



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE

Cydni Maryland records her findings on the worksheet provided.

Aspire, Advance, Achieve

The Baltimore-Washington Section of the Society of Women Engineers, along with Booz Allen Hamilton's African American Forum, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (Northern Virginia Alumnae Chapter and Omicron Rho Chapter), National Society of Black Engineers, and Booz Allen's Woman Forum presented "Making it Better" Badge Day at Mount Vernon High School on Saturday, Jan. 28. Together, each organization helped more than 70 Girl Scouts earn the engineer badge by performing seven hands-on fun experiments that teach basic engineering concepts. Activities included civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering. During the morning activities, five stations were set up in

the school's cafeteria for the scouts to rotate through. Label Checking involved discerning what ingredients/vitamins were listed on the box, can and jar labels. The Moving Parts station involved motion and freeing up the motion with spheres, as in ball bearings. The girls worked with coffee cans, a ping-pong paddle, round marbles and flat marbles. The third station was Making Connections, making a series circuit then a parallel circuit. The fourth station involved PH; the scouts used PH strips on water, borax, vinegar, lemon juice, soda, bleach and dish soap. Station five was taking the girls back to Play-Doh, Making a Polymer.

— LOUISE KRAFFT



Anoya Porter stretches her newly created polymer.



Autumn Lessone asks a friend for advice on the color the PH strip is showing.



Taylor Watson works on creating a series circuit as part on the Making Connections station.

Budgeting For Crisis

Community service boards push legislators to create crisis centers.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Johnny is a 13-year-old student at school in Northern Virginia. He's been acting out lately, running away and confronting other children on the playground. One day he punches another student in the nose and the parents of that student press charges. After he's found guilty of assault, Johnny reportedly becomes depressed and starts talking about suicide. His parents take him to the hospital, but Johnny is not welcomed.

Lori Meyer of the Alexandria

Community Services Board explains the process. She says one of the first questions that's asked is, "Does the child have a criminal court history or any charges?" This is followed by, "If so, what are the charges?" and whether it was assault and battery. If yes, they cannot accept the child.

What happens next? Johnny might be able to get into the closest crisis center in Leesburg, but his parents have a hard time getting back and forth.

Meyer explains that a lot of these parents are on the cusp of the poverty line, so they often don't have enough funds for trans-

SEE CRISIS CENTERS. PAGE 5

Homeless Couple Survives the Streets

"There's a place called Rising Hope."

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.
THE GAZETTE

Trapped in a downward spiral of homelessness beginning in the summer of 2009, Marvin and Debra Britt, both 52, endured.

"That's when the economy got hard. We lost our jobs," said Marvin Britt, who was working building homes at Fort Belvoir while Debra had a job doing inserts for a newspaper.

Unable to keep up with their rent, they lost their place and resorted to "sleepin' on the sidewalks, sleepin' on the streets, sleepin' at the bus stop. We slept

everywhere you wanna sleep at except in the woods. Most likely we stay at where people can see us."

When Marvin Britt could make money at odd jobs like painting, landscaping and cutting grass, they'd bed down to recuperate at a cheap motel.

"I was workin' little odds and ends jobs, workin' tryin' to keep a roof over my wife's head. We might stay two nights out of the week stayin' at the bus stop, then save the money up and we might go into the motel, then take a shower and the next day we back

SEE RISING HOPE. PAGE 3

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Accidental House Fire

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department units responded to a house fire, Tuesday, Jan. 24, at approximately 11:50 p.m., near Fort Hunt, in the Alexandria area of Fairfax County. The single-family home is located at 2125 Rampart Drive.

Firefighters encountered smoke and fire coming from the eaves and roof of the two-story home upon arrival. Firefighters conducted an aggressive offensive fire attack bringing the fire under control in approximately 20 minutes. The seat of the fire was in the attic space near the chimney of the fireplace. Two adults were home when the fire broke out. One adult male was transported to INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital for non-life threatening injuries. Two adults have been displaced. Red Cross support was declined.

Damage is estimated at \$30,000.

According to fire investigators, the fire was accidental. A zero clearance fireplace caused the fire.

UCM Seeks Food Donations

United Community Ministries' food pantry depends on community donations and after the holidays, people often forget to give. The food pantry shelves are becoming increasingly bare and help is needed to help fill them. Canned meat and fish are especially needed, as well as canned soups, fruits and vegetables. Drop off food donations at UCM's main office, located at 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria. UCM's food pantry accepts food donations Monday – Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the first Sunday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Surovell Appointed to Public Safety

Del. Scott Surovell (D-44) was appointed on Jan. 11 to the Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety during the 2012 session. The Militia, Police & Public Safety Committee focuses on matters concerning local police and sheriff's departments organization and jurisdiction in addition to gun control, homeland security and traffic offenses Surovell will continue his service on the Committees on Counties, Cities and Towns and the Committees on Science and Technology.

Guilty Plea in Shootings

Yonathan Melaku, 23, of Alexandria, pled guilty Thursday, Jan. 26 to damaging property and firearm violations involving five separate shootings at military installations in Northern Virginia between October and November 2010 and attempting to injure veterans' memorials at Arlington National Cemetery.

He will be formally sentenced on April 27. According to the statement of facts filed with his plea agreement which recommends 25 years in prison, Melaku admitted that he carried out a series of five shootings from Oct. 17, 2010, through Nov. 2, 2010, at the following locations: the National Museum of the Marine Corps (twice), the Pentagon, a Marine Corps recruiting sub-station in Chantilly, and a U.S. Coast Guard recruiting office in Woodbridge. Each shooting took place late at night or early in the morning and involved multiple 9mm rounds fired at each building. The cost for repairs at the facilities exceeded \$100,000.

UCM Receives \$15,000 Grant

United Community Ministries is the recipient of a \$15,000 grant from the Boeing Employees Community Fund. The grant will be used to support UCM's Basic Needs Program, which provides emergency assistance to families and individuals who are in crisis. The Employees Community Fund of The Boeing Company is an employee-owned and directed giving program that allows employees to support the needs of their local communities via tax-deductible recurring payroll deductions or one-time gifts.

Aiding Wounded Warrior Project

Recently opened Jersey Mike's Subs at 7732 D Richmond Highway hosted a 5-day fundraiser last month, with proceeds supporting Wounded Warrior Project. Wounded Warrior Project is aimed to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members.

Store hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

Rising Hope Provides Home

FROM PAGE 1

out at the bus stop. Really I didn't have no steady job. But I try to provide for my wife."

For Marvin Britt, the experience was "frightening and scary. I think I was more scared than my wife was. I think my wife was more braver than I was."

An anonymous good Samaritan attempted to make a lasting difference. "He just saw us with our bags out there. He came up and I said we was homeless and he gave me and my wife \$180, bought us dinner at Applebee's and gave us a room over there. Alexandria Motel. Just a stranger. Some good things came out of it."

Still their homelessness persisted. Months later on a cold winter evening, they encountered two more benevolent strangers.

"One night we was on our way, we had about 80 bucks on us. It's either go ahead and pay the 65 for the motel and leave 15 in our pocket to eat food. Then all of a sudden this white van came up."

Inside were two volunteers, apparently with the Loaves and Fishes food ministry formed by a loose confederation of churches in the Franconia area. They distribute food to the homeless on Fridays.

"He opened the back of the truck and gave us food. He said there's a place called Rising Hope. He say come on up here and you stay warm, and we caught a bus up here," said Marvin Britt

They arrived at Rising Hope Mission, a United Methodist church located on Russell Road just off Route 1. Its ministry is serving the homeless and needy of the Route 1 corridor. From December through March volunteers mostly from area churches staff the Ventures in Community Hypothermia Outreach Program there, providing a hot dinner, breakfast, and a warm, safe place to sleep in sleeping bags on mats in rows on the floor.

"That's the first day I met Miss Sherry. She been like a momma to me," said Marvin Britt. Sherry Edelkamp is a New Hope Housing staffer who manages VIC-HOP. She urged them to go to the Eleanor Kennedy Shelter located farther down Route 1, also operated by the nonprofit New Hope Housing. But Marvin Britt had an independent streak and it would be two years before they went.

Finally they arrived at Kennedy Shelter; New Hope Housing staffers helped them get their lives back on track. Debra Britt's teeth were bad, which made it hard to smile when she sought jobs. "New Hope Housing came through faithfully," said Marvin Britt. Providing dentures for her, they also helped her get glasses. She's now working in home care.

Over the summer, while they continued staying at Kennedy Shelter, Marvin Britt was working for a roofing company, rising at midnight to go to work with the crew at night to avoid the heat. "I'm on leave now. No work, no work."



PHOTO BY ED SIMMONS, JR./THE GAZETTE

Marvin Britt beams when he expresses his gratitude for New Hope Housing staffers, including Pamela Michell, executive director, and Sherry Edelkamp. Not pictured, his wife Debra was working.

Life at the shelter wasn't easy. Unlike Alexandria Community Shelter, also run by New Hope Housing, there are no private rooms for families. With 38 men in a dormitory room, Marvin Britt said the snoring was a racket and interaction could be a problem.

But Marvin and Debra Britt ate regularly at Kennedy Shelter and got training in life skills taking three classes: Out of Poverty, Ready to Rent, and Finance and Budgeting. Then, with Debra Britt working steady and her credit improving, staffers helped them apply for Section 8 Housing set aside for the homeless. Staffer Luke Taylor helped them locate and negotiate for a place.

They moved in Jan. 23. Seventy percent of their rent is subsidized. Donated furniture fills the place. Marvin Britt described his wife's relief and joy: "She's doin' cartwheels, she's excited. She's really happy."

Marvin Britt said they want to contribute to New Hope Housing when they're able. "It's a blessing what this organization did for me and my wife. It's a blessing. I thank Miss Pamela and Miss Michele and Miss Tonya ... and Miss Milly, I'd like to thank her too."

Their ordeal at end, Marvin Britt looked back: "We been out here almost three and a half years, and I mean it been hard. We finally gettin' somewhere."

Need help? Or want to volunteer? Contact Sherry Edelkamp at vichop2010@yahoo.com or call 703-799-2293 and press O. "We've still got open nights so it would be great if we got volunteers," said Edelkamp.



'Wings of Gold'

At ceremonies at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Fla. on Nov. 18, 2011, Ensign Brittany Amerau, U.S. Navy, and Second Lieutenant Reed Inglee, U.S. Marine Corps, received their designations as naval aviators upon completion of Navy Flight School and received their Navy "Wings of Gold." Amerau is a 2006 graduate of Mount Vernon High School and a 2010 Naval Academy graduate. Inglee is a 2003 graduate of St. Steven's and St. Agnes School and a 2007 La Salle University graduate. Amerau will report to Norfolk for follow-on training and assignment to a fleet squadron while Inglee will report to Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. for duty.

PEOPLE

GOP Chairman Campaign Kickoff for McConville

Jay McConville kicked off his campaign to be the next Fairfax County Republican Committee chairman last month at the Army Navy Country Club in Fairfax. Approximately 75 attendees, including event host Del. Barbara Comstock, listened as McConville laid out his vision for Republican success in Fairfax County.

The Fairfax County Republican Committee will select a new chairman to replace Anthony Bedell, who is stepping down after two terms, at a convention to be held on March 24 at West Springfield High School. Convention delegates must pre-register and be in attendance at the convention to support their candidate. Convention information is available at www.gojay.org and www.fairfaxgop.com.

McConville is a combat veteran, businessman, and community leader who ran for the Virginia House of Delegates in the 44th District (Mount Vernon) in 2009. Since then he has served as the FCRC's vice chairman for budget and finance. He is a former manu-



Jay McConville with wife Sue at his kickoff event to campaign for Fairfax County Republican Committee chairman.

facturing CEO who serves on the Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, is the former president of the Ft. Hunt Youth Athletic Association, is current president of his industry association's D.C. Chapter, and is an active member of the Mt. Vernon community. He is also an Ironman Triathlete, having com-

pleted the Coeur d' Alene Ironman in 2008, and a musician, playing in the local band Close2Home, and formerly with Tony Snow's band Beats Workin'.

McConville has been married to Sue McConville for 26 years and they have three children, Katelyn, 15; Colin, 19, and James Robert, 21.

A Million-Dollar Winner

David Williams of Alexandria bought and scratched a Casino Royale ticket from the Virginia Lottery. It turned out to be the game's first \$1 million ticket. He purchased it at Bostons Restaurant, 7375 Boston Blvd. in Springfield, where he's a regular customer. The \$1 million prize is an annuity paid out over 25 years; he chose to take the cash option of \$575,000 before taxes. Williams, who works as a senior trainer, said he will use the winnings to become debt-free and save for retirement. Three \$1 million tickets for Casino Royale are yet unclaimed.



From left are Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club President Dr. Dave Reynolds, member Greg Engelking, member Joanne Malkin holding UCM Award, awardee Pam Beggan holding MVKC award, and UCM representative Marcos Castillo.

Kiwanis, UCM Award Pam Beggan

The highlight of the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club's holiday party on Dec. 21 was the recognition award ceremony when the club presented a plaque and made Pam Beggan an honorary member for 2012 thanks to her 30 years of dedication to collecting fresh produce at the weekly Farmers Market at the Sherwood Hall library's parking lot from May to November and delivering the hundreds of pounds of food to the UCM's Food Pantry for distribution to needy families in our community. The club has been working with her at the market for the past five years.

In addition, UCM, represented by

Marcos Castillo, volunteer coordinator, also awarded Beggan a plaque for 30 years of volunteer service to UCM. After those awards were presented to her, the attendees worked on a gingerbread house competition to see which table could make the best decorated house. A panel of three judges finally decided on the winner and MVKC President Dr. Dave Reynolds held it up for its round of applause. All the decorated houses were then donated to UCM for the children there. Entertainment was provided by pianist Suzanne Reynolds, wife of member Dr. Donald Reynolds, and she led the singing of Christmas carols.



Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club member Kenny Blunt views results of the gingerbread house competition.

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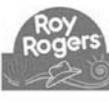
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Comparing Energy-Efficient Cars

Mount Vernon High School students attended a program about energy-efficient cars planned by the Future Educators Association in December. The presentation included a panel discussion, comprised of students and representatives of local car dealers, and an opportunity to inspect energy efficient cars. The guest panelists brought a Ford Fusion hybrid, Toyota Prius hybrid, Chevrolet Volt (electric) and Volkswagen Jetta TDI (diesel). The discussion reviewed pros and cons of alternative vehicles, natural gas as another fuel source, and the carbon footprint of each vehicle.

Funds for Crisis Centers Sought

FROM PAGE 1

portation. As a result, the parents are not as involved with the treatment as they could be if a crisis center were closer to home.

“So when the child came home, it was great for about a week, and because of the lack of involvement by the family and the community services, unfortunately, the child starts to decompensate,” said Meyer.

RECENT YEARS have seen a growing trend among social service providers for keeping children in crisis as close to their families and communities as possible. The old model of shipping children off to residential facilities far away has diminished over time as experts have realized that family and community involvement play an important role in helping children emerge from crisis situations.

“Basically, the farther away you send a kid the worse it is,” said Judith Deane, member of the Arlington Community Services Board. “There’s more of a perception now that you really do get the best results by keeping the kids as close to home as possible.”

This week, Del. David Englin (D-45) presented a budget amendment to an appropriations subcommittee to fund a \$16.3 million initiative that would create five children’s mental health crisis response units. Englin said that the effort was well received in the subcommittee because many of the members have already heard about the effort from their local community services boards, many of which have identified the crisis centers as a top legislative goal for the session. The only problem is finding the money.

“It’s a very opaque process,” said Englin. “At some point in the process, they go behind closed doors and horse trade and then appropriators come out with what they’ve decided to do with the budget and you hope your amendment made it through.”

FUNDING A \$16.3 MILLION initiative won’t be easy in the current budget environment. Englin said

one potential way to fund the initiative would be decreasing tax breaks for corporations, an effort that Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell opposes. Englin said if Virginia reduces the tax deduction on domestic production from 6 percent to 3 percent, an extra \$30 million would be available for funding the child crisis centers. Advocates say it’s a worthy investment.

“In the long run, this will save taxpayers money,” said Michael Gilmore, executive director of the Alexandria Community Services Board. “If we don’t intervene in the lives of these children, they’ll end up in the criminal justice system, which will be much more expensive in the long run.”

On the other side of the Capitol, state Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) has introduced a matching budget amendment. She said she would fund it by using some of the money McDonnell has proposed taking out of the general fund to pay for transportation projects.

“This is not money that’s currently for transportation. It’s money that is currently for education, human services and public safety,” said Howell. “This amount of money, \$110 million, will pay for almost nothing statewide whereas we could really do good for children that desperately need some services.”

THE GOVERNOR HAS recognized the need for increasing services for children in crisis, and his proposed budget includes \$500,000 for two mobile crisis teams. Mental health experts say the mobile units are for children who are in a lower level of crisis, essentially before they need to check into a residential crisis center. Many mental health professionals say both are needed — the mobile units to help children before the situation escalates and the crisis centers to handle problems that have become intractable.

“In the behavioral health-care continuum, one of the areas that we’ve identified as a gap in services is the ability to have crisis treatment for children,” said Heather Stowe, director of social services in Arlington County. “If you look at some of our neighboring jurisdictions in Maryland or in D.C., they have both physical crisis facilities and also mobile crisis teams.”

“Basically, the farther away you send a kid the worse it is.”

— Judith Deane



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OPINION

About Halfway

Always entertaining, the high-stakes session of the Virginia General Assembly reaches new heights this month.

The user-friendly website for the Virginia General Assembly plus live-streaming of the legislative sessions might make you believe that most of the important decisions in Richmond are being made out in the sunshine.

But as Mount Vernon's Del. Scott Surovell points out, some of the most important work of the legislature takes place in committees and subcommittees, but unless you are present in the room, you have no way of knowing who killed what or why.

EDITORIAL When a subcommittee votes, there is no requirement to record who voted or how each legislator voted. But this is where most legislation meets its fate.

According to the National Council of State Legislatures, there are only 14 legislatures in the United States that do not have audio or video live streaming or digital archiving of committee and subcommittee proceedings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Digging into Sewer Problems

To the Editor:

Having spent several frustrating years dealing with the sewer problems, I disagree with Jay Spiegel's conclusions about responsibility for sewer line problems under public

streets (but do support his views on the continuing need for more transparency and accountability in public bodies that purport to act for the County's residents).

In the Mount Vernon area, most sewer line problems are caused by the infiltration of tree roots through the Orangeburg pipes that were standard before the

Here are a few current issues that might make you want to tune in.

State Sen. Chap Petersen of Fairfax is championing legislation on parental notification; it's a shame to see this as needed since the Fairfax County School Board could have rendered it unnecessary. SB 167 would require school administrators to notify parents once they begin an investigation that could lead to criminal charges or expulsion.

"The intent of this bill is not restrict principals from the everyday supervision required in a building with 2,000 young people," Petersen said. "It's to separate those investigations which can change the lives of young people, e.g. a decision to expel, and make sure that parents are notified immediately that this is happening."

Petersen also sought some consequences for some older students, SB 626, because of complaints from residents that students from "a nearby college" were engaging in poor behavior in residents' front yards in late evening.

Petersen will likely be successful in repealing the ban on hunting on Sundays.

State Sen. Adam Ebbin of Alexandria proposed legislation that would have prohibited discrimination in state hiring on the basis of sexual orientation; that died in committee.

Earlier this week, state Sen. Janet Howell from Reston offered some very specific commentary on a bill that will likely require women

Live Streaming, More

You can watch legislative sessions of the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate via live streaming video at the General Assembly website: <http://legis.state.va.us/>

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seeking an abortion to first view an ultrasound of the baby. If women will be forced to have an unnecessary medical procedure, an ultrasound, then men should have a rectal exam and a cardiac stress test before receiving a prescription for erectile dysfunction medication, Howell proposed in an amendment.

It's a bit of comic relief in a year when the more conservative Virginia General Assembly will pass many new laws at odds with the views of most Northern Virginians.

Although many press reports describe the Democratic-controlled Senate of the past as a barrier to anti-abortion legislation, in fact one of the most significant anti-abortion laws escaped that body last year. The requirement that most facilities that provide abortions meet the physical standards of a hospital will likely close many if not most of these facilities.

These anecdotes represent just a few grains of sand of what is actually transpiring right now in Richmond.

— MARY KIMM



Mount Vernon Athletic Club presented both The Breast Care Institute at INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital and INOVA Alexandria Hospital with checks for \$6,900 each on Jan. 17.

\$14,000 to INOVA Research

The athletic club hosted its 6th annual "Swing for Pink" tennis fundraising event in October for breast cancer awareness month. The club, a recent winner of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber Mid-sized Business Award, has hosted this fundraiser since 2006 and has raised over \$85,000 for the cause. This year's funds will go towards breast cancer patient support. Above, Aaron Volbrecht, general manager of Mount Vernon Athletic Club, presented the checks to hospital representatives Judy Bilicki and Mary Myers. Also on hand, were the co-chairs of the event, Ellen McMichael and Leanna Jackson, and Sharon Timmons.

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

@MtVernonGazette

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A Connection Newspaper

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State Senate Changes Are Affecting Legislation

BY TODDY PULLER
STATE SENATOR (D-36)



Some of the bills that have been introduced and regularly died in the Senate in past years are now passing through committees and are likely to pass the Senate and House to become law with the change in Senate leadership resulting in the election of 20 Republican and 20 Democratic senators. The Republicans assumed leadership with Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling being able to break tie votes except on the budget, selection of judges and Constitutional issues. For example, the law that allows an individual to purchase one handgun a month that passed in 1993 when Governor Douglas Wilder was Governor is now being repealed.

RICHMOND REPORT

Gun/home defense bills - New legislation to repeal and allow more than one handgun purchase per month has passed the Senate Courts Committee. This along with two other bills referred to as the "castle doctrine bill" and "prevention of localities fingerprinting people seeking concealed gun permits" passed out of committee on a party line vote but will have to be voted on again on Monday because two senators who

gave their proxy votes left the Capitol grounds. That is against Senate procedures. I don't know if the votes will be any different then or not.

The "castle doctrine bill" may fail, as Common Law is stronger than any bills submitted including the two that have passed the Courts Committee or ones proposed. Already, Common Law in Virginia allows a person to defend yourself when someone forces the way into your home. In other words, you already have this right.

Legal abortion/birth control - Early in the Session members began introducing bills to restrict access to legal abortion. The Senate Education and Health Committee passed Sen. Jill Vogel's bill to require pregnant women to have a sonogram and look at it before having a legal abortion. There are other bills yet to be voted on regarding restricting access to legal abortion. Del. Bob Marshall has introduced a House bill to recognize "personhood at the point of conception." It is thought that if it passes, this could restrict access to birth control in Virginia. Mississippi voters defeated a similar "personhood bill" last year.

Veterans - I have introduced several bills that passed unanimously through committee and the Senate. SB 134 would allow a separate voting precinct for the Town of Quantico. Veterans' bills SB 297 grants full voting privileges to ex officio veterans members on issues before the Board of Veterans Services and SB 540 clarifies the real estate tax exemption for disabled veterans. This clarification would allow residences held in trust to also be allowed the exemption. Eligible disabled veterans and surviving spouses affected by a trust will be repaid with interest retroactive to the effective date of Jan. 1, 2011.

Transportation/Transit - SB 138 would transfer the motor vehicle fuel sales tax administration and collection to the Department of Motor Vehicles. This bill was carried at the request of the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). SB 539, also requested by PRTC, authorizes forward energy pricing with the use of mechanisms for budget risks and will affect all transit organizations.

VRE - A few years back, I introduced legislation that passed to fine people boarding the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) using fraudulent tickets. Unfortunately, this problem is continuing to grow. SB 657 will increase the fine to \$750 per second offense.

Gunston Hall - Last year, it came to my attention that some problems were developing at Gunston Hall Plantation. Evidently, the popular education director was fired. This was upsetting to the local community. Del. Dave Albo and I introduced a bill this year to clarify the governance of Gunston Hall Plantation that is owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1932, Louis Hertle bequeathed the Plantation to the Commonwealth of Virginia upon his death. It was to remain a national memorial to George Mason, the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

Health Costs - One of my most important bills is SB 135 that creates the Virginia All Payer Claims Database. This will start to save money on health care costs and provide evidence-based improvements in access, quality, and cost once it is set up and running. Data will be made publicly available to health care consumers. Only a few states now have such a database but the need is being recognized nationwide. This is separate from the health care benefits exchange.

Please contact me on issues of concern by phone, email or regular mail at: Sen. Linda T. Puller, 1-804-698-7536, district36@Virginia.senate.gov, or P.O. Box 396, Richmond, Virginia 23218. Also, please check my website at www.toddy.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 6

pipe (though it doesn't provide for county inspection of its work). The coverage does not include replacement of sewer lines. Dominion further reserves the right to deny coverage for reasons of its own (and anyone with old pipes would likely automatically be denied, as it would if it discovered the too-large drop under the public street). It further notes that "accessible cleanout(s) installed to plumbing code is/are necessary" — i.e., in order to get coverage the homeowner would have to spend a bundle up front bringing the property up to code (cleanouts were not required when much of the County's housing was built). A homeowner would likely pay \$2-3,000 up front just to have his (already conforming) pipes camera'ed and cleanouts installed so he could qualify for the measly insurance coverage. More important, Dominion's coverage is limited to \$5000 — about the cost of a couple of snakings and camera inspections. (In my case, I was told it would cost \$16-20,000 just to dig up the public street and reset the line, in addition to \$7,500 to \$10,000 to replace the line in my yard and add cleanouts. There was no evidence of pipe failure under the street.) Dominion further does not provide insurance for multiple dwellings (like many of those in the Gum Springs area where it seems unlikely that many homeowners

would be able to afford to fix the pipes under the property, much less under the County's roads.) Caveat emptor: Dominion's coverage is not the answer.

And how did the County arrive at the estimate of \$15-\$18 million that would be needed to dig under the streets every year? (Unlikely there would be many under-street problems in areas of the County built in the last 30 years). If this is just another "ballpark" estimate (like the County's "estimate" of \$58,000 to fence half an acre for a dog park — cost to be paid by dogowners, natch) — then I fear this could be just another attempt to blow off real problems.

Bottom line: if the County is responsible for a problem, the County should fix it — and it would appear from my experience that the County might have made some mistakes that need fixing. I believe Ms. Cox has flagged a genuine problem that deserves far more than "zero deference" from Supervisor Hyland.

Mary Tracy
Alexandria

How a Volunteer Committee Works

To the Editor:

This letter to the editor is in response to H. Jay Spiegel's com-

mentary concerning the sewer resolution passed by the MVCCA during its December 2011 general membership meeting.

Mr. Spiegel does raise a good point about not reporting member association's attendance for Consumer Affairs committee (COAF) meetings. However, there is no requirement to publish the list of attending member associations although it would be a good idea in order to eliminate any scrutiny by those who do not attend COAF meetings.

Mr. Spiegel is also correct about the MVCCA requirement to have a quorum particularly in order to pass a resolution in committee. COAF did in fact meet the MVCCA requirement for a quorum that passed the sewer resolution. I would be happy to share the names of the attending associations since I do maintain a list in the event of a "challenge" that could nullify any meaningful action by committee such as a resolution. Mr. Spiegel did not and has not ever attended a COAF meeting — teleconference or at a physical location.

There is nothing underhanded or anything mysteriously going on in the COAF meetings as Mr. Spiegel alludes. All meetings, when held and regardless of method, are open to the public. As Mr. Spiegel states, the conference telephone number and passcode is

published in the MVCCA's newsletter, the Record, which is posted on its website — www.mvcca.org. The number and passcode is also sent to a list of individuals on the COAF e-mail distribution list. Some are not official members designated by their association president. It does not matter because they are a part of the "public." Names are removed when requested.

Mr. Spiegel fails to mention that as a cost-saving measure, the MVCCA no longer mail its monthly newsletter, the Record, to member associations unless the requestor pays a hefty fee. This action was approved by the member associations a few years ago. In fact, anyone who attends the MVCCA general membership meetings must bring their own copy of the Record that they print from their own computer to the meetings. Otherwise, attendees use their laptops, handheld devices or ask to share a hardcopy with a fellow attendee. Hard copies are hard to come by. With another postage rate increase that went into effect on Jan. 22, there's no way the MVCCA would revert to mailing the Record again.

By this time, I'm certain Mr. Spiegel is aware that I'm not like all the other MVCCA committee chairs.

The other committee chairs do not use teleconferencing but wear out the use of other information

technology devices/tools such as e-mail to communicate committee business to include decisions pertaining to resolutions. Just because COAF is thinking out of its box, what's the problem for not holding meetings in a brick and mortar building particularly if the regular member association representatives voted to do so and there's no conflict with MVCCA bylaws? To paraphrase one member association representative statements when the committee agreed to teleconferencing — we are taking vehicles off the roadway, making better use of our time and able to hold meetings regardless of the weather. Another member representative welcomed teleconferencing because it minimizes conflicts with family obligations and volunteering. Overall, teleconferencing is a good fit for today's schedules.

However, it should be duly noted that teleconferencing is not used to vote on resolutions. We are required to meet and vote in a "physical location." COAF has not and will not violate that requirement.

Did it occur to Mr. Spiegel that perhaps for that one particular joint committee meeting with E&R that other committee members were not available to attend because it was not on COAF's regularly scheduled committee meet-

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Progress on Transportation, Government Efficiency

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL
DELEGATE (D-44)



This would give Northern Virginia at least three votes instead of one.

This year, my legislation was also introduced by three Republican delegates and two senators. We agreed to consolidate our proposals into one bill being carried by my

colleague Del. Tom Rust and we now have over 51 bipartisan cosponsors from around the state and the bill should be on the floor by the end of the week. I am pleased it is finally moving.

When I turned 40 years old this year, I had to renew my driver's license. While going through the process, I noticed that if I indicated a change of address, the DMV intended to mail me a voter registration form which I would then have to mail in. I introduced legislation that would require the DMV to electronically transmit the change request to the local voter registrar saving the need for printing, postage, and mailing. Given that the DMV processes 500,000 address changes per year, this should save the DMV at least \$250,000 per year. My bill was passed out

of subcommittee last week and should be in full committee next week.

Late last week, we debated repealing the requirement that schools advise the parents of sixth-grade girls of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine and allow parents to opt their child out before administering the vaccine. Virginia passed this requirement in 2007. HPV infects about 80 percent of all American women at some point in their life. It causes cervical cancer which kills 233,000 women per year in the world (about 4,000 in the U.S.). We had a passionate floor debate. Many in my chamber think that the vaccine incentivizes promiscuity and raised concerns about the safety of the vaccine although studies have shown few problems. I voted against repeal and the bill passed 62-34. The repeal will likely become law.

This week, we are debating additional restrictions to voting including bills to prohibit voting without valid identification and limiting public access to the post-election meetings where votes are verified. I opposed both measures but they are expected to pass. There are no documented cases of voter impersonation in Virginia and I believe prosecution of a felony is sufficient disincentive to discour-

age that kind of behavior and I believe the motives of this bill are purely political.

Voting is a fundamental constitutional right. In knocking 12,000 doors in my district, I have met many elderly voters that do not need a driver's license. There is a monastery near Bryant School where 30 nuns live who probably do not have ID. Over 20,000 licenses are reported lost every year, plus 500,000 licenses are suspended every year and many of those are physically forfeited. Your right to vote should not be dependent upon whether you can pay a traffic ticket or can keep track of your wallet.

Please continue to follow my website (www.scottsurovell.org) or blog (scottsurovell.blogspot.com) for current updates. Friend me on Facebook or follow me on Twitter (www.twitter.com/ssurovell). Over 200 households have responded so far! You can also comment on legislation, set up a meeting or request a Capitol tour at 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.

WEEK #4 of the General Assembly saw two of my bills pass and many controversial proposals starting to hit the floor of the House of Delegates.

I had two pieces of legislation that passed the House of Delegates unanimously. Both bills clarify the Code of Virginia on technical issues. I have several other bills that are working their way through committee.

I also saw some progress on transportation — at least on the procedural side. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) decides how transportation money is spent in Virginia. The regional commissioners represent districts that were based on 1930's congressional districts. Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads and Richmond have 65 percent of the state's population but only 33 percent of the regional votes on the CTB (3 of 9). In 2010, 2011 and this year, I introduced legislation requiring them to be allocated by current congressional districts.

RICHMOND REPORT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 6

ing night? There is something called a conflict with schedules. Or that since it was a joint meeting that certain member associations saw no need to have more than one representative attend? As chair of COAF, it was my responsibility to attend and report back to the committee about the meeting which was about litter and trash in case the committee had questions. I was also interested in that particular meeting since the topic of discussion was a part of a matter addressed by the Mount Vernon Visioning Task Force of which I was a co-chair and chair of the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee.

Let's not forget that the MVCCA is an all volunteer organization. You can't merely take the "face value" for when meetings are/are not held without a meaningful analysis. It appears Mr. Spiegel did not conduct such an analysis since I was not contacted for input. This MVCCA committee chair is not often available to chair every monthly meeting and if the assigned MVCCA co-chair is not available, then there is no meeting. This MVCCA committee chair has a life outside MVCCA.

During 2011, each COAF member was asked to take on a topic for 2012. For the first COAF meeting for 2012, there were not enough member association representatives to hold the meeting. The topic was a presentation by another member association rep-

resentative whose area of expertise is public utilities.

The lack of member association representatives was stated in the COAF minutes for the January 2012 Record. The lack of attendees may have been victim of timing, which was Jan. 3. Perhaps too soon after the new year.

In response to Mr. Spiegel's comments about the sewer resolution, there has been more than one homeowner who had to obtain a zoning permit to dig up a sewer line under a public street and repair the line at his/her own expense for more than \$15,000. Although Dominion offers a sewer line repair program, this service is limited to \$5,000 per occurrence and does not cover full protection for paved surfaces to include restoration. Homeowners have little or no recourse if Fairfax County or the Commonwealth of Virginia employees or those working on behalf of those entities damage a sewer line while performing work under a public street. It's hard for a homeowner to prove but by pure luck, one homeowner was able to do so. Otherwise, he would have been out of more than \$25,000. It appears that other homeowners have not been so lucky.

The resolution is requesting that Fairfax County maintain the sewer line beneath a public right-of-way in the same manner as the City of Alexandria and Arlington County.

According to Fairfax County, 654 lateral repair permits were issued during 2010. Fairfax County was

asked by COAF to break that number out so we could determine how many lateral repair permits were for work done within the property line. Although the question was asked on Oct. 14, 2011, we have not yet received a response from the County as of Jan. 26, 2012.

Mr. Spiegel further failed to state that Fairfax County clearly provided a disclaimer stating that the cost and number of lateral repair "estimates were very preliminary." So, don't put too much faith in that \$15M price tag. This information was also discussed during the December 2011 MVCCA general membership meeting.

To support the resolution, the latest homeowner who experienced the problem spoke in support of the resolution. What better "supporting documentation" than to have someone who could better explain the challenges a homeowner may encounter to the MVCCA general membership? It's what one could call firsthand knowledge and appeared to be welcomed based on the number of questions asked during the debate session for the resolution and prior to the final vote.

Another important fact is the collaboration amongst MVCCA committees. COAF began working on the sewer resolution during June 2011. A draft of the sewer resolution was provided to the Budget & Finance; Environment & Recreation and Planning & Zoning committees for review and com-

ment. Member associations also had an opportunity to discuss the resolution within their organization prior to final preparation and submission by COAF. The MVCCA general membership took final action on the resolution during December 2011. December is normally not a high attendance month. However, that turned out to be the vote month after the resolution worked through more than one committee and discussed with outside organizations to include Fairfax County staff. Regardless of the number of member associations represented as stated by Mr. Spiegel, he refused to acknowledge that the number was in fact more than enough to have a quorum for the general membership. Not knowing the number of households represented by the 14-member associations' representatives who attended the December 2011 general membership meeting, it is reasonable to assume that based on membership fees that those 14-member associations represented 1,050 households on the low end and 7,000-plus households on the high end.

Finally, how thoughtful and timely for Mr. Spiegel to express concern about COAF because unbeknownst to most, I submitted my resignation as chair of COAF to the MVCCA Board of Directors on Jan. 12.

However, after much discussion, I agreed to stay on a little while longer. Would Mr. Spiegel be interested in being the COAF chair

or know of someone who would be interested? If so, please contact one of the MVCCA co-chairs or myself. I would be happy to make room for that individual and move on.

I'm not at a loss for being involved with community projects and don't forget — I have a life outside MVCCA.

Queenie Cox
MVCCA COAF Committee
Chair

Awaiting Updates

To the Editor:

Apparently, Martin Tillet disagrees with my contentions that people who vote should have to prove their identities with a photo ID and that Virginia should provide such IDs free of charge to those who claim to be unable to afford the \$10 fee for a photo ID good for 5 years. I find it remarkable that photo IDs are required in numerous instances, from cashing a check to air travel to obtaining food stamps, and no one seems to object, but when it comes to the most fundamental of our rights, the right to vote, certain people, typically of liberal persuasion, are unconcerned about making sure voters prove their identities before voting. Enough said.

This weekend is Supervisor Hyland's town meeting. I have several community concerns that I hope are addressed:

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OPINION

Is Breast Cancer Vaccine on the Horizon?

BY DAVID C. WEINTRITT, MD, FACS
DIRECTOR, BREAST CARE INSTITUTE

I hope I have to change the direction of my medical practice one day. Because that would mean breast cancer is a thing of the past. As a surgeon who specializes in breast cancer, there is nothing I wish more than its elimination from the lives of my patients, future patients, and anyone who has experienced its impact.

The race to cure cancer is currently taking many different routes. One of the interesting and potentially simplest may come in the form of a vaccine, which stimulates the body's immune system to protect itself from cancer cells. During the last two years, there have been significant strides in the development of cancer vaccines. Doctors are already administering two FDA approved vaccines that target viruses to prevent liver and cervical cancers (as well as another to

treat certain types of metastatic prostate cancer). Many other cancer vaccines are in clinical trials, including one for an early form of breast cancer.

CLEVELAND CLINIC STUDY

In May 2010, researchers at the Cleveland Clinic announced they had developed a vaccine that targeted the formation of breast cancer. In the study, which was published in the



Dr. David Weintritt

journal *Nature Medicine*, mice that were genetically geared to develop cancer were vaccinated. Half of the mice

were given a vaccine containing an antigen (a substance that stimulates the body to produce antibodies to defend itself)

called α -lactalbumin. The other half were given a vaccine without it.

None of the mice that received α -lactalbumin developed breast cancer, while all of the other mice did.

Their team, led by Vincent Tuohy, PhD, focused on α -lactalbumin because it is a protein that is found in the majority of breast cancers. It is not found in healthy women, except during lactation, so it became the target of the vaccine. The strategy would be to vaccinate women over 40 — when breast cancer risk begins to increase and pregnancy becomes less likely. For younger women with a heightened risk of breast cancer, the vaccine may be an option to consider instead of prophylactic mastectomy as long as they didn't plan to breastfeed.

HUMAN TRIALS

In a separate study, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania are conducting trials for a vaccine for ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), an early form of breast cancer. The vaccine is made partly from a patient's own white blood cells with the goal of preventing a cancer recurrence. A 47-year-old mother of two from Pennsylvania is one of the first women in the world to receive the vaccine in the DCIS study.

And yet another study being conducted by the National Cancer Institute has shown some promising results with metastatic breast and ovarian cancers.

While there is no definitive solution yet, there will be a breakthrough one day that stops breast cancer and many other forms of cancer in their tracks. Until that time, we will fight the good fight with cutting edge approaches for predicting, diagnosing and treating breast cancer.

I have a universal goal when approaching patients with breast cancer to create a plan that maximally impacts the cancer but preserves the patient's sense of wellbeing. A breast cancer vaccine would be an amazing addition to the options that are currently available.

David C. Weintritt, MD, FACS is a board certified general surgeon and director of the Breast Care Institute at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

1. The off-leash dog area at Westgrove Park will be voted upon by the Planning Commission, probably in May. This is a no-brainer that addresses a great community need and is supported by adjacent neighborhoods, the MVCCA, Supervisor Hyland, our Park Authority rep Linwood Gorham and over 500 petition signers. I look for Supervisor Hyland to reiterate his support.

2. Virginia CCPA has been working to establish a police review board as exists in numerous other jurisdictions. I have great respect for our county police force and believe they are one of our nation's finest. At the same time, it is inconceivable that in its 70-plus year history, only a handful of officers have been found culpable for misconduct. Increased transparency is not harmful. Supervisor Hyland is chairman of the Board of Supervisors'

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14

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Learn more about MOUNT VERNON AT HOME membership and volunteer opportunities at our winter information session:

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or email us at info@mountvernonathome.org

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Fairfax County Public Schools FY 2013 Proposed Budget

FY 2013 Proposed Operating Revenue

(\$ in millions)*



*Does not add due to rounding.

FY 2013 Proposed Operating Expenditures

(\$ in millions)*



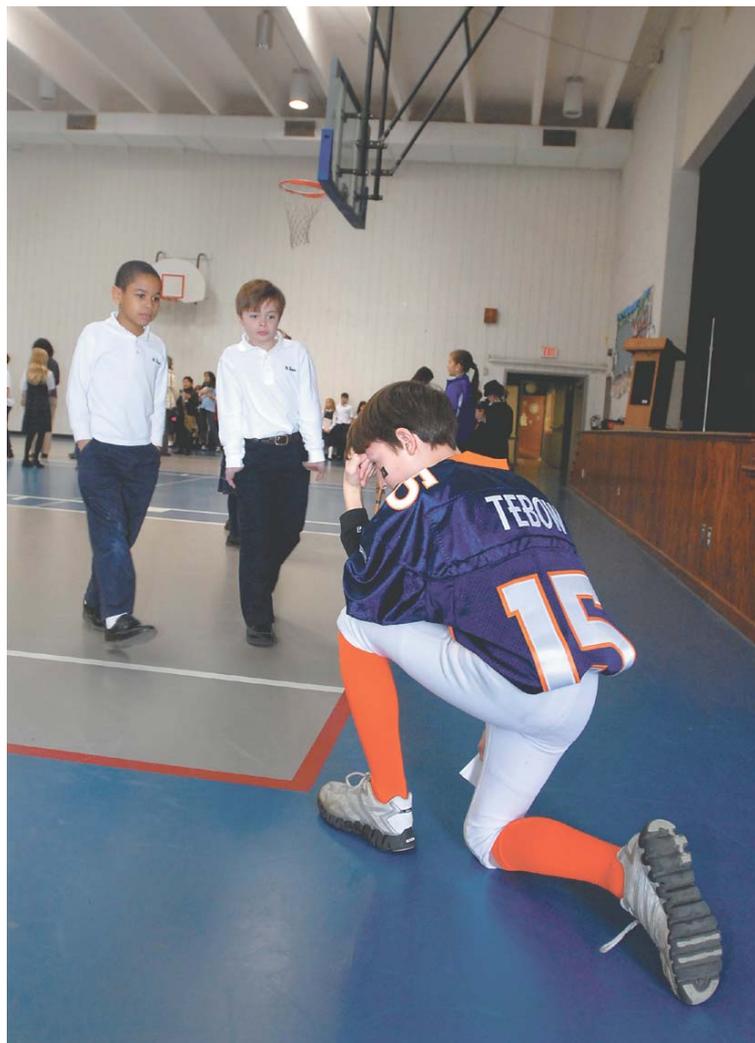
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SCHOOLS



Wax Museum Of History

Sydney Catron, Andrew Lugo and Tatiana Satorre-Tate listens to the story of Betsy Ross while attending the annual Student Wax Museum at St. Louis School in Mount Vernon on Tuesday morning, Jan. 31. Fifth-grade students dressed as a historical figure statue and only came to life to tell their story when a visitor pushed a button on their costume.



Patrick Doering is frozen like a statue while doing "The Tebow", while portraying the Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow.

Joseph Coyle, portraying Jimmy Stewart, and Scott Burton, portraying Robert E. Lee, wait for classmates to listen to their stories as they stand like statues.



Jane Filmonchik tells the story of Betsy Ross.



Fifth-graders Grace McCloud and Morgan McNutt portray Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.



St. Louis School fifth-grader Will Bartol portrays former President Ronald Reagan.

PHOTOS BY
ROBBIE HAMMER
THE GAZETTE



MiMi Najafzadeh tells classmates about the life of Queen Isabella the Catholic.

Madison Turgeon and Grace Kettell, dressed as Orville and Wilbur Wright, tell the story of the Wright Brothers.



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344 Cloudes Mill Court, Alexandria, VA 22304 \$459,000
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OPEN SUN. **NEW PRICE!**

8355 Justin Rd
\$870,000
PERFECTION!
Owner has spared no expense updating this spectacular, spacious Colonial on quiet cul-de-sac in the heart of Mt. Vernon. Fabulous features: open floor plan, high ceilings, expansive glass window walls, recently updated gourmet kitchen, 2 levels of hdwd flrs, stunning master. **OPEN SUN 2/5, 1-4! GW Pky S, past estate; R-Old Mt Vernon; L-Old Vernon Ct; R-Justin.**

NEW PRICE!

9405 Ludgate Dr
\$2,195,000
Stunning Price Reduction!
Magnificent colonial custom designed to capitalize on views from elevated site overlooking river. Home has approx 10,000sqft of luxuriously appointed space. Numerous features: 4 finished levels, elegant trim detail, high ceilings, multiple decks & private balconies, fab gourmet kit, 5 FP, elevator. Direct river access

JUST LISTED!

8528 Monticello Ave
\$559,000

CONTRACT!

Updated Colonial!
Classic Colonial
pristine cond. & updated throughout! Features

CONTRACT!

2300 Candlewood
\$569,000
Expanded Tri-Level!
Builder's own!
Exceptionally large well maintained

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!

4002 Belle Rive Terr
\$839,900
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: elegant trim detail, updated 'state of the art' kitchen, 5 bedrooms & finished lower level. Gorgeous setting on half acre grounds with view of river. Uniquely attractive home in premier location.

OPEN SUNDAY 1 - 4!
\$595,000
Torpedo Factory
115 N LEE ST #305
WOW! Turn-key stylish 1 level living in this 2BR corner home overlooking landscaped courtyard w/ bay window, plantation shutters, great storage. 1 garage space. Enjoy the river & all Old Town has to offer!

Pat Tierney 703.850.5630
Mary Taylor 703.785.5619

\$625,000
Arlington
"MONUMENT VIEWS"
Double wide balcony, everything upgraded & 2 indoor parking spaces. WOW! 2BR/2BAs, gourmet kit w/SS appls & granite, cherry hdwd & built-ins, granite BAs, California closets, roof-top pool & exercise room.

RandyBenderRealEstateExpert.com
Randy Bender 703-906-1749

\$745,000
Alexandria South
"NEW LISTING"
4 level contemporary. 3BR/2.5BA, 2 frpl on over 1/3 acre. Fenced back yard borders Dyke Marsh National Waterfowl Preserve adding privacy for swimming pool & sauna. Close to Metro/ express bus, Reagan Airport, schools, library, shopping, Potomac bike/hike path & rec center.

The Kohler Team Heidi 703.609.7367 & Elke 703.967.7633

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PLUS sunroom & enclosed balcony. Complete w/2 garage spaces & 2 storage units. Topped off w/Montebello's resort amenities & Metro shuttle - it's all here!
www.susanmovesyou.com
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ALL THREE HOMES ARE OPEN SUNDAY 1 - 4!

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825 WAYNEWOOD BLVD
Very spacious 2-lvls, 5/6BR, fantastic sunroom, gar & more!

\$679,900 Waynewood
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One of a kind totally renovated home w/2 level master suite.

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"NEW YEAR, NEW START"
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Janice Allen 703.509.0906

\$649,000
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Almost 5,000sqft with lots of original upgrades plus more by current owners. LL media rm w/projector wiring & surround sound. Gourmet kit, lux BA. 2 walk-in closets in MBR. Dual zone gas heat & air. 5BR/4FBA/IHBA.

Gary Ansley 202.288.7946

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Alexandria South
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Newly Refinished Floors * New Paint complete this expanded 3BR/2BA Cape plus newer kit, HVAC, HWH & landscaping West Potomac school district. Convenient to Ft Belvoir, Old Town and Reagan National Airport.

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*Restrictions may apply. While Supplies last. Offers expire February 29, 2012

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 9

Public Safety Committee. He should be urged to support the goals of the Virginia CCPA. The Commonwealth's Freedom of Information Act makes it optional for localities to direct their police forces to reveal evidence of police misconduct. The Board of Supervisors can solve this problem through a simple vote on a resolution directing the police force to do so. Since the Board of Supervisors refuses to do so, our state Del. Scott Surovell should propose legislation amending the FOIA law to require disclosure of information. Will he? I support the good intentions of Virginia CCPA.

3. The master plan for the park portion of North Hill was approved almost a year ago. What is the current status of the effort to obtain funding for the park? Frankly, it would be useful to discuss selling the Lamond property (recently renamed after Mount Vernon's former Park Authority representative) and using the proceeds to begin to develop the North Hill park. The Lamond property has been largely unused since its acquisition and the North Hill park will be beneficial to a larger group of people. Also, what is the status of the development of 65 affordable homes at North Hill? Let's get going!

4. Last year, the work of Supervisor Hyland's Visioning Task Force culminated in a comprehensive report that included recommendations for the future of the Mount Vernon District. Have any of those recom-

mendations been transformed into action items? I look for Supervisor Hyland to report to the community.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Need To Cut Back

To the Editor:

At a time when budgets are tight, and programs and services in our community are being cut back, the Pentagon budget keeps getting bigger. The Secretary of Defense announced on Jan. 26 that he plans to slow the rate of growth for the Pentagon budget, but even under this proposal in 10 years the Pentagon budget would still be bigger than it is today.

I hope that our members of Congress — U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, and Senators Webb and Warner — will stick with the current law, which requires the Pentagon to cut its budget by nearly \$1 trillion over the next decade — twice what the Secretary is proposing.

Over the last decade, the Pentagon budget has grown by 100 percent. Some of that growth was to pay for the wars, but a lot of it went right into the Pentagon budget. Right now, we are all having to cut back. The Pentagon should have to as well.

William Zaccagnino
Alexandria

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MVCCT'S Upcoming Camps And Performances

Located south of Old Town, Alexandria, the Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre is bustling with a slate full of spring and summer activities for children, teens and families to enjoy. This 32-year-old children's theatre features two full length productions and eight weeks of camps in the coming months. So visit www.MVCCT.org to see how you can participate! MVCCT is funded in part by grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND

Adapted from a short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Adapted by Tim Kelly

Feb. 11, 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 12, 19 at 3 p.m.

At Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria

Tickets: \$10 available at the door only

She thought she was locked "safely" in her own room, but the beautiful Julia Stoner is nevertheless murdered. Her dying scream, "The band — the speckled band!" is Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson's call to action. This entertaining tale of intrigue and suspense was adapted from the short story thought by Sir Arthur himself to be his best-ever Holmes tale. Features a cast of 14 area teenagers.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

Based on the novel by Mark Twain

Conceived and Written by Ken Ludwig

Music and Lyrics by Don Schlitz

April 14, 20 and 21 at 7:30 p.m.

April 15 and 22 at 3 p.m.

Carl Sandburg Middle School, 8428 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria

Tickets: \$10 in advance online at \$12 at the door.

Scout Night: April 14 Groups of scouts can order \$9 tickets in advance online

This musical version of Mark Twain's enduring novel is a tale of thrilling escapes, comedy and inspiration sure to dazzle and enchant children and adults alike. Ken Ludwig has won the hearts of musical theatre lovers with his Broadway musicals including "Crazy for You" and "Lend me a Tenor." Featuring a cast of 55 actors ages 8-18!

SPRING BREAK CAMP

April 2-6, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Want to be in a play? Looking for a fun Spring Break activity? Look no further ... MVCCT's popular Spring Break Camp is just the creative, engaging experience your student is looking for. MVCCT's camps are fun, build confidence, teach teamwork and develop ease in public speaking.

Regular Price \$365, Early Bird discounts available

Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria

SUMMER CAMP

Two-Weeks

July 2-July 13 (no 4th of July)

July 30-Aug. 10

Aug. 13-24

One-Week

July 23-27

Plan ahead because MVCCT's Summer Camps always sell out early! Experienced, professional instructors, directors and musical directors work with campers throughout the sessions to teach elements of the craft of acting through theatre games, improvisation and skill-building exercises. All campers also rehearse a showcase performance for the last day of camp. During the two-week sessions, mornings are devoted to acting workshops and rehearsals of a non-musical piece. Afternoons are devoted to acting, singing and dancing — all in preparation for a musical theatre production on the last day of camp. Campers can attend morning, afternoon or both, however, most campers stay all day. The one-week camp focuses on the rehearsal and production of a non-musical drama.

Prices range from \$270-\$650, discounts for Early Bird, siblings, and all day attendance available Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria For more information and to purchase tickets or register for camps, visit www.MVCCT.org

MVCCT is in its 32nd year as a nonprofit organization offering productions featuring children in all roles, led by professional directors, music directors and stage managers. MVCCT also offers education programs including afterschool programs and camps. Visit www.MVCCT.org or call 703-360-0686.

Musings from the Maestro

*We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of
dreams*

— ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

On Feb. 11 and 12, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra continues its season-long celebration of The Music of Dreams with its Valentine's Day weekend concerts entitled "Prescient Revelation." I'm very excited about our thrilling series of concerts and its historic line-up of guest artists — truly a season of living legends.

Music and dreams seem to come from the same place in our subconscious, from the hidden realms of the human mind. The ASO's exploration of this potent combination will feature music ranging from the blissfully tranquil to the electrifying. These masterpieces profoundly affected the composers who created them, and their magic continues to haunt us today.

The complexities and nuances of The Music of Dreams require music-making of extraordinary sensitivity and panache, and we are very fortunate to have guest artists this season who are renowned for those qualities. This Valentine's Day Concert, I am thrilled to be collaborating with legendary clarinetist Richard Stoltzman as we perform Mozart's blissfully beautiful "Clarinet Concerto." This music is full of unforgettable and exquisite tenderness. I cannot think of a better way to begin our Valentine's Day Concert than with this extraordinarily evocative and moving music. Stoltzman has done more than anyone since Benny Goodman to popularize the clarinet and its unique expressive powers. And like Goodman, he is also a jazz!

And how does one follow such a feast for the ears and the soul? Why, with another masterpiece of Mozart's, of course — his "Requiem," also written during the last year of his life. Milos Forman immortalized this "Requiem" in his bio-pic "Amadeus." The music was portrayed as being written in a feverish dream state as Mozart precariously hovered between this world and the next. Although the movie is highly fictionalized, the music does have the impact of a prescient revelation and powerfully evokes a dreamlike vision.

Mozart's two classics featured on this program are kindred spirits and share a dreamlike character. Long before modernism



Daniel Molkentin,
tenor



Katharine Dain,
soprano



Sarah Mesko,
mezzo-soprano



Richard Stoltzman, clarinet



Thomas Stork, bass-baritone

and knowledge of the subconscious, Mozart's music was able to tap into that special place in the brain where dream and reality converge.

Both the "Requiem" and the "Clarinet Concerto" were written during Mozart's final days (he died at the age of 35). In these final bursts of other-worldly creativity, the essential spirit and character of Mozart, the man and artist poured out of his music. In these last pieces he combines a new level of sublimity and sweetness with his characteristic exuberance and *joi de vivre!*

Please join Richard Stoltzman, the Metropolitan Chorus, the Alexandria Choral Society and the musicians of the Alexandria Symphony on Feb. 11 and 12 for our Valentine's Day weekend concerts. We also hope you will

come and experience the remainder of the ASO's Music of Dreams Season. Our March concert will feature the legendary violinist Midori playing "Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto" as part of a week-long artistic residency. She will also take part in the world premiere of "Meibuki" (Regeneration), a piece I was commissioned to write for her in commemoration of the victims and survivors of the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami.

See you at the Concert!
Together we are the music makers, the dreamers of dreams...

— KIM ALLEN KLUGE
Music Director
Alexandria Symphony
Orchestra
Alexsym.org

'Prescient Revelation'

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra/Symphonic NOVA presents clarinetist Richard Stoltzman performing Mozart's "Clarinet Concerto." Program also features Mozart's "Requiem" featuring Katharine Dain, soprano; Sarah Mesko, mezzo-soprano; Daniel Molkentin, tenor; Thomas Stork, bass-baritone; the Alexandria Choral Society: Brian Gendron, Artistic Director; and the Metropolitan Chorus: Barry S. Hemphill, Artistic Director. Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 12, at 3 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 N. Beaugard St., Alexandria. \$5-\$65. Visit alexsym.org or 703-548-0885.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 3

Fridays at Grace. 7:30 p.m. Pops organ concert with Tim Smith's transcription of Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals," complete with Ogden Nash poems read by a celebrity guest. Also James Hewitt's "Battle of Trenton" with human "supertitles" just like at the opera. At Grace Episcopal Church, 3600 Russell Rd., Alexandria. Optional goodwill offering. Call 703-549-1980 or www.gracealex.org.

FEB. 3 TO 26

Love, Politics & Scrabble. The Games People Play, juried art exhibit at Del Ray Artisans, inspired by the games people play throughout life. Del Ray Artisans' opening reception is Friday, Feb. 3, 7-10 p.m. This juried show explores the numerous games people play in life, whether power, Monopoly, manipulation, poker, Angry Birds, baseball, or gossip. The community is invited to 'get their game on' at Art Games on Feb. 10 and Game Talks on Feb. 25. The exhibit and Marketplace, with artful Valentine Cards, closes Feb 26. www.TheDelRayArtisans.org or 703-838-4827.

SATURDAY/FEB. 4

History Lecture. 1 to 3 p.m. Free. Take a Walk Through Time in Changes to Alexandria Reflected in Photos. With a talk by Julie Downie, special collections photo librarian. At Alexandria Library, 717 Queen St., Alexandria. Call 703-746-1706.

Country Western Dance. 8:30 to 11 p.m. The Northern Virginia Country Western Dance Association will hold its smoke-free, alcohol-free dance at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Rd., Falls Church. BJ Brown will be the DJ. A line dance will be taught beginning at 7:30 p.m. A couples dance will be taught beginning at 8 p.m. Open dancing is from 8:30-11:00 p.m. and includes Two Step, Waltz, line, Swing, Cha Cha, and specialty dances. Couples and singles are welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5; PSDC members \$10. Snacks and drinks will be available. Visit www.nvcwda.org, or call the hot line 703-860-4941.

Health Fair. Noon to 2 p.m. "Wii" are Catching, Coping, and Conquering Heart Disease, Diabetes and Stroke. Blood pressure screenings, BMI, massages, fitness demos. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. At the Nannie J. Lee Rec Center, 1180 Jefferson St., Alexandria.

Genealogy Lecture. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost is \$5. Genealogist Char Bah will present, "Using Oral History, Censuses and Vital Statistics to Start Your Research," a program for beginners. At the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St., in the Parker-Gray Historic District in Alexandria. Call 703-746-4356 or visit www.alexblackhistory.org.

Growing Inequality in Wealth. 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Corruption of the Democratic Process and Resulting Social Injustice. Featured speakers will include Kevin Zeese of the Occupy Movement and Aquene Freerchild of Public Citizen. At the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. To register, click on the "Register for Upcoming Events" banner of www.uusj.org. Questions? 301-588-1951.

Jane Franklin Dance: The Mouse of Amherst. 3:30 p.m. A performance for children. Tickets are \$10/children; \$15/adults. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Call 703-933-1111, or visit www.janefranklin.com

Jane Franklin Dance: Forty + or Minus. 5 p.m. Tickets are \$20. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Call 703-933-1111, or visit www.janefranklin.com.

Wonders of Science Demo. Visit the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum and discover curious objects, from poison bottles to dragon's blood, and find out how they were used. Admission is \$6. Reservations can be made at 703-746-3852. At 105-107 South Fairfax Street in Old Town Alexandria. Visit www.apothecarymuseum.org or call 703-746-3852.

McLean High School Historical Reenactment Society. 1-4 p.m. Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105-107 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Members of McLean High School's historical reenactment society will conduct scientific demonstrations about science in the 1700s. Explore the Apothecary and its large variety of objects, from poison bottles to dragon's blood. \$6, includes a tour of the museum. Reservations required at 703-746-3852.

SUNDAY/FEB. 5

Duo Harp Recital. 3 p.m. Free. Melissa Dvorak and Michelle Lundy, harpists, will present a Duo Harp Recital. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4994.

Mayor Bill Euille's Super Bowl Party. 5 p.m. Tickets are \$35/person; \$60/two; \$100/family of four; donations accepted. RSVP "Friends of Bill Euille," P.O. Box 25048, Alexandria, VA 22313. At Joe Theismann's Restaurant, 1800 Diagonal Road, Alexandria. Call 703-307-0851.

"Voyage to Germany." 2 p.m. Presented by the Marine Chamber Orchestra. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. Call 703-845-6156 or www.schlesingercenter.com.

FEB. 5-9

Free Barre Body Classes. This ballet-inspired workout combines traditional ballet barre with weights and therabands for a challenging cardio workout, all set to uptempo, energizing music. At Studio Body Logic, 2417 Mount Vernon Avenue. Advance registration required as space is limited. Visit www.studiobodylogic.com or call 703-527-9626.

TUESDAY/FEB. 7

"Poetry and Creative Play: Writing as an Expressive Coping Strategy." 6 to 8 p.m. Featuring Mary Azoy, Licensed Professional Counselor & Poetry Therapist. At Morrison House, 116 South Alfred St., Alexandria. Visit www.morrisonhouse.com or call 703-838-8000.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 8

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

THURSDAY/FEB. 9

Made With Love. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Fall in love with a unique work of art as you browse open studios and galleries and enjoy an evening, complete with flowers, candy, live music, and more. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Visit www.torpedofactory.org; 703-838-4565.

FRIDAY/FEB. 10

Art Games. 'Get your game on' at Del Ray Artisans' Art Games on Friday, Feb. 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m. where Art Bingo will be played after an artful mixer game. \$7 donation; light refreshments; adults 18 +. www.TheDelRayArtisans.org

SATURDAY/FEB. 11

Recital: For Art, For Love. 7:30 p.m. With Karin Paludan, soprano; Wes McCune, piano. Tickets are \$20/adults; \$15/seniors; \$10/students and teachers. At St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Call 703-765-4342.

Used Book Sale. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre, Alexandria. Call 703-339-4610.

Bishop Ireton Dance. 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. Featuring the bands, Black Moon Tonic and Big Bad JuJu. Sponsored by the BI Athletic Boosters Club. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. At Bishop Ireton School Gym, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. Tickets at door are \$25/person; \$50/couple. Online tickets at www.liveatbishopireton.com.

Genealogy Lecture. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost is \$5. Genealogist Char Bah will examine the family histories of four Alexandria women who



TUESDAY/FEB. 14

Burlesque-a-Pades. 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$29.50. At the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Tickets are available at www.ticketmaster.com or call 800-745-3000 or call 703-549-3701.

were influential in the city's African American community. At the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St., in the Parker-Gray Historic District in Alexandria. Call 703-746-4356 or visit www.alexblackhistory.org.

Swordsmen's Rendezvous. Every half hour between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Admission is \$6/person, ages 5 and up. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 703-746-4242. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Old Town Alexandria. Visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Alexandria Coin Show. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be 50 tables with U.S. coins and currency, world coins, banknotes, ancient coins, hobby books, gold, silver, medals, tokens and collectibles. This is open to the public. An educational presentation is provided. Prizes and coins are given away for attendees. At the Hampton Inn & Suites on the corner of the I-495 beltway and Route 1, Alexandria. Visit the Alexandria Coin Club website at www.alexandriacoinclub.com.

Clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. With the ASO and Mozart's Requiem. Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$35/adults; \$30/seniors; \$10/students. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria.

FEB. 11 AND 12

Living Legends and Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Collaboration. ASO is presenting "A Prescient Revelation," Saturday, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 12 at 3 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, 3001 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria. The concert features Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Requiem. The 2012 Living Legends of Alexandria portraits will be unveiled for the first time on Feb. 11 at the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra's concert. For tickets to the concert, see <http://www.alexsym.org/buyTix.shtml>. The 2012 Legends are: Bob Calhoun, Al Grande, Harry "Bud" Hart, Wendy McGann John, William "Bill" Kehoe, Allen Lomax, Jimmie McClellan, Pat Miller, Mike Oliver, Lillian Stanton Patterson, Joseph S. Shumard, The Steuerle Family, and the team of Dorothy Turner and Gwen Menefee-Smith.

Mattress Sale Fund-raiser. West Potomac High School is holding a Mattress Sale Fund-raiser. Profits go to the 2012 All-Night Graduation Celebration and Dance Team. Featured are Pillow-Top, Plus Top, Orthopedic, Latex and Memory Foam Sets. Prices start: Twin \$199; Full \$289; Queen \$299; and King \$499. Email CFSVirginia@gmail.com. The ANGC web site is <http://wphs-ang.weebly.com/index.html>

SUNDAY/FEB. 12

Basket Bingo. 2 p.m. A set of 20 bingo cards and a door prize ticket are included with admission. Proceeds support the Class of 2012 All-Night Grad Party. At Mount Vernon High School cafeteria (door #4), 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. To purchase tickets, contact

Paula Weinberg at MVHSBasketBingo@gmail.com or call 703-298-1593.

Paul Robeson Play. Actors Hugh Staples and Michael Hill will bring Paul Robeson to life in a one-night performance of "Paul Robeson, A Play by Philip Dean Hayes" at the Carlyle Club, 411 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria. A dinner will begin at 5 p.m., followed at 7:30 p.m. by the 90-minute show. After the performance, Mr. Staples and Mr. Hill will answer questions from the audience. Tickets are \$65/play and dinner; \$30/play only. Call 703-548-8899 or visit www.thecarlyleclub.com.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 15

Swing Dancing. 9 to 11 p.m. Admission is \$10. With the band, The Thrillbillies. At Nick's Nightclub, 642 South Pickett Street, Alexandria.

Hospitality Summit. 8 to 10:30 a.m. The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) presents "Staying Power: The Future of Lodging and Hospitality on the Richmond Highway Corridor." At the SpringHill Suites, 6065 Richmond Highway in Alexandria. Contact SFDC at 703-360-5008 or visit www.sfdc.org.

Starting Your Vegetable Garden Indoors From Seed. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Learn the basics of successful plant propagation, including seed selection, requirements for germination, tips on transplanting, and the importance of hardening plants before moving them outdoors. At the Nannie J. Lee Memorial Rec Center, 1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria. To register, call 703-228-6414 or e-mail mgaralalex@gmail.com. Visit <http://mgvnv.org>

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Plants and Pollinators: A Perfect Partnership. 7:30 p.m. Laura Beaty, VNPS Potowmack Chapter propagation chair will present a slide lecture that will feature the bloom sequence of local natives and highlight their importance to local pollinators. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Call 703-642-5173.

FRIDAY/FEB. 17

Artist Trading Card Night. 7 to 9 p.m. Make and swap artist trading cards from playing cards. Led by Theresa Kulstald. Refreshments. Free. Adults 18-plus. At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue. www.TheDelRayArtisans.org

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Colonial Tea. 2 to 4 p.m. The tea will be followed by a Living History program featuring a Fashion Show of 18th Century Clothing and a Presentation on Department. Presented by the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild. Tickets are \$25/adults; \$10/children. At Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton.

Mardi Gras Fundraiser. 7:30 to 10 p.m. The Mount Vernon District Democratic Committee sponsors this event to raise funds to elect Democrats in the Mount Vernon District. At Don Beyer Volvo, 7416 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.

THEATER



NOW THROUGH FEB. 4

"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." Wednesday to Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Presented by the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Visit www.thelittletheatre.com or 703-683-0496.



FEB. 9 TO MARCH 3

"Genesis Reboot." Tickets are \$30. Presented by Syntetic Theater. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. At Crystal City Theater, 1800 South Bell St., Arlington.

Know of something missing from our Local Theater listings? Send it to arlington@connectionnewspapers.com or gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is 2 p.m. the Thursday before publication. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412.

FEB. 24 TO MARCH 10

"The Dixie Swim Club." Port City Playhouse presents a delightful comedy about five women who were on their college swim team and get together for a "girls only" weekend at a cottage on the Outer Banks every summer. Fri.-Sat., Feb. 24-25, March 2-3 and 9-10; Tues., March 6 at 8 p.m.; Sat. matinees March 3 and 10 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$18 general admission, \$16 seniors & students, \$14 groups of 10+. At The LAB at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-838-2880 or www.portcityplayhouse.org.

FEB. 3 TO 17

"Laughter on the 23rd Floor." Show times are Feb. 3, 4, 5 (m), 10, 11, 12 (m), 16, 17. Evenings at 8 p.m., Matinees (m) at 2:30 p.m. Presented by the Arlington Players. At Gunston Theatre One, 2700 South Lang St., Arlington.

NOW THROUGH JAN. 28

"Dreamgirls." Evening performances on Jan. 26, 27, 28 at 8 p.m. Performances will be held at the Gunston Arts Center - Theater One, 2700 S. Lang Street in Arlington. Seating is General Admission; Tickets are \$20 and are available online for pre-purchase at www.DominionStage.org. Group



JAN. 31 TO MARCH 25

"Really Really." Showtimes are Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$56 - \$80 and are available by calling Ticketmaster at 703-573-SEAT (7328) or visiting www.signature-theatre.org. Signature is offering a special "20 Seats for \$20" ticket deal for every performance. At Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave., Arlington.

Discounts available. Reservations can be made online or by calling 571-DS-Shows or 571-377-4637.

americancentury.org or 703-998-4555.

NOW THROUGH FEB. 11

Jules Feiffer's "Little Murders." Show times are Thursday through Saturday 8 p.m.; Saturday/Sunday matinee at 2:30 P.M. Post-show talk-back on Jan. 19. At Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang St., Arlington. Order tickets online at

EXTENDED THROUGH FEB. 5

"Hairspray." Weeknights and matinees on Saturdays and Sundays. Directed by Eric Schaeffer, starring national radio host Robert Aubry Davis. Tickets start at \$63. Call 703-573-SEAT or visit www.signature-theatre.org. At Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave., Arlington.

FINE ARTS

THURSDAY/FEB. 9

Made With Love. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Fall in love with a unique work of art as you browse open studios and galleries and enjoy an evening, complete with flowers, candy, live music, and more. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Visit www.torpedofactory.org; 703-838-4565.

FEB. 13 TO MARCH 25

Cuba Revisited, 2011. Karen Keating, member of Multiple Exposures Gallery, will be exhibiting new images from her most recent trip to Cuba, April 2011. Reception is Sunday, March 4 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.; Artist's Talk is Thursday, March 15 from 7 to 8 p.m. At Multiple Exposure Gallery, Studio #312.

FEB. 3 TO MARCH 18

"City Limits." Featuring acrylic paintings on canvas by Eric Garner of McLean. Opening reception is Saturday, Feb. 4 from 4 to 6 p.m. and Artist's Talk at 5 p.m. At The Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, Margaret W. and Joseph L. Fisher Art Gallery at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

FEB. 3 TO MARCH 4

"An Affair to Remember." Embrace artisan handmade creations made with a little love in February at Scope Gallery in the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Kiln Club show at the Scope Gallery, 106 North Union Street, ground floor, Studio 19, Alexandria. Call the Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.htm

NOW THROUGH FEB. 19

Fears and Phobias. What does it mean to be fearful - to live and cope with a phobia? The 21 artists in the gallery's latest exhibition explore their own interpretations of various fears and phobias. At the Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. At the www.torpedofactory.org/target

JAN. 26 TO MARCH 11

GA Gardner: Interconnections. Gardner uses the vibrant colors and energy of his native Trinidad and Tobago in his paintings and mixed media works to address our often complicated relationship with mass communication. Artist's reception is Sunday, Jan. 29 from 4 to 6 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria.

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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.

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PEOPLE

The Junior Girl Scout Troops F299 and 716 from Ft. Hunt Elementary School sang carols at the Mt. Vernon Sunrise Assisted Living Center on Wednesday, Dec. 14. They rehearsed after school with Peg Beggan and then drove over to the Center to provide entertainment before dinner. After singing a variety of carols for 30 minutes the girls distributed ornaments they made to the residents.



Bringing Joy



In Performance

PHOTO BY MARY ANNE HESCH

The St. Aidan's Day School Kindergarten class presented "The True Story of Christmas" for their parents and all of the Day School students.

BULLETIN BOARD

FEB. 6, 8, 13, & 15

Hospice Volunteer Training. 6 to 9 p.m. Improve the quality of life of hospice patients and their families. Provide companionship for the patients and respite for their caregivers. Help people at the end of their lives. Contact Martha Huffman at 703-333-6962 or mhuffman@capitalcaring.org.

ONGOING

UCM's food pantry depends on community donations. Canned meat and fish are needed, as well as canned soups, fruits and vegetables. Help by dropping off food donations

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

at UCM's main office, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria. UCM's food pantry accepts food donations Monday – Friday, from 9 am to 5:30 p.m. and the first Sunday of the month from 9:30 am to 1 p.m.

UCM's Back Porch Thrift Store is in need of donations of furniture. UCM will pick up furniture, as well as other larger donations, or they can be dropped off at the back of the store Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To arrange for pick-ups, call 703-768-7106, ext. 320. Located at the Mt. Vernon Crossroads Shopping Center at 7838 Richmond Highway, Alexandria.

Fort Ward Museum is now registering for its annual Civil War Kids' Camp, a

week of learning and fun for boys and girls ages 8 to 12. Participants explore the lives of Civil War soldiers and civilians with marching, drilling, reenactor guest appearances, games, crafts and other activities.

Civil War Kids' Camp runs Monday, June 25, through Friday, June 29, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Fort Ward, 4301 West Braddock Road. Registration is limited to 24 participants. Spaces fill quickly, and applications are accepted on a first-come basis. Registration, including souvenirs and healthy snacks, costs \$200 per child, with limited scholarship assistance based on financial need. Contact Fort Ward Museum at 703-746-4848 or visit www.fortward.org.



Valentine treats by Occasionally Cake.

Tasty Support For Heart Association

Occasionally Cake of Alexandria is now taking orders for Valentine's Day treats through Feb. 11 for pick-up on Tuesday, Feb. 14, ranging in price from \$15 to \$35. In honor of American Heart Month in February, the cake shop is supporting the American Heart Association. When customers wear red on Friday, Feb. 3 or Friday, Feb. 10, they receive a free cupcake and 10 percent of their purchase goes to the American Heart Association. For more information, go to www.occasionallycake.com or call 703-780-CAKE.

Occasionally Cake, at 8859 Richmond Highway, is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send announcements to the Mount Vernon Gazette, 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.

The **Mount Vernon Varsity Wrestling Majors** would like to thank the following establishments for donating food to their hospitality room for the National District Duals Championships which took place at Mount Vernon on Jan. 20 and 23. Thanks to: Geranio Ristorante, located at 722 King Street in Alexandria; and El Paso Mexican Restaurant, located at 8746 Cooper Road in Alexandria.

Mount Vernon High School would like to congratulate the following students who competed in the Forensics and Debate Tournament that took place on Jan. 18:

Meron Gosaye – 1st place in Student Congress;
Alex Kellogg – 1st place in Storytelling;
Callista Skaggs – 2nd place in Poetry;
Shai West – 3rd place in Impromptu speaking;

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21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

Obituary

Mary H. Birkhead, 95, died Saturday, January 21, 2012 at Methodist North Hospital. Mrs. Birkhead was born to Ivan and Lera Holmes in Winona, MS on February 4, 1916. During WWII she worked as a Switchboard Operator in Alexandria, VA. She also worked for the Coca Cola Bottling Company, and for Lindsay Cadillac; all before she relocated to Memphis in 1983. She married Frank C. Birkhead on December 24, 1939. She is preceded in death by her husband, Frank; three sisters Ruth, Bobbie Lou, and Jane Vaiden; and one brother, Julius McClain "Buddy" Holmes. Surviving Mrs. Birkhead is her daughter, Diana B. Flora; son-in-law, Roy E. Flora; two grandchildren Dana F. DeLisle, and Eddie Flora; and six great-grandchildren, Connor Michael DeLisle, Ashlyn Rae DeLisle, Madelyn Ruth DeLisle, Cathryn Isabella DeLisle, Olivia Nicole Flora, and Jack Edwin Flora. The family will receive friends from 5-7 p.m. at Memphis Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens at 3700 N. Germantown Parkway, Bartlett, on Friday, January 27, 2012. Funeral Services will be at 2 p.m. Memphis Funeral Home Saturday, January 28, 2012. Interment will be at Memorial Gardens (formerly Memory Hill Gardens).

21 Announcements

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-Thomas A. Edison

21 Announcements

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West Potomac Girls Set Two District Swim Records

Next: Northern Region championships.

Thirteen West Potomac swimmers (eight girls and five boys) will advance to the Northern Region swim and dive championships Feb. 2-4 after a competitive Patriot District meet Friday and Saturday at Lee District RECenter.

During the Patriot District meet, the Wolverine girls set two Patriot District records, won five of the swimming events, and recorded two 1-2 finishes on their way to a fourth-place team finish. The West Potomac boys finished sixth in the team scoring. The top six individual and relay finishers at the district meet automatically qualify to swim in the Northern Region meet, which will be held at the Oak Marr Recreation center.

In the girls' meet, senior Reanna Doña led the Wolverines with two individual victories, in the 50Y freestyle (state-qualifying 24.43) and the 100Y backstroke. Her state-qualifying time of 57.95 in the 100Y back set a new Patriot District record, breaking her own record set in 2010. Junior Hellen Moffitt was also an individual winner for West Potomac with her first-place finish in the 100Y freestyle (53.89, state-qualifying). Moffitt finished a close second in the 200Y freestyle with a state-qualifying and season-best time of 1:56.44. The Wolverine girls' 200Y medley relay team of Doña, Maxine Clifford, Sara Bertram, and Moffitt set another Patriot District record with their winning time of 1:47.02, which also meets the state-qualifying standard. Doña took the lead on the lead-off backstroke leg and the West Potomac girls never looked back, cruising to victory by more than 3 seconds over

the second-place girls from W.T. Woodson, who were also under the previous Patriot District record set in 2008.

Sophomore Sara Bertram placed second in both the 200Y individual medley and the 100Y butterfly. In the 200Y IM, Bertram's state-qualifying time of 2:11.58 was just 0.25 seconds off the winning time of 2:11.33. In the 100Y butterfly, the top four girls were separated by just 0.58 seconds, with Bertram grabbing second place in another state-qualifying time of 58.69. Freshman Maxine Clifford, in her Patriot District championship debut, finished second with state-qualifying times in both the 100Y freestyle (54.01) and 100Y backstroke (59.63). In each race, the only swimmer ahead of her was one of her teammates, giving the West Potomac girls their two 1-2 finishes on the night.

West Potomac's other first-place finish came in the girls' 400Y freestyle relay, where the team of Bertram, Clifford, Doña, and Moffitt bested the field by more than 3 seconds with a state-qualifying time of 3:37.51.

The Wolverine girls had one more individual top-six finisher in sophomore Carolyn Murphy, who bettered her previous time by nearly 5 seconds to finish sixth place in the 500Y freestyle (5:36.83) and qualify for this week's Northern Region meet. Murphy also placed ninth in the 200Y freestyle (2:06.03). The 200Y freestyle relay team of Carolyn Murphy, Melanie Bomberg, Kristine Pinter, and Maddy Bolger also move on to the Regional meet after their fourth-



The West Potomac girls' 200Y medley and 400Y freestyle relay teams placed first in both events at the Patriot District meet on Jan. 28. Senior Reanna Doña, junior Hellen Moffitt, sophomore Sara Bertram and freshman Maxine Clifford teamed up to set a new Patriot District record (1:47.02) in the girls' 200 medley relay and won the 400 freestyle relay (3:37.51) by nearly four seconds. All three West Potomac girls' relay teams will advance to the Northern Region meet and the Virginia state high school championship meet in February.

place finish (1:44.81).

For the Wolverine girls, other point-scoring top-16 finishers included sophomore Pinter (10th in the 200Y free – 2:06.21 and 11th in the 100Y fly – 1:05.77), freshman Melanie Bomberg (10th in 50Y free – 26.34), junior Maddy Bolger (thirteenth in the 50Y free – 26.53 and 10th in the 100Y free – 56.84), freshman Torie Bolger (12th in the 500Y free – 5:52.47), and freshman Jayne Orleans, who finished 11th in the 100Y breaststroke (1:12.82).

In the boys' meet, the Wolverines had one

behind Yorktown (673.5), Washington-Lee (374) and Falls Church (317.5). The boys posted a score of 173.

Ethan Lane-Singletary placed second in the 100Y freestyle for Mount Vernon with a time of 51.01.

Underwood Sets WPHS Record in 1600

Facing elite competition, West Potomac senior Sara Jane Underwood placed ninth

Mount Vernon's Kyla Watson earned an 8.2 and placed 14th on vault during the National District championships on Jan. 26 at MVHS. Watson qualified for regionals on floor with a sixth-place finish and a score of 8.75.



individual top-six finisher (and Northern Region qualifier) in freshman Michael Valceanu, who finished sixth in the 200Y freestyle with a time of 1:53.13. Valceanu was just outside a top-six finish in the 100Y butterfly, finishing seventh with a time of 55.61. Teammate and fellow freshman Will Rausch was the other top-finishing West Potomac swimmer, finishing seventh in the 100Y breaststroke with a time of 1:03.46. Rausch also finished 12th in the 200Y individual medley (2:13.12). Two Wolverine boys' relay teams move on to the Northern Region meet by virtue of their fifth-place finishes at the District meet. The 200Y medley relay team of Trevor Jenne, Rausch, Valceanu, and Patrick Murphy posted a season-best time of 1:44.47 to advance to Regionals. The Wolverine 400Y freestyle relay team of Jenne, Jack King, Valceanu, and P. Murphy also posted a season-best time (3:29.19), moving on to compete at the Regional meet.

Several other West Potomac boys scored points for the team with top-16 finishes and personal best times. Senior Patrick Murphy was ninth in the 100Y backstroke (59.56) and 14th in the 200Y freestyle. Senior Trevor Jenne finished 10th in the 200Y IM (2:10.66). Sophomore Cyrus Adams-Mardi was 13th in the 100Y backstroke in a time of 1:02.85. The Wolverine boys' 200Y freestyle relay of Adams-Mardi, Luke Perez, Niko Knoblauch and Jack King placed seventh.

The girls' preliminary events for the Northern Region meet take place on Thursday, Feb. 2 at Oak Marr, followed by the boys' preliminary events on Friday, Feb. 3. Top 16 finishers in both boys' and girls' individual and relay events will advance to the finals on Saturday, Feb. 4.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Floyd Sets MVHS Wrestling Record

Senior wrestler Dusty Floyd became Mount Vernon's all-time leader in victories when he earned win No. 148 at home on senior night Jan. 25. The 170-pound Floyd



Mount Vernon senior Dusty Floyd, middle, placed first in the 170-pound weight class at the Ocean Lakes Invitational on Jan. 27-28. Floyd became Mount Vernon's all-time leader in wrestling victories on Jan. 25 when he earned win No. 148.

surpassed Tony Martinez's record of 147, set in 2003.

The Majors defeated Thomas Jefferson 56-12 and T.C. Williams 54-15 on senior night before completing their regular season Jan. 27-28 at the Ocean Lakes Invitational. Mount Vernon placed three wrestlers in the finals: Cody Marino (126 pounds), Floyd and Nathan Haro (220). Floyd defeated a wrestler from Great Bridge, 7-5, in the finals to improve to 48-0 on the season. Marino and Haro each placed second in their respective weight classes.

Mount Vernon will compete in the National District tournament on Saturday, Feb. 4 at Stuart.

Mount Vernon Swim Teams Compete at Districts

The Mount Vernon girls' swim team placed fourth and the boys' finished seventh at the National District meet Jan. 26-28 at Yorktown Aquatic Center.

The girls totaled a score of 159, finishing

in the high school girls' mile at the U.S. Open held at Madison Square Garden on Jan. 28, according to the school's Web site. Underwood's time of 5:03.65 was a personal best for a full mile. Her 1600M time of 5:01.89 broke the previous West Potomac record of 5:07.04, set by Heather Murray in 1995

MVHS Gymnastics Places Fourth at Districts

The Mount Vernon gymnastics team placed fourth at the National District gymnastics meet on Jan. 26 at MVHS.

The Majors posted a score of 104.975, finishing behind Washington-Lee (142.6), Yorktown (125.85) and Falls Church (109.825). The top two teams earned a berth in the Northern Region meet.

Mount Vernon's Kyla Watson earned a trip to regionals as an individual with a top-eight performance on floor. Watson placed sixth with a score of 8.75.

WELLBEING

Cybercycling for Better Health

Exergaming — exercise combined with video games — might offer a greater cognitive benefit than traditional exercise alone.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

The same staccato beeps and flashing graphics that keep some youth glued to video games might also boost cognitive function in senior citizens.

A study published in the February issue of the American Journal of Preventative Medicine shows that exergaming — exercise combined with video games — might offer a greater cognitive benefit than traditional exercise alone.

“[A] cybercycle, a recumbent bike equipped with a computerized screen that allows interactive virtual-reality gaming, has been shown to improve executive function, which indicate abilities such as planning, organizing and problem-solving,” said Kathy Richards, Ph.D., a Herndon resident and assistant dean, Doctoral Programs and

Research Development School of Nursing at George Mason University.

The Cybercycle Study, conducted by scientists at Union College in New York, tested 79 volunteers ranging in age from 58 to 99. Some of the volunteers completed three months of regular exercise on stationary bikes; others completed the same amount of exercise on cybercycles. Cybercyclists completed 3D tours and raced against a “ghost rider,” an avatar based on their last best ride.

Though the cyclists all exercised for the same amount of time and at the same level of intensity, researchers found that the cybercycle riders had significantly better executive function than those who used a plain stationary bike. They also experienced a 23 percent reduction in progression to dementia compared with the control group.

“We found that for older adults ... cybercycling two to three times per week

for three months yielded greater cognitive benefit, and perhaps added [greater] protection against mild cognitive impairment (MCI), than a similar dose of traditional exercise,” said lead investigator Cay Anderson-Hanley, Ph.D., from the Healthy Aging and Neuropsychology Lab and Department of Psychology at Union College. “Navigating a 3D landscape, anticipating turns and competing with others requires additional focus, expanded divided attention and enhanced decision-making. These activities depend in part on executive function, which was significantly affected.”

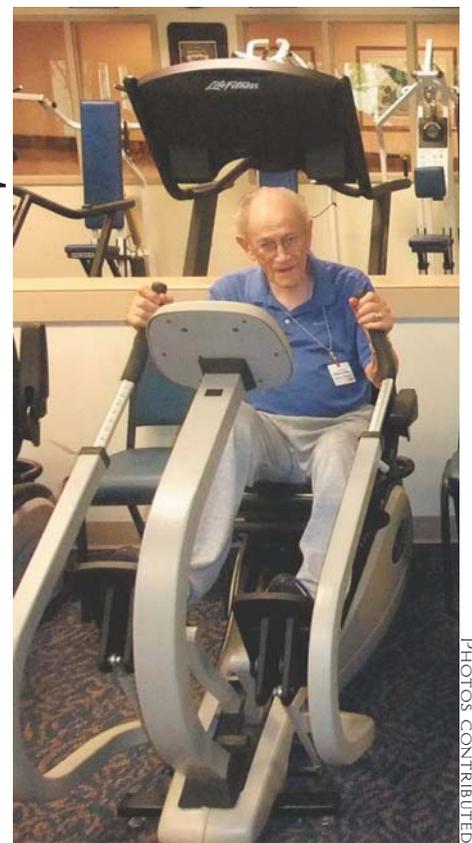
Dr. Jan Gable, an Alexandria resident and the medical center director at Greenspring, says that there are two types of memory changes that occur with age. “The normal age-related change in memory is not progressive and does not lead to disability. This is characterized by delay in recall such as ‘word searching,’” she said. “The other category is dementia, a relentlessly progressive deterioration in brain function that usually affects memory first and later judgment, initiative, personality and finally movement and swallowing.”

Research shows that exercise may prevent or delay dementia and improve cognitive functioning in normal aging.

“Although we may not completely understand the specific processes that contribute to dementia, current evidence certainly suggests that physical and cognitive activities improve functioning in older adults,” said Kristin Anderson, M.D., M.P.H., family and preventive medicine physician for Molina Healthcare and Community Health Care Network in Reston. “An example of this would be ballroom dancing, which involves learning steps paired with exercise.”

The American College of Preventative Medicine reports that only 14 percent of adults aged 65-74 years old and only 7 percent of those over 75 report regular exercise.

“Motivating people at any age to exercise can be a real challenge,” said Brad Hibbs, a



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Willard Griffing of Greenspring, a retirement community in Springfield, exercises using a stationary bike. The American College of Preventative Medicine reports that only 7 percent of those over 75 exercise regularly.

Burke resident and a wellness manager at Greenspring retirement community in Springfield. “Certainly this generation is especially challenging due to the fact that for most this is not something they were accustomed to doing on a routine basis.”

Mary Lee Esty, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., president of the Brain Wellness and Biofeedback Center of Washington, says neurofeedback — essentially biofeedback for the brain during which clinicians attach sensors to a person’s scalp to rebalance brainwave activity — might also improve cognitive functioning. “There is more and more evidence that neurofeedback actually improves executive functioning even in early dementia,” she said. “A personal experience was when my mother-in-law was in her early 90s, and it was increasingly obvious that she was having to search for words and was having trouble with fluency. But even after just one treatment, it made a huge difference in her word retrieval and ease of conversation.”



Fitness expert Brad Hibbs of Greenspring, a retirement community in Springfield (shown here with Greenspring resident Julia Gerow), says motivating seniors can be challenging.

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WINTER FUN



PHOTO BY MONTIE MARTIN/THE GAZETTE

Emme Porter and her students Ava Dempster, 8, and Griffin Sendek, 12, enjoy the ice. The Mt. Vernon RECenter has made a commitment to provide ice time for diverse activities including hockey, free skate, and public sessions.

Grab Those Skates

Winter fun means rink activities at Mt. Vernon RECenter.

BY MONTIE MARTIN
THE GAZETTE

More

For more information and a complete calendar of events visit: fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mvrec.htm

Group lessons, public sessions and skating development classes are some of the many ways to have fun on the ice this winter at the Mt. Vernon RECenter.

With its diverse schedule of activities, the RECenter caters to ice fans of all levels and interests.

"It's a community center and isn't like other rinks, where ice time goes to the highest bidder," said Emme Porter, a skate coach at Mt. Vernon. "The center has made a commitment to give a variety of activities."

A range of introductory classes is available for the three-to-five age group. Snowplow Sam classes teach students how to fall, get back up, and focus on getting skaters off the wall. Family-oriented activities such as Mom or Dad and Me sessions are also available.

Hockey classes include levels one to four, and are available for those aged six to adult.

Basic 8 classes also focus on the six to adult age group, and make for a traditional approach to skat-

ing. Level one handles the basics of marching and gliding, level four includes forward crossovers, while level eight covers scratch spins and waltz jumps.

"It's really cool because you get to go fast and do spins," said 8-year-old Ava Dempster, a figure skater enrolled in group lessons.

"Skating is different, there's something fantastic about gliding across frozen water," said Mike Richards, head rink guard at the Mt. Vernon RECenter. Classes tend to consist of eight

to 10 people, and registration is available at the front desk or online. Although ice-skating is a traditionally expensive sport, Fairfax residents receive a discount and skates can be rented at the rink.

"Go to the public skating sessions, check out group lessons," said Porter. "It's like riding a bike, skating is something you need to know how to do."

"It's like riding a bike, skating is something you need to know how to do."

— Emme Porter, a skate coach at Mt. Vernon