

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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DECEMBER 22, 2011



Penguin kindergarten teacher Mandy Kimlick and Jack Krainik applaud as the conclusion of the faculty and junior kindergarten sing of Jingle Bell Rock.



Eli Ponte-Rosenkrantz, Nora Read, Kenneth Nance and Caroline Killick appear with their class in the Procession-Posada.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

Festival Of Lights

Celebrating traditions and custom from around the globe, the students at Burgundy Farm Country Day School performed their annual holiday Festival of Lights for their families and friends on Dec. 16.

Anne Sullivan and Amelia Petty watch as the school mates enter the gym for the annual Festival of the Lights holiday program.



Changing Face of Arlandria

6-1 vote approves redevelopment despite opposition.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Ignoring hours of testimony against a proposed redevelopment in Arlandria and casting aside repeated threats of retribution at the polls this November, a majority of City Council members voted to approve a sweeping new plan for Mount Vernon Village Center that would replace a 1940s-era strip mall with two six-story towers. Councilwoman Alicia Hughes offered the lone dissenting vote, suggesting that a work group be impaneled similar to the one created when council members faced a firestorm of opposition on the waterfront

plan. "Let people come to the table and feel as though they are heard," Hughes said.

The other members disagreed, and her motion failed to gain a second vote for consideration. The majority of council members rejected concerns voiced by many neighborhood residents that they had not been part of the process. Several speakers supported the development special-use permit, but the vast majority of speakers for Saturday's public hearing were against approval or at least calling for a delay. City planners said they went through the same outreach efforts for every other development, and the

SEE REDEVELOPMENT, PAGE 7

Downcast On Upzoning

Waterfront Plan Work Group issues inconclusive final report.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

What began as an effort to narrow differences ended up underscoring the deep divisions within the city about the waterfront small-area plan, a controversial planning document that overturns a longstanding ban on hotels and increases density at three sites slated for redevelopment. The Waterfront Plan Work Group's long-awaited final report essentially punts the most

"This is not a consensus or an approval. It's also not an alternative plan."

— Bob Wood, member, Waterfront Plan Work Group

hotly contested parts of the plan. "This is not a consensus or an approval," said work group member Bob Wood at a Tuesday, Dec.

20, City Hall press conference officially releasing the 142-page document. "It's also not an alternative plan."

In a section addressing the controversial proposed changes to three parcels in the W-1 zone, the final report emphasizes the differences

among members rather than points of agreement. The five-vote majority concluded that additional density and hotels would be "modest and necessary," especially considering what Robinson Terminal North might be able to accomplish with-

out a new small-area plan if it follows through with a threatened lawsuit. The four-vote minority SEE WORK GROUP, PAGE 4

Holiday Heroes

Firefighters Toy Drive grows to serve 4,000 children.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

It was supposed to be a one-time event, a toy drive to help 50 struggling families in the Gum Springs community along the Route 1 corridor. But that was 14 years ago. Today, the Firefighters

SEE FIREFIGHTERS, PAGE 6



Capt. Willie Bailey reviews request lists.

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To the Dogs

Everybody knows that Alexandria is a dog town. That means that the politics of pooches can be electric. Literally.

Last month, the Alexandria City Council amended the dog ordinance to say that electronic collars did not meet the letter of the law for restraining dogs. For dog owners in Alexandria, it would be physical restraints only. That prompted an outrage among electronic dog collar users, who organized a countermovement of letter writing and lobbying. That effort culminated last weekend at City Hall, where a number of speakers signed up to oppose the council's action.

"A leash is only as good as the person holding on to it," said **Jean Kornblut**, a Del Ray resident who showed up Saturday morning to speak out on the issue.

As it turns out, Kornblut didn't have to speak. After the issue was raised by the first speaker, Vice Mayor **Kerry Donley** offered a motion to rescind the council's previous action. He said city staff should collaborate with the dog community and electronic collar advocates to come up with a better policy. One potential solution could be to allow electronic collars for professional dog-training schools.

"I don't think we made a bad decision," said Donley. "We might not have made the best decision."

Councilman **Rob Krupicka** said that council members should not lose sight of the citizens who called for action in the first place, raising concerns that people don't know if **Fido** is on an electronic leash or not when he approaches on the sidewalk. For many, the ambiguity is, well, rough. "I don't think the answer is to go back to the old way," said Krupicka.

Protecting the Investment

For years, the trend in "scattered-site" housing has been to split public housing from market rate housing. Now things are moving in a different direction, at least in Alexandria.

Last weekend, members of the Alexandria City Council voted to approve a new development special-use permit for one block of the massive James Bland redevelopment. Previous plans for the block in question, which faces the east side of Henry Street between First Street and Montgomery Street, called for a large multi-family building that mixed market-rate housing with public housing. After council members approved the original design in 2008, the investors decided they wanted a separate building for the market rate units.

"They're interested in protecting their investment," explained **Melvin Miller**, chairman of the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

The revised plan approved Saturday has three buildings instead of one, two public-housing facilities without elevators and one separate market-rate building that will be much more high-end. The unscattered-site housing development will need to apply for tax credits in March, so council members were facing a time crunch to approve the amendment on Saturday. But that doesn't mean they were thrilled with the proposal. Councilman **Paul Smedberg** said the revised plan watered down the architecture by moving toward something city planners call "warehouse vernacular."

"There's nothing of interests at all on these buildings," said Smedberg. "I'm sick of always having to compromise on architecture."

Although council members voted for approval, members of the authority will be working with staff to see if they can add some spice to the architectural details of the building.

Reluctant Candidate

It's that time of the election year. Candidates are announcing their intention to run left and right, including Democrat **Justin Wilson**, Democrat **Charles Sumpter** and Republican **Scott Gordon**. Democrat **Sean Holihan** is currently raising money for a possible campaign. But one potential candidate has mixed feelings about the prospects of throwing his hat into the ring.

"I'd like to run, but I don't want to serve," said Democrat **Jack Sullivan**, who has been critical of recent actions City Council has taken in the West End. "My wife tells me that they go together."

— MICHAEL LEE POPE

Merged Justice

Effort to merge
Arlington and
Alexandria
courts to
continue into
next year.



MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Courthouse.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Alexandria and Arlington currently have two separate court systems. That may change in the near future as members of the General Assembly consider reorganizing the court system to save money and reallocate the workload for judges.

The effort to merge the two Northern Virginia court systems began quietly last year, when Del. Bill Janis (R-56) and Sen. John Edwards (D-21) introduced legislation that would have merged the courts for Arlington and Alexandria. The discussion took place against a backdrop of a Circuit Court vacancy in Alexandria, which some members were reluctant to fill because they were advocating merging the two courts. That issue was resolved when members decided to ask the Supreme Court of Virginia to conduct a review, which was recently released. That report dismisses the idea of merging the courts in favor of creating an overlay that would move judges from overworked courts to ones with fewer actions.

"I don't think overlay is going to work," said Del. David Albo (R-42), chairman of the Courts of Justice committee in the House of Delegates. "I just don't think the courts are going to say, 'Oh you can take our judge.' It's not realistic."

Now, members of the General Assembly are preparing for another session just as two more vacancies have opened in Arlington, one on the Circuit Court and another on the General District Court. The Circuit Court was already down a judge before the retirement of Judge James Almond, so a consensus seems to have already developed to fill that position. But with money tight and efforts to reorganize the court still lingering, the effort to fill the seat of retiring General District Court Judge Dorothy Clarke may end up being an uphill battle for the Arlington delegation.

"I'll be fighting to fill both of the positions," said Del. Patrick Hope (D-47). "The caseloads warrant that these positions be filled."

THE EFFORT to merge courts in Virginia goes back many years. Before the current discussions in Richmond, the last time it was seriously debated was during a reorganization of the court system in the 1970s. At the time, some were eager to merge smaller courts such as Arlington and Alexandria so that the circuits would be more similar in size. But

the Byrd machine, which had dominated Virginia politics for 50 years, opposed the move because much of the organization's power flowed through the court system.

"The Byrd machine, or what was left of it at the time, was solidly against any kind of effort to merge the courts," said retired Judge Daniel Fairfax O'Flaherty. "They liked things the way they were."

The machine got its way, although the organization soon fell from power. In recent years, legislators in Richmond have been wondering if the caseloads in Arlington and Alexandria really warrant two separate courts. But a review of caseload data is difficult for a number of reasons.

"People tend to file a lot more pro se diverse cases in Alexandria rather than Arlington, for example," said Hope. "And then there a number of ways the courts tend to record cases that creates a problem when comparing one circuit to another."

For example, some courts count child custody hearings as one continuous case beginning with a divorce. Other courts close the divorce case and open new

custody cases. As a result, the Supreme Court has embarked on a study to determine a "weighted court average" to determine which courts are overworked and which ones can handle an increased load. That study isn't expected until next year, when the debate about merging Alexandria and Arlington's court system is likely to erupt again. "We've been lobbied heavily by judges and attorneys about this," said Del. David Englin (D-45). "The overwhelming consensus is that combining the two courts would be a bad idea, so I'm inclined to vote against it."

IN THE MEANTIME, Arlington has two vacancies in the upcoming General Assembly session.

Members say the Circuit Court vacancy is certain to be filled because that court is already down one judge. But the General District Court vacancy may not be filled this session because other courts also have vacancies to fill. And with the effort to merge Arlington and Alexandria still floating around in the General Assembly, spending money on a position that could be eventually vaporized could be perceived as a waste of money.

"The numbers say that Alexandria is busy, but my eyeballs tell me that Alexandria isn't busy at all," said Albo. "But we don't want to take action on what my eyeballs are telling me, so we'll wait for the numbers to come out."

"I don't think overlay is going to work. I just don't think the courts are going to say, 'Oh you can take our judge.' It's not realistic."

— Del. David Albo (R-42)

Waterfront Plan Work Group Issues Final Report

FROM PAGE 1

pointed out that the plan can be funded without allowing hotels or adding density to the existing zoning.

“This issue is not development versus no development,” the report concludes, “but instead involves the difference in density between settlement agreement with Robinson Terminal Warehouse Corporation and the 1992 Alexandria Master Plan that serves as the basis for the W-1 zoning.”

THE SEEDS of the waterfront plan were sown back in 2008 when Robinson Terminal Corporation, which is owned by The Washington Post, filed a lawsuit challenging the city’s 1992 zoning. Realizing that city officials were about to embark on a small-scale planning process, Robinson Terminal took preemptive action in court saying the land owner was entitled to the higher density outlined in a 1980s settlement agreement with the federal government rather than a 1992 plan with reduced density.

“We were not going to be bullied,” said Planning Director Faroll Hamer in an interview earlier this year. “At the same time, we viewed the lawsuit as an opportunity.”

Now that opportunity is finally coming to a head, but not without lingering opposition. Work group member Bert Ely is in the process of writing his own report, which he plans to release before Jan. 5 — just before the scheduled the Jan. 10 work session where City Council members will consider the work group’s report. Ely has been particularly critical of the Planning Director Faroll Hamer’s effort to amend the W-1 zone to allow hotels and increase allowable density.

“This plan is merely a marketing brochure to sell the W-1 zoning change,” said Ely. “They’re using scare tactics to get people to change the zoning.”

Ely said he is particularly concerned about a section in the text amendment to the zoning code specifying “the maximum floor area ration may be increased provided the development meets and is consistent with the Development Goals and Guidelines listed in the Waterfront plan for the property.” Although all the controversy in the current plan has been directed at the three properties slated for redevelopment, Ely



Work group member Bob Wood addresses the media at a City Hall press conference Tuesday releasing the long-awaited report from the panel. He’s joined by work group member Nate Macek, left, and City Councilman Paul Smedberg, right.

said he is concerned that other property owners who are also in the W-1 zone could use this provision to gain additional density without having to rezone. As a result, Ely has taken to calling this part of the text amendment “the blank check provision.”

“That’s ridiculous,” said Hamer when asked about Ely’s concerns. “The increased density only applies to these three properties. Other properties would have to get a different text amendment if they wanted increased density.”

DURING A SERIES of dueling press conferences at City Hall on Tuesday, opponents sought to draw attention to the massive opposition to the plan in advance of the work group’s press conference. A few minutes later, Councilman Paul Smedberg convened a press conference inside to officially release the report. It was a back-and-forth that has become familiar over the course of the last year, with those supporting the zoning changes standing in stark contrast to those in opposition to the zoning changes.

“This is a sad day,” said former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald, wearing a festive Santa hat for the Market Square press conference. “We’re being treated as if we really don’t represent people in the community.”

Opponents said City Council members



Former Vice Mayor Andrew Macdonald and members of the Citizens for an Alternative Waterfront Plan stage a press conference outside City Hall Tuesday to voice their opposition to allowing hotels and increasing density.

Work Group Findings

❖ **Eminent Dud:** Members strongly discourage the use of eminent domain to acquire property at the foot of King Street, where the Old Dominion Boat Club owns a parking lot on a slice of land the city wants to use for a new park.

❖ **Eliminate Lot:** Although the members discourage the use of eminent domain, they also recommend that the city pursue elimination of the existing parking lot at the foot of King Street currently owned by the Old Dominion Boat Club.

❖ **Design Plan Needed:** Members agreed that the existing plan lacks a unifying vision. Creating a design plan could spell out specific characteristics of the plan that have not yet been fully determined.

❖ **Early Parks:** Members suggested that new park space along The Strand and from Waterfront Park to Wolfe Street be constructed early in the implementation process as a signal to a skeptical community that amenities will not be forgotten.

❖ **Immediate Maintenance:** Members called for immediate upgrade to maintenance and management of waterfront parks and public spaces as a signal to a skeptical community that public investment will not be forgotten.

❖ **West’s Point:** Because of its history as a significant part of the origin of Alexandria at what is now Robinson Terminal North, members proposed historically inspired building designs, interpretive artwork and markers detailing tobacco shipment, military transportation, railroads, gasworks and the old African-American neighborhood known as Fishtown.

❖ **Traffic Study:** Although the existing waterfront plan includes a transportation study that looked at Washington Street, which is six blocks west of the waterfront, members proposed a new study that looked at how proposed changes might affect Union Street, the closest street to the waterfront. Some members of the work group said the plan should not be adopted until the study was completed, but Councilman Paul Smedberg disagreed.

❖ **New Director:** Members called for the creation of a new senior director to lead implementation of the plan who would prepare a budget, coordinate operation of the marina and oversee maintenance. Public oversight should come from either a task force or by rechartering the Waterfront Committee as the Waterfront Commission.

were on the verge of approving a small area plan that is widely unpopular, especially in Old Town. Many said this would be following a pattern of behavior in which council members ignored the desires of constituents on issues from redevelopment in Arlandria to endorsing the Mark Center as the location of a massive new building that

is expected to create regional traffic gridlock next year. Inside City Hall, the mood was much more subdued.

“We did what we were asked to do,” said work group member Nate Macek, who helped draft the final report. “It was never expected that we were going to come to a consensus.”



Giving Back

Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) Executive Director Lynnette Hotchkiss presents a check for \$1,000 from the employees of MSRB to E. Eugene Steuerle, President of the Board and John Porter, Executive Director of ACT for Alexandria. In presenting the check Dec. 16, Hotchkiss commented on the vital importance of national organizations like MSRB giving back to the communities in which they work. The donation will assist ACT in its mission of raising the level and effectiveness of giving and engagement for the benefit of all of Alexandria.



ACVA Superstar Awards

The Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association presented the 2011 Superstar Awards at their December Tourism Marketing Forum Dec. 2 at Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens. The award winners are Sarah Coster, director of Carlyle House; Sharone Swedarsky, co-owner of Alexandria-based DC Metro Food Tours; and Rebecca Aloisi, vice president of Marketing for Mount Vernon Estate. They are pictured with Tom Plott, portraying George Washington’s personal physician Dr. James Craik.

Healing Lives at Alexandria Shelter

Easier to find jobs in city than housing.

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.
GAZETTE PACKET

Bonita, 53 and gentle-spoken, who walks with a cane due to a stroke, said Jesus spoke to her, saying, "It's time to go home to Alexandria. That's your home."

But here she fell victim to an motel keeper on Route 1 who took \$300 from her for a month's rent, only to turn her out after a week. She ended up sleeping three nights on a bench at King and Washington Streets, praying she wouldn't be harmed.

She's safe now at the clean and brightly-lit Alexandria Community Shelter, located close to Duke Street at 2355 Mill Road. "They very pleasant towards me here," she said of the staff, headed by shelter director Kavita Mirchandani-Saini.

It's been a year now since nonprofit New Hope Housing took over the administration of the 65-bed shelter, a place with regular, nutritious meals, which has two bunk beds per room, with doors that lock for privacy. Night after night the shelter is full. "Whenever there's room, the bed space is gone within 30 minutes," said Kavita.

New arrivals go through an intake interview which determines what caused their homelessness, whether domestic violence, unemployment and eviction, substance abuse, mental illness or being newly released from prison and having nowhere to go. Sex offenders and those with a history of violence are not admitted.

A case manager is assigned and a 30-day service plan is drafted aimed at helping the client resolve their immediate crisis and eventually find work and a home.

The average stay is about 45 days. Shelter services include help with alcohol and drug problems, mental health assistance, medical and dental help, counseling, life skills classes, employment counseling, oversight on job searches and help with taking care of children. Links are made to other public services offered by the community.

"People need a lot of support and they get it here," said residential services specialist Shirley Robinson, who herself was homeless in 1994 and 1995, and stayed at the shelter. The Alexandria Community Shelter specializes in structured support.

"I'm feeling a little hopeful now," said 46-year-old Brenda, a client (not her real name). "I'm a little stressed. I'm anxious because I'm job hunting right now. It'll work out." Homeless due to domestic violence, she's working at becoming a certified nurse's assistant and wants to become an RN.



Shelter director Kavita Mirchandani-Saini (right) with staff members (from left) Christina Trotter, Tomar Brash, Samuel Carr, Shirley Robinson, Stephanie Sheehan and Luke Taylor.

For Ralph, 55, substance abuse led to homelessness. "I'm being faithful now, not drinking or drugging. I've found a new way of life."

Another, Cindy, 30, who lost her job and was evicted, said, "Being here I've gotten a lot more help. There are a lot of resources here." She said her case worker is "very supportive." "I'm hopeful things will be a lot better."

And Lisa, 32, a victim of domestic violence who was later jailed for reasons she doesn't want to talk about, said, "Things are starting to fall in place. Once I can find a job they'll help me find a home."

A housing specialist at the shelter assists in locating affordable housing and helps deal with landlords. Some clients will be given subsidized housing, others will rent a room, some — now that their lives have stabilized — will move in with family or friends, a lucky few will be able to afford the market rate.

The shelter helps clients save money in order to rent, requiring that they save 75 percent of their income once they start working.

"We're lucky as to our location," said residential services director Susan Keenan, "because we have a lot of jobs here. If you're employable, you can get a job in the city of Alexandria."

Finding housing is harder. "The affordable housing situation in Alexandria is bad," said Kavita, the shelter director. "We just don't have enough."

U.S. Rep. Jim Moran, speaking at the shelter's open house in October, said, "We have to show that it works to invest in people." He called the \$7.25 minimum wage "insane." "It takes \$16 an hour to be able to afford a one-bedroom apartment."

New Hope Housing executive director Pam Michell said, "If we only had 434 Jim Moran's we'd have a totally different social policy."

And there's no dimming of Bonita's optimism, despite being victimized and her three nights enduring on an Alexandria bench. "The housing committee said they'd make a special project of me," she said. "By the grace of God... he was the one that protected me."

BULLETIN BOARD

To have a notice listed, e-mail gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412 with questions.

DECEMBER

Cat Adoption Campaign. Local cat orphanage King Street Cats launched

a holiday season version of its "What About Me?" campaign. It aims at finding homes for shy and senior cats. At King Street Cats, 25 S. Dove St., Alexandria. Opened Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. or by appointment. Visit www.kingstreetcats.org.

FIRST WEDNESDAYS

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.

Pat Troy's Tour of Ireland



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Firefighters Toy Drive Grows To Serve 4,000 Children

FROM PAGE 1
and Friends annual toy drive serves more than 4,000 children in need throughout Northern Virginia.

"I never expected it would grow like this," said toy drive founder Capt. Willie Bailey. "But businesses and people in the community have really stepped up to help fill what is a growing need in this area."

Bailey's 2011 drive culminated Dec. 19 at Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Station 11 on Richmond Highway in Alexandria, where volunteers helped representatives from schools and nonprofits pick out toys for the children they serve.

"This is so overwhelming," said Charlene Braxton, who picked up bags of donated toys, coats and gift cards for Community Lodgings families. "Because of this drive, one of our little girls will even be getting her first bike for Christmas."

Joining Bailey in distributing toys were retired firefighters, soldiers from Fort Belvoir and Scouts from Troop 1865.

"The boys worked hard to raise thousands of dollars to buy toys and gifts cards," said troop leader Eric Severeid, whose son Mikael raised \$2,000 alone this year. "They didn't ask for money, they earned it all doing odd jobs so they could help give back to those less fortunate."

In partnership with Operation Warm, more than 500 new coats were also distributed as part of this year's drive, adding to the distribution of more than 2,500 during a fall coat drive in October.

"A lot of people in the community don't have the resources to provide for their families," said Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay. "Station 11 really is the 'Pride of the Highway' and I am proud to represent this county and the firefighters who give back so much to those in need."

In addition to the toy drive, Bailey's



Antonio Tamariz and Charlene Braxton of Community Lodgings with ACT's John Porter and Operation Warm representative Stephanie Cohen.



Retired firefighters (front) Joe Bertoni, Bill Barton, Ricky Pray and Steve Hartman and (back) Doug Emerson, Tom Wolfe, Walter Brown, John Harris and Elliott Rubino assembled more than 60 bikes as part of this year's Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive.

"When we're not running 911 emergencies, we're trying to find other ways to give back to the community."

— Capt. Willie Bailey, founder of the Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive

Firefighters and Friends nonprofit has grown to include the fall coat drive and August backpack and school supplies drive.

"When we're not running 911 emergencies, we're trying to find other ways to give back to the community," Bailey said. "I didn't have much growing up but have been very blessed in my life. Now it's my turn to give back in whatever small way I can."



Ruth and Grant McIntosh as Mr. and Mrs. Claus pause for a photo with Scout Troop 1865 members Cory Hamilton, Josh Van Holtz, Sam Green, James Silience and Jack Baker.



Students from St. Stephen's & St. Agnes Upper and Middle School collected more than 250 toys for the Northern Virginia Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive.



SSSAS students Emma Luparello, 17, Monica Dammann, 16, and Sarah Pariser, 17, gather some of the toys collected for the Firefighters and Friends toy drive.

Firefighters' Helpers

Monica Dammann, 16, helps Jesse Kruse load toys for the Firefighters and Friends annual toy drive.



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/ THE GAZETTE

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Black Fire Service Professionals Host Toy Party

More than 150 children from the city's recreation center programs attended the 11th annual Black Fire Service Professionals holiday toy party Dec. 18, an event founded by Alexandria firefighter Capt. Thurston McClain.

"I went to a party like this as a kid when I was growing up," McClain said. "Starting one of my own is my way of giving back to the community."

Held at the Mark Center Hilton, Fire Chief Adam Thiel was on hand to help distribute toys and the Hot Topic All Stars competitive cheerleading squad provided entertainment.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Members of the Black Fire Service Professionals gather for a group photo prior to distributing toys at the 11th annual holiday toy party Dec. 18 at the Mark Center Hilton.



Capt. Thurston McClain, founder of the Holiday Toy Party, with firefighter Anthony Kelly and McClain's god-daughter, 2-year-old Sanai Kelly.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Members of the Hot Topic All Stars perform for the crowd.

6-1 Vote Approves Redevelopment in Arlandria

FROM PAGE 1

developer's attorney suggested that delaying approval could have drastically negative consequences for the financial viability of the project.

"There's been a lot of discussion and a lot of input," said Councilman Paul Smedberg, "much more than a lot of other plans over the last decade."

City officials were quick to point out that the developer offered to include 28 affordable housing units in exchange for exceeding the allowable height limit by eight feet. But many speakers remained skeptical that the 450 market-rate units would gentrify the neighborhood by raising rents in the surrounding community, eventually pushing poor and Latino residents out of Arlandria. Several suggested that the affordable housing units weren't really affordable at all because they will be priced at 60 percent to 80 percent of the maximum income limits used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. That would put the units far out of reach for many of the existing neighborhood residents.

"This is a monument to greed and excess," said Hume Springs resident Betty King. "I realize that gentrification of inevitable, but in a city like Alexandria, I would hope it would be more gradual and humane."

THE POLITICS of gentrification created sharp divisions in the race for Alexandria City Council, with three non-incumbent



The 4.88-acre site includes four lots that would be consolidated into one property for this proposal.

members issuing statements shortly after the vote to weigh in — one in favor and two against the decision. Republican Scott Gordon praised the addition of new affordable housing units to the existing stock and commended the development as "urban revitalization."

"Alexandria is quickly becoming a pro-

gressive city and in order to play that role effectively, progress must be made in areas deemed otherwise lacking fiscal stability, such as Arlandria," Gordon said in a written statement. "I am hard pressed to oppose any development that will strengthen the commercial and residential stability of a struggling economic region."

Democrat Charles Sumpter took a different approach. During a speech to City Council members at the public hearing, Sumpter said he was not necessarily opposed to the development. But he said he was concerned that many Arlandria residents felt as though they had been excluded from the process. After the six-to-one vote, the Democratic candidate issued a statement suggesting that the incumbent members may have had a tin ear to concerns raised by their constituents.

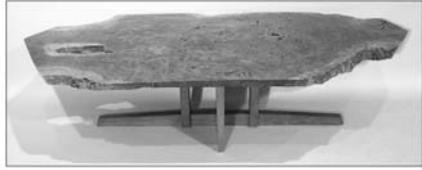
"I am not deterred by the City Council's decision," said Sumpter in a written statement issued Monday. "In fact, I am more motivated than ever to bring to Alexandria a government that listens and responds to the will of its people."

Another potential Democratic candidate, Sean Holihan, also issued a statement taking issue with the council's decision. Although he agrees that redevelopment is needed in Arlandria, Holihan said the city should have engaged in more outreach to community members expressing fears that they may soon be priced out of their own neighborhood. Like many of the speakers Saturday, he questioned the affordability of the 28 units set aside as affordable housing.

"These affordable housing units will be available for those making around \$50,000 a year," Holihan said in a written statement Sunday. "Unfortunately, many residents don't meet that definition of affordable."

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Wrapping It Up

10 tips for procrastinating shoppers.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The clock is ticking. This year, procrastinators actually get a break in that Christmas Eve is a Saturday. And while it may seem counterintuitive to wait until then, stores are actually less crowded and many begin marking down merchandise that evening in anticipation of the Dec. 26 sales.

So grab that gift list. It's not too late to get started with some of these last-minute gift ideas.

1. For something different and unique, check out the gift shops in Alexandria's local museums.

2. School bookstores, like those at T.C. Williams High School or nearby colleges, often have interesting gifts for students along with logo-ware for your favorite alum.

3. Support local businesses and give a unique gift by purchasing artwork (Todd Healy), spirits (Port City Brewing) or even cheese (Cheestique) from the hometown experts.

4. Grab a USB flash drive then load it with songs the recipient would like to add to their collection. This is the ultimate last-minute gift since it can be done at home long after the last stores have closed their doors on Christmas Eve.

5. One-of-a-kind hand-crafted gifts can be found at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, including textile gifts like colorful scarves, wraps, sweaters and capes. Unique pottery and images of local scenes are also available in a variety of mediums.

6. Many local shops have hand-made soaps, candles and regional treats. Save time by searching the web for store reviews, hours and directions.

7. For the athlete on your list, a gift certificate to a yoga studio, cycling studio or specialized fitness class allows the recipient to try out a different activity before making a large financial commitment.

8. Give a certificate for dance or acting classes (The Little Theatre of Alexandria), music lessons (The Alexandria School for the Performing Arts in Del Ray) or a wine tasting class (Unwined).

9. A tisket, a tasket. Put it in a basket. Create a theme — like DIY, spa night or barbecue bash (think Pork Barrel BBQ) — and fill a container with everything the recipient needs to do the job right. The folks at Artfully Gifts and Chocolate can do this for you on the spot as late as Christmas Eve.

10. Wrap up a current magazine



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Eric Nelson and the staff at Artfully Gifts and Chocolate can prepare a gift basket on the spot as late as closing time on Christmas Eve.

or newspaper with a note that a subscription has been purchased for the recipient. The recipient is sure to think of you each time a new issue arrives.



PHOTO BY SHANE CANFIELD/LTA

A gift certificate to acting classes at the Little Theatre of Alexandria makes a unique gift. Classes are available for all ages.

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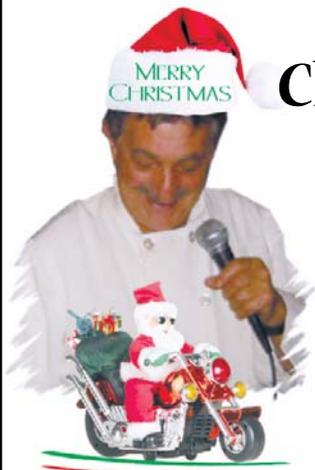
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HISTORY

A City Out of Control

By the end of 1861, Alexandria grappled with anarchy and occupation.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

By the end of 1861, Alexandria had become a Union city. Every business in the city had reorganized to deal with the new reality of occupation. And it wasn't a pretty sight.

"Outsiders after easy money infiltrated the town," wrote historian James Barber. "Rents soared as hucksters established businesses along the main avenues."

King Street was flooded with novelty shops featuring telescopes and microscopes. For a small fee, passers-by could peer inward or stare outward. They could visit distant cities by looking through the lenses of a stereoscope. Devices designed to measure human strength attracted men whose arms were now bulging from having dug earthenworks around the city. At the infamous Marshall House, postcards were for sale depicting the Confederate martyr James W. Jackson and the late Union hero Elmer Ellsworth.

"The staircase is almost all torn away by eager relic hunters," wrote Private John Vautier, a soldier in the 88th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. "But as for me, I was content with standing on the spot where he breathed his last, and where the blood of Jackson stained the floor."

People who could make the trek across the Potomac went to the District of Columbia, where the cost of produce was significantly lower. Those who could not score a pass haggled with local poultry dealers selling uncleaned chickens and turkeys by weight. The price of wood skyrocketed as the Union Army consumed acre after acre in Northern Virginia.

"During the nine months of occupation, the city had changed to such an extent that some senior citizens hardly recognized it," Baber wrote. "They could never remember market process so high."

ALEXANDRIA BECAME a town of saloons and watering holes, eager to offer a respite for the boys in blue. Before the war, the city had three saloons. By the beginning of 1862, Alexandria boasted more than 20 liquor halls and more were opening their doors every week. Soldiers forked over as much as \$3 for a bottle of whiskey, but one contemporaneous account explained that "wine and lager flowed freely."

Sesquicentennial Calendar

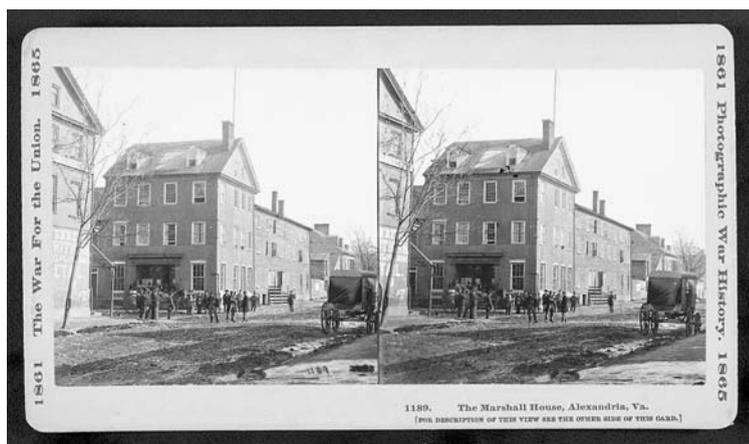
❖ **Public Lecture:** On Jan. 28 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., author and former chief historian for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Robert Krick will give a free lecture titled "Robert E. Lee and His Detractors in the Age of Anti-Hero."

❖ **Civil War Ball:** On Jan. 28 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Gadsby's Tavern will be hosting a Civil War Ball as part of the city's sesquicentennial commemoration. Tickets are \$45 a person in advance and \$40 at the door. Period attire, either civilian or military, is encouraged.

"The number of taverns, restaurants, eating houses of all grades, and similar establishments, in different parts of this town is increasing," the Local News reported. "The proprietors appear to be newcomers."

Rowdy drunken soldiers flooded the streets. A popular amusement hall at the corner of King and Henry streets known as the Odeon entertained nightly crowds of men from the 31st New York and the 88th Pennsylvania. Those who became wildly out of control were apprehended by the guards and marched to the slave pen. City authorities eventually adopted more and more radical means of control. One was to confine prostrated men in wheelbarrows and push them over rutted streets "sufficient to restore consciousness to the most befogged reason."

In his new book, "Civil War Northern Virginia 1861," author William Connery traces how the first months of the war forever transformed the common-



A stereograph shows a group of Union soldiers at the Marshall House, scene of the assassination of Col. Elmer Ellsworth on May 24, 1861.

wealth. Perhaps the most perplexing part of that transformation is how polarizing it remains today, 150 years later. For example, the chapter recounting the Union forces marching into Alexandria uses both "invasion" and "liberation" in its title. At the heart of that struggle was the intractable problem of slavery.

"Many Army field commanders returned runaway slaves to their owners under the Fugitive Slave Law still in force," wrote Connery. "But the soldiers and politicians became increasingly angry and dissatisfied with the situation as the flood of fugitives increased, and the Confederate armies employed the labor of the remaining slaves."

AS 1861 FADED into the mist of time, Alexandria looked back on the year as the darkest chapter in living memory. It began with the clouds of war gathering on the horizon. By spring the blood of Union and Confederate mingled in the stairwell of the Marshall House. The summer heat brought an epic battle that pierced the illusion of a short-lived war. By autumn, city leaders who refused to take a loyalty oath were ousted from office in a hostile takeover.

"The old year expires to-day," the Local News reported on Jan. 31, 1861. "Its sorrows and distresses have far exceeded those heretofore experienced within the memory of the oldest. For the mercies vouchsafed we should be profoundly grateful — but no rational and feeling man can fail to hope for brighter and happier days in the year which is to come, and which is to commence to-morrow."



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OPINION

Share Your New Year's Resolutions

What were top events, accomplishments of 2011 in your opinion?

This is the last regular edition of the Gazette Packet for 2011. Between Christmas and New Year's, we'll deliver the Children's Gazette Packet, an annual tradition, with pages filled with the artwork and writing of local students.

Meanwhile, we are preparing for the first issue of 2012, sharing views of what were the most important happenings of 2011 and what to look for in 2012. We'll also share a variety of New Year's resolu-

tions. We invite our readers to help in this endeavor.

For some, local elections were likely the top event of 2011. For advocates of families of the fallen, like the Tragedy Assistance Program (TAPS), the end of 2011 brings the end of the Iraq war and the complex emotional and practical issues that come with that. For non-profits and charitable organizations, 2011 brought greatly increasing numbers of people in need. For your family, the top events of 2011 might have included the birth of a child or a graduation or the completion of a marathon.

Share your joys and milestones with us, not only from the year that's past, but also your expectations of 2012.

EDITORIALS

Answer one or all of these questions:

1) What were the (one, two or three) most significant happenings of 2011 for you in your community? Why?

2) What do you think our readers should know to watch for in the coming year (up to three issues)? Or what do you think the top (one, two or three) happenings of 2012 will be locally? Why?

3) What is your New Year's Resolution? (Feel free to share more than one)

Please include your home address with your responses, we'll only print your town name. And we'd also love to have a photo of you, your family and/or events or places in your community that you reflect upon in your answer.

Please send photos and answers via email to Steven Mauren, smauren@connectionnewspapers.com.

Free, Safe Ride Home from Holiday Celebrations

Once again, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program will provide a safety net for those who might celebrate the holiday season with alcohol and unexpectedly need a safe ride home.

WRAP's 2011 Holiday SoberRide program will operate each night from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The program began Friday, Dec. 16, and will

continue until Jan. 1, 2012.

To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294 (TAXI). You must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service. All requests for SoberRide service must be called to and dispatched from 1-800-200-8294. Callers will be responsible for any amount over \$30.

Extending Learning Opportunities in APCS

BY DR. MORTON SHERMAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The recent community dialogue around adult education and adult English Language Learner (ELL) programs is heartening to me. I want to thank everyone who has engaged in this dialogue or attended a community meeting to share your stories and your thoughts with the Alexandria School Board, and with me, regarding our recent proposal for Flexible and Extended Learning Opportunities that includes Adult Education Programs.

The expression of opinions from all sides of the issue along with productive discussions will help us model the democratic process and the power of knowledge to our children. The greater the degree of community engagement in public education, the greater success we will have in graduating knowledgeable, thoughtful, active students who contribute to our global community.

That is the mission of this school division: to provide the environment, resources, and commitment to ensure that each and every student succeeds — academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. Our priority in carrying out our mission is to serve the underserved and eliminate disproportionality by eliminating academic achievement differences among race, income, disability and language subgroups. We know we have much work to do together to ensure the academic success of our students and enhance their quality of life beyond their secondary education years. We know that this includes increasing the opportunities for our

students ages 15-22 to earn a standard or advanced diploma. We must do better at offering innovative forms of Credit Recovery and acceleration for students on the path to graduation and we must find efficient effective ways to serve the needs of our Adult ELL students; in fact we must increase the reach of our programs for these students.

I want to be clear with the Alexandria community that at no point has this administration sought to eliminate our Adult ELL or our GED programs. Our mission is to ensure the success and meet the needs of all students. To think that we would eliminate services to some of our most needy and deserving students is unimaginable to me. But it is also our job to carry out our mission efficiently and effectively — to manage these programs to achieve optimal success and provide opportunities to all the students who need us. To always seek to improve services is at the very core of our work.

And that brings us to our current position. That is why it is our duty to take a hard look at our existing programs and enhance and improve them to meet the needs of our students in better ways. To ensure that more of our students earn a standard diploma, that we do not lose our non-traditional students with extenuating personal or academic issues to bureaucracy, lack of motivation, or lack of opportunity; we must make some modifications now. We must be flexible in our approach and we must develop a more complete continuum of services. If we work together as a community to do this, we will achieve greater success in school, work, and life for our students.

Therefore, I have proposed these key components to restructure our current adult edu-

WRAP's SoberRide has helped to ensure local residents have a safe way home on high-risk holidays, keeping likely impaired drivers off the roads. Since 1993, WRAP has provided nearly 53,000 safe rides home. SoberRide operates during the December/January holiday season, St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day and Halloween.

For details, see <http://wrap.org/soberride>

cation program and approach to ensuring a high school diploma for all students:

❖ Adult ELL language development courses will continue to be offered.

❖ Students ages 15-22 who are not currently enrolled in T.C. Williams programs will be encouraged to enroll in a high school diploma program.

❖ GED opportunities will be reduced, but not eliminated, as we focus on helping students achieve a high school diploma.

❖ Adult basic academic preparation will be offered for adults over 22.

❖ Pathways To Graduation at T.C. will continue through the 2011-12 school year with proposed changes for the 2012-13 school year.

❖ Credit Recovery students will continue their course as an 8th period block under the auspices of T.C. Williams.

I look forward to our continued community discussion around the scope of our efforts to enhance the quality of life for our students through attainment of a high school diploma and how we can improve services for our adult learners. My hope is that we will grow into a community of life-long learners; that we will learn and grow together.

LETTERS

Perfect Storm

To the Editor:

In an e-mail obtained by the Seminary Hill Association, as the result of a recent FOIA request to the City, Alexandria's director of Planning & Zoning, Faroll Hamer, suggests that "a perfect storm" may be brewing over develop-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

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The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-917-6480 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.

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Protect Children During Holiday Season and All Year Long

BY GISELLE PELAEZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR ALEXANDRIA'S CHILDREN

As the memorable song goes, the holidays can be “the most wonderful time of the year!” Unfortunately, it can also be a time of increased stress and anxiety for many families as we struggle to meet holiday expectations and stay within our budgets. The City of Alexandria’s Community Services Board has some great tips for reducing Holiday Stress including: asking for help; finding time to relax; and

COMMENTARY spending peaceful individual time with each of your children, doing quiet activities that they enjoy (try just 10 minutes every other day!). For more tips, visit the City’s website at: <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/dchs/info/HolidayColor.pdf>.

While we concentrate on family this holiday season, the Center for Alexandria’s Children urges all parents to be mindful of some harsh realities: studies have shown that 90 percent of childhood sexual abuse occurs by someone the child knows and trusts.

The Center for Alexandria’s Children, a public-private partnership that protects children and strengthens families by coordinating the investigation, prosecution, treatment and prevention of child abuse in one

safe, child-friendly facility, has some specific steps that parents can take immediately and all year long to protect their children from sexual abuse:

- ❖ It’s not healthy to expect the worst in people, however we should be conscious that child sexual abuse can occur in our own homes and by adults that we know personally: clergy, coaches, teachers, neighbors, and relatives. When adults realize and accept this, we pay start to pay attention to what may be happening to the children in our community.

- ❖ Limit one-child, one-adult situations. More than 80 percent of sexual abuse cases occur in one-adult/one-child situations. We know that one-on-one time with a trusted adult is important for children, but consider if these interactions can be interruptible or observable, or if there are policies in place that limit one-child, one-adult situations. When adults reduce the risk, the children in our community are better protected.

- ❖ Talk about it. Empower children to say “no” to any kind of touching with which they do not feel comfortable, including well intentioned hugs and tickles. And support their right to draw their boundaries. Maintain a relationship of trust with your child, so he/she finds it easy to talk with you about their fears. Teach your child about different parts of the body, particularly his/her private parts. Advise him/her to tell someone s/he trusts if anyone tries to touch their

private parts or tries to make them do something that makes them feel frightened.

- ❖ Be alert. If an adult seems overly interested in spending time with your child; think about ways you can monitor the relationship. He or she might offer to take care of your child, want to be alone with your child, take your child on a trip, or give your child multiple gifts. Ask for specifics about the planned activities; drop in unexpectedly to supervise their time together; talk with your child when they return; notice your child’s mood and whether the child can tell you with confidence how the time was spent.

FACTS TO REMEMBER:

Though hard to admit, the greatest risk to our children doesn’t come from strangers but from friends and family.

- ❖ Children are much more likely to be sexually abused by someone they know than a stranger. In more than 90 percent of sexual abuse cases, the child and the child’s family know and trust the abuser.

- ❖ 30-40 percent of children who are sexually abused are abused by a family member.

- ❖ It is very hard for children to tell others if they have been abused. Abusers often tell them that something dreadful will happen to them or others if they tell.

- ❖ People who abuse children look and act just like everyone else. In fact, they of-

ten go out of their way to appear trustworthy to gain access to our children.

If a child tells you about being sexually abused, you might be the only one with the courage to speak out and proactively get help for that child. The most important factor is the child’s right to be safe. If you have concerns that a child may be suffering abuse, please report it by calling the Hotline: 703-746-5800. For more information, contact the Center for Alexandria’s Children at 703-746-6008.

We encourage all families to take an active role in helping to keep our children safe. By taking these steps, parents can begin to ensure the safety of their loved ones. What a gift for the holidays.

Since opening its doors in 2007, the Center has served more than 1,000 children and families from throughout the Alexandria community annually affected by abuse and neglect. It has proved to be a powerful new tool in our city’s arsenal to fight and eventually eradicate child abuse and neglect.

Taylor Run

CAROLING ON DEC. 30

Because Christmas is on a Sunday, Shooters Hill carolers will tromp around the top of the hill singing and collecting money for Children’s Hospital on Dec. 30. Starting at 5:30 p.m., carolers should gather at 310 Park Road.

— LOIS KELSO HUNT



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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

ment in Alexandria. She was referring to the expressions of citizen outrage at her Waterfront Plan on the east side of town and the concerns of West End residents over the Beaugard Corridor Plan and a lighted field at Hammond High School.

Indeed, she is right. A hurricane of protest is building all over the city, and she and her department are mainly responsible. The more one delves into what has been happening recently to foster intense development in the city, the more one is convinced that City Staff has been manipulating city processes and the citizenry in order to gain results that will almost certainly disadvantage current residents. Remember these are the same folks who brought us the BRAC.

Now the City Staff is pushing a plan for the Beaugard Corridor on the grounds that it would fund from developer contributions \$139.5 million in "public benefits." Those largely turn out to be additions to the roadways and transportation that chiefly will benefit the developers themselves, not current residents. In return, the developers would be allowed to build the functional equivalent of five more BRACs in the corridor, tearing down hundreds of trees and increasing traffic. City staff has shown no interest in listening to neighborhood civic groups that have been opposed to major elements of the proposed plan.

Meanwhile City Council has failed to rein in taxpayer-paid city employees despite constant warnings from citizens. With a new City Manager on board this is a good opportunity for change. There is still time for Council to do something positive to stop city staff from jeopardizing our neighborhoods. For who knows what or whom the winds from Ms. Hamer's perfect storm may ultimately blow away?

Jack Sullivan
Alexandria

Appreciates Efforts

To the Editor:

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria wishes to thank the Olde Towne School for Dogs, specifically Sandy and Carlos Mejias and their staff, for once again hosting the Pet Photos with Santa event on Dec. 2-4, 2011. Special thanks also go to all of the members of our community (both 2- and 4-legged) who participated in the photo shoot, and additionally to our wonderful volunteers who help make the annual event such a success.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 22

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Week Before Christmas

The following item was found in a City trash bin, wedged between a poster advertising the Scottish Christmas Walk and a sign advocating "Don't Re-Zone the Waterfront!"

BY A. NONNY MOOSE

'Twas the week before Christmas,
And all through the town
Debate o'er the waterfront
Raged up and then down.
"Development first!" one side decried.
"No! No! Parks and Art!" the other replied.
Letters and ads in newspapers galore
Let residents know they were in for a war.
Waterfront Working Group meetings had ended,
With such a division, all knew what portended.
Onward to Council their big report flew,
No trace of consensus at all within view.
City Council proceeded with plans and Op Eds,
While visions of dollar signs danced in their heads.
"On with development! Let's have more and more!"
"We won't be content 'til hotels crowd the shore!"
"We started with BRAC and then Corridor A."
"We're just getting started! We won't go away!"
"The waterfront's next. Then Potomac Yard's coming!"
"When we are all done, the City'll be humming!"
"But what about us?" a young resident asked.
"Don't we have some rights? Aren't you going too fast?"
"You don't understand," all the Councilmen said.
"We need those hotels, or we'll go in the red."
"But our kids need the parks," the young resident said.
"Your plan has hotels and new bars there instead."
"And our history matters!" an old graybeard stated.
"Tall ships, George Washington, Bob E. Lee ... all created
"The city we love! The City we live in!"
"We'll, no never agree to give in!"
"But hotels are so cool!" the Council replied
"They're all glass and faux brick, with parking inside."

"Never mind all the traffic the hotels will bring.
"Tax income alone will make our hearts sing!"
"And the submarine parking! Why that's all the rage!"
"Cars will float up and down in a huge steel cage!"
"And don't forget restaurants! We own three or four.
"With these new hotels, we can add several more!
"And boats! Lovely boats! We can tax them a lot!
"And we'll build a new pier to bring more to this spot!"
"Now wait just a minute!" the young citizen cried.
"Don't YOU work for US? Why aren't you on our side?"
"And do you not see?" asked a citizen true,
"That hotels don't bring tourists. Art and History do!"
"How charming," the Councilmen said with a sneer.
"The truth of the matter is perfectly clear!"
"Developers rule! And biggest is best!"
"A huge new hotel will just pass the test."
And then clapping their hands overhead in great glee
The councilmen gloated, "And it's practically free!"
And they danced up the hill, trampling Art 'neath their feet
And History, too, lay there bruised in the street.
And Parks were forgotten. They'd soon be paved over,
While the Councilmen all rolled on in the clover.
And I heard them exclaim as they danced up the street
"Merry Christmas to us! We can't wait for our treat!"

But the end of this story's not yet written, my friend.
You still have a chance to change how it will end.
If you support Parks, Art, and History, too,
Then write to the Councilmen. Let them know your view
Then perhaps, just perhaps, a real change can take place
And the Council may find different use for the space
And respect what was done by Councils before,
And generations to come will still have the shore.

A. Nonny Moose was assisted by Alexandrian Hugh M. Van Horn.

'Tis the Season!
Expecting company for the Holidays?
Convenience. Comfort.
Visit your relatives and stay with us. Invite the family for the holidays dinner, and we will do the washing up.
Park & Play – enjoy the sights and sounds of Washington, D.C.
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JUST LISTED!

9115 Volunteer Dr
\$598,500

Large Home-Gorgeous 3/4 Acre Grounds!

Rare find in the heart of Mt. Vernon provides the ultimate private back yard. Spacious home with an open floor plan. Other features include: expanded master suite, updated kit with gas cooktop. Expansive multi-tiered deck overlooks custom in-ground pool and gorgeous wooded grounds. Rare opportunity to find a home and lot of this size.

4002 Belle Rive Terr
\$849,000

Classic Colonial! River View! HUGE PRICE DROP! Classic brick colonial, custom built in prestigious Belle Rive. A neighborhood of many \$1 million properties. Truly special home with many features including large room sizes, elegant trim detail, updated 'state of the art' kitchen, 5BR & finished lower level. Gorgeous setting on half acre grounds with view of river. Uniquely attractive home in premier location.

8890 McNair Dr
\$699,000

Pristine Custom Colonial! Custom colonial in enclave of 17 homes on quiet cul-de-sac surrounded by grounds of Mt Vernon Country Club. Many fabulous features include: large room sizes, stained hardwood floors, updated kit & baths, open kitchen-family room, upgraded trim detail & custom built-ins. Spacious master suite and 2 car gar. Pristine condition!

2300 Candlewood
\$569,000

Expanded Tri-Level! Builder's own! Exceptionally large well maintained home for the money! Fabulous property in prime location featuring 4 bedrooms, bright open floor plan, finished lower level and large breakfast kitchen area. Most major rooms have been substantially expanded. Private backyard features large pool and deck. Unique opportunity!

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516A E. Howell Ave
\$679,000

Del Ray-Rare Opportunity! Exceptionally spacious home by one of area's leading builders in prime location. Four stories of luxury featuring bright open floor plan, open kitchen-family room, stunning master suite and private rear yard and deck. Unique combination of close-in convenience with up to date floor plan and amenities. Buy during construction and customize to suit your taste. (Photo is rendition)

9387 Mount Vernon Cir
\$950,000

Majestic Home-Mt. Vernon on the Potomac! Unique opportunity price - bargain on property with true estate potential in

CONTRACT!

OVERPRICED!

1098 Sea View Ave
\$898,900

Price Slashed! Stunning

Potomac riverfront home just 8 miles from Ft. Belvoir. 7,000 sq ft luxury home on gorgeous lot with sandy beach for less than

CONTRACT!

3805 Riverwood Rd
\$629,000

Check this Price!

Best value in Riverwood home in years! Large just substantially updated. Fabulous

CONTRACT!

NEW PRICE!

8612 Fort Hunt Rd
\$699,000

Total

Renovation - Fort Hunt Area! Classic brick totally colonial just renovated from top to bottom by one

CONTRACT!

JUST LISTED!

7929 Bayberry Dr
\$549,000

Spacious Home-

Two Car Garage! A large home in prime location with an oversize 2 car garage for under

SOLD!

8723 Badger Dr
\$439,000

Stunning

Renovation! Completely renovated-model shows like new! Prime location on huge lot

SOLD!

NEW PRICE!

1916 Shiver Rd
\$549,000

Close In Location!

Minutes to Old Town! NEW Better to

PRICE! than new! Top bottom renovation of this fabulous 5BR, 3BA

SOLD!



“Celebrate endings - for they precede new beginnings”

Our office would like to extend our gratitude for your patronage and continued support this past year and toward a successful relationship in 2012.

We wish you a Happy Holiday and a New Year filled with Health, Happiness & Prosperity!

THANK YOU

to our Agents & our Community for your generosity toward the charities we supported this year!

Your contributions of gifts, time, and donations (for food certificates) provided the 46 “Giving Tree”

children & their families a very Merry Christmas, as well as those served by the “Toys for Tots” program.



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PEOPLE



Tammy Ignacil and Carol Siegel.



Rose Berla, Vola Lawson, Arthur Peabody and Sandy Modell.



Susan Kellom, Marian Van Landingham and Jayne Clancy.

Cheers!

Sherry Party celebrates 41 years.

The tradition of the all-female Sherry Party continued Dec. 11, marking 41 years of women from throughout the city coming together to celebrate their roles in the community.

"I have attended every Sherry Party since it was started in 1970," said Carol Siegel. "It was pot luck back then. I never expected it to grow into something like this. Heck, I never expected to make it through the turn of the century."

Held for the third year in a row at the home of Arthur Peabody and his wife, Lucy Thomson, the Sherry Party was started by some of Alexandria's pioneering women as



Lucy Thomson, Judge Becky Moore and Karyn Moran.



Nancy Macklin, Donnan Wintermute and Janet Barnett.

an alternative to the many all-male events taking place in the city at that time.

"This is such a fun and wonderful tradition," said retiring state Sen. Patsy Ticer. "Everyone knows and respects everyone and the active role they play in the community."

More than 150 women attended this year's event, with host Peabody's role as the lone male limited to serving the women.

"I am only allowed out of the kitchen to serve the sherry," Peabody laughed. "But the women are always charming and I am

happy to have a small part in the evening."

Asked if the party has changed much over the years, Siegel laughed. "We were all a lot younger then."

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Kathy Burns and Grace Mechanic.



Resa O'Flaherty and daughter Lucelle O'Flaherty.



Vola Lawson and Nancy Coats.



State Sen. Patsy Ticer and ACPS School Board chair Sheryl Gorsuch arrive at the 2011 Sherry Party Dec. 11 at the home of Lucy Thomson and Arthur Peabody.

PEOPLE NOTES

To have a People Note published in the Gazette-Packet, send an e-mail to gazette@connectionnewspapers or call Steve Hibbard 703-778-9412. Pictures encouraged.

Alexandria Police Officer Brandon Smith was recognized Dec. 16, for his efforts in the fight against impaired driving at the 14th Annual Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) Awards. Officer Smith was among 11 law enforcement officers from the region recognized by WRAP for their outstanding commitment and exemplary service in the fight against drunk driving. Smith, a two year veteran of the Police Department Patrol Operations Bureau, removed over 90 impaired drivers from

Alexandria roadways during the past year.

Becky O'Neil, president and founder of Becky's Pet Care of Alexandria, was selected from more than 5,000 submissions to be featured in The 2012 Woman's Advantage Shared Wisdom Calendar. The calendar provides advice for women business owners from influential women leaders across the U.S. and Canada.

Best Lawyers, the oldest and most respected peer-review publication in the legal profession, has named **Thomas J. Curcio** as the "Washington DC Best Lawyers Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs' Lawyer of the Year" for 2012.

Dick Knodt, former president and CEO of Vacation.com of Alexandria, was recognized nationally for his lifetime of success in the travel industry. Knodt was honored at The Plaza Hotel in New York City on Dec. 15, with Travel Weekly's 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is given annually to an individual whose efforts have led to extraordinary results within an enterprise and who has also made significant contributions to the industry as a whole. Knodt was one of four Lifetime Achievement Award winners at this year's Travel Weekly Reader's Choice Awards ceremony.

Garry Westcott stars in 'Thurston'
Kathryn O'Sullivan, head of the Theatre Program

at the Manassas Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, has written and produced an online Western drama series. "Thurston" tells the story of residents of a remote mining town in the Kansas Ozarks and their struggle for survival.

Alexandria resident Garry Westcott plays the role of Marshal Perry Robinson.

He began performing in radio commercials at the age of 7. His stage credits include "Hamlet," "The Apple Tree," "The Allegation" and "The Age of Aquarius."

Film credits include "Call to Danger," a Peter Graves made-for-TV movie; "Don't Drink the Wa-

SEE PEOPLE NOTES. PAGE 20

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

First Night Alexandria New Year's Eve Bash

100 live performances at 18 indoor venues.

First Night Scavenger Hunt designed by T.C. Williams senior.



JEANNE THEISMAN/THE GAZETTE

Newlyweds Suzanne Runyon and David Weschler ring in the New Year during last year's First Night celebration.

As New York City drops the ball in Times Square on New Year's Eve, Alexandria will drop 6,000 balls on revelers as laser lights crisscross the sky and club music moves people to dance and sing at the First Night Alexandria finale on the lawn of the George Washington Masonic Memorial. The finale warms up with a dance party on the Memorial lawn beginning at 10 p.m. with tunes by DJ Ray Casino. At 11:30 p.m. the show goes multimedia, with video, music, and a spectrum of colorful lasers, culminating in a midnight countdown and ball drop. Party-goers will want to snag a ball so they can enter to win prizes. On Jan. 1, participants who go to First Night's Facebook page and post a photo of themselves with a ball and First Night badge will discover if they are a winner.

First Night Alexandria is a mega mix of live musical acts and entertainment with 100 performances at 18 indoor venues throughout Old Town Alexandria. Swing, Argentinean tango, Cajun, rock, blues, jazz, and entertainment for kids, are just some of the acts ringing in the New Year. With these performances, plus a comedy magic show, interactive kids' activities and the all-ages, Fun Hunt, First Night Alexandria is the largest family-friendly and alcohol-free New Year's Eve event in the region. Your ticket for the event is a First Night badge which gives you access to entertainment and activities at spots all around Old Town. This year's First Night headquarters is the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street, just blocks from King Street Metro Station.

Starting at 7 p.m., with your First Night badge and schedule in hand, stroll Alexandria's streets among venues, or hop on and off the free King Street Trolley to catch your favorite acts. Check out entertainment at venues including the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the Little Theatre of Alexandria, historic Christ Church, and the Lyceum. Museums, public buildings, and retail shops are turned into performance venues to showcase talent. Make a night of it with dinner at one of Old Town's restaurants, pop into a warm, inviting pub, or grab a bite to eat at designated First Night venues.

WHAT'S IN STORE:

❖ **Matthew Mills**, named one of the 50 fastest guitarists by Guitar World magazine, performs instrumental acoustic guitar influenced by flamenco guitar and contemporary jazz.

❖ **Grammy nominee Ray Owen** whips up a feast of classic tunes, Americana and roots acoustic music and stirs in a healthy helping of comedy. Owen has performed with Garth Brooks, Arlo Guthrie, Bill Monroe and Bob Hope, and has toured with Willie Nelson and America.

❖ **Junkyard Saints** will be jamming with New Orleans party music. The band won the Washington Area Music Association WAMMIE award in 2009 and 2010 for best roots rock group, and bandleader Brian Simms was awarded WAMMIE 2009 Musician of the Year.

❖ **Phyllis Chapell & SIORA** will serenade with a mix of songs in different genres and languages and perform originals played on guitar with vocals and percussion. Phyllis Chapell was named one of the top 500 jazz vocalists of all time by Scott Yanow (Downbeat/All Music Guide).

❖ **Anthony "Swamp Dog" Clark**, the 2010 winner of DC Battle of the Blues Bands and 2011 International Blues Challenge semi-finalist, presents blues with a funk edge.

❖ **Keira Moran**, a 16-year-old pop singer/songwriter and T.C. Williams High School student, is the winner of the 2011 National "SmashTune" songwriting contest and was a finalist at the Kuau Music Festival Songwriters Contest. Her debut album was released in November.

❖ **Dance the night away** at the George Washington Masonic Memorial with the New Orleans-style music of the Junkyard Saints and the irresistible swing of King Teddy. Boogie down at the Torpedo Factory Art Center with Grammy-nominated Bill Kirchen's roots rock and roll and the Grandsons' rocking rhythm and blues.

❖ **This family-friendly event** is chock full of activities for kids including face painting, moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures, and interactive games. Check out the Seaworthy Small Ships activity and sail model boats for free, or buy and build your own. Join Hooray for Books' own Miss Megan for a rollicking evening of stories and songs. Kids also love the How-To Cowboy Joke Fest, sing-along and rhythm instruments with Mr. Don, and more.

❖ **Start your New Year's Eve fun** in the afternoon with the Third Annual First Night Fun Hunt between 1 and 4:30 p.m. This year's fun hunt has been crafted by T.C. Williams High School senior Lauren MacCracken. Lauren's clues focus on a George Washington theme. The scavenger-style hunt uses puzzles and clues to take teams to sites around Old Town. Everyone that completes the hunt clue sheet is eligible to win great prizes. Winners must be present at the kick-off event at the Durant Arts Center at 5 p.m. to claim their prizes.

❖ **Families can also take part** in new crafty afternoon activities from 1 to 3 p.m. The Torpedo Factory Art Center (105 N. Union St.) presents free art projects. Potomac Bead Company (1104 King St.) presents Family Fun Day, where kids are invited to design a zipper-pull, stretch bracelet or charm necklace for just \$6. All materials and labor costs are included.

❖ **Go to www.FirstNightAlexandria.org** for the complete schedule of shows and activities and to buy admission badges. Explore dining options and plan your visit to Alexandria at www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com.

BY MAYA HOROWITZ
GAZETTE PACKET

Start New Year's Eve with a George Washington-themed fun hunt around Alexandria, designed by T.C. Williams senior Lauren McCracken.

"What people who are thinking about doing it should keep in mind is that it's great for a family activity," said Ann Dorman, executive director of First Night Alexandria. "There's a little bit of history in it because all the clues center around places that were important to George Washington. It's really walkable. It's a fun way to spend New Year's Eve afternoon."

The fun hunt is now in its third year. It was designed by board member Denny Auld, who wanted to create a low-cost lead up to the annual First Night festivities. When Auld retired, Dorman had to find someone else to write the clues. She turned to Ruth Reeder, education coordinator at Alexandria Archaeology. Reeder suggested T.C. Williams senior McCracken.

McCracken had made a scavenger hunt previously for the archaeology museum so she was a natural choice. She was given guidelines and studied hunts from previous years to create this year's map. She chose George Washington as a theme.

"At first I really didn't know where to start, when they showed me the list of sites, I really didn't have any ideas," said McCracken. "But I started to realize, 'Wow George Washington really has something to do with each one of these. George Washington would be a good



Lauren McCracken, T.C. Williams senior, who wrote the clues for the First Night Scavenger Hunt.

theme.' It just all came full circle. We wanted to make this fun because a lot of families might be staying in hotels in Old Town. For people who live in Alexandria, we wanted to teach them some things they hadn't learned before, and definitely for people coming out of town, there's so much you couldn't possibly know until you see it yourself."

It took McCracken a week or two in August to create the hunt and they did a test run in October to make the final edits.

There are three different routes with about eight clues/stops on each. Teams can pick up their clues at 1 p.m. at the Durant Center and they have until 4:45 p.m. to be back at the Durant Center with their completed answer sheets. The routes take about 45 minutes. Time has been allowed for teams to relax at shops and restaurants in Old Town between clues.

"When we did the test run, I went with a family that was super competitive," said McCracken. "They ran the whole thing. They probably did it in like 20/30 minutes, which was amazing to me. Other families that got confused or it was difficult for them, it took them over an hour. We really want people to take their time and stop in shops. Take in the holiday time."

All the clues can be found outside and the routes are about a mile.

"What I like about it is that it's suitable for all ages," said Dorman. "You can do it as a family or if there are a group of adults that want to do it. It's multigenerational. It's all walking distance. It's not a timed event, so you can do it as quickly or as casually as you want to do it."

Everyone that correctly completes the hunt clue sheet by 4:45 p.m. is eligible to win prizes. Fun hunters must be present at the First Night kick-off at 5 p.m.

Answer sheets are drawn randomly from a box for first-, second- and third-place. Prizes include cash, treats from Bittersweet, Potomac Riverboat Company passes and assorted gift certificates from establishments in Old Town.



PHOTO BY GARY CARR/GARYPHOTO.COM

The Masonic Memorial was the backdrop for Alexandria's First Night media show and fireworks.



Put Us to The Test

- Selection
- Service
- Price



HOLIDAY HOURS

- 9 am–8 pm: Fri. 12/23
- 9 am–6 pm: Christmas Eve
- Closed Christmas Day • 9 am–6 pm: New Year's Eve
- Closed New Year's Day

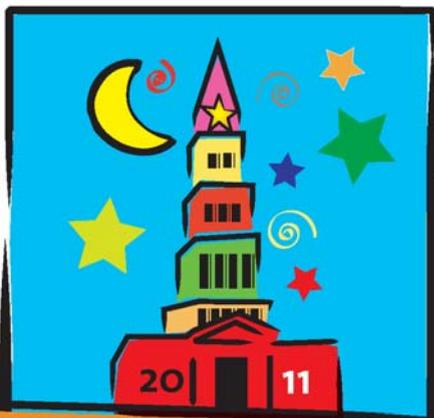


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First Night ALEXANDRIA



An Old Town New Year's Eve Party

12•31•11

Four Spotlight Areas of Entertainment between the Masonic Memorial and the Waterfront featuring 107 performances beginning at 7:00 pm

Admission badges are available online now through December 18 for just \$15. Children 12 and under, and active military are FREE, sponsored by Spectre Group International (Dec. 31 pick-up only)

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

More information and retail badge sites at FirstNightAlexandria.org



Third Annual Fun Hunt starts at 1:00 pm



ENTERTAINMENT

Making a Statement

Winners of Old Town Walled Garden Club Door Decorating Contest



612 South Fairfax Street, second place



207 South Royal Street, third place



630 South Fairfax Street, first place



206 North Columbus Street, honorable mention



At left: 414 South Royal Street, honorable mention



Ready, Set, Spell!

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee



Little Theatre of Alexandria
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PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

218 N. Lee Street. Finally, the Grape & Bean, at 118 South Royal Street, has contributed a prize for the third-place winner.

The first-place winner will receive a framed print from Old Town artist Todd Healy at Gallery Lafayette, 320 King Street. The second-place winner's prize is a gift certificate at La Bergerie Restaurant, at

The winners of the Old Town Walled Garden Club's 44th annual holiday door-decorating contest were selected on Dec. 15, after the judges spent the morning wandering the streets of Old Town looking at the many candidates. The winners are:

- First place: 630 South Fairfax Street;
- Second place: 612 South Fairfax Street;
- Third place: 207 South Royal Street;

In addition, two honorable mentions were selected:

- 206 North Columbus Street;
- 414 South Royal Street.

Winners were selected based on use of natural materials, homeowner construction, and how well the decorations enhanced the beauty of Old Town.

Winners were selected based on use of natural materials, homeowner construction, and how well the decorations enhanced the beauty of Old Town.

ENTERTAINMENT

DECEMBER

Trees, wreaths at Sandburg Middle School. Buy your holiday greens and trees while supplies last. Choose from a great selection of fresh Fraser Firs and Scotch Pines, decorated or undecorated wreaths, three types of garland and "Kissing Balls". Your purchase will help fund West Potomac High School athletes. At Carl Sandburg Middle School, 8428 Fort Hunt Rd., until sold out — weekdays, 5-8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

NOW THROUGH JAN. 6

Christmas at Mount Vernon. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. recurring daily. Holiday visitors will enjoy themed decorations (including 12 Christmas trees), a gingerbread replica of the Mansion created by former White House pastry chef Roland Mesnier, chocolate making demonstrations, and a rare opportunity to tour the third floor of the Mansion. In 1787, George Washington paid 18 shillings to bring a camel to Mount Vernon for his guests' enjoyment. During Christmas at Mount Vernon, visitors can meet Aladdin the camel. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Christmas at Mount Vernon admission is included in general admission: \$15/adults; \$7/youth. Call 703-780-2000.



DEC. 27, 28, 29

The Nutcracker. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. each day. Virginia Ballet Company and School will present its 62nd season of the classic Nutcracker Ballet. At the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus in the Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater. Tickets are \$30/adults; \$20/children, seniors and students. Visit www.virginiaballetcompany.org. Group pricing for these 6 performances is available for groups of 10 or more for the same performance. Call 703-249-8227.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 21

Swing Dancing. 9 to 11 p.m. Admission is \$10. With Scott Ramminger and the Crawstickers. At Nick's Nightclub, 642 South Pickett St., Alexandria.

Noonday Noels. 12:05 p.m. Eya, Women's Trio. A 30-minute musical service. At the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria.

Jewmngous. 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25. At The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Visit www.birchmere.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 22

Light Painting Community Art Event. 5 to 7 p.m. Bring a flashlight. Bring a new unwrapped toy or book donation. At Art at the Center, 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria.

FRIDAY/DEC. 23

Breakfast with Santa. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$10/child; \$20/adult, and includes a breakfast buffet, craft stations, cookie decorating. Guests can take their own photos with Santa. Sponsored by the Old Town Boutique District. Visit www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com.

Parent's Night Out. 6:30 to 9 p.m. The YMCA Alexandria's Parents Night Out program will babysit as parents take the night out on the town. Kids ages 6 months to 13 years of age only (no children under 6 months will be accepted). Restrictions apply. Games, movies and treats provided. The YMCA Alexandria is located at 420 East Monroe Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-838-8085.

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Explore the exciting world with some of favorite stories and songs. Ages 2 and under. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.



Jennifer Cutting

TUESDAY/DEC. 27

Musician Jennifer Cutting. 7:30 p.m. Performs originals, rare Celtic and Medieval tunes from "Song of Solstice." At The Birchmere in Alexandria. Visit www.birchmere.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 24

Water Skiing Santa. 1 p.m. Santa is back on the banks of the Potomac with his knee boarding reindeer, flying elves, jet skiing Grinch and Frosty the Snowman in a dinghy. At the National Harbor, 137 National Plaza, National Harbor.

Christmas Eve Service. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. 4 p.m. (children and family service with Angel Choir); 5:30 p.m. choral prelude and 6 p.m. service with St. Cecilia Choir, women from the Adult Choir, and Brass Express brass quintet with music by Rheinberger, Joubert, Callahan, and others; 10:30 p.m. choral prelude and 11 p.m. service with St. Paul's Adult Choir and Brass Express with music by Praetorius, Holst, Joubert, Rheinberger, Warlock, and others. Organist-Choirmaster, Grant Hellmers. Call 703-549-3312 or visit grant@stpaulsalexandria.com

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Explore the exciting world with some of favorite stories and songs. Ages 2 and under. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 25

Volunteer. Participate in the 25th Annual Washington DC Jewish Community Center's Day of Service. Join 1,000 volunteers who will help out at over 50 non-profits throughout D.C., Virginia and Maryland. Projects vary from 2-4 hours and encompass a variety of activities such as throwing holiday parties for children, visiting seniors and serving meals to the homeless. Family and group projects are also available. Visit www.washingtondcjcc.org/volunteer. There is a nominal registration fee of \$20, which helps cover the cost of the event and other community service projects throughout the year.

FRIDAY/DEC. 30

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Explore the exciting world with some of favorite stories and songs. Ages 2 and under. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Explore the exciting world with some of favorite stories and songs. Ages 2 and under. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Call 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

First Night Alexandria. This annual New Year's Eve bash takes over Old Town Alexandria with 100 live performances at 18 indoor venues, plus the Third Annual Fun Hunt, children's face painting and games, and a multimedia finale spectacular at the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Performances start at 7 p.m. throughout Old Town. Admission: \$15 before Dec. 21; \$20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Performances at 7 p.m. at venues throughout Old Town Alexandria. Multimedia Finale at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Call 703-746-3301 or visit www.FirstNightAlexandria.org.

TUESDAY/JAN. 3

Back to the Drawing Board. 6 to 8 p.m. Printmaker Carolyn Romano will describe and demonstrate her creative thought process using her sketch diaries to explain the genesis of her work. At Morrison House, 116 South Alfred St., Alexandria. Visit www.morrisonhouse.com or call 703-838-8000.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 4

Donation-Based Yoga Class. 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Yoga instructor Johanna Seltzer will offer a donation-based seva yoga class. The class gives individuals the opportunity to enjoy a free yoga class while helping others. Donations will benefit the Sacramento Neighborhood Center. In lieu of payment, students should bring an item(s) on the SNC wish list: monetary donations, snacks for kids (i.e. fruit, cheese, crackers, chips, granola bars, juice boxes), warm clothing or school supplies. Contact: Johanna Seltzer at 202-449-2249 or johanna_seltzer@verizon.net or www.innerlightyogi.com

FRIDAY/JAN. 6

Choral Evensong. 7:30 p.m. Grant Hellmers, Organist-Choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, will direct the Adult Choir in Choral Evensong on the Feast of the Epiphany. Three Magi will be accepting non-perishable foods for St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry serving the needy. Music by Mendelssohn, Vaughan Williams and others. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Call 703-549-3312, grant@stpaulsalexandria.com.

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Susan Kellom, Nina Randolph, Adrienne Hensley and Healthy Families program coordinator Nanci Pedulla at the Dec. 15 fundraiser at MetroStage.



Herbert Berg, Gila Harris, Paula Berg, Lorraine Aprile and Rodger Digilio at the Healthy Families fundraiser at MetroStage.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Del. Charniele Herring (D-46) with her mother Carolyn Herring.

Fundraiser Nets \$5,000 for Healthy Families

More than 130 people turned out Dec. 15 to see "A Broadway Christmas Carol" at MetroStage as part of a fundraiser for Healthy Families Alexandria. A reception was followed by a performance of the musical comedy that parodies the traditional Charles Dickens tale.

"The evening netted us just over \$5,000," said Healthy Families supporter Susan Kellom.

"And the show was hilarious. Who knew 'A Christmas Carol' could be so funny? Everyone had a blast."

Healthy Families Alexandria is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the prevention of

child abuse and neglect through home-based programs and services for expectant and new parents in the City of Alexandria. For more information, call 571-748-2840 or visit www.nvfs.org/hfalexandria.

— JEANNE THEISMANN

PEOPLE NOTES

FROM PAGE 16

ter," a Woody Allen film adaptation of his play; and "F.I.S.T.," a Sylvester Stallone film.

2010 U.S. bronze medalist **Ashley Wagner of Alexandria** won the bronze medal at Skate Canada International last week in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Wagner trains in Aliso Viejo, Calif., and is coached by John Nicks.

Wagner started the competition strong, entering the free skate in second place. During her Black Swan free skate, she landed five triples including a triple flip-double toe, a triple Lutz and three level four spins. She earned 165.48 points overall.

The Alexandria Chamber of Commerce honored **Peter A. Converse**, president and chief executive officer of Virginia Commerce Bank, as the 2011 Business Leader of the Year. Converse was recognized at the Chamber's Business Awards Dinner on Oct. 6 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The Chamber's selection of Mr. Converse as the recipient of its top business award was based on his dedication and exemplary leadership in the business community.

While working as English teachers in Spain, **Alexandria resident Eve Richer** and friend Ben Raznick wrote and produced "Pueblo," a comedy web series about life in small town Andalusia.

The show is a blend of documentary and fiction and tells the story of an English teacher (played by Raznick) adapting to the culture of a Spanish farming village. Filmed in La Puerta de Segura, Jaén, the series is the first of its kind to be produced in the region, an area primarily known for olive oil production.

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Saturday Evening

5:00 pm; 6:30 pm (en Español)

Sunday

7:30; 9:00; 10:30 am; 12:00 Noon
2:00 pm (en Español)
6:30 pm Mass (Starts Sept. 11)

Weekdays

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

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More info (703) 765-8255 or www.bethany-lcms.org

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LIVING LEGENDS

Fighting for Social Equality

Jon Liss leads Virginia New Majority.

BY SARAH BECKER

Jon Liss is a democrat with a small d. Liss, executive director of Virginia New Majority, actively promotes democracy. A community organizer, he fights passionately for social equality. Liss champions people of color and labors to change “the old ways.”

“I’m shameless; an urban expert,” Liss said. “I work consistently for what I know is right. Sure there’s hostility out there, but a new day is coming.” He repeatedly references “the old ways.”

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1958, Liss is of “eastern European Jewish” heritage. When his father, an architect, relocated to Falls Church, Va., the family followed. He “grew up Jewish in what was then the South.”

Liss graduated from Falls Church’s Marshall High School — “the wrong team in Remember the Titans” — and the University of Virginia. A history major, he became intrigued with Virginia’s past. “The old ways” are synonymous with the old Confederacy.

Described as a strong community advocate, Liss empowers the poor. He is committed to affordable housing, human rights, and fair employment practices. He is credited with the city’s 1990 hiring of 10 bilingual police officers.

“When I graduated from college I knew I did not want a corporate job,” Liss said. “My history degree prepared me to be a taxi driver so I went to work for the Falls Church Yellow Cab Company. It wasn’t long until I was organizing, fighting for drivers’ rights.”

“We were union affiliated, the Communications Workers of America, and to make a long story short I was fired,” Liss continued. “Lawsuits ensued and it took a while for things to settle.” He later organized Alexandria’s driver-owned Union Cab Cooperative.

Liss’ achievements are many. The Ford Foundation in 2003 gave him and four col-

leagues its Leadership for a Changing World Award. The award, including a \$100,000 prize, assisted in “fighting what they call ‘Jim Crow II’ — meaning discrimination against low-income people, especially immigrants.”

“Many people, including African-Americans and new immigrants, are still living with the legacy of slavery,” the award application said, “and they are still learning their rights.” Liss speaks “of a wave of anti-immigration ordinances,” especially in Prince William County.

“People of color are from the global south, African-American, or born in Africa,” Liss said. “They have a right to city space.” According to the 2010 Census Alexandria is 16.1 percent Hispanic, 21.8 percent black or African-American.

“Race is a social construct,” Liss said. “We are a salad bowl not a melting pot. Most segregation problems, issues in the city, are about white people leaving or self-segregating.”

Liss, until Dec. 31, 2010, served as executive director of Tenants & Workers United. He was a co-founder. Established in 1986, TWU is the largest member-based, low-income community organization in Northern Virginia. Its mission “is ... to develop multi-racial leadership for social and economic justice, and to democratically control or own community resources including housing, education and health care.” In 1990 TWU’s budget was \$3,000. Today its operating budget is \$1.1 million.

Tenants & Worker’s United was born in response to a Washington Post article detailing mass evictions in Alexandria’s Arlandria section near Four-Mile Run. Many of the residents “were Salvadoran, victims of gentrification.” In 1996 Liss and the TWU solved the problem, in part, by establishing a resident-owned housing cooperative known as Chirilagua. TWU’s constituency is primarily Hispanics.

“I spoke my smattering of Spanish, the residents responded, and together we prevented the mass evictions of low income tenants,” Liss smiled.

He believes housing, like city space, is a right. Low income housing, however, need not be scattered-site. Liss again reminisces about his life in an “immigrant Jewish enclave.”

Among Liss’ other accomplishments: passage of Virginia’s first Living Wage legislation (Alexandria and Arlington), education reform including the creation of a bilingual immersion program, and formation of the nationally-organized Right to the City Alliance.

What is Liss’ life lesson? “I am the father of two and I want to teach my children that we can make the world a better place. I believe on some fundamental level people have a tremendous capacity for good. Income implies riches, but real wealth is adequate housing, healthcare, work that brings sustenance and a better life for our children.”

Virginia New Majority is TWU’s sister organization. Liss’ goal is “to patch together



“A New Majority is not outside the realm of possibility,” Jon Liss said.

a new progressive majority in Virginia.” The political agenda includes universal healthcare, better public education, and immigration reform. In 2008 VNW reached “more than 100,000 homes in Virginia’s 11th Congressional District.”

“A New Majority is not outside the realm of possibility,” Liss said. “So what if some politicians drive us like a corkscrew. We’re advocating for a different kind of Virginia.”

From Virginia New Majority’s website: “Founded in August 2007, VNM breaks from Virginia’s old history of racism and corporate domination. We build on the best democratic traditions ... we work to create a new and modern political system ... We build power by organizing the diverse peoples of the Commonwealth.” Liss argues “people first,” allies with “progressives” and favors “the progressive tax.”

The connection between ethnicity, race and class is difficult for Liss to detail. A recent Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation-Harvard University poll confirms Hispanics and blacks are “far less likely to own homes.” Foreclosures are not uncommon and Hispanics median income is 73 percent that of whites.

Can a Hispanic be elected to Alexandria’s City Council? “There could be a Hispanic on School Board maybe as early as the next election,” Liss replied. “City Council could be within the next 10 years, but it would have to be a coalitional deal.”

Liss is a street soldier who in his own words is “creative and collective; realistic, but ambitious.”

Writer Sarah Becker was nominated as a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2007.

OBITUARY

Marjorie Smolka

Marjorie Smolka died peacefully in her home at The Fountains at Washington House in Alexandria, Va. on Dec. 8, 2011. Nee Marjorie Frances Timmins on April 18, 1917, she was born, raised and married in Boston, Mass. She met her husband, an M.I.T. student and Czechoslovakian émigré, at a Festival for Freedom to assist allied soldiers during World War II.

She was graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art with a Fine Arts degree and taught art at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf in Boston and later at St. Mary’s School in Alexandria. An active member of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, she was an accomplished watercolorist. She was also active in St. Mary’s

Catholic Church, the Belle Haven Women’s Club and several watercolor groups before moving to The Fountains at Washington House in 2003.

She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Peter H. Smolka; four daughters and four sons-in-law, Alice and Jim Close, Beatrice and Jeffrey Russell, Geraldine Smolka and Nick Willard; and Ellen Smolka and Thomas Wolf; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to hospice: Capital Caring, 5568 General Washington Drive, Suite A215, Alexandria, VA 22312; or Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community, 1417 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Living Legends: The Project

Now in its fifth year, Living Legends of Alexandria is an ongoing 501(c)(3) photo-documentary project to identify, honor and chronicle Alexandria’s Living Legends. The project was conceived by Nina Tisara to create an enduring artistic record of the people whose vision and dedication make a positive, tangible difference to the quality of life in Alexandria. Platinum and Gold Sponsors this year are Club Managers Association of America, Erkiletian Real Estate Development, Inova Alexandria Hospital, Renner & Co., Rotary Club of Alexandria, the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the late Douglas Thurman.

This is one of a series of 12 profiles that will appear this year. For more information or to nominate a Legend for 2012, visit www.AlexandriaLegends.com.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 13

Our sincere gratitude also to professional pet photographer Alison DeSilva, who created the lasting memories of the participating pets this holiday season. Proceeds generated from the Pet Photos with Santa event benefit the abandoned and homeless animals at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, operated by the Animal Welfare League.

Business-sponsored events such as these are fun for everyone in the community and we are most grateful for these efforts. Thanks once again.

Mary Beth Mount
Acting Executive Director

Lack of Credibility

To the Editor:

Andrew MacDonald now claims the city's waterfront plan will turn our waterfront into a Crystal City or Ballston. Previously he said it would "pave over" the waterfront, turn it into National Harbor, or "BRAC" it. One gross exaggeration after another. This

does not lend credibility to his arguments. Next he will charge the plan will create a Shanghai on the Potomac.

H.J. Rosenbaum, Ph.D.
Alexandria

Something's Seriously Wrong

To the Editor:

The weekend vote approving the massive new development in Arlandria is but another example that Alexandria citizens are marginalized. Our input doesn't count. The city that belongs to us has been hijacked by a mayor and a supporting council, each elected at large, who wrongly equate each new mini-BRAC type development with universal betterment.

However you want to label their actions, their unholy cabal is significantly altering the city by dense-packing it. Their goal appears to be more, possibly more tax revenue, but more at any cost. It is certainly

not an improved quality of life for current residents.

To what end is their development mania leading? Is it one billion residents packed within the city's rigid limits wherein no new major roads can be built to accommodate the additional vehicular traffic? Is it one million residents? Half a million along the river alone? Have they analyzed the effect on the quality of life their development addiction is having on existing residents? On future residents? On the features which make the city historic and unique?

Finally, why their disdain for open spaces? I've had enough of this crew. I have especially had enough of the Jim Crow era system by which council members are elected, a system depriving citizens from electing from among their neighbors a representative solely accountable to them.

Begone them all, and begone the Jim Crow system which put the council members in office.

Jim Roberts
Alexandria

Opposed to Waterfront Hotels

To the Editor:

I read with interest Michael Lee Pope's Dec. 15 article on the recommendations made to the City Council regarding the proposal to build hotels on the waterfront in Alexandria. I agree with the minority of three who oppose the proposal. There is already too much development in Alexandria.

The City Council is playing with fire. Many of us on the West End do not like the Planning Commission's and City Council's acquiescence in the BRAC project. Many citizens in Olde Towne do not like the hotel development idea. It may well be that this City Council will be voted out of office "in toto" in 2012. I am not certain whether this is a good idea or not but it is understandable given the City Council's disconnect with the views of many of the constituents.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 26

Legal Notices

Legal Notices



Washington Street Streetscape Improvements

City of Alexandria's
Department of Transportation
& Environmental Services (T&ES)

Design Public Hearing

Wednesday, January 25, 2011, 6-8 p.m.
City Hall, Sister Cities Rm. 1101
301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Find out about the proposed streetscape design improvements to the Washington Street corridor, between Church Street and Gibbon Street. The proposed project will add enhancements to the lighting, sidewalk and streetscape improvements, traffic safety improvements, and drainage improvements.

Review the proposed project plans and the National Environmental Policy Act documentation at the public hearing or at City of Alexandria City Hall, 301 King Street, Room 3200. You can also review the project on the City of Alexandria web site at <http://alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=2876>. Please call ahead to ensure the availability of personnel to answer your questions. Streetscape and landscape impact information and tentative construction schedules are available for your review at the above address and will be available at the public hearing.

Give your written or oral comments at the hearing or submit them by February 8, 2011, to Mr. Rashad K Friday, MS, MBA, Project Manager, City of Alexandria, City Hall, 301 King Street, Room 3200, Alexandria, VA 22314. You may also e-mail your comments to rashad.friday@alexandriava.gov. Please reference "Washington Street Streetscape Comments" in the subject line.

The City of Alexandria ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact T&ES at 703.746.4025. TTY/TDD 703.838.5056

State Project: U000-100-616
UPC: 64662

Sailor, Tennis Player, Woodworker, All Craftsmen

BY HARRY COVERT

This is the happiest holiday of the year for me. I didn't want the joys of the season to slip by without recognition of three of the finest Alexandrians I know.

For 25 years, Michael David Lieberman has been my primary doctor. He's kept me healthy and has always been ahead of the curve when advising me on how to stay fit and live a long time. He recently informed me there is no reason I couldn't have another quarter-century or more of productive and happy life. That's nice to hear.

Dr. Lieberman and I are about the same age, he's three months younger, and we both don't look bad for a couple of guys at three score and 10 plus. He's an avid sailor, I'm an avid talker and thankfully he has always been on the mark with medical advice.

It was in the middle of a hot July day in the early 1990s when mowing the lawn I broke out in a heavy sweat halfway through and then could not continue. I sat down for a while to recover my strength. Over the next hour or so, I managed to finish the yard. It was not easy.

The next morning I thought I'd take a walk around the block and suddenly, exhaustion hit me again. This time I figured I'd better see the doctor. Fortunately, Lieberman was in the office and immediately looked me over and calmly said I may be having a heart attack. He sent me around the corner of the medical complex to the "newest and best young cardiologist." Amazing because the young physician, Narian J. Rajan, instantly diagnosed the problem — heart arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).

No heart attack thankfully and a prescription for the next decade did the job. I continued regular visits to these medical men, par excellence. Then, unexpectedly, following a checkup, Dr. Rajan said I needed a stent. That almost sent me into mental paralysis since I'd never had any type of surgical procedure. I was scared almost to death.

Dr. Rajan did the job the next morning at Fairfax Inova Hospital. I couldn't believe it but I watched the procedure. He explained everything as he went along, even though I shut my eyes watching him push the stent into place. Four and a half months later, preparing for a Caribbean cruise, I had to have a checkup. "We have to go in again," Dr. Rajan, an

expert tennis player, reported. "And, we have to do it tomorrow."

I wanted to take the cruise and pleaded to put off the second procedure until after the cruise. The wise doctor, smile and said, "Sure, go ahead if you insist. Do they have an operating room on the ship?" I said I didn't know. "Well, you better check it out today because you're going to need it."

He was right and back to the hospital, he burned out scar tissue, inserted a new stent and I've been perfect since.

FOR THREE YEARS, I began to suffer severe back pain. I tried everything to ease discomfort. Nothing worked. So Dr. Lieberman checked me out again and, after discussing life in Alexandria, some politics he was blunt. "If you don't get this fixed, you'll be riding in a wheel chair," he said.

I was walking with a cane. One of my friends thought I was affecting a new look as an addition to sartorial splendor. It was pain like I've never felt. We discovered I had two slipped discs and another slipping. Excruciating.

"I want you to go see this new orthopedic surgeon," Lieberman said. "If it were me, I'd do it tomorrow." The pain was so great, I took his counsel and called Dr. Corey J. Wallach of Alexandria (you can see I prefer Alexandria's medical fraternity). Wallach is also expert woodworker and guitar player.

Dr. Wallach agreed to see me. "I can fix you up," he said. "If you can endure the pain there's no need for surgery." I thought he was kidding. He was serious. "Go home and think about it and let me know," he said.

Half-way home, I called Dr. Wallach's office and said I couldn't stand the pain. Within two weeks, this young surgeon had me on the table at Mount Vernon Inova Hospital. We laughed and joked in pre-op. I reminded him it was back surgery not brain surgery. We all grinned and the nurse inserted the needle in my arm "to see if all was well." And for the past one-and-a-half years, I've never had any pain, no prescription painkillers and the discs are perfect. Walking is fun.

During this Christmas season and the Festival of Lights, we sometimes forget to thank those who know how to make our lives better and better. Lieberman, Rajan and Wallach. What a first-class triumvirate. No cane and no pain, just smiles and years to come.

Lewis', Ninman's Toughness Leads Titans to Victory

Moss drills clutch 3-pointer to force overtime against Stonewall Jackson.

BY JON ROETMAN
GAZETTE PACKET

Facing a Stonewall Jackson girls basketball team with superior size and a 2011 state runner-up finish on its resume, T.C. Williams head coach Kesha Walton knew her post players would need to put forth a tough and scrappy performance in order for the Titans to compete.

Johnee Lewis and Brooke Ninman took care of the dirty work, hustling and banging their way to a combined 17 rebounds. The duo's effort, along with a clutch 3-pointer from Gaby Moss, lifted TC to a 64-59 overtime victory at The Garden on Dec. 17.

The Titans improved to 4-0 and received the No. 17 ranking in the Washington Post's top 20 by knocking off the previously unbeaten Raiders, who defeated TC 70-55 last season.

"It means a lot because the girls have worked really hard," Walton said. "We played them last year and we lost by 15 so it was more of a revenge-type thing [for] people who were on the team last year. We were hungry for it and we worked very hard to prepare ourselves and be ready for the game."

Lewis and Ninman epitomized the Titans' hard-working mentality. Lewis, a 5-foot-11 senior forward, scored 16 points and grabbed 10 rebounds. With TC trailing by three and less than a minute to play in regulation, Lewis grabbed an offensive rebound and scored to keep the Titans alive. Leading 59-57 in overtime, Lewis again scored on a putback to keep TC in control.

"We knew that we were undersized so we worked a lot on boxing out and defending inside because we knew they were going to



T.C. Williams senior Johnee Lewis (21) goes after a loose ball during the Titans' overtime victory against Stonewall Jackson, last year's AAA state runner-up, on Dec. 17.



T.C. Williams senior Brooke Ninman scored 10 points and grabbed seven rebounds against Stonewall Jackson on Dec. 17.

try to exploit us with their inside game," Walton said. "... Johnee's rebounding was amazing. We worked hard at it and that was one of her goals: to rebound, keep them off

the boards. I knew for us to be successful tonight and to come out on top, we needed her to get in there and get the boards.

"We set the challenge for her and she

stepped up to it and achieved it so we're very happy about that."

Despite battling multiple Raiders standing 5-feet-11 or taller, Lewis said she didn't pay attention to the size of the opposition.

"It was pretty hard, but I don't worry about the height when I'm playing against them," Lewis said. "I just see them as another person on the floor. It's the mentality. You have to have the attitude that no one can get in the paint and you have to play twice as hard as they are playing because you are smaller than them."

Ninman, a 5-foot-9 senior forward, scored 10 points and grabbed seven rebounds.

"Her defense was amazing," Walton said. "She banged them around in there. She was fearless. They're a lot taller than she is [but] she got in there and boxed out and she was pushing them around. The ball goes up and her mentality is 'that's my ball' and that's [how she played]. Everything had to be her ball."

While Lewis and Ninman battled inside, Moss knocked down the game's biggest shot from the perimeter. Trailing 53-50 with 15.4 seconds remaining in regulation, the TC coaching staff called a play for Moss to take a 3-point shot from the corner. The play didn't go as planned, but Moss still got a good look from the top of the arc and buried the clutch 3 to send the game into overtime. "I was really happy," Moss said. "I was just thinking, 'I don't want to let my team down.' That was the biggest thing. And when I hit it, it was a relief: 'Yesssss. I did something good.'"

Moss finished with 16 points.

"That's what I expect," Walton said, "[for Moss] to hit shots in the clutch."

Christian Roberts scored 10 points for the Titans. Sofie Schedler scored four points and had a key steal. Angie Schedler scored four points and had a key block near the end of overtime. Rejoice Spivey also scored four points. Ryan Jordan led Stonewall Jackson with 24 points.

The Titans will host Potomac, ranked No. 15 in the Post's top 20, at 7:45 p.m. on Dec. 22.

SCHOOL NOTES

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

Traci Robinson-Williams of Alexandria was awarded a full-tuition scholarship to the University of Phoenix. Robinson-Williams earned a Bachelor of Science in business administration and marketing from University of Phoenix in 2007, and plans use her scholarship to pursue a master's of business administration. With two sons and a step-daughter in college, Robinson-Williams says she would not have been able to pursue her MBA at this time without the financial support of this scholarship.

Liana Pardini of Alexandria is studying in Australia this fall. The semester-long program in Sydney takes place at Macquarie University. Its North Ryde campus is 30 minutes from Sydney Harbour and Sydney's central business district. Pardini is majoring in political science and plans to graduate in spring 2013.

Marymount University announces that the following residents are among the more than 450 undergraduates and 350 graduate students who received degrees at the University's 60th Commencement Ceremonies at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., on May 8.

❖ **Timothy Hill of Alexandria** earned a/an M.S. in Information Technology.

❖ **Eileen Kiley of Alexandria** earned a/an M.Ed. in Administration

and Supervision.

❖ **Andrew Lewis of Alexandria** earned a/an B.A. in English.

❖ **Hiwot Menberu of Alexandria** earned a/an Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management.

❖ **Erycka Reid of Alexandria** earned a/an M.A. in Forensic Psychology.

❖ **Bethlehem Tesfaye of Alexandria** earned a/an B.S. in Nursing (second degree).

❖ **Rosemarie Vick of Alexandria** earned a/an B.A. in Liberal Studies.

❖ **Susan Wadsworth of Alexandria** earned a/an B.A. in Interior Design.

❖ **Scott Wilbur of Alexandria** earned a/an B.A. in Multidisciplinary

SEE NOTES, PAGE 24

SPORTS BRIEFS

Ireton, TC, SSSAS Wrestling Competes

The Bishop Ireton wrestling team finished eighth out of 32 teams at the Northern Region Classic Dec. 9-10 at Fairfax High School.

The Cardinals got a win from 220-pounder Andrew Lutterloh, who defeated Annandale's Ali Musa 3-2 with a late takedown.

Nick Womach (138 pounds) finished fourth for Bishop Ireton, Darcy Gomez (120) took fifth and Mike Rodriguez (152) and Andrew

Bladen (182) each took sixth.

Ireton finished with a score of 116.5. Fauquier won the event with a score of 226, followed by Annandale (177.5), Lake Braddock (156) and South County (149)

T.C. Williams finished 26th with 51 points. Ibrahim Bunduka (113) finished fifth for the Titans and Shiruna Ntenda (145) and Nassim Elgourchal (195) each finished sixth.

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes finished 27th with a score of 44.5. Matt Brinckerhoff (170) finished seventh for the Saints and Shaw Whitley (113) took eighth.

SCHOOLS



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

Charles Houston Cheerleaders Win

The Charles Houston Recreation Center cheerleading squad erupts in joy as they are announced the first place winners in the holiday invitational competition at T.C. Williams last Saturday afternoon, Dec. 17.



Sharing in Holiday Spirit

Several members from the PTA at William Ramsay Elementary volunteered to help sort and distribute donated gifts for Alexandria's Holiday Sharing program. This was their first year putting their holiday sharing in action and plan to make it an annual event. From left are Shannon Craft, Tahseena Hamid, Tanya (Duggins) Cobbs and Emily Stewart.

SCHOOL NOTES

FROM PAGE 23

Studies with teaching licensure in Special Education. Wilbur graduated cum laude.

❖ **Mary Earm of Alexandria** earned a/an B.S. in Nursing (second degree). Earm graduated cum laude.

❖ **Nancy Lorentz of Alexandria** earned a/an M.Ed. in English as a Second Language.

❖ **Megan McFee of Alexandria** earned a/an M.Ed. in Elementary Education.

❖ **Holly Urquhart of Alexandria** earned a/an M.B.A..

❖ **Abdullah Aljubairi of Alexandria** earned a/an B.S. in Information Technology.

❖ **Amy Baginski of Alexandria** earned a/an B.S. in Nursing (second degree).

❖ **Michael Boyle of Alexandria** earned a/an B.S. in Nursing (second

degree).

❖ **Carolyn Fish of Alexandria** earned a/an M.A. in Community Counseling.

❖ **Sinan Kalay of Alexandria** earned a/an M.Ed. in English as a Second Language.

❖ **Carolyn King of Alexandria**

earned a/an B.S. in Nursing (second degree).

❖ **Neil Markoff of Alexandria** earned a/an Graduate Certificate in Organization Development.

❖ **Gelila Seleshi of Alexandria** earned a/an B.A. in Fashion Design. Seleshi graduated summa cum laude.

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 Edward E. Gahres, MD is closing his medical practice at 5021 Seminary Rd, Ste 109, Alexandria, VA, on December 31, 2011. Patients interested in requesting copies of their medical records should call (703) 931-7515 between 10 am and 4 pm, Mon., Tues. and Thurs.

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21 Announcements
ABC LICENSE
 Angel F. Rodriguez Jr, Sole Proprietor, DBA Angel's Vineyard Wine Shop, 103 N. West St, 2nd Floor, Alexandria, VA 22308. The above establishment is applying to the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control for an Internet Wine Retailer's License where in consideration of payment, internet or telephone orders are taken and shipped directly to the consumers and which establishment is not a retail store open to the public. Angel F. Rodriguez Jr, owner.
 NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to the Board no later than 30 days from the date of the first two required newspaper publications. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Fairfax Water
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/REDEVELOPMENT
 On December 6, 2011, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) held a public hearing regarding an ordinance to establish exclusive water service areas and maximum allowable rates, fees, and charges within Fairfax County for water service. At the same meeting, the BOS enacted the ordinance as Section 65-6-13 of the Code of Fairfax County. Section (a) of the ordinance provides that effective 12:01 a.m. December 7, 2011, Fairfax Water will be the provider of retail public water service within Fairfax County, Virginia, for any new construction or redevelopment of any dwelling unit and any residential or non-residential structure, unless Fairfax Water determines it cannot make water service available due to a utility-related reason.
 The ordinance requires that any determination by Fairfax Water that it cannot make service available be made in accordance with policies, rules, or regulations established by Fairfax Water for the purpose of establishing when a utility-related reason exists that prevents it from supplying water. The ordinance further requires that the policies, rules, or regulations be adopted by Fairfax Water after notice and a public hearing.
At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2012, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/ REDEVELOPMENT. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.
 A copy of the proposed rule can be viewed on our Web site at <http://www.fairfaxwater.org>. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed rule should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:
 Fairfax Water
 Public Hearing Comments
 8570 Executive Park Avenue
 Fairfax, VA 22031
 All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 to be included in the record of the public hearing.

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 22

They just don't seem to get the fact that most Alexandrians are fed up with the disappearing green space and the City's cuddling up with the developers. I ask the City Council to oppose the waterfront development plan. If they do not, I know how am voting in 2012.

Charles Schwidde
Alexandria

Value Minority Views

To the Editor:

Why is it that "smart alec" comments have to be rendered toward an individual of a group who has declared that he/she disagrees with the group's decision and has decided to file a minority report. That is exactly what happened at the last WPWG meeting in which Bert Ely announced that he was going to file a minority report, as he disagreed with the non-consensus outcome of the majority (4 to 3).

Initially Chris Ballard made the comment that what Ely was doing was akin to a cartel, specifically he said "it works until it breaks down." I wonder if he would make the same comment regarding minority opinions written by Supreme Court Justices?

Then, Mindy Lyle from Cameron Station stated that "You are part of a group, and as such you should act accordingly." Well George Mason IV and two other delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 decided not to vote for passage of the Constitution and walked out of the Convention. However Mason essentially filed his minority report and it became known as the Bill of Rights. Both of these individuals owe Bert Ely a big apology.

Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet
Alexandria

admit is a bit tacky. Second, the City's plan was developed behind closed doors, no citizen input? There was plenty of opportunity for citizen input. In fact, the City has modified the plan based upon citizen input. You say this is a "fact." Sorry, the fact is that the City had over 100 meetings where citizens could input. Therefore, it is your opinion, not your fact. The City's plan is not a plan but is "hundreds of pages of weak guidelines," I think you are thinking of the CAAWP document. The plan will not "cut the community off from the river" but enhance it. Sure, traffic will increase, but your request of adding \$100 to \$200 million to the taxpayers load, and pre-empting CIP dollars for schools, public safety, and infrastructure needed across all of Alexandria is hardly worth your parks. We need parks all across Alexandria, not additional ones on the waterfront. This plan improves abatement of pollution, does not denigrate the historic character of Alexandria (see Ellen Stanton's letter to the editor in the Dec. 8 Gazette), and attracts fewer tourists than your plan? CAAWP offered the "seeds of compromise"? It is clear from all of your letters that compromise is only your way. The City has already compromised, and you just disregard it. Your alternatives have proved to be unworkable. The Council should vote yes on the plan.

Dennis Auld, Alexandria

Festival's 'Great Joy'

To The Editor:

The Alfred Street Baptist Church hosted its Annual Christmas Festival at the T.C. Williams High School on Saturday, Dec. 17, and Sunday, Dec. 18. I attended the Sunday night performance. The Music, Drama and Liturgical Dance Ministries presented the theme for the 2011 Christmas Festival: "Great Joy."

So many people deserve thanks: Guest artist Joseph Joubert, pianist and composer; an all cast performance arranged by Buryl Red, Joseph Joubert and Michael McElroy; Joyce Garrett, director of music; Theodore Thorpe, artistic director; Handbell Choir, Harriet W. Smith, director; Orchestra, Ronnie Carthan, orchestra coordination; Drama, Cookie Harrell, director; Liturgical Dance Ministry, Virginia Raye, director/choreographer; Jason Ellis, assistant choreographer; DeMoya Watson, Assistant choreographer; King Kids and Junior Gospel Inspirers Choirs, Stephanie Cunningham, choir director; Yvette Manson, director Junior Gospel Inspirers, and many more who helped with the awesome performance and all the volunteers.

On the behalf of all our communities of Alexandria, I like to thank the Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, pastor of the ASBC for a Christmas Celebration that many family and friends were able to attend. The 2011 ASBC Christmas Festival was a memorable and exciting celebration that was extraordinary, spectacular, different, uplifting, innovation and original — an unforgettable gift one could share with the whole family — the celebration of the birth of Baby Jesus, Our Lord and Savior.

Merry Christmas.

Geri Baldwin, Alexandria

Workable Solutions

To the Editor:

Mr. Pringle, I appreciate and agree with your response ["Vision for River Museum," Gazette Packet, Dec. 15-21] to Ms. Stanton's letter to the editor. It was spot on. The City's plan accommodates the potential for a museum you describe. But your requirements "allowing the upzoning which is currently proposed to destroy this opportunity by radically commercializing both Robinson Terminal sites; (b) organizing a robust, long-term fundraising effort, building on the Waterfront's status as a National Historic Landscape; (c) addressing parking and congestion issues, as for any other major development; (d) obtaining the support of city, state and federal authorities" is either inaccurate, unworkable, or just plain "pie in the sky thinking." As for Mr. Macdonald's letter ["Vote No to Rezoning"], my response is thus. I don't think you are "weary" Andrew as you have used that line in a few comments over the last few weeks. In that regard, you are consistent. Problem is, consistently wrong. Let me lighten your load for you. First of all, Waterfront4All is not composed of "wealthy business people." I appreciate you elevating me to that status, but that's not the case. By the way, I appreciate you not referring to us as "Waterfront4All\$" which, even you must

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2 YEAR COMPLIMENTARY MAINTENANCE PLAN WITH ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE² ON EVERY NEW VEHICLE

COVERS 2 YEARS OR 25K MILES, OIL & FILTER, TIRE ROTATION, MULTIPOINT INSPECTION

BRAND NEW 2011 TOYOTA

PRIUS

0% APR FINANCING FOR 60 MO. OR \$1,000 CUSTOMER



0% APR FOR A 60 MONTH TERM ON SELECT NEW TOYOTA PRIUS WITH APPROVED TIER1+ CREDIT THROUGH TFS. \$1,000 CUSTOMER CASH AVAILABLE WHEN FINANCED THROUGH TFS. NO IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER ADVERTISED OFFERS. EXCLUDES \$379 DEALER DOC FEE.

BRAND NEW 2011 TOYOTA

COROLLA

SIGN & DRIVE
\$0 DUE AT SIGNING
\$249 PER MO.



INCLUDES TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT, \$379 PROCESSING FEE, ACQUISITION FEE AND \$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT. 36 MO. LEASE W/12K MILES PER YEAR.

ALL NEW 2012 TOYOTA

CAMRY

SIGN & DRIVE
\$0 DUE AT SIGNING
\$299 PER MO.



INCLUDES TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT, \$379 PROCESSING FEE, ACQUISITION FEE AND \$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT. 36 MO. LEASE W/12K MILES PER YEAR. EXAMPLE CAMRY L.

BRAND NEW 2011 TOYOTA

RAV4

SIGN & DRIVE
\$0 DUE AT SIGNING
\$299 PER MO.



INCLUDES TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT, \$379 PROCESSING FEE, ACQUISITION FEE AND \$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT. 36 MO. LEASE W/12K MILES PER YEAR.



- 7 Yr. / 100K Mi Roadside Assistance Plan
- 160 Point Quality Assurance Inspection
- CARFAX Vehicle History Report

- 2.9% APR Financing Available (3).
- 3 mo. / 3K mi Comprehensive Warranty
- 7 Yr. / 100K Mi Limited Powertrain Warranty

(1)BASED ON BLACK BOOK FAIR TRADE VALUE MINUS CONDITION, MILEAGE AND RECONDITIONING. TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF A NEW TOYOTA VEHICLE. (2)WITH PURCHASE OF A NEW VEHICLE. COVERS NORMAL FACTORY SCHEDULED SERVICE. PLAN IS FOR 2 YEARS OR 25K MILES, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST. THE NEW TOYOTA VEHICLE CANNOT BE PART OF A RENTAL OR COMMERCIAL FLEET, OR A DELIVERY OR TAXI VEHICLE. SEE PARTICIPATING TOYOTA DEALER FOR DETAILS. (3)WITH APPROVED CREDIT ON SELECT MODELS THRU TFS. SEE DEALER FOR COMPLETE FINANCING DETAILS. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER ADVERTISED OFFER. OFFERS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION DUE TO MANUFACTURER CHANGE IN INCENTIVES. SEE DEALER FOR COMPLETE CAMPAIGN DETAILS. 0% APR FOR A LIMITED TERM ON APPROVED TIER1 + CREDIT THRU TFS. DEALER RETAINS ALL FACTORY REBATES AND INCENTIVES. (4)PRICE EXCLUDES \$379 DEALER DOC FEES. EXPIRES 1/3/2012.

Jack Taylor's
ALEXANDRIA
TOYOTA / SCION
3750 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22305

"QUOTE"
See what people are saying about Alexandria Toyota!

"I gave this dealership a great rating because it was the greatest experience I have ever had at a dealership. John McMillan was exceptional as a salesman. He was able to answer every question and he made me feel like I was special as a buyer. It was truly a great experience and again I cannot say enough about John McMillan, he is truly an asset to Alexandria Toyota."

- Dealerrater Quote



4.9 / 5 RATING

ALEXANDRIATOYOTA.COM TOLL-FREE: 1 866-616-8420

Happy Holidays

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