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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 25, 2010



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

A Peek at a Holiday Tradition

The Alexandria Community Nutcracker will run for three nights and a matinee in the first week of December in the West Potomac High School Auditorium. From the wings, angels Ryan Falk, Charlotte Heimbach, Mary Kate Ross and Hannah Leslie watch the rehearsal.

SEE PAGE 4.

Lesson Learned

Grading changes rescinded after parents' and teachers' complaints.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Public Schools approved then rescinded "experiments" in West Potomac High School's revised Academic Improvement Plan.

Earlier in the year, West Potomac adopted an "Improvement Plan for the Academic Year" which would all but eliminate a failing grade in one quarter (it would be recorded as an Incomplete) and allow a student until as late as the summer to retake a test and receive a grade from the course as if he or she never took the test before. There would be no averaging — just re-

take the test later in the year and the grade for that test would apply to the course grade.

In addition, if a student was caught cheating or plagiarizing no academic sanctions would be imposed, and instead it would be treated as a behavioral problem. As stated in the plan, the purpose of the new policies was "to close the student achievement gap in all subgroups." Another academic policy change would phase out the honors program.

It took some time but once West Potomac parents and teachers realized the academic changes were installed, the re-

SEE GRADING, PAGE 6

Distracted Epidemic

More drivers experience an accident or near-miss because of distracted driving.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

A van full of Marines was barreling down Franconia Road after a baseball game one night last September, when the tragic consequences of distracted driving became clear. The way Fairfax County Police Capt. Susan Culin describes the circumstances of the crash, the driver was already distracted talking to his buddies when his cell phone began vibrating in his pants pocket.

"We're not really sure what happened next, but we have our suspicions," said Culin, commander

of the Traffic Division. "In that instant, the driver drove through a red light that he didn't see until it was too late."

What happened next is one more statistic in what a growing chorus of voices is describing as a "national epidemic." The four-vehicle crash sent eight people to the hospital. One Marine was in grave condition for a while, but he is still recovering. The driver, also a Marine, has legal consequences of the crash. That issue will be resolved in the courts, but the

SEE DISTRACTED, PAGE 6

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Mainland Attraction

Hyland travels to Harbin, China to promote Fairfax County as a tourist destination.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Supervisor Gerald Hyland in a fortuitous twist of fate has had an opportunity in the past year to make an impact on the tourist industry in Fairfax County by being the catalyst in establishing a county-city sister relationship with the northern Chinese city of Harbin, China.

Harbin, known internationally for its mass ice wedding ceremony and ice cutters (recently carving ice sculptures at a local hotel in nearby National Harbor in Maryland), next year will send a newly wedded couple who successfully competed for a prize that will entitle them to spend their honeymoon in Fairfax County. This commitment was due in large part to the efforts of Hyland, Visit Fairfax, and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Sharon Bulova.

For Hyland, it means bringing an economic boost directly to his district. The Mount Vernon District has more than its fair share of local, national, and internationally recognizable significant historic sites.

The History Commission of Fairfax County lists 340 sites of historic significance. In Mount Vernon alone there are a number of significant historic sites including George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Gunston Hall, Washington's Grist Mill, Woodlawn Plantation, Pope-Leighey House, and Pohick Church.

Over a year ago, Harbin, China government officials traveled to

Value of Tourism

- ❖ Visitors spend approximately \$2.5 billion annually in the area economy.
- ❖ \$150.9 million in state and local taxes were generated by direct travel spending in this area.
- ❖ Visitors to Fairfax County directly support almost 30,000 jobs with earnings of \$534.68

the District of Columbia hoping to establish a sister relationship with the Nation's Capital. The problem was that D.C. officials turned them down. Not wanting their visit to be in vain, Chinese embassy officials turned to Hyland, a member of the National Association of Counties (NACo), for help. Hyland introduced the Harbin officials to members of the Fairfax County Board and staff, and eventually the county-city sister relationship was established. This year Harbin entered into a Memorandum of Cooperation between Fairfax County and the Fairfax

Tourism Board, and the Harbin Municipal Tourism Bureau, Heilongjiang, China to promote each region as a tourism destination, and to pursue other areas of mutual economic interest.

Hyland has made two visits to Harbin; one visit with Bulova and Visit Fairfax CEO Barry Biggar, and another visit as part of an eight-person delegation sponsored by NACo. The visits were not financed by taxpayer dollars. Visit

SEE TOURISM, PAGE 9

“Personal relationships are very important in Asian cultures and we believe the sister relationship with Harbin and Fairfax county will be of mutual benefit.”

— Sharon Bulova

Mass Wedding Ceremony

One hundred couples representing more than 50 countries and regions will participate in a mass ice show wedding in the Ice City of Harbin during the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival to be held in January, 2011. The Fairfax County Convention & Visitors Corp. will sponsor one newlywed couple who wins the prize for two on a honeymoon trip and visit to Fairfax County. See www.ngaisheung.com



Golden Slawson and Bette Hines greet visitors to annual bazaar and sign them up for a chance to win the raffle.



AYNI co-founder Barbara Wolff talks about some of the Peruvian handicrafts and textiles that she has for sale at the bazaar.

Holiday Bazaar

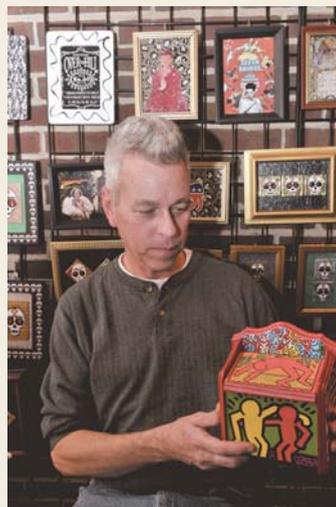
Dozens of craft vendors set out their wares Saturday, Nov. 20, at the annual Holiday Bazaar on the historic site of Hollin Hall on top of Mason Hill. Knitted hats, scarves, sweaters; glass artists displayed jewelry, platters, plates and goblets; jewelry, alpaca yarns from Lovettsville, decoupage boxes and orchids were just a sampling of what was available for purchase.



Glass pieces created by the Alexandria Glass Artists. www.alexandriaglassartists.com



The craft tables in the church hall were overflowing with holiday gift ideas.



Box Boy, a decoupage artist, Paul Bierman, shows one of his handmade boxes.



Alexandria Glass Artists Madeline Ramsay talks with Adina Russell and Renee Rutkowski.

PHOTOS BY
LOUISE KRAFFT/
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Four little mice: Elizabeth McMahon, Kate Hardy, Kate Falk and Julia Norton wait to be called up to the stage.

Presenting 'The Nutcracker'

A new local holiday tradition, The Alexandria Community Nutcracker, will run for three nights the first week of December (23, and 4), with an additional matinee performance on Saturday, Dec. 4, in the West Potomac High School Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at <http://www.alexandriadance.com/>.

The Alexandria Community Nutcracker is an original full-length community "Nutcracker" choreographed by local dance teachers Jennifer Lisenby, Courtney Betzel, and Adrienne Magnuson and featuring the West Potomac Dance Academy and other young dancers from the community. The approximately 100 dancers are from the Alexandria area attending St. Luke's Day School, Aldersgate Preschool, Hollin Meadows Math and Science, Fort Hunt ES, Waynewood ES, Belle View ES, Stratford Landing ES, Washington Mill ES, Burgundy Farm Country Day School, Browne Academy, St. Louis, St. Mary's, Carl Sandburg MS, West Potomac HS.

This performance tells the traditional story of "The Nutcracker" with a modern twist with newly recomposed music in Act II. The performance will include ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, modern, hip hop, gymnastics, and lyrical. For more information see <http://www.alexandriadance.com/>



Catherine Canary as Clara.



Angels Hannah Leslie and Connell Leary gaze about the curtain call line-up of all the angels on stage during Sunday's dress rehearsal.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

From left: Outgoing director Jeff Reed, President Virginia Hodgkinson, and new director Barbara Sullivan address Mount Vernon At Home members during its annual meeting.



PHOTO BY GERALD A. FILL/THE GAZETTE

New Director for Mount Vernon At Home

Barbara Sullivan will replace Jeff Reed as executive director of Mount Vernon At Home (MVAH). MVAH is a senior citizen advocacy and support organization which provides a range of counseling, social, recreational, transportation, and other services essential to those Mount Vernon area seniors who wish to maintain their independence and age in place in their homes and neighborhoods.

During its annual meeting held at Martha Washington Library on Nov. 17, President Virginia Hodgkinson announced that Sullivan will assume the duties of executive director as of Dec. 15. She will replace Jeff Reed, MVAH's first executive director, who is leaving the area to join his wife Beth, a recently ordained Episcopal minister, who is accepting a post as assistant rector of a church in Allentown, Pa.

Sullivan, a Mount Vernon District resident, has

most recently served as assistant executive director at Paul Spring Retirement Center. She served on the MVAH Board in 2008. She was named Citizen of the Year in 2007 by the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce where she served as president and chairman of the board. In addition, she served as chairman of the Inova Mount Vernon Development Council.

MVAH also elected four new board members: Julie Ellis, director, Hollin Hall Senior Center; Michael Serlin of Mason Hill who recently retired from the Treasury Department; Betsy Stephens, a Tauxemont resident with experience in nursing and social work, and Richard Titus, a resident of Montebello, and former employee of the Justice Department with experience as an instructor at U.C. Berkley and Penn State.

— GERALD A. FILL

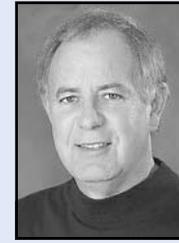
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Alex./Riverside Estates \$559,900
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Alex./ Mt. Vernon \$464,900
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Grading Changes Rescinded After Complaints

FROM PAGE 1

sulting reaction caused school officials to rescind the controversial grading and cheating policies.

The decision was communicated this past week to parents through the West Potomac High School newsletter, "Keep in Touch," much to the guarded relief of those parents critical of the proposed changes. These same parents, upon learning of the new grading and cheating policies, had quickly formed an advocacy group "Real World, Real Grades" and registered on the Facebook Community page. As of this past Sunday the group said they had 200 members and in one short stretch since it was installed had identified over 3,000 "hits" on the Facebook site.

In the aftermath of earlier news accounts, the following officials did not return phone calls for comment: Cliff Hardison, West Potomac principal; Scott Brabrand, Cluster 4 area superintendent, and Mount Vernon School Board member Dan Storck. Paul Regnier, spokesman for the Fairfax County Public Schools said no interviews were being granted to the media with public school officials.

Parents of "Real World, Real Grades" likewise expressed their dismay that Storck had not returned their phone calls.

As of this past Friday the grading and cheating policies are now back to what they were all along. Students can still get a failing grade and cheaters can be academically sanctioned. A third policy change is still in force: To eliminate the honors program which the "Real World, Real Grades" parents said is also of concern to them because

it reduces opportunities for a large group of students to aspire to improve their academic standing.

"Real World, Real Grades" parents said that the new honors policy will discourage those students who have a particular interest and capability in a specific subject to develop advanced knowledge in that subject. It was pointed out that the May, 2010 Annual Report of the Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee made no mention of the plan to phase out honors level courses at the high school level when AP courses were available. Kate Van Dyck, of "Real World, Real Grades," said, "Eliminating honors is not nice and really an unsound education practice. Is it data manipulation to gain a higher spot on Jay Matthew's 1,000 Best High Schools in the country or is it a sincere effort for best practice in education? Pushing unprepared high school students into college level classes cannot be best practice. Counting only the number of students who walk in the door without counting how many crash and burn cannot be best practice. AP level courses are suitable for only a small percentage of students who have the skill-set for college level study."

"Real World, Real Grades" parents said that the method by which the controversial policies were installed, without consultation with parents, teachers, and the absence of transparency, was particularly troubling.

Debra McKeown, one of the "Real World, Real Grades" parents said, "How can such a significant academic change be installed in one school but not in all the schools in the county? What is it that these core value academic policies were trying to address at

Stepping Back, Stepping Forward

Details of the Fairfax County Public School system's Nov. 19, announcement that the grading and cheating policies are rescinded:

❖ West Potomac will completely return to its Unified School Discipline Policy where students receive forfeiture of credit for incidents of cheating or plagiarism.

❖ West Potomac will return to prior grading practices that include giving Fs to students who are failing at the end of each grading period.

❖ A Grading Implementation Task Force, an Advanced Academics Advisory Council, and an Assessment and Grading Advisory Council will be created.

West Potomac but were not important enough to impose in other schools? Was the elected School Board consulted? If so, why weren't we allowed to comment? If not, why not?"

For some, the notion of a policy which allows students caught cheating to get away with it amounted to, according to Chuck Van Dyck, "undermining the ethics and values which parents are trying to instill at home. The now rescinded policy would, if it remained in effect, reinforce the culture of cheating that is rife in our schools and render good parents insignificant."

Hardison's "Keep in Touch" newsletter issued last Friday announced that the grading and cheating policy changes had been rescinded "because there was no consensus within the faculty, the student body, or the parents."

"Real World, Real Grades" parent Stephanie Melvin commented on Hardison's statement: "How could there be any consensus since there was virtually no consultation as far as we know with a broad cross section of the faculty or parents."

In a written statement, two members of the "Real World, Real Grades" organization commented on the now rescinded academic

policy experiment at West Potomac.

Barry Meuse said, "That the Fairfax county public school system would adopt an unequal education policy, for any reason, insults those who set the county on a course to establish some of the nation's best schools. Why Fairfax County gives special attention and resources to the bottom and the top but not to the vast middle is the question teachers, students, and parents are asking. There is no rationale to provide unequal opportunity to three different groups of students; its illogical, poor public policy, and a reason to question the fitness of administrators to hold appointed or elected public office."

Kate Van Dyck said, "If the school and county public school administration backed down so completely and so quickly on these two issues it was due to the help of media attention, not because they thought it was the 'right' thing to do for our students and teachers. Being a public school teacher myself, I think we will have to be vigilant and monitor future changes very closely to ensure that all members of the professional learning community at each school and throughout the county are not excluded again."

County Cites Inherent Danger in Distracted Driving

FROM PAGE 1

weight of what happened that day will be a burden forever.

"He now must live with critically injuring his friend," said Culin. "We have to stigmatize this type of behavior and put an end to it."

And the problem is only growing worse every day, according to survey data compiled by AAA Mid-Atlantic and HOT lanes contractor Transurban-Fluor. Last year, according to the survey, one in six drivers reported an accident or near miss as the result of sending texts, reading e-mail or chatting on the telephone. This year, it's one in four. Half of drivers on the phone say they are responding to urgent work-related issues. Despite the workplace-related nature of the epidemic, few employers have formal policies discouraging distracted driving.

"Overwhelmingly, we are seeing these numbers increase," said Virginia Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton. "People don't seem to be making the connection."

Connaughton hopes employers will help

them make the connection, instituting new policies. Four major regional employers have already taken the pledge: Inova Health System, Tysons Corner Center, Booz Allen Hamilton and Science Applications International Corporation. That last business, which is perhaps better known by the acronym SAIC, donated the use of its parking lot to serve as the venue for a press conference releasing the study and launching the campaign. Cars swooshed through the background, a large construction zone resembling an obstacle course for motorists and their smart phones.

"There are places in Tysons Corner and on the Beltway where I even turn off the radio," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Sharon Bulova. "Lanes are being rearranged as we speak, and it's important that we pay attention to what's going on around us."

DRIVERS WHO ENGAGE in distracted driving can be charged for failing to pay full time and attention to the road. Police records from across Northern Virginia show



Fairfax Police Capt. Susan Culin speaks about the rising in drivers being distracted by their smart phones.

a spike of charges in this category over the last few years as smart-phones have become more widely used. According to Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, distracted driving was responsible for more than 6,000 crashes in Northern Virginia last year. Ten people were killed, and 3,000 people were hurt.

"When you are distracted and you are driving, you are a hazard," said Fairfax

County Police Capt. Tracy Russillo. "You are a threat to yourself and all those people around you, especially when driving through a construction zone where there is already less room to navigate and make an error."

The statistics are daunting and potentially misleading. Police officers say there's no good way to know if a cell phone was the reason for a crash because they are depending on those responsible to report the information. Unlike driving while intoxicated, there's no test that could prove a smart phone was responsible. So the boundaries of the problem remain somewhat of a mystery. Yet according to those now calling for action, it's becoming a problem too big to ignore.

"We know that motorists know they shouldn't be doing it — that it's dangerous," said Lon Anderson, director of government relations for AAA Mid-Atlantic. "And yet our numbers are still going up."

In the first 100 days since the campaign launched last week, organizers hope to get at least 100 employers to take the Employer Safety Pledge.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE GAZETTE



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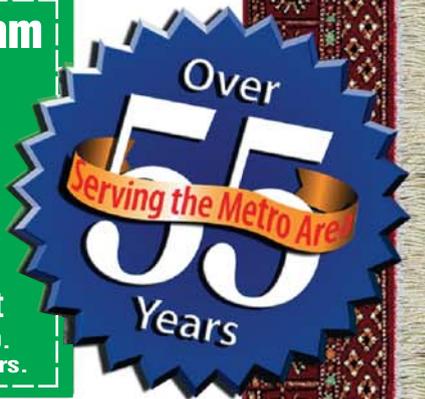
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Ceremony includes Festival of Music by Cleve Francis, MD.

Reception follows in the cafeteria.

To honor a family member or friend, call **703-664-7260** to make a \$5 donation or for more information about the 2010 Lights of Love ceremony.



Inova Health System is a not-for-profit healthcare system.

OBITUARY

Hannah E. Adams

Mrs. Hannah E. Adams didn't celebrate her 106th birthday as she had in the past with her many friends and family in the party room of the Mt. Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. She was a resident for the last three years at Mt. Vernon and was lovingly called "grandma" by the nursing staff. She had grown weaker and family and friends visited her in her room with balloons, cards and well wishes on Aug. 19 — the day of her birthday.

On Oct. 27, 2010, she peacefully slept away and left many friends and her family deeply saddened. On Nov. 8, she was buried at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Alexandria, (Gum Springs) Va., where she had been a member for over 90 years. Staff from Mt. Vernon

Nursing, Capital Hospice, many friends and family were in attendance to wish her a fond farewell. Expressions of sympathy were received by the family from many to include William D. Euille, mayor and the City Council of Alexandria; Virginia Gov. Robert F. McDonnell, and U.S. Rep. James P. Moran, 8th Congressional District of Virginia.

She was a life resident of Fairfax County, and was married to the late Clarence E. Adams Sr., for 56 years. She had one son, Clarence "Eddie" Adams Jr., who also predeceased her. In the 106 years of her life she had been a pillar in the community, and had made a meaningful contribution to society through work and service. She was the first black to serve on the Visiting Nurses Association in the

state of Virginia, with most of her cases being in the Alexandria area.

At one time she was employed by the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association of Mt. Vernon, and on her 100th birthday celebration the regent and vice regents of the Association ordered the planting of a Crepe Myrtle tree at Historic Mount Vernon in her honor. She was recently nominated and selected for Who's Who in Virginia Long Term Care, sponsored by the state of Virginia Health Care Association. During the spring of this year she was featured in the Capital Hospice Highlight 2010 Newsletter.

She also belonged to many church and civic organizations throughout Northern Virginia, and



Hannah E. Adams

received many honorable recognitions for her outstanding contributions to her church and society.

She remembered all of the presidents during her lifetime. In

her story telling she would often remind one of each president and the terms they served. She was honored to have the opportunity to vote by absentee ballot in the last presidential election of 2008 and see more history unfold at the election of the first black president of the United States, President Barack Obama. She will be deeply missed by many and leaves a legacy of love, giving, caring, and concern for her fellowman. She leaves to rejoice in her memory a granddaughter, great-granddaughter, two godsons and a host of relatives and friends. Her favorite saying was: "Lord let the work I've done speak for me." May she rest in peace.

Tourism

FROM PAGE 3

Fairfax, NACo, and out of pocket expenses from Bulova and Hyland helped to finance the trips. Private and public entities in China paid for housing and meals for Hyland, Bulova, and Biggar while traveling in China.

"China is a major economic player in the global market and our establishing a good working relationship we believe will result in forging business and tourism opportunities," said Bulova. "Personal relationships are very important in Asian cultures and we believe the sister relationship with Harbin and Fairfax county will be of mutual benefit. Asians now represent 17 percent of our population in Fairfax county and the Harbin, China relationship will further demonstrate our appreciation of their home countries.

"Right now we have a teacher exchange program with South Korea. Similarly, the Harbin officials have expressed an interest in a teacher and student language arts exchange. Harbin is known for its use of Mandarin Chinese. Cultural, teacher, and student exchanges will help place Fairfax county on the world stage when dealing with Asian countries."

Hyland said, "Promoting economic development, cultural, educational, and tourism exchanges with countries abroad is good business for Fairfax County. Our sister county/city relationship with Harbin, China opens up an important door of opportunity for us and brings China closer to us for our mutual economic and cultural benefit."



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OPINION

Shop Locally

Local businesses are invested in community.

While the rest of the world would like to remember small businesses for just one day this year, “small business Saturday,” Connection readers know that local businesses are a mainstay of our communities. Locally owned retail shops, services, restaurants depend on vibrant local communities to thrive.

While the economic situation is daunting, even locally where things are much better than nationally, even families who feel financially secure will be more frugal in this holiday season than before the recession. Recently, there is more life in the economy, though, and most local families will shop and give during the next month. Many people have started ahead of the traditional kickoff date for Christmas shopping, the Friday after Thanksgiving. Hanukkah begins Dec. 2.

One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of the shopping in some of the area’s locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambiance available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season.

Small retail shops are part of what defines

any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that no chain can.

Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active in fund raising for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

EDITORIALS

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores, face some of the toughest chal-

lenges imaginable right now. The costs of being in business have grown tremendously while revenues are not.

Competition from Big Box stores and the Internet make the holiday shopping season all the more important to locally-owned retailers.

Everyone will do some of their shopping at the mall. In this area, almost everyone will do some shopping via the Internet.

But local shoppers should be sure to save some shopping time and dollars for local stores.

Remember to Give Locally Too

Remember that people applying for food stamps and seeking help from food banks has more than doubled in the last few years in Northern Virginia. Local charities are scrambling to meet tremendous increased demand for holiday help as well.

Organizations like SHARE of McLean and LINK depend on volunteers and contributions to try to meet the expanding need for food and warm clothes on a daily basis.

Beyond that, organizations stretch to provide the basics for a holiday meal for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and the hope of pre-

sents for many children who might otherwise not receive a single holiday gift.

There are many ways to give, with some local charities connecting the donor to a specific family to provide a holiday food basket and fulfill some wishes for gifts. Many organizations encourage the donation of gift cards. Every local group seeking to help the needy right now is facing extra demand and needs both volunteer and financial help.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enforcement Priorities

To the Editor:

The following is an open letter to Mt. Vernon Gazette, Supervisor Gerry Hyland, and the Fairfax County Park Police.

I’m one of the criminals who got a ticket for walking her dogs off leash at Westgrove Park. I’m writing because my fellows in PACK are badgering me to write. I wasn’t going to, because I have no faith in politicians — which I consider Mr. Hyland to be, and this whole experience with trying to get the Westgrove area declared a tempo-

rary Off Leash Dog Area (OLDA) has simply reinforced my disillusionment with politicians and bureaucrats.

So I decided to write for two reasons. One was, frankly, to make my PACK associates happy. The other was because I wanted to have my say — not about Gerry Hyland (who either is, or has chosen to be, ineffective), but about the Animal Control police who are issuing all these tickets.

I’ve completed a 20-year career as a law enforcement officer (federal) and I was also in management in my agency. I know that

law enforcement cannot enforce all the laws all the time — and the public does not want their police departments to do so. So responsible departments and agencies have to balance public safety with available resources to make decisions on what enforcement efforts will be supported.

I have this to say about that. The people ticketed down at Westgrove are nice people walking nice dogs, neither presenting a danger to public safety. Some people taking their dogs to Westgrove are physically handicapped and must sit in the chair that’s down there while

their dog gets the exercise it needs. Others have picked up that dog’s poop on the owners behalf. In fact, the group of us who go down there (in the past, thank you very much) frequently pick up trash and other dog’s poop to keep the place clean because we didn’t want to cause any problems. But I digress ...

The point is that if the police have so many resources that they can be watching and patrolling and ticketing down at Westgrove to prove their productivity, then they have too many resources or they are not managing their resources properly. They are using them to enforce the letter of the law, rather than address a public safety issue.

I am the perfect example. Was I guilty? Yes. My two dogs are 60-pound rescue dogs who do not get adequate exercise walking on a leash. I work 9-hour days and commute another hour. I don’t want to have to get back in my car and drive 9 miles to Gristmill OLDA (that is designed like a prison exercise yard and the gravel makes their feet raw) or leave my jurisdiction for Old Town. I think it’s reasonable to drive one mile to a fenced in area that the County isn’t using for much, especially this time of year when it gets dark too early for me to make it to any other OLDA (none of which are lighted). Back to public safety. My dogs

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11



Happy Thanksgiving A dozen Kiwanis K-Kids from the Stratford Landing Elementary School club visited Paul Spring Retirement Community on Fort Hunt Road to give each resident a home-made Thanksgiving turkey Decoration on Nov. 19. Above the K-Kids gather around resident Bebe Malkin and MVKC member Joanne Malkin. The K-Kids at Stratford Landing Elementary is sponsored by the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club. If interested in a Kiwanis community service club in a local school, contact MVKC Past President Bruce Malkin at brucemalkin1@gmail.com.

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A Connection Newspaper

LETTERS



A lecture/workshop was held last year in the Christian Science Reading Room at First Church of Christ Scientist in Mount Vernon.

What I Am Thankful For?

To the Editor:

I have been attending First Church of Christ Scientist in Mount Vernon on Thanksgiving Day for the past 32 years and it has provided great satisfaction. This small church has been a firm foundation on my spiritual journey. Many healings have occurred as a result of just attending services on a regular basis.

For example, I had a healing of vertigo as a direct result of knowing the Truth about whom I am and who made me. Knowing that Mind (one of the synonyms for God) made me in His image and likeness and that I was His perfect creation,

healed me and the symptoms have not returned.

On Thanksgiving Day my family attends this healing service and listens to the President's Thanksgiving Day Proclamation as well as selected passages from the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy the founder of Christian Science. The service is then opened to the community for expressions of gratitude. All are welcome to attend this free service on Thanksgiving Day at 10:30 a.m. at 1500 Collingwood Road.

Christopher B. Bordeaux
Alexandria

FROM PAGE 10

were off leash. One was right by my side. The other was about 25 feet away and came right to me when I called her after I spotted the Animal Control van. Arguably, though not on a leash, they were "in my control." My woman friend and I were the only people down there. The place was deserted, so there were no others to be concerned that my dogs were off leash. I don't see the public danger.

I was down there under the good faith belief that Gerry Hyland had asked the police to hold off on ticketing at Westgrove. There had been a meeting

between Hyland, PACK Boardmembers and Park Authority staff just a couple weeks prior to this. I told the officer that. He asked if I had anything in writing. He said that all Mr. Hyland had to do was ask, and the police would stop, but he hadn't, so the officer was following the orders from his Commander.

So I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Hyland either lied when he said he spoke to them, or he did and was ineffective in doing it in a way that made the police stop their ticketing. And regardless of what Mr. Hyland did or didn't do, the police have too many

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

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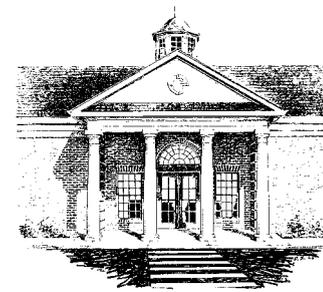
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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 11

resources if they're ticketing people like me doing what I was doing. It is a waste of public resources at best, and at worst it borders on abuse of police authority. I think Mr. Gerry Hyland should be concerned about that. Others are.

H. Alexis Suggs

PS. Yes, I'll pay the ticket. I was, after all, guilty as charged.

Follow Park Process

To the Editor:

The recent back and forth in the newspapers on the merits of a possible off-leash dog park on the Westgrove property requires some clarification of the facts and some answers.

Proponents of an off-leash dog park presented a petition to Supervisor Gerry Hyland and the Fairfax County Park Authority asking the Board of Supervisors to designate Westgrove "as an 'Off Leash Dog Area' at least until such time the County proposes, funds, and obtains voter approval for an alternative use."

Why are the Friends of Dyke Marsh concerned?

The Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, immediately east of and adjacent to the Westgrove property, is a freshwater, tidal, riverine, climax, cattail, 485-acre wetland ecosystem, a remnant of the extensive wetlands that once lined the Potomac River. Freshwater tidal marshes are rare. This wetland is one of the most significant in the U. S. national park system.

Congress designated it as a national park in 1959 "so that fish and wildlife development and their pres-

ervation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount." In terms of known species, Dyke Marsh has 300 plants, 6,000 arthropods, 38 fish, 16 reptiles, 14 amphibians and over 230 birds.

What happens around Dyke Marsh affects Dyke Marsh. Nature does not respect people-imposed boundaries.

What is the process for creating a park?

The county Park Authority has an established, public master planning process for deciding how its properties will be developed or not and which uses will be allowed. If the Park Authority wishes to develop Westgrove, it should follow that process, one that guarantees public participation and public decision-making and provides all the same information to all the people.

What are the requirements and costs for a dog park?

The Park Authority has clear guidance for off-leash dog parks which includes having a sponsoring organization responsible for funding the park's development and recurring operations; avoiding resource protection areas; a preferred size of 27,780 square feet (about half an acre); a vinyl-coated, double knuckled nine-gauge five-foot fence; a double-gated entrance and a surface of four inches of stone dust.

Park Authority staff reported on Aug. 25 to Supervisor Hyland that a Westgrove off-leash park with a fence would cost approximately \$55,800; a kiosk, \$1,000; a trail from Belle View Elementary parking lot, \$130,000; a vehicle entrance, including turn lanes and widening Fort Hunt Road, \$1 million. I am not aware of estimates of operational costs.

What questions need answers?

I gladly met with Steve Nixon, leader of the pro-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13



Things To Do Today

- 1. Breakfast w/ Mary & Bob—8:30
- 2. Tai chi group at 10
- 3. Stop by library before lunch?
- 4. Pottery class—1:00
- 5. Scrabble club at 3:00

Notes:
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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 12

off-leash dog park group, PACK, on Sept. 7 to better understand their proposal.

The Friends of Dyke Marsh submitted 16 questions to Supervisor Hyland, the Park Authority and the proponents of an off-leash dog park at Westgrove in early October. Here are some of them:

Another Nearby: With the developer at Groveton Heights proffering a new dog park at Lenclair Park, why can't that meet the need?

Other Areas: What other areas have the proponents and the county considered, for example, Hollin Hall Senior Center, Walt Whitman Intermediate School, Belle View Elementary School, Mount Vernon Government Center, South County Government Center, Collingwood Park and Inova Hospital, areas that are already highly disturbed and developed?

Inventory: When will the county conduct an inventory of the natural resources at Westgrove Park?

RPA: Part of Westgrove Park is in a resource protection area. Park Authority documents say that "Dog parks cannot be placed within Resource Protection Areas ..." Isn't an off-leash dog park inconsistent with the purposes of RPAs?

Connectivity: Given the location of Westgrove between Mount Vernon Park and the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, wouldn't keeping it natural, without further development, without dogs, provide connectivity, consistent with FCPA goals?

Degraded Streams: The Belle Haven Watershed Plan says that the streams in that watershed are of the "poorest quality" in the county. How will the development of a dog park, with more impervious surfaces, four inches of stone dust, an asphalt trail, an expanded entrance and turn lane and the expanded infrastructure and the

stormwater runoff and pollution they bring, improve the quality of the streams?

Nesting Birds, Plants: There are at least five species of ground-nesting birds in northern Virginia. How will off-leash dogs be prevented from disturbing nesting birds and other animals and their young and plants?

There have been several studies showing that even a leashed, well-behaved dog is perceived as a predator to nesting birds and can prevent them from successful nesting. These studies show that a dog's presence can cause a 40 percent drop in bird numbers and a 35 percent drop in bird species.

Park Service: What is the position of the U. S. National Park Service? If they have not been consulted, when will they be?

Traffic Hazard: With more vehicles turning into the property on a curve, how will vehicular and pedestrian safety be assured?

Sponsoring Organization/MOUs: How does the county maintain a stable, long-term sponsoring organization, as people move away or die?

We hope these questions will be answered. There is no current plan that people can study and comment on. Would the dog park be a fenced-in area within Westgrove's current footprint, would Westgrove be expanded, would dogs be allowed to run throughout the entire 22-acre property? Where would people park? The master planning process enables people to raise questions like this and get well-researched answers.

The authority to masterplan parks rests with the Park Authority, not the Board of Supervisors. If the Park Authority plans new uses for Westgrove Park, we will insist that the normal park master planning process be followed.

Glenda Booth,
President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Reflections: On Being Thankful

Here some responses to questions about living and working in Mount Vernon.

5TH GRADERS

Hollin Meadows Elementary School
What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?
To go to school. – **Johnathan Alvarez**
To learn. – **Nicole Castro**
To have friends and a family and a roof over my head. – **Kelley Newborn**
To be alive and able to walk. – **Chloe Azzam**
To be me. – **Luke Simonsen**
To experience life ... – **James Ager**
To have money and go to school and learn. – **Gabby Clautice**
To have parents who care for me. – **Matthias Iyassu**

SUSIE BOWERS

What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?

First, thankful for my family and friends, thankful for those who serve our country.

What are you thankful for living and/or working in Alexandria?

Sounds silly, but the ride home on the Parkway always calms me down especially after a busy day at the hospital. I am able to reflect on the day and enjoy the view.

SUSAN BAUER CLUBB

What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?

Always family — both extended and our little family of four!

What are you thankful for living and/or working in Alexandria?

I am thankful to work at the National School Boards Association whose mission is working for excellence in our public schools. I am thankful that my commute to Old Town Alexandria is up our beautiful George Washington Parkway.

What advice would you give to someone looking for more special things to be thankful for in Alexandria?

Volunteer — either through your place of worship, UCM, your neighborhood, or your local school — get out there and make life a little better for someone else. It will come full circle back to you!"

STEPHANIE PACE BROWN

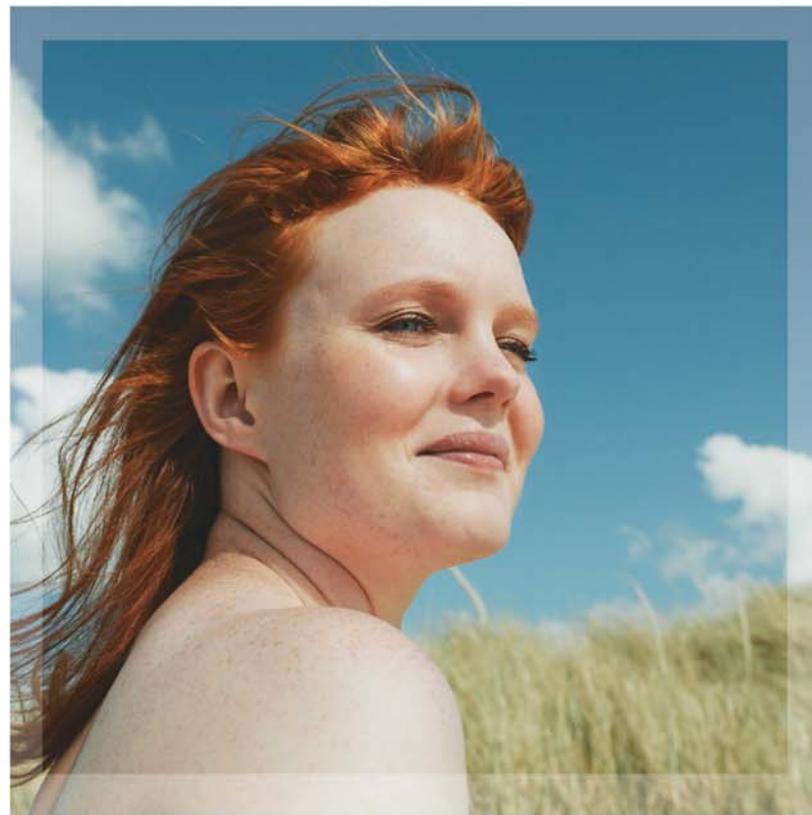
CEO Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association

What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?

Thankful to be able to spend the holidays with friends and family in Alexandria as we enjoy so many traditional events found right here at home.

What are you thankful for living and/or working in Alexandria?

As CEO of the organization that promotes visitor spending in Alexandria, I am thankful to have work that I am passionate about, and that contributes to the vibrancy of the place I love to call home.



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SEE THANKFUL, PAGE 25



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10am - 5pm, Sunday

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PORTO VECCHIO WATERFRONT Alexandria

This small residential building features a gracious ambiance & outstanding amenities: Limo service, 24-hr desk, pool, tennis, kayak, party rooms, security & gar prkg. Available units priced from \$450,000-\$1,250,000 & 2 rentals @ \$2000-\$3200/mo.

Pat Tierney 703.850.5630

JUST LISTED

4504 Neptune Dr \$479,900

Prestigious Yacht Haven Estates

Great Potential! Large brick rambler on gorgeous 1/2 acre lot near river in Yacht Haven Est. Many features include: maintenance free exterior. 4BRs on main level, including master with private bath, large room sizes, 2 FPs, hardwood floors, huge lower level family room w/fireplace plus storage area! Exceptional price provides opportunity to create your own masterpiece!

NEW PRICE

9316 Allwood Dr \$489,500

Absolutely Impeccable!

New Price! 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.

NEW PRICE

6515 Princeton Dr \$749,900

Classic Colonial - Near Old Town!

PRICE REDUCTION! Move in ready! Spacious home in Belle Haven area. Center hall colonial with up to date floor plan featuring kit with SS & granite, family room, 4BRs, 3.5BAs, fin LL & oversized 2 car gar. 'Close In' location with 2 tiered deck & seasonal river views.

NEW PRICE!

7816 FRANCES DR Mt Vernon / Alex \$ 399,000

Mt Vernon's BEST BUY! Custom built on over 3/4 acre level treed lot. 4BR / 2.5BA. Hardwood, deck, screened porch, carport, fireplace. Priced for sale as is. Hollin Meadows ES.

Ruth Guirard 703.609.3343

Please drop-off NEW, UNWRAPPED TOYS to our office at:
400 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Toys may be dropped off 7 days a week, between the hours of:
9am - 6pm, Monday - Saturday
10am - 5pm, Sunday

Long & Foster is proud to be an official sponsor of The Marine Corps Reserves' annual campaign. Please help, your donations will be greatly appreciated.

921 CAMERON ST Old Town / Alex \$ 1,090,000

Multifamily. Renovated 2BR, 2BA unit on upper level. Lower level w/3 office spaces, 2 half baths & workout. Separate rental apartment included. RM zone.

Dayna Blumel / Kerry Adams 703.597.2252

1702 Cool Spring Dr \$569,000

New Home Features- Re-Sale Priced

Unique Opportunity! Total renovation in popular Ft. Hunt area. 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath home has been stripped to bare walls by leading custom builder. Everything is brand new: chef's kitchen with custom 42" cabinets, granite counters, luxury baths, gorgeous hardwood floors, upgraded trim detail. Feels like new home at half the price!

NEW PRICE

7106 Colgate Dr \$528,000

Hollin Glen-Super Value!

MAJOR PRICE REDUCTION! OWNER WANTS IMMEDIATE SALE. Owners have priced to sell immediately! Spacious home in prime location just minutes from Old Town. Many special features include: updated kitchen, 4 large BRs, 3BAs, hdwd fls, fin LL, 2 fireplaces, fenced in rear yard with two level deck. Move fast nothing like it at this price in prime 'close-in' market!

9316 Heather Glen Dr \$650,000

Price Slashed! Large Colonial!

The most house for the money in area! 3 level, 4BR, 2 car garage colonial with the most spectacular family room addition you will ever find! Curved all glass walls and screen porch overlook fabulous custom pool. Originally priced in the \$800's. Owner wants immediate sale and has slashed the price accordingly!

5904 MT EAGLE DR #906 Montebello \$ 399,000

Dramatic views from every window in this 2BR, 2BA condo. Highlights: hardwoods, renovated kitchen, enclosed glass balcony & 1 garage space conveys.

Dayna Blumel / Kerry Adams 703.597.2252

1911 JAMESTOWN RD Alex / \$ 450,000

This home is ready for you! 3BR, 1BA in Hollin Hall Village. Beautifully finished hardwood, wood fireplace, fenced backyard. Unfinished basement plumbed for bath - and too many more upgrades to list! www.susanmovesyou.com

Susan Houghton / Mindy Brubaker 571.242.9913

1900 COURTLAND RD Mt Vernon / Alex \$ 549,900

MOVE IN ASAP to this move-in condition home in sought after Hollindale. Updated kit w/granite counters. New high efficiency Carrier HVAC. Beautifully finished Hardwood. Screened porch. 2-car garage. 3BR/3 full BA. Waynewood ES.

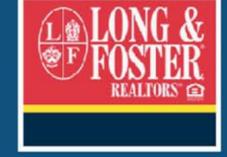
Ruth Guirard 703.609.3343

VERY LOW INTEREST RATES + MANY HOMES ON THE MARKET = A GREAT TIME TO PURCHASE!

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www.OldTownAlexandria.com



THE CAMPAGNA CENTER'S SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK WEEKEND & PARADE

Continuing the Tradition...

Friday, Dec. 3 – Saturday, Dec. 4

A Christmas Marketplace

Friday, Dec. 3 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Taste of Scotland

Friday, Dec. 3 from 8:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Scottish Walk Parade

Saturday, Dec. 4th at 11:00 a.m.

Designer Tour of Homes

Saturday, Dec. 4th 11:00 am-4:00 pm

More Activities

Heather and Greens Sale • Children's Tea



Presented in Partnership
with The Scottish Government

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



Join Us Friday at
The George Washington Masonic Memorial!



The entire Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend—including the Scottish Walk Parade—is hosted by The Campagna Center. All of the weekend proceeds benefit The Campagna Center's programs, helping children in Alexandria arrive at school ready to learn and ensuring their academic success. We rely on gifts from individuals and businesses to continue providing these outstanding services.

For more information on how you can contribute to The Campagna Center's efforts,
please visit www.campagnacenter.org or call (703) 549-0111.

For more information visit www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com or phone (703) 549-0111.

Weekend events are Metro-accessible.

NEWS

Hyland Addresses Redistricting

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Supervisor Gerald Hyland briefed Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) on the formation of a Board of Supervisors Advisory Citizen Advisory Committee on Redistricting.

Due to population changes, the supervisors' districts will have to be adjusted to even out the number of residents they each represent.

Hyland said that the Mount Vernon District includes approximately 125,000 residents and, based on projections county-wide, to achieve equity and balance of the existing supervisor districts, approximately 8,000 residents would need to be reassigned to the Lee District.

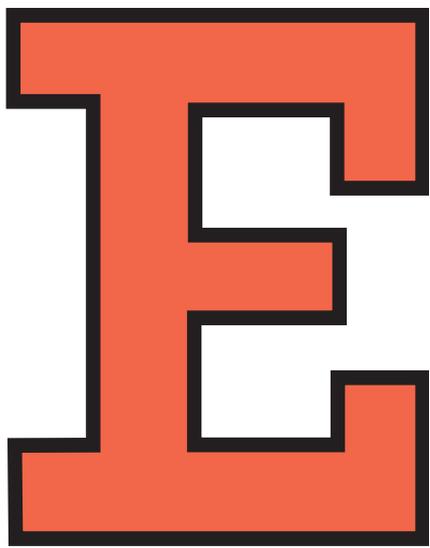
He also discussed and handed out a copy of the ruling by the Federal District Court of the eastern district of Virginia regarding the lawsuit by Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC against the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on the decision by the board to deny the special application proposal to erect a telecommunications flagpole at the proposed Masonic Lodge site. The federal court sustained the board's decision, establishing case law on such matters in the future.

IN OTHER MVCCA ACTIONS:

❖ Approved a Resolution prepared by the Planning and Zoning Committee to call on the Planning Commission to defer action on the special exception application to erect a cell phone tower at St. James Episcopal Church pending an application for a similar tower at the Mount Vernon Country Club. Vote: Support: 20, Against: 1

❖ Approved a Resolution prepared by the Transportation Committee to request the Board of Supervisors, the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the Virginia Department of Transportation to secure funding or reinstate the money previously allocated for the U.S. Route 1 Fixed Guideway Study for Route 1 road improvements; and urged General Assembly members to study the feasibility of rail mass transit options and that VDOT establish the centerline of Richmond Highway so that the widening and other Route 1 improvements can be planned. Vote: Support: 22, Against:

❖ Election of MVCCA Officers to Serve in 2011. Vote of Nominating Committee recommendations accepted by acclamation. Officers elected were: Co-chairs: Al Bornmann; David Plummer; Robert Reynolds; Secretary: Carol Coyle, and Treasurer: Brenda Hebert.



ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Holiday Concert Series

The City of Alexandria Announces 2010 Holiday Concert Series. Enjoy the festive sounds of the season in Alexandria as a break between shopping, on your way to dinner, or just to get into the holiday spirit. Come enjoy local performers with their rich talent as they entertain you during this festive time of year. Types of music featured include barbershop, folk, Hanukah favorites, hand bell ringers and good old fashioned caroling.

All the performances are free and held outdoors. Concerts will be cancelled due to inclement weather. Call the City's Special Events Hotline at 703-746-5592. These concerts are scheduled at Market Square, 301 King St.

SATURDAY, NOV. 27

1 p.m. — Potomac Harmony Chorus (Women's Barbershop);
2 p.m. — Doris Justis (Acoustic Folk);

SUNDAY, NOV. 28

2 p.m. — Rich Follett (Folk);
3 p.m. — Barbara Martin (Jazz);

SUNDAY, DEC. 5

2 p.m. — Shir Tze'ir (Jewish a cappella);
3 p.m. — The Alexandria Singers;

SATURDAY, DEC. 11

1 p.m. — Bell's Angels, St. John's Lutheran Church Handbell Choir (Handbells);
2 p.m. — Alexandria Harmonizers (Men's Barbershop);

SUNDAY, DEC. 12

2 p.m. — St. Matthew's United Methodist Handbell Choir (Handbells);
3 p.m. — Blue Book Value Band (Swing Blues);

The public is encouraged to take public transit or walk to the event. Visitors to Old Town can take the Metrorail lines to the King Street Station, and then take the free King Street Trolley to the event. For DASH schedule information, call 703-370-DASH or visit www.dashbus.com. For Metrobus schedule, call 202-637-7000 or visit www.wmata.com. For a parking map, visit www.alexandriava.gov/12490.

Holiday Boat Parade of Lights

The 11th Annual Burke & Herbert Holiday Boat Parade of Lights announced the lineup of pre-parade festivities taking place at the Alexandria marina Saturday, Dec. 4 at 4 p.m., leading up to the 6 p.m. boat parade.

Starting at 4 p.m., revelers can enjoy free holiday treats including Ben & Jerry's hot chocolate with whipped cream. Free dog treats will be provided by Barkley Square Gourmet Dog Bakery & Boutique.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive at the marina by fireboat at 4:15 p.m., and make their way to the gazebo to take free pictures with kids and canines. A professional photographer will take the photos and a print will be made immediately to take away, courtesy of RedPeg Marketing.

The Annual Holiday Revue will entertain visitors on the nearby stage with cheerful sounds by choral group the Montgomery College Singers followed by the Braddock Brass Quintet.

Santa and Mrs. Claus won't be the only famous figures spreading holiday cheer. Yogi Bear and Boo Boo from Warner Bros. will be at the marina, too, in celebration of the new "Yogi Bear" movie coming out in



PHOTO BY CHESTER SIMPSON

The Burke & Herbert Holiday Boat Parade of Lights festivities starts Saturday, Dec. 4 at 4 p.m. at the Alexandria marina.

December.

Visitors are invited to support the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots drive by bringing a toy to the collection point at the gazebo during the event. Through Dec. 17, toys will also be collected at the Old Dominion Boat Club, Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House, Foster's Grill, and the Starbucks at Union and King

streets.

Bob Madigan, WTOP's "Man About Town," will take over as the celebrity emcee for the parade at 6 p.m., when 50 brightly lit powerboats and sailboats led by the Vigilant, Alexandria's fireboat, cruise down the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., to Alexandria, fully decked out in lights and holiday décor.

Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend

Friday, Dec. 3

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. — Christmas Marketplace – One Day Only
Heather and Greens Sale
1 - 3 p.m. — Children's Tea
7 p.m. — Taste of Scotland Patron Pub Opens
7 - 10:30 p.m. — Christmas Marketplace (Taste of Scotland guests only)
8 - 11 p.m. — Taste of Scotland – Celebrating Scotland as a Land of Food and Drink

Saturday, Dec. 4

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. — Heather and Greens Sale (418 S. Washington St., in the Campagna Center parking lot)
9 - 10 a.m. — Dignitaries' Breakfast
11 - 4 p.m. — Holiday Designer Tour of Homes
11 a.m. — Scottish Christmas Walk Parade

Activities

♦ **A Christmas Marketplace** – One Day Only
Vendors sell unique, holiday gift wares in a boutique setting.

Location: George Washington Masonic Memorial
Date/Time: Friday, Dec. 3 — One Day Only 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

7 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. (Taste of Scotland guests only)

♦ **Heather and Greens Sales** — Try a touch of heather and greens to enhance your holiday decorations with a Scottish flair. Purchase fresh heather, handmade wreaths, garlands, and more. Pre-order forms are available at www.campagnacenter.org.

Location: Friday, Dec. 3 – George Washington Masonic Memorial;

Saturday, Dec. 4 – 418 S. Washington St., in the Campagna Center parking lot

Date/Time: Friday, Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
7 p.m. – 11 p.m. (Taste of Scotland guests only)
Saturday, Dec. 4 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

♦ **Children's Tea** — Children can enjoy tea and snacks as they visit with Santa and participate



in fun arts and crafts.

Location: George Washington Masonic Memorial
Date/Time: Friday, Dec. 3 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Cost: \$30 per adult; \$10 per child

♦ **Taste of Scotland** – Celebrating Scotland as a Land of Food and Drink. A tasting featuring hard-to-find Scotches direct from Scotland distilleries. The Patron Pub features complete top-shelf tasting menu, including various rare Scotches. This complete Scotch selection will be available only in the Patron Pub.

The remainder of the evening will feature a limited Scotch selection and Scottish ales, as well as beer, wine, and unique Scottish fare. All Taste of Scotland guests enjoy a private shopping experience at the Christmas Marketplace and have the chance to peruse the fine selection of decorative greens.

Location: George Washington Masonic Memorial

Date/Time: Friday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. – Patron Pub Opens;

8 p.m. – 11 p.m. General admission welcome
Cost: Patron: \$150/individual, \$250/couple. General admission tickets \$100. Advance tickets required.

Go to www.campagnacenter.org or call 703-549-0111 x146 for tickets.

♦ **The Dignitaries' Breakfast** — A pre-parade breakfast for dignitaries, city and state officials, Friends of the Parade, corporate champions and partners.

Location: The Campagna Center
Date/Time: Saturday, Dec. 4 from 9 – 10 a.m. (just before the parade)
Cost: By Invitation

♦ **The Holiday Designer Tour of Homes**

— Stroll through properties in the historic district of Alexandria dressed up for the holidays by acclaimed interior designers and local florists. Presented by Christine Garner, Weichert, Realtors

Location: Select properties in Old Town

Date/Time: Saturday, Dec. 4 from 11 – 4 p.m.

Cost: Tickets required. To purchase tickets, call 703-549-0111 or visit www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com. Also stop by The Campagna Center or Ramsay House Visitor's Center to purchase tickets. Advance purchase \$30; day-of purchase \$35. Tickets may also be purchased at the homes.

♦ **The Scottish Christmas Walk Parade** —

Over 100 Scottish Clans, pipe and drum bands, Scottish dancers, re-enactment groups, Scottie dog groups, dignitaries and, of course, Santa Claus will march through the streets of Old Town Alexandria. As the Premier Sponsor, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead will serve as the Grand Marshal of the 40th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Parade.

Route: Beginning at the corner of Wilkes and South St. Asaph Streets in Old Town and ending at Market Square

Date/Time: Saturday, Dec. 4 at 11 a.m. In the event of severe weather, contact The Campagna Center at 703-549-0111.

Visit www.campagnacenter.org or www.scottishchristmaswalk.com.



"Grass Roots," the newest multicultural, organic, restaurant on the block is now serving wine and beer to complement the exceptional cuisine of our celebrity chef, Santino Fillipeto

Mention this ad and receive 15% discount on your meal.

All Natural World Cuisine Locally sourced in partnership with regional farmers
 Restaurant & Wifi Coffee Bar
 535 E Braddock Rd. • 703.888.2865



Be a Part of CHILDREN'S (& TEENS') GAZETTE



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

E-mail to: gazette@connectionnewspapers.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) by Dec. 1, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

Mount Vernon Gazette

First Night ALEXANDRIA



12•31•10



Second Annual
Fun Hunt
 starts at
1:00 pm

Four Spotlight Areas of Entertainment between the Masonic Memorial and the Waterfront featuring one hundred performances beginning at 7:00 pm

Admission badges are available online now through December 21 for just \$15. Children 12 and under, and active military are FREE (Dec. 31 pick-up only)

Don't miss the area's largest, safest, family-friendly, budget-friendly New Year's Eve celebration!

More information and retail badge sites at FirstNightAlexandria.org

ENTERTAINMENT

West Potomac Academy, Alexandria Community Dance Perform "Nutcracker"

West Potomac Academy and Alexandria Community Dance are teaming up to present a joint performance of "The Nutcracker," the traditional holiday story with a modern twist, Dec. 2-4 in West Potomac High School's Springbank Auditorium. Shows will be presented Thursday, Dec. 2, at 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 3, at 6:30 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 4, at 2 and 6:30 p.m. West Potomac Academy is one of six high school academies in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Music for the entire second act has been recomposed to include ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, modern, and hip hop dance and gymnastics. West Potomac Academy's Dance students will be participating in the production both on stage, behind the scenes, and mentoring young dancers. Advanced Dance students will have featured performances. Academy alumni will also be returning to participate in the production.

More than 100 dancers from the Alexandria area of Fairfax County auditioned for the performance.

Students from the following Fairfax County public schools are represented in the production: Belle View Elementary School, Fort Hunt Elementary



School, Hollin Meadows Elementary School, Stratford Landing Elementary School, Washington Mill Elementary School, Waynewood Elementary School, Sandburg Middle School, and West Potomac High School. Performers range in age from 4 years old to adult.

Tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door. For advanced ticket sales visit www.Alexandriadance.com.

West Potomac Academy and West Potomac High School are located at 6500 Quander Road in the Alexandria area of Fairfax County. Contact Courtney Betzel, West Potomac Academy Dance instructor, at 703-718-2641 or cjbetzel@fcps.edu, or Jennifer Lissenby, Alexandria Community Dance director, at glisenby@verizon.net.



Brass of Peace will perform a free holiday concert at the Lyceum Nov. 28.

Brass of Peace to Perform at Lyceum on Nov. 28

Brass of Peace, a group of select high school musicians from Northern Virginia, will kick off the holiday season with a free holiday concert Nov. 28 at the Lyceum.

The ensemble of top student musicians was selected through auditions held earlier this season from throughout the region.

"This is an honors band representing several area high schools," said Dan McKay of the Alexandria Performing Arts Association. "This is the third year that APAA is sponsoring a holiday concert by these exceptional musicians."

This year's concert will feature holiday compositions in a variety of musical styles from Bach and other Baroque compositions to Mel Torme's "The Christmas Song" and other contemporary tunes.

Brass of Peace musicians are selected on musical merit from various schools and play under the direction of Sylvia Alimena, a French horn player in

the National Symphony Orchestra and musical director of Alexandria's Eclipse Chamber orchestra.

Graduates have gone on to attend The Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory and some are current instrumentalists of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony and the U.S. Marine Corps and Air Force Bands.

Sunday's concert begins at 4 p.m. and will be followed by a reception featuring beverages and light fare. Admission is free but tax-deductible donations will be accepted. The concert hall of the Lyceum, located at 201 S. Washington St., seats between 125 and 140 so attendees are encouraged to arrive early.

Brass of Peace, founded in 1977, is a scholarship program for gifted high school musicians. For more information, visit www.brassofpeace.org.

— JEANNE THEISMANN

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY/NOV. 25

Alexandria Turkey Trot. 4,000 runners are expected to run through the Del Ray neighborhoods in Alexandria. The Del Ray Business Association as well as the DC Road Runners Club sponsors the event and proceeds will benefit the AL.I.V.E foundation. Visit <http://www.alexandriaturkeytrot.com>.

FRIDAY/NOV. 26

Hooray For Books! Children's Bookstore Black Friday Sale. Hooray For Books will be giving 20 percent off all merchandise purchased between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. At 1555 King Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-4092.

Alexandria's Tree Lighting. 7 p.m. Free. Entertainment features a message from the Mayor, a visit from Santa, a performance of Santa's Frosty's Follies by the Metropolitan Fine Arts Center, and caroling with a community sing along. At Market Square, 301 King Street, Old Town Alexandria. Call the City's Special Events Hotline at 703-746-5592 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

NOV. 26 - JAN. 6, 2011

Christmas at Mount Vernon. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Themed decorations (including 12 Christmas trees), a gingerbread Mount Vernon, historical chocolate-making demonstrations, and 18th-century dancing will be offered. Visit Aladdin, George Washington's Christmas Camel, take special Mansion tours, and make a Chocolate Toast to Christmas, with our 18th-century-style chocolate drink, a Washington family favorite. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon; call 703-780-2000 or visit mountvernon.org. Admission: \$15 for adults, \$7 for youth (6-11), and free for children 5 and younger.

NOV. 27 TO DEC. 19

Alexandria Jaycees' Christmas Tree Sales. The tree lot features a variety of trees, including Canaan Firs, Douglas Firs, Fraser Firs, and Scotch Pines in heights from 4-10 feet, with prices from \$45-\$90. Proceeds to benefit the Holiday Shopping Tour for underprivileged children. Operating hours are Tuesday-Friday 6-9 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.; and Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. At the Safeway Parking Lot, 500 South Royal Street, Alexandria. Call 703-866-7171 or go to www.alexjaycees.org or visit <http://www.alexjaycees.org/trees.php>.

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Join "Mrs. Washington" for an evening of candlelit tours, fireside Christmas caroling, and hot cider and ginger cookies. Tour the first and second floors, hear characters from Washington's world as they guide visitors through the home, adding ambiance to a traditional Christmas evening at Mount Vernon. Admission: Adults/\$20, Youth 11 and under/\$14. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon; call 703-780-2000 or visit mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 27

Craftermath. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. A handmade exhibition and fair, where independent artists, designers and crafters sell handmade alternative arts and crafts, products and curiosities. Hosted by West Potomac Academy's Pro Graphic Studio. At West Potomac High School, 6500 Quander Road, Alexandria. Visit www.craftermath.moonfruit.com.

NOV. 27-29

Christmas Tree Sale. Noon to 8 p.m. Sale will continue through Sunday, Dec. 19 or until all 780 Frasier firs plus wreaths and garland are sold. At the Belle View Shopping Center parking lot, near the Texaco Gas Station. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club.

SUNDAY/NOV. 28

Brass of Peace Concert. 4 p.m. Free. An ensemble of top musicians selected from local high schools. This year's concert will feature Holiday compositions in a variety of musical styles from Bach and other baroque compositions to Mel



FRIDAY/DEC. 3

ArtFest 2010. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Open House and Holiday Party featuring handmade ceramics and jewelry for sale, live music by Rew Smith band, exhibits, art demos and more. The Ceramic Sale will take place Friday, Dec. 3, from noon to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 5 from noon to 5 p.m. The Jewelry Sale will take place Friday, Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At The Art League's Madison Annex, 305 Madison Street, Alexandria.

Torme's "The Christmas Song." Brass of Peace musicians practice and weekly and perform throughout the school year under the direction of Sylvia Alimena, a hornist with the National Symphony Orchestra. At the Lyceum, at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria. Visit www.alexperformingartsassociation.org.

Bach Vespers at Westminster. 6 p.m. These Vesper services incorporate the complete organ works of J. S. Bach in their proper religious content, played by Paul Stetsenko, organist. At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Visit www.wpc-alex.org

TUESDAY/NOV. 30

Vivaldi Concert. 7:30 p.m. Free. Presented by the National Chamber Players; members of the National Symphony Orchestra, including guest soloists Nurit Bar-Josef, David Hardy and Nicholas Stovall, with Kenneth Slovik of the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society and the Episcopal High School Choirs. At Episcopal High School, Pendleton Hall, 3900 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Visit www.episcopalhighschool.org. Call 703-933-4135.

The Kirkin' O' the Tartans. 7 p.m. The service commemorates the Feast of St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. At St. Andrew & St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Catholic Church, 402 E. Monroe Avenue in Alexandria. Visit www.standrewandstmargaret.org or 703-683-3343.

NOV. 30 AND DEC. 1

DRA Holiday Mosaic Art Workshop. 7 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$35/DRA members; \$45/nonmembers. Pre-registration at www.TheDelRayArtisans.org must be completed by Tuesday, Nov. 23. For a list of supplies or to purchase a 12x12" frame and mirror, email instructor Sally Coler at sallycoler@hotmail.com.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 1

Free Group Vocal Lessons. Potomac Harmony Chorus, Sweet Adelines International, invites you to attend four free group vocal lessons conducted by Ozzi Mask, Master Director of Potomac Harmony. Lessons will be held at 7 p.m. on Nov. 22 and Dec. 1. At the Hermitage in Northern Virginia, 5000 Fairbanks Avenue, Alexandria. Call 703-764-3896. Visit www.potomacharmony.org

Traditional Scottish Music. 7:30 p.m. Free. Sponsored by sister city of Dundee, Scotland and the City of Alexandria Sister Cities Committee. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Old Town Alexandria.

DEC. 1-3

Interactive Book Fair. Open to students and families Wednesday, Dec. 1 to Friday, Dec. 3 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The Book Fair is open to the public on Wednesday, Dec. 1 and Thursday, Dec. 2 from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Those evenings are also "Pajama Parties" — children and their families are encouraged to wear their pajamas to these special events, which will feature interactive storytelling, baked goods, and more. At Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, 1101 Janneys Lane, Alexandria.

THURSDAY/DEC. 2

Holiday Bash With Shopping. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Studios and galleries are open for holiday shopping as the art center is transformed into a glittering spectacle of holiday spirit. Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts as you enjoy live music and festive activities throughout the evening. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street,



SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Divas and Bards. 7 p.m. Concert by the 7 Sopranos. At the Arts Center at Convergence. Guests will be invited to a party featuring a new exhibit by visual and performing artist, Eve Hennessa. Guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres, wine and champagne from 8 to 9 p.m. During the reception, guests will enjoy marimba player Adam Garcia and appearance by performance artist, Deborah Lash modeling one of her "sculpture dresses." From 9 to 10:30 p.m. the evening will continue with a D.J. and beer from Dogfish Head Alehouse. Tickets are \$35 at door or \$30 in advance or reserved online at www.convergenceccf.net.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 20

Join The

Royal Restaurant

734 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 548-1616

FOR

BREAKFAST & THANKSGIVING DINNER

Open 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

BREAKFAST BUFFET

7:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 19

Alexandria. Call 703-838-4565 or visit www.TorpedoFactory.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 3

A Christmas Marketplace. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sponsored by the Campagna Center. Special shopping hours for Taste of Scotland guests 7-11 p.m. Vendors include: Janice's Table; Discovery Toys; G's Glory Handbags; Janet Egan Design; The Dressed Up Nut; Celtic Landscapes in Pastel; Aurora Bath and Jewels; The Perfect Buddha; Scottish Gourmet USA LLC; Patricia Palermino Studio; Villa de Alpacas Farm; Southwestern Silver; The Scottish Trading Co.; Queen Bee Designs; Monday's Child; Thirty-One; Heather & Greens also available. At the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria.

Holiday on the Avenue in Del Ray. 5:45 to 9 p.m. Free. Annual Del Ray holiday tree lighting, visit with Santa and lighting of the luminaries; a holiday tradition in Alexandria. Carols begin at 5:45 p.m. and hot chocolate, hot cider and cookies will be provided. At 6 p.m. sing "Here Comes Santa Claus" when Santa arrives. Thousands of luminaries will be lit from Mt. Vernon and Commonwealth down to Luray Avenue. At Del Ray Farmer's Market at Mt. Vernon Ave. and E. Oxford Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-746-3301.

Taste of Scotland. 8 to 11 p.m. Exclusive Patron Pub from 7 to 11 p.m. Join in a tasting featuring rare scotches direct from Scotland distilleries. Part of The Campagna Center's 40th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. At the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call Carlos at 703-549-0111 x146 or cllano@campaganacenter.org.

DEC. 3 TO 4

Annual Christmas Celebration. Friday, Dec. 3, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. At Pauline Books & Media, 1025 King Street, Alexandria. Bring your own camera, costumes provided.

Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. Free for Parade and Marketplace; \$75 Taste of Scotland; \$35 Designer Tour of Homes. 40th Annual Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend—even the dogs wear tartans. On Saturday, Dec. 4, more than 100 Scottish clans dressed in tartans will parade through the streets of Old Town. They'll be joined by pipe and drum bands from around the region, as well as terriers and hounds of every description. This year's event is sponsored by the Scottish government. Other events of the weekend include A Christmas Marketplace and A Taste of Scotland on Dec. 3, and the Campagna Center's Holiday Designer Tour of Homes on Dec. 4. Call 703-549-0111 or visit www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com.

DEC. 3 TO 5

15th Holiday Market. Free. Reception is Friday,



DEC. 2, 3, 4

"The Alexandria Community Nutcracker."

Dec. 2 at 5 p.m.; Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 4 at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The Alexandria Community Nutcracker is an original full-length community Nutcracker choreographed by local dance teachers Jennifer Lisenby, Courtney Betzel, and Adrienne Magnuson and featuring the West Potomac Dance Academy and many young dancers from the community. Local schools represented in the production include St. Luke's Day School, Aldersgate Preschool, Hollin Meadows Math and Science, Fort Hunt ES, Waynewood ES, Belle View ES, Stratford Landing ES, Washington Mill ES, Burgundy Farm Country Day School, Browne Academy, St. Louis, St. Mary's, Carl Sandburg MS, and West Potomac HS. At West Potomac High School Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.alexandriadance.com>. Visit alexandriadance.com.

Dec. 3 from 6-9 p.m. Hours Saturday, Dec. 4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Unique handmade fine arts and crafts from 20 exhibitors (including pottery/ceramics, photography, jewelry, cloth, paper crafts, and glass), beautiful poinsettias from West Landscapes LLC, and delicious Bake Sale items to benefit the local community. Del Ray Artisans Gallery, at the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Check www.TheDelRayArtisans.org.

DEC. 3 TO 12

A Christmas Carol. Admission: \$15. The Little Theatre of Alexandria rings in the holidays with a return of a classic by Charles Dickens. Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly Victorian humbug, travels with ghostly guides through Christmas past, present, and future to find the true meaning of the holidays. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria; call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Book Signing Event. 6 p.m. Author Maria McCarthy will sign her book, "High Heels Honey Lips and White Powder." At Books-a-Millions, 6230 N Kings Highway, Alexandria.

Author and Bra Fitter.

9:30 to 10 a.m. Reading and Kid's Activities. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Book Signing. Vicky Whipple presents her new book, "The Little Weed Flower." At The Full Cup European Bra Fitting Salon, 218 N. Lee St. #206, Alexandria. Call 703-836-9441.

Burke & Herbert Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.

Free. Festivities at 4 p.m.; Boat Parade at 6 p.m. Alexandria's harbor lights up when more than 50 illuminated boats cruise the Potomac River at the historic waterfront. Festivities at the Alexandria City Marina (One Cameron Street, Alexandria) with Santa arriving by fireboat at 4:15 p.m. Call 703-746-3301. Visit AlexandriaVA.com



Vicky Whipple



Jason Linett of Alexandria.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 1

Comedy Hypnotist Performs. 7 p.m. Tickets are \$6. Audiences can expect to see willing volunteers rapidly induced into a hypnotic trance and then given funny suggestions. A fund-raiser for the Class of 2011 Seniors at T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King Street in Alexandria. Visit www.JasonLinett.com.

Concert with Ars Choralis. 7 p.m. The concert features a candlelight procession, Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria, A Carol Suite by modern English composer Karl Jenkins, favorites including "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," and an audience sing-a-long. A reception will follow. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., corner of Pitt and Duke Streets.

Christmas Boutique. 9 a.m. to noon. Handmade Christmas décor, ornaments, hand knitted items, baked goods, and unique gifts. Proceeds support Heritage Presbyterian Women's outreach programs for children and women. At Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Call 703-360-9546.

Mediation: The Better Way to Resolve Separation and Divorce Issues. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Virginia Colin, Ph.D., will tell you how to reduce distress and save time and money by using mediation, not litigation. At Kingstowne Library Meeting Room, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Call 703-864-2101.

Cocker Spaniel Adoption Show. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come meet cockers of all ages available for adoption. All dogs are spayed or neutered. Visit www.cockerspanielrescue.com. At Alexandria/Hybla Valley Petsmart, 7690 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Call 703-533-2373.

Holiday Open House. Fair Trade, World Peace and Cats. Fair trade tea and chocolate, cider and treats. Toss your hand-colored wish for world peace into the World Peace Wishing Well and enter your name into a drawing to win valuable prizes. Also hosting the cats and kittens from Tails High, an Alexandria-based cat rescue group, in the kitty playpen. At Mindful Hands, 211 King Street. Visit www.mindfulhands.com or 703-683-2074.

Ornament Decorating Workshop.

1 to 4 p.m. Free. Be inspired by the colors and patterns of pottery excavated in Alexandria and make a memorable holiday keepsake! Participants can decorate and take home dough ornaments which are shaped like artifacts from the museum's own collection. At the Alexandria Archaeology Museum at the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union Street #327, Alexandria; Call 703-746-4399 or visit www.alexandriarchaeology.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 5

Women's Artists Show. 1 to 5 p.m. Free. More than 30 local women artists will offer pottery, scarves, jewelry, crafts, photography and more. Exciting items—including trips, restaurant certificates, household items and vendor items—will be raffled off. Sponsored by The Alexandria Commission for Women. At the Charles Houston Recreation Center, 905 Wythe Street.

"Ode to Joy." 4 p.m. An All-Beethoven Concert with The New Dominion Chorale, Thomas Beveridge, artistic director. Tickets are \$30/general; \$25/



Kate Campbell

SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Kate Campbell Performs. 7 p.m. Country/Folk singer. Tickets are \$18/general; \$15/advance. Presented by Focus Music in Mount Vernon. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Rd., Alexandria.

seniors. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 North Beauregard St., Alexandria. Visit www.newdominion.org or call 703-442-9404.

Interactive Nativity Pageant. 2 to 4 p.m. The pageant will feature live animals, including sheep and a donkey. Christmas cookies and hot chocolate will be served in the church's community room. Opportunities for worship, Bible study, youth activities, grief counseling and healing are offered throughout the week. At St. Andrew & St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Catholic Church, 402 E. Monroe Ave., in the Del Ray area of Alexandria. Visit www.standrewandstmargaret.org or call 703-683-3343.

Toys for Tots Benefit Square Dance. 1 to 5 p.m. With a special 3 p.m. performance by Capital Squares Demonstration Team. Recommended donation for each couple is a new, unopened toy or a \$10 minimum contribution (singles \$5). At the Lee Center Exhibit Hall, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria. Call the City's Special Events Hotline at 703-746-5592 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/recreation.

Handel's "Judah Maccabaeus." 3 p.m. Free. No tickets required; \$10/donation. Performed by NOVA Community Chorus, Dr. Mark A. Whitmire, Director, and Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Ulysses S. James, Music Direct/Conductor. At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. Call 703-845-6097.

Alternative Christmas Giving Bazaar. A fundraiser for local charity. After the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. In the Fellowship Hall of Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Visit www.spc-alex.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 6

Advent Benefit Concert. 7:30 p.m. A benefit concert for the Daughters of St. Paul. A relaxing and prayerful evening of classical and sacred music with concert pianist Donna Stoering and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra violist, Erin Nolan, a postulant with the Daughters of St. Paul. Music by Chopin, Faure, Rachmaninov and Schubert. Free-will offering will be collected to support the mission of the Daughters of St. Paul. Call 703-549-3806. At St. Mary's Lyceum, 313 Duke Street, Old Town, Alexandria.

Toastmasters International Area G1 Holiday Party. 7:30 p.m. At Primo Family Restaurant on Belle View Blvd in Alexandria. Visit mtvernontoast@gmail.com. Visit <http://mountvernon.freetoasthost.org/>

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 8

Swing Dancing. 9 to 11 p.m. Admission is \$6. DJ Dance Party with DJ Dabe Murphy. At Nick's Nightclub, 642 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.

Electric Nature Open House. 4 to 7 p.m. Get some fun and new ideas about decorating and buying holiday gifts. Wear your red and green—and bring a friend (or two)! Door prizes and special offers. At 1503 Mount Vernon Avenue. RSVP: galecurcio@verizon.net or 703-360-3621

"Need a Closet Renovation?" Bake sale fundraiser luncheon sponsored by the Springfield/Alexandria Christian Women's Connection. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$17/person. Reservations 703-590-6562 or email to SpringWmConn@yahoo.com. At the Springfield Golf & Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Call 703-815-4204.

Cooking Demos at Spice & Tea Exchange

The Spice & Tea Exchange Alexandria is hosting a series of cooking demonstrations with Old Town Alexandria's finest chefs. Chefs will use the selection of fresh spices available at The Spice & Tea Exchange Alexandria to debut their favorite dishes that can be cooked at home. Customers will learn and taste. Reservations required; \$20 in advance, \$25 day of (if seating is available). Email Alexandria@SpiceandTea.com or call, 571-312-8505. At The Spice & Tea Exchange of Alexandria, 320 King Street, Alexandria (across from City Hall). Call Joy Quinn and Taruna Reddy at 571-312-8505.

Schedule

- ❖ Nov. 28, 6 p.m. — Chef de Cuisine Chris Watson, BRABO by Robert Wiedmaier & BRABO Tasting Room
- ❖ Jan. 27, 7 p.m. — Dennis Marron, Executive Chef, The Grille at Morrison House & Jackson 20
- ❖ Feb. 21, 7 p.m. — Executive Chef Anthony Chittum, Vermilion
- ❖ March 29, 7 p.m. — Chef Shannon Overmiller, Majestic Cafe and Todd Thrasher, PX Lounge
- ❖ April 25, 7 p.m. — Chef Nick Flores, Hank's Oyster Bar

SCHOOLS



Outdoor education coordinator Shawn Akard prepares the student-grown and harvested lettuce for the Thanksgiving dinner salad.



Suzanne McDonnell joins her daughter Kiki, a Hollin Meadow student for the holiday luncheon.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOLLIN MEADOWS

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Launching 'Save Our Garden, Save Our Focus'

Nearly 1,000 parents, students, families, faculty and community members enjoyed a Thanksgiving luncheon at Hollin Meadows School

on Thursday, Nov. 18. The luncheon included a salad with lettuce grown by the students in the nationally recognized school garden.

The lettuce harvest was made possible through a donation of 1000 lettuce seedlings from Bonnie Plants.

The luncheon marks the kick-off

of a campaign to raise \$170,000 cut from the school budget. The money funds the Hollin Meadows learning garden and the Science and Math Focus Program.



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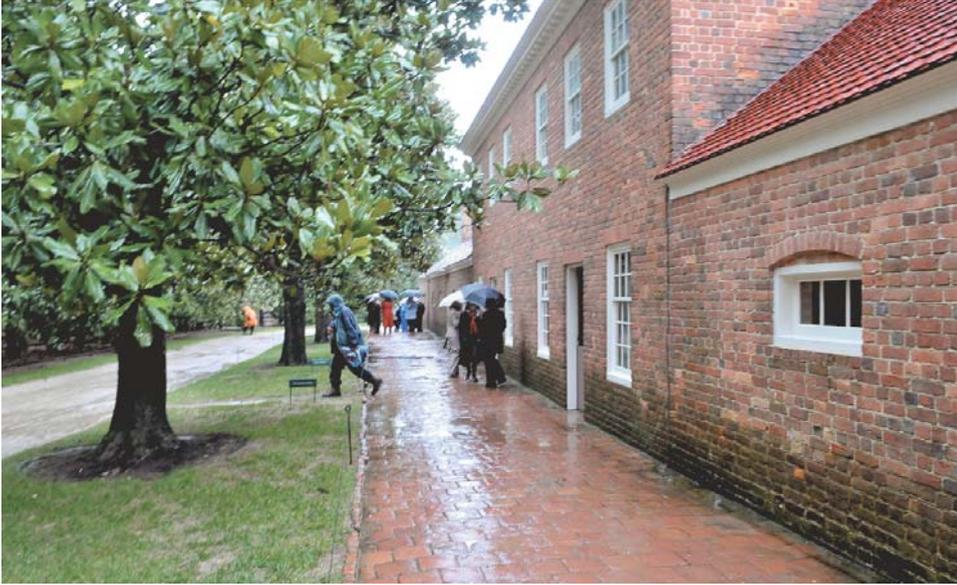
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Alexandria, Virginia

PEOPLE



The slave quarters and green house on the mansion site.



Harmony Annette Armstrong places a fabric doll on the bed of a child in the women's quarters.

Rededication of Slave Quarters at Mount Vernon

Four descendants of George Washington's slaves returned to the mansion earlier this month for a special rededication of the slave quarter on the mansion grounds. The Hon. Rohulamin Quander and Gloria Alice Tancil Holmes are both related to Suckey Bay, one of the estate slaves, and Harmony Annette Armstrong came with her grandmother Zsun-Nee Matema. Harmony, through her grandmother, is related to one of the mansion slaves Caroline, who was in the room with the doctors and family when General George Washington died in 1799.

The slaves quarters were reinterpreted to be more accurate in the portrayal of how they would have lived. In the period between 1775 and 1787, George Washington decided that he would never buy or sell another slave. In 1786, a complete census was conducted of the slave population: George Washington owned 105 and the estate of Martha Washington's late husband, Daniel Parke Custis numbered 111. In 1799, Washington drafted a second inventory; the list included 123 slaves owned by him.

Washington wrote his in will to free his slaves upon his death and included detailed instructions for care and support for the newly freed slaves. The slaves held by the Custis estate were divided among Martha's four grandchildren.

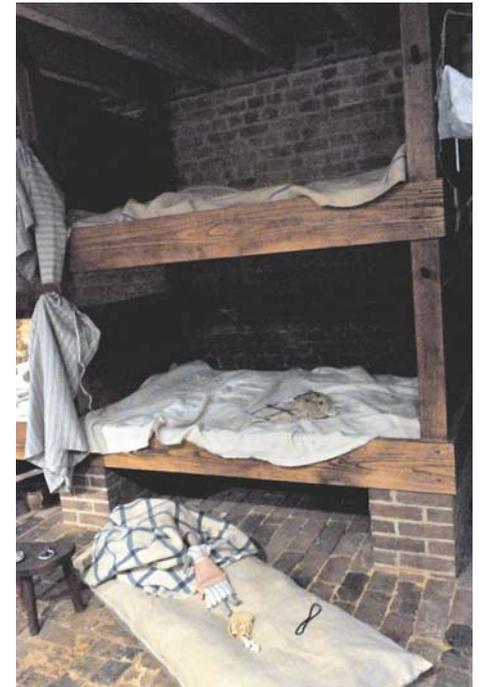
PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE



Gloria Alice Tancil Holmes, a descendant of Suckey Bay placed a Colonware bowl near the hearth in the woman's slave quarters.



Dr. Susan Schoelwer, curator, presents Harmony Armstrong with a similar fabric doll. With Harmony is her grandmother Zsun-Nee Matema



In the reinterpretation of the slave quarters, bunk beds were made. Historical evidence indicates that this may be more accurate furnishings.

Mt. Vernon Team Advances in Youth Cyber Competition

Members of the Mount Vernon Composite Squadron's CyberPatriot Team include: C/Amn Gabriel Abbe, C/AB Nebay Haile, C/1st Lt Christopher Fry, C/CMSgt Brandon Julig, C/2d Lt Hunter Garth, and C/SrA Jack Wilson. Not pictured is C/SSgt Paul MacGregor.



Mount Vernon High School's Composite Squadron's CyberPatriot Team has surpassed hundreds of teams to advance in CyberPatriot, the nation's largest youth cyber defense challenge.

CyberPatriot officially began Oct. 23 with more than 400 All-Service teams around the nation setting out to competitively ward off a series of cyber attacks by defending a virtualized network of computers.

Each team of students was able to successfully compete in the first round and excelled. Owing to their performance, they have received a "bye" for the second round of competition and will advance directly to the third round, which takes place on Dec.

4, 2010. Due to exceptionally high server demand, technical challenges impaired some teams' ability to compete. As a result, every team in the competition was advanced to the second round.

Mount Vernon Composite Squadron, which meets at Ft. Belvoir, is one of six squadrons in Civil Air Patrol's National Capital Wing. Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions, with approximately 75 lives saved each year. Its members also provide disaster relief and emergency services following natural and manmade disasters such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina.

Defending District Champ WPHS Inexperienced

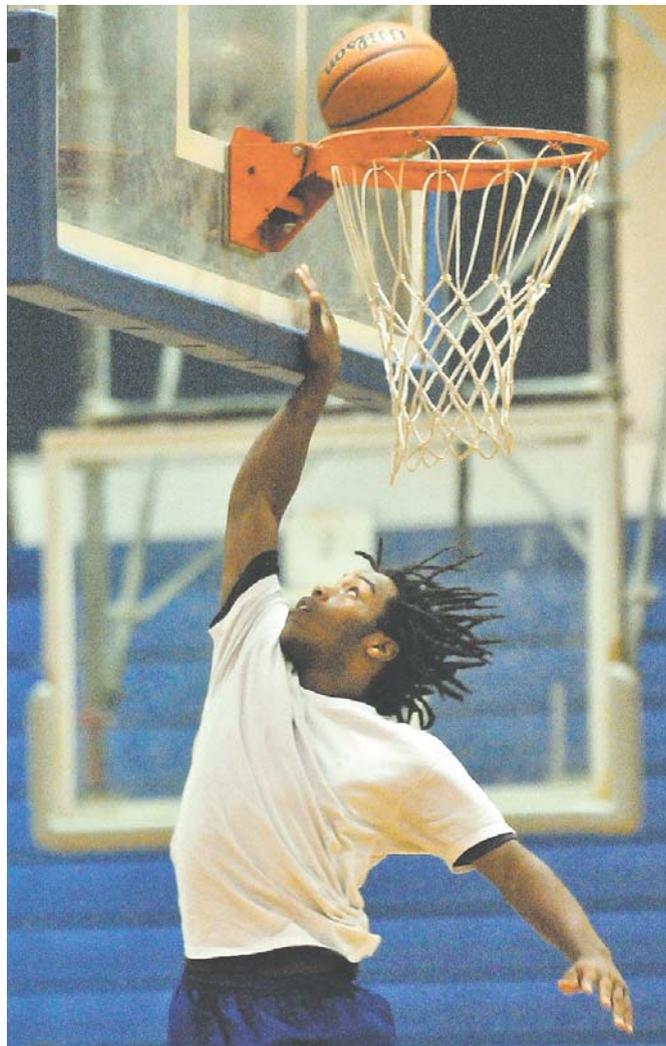
Wolverines return four players from title team.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Bring up that West Potomac graduated a lot of seniors from last year's Patriot District boys basketball championship team and head coach David Houston III acknowledges the loss. But mention that a group of inexperienced athletes will be defending the title and Houston disagrees.

"These guys aren't defending it," the coach said. "They didn't have it."

West Potomac enters the 2010-11 season as the defending district champion, but the Wolverines return only four players from a team that reached the region quarterfinals. Eight seniors are gone, leaving only Daryl Copeland, Jalen Dawson, Nik Dimitrijevic and Karl Grabbi as athletes with varsity experience. But while Houston declines to label his newcomers defending district champs, the coach offers an endorsement for a group he feels capable of its own accomplishments.



West Potomac senior Jalen Dawson is one of only four players who return from last season's Patriot District championship team.

"We lost a lot of experience and toughness," Houston said, "but I think that we are more talented this year."

West Potomac's best player is senior Daryl Copeland, who enters his third season as a varsity starter. The 5-foot-8 guard was the MVP of last season's Patriot District tournament and will once again be the Wolverines' top scoring threat. This year, however, Copeland's role will be expanded to help deal with the team's inexperience.

"We lost a lot of experience and toughness, but I think that we are more talented this year."

— West Potomac head boys basketball coach David Houston III

"He's now the veteran leader," Houston said. "He started when he was a sophomore when he was one of the younger guys on the team. Last year, with as many seniors as we had, he was still one of the younger guys on the team. Now, he's a veteran, has a lot of game experience and [he's attempted] a lot of big-game shots."

"Last year, his role was more, 'Put it in. Score. Get us in our offense and make some shots.' This year, he's going to score, no doubt about that, but he's going to be helping the guys — more of a leader on the floor."

It's a role Copeland said he's ready to assume.

"I like," Copeland said, "being depended on and taking the last shot — being the important person."

Along with Copeland, the 5-foot-8 Dawson, who Houston called "the best athlete on the team," will also be a factor in the West Potomac backcourt.

An area of uncertainty for West Potomac is the frontcourt. Houston said the Wolverines have five players standing 6 feet 4 or taller, but none of which have varsity experience. Seniors Jesse Fico and Evans Labossiere and junior Bryant Fultz are potential frontcourt standouts for West Potomac.

The Wolverines open their season at home against Mount Vernon at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 3. Houston said the team wants to end up playing at Robinson Secondary School in the region final four. For now, West Potomac needs to gain experience — a reality of which one of its veteran players is well aware.

"We have a golden opportunity to try to defend [our district crown] and that's what we want to do, but that's not what we're looking at now" Dawson said. "What we're looking at now is execution, working hard, instilling confidence in our players and listening to what the coaches say. ... If we do that, anything can happen."

Seahawks Eliminate Majors in Football Playoff Opener

But season overall proves great improvement for Mount Vernon program.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon High football coach Barry Wells had a good feeling about his new team right from the start this season. The first-year head coach, whose Majors saw their 2010 season end with a playoff loss to South Lakes last Friday night in Reston, said he knew upon meeting with his squad for the first time several months ago that they had the make-up of a good team. In 2009, the Majors experienced a dismal 0-10 season under previous head coach Tom Glynn. But Wells was positive about a turnaround from the start.

"We went into the season cautiously optimistic. After 0-10 you really don't know what to expect," said Wells, an assistant high school football coach in New Jersey for 10 years prior to becoming the Mount Vernon head coach. "But from the first day I met the kids, I really didn't think we were an 0-

10 team. I thought we might surprise some people."

The challenge to respectability was far from easy for the Majors, who opened the season with lopsided losses to local Alexandria area rivals West Potomac, 55-20, and T.C. Williams, 45-14. But Mount Vernon came back in week three to beat Edison at home, 14-6, in a National District game played on Sept. 16. The win over the Eagles was the first Mount Vernon victory since the 2008 season. Then, the following week, the Majors improved to 2-2 with a 17-14 district win at Stuart.

Losses to both Centreville and Hayfield had Mount Vernon sitting at 2-4 with a month remaining in the regular season. But the Majors won three of their next four games — the wins coming over Washington-Lee, 37-20, Falls Church, 20-13, and Wakefield, 41-21, and the setback coming in week nine to Yorktown, 28-14, with the district title on the line — to conclude the regular schedule with a 5-5 record, a huge



Dennis Mensah led Mount Vernon with 48 rushing yards during the Majors' playoff loss to South Lakes on Nov. 12.

improvement from the year before.

"When you're 0-10 [the year before] a lot of things have to be re-tooled," said Wells. "A lot of it was psyche. That was a very hard [challenge] for me. I took this

job with the understanding that I would be relentless [in the pursuit of seeing the team improve]. I wanted to work to help

SEE MVHS, PAGE 24

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January 13



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SPORTS

Much Improvement for MVHS

FROM PAGE 23

restore Mount Vernon's tradition."

WHILE THE SEASON was a success overall, Wells said his team's postseason loss to South Lakes — a 39-0 shutout setback to the No. 4-seeded Seahawks in a Div. 5 Northern Region quarterfinals playoff matchup on Nov. 12 — was difficult to take.

"I felt similar to how I had felt after the [late season] Yorktown loss — for whatever reason, we didn't show up," said Wells, of the season-ending defeat at the hands of coach Andy Hill's South Lakes squad, members of the Liberty District. "We were moving the ball early on but had a [lost] fumble on that first drive."

Mount Vernon trailed 8-0 after one quarter but had fallen behind 20-0 by halftime. South Lakes put up 13 more points in the third quarter to make the score 33-0 and put the game out of reach.

On the night, the run-oriented Mount Vernon offense was held to less than 100 yards rushing by the South Lakes defense. Dennis Mensah was the Majors' top ball carrier with 48 yards. The visitors managed just 27 yards through the air as two Mount Vernon quarterbacks combined to go 3-for-12.

Meanwhile, South Lakes sophomore quarterback Rashaan Jones continued a marvelous first season as South Lakes' starting varsity signal caller by tossing three touchdown passes, including scoring strikes of 10 and 13 yards to wide receiver Sean Price, and

running for another score in his team's playoff win. Jones' fourth quarter 40-yard touchdown pass to junior Stan Lindsay capped the night's highlight play reel for the home team.

The win improved South Lakes' record to 8-3 on the season and advanced them to the semifinals.

"I thought our defense played extremely well, as they have any time we put up a shutout, but they were dominant at times," said Hill. "Mount Vernon came in with a very good running attack and a decent passing game that could keep us off-balance."°

Wells said he has received lots of congratulatory compliments in regards to Mount Vernon's five-win season and the impressive turnaround from the winless season before. But he also admitted to having a hard time shaking off the decisive loss to South Lakes.

"Everyone is telling me it was a great season, to go from 0-10 to 5-5," said Wells. "But right now, personally, it's hard to brush that [playoff defeat] aside. South Lakes is a good ball club, well coached with talented players."

Wells is optimistic about the future of the Mount Vernon program and he looks forward to coaching the team next year and thereafter. He expressed gratitude for having been given the opportunity to pilot the Majors.

"I wouldn't trade this opportunity for anything," he said. "Mount Vernon was kind enough, gracious enough to afford me my first opportunity ever as a head coach."

Be a Part of CHILDREN'S (& TEENS') GAZETTE



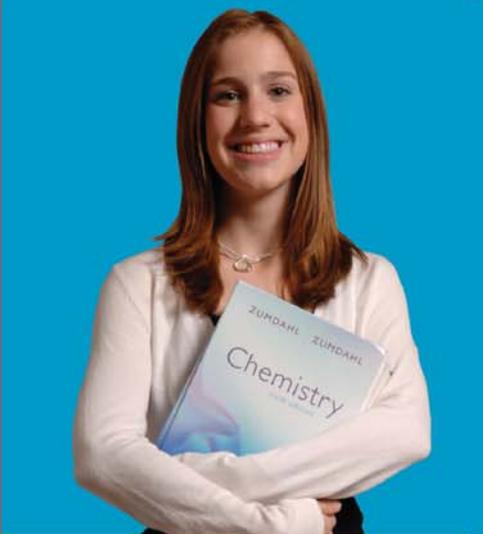
Every year between Christmas and New Year's, The Mount Vernon Gazette turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home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

E-mail to: gazette@connection

newspapers.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) by Dec. 1, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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OPINION

Thankful

FROM PAGE 13

What advice would you give to someone looking for more special things to be thankful for in Alexandria?

Take time to enjoy the events and places that make Alexandria so special.

DIANE HENRY

What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?

I give thanks for not killing the bicyclist. I've been doing it every Thanksgiving for about 15 years. It was a dark night in Old Town where every corner has a stop sign. I obeyed. But when I pushed the gas pedal again there was a bicyclist, out of no where, fast, wearing dark clothes and he tipped over, probably out of fright. I don't think I hit him, but we came dang close. He cursed. My heart stopped and I sat frozen as he righted himself, cursed some more and started riding again. I don't know who's guardian angels were at work, his or mine, but I give thanks that they were on duty and I will continue the same prayer of thanks until my breath gives out. I think this year, I will also ask the guardian angels to look out after the guy who rides his handicapped scooter in the streets, at night, in the north end of Old Town. He also wears dark clothes and there are no reflectors on his scooter.

I am blessed beyond words with family and friends, like so many others in our town. If I let myself write about these dear ones I wouldn't get up from the computer until Groundhog's day. They are loved and I frequently tell them so. On Thanksgiving I should perhaps add in a few that I overlook sometimes, like the poet Wendell Berry, the creators of Google, whom I adore, or the doctors who have allowed me to live beyond my original expiration date.

The teachers at Burgundy Farm Country Day School would certainly be high on my list. My daughter, now in law school, attended Burgundy and I am so grateful that her early years were filled with a love of learning, reasoning, and respect in a place where curiosity, joy, and imagination were encourage. Not one day, in all those years at Burgundy, did my child ever say she did not want to go to school. Not one. Just the opposite. Eagerly, she raced to her classroom each morning when she was dropped off. Is that not one of the great gifts in life?

I will also give thanks this year for my yoga buddies at "Yoga In Daily Life" in Del Ray. I stumbled into a free yoga class ten years ago, out of shape and totally ignorant about yoga. But I discovered the most wonderful teacher who was patient, funny, and always encouraging. By accident I came upon a very traditional style of yoga, not competitive, not trendy, not strict. It was yoga that embraced many imperfections and helped people become more healthy and more relaxed. Everyone who works there is a volunteer, running the office, cleaning, teaching classes, including some who teach at the city jail and offices around town. I am one of the teachers now so I know I'm more than a little biased on the subject. But I think it is honest to stay that the people who teach and take classes at the yoga center are an exceptionally lovely group and to them I say a special thank you.

CHRISTINE (CHRIS) WIXTROM

Founder ASL Access

What will you give thanks for this Thanksgiving?

I'm thankful for the generosity of deaf friends as they share American Sign Language with me.

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OBITUARY
Mary Beth Shelton, age 84, died peacefully on 11/20 10 in Hendersonville, NC, after a brief illness. A native of St Claire, PA, Mary Beth moved to Washington DC during WW II. There she worked for the Dept of Agriculture and met her late husband, Billy Ray Shelton. The couple were married, settled in Alexandria, VA and raised 6 children. After the death of her husband, Mary beth worked as an office administrator at St Lawrence Catholic Church in Springfield, VA and later at St Timothys Catholic church in Chantilly, VA. After retiring in 2004, Mary beth moved to Columbus, North Carolina. She is survived by her 6 children, 9 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at St. Johns Baptist Church in Tryon, NC on Wed Nov 24, 2010. In Lieu of flowers please make donations to the American heart Association.

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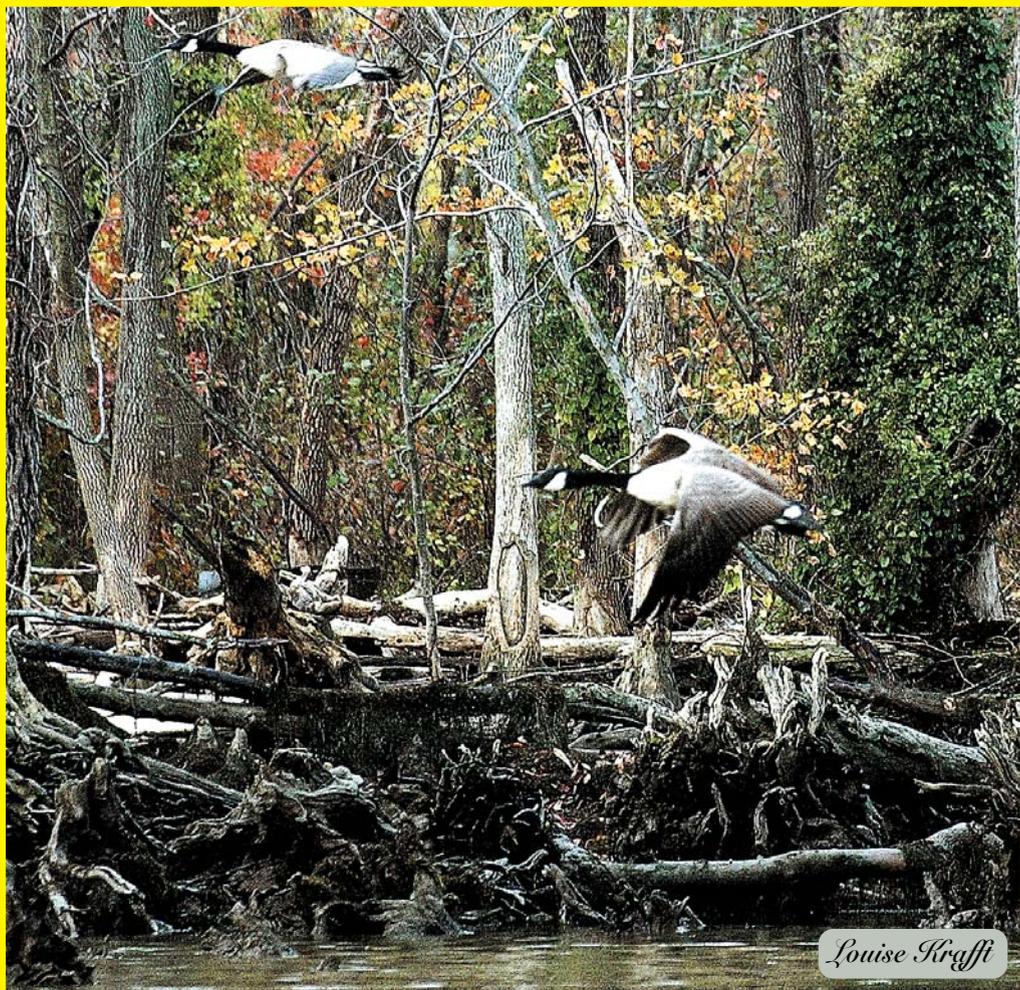


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NEWS



COURTESY PHOTO

Catie Liebeck instructs rowing class at Carl Sandburg Middle School.

Girl Scout Project Encourages Rowing

BY GALE CURCIO
THE GAZETTE

Catie Liebeck and Nell McKeown have taken their love of rowing to a whole new level. Using their expertise, they put together a program that introduces rowing to PE students in both Carl Sandburg Middle School and West Potomac High School. This project will ultimately earn them the Girl Scouts Gold Award. They have spent more than 80 hours on the project creating a curriculum that can be used at both levels.

Their motto is: "Creating a Life-Long Row-mance. Row Long, Live Strong."

The course includes information on technique, jargon, history, strength training and the many mental and physical benefits of rowing. The curriculum is an introduction to rowing, an aquatic sport in which rowers race each other in shells of up to eight rowers, usually accompanied by a coxswain.

"Rowing is a wonderful sport that is physically demanding and works all parts of the body, making rowers very fit and healthy people," said Liebeck and McKeown. "It is a test of intensity, strength and teamwork."

Their goal is to inspire students to take up the sport of rowing and become fitter, healthier and happier people.

They also hope to reduce childhood obesity by inspiring students to get fit through a worthy and fulfilling sport that they can continue all their lives.

Their Power Point presentation shows statistics about obesity and effects of obesity on a child.

The girls still have to present their final project to the Girl Scout Council, but their initial plan has already been improved. The course was given to Carl Sandburg students last semester and is currently in place at West Potomac. The rowing machines were loaned to Sandburg by the West Potomac crew team so that they could be used during the time that the team didn't need the machines.

"Most of the kids really like it and really seem to have fun with learning to row," said McKeown. "It is the ultimate team sport, not a lot of people know about it."

Liebeck added, "We both really like rowing and wanted to inspire other kids."

Gale Curcio is an independent writer and public relations consultant in Mount Vernon.