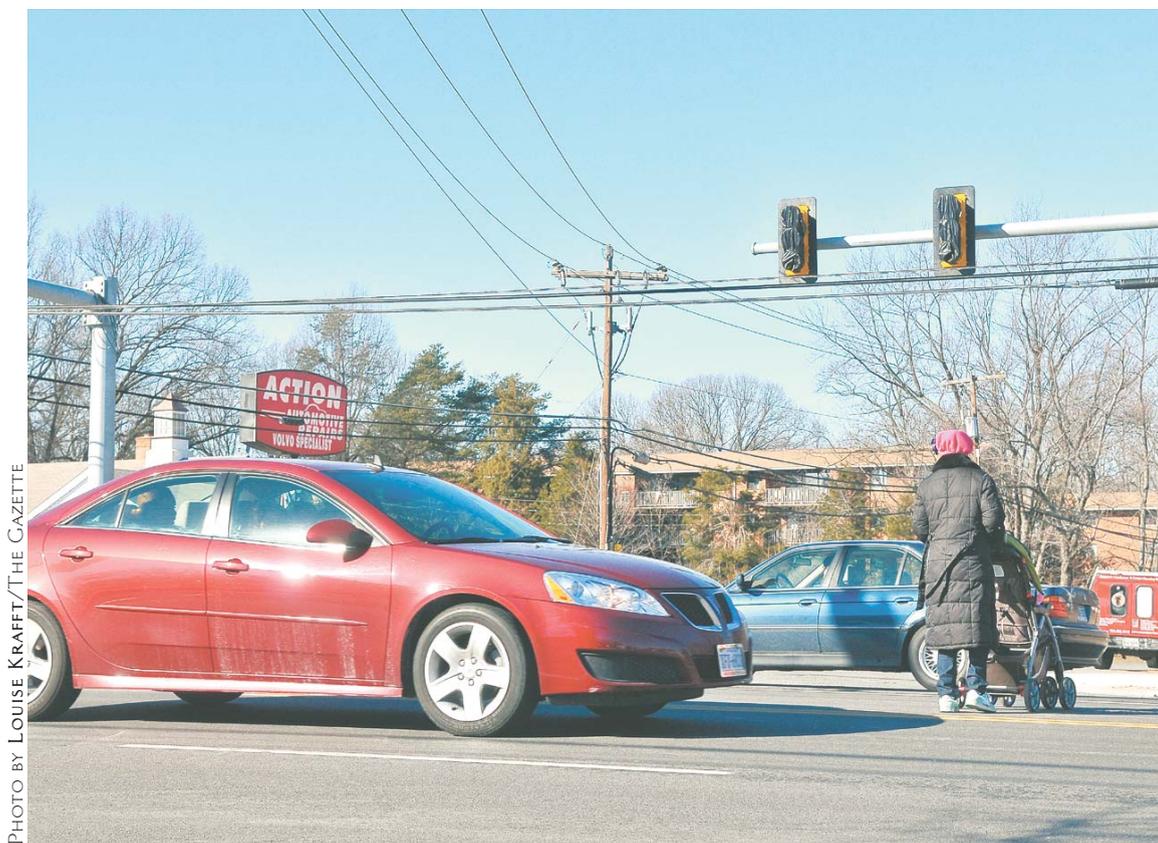


Mount Vernon Gazette

VOL. XXII, No. 1

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 6, 2011



Pedestrians cross Richmond Highway at Janna Lee Road, the site of Saturday's fatal pedestrian accident.

The Waiting Game

Long-delayed project stirs up controversy.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

After decades of planning and delay, a controversial project to construct a mobile-home project for low-income residents of Fairfax County is about to move forward. But not without opposition.

The long-awaited North Hill development has been in the works since the early 1980s. Yet a series of events conspired to scuttle the project, including a debate be-

tween environmentalists and affordable-housing advocates about the value of preserving trees. In 2007, opponents struck a compromise that would preserve 21 acres for a new park while setting aside 12 acres for a mobile-home park for low-income people.

"There has never been any other subject that has divided people more than North Hill," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland. "I feel like we've split the baby down the middle, and of course that doesn't make anybody happy."

In the coming weeks, the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority is expected to present plans for North Hill. Then

SEE MOBILE-HOME, PAGE 5

Howard Gardner School Opens New Building

BY GALE CURCIO
THE GAZETTE

When Katherine Keith purchased the property at 4913 Franconia Road five years ago, she anticipated that students at The Howard Gardner School would be attending classes in trailers while the permanent building was built.

Fairfax County had other ideas when they denied the placement of the trailers, causing Keith and others to scramble. For six weeks, students attended classes in large refugee trailers that were located on the grounds. They then negotiated a deal with the church next door so that they could hold classes in its building. This became their home until a couple of weeks ago when the new building at The Howard Gardner School officially opened for classes.

"It shows how flexible our parents — and teachers are," said Keith, as she addressed a group of educators this week. "I am grate-

ful to the church for renting the space to us," said Keith. "But we are so excited about moving into our new space. The teachers are thrilled."

Keith added, "We're not fitting ourselves to a building. We built to suit ourselves."

For the past few years, teachers have been operating out of rooms provided by the church next door. The round design of the new building features a large inner atrium that will be used for school meetings and other events. The five classrooms surrounding the atrium on the main floor all open to the outdoors, while the space on the lower level include a lunch room, a theater and a music recording studio.

Keith said that the building shell came from a zero landfill factory in North Carolina; it was delivered in sections and was assembled in a week and a half. The finishing touches and permits have taken

SEE DREAM FULFILLED, PAGE 3

Pedestrian Dies on Route One

Third such fatality since November.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Three pedestrians have lost their lives while attempting to cross Route One during the past three months. The most recent was on Jan. 1. In each of these accidents there was no evidence of drug or alcohol use or reckless driving by the drivers involved.

According to the Mount Vernon District Police Commander David Moyer, "These were tragic fatalities that could have been avoided Everyone has to do their part in preventing these preventable deaths."

He advises "pedestrians crossing Route One to use crosswalks, cross by traffic lights, and use caution when deciding when, where, and how to cross the street."

In a statement, he added: "The police department does education and enforcement regarding pedestrian crossings. Both of our recent crashes were

not at crosswalks and were after dark, and it was also raining at the time of the latest crash. Pedestrians should use crosswalks whenever possible as these offer better visibility and safety. This time of the year

it is dark by evening rush hour and pedestrians need to be aware of the limited visibility they present to drivers."

Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, in the Seven Corners area, a median screen has been installed to prevent pedestrians from attempting to cross the street in a particularly dangerous section of the road. This has helped to channel pedestrians to an overpass that has also been constructed to assist them in safely crossing the road. Currently there are no known plans for a similar median barrier and overpass to be constructed anywhere on Route One.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerald Hyland, chair of the Board of Supervisor's Public Safety Committee, calls these recent pedestrian fatalities on Route One

"a very regrettable tragic series of accidents that are very frustrating because these accidents occurred while the residents' were crossing in very unsafe areas, and not at crosswalks or where there was a traffic light." He has personally observed pedestrians trying to cross in the middle of oncoming traffic at the worst time. According to Hyland, "no driver has been charged with reckless driving or any other charge in any of these recent deaths or, to the best of my knowledge, no driver has been charged with

any violations in other pedestrian fatalities on Route One this past year. That means the problem is un-

"Pedestrians should use crosswalks whenever possible as these offer better visibility and safety."

— Mount Vernon District Police Commander David Moyer

SEE ROUTE ONE, PAGE 5





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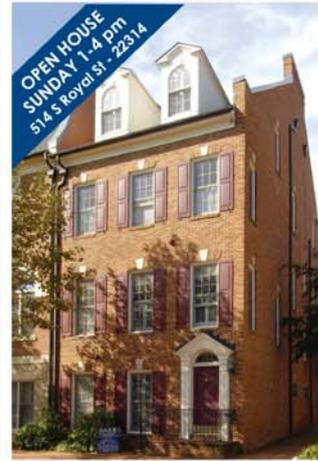


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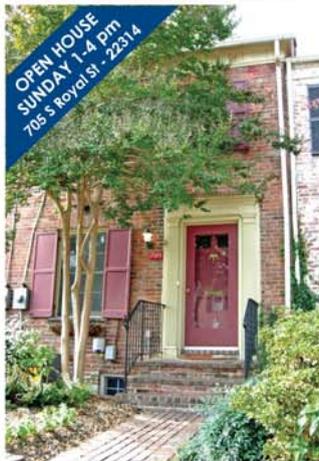


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Belle Haven Women's Club Celebrates 75 Years

Holiday party held at Belle Haven Country Club.

BY GALE CURCIO
THE GAZETTE

In 1936, Mrs. Bert Ray Landis went door to door in Belle Haven. She wasn't selling anything, rather she was recruiting members for a new women's club.

It was in that year that the Belle Haven Women's Club was formed. Last month, members celebrated their 75th anniversary with a gala affair at the Belle Haven Country Club.

Mary Ann Conant coordinated the event that brought in about 250 guests. Current club president Reae Sargeant said that there are approximately 250 members, which means that about half the membership attended the event with their spouses and partners.

"As I planned the event, I studied the club's history," said Conant. "It was fascinating to learn that the BHWC paid a member's mortgage for three months in 1951 when her husband was incapacitated with illness. In the '60s, Jackie Kennedy came to Belle Haven for a barbecue. Even though we are not a fundraising group, the club has donated \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year to local charities. I'm thrilled to be part of such a wonderful group."

Members of the club also rubbed elbows with Mamie Eisenhower when they attended the National Garden Show in 1956. Jeane Dixon spoke to the group in 1967 and



Members of the band "the funsters" walk into the Belle Haven Women's Club Anniversary Party.

Robert Froelke visited in 1972. Helen Thomas was the speaker in 2000. President Harry S. Truman was a frequent guest of one of Belle Haven's residents.

2003 was a big year for Belle Haven when the producers of "West Wing" filmed one of the shows at the home of Col. (ret.) Joseph and Anne Muckerman. They moved all the furniture out of their main floor and moved in their production equipment and props and started filming. It was an exciting few days as the neighbors all watched.

Anne Muckerman is one of the original members of BHWC, as are Jane Anne Edwards, Betty Walker and Laura Whelan. They were all honored at the anniversary party.

A slide show chronicled the history of the

club. In 1949, the club lunch cost \$1.65. Dues in 1950 were \$5. Garden Club calendars sold for \$1.50 in 1965.

The women's first cookbook was printed in 1959; they just printed their second cookbook titled "Behind These Doors" which was done to commemorate the club's 75th anniversary.

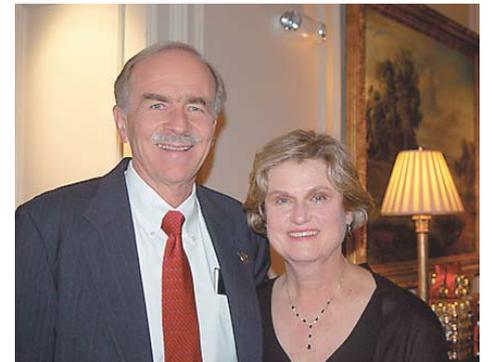
The first Oktoberfest was held in 1978 and the first new member coffee in 1985. The first Halloween party was held at Fort Willard Circle in 1990.

The Belle Haven Water Tower was dismantled in 1989, which must have been a disappointment to the children who didn't have a chance to climb it as a rite of passage. Members at the party were asked to sign a board indicating if they had climbed

PHOTOS BY GALE CURCIO/THE GAZETTE



Mary Ann Conant coordinated the Belle Haven Women's Club Anniversary Party.



Lew and Gerry Pratsch

the tower — or if they had sledded down Mansion Hill.

The women's club now holds an annual fashion show and they alternate between a house tour and a garden tour. The current vice-president is Kara Cosby; treasurer is Sally Murphy; and there are two secretaries — Molly Singerling and Elaini Silverman.

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

New School Building Opens Fulfilling an Educational Dream

FROM PAGE 1
much longer.

Bob Kuletz, parent of former student, Brendon Kuletz, chaired the campaign committee to fund the building. Kim Peele, current parent and member of the campaign committee, and Charlie Thomas, grandparent and supporter of the campaign, also helped to raise funds for the new building.

In keeping with the environmental philosophy, Keith said that they will build a pond and wetlands to manage the stormwater with an emergency overflow.

Students have already signed up for an elective class to plant the pond edge with native grasses and wildflowers. The entire student population will be involved in planting seeds.

And in keeping with the natural approach that the school promotes, the path will not be laid until they determine the course that students tend to take while walking to and from the pond.

Teachers are glad to have a place to call their own. For years, they have been shuttling back and forth between buildings and now they have their own space. They are not concerned that they don't have a full



Teacher Alex Castle (middle) with students Jessie Baker, Nate Sharp, Connor Anderson and Stacey Gaffney.

supply of desks or chairs. At this small, progressive, independent school, students find it normal to have classes in the fields, on the lawn, at the beach or sitting on the floor in their new building.

Shelley Witiak, art electives and math teacher, plans to put a lot of artwork on her class walls. She is looking forward to looking out the window at the wildflowers in the spring.

"We have field studies every Tuesday," said Keith. "This adds a whole other dimension and makes things come alive."

One week they might take water samples for the environmental class or visit a battlefield to learn about history.

Chad Thomas teaches concurrent physics and psychology at the

school and said that he was surprised when students came from other schools that were used to memorizing information.

Keith said that instead of memorizing, the students experience the lesson. They have no SOEs and most of the tests are open notes. Students with special needs can have additional time to complete the test.

While The Howard Gardner School is not a special education school, it is inclusive.

As such, they are able to address issues with anxiety, ADHD and some level of learning disabilities (LD).

Emily Pavot, learning specialist and mentor teacher, is a co-founder of the school. She said, "It's amazing the progress we've made with LD kids. They come in here 4-5 years behind, but once they lose the stigma, they are able to move forward."

One of the guests inquired about homework, and Keith said, "We do have homework, but it is a much reduced homework load. Instead of giving 25 math problems, we give 5 to 7 problems. Students work on projects and papers in small chunks."

As is typical with this progressive school, students were part of the design and decision process of the new building. Several of them addressed the group, talking about their weekly internships, which is a mainstay of The Howard Gardner School.

Stacey Gaffney is a senior who has done her internship at local schools — two years with a preschool and this year with a middle school. She has been given liberty to teach classes and plan lessons. She hopes to attend James Madison University next year.

SEE DREAM FULFILLED. PAGE 6

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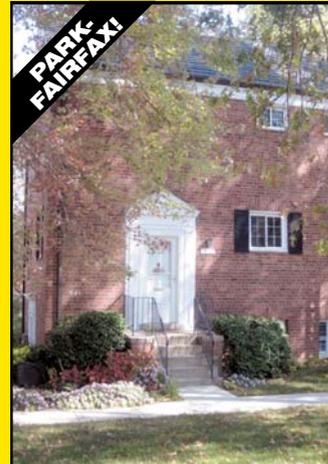
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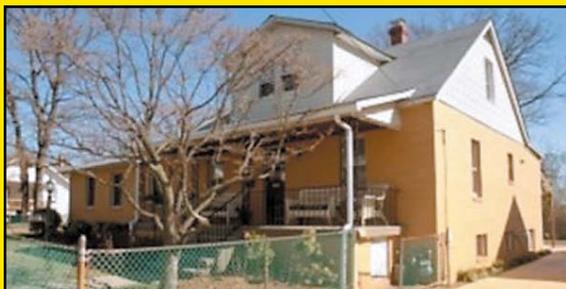
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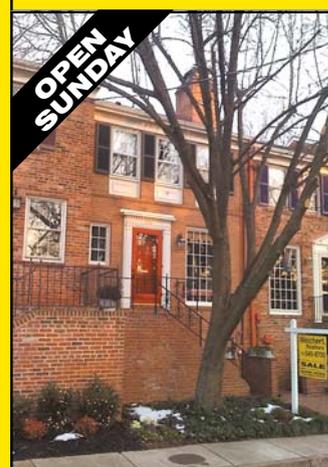
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Mobile-Home Project Nears

FROM PAGE 1

it becomes a budget issue, with the Board of Supervisors having the ultimate say over whether or not the idea is worth \$10 million to \$12 million. Opponents of the North Hill concept say clearcutting acres of trees would be an environmental disaster and that building a mobile-home park is not the best way help low-income people.

"This is another low-income slum," said David Dale, president of the Spring Bank Community Association. "This is not an effective way to help people out of poverty."

CRITICS OF THE PLAN stress that they are not opposed to affordable housing. But they say clustering low-income housing in a mobile-home development is an outdated way to go about accomplishing this task, citing the trend toward scattered site housing. Others say building a mobile home community on Route One would work against revitalization efforts, creating a stumbling block for the kind of mixed-use development that many would like to see along the corridor.

"This is one of the largest parcels along Route One left for revitalization," said Kahan Dhillon, chairman of the Land-Use and Strategic Planning Committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. "The county should really be taking a mixed-use approach rather than the one that's currently being considered."

Supporters of the North Hill proposal say affordable housing is desperately needed in the county and that the project has been in the works for decades. They point to the compromise setting aside 21 acres of trees as an important concession to those with environmental concerns about stormwater runoff. And — ultimately — they say constructing affordable housing units should be a higher priority than attracting high-end development to the Route One corridor.

"I'd rather see this area developed into a low-income apartment complex," said Keary Kincannon,

pastor at Rising Hope United Methodist Church. "But we decided to move forward with mobile homes because they could be developed by-right and we wouldn't need to go through all the planning and zoning."

THE STORY OF NORTH HILL begins a half a century ago, when the tract became the Woodley Nightingale Mobile Home Park. During this time, it grew to about 550 mobile homes. By the early 1980s, county officials were eyeing the property as a potential site to preserve affordable housing. As a result, the 48-acre tract was purchased by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority in 1981, and no additional mobile homes were allowed into the park.

Phase one of the project was Woodley Hills Estate, 115 units located on the southern 14 acres of the site. But phase two never happened, and the remaining 33 acres remained undeveloped. Until now. In 2007, county officials approved a new plan that called for redeveloping 12 acres for "affordable manufactured home units" while preserving 21 acres at the site for a park. According to Hyland, about 11 percent of Fairfax County's affordable housing units are located in the Mount Vernon District.

"This has been vetted through the entire community," said Hyland. "And it's the right thing to do."

The project can be built "by right," which means that the community has less control over what the developer — in this case, the county's housing authority — constructs on this piece of land. Despite opposition to the project in the community, no public hearing has been scheduled on the project. The Board of Supervisors is expected to consider a financing plan during the upcoming budget cycle.

"There's really no need to have a division between people versus trees," said Louise Cleveland, chairwoman of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations Health and Human Services Committee. "At this point, people should come together and find a way to fund affordable housing and creation of the park."

Another Pedestrian Dies on Route One

FROM PAGE 1

safe behavior on the part of pedestrians. We have to do a better job of encouraging safe crossing habits through education, and better monitoring of unsafe street crossing practices."

Hyland says that sidewalk installation will help and

is taking place along Route One, but other steps should be considered to prevent future deaths of pedestrians on Route One.

The police have identified the pedestrian in Saturday's fatal crash as Marino Sorto-Reyes, 58, of Audubon Avenue in Alexandria.



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.

Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required at
www.volunteerfairfax.org.

Volunteer Fairfax Special thanks to the Connection for its support of volunteerism.



"New World" Symphony!

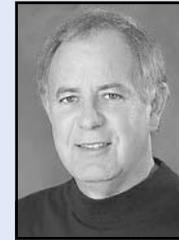
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An Educational Dream Fulfilled

FROM PAGE 3

"I love working with children," she said. Sam Gordon has been doing his internship at a local skate shop, and said, "I told them that they should tone down the colors in their graphics and I think it helped."

He has modeled the clothes; helped sell the clothing in Richmond, and taken photos of the merchandise. Keith said that he got an "amazing letter of recommendation" from the owner for his college application. Gordon plans to major in business administration or entrepreneurship.

For Keith, this is a culmination of a dream. In 2000, Keith founded Reach for the Stars, a study and support group for middle and high school students in the Alexandria area. After working with students for four years, it became clear that many capable students were not thriving in their school environment.

With the encouragement of parents, Keith and Emily Pavot formed The Howard Gardner School in 2004, providing a different learning experience for high school teens from all over the Washington, D.C. area.

For a few years, they worked out of a small building near Duke and Quaker Street. It was next to the skateboard park and Keith quipped that they should have handed out their flyers at the park since so many of their students were skateboarders.

With a focus on environmental science

and the arts, the school's mission is to help bright, creative non-traditional learners use their strengths to thrive academically, intellectually and emotionally.

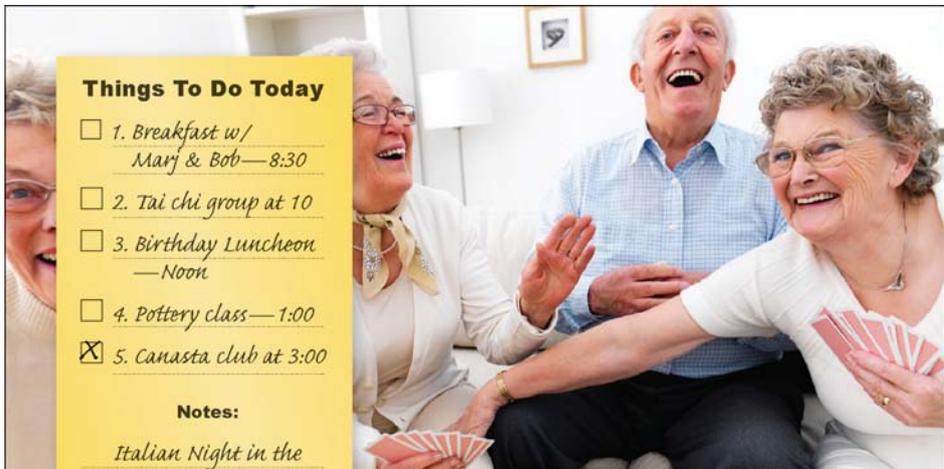
Hands on learning and weekly field studies keep students active and involved, and internships let students explore their interests through work. Their website lists the following items as key elements to their teaching style.

On Friday, all students do community service or intern. Some students are currently helping in classrooms, while others have internships at Connection Newspapers; a local music store; and the National Aquarium in Washington, D.C. One student, who is doing a fossil study in the Chesapeake, recently published a paper on paleontology.

There are currently 40 students in grades 9 through 12. A new eighth-grade class was started this year with eight students; eight more were added when the new building opened. They currently have three buses available for their yearly trip to Assateague and other places.

"We will stay small," said Keith. "We want to be able to continue to go to places as a group. Our students are bright, creative and thrive in small groups," said Keith.

The Howard Gardner School is located at 4913 Franconia Road, Alexandria, VA 22310. For more information, call 703-822-9300.



Things To Do Today

- 1. Breakfast w/ Mary & Bob—8:30
- 2. Tai chi group at 10
- 3. Birthday Luncheon—Noon
- 4. Pottery class—1:00
- 5. Canasta club at 3:00

Notes:

Italian Night in the dining room!

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OBITUARY

Colonel Norman Farrell

Colonel Norman Farrell, 93, died Dec. 6, 2010, from complications of a stroke, at Arden Courts in Annandale. He had made his home in Alexandria for almost 50 years.

Col. Farrell was born at Fort McPherson, Georgia in 1917. The youngest of five children and son of an Army officer, he grew up on army posts around the country, returning often to Nashville, his father's home city. He went to high school in Berkeley, California and followed an older brother to the United States Military Academy at West Point, but having skipped two grades was too young to enter directly, and first spent a year at the University of California, Berkeley. He graduated from West Point in 1939, receiving his diploma from the hand of President Roosevelt.

En route to his first duty station at Fort Sam Houston in Texas he visited his parents in Berkeley and there met Jeannine Lattin, a student at Stanford and a fellow army brat. They were married in 1940. They lived at Fort Sam and later moved via MIT to West Point where he was an instructor in physics and mathematics. Subsequent stateside assignments took them to Fort Lewis, Fort Benning, the Pentagon, Fort Leavenworth, and Carlisle Barracks. He earned a master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois and was a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College where he remained to serve on the faculty for three years. He came to the Washington area in 1962 serving again at the Pentagon, and later at Fort Belvoir. In this last assignment he commanded the Institute for Land Warfare, in recognition of which service he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Foreign postings included Korea at the end of World War II where he was in charge of the American team which, with Russian counterparts, surveyed the 38th parallel across the peninsula. He was also stationed in Austria, Germany, and Italy (1954-1957) and in Iran (1961) where he was a military advisor to the Iranian army.

Col. Farrell and his family remained in Alexandria after his retirement in 1969. Always active, he worked for several years as a consultant for compa-



nies involved in long range military planning, but increasingly turned his attention to his vegetable garden, family genealogy, photography, study of the American Indian Wars and the Civil War, and folk dancing. He volunteered for many groups including Meals on Wheels, Neighborhood Watch, the

pharmacy at Fort Belvoir, and the Kings Park Elementary School Library. For many years he was president of his West Point class, and into his 90's he participated in a West Point program as a mentor to young officers. He also supported the Academy's soccer program and library. In 2009, accompanied by his children, he attended his 70th class reunion there.

Col. Farrell was a devoted Christian. He taught adult Sunday school and served as an Elder in the Presbyterian church. His faith was evident in his life. He was a longtime member of the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church in Alexandria. In later years he worshipped at the Post Chapel at Fort Belvoir. A just and compassionate man, a friend to many, he was a faithful and devoted husband and a loving father to his children.

Preceded in death by his wife, Jeannine, in 1993, Col. Farrell is survived and remembered by their children: Norman Farrell, Jr. of Tokyo; Elizabeth Bragg of Covington, Georgia; Jay Farrell of Austin, Texas; and Patricia Oliver of Alexandria, as well as by seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, all of whom are grateful for his life.

Services will be at 11 a.m. on April 28, 2011, at the Old Chapel on Fort Myer, followed by burial with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Capital Hospice or to Special Collections, United States Military Academy Library at West Point.

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OPINION

Resolved: Pick One Way To Get Involved

How about helping others in the New Year?

New Year's resolutions? Go ahead, let's pledge to lose weight, exercise regularly, spend less, recycle, save and read more. The turn of the calendar really does provide an impetus to make small and large changes in the way we live.

One item to add to the list of resolutions is to get involved locally. Volunteer one time for one day, or give a few hours a week to something that interests you. Pick one place where you can make a difference. The experience will enrich you (and your family) as well, connecting you to the community in new ways. Making time for even a single volunteer effort communicates an invaluable message about your values to your children in a powerful way that words cannot match.

Most local nonprofits and church groups that provide emergency food and services for families in need are overwhelmed right now by the dramatic increase in demand for food, emergency help with rent to prevent homelessness and much more. See sidebar for some suggestions.

Volunteer Fairfax connects volunteers of all kinds to organizations in need of help, providing flexible weekend and evening opportunities including packing emergency food kits for families in crisis, tutoring adults in alternative learning programs, reading to elementary school children after school, socializing with

seniors or planting trees to prevent erosion. Volunteer Fairfax will hold its annual Give Together: A Family Volunteer Day on Monday, Jan. 17, 2011 at George Mason University, an opportunity to work on service projects with your family. See www.volunteerfairfax.org.

The Arlington County Volunteer Office promotes civic engagement and active volunteer participation, coordinating volunteer opportunities from hundreds of non-profit and government agencies. Visit www.co.arlington.va.us and type "volunteer" into the search box.

The Alexandria Volunteer Bureau recruits and coordinates volunteers and matches their interests, skills and availability with the needs of service-providing nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Visit www.volunteerallexandria.org.

The Literacy Council Northern Virginia is in need of volunteers who will devote several hours a week to helping adults master reading and writing skills; visit www.lcnv.org.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained citizen who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of a child in court. CASA volunteers help children who will have their home placement determined in juvenile court. See www.casafairfax.org.

The Alexandria/Arlington Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program has helped hundreds of children have a voice within the court system. See <http://www.scanva.org/casa.htm>

Some other suggestions:
Get involved in state and local political cam-

pany, Covanta Fairfax, Inc.

The incinerator has been competitively and successfully operated for some 20 years. Its success has resulted in the lowest prices in the region for trash dropped off for incineration. The estimated cost to purchase such a facility ranges from \$400 million to \$700 million.

It is difficult to understand why the BOS

Places To Volunteer

- ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO)**, 703-569-9160, www.echo-inc.org, 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton, 703-339-8611. www.lortonaction.org
- ❖ **FACETS**, 703-352-5090
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia. 703-541-3063, www.capitalareafoodbank.org
- ❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia**, Arlington, 703-521-9890

paigns. Every seat in the Virginia General Assembly, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board and many other state and local offices are about to enter campaign mode, with some races hotly contested. Volunteer with a candidate, with the League of Women Voters or with your local electoral board.

The public school or library closest to your house is also in need of volunteers. Homeowners associations need activists to learn about a variety of local issues and coordinate neighborhood response. Your church or house of worship could use a hand. Animal shelters and animal rescue groups are also over extended with families giving up pets due to the economy, in addition to their usual work. Environmental groups like Audubon Naturalist Society and the Nature Conservancy offer many kinds of volunteer opportunities, as do local parks.

— MARY KIMM.

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

would explore taking over a successful private company at such cost when there are more pressing needs such as our schools and public safety to name just two. With the economy in such a downturn and the county facing annual budget deficits, it doesn't seem appropriate to even consider expanding government particularly purchasing a private company.

I attempted to obtain, under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, information that supports the purchase of the incinerator. According to a letter from the County Attorney's Office, no study exists and whatever other documents may exist were denied because the matter has not been discussed in public by the BOS in public sessions. It does little good for general citizens to be allowed to look at records after the BOS makes a decision to purchase a private company.

I urge you to contact your supervisor and make your views known about whether its a good idea to purchase a 20-year successful privately-owned trash incinerator costing somewhere between \$400 million to \$700 million, or leave it in the hands of the private owners to continue their operation.

You can find the supervisors email, mail address and phone number at FairfaxCounty.gov.

Contact the supervisor now, it could save you many tax dollars.

Frank Medico
Mount Vernon

MORE LETTERS, PAGE 18

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

Newspaper of Mount Vernon

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.
1606 King Street
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A Connection Newspaper

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Burning Up Tax Money?

To the Editor:

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) is exploring the purchase of the Lorton trash incinerator owned and operated by a private

company, Covanta Fairfax, Inc. The incinerator has been competitively and successfully operated for some 20 years. Its success has resulted in the lowest prices in the region for trash dropped off for incineration. The estimated cost to purchase such a facility ranges from \$400 million to \$700 million.

It is difficult to understand why the BOS

would explore taking over a successful private company at such cost when there are more pressing needs such as our schools and public safety to name just two. With the economy in such a downturn and the county facing annual budget deficits, it doesn't seem appropriate to even consider expanding government particularly purchasing a private company.

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You can find the supervisors email, mail address and phone number at FairfaxCounty.gov.

Contact the supervisor now, it could save you many tax dollars.

Frank Medico
Mount Vernon

MORE LETTERS, PAGE 18



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

Snapshot Geese take flight from the south field at River Farm on Monday afternoon.



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Susan Gray Chambers 703-203-9900



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314 Commerce Street,
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\$586,900

921 South Columbus St,
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This all brick, end townhome offers 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, gleaming hardwoods, large family room, new kitchen and a deep fenced rear yard. All this and just a short stroll to the heart of Old Town!



Donnan C. Wintermute
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The Bearings South \$198,500
922 S. Washington St #108, Alexandria, VA 22314

Charming Renovation! Conveniently located and renovated efficiency with decorator colors, cherry hardwoods, granite counters & crown molding. Large walk-in closet with organizers and Murphy bed in living area.



Carol Hooks 703-509-4199



Highgate of Rosslyn \$875,000
1503-D North Colonial Terrace, Rosslyn, VA 22209

Fabulous & Over the Top! Rare Kent model townhouse, completely renovated! Eat-in kitchen, 2 car garage, private garden, DR & LR with fireplace. Library, 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths & courtyard setting! Visit www.1503DHighgate.com.



Marie Louise Meyer 703-836-2080



Old Town
\$885,500

722 Carpenter Road,
Alexandria, VA 22314

Just Like New! Just listed! Dramatic townhouse with bright southern view! 4 bedrooms, guest suite, garage, large kitchen with breakfast area. Bay windows, high ceilings & gas fireplace. For more info visit www.722Carpenter.com



Marie Louise Meyer
703-836-2080



Old Town \$1,499,000
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Perfect Fusion of Historic and Contemporary! Filled with character and sunlight, this historic home is filled with surprises. Three bedrooms, 2.5 baths, a garden oasis and two off-street parking spots!



Bonnie Rivkin 703-598-7788



Braddock Heights \$699,900
2503 Farm Road, Alexandria, VA 22302

Open Sunday 12pm - 3pm. Ready for your personal touch! 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, hardwood floors and a flagstone patio. Updates include new windows, updated kitchen with granite & spa-like bath upstairs.



Mary Cay Harris 703-981-9976



Waynewood \$507,999
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Bob Woods 703-224-8726



Jefferson Manor \$359,000
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Tom Rickert 703-447-7901



Del Ray
\$439,000

516 East Alexandria Ave,
Alexandria VA 22301

Price Reduced! Classic Del Ray townhouse with 2 bedrooms and 2 full baths. Finished basement, large patio with storage shed and off-street parking. Short distance to Braddock Road Metro.



Michael Bergin
703-927-4554



Old Town
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627 South Saint Asaph St,
Alexandria, VA 22314

Classic Old Town property on a double lot. Features small pool and 2,020 sq ft of living space. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, family room, 3 fireplaces, beautiful pine floors and lovely appointments throughout.



Sherry York
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8826 Camden St \$879,900

Unique opportunity-Brand new custom home by Wakefield on stunning large tract spanning both sides of creek in prestigious Stratford Landing. Fabulous floor plan loaded with upgrades! OPEN SUN 1/9, 1-4PM. GW Pky S, R-Stratford; L-Camden.



NEW PRICE!
7106 Colgate Dr \$499,500
Hollin Glen-Super Value!

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, hardwood floors, 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!



6309 Barrister Pl \$649,900
Elegant Townhome
Olde Belle Haven Towne

Prestigious Belle Haven on the Green's large model. Prime location across from the grounds of Belle Haven C.C. Stately townhome abounds w/old world charm and modern efficiency. Special features include 3 finished levels and spacious walled garden, gourmet kit and more. Exceptionally attractive price for this gorgeous community. Just minutes to Old Town.



NEW PRICE!
ALEXANDRIA HOUSE 400 Madison Street 2 UNITS are OPEN SUNDAY 1-4pm!
#909 \$599,900

RIVER VIEWS from this stunningly renovated 2BR/2BA corner condo! 1,298 sq ft of one-level living. Kitchen w/granite, glass tile & cherry cabs. Brazilian cherry balcony w/access



#804 \$335,000
GREAT CORNER UNIT. 80 ft balcony has both western & northern exposure w/river views. 2 large BR/2BA and lots of closet space. 1,298 sq ft of one-level living. Updated kitchen has light wood cabinets. Beautiful hardwoods thru-out. 1 garage space with storage.

Mike Lekas 703.927.9895

Ann Kavajjian 703.626.9171



OPEN SUN. 1-4pm!
2808 S IVES ST
Arlington \$699,000

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! Minutes to the Pentagon, DC & Old Town! Freshly painted & updated 4BR home w/2 car garage on a private cul-de-sac. Includes a gorgeous family room w/ fireplace, 2.5BA, a rec room, lots of windows, & deck. Seeing is believing!

Catherine.Foltz@longandfoster.com
Catherine Foltz 703.626.6914



8531 Mount Vernon Hwy \$475,000
Huge House-Little Price!

Spacious 5 bedroom home in pristine condition! Many new features include large room sizes, recently remodeled baths, kitchen w/cherry cabs and corian counters, fresh paint, new carpet, new windows and siding, 2 car garage, patio and more! Deck overlooking beautiful backyard.



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.



4408 Tarpon Ln \$625,000
Yacht Haven-Near River!

Spacious four level home has been meticulously maintained. Absolutely gorgeous half acre lot within walking distance of clubhouse and river in this fabulous waterfront community. Both home and grounds are in exceptional condition. Significant upgrades include luxurious baths, hardwood floors and much updating throughout. Unique opportunity to be near water at reasonable price.



5904 MT EAGLE DR #910 Montebello \$355,000

Beautiful river view, popular "E" floor plan. 2BR/2BA condo w/brand new carpet, extra large enclosed balcony, new kit appliances, newer HVAC.

Amenities: indoor/outdoor pools, tennis, bowling, cafe & bar, local shuttle to METRO & shopping.
Susan Haughton / Mindy Brubaker 571.242.9913



BOTH OPEN SUN. 1-4pm
NEW YEAR in NETHERGATE

\$565,000 1209 Portner Rd Roomy 2BR, new kit & carpeting, 3FPs, rec room, wood flrs, patio, parking, quick settlement.
\$625,000 1111 Michigan Ct Affordable end unit TH w/sleek new kit, Mstr suite w/FP, guest suite w/BA, family rm/guest suite w/FP & BA, 3FPs, patio, & updates.

NethergateHomes.com
Renee Raymond 703.507.5330



OPEN SUN. 1-4pm
6423 15th ST New Alexandria \$629,900

NEW PRICE for this beautifully updated colonial on large private lot. Gourmet kitchen with granite counters, wine refrigerator, huge family room with built-in bookcases, 2 fireplaces, patio, hardwood floors and custom trim & moldings throughout. Appointment only!

Klanci Vanderhyde 703.919.4460



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!



9316 Heather Glen Dr \$650,000
Price Slashed-Large Colonial!

The most house for the money in areal 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!



3800 Great Neck Ct \$549,000
Meticulously Maintained!

Five bedroom home has been lovingly cared for and is ready for you to move into! Spacious gourmet kitchen with cherry cabinets and center island, fabulous sunroom added with vaulted ceiling overlooks landscaped grounds. Features include: luxurious master bath, hardwood floors, two fireplaces, patio, tons of storage plus garage parking. Gorgeous park-like grounds.



4161 LEGATO RD Fairfax / \$639,000

Sophisticated 3BR/3.5BA townhome in Centerpointe. With 4 finished levels, this home features an open gourmet kit, master suite, two gas fireplaces, finished loft w/full bath, rooftop terrace, two-car garage and more!

Dayna Blumel / Kerry Adams 703.587.7841



6101 EDSALL ROAD #501 / Alex \$240,000

ALEXANDRIA KNOLLS WEST 2BR/2BA, 1,408sf of spaciousness in a popular hi-rise end unit. Enormous LR; sep. DR w/wet bar; huge MBR w/WIC; LR & BRs open to 40ft balcony; W/D in unit. 1 parking space. Nice amenities. EZ to Van Dorn Metro, I-395, the Beltway and Old Town.

Wendy Shelley 703.919.6045



5904 MT EAGLE DR #906 Montebello \$375,000

Dramatic views from every window in this 2BR, 2BA condo! Highlights: hardwoods, renovated baths, updated kitchen, enclosed glass balcony, great building amenities & more! 1 garage space conveys.

Dayna Blumel / Kerry Adams 703.587.7841



CONTRACT!
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.



4117 Robertson Blvd \$719,000
Upgraded Throughout! Move In Ready!

Owner just spent thousands on upgrades. All the work has been done for you. Move right in and enjoy! Classic colonial with 2 car side load garage. Elegant foyer, formal dining room with built-ins, family room off kitchen leading to deck. Table space kitchen features silestone counters. Lower level boasts rec. room, den, full bath & storage. Two fireplaces, 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths. Huge lot with mature trees and gardens. Stunning!



9110 Congressional Ct \$725,000
Mt. Vernon's Finest!

One of Mt. Vernon area's most imposing homes. Stately columned front and exceptionally large lot with custom pool creates true 'estate' feel to this special property. Features include: large room sizes, 3 finished levels, hardwood floors, updated kitchen, 3.5 baths, masonry fireplace and large garage. Gorgeous setting on fenced lot in prime location on quiet cul-de-sac just off parkway.



6465 BRICK HEARTH CT Alexandria \$349,900

STORYBOOK PERFECT INSIDE AND OUT. Enchanting Garden! 2 Master Suites, one with a balcony and one with a sitting room. Lower level has sep entrance & full bath for use as another bedroom. LR has fireplace, DR has big bay window. Big laundry rm with storage area. Close to Metro, on busline, walk to many shops.

June Sherwood 703.346.3029



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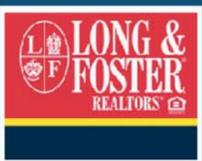
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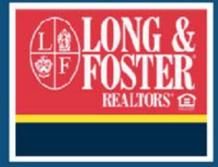
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Local Theaters Have Big Plans for 2011

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

While most theaters have only announced their plans for the first half of the calendar year because seasons usually run from fall to spring, there are already many productions on tap that should be highly anticipated.

In Alexandria, the premiere professional theatre is MetroStage on North Royal Street, where the year kicks off with another of their bio-musicals of major performers. In the past they have given audiences a chance to get a hint of what it was like to attend a performance by Pearl Bailey, Alberta Hunter, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington and Mahalia Jackson in solo shows. The new show is "His Eye On The Sparrow" with Bernardine Mitchell as Ethel Waters. Then, in April, MetroStage reunites Ralph Cosham, John Dow and Michael Tolaydo who together won last year's Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Ensemble. They join Catherine Flye in Tom Stoppard's clever "The Real Inspector Hound."

Community theaters in Alexandria also have some intriguing productions on their slates. The Little Theatre of Alexandria gets things going for the year with Roland Branford Gomez's production of the musical "Oliver." It runs through Feb. 5. Later that month, the theater offers a mystery set in Wales at the turn of the last century with "Widdershins" and then things lighten up with the four-person musical comedy about young people writing a musical about young people writing a musical, "[Title of Show]". It will be followed by two comedies, "The Little Dog Laughed" and "Move Over, Mrs. Markham" before a musical whose title hasn't been announced opens for the summer. In the fall, look for the very satisfying drama "Proof," which is known for its success at making intellectually gifted people seem entirely human while getting the exhilaration of the pursuit of knowledge just right. As winter arrives so will "Is He Dead?" which David Ives adapted from Mark Twain's comedy of an artist who pretends his own death in order to increase the value of his paintings.



The new Artisphere in Rosslyn hosts the Washington Shakespeare Theatre's "Juno and the Paycock." Pictured is author Sean O'Casey.

Port City Playhouse takes advantage of their new venue, the Lab at Convergence on North Quaker Lane, to present two more plays that should benefit from the more intimate surroundings of the lab, John Redwood's provocatively titled "No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs" and, later, the thriller "Mindgame." The Aldersgate Church Community Theatre enters its third decade with a children's musical and a mystery. This month the all-youth cast will be performing Paul Williams and Alan Parker's spoof of gangster musicals, the squirt-gun gang musical "Bugsy Malone, Jr." In March they open the murder mystery "Design for Murder."

In Arlington, things are already looking good for the year. At Signature Theatre in Shirlington, where a thrilling production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Boulevard" is running through Feb. 13, there are quite a few thrills to be expected throughout the year. In March Signature's artistic director, Eric Schaeffer, will direct the world premiere of a musical funded through the Shen Family Foundation's American Musical Voices project. It will be "Wheatley's Folly," which is to tell the story of the creation of the first American musical, 1866's "The Black Crook." Then, this Spring, Matthew



"Beyond the Horizon" will be performed at Theatre Two in the Gunston Arts Center. Pictured is author Eugene O'Neill.

Gardiner will take on the directing chores for a revue built on the songs of Stephen Sondheim, "Side by Side by Sondheim" while Schaeffer crosses the Potomac to mount Stephen Sondheim's classic "Follies" at The Kennedy Center with a cast featuring Bernadette Peters, Elaine Paige and Florence Lacey.

While the 2011-2012 season hasn't yet been announced, there are a few clues that make that season look quite promising. Schaeffer recently told an interviewer that the season will include Signature's first musical by Jerry Herman. He wouldn't reveal which one, however. Will it be "Hello, Dolly!," "Mame," "La Cage aux Folles" or "Mack and Mabel"? In the same interview he said that they will also be doing a new musical by John Dempsey and Dana P. Rowe whose "The Fix" and "The Witches of Eastwick" are both well remembered by Signature audiences. Whether that new musical will be in the 2011-2012 season, however, hasn't been revealed.

Also in Arlington we are privileged to have one of the few professional theater companies in the nation devoted to reviving classic American plays, The American Century Theater, which performs at Theatre

Two in the Gunston Arts Center. Starting on Jan. 14 Kathleen Akerley will be directing Eugene O'Neill's first Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Beyond the Horizon." In April comes George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber's tale of would-be Broadway stars, "Stage Door," and then during the summer it will be Gore Vidal's satirical look at what Earth would seem like to an invader from outer space, "Visit to a Small Planet."

The unique movement-based Synetic Theatre is now in residence in Crystal City. Later this month they revive their production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" which garnered seven Helen Hayes Award nominations when it played the Lansburgh Theatre downtown. It will only play Jan. 25 - 30, but there will be other opportunities to see their works as they mount a new adaptation of "Don Quixote" in June. If you can't wait that long, however, you can catch their "King Lear" in March and April at the Lansburgh. Their children's company, Classika Theatre in Shirlington is presenting "The Magic Paintbrush" from Feb. 19 to April 3.

The new Artisphere in Rosslyn hosts the Washington Shakespeare Theatre, recently displaced from Clark Street. The first half of the year brings Sean O'Casey's Irish tragedy "Juno and the Paycock" set in Dublin, Tom Stoppard's Civil War drama set in the fictional African nation of Kambawa, "Night and Day," and then a pair of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams. For the Spanish speaking theatergoers, or those interested in sampling Spanish programming with English surtitles, Teatro de la Luna will be presenting the U.S. premiere of a Uruguayan comedy, "Cómo Evitar Enamorarse del Hombre Equivocado," or "How to Avoid Falling in Love with the Wrong Man."

Arlington community theatre companies have announced promising programs as well. Blakeman Brophy will be directing The Arlington Players' production of Anton Chekhov's "The Seagull" starting at the end of this month and then in April the team of director John Monnett and music director John-Michael d'Haviland will field a huge cast for the musical "42nd Street." Dominion Stage will add both musicals and less classifiable shows to the mix. This month they mount "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" for three weekends and then in June comes a hodge-podge titled "Psycho Beach Party," which, in the hands of playwright Charles Busch, turned out to be perhaps Off-Broadway's first successful horror comedy by combining elements of the Annette Funicello/Frankie Avalon beach movies with a Hitchcockian plot twist involving split personalities.

With so many interesting projects already announced, local theaters should make 2011 a year to remember.

Brad Hathaway reviews theater in Virginia, Washington and Maryland as well as Broadway and writes about theater for a number of national magazines. He welcomes feedback from those he writes about and those he writes for. He can be reached at brad.hathaway@verizon.net.

FINE ARTS

NOW THROUGH JAN. 30

Gallery West Presents WOW! Works in wax, oil, and wire by new member artists Susan Stayer, Caty Forden, Margret Lindsey, and Sue Lindsey. Meet the artists at their reception on Saturday, Jan. 15 from 5 to 7 p.m. Refreshments will be included. At Gallery West, 1213 King Street, in Alexandria's Boutique District. Visit www.gallery-west.com or call 703-549-6006.

NOW THROUGH FEB. 6

Photographer Bruce Dale. MemberShow. Bruce Dale has had more than 2,000 photographs published by National Geographic. In 1989 he was named White House Photographer of the Year. At the Multiple Exposures Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria.

JAN. 6 TO FEB. 7

Understory. Alison Sigethy's Solo Artist Exhibit. Opening reception with a performance by Karen Reedy Dance on Thursday, Jan. 13 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Environmental artist Alison Sigethy draws inspiration from the natural world surrounding her. At the Art League Gallery.

JAN. 7 THROUGH JAN. 30

Baby, It's Cold Outside & Sock It To Winter: Celebrating all things good and bad about winter. Meet the artists reception Friday, Jan. 7, from 7-10 p.m. The all-member show runs through Sunday, Jan. 30. Check out the best works and "sock it to winter" by donating a pair of new socks to benefit the Carpenter's Shelter. Join the Sock Hop Saturday, Jan. 15 from 7-10 p.m., admission: donated pair of new socks. www.TheDelRayArtisans.org or cspringer43@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 8

Calligraphy Workshop. 1 to 4 p.m. Learn basic calligraphy strokes and lettering with a calligraphy marker (yours to keep). \$20 members, \$25 non-members. At the Del Ray Artisans Gallery at the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria.

SUNDAY/JAN. 9

Gesture Drawing Exercises. 10 a.m. to noon. Learn how to capture the figure quickly and take advantage of dynamic short poses. The session is free and open to members and non-members, but RSVP by Saturday, Jan. 8 to Katherine Rand at DRA.LifeDrawing@gmail.com or 703-836-1468. Space is limited. At the Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.

FITNESS Get Fit Challenge

Start the New Year with Mt. Vernon REC's Fitness Program.

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to get back in shape, then Mount Vernon RECenter's new Get Fit Challenge will help you realize that goal. Join the inaugural challenge on Sunday, Jan. 16, and sample the RECenter's range of fitness-oriented facilities and programs. Events and activities are scheduled throughout the morning to challenge all fitness levels. You are invited to participate in as many activities as you feel comfortable doing.

The full Get Fit Challenge starts at 8:30 a.m. with a looped trail run (rain or shine). Find out how many loops around the property you can complete in 50 minutes. Pace yourself because it's just the beginning! The extreme step challenge from 9:30 to 10 a.m. is only 30 minutes, but the burn will be extreme!

From 10:30 a.m. to 12:10 p.m., choose four classes to sample, switching every 25 minutes. This is a great opportunity to check out popular classes you've heard about and always wanted to try. Samplers include Zumba, Mix It Up, Spin, Yoga, Core Conditioning, Power Pump, Pilates, Shallow/Deep Water Exercise, and Power Fitting. The challenge wraps up with a group cool down, prizes, and giveaways. If you still have energy left to burn, the pool will be open for a public swimming session all afternoon.

The cost is \$5 per person, payable at the RECenter during registration. Lockers are available for \$.25 each. This event is limited to the first 60 registrants.

Mount Vernon RECenter is located at 2017 Belle View Blvd. in Alexandria. For information and directions, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mvrec.htm.

For more information, contact Mt. Vernon RECenter at 703-768-3224.



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ENTERTAINMENT



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.

FRIDAY/JAN. 7

"Out in the Silence" Film (2009). 7 p.m. A film about the upheaval in a small Pennsylvania town when a town native (who is also the filmmaker) places an announcement of his wedding to another man in the local paper. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1609 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-721-0595 or gpcourchot@yahoo.com.

MPAT Auditions. 7 p.m. Open call for auditions for "Little Shop of Horrors." At 6450 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Performances are March 24-27. Email resume and photo to mpat.show@gmail.com for early appointment. Prepare one upbeat show song and be ready to read from script. Visit www.metrotheater.org or email mpat.show@gmail.com

SATURDAY/JAN. 8

Stage Play Audition Workshop (8 to 12 years old). 10 a.m. to noon. Monologue/song coaching and/or selection, cold reading techniques using scripts from Annie, small class size (12 max). At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. To register or for more information, email bardsplay@aol.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 or 571-482-9052.

SUNDAYS, JAN. 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

MONDAY/JAN. 10

Tavern Toddlers. 10:30 a.m. to noon. A special program for toddlers (walkers through 36 months) and their caregivers at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. Tavern Toddlers features a weekly open playtime in Gadsby's historic ballroom Mondays,

excluding Federal holidays, through April 25 between 10:30 a.m. and noon. Cost is \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, or \$30 for purchase of a five-week pass. Visit www.gadsbystavern.org or call 703-746-4242.

TUESDAY/JAN. 11

"Concepts Investors Should Understand." 10 a.m. Presentation by Herman Bluestone on The Efficient Market Hypothesis; The Real Rate of Return; Investment Costs; Investment Risk; and Strategies for Reducing Taxes. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Call 703-765-4573.

The NOVA Community Chorus invites all singers to join for its Spring 2011 season. Rehearsals will start on Jan. 11. This spring the chorus will sing Verdi's "Requiem," joining with three other choral groups and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra on March 12 and 13, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, to be performed with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic on April 10 and 17. No audition is required. Join by registering for this one-credit class at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria campus. Rehearsals are 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays at the NVCC Alexandria campus, 3001 N. Beauregard, Alexandria, with some optional extra Saturday rehearsals. The college waives tuition for seniors. Contact Dr. Mark Whitmire, Director, at 703-845-6097 or e-mail: mwhitmire@nvcc.edu

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.

JAN. 12 TO MARCH 16

Shakespeare Shenanigans! Wednesdays 11:30-1 p.m. At the Little Theatre of Alexandria in Old Town. Geared for the older adult, participants will discuss, read, and perform scenes from Shakespeare. Non actors welcome. Email Heather Sanderson at bardsplay@aol.com or call the Little Theatre at 703-683-5778, ext. 2.

THURSDAY/JAN. 13

Wintry Mix. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Cool candy buffet, artist-made snowflakes and an art-inspired modern dance performance by Karen Reedy Dance. Juror's talk by Amy Cavanaugh Royce and Briony Evans Hynson from Honfleur Gallery at 7 p.m. At the Second Thursday Art Night, Torpedo Factory art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Visit www.torpedofactory.org; call 703-838-4565

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Majors' Winless-to-Playoffs Turnaround Highlights 2010

West Potomac basketball wins first district title since 1996.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

A miserable 2009 season brought change to the Mount Vernon football program. After the Majors finished 0-10 and were outscored 365-129, Barry Wells, a 50-year-old long-time assistant in Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, received his first head coaching job. Wells quickly set his sights on reviving the program and instilling a winning mentality.

It wasn't easy. Division 5 Mount Vernon lost its first two games of the 2010 season — contests against Division 6 schools West Potomac and T.C. Williams — by a combined score of 100-34, extending the school's losing streak to 13 games. The Majors, however, didn't hang their heads and responded with the school's first win since 2008, defeating Edison 14-6 in the National District opener on Sept. 16. The following week, Mount Vernon beat Stuart 17-14.

Four weeks into the season, the team that couldn't win was tied atop the district standings. Time to celebrate? Hardly.

"For the program, it means we're taking steps in the right direction," said Wells, focused on the bigger picture. "I don't think it validates us as a team. We didn't play our best against Stuart. ... We're just not there yet. We've been opportunistic. In order to move this program along, we'll need to win some ugly games."

Mount Vernon lost its next two games but closed the regular season winning three of its final four. The Majors were 5-5, including 4-2 in the district, and headed to the regional playoffs.

While the Majors fell to South Lakes in the opening round, the team had estab-



Mount Vernon tailback Dennis Mensah was a key part of the Majors transformation from winless team to playoff participant.

lished a physical identity. With fullback Logan Beougher leading the way for tailback Dennis Mensah, Mount Vernon punished other teams on the ground and set the tone for future Mount Vernon teams.

"When you're 0-10 [the year before], a lot of things have to be re-tooled," Wells said after Mount Vernon's playoff loss to South Lakes. "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 restore Mount Vernon's tradition."

One season into his tenure at Mount Vernon, Wells is off to a good start.

WEST POTOMAC TOPS PATRIOT DISTRICT

Coming off a seventh-place finish the year prior in a district dominated by T.C. Williams, it would have been a longshot to consider the West Potomac boys basketball team a title contender heading into the Patriot District portion of the 2009-10 season. The senior-laden Wolverines, however, had

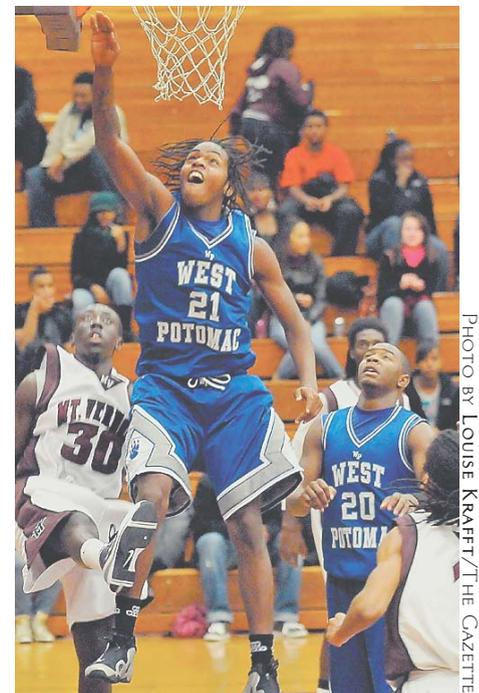
different ideas.

The Wolverines won the district tournament for the first time since 1996, defeating Woodson 70-67 in overtime on Feb. 22 at T.C. Williams High School. West Potomac won a game in regionals before falling to eventual state tournament participant Chantilly in the quarterfinals.

"Nobody felt like we would be in the regional tournament — let alone the top team in the best district in the region," West Potomac head coach David Houston III said after the Chantilly loss. "... This is the best team that I've had as far as a collection of players with one goal. ... We won the [district] championship [and] I think we did it the right way. We didn't go out and get transfers. We did it with the same kids we had last year."

Daryl Copeland, then a junior, earned Patriot District Tournament MVP honors and is leading the Wolverines into 2011.

WOLVERINES WIN DESPITE COACH'S HEALTH SCORE



Then-senior Keevyn Hankins and the West Potomac boys basketball team won the 2010 Patriot District title — the program's first since 1996.

The West Potomac football team took the field against West Springfield on Sept. 24 without head coach Eric Henderson, who earlier in the day suffered a heart attack. Without their leader on the sideline, the Wolverines stayed composed and put together a stellar defensive effort, winning their Patriot District opener 13-7.

"The kids played hard for [Henderson] because they love him," assistant coach Chuck McCullough said. "He gives every ounce of himself to these kids and they know that. And I know these kids were not going to let him down. ... I think [not having Henderson on the sideline] made the kids play harder. They did not want me to send him a text saying that we were trailing or that we were in danger of losing this game." Henderson recovered and was back at practice within days.

SPORTS BRIEFS

West Potomac Gymnastics Places Second

The West Potomac gymnastics team finished second at a home gymnastics meet on Monday, scoring 124.3 points. Robinson won the event with a score of 127.

West Potomac's Marien Voorhees finished first on the bars, third on the floor and fifth on the beam.

West Potomac Wins Wakefield Tourney

The West Potomac boys basketball team won a trio of games to capture the Wakefield holiday tournament championship. The Wolverines defeated Roosevelt (Washington, D.C.) 77-73 on Dec. 27, Glenelg Country 70-64 on Dec. 28 and Stonewall Jackson 55-44 on Dec. 29. West Potomac improved to 7-2 and entered 2011 with a five-game winning streak. The Wolverines will travel to face Annandale on Jan. 7.

Mount Vernon Boys Respond

After losing two out of three games at its own holiday tournament, the Mount Vernon boys basketball team defeated Wakefield 70-66 on Tuesday to improve to 6-3, including a 3-0 mark in the National District. The Majors will host Yorktown on Jan. 7.

Mount Vernon Wrestling Wins Tourney

The Mount Vernon wrestling team competed in the Cavalier Classic, hosted by W.T. Woodson High School, on Dec. 29. Nine teams participated at the tournament. The Majors won by more than 40 points with a total of 180 team points. Woodson placed second (137) and Collegiate School of Richmond was third (124 points). Mount Vernon had eight individual wrestlers compete in the final championship round. First-place winners were Eriq Dahlum (103

pounds), Cody Marino (130), Trey McClure (152) and Dusty Floyd (171). Freshmen Chris Johnson (119) and Bailey Marino (125) placed second along with Francisco Cardona (189) and Marqui Jackson (215). Jalen Gadson (135) took third place. The team will travel to Cumberland, Md., on Jan. 7-8 for the Fort Hill Super Duals.

West Potomac Softball Clinic

The West Potomac High School winter softball clinic will be held Jan. 9, 16 and 23 in the school's main gym and surrounding areas. The clinic is designed to prepare softball players for their upcoming seasons with drills that emphasize fielding, hitting, base running, pitching and catching. Grades 2 through 6 will participate from 9-11 a.m. and grades 7 and up will participate from 12:30-3 p.m. Cost is \$75 in advance, \$85 at the door or \$35 each day. For more information, contact West Potomac head softball coach Craig Maniglia at cgman01@gmail.com or Lee Harrington at leeharring@aol.com.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Step Forward

To the Editor:

In recent months, Supervisor Gerald W. Hyland appointed the Mount Vernon District Visioning Task Force with a goal to collect ideas including public safety matters for county leaders to consider for future planning. I was privileged to be appointed to the Task force Public Safety Committee (PSC).

Following several meetings, the PSC adopted a number of ideas for Supervisor Hyland to provide direction to county leaders. These ideas were delivered to Supervisor Hyland on Dec. 10. I was pleased that my proposal was included among the PSC's report that read as follows: "The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Office of the County Executive and the County Attorney's Office, in consultation with the Chief of Police, should consider the feasibility of creating a Citizen Review Board to address any citizen allegations of police misconduct. This Board, if implemented, would report its findings and recommendations to the Chief of Police for consideration."

I applaud my fellow PSC committee members for adopting my proposal. It is my belief a Citizen Review Board will benefit our police department and all citizens of Fairfax County.

Nicholas R. Beltrante
Mt. Vernon

Anti-Affordable Housing?

To the Editor:

Following up upon my letter of two weeks ago, at the MVCCA Council Meeting last week, the E&R Committee's resolution concerning North Hill was approved by a vote of 12-8-1. Thus, out of 125,000 residents of the Mount Vernon District, 8 Committee members and 12 Council members (1/3 of the MVCCA membership) believe they have taken a position that should be followed by Supervisor Hyland and the County. They are wrong.

In my earlier letter, I explained that the E&R Committee's resolution raised the specter of sale of the North Hill property to a private developer and that it is inconceivable this could occur. Clearly, the current leadership of the MVCCA is so determined to find a way to stop the North Hill development, they aren't concerned about the inconvenience of the facts.

Fairfax County purchased the entire 49-acre Woodley-Nightingale Mobile Home Park in 1981, using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The total HUD grant was \$5,811,164. These funds were received from HUD based upon the County's representation that the entire 49-acre parcel would be developed into a mobile home park. The first phase of 115 mobile homes on 14 acres was completed and is now known as the Woodley Hills Estates

Trailer Park. The remaining land, about 35 acres, was supposed to be developed in a second phase consisting of additional affordable housing units. That phase is what is being satisfied with the North Hill development that is the subject of the MVCCA's resolution.

In 2001, the County Attorney rendered an opinion in which he stated that the only way in which the County could avoid developing the 35 acres for affordable housing was either (1) by reimbursing HUD for the current fair market value of the property less any portion of the value attributable to expenditures of non-CDBG funds for acquisition of and improvements to the property; or (2) if the proposed use qualified as meeting one of the national objectives of the CDBG program as set forth in 24 C.F.R. 570.208.

Concerning the latter option, a park would comply if it could be demonstrated to comprise an activity benefiting low and moderate-income persons to a required degree. The criterion for determining whether this would be the case was set by HUD to be a certain percentage (updated with every census) of the residences within the geographic area expected to be served by the park being required to be low and moderate income housing. Since the Fairfax County Park Authority specifically states that each of its parks is open to the general public and is deemed accessible to all Fairfax County residents, the percentage would have to be based upon a Countywide figure. Under these circumstances, the required percentage could not be met. In fact, in a letter dated June 15, 1995, from HUD's Director of their Community Planning and Development Division, this exact point was made, raising the specter that if the remaining 35 acres of North Hill were not developed for affordable housing, reimbursement at fair market value would be required.

The documents demonstrating these facts to be true are public record and, in fact, former MVCCA Co-Chair Jerry Ireland received them from Brett Kenney, Supervisor Hyland's chief aide in 2007, and copied them for the MVCCA files. Yet, the MVCCA's E&R Committee, in their haste to try to throw a monkey wrench into the North Hill development, chose to cobble together a resolution they want the community to believe represents community thought without taking the time to do the due diligence necessary to make that true. Instead, a resolution was prepared to satisfy the anti-affordable housing partisans who populate the leadership of the MVCCA in what appears to be excessive numbers.

Not only does the enactment of the MVCCA's resolution change nothing concerning the future development of 67 affordable houses on North Hill, at the same time, it is quite revealing of the lack of credibility of the MVCCA at a time when this community desperately needs a credible umbrella organization that accurately reflects community views and can thus appropriately advise our Supervisor.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon



Mount Vernon Unitarian Church members Lynne Kennedy (front), Joan Darrah, Ken Pilkenton, Birgit Robbert, Al Robbert, and Ann Montanari march to the White House demanding "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal in June 2009.

MVUC Chair Witnesses DADT Repeal

On Sept. 11, 2001, Capt. Joan Darrah was at the Pentagon, attending the weekly 8:30 a.m. intelligence briefing. The meeting ended promptly at 9:30 a.m., and Darrah walked toward her bus stop. Minutes later, American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, destroying the meeting room she had just left and killing seven of her co-workers. In the aftermath, Darrah realized that if she had been killed, her partner of 11 years would have been among the last to know. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" prohibited her from listing her partner as an emergency contact.

Years of effort culminated in the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). At the invitation of the White House, Darrah witnessed President Obama signing the repeal. "It is hard to put into words all that I am feeling," she said afterward. "It was a wonderful experience to be able to look the President in the eye, shake his hand and thank him for making this a reality."

She reported that "there was a tremendously loud standing ovation and many tears from the audience when the President said 'For we are not a nation that says, 'Don't ask, don't tell.' We are a nation that says, 'Out of many, we are one.' We are a nation that welcomes the service of every patriot. We are a nation that believes that all men and women are created equal. Those are the ideals that generations have fought for. Those are the ideals that we uphold today.'"

Darrah's career as a Naval intelligence officer began in 1973 and spanned nearly 30 years. Her final assignment was on the staff of the Director of Naval Intelligence where she was the Officer and Enlisted Community Manager until June 2002 when she retired. Her personal decorations include three Legions of Merit, three Meritorious Service Medals, three Navy Commendation Medals and the Navy Achievement Medal. Since her retirement, she has crusaded to repeal DADT with national and local organizations.

At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church (MVUC), she worked to establish a "Repeal DADT" social justice task force. The church's website proclaims the rationale for the group: "The inherent worth and

dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; world community with liberty and justice for all are part of the proud Unitarian Universalist tradition of supporting human rights and equality for all, including gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender individuals. All people are worthy of our love and respect."

In June 2007, the MVUC task force spurred the national Unitarian Universalist Association to approve an Action of Immediate Witness to repeal DADT. Later, Darrah testified before a House Armed Services subcommittee and was interviewed on Good Morning America and NBC Nightly News. Darrah and fellow MVUC members RADM Jamie Barnett, USN (Ret.) and MCPOCG Vince Patton, USCG (Ret.) briefed the Obama transition team on the necessity of repeal in January 2009. Darrah currently chairs the MVUC Board of Trustees.

Many rallies, petitions, and interviews later, the repeal cleared its final legislative hurdle on a sunny Saturday. The day before, Darrah and her partner of 20 years, Lynne Kennedy, had been married by the Rev. Kate Walker at the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C. At 3 p.m. Saturday, NBC News recorded Darrah and Kennedy watching the final Senate vote on television. That evening, 230 guests gathered at their home to celebrate the wedding, along with Darrah's birthday and the repeal of DADT.

Said Darrah, "This has been such a long hard fight. Today for the first time ever in the history of our great country we are on our way to allowing gay people to serve openly in our military. This is a huge win for the military but an equally huge win for our country. Finally, we will stop sending a message to our young people that because they are gay, our country's military does not want their service regardless of their ability or skills."

"I can't fully put into words how important MVUC's support was to me personally and to getting Unitarian Universalists around the country involved."

Everyone at MVUC should take great pride in your contribution to this decision," she added. "You were willing to take a stand."

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