

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 19, 2012

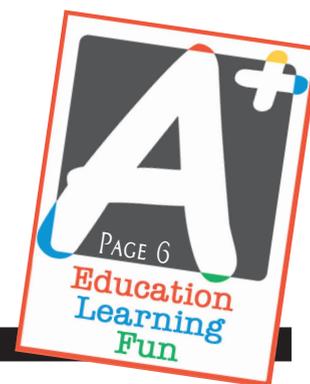


PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

## Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.

Deborah Ingram Allen of the Bethlehem Baptist Church Daughters of Judah performs "The Anthem of Praise" with members of the dance ministry at the Martin Luther King Jr. Choir Festival held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church on Sunday, Jan. 15.

MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 3.

## \$2.4 Billion School Budget Proposed

Budget includes new positions, salary increases to address growing student population.

BY VICTORIA ROSS  
THE GAZETTE

### Budget Facts

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Jack D. Dale presented a \$2.4 billion budget proposal to the school board on Jan. 12, reflecting a nine percent — or \$202.3 million increase — in next year's operating budget.

With a projected enrollment of 181,608 students, the proposed budget includes an additional 721.3 positions to support an additional 3,900 students, as well as cost-of-living increases for all eligible employees. Since 2008, the district's enrollment has grown by more than 15,000 students.

"Over the past five years, we have added the [student population] equivalent of a high school, middle school and 16 elementary schools," said Ted Velkoff (At-large) after the Jan. 12 school board meeting, during which Dale released details of the budget.

Velkoff added there is a "pent-up need" for increased funding. "The funding has been pretty flat over the past five years, while we've been absorbing that many students and we've had no corresponding increase in funding," Velkoff said.

"We are seeing the greatest increases in the numbers of our students with additional needs," Dale said. "Since 2008, the number of students enrolled in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) has risen 48.3 percent, and the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals is up 35.4 percent."

◆ Funds to expand Pathways to the Baccalaureate, part of the College Success program, to four additional schools — Centreville, Chantilly, South County and Westfield High Schools — and to expand the program to 10th and 11th grades at Annandale, Edison, Falls Church, Lee, Mount Vernon, South Lakes and Stuart High Schools and Hayfield Secondary School. The program works to develop college readiness and provide ongoing support to students who enroll in Northern Virginia Community College with the intent of transferring to a four-year Virginia college to earn a bachelor's degree. Fairfax, Herndon, Marshall and West Potomac high schools also offer a similar program called the College Success program.

◆ The projected cost per pupil for FY 2013 will be \$13,654, an increase of 6.5 percent over the current operating budget.

The Fairfax County School Board will hold public hearings on the FY 2013 budget on Jan. 30 and 31 at Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road. A speakers' list for those public hearings opened on Jan. 13 at: [www.fcps.edu/schlbld/meetings/requestspeak.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/schlbld/meetings/requestspeak.shtml). For complete information on the FCPS FY 2013 budget, including the budget calendar, visit [www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/index.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/index.shtml)

This fall, FCPS will open two new schools: a middle school at the South County site and an elementary school at the Lacey site.

The proposed budget includes the addition of 26 positions to address large class sizes and 12 positions to support the expansion of the World Languages program in elementary schools. Eight schools will add the Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools (FLES) program, and two new schools will implement the Foreign Language Immersion program.

SEE \$202 MILLION, PAGE 5

## Undercutting 'King's Dominion Law'

Governor supports Northern Virginia's plight to start schools before Labor Day.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Ever since Republicans gained a narrow one-vote majority in the state Senate, many in Northern Virginia have been fearing a loss of influence in Richmond. But Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell threw the region an unexpected lifeline last week on an issue that was at the top of the legislative agenda for the region — ending the prohibition against beginning schools before Labor Day. The

mandate is known as the "King's Dominion Law" because the amusement park successfully lobbied for the prohibition in the 1980s.

"Local communities can best balance their teaching and calendar needs with the important concerns of local tourism and business," said McDonnell during his annual state of the commonwealth address. "They know their situations far better than Richmond."

SEE GOVERNOR, PAGE 4



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

## 'Pop-Up Shakespeare'

The cast of the upcoming West Potomac High School production of "Richard III" performed "Pop-Up Shakespeare" at Market Square in Alexandria on Jan. 16. Left, Alex Wong as Richard III speaks with Queen Elizabeth (Emilyann Key). "Richard III" will run Jan. 19-21. Tickets are available at the door. For more information, call 703-718-2585.

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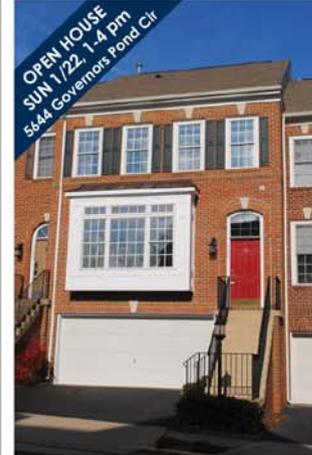
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PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

The Mount Vernon Ecumenical Choir performs "United in His Love."



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

"For the Beauty of the Earth" is sung by the Good Shepherd Choir.



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

Anne Shingler directs the Good Shepherd Choir.

# Mount Vernon Choirs Salute Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Good Shepherd hosts choir festival.

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.  
THE GAZETTE

In a tribute attended by hundreds, choirs from throughout the Mount Vernon area performed Sunday evening at Good Shepherd Catholic Church celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

This was the 17th year Ventures in Community has sponsored the Martin Luther King, Jr. Choir Festival, which was organized this year by the Rev. Ketlen Solak of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

In an interlude, the Rev. Jeri Fields led the audience chanting "The time is always ripe to do what is right!" as she recounted

VIC's initiatives which include feeding the poor, providing affordable housing, disaster preparedness, ending homelessness and staffing the Hypothermia Outreach Program which provides warm and safe sleeping for the homeless at Rising Hope Mission Church. VIC, which unites area churches in social action, will also address bullying in schools and responding to mental health crises.

The climax of the festival came when Willie Parker of Woodlawn UMC stood alone and recited King's "I Have a Dream" Speech. The singing of "We Shall Overcome" followed and then a soulful version of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" by the choirs of Woodlawn UMC and Bethlehem Baptist.

The evening concluded with the Mass Choir performing a muted and haunting rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."



PHOTO BY ED SIMMONS, JR./THE GAZETTE

The St. Luke's Episcopal Church Children's Choir performs "O Bon Die" (Good Lord).



PHOTO BY ED SIMMONS, JR./THE GAZETTE

The Mount Vernon High School Choir sings "We Are" by Dr. Vsaye Barnwell.



PHOTO BY ED SIMMONS, JR./THE GAZETTE

The Metropolitan Washington Baha'i Chorale performs "These Fruitless Strifes" by Van Gilmer.

# Governor Backs Schools' Flexibility

FROM PAGE 1

For most of Virginia, the issue doesn't make much of a difference because of the amount of snow that falls west of the Fall Line. School divisions in those parts of Virginia can get a weather waiver, allowing them to begin school before Labor Day because they are unable to hold classes during the coldest parts of winter. Yet school divisions in the eastern parts of the state can't get a weather waiver because they don't get enough snow. And when Alexandria City Public Schools tried to get an "innovative program" waiver, they ended up abandoning the application when it became clear that the State School Board was about to reject it.

"It's just downright silly to say that schools can start early if they get a lot of snow but can't if they want to help teachers," said Alexandria Superintendent Morton Sherman. "The state is flat out wrong."

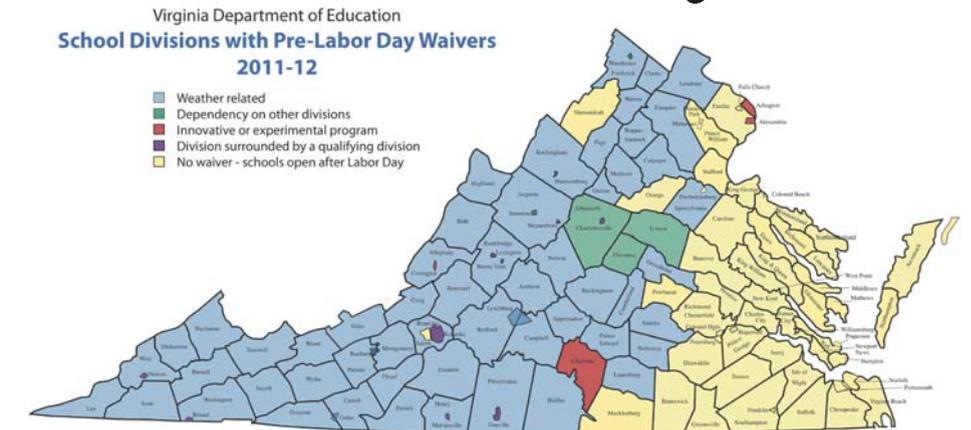
**SEVENTY SEVEN** of Virginia's 132 school divisions already have some form of waiver, which means that the exception has become the rule. That also means that the hospitality industry that fought for the mandate is fighting for an increasingly smaller share of the profits. The Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association, which represents King's

Dominion and other amusement parks, will be leading the charge for maintaining the status quo. The association estimates that shortening the tourism season would forgo spending by about \$274 million and decrease wages and benefits by about \$104 million.

"We've never seen any kind of difference in academic achievement in terms of starting before Labor Day," said Katie Hellbush, director of government affairs for the association. "But studies have shown a distinct change in tourism."

But school officials in Northern Virginia say momentum is on their side. Even before McDonnell highlighted the issue in his state of the commonwealth speech, the Virginia School Boards Association identified it as a top priority. The mandate against beginning classes before Labor Day has become a shared frustration across the region. This year, the effort to abandon King's Dominion Law is supported by the Virginia Education Association, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents as well as a handful of Northern Virginia jurisdictions.

"The big hurdle is going to be having the business community not as concerned as it's been in the past," said Michael Molloy, director of government relations for Fairfax County Public Schools. "It's really about persuading legislators that this change is



needed to help student achievement."

**THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY** has spent more than \$200,000 in the last 15 years contributing to Republicans and Democrats in Richmond. Top recipients in Northern Virginia include \$4,500 to Del. David Albo (R-42), \$2,050 to Del. Scott Lingamfelter (R-31), \$2,000 to former Del. Vince Callahan (R-34), \$2,000 to Del. Tim Hugo (R-40) and \$1,750 to state Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35). But votes don't always follow the money. Albo, for example, said he'll be voting to overturn the law this year.

"Now that we have the Standards of Learning, it's really important to give the schools time to prepare the students to take the test," said Albo. "You can't have it both

ways."

Two years ago, Del. Adam Ebbin (D-49) introduced a bill that would have allowed school with high rates of poverty be exempted from the Labor Day restrictions. That failed, but Ebbin is undeterred. Alexandria's experience being essentially denied a waiver has galvanized local school officials to put pressure on Alexandria City Council members, who added the item to their legislative package this year. Now Ebbin says he's going to take another crack at it. This week, he introduced a bill that would give school divisions the ability to start school whenever they want, regardless of poverty statistics.

"I feel strongly about local school divisions having autonomy," said Ebbin.

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UCM is thankful for the media sponsorship of this event by the Mount Vernon Gazette.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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# \$202 Million Increase Sought

FROM PAGE 1

Under Dale's plan, extended learning time for students and extended time for teachers are included in the budget, as well as a 2-percent cost-of-living increase for employees. Teacher salaries have been frozen for two years.

"It is imperative for FCPS to stay competitive in the marketplace in order to continue to attract the best employees to support student success," Dale said. "We continue to dedicate the majority of our budget, 85.9 percent, and the majority of our positions, 94.6 percent, directly to instructional programs."

"I was content to see that teacher compensation

was again prioritized in this year's budget. Sustaining compensation increases from last year shows Fairfax's commitment to ensuring that those who teach here can afford to live here," said Ryan McElveen (At-large).

"However, I was disappointed to see that athletic fees were not addressed in the budget. In terms of cost, they are a low-hanging fruit at less than \$2 million," McElveen said athletic fees, as well as booster fees, fundraisers and spirit-pack payments, can be a significant burden on students of low-income families. "I hope that the board will remember these students and their families in the coming months," he said.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### SATURDAY/JAN. 21

**Town Meeting.** State Sen. Toddy Puller (D-36) and Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) will meet with constituents at 10 a.m. at the Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway, Kingstowne. Everyone is urged to attend to hear reports from the General Assembly in Richmond, ask questions and express concerns about issues of interest to them.

**Mental Health First Response.** 9 a.m. to noon. The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board invites you to a free community forum: "Mental Health First Response — How to tell if someone needs help and what you can do," at the Emmanuel Baptist Church on Buckman Road, just off Route One, in the South County area of Fairfax

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

County. Contact Ann Bahr at 703-324-7010, TTY 711, or by email at [ann.bahr@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ann.bahr@fairfaxcounty.gov)

### SUNDAY/JAN. 22

**Tauxemont Preschool Open House.** 1 to 3 p.m. Tauxemont has classes for children ages 2 1/2 to kindergarten. At 7719 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Contact [tauxemontcoop@gmail.com](mailto:tauxemontcoop@gmail.com).

### SATURDAY/JAN. 28

**CASA Information Session.** 11 a.m. to noon. A new case of child abuse or neglect enters the Fairfax County Domestic & Juvenile Relations Court system once every 38 hours. These children need caring advocates to

help ensure that they grow up in safe and permanent homes. Fairfax CASA trains volunteers to advocate for a child's best interests in Court. Meets at the John Marshall Library in Rose Hill in Alexandria. Contact Elisa Kosarin, Associate Director — Recruitment and Training, at 703-273-3526, ext. 22, [ekosarin@casafairfax.org](mailto:ekosarin@casafairfax.org), or visit [www.casafairfax.org](http://www.casafairfax.org).

### ONGOING

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**Mount Vernon Gazette**

# The Yoga Generation

**Yoga credited with relieving stress, boosting self-esteem and improving grades in children.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE GAZETTE

**H**annah Ticardi deals with the pressure of competitive soccer games or rigorous science classes by striking a pose. The 16-year-old Vienna student usually prefers downward facing dog or cobra.

"It is really important to have a stress reliever, and yoga is really good for that," said Ticardi who is an 11th-grade student at James Madison High School in Vienna.

Katherine Harris, who has practiced yoga since middle school, agrees. "What I like best about yoga is the feeling I have after class where I feel like I'm floating," said Harris, a high school junior who takes classes at Sun and Moon Yoga Studio in Arlington.

Ticardi and Harris are part of a generation of children who are growing up with yoga, the practice impacting their lives from in utero through high school. Most studios now offer prenatal classes as well as instruction for toddlers, elementary, middle and high school students.

"When I visit my prenatal students in the hospital after they have their baby, I can pick up the newborn child and they almost always take a deep breath and say 'om,'" joked Luann Fulbright of Dream Yoga Studio and Wellness Center in McLean.

Aficionados, educators and researchers credit the discipline for addressing issues ranging from self-control to self-awareness. A study conducted by researchers at the California State University, Los Angeles' College of Education showed that regular yoga practice boosted students' self-esteem and improved their physical health, behavior and academic performance.

"It is amazing to watch what happens with these children. Their focus and concentration is improved," said Dawn Curtis, owner of East Meets West Yoga Center in Vienna.

Yoga classes for middle and high school students incorporate exercises that deal with issues like peer pressure and body image. "We use warrior pose, for example, where kids come into the pose with their arms stretched up to the ceiling or out to their sides, and we say 'Feel how strong you are,'" said Annie Moyer of Sun and Moon Yoga Studio in Arlington. "It is a gesture of opening oneself up to the world and cre-



PHOTO BY JIM VECCHIONE

**Yoga students, including Maya Ettleson (center) practice a downward dog tunnel at Budding Yogis studio. Experts say yoga is good exercise for children.**

ates the feeling of real confidence."

Instructors say it's good exercise. "It helps them to get physically fit," said Freddy Margolis of Village Yoga in Potomac.

**SISTERS** Joey and Eva Schulman, who practice at Budding Yogis studio in Washington, D.C., agree. "My favorite yoga pose is eagle pose, said 11-year old Joey. "It challenges your body to balance, to twist and to be strong all at the same time."

Eva gets a charge from the down dog tunnel. "You have to run, stretch into downward dog and then hold that pose for a long time. It's like a cardio, stretch and strength workout. I like it because it challenges all of your body," said the 14-year old.

Classes are structured to appeal to chil-

dren at each age group. "For smaller children, everything is done on a theme. Sometimes classes are themed around the holidays or seasons or animals or stories," said Curtis.

Moyer's young yogis often pass a swath of brightly colored fabric across the room by balancing it on their heads or grasping it with their elbows. The object is for the students to work in tandem to get the cloth from one side to the other without using their hands.

"We're all pursuing this goal together," said Moyer. "It is a group effort. It's team building. None of the games we play are about winning. We all win. Some of the things kids do at school are goal oriented and have a component of pressure and

stress. In yoga, there is never anything that you have to achieve or attain except for a good feeling inside."

Teachers keep students engaged by using age-appropriate language and adapting traditional yoga poses for children. "We learn poses that relate to nature or animals," said Cynthia Maltenfort, an instructor at Sun and Moon Yoga in Fairfax. "There is a lot of interaction and developing a connection with themselves and with each other. We start to address feelings and emotions."

Each class ends with a relaxation technique often referred to as shavasana. "We teach them how to calm themselves," said Moyer. "They lie down or curl up and listen to a story, a poem or music. Often, the most fidgety kids you've ever seen in your life will just chill and let go of everything when you set the right tone."

Many yoga studios also host yoga summer camps and yoga birthday parties. There is also yoga for families. "Family yoga classes give parents and children a chance to be together in a supportive, non-threatening, non-hierarchical way," said Fulbright. "They can just interact and enjoy each other without the parents having to discipline. There's lots of laughter and lots of fun. You build a stronger, healthier connection with your child."

**SOME LOCAL SCHOOL** officials have embraced yoga for children. Potomac Elementary School students are offered yoga classes from instructors at Village Yoga in Potomac.

"I believe that exercise and relaxation techniques should start at a very early age," said Linda Goldberg, principal of Potomac Elementary School. "Children will enjoy exercise throughout their lifetime when they experience pleasurable learning when



PHOTO COURTESY OF YO KID

**Children take a YoKid yoga class in Alexandria. Teachers keep young students engaged by adapting traditional yoga poses for children. Classes often end with a relaxation exercise.**

SEE HELPING, PAGE 7

# Helping Students Focus

FROM PAGE 6

they are young.”  
YoKid, a non-profit organization that makes yoga available to at-risk and underserved youth, also deploys instructors to a growing number of public schools in Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties and the District.

“I have some teachers who, when the class is getting too busy, say to the students, ‘Stand up and everybody take some deep breaths,’ and they do a yoga position, sometimes just to calm children down,” said Marjorie Myers, Ed.D., principal, Francis Scott Key Elementary School in Arlington. “We have an after-school yoga class that the parents put together, and there is a family yoga night where parents come in with their children and everybody does yoga together. One of the pluses is that these activities have demystified yoga for the children.”

YoKid runs Key’s after-school yoga program. Alexandria resident Michelle Kelsey Mitchell, the program’s co-founder and executive director, says yoga’s principle of self-acceptance can help boost self-esteem and confidence. “In yoga, kids don’t have to prove anything to anybody. They can just come and be who they are.”

**YOGA HAS BEEN** criticized for having religious overtones. “We often ‘om’ at the end of class .... We also say namaste. While the words aren’t religious, they can be construed that way,” said Linda Feldman, director of Budding Yogis, a studio that caters solely to children. “I tell our teacher trainees that if they’re in a public school scenario or where there are concerns over religion, they can use a word other than om or namaste.”

As with any physical activity, injury is possible, but preventable. “Sometimes [children’s] muscles haven’t yet developed to hold things where they need to be, so we have to be strict with them in making sure their alignment is proper,” said Margolis.

Instructors say incidents are rare, even among the most vulnerable students. “I’ve had kids with all sorts of limitations like partial paralysis due to stroke, cerebral palsy, ADHD, Asperger’s syndrome and others,” said Feldman. “All have been able to practice yoga with no concerns or injuries.”

While many doctors agree that yoga is a healthy practice, they say the benefits children get from yoga can also be found just as effectively elsewhere. “The good thing is that



PHOTO COURTESY SUN AND MOON YOGA STUDIO

**Piper O’Donnell and Jessie Moyer practice yoga at Sun and Moon Yoga’s Summer Camp in Arlington. Most yoga studios now offer classes for toddlers, elementary, middle and high school students.**

there [are] a variety of cost-efficient and simple ways for children and teens to relax and unwind,” said Kristin Anderson, M.D., M.P.H., family and preventive medicine physician for Molina Healthcare, Community Health Care Network clinic in Reston. “Going on walks as a family can also help everyone get the exercise they need as well as spend quality time together while they de-stress. This can help kids and their parents improve posture, relieve anxiety, practice deeper

breathing, build lungs and stretch muscles.”

But Ticardi, who is planning for college and preparing to take the SAT this spring, believes that yoga is the best stress reliever for her. In fact, she approached Curtis about starting a Yoga club for teens at East Meets West Yoga Center. Curtis agreed and will begin classes later this month.

“It’s nice to have an hour every week where I don’t need to think about anything but my breath,” said Harris.

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# OPINION

## Building on Pro-business Culture

New industry sectors are critical to Fairfax County's continued economic success.

BY SHARON BULOVA  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



In the speech I gave Dec. 13 as I was sworn in as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I quoted Albert Einstein, who said, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." The continuing economic problems that afflict the nation, and the federal budget cuts that could take effect soon, provide Fairfax County an opportunity to continue the significant and diversified economic development successes of the past several years.

Fairfax County is fortunate to be at the doorstep of the nation's capital. Our proximity to Washington has made us a natural base for companies that want to do business with the federal government, and our ability to attract and retain government contractors has been a

### COMMENTARY

critical element in the county becoming the economic engine of the Washington area as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. And, of course, the commercialization of government technology, including the Internet, has also helped create businesses and jobs in Fairfax County.

We are proud that 66 of the nation's 100 largest government contractors have a presence in the county, including 22 that are based here. Government contractors employ Fairfax County residents and perform some of the most vital tasks required by the nation.

Of course, no community can sustain itself over time unless it has a diverse economy. Fairfax County will continue to foster the business-friendly climate that has attracted so many corporate relocations in the last several years, and we will continue to welcome government contractors to our community. But, we also will redouble our efforts to attract companies from a wide array of appropriate industry sectors to diversify our economic base.

The county, working through the Economic Development Authority, has in recent years

landed the headquarters of high-profile large employers that are helping us diversify our economy. Volkswagen Group of America and Hilton Worldwide give us important inroads in the automotive and hospitality industries, for example. Most recently Bechtel, one of the largest engineering and construction companies in the world, announced it would relocate its global operations headquarters to Fairfax County. That is the kind of progress that the county can build upon for future economic success.

In my inaugural speech, I also referred to a business owner who moved his IT firm to the county. He told me how much he liked the mood here and that he wanted to be in a place where people enjoy what they do and are "charged up" about their work and their community. Our corporate leaders, like our residents, appreciate that, during these challenging times, Fairfax County has developed and improved on our pro-business culture. That will continue to be important in these difficult times as we look for new opportunities to improve the economic stability of the county in 2012 and beyond.

SHARON BULOVA CHAIRS THE FAIRFAX COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

## Redistricting Rockets Through Legislature

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL  
DELEGATE (D-44)



### COMMENTARY

On Opening Day, we were notified of our new committee assignments. I was reappointed to the Cities, Counties & Towns and Science and Technology Committees. As the largest jurisdiction in the Commonwealth, it is important that Fairfax County have effective advocates for local government flexibility and to guard against state government siphoning off more local government funds. The Science and Technology Committee will also enable me to continue to work with the fastest growing businesses in Northern Virginia.

Due to my increased seniority, I was also appointed to the Militia, Police & Public Safety Committee. This committee has jurisdiction over gun control laws, traffic offenses, jail and prison policy. I looking forward to being able to use my practical experience in the criminal justice system on the issues we face in committee to help keep our communities safe.

Another highlight of Opening Day was a visit from about 40 West Potomac High School Band students. We attended the 1812 Bicentennial Concert together and they took a tour of the Capitol. Listening to Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture took me back to Junior Year at West Potomac although back then our band director used shot gun blanks shot into oil drums to imitate the cannon shots (I don't think that's allowed any more).

As I predicted, minutes after we were sworn in, the Privileges and Elections Committee "met" in the corner of the chamber, passed the

latest partisan redistricting bill with little debate, it was put on a supplemental calendar presented to us at the 7 p.m. State of the Commonwealth Address, and was "debated" on our second day. We asked for more time so that the public could comment, we could prepare amendments, and the 16 freshmen could have time to consider the legislation before debating and voting on it, but our request was rejected. The legislation was passed on our third day in session and is now on to the Senate where it will likely be rocketed through and sent to the Governor.

The Constitution of Virginia requires redistricting to be completed in 2011. Many of us view the latest attempt to draw these lines as being an illegal partisan power grab. Upon passage in the Senate and the Governor's signature, a court will have to decide whether it was proper.

The legislation passed puts my entire delegate seat inside the Eighth Congressional District. The new Eighth Congressional District would include all of Lee District except for Greenspring Precinct and a small part of the Mount Vernon District in the Lorton area. I continue to believe that we should enact non-partisan redistricting so that the voters pick their elected officials. Elected officials should be divorced from the process of drawing their districts and setting their salaries and benefits.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, 50 people turned out for our Town Hall Meeting. If you would like to watch 30 minutes of opening statements by

myself or Senator Puller or Ebbin, you can watch them on my website at [www.scottsurovell.org](http://www.scottsurovell.org) and email your comments to me.

Many constituents expressed concern about the completion of Mulligan Road and the lack of investment in our transportation infrastructure. Several expressed concern about voter suppression legislation such as mandatory voter ID laws, and support for allowing undocumented children to attend state universities so long as they obeyed the law and paid their taxes. We heard from constituents that wanted to help seniors to afford in-home care expenses, admonished us to avoid devolving into Washington D.C. style gridlock, and one constituent urged us to protect against a decline in government services so we can maintain our current quality of life.

We will start to consider legislation this week. I have introduced 28 bills (so far) so I will be very busy. You can see summaries of my legislation on my website.

My constituent survey should have arrived in the mail. The online version is more comprehensive. I would appreciate it if you could complete it at [www.scottsurovell.org/survey](http://www.scottsurovell.org/survey). Last year, we received over 700 responses.

Please also visit my blog, The Dixie Pig, at [scottsurovell.blogspot.com](http://scottsurovell.blogspot.com), for more frequent updates. You can also comment on legislation, set up a meeting or request a Capitol tour at [www.scottsurovell.org](http://www.scottsurovell.org). Good government requires your involvement so please be in touch or come visit in Richmond so I can best represent you in the General Assembly. It is an honor to serve as your state delegate.

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# LETTERS



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

**The West Potomac Dance Team has qualified to compete in the National Dance Alliance National Championship in Orlando, Fla.**

## Support WPHS Dance Team

To the Editor:

Over the next month and a half, the Ft. Hunt community will be hearing a lot from the West Potomac Dance Team. That's because the team recently learned that they have qualified to compete in the National Dance Alliance (NDA) National Championship in Orlando, Fla. March 3 and 4.

This is more than an honor. It is an acknowledgement of the team's hard work and dedication to the growth and development of this program by all involved.

The West Potomac Dance Team has grown from 11 dancers just six years ago, to 25 dancers on the Varsity Team and another 14 on the JV team, which was formed for the first time this year. In October, the team won Grand Champions at the Kings Dominion Dance & Cheer Competition.

The team is already hard at work raising funds and rehearsing for this competition. In addition to regular rehearsals and half-time performances at West Potomac basketball games, the team has added practices, including some on weekends, in order to prepare. Among the fundraisers is a Junior Dance Team fundraiser, raffle baskets, donut and concession sales, and community and business sponsorships.

On Saturday, Feb. 4, the team will hold a lunch fundraiser at Outback Steakhouse on Richmond Highway. The cost is \$20 and includes drinks, ribs, steak, chicken, salad and fries. All proceeds benefit the dance team. If you are interested in purchasing a ticket contact Laura Bavaria at bavaria.laura@yahoo.com or purchase a ticket from a member of the team.

The team encourages the community to get involved and support their effort. Businesses that contribute to the "Road to Nationals" journey, will be recognized on fundraising t-shirts that will advertise sponsors.

All donations (business and personal) are welcome and must be received by Jan. 30. Checks can be made payable to West Potomac Athletic Boosters "WABC." In the memo section please write "Road to Nationals" and mail to: Laura Bavaria, President Dance Team Boosters, 3419 Ramsgate Terrace, Alexandria VA 22309.

With such a supportive school and community behind them, the team is sure to meet their fundraising goals and represent our community well in Florida!

**WP Dance Team Boosters**

## Photo ID Voting Nonsense

To the Editor:

The most common example of the harm by imprecise and inflated claims of "voter fraud" is the call for in-person photo identification requirements. Such photo ID laws are effective only in preventing individuals from impersonating other voters at the polls — an occurrence more rare than getting struck by lightning.

By throwing all sorts of election anomalies under the "voter fraud" umbrella, advocates for such laws artificially inflate the apparent need for these restrictions and undermine the urgency of other reforms.

As with all restrictions on voters, photo ID requirements have a predictable detrimental impact on eligible citizens.

Such laws are only potentially worthwhile if they clearly prevent more problems than they create. If lawmakers distinguished real voter fraud from the more common election irregularities erroneously labeled as voter fraud, it would become apparent that the limited benefits of laws like photo ID requirements are simply not worth the cost.

More precisely, "voter fraud" occurs when individuals cast ballots despite knowing that they are ineligible to vote, in an attempt to defraud the election system. This sounds straightforward. Fraud by individual voters is a singularly foolish and ineffective way to attempt to win an election. Each act of voter fraud in connection with a federal election risks five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, in addition to any state penalties. In return, it yields at most one incremental vote. That single extra vote is simply not worth the price. Instead, much evidence that purports to reveal voter fraud can be traced to causes far more logical than fraud by voters. And yet, voter fraud is often conflated, intentionally or unintentionally, with other forms of election misconduct or irregularities.

There are many such problems improperly lumped under the umbrella of "voter fraud." Some result from technological glitches, whether sinister or benign: for example, voting machines may record inaccurate tallies due to fraud, user error, or technical malfunction. Some result from honest mistakes by election officials or voters. And some irregularities involve fraud or intentional misconduct perpetrated by actors other than individual voters: for example, deliberate misinformation about the proper locations or procedures for voting; thugs may be dispatched to intimidate voters at the polls; missing ballot boxes may mysteriously reappear. These are all problems with the election administration system ... but they are not "voter fraud." Photo ID would not prevent these more common irregularities.

Conflating these concerns is not merely a semantic issue. First, the rhetorical sloppiness fosters the misperception that fraud by voters is prevalent. That is, when every problem with an election is attributed to "voter fraud," it appears that fraud by voters is much more common than is actually the case.

Perhaps because these stories are dramatic, voter fraud makes a popular scape-

goat. In the aftermath of a close election, losing candidates are often quick to blame voter fraud for the results. Legislators cite voter fraud as justification for various new restrictions on the exercise of the franchise. And pundits trot out the same few anecdotes time and again as proof that a wave of fraud is imminent.

Royal Masset, the former political director for the Republican Party of Texas, concisely tied all of these strands together in a 2007 Houston Chronicle article concerning a highly controversial battle over photo identification legislation in Texas. Masset connected the inflated furor over voter fraud to photo ID laws and their expected impact on legitimate voters: Among Republicans it is an "article of religious faith that voter fraud is causing us to lose elections," Masset said. He doesn't agree with that, but does believe that requiring photo IDs could cause enough of a drop off in legitimate

Democratic voting to add 3 percent to the Republican vote. This remarkably candid observation underscores why it is so critical to get the facts straight on voter fraud. The voter fraud phantom drives policy that disenfranchises actual legitimate voters, without a corresponding actual benefit.

Virtuous public policy should stand on more reliable supports.

**Martin Tillet**  
Mount Vernon

## Voter Fraud Occurs

To the Editor:

Last week, I wrote about the appropriateness of requiring voters to prove their identity prior to being able to vote. I pointed out that this is not a political issue but constitutes protection of our fundamental right to vote and of our right not to have our votes illegally diluted. Last weekend, Del. Scott Surovell and Sen. Toddy Puller held a town meeting that was also attended by Sen. Adam Ebbin. At the town meeting, Senator Ebbin was quoted as saying "Show me the evidence of when was there vote-stealing in Virginia; we don't really know of that to be a problem." Delegate Surovell chimed in stating that "There hasn't been a single documented example of a person impersonating a voter in this country in I don't know how long." He went on to say "... it's just a pure political power play is all it is [referring to Republican efforts to require presentation of a photo ID in order to vote]. It has nothing to do with protecting the integrity of the vote." I beg to differ.

In response to these contentions, I make reference to the following:

(1) In Appalachia, Va., in Wise County, in 2007, Ben Cooper was convicted of 243 felony counts of election fraud and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Among other things, Cooper bought votes with cigarettes and beer and stole others by taking absentee ballots from the mail. Thirteen others were involved in the scheme with most of them receiving suspended sentences or house arrest. One postal employee received a jail sentence.

(2) On April 27, 2004, Alvin Kurt Will-

iams' conviction for election fraud was upheld by the Court of Appeals of Virginia. The case is cited at 43 Va. App. 1. Williams had previously been convicted of a felony but registered to vote checking "no" in the box on the registration form asking if he had been convicted of a felony.

(3) On May 2, 2000, the Court of Appeals of Virginia affirmed the conviction of Debra Ann Wilson for election fraud. The case is cited at 2000 Va. App. LEXIS 322. Ms. Wilson was convicted of falsely stating on her voter registration form that she lived at an address where, in fact, she did not live.

(4) On Dec. 17, 1996, the Court of Appeals of Virginia affirmed a conviction against John A. Waldrop, Jr. on two counts of perjury for making a false statement in a campaign finance report. The case is cited at 23 Va. App. 614.

Yes, Virginia, voter fraud exists in the Commonwealth. As to Delegate Surovell's claim that there hasn't been a single documented example of a person impersonating a voter in this country "in I don't know how long," intercepting mailed absentee ballots and changing the votes therein, as formed the basis for Ben Cooper's conviction, constitutes impersonating a voter. Those who work at the polls routinely report that people often come to vote without identification, claiming to be someone or other. Who knows if those claims are true?

Former U.S. Congressman Artur Davis (D-Alabama), admitted in November 2011 that he had been wrong to previously oppose voter ID requirements. Quoting him, "People who are progressives should never be afraid of more transparency and accountability. I always thought that one progressive core was that we want to know more and be more transparent about politics. The progressives I know believe in more campaign disclosure in terms of who's putting money into campaigns. They believe in more disclosure in terms of how involved lobbyists are and special interests are in the process. If you believe in more transparency around connections in politics and money in politics, how can you not believe in transparency when it comes to the core of politics which is voting?"

Davis went on: "The right kind of voter ID law which of course will provide exceptions for old folks who don't have licenses or people who are infirm and don't have licenses, the right kind of ID law will provide free of charge an ID for people who want to vote. Those kinds of laws, they're not suppressionary tactics. They are not things we ought to fear. They are things that can make politics work better."

In my letter last week, I suggested the very same thing, that photo IDs should be provided free of charge for those who can't afford to pay \$10 to the DMV and want to vote. I will give Delegate Surovell and Senator Ebbin a pass for their comments at last weekend's town meeting, so long as they support a voter ID bill including the proviso that those who can't afford a photo ID be provided one free of charge. They should propose such a provision if it isn't in the proposed bills.

**H. Jay Spiegel**  
Mount Vernon

# '25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee'

LTA production spells success.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

It's an American institution that millions of children have suffered through — the spelling bee — and contestants in the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee are preparing for the county championship in this lively production of the Tony Award-winning musical now playing at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.

With music and lyrics by William Finn and book by Rachel Sheinkin, the show centers on a fictional spelling bee at Putnam Valley Middle School where six misfit teens are competing in the championship Bee.

Amy Conley is Rona Lisa Peretti, the bee's moderator who won the Bee herself as a child. Ms. Peretti is also the audience's narrator together with Vice Principal Douglas Panch, played to persnickety perfection by Jeff Davis. Carl Williams rounds out the trio of adults as Mitch Mahoney, who is doing community service as the Bee's "comfort counselor" to eliminated contestants.

The Bee's six contestants include defending champion Chip Tolentino (Eric Hughes); Logainne Schwartzandgrubenniere (Emily "E.J." Jonas), the radical daughter of two gay fathers; Leaf Coneybear (Josh Goldman), who despite finishing third in his previous competition ends up in the finals because two other girls had to attend a Bat Mitzvah; Marcy Park (Claire O'Brien), an over-achiever who advanced to last year's national championship; William Barfee (Matt Williams), a quirky teen who spells out words with his "magic foot"; and Olive Ostrovsky (Maureen Rohn), a soft-spoken teen who finds solace in the dictionary.

The ensemble cast is exceptionally talented, each with strong vocals and improvisational skills, which come in handy as four random adults are chosen from the audience to participate onstage as contestants in the Bee.

"That part of the show is a lot of fun but very unpredictable," said LTA publicist Rachel Alberts. "We scout out people in the lobby just before the show and ask them if they would like to participate."

Directed by Frank Shutts and produced by Mary Beth Smith-Tomey, the physical energy of ado-



Emily "EJ" Jonas as Logainne Schwartzandgrubenniere

PHOTO BY SHANE CANFIELD/THE GAZETTE

lescence is masterfully orchestrated by Shutts and brought to life through choreographer Grace Manly Machanic. Music direction is by Christopher A. Tomasino with sets and lighting by Ken and Patti Crowley.

The original 2005 Broadway production was nominated for six

Tony Awards, winning two, including Best Book for Sheinkin, and the original Broadway cast recording was nominated for a Grammy Award.

With a gifted cast and catchy score, The Little Theatre of Alexandria's revival of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling

Bee can be summed up in one word: S-U-C-C-E-S-S.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is playing now through Feb. 4 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. For tickets or more information, call 703-683-0496 or visit [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com).

## A Star is Born!

LTA education program offers classes for all ages.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

The Little Theatre of Alexandria is one of the oldest and most respected community theaters in the nation and some of the most prestigious actors, including Academy Award-winner Marcia Gay Harden and Dermot Mulroney, have performed on the Wolfe Street stage.

But there is more to LTA than razzle-dazzle productions like last summer's blockbuster musical "Hairspray." It is also home to one of the best kept secrets in the Washington area: the LTA adult education program and summer camps for kids.

"I'm not sure exactly when we started our classes," said Roland Branford Gomez, an award-winning actor and director who oversees the education programs. "I joined the theater in 1968 and we were already teaching classes back

then."

Some of the finest theater professionals in the region teach the programs offered at LTA, including Emmy-winners Mike Baker Jr. and Rich Amada, and Gomez himself teaches a musical theater course.

"For those not acquainted with the theater, this is a way to see how it all works backstage," Gomez said. "And you don't have to aspire to be on stage to enjoy the classes and learn about the craft. Many students just want to get a better understanding of the theater."

Classes being offered during the winter session include acting, improvisation, musical theater and playwriting. New this year is a documentary filmmaking course taught by Northern Virginia Community College film instructor Clinton Parker.

"Everyone is making videos for YouTube these days," said



PHOTO BY SHANE CANFIELD/LTA

Students participate in one of the many summer camps for kids programs at LTA.

Gomez, who has a Master's degree in film. "We thought this would be a great class to add and a way to reach out to a broader audience."

Registration is now open for the winter session and any classes that have already started can be joined at a prorated rate.

"We are pretty flexible," said LTA publicist Rachel Alberts. "And if a class is not for you, you can switch

to another class. We want this to be fun for everyone."

Adult classes meet at various days and times and run from eight to 10 weeks. The cost varies from \$120 to \$225 depending on the course and specific information can be found on the LTA website ([www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com)).

"Anyone interested can go online, print out a registration

forms.

"This is a wonderful way for children and adults to discover the world of theater," Gomez said. "And everyone always comes away learning something and making friends."

For more information on the LTA adult education classes and summer camps for kids, visit [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com) or call Virginia Lacey at 703-683-5778.

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- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Macaroni and cheese
- Peanut butter
- Jelly

UCM's food pantry is located at **7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, VA, 22306**, and accepts food donations Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm and the first Sunday of every month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

UCM is thankful for the generous support of the Mount Vernon Gazette.

*Mount Vernon Gazette*

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# ENTERTAINMENT

### THURSDAY/JAN. 19

**Downsizing and Decluttering Seminar.** 1 p.m. Beth Conord, owner of Smooth Transitions, provides an entertaining presentation with functional tips and suggestions on how to get started downsizing and cleaning out the clutter. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Call 703-765-4573.

**A Bee's Eye View of Native Plants.** 7:30 p.m. Explore the plant-pollinator relationship from the bee point of view and learn why what we plant has consequences for these fascinating creatures. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org) and [www.vnps-pot.org](http://www.vnps-pot.org)

**R.E. Lee Banquet.** 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Celebrating the 205<sup>th</sup> birthday of Gen. R.E. Lee. Cost is \$75/person. At the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. RSVP to Mr. J.J. Smith at 703 299-1725. Checks should be made out to R.E. Lee Camp #726 and mailed to 401 Wilkes St., Alexandria, VA 22314 and must be received by Jan. 18 as no payments will be accepted at the door. Visit [www.leecamp.org](http://www.leecamp.org).

**Colonial Republican Women:** The next meeting will be Thursday, Jan. 19 from 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Virginia Hills Administration Center (Old Virginia Hills School), 6520 Diana Lane, Alexandria. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., the meeting begins at 7 p.m. Contact Debbie at 703-768-1934 or [dbodlander@hotmail.com](mailto:dbodlander@hotmail.com)

### FRIDAY/JAN. 20

**Poetry Slam Alexandria with Shelly Bell.** 7 p.m. Live music, open mic and poetry slam. Sign up for the open mic and share your original work. Admission is free, but attendees interested in competing in the poetry slam pay \$10 to have the chance to win a \$100 cash prize. At The Athenaeum in Alexandria.

**Mount Vernon Swing Band.** 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Owen Hammett will conduct the live band. Light refreshments will be provided by "Seniors Living Well". \$4 at the door. Open to the Community. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Call 703-765-4573.

**Jonathan Parker Quartet.** 8 p.m. At St. Elmo's Coffee Pub in Alexandria. Contact Jonathan Parker at 703-819-3808

**Historic Beer Dinner.** 7 p.m. This culinary adventure pairs history-inspired beers from Yards Brewery of Philadelphia with a four-course meal. Tickets are \$85. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St., Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242 or visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org).

### JAN. 20-21

**"Why Try?" Training.** 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The Urban Passage Inc. is hosting this compelling training. At 711 N. Columbus St., Alexandria. Contact Jim Wilson, Director at "Why Try?" at 866-949-8791 or [www.whytry.org](http://www.whytry.org).

### SATURDAY/JAN. 21

**FIRST Tech Challenge Qualifying Tournament.** 10:30 a.m. opening ceremony. At Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus, Ernst Community Cultural Center, 4001 Wakefield Chapel Road, Annandale.

**American Balalaika Symphony Performs.** 8 p.m. The American Balalaika Symphony (ABS), under the artistic direction of Peter Trofimenko, presents White Dance, a winter revel of music for waltz, foxtrot, tango and more, at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. Tickets are \$20/advance; \$25/door. Visit [www.ABSorchestra.org](http://www.ABSorchestra.org).

**Pinewood Derby Workshop.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Old Town Ace Hardware announces its fourth annual Pinewood Derby Workshop. Cub Scouts, their parents and siblings are invited to bring their Pinewood Derby cars to the store to have local craftsman Jesse Cathell rough cut their designs. Cub Scouts are required to have the car design traced on their cars. In addition, electric sanders, sand paper and hand tools will be available for the Cub Scouts to perform additional work on their cars. At 809 S. Washington St., Alexandria. Call Rich Heilman at 703-879-0475.

**Author Talk.** 1:30 p.m. Norwood Holland returns to Gum Springs to discuss his legal thriller, *Sleepless Nights: The Drew Smith Series*. Residents will gather in the community center, a building once named Drew-Smith Elementary School, and attended by the author who grew up in Gum Springs, and traces both parental lineages to Mount Vernon slaves. At Gum Springs Community Center, 8100 Fordson Road, Alexandria.

### THROUGH JAN. 22

**Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week.** 60 restaurants offer a \$35 prix-fixe three-course dinner or \$35 dinner for two. Savor the flavors of Alexandria's distinctive collection of eateries, from fine dining establishments to casual neighborhood favorites. Participants include the Majestic, Bastille, La Bergerie, the Grille at Morrison House, Tempo, and Cheesetique. 703-746-3301. Menus and online reservations on [VisitAlexandriaVA.com](http://VisitAlexandriaVA.com)

### MONDAY/JAN. 23

**Tavern Toddlers.** Weekly open playtime on Mondays between 10:30 a.m. and noon, and a new craft activity each week. Each week costs \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, and additional people are \$3. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St., Old Town Alexandria. Call 703-746-4242 or visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org).

### TUESDAY/JAN. 24



**Alex Wong as Richard III**

### JAN. 19 TO 21

**"Richard III."** West Potomac High School drama department will present "Richard III." Performances are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10. All performances are at West Potomac High School in the Kogelman Theater, 6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria. Tickets are available at the door. Call 703-718-2585. Starring Alex Wong as Richard III. With Emilyann Key as Queen Elizabeth, Toby Mananzan as Buckingham, Nell McKeown as Duchess of York, Maggie Solo as Margaret, Emily Woods as Lady Anne, Jon Poole as King Edward IV, Dominic Sey as Richmond, Jared Walters as Clarence, Eliza Lore as Grey, Sarah McKeown as Rivers, Dan Evans as Hastings and many more talented actors, designers, technicians, and musicians.

**Alexandria Singers Open Auditions.** The Alexandria Singers, the D.C. area's adult pops chorus, is auditioning for all voice parts on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 6:45-10 p.m. We invite you to join us at our regular rehearsal time from 6:45-9:30 p.m. with auditions immediately following. At the Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St., Alexandria. Contact [audition@alexandriasingers.com](mailto:audition@alexandriasingers.com) to arrange an audition. Visit [www.alexandriasingers.com](http://www.alexandriasingers.com).

### WEDNESDAY/JAN. 25

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

**Potomac Harmony Chorus Open House.** 7 to 9 p.m. For women and teens who like to sing. Visitors will be treated to refreshments and socializing, along with quartet and chorus demos and a group singing lesson during which everyone will learn and perform a full song. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Visit [www.PotomacHarmony.org](http://www.PotomacHarmony.org).

**Author Talk.** 7 p.m. Free. Local author Brooke C. Stoddard talks about his book, *The World in Balance: The Perilous Months of June - October 1940*. At the Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. Call 703-746-1702.

**Visual Tour of Civil War Alexandria.** 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10/person. Encore Lecture by Author Wally Owen includes 3-D and rare Civil War images. See what Alexandria looked like during the Civil War through the eyes of photographers who documented it. Meet some of the people behind the lens who are responsible for Alexandria's rich Civil War photographic heritage, such as Andrew J. Russell and Egbert Guy Fowx. Tickets are available by calling The Lyceum at 703-746-4994 or through [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org). At the Lyceum, 201 South Washington St., Alexandria.

### FRIDAY/JAN. 27

**Pieta Brown in Concert.** 7:30 p.m. With Iris Dement. Tickets are \$35. At the Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-965-3347 or visit [www.birchmere.com/calendar](http://www.birchmere.com/calendar)

**Tim Zimmerman and The King's Brass.** 7:30 p.m. Concert features 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion and keyboards. At Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King Street, Alexandria. Contact Louise Wilson, Director of Music at [louise@fairlingtonumc.org](mailto:louise@fairlingtonumc.org) or [www.fairlingtonumc.org](http://www.fairlingtonumc.org) or call 703-671-4057.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 28

**Archaeology Talk.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology and Gunston Hall are co-sponsoring a symposium on Mason Neck archaeology. The program includes talks by Mike Johnson, Christopher Sperling, David Shonyo, Wendy Miervaldis, Paul Inashima, and Douglas Comer. Visit the website at <http://www.gunstonhall.org/grounds/archaeology.html>.

**Author Discussion.** 1 to 3 p.m. Free. Author and former Chief Historian for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Robert K. Krick, will give a free lecture on "Robert E. Lee and His Detractors in the Age of the Anti-Hero." At the Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke St., Alexandria. Call 703-746-1702.

# THEATER

## Little Theatre Earns 43 WATCH Nominations

- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Musical - Scott J. Strasbaugh as "Mr. Pinky" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Musical - Gina C. Tomkus as "Matron/Gym Teacher" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Cameo in a Musical - Mark Williams as "High School Principal" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Choreography - Ivan Davila - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical - Jean Schlichting & Kit Sibley - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Direction of a Musical - Sue Pinkman - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical - Adrian Cabbage as "Seaweed J. Stubbs" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical - Brenda Parker as "Motormouth Maybelle" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical - Jaclyn Young as "Penny Pingleton" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Musical - Anna Michelle Jackson & Irene Kasotakis - Hairspray

- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical - Christopher Harris as "Edna Turnblad" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actress in a Musical - Shannon Kingett as "Tracy Turnblad" - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Musical - Franklin C. Coleman - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Musical - Robin Parker - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Music Direction - Christopher A. Tomasino - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Musical - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Properties in a Musical - Judy Kee & Margaret Snow - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Musical - Chris Feldmann - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Set Decoration in a Musical - Marian Holmes & Russell Wyland - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Set Design in a Musical - Myke Taister - Hairspray

- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Kevin O'Dowd - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Sound Design in a Musical - David Correia & David Hale - Hairspray
- ❖ Outstanding Hair Design in a Play - Howard Vincent Kurtz - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Play - Liz Owens & Nancy Owens - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Makeup Design in a Play - Howard Vincent Kurtz - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Properties in a Play - Rebecca & John Johnson - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Play - Chris Feldmann - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - Mary Hutzler - Move Over, Mrs. Markham
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Play - Annie Vroom - Noises Off
- ❖ Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play - Adam Downs as "Garry Lejeune" - Noises Off
- ❖ Outstanding Play - Noises Off
- ❖ Outstanding Set Construction in a Play - Dan Remmers - Noises Off
- ❖ Outstanding Set Design in a Play - C. Evans Kirk & Dan Remmers - Noises Off
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Play - Kevin O'Dowd - Noises Off
- ❖ Set Decoration in a Musical - Nancyanne Burton et al -

- Oliver
- ❖ Outstanding Set Painting in a Musical - Erin Cumbo - Oliver
- ❖ Outstanding Sound Design in a Musical - David Correia - Oliver
- ❖ Outstanding Direction of a Play - Joanna Henry - Rabbit Hole
- ❖ Outstanding Properties in a Play - Nicole Zuchetto - Rabbit Hole
- ❖ Outstanding Costume Design in a Play - Annie Vroom - Widdershins
- ❖ Outstanding Light Design in a Play - Ken & Patti Crowley - Widdershins
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- ❖ Outstanding Special Effects - Ken & Patti Crowley - Widdershins

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- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actress in a Play - Robin Zerbe as "Irma Grese" - Angel: A Nightmare in Two Acts
- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play - Mark Lee Adams as "Dr. Farquhar" - Mindgame
- ❖ Outstanding Lead Actress in a Play - Lolita-Marie as "Mattie Cheeks" - No Niggers, No Jews, No Dogs

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## Wilson Clutch for Wolverines in Win over Bruins

West Potomac boys  
one game out of first  
in Patriot District.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

**W**est Potomac senior Tamaric Wilson made a name for himself intercepting passes as a defensive back for the school's football team. On Jan. 17, it was a basketball Wilson wrestled away from an opponent to lift the Wolverines to victory.

The 5-foot-9 Wilson snagged an offensive rebound and drew a foul with 14.4 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter and West Potomac leading Lake Braddock by the slimmest of margins. Wilson then knocked down a pair of clutch free throws and the Wolverines held on for a 55-50 win at West Potomac High School, pulling the Wolverines within a game of the Bruins at the top of the Patriot District standings.

Wilson finished with 11 points and six rebounds, but none bigger than the offensive board that denied Lake Braddock a chance to take the lead in final seconds.

"He's strong. He plays five inches taller than he is," West Potomac head coach David Houston said about Wilson. "... It's hustle. He's 5 feet [9] and [Lake Braddock has] got two 6'4" guys in there and he gets the ball. That's just who wanted the ball more. That's it."

West Potomac improved to 11-3 overall, 5-2 in the Patriot District. Lake Braddock and Woodson are tied atop the standings at 6-1.

"We needed to defend our home court," Houston said. "In the district, that's what it comes down to: you're going to have to defend. We had aspirations of being [No.] 1 in the district at the end of the year and we knew we couldn't go down three games



**West Potomac senior Tamaric Wilson scored 11 points against Lake Braddock on Jan. 17.**

to Lake Braddock, so this was an important win for us."

Neither team led by more than six points throughout the contest. Lake Braddock senior Brendan McHale scored in transition to give the Bruins a 48-47 advantage with 3:03 remaining in the fourth quarter, but West Potomac scored eight of the game's final 10 points to secure the win. Randall Brobbey's transition bucket and Bryant Fultz's tip-in gave the Wolverines a lead they would not relinquish in crunch time.

"They were the first-place team, we were third-place team [and] it was a Patriot District game," Houston said. "When we play Lake Braddock it always comes down to something like that. They don't let you pull away. They're good. They're a good team. They have some solid shooters, solid players [and] they're big inside. I've got a lot of

respect for their squad, but we persevered. I'm really proud of my guys. They didn't give up, they stuck to the plan and got through this game."

Defense was a big part of the Wolverines' success. West Potomac forced 31 turnovers, thanks in part to the anticipation and athleticism of sophomore DeMornay Pierson-El. The 5-foot-9 guard repeatedly came up with steals by jumping Lake Braddock passing lanes, some of which he turned into layups at the other end.

"I look for eye contact," Pierson-El said. "Once [an opponent looks at] that player and he throws it, I break on it and the player can't react to it."

Offensively, Pierson-El attacked the basket at will in the first half but struggled finishing near the rim. Houston spoke with Pierson-El at halftime and told him to relax. The sophomore responded by scoring eight of his 12 points in the second half.

"We just kept encouraging him," Houston said. "He was getting the shots that we wanted to get and he normally makes those. Our plan was to penetrate and get by them and I thought he was doing a great job, he was just missing some shots. But he made up for it in the second half [with] a lot of big plays."

"Everybody knows he's a tremendous athlete. He was anticipating very well in the passing lane. He followed the game plan, which for a young guy is tough to do. [For] a sophomore it's tough to try to remember the plan the whole game and I thought he did a great job of it."

Fultz scored a team-high 13 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Brobbey finished with 11 points.

Christian McKenrick led the Bruins with 15 points. Dylan O'Connor and McHale each scored 10 points for Lake Braddock and Tyler Snow scored nine points and grabbed nine rebounds.

"We had 31 turnovers. We shouldn't win the game [playing] that way," O'Connor



**West Potomac sophomore DeMornay Pierson-El was a factor at both ends of the floor against Lake Braddock on Jan. 17.**

said. "It was the worst game possible that we could have played. We didn't pass the ball well, we didn't make good decisions, but we'll get them next time. ...

"That was the worst game possible, so if we only lost by a basket or two, we're still pretty happy. We're just trying to work forward and correct our mistakes and hopefully go undefeated the rest of the season."

West Potomac will host T.C. Williams at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 20. The Wolverines will host Woodson on Jan. 30 and travel to face Lake Braddock in the regular season finale on Feb. 10.

Beating Lake Braddock was important "just to prove to everybody that we play good basketball here and we're a contender," Wilson said. "We knew that, but now everybody else knows."

### SPORTS BRIEF

## Mount Vernon Wrestling Wins Dundalk Duals

**T**he Mount Vernon wrestling team traveled to Baltimore and won the 10-team, two-day Dundalk Duals on Jan. 14-15. Mount Vernon, led by seniors Dusty Floyd, Cody Marino and Jaelen Gadson, blasted defending champions Ft. Hill of Cumberland, Md., 66-12 before pulling away from Maryland's Sparrow's Point High 50-21 to assure a first-place finish.

Mount Vernon's day-two dominance included outscoring the final five teams by a total of 320-50. Factor in that the Majors were without two starters due to injury and it put an even bigger smile on the coaching staff's faces.

John Victoria (106 pounds), Marino (126), Gadson (145), Floyd (170), Xavier Craig (182), Nathan Haro (220), and heavyweight Vika Mathias each went 8-0 and placed first. The Majors are now 30-3 on the season.

Next up for the Majors will be the National District Duals, which will be held at MVHS on Friday and Saturday.



**The Mount Vernon wrestling team won the Dundalk Duals meet in Baltimore last weekend.**

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**21 Announcements**

**21 Announcements**



Joan Masin Freck, 74 of Ashburn, VA, passed away January 5, 2012 from complications associated with idiopathic myelofibrosis, a rare bone marrow disorder. As was her way, and in keeping with her career as an educator, Joan waited until the final school dismissal bell at 3:30 PM, when she passed away peacefully in the company of her family.

Joan was born on July 29, 1937 in Neptune, NJ, the daughter of Josephine Nurkin and Louis Masin. She was married for 54 years to her college beau, Peter Grier Freck. Joan is survived by her husband, three grown children and their spouses: Stanley Grier Freck (Tina Braun), William Robert Freck (Catherine), and John Stuart Freck (Karen); seven grandchildren whom she loved dearly: Kendall, Jake, Peter, Henry, Symon, Aidan and Asa and her older brother, Michael A. Masin of Fletcher, NC.

Joan was a lifelong and gifted educator who believed firmly in the value of a strong education for all. She was a graduate of Prospect Hill Country Day School (Orange, NJ) and received a Bachelor's of Arts from Vassar College, a Master's degree in Teaching from the University of Virginia and a Doctorate of Education in School Administration from Vanderbilt University.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Beverly Hills, CA and Fairfax County, VA before becoming a principal in Fairfax County Public Schools first at Mt. Vernon Woods Elementary School and then at Woodley Hills Elementary School from which she retired. Afterward, she continued to work in the school system as an interim administrator and elementary school principal. Joan also taught student teachers at the undergraduate and graduate levels at Mary Washington and George Mason Universities. She was the past President of the Fairfax Association of Elementary School Principals.

Joan was an Elder and active member of Burke Presbyterian Church. She received endless amounts of joy and fellowship from her time at the church and with the members there.

A Memorial Service to celebrate Joan's rich and full life will be held at 2:30 pm on February 10, 2012 at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke VA (703-764-0456). On her passing, it was Joan's wish to establish a book fund for the library at her beloved Woodley Hills Elementary School. Therefore, in lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Woodley Hills Elementary School Library to honor Joan's life and her commitment to promoting high quality education for all children. Your tax-deductible donations should be made payable to the Woodley Hills Elementary School and reference the "Dr. Joan Freck Memorial Book Fund" in the memo section of the check or in a separate accompanying note. Donations should be sent directly to: Woodley Hills Elementary School at 8178 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria, VA 22309.

**VDOT** Virginia Department of Transportation

**I-395 HOV/Transit Ramp**  
**Seminary Road**  
**City of Alexandria**

Citizen Information Meeting and  
Design Public Hearing

**Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 7 – 9 p.m.**  
Francis C. Hammond Middle School  
4646 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304  
(If the school is closed due to inclement weather,  
meeting will be February 1, 2012, 7 – 9 p.m.)

Find out about the proposed major design features and draft environmental assessment for the I-395 HOV/transit ramp to Seminary Road.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771, a draft environmental assessment is being prepared. Information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be included in the environmental document in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800. The draft environmental document, including other environmental information, will be made available for public review and comment.

Review project information at [www.vamegaprojects.com](http://www.vamegaprojects.com), at the public hearing, or at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call ahead at 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions. Property impact information and relocation assistance policies are available for 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 10, 2012 to Robert Iosco, Environmental Engineer at the VDOT District Office address above. You may also e-mail comments to [meeting\\_comments@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:meeting_comments@vdot.virginia.gov). Please reference "I-395 HOV/Transit Ramp" in the subject line.

VDOT 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 VDOT's Civil Rights Division at the above phone numbers.

State Project: 0095-100-722, P101; UPC 96261  
Federal Project: NH-000S (218)

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