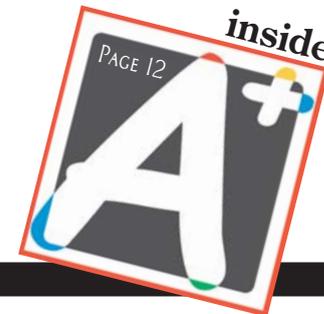


Mount Vernon Gazette



MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

FEBRUARY 24, 2011

Proposed: \$3.38 Billion Budget

No raises for
county employees.

BY NICHOLAS M. HORROCK
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Executive Anthony H. Griffin proposed a \$3.38 billion budget to the Board of Supervisors Tuesday, Feb. 22, which if adopted would bar pay raises for county employees and school teachers for another year and could cost an average home owner some \$110 a year in increased real estate taxes.

Griffin told the supervisors that the budget still has a shortfall of some \$50 million, but this far less than the \$350 million shortfall in the current 2011 budget and was designed to maintain "the quality of life" in Fairfax County, he said.

The board voted Tuesday to "advertise" the tax rate at \$1.09 in the 2012 budget, beginning on July 1, which on a home valued at \$443,511 (the mean assessed value in the county) would cost the tax payer an additional \$110 a year.

Three members of the board refused to back the \$1.09 figure, offering an amendment to advertise a figure of \$1.065, which would further tighten the amount of money the county would have to spend.

The board's three Republican supervisors John Cook, Braddock District, Michael R. Frey, Sully District and Pat Herrity of the Springfield District said the lower rate would force cuts in services rather than an actual increase in county revenue. Herrity said it was time to drop the tax rate. "We doubled people's taxes between 2000 and 2007, and its past time we give them some relief."

But Jeff McKay of Lee District said the \$1.09 figure gives the people of Fairfax a chance to present their ideas of what programs they want in public hearings and budget meetings over the next two months. "The lower figure looks like we have already

SEE PROPOSAL, PAGE 3



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET

Presidents Day

Fairfax County School Board Dan Storck of Mount Vernon as President Abraham Lincoln greets spectators as he participates in the annual George Washington birthday parade in Alexandria on Monday.

School Discipline: Broken or Perfect?

Jack Dale criticizes concerns linking teen suicides to suspensions.

BY JULIA O'DONOGHUE
THE GAZETTE

In the last 22 months, two Fairfax County students have died of suicide while coping with their removal from their local high school for disciplinary matters.

When the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Feb. 8 to "make outreach efforts" to the local school system about student disciplinary tactics, members hoped to begin a friendly and ongoing discussion about possible

reforms to the schools' current system.

"I want us to come together and ask 'Can we find a better way to do this?'" said Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill), one of two sponsors of the county measure.

Hudgins is concerned that the school's current disciplinary process may have caused these students to feel more isolated and could have contributed to their deaths.

"Many parents and students are asking whether the Zero Tolerance

'Dumb Growth?'

Planning Commission to consider another big-box store on Route 1.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE

For years, advocates of a concept known as "smart growth" have supported revitalizing Richmond Highway by encouraging mixed-use development. The idea is to blend residential units and commercial real estate, adding mass transit options to reduce the suburban sprawl that has choked transportation in the corridor for years. That's why people have mixed emotions about the proposed Costco that will be considered by the Fairfax County Planning Commission in April.

"There are traces of smart growth," said Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, whose district includes

the old Multiplex movie theater site where the Costco is proposed. "Although I would have to agree that it's not the highest and best use of the site."

McKay says a thriving Costco with customers contributing to the tax base and improved stormwater

runoff is a vast improvement to what's there now, an abandoned building with a rugged parking lot and minimal landscaping. The project also has the benefit of bringing merchandise closer to consumers, so Costco customers in Mount Vernon don't have to travel through Springfield to Newington or through Alexandria to Pentagon City.

"I'm not a kingmaker," said McKay. "If I don't approve this case, it's possible a by-right development will come in here twice the size of Costco."

THE DEVELOPMENT that will be before the Planning Commission and ultimately the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors requires a special exemption because the

developer is asking for more than 80,000 square feet of retail space. Under the current zoning at the site, a developer such as Wal Mart could come in with a proposal under 80,000 and develop "by

"There are traces
of smart growth."

— Jeff McKay, supervisor,
Lee District

SEE COSTCO, PAGE 5

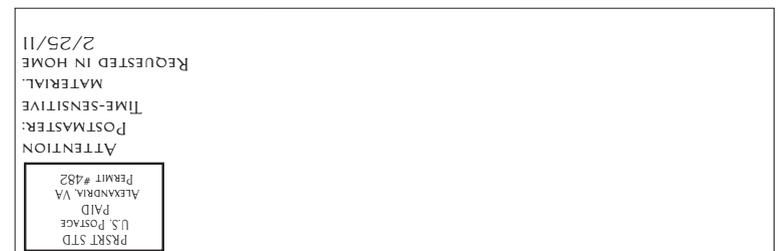
disciplinary policy of FCPS lacks the ability to recognize the emotional difficulties students experience," she said in a written statement.

Supervisors plan to invite the Fairfax Partnership for Youth and parent groups to put together a forum about student discipline, including how expulsions and suspensions are handled, for both

county and school system officials.

THREE DAYS LATER, Fairfax County Superintendent Jack Dale made it clear he had no intention of discussing the disciplinary system with the county. Dale said in a statement that Hudgins' resolution demonstrated a "serious mis

SEE DISCIPLINE, PAGE 3





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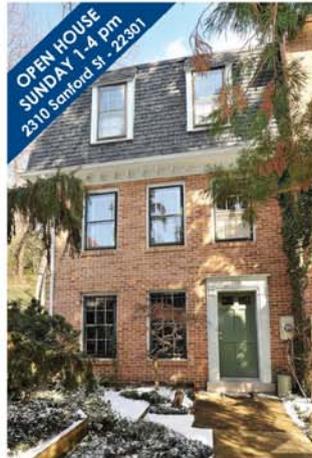
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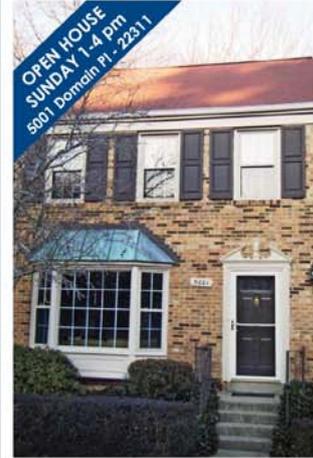


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Shutters Hill	4 BR/3.5 BA	\$2,650	MLS# AX7515117
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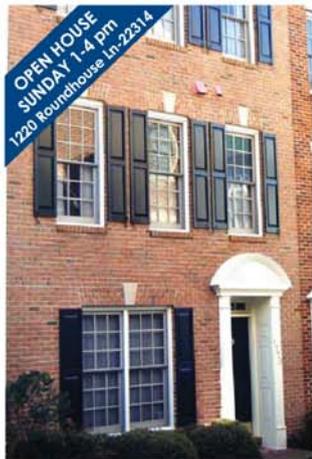
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\$3.38 Billion Proposal

FROM PAGE 1
decided," he said.

When the Board votes to advertise a rate, it can lower the rate in the final adopted budget, but it cannot raise the tax rate without starting all over. Board chairman Sharon Bulova and McKay, John W. Foust of Dranesville, Catherine M. Hudgins of Hunter Mill, Penelope Gross of Mason District and Linda Q. Smyth of Providence voted to advertise the \$1.09 rate. The Board may still vote to lower it on April 12.

The total recommended 2012 budget of all funds is \$6.1 billion.

Fairfax County can anticipate less money from Richmond. Staff analysis showed that the Virginia Senate might approve a package with a \$6.9 million loss for fiscal 2012 and that the House of Delegates version could mean a \$10.2 million reduction.

Though the Board of Supervisors does not control the school budgets, it can effectively veto increases the school board seeks. The Fairfax County Public Schools has sought a county "transfer" of \$1.659 billion, an increase of \$48.8 million, and most of which would go to increase school salaries. But Griffin said that the county cannot have school employees getting an increase when county employees are not and he has proposed \$1.61 billion for schools.

Griffin said his budget plan results in an "available balance" of \$30 million, which the Board of Supervisors can utilize in several ways including pay increases for county employees or a reduction in the real estate tax rate. Griffin said it could be "saved" for the "critical needs" in 2013.

Both Griffin and Bulova see continued bleak economic times in Fairfax. Though the average price of homes sold through the Multiple Listing Service increased 8.9 percent in 2010, the number of homes sold declined some 7.8 percent to 14,100. Foreclosures in Fairfax totaled 842 in December 2010, a 5.8 per cent increase over December 2009.

Even though the Department of Defense transfer of some 19,000 workers to Fairfax in 2011 will increase revenues and investment, several members of the Board see budget tightening in Washington as ominous for Fairfax.

Supervisor Gross said the county will have to learn more about a crisis in Virginia's ancient system of institutional care for people with mental or developmental disabilities.

The Department of Justice found

Summary of Important Dates

Board of Supervisors Budget Committee Meeting - March 15, 2 p.m.
Board of Supervisors Budget Committee Meeting - March 22, 2 p.m.
Public Hearing - March 29, 6 p.m.
Contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903
Public Hearing - March 30, 3 p.m.
Public Hearing - March 31, 3 p.m.
Board of Supervisors Pre-markup - April 8, 2 p.m.
Board of Supervisors Budget Markup Session - April 12, 10 a.m.
Formal Adoption of Budget - April 26, 10:30 a.m.

Virginia needlessly institutionalizes many people with intellectual disabilities and provides too little community based care. The state has 40 days to address the Justice Department report.

Gross wants to find out whether Fairfax and other counties will be called upon to provide community based care.

The Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the budget in March.

Sparring over School Discipline Policy

FROM PAGE 1

understanding" among the supervisors of the school system's current disciplinary policies.

Instead, he suggested a broader approach of tackling teen depression in general.

"I believe our efforts would be far more productive if we focused on the incidence of depression among our county youth and how our agencies can work together to tackle this problem," wrote Dale in his statement.

Dale said Fairfax County schools do not have a "zero tolerance" approach to discipline and consider every proposal for expulsion or suspension on an individual basis.

"I strongly recommend that all members of the Board of Supervisors learn more about FCPS' practices and policies before making public statements that are misinformed and damaging to our students, families and community," wrote Dale.

DALE ALSO objected in strong language to Hudgins' link of two teenage suicides to the school disciplinary process.

"For Supervisor Hudgins to link the two tragic student deaths to their disciplinary processes for the purpose of furthering a falsehood is unconscionable and a blow to those who have already suffered

Fill That Bus

United Community Ministries uses bus to help replenish its food pantry. On Saturday, Feb. 19, Michael Artson of Fastran, and coordinator of services and planning within the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, packed donated food from shoppers at the Giant Food Store in Beacon Hill Mall. UCM is accepting continuing donations of food at 7511 Fordson Road in Alexandria. Donations are accepted Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on the first Sunday of each month from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. UCM requests those who have donations to enter through the gates on the right side of the building, drive around to the back, and ring the bell at the green door.

The wish list includes: Canned meat and tuna, soups, fruits and vegetables. Pasta, rice, tomato sauce, oatmeal and cereal, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, dry milk, baby food, diapers, small boxes of juice and cereal, pop-up cans of meat and fruits, apple sauce, raisins and nutritional bars. Disposable eating utensils, small toiletries and paper shopping and grocery bags are also welcome.

For more information contact UCM at 703-768-7106



Giant Food shopper Blair Beander is thanked by UCM volunteer Kathleen Fitzgerald for his grocery bag of food donation to UCM last Saturday afternoon.

PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

great pain and loss," wrote Dale.

Dale and Hudgins did not speak to each other directly; each issued public statements.

Last month, sophomore Nick Stuban died a few weeks after he had been forced to leave Woodson High School for Fairfax High School because of an infraction. In 2009, South Lakes High School junior Josh Anderson took his life a few hours before he expected to be expelled from the entire Fairfax County school system at disciplinary hearing.

According to last year's Fairfax County Youth Survey, 14 percent of local students had considered suicide and 3.6 percent had attempted suicide at least once. The youth survey shows that students who report abusing substances also tend to report considering suicide and attempting suicide at a higher rate, according to Dale.

"There is no link between the tragic suicides that we have had and the disciplinary process. ... I have knowledge of both cases that I can't share with you and there is zero evidence to support that. None," said Dale in an interview.

JOSH'S PARENTS disagree with Dale's assessment.

"Honestly, the superintendent's response was very mystifying to me," said Tim Anderson, Josh's father. "To say there is nothing that connects the suicide and depres-

sion to the disciplinary procedure, we believe it is unconscionable to say that. We believe it is unconscionable to not look [at the disciplinary process]."

Tim Anderson said his family and other people close to Josh believe the emotional strain of the disciplinary hearing and facing expulsion from all Fairfax schools contributed to the teenager's death.

"Obviously it happened on the eve of his second hearing. Whether it was the number one cause or the number five cause, I don't know. But it got him closer than he needed to be to that place. I don't think it is by coincidence that it happened the day before his second hearing," said Tim Anderson in an interview Feb. 15.

The Andersons wonder how Dale might have acquired enough "knowledge" about their son to make any conclusion about the impact of the disciplinary process on Josh's suicide.

"No one from Fairfax County [schools] has ever talked to us about Josh's death. No one from the superintendent's office has ever discussed it with us. If you are really concerned about kids and families in Fairfax County, wouldn't it be the right thing to at least send a condolence card in these cases?" said Tim Anderson.

He added that Dale appears to be more concerned with protect-

ing the school system from liability or a class action lawsuit than addressing the shortfalls of the disciplinary process.

The Andersons' limited contact with the county board on this issue has been a much more positive experience. Hudgins contacted the family before she made her proposal to the county board, asking for input on the issue from Tim Anderson and to make sure he was comfortable with a reference to Josh's death in her written statement. "Cathy Hudgins — I really appreciate all the things she said. I don't appreciate the approach that Jack Dale took," said Tim Anderson.

School Board member Tina Hone (At-large) started pushing for a detailed examination of the process last October.

Hone said it is difficult for her to even deduce what problems might exist in the current system because the administration has never provided her with comprehensive data related to student suspensions and expulsions. Other school board members have also been reluctant to spend time looking potential reforms until they have more information about the effectiveness of the current system, she said.

"We need to see the data. But what I have gotten is stonewalling and stalling on this [from school staff]," said Hone.

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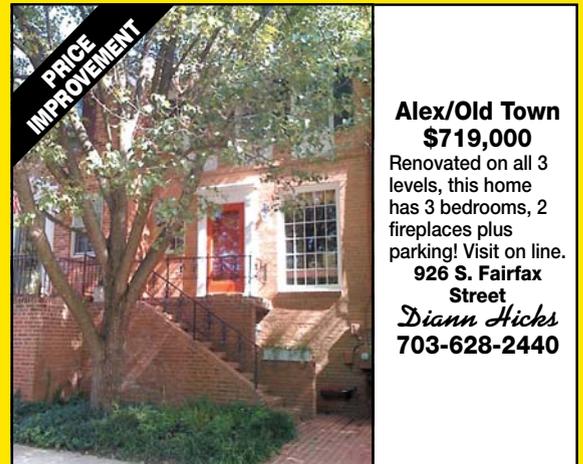
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Healthy Dating Workshop for Teens

In observance of February's Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, 12 youth leaders of the TeenSpace Youth Mentoring And Leadership project at UCM's Sacramento Neighborhood Center in partnership with the President and Founder of Mount Vernon High School's L.A. Ladies Club, Christalyn Soloman, engaged 35 teens residing in Creekside and Sacramento neighborhoods. Twenty adults also attended, including representatives from Fairfax County's neighborhood and community services, UCM, school officials and mentors.

Discussions revolved around healthy dating relationships at the workshop on Feb. 12. It began with a Valentine's brunch and was followed by the premier of a video created by the TeenSpace participants entitled, "Teenage Diamonds In The Rough."

Special guest presenters included Mattie Palmore and Kari



From left: Mattie Palmore, Deirdre Johnson, Seema Zeya, Kari Warren, Sally B. Waller and Jackie Winborne

Warren, founders of the Mt. Vernon Women's Group; Seema Zeyas, Fairfax County's domestic violence prevention coordinator; Blanca Vasquez, director of UCM's Community Center in Creekside; Sally B. Waller, director of UCM's

Sacramento Neighborhood Center and founder of the TeenSpace Project; and Jackie Winborne, whose story made national news when her daughter Shaquita Bell was murdered in 1996.

County To Consider Costco Proposal

FROM PAGE 1

right." That means the county would be unable to make requirements that the developer make improvements to traffic intersections or stormwater runoff, a worst-case scenario that played out recently at King's Crossing in the Mount Vernon District.

"If I had my druthers, I would prefer to see something other than another big-box retailer along the corridor," said Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland, adding that he did not believe a Costco was smart growth. "I have major concerns about the traffic this will generate."

Hyland said the traffic estimates he's seen show the new Costco will add about 5,000 additional cars a day to a corridor that's already overburdened. Many see the traffic-clogged corridor as an existential problem, discouraging developers of mixed-use properties from locating along the corridor until transportation improvements alleviate some of the gridlock. But that's at least 20 years away, said Del. Scott Surovell (D-44), so the Costco is the best thing that could happen until those improvements are made.

"In the short-term, I don't think it's realistic to think we could expect anything better than the proposal that's in front of us," said Surovell. "In the long-term, this is not the kind of development that's going to revitalize the corridor."

LAST YEAR, the developer approached the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association about a proposal that would replace the old abandoned Multiplex movie theater with a new Costco. But the original site plan called for loading docks facing Richmond Highway, which was summarily rejected by the community. Now the developer is ready to move forward with a modified proposal, one that has already achieved some support from the business community.

"While this may not be the 'highest and best' use of this land, it is a substantial investment in the economic re-development of Richmond Highway," said



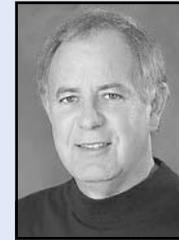
PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE GAZETTE

The Multiplex has been closed since summer 2007.

Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce President Michael Gailliot in a letter to the editor of the Gazette. "The Multiplex site has been vacant for months and has been an eyesore and public safety nuisance while the owners waited for a development proposal."

Many supporters of revitalization along the corridor feel that Costco is the best possible deal they can get right now. Although it's not the idea land use for the future, they say, it would be unrealistic to expect a developer to finance high-end residential units or expensive mixed-use proposal given the current transportation limitations. And with General Assembly and the governor strapped for cash, funding for widening Richmond Highway or adding light rail is at least a generation away. Many people say that means accepting yet another big-box store along the corridor in order to reap the short-term benefits.

"They have been a good neighbor in other areas," said Mount Vernon Council co-chairman Al Bommann, adding that he was speaking for himself not the council. "So I would assume they would do the same thing here."



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Lovely 5 bedroom, 3.5 bath home on a spectacular .48 wooded lot in prestigious Woodland Park. Stunning sun room addition in 2006. Cherry cabinets & corian counters in large remodeled kitchen and updated baths, freshly painted interior and newer energy efficient replacement windows. Spacious double carport with ample storage. Community boat ramp for water access. 5 mins to Ft. Belvoir, 15 to Metro & Old Town, 25 to Natl Airport & 30/35 to Pentagon/D.C.



Alex/Riverside Estates \$499,900
8405 Cherry Valley Lane

Lovely 4BR, 2.5BA brick split w/garage & spectacular sun room addition which overlooks a lg, landscaped yard backing to a private, wooded sanctuary. Furnace & A/C replaced in 2001 & newer energy efficient windows thru out. Kit appliances & counter tops replaced in the 2000's. Good paint, beautiful hwd floors accent a meticulously maintained home. 5 mins to Ft. Belvoir, commute to Alex, Ntl Airport, Pentagon/D.C. via GW Pkwy. This is a GEM!



Alex/Westgate \$659,900
9010 Volunteer Drive

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OPINION



Popcorn to Embassy in Baghdad

Cub Scout Pack 888, based in the Mt. Vernon area of Alexandria, recently sent popcorn to those serving at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Pack member Brandon Latham's father Mike is serving in the Embassy's Regional Security Office. In this photo Mike Latham is joined by Deputy Chief of Mission Stuart Jones and representatives from the Defense Attaché's office and the Marine Security Detachment as they pose with the popcorn and picture of Pack 888.

George Washington: A Moderate Man

BY LINDA T. "TODDY" PULLER
STATE SENATOR (D-36)

In recognition of the 279th anniversary of the Birth of George Washington, Feb. 22, 2011:

George Washington was perhaps the most complex of any of our founding fathers. He began his career as a surveyor. Fought in the French and Indian War. Served in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Led a somewhat disparate fighting force in the Revolutionary War to victory, and helped forge a national government to bring the 13 colonies together. He was also one of our foremost business entrepreneurs.

The newly released book entitled "Washington A Life" by Ron Chernow explores the complexity of this formidable leader researching voluminous documents penned by Washington himself or recollections left by those who knew him.

Chernow calls "Washington the most famously elusive figure in American history."

He describes a man who trained himself to exhibit "granite self control in his public actions while personally being a man of sensitivity and passion." His "cradle to grave" biography is one of the most complete works to date of George Washington, the man.

The exciting news at Washington's home, Mount Vernon, is the building of a new library to bring as many of George Washington's manuscripts and other archives together as possible for scholarly research. The Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington's life will provide the opportunity of indepth research unveiling "relevance for our lives today and for those in the future." James Rees, president of Mount Vernon explains: "The library task force challenged us to find ways to build a beautiful



refuge for the scholar who really wants to delve into much more than the writings of Washington, but also into his personality."

Chernow writes of a moderate man summed up well in a letter by another Virginian Thomas Jefferson after Washington resigned as commander in chief of the American Revolutionary army. "The moderation and virtue of a single character ... probably prevented this

revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish."

George Washington, great leader, founding father, business leader, and personal man of Virginia, evolved in his thinking that a strong central government was necessary to protect the states. He feared that without that "liberty would descend into anarchy."

Today we remember George Washington, the moderate man who led a revolution to protect our individual and states rights and in doing so launched the greatest democracy in the world.

BULLETIN BOARD

ONGOING

Separated? Divorced? Widowed? The Rebuilding Program helps people who are separated, divorced, widowed and want to move on with their lives. The nine-week program starts Sunday, Feb. 27 and meets Sundays from 5:30 to 8 p.m., at St. Martin DePorres Center in Alexandria. A \$45 fee covers book and other expenses. Contact Carie Schaffer at 703-519-1751 or email CopingRebuilding@hotmail.com.

Fort Ward Museum is registering for its annual Civil War

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 7

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U.S. 1 Transit Study Advances

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)



This session of the General Assembly will end soon and we have a full plate this last week. We will vote on the de-regulation of consumer telephone service, revisions to the Governor's Transportation Plan, the expansion of car title

RICHMOND REPORT

lending, the strengthening community-based care for developmentally disabled adults,

changes to the state retirement plan, loosening advertising restrictions on liquor, the appointment of two Supreme Court Justices and we have a big budget battle looming.

Here is an update. Senator Toddy Puller and I are very close to passing a resolution to authorize the U.S. 1 Transit Study. It cleared the Senate and two House committees unanimously and will be before the House of Delegates for a vote on Feb. 22. There is also language in the Senate budget to lock in funding for the study. Senator Puller and I are also working with the Governor Bob McDonnell and his administration to ensure that the language is included in the final budget, and they have been extremely helpful.

My legislation to close a DUI (driving under the influence) loophole clarifying that Commonwealth Attorneys are allowed to participate in first offense refusal prosecutions passed the House and Senate unanimously and is waiting signature by the Governor. If this bill becomes law, prosecutors will be able to prosecute both the DUI and the Refusal charge.

Both the House and Senate approved my bill to correct a typo in the school bus passing statute. I asked the Senate to add an emergency clause after the Fairfax County Police reported that school bus passing incidents are up and that four children have been struck this year en route to school. The Senate agreed and that bill is also awaiting the Governor's signature.

The House has passed two bills that Del. Mark Keam introduced for me due to individual member filing limits. One would exempt computer forensic services from private investigator licensing as recommended by the American Bar Association. Ambiguity in the law has created unnecessary litigation in Virginia divorces and criminal cases. The second bill would facilitate the prosecution of unlicensed contractors by clarifying that violations of Fairfax County ordinances are subject to the same

statute of limitations as violations in state law.

I also introduced a bill to authorize the licensing of home energy auditors. Licensing will help ensure that auditors have a minimum level of training and help consumers understand the minimum services to be provided in an audit. Even though my bill was supported by Governor McDonnell, a House committee tabled it. However, I am working with a Republican senator, Frank Wagner, from Virginia Beach and he conformed his bill in the Senate to mine.

The Senate passed that legislation unanimously, and it has passed two House of Delegates' committees. It will go to the Governor this week if it is passed by the House.

Five of my bills were tabled to either be studied over the summer or introduced next year after further consideration by the Administration. Here is a short summary of those bills:

- ❖ Requires that seats on the Commonwealth Transportation Board be allocated by current population instead of 1930 population numbers.

- ❖ Requires that all committee and subcommittee meetings be digitally recorded and put on the internet.

- ❖ Authorizes a system to reward individuals who disclose or "whistle blow" on tax cheats, paralleling an existing federal program.

- ❖ Streamlines paperwork and filings in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts.

- ❖ Directs the Department of Social Services to study ways to enhance child care subsidies.

- ❖ Prohibits gifts and political contributions to local government officials and employees while employees are considering government contracts or procurements.

I appreciate all of the feedback you have given me during this session, including the 730 survey responses you returned. Please continue to send me your ideas and views. Some of my best ideas come from the people of the 44th District. You can learn more about my work on your behalf on my blog – The Dixie Pig (scottsurovell.blogspot.com).

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

Kids' Camp, a week of learning and fun for boys and girls ages 8 to 12. Participants explore the lives of Civil War soldiers and civilians with marching, drilling, reenactor guest appearances, games, crafts and other activities. Civil War Kids' Camp runs Monday, June 27, through Friday, July 1, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Fort Ward, 4301 West Braddock Road. Call 703-746-4848 or visit www.fortward.org.

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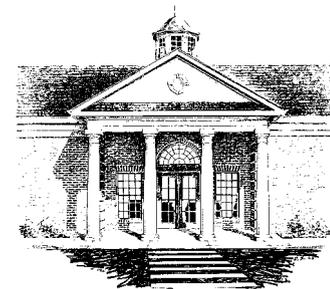
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OPINION

Time to Talk about 'Discipline'

Schools need to consider the best interests of the student.

Our hearts go out to the parents of Nick Stuben, a student at Woodson who died of suicide last month after an ordeal of navigating a suspension and disciplinary process that clearly has gone awry.

Nick was not the first local student to suffer from the process. In March 2009, Josh Anderson, then a junior at South Lakes High School, died of suicide the day before he was to face expulsion from the Fairfax County school system at a disciplinary hearing.

It is true that a teenage suicide never has only one cause; the students' deaths are not the "fault" of disciplinary policies. But no one can deny that the disciplinary process contributed to the unhappiness that these two students experienced.

We have heard now from many parents whose teenagers (and even younger children) have suffered through an inflexible and adversarial process that separates students from support systems and healthy activities and even schoolwork at exactly the moment that they need them the most.

Students who have not been in serious trouble before suddenly find themselves isolated at home, unable to participate in sports or clubs, unable to interact with peers or teachers on a regular basis. The results have been devastating for many families.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Supports Costco Proposal

To the Editor:

The Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce supports the proposed Costco development on Richmond Highway recently approved by the Lee District Land Use Planning Committee, at the site of the former Multiplex.

While this may not be the "highest and best" use of this land, it is a substantial investment in the economic re-development of Richmond Highway. The Multiplex site has been vacant for months and has been an eyesore and public safety nuisance while the owners waited for a development proposal. Bringing a Costco to this site brings almost \$24 million in new investment to Richmond Highway and 300 new, well-paying jobs to our community.

Costco has shown its willingness to work with the community to accommodate concerns about potential traffic impacts. They have presented an environmentally responsible plan for development.

Many people are seeking a dialogue to understand and hopefully modify the current approach.

Del. Kaye Kory introduced legislation in the Virginia House of Delegates that would have required schools to notify parents if their student was in trouble that might lead to suspension. The bill failed, but the idea that such legislation might be needed is eye-opening. Fairfax schools opposed it.

Caroline Hemenway founded Fairfax Zero Tolerance Reform, a community group that advocates for changes to Fairfax's approach to disciplinary matters, years ago after her family's ordeal with suspension years ago.

School board member Tina Hone (At-large) has been asking for data about suspensions and expulsions from schools staff, but reports that she has been unable to get good answers, leaving open questions about minority students being over-represented in students who have been suspended, among other issues.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Feb. 8 to "make outreach efforts" to the local school system about student disciplinary tactics, hoping to begin a friendly and ongoing discussion about possible reforms to the schools' current system.

Fairfax County Superintendent Jack Dale made it clear he had no intention of discussing the disciplinary system with the county. Dale said in a statement that the resolution demonstrated a "serious misunderstanding" of the school system's current disciplinary policies.

Note that this exchange involved dueling "statements," not discussion.

Their reputation as a quality retailer will draw many customers to the area and benefit all the businesses on Richmond Highway.

We urge our supervisors and the community to support the proposed Costco development and in doing so maintain the momentum for economic development on Richmond Highway.

Michael Gailliot
President
Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce

Talented Docents

To the Editor:

I have read all the negative articles that have been published and find them one sided. There are nearly 100 volunteers at Gunston Hall who believe in continuing the mission to educate the public about George Mason. Although the termination of Denise McHugh was a surprise to us all when it occurred, it was not a shock to some. To be honest the majority

of the volunteers were tired of her manipulative management style. In the recent past, she increasingly added useless gimmicks to tours which detracted from their real purpose. In addition, she often double-booked tours which produced negative feedback from both docents and teachers. She was continually calling the docents at the last minute to help with an idea she just came up with, unbeknownst to the director or staff. Many of us complained to her to no avail. Many times I heard the comment, "she is pushing the volunteers too much." But this seems to be forgotten due to her termination. The majority of the complainers should read the book: "Who moved my Cheese" as they are not good with change. This same group has been against Mr. Reese from day one of his arrival and has done whatever they can to put him and Gunston Hall in a negative light.

I would like to briefly fill in some of the information that was left out as to Mr. Reese's treatment of animals at Gunston Hall. The poor cat that he had euthanized was at

Read On

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: BROKEN OR PERFECT?

Jack Dale criticizes concerns linking teen suicides to suspensions.

MONDAY, FEB. 21, 2011

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=348482&paper=72&cat=104>

MANTUA TEENAGER REMEMBERED

Nick Stuben, 15, participated in Woodson football, Boy Scouts.

THURSDAY, JAN. 27, 2011

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=347811&paper=63&cat=104>

ONE STRIKE, THEY'RE OUT

Some families call the school system's polices on marijuana punitive and ineffective.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 17, 2010

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=344330&paper=82&cat=104>

Dale is correct when he suggests a broader approach of tackling teen depression in general, but this must be in addition to grappling with the challenges in the disciplinary process.

"I believe our efforts would be far more productive if we focused on the incidence of depression among our county youth and how our agencies can work together to tackle this problem," wrote Dale in his statement.

In the meantime, if you have a teenager in your family, it might be worth letting him or her know that they shouldn't sign any statements admitting they've done anything wrong at school without having the school call you first.

—MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

least 17 years old and had to have a vet attend to him twice a day. As to the farm animals, unfortunately, some of the sheep were attacked by dogs and had to be euthanized. The rest of the animals were found homes for their safety. The complainers will tell you that the animals were an important part of Gunston Hall. But, who was there to look after these animals after hours, when the volunteers were safe at home? No one, as there is no caretaker and has not been for some time. But the complainers were happy to have the animals just hang out until they could bring a group of 3rd graders to see a sheep for a few minutes. This seems crueler than anything Mr. Reese has done to the animals.

Gunston Hall has a lot of talented docents that not only provide school tours for children, but also do living history interpretation for these tours, storytelling and 18th century cooking on a daily basis. While the Gunstonians are talented and dedicated group, they are only at GH two or three

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14

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www.MountVernonGazette.com

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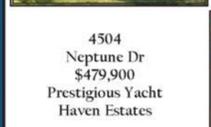
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Parenting Advice from the Experts

“Nurture and respect teens, set and enforce rules and listen.”

BY BONNIE HOBBS
 THE GAZETTE



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE GAZETTE

At the outset of their talk to local parents of teen-agers, Michele Tureaud, Barbara Cohen and Wanda Holloway made it clear they have firsthand knowledge of their subject.

“Between the three of us, we have nine children,” said Tureaud. “We each have two boys and a girl, so we’ve lived your life.”

Speaking recently in the Centreville High media center, they provided information and insight on teen-agers and gave advice on how to parent them. Tureaud is a behavior-intervention instructor with Fairfax County Public Schools’ Cluster VII (the Centreville pyramid), and Cohen and Holloway hold the same positions with the McLean and Mount Vernon pyramids, respectively.

“We started these talks, the last school year, for the Parent Resource Center,” said Tureaud. “And a lot of our information is based on Michael Bradley’s book, ‘Yes, Your Teens are Crazy.’”

To better understand how to communicate with their teens, she said, parents need to understand where they are neurologically and developmentally. “Living with a 16-year-old is a mystery because you never know what to expect, from one day to the next,” said Holloway.

Agreeing, Cohen said, “The frontal lobe of a teen-ager’s brain isn’t fully developed, yet — which is why they sometimes appear crazy to us. So their brains are unpredictable and complicated.”

The brain does most of its maturing between ages 12-20, she said; it’s not fully developed before age 25. “Having this information helps us understand why they’re behaving as they are, so we shouldn’t take it so seriously or personally. It has nothing to do with our parenting skills.”

From left are Fairfax County Public Schools behavior-intervention specialists Wanda Holloway, Michele Tureaud and Barbara Cohen.

THEREFORE, explained Cohen, teen-age behavior is often characterized by the following elements: A lack of common sense, thinking that seems rigid; decisions that seem irrational, disorganization, impulsiveness, mood changes, inadequate emotional control and risk-taking.

“So our kids will demonstrate all these behaviors at once, or change from one to another, in the blink of an eye,” said Tureaud. “At parties, your kids are going to be faced with stress, decision-making and peer pressure. So, as parents, you have to make sure they know what is right.”

Children take a great deal of risks, beginning in eighth grade, said Cohen. Added Tureaud: “They’re demonstrating their independence at ages 15, 16 and 17 and want to show you they can handle whatever happens.” And, Cohen told the parents, “You do want them to be able to break away and make smart decisions on their own.”

“Listen to your children, even as they’re shouting,” advised Tureaud. “You can either escalate or de-escalate a heated discussion. Apply the 15-second rule, waiting this long — even 10 seconds — before responding. That way, you don’t yell at them and make them defensive and your conversation will be more productive.”

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MOUNT VERNON
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Mount Vernon Girls Have Bright Future

Majors win district title, region game with no seniors.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

The Mount Vernon girls basketball team was starting to shake loose from a pesky McLean team when Elizabeth Owusuwaa let fly with a 3-point attempt from in front of the Majors' bench, holding her hand in the air as the ball sailed toward the bucket. Directly behind her, Mount Vernon head coach Courtney Coffey stood on the sideline with his hand raised, willing the ball into the net.

Swish!

Owusuwaa's 3-pointer gave Mount Vernon a 13-point lead early in the fourth quarter. McLean made one final run, pulling within six, but the Majors held on for a 69-57 victory on Feb. 21 during the opening round of the Northern Region tournament at Mount Vernon High School. The Majors accomplished their goal of winning a regional game and advanced to the quarterfinals to face T.C. Williams.

Owusuwaa's "a really good shooter," Coffey said. "Even when she misses, it looks good. I'm always animated on the sidelines. Not too long ago, I was a player in college, so I coach like I'm playing. Every now and then I may throw the hand up because, for me, it lets the girls know that I'm here with



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon freshman Samantha Porter (24) scored 10 points during the Majors regional win over McLean on Monday.

them. At the end of the day, we're all in this thing together."

The region victory, which improved Mount Vernon's record to 21-4, came three days after the Majors defeated Edison 57-54 to win the National District championship. While Mount Vernon is experiencing success in the present, the team's future figures to be even brighter. The Majors are an athletic and aggressive team without a se-

nior on the roster.

"The sky's the limit," Coffey said. "These girls, they work so hard. Right now, their mindset is they're taking it game by game. But because they're so young, I know they're looking ahead and that's why I'm always trying to pull them back to reality like, 'Look, we've got to take this one game at a time.' But it speaks well for the future. I think the future here for girls basketball at Mount Vernon is very bright."

On Monday, five Majors scored in double figures, led by sophomore guard Taylor Dunham's 17 points. Sophomore guard Kelly Loftus scored 16 points, sophomore guard Tiffany Webster finished with 11 and freshman forward Samantha Porter and junior guard Owusuwaa each added 10. The Majors roster includes two juniors, four sophomores and four freshmen.

Mount Vernon led 18-7 after the first quarter, but McLean battled back, outscoring the Majors 17-10 in the second period to pull within four at halftime. The Highlanders eventually cut the deficit to two during the third quarter, but couldn't get over the hump.

While the Majors are talented, Coffey said the team's youth can show in times of adversity.

"I just told them to calm down," Coffey said of his instructions while McLean was chipping away at the Mount Vernon lead. "I have a young team and when things start

going the opposite way, the first thing they do is they hang their heads, they start pouting, so I had to call a couple timeouts."

Porter kept her cool throughout the second quarter. While McLean narrowed its deficit, Porter kept the Highlanders from taking control of the game. The freshman attacked the rim and scored eight of the team's 10 points in the quarter, including a nifty reverse layup.

"She has a really unique skill set — and she's a freshman," Coffey said. "This girl is really, really going to be good. She's just starting to scratch the surface. There were times when McLean really made some huge runs and it was her buckets that kind of negated those shots."

Porter attributed the team's strong on-court chemistry to getting along off the hardwood.

"At the beginning of the year, we were kind of apart," Porter said, "but lately we've been doing stuff together

and getting to know each other more. ... I think we're extremely confident. We're really, really excited to get this far."

Regardless of how far Mount Vernon advances, the 2010-11 season has been full of accomplishment — something that figures to continue for several years.

"I feel like in the future we'll be really strong," Loftus said. "We're so young, everybody underestimates us. We just have to prove everyone wrong and keep going further."

"The sky's the limit. These girls, they work so hard."

— Mount Vernon head girls basketball coach Courtney Coffey

Bullard Leads Majors to Victory

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

The coaching staff of the Mount Vernon boys basketball team throughout the season has pestered 6-foot-4 Juwan Bullard about using his physical talents at the offensive end — especially if an opponent is focused on stopping first-team All-Region guard Jesse Konadu.

"We've been on our hands and knees begging to [him] shoot the ball through much of the season," head coach Alfonso Smith said, "and he's reluctantly done so."

On Monday, with Mount Vernon's season on the line, Bullard rid himself of rim-attacking reluctance. He scored a career-high 29 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and the Majors defeated Fairfax 77-63 during the opening round of the Northern Region tournament at Mount Vernon High School. Bullard scored 12 points in the first quarter, 21 in the first half and helped the Majors secure a quarterfinal matchup with Annandale.

"It's the playoffs," Bullard said, "so I knew had to step my game up and help my team

move on to the next round. We know it's one [loss] and done."

Fairfax pulled to within one with 3 minutes to go in the second quarter. Mount Vernon's Michael Lewis responded with a basket before Bullard outscored Fairfax 7-2 during the final 2 minutes, 12 seconds of the half, giving the Majors a 38-30 lead at halftime. Mount Vernon led by at least eight for the rest of the game.

"We've seen the potential in him," Smith said. "We've been waiting for the potential — that light going off. When we're seeing those junk defenses [aimed at stopping Konadu], it's important that other guys step up. We have a lot of confidence that somebody can, it's just a matter of whom."

Lewis scored 10 points for Mount Vernon and Smith praised the junior's defensive play. The coach also said senior Justin Miser played well.

While the supporting cast had some strong performances, Konadu, the National District Player of the Year, also had a big night, scoring 22 points.

Three days earlier, Mount Vernon defeated Falls Church 81-49 to win the program's third consecutive National Dis-



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon senior Juwan Bullard scored a career-high 29 points against Fairfax on Monday.

trict championship.

"I think our program," Smith said, "is one now where people expect some excellent things from us."

Floyd Displays Flair For Dramatic

BY RICH SANDERS
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon High junior wrestler Dusty Floyd recalls watching his peers accepting their place-finish medals and taking the awards stand at last year's Virginia State AAA wrestling championships. While Floyd, then a sophomore, had qualified for the 2010 state tournament, he had not done well enough once there to earn a top-eight medal.

But that moment served as high motivation for Floyd, who this winter season was determined to earn a medal at the state championships.

"I remember last year seeing the kids at the podium at states," said Floyd. "I knew I could get there."

Last weekend, he accomplished that mission by finishing a solid fifth place in the

SEE FLOYD, PAGE 19

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

times a year, and have little contact with the school children.

Maybe your next article should be about the positive side of Gunston Hall and how we are moving forward.

Brenda Hall

Docent, Cook, Gunstonian and Board Member

Proud of Program

To the Editor:

In regards to volunteers leaving Gunston Hall: Ninety plus dedicated volunteer docents continue to conduct daily school tours for students who visit the plantation. The Gunston Hall Docent's Association has been serving in this capacity for 52 years and has no intention of walking! These capable volunteers also take part in all other public events under the direction of Frank Barker, assistant education coordinator, and with the support of Director David Reese. We are quite proud of our association with Gunston Hall and its educational program.

Shawn Zurlo

Chairman

Gunston Hall Docent Association
South Run, Fairfax Station

Appreciates Living History

To the Editor:

As a resident of the Mt. Vernon area and a former employee of Gunston Hall Plantation, I was dismayed to read of the dispute at Gunston Hall and the elimination of the position of education coordinator. The historic home itself is an architectural treasure, and the grounds are peaceful and welcoming. However, it is the educational component of the plantation's daily operation and special programs that makes the plantation relevant. Director David Reese's decision to apparently curtail the educational work of Gunston Hall is short-sighted. As for his seeming disregard for the living history program, well, it's surprising. This group of committed individuals is what brings George Mason and his era to life for all of us to better appreciate and understand.

Kathleen W. VanOrden

Mount Vernon

Need for Change

To the Editor:

The following letter was addressed to Gov. Robert McDonnell.

I am writing on a serious matter that I am not taking lightly in any way. I am asking you to request the resignation of Mr. David Reese, the director of Gunston Hall. After several years of complaints and reviewing a very subpar performance, I have concluded for many reasons that Mr. Reese has done a terrible disservice to the mag-

nificent historic site I have grown up with and known and supported for many years.

To summarize, my reasons, which I will document, Mr. Reese has:

- ❖ Alienated the local community, docents, volunteers and staff and has been mostly inaccessible and made Gunston Hall inaccessible for the community and Northern Virginia residents;

- ❖ Has overseen a decline in revenues; activities and visitors based on historical data and underperformed; and

- ❖ Lacked a vision for Gunston Hall to modernize its performance, utilize technology and sought to publicize and educate the public at large about one of our most historic treasures in America.

For instance, in 1999 and 2000, Gunston Hall's tax returns show nearly \$1 million in revenues, yet the average during his term starting in 2003 has been just \$588,000 annually. Under his tenure, revenues have decreased by nearly 40 percent. Total income from 1999 to 2008 dropped almost in half at a time when every effort should be made to increase such support.

One measure of effort can be seen in Gunston Hall's revenue generating activities, which also involved weddings and events, where unrelated business income reached a peak of \$50,000 in 2001 (after 9-11), remodeling was done and Director Reese discontinued revenue generating activities almost entirely resulting in losses in four out of six years with the peak revenue bringing in only a little over \$2,000. Gunston Hall has an expensive and modern kitchen that could be used for outside groups to rent for meetings, conferences and weddings, which gets very little use.

Most disturbing was his excuse that weddings lost money (because they had a full-time caterer on staff) and did not use the best model. The working farm was self sustaining and was shut down. Reese's vision unfortunately shut out the use of Gunston Hall for many outside groups, and visitation numbers also reflect this.

It is clear that Director Reese has no entrepreneurial capability at a time that it is critical to be drawing new visitors and competing with so many other historic sites. Other local venues now have profitable and substantial wedding business, such as River Farm, Stoneybrooke Mansion, and Collingwood on the Potomac.

Director Reese's lack of understanding and utilizing technology is also striking. Portions of the website are nearly three years out of date; reports and essential data are not available or are the names of the leadership or contact information for them. There is no way to donate on line and little usable information. While Mount Vernon just a few miles away brings in hundreds of bus tours, Director Reese has discouraged this and purposely not marketed George Mason's home and history to hundreds of thousands of Washington D.C. area tourists. The only good bus business is the school bus visits generated by the dismissed education coordinator.

In terms of his stewardship, or lack thereof, many of the hardwoods were clear cut without permits and reportedly disposed of via dumping, including hundreds of dogwoods, redbuds and crepe myrtles. Plantings in the

boxwood gardens below were removed as they were deemed "non historic" because they were planted in the 19th century after George Mason. However, they were a favorite of visitors and the weddings held there still bring fond memories to local families. Some of the 19th century boxwoods were removed as well as other trees and plants.

The farm supervisor was forced out and the successful farm breeding program eliminated because Director Reese, unlike Mount Vernon, viewed the working farm and history (a very popular tour program) as a "petting zoo."

Knowing that you have heard of the firing of so many top employees and the education director who brought in nearly 50 percent of all visitors through her efforts over 20 years, I will not dwell on personnel or temperament issues that have been documented and are under legal review.

In short Governor, I grew up with Gunston Hall and knew Directors Jameson Parker to Tom Lainhoff, and this director is a total disaster. I urge you to find a Virginian with vision and entrepreneurial skills to better match the genius and legacy so deserving of Virginia's George Mason.

Robert v. L. Hartwell

Many Remain Committed

To the Editor:

Michael Lee Pope's recent article, "Living History on Deathbed," presents a very biased view of the situation at Gunston Hall. While all are saddened by the termination of Denise McHugh, the nearly 100 volunteer docents who also worked under Ms. McHugh remain active and committed to the mission of educating the public about George Mason by providing quality tours (many of which have a living history component) to the thousands of school children who visit each year.

Becky Laudenslager

Gunston Hall Docents Association
Burke

'Guilty Until Proven Innocent'

To the Editor:

Involvement in the civic arena is a continuous educational process, particularly if one wants to know that the positions one takes are based upon a correct understanding of the law and the facts. For example, I recently learned that just because a County map depicts a Resource Protection Area (RPA) on a property doesn't actually mean there is one there. This revelation is pertinent to the County map for Westgrove Park which depicts an alleged perennial stream traversing the property with a 100-foot RPA buffer to each side of it.

Westgrove PACK members who have been visiting Westgrove Park for several years told me that for most of the year, the stream bed is dry. This piqued my curiosity — why does the County map show an RPA at Westgrove Park? The answer to this question is complicated. Under Chapter 118 of the County

Code, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (CBPO), an RPA is defined as including one or more of (1) a tidal wetland, (2) a tidal shore, (3) a water body with perennial flow, (4) a non-tidal wetland connected by surface flow and contiguous to a tidal wetland or water body with perennial flow and (5) a buffer area consisting of any land within a major floodplain as well as any land within 100 feet of one features (1) to (4). There are no tidal wetlands or tidal shores at Westgrove Park. The tidal floodplain (10 foot elevation line) is located on an adjacent property. If there is a non-tidal wetland on the property, it is remote from the area where Westgrove PACK members want the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) to establish an off-leash dog area (OLDA) as an interim use. I consulted with a licensed surveyor who calculated that the stream drains 61 acres of land — the County's public facilities manual (PFM) requires a minimum of 360 acres of drainage for a "major floodplain." Thus, if the stream is not perennial, there is no RPA near the proposed OLDA.

Based upon my conversations with a County storm water engineer and a County ecologist, if a property has a perennial stream shown on its RPA map, in order to remove that designation, the following steps must be taken pursuant to the PFM: (1) notification to adjacent neighbors, county staff and the supervisor's office of intent to investigate the issue; (2) consultation with a drought map provided by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to confirm that no drought condition exists in Fairfax County; (3) within a subsequent 40-day period during which the NOAA map must not confirm a drought condition, make two observations of the alleged perennial stream within the property in question, the observations to be taken 7 to 15 days apart.

By contrast, in order to designate a stream as perennial in the first place, as explained to me by the County staff members mentioned above, the County need only undertake one observation of the stream and it doesn't even have to occur at the subject property. County staff informed me that the designation on County maps of an RPA at Westgrove Park was based upon one observation of the stream on one day on which the NOAA map confirmed no drought condition, the observation occurring 500 feet from the Westgrove Park property, up the hill on the other side of Fort Hunt Road.

If ever there was a case for "guilty until proven innocent," this is it. I understand and appreciate the need to resolve doubts in favor of protecting the environment, but there is also the little matter of refraining from taking property rights without compensation (U.S. Constitution, Fifth Amendment). Designation of an RPA can adversely affect development rights. Based upon the observations of Westgrove PACK members over many years, I suspect the stream in Westgrove Park is not perennial and there is not an RPA on the property as it is represented on County maps.

H. Jay Spiegel

Mount Vernon



ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

Port City Presents Prejudice Play

Frank Pasqualino
directs solid cast.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY
THE GAZETTE

With a very satisfying production of a challenging morality play, the Port City Playhouse is hitting its stride in its new, intimate home off Quaker Lane. Running through March 6 at The Lab at Convergence, a multi-purpose room seating nearly a hundred, John Henry Redwood's play "No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs" puts the pain produced by prejudice on display.

The primary story of the play is of a loving black family living in a rural area of North Carolina in the late 1940s. The family had been terribly injured years before as a result of a crime that went unpunished due to the discriminatory attitudes of the time and place. Now, a similar atrocity has happened again but the victim, a happily married mother of two, tries a different approach to handling the tragedy in the hope of achieving a different result.

Actress Lolita-Marie gives heart, charm, warmth and intelligence to her portrayal of the mother, letting the audience understand the pain not only of having undergone such hateful violence but of the frustration and determination required by her effort to handle the tragedy in a new way. That this actress would give a performance of this quality is hardly surprising as she has quite a track record in local community theater. This year she is a nominee for the Washington Area Theatre Community Honor for outstanding lead actress in a play for her performance in Tantallon Community Players' "A Raisin in the Sun," and she won the honor two years ago for outstanding cameo in a play for "Doubt: A Parable" at the Elden Street Players.

This is Lolita-Marie's first performance with Port City Playhouse, as it is for DeJeanette Horne who plays her husband, and high school senior Marissa Moody and fifth-grader Aeshia Brown who play their children. Each is impressive and together they form a family portrait that engages the audience's heart. Add a striking performance in the strange role of a family aunt whose secrets emerge over time by Kecia A. Campbell, and the entire cast playing the extended family is commendable.

Hidden within the otherwise straightforward, if disturbing drama illustrating the injustice of racial subjugation, is an intriguing



PHOTO BY ARI MCSHERRY

Marissa Moody, DeJeanette Horne and Aeshia Brown (foreground); Lolita-Marie (background, right), in "No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs."

subplot exploring an aspect not often considered.

The one non-black character in the play is a Jewish man who has struck up a friendship with the family during a visit to northeast North Carolina while researching a fascinating topic. He's studying the psychological impact of discriminatory signs on subjugated people. In the wake of the Holocaust and its impact on the Jewish people, he's fascinated by the impact on blacks of being constantly exposed throughout the south to signs setting some facilities aside for whites only and others, usually visibly inferior, for blacks. He tells the story of a sign he saw once in Mississippi that gives the play its title: "No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs."

This intriguing subplot comes across as something of a digression, despite the impact of director Frank Pasqualino's opening the performance with a montage of photographs of such signs projected on a sheet drying on the laundry line of the family's house in the marvelously realistic set designed by Erin Cumbo. Perhaps the subplot fails to achieve the heft it should because the actor who performs it, David Berkenbilt, stumbles over some of the dialogue at times and is distractingly hesitant at others.

Still, the message gets across. Pasqualino has done a fine job of drawing solid performances in all the family roles. This is most notable with the two children who never seem to be rushing through lines or awkwardly awaiting a cue. They interact together with the solid sense of comfort and familiarity that is the mark of a family.

wardly awaiting a cue. They interact together with the solid sense of comfort and familiarity that is the mark of a family.

This is the second production of the company since it left the cavernous and often nearly empty Nannie J. Lee Center's auditorium for its new home. Under president Ron Field, Port City Playhouse is re-staking its claim to a reputation it once enjoyed as Alexandria's purveyor of serious, challenging community theater.



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.



Duck a la Cherry from Murphy's Irish Pub.

Cherry Challenge Winners Announced

The George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee announces the winners of its third-annual "Cherry Challenge," held Feb. 6-12 in 14 Alexandria restaurants. It featured cherry-inspired dishes, drinks, and desserts created by the restaurant chefs.

Participating in this year's contest were Food Matters, Hank's Oyster Bar, Seagar's, Shooter McGee's, Dishes of India, Tempo, Murphy's Irish Pub, St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, The Light Horse, and Rampart's, Pizzaiola Café on Fern, Fontaine Caffe and Creperie, King Street Blues Old Town.

For the third year in a row, Tempo Restaurant and Murphy's Irish Pub placed in the finals — Tempo with a winning salad, and Murphy's with its three-time winning duck entrée.

THE WINNERS:

Starters Category: Insalata di Ceresa e Mela di Fuji from Tempo Restaurant;

Entree Category: Duck a la Cherry from Murphy's Irish Pub;

Drinks Category: Sweet Cherry Rye from Food Matters;

Dessert Category: Cherry Kulfi (ice cream) from Dishes of India.

"With 93 ballots, the Sweet Cherry Rye from Food Matters was in a class of its own," says Ann Yaktine, of the new contender's cherry cocktail concoction. Food Matters did so well with its cocktail that it ran out of ballots on the sixth day of the challenge, and mixologist John Snopes ended up making up some blanks while he waited for more to be delivered.

Where & When

Port City Playhouse's production of "No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs" runs through March 6 at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 North Quaker Lane. Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., Sunday matinees at 3 p.m. and a special Tuesday evening performance at 8 p.m. on March 1. Tickets are \$16 - \$18. Call 703-838-2880 or log on to www.telgo.com/pcp/on_line_tickets.html.

New Route for Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade

The 30th Annual Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on Saturday, March 5 at 12:30 p.m. in the heart of Old Town Alexandria.

A new parade route has been established for 2011. The parade will start at the corner of King Street and Alfred Street, and proceed East down King Street to the corner of King Street and Lee Street. "We expect the new parade route to eliminate gaps between parade divisions and provide a first class experience for the tens of thousands

of people who come to Old Town to enjoy this great day," said Pat Troy, Ballyshaners chairman and parade master of ceremonies.

This year's parade will be lead by co-Grand Marshals Tom and Nancy VanCoverden, who are long-time supporters of the Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade.

In addition to the parade, festivities will include a Classic Car Show, held on Pitt Street between King and Cameron Streets beginning at 10 a.m., and a Fun Dog Show held in Mar-

ket Square, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

All events are free to the public. Parade organizers suggest using Metrorail to the King Street Metro stop, and walking 10 minutes East on King Street to the Parade Route.

All events are sponsored by the Ballyshaners — Gaelic for "Old Towners". A not-for-profit group, the Ballyshaners' goal is to promote and preserve Irish heritage through sponsorship of the Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Alexandria Irish Festival, held every summer.

ENTERTAINMENT

Living Legends Reception To Be Held March 17th

The Board of Directors of Living Legends of Alexandria will host the fourth annual Meet the Legends Reception on March 17 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Patent & Trademark Office, 600 Dulaney Street in Alexandria.

The 2011 Legends will be introduced in person. They include Mollie Abraham, Lynnwood Campbell, William Clayton, H. Stewart Dunn, Timothy S. Elliott, Jon Liss, Peter Lunt, Don Mela, Fran and Gant Redmon, Carlyle C. Connie Ring, Jack Taylor and Joseph F. Viar, Jr. All of 2011 nominees will also be introduced.

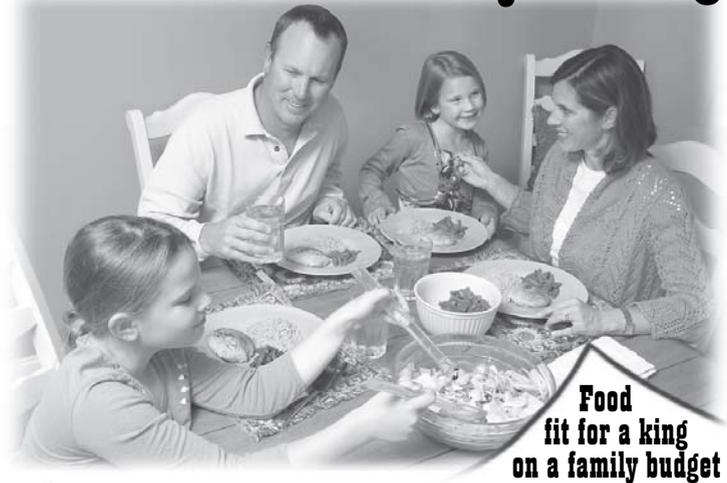
Special guests will be The Honorable William D. Euille, mayor of Alexandria and General George Washington as portrayed by Don DeHaven.

There will be complimentary beverages and light fare provided by Barrett's of Alexandria, Hard Times Cafe, Nickell's & Scheffler, Pork Barrel BBQ and Joe Theismann's Restaurant.

Tickets are \$35 in advance by March 11, \$45 at the door. Please RSVP by March 11. Complimentary Parking will be provided by Colonial Parking. Please send your payment to Living Legends, P.O. Box 10485, Alexandria, VA 22310.

For more information or to receive an invitation to cover the event, contact Mary Anne Weber at maweber@comcast.net or 703-629-3747.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/FEB. 24

Pre-Festival Concert. 7 p.m. The Mount Vernon High School orchestras perform in preparation for the district-wide orchestra assessment in March. At Mount Vernon High School's Little Theater. Contact the MVHS Orchestra Conductor, Timothy Gaffga, at TFGaffga@fcps.edu.

Short Story Discussion Group. 7 p.m. Will meet to talk about the introduction and first three short stories in *Short Shorts: An Anthology of the Shortest Stories*, edited by Howe and Howe. At Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Rd. Call Mark Schwartz at 703-746-1770.

"Oscar Night" Gala Benefit. 7 to 10 p.m. An evening of Hollywood glitz and glamour, featuring an Oscar Raffle, Silent Auction and Cocktail Buffet, the event promises to be a sellout! The event will raise funds for the Center for Alexandria's Children (CAC), a public-private partnership dedicated to the elimination of child abuse. Tickets start at \$125 each. Tickets are available at www.oscarnight@eventbrite.com or 703-746-6008. At Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria.

Story Time. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Designed for young children and caregivers, features story time and a craft. Fee is \$3/family. At the Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden. Call 703-548-1789. Visit www.leafendallhouse.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Life Line Screening. Get screened to reduce your risk of having a stroke or a bone fracture. Packages start at \$139. At Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 1608 Russell Road, Alexandria. To schedule an appointment, call 1-877-237-1287 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com.

Step Competition. 6 to 9 p.m. The event celebrates African American heritage and the art of stepping, a percussive style of dance originated by African American college students. Step teams from McLean High School and Poe and Sandburg Middle Schools, along with teams from Maryland and Virginia, will participate. At West Potomac High School.

Community Appreciation Day. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. Class demonstrations and family activities. At the Charles Houston Rec Center, 901 Wythe Street, Alexandria. Contact Shelia Whiting at sheila.whiting@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-5552.

Ensemble Gaudior. 7:30 p.m. Ensemble Gaudior presents "Barroca Nova" (Music in the Key of Light) – chamber music by Scarlatti, Leclair, Buxtehude, and Handel among others. Tickets are \$20/adults; \$15/seniors. At St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Call 703-395-2899 or visit www.ensemblegaudior.com.

Prohibition Night Fundraiser. 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets are \$45/advance; \$55/door. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronco St.,

Alexandria. Call 703-548-1789.

U.S. Army Concert Band. 7:30 p.m. Free. With guest artist Steve Houghton, percussion. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NOVA Campus, Alexandria. Visit www.usarmyband.com.

Learn About Bees. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$6. Find out how bees contribute to the human world and what you can do to attract them to your garden. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Call 703-222-4664.

History Lecture. 1 p.m. Cost is \$10. Historian Carroll R. Gibbs presents, "Whirlwind Coming: African Americans in the District and Alexandria during the Civil War." At Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road. Call the Museum at 703-746-4848 to make reservations. Visit www.fortward.org.

FEB. 26-27

Mattress Sale Fundraiser. Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday noon to 5 p.m. All sizes of mattresses available. A West Potomac High School All-Night Graduation fundraiser. At the WPHS Main Lobby, 6500 Quander Road, Alexandria. All profits go directly to the senior class fund.

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

Learn About Bones. 2 to 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$6. Every skeleton has a secret. Search the clues left behind in animal skulls, teeth and bones. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Call 703-222-4664.

MONDAY/FEB. 28

"Alexandria and the Civil War: Pride and Shame in Black and White." Reception at 6:15 p.m., Dinner (\$25 members/\$30 nonmembers) at 6:45 p.m.; Program 7:15 p.m. Dinner reservations required. With Ronald Beavers, Civil War Historian; Andy Evans, Community Activist and Comedy Counselor; Lillian Patterson, Retired Curator, Alexandria Black History Museum; and Laura Trieschmann, Director, Survey and Documentation at EHT Traceries. Special Guest, Barb Winters, author "Letters to Virginians." Holiday Inn Eisenhower Metro Center, 2460 Eisenhower Avenue. Contact Sherry Brown, 703-548-7089 or agendaalexandria@aol.com.

TUESDAY/MARCH 1

"Who Owns the Past?" 6 to 8 p.m. Morrison House Presents Michael Lee Pope, Journalist, who will discuss how recorded histories become convoluted by conflicting interpretations of the past. Part of a Salon-Style Series Celebrating Culture through Arts, Literature, and History Discussions. At Morrison House, 116 South Alfred Street, Alexandria. Visit www.morrisonhouse.com or 703-838-8000.

MARCH 2-31

Woodlawn Needlework Exhibition. America's oldest and largest display of historic and contemporary needlework will be showcased at the 48th Annual Woodlawn Needlework Exhibition. Hundreds of needle workers from

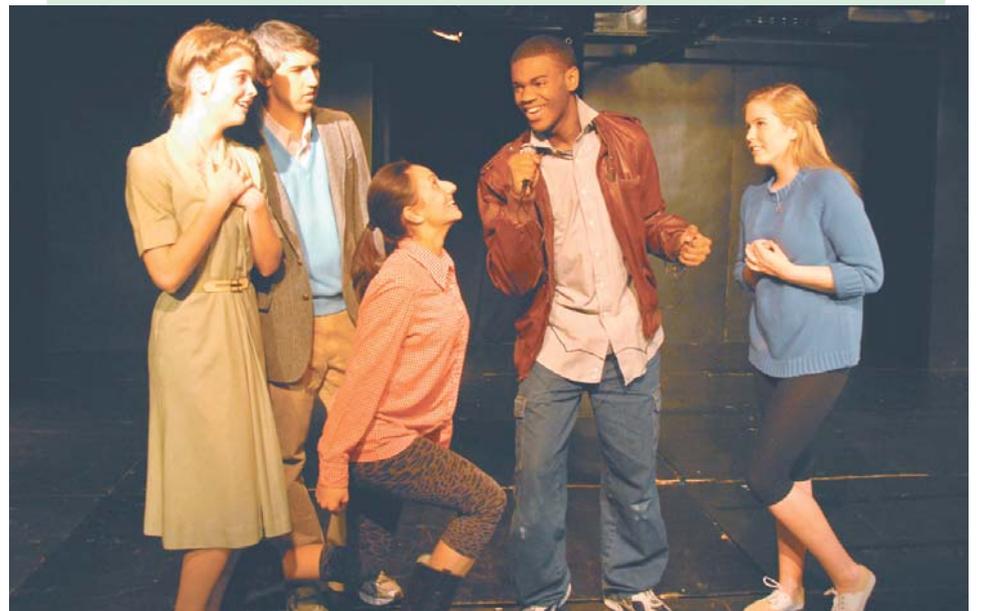
around the world, both professional and amateur, enter their creations each year.

Demonstrations throughout the month will highlight a variety of techniques for the visitor. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday - Monday during March. Admission prices are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students through 12th grade. At Woodlawn Plantation, 9000 Richmond Highway, three miles west of Mount Vernon. Call 703-780-4000 or visit www.woodlawn1805.org.

WEDNESDAY/

MARCH 2

Owls: Birds of Mystery and Majesty. 7:30 p.m. Free. Retired



Greg Roland as Conrad Birdie (center) sings one of his hit songs while the MacAfee family looks on. (From left): Heather Hartzell, Dru Hortum, Sibet Partee and Virginia Coffield.

MARCH 4-12

"Bye Bye Birdie." March 4, 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m.; Matinee on March 5 at 2 p.m. At St. Stephen's & St. Agnes Upper School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road, Alexandria. Visit www.sssas.org/arts

pathologist John Spahr will share his knowledge and images of these nocturnal birds. A presentation by the Friends of Dyke Marsh, co-sponsored by the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia and the Northern Virginia Bird Club. At Huntley Meadows Park Visitors' Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Call 703-768-2525. Visit www.fodm.org.

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

Summer Camp Fair. 5:30 to 8 p.m. Free. Some 50 exhibitors will represent a wide range of camp programs, including day and overnight camps. Sponsored by the PTA Council of Alexandria. At the cafeteria of TC Williams, Minnie Howard Campus, 3801 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Contact Marianne Hetzer at alexptaccamp@comcast.net or 703-823-3367.

SATURDAY/MARCH 5

Ninja Warrior Night. 7 p.m. 100 contestants must run through four increasingly difficult obstacle courses that test endurance, strength, and agility. Cost is \$20. At Urban Evolution, 5402 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria. For more information or to participate, visit www.urbanevo.com, or call 571-215-8218.

Digging for Buried Treasure. 1 to 3 p.m. How a Treasure Trove of Civil War and Alexandria History was Uncovered and Became The Book, "Letters to Virginia" At the Alexandria Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria.

Fun Dog Show. 11 a.m. to noon. Sponsored by Barkley Square and the Ballyshanners, held in conjunction with the St. Patrick's Day Parade. At Market Square (on the corner of N. Fairfax and King Street).

La Bella Sinfonia. 6 p.m. An Evening in Italy. The Symphony Orchestra League of Alexandria is hosting its 24th annual ball to benefit the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. The gala begins with a reception and silent auction; followed by dinner, live auction, dancing, and music. At the Westin Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Price \$200; \$150 first timers. Part is tax deductible. Contact 703-960-7994 or mtpwoods@aol.com

Greg Greenway and Reggie Harris. 7 p.m. Tickets are \$18/general; \$15/advance at FocusMusic.org. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Parade. Free. Old Town is Irish for a day with the Fun Dog Show at 10:30 a.m. in Market Square, classic car competition at 10:30 a.m. along King Street and the parade at 12:30 p.m. The parade will start at the corner of King Street and Alfred Street, and proceed East down King Street to the corner of King Street and Lee Street. Co-Grand Marshals are Tom and Nancy VanCoverden. Throughout Old Town, Alexandria. Call 703-237-2199 or visit www.Ballyshanners.org.

Mardi Gras Celebration. 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Cost is \$40/person. Hosted by the Mount Vernon District Democratic Committee. Del. Scott Surovell is a confirmed speaker. Congressmen Gerry Connolly (D-11) and Jim Moran (D-8), Supervisor Gerry Hyland, and other local Democratic leaders from Mount Vernon District are invited to speak. At Don Beyer Volvo, 7416 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Visit www.mvdemocrats.com.

MARCH 5 AND 6

Jazz and Tap Festival. Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 4 p.m. Presented by the Dancin' Unlimited Jazz Dance Company. Tickets are \$18/advance; \$20/door. At Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus Theatre. The NVCC Annandale Campus is at 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. For tickets and information, visit www.dance-festival.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 6

Eclipse Chamber Orchestra. 3 p.m. Conducted by music director Sylvia Alimena, the concert will feature Bruch's Violin Concerto No.1 in G Minor, to be performed by violinist Elisabeth Adkins. Tickets are \$25/\$20. Call 703-635-2770. Performs at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Visit www.eclipseco.org.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 9

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

THURSDAY/MARCH 10

"Race to Nowhere" Screening. 7 to 9 p.m. Documentary film examines the culture of education and achievement in America. Tickets are \$15/door; \$10 online at <http://www.racetonowhere.com/epostcard/4135>. At Mt. Vernon High School Little Theatre, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria.

Pat Victor. 7 p.m. Part of the Second Thursday Music at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Tickets are \$10. Call 703-548-0035 or nvfaa.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 11

"Celtic Aire." 8 p.m. Free. An evening of Celtic music performed by the U.S. Air Force Band Chamber Players. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafb.af.mil.

MARCH 11, 12, 18, 19

A Night of Broadway. 8 p.m. Featuring Lisa Anne Bailey and Andy Izquierdo, accompanied by Charlie Manship. Presented by Zemfira Stage. Tickets are \$15/general; \$10/students/seniors. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Call 703-615-6626.



Junkyard Saints

FRIDAY/MARCH 4

Louisiana Dance Party. 8 p.m. Popular dance instructors Ben Pagac and Debbie Shaw will be on hand to provide free lessons in the art of swing, cajun and zydeco stepping. There will be King Cake and Mardi Gras beads for all, and drinks will be plentiful at the cash bar, along with light snacks. Tickets are \$15/advance; \$20/door. With the bands Junkyard Saints and Squeeze Bayou. Tickets at www.hungryformusic.org. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. on the Potomac River in Old Town Alexandria.

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Part Time After-Care and Lunch Assistant at Alexandria Country Day School
Alexandria Country Day School (ACDS) currently seeks a part time assistant for our PM Care program. The assistant will be responsible for monitoring children after school; additional responsibilities include assisting with the school lunch program and receptionist duties. Hours: 11:00AM- 6:00PM Tuesday & Thursday. Compensation: \$15/hr. Candidates must have excellent communication skills, a professional demeanor and an aptitude for working with children. References and criminal background check required. ACDS is an K-8 Independent School; for additional information please visit acdsnet.org.

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SPORTS

West Potomac Girls Finish 5th at States



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The West Potomac girls swim and dive team finished fifth at the Virginia State AAA High School Swim and Dive Championships, which were held at the Princess Anne

Recreation Center in Virginia Beach on Feb. 18-19. The girls earned 132 points, finishing behind state champion Langley (187 points) and runner-up Oakton (166), followed by Robinson (161) and Osbourne Park (138.5). The Wolverines had top-seven finishes in seven of the eight events for which they qualified.

Top-three finishers for the girls included the girls 200 meter freestyle relay team of junior Reanna Doña, sophomore Maddy Bolger, freshman Sara Bertram and sophomore Hellen Moffitt which finished second to the state champion team from Langley, who set a national high school meter record in the race. Moffitt finished third in the 100-meter butterfly and in the race Janet Hu of Oakton set a new state record. Finally, Doña also finished third in the 100-meter backstroke in which Madison Hahn of Maury set a new state record.

In the 50-meter freestyle, Moffitt finished fourth and Doña finished sixth behind state champion Janet Hu of Oakton who set another state record the day before in the preliminary session.

Bertram finished seventh in the 100-meter butterfly after moving into the top eight for finals with a strong effort in the preliminary session where she went in seeded 13th.

The girls 400-meter freestyle relay team (Doña, M. Bolger, Bertram and Moffitt) finished sixth to complete the scoring for the girls.

The West Potomac girls 200-meter and 400-meter freestyle relay team finished second at the 200-meter distance at the state meet. From left: sophomore Hellen Moffitt, freshman Sara Bertram, junior Reanna Doña and sophomore Maddy Bolger.

ished sixth to complete the scoring for the girls.

The girls also qualified for states in the 200-meter medley relay and the team of Senior Julia Bolger, M. Bolger, Bertram and Sophomore Leigh Orleans finished 23rd in the preliminary session.

This year's effort at states is by far the best West Potomac has ever done in a state meet since at least 1997 for which records are available. The next best performance was last year where the girls scored 65 points and finished 13th overall.

On the boys side, senior Mark Mattis was the only state qualifier for the Wolverines and he finished 15th in the 200 meter individual medley. Mattis had a strong effort in the preliminary session to qualify for finals after being initially seeded 17th in the event. In team scoring the boys finished 42nd overall with that effort.

Floyd Takes Fifth Place

FROM PAGE 13

171-division weight class. The two-day state championship tournament took place last Friday and Saturday (Feb. 18-19) at Robinson Secondary.

Floyd, who in recent weeks captured postseason titles at both the National District and Northern Region championships, put together a strong showing at the state meet. He also displayed a flair for the dramatic with three of his matches coming in the final seconds.

Following a Friday afternoon first round win over Adam Stein of Deep Run High (Glen Allen), Floyd fell into the loser's bracket as a result of a 5-2 loss to Woodbridge High's Nolan King on Friday night.

But a determined Floyd won his next two matches — a late third period pin win over Omar Howard of Midlothian High on Saturday morning, followed by an early afternoon, 8-6 triumph over Rickey Foreman of Oscar Smith High (Chesapeake). Both of those loser's bracket wins were clinched in the final five seconds, the winning points versus Foreman coming on a standing throw down.

"That was crazy," said Floyd, of the late match drama win over Foreman.

He then lost, 8-1, to Corbin Ramos of Matoaca (Chesterfield) in a mid-afternoon match that Floyd called the low point of his tournament. That setback prevented him from having a chance to wrestle in the consolation finals for third place. Instead, Floyd would wrestle in the fifth-place match against senior Stephen Henderson of Hickory High (Chesapeake).

There, Floyd concluded his state tournament showing with a 7-4 win and a fifth place overall standing. But the win over Henderson was far from easy. Floyd, ahead 3-2 in the third period, was taken down to fall behind 4-3. But another late winning move — a reversal in the final five seconds — resulted in the cardiac style win.

"Going into states, a top-six finish was my goal. I think I wrestled very well," said Floyd, who went 4-2 at states. "King [of Woodbridge] got a late takedown on me in the quarterfinals. But I wrestled back [in the loser's bracket] real tough."

Floyd, who a year ago finished fourth at regionals to qualify for states, said his fifth-place showing at states last weekend means more to him than his prior earlier first place postseason heroics at the district and region championships.

"Finishing fifth was the highlight of the season for me," he said.

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