

# Mount Vernon Gazette

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 23, 2010



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

## Lighting the Way

The Festival of Santa Lucia, beginning before dawn on Dec. 13, which under the Julian calendar (used in Sweden before 1753) was Christmas Day and the longest night of the year. Throughout Sweden, the eldest daughter in each household comes to her sleeping parents dressed in a long, white gown tied with a red sash, and wearing a crown of lingonberry leaves and seven lighted candles. She carries a tray of steaming coffee and "Lussekatlor" (Lucia Runs). The procession includes her sisters and brothers also dressed in white, holding lighted candles, and singing of the light and joy of Christmas. Eighth grader Zoey Pellowitz portraying Saint Lucia in the opening procession of the Festival of Lights at Burgundy Farm, waits in the doorway with eighth grade teacher Nancy Kaplan. More photos, page 10.

## Deadlock over BRAC Gridlock

No answers for potential traffic from Mark Center.

BY NICHOLAS HORROCK  
THE GAZETTE

The following article is the final segment of a series of articles on the impact of the movement of 22,000 military and government employees from Washington, Maryland and Arlington to Alexandria and Fairfax County.

One of the biggest Northern Virginia projects under the Base Closure and Realignment Act is ending the year as a political football between a Republican governor and the Democrats that dominate Virginia's U.S. Congressional delegation.

The result is that nine months before 6,400 Defense Department employees are to move into a new building at Seminary Road and U.S. Route 395 in Alexandria, there is no adequate way for thousands of employees to enter and leave the site each day and the potential that the traffic congestion will cause gridlock on U.S. 95 from Stafford County to the Pentagon.

At the same time, U.S. Route 1 in Fairfax County is far too narrow to permit other thousands of new employees to enter and leave Ft. Belvoir without causing backups that would stretch from the Occoquan to the Alexandria city line.

On Tuesday, Dec. 14, four key Northern Virginia Democrats fired off a letter to Republican Gov. Robert F. McDonnell asking him to di-

SEE BRAC TRAFFIC, PAGE 6

## Momentum Builds For Oversight Board

Panel recommends creating citizen review board for police.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

Advocates for the creation of a citizen review board scored a major victory this month, one that could build momentum moving into 2011. Yet the long-awaited recommendation from Police Chief David Rohrer has

yet to be issued, creating a sense of uncertainty. For now, the idea of creating a body of citizens to provide oversight of police actions remains up in the air.



Hyland

SEE VISIONING PANEL, PAGE 5

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Supervisor Gerry Hyland enjoys the crowd at the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber BEST Business Awards 2010 and Holiday Celebration.



Sabrina Campbell, Loren Campbell and Jeff Todd visit during the chamber event.

PHOTOS BY GALE CURCIO/  
THE GAZETTE



Jamie Martin collects money for the 50/50 Raffle.

# Chamber Enjoys Holiday While Saluting Members

BY GALE CURCIO  
THE GAZETTE

Jeff Todd and his father and brother have been mainstays of the Mount Vernon and Lee communities for years. They donate chicken and roast beef to chamber events. They collect money and toys for local charities. They hold fundraisers for local schools and charities. The list goes on and on, but there is rarely a charitable event that the Todds are not a part of.

Last weekend, Todd, the owner of three Roy Roger's restaurants, was named Chamber Citizen of 2010 at THE BEST Business Awards 2010 and Holiday Celebration.

Barbara Sullivan, executive director of Mount Vernon At Home and former chairman of the chamber, said, "Jeff Todd. What can I say? The man is so humble, just a

'burger guy.' No way, he is a great person, volunteer, advocate and visionary for our community. He really should be Mayor of Mount Vernon."

Held at the Mount Vernon Country Club, the chamber also honored Twin Contracting Corporation as the Best Large Business of 2010; United States Homeland Investigations Inc. as the Best Small Business; and Baywood Hotels as the Best New Business of 2010.

Sullivan also said, "Homeland Investigations has been a great resource for my business. Very helpful, efficient and have used them multiple times in the last couple of years.

"The newest, Spring Hill/Holiday Inn has

jumped right into the business landscape of the Mount Vernon Community. They have been very involved and opened their doors for many meetings and community gatherings — a great asset to Richmond Highway.

Tim Sargeant, president, Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, and manager, State & Local Affairs, Dominion Power, summed it up by saying, "The award recipients epitomize the best qualities of our business partners in the Mt. Vernon and Lee Districts. They have demonstrated the leadership, business acumen and civic commitment that make our community a great place to live

and work."

The evening was not all business. There was musical entertainment. Chamber members participated in the annual gift exchange where they had the opportunity to switch gifts with their neighbors during a frenzied gift swap. They also had the chance to participate in a 50/50 Raffle to win a Kindle.

For more information about the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, visit [www.MtVernon-LeeChamber.org](http://www.MtVernon-LeeChamber.org).

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



Lawonda Swope picks her prize.



Jim Dunn tries to determine what's in his gift.



Frank Flaherty talks with Fairfax County Fire & Rescue committee member the Rev. Grant McIntosh.



Priscilla and Al Bornmann are all decked out at the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber gathering.



Nate Wilson, Luis Navarro and Barbara Sullivan visit during the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber celebration.



Tim Sargeant, current president of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, presides over the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber BEST Business Awards 2010 and Holiday Celebration.



United States Homeland Investigations, Inc. (USHII) was chosen as the 2010-2011 Mount Vernon-Lee Small Business of the Year. From left: Bruce Jaeger, research associate; Ashley McNeff, CEO/managing partner, and Shena Nutter, director of client relations.

# Looking for Real Estate Rebound in 2012?

BY NICHOLAS HORROCK  
THE GAZETTE

**T**hough area real estate experts and economists discount the danger of a “double dip” recession in the Washington region, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates proposal to curb defense

procurement is perhaps the greatest danger to Northern Virginia’s economic future, according to John McLain, deputy director of the George Mason University’s Center for Regional Analysis.

Speaking at an annual news briefing conducted by the Washington region real estate industry, McLain said that if Gate’s plan is

successful to shave \$100 billion, or 10 per cent a year for five years in defense procurement, it would result in a \$3 billion a year “blow to our economy,” McClain said.

This loss, he said, would far overshadow the \$500 million a year impact of President Barack Obama’s plan to reduce federal

salaries by 2- percent over the next two years.

Though McClain pointed out that Gates will leave office next year and his program may not be successful, a large number of other proposals to cut defense spending exist and that though history has shown other plans to cut DOD have failed, this time they could be successful.

He said some businesses are making plans for alternative products to offset defense procurement. “They know that we can’t keep expanding government spending 10 percent a year as we have for the past 10 years.

McClain said the region added 43,000 jobs in the past seven months, more than job growth in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

He said that home ownership is likely to remain strong in Northern Virginia because family ownership is far greater than in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, where

greater numbers of single people live.

The very core of the region’s economic resistance to the impact of the national recession had been the fruits of the enormous federal procurement that flows in to region and most particularly to Northern Virginia, McClain said.

McClain and other speakers at the briefing do not see 2011 as the “come back” year in this region from the recession and think that the general real estate market will begin to return in 2012.

Indeed, for most of the year, 2010, housing sales in Northern Virginia outstripped 2009 6,486 to 6,067. But the sales tailed off in November, despite low interest rates, because of the end of the federal tax deduction program.

Vin Nguyen, chairman of the board of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, said he sees 2011 unfolding very much like 2010 if the interest rates remain low.

## NOTICE!

AFTER TEN WONDERFUL YEARS IN ALEXANDRIA, ARTCRAFT IS SADDENED TO BE CLOSING OUR OLD TOWN LOCATION ON DECEMBER 31, 2010. CONTRARY TO PUBLISHED REPORTS, WE’RE NOT ABANDONING ALEXANDRIA. OUR LEASE HAS EXPIRED AND WE WERE UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE A NEW LEASE THAT REFLECTS THE CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY THAT ARE AFFECTING ALL OF US. WE CHERISH OUR TIME IN ALEXANDRIA AND WE WILL DEARLY MISS ALL OF OUR GOOD FRIENDS AND LOYAL CUSTOMERS (BOTH HUMAN & CANINE!). FEAR NOT: WE HAVE OPENED A BEAUTIFUL NEW GALLERY JUST ACROSS THE POTOMAC IN NATIONAL HARBOR. PLEASE COME & VISIT US THERE, WHERE YOU CAN CONTINUE TO FIND THE BEST WORK FROM 100’S OF AMERICAN ARTISANS.

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## Tree Delivery

Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club (MVKC) Past President Bruce Malkin, left, and member Rich Keil delivered two Fraser firs to Blanca Vasquez, UCM community developer and director of the Creekside Neighborhood Center on Janna Lee Avenue.

## BULLETIN BOARD

To have a notice listed, e-mail [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

### ONGOING

**Join The Full Cup**, Becky’s Fund (a domestic violence organization) and other partners by participating in the Bra Call Holiday Drive. From Dec. 6-31, they will be collecting gently used or new bras that will be donated to women living in low income housing or shelters. Look for the red box at these businesses: **The Full Cup**, 218 N Lee St # 206, Alexandria; **Appleseed**, 115 S. Columbus Street, Alexandria; **Bellacara**, 1000 King Street, Alexandria; **Bloomers**, 924 King Street, Alexandria, and **Diva Consignment Boutique**, 116 S.

Pitt Street, Alexandria.

The **Animal Welfare League of Alexandria** believes this is a great time of year to add a feline to the family. You can help offer a cat or kitten “It’s a Wonderful (2nd) Life” opportunity and take advantage of special adoption incentives throughout December. Felines from 1-3 years of age now have their adoption fees reduced by 50 percent and those 3 years of age or older will be free. All standard application/adoptions processes, rules and procedures apply. Visit [www.alexandriaanimals.org](http://www.alexandriaanimals.org) or call 703-746-4774.



Zelda Shute, Rev. Ketlen Solak, Alicia and Tony Perez, and the Rev. Tuck Bowerfind loading up toys that were collected for UCM's "Share the Joy" gift distribution program.

COURTESY PHOTO

## St. Luke's Collects Toys for UCM

Members of St. Luke's Church collected hundreds of gifts for community children in need and delivered them to United Community Ministries on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

St. Luke's coordinated the Toy Drive that included contributions from St. Luke's parish as well as the

surrounding community.

This year, UCM expects to distribute thousands of gifts, as well as holiday food to families in need in our community. Each year, UCM helps families in need to have a happy holiday season by providing thousands of toys and other gifts for children through our holiday Share the Joy program.

## Visioning Panel Supports Review Board

FROM PAGE 1

"I have an open mind about this," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland. "At this point, I'm still waiting to hear the results of the police inquiry and the recommendation."

Earlier this month, the Public Safety Committee of Hyland's Visioning Task Force issued a recommendation that the Board of Supervisors "consider the feasibility of creating a citizen review board to address any citizen allegations of police misconduct." Yet the police chief has yet to make a recommendation on whether or not such a citizen review board should be considered or how it would work.

"I think the chief is stonewalling," said Nicholas Beltrante, executive director of the Citizens Coalition for Police Accountability based in Mount Vernon. "He's had ample time to complete a review and make recommendations, but that hasn't happened yet."

The effort to create a citizen review board began a year ago, shortly after Fairfax County officer David Ziants shot and killed an unarmed motorist at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Fort Hunt Road. This episode followed two other recent incidents in which Fairfax cops shot and killed civilians, creating a sense of concern among many that the culture at the department is in need of oversight. Yet the idea of creating a board of citizens to review allegations of misconduct met with resistance among some.

"There isn't really a sense that anything needs to be done about this," said Dallas Shawkey, chairman of the Public Safety Committee for the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations, said in October. "We haven't seen anything out of the ordinary."

**NOW THE ISSUE** is headed to the Fairfax County

Board of Supervisors, which is expected to receive the long-awaited recommendation from Chief Rohr in early 2011 — perhaps as early as a January executive session. That report is expected to have the chief's research into best practices from other jurisdictions, although some have called into question the extent of that research. Officials at the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement say they have yet to be asked for input into the department's review.

"It's a little bit surprising that they haven't reached out to us," said Phillip Eure, immediate past president of the association. "We're here, and we're ready, willing and able to assist in any way possible."

Eure says the vast majority of jurisdictions that have a population of 500,000 or more already have a police review board, and that Fairfax County is really an outlier that's out of step with national trends. Police officials have yet to respond to that charge, although the chief's recommendation is expected to address best practices on the topic

of citizen review. Police officials have been noncommittal on when that will happen.

"I don't believe anyone has an estimate of when that will occur," said Mary Ann Jennings, a spokeswoman for the Fairfax County Police Department, in an e-mailed response to questions.

Despite the lack of input from the police, several elected officials have already come out in favor of creating a review board. One of those who has already publicly announced her support is Fairfax County Chairwoman Sharon Bulova.

"I think it would be helpful to assure ourselves and either confirm that the right decision was made or to be able to go back and correct something that may not have gone as well as it should have," said Bulova in October.

**"I have an open mind about this."**

— Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland



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# No Federal, State Answers to BRAC Traffic

FROM PAGE 1

rect any uncommitted Virginia Department of Transportation funds to relieve traffic congestion in Alexandria and along Route 1 and Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County. McDonnell had said that an audit of VDOT found some \$1 billion in unused transportation funds.

McDonnell has since proposed a controversial \$3 billion transportation program that did not include unusual funds for BRAC changes.

“Although VDOT and the federal government have allocated resources to improve Fort Belvoir’s surrounding transportation infrastructure, several studies document more funding is necessary to prevent unacceptable congestion,” the letter to McDonnell said.

McDonnell’s office shot right back. McDonnell spokesman Taylor Thomley said that Virginia had provided more for BRAC than other states and had asked the congressional delegation for ideas. “We would appreciate it if the Congressmen would secure federal funding to support the needed infrastructure, which at this point they have been unable to do.”

Though there are bills in the 111th Congress to both provide additional funding and to compel the Department of Defense to slow the transfers, their passage is unlikely in the frantic final lame duck hours before Jan. 4.

For the people of Alexandria and Fairfax County the mishandling of the BRAC projects may cause problems that will linger for years in the future.

**THE BRAC FACILITY** at Seminary Road and Beauregard Streets, dubbed BRAC 133, is two multi-story office towers, one 17 floors high and the other 15 stories. They are attached by a lobby in a modified L. Construction started in 2009 and the Corps of Engineers team that is managing the construction said in a briefing that the project is on time and on budget to open on Sept. 15, 2011.

Both buildings are up and being finished and can be seen from Route 395 and from Seminary Road.

The problems do not arise from the building’s construction, but from its location.

Between 2005 and 2008, the Army conducted an extensive search for a location for an office building to accept some 6,409 DOD employees now in leased space in



**Route 395 and Seminary Road will need to handle an additional 6,409 Department of Defense employees next year.**

Crystal City, Roslyn and the Pentagon. All of those locations are on subway, bus and in one case a rail line and provided easy access to work for employees that did not want to drive.

One by one the Army found fault with other proposed sites. One on Eisenhower Avenue was rejected and another site in Springfield near Metrorail and the Virginia Railway Express, a group of warehouses already belonging to the federal government, was turned down.

**“The parking cap has strong support in both the House and Senate bills.”**

— U.S. Rep. James Moran

In the end, as Chris Gaspar of U.S. Rep. James Moran’s office points out, the proposal for the Army to buy the site on Seminary and build there came in \$200 million below the other estimates.

The Seminary Road site is not near any major public transportation. The closest Metrorail stop is King Street, about three miles away. The VRE station is co-located at King Street and the other main Metro stops, Braddock Road and Van Dorn Street, are even further from the Mark Center.

Both the City of Alexandria and VDOT had done traffic studies that said a special access ramp to 395 would have to be built to provide for the number of cars DOD esti-

mated would enter and exit the site each day. DOD surveys had found that 41 percent of the employees currently drove to and from work and estimated that some 3,000 employees would drive.

**THE 16-ACRE** Mark Center site was owned by the Duke Realty Corporation and was also offering to construct the buildings. It commissioned its own transportation study that found the site was feasible without a major ramp. As Gaspar said, this study made Mark Center irresistible to Army procurement officers and the Army bought the site and began construction.

But VDOT engineers and Alexandria officials and a host of other traffic exits said the Duke study is flawed, some suggested it was a conflict of interest for the seller to provide a study.

The Department of Defense inspector general has opened an investigation of how Mark Center was selected and the role of the traffic study in the decision.

Thousands of the DOD employees anticipated at Mark Center will be driving north from homes in Fairfax, Prince William and Stafford Counties and their attempts to exit at the narrow one lane ramp at Seminary Road and return by a similar one lane ramp to go home at night has the makings of a traffic congestion disaster, VDOT and other experts contend.

Traffic going north on 95 is already at near capacity and even a small accident can clog the route for hours. It is the main north-south route for workers in Washington, at

the Pentagon and beyond.

The realization of the traffic disaster has slowly seeped into the consciousness of Northern Virginians. Moran said it means drivers could spend three hours on the road in the morning and evening.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE** has refused to dislodge funds for building a special ramp to 395. It has proposed a transportation plan that includes shuttle buses from King Street and other Northern Virginia Metro stations and car pooling and teleworking as viable alternatives. It is asking Alexandria to place police officers on Seminary Road morning and evening to assure the smooth transit of cars, but the city has refused without the Army paying for the overtime and other costs.

In one community meeting in November, the strange nature of the Mark Center became clear. The Army said it is part of Ft. Belvoir, but has refused to pay for additional police and fire services even though as a federal building it does not pay Alexandria taxes. It said Alexandria is bound by compact of fire services to provide assistance in case of a fire at Ft. Belvoir and thus is entitled to protection at the Mark Center. But Ft. Belvoir proper is some 10 miles south and its fire services are unlikely to get to Mark Center very quickly.

Last summer, Moran introduced a bill to force the Army to cap the number of employees driving cars at 1000 until it works out an acceptable transportation plan. His bill passed the House and Senators Mark Warner and Jim Webb introduced similar language in a Senate bill, but many on the Hill think it is unlikely to pass in the lame duck session.

“The parking cap has strong support in both the House and Senate bills,” Moran said in a statement Monday, Dec. 13. “Senators Webb and Warner have introduced identical language as an amendment. We’re monitoring Senate action very closely; whether they have the votes to proceed on the larger bill to overcome a Republican filibuster is really what’s in question — not support for the cap.”

The statement added that “The IG’s office has given every indication this will be a thorough review. Depending on what the report finds, there are scenarios that could delay the move. The congressman is preparing to use every option available to prevent the Mark Center situation from becoming a traffic nightmare.”

## CRIME REPORT

Activities reported by the Mt. Vernon police department through Dec. 17.

### ROBBERY

**A 50-year-old man was robbed at gunpoint** in the 6000 block of Rixey Drive around 9:48 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15. One suspect was described as Hispanic, in his early 30s, about 5 feet 4 inches tall and 170 pounds. The other suspect was described as black, in his early 30s, about 5 feet 9 inches tall and

180 pounds. Both suspects were wearing masks. The victim was not injured.

### LARCENIES

**8800 block of Black Alder Drive.** iPod stolen from vehicle.  
**9300 block of Brambly Lane.** GPS and cell phone stolen from vehicle.  
**8300 block of Carlwood Road.** Stereo stolen from vehicle.  
**8600 block of Conover Place.** CDs stolen from vehicle.

### 3900 block of El Camino Place.

Wedding rings stolen from residence.  
**2300 block of Huntington Ave.** Case of beer stolen from business.  
**2300 block of Huntington Ave.** Two 24-packs of beer stolen from business.  
**8700 block of Lea Lane.** Radar detector stolen from vehicle.  
**5300 block of Old Mill Road.** Hunting rifle stolen from vehicle.  
**3300 block of Oriole Lane.** Tools stolen from vehicle.  
**9100 block of Patton Blvd.** Wallet

and GPS stolen from vehicle.

### 6500 block of Quander Road.

Jacket and cell phone stolen from school.

### 6000 block of Richmond Highway.

Tires stolen from vehicle.

### 6800 block of Richmond Highway.

Cameras stolen from vehicle.

### 9100 block of Richmond Highway.

Jacket stolen from business.

### 4300 block of Robertson Blvd.

Camera equipment stolen from vehicle.

### 1200 block of Waywood Blvd.

Four tires stolen from vehicle.

### 8600 block of Woodlawn Court.

GPS unit stolen from vehicle.

### 3900 block of Woodley Drive.

Tools stolen from residence.

### VEHICLE THEFTS

**3300 block of Pelican Place.** 1994 Mazda.

**6000 block of Richmond Highway.** 2000 Dodge Caravan.

**3900 block of Sonora Place.** 2009 Toyota Scion.



### Congratulating CKI Club

After a successful semester of doing community service while studying full time, the members of the Kiwanis CKI Club at the Alexandria campus of the Northern Virginia Community College had a final get-together in the college's cafeteria on Dec. 17. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club (MVKC), this CKI Club has been in operation since early 2009, when it was chartered with 83 members. Above, from left, CKI Executive VP Ryan Pierpoint, NOVACC Staff Advisor Ken Balbuena, MVKC's Joanne Malkin, CKI's Service VP Jazmin Gonzalez, CKI's President Asw Elmelik, MVKC's Bruce Malkin, and CKI's Secretary Sandra Vargas.

### BUSINESS NOTES

Send announcements to the Gazette, by e-mail to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon for the following week's paper. Photos and artwork encouraged. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

**Dr. David C. Weintritt's** new Breast Cancer Clinic at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital offers the latest advancements in genetic testing, cancer prevention, and treatment. High Risk Analysis and Screening is now offered to the public to assess breast cancer risk. The clinic is located at the Yellow Lobby Entrance of Inova's Mount Vernon Hospital at 2501 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Valet parking is available. Clinic Hours are Mondays: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Call 703-313-8808.

**Inova Mount Vernon Hospital's Hyperbaric Oxygen Unit** was granted a four-year reaccreditation with special distinction by the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Society (UHMS), a recognition earned by less than 20 per-

cent of accredited medical facilities in the country.

Approval is given only to facilities that have voluntarily committed to following the guidelines of the UHMS, performing approved procedures and providing the highest level of safety in hyperbaric medicine. In addition to an on-site review by physicians board-certified in hyperbaric medicine, the facilities must undergo a rigorous evaluation and review process of their performance.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used to treat patients needing increased oxygen such as those with carbon monoxide poisoning, scuba divers suffering from diver's disease or the bends, and in treating some non-healing wounds.

**The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation** is awarding 49 unsolicited grants of \$1,000 each to nonprofits serving the greater Washington, D.C. area as part of Wells Fargo's Community Partners program. Under the program, banking store team members select a nonprofit in the store's neighborhood to

receive a grant. The greater Washington, D.C. nonprofits that are receiving the grants are: **Bryant Alternative High School (MV)**; **Mount Vernon Lee Education Partnership**; **New Hope Housing, Inc (V)**, and **West Potomac High School (MV)**.

**The Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce** is authorized to sign certificates of origin for companies shipping or exporting goods to international destinations.

Interested business may visit the Chamber Office at 6911 Richmond Highway, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA 22310, or call 703-360-6925 for more information or to arrange an appointment.

A Certificate of Origin is a document used in international trade. It traditionally states from what country the shipped goods originate. The document may be issued by the exporter or be confirmed by another party in the exporting country, such as a chamber of commerce, or a local consulate of the destination country.

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# OPINION

## Merry Christmas, Happy New Year

**W**e wish our readers, our clients and everyone who lives, works, studies, plays, shops or pursues their avocations here all the best over this holiday week and beyond into the New Year. Thank you for making the Gazette a part of your week, a part of your year.

This is our last news edition of 2010; next week shortly after Christmas, readers will receive the Children's Gazette, our traditional issue devoted to the writing and artwork of local children and teens.

In the meantime, we are looking for input on New Year's resolutions. Share one or more of the resolutions you will make for 2011, or tell us about a past resolution and how you approached it, for better or worse. Do you have some tips to share for achieving your goals? Send us 50-200 words, and please share a photo as well. We'll print selections in our first issue of the New Year, Jan. 5-12, 2011.

Send your submissions to [smauren@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:smauren@connectionnewspapers.com).

Another opportunity to be a part of the newspaper: The Pet Gazette will publish on Feb. 2,

2011, send us photos of you and your pet by Jan. 20.

### Alternatives to Drinking and Driving

A recent ride-along with a Northern Virginia police officer gave Connection reporter Alex McVeigh a chance to convey some of the methods and mission to get drunk drivers off the road. (See Getting Drunk Drivers Off the Streets, in Dec. 15's Reston Connection, <http://connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=346976&paper=71&cat=104>)

Among other things on the night of the ride-along, the officer encountered an apparently drunk driver who had fallen asleep behind the wheel waiting to make a right turn, his car running, his turn signal blinking and vomit evident down the outside of the driver's side door.

It's enough to make you want to stay home.

With the season for holiday parties comes the increased incidence of driving under the influence, with drunk driving arrests up more

than 70 percent compared to other times of year. In 2010, Fairfax County Police have investigated more than 660 alcohol related accidents. In 2008 in Fairfax County, there were more than 3,100 arrests for driving under the influence.

In Arlington, 677 arrests. In Alexandria, 515 arrests. In the City of Fairfax, 181 arrests.

**DON'T TAKE THE RISK.** Plan ahead, leave your car at home, take public transportation, arrange for a designated driver, or choose to abstain if a designated driver isn't available.

But if you find yourself in the unfortunate position of drinking without a safe way home on your own this holiday season, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program has provided you with a safety net called SoberRide. Take their number with you when you head out, and be sure any young adults (must be 21 or over) in your family are similarly armed.

WRAP's 2010 Holiday SoberRide program is available now through 6 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011. To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294. You must be 21 or older. (Callers are responsible for anything over \$30.)

### EDITORIALS

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Unworthy Of Respect

To the Editor:

After a year of diminishment of prestige, influence and relevance, one would think the MVCCA would make all best efforts to re-

turn to its former place as an influential, representative voice for Mount Vernon. Unfortunately, no such luck.

Over the past year, under the "leadership" of the current co-chairs, the MVCCA has made it a habit to ignore its Bylaws when the

mood suits it. The MVCCA passed resolutions advocating raising our taxes during an historic recession. Attendance figures at MVCCA meetings are an embarrassment and their GALA even lost money. An opportunity to make a break with the past and turn over a new

leaf presented itself at the November MVCCA Council meeting. Elections were held for the 2011 co-chairs and officers, and these same co-chairs were re-elected "by acclamation." So much for hope and change.

Now, following up on my letter of last week concerning David Dale and the North Hill issue, in the December MVCCA Record, a resolution of its Environment & Recreation (E&R) committee was published and will be voted upon this week. The resolution definitively demonstrates that the MVCCA is out of touch with the community, fails to understand the salient details of the North Hill development and did not conduct appropriate background research before cobbling together a non-credible resolution. Its very publication demonstrates that the MVCCA Board is an irresponsible body unworthy of community respect.

The MVCCA set forth its position concerning North Hill in 2007. In so doing, the MVCCA endorsed the so-called North Hill compromise, about 11 acres where 66 affordable homes will be constructed and the remaining 22 acres to be developed as a park. Now the E&R committee has proposed a resolution opposing the compromise unless the County satisfies certain conditions concerning tree preservation, the number of housing units and requiring the county to



**Awarding Achievement** On Dec. 17, Sacramento Neighborhood Center held its "Home for the Holidays" event at its office in Sacramento Plaza. Many of the students who participate in the after-school programs there and many of their parents attended. Forty-four of the students who completed a special skills (like keyboarding) achievement program received Wal-Mart gift cards from the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club members Lee Palmer, Barbara Callahan, Bruce Malkin, Joanne Malkin, and Vivien Peterson. Interested in doing some community service in 2011? See [www.mtvernonkiwanis.org](http://www.mtvernonkiwanis.org) or contact [brucemalkin1@gmail.com](mailto:brucemalkin1@gmail.com)

### Mount Vernon Gazette

[www.MountVernonGazette.com](http://www.MountVernonGazette.com)

Newspaper of Mount Vernon

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A Connection Newspaper

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

## OBITUARY

### Jube B. Shiver, Sr.

Jube B. Shiver, Sr. a Fairfax County real estate developer who in 1967 built the first federally subsidized apartments for low-income residents in Northern Virginia and had two county streets named after him, died after a long illness Nov. 20, 2010 at his home in Alexandria. He was 88.

Mr. Shiver, who was president of Shiver Construction Corp. and J.B.S. Management Inc., built nearly 100 homes in North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Maryland over his four-decade long career. He also completed several non-residential projects, including a Bell Atlantic telephone facility on Duke Street in Alexandria and First Baptist Church in Falls Church.

Mr. Shiver, who had taught in public schools in Halifax County, Va., and in Manassas and Alexandria, got started in the real estate business in the early 1960s after facing racial discrimination when tried to buy a home for his wife and two children. On his days off from teaching, he crisscrossed Northern Virginia in search of a home for his family but said he found no lender willing to extend him a mortgage.

"I would call companies and they would say they had money available (for) F.H.A. or V.A.," loans, Mr. Shiver told a group of Fairfax County students compiling an oral history of the Groveton area of the county for teacher Marian Mohr. But "when I

showed my black face, that was another story ... I went into about 14 banks" and came up empty handed.

It wasn't until Mr. Shiver brokered a deal in 1962 to turn a Virginia farm into a housing subdivision for middle-class black families, and convinced a Washington, D.C. bank to finance the deal, that he finally solved his housing dilemma.

In a television interview, Mr. Shiver told WRC-TV reporter Susan Kidd that he struck a deal with William L. Randall, a retired utility company worker, and four others, to subdivide Randall's farm into 44 lots. In exchange, Mr. Shiver agreed to replace Randall's aging home with a new brick rambler and give him other consideration.

After he moved in, Mr. Shiver told the history project that he had this exchange with a man who lived across the street:

"One morning I walked out and he said, 'Shiver, you sure came out and messed things up.'

I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'Well, my taxes have gone up.'

'Well, isn't that a little unusual,' I said. 'That's contrary to the system, isn't it?'

'What's that?' he said.

'Usually when a black person moves into a community the property goes down,' I said. 'I've raised the value of your property.'

The resulting subdivision — Randall Estates — was one of the nation's earliest and

largest middle class communities of custom homes owned by African-Americans. During a celebration in 1992 marking the 30th anniversary of the development, Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder cited the neighborhood for "its true beauty and significance" and praised Mr. Shiver for his "determination and perseverance" in building the development.

Five years after breaking ground on Randall Estates, Mr. Shiver developed the 208-unit, low-income complex named Spring Garden Apartments. The garden styled apartments off of Richmond Highway in Alexandria were Northern Virginia's first federally subsidized complex for low-income residents. Mr. Shiver also built 17 townhouses on Napper Road in Fairfax County and about a dozen homes on First Street in Alexandria near Old Town.

Despite his knack for deal-making, Mr. Shiver was not simply a button down businessman. Shortly after he built Spring Garden Apartments, he led a protest march that briefly shutdown traffic on Richmond Highway after several of his Spring Garden tenants were killed crossing the busy commuter route, according to Bernice Evans, a Spring Garden resident who worked in Mr. Shiver's rental office.

Mr. Shiver and about three dozen others waded onto the six lane highway and demanded that the state install two traffic

lights to make crossing the road safer. They got one.

Mr. Shiver was born in Eastover, S.C., the second youngest of eight children. He left the state after the seventh grade because there was no high school near Eastover at the time. Mr. Shiver eventually finished Armstrong High School in Washington, D.C. where he came to live with an older brother. After graduation, Mr. Shiver volunteered for the Army and fought in World War II.

Mr. Shiver received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond in 1953 and a master's degree in education administration from George Washington University in 1965.

He was active in the Alpha Kappa Psi fraternity, raising scholarship money for more than 70 students. He also served on the Virginia Small Business Financial Authority from 1990 to 1994.

Mr. Shiver is survived by his wife, Mildred L. Shiver, son, Jube Shiver, Jr., daughter-in-law, Tadasha Culbreath-Shiver and grandsons, Touré and Jela Shiver. He was predeceased by his daughter Jacqueline D. Shiver.

The family requests that a donation be made to the American Heart Association in lieu of flowers.

— JUBE SHIVER, JR.



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## NEWS

Led by eighth grader Perry Connor, the kindergarten Penguin class performs Las Posadas, which means “the inns” or “the shelters” in Spanish. A religious and social celebration that takes place for nine nights (Dec. 16-24), the holiday known as Las Posadas commemorates Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem and their search for shelter prior to the birth of Christ. Las Posadas is a reenactment of this journey and an elaborate preparation for La Navidad (Christmas) in Mexico and some Central American countries.



## Festival of Lights at Burgundy Farm

The students of Burgundy Farm Country Day School performed a holiday celebration, Festival of Lights, on Friday, Dec. 17. The Festival of Santa Lucia, Las Posadas, Ramadan, The Legend of the Raven, Diwali, Kwanzaa and Hanukkah narrated by the eighth grade boys were re-enacted by each of the classes in the school gym.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE



The children of the Kindergarten Polar Bears class lead the Saint Lucia Day Procession into the gym on Friday morning.



The seventh grade class perform the Native American legend of the Raven. The legend explains how the trickster Raven brought light and warmth to the world. While many tribes tell a different story, the tale generally tells of a Raven who turned himself into a pine needle the chief’s daughter drank. She then gave birth to a baby who cried and cried for a particular box, which his mother and grandfather opened to reveal the sun.



As the first grade students sing “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch,” second and third grade teacher Peter Nippard appears as Mr. Grinch.



Cathy Selman, Joe Peacock, Nancy Kaplan and Steve Selman sing the finale of “This Little Light of Mine.”



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# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

fund the park before commencing construction of the homes. The resolution also raises the specter of sale of the property to a developer and requests that the County exceed the storm water requirements of its own ordinances "to set an example for private developers."

Looking at these issues, I note the following: (1) The County's development of North Hill is "by right." There will be no public hearings — why would the MVCCA seek to interject itself where it has no leverage? (2) The 2007 MVCCA resolution endorses up to 66 affordable homes — the current proposal contemplates 67. Does a difference of one home make it worthwhile for the MVCCA to act? (3) There will be no sale of the 33 acres to a developer. Had the E&R committee done its homework, it would have known that the County is obligated to develop affordable homes at North Hill or risk being required to reimburse the federal government at the property's fair market value. No supervisor will vote for an action that might expose the County to a \$50-60,000,000 payment. (4) The E&R committee is notorious for seeking to use its leverage regarding non-by-right development proposals to seek to induce developers to exceed legal requirements for storm water treatment. This development is by-right; the E&R committee has no such leverage. (5) Given the lack of leverage, the MVCCA has no chance of compelling the

County to refrain from commencing construction until the park aspect is funded. (6) The tree preservation issue is just another red herring. There aren't many "specimen" trees at North Hill worth saving and the infrastructure from the 500-plus trailers that formerly existed there, including concrete pads, asphalt roads, electrical wires, underground piping for various uses makes it a virtual certainty that to create a park while protecting the health and safety of its prospective visitors, at least some of the land will have to be cleared, excavated, filled and re-planted.

Article XI, Section 7 of the MVCCA By-laws gives the MVCCA Board the authority to consider a committee resolution and reject it, send it back to the committee for further consideration, amend it or publish it in the Record and set it for a vote by the Council. If ever there was a resolution that should have either been rejected outright or sent back to the committee to die, this was the one. Regardless of the Council's vote that will have occurred by the time this letter is published, the fact that the MVCCA Board caused the E&R resolution, endorsed by eight E&R committee members, to be published signals that the MVCCA is out of touch with both reality and the citizens it says it represents. Regardless of the outcome of that vote, 67 affordable homes will be constructed at North Hill, as they should.

**H. Jay Spiegel**  
Mount Vernon

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for another Wonderful Year!*



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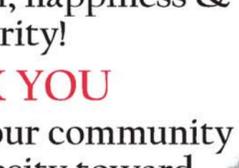


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# Best Wishes For The Holidays



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT

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ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE



**SATURDAY/JAN. 8, 15, 22**

**Pinewood Derby Workshop.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Old Town Hardware will be holding its third-annual Pinewood Derby Workshop. Cub Scouts are invited to bring their Pinewood Derby cars to the store to have craftsman Jesse Cathell rough cut their designs. Scouts are required to have the car design traced on their cars. There will be sanders and hand tools available for the Scouts to perform additional work on their cars.

# “Sunset Blvd.” Worth a Listen

## Schaeffer pulls out all stops for Lloyd Webber musical.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
THE GAZETTE

It has been 11 years since Signature Theatre mounted one of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musicals, but now that they have decided to take up “Sunset Boulevard” they certainly pulled out all the stops. That included the stationing of a 20-piece orchestra on the set in the 276-seat theater, yielding the highest ratio of musicians to audience members of any production to date. Indeed, there are more musicians in the orchestra than there are actors in the cast.

The sound is simply superb. Music director Jon Kalbfleisch draws out the long melody lines of Lloyd Webber’s tribute to the great movie scores of the 1940s lovingly while managing to keep the brighter up-tempo tunes from seeming heavy. The interlude that greets the audience following intermission is the orchestra’s opportunity to really show its riches and Kalbfleisch makes sure they make the most of it. The plucked strings behind the chorus in “A Little Suffering” come through more distinctly and to better effect than they did on Broadway or, for that matter, on the original cast recording, and sound designer Matt Rowe uses wireless microphones and amplification not to overwhelm the space but to maintain the balance between vocal and instrumental forces.

Based on the Billy Wilder movie in which Gloria Swanson portrayed a mentally unstable former film star (with famous lines such as “I am



PHOTO BY SCOTT SUCHMAN

**Florence Lacey (as Norma Desmond) sings “With One Look” in “Sunset Boulevard” at Virginia’s Signature Theatre through Feb. 13.**

### Where & When

“Sunset Boulevard” plays at Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave., in Shirlington through Feb. 13. Evening performances are Tuesday - Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday - Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m. Matinees are Saturday - Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$71 - \$85. Call 703-820-9771 or log on to [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).

big. It’s the pictures that got small!” and “I’m ready for my closeup now”). At heart, “Sunset Boulevard” is really a fairly intimate show because it tells two love stories involving just four main characters. There are 14 others in the cast who play everything from famous director Cecil B. DeMille to the guards at the gate of Paramount Studios, but it is just the four principals who are the focus of the piece.

Broadway veteran and frequent Signature star, Florence Lacey, brings her marvelous voice and a face that is believably the “remnant” of the very image of Hollywood to the role of demented and degenerating Norma Desmond who takes in a young writer to work on a script for her return (never use the word “comeback”!) and seduces him with her

money and lifestyle, not with her sex appeal. When Lacey stands to sing “As If We Never Said Goodbye” with tears streaming down her face, the production hits its highest highlight.

Unlike Lacey, who sometimes seems to be performing rather than becoming her character, Ed Dixon, who was last seen here in his Helen Hayes Award nominated dual-character performance in “Saving Aimee”, is mesmerizing as the butler who, it turns out, has more connection to the former film star’s past than it first appears. He’s

SEE “SUNSET BLVD”, PAGE 17

# First Night Alexandria’s New Year’s Eve Bash

## 100 live performances include a Capella, Swing, Argentinean Tango, Russian Folk, Cajun, Rock, Jazz at 17 venues in Old Town.

The harmonies of two a capella ensembles are part of the colorful lineup of more than 100 live performances throughout Old Town Alexandria for First Night’s annual New Year’s Eve bash — professional a capella ensemble Musikanten and the popular College of William & Mary Stairwells. The Stairwells will usher in the New Year just prior to the fireworks finale.

Swing, Argentinean tango, Cajun, Russian folk, rock, blues, jazz, even a comedy magic show and entertainment for kids, are just some of the acts that can be found at 17 indoor venues throughout Old Town. With these performances, plus interactive kids’ activities and the all-ages, Fun Hunt, First Night Alexandria is the largest family-friendly and alcohol-free New Year’s Eve event in the region. Your ticket for the event is a First Night badge which gives you access to entertainment and activities at spots all around Old Town. This year’s First Night headquarters is the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street, blocks from King Street Metro Station.

Starting at 7 p.m., with your First Night badge and schedule in hand, stroll

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Alexandria’s streets among venues, or hop on and off the free King Street Trolley to catch your favorite acts. Check out entertainment at venues including the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the Little Theatre of Alexandria, historic Christ Church, and the Lyceum. Museums, public buildings, and even retail shops are turned into performance venues to showcase regional and national talent. Make a night of it with dinner at one of Old Town’s restaurants, or grab a bite to eat at designated First Night venues.

Award-winning acts include Al and Amy’s Celtic and Appalachian acoustic groove, as heard on the Ken Burns documentary “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea”, Grammy-nominated Bill Kirchen’s roots rock and roll, and 2009 WAMA Best Jazz Recording winner Al Williams. QuinTango serenades with sounds from Argentina, and Russkie Musikanti will play Russian folk music that might be heard in the village after a long day’s work. The History of Acoustic Blues show includes authentic instruments from the 1920s and 1930s and is performed by Curtis Blues who was voted Solo Blues Artist of the Year.

### To Go

**WHAT:** First Night Alexandria  
**WHEN:** Friday, Dec. 31, 2010  
Second Annual Fun Hunt: 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Kick-off Event at Durant Arts Center: 5 p.m.  
100 Live Performances throughout Old Town: 7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.  
Multimedia Fireworks Finale at George Washington Masonic Memorial: 12 midnight  
**WHERE:** Headquarters: Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Alexandria  
Event: Throughout Old Town  
**INFO:** [www.FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://www.FirstNightAlexandria.org); 703-746-3301  
**TICKETS:** \$15 before Dec. 21; \$20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Admission badges may be purchased online through Dec. 25. Badges can be purchased in person at the Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House, 221 King Street. On Dec. 31, all First Night venues will have badges for sale beginning 15 minutes prior to the first performance. Admission badges will also be available beginning at noon on Dec. 31 at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street.

Dance the night away with the irresistible swing dance band King Teddy plus country and honky tonk by the Folsom Prisoners, Americana roots music by the Grandsons, the Cajun tunes of Zydeco Crayz, and the lively sounds of the Irish Breakfast Band.

Delight in the a capella renaissance with the Stairwells’ mix of musical genres and holiday favorites, or the inspiring choral chamber sounds of professional a capella ensemble Musikanten.

This family-friendly event is full of activities for kids including face painting, moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures, and interactive games. Try model boat building and sailing for an additional fee. Kids will also

love the How-To Cowboy Joke Fest, sing-along and rhythm instruments with Mr. Don, and more. Alcohol-free venues keep it fun and accessible for all ages — and children under 12 are free.

New this year, First Night Alexandria’s New Year’s Eve midnight finale is exploding into a multimedia spectacular with videos, lasers, music and fireworks. The city’s most visible monument, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, will be the focus, with pyrotechnics that explode from the roof of the building! Be sure to grab a seat on the memorial lawn for a great view and to hear a vocal performance by the College of William & Mary Stairwells.

**Give Together**



**A Family Volunteer Day**  
**Monday, January 17, 2011**  
**Shift 1: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Shift 2: 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**GMU - Fairfax Campus**

Families of all shapes and sizes can volunteer at projects benefiting six local nonprofits - in the convenience of one, central location.

**Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required at [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).**

Special thanks to the Connection for its support of volunteerism.



**Volunteer Fairfax**

## ENTERTAINMENT

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

### ONGOING

**Children enter a world of fantasy and fables** when costumed interpreters weave three tales together during Mount Vernon's storytelling session, "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon," held every Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Storytelling sessions will take place in the Hands-On History Room in the Donald W. Reynolds Education Center. "Working Together" is the theme for January's storytelling sessions. During the 20-minute session, children learn Aesop's fables and listen to stories about George Washington's life! The storytelling program is recommended for children ages 3 to 8. Parental supervision is required. "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon" is included in regular Estate admission: adults, \$15; youth ages 6-11, \$7; and children under 5 are admitted free.

### NOW THROUGH JAN. 6

**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](http://mountvernon.org). Admission: \$15 for adults, \$7 for youth (6-11), and free for children 5 and younger.

### EVERY FRIDAY

**Grown & Sexy Happy Hour and Comedy Show.** 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Hosted by comedian Ed Blaze. Ladies free until 9 p.m. Men \$10/\$15. At Weyone Lounge, 5801 Duke St. # E100, Alexandria, located in the back of Landmark Mall. Call 202-321-0867.

### FRIDAY/DEC. 24

**Jewish Community Center's Day of Service.** Join 1,000 volunteers who



**Peter Mayer**

**Sterling Trio**

### SUNDAY/JAN. 16

**Singer/songwriter Peter Mayer.** 7 p.m. With special guest Sterling Trio. Tickets are \$18 general, \$15 in advance at [FocusMusic.org](http://FocusMusic.org). At Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria.

will help out at over 50 non-profits throughout DC, Virginia and Maryland. Projects vary from 2-4 hours and encompass a variety of activities such as throwing holiday parties for children, visiting seniors and serving meals to the homeless. Family and group projects are also available. Visit [www.washingtondcjcc.org/volunteer](http://www.washingtondcjcc.org/volunteer). There is a nominal registration fee of \$20, which helps cover the cost of the event.

### FRIDAY/DEC. 31

**First Night Alexandria.** 100 live performances start at 7 p.m. at 17 venues in Old Town Alexandria; the Fun Hunt; Multimedia Fireworks Finale; lasers; video, music. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Admission: \$15 before Dec. 21; \$20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Note that the headquarters are at Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Alexandria. Call 703-746-3301 or visit [www.FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://www.FirstNightAlexandria.org).

**Dance Studio Lioudmila's New Year's Eve Dance Party.** 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Dance to the best in Ballroom, Latin and Swing Music. Attire: Elegant Casual. Admission is \$25/advance; \$30/door. At Dance Studio Lioudmila, 18 Roth Street, Alexandria. Call 703-751-8868. Visit [www.dancelioudmila.com](http://www.dancelioudmila.com).

### SUNDAYS, JAN. 2, 9, 16

**Bach Vespers.** 6 p.m. These Vesper services are based on the principles of "ancient-future" worship, which incorporates the rites and elements that go back centuries if not thousands of years - candles, incense, sung Scripture, cantor-lead singing and recitation, and ancient hymns. At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Visit [www.wpc-alex.org](http://www.wpc-alex.org)

### SATURDAY/JAN. 8, 15, 22

**Pinewood Derby Workshop.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Old Town Hardware will be holding its third-annual Pinewood Derby Workshop. Cub Scouts are invited to bring their Pinewood Derby cars to the store to have craftsman Jesse Cathell rough cut their designs. Scouts are required to have the car design traced on their cars. There will be sanders and hand tools available for the Scouts to perform additional work on their cars.



### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 29

**Jubilant Bridge.** 8 p.m. A harmony-driven acoustic duo from Colorado will perform. At St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-739-9268 or visit <http://www.stelmoscoffeepub.com>.

### SUNDAY/JAN. 9

**"Twelfth Night: Noel, Nouvelet!"** 6 p.m. Armonia Nova, an ensemble of historical instruments and voices returns for its ninth year at Christ Church to celebrate the joyous traditions of Twelfth Night and the mid-winter solstice, with French music from the 12th-17th C. At Christ Church, 118 N. Washington St., Old Town Alexandria. Also Saturday, Jan. 8, 5 p.m. at Our Savior Lutheran, 825 S. Taylor St., Arlington. Donations welcomed. [www.armonianova.org](http://www.armonianova.org) or 571-482-9052.

### WEDNESDAY/JAN. 12

**DJ Dance Party.** 9 to 11 p.m. Admission is \$6. With DJ Dabe Murphy. At Nick's Nightclub, 642 South Pickett St., Alexandria.

### FRIDAY/JAN. 14

**Union 206 Film Night: "Brazil."** 8 to 11 p.m. Free. Union 206 Studio presents a free showing of the film, "Brazil." At 206 S. Union St., Alexandria. Visit <http://www.union206.com>

**"Oliver."** 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25/person. Hosted by the Bailey's Crossroads Rotary Club. Proceeds will be donated to Fisher House Foundation. At the Little Theater of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 15

**American Balalaika Symphony in Concert.** 8 p.m. Peter Trofimenko and The American Balalaika Symphony present Midwinter Music of Love, a musical exploration of love in all its many variations, as presented by great composers from around the world, including Arensky, Brahms, De Senneville, Kabalevsky, von Weber, Hanley, Tabachnikov, Petrov, Zubkov and more. Tickets are \$20/advance; \$25/door; \$15/seniors and students. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NOVA Community College, Alexandria Campus, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Visit [www.ABSorchestra.org](http://www.ABSorchestra.org).

**Alexandria Coin Show.** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Alexandria Coin Club is sponsoring a Coin Show featuring 50 tables with a wide variety of coins, currency and numismatic collectables. Prizes will be given to the first 500 people who show up at the show. An instruction period is included for those new to collecting. Additionally, there is a raffle for Gold & Silver coins. At the Hampton Inn on the corner of the Beltway and Rt. 1 (5821 Richmond Hwy.). Visit [www.members.cox.net/SEE\\_ENTERTAINMENT](http://www.members.cox.net/SEE_ENTERTAINMENT), PAGE 17



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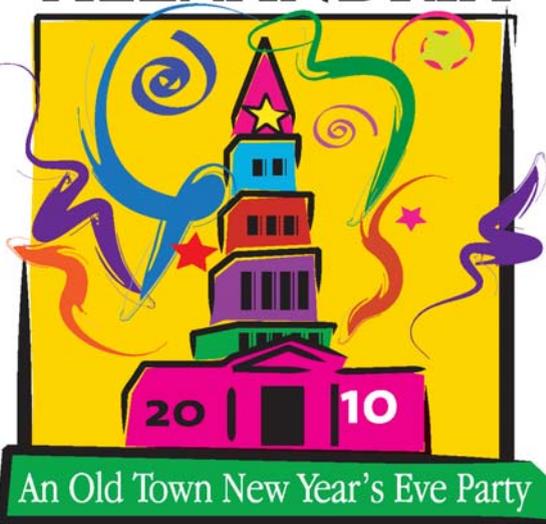
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More information and retail badge sites at [FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://FirstNightAlexandria.org)



**Second Annual Fun Hunt starts at 1:00 pm**

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**SUNDAY/JAN. 16**

**Singer/songwriter Peter Mayer.** 7 p.m. With special guest Sterling Trio. Tickets are \$18 general, \$15 in advance at FocusMusic.org. At Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria.

**MONDAY/JAN. 17**

**Free Tours.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. In honor of the birthdays of Gen. Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his son, Gen. Robert E. Lee, the Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden will be offering free tours.

**WEDNESDAY/JAN. 19**

**Square Dance Lessons.** 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Free. From the Boomerangs Square Dance Teaching Council. At Lincolnia Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. Call Nancy at 703-573-8378.

**THURSDAY/JAN. 20**

**"Measure for Measure."** 7:30 p.m. Free. Performed by the American Shakespeare Center. At Pendleton Hall, Episcopal High School, 3900 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Visit [www.episcopalhighschool.org](http://www.episcopalhighschool.org) or call 703-933-4135.

**SATURDAY/JAN. 22**

**Speak Up for a Child.** 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is hosting an information session. At the John Marshall Library, 6209 Rose Hill Drive, Alexandria. If you would like to learn more about advocating for abused or neglected children, call 703-273-3526, x22 or email [ekosarin@casafairfax.org](mailto:ekosarin@casafairfax.org) for more information.

**FEB. 12-20**

**"A Midsummer Night's Dream."**



**FRIDAY/DEC. 31**

**First Night Alexandria.** 100 live performances start at 7 p.m. at 17 venues in Old Town Alexandria; the Fun Hunt; Multimedia Fireworks Finale; lasers; video, music. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Admission: \$15 before Dec. 21; \$20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Note that the headquarters are at Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Alexandria. Call 703-746-3301 or visit [www.FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://www.FirstNightAlexandria.org).

Performances are Feb. 12, 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m.; and Feb. 13 and 20 at 3 p.m. Presented by Mount Vernon Community Children's Theater. At Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria.

'Sunset Blvd.' Worth a Listen

FROM PAGE 15

the enabler that keeps fatal fantasies alive. When he sings, in his distinctive basso, his final revelations, you know from where the destructive lunacy stems.

The younger characters of note are D.B. Bonds, returning to Signature where he danced the memory of youth in the Kander and Ebb musical "The Visit" two years ago, and Susan Derry who emerges from the ensemble (she was in "Show Boat" here last year). Bonds is impressive as he delivers every line of dialogue and lyric with notable clarity while creating a believable character of the weak young man who finally finds a back bone but not before it is too late. His delivery of the title song is another highlight of the production and he and Derry join in a superbly modulated rendition of the prototypical Andrew Lloyd Webber love duet "Too Much In Love to Care."

The score has always drawn mixed reviews. Everyone admits that it is full of soaring melodies, but some object to the amount of repetition with Lloyd Webber using themes over and over again. On the other side of the argument, none other than Malcolm Williamson, the Master of the Queen's Music at the time the show debuted, said it was "technically marvelous" finding in it a "spiritual and philosophical depth" that "must be taken every bit as seriously as the most significant developments in opera." I think both views have some touch of truth. The soaring melodies reminiscent of big movie scores are superb, while some of the lighter material from the scenes at Schwabs Drugstore or in a

Hollywood wanabe's apartment fail to come up to that standard no matter how often they are repeated.

Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer has set up the main stage theatre at Signature in a thrust stage configuration with the audience on three sides of the action and the orchestra on a balcony behind the set. Set designer Daniel Conway came up with a grand staircase that lowers down from the ceiling for the scenes in the mansion and then flies away for those at the movie studio. Matthew Gardiner has provided half a dozen segments of film that help either establish the mood or move the story along. Particularly effective is his use of video for the car chase in the first act which is a scene that has defeated designers before. Gardiner and Schaeffer save us from a repeat of the Broadway or the national tour approach which made the actor playing the young man look almost like he was driving a bumper car in a carnival. Distractingly, however, another film-related effect has a problem when the reels don't rotate on the movie projector on the set for the scene in which Lacey and Bond sing "New Ways to Dream."

The show settles in for a lengthy run scheduled to go through Feb. 13. It is a particularly good season for musical fans here in the area. Arena Stage, which has now returned to its facility in Washington after a stay in Crystal City, has a lovely production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" while "South Pacific" holds forth at The Kennedy Center's Opera House and even the Shakespeare Theatre Company offers a rare musical with Mary Zimmerman's revision of Bernstein's "Candide."

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**Sunday**

7:30; 9:00; 10:30 am; 12:00 Noon

2:00 pm (en Español)

6:30 pm Mass (starts Sept. 12)

**Weekdays**

(Mass or Communion Service) 9:00 am (followed by Rosary)

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# 'An Act of Faith' Anonymous donor underwrites St. Mary's book.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Every Sunday, you'll find Marty LaVor in his regular pew at the 7 a.m. service at St. Mary's Church in Old Town.

"I don't just do Christmas and Easter," said LaVor, a Mount Vernon resident and St. Mary's parishioner since 1969. "But like most people, you go in, attend Mass, take communion and leave. Nobody ever stops to look around."

But that changed after LaVor, a photographer with dozens of books to his credit, was commissioned to do a book for the 200th anniversary of St. Paul's Church two years ago.

"I went to Mass one day and just started looking around," LaVor said. "In all the years I've been attending St. Mary's, I never really looked at all the beautiful details of the church."

LaVor had just finished a book on the Library of Congress building and had no intentions of doing another one so soon, but Rev. Dennis Klinemann and some other parishioners had other plans.

"It was the success of the St. Paul's book that led to this one," LaVor said. "When Fr. Klinemann allowed me to take some personal photographs of St. Mary's, some other members of the church contacted him about underwriting the cost of a book."

The result is a 128-page hard-cover book of photographs that will be given free to anyone attending this year's Christmas services at St. Mary's.

"For the donors underwriting this, it was an act of faith," LaVor said. "They hope people will come in and look at their own church - and perhaps even their faith - differently."

LaVor's book highlights many of the easily overlooked details of the 215-year-old church.

"I saw my church for the first time," LaVor said. "I never knew there are two stained glass windows dedicated to all mothers. No one knows they are there."

The book will also be available in the church rectory — at no charge — for those



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Parishioner Marty LaVor points out details in a stained glass window in St. Mary's Church.

who are away for the holidays.

"This book will never be for sale," LaVor said. "There is no price on this book, no barcode, no letter asking for a donation. For those of us involved, it was simply an act of faith."

# 'Christmas Came Early This Year'

## Fundraiser turns into celebration for Cuccinelli.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Less than 48 hours after federal district Judge Henry E. Hudson ruled that the provision in the health care reform law requiring individuals to purchase insurance is unconstitutional, Virginia's Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, architect of the controversial litigation, was savoring his first-round victory at a private fundraiser Dec. 15, in Alexandria.

"Christmas came early this year," Cuccinelli told a group of friends and supporters at the home of Susan and David Hirschmann.

After addressing a crowd that included Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE), Rep. Sam Graves (R-GA), Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech, Del. Barbara Comstock (R-34), RNC state committeeman Morton Blackwell and City Councilman Frank Fannon, Cuccinelli spoke about the media whirlwind following the Dec. 12 decision.

"The last 48 hours have been tightly scheduled talking to a lot of different folks," Cuccinelli said. "Some of them are hostile, some are friendly and some are actually objective as I'm trying to explain to people why we are carrying the case forward."

While many were surprised at the outcome, Cuccinelli was not.

"The shock of actually winning is fun," Cuccinelli said. "I don't mean my shock, I mean other people's. We're not shocked at all. We analyzed this closely before we ever made a move on it. Everybody else just presumed the outcome."

**DESPITE THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT** on the case, Cuccinelli has taken a back seat in the courtroom to Virginia's solicitor general, who will argue the case when it is expected to go before the Supreme Court sometime in 2011 or 2012.

"Our solicitor general is one of those guys where people frequently say 'that's the smartest person I've ever been in a room with,'" Cuccinelli said of E. Duncan Getchell Jr. "And because he's not the attorney general, he can spend more time with the details planning for the curveballs. I would love to argue it and am capable of arguing it, but he's the one who knows the case law and history, which is critically important."

In addition to health care, Cuccinelli talked about other significant issues his office has tackled.

"Like the health care case, the EPA case is about protecting the constitution," Cuccinelli said of the pending suit challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's move to regulate greenhouse gasses. "It's also about the rule of law and the economy. Typically, we are trying to support Virginia's good business environment."

Another success for Cuccinelli was allowing absentee ballots that arrive after Elec-

tion Day to be counted.

"Protecting the voting rights for our military members deployed abroad is important," Cuccinelli said. "We have registrars who don't get absentee ballots out on time so now for the first time we allow people's votes that arrive after Election Day to be counted."

According to Cuccinelli, the political races to watch in 2011 will be in Northern Virginia.

"I believe we're going to have a great [Republican] candidate in Janet Howell's district — Caren Merrick," Cuccinelli said. "In the Prince William-Loudoun swath we're going to get a new senate seat, and that open seat is going to be very interesting regardless of where it lands."

**A NATIVE OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA**, Cuccinelli has remained in the area since taking office earlier this year.

"I get mocked in other parts of the state, but this is where I grew up," Cuccinelli said. "This is where I went to school and where my kids are going to school. My wife did the same thing. We're those rarities — we actually grew up here and stayed here, and we're very happy with that."

Despite the celebratory mood, Cuccinelli remained cautiously optimistic as the health care case moves forward.

"I'm glad we've gotten over the first hurdle," Cuccinelli said. "But while this ruling is persuasive, it's not a binding authority. Still, that first ruling against the federal government is the toughest and is significant."

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# Majors' Young Talent Impresses Rookie Coach

Mount Vernon girls basketball team wins first five games with first-year head coach, eight freshmen and sophomores.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

First-year Mount Vernon head girls basketball coach Courtney Coffey shouted “three seconds!” from the Majors’ bench, warning freshman Chanel Shannon she had little time to waste. Shannon looked at the clock, heard her coach and let fly a halfcourt shot. Shannon heaved the ball with such urgency; however, she might have cost herself the opportunity to get a few steps closer.

It didn’t matter.

Shannon drained the halfcourt attempt, giving Mount Vernon a 13-point lead headed into the fourth quarter of the Majors’ National District opener at Washington-Lee on Dec. 17. As Shannon approached the bench, Coffey stood in a state of shock, his jaw dropped in amazement.

After Mount Vernon won four non-district games to open the season, Coffey said the Majors were exceeding his expectations. During the district opener against the Generals, Coffey still couldn’t believe what he was seeing from his youthful team.

Mount Vernon defeated W-L 59-45 on Friday to improve to 5-0. There are no seniors on a Majors roster containing eight freshmen and sophomores. Gone from the recently successful Mount Vernon teams are head coach Terry Henderson and standouts Tracy King, Jasmine McDonald and Jalinda Venable. The here and now for Mount Vernon is a first-year head coach who gained valuable experience while waiting his turn and group of talented underclassmen capable of surprising their leader.

“It’s one of those moments where you’re like: ‘No, no, no,’ but, OK, you’ll take it,” Coffey said of Shannon’s halfcourt shot. “I kind of thought she had a couple more [dribbles before she had to shoot]. When it went in I was like, ‘Wow. OK, we’ll take it.’ I think it gave us a great lift going into the fourth quarter.”

While there have been changes in the program, Coffey, who assisted Henderson for six years at Mount Vernon and Edison, said defense continues to be Mount Vernon’s trademark. The Majors’ aggressive, full-court trapping attack forced 36 W-L turnovers on Friday, frustrating a Generals team facing its own experience issues.

“It needs to be very intense,” sophomore point guard Taylor Dunham said of the team’s defense, “for it to actually work.”

Helping the defensive intensity have been freshmen Samantha



Mount Vernon freshman Chanel Shannon, left, defends a Washington-Lee player.

Porter and Shannon.

“She’s everywhere,” Coffey said of Porter. “She just has a lot of heart. When we put

her and Chanel out there together, our energy level as a team increases, and that’s amazing coming from two freshmen.”

Offensively, Mount Vernon entered Friday’s action with four athletes averaging double figures in scoring. Sophomore Kelly Loftus averaged a team-high 14 points through four games, but had an off shooting night against W-L and finished with six. Coffey said No. 3 is the team’s vocal leader.

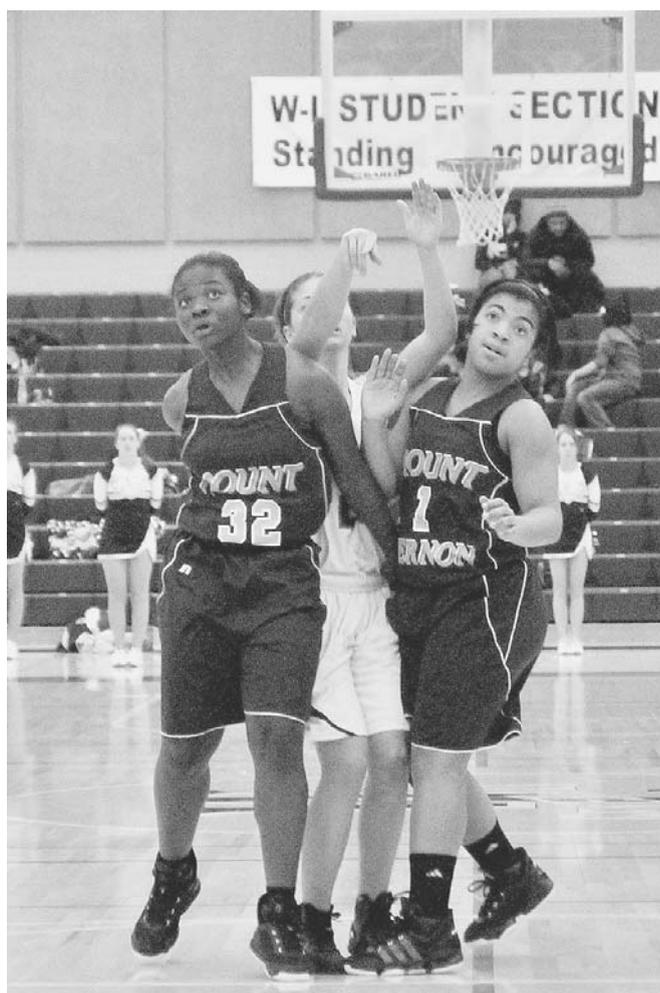
Sophomore Tiffany Webster averaged 13 points and scored a team-high 14 against the Generals. Junior Elizabeth Owusuwaa averaged 10 points and finished with four against W-L. Dunham averaged 10 points and scored five against the Generals.

Coffey said he expects big things Dunham, who was a full-time starter as a freshman.

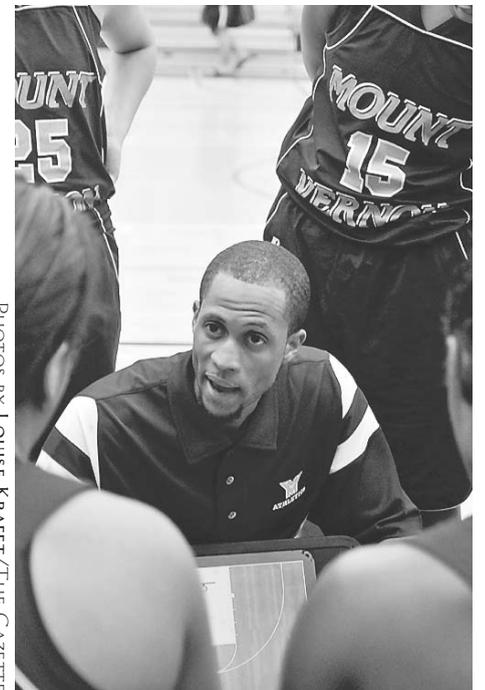
“She’s been playing very well,” Coffey said. “She would probably say I’m on her a lot, but that’s only because I was a point guard [while at Barton College]. I think and coach the game as I’m a point guard on the floor, so I’m always on her because I think she really has a lot of potential.”

“She could be one of the best guards in the area by the end of this season. She started every game last year as a freshman, so she sees it. She’s having a good year so far and we’re going to keep pushing her to make her better.”

Shannon finished with 13 points against W-L, including a trio of 3-pointers.



Mount Vernon sophomore Taylor Dunham, right and junior guard Elizabeth Owusuwaa box out a Washington-Lee player during the Majors’ 59-45 win over the Generals on Dec. 17 at W-L.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

First-year head coach Courtney Coffey instructs his Mount Vernon girls basketball team.

“We don’t have somebody to lean on to score,” Dunham said. “We have to depend on ourselves more. A lot of people are stepping up because we don’t have any seniors.”

Helping keep everything together is junior Lafatima Gray, who has two years of varsity experience and became friends with Mount Vernon’s former senior leaders.

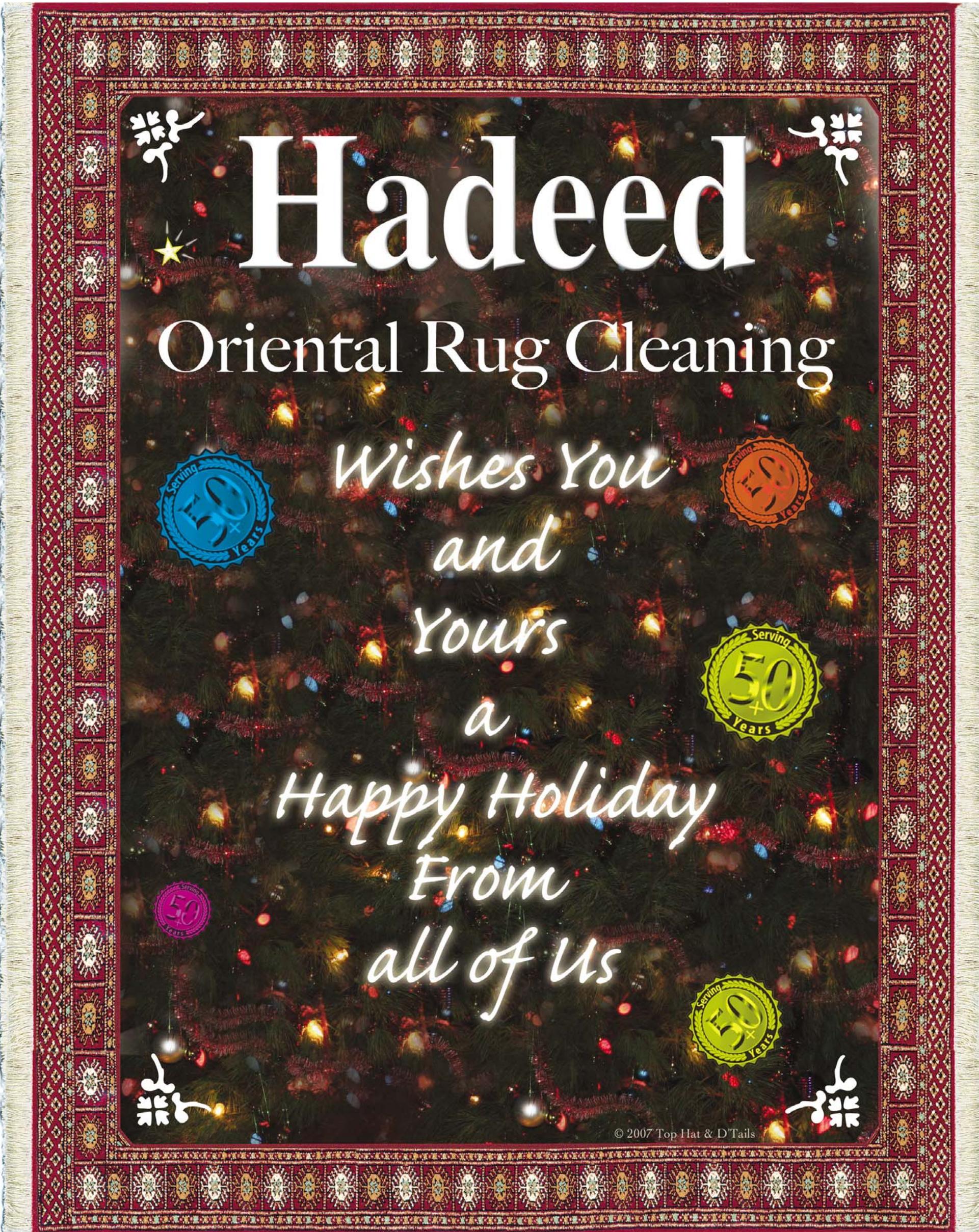
“She knows how to interact with the team,” Coffey said. “She actually learned a lot from Tracy. [The seniors] kind of took her under their wings, so she’s kind of providing that spark for us as a team. They have sleepovers and they’re always together.”

**“A lot of people are doubting us because we have no seniors. We just have to play hard and prove them wrong.”**

— Mount Vernon freshman Chanel Shannon

Gray scored 11 points against W-L. The Majors will participate in the I.C. Norcom Holiday Classic from Dec. 28-30 and will resume National District play on Jan. 4 at Wakefield. While the future is bright for Mount Vernon, the Majors have shown they have the ability to compete this season.

“A lot of people are doubting us because we have no seniors,” Shannon said. “We just have to play hard and prove them wrong.”



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MVKC member Bob Valone, left, and Past President Bruce Malkin hosted a bingo for PRS Day Center clients. At right, is Kerri Lord, Day Program Manager at the PRS Sacramento Center.



MVKC Past President Bruce Malkin presents a check for \$750 to Kerri Lord, PRS Day Program Manager at her Sacramento Plaza office on Oct. 29.

# Kiwanis Hosts Bingo Game for PRS Clients

Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club (MVKC) member Bob Valone and past President Bruce Malkin hosted a Bingo game on Oct. 29 for about 15 of the PRS Day Center's clients at the PRS office in Sacramento Plaza. The players were happy to receive \$5 gift certificates to either Wal-Mart or McDonalds as game prizes, and PRS Day Program Manager Kerri Lord welcomed the MVKC's support. In addition, Malkin presented Lord with a check for \$750 to help pay the salary of a workforce development teacher who works with the PRS clients to

bring them into the workforce.

The MVKC hosts 10 Bingo or karaoke sessions at the Sacramento Plaza PRS Center annually.

Recently, MVKC members have distributed free books to the Daycare Center at the Inova Mount Vernon Hospital and delivered free bicycles and helmets to children participating in the after-school program of the Creekside Neighborhood Center, which is a program supported heavily by UCM, a MVKC partner. On Oct. 30, MVKC members collected food and cash and check donations to UCM outside the Hollin Hall

Safeway on Fort Hunt Road from the generous customers shopping there from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., which MVKC does five times a year to stock the UCM Food Pantry. MVKC usually collects more than 1,200 pounds of donated food and several hundred dollars that will be used to buy more food for distribution by the UCM Food Pantry on Fordson Road.

To learn more about the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club, visit [www.mtvernonvakiwanis.org](http://www.mtvernonvakiwanis.org) or call past President Bruce Malkin at 703-360-7725 or e-mail him at [brucemalkin1@gmail.com](mailto:brucemalkin1@gmail.com). MVKC also on FaceBook.

SPORTS BRIEFS

## West Potomac Wrestling Splits

The West Potomac wrestling team defeated Wakefield 60-18 and lost to Washington-Lee 38-33 on Dec. 15.

Against Wakefield, West Potomac won six matches by forfeit. Peter Starr (135 pounds), Nick Africano (160) and Suliman Atwater (189) won by pin for the Wolverines.

Against W-L, Cole Beeby (145) won by decision, William Rupp (152) won by pin, Africano won by pin, Atwater won by pin, Jordan Blair (heavy-weight) won by pin and Ian Thompson (103) won by pin.

West Potomac will travel to face South County on Jan. 5.

## Mount Vernon Boys Win Opener

The Mount Vernon boys basketball team defeated Washington-Lee 92-60 during the Majors' National District opener at home on Dec. 17. Mount Vernon will host Westfield at 7 p.m. on Dec. 22 and will host the Mount Vernon Holiday Tournament on Dec. 27-29.

## West Potomac Boys Edge Centreville

The West Potomac boy basketball team rebounded from a loss to South County with a 54-53 win over Centreville on Dec. 17. The Wolverines will take part in the Wakefield Holiday Tournament on Dec. 27-29.

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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large), center, helps Lt. Col. Dwayne Bowyer and Sgt. Miguel Perez of Fort Belvoir bag toys at the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 15.

PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

## Holiday Heroes

**Firefighters help  
collect for 3,000  
area children.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE



Shellie Vasser-Gilliam, right, helps Fairfax County Public Schools coordinator Lisa Kelly, left, and Elisa Alexander of Mount Eagle Elementary School with their toy list at the Firefighters and Friends distribution day Dec. 15.

**A**s a young firefighter in Fairfax County, Capt. Willie Bailey saw a desperate need in many of the homes he visited during the holidays and decided to do what he could to help.

"I went into homes where there wasn't even a single piece of Christmas candy," said Bailey, founder of the Firefighters and Friends holiday toy drive. "I started out 13 years ago helping 50 kids and today we will serve more than 3,000."

Bailey's 2010 drive culminated Dec. 15 at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Station on Richmond Highway, where volunteers helped representatives from schools and non-profits throughout the county pick out toys for the children they serve.

"The generosity of the community is exceptional," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Sharon Bulova (D-At-large), who volunteered with the toy distribution. "Many people think that Fairfax County doesn't have needs but many still struggle."

Joining Bulova were retired county firefighters, soldiers from Fort Belvoir and Scouts Mikael Severeid and Josh Von Holtz from Troop 1865.

"These boys worked odd jobs throughout the year to raise over \$1,800 for this drive," said Troop advisor Erik Severeid, whose son

Mikael alone raised \$1,345. "This was money they earned. They didn't ask for it."

Other dignitaries on hand to thank the firefighters and volunteers for their efforts were Supervisors Jeff McKay (D-Lee) and Gerry Hyland (D-Mount Vernon).

"Nothing can be better this holiday season than to see what takes place here today," McKay said. "You are the heroes of the holiday season."

Hyland also praised the success of this year's drive.

"It's remarkable that so many jurisdictions have stepped up to the plate to make Christmas a special time of year for so many young people," Hyland said. "If we could package the smiles of the children you are helping, the world would be a better place."

Bulova expressed her gratitude to the supporters of the holiday toy drive.

"It's amazing what you have done," Bulova said. "Thank you to the business community and the non-profit organizations for looking out for everyone in our community."