

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 12, 2011

## Home LifeStyle



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

### Why Personal Design Matters

Interior design is about allowing yourself the freedom to create an environment that makes you smile, says Alexandria designer Barbara Franceski, who designed this family room for a spring design house.

SEE SPECIAL SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 24.

## Disappearing Dyke Marsh

Panel of scientists advises National Park Service to develop a plan to restore Dyke Marsh.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

**D**yke Marsh is eroding rapidly. That's the shocking conclusion of study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey conducted at the request of the National Park Service. The 80-page report concludes that the marsh is eroding by as much as six feet each year. The problem dates back to 1973, when sand and gravel mining ended and the wetland was transformed into an unstable remnant. Congress mandated the marsh's restoration in 1974, but the environmental issues have never been resolved.

"The marsh has been deconstructed over the past 70 years by a combination of manmade and natural causes," the report

SEE SCIENTISTS, PAGE 3

## Pittman Wins International-National Science Award

Hollin Hills science teacher selected for outdoor garden project.

BY SENITRA MCCOMBS  
THE GAZETTE

**L**ast year, First Lady Michelle Obama chose Hollin Meadows Elementary School as the first school garden she visited as part of her better nutrition campaign.

During her visit, the First Lady asked science teacher Jason Pittman about his science lessons in the garden.

Recently, he received national recognition when the Zula International-National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) awarded him with its Zula International-National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Early Science Educator Award for his outdoor garden project. This was his first time be-



Hollin Meadows Elementary School science teacher Jason Pittman

ing nominated.

"I received a voicemail in January from someone at NSTA, but I

mis-heard the name, and I thought it was the editor from their magazine, 'Science and Children,' for whom I've been trying to submit an article," he said.

Once he got past the confusion, he was very excited because the award included a trip to the National Science Teacher's convention in San Francisco.

Moreover, NSTA's magazine has a feature column for articles written by award winners and they asked him for an article.

**SINCE EVERY STUDENT** at Hollin Meadows visits the science lab as a part of their weekly specials rotation, he teaches Pre-K – 6th grade.

Pittman started a cross-curricular outdoor education program centered on an outdoor garden in order to create "a place at school where learning can be meaningful for his students.

"We take science outside, let kids

inquire about the natural phenomena around them, and structure lessons that give students the opportunity to find solutions rather than just follow instructions from cookbook lab experiments."

However, he readily admits that he "certainly cannot take all the credit."

He said he's lucky to be a part of "a very special group of parents, teachers and administrators who worked together to start this program."

Pittman runs the garden with the help of award-winning outdoor education coordinator

Shawn Akard.

Although Pittman's parents are both from Arlington, they moved to Houston before he was born and raised him and his two sisters there until his 8th grade year when they relocated back to the area.

"I really didn't like teachers or school much when I was a kid. In Texas, where I grew up, teachers spanked kids in public school," Pittman said.

Despite all that, he did well in school. Upon graduating from college, Pittman started his own

SEE IMPORTANCE, PAGE 14

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**Lenny Marsh**

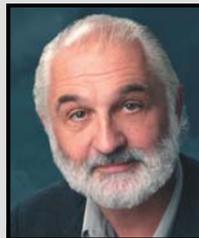
### *President's Club ~ Production Volume of \$3-\$5 Million*



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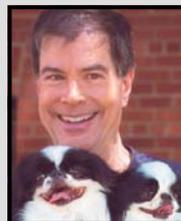
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# Scientists Recommend Plan To Restore Dyke Marsh

FROM PAGE 1

states. "We conclude that the marsh is not in a geologically sustainable state."

The study documents a loss of six to eight linear feet of shoreline loss each year for the last two decades, a time when 12 percent of the central part of the marsh eroded. Photographic evidence shows that lateral erosion is now capturing existing tributaries in the Hog Island Gut tidal network.

"We're shocked by these conclusions," said Glenda Booth, president of Friends of Dyke Marsh. "We are urging the National Park Service to take action."

**SCIENTISTS BELIEVE** Dyke Marsh began forming about 530 years ago in the 15th century. But what was measured at 187 acres in 1937 has rapidly depleted to 60 acres in 2006. Since the mining operation ended in the 1970s, the marsh remnant has been rapidly shrinking. That means the marsh habitat for state-listed species, migratory waterfowl and predatory birds has also been shrinking, a threat to the delicate balance of a fragile ecosystem.

"Dyke Marsh is one of Northern Virginia's treasured wetlands," said U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8). "Unfortunately, dredging, stormwater runoff and pollution threaten to destroy not only the marsh but the wildlife and plant life that sustains it."

Historically, the shallow western river bottom and forest floodplain have served as a buffer to storms. But dredge mining that took place before 1959 removed those protections, destabilizing the marsh and exposing it to repeated storm erosion. Now a series of deep mining scar channels have appeared in the western river bottom adjacent to the present shoreline, increasing the intensity of storm erosion at the shoreline and adding to the marsh's instability.

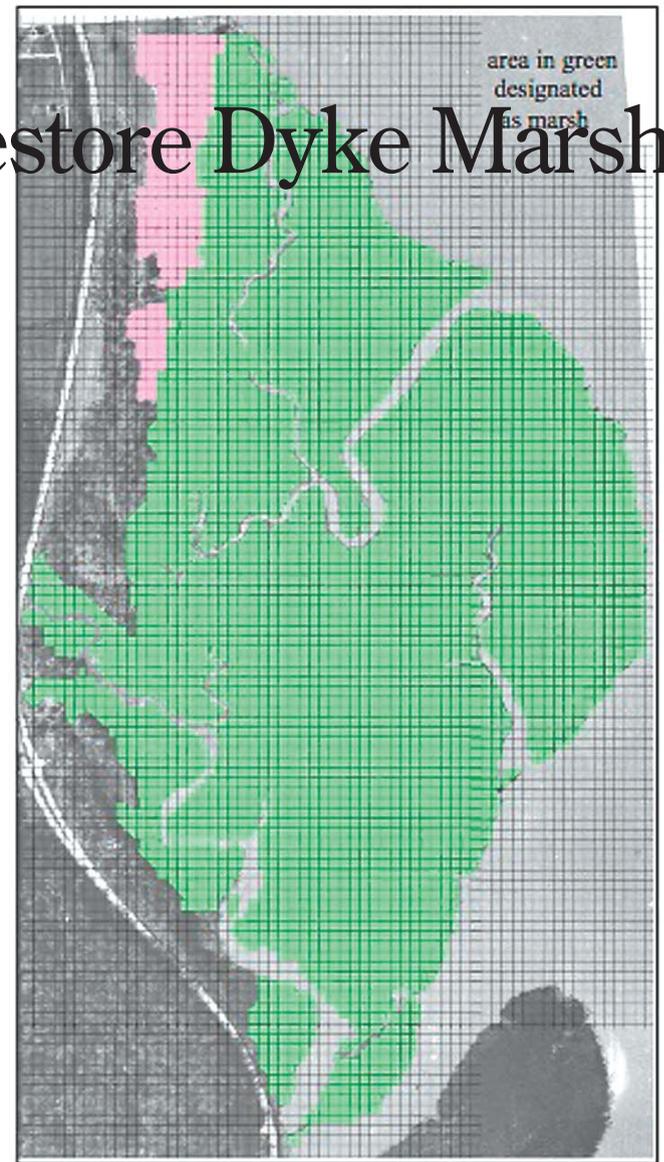
"I will continue to monitor the progress of the Army Corps of Engineers Concept Plan and work with the National Park Service to ensure that preservation of Dyke Marsh remains a high priority," said Moran.

**THE TWO POTENTIAL** solutions outlined by the U.S. Geological Survey is to restore former geological structure or let it waste away forever. To accomplish a restoration, the scientists concluded, a functional wave break would need to be installed and the scar channels would need to be blocked. A panel of scientists is advising the National Park Service to develop a plan that will restore the natural function and structure of Dyke marsh to the way it was before it was mined for sand and gravel.

The scientists have concluded that filling all the sediment that has been lost would be an impossible task, one that would require millions of yard of fill. Instead, the plan now under consideration would design a natural process to deposit sediment. An environmental impact statement for the restoration has already been initiated, and supporters are eager to start moving toward restoration soon.

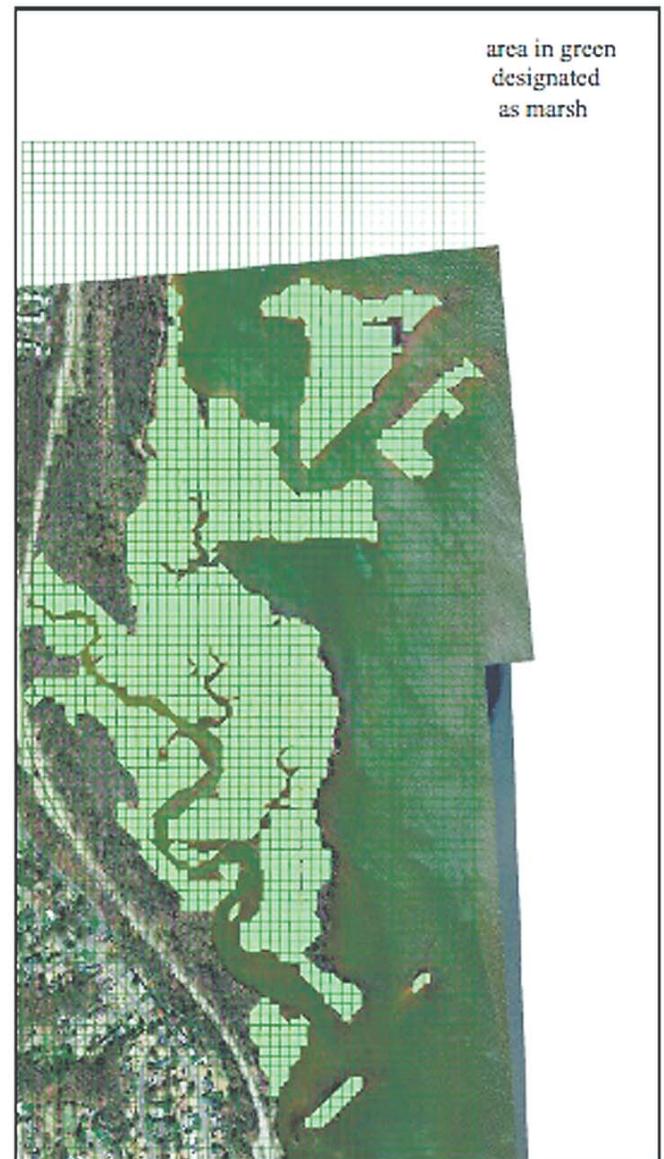
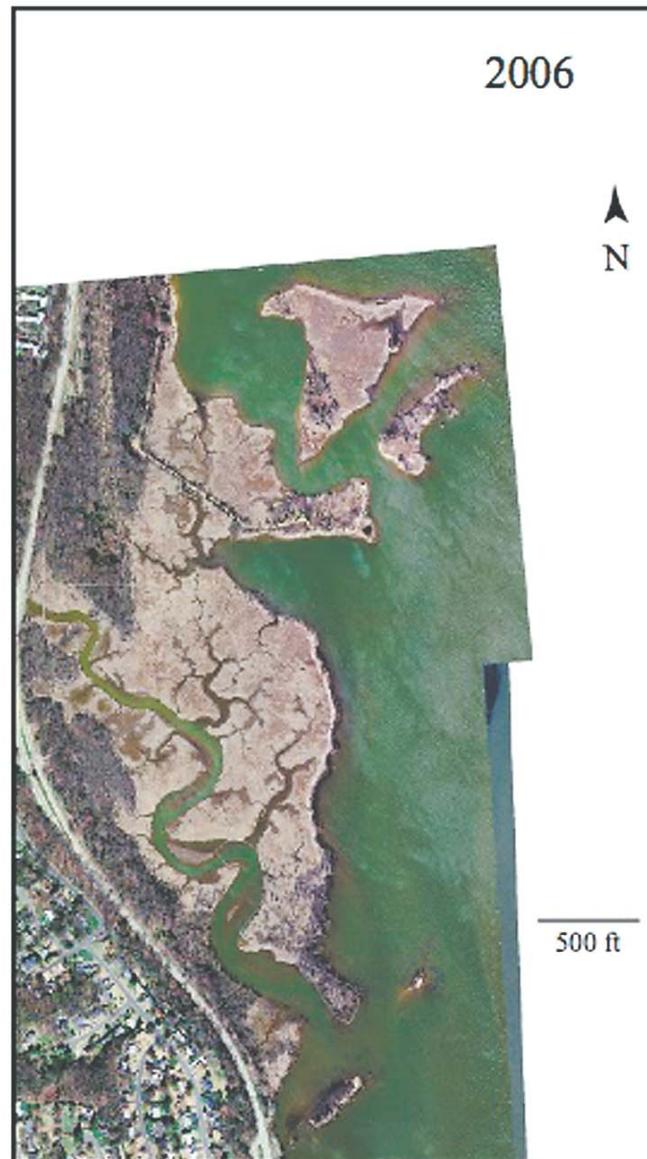
"We've very impressed by the thoroughness of the study. Now it's time to carry out its recommendations," said Booth.

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Aerial photos from 1937.

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Aerial photos from 2006.

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### Executive Club



**Kim Farina**  
Manager of the Year

For the fourth consecutive year, Kim Farina, Alexandria/Old Town has been named Manager of the year. The award recognizes and honors individuals who have demonstrated exceptional management skills and led their office to achieve outstanding results for the Year.

Nadine Wren ★  
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Peter Niebauer

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Mary Hurlbut ★  
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Kerrie Price  
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# OBITUARY

## W. Raymond ("Ray") Colley

W. Raymond ("Ray") Colley served as Deputy Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1969 to 1995, which during that period managed legislative, financial, contracting, and administrative operations for the House. His 42 years of Federal Government service also included work as a legislative liaison in the Johnson administration while an assistant to two Postmasters General (Larry O'Brien and Marvin Watson), and as the Administrative Assistant to Congressman W. Pat Jennings from Virginia's "Fighting Ninth" district in Southwestern Virginia (1955-1966). While working with Congressman Jennings, he took great pride in many successful efforts to further legislation and programs that assisted his native Appalachian region of Virginia.

Ray was elected a vice chair of the Virginia Democratic Party at its state convention in 1980 and served in that position for 20 years. In 2001, he was recognized by its State Central Committee as the "Father of the Virginia Democratic Party Plan," having been responsible for rewriting the plan to achieve more open and inclusive participation. He was widely relied upon regarding the party's delegate selection, procedural and rules matters. His other positions in the Democratic Party included membership on the Democratic National Committee and chair of Virginia's Eighth Congressional District Committee, as well as active roles in the Fairfax County and Mount Vernon District Committees.

Before moving to Northern Virginia 1955, Ray served as a staff writer for The Roanoke Times, reporting on government and politics. He enlisted in the Army during the Korean War and served two years, with subsequent service in the Army Reserves and eventual honorable discharge as a captain.

Regularly active in the community, Ray served as president of the Waynewood Community Civic Association, Waynewood Elementary School PTA, and Fort Hunt High School PTA.

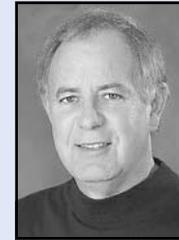
Born April 23, 1929 in Dickenson County, Va., Ray is the son of Granville J. and Bessie Owens Colley, and was raised in Breaks, Va. He attended high school in Grundy.

The first member of his family to attend college, he graduated from Berea College, Kentucky in 1951, where, like all students there, he worked through school, in his case as a bellhop and desk clerk at the school's Boone Tavern Inn. He also edited the college newspaper and yearbook. He is a past president of the Washington Area Berea College Alumni club.

Ray died May 3, 2011 in Fairfax, Va. following several years of affliction with Alzheimer's. He is survived by his wife of over 60 years, his college sweetheart, the former Alice Mildred Hook, two sons, Mark D. Colley, a partner with Arnold & Porter in Washington, D.C., and David R. Colley of Long Beach, Calif., a financial advisor with Waddell & Reed, as well as daughter-in-law Deborah Harsch and granddaughter Arden Colley, both of Alexandria.

Family and friends will gather for visitation on Tuesday, May 24 from 6-8 p.m. and a memorial service on Wednesday, May 25 at 10 a.m., both at the Demaine Funeral Home, 520 S. Washington Street, Alexandria, Va. Burial will be at the Quantico National Cemetery in Triangle, Va. on May 25 at 2 p.m.

Contributions in his memory may be made to Berea College, CPO 2216, Berea, KY 40404, or to the Democratic Party of Virginia, 1710 East Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23223.



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**OPEN SUNDAY**

**Alex/Hollindale \$568,500**  
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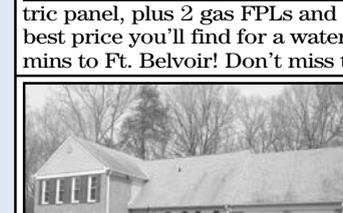
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**Alex/Riverwood \$709,900**  
**3712 Carriage House Court**

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upper level & new carpeting on main level. Updated kitchen & baths plus sun rm & breakfast rm addition. Partially finished basement & 2 car garage. This is a great home! Five minutes to Ft. Belvoir.



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**Alex./Westgate \$624,900**  
**9010 Volunteer Drive**

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kit. Wood FP in living rm. Lovely kitchen w/corion counters & large picture window facing scenic backyard. Sweet front porch. Large unfn bsmt: ample storage.



**Alexandria Hollin Hall Village \$514,900**  
**1501 Alexandria Avenue**

Beautiful 4BR, 3BA Brick, Split level home in Hollin Hall (Waynewood Elementary) w/lovely landscaping. Vaulted ceiling in living and dining areas.

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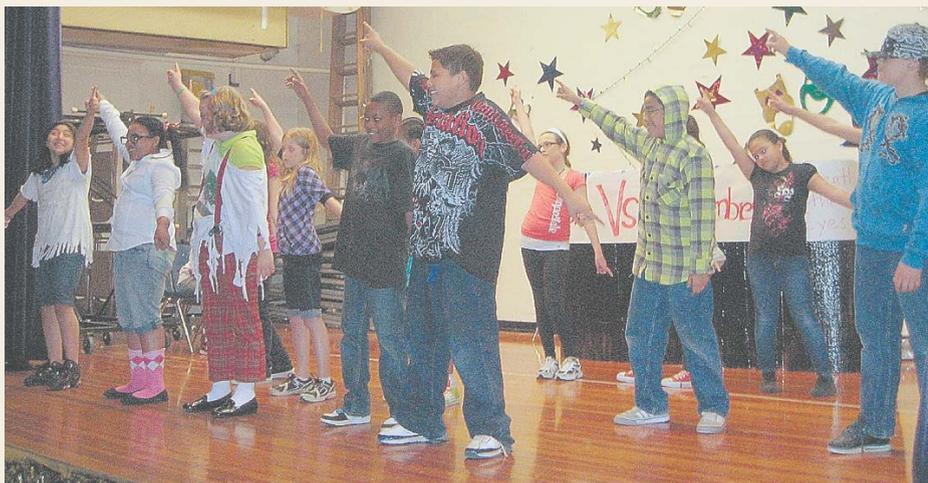
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The cast of Woodlawn Elementary School performs *Bullies Vs. Zombies: Beneath the Eyes*.

## Elementary Students Perform Their Own Original Plays

Forty-one fifth graders from Mt. Vernon Woods, Woodley Hills and Woodlawn Elementary Schools performed their original plays onstage at Woodlawn Elementary School on Tuesday evening, May 3. The students created plays based on themes from their lives. Teaching artists have joined the students to guide them through the process of playwriting,

scripting, blocking motion, and performing onstage. In addition, the students have enjoyed privileges of free attendance to all of the Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre's productions and scholarship opportunities for MVCCT's Spring Break and Summer Camps.

"All For One" was performed by Mt. Vernon Woods, "Born This Way" by Woodley Hills and "Bullies Vs. Zombies: Beneath the



The cast from Woodlawn Elementary School poses on stage after receiving their certificates.

*Eyes*" by Woodlawn. Iman Hassan and John Waldron were the directors working with the students for the past 12 weeks.

The cast list includes: Jasmine Cruz, Keona Fulton, Valaria Garcia, Kevin Mejia, Sheila Spratly, Jessica Williams, Vanessa Quinteros and Sara Sota from Mt. Vernon Woods; Angela Ampofo, Maggie McClelland, Bismark Amoako, Jonathan Hollingsworth, Al-Ameen Baidoo, Quenada

Moore, Malcolm Porterfield, Miguel Rodriguez, Raven Reid, Magali Dowling, and Julian Davis from Woodley Hills; Kyra Riggleman, Leu Abnet, Alana Malufau, Cindy Granados, Monet Chappell, Jackie Salas, Cindy Castro, Stephanie Diaz, Emily Merriam, Vallory Collins, Edwin Vado, Markez Middlebrooks, Jason Lewis and William Vela Diaz.

## Residents Share Their Appreciation for Teachers

Last week was Teacher Appreciation Week. The Gazette invited readers to share a brief recollection of a teacher, past or present. Here are some responses:

### DEDICATED MATH TEACHER

Bill Dobson is an exceptionally dedicated teacher who truly loves his job as a mathematics teacher at West Potomac High School where he has taught for 16 years. Mr. Dobson is an outstanding Honors Geometry, Honors Pre-Calculus and AP Calculus A/B teacher who challenges his students in these demanding courses and, as a result, his students always excel. Mr. Dobson's enthusiasm for math is contagious and students look forward to being assigned to his honors classes. The school day doesn't end at 2:05 pm for Mr. Dobson, he is available to help students all afternoon and his evenings are spent grading exams, corresponding with parents and writing letters of recommendation for his students. West Potomac has been very lucky to have a wonderful teacher and role model like Mr. Dobson.

— RUTH LESCHER

### PATIENT AND CREATIVE

Three out of my four children began their successful quest for knowledge in Angela Sanders' kindergarten classroom at Waynewood Elementary. Her patience, creativity, and ability to adapt to the variety of personality and learning styles contributed

to my children's enthusiasm for each day of school in those successive years, and to their being lifelong learners. When we went for our parent conference many years ago, and as we looked over the room and the various items and learning tools in

the room, my husband asked what the purpose was for the four pieces of masking tape forming a small box in the middle of the rug area. Ms. Sanders said, "Oh, that's so your son knows where to sit during reading group." He was a very active child and did indeed have a hard time sitting still. Her individualized approach helped him to focus, and he is now in his final year in Biometrics Engineering. We have always been grateful to have had her as the teacher that began formal

education for our children.

— ANN VERNON

### INSPIRING AND CARING

West Potomac High School's Bill Dobson is more than a math teacher. He is a mentor and advocate for high school kids. He takes an interest in them as people and truly understands how tumultuous high school can be.

My daughter, Lauren, has loved every minute of his rigorous classes and not because she has an incredible knack for math. She has had him for three out of the four years of her high school career. She has worked incredibly hard to please him and

live up to his high but attainable standards. She has achieved more in math under his tutelage than I thought possible. He has inspired her and taught her to enjoy math. She talks about the fun things he posts on their homework website and funny things that happen in the class. He has made a relatively dry subject come to life and be enjoyable.

As a parent, I have loved having Lauren in his classes due to the frequent and informative emails that he has sent. It is obvious to me that he cares about the students as individuals and understand this time in their lives. He was a voice of reason, upholding the standards of hard work and personal responsibility, when the administration wanted otherwise.

When Lauren's stepfather suffered a severe cardiac incident, she went to Mr. Dobson and cried. He comforted her and went to the administration in case she needed her AP's rescheduled. None of the other teachers advocated for her like that. Mr. Dobson was the one to whom she confided her burden. He sent me an email giving me his perspective on her emotional state while maintaining the appropriate professionalism. I am so glad that she had a grown-up male that she trusted to help her when she felt scared and helpless.

There is a teacher is most people's lives who help shape them profoundly and forever. Mr. Dobson is that teacher in my

daughter's life and in many other West Potomac students' lives. I am so grateful for all that he has done for my daughter. I feel truly blessed that he was there to help guide her, on so many levels, during her high school years. He is the teacher who she will remember forever.

— ELIZABETH C. WILMOT

### TAUGHT LEADERSHIP

I started at West Potomac High School the first year it opened in 1984 and immediately joined the band. Because West Potomac was brand new, we had no uniforms, no traditions, no school fight song. Many of the older students had been members of the Fort Hunt and Groveton High School Bands. Fort Hunt had a music program that was nationally known and there was a natural rivalry between the two schools. Both band directors moved on and we had a new band director named Roy Holder.

Mr. Holder improvised on uniforms (white styrofoam hats, blue rugby shirts, and white Dickie's), he wrote a new school fight song, he focused us on forgetting about which high school pyramid we'd come from and working together. He had many stories about small, unknown, and ignored schools beating the big ones. Mr. Holder had very high expectations and would somehow get

SEE TEACHERS, PAGE 7

## SCHOOLS

# Teachers Accrue Thanks

FROM PAGE 6

the best out of all 100 of us — even the fourth and fifth chairs who didn't practice their parts.

At Mr. Holder's urging, we were all very determined set out to send a message at our first competition in Hampton Roads. No one had heard of this high school dressed in styrofoam and rugby shirts, yet we received the highest rating possible. Substance had triumphed over style. Throughout the three years Mr. Holder taught, the West Potomac Band Program racked up awards and first place finishes at every competition we attended.

Just before my senior year, Mr. Holder announced that he was moving to a new position at a larger school — Lake Braddock Secondary School — where he still is today. I learned more about leadership from my three years in band with Mr. Holder than probably anything else I've done in life.

— SCOTT SUROVELL

### TOUGH BUT FAIR

As a parent and as a fellow public school teacher in another district, I would like to show my appreciation for the incredible skill and dedication of our

family's all time favorite teacher, Bill Dobson at West Potomac High School. Teaching is a second career for Mr. Dobson as he served our country in the United States Marines until his retirement from the military. He then went back to school to become certified as a secondary school mathematics teacher. He has taught hundreds of students during his 16 years at West Potomac with an amazing pass rate for his high level courses. My daughter has had him as her teacher for two different math courses and we have been so impressed with his singular dedication, ethical standards and communication skills with parents and students alike. Throughout these difficult courses, he keeps parents apprised of their students' successes at regular intervals. He makes himself available to students for hours each day outside of his required work day. Mr. Dobson is a tough but fair teacher who can be proud of his performance as a Fairfax County Public School teacher, especially in this time of extreme shortages of talented and inspiring math and science teachers. He has given all he has for our country while in the Marines and now to the teenagers that he teaches, faithfully and with a high degree of skill. Thank you, Mr. Dobson!

— KATE VAN DYCK



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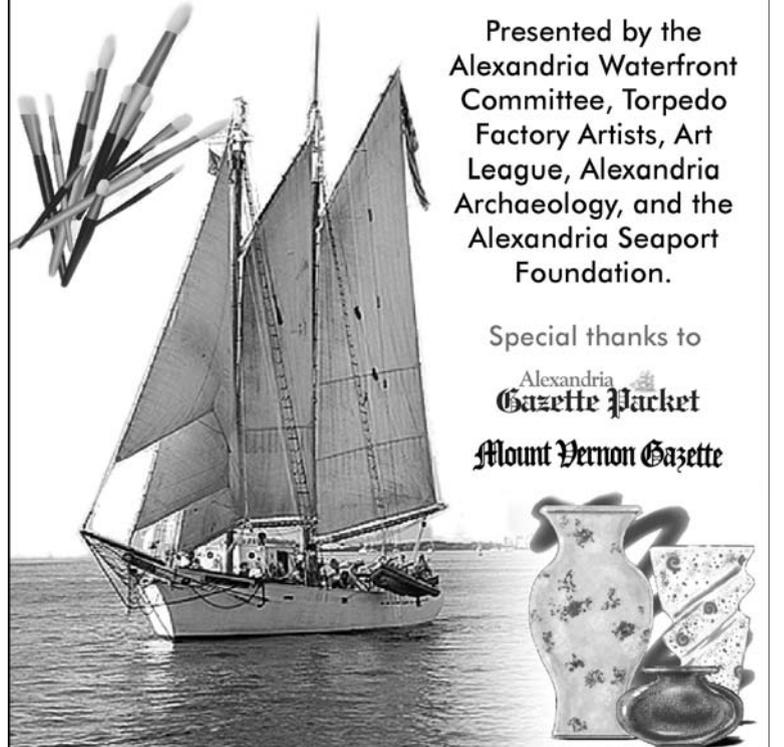
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# OPINION

## In Recognition of Small Business Week

### Show support for local businesses May 15-21, small business week.

Small businesses, especially locally owned retail stores and restaurants, are part of what defines any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them.

Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active as a volunteer in fundraising and advocating for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing community events.

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores and restaurants, have weathered some very tough times in the last few years. Many of the costs of doing business have increased, (price of gas, for example) while many businesses defined a successful year in 2010 if revenues did not decline — again — from the previous year.

And small businesses are critical to economic recovery. In Virginia, small businesses make up more than 97 percent of employers and nearly

50 percent of non-government employment.

And while Northern Virginia's economy has fared far better than almost any other region in the country, small, locally owned, community-oriented businesses have not universally shared in bounty.

The small business owner must be master of the budget and doing more with less. He or she must stay up to date on changing regulations while they market their business, manage benefits and employee schedules and maintain the company's edge in serving its customers.

May 15-20, show support to your locally owned small businesses. Shop locally. Eat locally. Greet the business owner and tell her that you're there this week to support small, local business.

Then be sure to come back on a regular basis.

You home-town quality of life depends on it.

### Local Winners

Washington Metropolitan Area District Office of the Small Business Administration will honor several local business people and orga-

are objectionable.

However, one that makes absolutely no sense to me at any time and especially at this time of economy disrupting oil prices is the recommendation to "Increase the gasoline tax." I am certain that I not stand alone on this issue.

**David L. Belden**  
Mount Vernon

### Standing Up

nizations this week.

This year's Washington Metro Minority Business Champion is Danny Vargas of Herndon, president of VARCom Solutions, a marketing and public relations firm. A U.S. Air Force veteran and former Fortune 500 executive, he served as chairman of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, the first Hispanic to chair a mainstream chamber Virginia, according to the chamber. Vargas grew the Dulles Hispanic Business Council and developed a professional support program for local small business owners. Vargas also serves on the advisory board of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Commission of the National Museum of the American Latino, the Virginia Workforce Council, and the Board of the Northern Virginia Family Service.

Small Business Development Center of Excellence and Innovation award this year honors the Mason Small Business Development Center at George Mason University for providing value to small businesses through innovation. The Mason Small Business Development has a team of certified small business counselors who have helped more than 765 entrepreneurs in the past two years, nurturing more than 60 startup companies and retaining more than 1,200 area jobs.

### For Honors Classes

To the Editor:

Fairfax County School Board Member Dan Storck and Superintendent Jack Dale recently faced questions from concerned parents about Dr. Dale's plan to continue to drive Fairfax County High School curricula to two levels of learning: General Education and Advanced Placement (College-level).

Questioners challenged Dr. Dale on the wisdom and logic of limiting students to two levels of learning at opposite ends of the educational spectrum: (1) college-level courses for which many are neither emotionally nor academically prepared; or (2) basic educational courses which currently are not college-prep.

This dialectic would strand thousands of college-aspirants who once had Honors courses as islands of hope — as stepping stones to more challenging academic work.

Dr. Dale's logic for eliminating Honors is two-fold: first, studies of multi-track systems show the bottom cadre can get disadvantaged; and second, Honors is/will not be needed because Fairfax County plans to raise the General Education course to college-prep status. By inference, the 'new' college-prep Gen Ed would replace Honors on the bottom side and, by forcing increased enrollments in Advanced Placement (AP or college-level) courses, replace Honors on the high side. To support his case, Dale cited College Board research showing students taking AP courses do better in college than those who do not.

Let's take each point in turn. First, multi-level educational systems flourish around the country and even our neighbors in Prince George's County Maryland have five — not two. Taking

#### EDITORIALS

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Increase Gas Tax?

To the Editor:

Thank you for publishing highlights of the recommendations emanating from the Visioning Task Force appointed by Supervisor Gerald Hyland. I am certain that every reader finds that some recommendations are supportable if not laudable while other recommendations



**Offering Advice** Sandburg Divas (Determined and Inspired to Value Absolute Success) welcomed guest speaker Tracee Wilkins, News 4 reporter, as a mentor to the group that builds and strengthens leadership skills and strategies to develop self esteem, friendships, prevent teen violence, and develop career choices. Wilkins spoke about determination, following your heart, and not letting others decide who you are and how you are going to be successful.

## Mount Vernon Gazette

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SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8

# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

Fairfax County high schools to two levels isn't necessitated by issues with the current system nor by research; it's a choice. And it's a choice that promises to drive instruction downward, restrict options for perhaps 90 percent of Fairfax County high school students, and take us all into unchartered waters.

Second, because multi-level levels of learning can disadvantage the bottom cadre doesn't mean it must. That bottom cadre — like all things human — is responsive to attention. In addition, if self-interest was not enough, State and federal educational mandates (SOLs; No Child Left Behind) incentivize administrators to not ignore the bottom.

Third, students learn at their own pace, have their own interests and proclivities and shouldn't be squeezed into two shoe boxes of instruction. Going to fewer — rather than more — levels of learning makes no sense. By doing so, we forego the advantages of multi-levels of learning — the ability to place each student on his/her own learning level — solely to protect the bottom cadre for which we have other mechanisms. We place management attention on the bottom; then focus on providing options for the other 90 percent — not the other way around.

Fourth, Dr. Dale envisions a world where the General Education tier morphs into a college-prep course; although quick to note that 'we're not there yet.' So why eliminate

Honors today on the supposition that Gen Ed will someday (no schedule available) be a college-prep course? Why not wait until Gen Ed is, in fact, college-prep level and see if eliminating Honors makes sense at that time? Don't eliminate Honors when one of the planned replacement courses is years away from being operational. To his credit, Dr. Dale left the door open saying he would consider keeping Honors until Gen Ed can rise to college-prep level.

Fifth, in the system envisioned by Dr. Dale some high achieving Honors students would be forced down into Gen Ed or up into AP — one level set too low to be challenging and one level set too high for their ability and interest and where failure is a reality. We're swapping fear of failure of the bottom to certain failure for many in the top tier; what sense does that make?

Sixth, in Dr. Dale's future world where Gen Ed is college-prep and the only other option is AP, there is no option for the non-college bound. Those kids are forced like square pegs into round holes to take either college-level (AP) or college-prep (Gen Ed) courses. Why is that? What's wrong with a vocational course or even a separate high school for the non-college bound? This just begs for another tier of learning.

Seventh, why are we forcing adolescents into college-level courses before they are ready? If we want high school sophomores and juniors to go to college, let them apply for early entry to the college of their choice.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15



## Joseph P. Cavallo, D.D.S., FAGD

Celebrating 25 years in private practice, Dr. Cavallo has turned his passion for dental care into an expert and comprehensive clinical practice. Focusing on each patient's total dental system - joints, muscles, gums and teeth - Dr. Cavallo is guided by the principle that both children and adults may be educated to maintain their oral health and keep their teeth for their lifetime. His continuous studies with The Pankey

Institute, The Dawson Academy, and as a Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry enables him to provide his patients with the latest innovative techniques in achieving his patients' restored oral health. While patients appreciate his vast experience, they also enjoy the personal time and attention he and his staff are able to provide, explaining each and every option available to them.

*Please call today for an appointment to discuss your own personal questions and concerns regarding your dental health.*

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**See you at the Fair!**

**To register, call 1-855-My-Inova (694-6682).**

# Tell the State To Improve Route 1

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL  
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)



Virginia has announced the draft transportation Six-Year Improvement Plan, a plan that includes the \$34 million long-delayed and long-needed widening of Telegraph Road, but there is not a single project or dollar listed in the 22306, 22307, 22308 or 22309 zip codes. Route 1 was left off the list yet again.

Last week, I was one of two state legislators who spoke at the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) public hearing on the draft plan. (You can watch video of my comments on my blog, The Dixie Pig at [scottsurovell.blogspot.com](http://scottsurovell.blogspot.com).)

I made several points. First, I thanked the McDonnell Administration for agreeing to fund the U.S. 1 Transit Study after a six-year wait. This is the first legally-required step to improve U.S. 1. However, none of the legally-required steps after that study were included in the Six-Year Improvement Plan at all.

The Route 1 Transit Study will take three years to complete. A Route 1 Centerline Study must also be completed to confirm

the center line of the road. That process involves public hearings and environmental reviews.

Once these two studies are done, VDOT can do preliminary engineering and make right-of-way purchases. Then construction can start. VDOT has neither planned or budgeted for any of these steps.

I argued to the CTB that while there are dozens of million-dollar projects scheduled in the northern and western parts of Fairfax County, the eastern part of Fairfax has not and still will not be receiving infrastructure investments necessary to sustain our quality of life, not even a small study.

CTB is accepting public comments until May 27. I am gathering petition signatures asking the Commonwealth Transportation Board to add the Route 1 Centerline Study, preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition to the current Six-Year Improvement Plan. Please take two minutes and sign the petition online at [www.bit.ly/route1petition](http://www.bit.ly/route1petition).

I also encourage you to write directly to the Board. You can find information on the petition site or my blog The Dixie Pig (<http://scottsurovell.blogspot.com>) as well.

## MAINTENANCE, MOWING LAG

By law, regular revenues in the Transportation Trust Fund are distributed to administrative costs first, maintenance second and construction last. The state gas tax is levied in pennies per gallon. As cars have become more efficient and gas prices have risen, people are using less gas per mile and generating less revenue per miles driven.

Plus, while today's gas tax (\$0.175/gal.) is still the same as when I was a sophomore at West Potomac High School in 1987 when gas cost \$0.99/gal., the cost of concrete, steel, asphalt and labor has gone up. Maintenance has completely consumed the highway construction budget.

Secondary roads are the ones numbered 600 and higher. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) allocates funds to localities every year to construct secondary road improvements. Fairfax County's secondary road allocation went from \$28 million two years ago to \$1,800 last year and \$0 — zero — this year. It will remain \$0 into the future unless there is a new infusion of revenues. Additionally, road maintenance is being deferred. This includes paving, which is why Fort Hunt Road resembles rumble strips in some patches. Today, there are 2,500 and growing lane miles of substandard secondary roads in Fairfax

County.

Spring is here, it's been raining, and road medians are starting to resemble prairies. Because of funding shortfalls, VDOT has laid off 30 percent of its employees in the last three years and has cut way back on mowing.

One neighborhood association in Stratford contacted me asking to take over maintenance of a right-of-way. VDOT will agree to allow organizations to maintain medians if certain procedures are followed and a formal contract is signed. If your local association would like to look into this, please contact my office and we can connect you with VDOT.

It is an honor to be your state delegate in Richmond.

## Film, Dance at WPHS

West Potomac Academy Professional Television Production and Dance students are collaborating to produce a film festival and dance performance, "It's Personal," on Thursday, May 12, and Friday, May 13, at 7 p.m. in the West Potomac High School auditorium.

Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. Contact [cjbetzel@fcps.edu](mailto:cjbetzel@fcps.edu), [nemantelli@fcps.edu](mailto:nemantelli@fcps.edu), or the West Potomac Academy office at 703-718-2750 for more information.



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**Home Sweet Home**  
This charming cottage has so much to offer – wonderful natural light throughout, generous room sizes to include formal living and dining rooms, a large kitchen, first floor family room, two fireplaces and a lower level rec room. Sited on a gorgeous 18,000 square foot lot with plenty of room for expansion.

**Robin Arnold 703.966.5457**  
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**Brentwood Model in Stonegate**  
Rarely available Brentwood floor plan with nearly 2,600 SF of living space plus a two-car garage. This home has a bright and sunny chef's white kitchen with eat-in space and a family room area which opens to a great room with dining room, living room, gas fireplace. Living room opens to a large deck. The lower level recreation room opens to a beautiful professional landscaped stone patio and enclosed garden. Three bedrooms, three and a half baths, new air conditioning and water heater.

**Jo Erkiletian 703.862.6870**  
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<b>FLORAL DESIGN WORKSHOP</b> Sat., May 21 ★ 2 PM ★ \$35	<b>A SPECIAL TEA PARTY</b> Sun., May 22 ★ 2 PM ★ \$25

Information: [www.AntiquesinAlexandria.com](http://www.AntiquesinAlexandria.com)

## CRIME

Activities reported by the Mt. Vernon police department through May 6.

### BURGLARY

Someone burglarized a trailer at a construction site in the 6800 block of Richmond Highway some time between 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27 and just after noon the following day. An investigation determined entry was forced through a window and power tools were stolen.

### BURGLARY

A home in the 3000 block of Franklin St. was burglarized some time between 12:30 p.m. and

3:30 p.m. on Monday, May 2. An investigation determined entry was forced through a door and a laptop computer was missing.

### LARCENIES

**7900 block of Audubon Ave.** License plates stolen from vehicle.  
**3100 block of Groveton St.** Furniture stolen from residence.  
**7900 block of Janna Lee Ave.** Video game system stolen from residence.  
**7400 block of Mount Vernon Square.** Groceries stolen from business.  
**6500 block of Quander Road.** Purse

stolen from school.  
**6300 block of Richmond Highway.** DVDs stolen from business.  
**6600 block of Richmond Highway.** Merchandise stolen from business.  
**7900 block of Richmond Highway.** Sunglasses stolen from business.  
**7900 block of Richmond Highway.** License plates stolen from vehicle.  
**7900 block of Richmond Highway.** Doll and merchandise stolen from business.  
**8600 block of Richmond Highway.** Liquor stolen from business.  
**2600 block of Stirrup Lane.** Bicycle stolen from residence.

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## Open Sunday 1-4 in Kings Cloister



Bright & open in cul-de-sac backing to trees. Cooks kitchen w/ island & sunny breakfast room opens to tiered deck w/ landscape & exterior lighting. 4 bedrooms, library, large dining room, foyer & living room, 3.5 baths, 2 car garage—a car lovers DREAM w/ heat, flooring & built-ins. Wood floors on main & upper levels, + 2 custom staircases w/ iron railing. Recently finished rec room ~ \$1,495,000

624 Kings Cloister Circle Alexandria, VA 22302

## Just Listed in City of Alexandria



Delightful 3BR,2BA brick colonial, screened porch, updated kitchen w/granite countertops, hardwood floors,2 fireplaces, garage, great close-in location, and lovely level lot with mature plantings. ~ \$709,900

2407 Ridge Road Drive Alexandria, VA 22302

## Just Listed in Tower House Place



5 bedroom, 5.5 baths, two Story Great Room w/ Palladian Windows & coffered ceiling overlook stone terrace w/fountain. 10' ceilings on first floor.2 MBR's main & upper floor w/ balcony and steam shower. Open Kitchen w/ center island, commercial appliances, breakfast rm. Custom Laundry rm. Concrete counters and rustic bar in lower lvl exercise, office ~ \$1,595,000

9060 Tower House Place Alexandria, VA 22308

## The "Light Horse Harry" Lee House

Stately brick townhouse built in 1780 was once the residence of Henry Lee and his family which included son Robert E Lee. Tall ceilings, some original features including plaster moldings, heart pine floors, horsehair ceiling medallion, and front staircase. Currently used as an office and residence, it could be used for either or both and offers seven off street parking spaces! ~ \$1,950,000



611 Cameron St Alexandria, VA 22314

## Just Listed in Tauxemont



Completely renovated and almost new. One level living! 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths on half acre. Large eat-in kitchen w/ vaulted ceiling, stainless steel appliances, granite countertops, cherry cabinets, glass backsplash & gas fireplace. Spacious great room w/ stone fireplace, master bedroom suite w/ top of the line bathroom, walk in closet + 2 additional closets. Backs to neighborhood tennis courts. ~ \$749,000

1401 Namassin Road Alexandria, VA 22308

## New Price in Mount Vernon



Big, bright, beautiful on cul-de-sac! 4 spacious bedrooms with large closets, 3.5 updated baths. Large kitchen w/ granite countertops and island, Viking 6 burner cooktop, new stainless steel appliances. Kitchen opens to large TREX deck w/ spectacular back yard! In-ground sprinkler system, playset and cute shed. Luxury owners suite w/ jacuzzi & sep shower. Walk out lwr lvl. Great flow for family & easy outdoor entertaining. ~\$870,000

8355 Justin Road Alexandria, VA 22309

## Elegant Belle Haven Home



Stately 7 bedroom, 5.5 bath 1940's brick colonial. Renovated in 2006, this home offers lovely moldings & architectural detail, hardwood floors, slate roof, copper gutters & downspouts, light filled living room, spacious formal dining room w/ fireplace and French doors leading to a private patio, gourmet chef's kitchen, cozy family room, luxurious master bedroom & walk in closet, master spa bath, fabulous rec room w/ stone fireplace, wet bar and 600 bottle wine cellar, and a large brick patio overlooking a rolling lawn. ~\$1,670,000

1906 Belle Haven Road Alexandria, VA 22307

## Like New In Plymouth Haven



Inviting and refreshing southern style with front and back porches custom built and only 3 years young! 6700 finished sq feet on half lush acre. Dual staircases, modern open floor plan, easy entertaining flow, 6 BRs, 4.5 baths, 3 car garage, wide wood floors, 3 fireplaces, fabulous master suite, chefs kitchen Exercise, music and game rooms, walk up attic, study. Steps from Ft. Hunt Park! ~ \$1,550,000

8839 Fort Hunt Road Alexandria, VA 22308

## Charming in Old Town



Delightful 2BR, 2BA brick townhouse featuring crown molding and chair rail, hardwood floors updated kitchen with granite counters, rec room with full bath on lower level with outside entrance to lovely private deck, stone patio and garden ~ \$539,000

912 South Alfred Street Alexandria, VA 22314

## Stunning Colonial in Belle Haven



Beautiful, light filled colonial perfect for elegant entertaining as well as comfortable family living. Offering a two story foyer, tall ceilings, gracious formal rooms, gourmet kitchen, three fireplaces beautiful master suite with a vaulted ceiling, six bedrooms, five and one half baths, exceptional built-in bookshelves and cabinets, wonderful family room and recreation room with fireplaces, two private decks, and two car garage. ~\$1,599,900

1912 Glen Drive Alexandria, VA 22307

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## NEWS

# Award Emphasizes Importance Of Early Science Education

FROM PAGE 1

internet design company in Richmond when he was 22.

**AND AFTER A FEW** years he began volunteering and mentoring children.

In particular, his mentorship of three brothers whose family emigrated from Haiti had a profound impact on his teaching perspective. "They're grown now, have families of their own and have experienced great success in life. Their tenacity and character has been the driving force behind my passion to serve my students to the best of my ability," he said.

Once he got involved with mentoring and helping children through volunteer programs, Pittman realized he could help "level the playing field for kids who needed a leg up, turn kids on to learning in ways that I wish a teacher would have done for me."

So he sold his business and enrolled at James Madison University to obtain a master's degree in education.

When he graduated, Pittman relocated back to the area and began looking for a school that served a high-need population. He has been teaching for eight years.

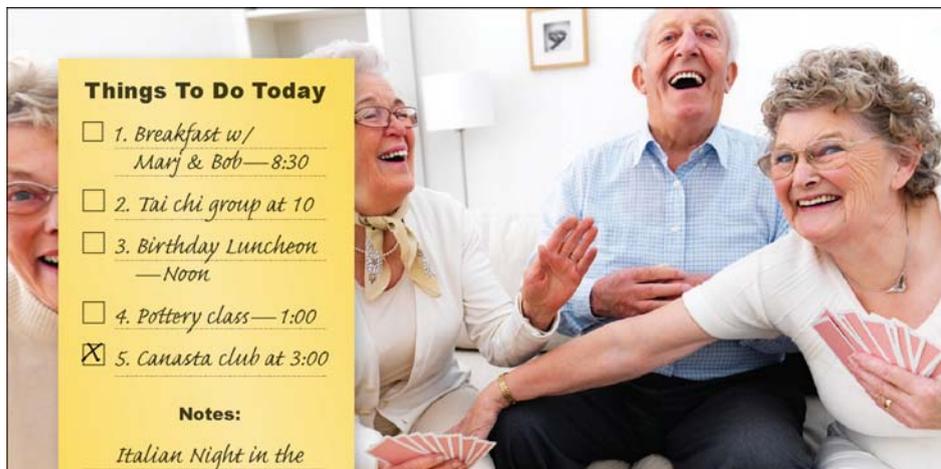
"I chose Hollin Meadows because of the administration's strong commitment to serve students with these types of needs and Fairfax County's access to the educational resources that other school districts couldn't provide," he said.

Pittman also credits his 8th grade English teacher Mrs. Rosebrock who encouraged him to look at Fairfax County when searching for a school.

Another teacher who inspired him was Mrs. Saffron his high school arts teacher who contacted him after she found out about his winning the American Geological Institute Earth Science Teacher of the Year award last year.

"It was very touching to think that she was still thinking of me in the same way I think of my students who have moved on from elementary school," he said.

Not only does he keep busy in his professional life, but Pittman also paints, cooks, writes computer programs and plays on a men's amateur baseball team to name a few of his hobbies. In addition, he also does storytelling with the Washington Storyteller's theatre and plays guitar with a few local musicians on occasion.



### 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

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# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

The Dale two-tier – Gen Ed & AP - strategy confuses objective with strategy. Of course, we want to challenge our students. But, instead of challenging with organically-developed upper level curriculum, we jump two steps ahead and buy the College Board paradigm of teaching college level courses in high school. This is the 'if college-prep is good, then college-level must be better' approach to education.

Sending our kids to college while they're still in high school is an easy if misguided strategy and very tough on the kids. It's made a little tougher when the only option to college-level AP (absent Honors) is non-college-prep 'Gen Ed.' Given this choice, we can expect some kids to go each way – some up, some down, few satisfied. Absent Honors, in a world where individual differences loom large, our school system becomes an 'option-less' system force-fitting kids into one of two unappealing tiers.

Eight, Dale cites College Board research showing students who take College Board AP courses do better in college than those who don't. That isn't necessarily true nor is it the whole story. Independent research shows that only those who do well in AP classes do well in college. The reality is that students who score low in AP fare no better in college than students who don't take AP. Further, high-achieving students don't need AP; they'll succeed in college anyway.

College Board is the vendor supplying AP courses and exams to Fairfax County. It

seems to me quoting its own research to sell its product is a conflict of interest. Most often, qualitative statements from vendors are called marketing – not 'research.' College Board statements about the value of their product can't carry the weight of this wide-sweeping plan to eliminate Honors and go to a two-tier curriculum of AP and non-college prep Gen Ed.

On the up side (AP) it seems to me imprudent to rely on vendor research to validate the redirection of curricula in the country's 11th largest school system. On the down side (Gen Ed), we're 'not there yet' and it may never get there (college-prep level). It's risky to drop a proven winner (3-tier instruction with Honors), pull options away from the succeeding 90 percent, and gamble on relying on two-tiers to sustain the system if our primary purpose in doing so is simply to save the bottom; if that's the fear, let's stop where we are and use other mechanisms to address the bottom cadre.

I oppose the Dr. Dale plan to eliminate Honors courses in Fairfax County Public Schools – now and later. It doesn't make sense. It isn't supported by research. It stresses our kids by threatening to dumb down curricula on the one hand and to over-tax them on the other by prematurely placing them in college-level courses. It reduces options for the succeeding 90 percent in favor of catering to the bottom when other options are available to solve that issue.

**Barry Meuse, Alexandria**

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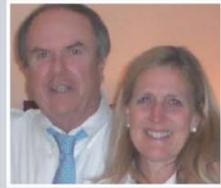
\* By readers of the *Virginia Gazette* 2007-2009



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#607 / Alexandria  
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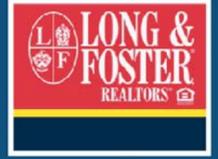
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## ME & MY MOM



Celebrating Mother's Day 2010 are Eck and Ruth Blankenship, their daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Larry Pleasants, granddaughters Angela Norman (Tim) and Stephanie Stallard (Robbie) as well as 10 of Angela's and Stephanie's 11 children. The photo was taken at the Blankenship home in Mount Vernon.



Erika Delman, 21, with her mother Danae Delman of Alexandria on a trip to New York City during Spring Break to see the Broadway musical, "Wicked." Erika is a student at Virginia Tech.



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## THEATER

# First Half of the Story

Signature revives early Sondheim review.

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
THE GAZETTE

**W**ould you put on a Shakespeare Festival and only cover the plays he wrote in the first half of his career? Would you prepare a lecture on Abraham Lincoln that went up through the first two years of his presidency? If not, why would you mount a musical revue on the career of Stephen Sondheim that stops before he wrote “Sweeney Todd,” “Into the Woods,” “Passion,” “Sunday in the Park with George” and “Assassins”?

This is what Signature Theatre has done in resurrecting a 25-year-old show that has three vocalists — assisted by two pianists — singing nearly 30 of Sondheim’s songs from his first 10 shows, a movie and a television show. While Signature has incorporated a few lines of dialogue that are more up to date, the view of Sondheim’s career is incomplete without any of the songs he has contributed to the American musical cannon since 1977.

That was when the revue “Side by Side by Sondheim” was put together by a theatre in England as a fund-raiser. Mega-producer Cameron Mackintosh saw that performance and arranged a transfer, first to a London stage and later to Broadway. It was the first, but not the last, revue built on the songs of the composer/lyricist who has been all but canonized by much of the musical theater community with a Broadway theatre named after him, a prize in his honor presented annually by Signature Theatre and, just last year, the topic of a new and comprehensive revue on Broadway titled “Sondheim on Sondheim.”

The show now on stage at Signature’s larger of its two black-box theatres, the 280-seat theatre they call The Max, will interest solid Sondheim fans. Others, who have yet to be either exposed to, or captured by the genius of his output, can get an introductory course in one pleasant two-hour dose with three talented performers working through the highlights. Interspersed with the songs are some simple explanations of the themes the songs illustrate, such as Sondheim’s reported concentration on the topic of marriage and commitment, or his frustration over being known initially as a lyricist rather than a composer. Early in his career he contributed the lyrics for other composers’ music on shows including “West Side Story,” which had music by Leonard Bernstein, “Do I Hear A Waltz,” which he wrote with Richard Rodgers, and “Gypsy,” for which it is explained in this show, the star, Ethel Merman would let him write the words but wanted a more famous composer to do the music. What the explanation in the show lacks is the name of that more famous composer. It was Jule Styne.

Sherri L. Edelen, long-time Signature veteran, is joined for this show by two Broadway performers, Nancy Anderson making her Signature debut and Matthew Scott returning after performing here in both the



PHOTO BY SCOTT SUCHMAN

**Matthew Scott and Nancy Anderson perform “Getting Married Today” in “Side by Side by Sondheim” at Virginia’s Signature Theatre through June 12.**

fabulous revue of the music of Kander and Ebb, “First You Dream” and the world premiere of the musical “Ace.” Each is talented and hard working, but the blend of their voices seems weak because it lacks a grounding bass or full-blown baritone. Strangely, the arrangements the pianos are playing, which are uncredited in the program, rely on the higher half of the keyboard most of the time, which also robs the sound of a solid bass line.

There certainly are highlights to be enjoyed, especially as the evening comes to a close when, having saved the best for the last, each of the three vocalists take center stage in turn to deliver a crowd-pleasing big number. Anderson starts this triptych off with “Loosing My Mind,” the searing torch song from “Follies.” Scott then steps in to deliver “Being Alive,” one of the closing numbers written for the landmark musical “Company,” which underwent multiple rewrites of its finale. (Scott had sung one of the other songs written for that slot, “Marry Me a Little,” earlier in the show.) Finally, Edelen takes the spotlight for the most thrilling single performance in the show, “I’m Still Here” from “Follies.”

Highlights before the final trio included Anderson’s impressive mix of tongue twisting patter and physical comedy on “Getting Married Today,” Scott’s lovely rendition of the softly sentimental “I Remember” from the 1966 television musical “Evening Primrose” and Anderson and Edelen pairing up for the “I Have a Love” duet from “West Side Story.”

SEE FIRST HALF, PAGE 21

### Where & When

“Side by Side by Sondheim” plays at Signature Theatre in Shirlington through June 12. Performances are Tuesday - Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday - Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$55 - \$81. Call 703-573-7328 or log on to [www.signature-theatre.org](http://www.signature-theatre.org).



PHOTO BY DOUG OLMSTED

**From left: Matthew Randall, Shannon Benton and Mark Adams star in “Mindgame” at Port City Playhouse.**

## Adams Shines Evil Light on ‘Mindgame’

BY BRAD HATHAWAY  
THE GAZETTE

**T**here are some shows that simply seem to belong to a specific actor. Mark Lee Adams takes such command of Port City Playhouse’s production of Anthony Horowitz’s bait-and-switch thriller “Mindgame” that he can pick it up, put it in his pocket and take it home with him. It’s his.

The role is one of those leading parts in a thriller that keeps the audience wondering just who or what the character is supposed to be. Just when you think you have it figured out, the script takes an abrupt about face or at least a 90-degree shift and Adams has to adopt a different persona. Each of the apparent identities is different, and the shifts so abrupt that Adams gets to flit from laid back to hyper and back again, creating first one and then another different personality and then yet one more. You will enjoy each, perhaps as much as it appears that Adams himself is enjoying creating them.

Adams isn’t alone on the stage and his colleagues, both of whom have roles that also have switches designed to surprise the audience as the mystery plays out, are certainly not doing less than fine work themselves.

Shannon Benton spends much of the first act shaking with fear. This could become quite tedious if not handled with skill, and Benton, under the direction of Bruce Follmer, finds that balance between controlled panic and deep-seated dread that keeps the audience from rejecting her out of hand.

Matthew Randall likewise has his character shifting and evolving over the course of the evening. He has to cope with one of the

**The dialogue isn’t exactly what one would call subtle, but this cast manages to keep a straight face in the presence of a clunker or two while they keep the tension level high.**

hardest plot points any actor can have in a horror thriller — he has to have his character make a foreboding mistake in judgment that the entire audience can tell is a disastrous decision

without either becoming unsympathetic or the object of ridicule. He pulls it off

SEE MINDGAME, PAGE 21

### Where & When

The Port City Playhouse production of “Mindgame” plays at the Lab Studio Theatre at Convergence, 1819 North Quaker Lane through May 22. Performances are Friday - Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3 p.m. with a special Tuesday evening performance at 8 p.m. on May 17. Tickets are \$16 - \$18. Call 703-838-2880 or log on to [www.telgo.com/pcp/home.html](http://www.telgo.com/pcp/home.html).

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## ENTERTAINMENT

### EVERY THURSDAY

**Environmental Activists Needed.** 6 to 9 p.m. Clean up your community, your country, your planet — meet with the Sierra Club at its new NOVA Hub in Del Ray, 2312 Mount Vernon Ave., Suite 206, Alexandria. RSVP to Phillip Ellis, Sierra Club Field Organizer at 571-970-0275 or phillip.ellis@sierraclub.org.

### FIRST AND THIRD SATURDAYS

**Line and Hand Dance Party.** 6 to 7 p.m. Cost is \$5/class. At the Weyone Sports Lounge, Landmark Mall E-100, 5801 Duke Street, Ground Level, Alexandria.

### NOW THROUGH OCT. 30

**Civil War Walking Tour.** Saturdays and Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Covers the changing role of African Americans on the estate, views on George Washington from the perspective of Union and Confederate supporters, and the Washington-Robert E. Lee connection. At Historic Mount Vernon. These tours are limited in capacity and cost \$5 in addition to Estate admission: \$15 adults; \$7 children (6-11); free for children 5 & under. Visit [www.MountVernon.org](http://www.MountVernon.org) or call 703-780-2000.

### THURSDAY/MAY 12

**Fiesta Cinco de Mayo.** 6:30 to 9 p.m. Admission of \$65 includes food, drinks and music. Sponsored by Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services Inc. At Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota, 3750 Jefferson Davis Highway, Alexandria. Call 703-360-4387, email [nhanhsi@aol.com](mailto:nhanhsi@aol.com) or visit ANHSI's website [www.anhsi.org](http://www.anhsi.org).

**Raining Cats and Dogs.** 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Spend time with your four-legged pal at this pet-friendly event, featuring a doggie nest tour of The Nest Project's outdoor installations, an adoption event by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, and a pet photo booth. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org); 703-838-4565

**10-Year anniversary.** Inova HealthPlex will be offering Stroke Awareness, Free Blood Pressure Checks, Freedom from Nicotine on site class, Ask the Nutritionist, Body Mass Index Screening, Sun Safety Booth, Car Seat safety and more. At 6355 Walker Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-797-6800.

**Toby Walker.** 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10. Part of the Second Thursday Music program. Acoustic blues music at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

**Rising Hope Fund-raiser.** Shane's Rib Shack will donate 20 percent of the sales of all meals purchased between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, to Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church. Shane's Rib Shack is at 7698-B Richmond Highway, Mount Vernon Plaza, Alexandria.

### FRIDAY/MAY 13

**Kinky Friedman With the Texas Jewboys.** 7:30 p.m. A very rare East Coast tour. Tickets are \$35. At the Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria.

**National Chamber Players.** 7:30 p.m. Saint-Saëns and Brahms. The program will be Camille Saint-Saëns' The Carnival of the Animals and Brahms' Sextet in B major, with guests Benny and Eric Kim, and pianist Rohan de Silva. A reception hosted by Autism Speaks will follow the concert. At Episcopal High School in Alexandria. Visit [www.episcopalhighschool.org](http://www.episcopalhighschool.org) or call 703-933-4135.

### SATURDAY/MAY 14

**Chamber Singers Concert.** 7:30 p.m. Free. Chamber Singers of Marywood University in Scranton, PA, will perform. At St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road,



### SUNDAY/MAY 15

**Middle School Drama Festival.** 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. St. Nearly 100 Stephen's & St. Agnes School students in grades sixth, seventh and eighth will perform in full-scale drama and musical theater productions. At St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, 1000 St. Stephen's Road, Alexandria.

Alexandria. The Chamber Singers are under the direction of Dr. Rick Hoffenberg; the accompanist is Mark Laubach. The music will include selections by Thomas Morley, Franz Schubert, Fanny Mendelssohn, Ralph Vaughan Williams, John Rutter and others, and all musical texts are from the works of William Shakespeare.

**Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.** Branch 567 of the National Association of Letter Carriers will be collecting food at their mailboxes to deliver to local food banks such as ALIVE, Koinonia Foundation, Rising Hope, United Community Ministries and Capital Area Food Banks.

**National Harbor Wine and Food Fest.** 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Festival brings together area chefs, artisanal craftsmen, culinary pioneers as well as wine and spirits. Tickets for two-day all-access pass is \$150/person; two-day general ticket is \$65/person; VIP ticket is \$75; general admission is \$35/advance; \$45/door. Visit [www.wineandfoodnh.com](http://www.wineandfoodnh.com) or call (800) 830-3976.

**Family Health & Wellness Day.** 9:30 a.m. to noon. At Mount Vernon Community School. TrailsforYouth.org will be hosting a bike safety rodeo showcasing safety skills along with free helmets to give away. Other activities include the YMCA mobile activity vehicle, Green Team plant sale, yoga demonstrations, nutritional information and free bike safety gear. Contact Megan Brooks at [megan@tkmetrodc.org](mailto:megan@tkmetrodc.org).

**Polish Cookbook Signing.** 1 to 3 p.m. Alexandria locals Peter and Laura Zeranski will be signing copies of their new cookbook, Polish Classic Recipes. At Barnes & Noble, 3651 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Alexandria.

**World Fair Trade Day.** At Mindful Hands in Alexandria. There will be refreshments of fairly-traded iced tea and chocolate, craft activities for kids, and chances to win prizes of fair-trade handmade gifts. The event will also feature the fairly-traded cats and kittens of Tails High, an Alexandria-based cat rescue group. Visit [www.mindfulhands.com](http://www.mindfulhands.com)

**Talk on Cambodia, Laos.** 10 a.m. Free. Ten Thousand Villages will host a presentation by store manager Kate McMahon on her tour of Southeast Asia. The first 30 attendees will receive a gift from Cambodia, and will also be allowed to shop the 50 percent off sale of items from Cambodia and Laos before the doors open at 11 a.m.

**Convivium Concert,** 7:30pm. Convivium is a Washington-area chamber choir specializing in Renaissance, Tudor and 20th century music since 1985. Grace Episcopal Church, 3601 Russell Rd, Alexandria 22305. Contact [www.gracealex.org](http://www.gracealex.org) or 703-549-1980.

**"Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela."** Film screening at 4:30 p.m. Free. Part of Movies With a Mission program. At the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street, Alexandria. Call 703-746-4356.

**Boutique Charity Day.** On this day, 30 retailers will create an activity or promotion in their stores that would benefit a charity of choice. Profits from the day will be donated to the charity. At participating Old Town Boutique District stores. [www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com](http://www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com)

**Spring Virginia Native Wildflower Sale.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Native trees, shrubs, ground covers, ferns, and wildflowers will be offered for sale by the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society at Green Spring Gardens. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Call 703-642-5173.

**Spring Plant Sale.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Large selection of perennials, annuals, native plants, vegetables, herbs. At Green Spring gardens Park, Booth #13, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria.

**UD FEST.** Noon to 6 p.m. Free. Unique Definition Clothing & Entertainment is having "UD FEST" (Fashion, Entertainment & the Arts Collide). Come and see various performances from dance teams, cheer teams, singers and bands. Chef presentations, fashion shows, face painting and vendors. At the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Alexandria. If you would like to participate, call 703-296-8191 or email events@uniquedefinition.com.

**Free Concert.** 7:30 p.m. Convivium chamber choir specializing in Renaissance, Tudor and 20th century music. At Grace Episcopal Church, 3601 Russell Road, Alexandria. Contact [www.gracealex.org](http://www.gracealex.org) or 703-549-1980.

**Live Green Together.** 4 to 6 p.m. Building Sustainability Community. Presentation and book signing by Liz Walker, co-founder EcoVillage Ithaca, NY & author Choosing a Sustainable Future. At MAS Community Center, 6408 Edsall Road, Alexandria. Visit [GoodTreeVillage.org](http://GoodTreeVillage.org).

**Cook and Bake-Off for a Cause.** 5 to 7 p.m. Youth members will each bring their own creation to compete for best dish; come enjoy a gourmet buffet and vote for your favorite dish. Proceeds will benefit UCM and the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church's Youth Appalachia Mission Trip. At the Fellowship Hall at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 23

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# Adams Shines Evil Light on 'Mindgames'

FROM PAGE 19

well, and as a result, spends a major portion of the evening attempting to emote in the confines of a straight jacket, which is no mean trick.

You will have noticed that I haven't said much about the plot. In part, that is because the plot isn't really that well constructed in Horowitz's play. But mostly it is because I don't want to give away any of the surprises. Let me, instead, simply describe the state of affairs as the play gets underway and then you can decide if you want to attend to find out where the twists go:

A writer with two books on serial killers (Randall) is in the office of the head of an asylum for the criminally insane. He's there to convince the administrator (Adams) to let him interview the worst of the serial killers for yet another book. But the attending nurse (Benton) is trembling so badly that you suspect something in the asylum is very wrong. Of course, it turns out that you are

right.

Horowitz is a British novelist and screenwriter whose personal biographical sketch seems as unlikely as any of the twists in his stories. Raised by a wealthy but secretive father, the family lost its fortune when his father converted all the assets to cash, deposited them in a secret Swiss bank account and then died without leaving a clue as to what bank, what account and what password would free the money. And that was only part of the strange account of his childhood.

**AS AN ADULT**, he has found success as a writer, turning out mystery novels for adults and teens, most notably the Alex Rider series about a teen super-spy. For adults, he's writing a new Sherlock Holmes mystery with the approval of the Conan Doyle estate. Their choice may not be too surprising given Horowitz's track record with television adaptations of the mysteries by Agatha Christie.

The script for "Mindgame" is marked by the facile touch for twists and turns that one would expect from such an author. The dialogue isn't exactly what one would call subtle, but this cast manages to keep a straight face in the presence of a clunker or two while they keep the tension level high.

Director Follmer's design team puts the intimate space called The Lab Studio Theatre at Convergence on North Quaker Lane to good use even though the limits of their financial resources for set construction are clear. Horowitz has built into his script a number of visuals that set designer Michael deBlois and set dresser Kim Gowland accommodate efficiently. But there are times when you may not notice a change in the set or a clever property because you are just having too much fun watching Adams.



*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](mailto:brad.hathaway@verizon.net).*

# First Half of Story

FROM PAGE 19

The pianists take a few moments from time to time to narrate. Of the two, John Kalbfleisch has the bulk of the spoken material and he delivers it with a nice, humorous touch. Indeed, he gets the first (or perhaps second) big laugh of the evening when reading Sondheim's lyric for "Invocation," which includes the prayer "You who look down on actors . . . and who doesn't?"

All this takes place on a very big set for what is essentially a very intimate show. Micha Kachman designed a wall-filling expanse of shimmering plastic strips adorned with pages, presumably from the scripts of Sondheim's shows. In the center he places a fairly wide, light encircled proscenium. When the company is spread across the large playing space they seem far apart from each other. Edelen even gets a chuckle by pointing out the paucity of performers when, in the finale, she looks over the stage and says "We need more people!"

At \$55 to \$81 a seat, this is an expensive but enjoyable collection of highlights from the first half of Sondheim's brilliant career delivered with just a touch of explanation. It lacks any effort to use the songs in a story-telling context, however. That is a failing that later revues based on Sondheim's songs, such as "Putting It Together" which Signature's Artistic Director Eric Schaeffer directed on Broadway and then brought here, tried to correct.

## Boutique District Charity Day

Ready to do a little shopping in Old Town and help 29 local charities at the same time? The Old Town Boutique District (OTBD) announces a community-focused Spring event called Boutique Charity Day taking place on Saturday, May 14. This small business-driven event is staged

to be the largest charity collaboration in the metro area.

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A complete list of each shops activity and charity is located at [www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com](http://www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com).

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GW Pkwy South on Belle View which become Beacon Hill. Left on Derrell Court to home on left.

# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 20

Ohlsson plays Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No. 3. Saturday, May 14 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, May 15 at 3 p.m. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, NOVA Community College, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-0885 or visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org).

**Creating Outdoor Mosaic Garden Ornaments.** Saturday from 11:30 to 3:30 p.m.; Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. At the home of the instructor in Alexandria. Workshop fee is \$60/both days; \$30/one day. On-line registration at [http://calendar.thedelrayartisans.org/view\\_entry.php?id=911&date=20110514](http://calendar.thedelrayartisans.org/view_entry.php?id=911&date=20110514). Visit [www.TheDelRayArtisans.org](http://www.TheDelRayArtisans.org) or contact the instructor Sally Coler at 202-270-9524 or [sallycoler@hotmail.com](mailto:sallycoler@hotmail.com).

## SUNDAYS, MAY 15, 22, 29

**Old Town Waterfront Fun Days.** 1 to 4 p.m. Presented by the Alexandria Waterfront Committee, Torpedo Factory Artists, Art League, Alexandria Archaeology, and the Alexandria Seaport Foundation. At the Alexandria City Marina on the waterfront. Contact Charlotte Hall at 703-684-0580.

## SUNDAY/MAY 15

**Middle School Drama Festival.** 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. St. Nearly 100 Stephen's & St. Agnes School students in grades sixth, seventh and eighth will perform in full-scale drama and musical theater productions. At St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, 1000 St. Stephen's Road, Alexandria.

**Titan Expo.** 1 to 5 p.m. An outdoor fun festival. Food, music, games, moon bounce, bake sale, face painting, car bash, used book sale, dog obstacle course, and more. All proceeds support the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. Free Admission, but tickets required for games and other purchases. Rain or Shine. At T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King Street, Alexandria. Call 703-824-6868.

**Matt Meyer, Drumming Workshop.** 2 p.m. Bring your own instrument or use one provided. Donation of \$10/adult. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-765-5950.

**Choral Evensong.** 5 p.m. Grant Hellmers, Interim Organist-Choir Director of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, will direct the Adult Choir in a choral evensong. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria.

**Martinez and Guthrie.** 7 p.m. Tickets are \$18/general; \$15/advance. At Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Visit [www.FocusMusic.org](http://www.FocusMusic.org). Call 703-501-6061.

**Mount Vernon Crop Walk.** 1:30 p.m. ! Part of the proceeds from this walk will benefit United Community Ministries and New Hope Housing. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Contact Christine



Pictured is the Rev. Chris Furr with his son Noah of First Christian Church of Alexandria. Ken Naser, Wendy Billet and Stowe Boyd of ALIVE Inc. and Brian McCormick, Food Drive Coordinator for Alexandria Branch 567.

## SATURDAY/MAY 14

**Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.** Branch 567 of the National Association of Letter Carriers will be collecting food at their mailboxes to deliver to local food banks such as ALIVE, Koinonia Foundation, Rising Hope, United Community Ministries and Capital Area Food Banks.

Fiske at [christine.fiske@ucmagency.org](mailto:christine.fiske@ucmagency.org) or 703-768-7106 ext 328.

## TUESDAY/MAY 17

**Cici's Pizza Fundraiser.** When you eat at Cici's Pizza anytime on Tuesday, May 17, 10 percent of your meal will be donated to United Community Ministries (UCM). At Cici's Pizza, 7666 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Call 703-718-8880.

**Mount Vernon Evening Lions Dinner.** 6:30 p.m. Speaker is Erika Hernandez from Prince William Justice Academy who will speak on safety issues. At Pema's Restaurant. Contact Andrea Corsillo at 703-960-4973.

**Mount Vernon Genealogical Society.** 1 p.m. Features a presentation on "Genealogy from the Inside Out: Tracing a Family Secret from a Single Clue." With Steve Luxenberg, senior editor with the Washington Post. At Room 112 of the Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Call Harold McClendon at 703-360-0920 or [haroldm@erols.com](mailto:haroldm@erols.com).

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 18

**Swing Dancing.** 9 to 11 p.m. Admission is \$10. With the band, JP McDermot and Western Bop. At Nick's Nightclub, 642 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.

## THURSDAY, MAY 19

**Preview Party, Antiques in Alexandria.** 7 to 10 p.m. Be among first to see booths of show's 60 nationally recognized exhibitors.

Benefit for The Lyceum, Alexandria Association and Twig. Tickets \$135. At Hilton Mark Center, 5000 Seminary Rd., Alexandria. Details: [www.AntiquesinAlexandria.com](http://www.AntiquesinAlexandria.com)

**Politico Reporters.** 6 to 8 p.m. Part of the Rooms with a View lecture series. Featuring Jonathan Allen, Senior Congressional Reporter, Politico, and Julie Mason, White House Reporter, Politico. At The Boeing Company's Conference Center, 1200 Wilson Blvd., Arlington. Visit [www.RosslynVA.org](http://www.RosslynVA.org).

**Ms. Virginia Senior America Pageant.** 1:30 p.m. Free. Three candidates are from Arlington including Ruthmarie Finley, Toby Greenwald and Patty Heenan and two from Alexandria, Lynn Kelley and Shirley Stroud. The winner will represent Virginia at the national pageant in Atlantic City. At the Lee Center, Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria. Call Annmarie Pittman, 703-549-7012 or e-mail [annmariep@comcast.net](mailto:annmariep@comcast.net). The website is [www.msvirginiasenior.com](http://www.msvirginiasenior.com).

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# Home Life Style

## 'Your Home Should Make You Happy'

Design trends include more personal touches, smaller spaces, lower maintenance materials.

BY CLAIRE MCKENNA  
THE GAZETTE

**M**any local interior designers participated in this Spring's design house to benefit Children's National Medical Center. Several reflected on recent trends and offered insight on why good design matters.

"Most of us are looking at our home now as more than an investment," said Barbara Franceski of Alexandria, who designed the family room in the design house. "We plan to stay in place for a longer period of time, and with that comes a desire to enjoy life right where we are."

For that reason, "personal expression is more center stage than ever," Franceski said. Homeowners want to use original, unique art to animate spaces, and can even turn to digitally printed wallpaper to create something that's just for themselves. People are mixing materials like contemporary Lucite pieces with wood and alabaster and metals.

"We're embracing originality rather than a stale, decorated look."

Designer Michael Roberson of Arlington also referred to "a new eclecticism." This style consists of an "interesting mix of things we've never mixed before."

It used to be that eclectic design combined different historic and modern styles that in one way or another related to each other, she said. But now this is not always a requirement.

"Literally everything in the room is unique from everything else," Roberson said. "People seem to be simply putting what they like in a room."

This design technique can "sometimes be wonderful," but Roberson also implies that it also has the potential for disaster.

That's one reason Nancy Colbert of McLean, who designed the library in DC Design House, recommends consulting a designer, as well as checking other resources.

"Whether you're planning on going it alone, or choose to seek help [from a designer], spend time investigating current design magazines or websites to get a sense of what feels good for you."

In gathering ideas from these different sources, Colbert says new decorators may find "a place to

build their vision."

One trend Colbert observes: "We're seeing less and less brown wood." Until recently, most furniture finishes consisted of some variation of brown wood. Now, however, decorators are noticing more painted and combination finishes on furniture pieces.

Lauren Liess of Herndon was the designer of a "hideaway" bedroom in the design house that was designed as a relaxing place to enjoy the window seat, take a nap, write at the Parson's desk or share a cup of tea.

Her wing chair in the hideaway bedroom included its back upholstered in a Michael Smith floral while the seat and front of the chair are dark velvet.

For home decorators looking for a casual design, Liess suggests "using a casual mix of patterns and textures is a more relaxed way to design a room."

Grass-cloth wallpaper, in bedrooms or living areas, is one way to add texture.

Many designers have welcomed more business lately as clients look to redecorating as an alternative to relocating. "People seem to be re-doing what they already have rather than moving" says Juliana Cunningham, head of Juliana's Home Interiors in Clifton.

Cunningham commented on the recent trend for clients to simplify the redecorat-



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

**'Nature inspired and quirky' describe well the hideaway designed by Lauren Liess. Grasscloth wall and ceiling coverings, diamond patterned sisal rug, an oversized window seat and a pair of distressed silver sconces are just a few of the cozy elements of the hideaway at the Design House.**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ing process. She said that window treatments, including panes, blinds, shutters and more "used to be a more labor-intensive process." But people now seem to be turning to simple shades to complement their windows.

The designer also echoed many of her fellow designers in commenting on the lack of bold colors seen in homes recently.

"Were seeing much more middle-of-the-color-wheel combinations in all rooms," Cunningham said.

Allie Mann of Case Design agreed, saying, "Grey is the new beige."

The designer assures anyone looking for a color change in their home that grey is a safe and smart option. "It can work in many rooms," using the successful blend of "Charleston Grey" in the master bedroom in the design house with the "Corn Forth White" she used in the master bathroom which she designed to support her argument.

Like Cunningham, Mann has noticed many of her clients seeking a less laborious approach to redecorating their homes. Rather than the big additions Mann saw in the early 90s, the designer has noticed "a resurgence of people making better use of smaller spaces."

Mann added that many clients were "asking for more low-maintenance projects." Rather than purchasing materials for their new countertops or floors



**Designer Barbara Franceski, ASID.**

that require constant upkeep, homeowners are looking for lower maintenance options. For example, Mann, who specializes in kitchen and bathroom remodeling, said that while before her clients have sought out natural stone tiles for their kitchen and bathroom floors, many have now caught on that porcelain tiles look about the same without requiring nearly as much work to maintain.

Mann offered several tips for getting the most from a modest change: "I'm a big fan of stripes, they can often play up the size of a room." Adding crown-molding can quickly make a room look more formal.

When looking to change the look of a room, often the easiest thing to do is switch out accessories, including pillows, shades, furniture covers and chairs.

But the real reason to design spaces in a house is to please the homeowner.

"Simply put, I believe your home should make you happy," said designer Franceski of Alexandria. "Allow yourself the freedom to create an environment that makes you smile. Doing so brings immeasurable joy."

And when your home gives you pleasure, you're more likely to invite others in, Franceski said, spreading the joy and enhancing quality of life.



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

**Beyond two conversation chairs at the library entrance from the foyer two milled bookcases were added to the entrance to the garden room to contribute to the library's symmetry. Designed by Nancy Colbert of McLean.**

# Home LifeStyle Universal Appeal?

More renovations include accessible details.

BY BILL MILLHOLLAND  
CASE DESIGN/REMODELING

Whether you realize it or not, a look at today's newest appliances or a visit to a home design showroom is likely filled with elements of universal design. Some can be subtle, such as a drawer in the middle of your refrigerator door. Others are a bit more obvious, such as grab bars in showers and bathtubs.

Today, universal design concepts are taking root in modern home design, making homes more accessible to users of all backgrounds, ages and physical abilities. But don't worry – this doesn't have to take away from the beauty of a home remodeling project. Rather, even the smallest home modification can adhere to the look and feel of a home while enabling owners to enjoy their investment even longer.

Incorporating universal design elements into a home remodel or building project benefits homeowners of all ages and abilities – from families with young children to older, retired couples. As a family grows and evolves, so too does the way in which it uses a home. Once children have grown up and moved out, many couples face the prospect of relocating to a home or community that is more accommodating of older residents – single-story dwellings, for instance. Universal design, however, can offer a reprieve to homeowners wishing to remain in their homes and maintain an independent lifestyle, as they “age in place.” This is especially important given the current economy, as more people choose to remain in the same home rather than sell it.

Major upgrades can require considerable time and money, but it's never too early to incorporate small changes – such as replacing door knobs with handles – that can help with ease of use. Even families with young children reap the benefits from appliance drawers in the kitchen and seating in showers. Other slight, but helpful, modifications include increased task lighting, hand rails on stairs, and a refrigerator with side-by-side doors.

Some of the most popular, yet larger, universal design upgrades include altering home's structure



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE CONNECTION

**Allie Mann of Case designed the master bathroom of the DC Design House, exemplifying a trend of low or no-threshold showers.**

and layout. For example, widening halls and doorways has the benefit of better accommodating wheelchairs and walking aids for older or physically challenged inhabitants. These changes can also aid in circulation patterns and make a home feel more spacious, regardless of square footage.

It is also not uncommon for today's homeowners to request a first-floor master bedroom and bathroom, eliminating the need for walking up and down a flight of stairs. Even installing elevators in residential homes is becoming a trend.

The bathroom is the location of many universal design projects, both large and small. Some homeowners are now opting for low or no-threshold showers and sinks and vanities of custom heights. Increasing in popularity is the “comfort-height” toilet that is easier to sit down on than older, shorter models.

As is true with any design element, universal design additions should coordinate with the overall flow and aesthetics of the home. Designers, contractors and architects should incorporate changes while refraining from taking away from the beauty of a home. Many manufacturers keep this in mind when developing new products for both home construction and upgrades.

When considering a universal design project of any size or scope, homeowners should ask themselves:

- ❖ How long do I plan to live in my home?
- ❖ How can I make my house more accessible to people of varying abilities?
- ❖ How much can I afford to spend?

If you are overwhelmed or unsure of how you can introduce universal design concepts to your home, discussing these topics with a Certified Aging in Place Specialist.

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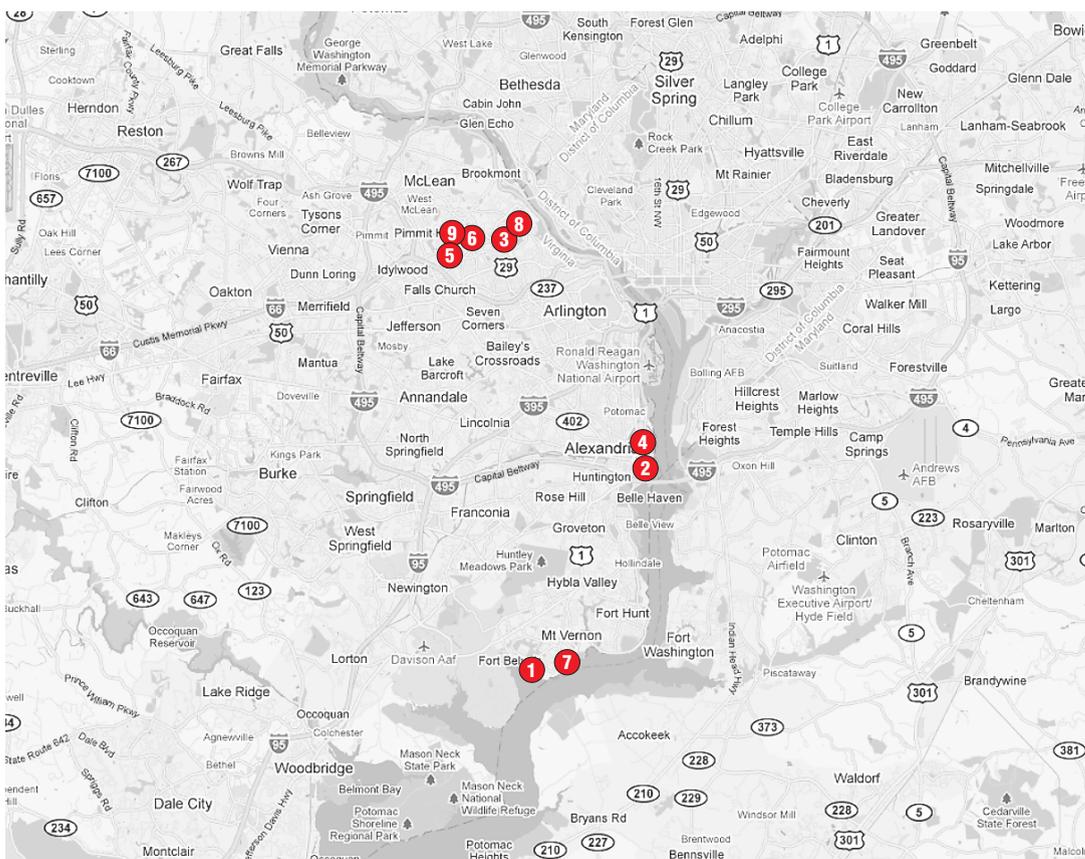


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# SPORTS

## Changing Roles

**A knee injury turned  
standout goalkeeper  
Charlene Belanger into a  
coach in her senior season.**

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

**C**harlene Belanger's ability to lead was evident from the time she was a freshman on the Mount Vernon girls soccer team. She unseated a senior for the starting goalkeeper position while giving advice to help her elder teammate improve.

In February of 2010, Belanger, a junior at the time, committed to play for American University. Her intangible qualities and physical talents made her a standout for the Majors, whether she was playing in goal or on the field.

One year later, Belanger made it official, signing with American on Feb. 2. The start of her senior season was one month away, but before Belanger could begin what figured to be her best season in a Majors uniform, she had to undergo what figured to be a simple surgery on her left knee. She had been having problems with the knee since November — the product of long-term "awkward" running, she was told — but the injury was expected to get better on its own. But after the healing process plateaued, she was scheduled for surgery.

During surgery, it was discovered Belanger's injury was worse than expected. The cartilage behind her

knee cap was "completely destroyed," Belanger said, an injury not seen on an MRI. What started as a procedure that would cost Belanger a few weeks turned into season-ending surgery.

"When I went under, they said I would be able to play in three weeks — there isn't other damage, they're just cleaning up," Belanger said during a Mount Vernon practice on May 4 at the George Washington RECenter. "The first thing they told me when I woke up [on Feb. 8] is you're out for three months. I started crying. I was bawling my eyes out."

That night, Belanger's brother Lucas, an all-state goalkeeper for the Mount Vernon boys soccer team, sent a text to girls head coach Tony Garza to inform him Belanger was out for the season. Later that night, Garza, returning home from his birthday dinner, received a call from Belanger.

"My initial [reaction], honestly, was denial," Garza said. "I really thought it was just a joke. I was like, 'Nah, she's not hurt. I think maybe it's just a bruise or something like that,' but I was in complete denial for awhile. It was a big blow to our system, I'll be honest, a very big blow. When I finally realized it was very serious, very true, I had no words. I didn't know what to say, I didn't know how to react."

"I've looked at Charlene as my own daughter in school ever since she was a freshman and it was like having news given to your own child, like your breath was taken away. When it finally settled into me, it was, 'Wow, what are we going to do?'"

**WHILE BELANGER** hasn't been able to help Mount Vernon on the field, the senior wasn't going to allow her misfortune to keep her from her teammates. Belanger has used her leadership skills from the side

SEE CHANGING ROLES, PAGE 28

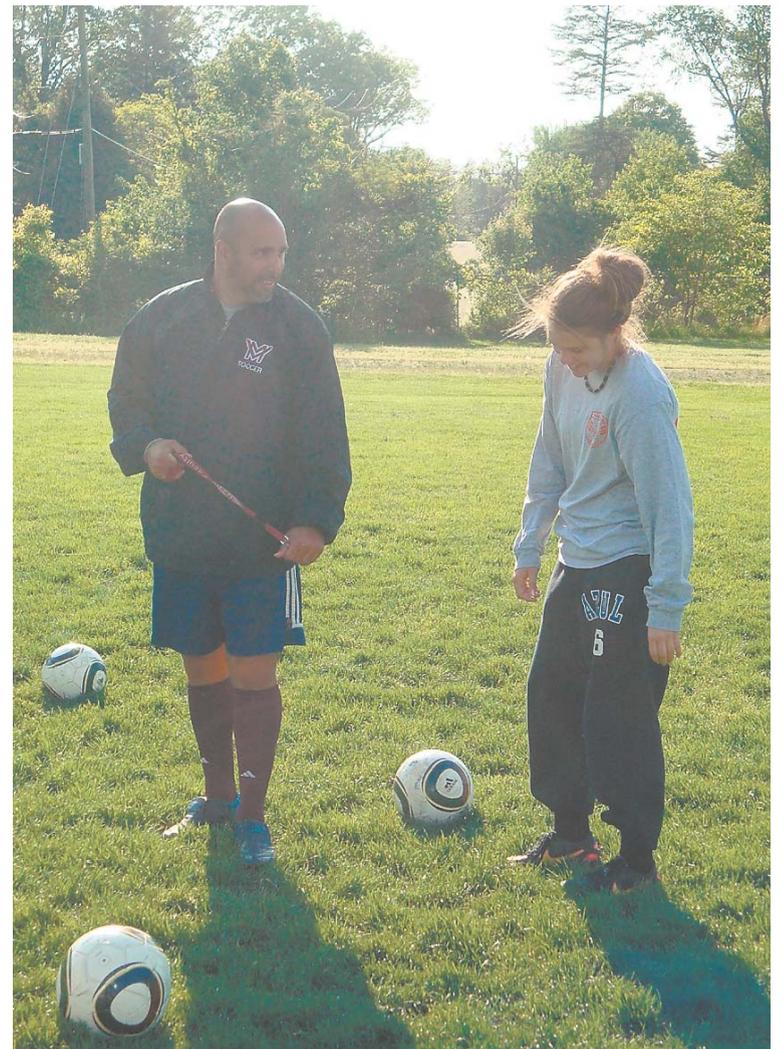


PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE GAZETTE

**Mount Vernon head girls soccer coach Tony Garza, left, talks to senior Charlene Belanger during a May 4 practice at the George Washington RECenter. Belanger, a standout goalkeeper, missed the season due to injury, but has taken on a coaching role.**

### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### Alumni Soccer Game

On Friday, May 13, Mount Vernon High School will be hosting the Inaugural Alumni Men's Soccer game against the alumni of West Potomac High School. The "junior" alumni game will begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by the "senior" alumni game at 8 p.m. Several members of the Mount Vernon Hall of Fame will play. Alumni ranging from the class of 1985 to the class of 2010 will participate. All military, active and retired, will be honored at the game. Admission is \$3, or free for all military in uniform. MVHS alumni who played boys soccer are encouraged to contact Anthony Garza in the activities office at 703-619-3142.

#### Gunston Soccer Club

Gunston Soccer Club, which provides recreation and travel soccer opportunities for boys and girls in the Fort Hunt, Mount Vernon, Lorton, Alexandria, and other areas of Fairfax County, will be holding tryouts for its travel soccer teams, which play in the National Capital Soccer League, Washington Area Girls

Soccer League, and Old Dominion Soccer League. Boys and girls, ages 8-18, who are interested in playing soccer at a higher level and improving their skills and knowledge of the game should attend their age-appropriate tryout session. Tryout sessions begin on May 23 and run through June 10. All players should bring a soccer ball and water bottle and wear shin guards. Additional information can be found at [www.gunstonsoccer.com](http://www.gunstonsoccer.com).

#### WP Air Raid Football Camp

The Wolverine Booster Club is sponsoring the Air Raid Football Youth League Camp, structured toward grades 4-8 and ages 10-14. Camp sessions are July 11-15 and July 18-22. Each day runs from 6-8:30 p.m. on the West Potomac High School practice fields.

Cost is \$75. Make checks payable to the Wolverine Athletic Booster Club or WBAC.

#### WP Boys Basketball Summer Camps

West Potomac will host three weeks of basketball camps in July for ages 7-16. Week one is the co-ed camp from July 5-8. Cost is

\$95. Weeks two (July 11-15) and three (July 25-29) are boys camps. Cost is \$120. Contact West Potomac head coach David Houston at [djhouston@fcps.edu](mailto:djhouston@fcps.edu) for more information.

#### American Legion Baseball Players Wanted

The Montgomery College Rockville baseball team is looking for American Legion or showcase-quality players for the fall 2011 and spring 2012 seasons. The Rockville Express of the Cal Ripken League plays their home games at MC Rockville. Contact Coach Rick Price at 240-447-6948 for more information.

#### Awards Banquet

The Sportsman's Club will hold its 56th Annual Awards Banquet on May 16 at The Westin Alexandria, located at 400 Courthouse Square. Reception hour begins at 6 p.m. and dinner is served at 7 p.m. The guest speaker will be Navy head football coach Ken Niumatalolo.

Individual tickets are \$75. For more information, contact Frank Flaherty at 703-

346-6525.

#### Aces Looking For Host Families

The Alexandria Aces Collegiate Summer Baseball Club of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League is looking for host families for its upcoming 2011 season. Aces players arrive in Alexandria on Memorial Day Weekend. All players need is a place to sleep and access to a washer and dryer, the Aces take care of everything else. To volunteer as a host family, contact Aces Host Family Coordinators, David Cheney (Aces Club Boosters - Baseball Chairman) or Lisa Marie Cheney (Aces Club Boosters - Board Vice Pres.) by email at [cheneydave@gmail.com](mailto:cheneydave@gmail.com) or by phone at 703-370-2882.

#### Sports Updates On Twitter

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## SPORTS

### Changing Roles

FROM PAGE 27

line during the 2011 season, encouraging and instructing the Majors. She's with the team during every game and makes it to practice whenever she isn't at a physical therapy appointment, which are on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Garza thinks of her as a player/coach. Belanger describes her role as a "bridge" between players and coaches.

"I'm on the sidelines with [the coaching staff] during the games and practices, but then again, I'm with the girls all the time," Belanger said. "I can kind of fill the coaches in on what's going on with the girls and fill the girls in with what's going on with the coaches."

Belanger works with sophomore goalkeeper Alexis Lybarger, warming her up before games and giving her pointers. Lybarger started in goal during non-district games last season, allowing Belanger to play in the field, but experience as a freshman didn't prepare Lybarger for being thrust into the starting role while in the shadow of a standout.

"At first, it was nerve-wracking," Lybarger said. "I was really nervous because those are big shoes to have to fill. As the season progressed, I'm getting more and more comfortable with it and [Belanger is] definitely helping me out and so is everybody else on the field right now."

Lybarger said one of the most important things she's learned from Belanger is how to bounce back from adversity.

"Before the [season opener against West Potomac], she told me that if something happens or if something gets by me to just flush it away," Lybarger said.

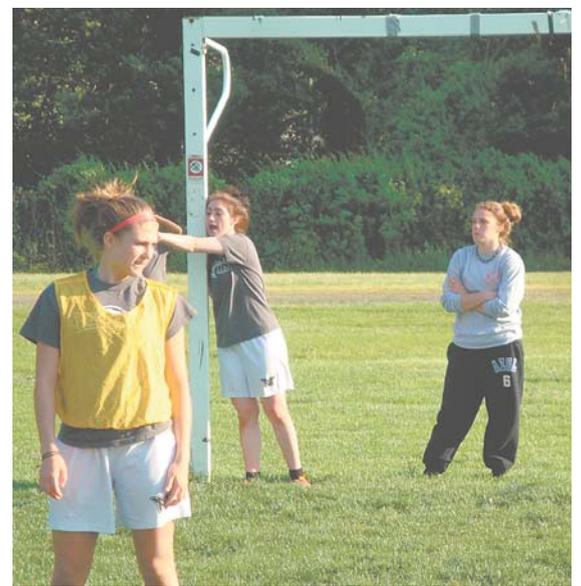


PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE GAZETTE

**Mount Vernon senior Charlene Belanger watches as sophomore goalkeeper Alexis Lybarger directs teammates during a May 4 practice at George Washington RECenter.**

"In our scrimmages I would sit there and I would be mad [if something went wrong] and it affected the game. She told me just to flush it away and to be positive after [a] goal. After [a] goal ... I'm mad at myself. [During] the West Po game I got scored on — it ended up being a 1-0 game — and I sat there and said, 'Let's go ladies! Let's pick this up!' I think that's the first time I've done that since I was little."

Belanger has made the most of her situation, but things haven't been easy. Not being able to play has been an emotional challenge, especially with her brother excelling for the boys program.

"Game days are hard," Belanger said. "Those are definitely the hardest ones because I remember playing all the teams from last season. I know the good players, I know how they play, I can do this and this and I have to tell the other players that, I have to fill them in. Warmups are hard. I try to get everyone pumped and focused. I'm goofy. I try to make everyone relaxed. ...

"There's definitely sibling rivalry [with Lucas]. ... He got all-state as a freshman and this was going to be my year to get all-met. It's a little awkward because I wanted [to earn accolades], too, but I don't mind. I'm like, 'I got you next year — rookie of the year'" at American.

**GARZA, AN ASSISTANT** athletic director at Mount Vernon, saw how not playing took a toll on Belanger. The two used to speak often about soccer in his office. After Belanger's surgery, the soccer conversations dwindled.

"I didn't want to talk about the season because I knew it would upset her," Garza said. "She was hurt, she knew she was out for the season and every time we talked about the season you could just see her eyes water. ... I think she's handled it as best as she can. She's kept her emotions in line. There are times where I can tell she's angry and upset and you've got to let her get it out, let her be angry, let her be upset. She's been in my office numerous times angry, up

SEE CHANGING, PAGE 30

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## SPORTS

# Changing Roles

FROM PAGE 28

set, emotional about it and my job is to comfort her, console her and do everything I can as a coach, as an athletic director and a fatherly figure to her. Sometimes I've got to let her vent and steam and she's done that just about as best as you can ask her to do."

Belanger has coached a U10 boys team for two seasons and said she would like to coach in the future, but instructing one's peers and teammates can be a difficult task. Belanger was hesitant to offer much in the way of instruction early in the season. As time has passed, she has grown comfortable in her role.

"She started off very nervous," Garza said. "Our very first game against West Potomac, she was nervous [about giving] instruction from the sideline. ... She always thought she was overstepping our toes. I think she was very nervous at first because she didn't want to overstep the coaches' toes. ... Over the season, it's progressed where she's gotten more comfortable. ... She's always asked, 'What's my limitation? Can I do this? Can I do that?'. [I tell her], 'Charlene, go as far as you can until I say, OK you kind of crossed the line,' but she hasn't ever crossed that line."

Belanger has made the transition to a new role while also having to deal with physical challenges. For more than a month after surgery, she was in a brace from her hip to her left ankle, unable to bend her knee. While the bone and cartilage were healing, her quad muscle atrophied, leaving her left thigh noticeably smaller than her right. She is in physical therapy, learning to do simple tasks she took for granted in the past.

"At physical therapy, I literally have to think to walk up the stairs," Belanger said. "You have to actually say, 'OK, these muscles are going to tighten and I have to step up. You don't ever think about it. Showering, getting in and out of the shower, you don't think about that, but when you can't do it it's like, oh, it's kind of a big deal.'"

Belanger said having to watch her teammates practice and play has taught her a lesson.

"Don't take anything for granted," she said. "While the drills can be monotonous and boring and training is hard, I would give anything to be able to do that instead of being injured. [I would tell people] definitely don't take it for granted and enjoy it while you can."

Belanger isn't able to run yet — "I can do this hop-skip thing, but it's ugly. It's awkward" — but hopes to be able to train for her club team, McLean Azul, by the end of May or early June. Until then, she will continue helping her Mount Vernon teammates as the Majors approach the postseason, which begins with the National District Tournament on May 16.

"She's definitely still a leader," Lybarger said. "She was a leader before and even though she's injured, she's a leader now. You can't take that away from her."

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