to dwindle, the Majors' win-loss records could suffer. But on-field results are only a small part of the situation to MVHS assistant athletic director Tony Garza, who is concerned with

the attitude of students who couldn't afford to play.

On May 20, the Fairfax County School Board passed a motion, 9 to 3, to require a \$100 fee for high school athletes to participate in a sport. The fee will be applied to all sports and will be required for each sport a student participates in.

School Board members Tina Hone (at-large), Sandy Evans (Mason) and Patty Reed (Providence)

SEE NEW FEE, PAGE 16

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Hispanic Summit Promotes Parental Involvement

School staff, parents gather to discuss needs of Hispanic community.

BY GRACE POWELL
THE GAZETTE

In an effort to promote more parental involvement within the Hispanic community, West Potomac High School sponsored a Hispanic Summit at Gum Springs Recreational Center.

Nearly 50 parents and local school administrators attended the meeting on Saturday, May 22 including representatives from Mount Vernon High School, Carl Sandburg Middle School, and members of the community.

West Potomac Director of Student Services Tim Boyd said the event took place at Gum Springs in order to reach out to the community: "We want to serve all the students in our school and we have a large Hispanic community."

Boyd stressed the importance of parental involvement. "We want them involved in our school, we know there have been times when families haven't felt comfortable," he said.

Parent Liaison Haraldo Suarez said it can be difficult for parents to get involved with their students' education since many parents work several jobs and do not have transportation. "These people are under a lot of stress," he said.

"These schools are your homes," FCPS administrator Scott Brandband said. Brandband encouraged students to utilize all the resources the county offers. "We're going to have your backs so that you can be successful," he said.

West Potomac High School Freshman Iris Lopez said it can be difficult for students within the Hispanic community to achieve success. "Spanish people don't always have the opportunity that other people have," Lopez said. "In my school people aren't going to college because they don't have papers."



Evangelina Dobbs discusses some of the issues facing the Hispanic community.

Evangelina Dobbs, a federal government consultant and advocate for the Hispanic community, touched on the issue of immigration during her speech. "The problem is that most people think we are illegals," Dobbs said.

Dobbs encouraged the audience to maintain a good reputation and think creatively. "Most of the time we think that money is the answer, but we forget to be creative," Dobbs said. "If everyone contributes one idea, we leave here with 50 ideas. Ideas are very powerful."

Boyd said Hispanics are among the minorities with low testing rates in Fairfax County.

West Potomac ESOL teacher Paul Watlington expressed the need for two after school buses for students who need extra help. "Fairfax County is one of the richest counties in Virginia, there's no reason there's only one late bus a week," Watlington said.

School staff hope that the summit will continue to bridge the communication gap



Fairfax County Public Schools administrator Scott Brandband urges families and students to take advantage of the county's resources. Behind: West Potomac High School Parent Liaison Haraldo Suarez translates.



West Potomac High School Junior Hector Mazao, Freshman Iris Lopez and Junior Manuel Gonzalez smile after helping host the Summit.

PHOTOS BY GRACE POWELL/THE GAZETTE

between parents and the school system. The next summit is scheduled for October. Suarez said parents can call his office day

or night with questions and concerns. "We need to give them a chance," Suarez said. "Both the students and the parents."

Kinship Respite Day at Gum Springs Center

In the last census, 3,800 grandparent households in Fairfax County had kinship grandchildren under their roofs and providing care for them. In 2004 a Fairfax County Focus Group asked questions into how to provide better services. A support group was formed and a Kinship Care Resource Guide was published. The guide offers information on services available to caregivers. The guide may be picked up in a hard copy from the Prevention Services Office of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services or it is available online by visiting <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/>

[adultselderly/kinship_care_guide.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/adultselderly/kinship_care_guide.htm). or call the Family Services offices special projects coordinator, Nancy Coffey at 703-324-7723 to request a hard copy.

On Saturday, May 15, the staff of the Family Services division held a kinship respite day where the children were invited to spend the day at the Gum Springs Community Center. A staff member from the Huntley Meadows Park off Lockheed Boulevard introduced the children to some of the wildlife inhabiting the park.

Frogs, from the peeper to the bullfrog had been recorded on tape and photos.



Kathy McNeil from Huntley Meadows introduces the frog kingdom by reading aloud the book "Jump Frog Jump." Frogs can jump seven times their body length with one hop.

PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

Primary Vote: Fimian Vs. Herrity

Two candidates face each other for Republican nomination June 8.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

Virginia's 11th Congressional District will see its first primary contest in 18 years next month. Supervisor Patrick Herrity (R-Springfield) and businessman Keith Fimian are vying for the chance to take on U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) next fall in what could be a competitive race.

Primary voters go to the polls to decide between Herrity and Fimian June 8. In Virginia, voters do not register with a political party, so any person, regardless of political affiliation, can participate in the election to pick the Republican Party nominee.

Connolly is serving his first term in the House of Representatives after beating Fimian 54.7 percent to 43 percent in the 2008 general election. Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis (R-11) held the seat for 13 years before retiring.

The Cook Political Report, a political analysis publication, rated the race as "leaning Democratic" in April. But several local Republican activists said the current anti-incumbent sentiment could provide an opportunity for an upset.

"I think there is a strong sentiment that the federal government is out of control," said Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock), who won a special election to the Fairfax board in 2009.

FIMIAN AND HERRITY share many of the same opinions when it comes to general matters of public policy.

Both candidates said reducing the federal deficit would be a priority should they be elected to office. Both have hammered Connolly for support of the government health care reform bill and "cap and trade" legislation, which places a ceiling on emissions over concern about the environment but is frowned on by some business groups.

"This is not San Francisco. This is not some radical left district," said Fimian of Connolly's voting record.

If elected, Fimian and Herrity both said they would like to serve on the House Government Reform Committee, which oversees federal employees and government contracting. The two candidates have also said they would want to be part of the small business committee.

Both candidates have said social issues would not be a top priority in the campaign.

"I think the issues of concern to people today are the issues of what will happen to their children and grandchildren and their jobs," said Herrity.

But both candidates describe themselves as pro-life and against legal abortion.

They support the Defense of Marriage Act, in which the federal government defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman. Both candidates also say they are defenders of the constitutional right to own a gun.

Patrick Herrity

Age: 50
Hometown: Springfield
Residence: Clifton
Family: Wife Nancy, one son and one daughter
Education: Virginia Tech, bachelor's of science in accounting - 1982
Occupation: chief financial officer for Fulcra Worldwide, a government contractor and communications firm; Fairfax County Supervisor - Springfield District (2008-present)
Civic Activity: Former board member of the Northern Virginia Technology Council; former executive committee member of the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce; former board member for Potomac Inline Hockey; Fairfax County chairman candidate in 2009; former youth athletics coach for local teams in ice hockey, inline hockey, rugby, soccer and basketball



Keith Fimian

Age: 53
Hometown: Virginia Beach, Va.
Residence: Oakton
Family: Wife Cathy of 28 years and three daughters
Education: College of William & Mary, bachelor's of business administration, accounting concentration - 1979
Occupation: Founder and chairman of U.S. Inspect, a national provider of property inspection services
Civic Activity: president of the Youth Leadership Foundation, which provides academic and character building to low-income students in Washington D.C.; Republican nominee for Virginia's 11th District Congressional seat in 2008

WHERE THE CANDIDATES differ is experience and background.

Fimian has spent most of his career building and running U.S. Inspect, a multi-million dollar business that now operates nationwide. He has never held public office and has not been involved to any great extent in the larger local civic or business associations of Northern Virginia.

By contrast, Herrity, whose father Jack Herrity served on the Board of Supervisors from 1972 to 1988, has deep roots in the county.

A West Springfield High School graduate, Herrity is the sitting supervisor for the Springfield District in Fairfax. Prior to being elected in 2007, he served on the board of directors for two of the county's largest and most influential business associations, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Virginia Technology Council.

He also participated on and coached local sports teams, including several in the Southwestern Youth Athletic Association.

"I have a long record of service to this community. I have everyone from rank and file citizens to the business community supporting my efforts," said Herrity.

Herrity said his record of service in Fairfax would make him a stronger candidate to go up against Connolly in November.

FIMIAN has characterized Herrity's work in Fairfax County as that of political insider who has always aspired to serve in public office. To get a truly different kind of politician, voters need to elect Fimian.

"It takes an entirely new kind of leadership. I am fearful that if competent men and women don't run, we will drive this country off a cliff," said Fimian.

According to the Oakton businessman, he grew his company, U.S. Inspect, from just \$150,000 he made off a real estate investment when he was 29. Capitol Hill needs more people who understand what it means to start a business and create jobs, said

Fimian.

He does not consider Herrity, who has worked as a chief financial officer for several local government contractors, to have similar business experience.

"When you join a company as a CFO, you are guaranteed a salary. There is no risk to you. I lived hand-to-mouth for eight years. I have created jobs from nothing," he said.

HERRITY said his work in government contracting and for high tech companies has created jobs. He has often been brought in to turn around troubled firms and help grow their business, which has in turn has led to new positions at the companies.

Herrity's familiarity with government contractors also means he has a good understanding of how Fairfax County's largest industry works.

"This has an impact on the local economy. This is our number one industry in Fairfax County," he said.

Herrity's experience in local government will be valuable in the U.S. Congress, he said.

"I have had to say 'no.' I have had to challenge things from affordable housing to the tree ordinance. I took on the penny for affordable housing. That was not an easy thing to do," said Herrity.

BUT FIMIAN has criticized Herrity for not saying 'no' to enough as a county supervisor. The businessman accused Herrity of voting to raise taxes while in elected office.

Herrity, along with every other member of the Board of Supervisors, voted to raise the real estate property tax rate in 2009. But an increase in the tax rate does not necessarily correlate to an increase in a resident's property tax bill.

Though the property tax rate went up in 2009, property taxes for most households in Fairfax County decreased because of a sharp decline in home values. Because of this, Herrity has said it is unfair to accuse him of raising taxes.

Herrity said he only voted for the county

budget in 2009 because it included a tax break for most property owners. He did not vote in favor of the county budget this year because it included an increase in taxes and fees for the average citizen.

Still, Fimian contends that property tax rate increase resulted in a larger tax bill for some residents of Fairfax County, whose home values did not decline as significantly as the average county property.

Fimian has also criticized Herrity for voting for a special tax district in the Dulles area set up to help fund the construction of the new Metrorail line.

Dulles area landowners that would be taxed brought that proposal to the supervisors themselves in December. These landowners asked the supervisors to approve their request to pay more taxes to fund the construction of Metro stops close to their property.

Without the special tax district, Fairfax County would have had to find another way to pay for stations in the Herndon and Dulles area or scrap those stops altogether, said several supervisors at the time.

IN KEEPING with his political outsider image, Fimian is calling for an end to all congressional earmarks.

"Earmarks are bribes. People get all these bribes to vote for other people's legislation," said Fimian.

Critics often refer to earmarks as "pork barrel" spending. They allow local congressman to secure federal funding for local projects, organizations and businesses and donors that haven't had to compete for money.

Frequently, a congressman's seniority or position on a committee is of more importance than the merits of the project, company or organization receiving the funding.

All of Fairfax's current and past congressmen — including Connolly, Davis, U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10) and U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8) — use earmarks. That money has been used for several popular projects, including the construction of the Fairfax County Parkway and to support a regional anti-gang initiative.

CONNOLLY won his seat two years ago under good circumstances for a Democrat. With the Republican brand weak, Democrats picked up 19 seats, including Virginia's 11th Congressional District, in the U.S. House of Representatives and secured 60 votes in the U.S. Senate as a result of the 2008 election. In Virginia, Connolly also shared the ticket with two well-liked candidates, President Barack Obama (D) and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), who won with 57.01 percent and 65.46 percent of the vote respectively in Virginia's 11th Congressional District.

But several Republicans said the political climate has changed heading into the 2010 election.

"It is a completely different atmosphere. Bush is gone," said Davis.

SEE PRIMARY, PAGE 25

Connecting with Laptops



Vivian Dietrich of CDW-G presents a laptop computer to Staff Sergeant Curtis Winston, Dacia Winston, son Brandon Winston, 7 months. The Winstons also have a daughter, Kaylie, age 7. Staff Sergeant Wilson did not see his now 7-year-old daughter until she was seven months old. A laptop at home with wife would have helped them stay connected during his previous deployments. Now, the technology donated by CDW-G will help them stay connected to family in Illinois as Winston recuperates at Fort Belvoir.

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Brig. Gen. John Howard (Ret.), CDW-G Department of Defense (DoD) business development manager, and Operation Homefront National Board of Directors member, speaks at CDW-G's laptop donation presentation Tuesday, May 25, at Fort Belvoir.

Helping Seniors At Home

Nonprofit Mount Vernon at Home prepares to celebrate successful launch at River Farm on June 3.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Getting a new roof can be stressful, especially for elderly people who live alone. First, there's diagnosing the problem. Then there's a range of options to consider. Eventually, a team of workers will arrive and money will change hands. For many senior citizens, it's a recipe for disaster because con men look for elderly people as an easy mark.

Unless, the senior is a member of Mount Vernon at Home.

The newly formed nonprofit offers support services and social opportunities for seniors in the Mount Vernon area. Launched in November, the 501 (c)(3) is preparing to celebrate a successful launch and passing the threshold of 100 members. Director Jeff Reed says members do everything from enjoying a trip to the museum to advice on finding a roofer.

"We are with them all the way," said Reed. "We don't just turn them over to a contractor and say 'good luck.'"

The nonprofit can now boast 118 members in 81 households in 24 different communities. Social events include bridge clubs, lectures, ice-cream socials and pot-

luck dinners. Support services offer a careful review of businesses to make sure the price and quality of work is up to snuff. Volunteers such as Willie Wright help members make doctors appointments and supermarket trips.

"My personal reason for doing this is because I was an old Navy wife," said Wright, 68. "I wasn't there for my mother and my mother-in-law. So this is my way of giving back."

Membership is \$550 a year for a single and \$800 for a couple, and it comes with a certain ease of mind. Not only are the folks at

Mount Vernon at Home checking with the Better Business Bureau to make sure the tree-trimmer is on the up-and-up, but they're also planning a dinner party. Members include several married couples as well as seniors who live alone.

"We just had railing put on both side of the stairwell, and we used the vetting service to make sure the vendor was someone we could trust," said Jim Rapp, 82. "Someone who lives alone might not need help until there's an emergency, and that's where Mount Vernon at Home could fill a real need."



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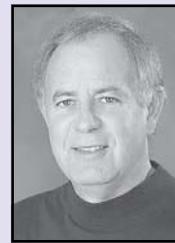
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OPINION

Remembering on Memorial Day 2010

Close to home, many to honor.

On Memorial Day, we remember all of those who have died in military service, nearly 300,000 in World War II, more than 30,000 in Korea, more than 50,000 in Vietnam.

More than 160 U.S. Military service personnel from Virginia have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, including several in the last year. Earlier this month, on May 12, 2010, Donald J. Lamar II, 23 of Fredericksburg, was killed in Afghanistan. Christopher D. Worrell, 35 of Virginia Beach, was killed in Iraq on April 22, 2010. Steven J. Bishop, 29 of Christianburg, was killed March 13, 2010 in Iraq. Kielin T. Dunn, 19 of Chesapeake, was killed Feb. 18, 2010 in Afghanistan. Brandon T. Islip, 23 of Richmond, was killed Nov. 29, 2009, in Afghanistan. Stephan L. Mace, 21 of Lovettsville, died Oct. 3, 2009 in Afghanistan.

Bill Cahir, 40 of Alexandria, died Aug. 13, 2009 of a gunshot wound while conducting combat operations in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

After 9/11, Cahir decided to leave his career as a journalist and join the Marine Corps. After his application to become a Marine had originally been denied because of his age, he lobbied members of Congress to get a special exemption.

"We all thought he was crazy," said Brett Lieberman, a former colleague at Newhouse News Service.

Fairfax Station resident Pfc. Dillon Jutras, 20, was killed in combat operations in Al Anbar Province of Iraq Oct. 29, 2005. Dillon Jutras's younger brother, Hunter Drake Jutras, has helped us remember by submitting drawings every year; this year his portrait of his brother Dillon appeared on the cover of the Burke Children's Connection. Hunter, a sixth grader at White Oaks Elementary, wrote: "My draw-

ing of my brother Dillon who was a Ranger in the U.S. Army. He deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was killed in action on Oct. 29, 2005. I miss him very much."

MORE THAN 4,300 U.S. military members have been killed in Iraq and more than 1,000 have been killed in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001. More than 40,000 have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On Memorial Day, we honor and thank all those who have served in the military, in times of war and peace. It is also a time to reinvigorate efforts to provide the best services and opportunities to our veterans. The Post-9/11 GI Bill dramatically increases the educational benefits extended to members of the military who have served at least three months of active duty since Sept. 11, 2001. George Mason University has been on the forefront of implementing the GI Bill for veterans locally. Steps to provide better, faster and more responsive health care, including mental health care are underway.

Lance Cpl. Daniel Ryan Bennett, 23 of Clifton died Jan. 11, 2009, in Helmand province, Afghanistan. "He loved his country, and we're so proud of him," said his mother.

2nd Lt. Sean P. O'Connor of Burke died Oct. 19, 2008 while stationed at Hunter Army Air Field, Savannah, Ga. O'Connor was an athlete in soccer, baseball and football who attended Fairfax County Public Schools and was a 1999 graduate of Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School in Arlington.

Pfc. David Sharrett, 27 of Oakton, died Jan. 16, 2008 in Iraq. On Oct. 24, 2008, his father, David H. Sharrett, was on hand along with former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis (R) as the Oakton Post Office on White Granite Drive was renamed to honor his son.

Army 1st Lt. Thomas J. Brown, a George Mason University graduate and Burke resident, died on Sept. 23, 2008, while serving in Iraq. His unit came under small arms fire, and Brown, 26, died from his wounds.

HERE ARE the names of some of the local men and women who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. We repeat these names several times a year to honor their service and to keep their memories in our consciousness.

If you know of someone who should be included in this list, or if you would like to share how you are honoring the memory of a family member or friend lost, or about the progress of someone injured, please let us know.

Sgt. Scott Kirkpatrick, 26, died on Aug. 11, 2007, in Arab Jabour, Iraq. Kirkpatrick, who graduated from Park View High School in Sterling, and also considered Herndon and Reston as his hometowns, was a champion slam poet. His father, Ed Kirkpatrick, calls him the "warrior poet," and he and his wife help injured vets at Walter Reed through the Yellow Ribbon fund (www.yellowribbonfund.org).

Ami Neiberger-Miller of Sterling lost her brother, U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Neiberger,



"My drawing of my brother Dillon who was a Ranger in the U.S. Army. He deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was killed in action on Oct. 29, 2005. I miss him very much." — Hunter Drake Jutras, Grade 6, White Oaks Elementary School

in August 2007 when he was killed by a roadside bomb while serving in Baghdad, Iraq. He was 22 when he died. Since her brother's death, Neiberger-Miller has devoted herself to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (www.taps.org), which provides peer-based emotional support and other services for families of the fallen, and provides intensive services and activities.

Staff Sgt. Jesse G. Clowers Jr., 27, of Herndon, died when an improvised bomb exploded near his vehicle in Afghanistan on Aug. 12, 2007. Jonathan D. Winterbottom, 21, of Falls Church, died in Iraq on May 23, 2007, of wounds inflicted when an "improvised explosive device" exploded near his vehicle.

Nicholas Rapavi, 22, of Springfield, died Nov. 24, 2006, of wounds received during combat in Anbar province in Iraq. Army Cpl. Andy D. Anderson, 24, was killed by enemy fire in Ar Ramadi, Iraq on Tuesday, June 6, 2006.

Airman 1st Class LeeBernard E. Chavis, 21, was killed Oct. 14, 2006, by sniper fire in Iraq, trying to protect civilians from a roadside bomb.

Spc. Robert Drawl Jr., 21, a 2003 graduate of T.C. Williams High School, was killed by a bomb in Kunar, Afghanistan, on Aug. 19, 2006.

United States Army Specialist Felipe J. Garcia Villareal, 26 of Burke, was injured in Iraq and flown to Washington Hospital Center, where he died Feb. 12, 2006. He was a graduate of Herndon High School.

Capt. Shane R. M. Mahaffee, 36, a 1987 graduate of Mount Vernon High School, died May 15, 2006. He was a lawyer, married, with two children. His parents live in Alexandria.

U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Nicholas Kirven, 21, was killed in Afghanistan in 2005 during a firefight in a cave with insurgents. He enlisted while still in high school after 9/11. Maj. William F. Hecker III, a 1987 graduate of McLean High School, was killed in action in An Najaf, Iraq, Jan. 5, 2005. Staff Sgt. Ayman Taha, 31, of Vienna, was killed Dec. 30, 2005, when an enemy munitions cache he was prepping for demolition exploded. Army Capt. Chris Petty of Vienna was killed Jan. 5, 2006.

Staff Sgt. George T. Alexander Jr., the 2,000th soldier to be killed in Iraq, was literally born

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LETTERS

Gala Signals Discontent?

To the Editor:

Every Spring, the MVCCA holds its annual Gala. This year's event occurred on May 1. The MVCCA budget (April 2010) reveals that the MVCCA anticipated Gala income of \$4,100 and expenses of \$3,200 for a net profit of \$900. The income figure, at the Gala ticket price of \$40 a head, predicts about 100 paying guests.

I understand attendance at the Gala was about half (51) the budgetary prediction and that it lost money. Last week, Gala Chairman Queenie Cox sent a survey on the MVCCA listserv asking recipients "What is the primary reason you did not attend the 2010 MVCCA Gala?"

I'm confident the reason for poor attendance at the Gala has little or nothing to do with the date, time, place, price, food and entertainment or the people and organization honored at the event. Regarding these factors, I'm sure Ms. Cox made all the proper arrangements to give the event the best chance of success. The poor attendance is more likely a result of the recent policies and actions of the MVCCA that have turned off all

but the inner circle of MVCCA leaders.

In recent months, (1) the MVCCA has routinely ignored its own bylaws, including failing to provide notice to its own members of the election of committee chairmen and appointing a committee chairman ineligible to serve in that capacity under those bylaws in light of her concurrent service on the policy-making Wetlands Board; (2) the MVCCA has wasted valuable and scarce county staff resources by filing a number of Comprehensive Plan nominations requiring transportation studies it knew it could not afford to fund; (3) six MVCCA-affiliated people were appointed by Supervisor Hyland to the recent APR Task Force considering Comprehensive Plan nominations. They were supposed to represent our entire community. Over a dozen of those nominations were made by the MVCCA yet the MVCCA-affiliated Task Force members routinely refrained from recusing themselves when those nominations were debated and voted upon, even though each of them had a stake in obtaining approval of those nominations. I'm told the County

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Looking Beyond Numbers for 'Best' School

FROM PAGE I

Landing school district based on data like this.

Except, when it comes to white students, Riverside actually had a higher pass rate (100 percent) on the language arts exams than Stratford Landing (98 percent) last year. The two schools also had the same pass rate for white students on the math exams, according to Virginia Department of Education test data.

And among African Americans, Riverside's 2009 test results were far better than Stratford Landing's. At Riverside, 90 percent of black students passed the language arts exam and 83 percent passed the math exam. At Stratford Landing, only 78 percent of black students passed the language arts exam and 62 percent passed the math exam.

THAT RIVERSIDE'S overall test scores were lower than Stratford Landing's last year appears to be more of a reflection of the two school's demographics. A large percentage of Riverside's student body belongs to groups — such as those who black, Hispanic or poor — that have historically struggled on standardized tests.

According to Fairfax County Public Schools, Riverside enrolled 226 black students (38.57 percent of the student body), 200 Hispanic students (34.13 percent of the student body) and 352 poor students (60.07 percent of the student body) last year. Stratford Landing had 86 black students (11.51 percent of the student body), 45 Hispanic students (6.02 percent of the student body) and 127 poor students (17 percent of the study body) in 2009.

And even though Riverside had higher pass rates among white students — who historically perform better on standardized tests than minority students — than Stratford Landing in 2009, the total number of students at the school that were white was relatively small. Last year, Riverside enrolled 93 white students (15.87 percent of the student body) while Stratford Landing enrolled 510 white students (68.27 percent of the student body).

THE COMPARISON of Riverside and Stratford Landing's testing data from last year illustrates what several education activists in the Mount Vernon area have been telling middle class parents for years.

Residents should not dismiss a school simply based on overall test scores because they don't neces-

Mount Vernon Elementary Schools Test Scores

The Virginia Department of Education provides the percentage of the total population of students who passed the commonwealth's standardized test for each school. They also provide the pass rate for certain subgroups of students. The state education department does not provide testing data for students.

	Belle View	Bucknell	Fort Belvoir	Mount Vernon Woods	Riverside	Washington Mill	Woodley Hills	Fort Hunt	Groveton	Hollin Meadows	Hybla Valley	Stratford Landing	Waynewood	Woodlawn
LANGUAGE ARTS														
All	91	82	91	78	93	82	86	90	90	90	85	95	94	83
Black	67	67	84	69	90	69	79	62	84	87	85	78	N/A	79
Hispanic	93	86	94	82	89	79	84	80	91	92	84	97	N/A	81
White	96	82	92	N/A	100	92	95	99	97	94	87	98	95	93
Students with Disabilities	92	76	93	60	88	50	83	67	91	91	94	89	69	81
Economically Disadvantaged	84	80	89	76	91	73	83	60	86	89	84	81	91	79
Limited English	93	85	83	81	90	78	84	65	90	88	85	93	N/A	77
MATH														
All	87	69	88	64	87	80	78	87	82	84	75	92	92	77
Black	74	59	80	57	83	71	66	57	77	79	75	62	N/A	76
Hispanic	77	68	77	67	83	74	71	87	83	79	73	90	N/A	73
White	92	88	90	N/A	96	90	96	95	80	92	80	96	94	85
Students with Disabilities	83	39	87	35	75	79	64	65	84	76	85	80	73	62
Economically Disadvantaged	77	66	86	61	82	74	70	56	80	80	73	66	91	73
Limited English	76	69	76	63	82	73	70	65	80	78	73	81	N/A	71

sarily correspond to the performance of children who most resemble their own.

"It is so easy to look at the average score but I think that is a mistake. It tells you very little about the school itself and how your child is going to do at that school," said Judy Harbeck, head of the education committee for the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations.

For example, among white students, eight of the 14 local Mount Vernon elementary schools had a pass rate of 90 percent or above on both the math and language arts exams last year. But at these same eight schools, the pass rates of the overall student body varied widely, from the low 80s to the mid 90s, according to Virginia education department data.

One school with relatively high test scores last year, Fort Hunt Elementary, also ended up having the lowest local pass rates among black students — 62 percent in language arts and 57 percent in math — and poor students — 60 percent in language arts and 56 percent in math — of any school in the Mount Vernon area.

EVEN A SCHOOL'S label or "status" under the federal No Child Left Behind act can be deceiving, according to school activists.

Each year, schools are broken into two groups, those who made

"adequate yearly progress" and those who failed to make "adequate yearly progress."

Many members of the public automatically assume that schools that make "adequate yearly progress" have higher test scores in given year than those that do not make "adequate yearly progress." This is not necessarily the case.

To meet "adequately yearly progress," most schools not only have to have their overall student body meet testing goals but also a wide variety of student subgroups also reach a similar level of achievement. If one of these subgroups — such as black, Hispanic or poor students — falls short of testing goals in a given year, then the whole school can fail to meet "adequately yearly progress."

For example, Stratford Landing, with the highest overall test scores of any school in Mount Vernon, failed to make "adequate yearly progress" last year when it had low scores among black and poor students. Likewise, Hollin Meadows Elementary made "adequately yearly progress" last year even though its overall test scores were not as high.

Certain schools are able to circumvent low test scores among subgroups.

For example, Belle View Elementary's black students did not meet testing goals last year.

But those scores were not a factor in the school making "adequate yearly progress" because the number of black students enrolled at Belle View was 46. Virginia requires a school have at least 50 children in each subgroup before the group's scores are counted for "adequate yearly progress purposes."

NO CHILD Left Behind is also particularly hard on schools which receive federal "Title I" funding, often referred to as "Title I" schools.

In Fairfax, all schools at the elementary school level where 40 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch are "Title I" schools. And nine of 14 local Mount Vernon schools — Bucknell, Hollin Meadows, Hybla Valley, Mount Vernon Woods, Riverside, Washington Mill, Woodley Hills, Groveton and Woodlawn — are "Title I" campuses.

When "Title I" schools fail to make "adequate yearly progress," they face much stiffer consequences and sanctions.

Often, the school has to offer students the option of transferring to another school that has met testing goals. Under the most extreme options, where the school has failed to meet testing goals for several years in a row, the entire staff of a "Title I" school could be

replaced and the instructional program could be "restructured."

Schools that are not "Title I" schools do not face such sanctions, even if they fail to make "adequate yearly progress" for several years in a row or have lower test scores than their "Title I" counterparts.

This can be frustrating for "Title I" school communities, who feel as if they are unfairly singled out when they fall short of testing goals.

For example, Superintendent Jack Dale announced two weeks ago that the Virginia Department of Education was giving five Mount Vernon Elementary Schools grants to help boost low test scores. But these grants were only targeted to "Title I schools" who in some cases have higher test scores, particularly among certain subgroups, than other non-"Title I" schools in Mount Vernon.

"The reason Title I schools get that type of focus is because of the label put on them and not other schools," said School Board member Dan Storck (Mount Vernon).

THE HOLLIN MEADOWS Elementary School community found the "low-performer" label particularly unfair.

Hollin Meadows made "adequately yearly progress" last year while some other non-"Title I"

SEE TEST SCORES, PAGE 11

Test Scores, Student Subgroups, Title I

FROM PAGE 10

schools that would not have been considered for the grant — Stratford Landing and Fort Hunt — did not.

When compared to Fort Hunt and Stratford Landing, Hollin Meadows also has higher test scores in several subgroups, especially among students who are black or poor.

Hollin Meadows also has a relatively small achievement gap when compared to the other two schools. White students performed five percentage points higher on the language arts exam and 13 points higher on the math exam than black students.

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.

Shelby Elisabeth Hodgkins of Alexandria, daughter of Jay and Susan Hodgkins '72, graduated from Juniata College with a Bachelor of Science degree in politics with a secondary emphasis in psychology. While at Juniata, Hodgkins was a member of the Cheerleading Team. Next Fall she is going to Georgetown for her masters. Hodgkins is a graduate of Bishop Ireton High School.

Local students were cited for excel-

lence in journalism at the Journalism Education Association Write-Off Contest, held recently at the JEA-National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) spring convention in Portland, Ore. Earning Superior ratings were:

◆ **Mazen Elbashari** of West Potomac High School for Computer Design: Headline.

◆ **Beth Stanley** of West Potomac High School for On-Air Reporter. Earning Excellent ratings were:

◆ **Cara Yaworske** of West Potomac High School for Yearbook Copy-Caption: Sports.

◆ **Caitlin Stewart** of West Potomac High School for Broadcast Sports Story. Earning Honorable Mentions were:

◆ **Alexx Graybill** of West Potomac High School for Yearbook Layout: Theme.

At Fort Hunt, white students performed 37 percentage points higher in language arts and 38 percentage points higher in math than black students. At Stratford Landing, white students performed 20 percentage points higher in language arts and 34 percentage points higher on the math exam than black students.

Longtime Hollin Meadows parent Sue Bernstein said the school community works hard to combat lingering concerns about the school's performance.

"We call every family that has a rising five year-old in our area and have them over for coffee so they can meet some of the parents at the school. All of our local preschools are also invited to visit Hollin Meadows," said Bernstein.

◆ **Erin Spangler** of West Potomac High School for Literary Magazine: Layout.

Three West Potomac High School students have been named to the 2010 Virginia All-State Band. They performed at Great Bridge High School in Chesapeake on Saturday, April 10. Congratulations to these students:

Ian Chaava, Euphonium, Concert Band.

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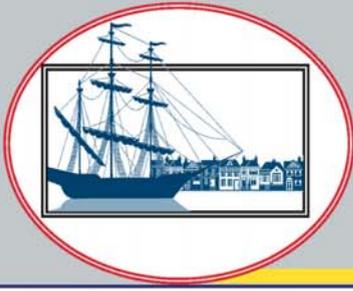
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\$795,000



Radford, 3100 s.f.
\$804,000



Woodlawn, 3145 s.f.
\$815,000



Fairfax, 3600 s.f.
\$835,000



3612 Old Vernon Court
Pettits Landing
\$819,900

Wonderful brick & stone center hall Colonial. Five bedrooms, 3 full & 1 half baths, den, gourmet kit w/large walk-in pantry, family room w/floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace & walks out to gorgeous stone patio with detailed landscaping. Master has vaulted ceilings, sitting area, walk-in closets & ultra bath. Finished walkout lower level has 5th bedroom, full bath, rec room, office, and large storage room.
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SOLD
2613 Gadsby Place
Stonegate
\$610,000

This home SOLD before even going on the market! Very popular Jefferson model. Three bedrooms, 2 full & 2 half baths. Dramatic living room has 14 foot ceilings, three sets of French doors with Palladium windows that walk out to very large deck. Large master has bay window & luxury bath. Finished lower level rec room has 12 foot ceilings, 2nd gas fireplace, two large closets, more large Palladium windows for much light & walks out to 2nd large deck.



UNDER CONTRACT
6104 Florence Lane
Midwood Ests

The Bender Group would like to welcome the Smith family to the neighborhood!
Two level, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath rambler with over 3200 square feet of living space. Eat-in gourmet kitchen with tons of cabinets, formal living room & dining room. Main level master with custom closet, upgraded bath with double vanity, separate shower & Jacuzzi tub. Family room & rec room on the lower level with wood burning fireplace & 2nd full bath.



COMING SOON
2426 N. Hampton Drive
The Mews @ Stonegate
For Rent
\$2300/a month

Beautiful Townhome with eat-in kitchen, granite countertops, hardwood floors, adjoining family room that walks out to deck. Living room w/cathedral ceilings, gas fireplace and many windows. Master has soaring ceilings, loft luxury bath with soaking tub, separate shower, vanity, large walk-in closet. This home also offers 2 car garage parking, community pool, clubhouse, tot lots, and is in an excellent Alexandria location.



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The peaceful natural setting of this Fairfax County location is known in Virginia for its welcoming shelter for the Blue Heron and the Bald Eagle. Now the opportunity exists to own a home within this special place, where spectacular views of the Potomac River and Mason Neck add to the splendor and tranquility that is inherent to the location. Enjoying private gated solitude, these beautiful lots offer the ideal place to build an exquisite dream home. Included is a deep-water slip in the community's private marina.



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Mason Neck (Lot 8)
\$2,300,000
Waterfront Lot (3+ Acres)

6000 St. Catherines Lane
Mason Neck (Lot 12)
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8714 Bluedale St \$659,000
Stratford Landing - Colonial!
Classic four bedroom center hall colonial on gorgeous level lot in prime Stratford Landing location.

Home has been exceptionally well maintained and has had major updates such as thermal windows, new HVAC unit and foyer extension. Large deck overlooks beautifully landscaped private yard. Priced to sell!



9333 Brambly Ln \$549,500
One of Area's Best Values!
Don't miss out - Quite simply the best value for under \$550,000 you will find in Alexandria area. This home offers everything: updated, 5 bedrooms, large room sizes,

brick fireplace, hardwood floors, covered parking, pristine condition and prime location on quiet cul-de-sac. Compares favorably with properties that cost thousands and thousands more. A stunning value!



4319 Ferry Landing \$498,500
Absolutely Stunning!
Unheard of opportunity to purchase in prestigious Yacht Haven Estates for under \$500,000!

Comfortable home in pristine condition. Lovingly maintained by long time owners. Features include: all major rooms on one level, fin. lower level with direct outside access, 2 fireplaces and hardwood floors. Exterior deck overlooks private 1/2 acre grounds. Huge potential!

400 COMMONWEALTH #204 Rosemont / \$359,000
BEAUTIFUL! Complete renovation in '05. Hardwood thru-out, SS, granite & maple cabs w/ W/D in unit. Back Porch. Can walk to 2 METROS. 1BR,1BA.



The Kohler Team
Heldi 703.609.7367
Elke 703.967.7633



400 COMMONWEALTH #307 / Rosemont / \$417,400
RENOVATION in '06. Top floor corner unit w/AV/D. Hardwood, SS, granite & maple cabs. Back porch. Can walk to 2 METROS. 2BR, 1BA.



1901 ARLINGTON RIDGE RD Arlington / \$999,000
LOCATION! Walk to METRO, Pentagon, mall, restaurants. 5 mins to DC. Older established upgraded neighborhood. 4BR, 3BA, 2FP.



126 ROBERTS LANE Near King St METRO \$319,900
LOCATION & CONDITION makes a perfect condo. Spacious 2BR, 1BA condo, high ceilings, ground floor patio opens to kitchen & living room.

New carpets, Pergo, fresh paint thru-out. W/D in unit. Condo fee includes heat/ac/water. Pool/tennis/assigned parking. Warranty.

www.Deb@DebVaRealtor.com
Deborah Alea 703.447.1315



4404 Ferry Landing \$575,000
Absolutely Stunning!
Owner's transfer creates unique opportunity. Price Slashed! Huge 3 level colonial on spectacular, fenced half acre lot with trees. Four huge bedrooms,

three full baths, family room, rec room, large eat-in kit featuring stainless steel, granite and ceramic tile, refinished wood floors on main level and upstairs hallway, three fireplaces, sun room, deck and lots of storage areas. Balcony off master suite. Truly a Must See!



1139 Cedar Dale Ln \$769,000
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Exceptionally attractive Classic Cape in prime location on gorgeous .60 acre lot mins from OT, just

off GW Parkway. Tastefully expanded and updated to preserve the integrity of original home. Fabulous features include stunning family room, spacious first floor master suite, upgraded kit and more! Custom in ground pool. Great New Price!



4401 Jackson Place \$448,000
Special Value!
Spacious brick home on gorgeous half acre lot in heart of Mt Vernon with open floor plan, hardwood floors, family room with fireplace.

Fabulous custom deck overlooks magnificent level grounds. Covered parking and extra driveway space. Rare opportunity to find a well maintained Mount Vernon home for under \$500,000!



6216 RUBY VIRGINIA CT Alexandria \$469,900
BACK ON THE MARKET! Spacious 2 car TH painted, new carpet & updated w/granite in kit, & new flooring on main level. Check out this lovely 4BR, 3.5BA, 3 lvl TH w/Trpl & extra room/office in fin basement. Under 2mi from Springfield-Franconia Metro & min to major rtes. Call...

Peggy Cresent 703.244.2138



7177 FAIRFIELD COURT Alex / \$330,000
MOVE RIGHT INTO THIS completely updated & renovated 3 level TH, conv to METRO, OT & Belvoir. 3BR, 2.5BA w/wood floors, oversized eat-in kit boasting granite & new cabs. Lovely fenced backyard w/patio for summer bar-b-que(s). Finished lower level w/full bath, play area & laundry. Nothing left to do!

Kim Muffler 703.282.7739



1250 SOUTH WASHINGTON ST Alex / Porto Vecchio
Prime river location in SE quadrant of OT - outstanding amenities/service - secure one level living.

• 1BR Estate Sale - special value \$325,000
• 1BR - Super Pied-a-Terre \$420,000
• 2BR/2BA - Well designed floor plan \$659,000
• 2BR/2BA - Stunning renovation \$750,000
• Rentals - at \$1,850 to \$2,750
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Pat Tierney 703.850.5630



4713 Dolphin Lane \$1,395,000
Custom Waterfront - Private Dock!
Spacious, updated home remodeled and expanded by leading custom builder as his own residence. Exceptionally bright, open floor plan capitalizes on fabulous waterfront location. Features include huge deck, private dock, waterview master suite, updated kitchen spectacular sunroom, gorgeous yard, two car garage and bulkheaded water frontage. Owner Financing Available!



9000 Volunteer Dr \$720,000
Custom Cape!
Spacious custom Cape on gorgeous grounds with fabulous in ground pool. Bright open floor plan with all major rooms including

Master Suite on main level. In-law suite/office addition with private entrance. Updated throughout including kitchen and baths. Features include hardwood floors, eat in kitchen, patio, 4-5 bedrooms, 2 car oversized garage. Special location on quiet street with privacy assured by proximity to acres of woods.



Field of Dreams! Lofty Oaks \$755,900
Build your Wakefield dream home on fabulous 3/4 acre estate site in the heart of Mt. Vernon. New low price! Pre-Construction opportunity allows for maximum customization. Call for details.



2102 BASSET ST Ft Hunt / Mt Vernon \$599,900
NO COOKIE-CUTTER HERE! This delightful home is full of light & charm & renovated top to bottom. It glows w/ warmth & friendliness, from the beautiful gourmet kitchen to the stylish baths.

DIR: from Alex/OT: SGW Plovy, R Stratford Lane, R Basset St to 2102.

Leah Chapla 703.929.4875



6214 TALLY HO LN Belle Haven \$525,000
RARE OPPORTUNITY! Enjoy the privacy of a gorgeous canopy of trees! This 3BR, 2BA home is waiting for you to make it your own. The master

has a walk-in closet & bath. The living room has a lovely fpl & the dining room spacious. LL includes finished family room & fpl plus laundry & garage.

Catherine.Foltz@longandfoster.com
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3 RUSSELL ROAD Unit D / Alexandria \$349,000
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9316 Heather Glen \$699,000
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walled family room and fabulous screened porch both overlook amazing custom pool. Three levels, 4 bedrooms, updated kitchen, direct access to outside from lower level and 2 car garage.



9316 Allwood Dr \$535,000
Absolutely Impeccable!
Stunning home features bright open floor plan with soaring cathedral ceilings on main level. This fabulous property has been

substantially updated and is in absolutely impeccable condition. Gleaming hardwood floors, track lighting, finished lower level, garage and much more! Gorgeous setting on half acre tract fronting a quiet street in the heart of Mt. Vernon.



We're Underway! 8826 Camden St \$899,000
Ground floor opportunity to add your personal touches to this new creekside home in Stratford Landing. Custom Wakefield home loaded with upgrades! Call for details.



619 S PITT ST Old Town Alexandria \$1,090,000
Expansive & beautiful renovation of one of Old Town's historic homes in the SE quadrant. Highlights include: 3BR/3.5BA, hardwood floors, granite, luxurious master suite, 3 gas fireplaces, detached gar has private BR & full BA.

Dayna Blumel / Kerry Adams 703.587.7841



1306 COMMONWEALTH AVE Del Ray / \$515,000
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Inderjeet Jumani 703.472.8804
Pictures: www.ijumani.com



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New Fee For Athletes

FROM PAGE 1

voted against the fee.

"These fees touch such a large swath of students," Hone said.

Garza said there is potential for classmates to mock a student who was unable to participate in a sport due to lack of money.

"I'm concerned about the overall morale of our student athletes," said Garza, who is also the head coach of the school's girls soccer team. "If you turn them away from sports, I'm worried about how the kids will be looked at in school."

Evans, Reed and Hone supported a motion to remove the fee entirely, which failed. The three, along with Dan Storck (Mount Vernon), supported another motion to make the fee a one-time expense for students, but that failed as well.

"Sports are clearly a game-changer for some kids," Storck said.

While Storck supported the fees, he said he wants the school system to monitor the situation closely.

Money generated from the fee will go into the county's general fund and is expected to generate \$1.8 million in revenue for the county.

There are exceptions to the rule.

Students who qualify for a free or reduced-priced lunch will be exempt from paying the fees. However, that standard is extremely low. A family of four must be living on \$41,000 per year in Fairfax County to qualify for reduced-priced lunches.

The average median income for Fairfax County households is over \$100,000.

Some are worried the fee might prevent students from participating in as many as three sports in a year, or any sports at all.

"Small schools are afraid they won't be able to field teams," Reed said.

Garza is also worried about not being able to field teams, saying football of all of the sports will suffer the most. Garza said four members of the girls soccer team and nine members of the boys soccer team have spoken about potential problems with the athletic fee.

Evans said that some Loudoun County Public Schools with needier populations have seen an impact since their high school sports fee went into effect. Park View High School has seen a drop off in the number of students participating in track this spring.



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ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Local 2010 Cappies Nominees

Rising Critic — Ally Markussen — Bishop Ireton High School

Rising Critic — Catherine Addington — Bishop Ireton High School

Rising Critic — Jonathan Polson — Bishop Ireton High School

Critic Team — Bishop Ireton High School

Lighting — Elizabeth Movius, Maiya Elliott, Justin Klingenberg — St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School — A Midsummer Night's Dream

Costumes — Julia Munro, Meghan Pearson, Nicole Weinard — Bishop Ireton High School — GO-GO BEACH The Musical

Costumes — Thomas Norman — Thomas Edison High School The Curious Savage

Make-up — Elizabeth Lamb — St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School — A Midsummer Night's Dream

Ensemble in a Play — The Wayside School Kids — West Potomac — Sideways Stories from Wayside School

Female Dancer — Madeline Bryan — TC Williams High — Chicago

Comic Actor in a Play — Timothy Yuan — Thomas Jefferson High School — Once in a Lifetime

Comic Actor in a Musical — Adam J. Santalla — Bishop Ireton High — GO-GO BEACH The Musical

Supporting Actress in a Play — Sophia Sperling — Thomas Edison High School — The Curious Savage

Supporting Actor in a Play — Henry Knotts — St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School — A Midsummer Night's Dream

Lead Actress in a Play — Emily Wolfeich — Thomas Edison High School — The Curious Savage

Lead Actress in a Play — Emily Woods — West Potomac — Sideways Stories from Wayside School

Song — Mister Cellophane — TC Williams High School — Chicago

'Love! Valour! Compassion!' Shows Men Coping with AIDS

Dominion Stage tackles McNally's 1994 play.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE CONNECTION

As Memorial Day Weekend approaches this is an appropriate time for Dominion Stage to open its production of Terrence McNally's "Love! Valour! Compassion!" After all, the first act takes place over a Memorial Day Weekend at a lake-side summer home about two hours' drive north of New York City where a group of gay men have gathered for a weekend of skinny dipping and other forms of "R and R."

Acts two and three take place over the Fourth of July and Labor Day weekends, as the men's relationships evolve in the wake of indiscretions and events during that first weekend. Over it all hangs the specter of a plague that, at that moment appeared both unstoppable and incurable. It was the plague known as AIDS.

That was the mid-1990s. It may be a bit hard to recall just how terrible the epidemic appeared just then. As bad as the AIDS crisis is today, then it seemed even worse because of the factor of the unknown. The gay community in the United States was reeling from the shock of an apparently unstoppable onslaught. The new disease was taking thousands of lives a month and the rate was increasing. Today the trend is down. Where AIDS would take over 50,000 American lives a year then, today it is closer to 10,000 — and treatments have been devised. It is still a scourge and the international as well as domestic implications are staggering. But in 1994 it seemed an unstoppable terror, at least to those in the identified high risk groups.

Terrence McNally, author of such powerful plays as "Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune" and "Lips Together, Teeth Apart" (and later "Master Class" and "Corpus Christie") created this eight-character play that won the Tony Award for Best New Play of 1994. McNally wasn't just writing about AIDS. He was writing about people. Specifically, male people. In particular, gay male people. Each is a definable individual with strengths, weaknesses, virtues, vices, hopes and fears. The AIDS crisis permeates those fears, but isn't the only fact of life in their lives.

That Dominion Stage was able to attract seven actors both capable of bringing those characteristics to life and willing to bare all in the process is something of a testament to the strength of the talent pool in our community. The on-stage nudity is treated here, as the play requires, as a simple fact of life among the men in the play. How different characters display or disguise their bodies is but one tool the playwright uses to reveal their personalities.

There's Buzz, an AIDS victim who flaunts his gayness but not his body. Mario Font handles the role with appropriate flair (it is a role that featured Nathan Lane on Broadway



PHOTO BY REGINALD WATERS

Richard Isaacs, Mario Font, Matthew Randall and Patrick M. Doneghy in "Love! Valour! Compassion!"



PHOTO BY REGINALD WATERS

Richard Isaacs and Jeffrey Stevenson in "Love! Valour! Compassion!"

and Jason Alexander in the film adaptation) as a show tune queen. When it came to nudity, however, the character opts for a front-covering barbecue chef's apron.

On the opposite side of the issue is Ramon, given a vibrant performance by Shawn g. Byers. He's an openly gay dancer who revels in his body and enjoys showing it off either to shocking effect or simply as an object of beauty. He spends a good deal of the play sunbathing in the nude on a platform at the rear of the stage.

The most touching performance of the evening comes from Luke Morris as the blind young lover of the host of the weekends. He's vulnerable on so many different levels and Morris gets each of them right. Patrick M. Doneghy is strong and compelling as his lover, the owner of the house and a middle-aged choreographer who fears he may be running out of inspiration for new dances and his body may be getting too battered to execute what dances he does devise.

Matthew Randall doubles as both a British pianist and his AIDS infected brother while Jeffrey Stevenson brings an empathetic tone

to the role of one half of a long-term relationship and Richard Isaacs adds the acerbic edge to that of his partner.

As with other productions of the play, the costumes tell about as much about each character as the absence of costumes does. Ceci Albert does a fine job of giving each character a wardrobe that bespeaks personality without overdoing it. That is, until the finale which sees six of the seven don tutus for a bit of "Swan Lake" at an AIDS benefit show.

Director Rick Hayes brings it all together in a well-paced presentation that emphasizes the camaraderie of the group while giving each member a chance to make his reactions to events clear. It is a full evening of emotion with, as is almost always the case with a Terrence McNally play, a good deal of humor.

Where and When

The Dominion Stage production of "Love! Valour! Compassion!" continues through June 6 at Theatre One of the Gunston Arts Center, 2700 South Lang Street. Performances are Wednesday - Saturday at 8 p.m. with a matinee on Sunday, June 6 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Call 703-683-0502 or log on to www.dominionstage.org.

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.

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.

MAY 22 TO JUNE 1

Handcrafted Alexandria Spring Shopping. Visit 10 Handcrafted Alexandria businesses and enter for your chance to win a Grand Prize Weekend Getaway featuring gift certificates to the Hotel Monaco, Jackson 20 restaurant, and a Handcrafted Alexandria Shopping Spree! At the following Handcrafted Alexandria businesses: Torpedo Factory Art Center, The Art League, fibre space, La Muse, Potomac Bead Company, Ten Thousand Villages, Artcraft, Arts Afire, Carafe Wine Makers, Del Ray Artisans, Gossypia, Imagine Artwear, Oerth Gallery & Tile Works. Visit www.handcraftedalexandria.com; 703-838-4565

THURSDAY/MAY 27

"Canvas." Free film screening at 6:30 to 9 p.m. Free. Followed by a discussion in recognition of Mental Health Month. Starring Marcia Gay Harden and Joe Pantoliano, the film is an accurate and sympathetic portrayal of mental illness and the devastating effects it can have on a family. At the Masonic Temple, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Contact Shay Holman, Chair at 703-868-7429 or visit <http://healthieralexandria.org/AntiStigma/>

Blues, Swing, Jazz Concert. 7 - 9 p.m. Concert is by guitarist Jim Stephanson and bassist John Previti. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. Contact 703-838-4565 or www.torpedofactory.org.

Urban Garden Workshop. 10 a.m. to noon. Dean Norton, director of Horticulture at Mount Vernon, will show how to restore, reshape and improve the overall health and look of older or storm-damaged shrubs. At the Carlyle House Historic Site gardens, Old Town Alexandria. Admission is \$20. Call 703-549-2997 to register.

Wine Tasting Night for UCM. 50% of the cost of your wine tasting will be donated to United Community Ministries. Hosted by Prince Michel Tasting Room & Gift Boutique. At 1309 King Street, Alexandria. Visit www.princemichel.com.

12-Week Girl Empowerment Group. 6-7:30 p.m. Free. For females ages 14-18. Meets at 1120 Queen Street, Alexandria. Sponsored by Voice Consulting LLC. Topics will include: body image, self-esteem, dealing with authority figures, mother/daughter relationship and much more! Contact: voice_consulting@yahoo.com or 571-314-1989.

Movie Night featuring "Bride and Prejudice." 5 p.m. (rated PG-13): A fast-paced modern retelling of Jane Austen's classic "Pride & Prejudice" Bollywood-style. Refreshments served. At the Burke Branch, 4701 Seminary Road.



JUNE 11-12

Jewelry Designer Trunk Show. Noon to 8 p.m. Featuring collections of Mia Katrin for Jewel Couture LLC. Katrin will present her collections including best-selling limited edition necklaces and earrings of diamonds, emeralds, multi-colored sapphires, rubies and pearls in high-karat gold which have been worn by A-List Hollywood celebrities. At Goldworks by David Martin, 1400 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-683-0333.

Taste of Old Town North. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal Street, Alexandria. Live entertainment, yoga, karate, dance demonstrations, food and a raffle! Sponsored by the Old Town North Community Partnership. Contact 703-836-8066.

FRIDAY/MAY 28

Evening of Music for French Horn. 8 p.m. Free. The U.S. Air Force Band Chamber Players performs. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil

Moe Provencher Performs. Americana/folk songwriter. At St. Elmo's Coffee Pub in Alexandria.

MAY 28-30

Sunset Celebration. 6-9 p.m. Take evening tours of Mount Vernon, enjoy wine and desserts, 18th century music, dancing, games and wagon rides. Tickets are \$18/adults, \$12/children; free for 5 and under. At Historic Mount Vernon. Tickets may be purchased online in advance at MountVernon.org/onlinetickets.

SATURDAY/MAY 29

Meditation Basics with Art of Living. 11 a.m. Learn basic exercises for clearing your mind, gaining focus, and minimizing stress. At the Burke Branch, 4701 Seminary Road.

SugarCube. 10 a.m. (for all ages): Learn the health benefits and types of chocolate while enjoying free samples. At the Beatley Central, 5005 Duke Street.

Bill Jenkins - World of Music. 2 p.m. (for all ages): Bill Jenkins showcases musical instruments from around the world, with a special focus on India and other Asian countries. Light refreshments served. At the Burke Branch, 4701 Seminary Road.

SUNDAY/MAY 30

Wheel Day Parade. 3 p.m. Kids of all ages are invited to decorate their bikes, scooters, skates, strollers or anything with wheels to join in the annual Wheel Day Parade. Arrive by 2:45 p.m. at Old Dominion Blvd. and Chalfonte Drive traffic circle. The parade rolls in the North Ridge neighborhood to the Beverley Hills Church playground where prizes will be awarded. Contact Amy or Tom at wheelday@me.com or 703-549-2220.

MONDAY/MAY 31

Memorial Day Jazz Festival. 1-7 p.m. Attendees can bring lawn chairs and blankets. Food will be available for purchase, picnic baskets are welcome and grills are available in the park at the picnic sites. Admission is free. At Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/12678.

Friends of Captain Rocky Versace Memorial Day Ceremony. 11 a.m. The "Friends of Captain Rocky Versace" invite the public to the 8th Annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. At the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. The event will honor the 67 Alexandrians who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.

TUESDAY/JUNE 1

Swing Dancing. 9-11 p.m. Admission is \$10. With the band, King Teddy. At Nick's Nightclub, 641 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.

THURSDAY/JUNE 3

Celebrate Mount Vernon At Home. 4 - 6 p.m. The organization whose mission is to help residents of the Mount Vernon area live safely, comfortably, and confidently in their own homes for as long as possible celebrates its launch at historic River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive. All are invited for drinks, light refreshments, music, and lovely views of gardens and river. Remarks by Mt. Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland. Tickets: \$25/members, \$30/non-members. Call 703-303-4060 or



JUNE 3, 4, 5

"Legends of Song." Annual West Potomac High School Choral Department's Spring Show. The show is produced and directed by Ernest L. Johnson, choral director at West Potomac. The choreography is directed by Jennifer Lisenby, dance instructor for 25 years at Alexandria Dance. Held in the Springbank Auditorium. Performances are June 3-5 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12. Visit www.westpotomacchoirs.org.

email info@mountvernonathome.org for tickets.

Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, NOVA Community College, Alexandria campus, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-0885 or visit www.alexsym.org.

Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic

(WMP). Concert. 3 p.m. Free. James Kazik Concert Overture (world premier). Benjamin Britten: Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31 with tenor Jon Lackey and hornist Amy Smith. Pre-concert lecture with Dr. Stephen Bertino at 2:15 p.m. (both concerts). At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria.

TUESDAY/JUNE 8

Richard Rice Recital. 7:30 p.m. Free. The concert, entitled Go Lovely Rose: Songs of Love and Loss, features music of living composers, including Ned Rorem, Elizabeth Vercoe, Richard Pearson Thomas, and Richard Rice. The works represent a wide range of poets, from Elizabethans William Shakespeare and Edmund Waller to moderns, including Thom Gunn, John Ashbery, and Constantine Cavafy. Vocal recital at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria.

Swing Dancing. 9-11 p.m. Admission is \$10. With the band, The Joker's Wild. At Nick's Nightclub, 641 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 9

SPY Versus SPY Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Special guest Dr. David Robarge, Chief Historian of the CIA, will talk about the secret side of the Civil War. Sponsored by the Springfield/Alexandria Women's Connection. At the Springfield Golf & Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Cost is \$17/person. Call 703-590-6562 or email SpringWmConn@yahoo.com.

Wine Tasting With Spanish Wines. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Led by Wilkinson Wine Cellar. Fee is \$25/person. Reservations necessary. Call 703-548-1789. At the Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org

JUNE 10, 11, 12

Summer Book Sale. Hours are Thursday, June 10, from 1 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Friday, June 11, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, June 12, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Call 703-746-1704.

THURSDAY/JUNE 10

David Kitchen. 7 p.m. Known as a road warrior in the local DC area, Kitchen has honed his skills performing before live audiences on an almost nightly basis, working as a sideman on various projects as well as fronting his own bands. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-0035. Visit myspace.com/davidkitchen.

FRIDAY/JUNE 4

Sandra Y. Johnson Quintet. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. At Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy., Alexandria. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469).

Theater Night Fund-raiser. 7 p.m. Local cat orphanage King Street Cats will host its annual Theater Night. At the Little Theatre in Alexandria featuring "Play It Again, Sam" by Woody Allen. Tickets are \$40/advance, \$50/door. The event will raise money to support KSC goals of finding loving homes for all cats and kittens in their care and providing community outreach regarding the welfare and care of cats. Visit the website www.kingstreetcats.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 5

Alexandria Art Market. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Grand Opening June 5, 10-4 p.m. Your monthly dose of art in the heart of Del Ray. Market dates: June 5, July 3, Aug. 7, Sept. 4, Nov. 6. Alexandria Art Market is on the green space of the Del Ray Artisans' gallery in Colasanto Park, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., on the corner of Commonwealth and Mount Vernon Avenues. Entry is free and open to the public. Call Kimberley Bush at 703-627-7656 or DRA.AlexandriaArtMarket@gmail.com.

Star-Spangled Bike Tour. Begins at 9 a.m. Cyclists will learn about the impact of the War of 1812 from costumed interpreters. Goes 10 miles and starts at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 North Fairfax Street, Old Town Alexandria. For information or to make reservations, contact ruth.reeder@alexandriava.gov or call Alexandria Archaeology at 703-746-4399.

Shade Gardening. 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Fee is \$5/per workshop; advance registration required. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

Historic Alexandria Museum Gala. 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Rescheduled. Dining and dancing to Doc Scantlin and his Imperial Palms Orchestra. Tickets are \$150/person or \$300/sponsor. At the Holiday Inn Old town, 625 First Street in Alexandria. Visit www.historicalexandria.org or call the Office of Historic Alexandria at 703-746-4554.

SUNDAY/JUNE 6

Koi Auction. 11 a.m. Sponsored by the ZNA Potomac Koi Club. At Hollywood and Vines Nursery, 8453 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Free registration to bid. Contact Mike Frady at 703-360-9142 or mike@znapotomac.org.

ASO Children's Arts Festival: The Heart of Music. 2 p.m. activities hour; 3 p.m. concert. Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture," Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story," Carter Burwell's "Bella's Lullaby," music from "Twilight." Tickets are \$5. At the Rachel M.



Mount Vernon at sunset.

Sunset Celebration at Mount Vernon

Historic Mount Vernon invites visitors to an unprecedented evening experience: Sunset Celebration at Mount Vernon, a new event over Memorial Day weekend (May 28 – 30) offers a rare opportunity to visit Mount Vernon after the daytime crowds have departed. Visitors may take evening tours of the Mansion, relax and enjoy wine and desserts available for purchase in George Washington's picturesque garden, and delight in 18th-century music, dancing, games, and wagon rides. Stroll the lantern-lit grounds from 6 to 9 p.m. and immerse yourself in the 18th century as the sun sets on the plantation and costumed residents like the charming Lady Washington

and her granddaughter Nelly interact with visitors. This family-friendly event celebrates the beginning of summer on the plantation.

Tickets are \$18, adults; \$12, children ages 6-11; and free for ages 5 and under. This event requires a separate ticket from daytime admission. Annual passes are not valid for this event. All activities, with the exception of food and wine, are included with admission to this event. Tickets may be purchased online in advance at MountVernon.org/onlinetickets or at the Ford Orientation Center ticket window until 8 p.m. the evening of the event. Guests must be prepared to show identification to purchase wine.

Pig Party at Jackson 20

Starting June 9, Jackson 20 will host a monthly Pig Party with a nod to its bronze pig statue Bessie, an icon representing the favorite animal of the restaurant's namesake, Andrew Jackson.

On the second Wednesday of every month from 5:30 p.m. to close, Chef Dennis Marron and his team will prepare a feast of slow-roasted whole pig with all the fixings, served in the restaurant's colonial style courtyard. The menu features Pulled Pork Shoulder, Mahogany Barbeque, East Carolina Barbeque, Ribs, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, Smoked Corn, Corn Bread with Maple Butter, Green Bean Salad, Soft Rolls and Seasonal Pies. Guests can come early to enjoy an ice cold canned beer during the restaurant's newly launched "Eco-Hour," available daily from 3 to 7 p.m. and featuring a wide selection of canned beers and boxed wine. The Pig Party Barbeque is available for \$35 (if reserved in advance) or \$45 dollars at the door. Price does not include beverages, tax and gratuity. Call 703-842-2790 to make reservations.

Jackson 20 is located at 480 King Street, Alexandria. Phone: 703-842-2790. Or visit www.jackson20.com.



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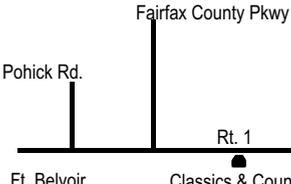
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FINE ARTS

MAY 24 THROUGH JUNE 27

Put a Lid on It. Artisan pottery add occasion to occasions. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Sunday, with Thursdays until 9 p.m. At the Scope Gallery, Studio 19, 101 North Union Street Alexandria. Call 703-548-6288.

NOW THROUGH AUG. 29

McLean Art Society's Summer Show. Juried by Gwen Bragg, teacher and award-winning artist. At River Farm, home of the American Horticultural Society, 7931 E. Boulevard Drive, South of Old Town. The themes are flower painting and still life as well as landscapes. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

MAY 28-JULY 4

Bucky-Art Project. A temporary outdoor art exhibit that pays homage to the scientific mind of R. Buckminster Fuller and his creation of the Geodesic Dome. Part of the Crystal City BID's ARTFUL Program.

NOW THROUGH MAY 30

WomanMade. Part of the Minds Wide Open celebration of women in the arts. Lillian Fitzgerald, curator and art consultant, chose 28 artists' work from more than 400 artists who had applied submitting over 1200 images for her review. She chose work that provided a small window into the art being made by women today. At the Target Gallery.

NOW THROUGH MAY 30

Finding Beauty Show. Opening reception Friday, May 21 from 7-10 p.m. This is Virginia Commonwealth University student Amanda R. Wright's Master of Interdisciplinary Studies Thesis Exhibition. Details and hours at www.TheDelRayArtisans.org. At the Del Ray Artisans Gallery at the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org or contact Amanda R Wright, 703-501-6838 or arook20@gmail.com.

NOW THROUGH MAY 31

In the Genes? Free. Torpedo Factory artists explore the possibility of a

THEATER

NOW THROUGH JUNE 30

"Love! Valour! Compassion." with evening performances (May 27, 28, June 2, 3, 4, and 5) at 8 p.m., and a Sunday matinee on June 6, at 2 p.m. At the Gunston Arts Center - Theater One, 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington. Tickets are available online for pre-purchase at www.DominionStage.org. Group Discounts available. Reservations can be made online or by calling 703-683-0502.

NOW THROUGH MAY 30

"Abandonment." By Kate Atkinson. Directed by Susie Poole and Genie Baskir. Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.; Tuesday at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$16/general, \$14/seniors and students, \$12/groups of 10. At Alexandria's Port City



"creative gene" with this building-wide exhibition that celebrates the family bond. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Open Daily 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Open Thursdays until 9 p.m. Visit www.torpedofactory.org; or call 703-838-4565.

NOW THROUGH JUNE 10

Metamorphosis. Free. Artworks reflect change, discovery, growth, alteration, or modification; work which suggests personal, physical, emotional, or spiritual transformation. The exhibit features sculpture, paintings, mixed-media, and photography showcasing the diversity of artistic talent found in the Washington, D.C. area. Presented by Convergence and Mount Vernon Baptist Church. At the Gallery at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-998-6260.

JUNE 2-JULY 4

A Day at the Beach or Accidental Models. Paintings by Linda Bankerd. reception and light refreshments on Saturday, June 12 from 5 - 8 p.m. At Gallery West, 1213 King Street in Old Town Alexandria. The gallery is open 11 - 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, as well as until 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, for the monthly Second Thursday Art Walk. Call 703-549-6006.

JUNE 3-6

Female Shorts: Film and Video Showcase. June 3, 6:30-9 p.m. Female Shorts is a juried film and video competition opened only to female filmmakers worldwide. Opening reception to meet the filmmakers and the juror, Sydney-

Playhouse, 1108 Jefferson Street in Old Town, Alexandria. Call 703-838-2880 or visit www.PortCityPlayhouse.com.

NOW THROUGH MAY 29

"Rifarl el Corazón" ("Heartstrings.") At Teatro de la Luna. By Dino Armas (Uruguay). Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 8 p.m. Saturday matinees at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25/regular, \$20/students and seniors. At Gunston Arts Center, Theater Two, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington.

NOW THROUGH JUNE 13

"Sycamore Trees." Second part of Signature's "American Musical Voices Project" sponsored by The Shen Family Foundation. Show times are Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2

Chanelle Dawkins June 4, 7 p.m.: Special Screening of "Who Does She Think She Is?" directed by Pamela Tanner Boll followed by an audience discussion mediated by Sydney-Chanelle Dawkins and Pamela H. Viola (\$5 advance tickets; \$8 at the door). June 6, 5-6 p.m.: Closing reception/awards ceremony with special screening and director's discussion of "EcoDude" and "Beauty is Motion" by local student filmmaker, Sydney Schaedel. Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria, www.torpedofactory.org. See www.vamindswideopen.com.

JUNE 4-27

Undecided: A Dialog between Artist and Viewer. Opening Reception is Friday, June 4, 7-10 p.m. This all-member, all-media show gives DRA artists a chance to observe how viewers respond to their art by asking them to submit titles for the artworks. At the Del Ray Artisans gallery, Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org

SATURDAY/JUNE 5

Alexandria Art Market. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Your monthly dose of art in the heart of Del Ray. Market dates: June 5, July 3, Aug. 7, Sept. 4, Nov. 6. Alexandria Art Market is on the green space of the Del Ray Artisans' gallery in Colasanto Park, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., on the corner of Commonwealth and Mount Vernon Avenues. Entry is free and open to the public. Call Kimberley Bush at 703-627-7656 or DRA.AlexandriaArtMarket@gmail.com.

NOW THROUGH JUNE 6

You Are Here by Susan LaMont, contemporary realism artist. The show features four large works that examine the relationship between people and their increasingly complex environments. At Gallery West, 1213 King Street, Alexandria. Visit www.gallery-west.com or call 703-549-6006.

NOW THROUGH JUNE 7

Teresa Oaxaca, "Classical Realism: New Works." Teresa Oaxaca, a 2005 graduate of HB Woodlawn and resident of Arlington, will have her recent paintings featured at The Art League Gallery, inside the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria, in her solo exhibit. Gallery Hours: Daily, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, 12 noon-6 p.m. Open Thursdays until 9 p.m. Exhibitions and events are free and open to the public.

p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$52 to \$76. Call Ticketmaster at 703-573-SEAT (7328) or go to www.signature-theatre.org. At Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave., Arlington.

NOW THROUGH MAY 30

"Sophisticated Ladies." Starring Maurice Hines. At Arena Stage at the Lincoln Theatre. Show times are Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday at 7:30 p.m. (6 p.m. curtain on 4/25); Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. (1 p.m. curtain on 4/25); Weekday matinees at noon on 4/21, 4/27 & 5/5. Tickets range from \$25 to \$74. For tickets, call 202-488-3300. At Arena Stage, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington.

SCHOOLS



Jakob Cramer, Will Rosenkranz, Kevin Glatting and Cole Coder gather at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center for the May 22 prom.

West Potomac Celebrates Mardi Gras Prom Night



Christian Jackey gets into the mime act.



Thomas Baird, Kathleen Brady and Cara Yaworske as they don their Mardi Gras masks for the senior prom.



West Potomac staff Lynelle Locket, Sandra Williams, Janice Monroe and Stephanie Manous pose with the Mime Queen Amy.



Christina Devine, and her boyfriend, Kwasi Owusu, as they were meeting up with friends before heading to dinner on prom night. They each play for their respective varsity soccer teams at West Potomac High School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE



Marine Corp recruiter Stephen Myrick is greeted by the Mime Queen before entering the ballroom for the 2010 West Potomac Senior Prom.

MOUNT COMFORT CEMETERY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE



The 31st Annual Memorial Day Avenue of Flags

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OPINION

Remembering on Memorial Day

FROM PAGE 8

into the Army here in Northern Virginia, at DeWitt Army Hospital at Fort Belvoir. Alexander died at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 22, 2005, of injuries sustained in Samarra, Iraq, Oct. 17.

Lt. Col. Thomas A. Wren, 44, of Lorton, died in Tallil, Iraq on Nov. 5, 2005. Marine Capt. Michael Martino, 32 of the City of Fairfax, died Nov. 2, 2005, when his helicopter was brought down in Iraq.

1st Lt. Laura M. Walker of Oakton was killed on Aug. 18, 2005, in Kandahar, Afghanistan. CW4 Matthew S. Lourey of Lorton died from injuries sustained on May 26, 2005 in Buhruz, Iraq.

Operations Officer Helge Boes of Fairfax was killed on Feb. 5, 2003, while participating in counterterrorism efforts in eastern Afghanistan.

Among other local lives lost: Lance Cpl. Tavon Lee Hubbard, 24, of Reston; 1st Lt. Alexander Wetherbee, 27, of McLean; 1st Lt. Jeff Kaylor, 25, of Clifton; Coast Guard Petty Officer Nathan B. Bruckenthal, 24, of Herndon; Army Chief Warrant Officer Sharon T. Swartworth, 43, of Mount Vernon; Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Blankenbecler, 40, of Mount Vernon; Capt. James F. Adamowski, 29, of Springfield; Sgt. DeForest L. Talbert, 22, of Alexandria; Marine Cpl. Binh N. Le, 20, of Alexandria; Staff

Sgt. Russell Verdugo, 34, of Alexandria. Army Capt. Mark N. Stubenhofer, 30, from Springfield; Marine Gunnery Sgt. Javier Obles-Prado Pena, 36, from Falls Church; Marine Sgt. Krisna Nachampassak, 27, from Burke; Army Staff Sgt. Nathaniel J. Nyren, 31, from Reston; Marine Lance Cpl. Tenzin Dengkhim, 19, from Falls Church, Navy Chief Joel Egan Baldwin, 37, from Arlington; Maj. Joseph McCloud, of Alexandria; Major Gloria D. Davis, 47 of Lorton.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

staff raised this issue with Mr. Hyland to no avail; (4) the MVCCA passed budget resolutions asking the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to raise every conceivable tax during a historic recession in lieu of proposing the BOS make responsible and necessary budget cuts; (5) the MVCCA refused to take up the request by a local citizen that it seriously consider his proposal for a Citizen Review Board for reviewing police actions. It allowed its Public Safety committee to vote against the proposal without giving the proponent the courtesy of an invitation to appear before the committee and present his case. (6) Its Planning & Zoning com

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 25

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Sunday 7:30; 9:00; 10:30 am; 12:00 Noon 2:00 pm (en Español)	

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Mount Vernon Beats Langley in Soccer Regionals

West Potomac softball prepares for Centreville.

The Mount Vernon boys soccer team, the No. 3 seed from the National District, upset Langley, the Liberty District's No. 2 seed, in the opening round of the Northern Region tournament, 3-1 in overtime, on May 25 at Langley.

The teams ended regulation tied at 1 and Mount Vernon's Dannish Decardi-Nelson scored a goal in each five-minute overtime period. Mount Vernon will travel to face Robinson, the Concorde District's No. 1 seed, at 7 p.m. May 27.

SPORTS BRIEFS

"I can't even put into words what this means," head coach Robert Garza said via phone after the game. "This is a huge step."

Decardi-Nelson scored the game-winner by beating a Langley defender 1-on-1 and added an insurance goal in the second overtime.

"We just came out with intensity, thinking we're going to go in this game and win," said Decardi-Nelson, a first-team all-district selection. "We knew [the Saxons] were big boys but we came out with the mindset we were going to dominate."

Garza said the Majors had strong fan following at the game.

"The whole place erupted," after Decardi-Nelson's first goal, Garza said. "When he scored you could hear it a mile away."

Langley went 15-0 before losing to McLean in the Liberty District tournament final. Mount Vernon won four straight games to improve to 10-2-2 before losing to Stuart in the National District semifinals.

Mount Vernon fell behind early as Lan-



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

Simond Kargbo, seen earlier this season, and the Mount Vernon boys soccer team upset Langley in their regional opener on May 25.

gley scored in the third minute, but the Majors battled back and tied the game on a Ruben Alvarez goal 20 minutes in.

Garza praised the play of the Mount Vernon defense, including senior defender David Heller, a first-team all-district selection, and freshman goalkeeper Lucas Belanger, a first-team all-region selection.

"I heard everything about how big they were. I was a little scared," Belanger said. "After the first goal I was a little scared. [But then] I looked around the field and" they didn't seem so big.

Nery Cruz-Lainez had two assists for Mount Vernon and Simond Kargbo had one.

— JON ROETMAN

Mount Vernon Milers

The Mount Vernon Milers running club

meets at 8 a.m. on Sundays. The group usually meets along the Potomac River, but the exact location is listed in an e-mail sent every Wednesday for the coming week. Distances vary but runners can expect between four and eight miles.

To join the Mount Vernon Milers, send Lee Britton an e-mail at lbritton7@yahoo.com to be put on the e-mail list.

Wolverines Look To Bounce Back From District Loss

After recording an 11-3 record and a second-place finish in the Patriot District, the West Potomac softball team had its sights set on a rematch with South County — the

only team to beat the Wolverines twice — in the district tournament championship game.

But West Potomac's plan fell apart when the Wolverines were upset by Woodson, which handed West Potomac its other regular-season district loss, in the semifinals.

While a district championship is out of the question, West Potomac's next challenge is traveling to face Centreville at 7 p.m. on May 28 during the opening round of the Northern Region tournament. West Potomac, the Patriot's No. 3 seed, defeated Centreville, the Concorde's No. 2, 3-0 during an April 21 meeting.

"They have to go out loose and believing in themselves."

— Head coach Craig Maniglia

West Potomac senior Zannie Crowe, the Patriot District Player of the Year, said the Wolverines need to be more accountable heading into regionals. "We really have to rely on our own skill," she said, "not look forward to the next person to get the base hit — make sure that you do your part to get a win."

Head coach Craig Maniglia said errors and nerves cost the Wolverines against Woodson. "It's just tough. We gave them the game," he said. "We gave up so many errors and the kids; I think they understand now if we're going to play tight we're not going to win. They have to go out loose and believing in themselves."

Sophomore pitcher Morgan Maniglia, a first-team all-district selection who threw a no-hitter against Lee in the opening round of the district tournament, said the Wolverines are ready to move on. "We're just getting ourselves mentally and physically prepared," she said. Losing to Woodson "was a heartbreak, but we're going to pick it up."

Wagner Just Misses Out on Olympic Dream

West Potomac grad's hard work earns medal at U.S. championships.

BY KELLY WOOD
FOR THE GAZETTE

"They didn't go down without a fight and neither will I," tweeted figure skater Ashley Wagner after watching "Titanic," just hours before stepping onto the ice.

Her heart was beating faster as the music started. Her skates sliced into the smooth ice like a knife into butter. The playful music, her flowing dress and the flowers in her hair created the feeling of spring on a platform of ice.

The anticipation was ever building and

all eyes were focused on her. She landed the triple flip into the double axel. One more jump remained; the hardest in the program. She landed it. The music stopped but her heart was still beating faster than ever. Her cheeks were rosy from the chill of the rink and her wide grin was visible to even those in the back-most rows. She received a standing ovation. With a tone of admiration, the TV commentator said, "seven points behind the leaders ... and she fought."

Wagner, only 18 years old, awed the audience and judges with her free skate program. Her performance brought her back into medal contention after she fell behind the leaders in the short program, and won her the bronze medal at the 2010 U.S. Women's Figure Skating Championships this past January.

It was an amazing accomplishment, yet at the same time, an overwhelming let down. Only the top two could advance to

the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Wagner had missed making the Olympic team by four points. She had almost grabbed her dream of being an Olympian, but it was pushed just out of reach.

"Any other Olympic year, third place would have been good enough to make it onto the team, but this was the one year where it was different," Wagner said. "The fact that I had skated the long program of my life made it easier to stomach the fact that I wasn't going to Vancouver."

Wagner gave it everything she had. She took home a bronze medal that complemented her many other skating achievements, but it wasn't the medal she had dreamed of for years. That dream is still in the cards if she holds onto it.

This past season has been very successful for Wagner. She was the first U.S. lady figure skater to qualify for the Grand Prix Finals in the past two years and came away

with an impressive fourth place. Wagner's skating at the Grand Prix put her on the global radar and her performance at the U.S. Championships showed the world the determination and fortitude that lie beneath her graceful demeanor.

The ice has been a home away from home for Wagner since she was 5 years old. She didn't start skating because she saw a pair of intriguing skates in a window shop or because she felt inspired after watching a performance on TV. Rather, her skating career began because her mother needed a break from the then 5-year-old Wagner and her 3-year-old brother. Her mother signed her up for skating to get her out of the house occasionally and Wagner has been on the ice ever since.

Born into a military family, Wagner has done a fair share of moving around while

SEE WPHS GRAD, PAGE 24

WPHS Grad Earns U.S. Skating Medal

FROM PAGE 23

growing up. It was not until Wagner was 12 that her family settled in Alexandria. She trained at the Mount Vernon Ice Rink prior to joining the Skating Club of Wilmington in Delaware.

Like many of her fellow West Potomac High School 2009 graduates, Wagner moved out of the house the summer following graduation. However, rather than moving onto a college campus, Wagner chose to move in with her coach Priscilla Hill to prepare for the upcoming season.

IN ADDITION to fulfilling her passion for skating, Wagner takes online classes through Northern Virginia Community College. Wagner sacrifices many of the typical college student luxuries for skating, including sleeping through the morning hours.

Every morning Wagner hits her 6:30 a.m. alarm, rolls out of bed and makes her way to the skating rink by 7:15 a.m. to begin another busy day. She spends an hour and 45 minutes to warm up and skate before getting a less than two-hour period to grab food and catch up with her online classes. Wagner then returns to the ice where she spends the next three-and-a-half hours perfecting her skills.

Her day is still far from over. Depending

on the day, she then either has an hour dance or workout class. Twice a week she attends a one-hour strength and conditioning class. Wagner spends the remainder of her time either helping out at the ice rink's café or teaching a "Learn to Skate" class until she finally heads for home around 6:30 p.m.

Exhaustion has already been hovering over her, but she pushes it aside for yet a few more hours. Online classes take up a large chunk of the evening. At last, her head hits the pillow at 11 p.m. and she is soon asleep until the next day's alarm.

Wagner goes through this routine day after day, never complaining.

"I've been doing it for so long and often I wonder what it would be like to have a 'normal' life, but in the end I always realize that I have gotten to experience so many things that people my age haven't because of skating, and I'm really grateful for that," Wagner said. "I love the sport and what I'm doing so that keeps me going."

WAGNER'S DISAPPOINTMENT in not making the Olympic team has not dampened her spirits. She continues to train just as hard as ever in preparation for the coming season and the next Olympics, four years down the road. Hill said, "Of course she was

disappointed by not making the team, but she's worked very hard this spring to keep refining her technique."

Her dream of becoming an Olympian is not lost but rather coming nearer. She could almost touch it after placing third at this year's U.S. Championships and she retains high hopes for what the future has in store. In one of her online video blogs, she tells her fans to "watch out for me next year."

Wagner has accumulated hundreds of fans because of her inspirational skating and her always-positive outlook. She takes the time to show her adoring fans her appreciation by reaching out to them through her official Web site, Facebook and Twitter accounts, and video blogs. Wagner's family and friends stand along side these many fans to always cheer her on. Through the disappointments and triumphs, Wagner is backed by a huge support system.

The future stands open to Wagner's imagination and she hopes to find herself in Russia for the 2014 Olympics. Her bittersweet bronze medal helps to drive her motivation and keeps her dreaming of the possible. She continues to build on her experience and skills every day with the help of her coach and her support system. The next four years will find Wagner on the ice. Wagner continues to strive for perfection.

5Qs



Five questions with West Potomac sophomore pitcher Morgan Maniglia

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

A: Vancouver, B.C. for a Bar Mitzvah.

Q: Who is your favorite music artist?

A: Taylor Swift. She is awesome and she writes her own music.

Q: What's your favorite movie?

A: "Dirty Dancing." It's a classic and it's a good movie.

Q: What's the best feeling you can have during a softball game?

A: Strike three.

Q: What is it like to play for your dad, head coach Craig Maniglia?

A: Last year was the first year that I hadn't played for him, so I don't really know any different. I love it and I trust him because I know he knows the game.

— JON ROETMAN

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 22

mittee discourteously treats presenters who appear before it to seek the committee's reasoned consideration of their development proposals, to the point at which such treatment appears to be a policy of the committee.

It is not surprising, given the above examples of the MVCCA's actions, that attendance at their Gala appears limited to their central core of 16 board members and their significant others, as well as Gala honorees and their invitees. In order to increase Gala attendance, the MVCCA leadership must be cleansed of its current crop of partisans and begin abiding by its bylaws, correct current bylaw violations, refrain from actions that waste valuable county resources, pass resolutions more in concert with mainstream community thought, invite to its meetings those whose proposals it is debating and reform its P&Z committee including removing from the committee those who refuse to act with appropriate decorum.

If the MVCCA ever reforms itself and re-joins the community it purports to serve, that community will be more likely to patronize and support its events including the Gala. Our Supervisor should take note of the lack of community support for the Gala whenever he considers using MVCCA positions as political cover for his decisions. That lack of support evidences that MVCCA positions do not reflect community views and that the community has rejected the MVCCA as its spokesman. Perhaps the MVCCA "Emperor" has no clothes.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Primary Vote

FROM PAGE 4

Republicans also had a good showing in Virginia's 11th Congressional District during last year's general election. Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) received 55.25 percent of the vote; Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling (R) received 52.62 percent of the vote and Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli (R) received 52.28 percent of the vote in Connolly's district.

But Davis warned that Republicans have to keep their focus on selecting someone who would appeal to the general electorate in November if they want to beat Connolly.

The strong anti-government sentiment coming from some conservatives in other parts of the country is probably not a message that would appeal to Northern Virginia voters, many of whom make their living either directly or indirectly from the federal government.

"What may work in some other parts of the country doesn't work here. Beating up on the government isn't necessarily a winner," said Davis.

BULLETIN BOARD

THURSDAY/MAY 27

MVCCA Special Committee on Affordable and Workforce Housing. 7:30 p.m. At the Mount Vernon Government Center, Room #3. The Committee continues to review County plans for the development of affordable housing and a report on the status homelessness in Northern Virginia. All MVCCA meetings are open to the general public. www.mvcca.org.

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OBITUARY

Frederick Andrew Brown

92, a decorated Naval Officer, died of cardiac arrest March 15, 2010 at INOVA Fairfax Hospital, Falls Church, Virginia. He was an Alexandria resident.

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