



Lolly Hetherington with Rising Hope original member Mary Baker.



Pastor John Speight and his wife Rosemary of Christ Church of Fairfax Station which organized and sponsored the Rising Hope Gala were among the first to step out on the dance floor.

Rising Hope Gala Relieves Pastor

Christ Church organizes gala which earns \$30,000; anonymous donor gives additional \$25,000.

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.
THE GAZETTE

Anxious, stressed, yet maintaining his signature joyfulness, the Rev. Keary Kincannon of Rising Hope Mission Church revealed to his congregation Sunday, Nov. 11, he was suffering sleepless nights worried over his church's finances. There was not enough money to run the mission for the homeless and needy along the Route 1 corridor for the rest of the year.

He prayed for guidance. And for sleep.

"I just knew that Rising Hope is God's vision for our community. I was praying to find the means to keep going," said the pastor whose church on

Russell Road just off Route 1 serves the poor with hot meals, groceries, daily chapel services, clothing, employment help, emergency aid and a hypothermia shelter.

Recent fundraising efforts had fallen through.

A September fundraiser featuring the Christian rock band Tenth Avenue North, though drawing 1,000 enthused young people, resulted in a loss of \$4,000.

Then a choir festival intended for October hosted by Gospel star Jeff Majors fizzled in the planning stages.

Faced with these losses, it was critical that the Rising Hope Gala on Friday, Nov. 16, at the Waterford in Springfield be a resounding success.

SEE RISING HOPE GALA, PAGE 26



Sharon Emory of Christ Church with Rising Hope staffers Kat Roman and Sarah Heckman and volunteer Leigh Rosenmund.

PHOTOS BY
ED SIMMONS, JR.
THE GAZETTE

Losing Wetlands

Lecture explains loss of acres of Dyke Marsh.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

National Park Service's Matthew Virta described how, for hundreds of years, Dyke Marsh and its area residents lived in relative harmony until a single act triggered its rapid degradation.

Speaking at a Friends of Dyke Marsh quarterly meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 14, Virta, a cultural resources manager, described the

authorized uncontrolled dredging and dumping in Dyke Marsh, without regard to the environmental consequences.

Virta presented his history research before an audience of approximately 90 attendees during the meeting held at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center. During the presentation, Virta traced Dyke Marsh, a freshwater tidal wetlands, going back thousands of years based on archeological findings, to more recent early Ameri-



PHOTO BY GERALD A. FILL/THE GAZETTE

Matthew Virta, cultural resources manager at the National Park Service, discusses area's early human history.

can history dating back 500 years ago and up to the present.

Glenda Booth, president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, said, "Matthew Virta expertly outlined the rich human history of Dyke Marsh,

SEE LECTURE, PAGE 25

Taste Trumps Nutrition

Film highlights food business gone awry.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) put a spotlight on food during its program at the Heritage Presbyterian Church last Thursday, Nov. 15.

The principal presentation of the program was to show an award-winning film "Food, Inc." that highlights unsanitary slaughter of cows, chickens, and pigs, and the

over-reliance on toxic pesticides and fertilizers as part of what the film contends is corporate agribusiness strategies to produce large quantities of cheap food of poor nutritional quality at the expense of the consumer.

The film and the discussion by panelists that followed was a reminder of the need to be vigilant regarding federal and state public policies affecting food quality, or the lack thereof. The film makes the case that science and technology has not been the friend of quality nutritional food; but, according to the film, its enemy, as mass produced and heavily applied pesticides, fertilizers, and

SEE TASTE TRUMPS, PAGE 26

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Joyce Wagner and a few of Reinvented Elegance jewelry pieces.



Karen Schwarz prepares to select a colorful thread for another of her Talking Design creations.



Kim Hyo Ju displays a piece of her pottery.



Chef Mike Walker sets up quarts of soup for sale in the Country Kitchen.

51st Annual Mount Vernon Unitarian Church Holiday Shop

Fifty artisans presented their work during the annual Holiday Shop at the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church on Windmill Lane on Saturday, Nov. 17. Pottery, basketry, fiber arts, paper, photography, jewelry, orchids and crafts from India, Southeast Asia and South and Central America were available for purchase. The Holiday Shop is organized by the E.T., the Every Thursday women's group at the church. A handmade quilt and a gingerbread house were donated for the raffle. Chef Mike Walker was in the kitchen of the Hollin Hall Mansion cooking up pots of Calico Bean Soup for the shoppers to enjoy and take home.



Betty Jo Middleton offers visitors a chance on the afternoon raffle.



Church music director Mark Thompson and banjo player Eric Pourchot serve up bowls of soup for guests at the annual Holiday Show.



Susan Wilson and Kathy Sproston sell flowers at the Holiday Shop.



Mary Ellen Feid shows a customer one of her crocheted afghan throws.

PHOTOS BY
LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE



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Radioactive Debate

Upcoming General Assembly session to feature effort to lift ban on uranium mining.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

The uranium deposits under the farmlands of Pittsylvania County are miles away from Northern Virginia, but the debate about what happens there is shaping up to be one of the hottest issues of the upcoming General Assembly session. In the last year, Chatham-based Virginia Uranium, Inc., has invested more than \$52,000 in campaign contributions across the commonwealth as part of a lobbying effort to persuade legislators to tap the largest undeveloped uranium deposit in the nation.

"I told them I would take their money, but that I haven't made up my mind," said state Sen. Toddy Puller (D-36), who received \$1,000 from Virginia Uranium. "There seems to be more people that are lobbying for it. I am certain that the environmentalists will weigh in against it, but they haven't started doing that yet."

A recent study by the George Mason Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University concluded that overturning the longstanding ban on uranium mining in Virginia would bring more than \$1 million to Pittsylvania County, adding about 2 percent to the county's revenue base. The study concluded net fiscal benefit would be equivalent to a reduction of 4 cents on the tax rate. Virginia Uranium financed the study with a \$147,000 contribution to the George Mason University Foundation.

"They certainly didn't tell us what to say," said Stephen Fuller, director of the Center for Regional Analysis. "Although they did edit our work a bit when we had some misspellings."

For supporters of uranium mining, the financial analysis makes a strong case for helping a part of Virginia that's struggling to emerge from the global economic crisis. Statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show the unemployment rate in Pittsylvania is 6.7 percent, which is higher than the statewide average of 5.6 percent.

"I don't disagree with the fact that this portion of the state needs economic development," said Del. Rob Krupicka (D-45). "But I also think that folks shouldn't have to sacrifice the health of their water

or the long-term health of their community for jobs."

FOR MORE THAN 30 years, Virginia has banned uranium mining in the commonwealth. Last year, Virginia Uranium tried to overturn that ban to begin mining a vast resource in Pittsylvania County, a southside community that borders North Carolina. But Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell intervened, asking legislators to take no action in 2012. Instead, the governor initiated a study of the issue by a newly created multi-agency state workgroup including secretaries of Natural Resources, Commerce and Trade and Health and Human Resources.

"Public safety must be the primary factor in the ultimate determination as to whether to proceed with uranium mining," McDonnell said in a written statement. "While uranium mining could mean the creation of high-paying jobs for our citizens, a boost for the important nuclear power industry, increased economic development for the region and the generation of significant tax revenue for the entire commonwealth, we must prudently study the issue to ensure that such mining would not impair the health of our people or the condition of the environment."

Environmental groups have been critical of uranium mining because of concerns over a radioactive

SEE URANIUM, PAGE 25

Uranium Money

Chatham-based Virginia Uranium, Inc., has invested more than \$52,000 this year in campaign contributions across Virginia:

- \$7,500 to the Republican Campaign Committee for House of Delegates
- \$5,000 to the Virginia Republican Senate Caucus
- \$5,000 to the Majority Leader PAC
- \$5,000 to Dominion Leadership Trust
- \$5,000 to Sen. Ryan McDougle (R-4)
- \$2,500 to Del. Todd Gilbert (R-15)
- \$2,500 to the Democratic Party Commonwealth Victory Fund
- \$2,500 to Del. Jackson Miller (R-50)
- \$2,500 to Del. Onzlee Ware (D-11)
- \$2,500 Del. Greg Habeeb (R-8)
- \$1,500 for Del. Steven Landes (R-25)
- \$1,000 for Del. Jimmie Massie (R-72)
- \$1,000 for Del. Dickie Bell (R-20)
- \$1,000 for Del. Mike Watson (R-93)
- \$1,000 for Del. Will Morefield (R-3)
- \$1,000 for Sen. Toddy Puller (D-36)
- \$1,000 for Del. Brenda Pogge (R-96)
- \$1,000 for Sen. Kenneth Alexander (D-5)
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Alex./Mt. Vernon Grove \$499,900
4112 Scotland Road

Lovely 4 BR, 3 BA Split in the heart of Mt. Vernon on a spacious .33 acre lot. Beautiful hdwd flrs thru out the main lvl, freshly painted interior. Bright & light-filled rooms, large 2-car garage & beautifully landscaped yard w/in-ground sprinkler system. 5 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 17 to Old Town, 28 mins to National Airport & 35 mins to Pentagon/D.C. Priced for a quick sale.



Alex./Yacht Haven \$914,000
4721 Tarpon Lane

WATERFRONT! Live the life you've imagined: Come home to this spectacular Colonial located on a waterfront lot (.61 acre) w/full working dock & quick navigable access to the Potomac River. Less than 100 yds to prestigious Mt. Vernon Yacht Club. Stunning rms & open floor plan on main lvl provide for fabulous entertaining. 5 BRs, 3 Full BAs + 2 half baths. 3,462 sq.ft. of above ground living & finished basement. Gorgeous Great Rm addition w/expansive windows, vaulted ceilings. Beautiful remodeled kit w/lighted cabinetry, granite counters, & center island. Kit, Great Rm & Den off of kit all offer deck access via French doors. 2 FPLs. Sunken living rm. French doors off MBR lead to beautiful "Lounging Rm" w/two lg skylights, & a wall of windows facing the waterfront side of the property. This home is a 10!



Alex./Hollin Hall \$489,000
7926 New Market Road

Absolutely lovely home w/over \$130k in recent improvements in great location! Stunning front porch and Family Room addition in 2009 by custom builder. Slate floor on front porch and back patio. Replacement windows. New 2012 & '09: large shed, cedar fence, driveway, roof, dishwasher, hot water, stove, humidifier. Beautiful backyard. It's a gem! Wayneswood Elementary, close to GW Parkway, Potomac River and minutes to Old Town.



Alex./Riverside Est. \$489,900
3404 Ramsgate Terrace

TURN KEY—Beautifully updated 4 BR, 3.5 BA Colonial w/dbl carport on a lovely, landscaped lot w/fenced backyard. Updates since 2004 to include-kitchen, all 3 baths, HVAC, hot water, paint, hardwood floors refinished, deck, central vac and security system. Finished basement w/exterior exit. 5 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 25 mins to National Airport. This is a Keeper! Alex/Mt. Vernon.



Alex./Belle View \$259,900
6612 Boulevard VW #A2

Newly remodeled PORCH unit, shows beautifully. Lovely kitchen: granite counters, ceramic tile floor. Gorgeous bathroom with beautiful tile, everything brand new. Replacement windows. New flooring throughout, freshly painted. New screen door for porch. Convenient & ample parking next to bldg. FANTASTIC location: Steps to G.W. Pkwy, Potomac River, Bike Trail, 5 mins to Old Town. Bus to Metro.



Alex./Wessynton \$624,900
8802 Four Seasons

Large, stunning, contemporary Colonial in popular Mount Vernon Community of Wessynton. This lovely home is highly updated: kitchen remodeled in '07, HVAC & hot water heater replaced '07, energy-efficient replacement windows, freshly painted interior - family room w/vaulted ceiling off kitchen - large beautiful picture windows throughout overlook a large, private, landscaped lot on a quiet cul-de-sac - In-law bedroom & bath on main level - 5 minutes to Fort Belvoir - This is a Keeper!

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NEWS

Chairman Moran To Step Down

**Moran endorses
Herring to
succeed him as
state Democratic
Party chair.**



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

As chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, Brian Moran couldn't have had a better year. He delivered Virginia's 13 electoral votes to Barack Obama, and he helped former Democratic Gov. Tim Kaine beat back a strong challenge from former Republican Gov. George Allen. Now Moran says it's time to step aside and let new leadership take over the party.

"To be frank," said Moran. "I need a job."

Moran is the younger brother of U.S. Rep. Jim Moran (D-8) and a former member of the House of Delegates, where he represented the West End of Alexandria and the Skyline community in Fairfax County.

He abruptly resigned that seat in December 2008

Brian Moran congratulates Charniele Herring the night she narrowly beat Republican Joe Murray in a special election for the 46th District of the House of Delegates.

to launch an ill-fated campaign for governor, prompting a last-minute special election in January 2009. That race was so close that Republican Joe Murray asked for a recount, but Charniele Herring eventually emerged as the winner. Now, Herring is the leading contender to take Moran's place yet again — this time as chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia.

SEE MORAN, PAGE 25

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E-mail to: gazette@connectionnews-papers.com, or mail (.jpg and text files on disc only) by Dec. 5, to 1606 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please be sure to include the student's name, age, grade, school and town of residence along with each submission. For information, call 703-778-9410.

**Mount Vernon
Gazette**

OBITUARY

Evelyn Virginia Bird Linton

Evelyn Virginia Bird Linton, 90, died Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012. She was known as "Polly" to her Texas relatives and friends; and as "Birdie" to her friends and relatives in Virginia. She was the fourth born of 16 children.

Funeral will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 24, at Benchmark Baptist Fellowship, Fredericksburg with burial at the Mount Comfort Cemetery in Alexandria.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation in honor of Evelyn Linton to Benchmark Baptist Fellowship.

Evelyn was born in Fort Worth, Texas on May 17, 1922. In 1940, she moved to Washington, D.C. She met and married Kirk Louis Linton in 1944.

In 1985, they moved to Fredericksburg, Va. after her husband's retirement from the RF&P Railroad. She returned to Texas in 1988.

Evelyn worked at the Library of

Congress cafeteria, at the Pentagon's Railroad Department during the early years of World War II, as secretary of the Great Meadows Little League baseball league in Mount Vernon for 19 years, as secretary of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Mount Vernon Volunteer Fire Department for over 25 years and as secretary of the Great Meadows Civic Association during the 1950's. She was a talented porcelain painter, winning over 50 prize ribbons at the local county fairs in Virginia between 1971 and 1985. As a lifetime member, she served as secretary of the Mount Vernon Porcelain Guild.

Evelyn, a born again Christian, was baptized at the Haltom City Church of Christ in Texas.

Survivors include two sons: Kenneth E. Linton of Bedford, of Texas and Terry L. Linton, of Fredericksburg, Va.; two brothers; five sisters; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

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NEWS



The Cynthia Hull Food Pantry

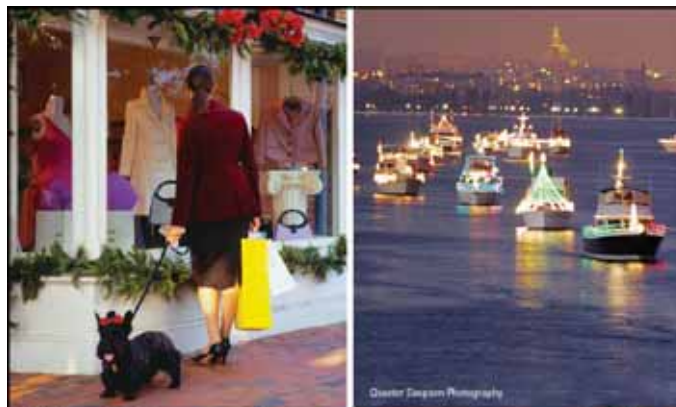
Richard Dobber, United Community Ministries' director of social services, shows off the new commercial grade refrigerator from Westminster Presbyterian Church. UCM named its food pantry in honor of its former Executive Director Cynthia Hull on Sunday, Nov. 18. Hull served as executive director for five years from September 2007 to March 2012. Donations to the "Cynthia Hull for UCM Fund," which UCM established for gifts to honor her legacy, provided new shelving. Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria provided a \$3,750 grant for the commercial refrigerator.

NEWS BRIEFS

Body of Missing Man Found

A resident who was out walking around 2:45 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 11 came upon the body of a man lying along a creek bank near the 7700 block of Audubon Meadow Way. The man was deceased and police have identified him as Mohammad Sharif Yazdani, who had walked away from his residence in the 3800 block of Havenwood Place on Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Police do not believe there are any signs of foul play related to his death and the Office of the Medical Examiner has preliminarily determined that the cause of cause and manner of death is accidental drowning.



Animal Control Saves Owl

Dozens of concerned motorists and pedestrians watched as an owl flew wildly into cars, signs and buildings last week, according to police.



Rescued owl

For four days, Animal Control Officers received calls and responded to the Richmond Highway intersection near Sacramento Drive to investigate. Finally, on Friday, Nov. 16 officers were able to rescue the owl at around 11 a.m. Officers worked for over an hour trying to capture the owl after he had perched on a wire about 20 feet high. With assistance from citizens, patrol officers and the fire department, officers threw towels up at him, he landed on a parking lot and they netted him.

Ill and malnourished, with one eye missing and the other covered in cataracts, he was not able to hunt. Delivered to a raptor rehabilitation center in Falls Church, he is in stable condition.

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- Nov. 23 **Alexandria Black Friday Sale**
- Nov. 23 **City of Alexandria Holiday Tree Lighting**
- Nov. 24 - Dec. 16 **Mount Vernon by Candlelight**
- Nov. 24 - Dec. 23 **Santa Claus is Coming to Old Town**
- Nov. 29 **Torpedo Factory Art Center's Holiday Open House**
- Nov. 30 - Dec. 16 **Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market**
- Nov. 30 - Dec. 16 **Little Theatre of Alexandria's "A Christmas Carol"**
- Nov. 30 **A Christmas Marketplace**
- Dec. 1 **42nd Annual Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk Parade**
- Dec. 1 **Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights**
- Dec. 7 **Holiday on the Avenue in Del Ray**

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PEOPLE

Chila Named Nursing Director of the Year

Nancy Chila, RN, BS, has been named Nursing Director of the Year by the Virginia Health Care Association in recognition of her role in facilitating the Mount Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation Center's transition from long term care for the chronically ill to an emphasis on post-acute care and rehabilitation.

At the center, Chila introduced and implemented systems and processes for survey readiness, risk assessment and raising clinical competencies. She has been a mentor in helping nurses reach their professional goals and is an advocate for achievement of excellence in patient care at all levels. Nancy introduced regular management meetings that have resulted in the introduction of programs in pain management, fall reduction and wound care. She came to the Mount Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation Center as part of the new management team that has been in place since 2010.

As the complexity of patients in-



crease, she encourages many of the staff to get their RN degrees and assists them with obtaining financial support. She assists many of the staff in applying for the Regirer scholarships offered by the Commonwealth Long Term Care Foundation.

She has worked at MVNRC since 2011 preceded by employment at a number of other nursing homes and health care organizations since 1979. She is a graduate of College of Mt. St. Vincent where she received her BS in nursing and enrolled in a graduate program at George Mason University. Nancy is a native New Yorker and moved to Vienna in 1996 with her husband and their three daughters. She began her nursing career as a certified nursing assistant in a nursing facility while in college. She has been a nurse for 32 years and recently returned to long term care as director of nursing. Prior to joining Mount Vernon Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, she worked as a clinical consultant for several nursing facilities.



Nouri and Suham Abbou at their wedding on Nov. 21, 1952



Nouri and Suham Abbou, today.

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On Nov. 21, 1952, Nouri and Suham Abbou were married and began an adventure that has continued for 60 years. Their children, grandchildren and in-laws consider themselves so blessed to have them in their lives: They are a testament to how love, a sense of humor, patience, and respect can result in a marriage made in heaven.

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6:30 pm Mass (from Sept. 9
until mid June)

Weekdays

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word
Sundays (Sept.-July) during 9:00 am
Mass (English)

Sign Language Interpreter
Sunday at 9:00 am Mass

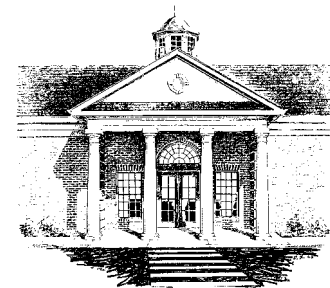
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OPINION

Diversity Growing

This week, the Gazette and Connection Newspapers kicks off a series about immigration, diversity and the growing population of foreign-born residents in Fairfax County. County reporter Victoria Ross opens with a story that captures vignettes and statistics of the changing population.

It is a topic consistent with the original Thanksgiving story.

More than 28 percent of Fairfax County's population is foreign born; that's 317,000 residents.

Consider Yesuf Beshir from Ethiopia, who two years ago settled in Springfield and now works for a government contractor. In May, he became an American citizen. "The main thing here is democracy, the right to vote," Beshir said.

These residents include nearly 20,000 who are self-employed business owners, truly job creators, large and small. One of these is Shami Walia who emigrated from India in 1982, and now owns Burke Cigar Shop, a popular cigar lounge that's become a neighborhood fixture. One part of our series will look at the business impacts of the foreign-born population.

Fairfax County Public Schools are harbingers of change: 38,760 Fairfax County elementary school students, that is 44 percent of all elementary school students in public schools here, spoke a language other than English at home as of May 2009. And between them, they speak more than 100 different languages. Another part of our series will look at the challenges and opportunities in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Consider Hutchison Elementary in Herndon, where 63 percent of students have limited

English. And Crestwood Elementary in Springfield, where 68 percent of students have limited English. At Lynbrook Elementary, also in Springfield, 74 percent of students have limited English. At Mount Vernon Woods, in Mount Vernon, 52 percent of students have limited English. At Dogwood Elementary in Reston, 56 percent of students have limited English.

Tune in and let us know what you think.

You can submit a letter to the editor at www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/

— MARY KIMM.

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Be Part of Children's Gazette

During the last week of each year, The Gazette devotes its entire issue to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families.

We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format.

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Please provide the submissions by Monday, Dec. 3.

Tune in to our series on immigration.

Some suggestions:

- ❖ Drawings or paintings or photographs of your family, friends, pets or some favorite activity. These should be photographed or scanned and submitted in jpeg format.

- ❖ Short answers (50 to 100 words) to some of the following questions: If you could give your parents any gift that didn't cost money what would that gift be? What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming year? What is one thing that you would change about school? What do you want to be when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite toy? What makes a good parent? What makes a good friend? What is the best or worst thing that ever happened to you? What is the best gift you've ever given? Ever received?

- ❖ Your opinion (50 to 100 words) about traffic, sports, restaurants, video games, toys, trends, etc.

- ❖ Poetry or other creative writing.

- ❖ Opinion pieces about family, friends, movies, traffic, sports, food, video games, toys, trends, etc.

- ❖ News stories from school newspapers.

We welcome contributions from families, public and private schools, individuals and homeschoolers.

Email submissions to smauren@connectionnewspapers.com.

To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the CD to Children's Gazette, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Please send all submissions by Dec. 3. The Children's Gazette will publish the week of Dec. 27, 2012.

Immigrants and Today's Faith Response

BY JOHN HOREJSI, COORDINATOR
SOCIAL ACTION LINKING TOGETHER (SALT)

The presence of increasing numbers of immigrants is a challenge to the Fairfax County faith community commitments. The challenge is to be a faith community with open arms.

Historically the churches in the United States have been immigrant churches. Who among us cannot trace one's ancestors back to a country outside the U.S.? The church's care and concern for countless European immigrants is well known. Today, we the faith community are called to welcome immigrants with similar hospitality.

The situation of immigrants is often desperate. Entering a culturally strange and different land, and struggling financially is as scary today as it ever was in the past. Perhaps it is even more so because of the quickened pace of American life.

Those who are fortunate to connect with helpers are settled within a few years. Others remain in transition the rest of their lives as families struggle with complex adjustments. All face major problems in housing, employment, health care, legal assistance, and a difficult new language.

Immigrants frequently face the additional obstacle of cruel prejudice and racism. Non-immigrants often want to exclude them from the benefits of a free country, yet are eager to use cheap and reliable labor of immigrants.

THE IMMIGRANTS and other refugees keep coming, not necessarily because they want to, but as one, fleeing from war and persecution, put it, because of "the persistent advantage of life over death."

Presently, many Hispanics from Central America are located in Northern Virginia. About 65 percent are Salvadoran, 15 percent Honduran, and 10 percent each are Guatemalan and Nicaraguan. The faith community in Northern Virginia has not been unaware of the presence and plight of these immigrant refugees.

Nationally, for more than 65 years, Catholic Charities agencies have responded to the needs of people who come to this country in search of a better life. Thousands of refugees have been settled. Over 90 percent of Catholic resettlement services are provided through Catholic Charities which is one of the keys to the future of migration ministry in the U.S.

In Northern Virginia, one of the responses of the faith community has been through Hogar

Immigrant Services, a program of Catholic Charities. Hogar assists immigrants in participating more fully in their everyday lives. Information referrals, legal information services, and educational opportunities are just some of the aids. The aim is to help the Northern Virginia immigrant population become knowledgeable, participating individuals in society.

Yet much remains to be done, especially in and by the faith community. What are the elements of this challenge?

- ❖ Recognizing the contributions of the immigrants to the community;

- ❖ Providing a greater voice to the immigrant community in decision-making within the community;

- ❖ Supporting programs designed to improve the quality of life for newcomers;

- ❖ Serving as advocates to create a favorable public opinion out of which good things can happen; and

- ❖ Seeking to raise consciousness for solidarity with the poor and the stranger.

Our response must be to acknowledge by word and action that the spirituality of the faith community and the spirituality of the immigrant communities are interdependent. Through love, kindness, service and advocacy for each other, both stand to gain.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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stone bath. Wood and stone floors throughout. Three bedrooms, 2.5 baths, new 2 car cedar carport, lush landscaping and two flagstone patios. ~\$875,000

8316 Fort Hunt Road Alexandria, VA 22308

Tower House Place



Stately, spacious colonial in Riverview at Mount Vernon. Enjoy Potomac River views from all three levels. Four bedroom, five full baths on private cul-de-sac. 1/2 acre and over 5,000 sq ft w/ high ceilings and fine woodwork throughout, large lower level rec room with full bath, 3 fireplaces, + storage and 2 car garage. ~\$1,295,000



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1604 River Farm Drive Alexandria, VA 22308

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Dating to the 1700's but converted to condos in 2008, the remodeled General Washington Club combines chic city living with historic character. This unbelievably unique residence presents colonial era materials coupled with elegant modern finishes on over 3,800 square feet on three levels. Three bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths and a 2 car detached garage. ~ \$1,495,000



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School Admissions: Interviews and Teacher Recommendations

Admissions officers at local independent schools offer insight into the process.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Mark Fischer sat with his parents in the plush reception area of one of the region's elite independent schools, biting his fingernails and tapping his left foot while waiting to speak with an admissions officer for the interview portion of his application.

"Yeah, I'm a little nervous," he said. Admissions directors say the interview is a chance for both students and their parents to get to know the schools and for the school to become familiar with the applicants. But what do admissions teams want to learn from interviews with applicants and their families?

"We really just want to get to know you better and hear what you have to say about your school year and thoughts for next year," said Ann Richardson Miller, director of admission and financial aid at The Madeira School in McLean.

"We like to see that the student is curious

about life, what he or she is interested in and what they are passionate about," said Diane Dunning, director of admission and financial aid at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in Alexandria.

COMPETITION TO GET INTO independent schools can be fierce — some school admissions teams accept only one out of every 10 applicants — so parents may wonder if they should hire education consultants or coaches to help their children prepare for interviews.

Mark Sklarow, executive director of the Independent Educational Consultants Association, says it's not worth it: "A school is trying to get ... an understanding of who that student really is," he said. "They'll try to get past any planned or scripted answers."

Richard Moss of The Heights School in Potomac agrees. "It is often easy to tell when a student is not interested based on their knowledge of the school and the reasons for wanting to attend," he said. "The interview with the parents is important because you get a sense of the kinds of people you're going to be working with. We want to make

sure our parents are on board with what our instructors are trying to do."

Admissions directors say parents often ask how their families should prepare for interviews. "This is an opportunity to soul search about why they are interested in the school," said Moss, adding he notices a lot about a prospective student during an interview. "Does a student present well? Does he look sharp? Does he have a firm handshake? Does he thank you for having him? Does he look alive and engaged? Does he mumble?"

Sklarow says that while students should not over-prepare, they should know what to expect. "Every school is not looking for the same kind of student. Every school is not looking for the same answer. They are trying to figure out whether that student fits the personality of the school. They want to know if this is a student who will find friendships within the school and fit into the school community."

WHAT ROLE do the teacher recommendations play in admissions decisions? "Teacher recommendations give us a broader perspective on student effort and attitude, and often provide us with a different perspective than what the application alone might show," Michael Cresson, director of admissions, Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington.

"Families would be surprised by the thoughtful and insightful comments most teachers make on the recommendations," Miller said. "Trust the teachers. They have your child's best interest at heart."

Charlotte Nelsen, director of admission for the Potomac School in McLean said, "Potomac School takes a particular interest in the current teacher's recommendation for the applicant. We recognize a teacher has known the student far longer than we have."

Some experts say that reports from a student's current instructors can raise red flags as well. "Teacher recommendations can shed light on the difficult aspects of a student's personality that you don't see on a report card," said Moss. "Report cards don't necessarily tell you how hard a student is working, how generous he is or what his true abilities are."

"We realize that teacher recommendations are subjective, but they are important," Moss continued. "If a student is required, for example, to get a recommendation from a current English teacher and they have a terrible relationship with that teacher ... they should ... ask the previous year's English teacher to write a supplementary recommendation, just so they can balance out the negative one. The one thing you don't want to do is get a bad recommendation and say, 'Well this is a horrible teacher who doesn't like my son.'"



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ONGOING

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.-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 Hwy.

Volunteers Needed. AARP Tax-Aide, a national volunteer-run tax counseling and preparation service for low to moderate income and elderly citizens, needs volunteers to electronically complete and file federal and state income tax forms for the 2013 tax season. The program offers free five-day training using IRS computers and software. Volunteers become IRS Certified Tax Counselors after completing and passing the IRS examination. Training sessions will be held in Annandale, Centerville and Alexandria in Dec. 2012 and Jan. 2013. Visit www.aarp.org/taxaide.

Training Courses. The American Red Cross in the National Capital Region will host training courses in CPR, First Aid, and AED in the Alexandria and Fort Belvoir offices. These classes offer a two-year certification. Classes range from \$70-\$110 and are available Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Saturdays. Advance registration is required. To register for a class or find another class in your area, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit redcross.org/takeaclass.

Dance for Parkinson's Disease.

Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. Those with Parkinson's and caregivers are welcome. No dance experience necessary.

TUESDAYS/THROUGH NOV. 27

Seminars. 12:30-2:30 p.m. Join Fairfax County's Independent Living Project, a free series of educational seminars for older adults, along with exercise or yoga classes for strength and balance. The program also provides home safety visits for 60+ adults and adults with physical disabilities. Participation in the full project is advised, and space is limited. At 7000 Schoonmaker Court. Register with Jennifer Edge at 703-324-7210, TTY 711 or email Jennifer.Edge@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/independent.htm.

THROUGH DEC. 7

Fruit Sale. The Mount Vernon Lions Clubs are selling navel oranges and grapefruit. They can be purchased by the case for \$38 or half case for \$20. Prepaid orders can be made to Andrea Corsillo 703-960-4973 or Tom Wilson 703-585-6327 by Dec. 7. Delivery date is Dec. 15.

THURSDAY/NOV. 29

Public Information Meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Fairfax County Park Authority staff members and wetlands design professionals from Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc. will present a wetlands restoration plan for Huntley Meadows Park, a 50-plus acre freshwater wetland. The public information meeting is in the park Visitor's Center located at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Working closely with the public, wetland experts and design professionals, park staff and volunteers gathered data, developed project goals and worked through several designs over the years. The final design will be presented.

SUNDAYS/DEC. 2, 9, 16 AND 23

Advent Celtic Evening Eucharist Services. 5:30 p.m. St. Aidan's Episcopal Church will be offering a 4-week series of Advent Celtic Evening Eucharist Services. Candlelight, silence, prayers and music from the Celtic tradition will set the tone for this Sunday evening worship and communion service. All are welcome. St. Aidan's Episcopal Church is located in the Fort Hunt neighborhood, 8531 Riverside Road. Call John Baker at 703-360-4221, Susan Hartzell at 703-309-9103 or visit www.staidansepiscopal.com.

Change during the Holidays. 11 a.m. Capital Caring presents "Stress, Grief, and Coping with Change during the Holidays" with bereavement counselor Wendy Maiwurm. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. To reserve a seat, call 703-765-4573.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 5

Mount Vernon At Home. Virginia's Village will be hosting an information session for seniors who want to age in place in the Mount Vernon Community. Membership and volunteer opportunities available. In the Sherwood Meeting Room, Sherwood Regional Library. Call 703-303-4060 or email info@mountvernonathome.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 3

Stress, Grief and Coping with



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9317 Old Mansion Rd
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FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Finding a Home in Fairfax County

Fairfax County has become an immigrant gateway—a place immigrants choose as their destination.

By VICTORIA ROSS
THE GAZETTE

Part one of an ongoing series.

Y esuf Beshir spent nearly three years gathering the mountain of paperwork he needed to leave Ethiopia and emigrate to America. Two years ago, he settled in Springfield and now works as a government contractor. In May, he became an American citizen.

“The main thing here is democracy, the right to vote,” Beshir said. “You can be what you want in America. You can be president. If you want to be a doctor, you can be a doctor. I tell my daughter that the possibilities in America are endless.”

Shahinaz Hassan of Fairfax, originally from Egypt, also became an American citizen in May. “I am happy for today. Everything gets easier here,” she said.

In 1982, Shami Walia emigrated from India. He was 18 years old, and worked in “every job you can think of” all over Northern Virginia. “I didn’t have anything when I came here, but I worked hard.” He now owns Burke Cigar Shop, a popular cigar lounge that’s become a neighborhood fixture.

Rosemary Osei came to Centreville in 2000 from Ghana. The 22-year-old voted in her first presidential election this month, and works as a special needs teacher in Vienna.

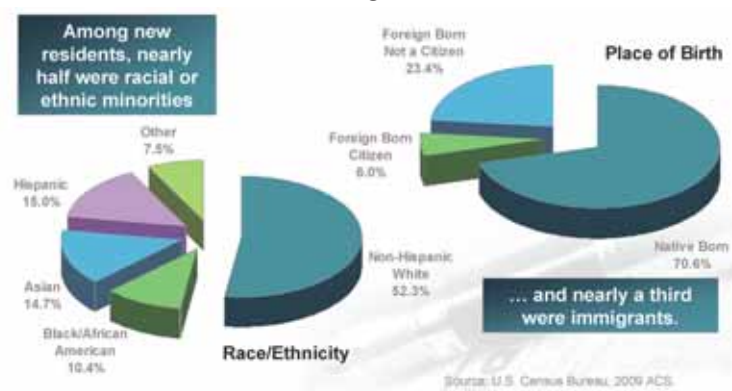
Srikanth Ramachandran came to America 14 years ago from India. In 2002, he founded the Fairfax-based Multivision IT company; by 2007 the company employed 200 people and had \$32 million in sales.

Andy Ton came from Vietnam. He now owns Andy’s Barbershop in Vienna, where customers line up out the door on the weekends. Del. Mark Keam (D-35), the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, is one of his regular customers.

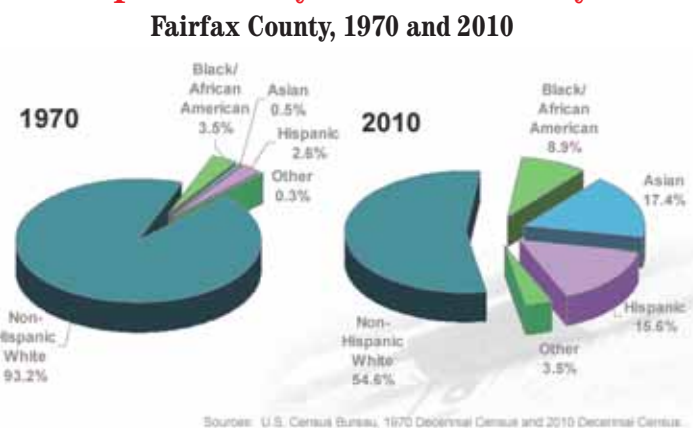
Individually, immigrants bring their own talents, culture, hopes, fears, sorrows, skills and needs. Collectively, they have permanently altered the fabric of Fairfax County.

In the span of one generation, Fairfax County has seen an explo-

Residents Who Moved to Fairfax County During 2009



Population by Race/Ethnicity Fairfax County, 1970 and 2010



sion in its immigrant population. In 1970, more than 93 percent of Fairfax County’s population was white and middle-class. In the fall of 1970, a white 6-year-old child beginning elementary school in one of the county’s developing towns—Chantilly, McLean, Vienna, Herndon and Centreville (which did not yet have one major grocery store or drug store)—could look to his left, or look to his right, and see a classroom full of children who, at least 90 percent of the time, looked like him and who spoke English.

By 2010, a child entering elementary school in Fairfax County would almost certainly encounter a classmate who did not speak English as a primary language, and whose parents or grandparents immigrated from places such as Vietnam, India, Korea or a country in Africa.

According to the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, more than 46 percent of the county’s population are of a racial or ethnic minority, and nearly a third are immigrants.

“I think the migrant population is creating a richness and diversity and really enhancing our culture,” said Frederic Bemak, PhD, director of the Diversity Research and Action Center at George Mason University. He said residents notice changes in obvious ways and subtle ones.

“There’s a language change; there’s a cultural change; there’s a change as you walk down the street in the communities, there are changes in signs on the storefront because some of them are in different languages . . . or in churches, religious institutions. I hear it all day, ‘It’s not like it used to be.’ Well, it’s not, and that’s positive,” Bemak said.

In comparison—from 1990 to 2010—the United States doubled the number of migrants settling in America.

“By 2020—and this is astounding—the children and adolescents of migrants will comprise one third of the U.S. population... one-third,” Bemak said. “People don’t know that, if we’re talking about

children... that’s our future. And if that’s only 2020, imagine what 2040 be like.”

Bemak argues that a healthy process of acculturation and adjustment—when existing cultural features are combined, and new features are generated—is possible, but only when the non-immigrant culture reaches out.

“We know racism and discrimination have an impact on people’s mental health. We say ‘you’ve got to figure out how to be here,’ [The work] is simultaneously with the larger communities. . . . Those issues have to be attended to at the same time we help people adjust, adapt, acculturate,” Bemak said.

Bemak said he disliked the word “tolerance,” because it suggests that we’re just “tolerating” immigrants. “We need to respect and celebrate immigrants,” Bemak said.

Parents often notice the increasing inflow of diverse cultures at their children’s schools. Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield, for example, reflects the increasing diversity of the community in its student body. The school, which opened in 1958 with nearly all white students, now has students from 42 countries who speak more than 34 languages.

In the 2009-2010 school year, according to FCPS, Lee High School’s student body was slightly more than 30 percent white, 26 percent Asian, 24 percent Hispanic and about 16 percent black.

“Go to a high school graduation and listen to the names being read. It’s not just Smith and Jones anymore,” said Lee High School parent Paula Montero, who came with her parents from El Salvador when she was 6 years old.

Statistics show the breathtaking breadth of change in diversity and immigration in Northern Virginia:

❖ From 2000 until 2010, Fairfax County gained 91,165 immi-

❖ Forty-four percent of Fairfax County elementary school students currently speak a language other than English at home. That’s nearly 40,000 students who go home to households that speak one of more than 100 languages.

❖ Among new residents who moved to the county in 2009, nearly half were racial or ethnic minorities, and nearly one-third were immigrants.

❖ In the decade from 1990 to 2000, the increase in the number of foreign born in Fairfax communities included: Centreville, 323 percent; Herndon, 168 percent; City of Fairfax, 88 percent; Springfield, 78 percent; Burke, 63 percent; and McLean, 10 percent.

❖ 19,301 (6.4 percent) immigrants in Fairfax County are self-employed business owners. This is higher than the 4.1 percent of self-employed business owners who are U.S.-born Americans.

Between 1990 and 2000, Fairfax County became an immigrant gateway—a place immigrants choose as their destination upon entering the United States, according to a 2006 Fairfax County demographic report. The trend continues. In 2010, Kiplinger called Fairfax County one of the nation’s top eight gateways for immigrants.

“Immigrants to this region come from nearly every country in the world, and some localities are home to people from more than 100 countries,” said Audrey Singer, a senior fellow in metropolitan policy at the Brookings Institution.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

According to scholars at the Brookings Institute, localities and their residents typically respond in one of two ways to newcomers: they either accommodate diversity or deflect immigrants through policies and procedures.

“I hear it all day, ‘It’s not like it used to be.’ Well, it’s not, and that’s positive.”

— Frederic Bemak, PhD, director of the Diversity Research and Action Center at George Mason University

grants. In 2000, Fairfax County had 237,677 foreign-born residents; in 2010, the number of foreign-born spiked to 328,842, according to the American Community Survey and the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 Decennial Census,

The rate and intensity of immigrants settling in Fairfax County have pushed community leaders to acknowledge the scope of diversity and address the benefits, as well as the challenges, created by the rapid influx of immigrants.



PHOTO BY DEB COBB/THE GAZETTE

Khatira Alvarez (left) of Springfield, and Laura Simon-Salzer of McLean, took the Oath of Allegiance and became naturalized American citizens at a ceremony on July 10, held in the Hayfield Secondary School auditorium.

In Upcoming Weeks

During the next month, *The Gazette* Newspaper will feature stories, viewpoints and columns about the significant impact immigrants have in Fairfax County.

- ❖ Part II focuses on immigration and Fairfax County Public Schools;
- ❖ Part III examines politics of immigration;
- ❖ Part IV explores the religious and cultural diversity immigrants bring to Fairfax County.

We encourage your letters and thoughts as we explore this topic.

When R. Scott Silverthorne became the 10th person to serve as mayor of the City of Fairfax in June, he made diversity a talking point, promising to recognize and reflect the city's growing diversity through representation on the city's boards and committees.

"It's no secret that our community continues to diversify," Silverthorne said during his swearing-in ceremony.

"When former Mayor Rob Lederer graduated high school, our minority population was just over 2 percent. When I graduated high school 10 years later, the minority population was 10 percent. Today, it's 40 percent," Silverthorne said, noting that in the Fairfax County school system, more than 100 languages are spoken. "I believe we have turned a blind eye to this trend."

Sharon Bulova, Fairfax County's Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, has emphasized and celebrated Fairfax County's diverse cultures in a number of ways. In 2009, she supported Filipino advocate Corazon Sandoval Foley's efforts to organize and host the first Naturalization Ceremony in the Fairfax County Government Center.

"Everywhere you look, there are

signs of diversity in our community," Bulova said. "And it's made us a richer, stronger place. It's important that Fairfax County is recognized as a community that welcomes people from all backgrounds."

One of the basic ways that Fairfax County reaches new immigrants is by publishing materials in languages other than English, tailored to specific immigrant communities. For example, the Fairfax County Guide to Emergency Preparedness, as well as many other county brochures, is available in six languages—English, Arabic, Farsi, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

The growing immigration population in Fairfax County has presented some challenges. While the county's "politics of place" may be welcoming, the realities of rapid change, in particular the challenges and issues low-income immigrants face, can be daunting.

According to a 2006 study, "Unsettling Immigrant Geographies and the Politics of Scale," the shifting of responsibility from the federal government to localities for the integration, assimilation and social welfare of immigrants has

A Way Out of No Way

Two women—
one African-American and
one from Africa—learn to
see America through each
other's eyes.



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE GAZETTE

Lillie Reynolds and Rosemary Osei in Reston Town Center in November.

Rosemary Osei, 22, and Lillie Reynolds, 61, have been good friends for four years. The two women, who help teach special needs students at a Vienna elementary school, are sometimes mistaken for mother and daughter.

They bonded over their faith — both are devout Christians — and family values.

Recently, they attended a rally for President Obama at George Mason University. The 2012 presidential election was the first time Osei was exercising her right to vote as an American citizen, and Reynolds was proud of her.

"Voting is a powerful feeling," Reynolds said. "It's one of the best things about being an American."

Although they have much in common, both women said they've learned important lessons from their differences.

"We both experience being Americans in different ways. Rosemary came here because she wanted to come here," Reynolds said. "My family was brought here in chains. ... We've both found a way out of no way."

Osei spent the first 12 years of her life in Ghana. In 2003, she and her younger brother, Reuben, reunited with her family in Centreville. She became an American citizen on Aug. 25, 2012.

"In over nine years of living in the U.S., my proudest moment was on Nov. 6, 2012, when I waited in line for over an hour to help re-elect the president of the United States. I am now proud to say I am an American citizen."

LIKE MANY IMMIGRANTS, Osei said she grew up seeing America as a land of wealth and opportunity. She said there was always a celebration when family friends would come back from America, because they brought armfuls of clothes, candy and toys. "It was something special and magical to me," Osei said.

"Although I lived a comfortable life in Ghana, I believed that America would be a better place to live. To me America represents freedom and justice. Since the money is higher in America, I believed my family and I would become rich and have more money than we had in Ghana," Osei said.

She said she was disheartened when — as a 7th grader at Liberty Elementary School — she did not receive the welcome she anticipated.

"In my country, when we saw white people, we welcomed them. We wanted them to think well of us and come back. I thought everyone would welcome me when I came here," Osei said. Instead, Osei said she felt out of place "as though I didn't belong because of the complexion of my skin color." She said she often cried, and ate lunch in the school's bathroom. Within a month, the 12-year-old yearned to return to Ghana.

"I wanted to go back 'home' to my friends. I was very unhappy because I wasn't being welcomed and accepted for who I am as a person,"

she said.

Reynolds said she understands that feeling all too well. She grew up in Mobile, Ala. in the 1950s and '60s, during state-sponsored segregation, a time when laws forced blacks and whites to use different drinking fountains, public parks, pools and transportation.

"I have a lot of friends from Africa. They didn't understand why I was so excited to be voting for President Obama the first time. I had to explain to them that we didn't always have the right to vote, and I didn't think I'd live to see the day I could vote for a black man," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said she remembers when she and her sister would walk to go shopping in downtown Mobile. "You could buy the clothes, but you couldn't try them on because white people didn't want to touch anything a black person wore," she said.

Osei said it was eye opening to learn about the United States' recent history of racial discrimination. "When Lillie tells me stories about growing up in America as a black girl in the '60s, it breaks my heart," Osei said.

"It's one thing to watch a movie on TV about how horrible African Americans were treated in the past, but it's another thing to know someone who lived through those experience.

"I was in my 40s, my 40s," Reynolds said, pausing, "before I stopped hating myself for being black."

"My daddy was a smart man," she said. "He was a lumber-checker, and he was really good at math. He did everybody's taxes in our part of town. But he couldn't ride in the front seat of a car with a white person or he'd get arrested. He was talked down to by white people, called 'boy.' ... I always felt hurt and angry for him."

Reynolds said her grandmother had a saying that stuck with her "She would say nobody is better than you and you're no better than anybody else. My family was smart. I grew up strong in one way and beat down in another."

"It took me to become an adult and to witness a black man become president of the United State of America before I could really feel proud about being an American," said Reynolds. "And make no mistake about it, I am proud to be an American, and proud to live here."

BOTH REYNOLDS AND OSEI said they like living in Fairfax County, where they get to experience the benefits of such a vibrant, diverse culture.

"I am proud of so many things now. It makes me proud of America for how far we, as people, have changed for the better," Osei said. "Most of all I am proud of Lillie for not allowing her past experience turns her into a bitter person—an angry black woman—but instead she is a stronger, independent black woman, who treats everyone with respect."

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Fairfax Becomes Immigrants' Gateway

FROM PAGE 17

caused frustration and some resentment.

In Fairfax County, slightly more than half of those who are classified as "foreign born" live below the poverty line. Minority students, according to FCPS records, are less likely to graduate from high school on time. The on-time graduation rate for the class of 2010 was 95.6 percent for white students, 94.5 percent for Asian students, 87.5 percent for black students and 75.3 percent for Hispanic or Latino students. On the flip side, Asian students make up more than 60 percent of students admitted through a rigorous admissions process to Fairfax County's elite magnet school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

Immigrants are less likely to have health care coverage. Although immigrants comprise about 30 percent of the county's total population, they comprise 63.5 percent of the county's uninsured residents.

Immigrants are also more likely to experience housing discrimination. According to Fairfax County's Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs, the agency that enforces fair housing laws in the county, discrimination cases have been on the rise in Fairfax County in the past six years.

"Sadly, housing discrimination is alive and well and we've seen an uptick in complaints during the past six years," said Ken Saunders, executive director of Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs.

Although discrimination based on race remains an issue, Saunders reports that in recent years complaints received by his office are related to national origin or involve disability-related issues.

In contrast to national trends, discrimination based on nationality made up 25.6 percent of complaints from 2008 to 2010. In comparison, about 9 percent of complaints to HUD fall under this category. Discrimination complaints, Saunders said, are not filed by one particular group.

"It runs the gamut. We have complaints from Latin Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, individuals from the Continent of Africa," Saunders said. Saunders said Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs does a significant amount of education and outreach to communities with limited English proficiency, by hosting seminars aimed at various ethnic groups and by publishing and disseminating information in a number of languages.

VIBRANT CULTURE THROUGH IMMIGRATION

Most community leaders and residents in Fairfax County agree the benefits of diversity and immigration outweigh the challenges.

"Fairfax County is proud to be a community in which companies of all descriptions can and do succeed to a greater extent than in the rest of the region, the state or the country," said Gerald L. Gordon, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

In September, the county was recognized as a successful market for minority-owned businesses in several national business publication rankings. Businesses owned by Hispanics, African-Americans and women generated nearly \$1 billion in revenue and



Frederic Bemak

provided more than 1,000 jobs, according to the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

Eleven Fairfax County-based companies were among the 500 largest Hispanic-owned businesses in the nation based on revenue—more than the total in 40 states, according to HispanicBusiness.com.

The Fairfax County companies comprise 22 from Virginia on the 2012 Hispanic Business 500 list. In the Washington area, eight companies are from Maryland and two are from the District of Columbia.

Together these companies generated \$655 million in revenue and employed more than 3,000 workers in 2011, according to Hispanic Business.

CELEBRATING OTHER CULTURES

There are numerous ways to experience the cultural diversity of Fairfax County, but perhaps one of the most accessible is by attending one of the county's Naturalization Ceremonies.

"Immigrants bring talent and culture to our community in many ways, and make us who we are," said Bulova. "Every time I attend one of our Naturalization Ceremonies, I'm reminded of how important diversity is to Fairfax County."

On May 25, 2012, Bulova presented the Certificates of Naturalization to 75 new Americans in the Fairfax County Government Center. The board room was packed with immigrants and their families from every corner of the globe—Afghanistan, The Congo, Costa Rica, Burma, India, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

"Some of you have endured hardships to arrive at this time and place," Bulova said in her remarks. "All of you have invested your time, money and efforts to become citizens. Many of you came here to escape war or endless poverty. . . . You who are here today now officially have a seat at that table."

Samuel DeVera, a captain with the county's Fire and Rescue Department and a member of the Fairfax County Asian American Firefighters' Association, gave the keynote address, telling the audience his personal story of coming to America from the Philippines when he was 14 years old in 1983. After becoming a paramedic in 1994, he received a Valor award and, in 2010, scored first on the test to become a captain with the Fire and Rescue Department.

"Look at me. The one thing I can say is work hard to make you and your families better," DeVera said. "If you're vice president of the company, aim to be president. I'm not here to encourage you; I want to challenge you."

The room was quiet when U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11) stepped to the podium.

"My fellow Americans," Connolly said with gravitas, pausing to let the meaning sink in. And when it did, 75 immigrants, who had just raised their right hand and taken the Oath of Allegiance to become American citizens, erupted with applause and tears, waving American flags and hugging family members.

"You now join us. . . . Every new wave of immigrants refreshes us, makes us stronger," Connolly said, leading the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE GAZETTE



BY ALEX MCVEIGH/THE GAZETTE

Ellen Graves leads newly naturalized citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance Saturday, Sept. 22 at Lake Anne.

VIEWPOINTS

Immigrants' Experiences: Becoming Americans

On Sept. 22 at the Multicultural Festival on Lake Anne Plaza in Reston, 25 people participated in a naturalization ceremony that made them American citizens. Some of them talk about how they came to the U.S. and why they chose to become citizens.

—AMIEE FREEMAN



PHOTOS BY AMIEE FREEMAN

Xiomara Artola, currently living in Woodbridge, originally from El Salvador

"Since I was 18 I had thought about becoming a citizen. But I was young then. I have lived here since kindergarten and I went to school here. Now that I am 23 I felt that it was time to complete the naturalization process."



Jose Zalles, currently living in Woodbridge, originally from Bolivia

"I came here as a very young person. My parents came here first and then I followed. I grew up here. My parents already spoke English. I never really felt the need to become a citizen until recently. During college I saw opportunities that were only available to citizens, so I thought it was time for me to become one."



Seung Il Kim, currently living in Falls Church, originally from South Korea

"This is really a very special event. I have been a member of the community for a long time, but not really. Until now I never had the rights or responsibilities of a citizen."



Bassam Ghazi, currently living in Ashburn, originally from Lebanon

"I came here on a visit 25 years ago and decided I would like to stay here. So, I got my green card. Now I will have time to travel and see more of the country."



Saaeddine Zaghbani, currently living in Burke, originally from Tunisia

"From today I can say I am an American citizen. It is a big honor. For me it is a great opportunity. I can live my dream. My first step as a citizen will be to vote freely. I have visited 47 countries, lived in five of them. Here is where I want to stay."

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to members of the NY, nonprofit, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc., that eligible ASCO members may vote by proxy ballot from Oct. 15 to Nov. 20, 2012 to elect the President Elect, three seats on the Board of Directors, and three seats on the Nominating Committee for service beginning on June 3, 2013. Information about proxy ballots is available at www.asco.org. Completed proxy ballots will be delivered to the ASCO President or his designee for casting at a meeting held on Nov. 26, 2012, 8:30-9:00 AM at ASCO Headquarters, 2318 Mill Road, Suite 800, Alexandria, VA 22318. Members with questions can email ASCOelection@asco.org or call 571-483-1316.

21 Announcements

21 Announcements

St. Aidan's Day School
Holiday Marketplace
Friday, November 30 and Saturday, December 1 from 9 AM - 2 PM
Come shop from 25+ vendors selling everything from unique, handcrafted art and accessories to handpicked childrenswear and toys. Also on hand will be representatives from local businesses providing services from party-planning to onsite holiday photo sessions.

26 Antiques

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21 Announcements

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Fairfax Water
NOTICE OF WATER RATE Public Hearing

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 13, 2012, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

- The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2013, include the following:
1. An increase in the Availability Charge from \$3,700 to \$3,850†.
 2. An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$9,000 to \$9,500.
 3. An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,000 to \$1,050†.
 4. An increase in the Account Charge from \$33 to \$35.
 5. An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$8.35 to \$9.20†.
 6. An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$2.16 to \$2.29 per 1,000 gallons of water.
 7. An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$3.20 to \$3.45 per 1,000 gallons of water.
 8. An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$46 to \$50.
 9. An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
 10. An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge from \$41 to \$44.
 11. An increase in the Returned Payment Charge from \$16 to \$17.

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our Web site at <http://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm>. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017. Interested parties also may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 to be included in the record of the public hearing.

*Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2013 BUDGET

Fairfax County Water Authority (Fairfax Water) is proposing a \$143.4 million budget for calendar year 2013¹.

On Thursday, December 13, 2012, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed 2013 Budget in its offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax. The public hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. A copy of the proposed budget can be viewed on our Web site at <http://www.fairfaxwater.org/>. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed budget should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017.

Revenues are expected to be \$143.4 million in 2013. Water sales are expected to provide \$124.6 million. Approximately \$18.8 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2012	2013
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$46,473	\$48,367
Power and Utilities	11,345	11,686
Chemicals	6,694	7,968
Fuel	916	960
Postage	547	460
Insurance	1,300	1,107
Supplies and Materials	3,976	4,233
Contractual Services	8,749	8,657
Professional Services	1,656	1,902
Other	2,005	2,285
Sub-Total	83,661	87,625
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(9,559)	(9,613)
Total	74,102	78,012

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:
Debt Payment \$39,374,000
Improvement Fund \$11,000,000
General Fund \$14,068,000

¹ Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

ENTERTAINMENT

A Magical Time of Year

Magicians to entertain children with free show Dec. 5 while helping the Alexandria branch of the Salvation Army.

BY AMBER HEALY
THE GAZETTE

There's something special about the holiday season, between the sparkling lights, frosted windows, endless baked goodies and the wonder that anything is possible.

That same feeling of awe makes it the perfect time of year for a magic show, and that's precisely the sentiment that led Ring 50, the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, to host a magic show for area children.

"We started this last year when we wanted to do something to give back to the community, not just hold a children's magic show," said Daniel Selnick, the club's president.

WITH MORE THAN 100 magicians in the group, Ring 50 decided to feature different magicians this year, and the interest was huge, Selnick said. Some are working magicians whose weekends are filled with children's birthday parties and other events, while others

are hobbyists who don't get the opportunity to perform as often. Each will take the stage in the cafeteria

at Bishop Ireton High School for a 15-minute performance, with another magician serving as emcee for the event keeping the

kids entertained between sets.

This year's emcee is Arlington resident Arnold Fuoco, who said his job is to keep the children focused without losing their interest in what's going on.

"There were so many kids last year," Fuoco remembers. He worked the show last year as a videographer and was eager to help out again this year, in a larger capacity.

He intends to do some "vanishes and productions" during his in-between-acts performances, making things disappear or appear out of seeming nothingness.

A magician for 20 years, Fuoco said he got his first magic set as a Christmas present when he was a little boy, and the fascination grew. But, like the other magicians also admitted, magic took a backseat to school, work and families, never fully disappearing from their interests.

"When I got into my 50s, I went into Al's Magic Shop in D.C., looking to buy tricks for a child," he said. "That got me hooked again."

Fuoco said performing during the holidays makes the show more fun, the magic more real.

"Christmas is wonderment," he said. "Magic is wonderment."

That's a sentiment shared by this year's magicians as well.

Spread Some Cheer

Ring 50 of the International Brotherhood of Magicians will be offering their holiday magic show Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Bishop Ireton High School, located at 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria, from 7-8:15 p.m. A donation of a new toy or canned food item is suggested for admission, but no one will be turned away. Donations will benefit the Alexandria branch of the Salvation Army.



A magician known as Capt. Token displays his magical abilities

Hugh Turley, a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians Ring 50 club, performs during last year's holiday magic show.

Theo Rushin, one of this year's performers, said he got into magic as a child and returned to it at the urging of his wife in recent years. In Ring 50, he works with children who are interested in becoming magicians or just looking to learn a few tricks to impress their friends.

Performing for children is his favorite, because "children simply accept what you're doing as being magic," whereas older children or adults might spend more time trying to figure out how a particular trick works.

As an added feature, Rushin, who lives in Gaithersburg, said he won't be speaking during his routine, but while he's silent, there will be a soundtrack to create a world into which the audience can watch the tricks unfold.

"I'll tell the story of a kid so excited for Christmas that he wakes up at night to see what he got," and tries to figure out his gifts by shaking or looking at boxes, he said.

Kevin McGuire, who performs as "The

Amazing Kevin," served as the emcee last year and had such a good time, he couldn't resist taking on a bigger role this year.

He's incorporating the holiday theme into his set, using candy cane wands and a Santa Claus hat among other props.

Performing in front of children "is a euphoria. It's so energizing. That's what drives me to do the magic I do. Kids are so into it, they really believe this can happen," he said.

McGuire, the vice president of the club and a Stafford resident, said magic never gets old or stale for him.

"You can do a trick 100 times, and then there's that one time you do it and it's even better than it's been in the past," he said. "That makes it all even better."

Drew Owen, whose stage name is Professor Fizzwiffle, said he started putting together this character when his children became interested in the Harry Potter books.

"Professor Fizzwiffle is a goofy guy who

SEE RING 50, PAGE 24

CALENDAR

E-mail announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Photos and artwork are encouraged. Deadline is Thursday at noon.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 21

Santa Claus. 9:30 - 11 a.m. The Alexandria/Mount Vernon Antiques Club will feature Kevin Rawlings, who will be in costume as he portrays Santa Claus during the Civil War Years of the 1860s. Free. Public invited. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Call Ann Connell at 703-360-4979.

National Thanksgiving Turkey Welcoming Ceremony. 3 p.m. Immediately following President Obama's "pardon" of the National Thanksgiving Turkey, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Museum & Gardens will welcome the turkey with a ceremony featuring a trumpet fanfare and proclamation read by Washington's farm manager, "James Anderson." The turkey will arrive to the front of the Mansion in a horse-drawn carriage guided by staff dressed in 18th-century

costumes for the ceremony. The turkey will be on display for visitors during "Christmas at Mount Vernon," a daily program that takes place Nov. 23 through Jan. 6. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Museum & Gardens, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.

FRIDAY/NOV. 23

Alexandria Black Friday Sale and Festivities. 6 a.m. and all day. Following in the tradition of Black Friday kicking off the holiday shopping season, local retailers will open early on Black Friday offering once-a-year deals to lure shoppers to Old Town Alexandria. Stay for the city's annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at 7 p.m. Call 703-746-3301 or visit www.alexandriava.com.

Bike Ride. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. The Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee November informal community bike ride will be an escape from Black Friday. This winter ride will be take place at Mt Vernon trail. Meet outside Firehook bakery, 430 S Washington St. Bring a bicycle and water. RSVP

recommended. Contact Jonathan Krall at jonathan@jonathankrall.net.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 23-24

The Seldom Scene & Dry Branch Fire Squad at the Birchmere. \$35. Visit www.seldomscene.com or www.drybranchfiresquad.com. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 23-25

St. Aidan's Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Freshly-cut Fraser Fir Trees & wreaths from North Carolina. For parents with children in local public elementary schools, give back 10 percent to the PTA of any choice. Hot cider, cookies, and music will be offered. At St Aidan's Episcopal Church at 8531 Riverside Road. Call 703-360-4220 or visit www.staidansepiscopal.com.

Historic Candlelight Tours. 5-8 p.m. Join "Mrs. Washington" as she hosts an evening of candlelight tours,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 23



Christmas Tree & Wreaths at St. Aidan's

St. Aidan's Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale starts on Friday, Nov. 23 and then runs Saturdays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1 and 8) and Sundays (Nov. 25, Dec. 2 and 9) through Dec. 9, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Freshly-cut Fraser Fir trees and wreaths from North Carolina. For parents with children in local public elementary schools, St. Aidan's will give back 10 percent to the PTA of your choice. Hot cider, cookies, and music makes this a festive event for the entire family. St Aidan's Episcopal Church is located at 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria (across from Stratford Elementary). Call 703-360-4220 or visit www.staidansepiscopal.com.

ENTERTAINMENT



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MetroStage
artistic director
Carolyn Griffin,
left, celebrates
the opening of "A
Broadway Christ-
mas Carol" Nov.
18 with cast
members Michael
Sharp, Jacob
Kidder, Russell
Sunday and
Tracey Stephens.



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

What the Dickens?

MetroStage continues
"Broadway Christmas
Carol" tradition.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Oh come, all ye faithful fans of musical theater. For the third year running, MetroStage is staging the wickedly funny "A Broadway Christmas Carol," an irreverent musical take on the classic novel by Charles Dickens.

"We're so glad MetroStage brought this Christmas show back," said Becky Mahood, who attended the Nov. 18 performance with her husband Adron Krekeler. "I missed it last year and it is truly one of the funniest shows I have ever seen. The Broadway songs added a tremendous amount of humor."

A parody of the oft-told Dickens tale, the shameless Broadway spoof follows Ebenezer Scrooge as he is visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future. Through the inventive work of creator Kathy Feininger, Scrooge is shown the error of his miserly ways through the songs of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim.

Feininger uses Broadway's finest to lampoon the holiday classic, cleverly creating lyrics for more than 30 musical numbers. A talented cast of three takes on the multitude of characters with various backgrounds and personalities.

Reprising the central role of Scrooge is Helen Hayes award-winner Michael Sharp, who also acts as director and choreographer. A versatile performer, Sharp is better than ever as he brings his strong vocals and expert comedic timing to the vaudevillian musical numbers.

"I have a great time performing this role," Sharp said. "I have fun when I am out there

and if you don't have a good time on stage, the audience won't have a good time."

New to this year's cast is Russell Sunday as The Man Who Isn't Scrooge. Sunday tackles the roles of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's nephew Fred, the Ghost of Christmas Past and even Tiny Tim with uproarious aplomb.

Tracey Stephens is back as The Woman Who Isn't Scrooge, playing the ghost of Jacob Marley, the Ghost of Christmas Present, Mrs. Cratchit, Scrooge's fiancé and the woman seeking holiday donations for the poor.

The exceptionally gifted Sunday and Stephens tackle the demanding character and split-second costume changes with astonishing ease while Sharp brings tenderness and vulnerability to the villainous Scrooge. All three have voices that soar throughout the challenging score of Broadway melodies.

Central to the acting performances is the on-stage musical accompaniment by musical director Jacob Kidder, who dons a Phantom of the Opera mask to serve as the Ghost of Christmas Fu-

**"You really have to see it
to believe it."**

— Audience member Susan Kellom

ture.

With dozens of inside jokes aimed at theater buffs, part of the fun of "A Broadway Christmas Carol" is recognizing the songs Feininger has transformed for the show.

"I can't believe the imagination that goes into making Broadway songs fit into the Dickens theme," said audience member Susan Kellom. "It makes you laugh so hard, you really have to see it to believe it."

There is no better way to kick off the holiday season than with "A Broadway Christmas Carol." The inside Broadway references are clever enough for the theatre cognoscenti but thoroughly entertaining for anyone looking for a lively alternative to traditional holiday entertainment.

"A Broadway Christmas Carol" is playing through Dec. 23 at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. For tickets or more information, call 703-548-9044 or visit www.metrostage.org.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 21

fireside caroling, and hot cider and ginger cookies. Tours include merry music, and characters from the Washingtons' world guiding visitors through the first and second floors of the home, adding ambiance and authenticity to a traditional Christmas evening at Mount Vernon. Tickets may be purchased at the Ford Orientation Center (9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily), or through MountVernon.org. Admission is \$22 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. Call 703-780-2000 or 703-799-8697 or visit www.MountVernon.org.

NOV. 23 THROUGH DEC. 9

Old Town Boutique District's Window Wonderland. Come out to Old Town Alexandria and view the festive Window Wonderland of holiday lights and decorations on display at our local boutiques. Throughout Old Town Alexandria. Visit oldtownboutiquedistrict.com.

NOV. 23 THROUGH JAN. 6

Christmas at Mount Vernon. Visitors will get a glimpse of how the Washingtons might have decorated and entertained during the holiday season. Tour the rarely-open third floor of the Mansion and learn how the Washingtons celebrated Christmas. During Christmas at Mount Vernon, visitors can meet Aladdin, the resident camel. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 24

Holiday Open House. At Contessa's Home and Garden, 1906 Mount Vernon Ave. Kick-off the Holiday season with new gifts, live tree and seasonal decorative items. Refreshments will be served. Receive

20 percent off entire purchase 4-6 p.m. Visit www.contessas.wordpress.com or call 703-548-1882.

Wee Ones Storytime. 10:30-11 a.m. Explore the exciting world around us with some of our favorite stories and songs. Ages 2 and under. Free. Hooray for Books is located at 1555 King Street. Call 703-548-4092 or visit www.hooray4books.com.

NOV. 24 THROUGH DEC. 23

Santa Claus is Coming to Old Town. Santa and Mrs. Claus are back in Old Town Alexandria to take pictures with children every Saturday and Sunday between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The cost for pictures is \$15 for a 5 x 7 print. Hours: Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except for Dec. 1 (Scottish Walk Parade day) when hours are 1-5 p.m.; Sundays, noon-5 p.m. At Bike and Roll Alexandria, One Wales Alley. Call 703-501-6289 or visit oldtownboutiquedistrict.com.

SUNDAY/NOV. 25

Duncan Sheik. 7:30 p.m. \$29.50. Visit www.duncansheik.com/. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

Birchmere Show. 7:30 p.m. Courier to open for Duncan Sheik 'Sunset Sessions Tour.' The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

Coffee + Critique + Conversation. 10:30 a.m. to noon. Free. Photographers and art enthusiasts of all levels are invited to engage in friendly dialogue and share their portfolios, projects,

ideas, and questions. Multiple Exposures Gallery (Studio 312), 105 North Union St. Call 703-683-2205 or visit

www.multipleexposuresgallery.com.

Photos with Santa Claus. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Join Alexandria Firefighters & Paramedics for photos with Santa Claus at Firehouse 201 at 317 Prince St. A \$10 donation includes photograph with Santa in front of the historic 1863 "Champion" Steam Engine in one of Alexandria's oldest operating firehouses as well as a credit for one medium resolution digital image or one 4x6 print. All images taken are available to view online and reprints are affordably priced starting at \$2.99 for a 4x6. Proceeds benefit the Helping Hands Relief Fund and the Alexandria Fire Department Children's Holiday Toy Drive. Visit http://local2141.smugmug.com.

THROUGH NOV. 25

"Photographers at the Factory Invitational Exhibit." Juried by LensWork founder and editor, Brooks Jensen. Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursdays 12-9 p.m. The opening reception is on Nov. 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. Free and open to the public. At Multiple Exposures Gallery located at 105 N. Union St. #312. Call 703-683-2205. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

Photography exhibition: "Telling Images." See photographic techniques and interpretations that tell a story without words. Call 703-960-3873, email jldtiff@cox.net or visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org.

MONDAY/NOV. 26

James Fortune & Jessica Reedy 'Celebrate Christmas.' 7:30 p.m. \$29.50. Visit jessicareedymusic.com/.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 24

The Best in Family Dining



Food fit for a king on a family budget

An Alexandria community fixture for more than 100 years, the Royal Restaurant offers the best in Greek, Italian and American cuisine. Enjoy burgers, steaks, prime rib, chicken, seafood, pasta and full salad bar complete with special children's menu items.



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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 23

FIRST NIGHT ALEXANDRIA®

DECEMBER 31, 2012

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PLUS afternoon adventures with the Fourth Annual Fun Hunt and new creative and culinary activities all around town

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

Children 12 and under, and active military are **FREE**



Badge and schedule information at FirstNightAlexandria.org



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Did you know?

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Put the ZIP on Homelessness by wearing jeans December 14 in exchange for a \$5 contribution to the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness.

Learn More & Sign Up

<http://jeansday2012.eventbrite.com>

In 2011, more than 100 employers representing 3,000 employees participated in this community-wide give-back initiative. Help us boost those numbers in 2012!



The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

TUESDAY/NOV. 27

Graham Parker & The Rumour Reunion. 7:30 p.m. At the Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. \$35. Visit <http://www.grahamparker.net>. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

THURSDAY/NOV. 29

Torpedo Factory Art Center Holiday Open House. 6-9 p.m. Free. Join the Torpedo Factory Art Center's artists for the annual Holiday Open House. Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts while enjoying sweets and savories from Bread & Chocolate. Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Call 703-838-4565 or visit www.torpedofactory.org.

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/NOV. 29-30

Will Downing. 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$69.50. Visit www.willdowning.com. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 29-DEC. 1

The Nutcracker. West Potomac Academy and Alexandria Community Dance present their fourth annual joint performance of The Nutcracker, at West Potomac High School at 6500 Quander Road. Thursday, Nov. 29, at 5 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 30, at 6:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 1, at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for students and \$12 for adults in advance, or \$12 for students and \$15 for adults at the door. Visit www.Alexandriadance.com.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30

Craft Sale. Heritage Presbyterian Church will hold a "Made By The Bell" Christmas Boutique on Nov. 30, from 3-7 p.m. and on Dec. 1, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. 8503 Fort Hunt Road. One hundred percent of the proceeds go to support Heritage Presbyterian Women's outreach programs. Call 703-360-9546.

Free Concert. 8 p.m. Enjoy an evening of music for Clarinet at The Lyceum located at 201 S. Washington St. This free concert is offered as a public service. Call The United States Air Force Band's Concert Line at 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

Book Signing. 6:30 p.m. Jordan Jacobs will be signing his book, "Samantha Sutton and the Labyrinth of Lies." Hooray for Books is located at 1555 King Street. Call 703-548-4092 or visit hooray4books.com.

THROUGH NOV. 30

Art Exhibition. The Gallery at Convergence presents "pitture e parole" ("Paintings and Words"), a solo exhibition from artist, Lynne Elizabeth Heiser. A portion of all sales benefit Convergence programs including Artist's Way, Convergence Shared Artists Studios, and the Lab All Ages. Opening reception on Oct. 6 from 7-9 p.m. Email Lynne@in2itCreative.com or call 703-915-0917 to RSVP. Call 703-998-6260 or visit www.convergencecccf.net.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 30-DEC. 1

Annual Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend. On Dec. 1, more than 100 Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans will parade through the streets of Old Town. They'll be joined by pipe and drum bands from around the region, as well as terriers and hounds of every description. The Saint Andrew's Society of Washington, D.C., partners with the Campagna Center and the City of Alexandria to host the annual parade. Other events of the weekend include A Christmas Marketplace and A Taste of Scotland, both on Nov. 30, and the Campagna Center's Holiday Designer Tour of Homes on Dec. 1. Free for parade and marketplace; \$100 Taste of Scotland (general admission); \$35 Designer Tour of Homes. Call 703-549-0111 or visit scottishchristmaswalk.com.

Alexandria Harmonizers Holiday Dinner Theater. Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Featuring seasonal favorites in caroling and choral masterpiece sets; a light hearted musical play starring the one and only "Jack In The Box"; plus a delicious dinner served by your singing Harmonizer waiters. Reserved table seating. Adults \$30, children \$15, seniors \$25. Purchase tickets at www.harmonizers.org. Venue: First Baptist Church of Alexandria, 2932 King St. Call 571-969-1377 or visit www.harmonizers.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 30-DEC. 2

Del Ray Artisans' 17th annual Holiday Market. Handmade work from local artists plus bake sale. Reception is on Friday, from 6-9 p.m. The hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday and noon-4 p.m. on

Sunday. Visit TheDelRayArtisans.org/HolidayMarket.

Artfête Weekend. Open house and holiday party celebrate expansion of Madison Annex. Ceramic and jewelry sales continue throughout the weekend. Artfête holiday party is on Friday, Nov. 30, 6-9 p.m. Ceramic sale is noon-9 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday, and noon-5 p.m. on Sunday. Jewelry sale is noon-9 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, and noon-4 p.m. on Sunday. At The Art League's Madison Annex, 305 Madison St. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-2323.

NOV. 30 THROUGH DEC. 16

The Little Theatre of Alexandria's "A Christmas Carol." 8 p.m. Ring in the holiday season with a return of the classic by Charles Dickens. 600 Wolfe St. Call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com for showtimes or to purchase tickets.

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. At sundown, Alexandria's harbor lights up when more than 50 illuminated boats cruise the Potomac River at the historic waterfront, led by Alexandria's fireboat Vigilant and Washington, D.C.'s fireboat John Glenn. Call 703-746-3301 or visit www.alexandriava.com.

Barbershop Harmony Concert. 1 p.m. Free. Celebrate the holiday season with the Harmony Heritage Singers. All are welcome. At Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Call 703-765-4779 or email brandtron@verizon.net.

Holiday Craft Fair. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Alexandria Unit 24, The American Legion Auxiliary, is having a holiday craft fair in Gadsby's Tavern located at 400 Cameron St., featuring 20 crafters of wide variety and homemade baked goods.

Concert. 7:30 p.m. Chris Smither at The Birchmere located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets are \$25. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 1-16

Historic Candlelight Tours. 5-8 p.m. Join "Mrs. Washington" as she hosts an evening of candlelight tours, fireside caroling, and hot cider and ginger cookies. Admission is \$22 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. Call 703-780-2000 or 703-799-8697 or visit www.MountVernon.org.

Ring 50's Magic Show Returns

FROM PAGE 21

has magical powers and doesn't always know how to control them," Owen said. "He keeps trying to salvage a trick that's going wrong, and the kids will help save the day."

He hinted that there will be a "special secret magician" that will appear during his performance, but in keeping with the Magician's Code, he couldn't divulge who that guest might be.

Owen said it's "important that magic looks good. If you get people involved in the story, they're more willing to believe in the magic."

The Falls Church resident, who is new to the club, said the club is optimistic they'll have a bigger and better show than last year, when nearly 100 children were in attendance.

"This is just magic and fun stuff, to make the kids laugh," he said.

He got his start in magic when he was a child and

saw a magician on TV. "I remember thinking that if I had magical powers like that, I could use magic to wash the dishes and make my bed," like Mickey Mouse does, to great comedic trouble, in the Sorcerer's Apprentice from the classic film Fantasia.

THE FINAL MAGICIAN of the night is the only one who does magic as his full-time job, putting on somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 shows a year.

Louis Meyer, an Alexandria resident, uses puppets in his act. "The puppets perform tricks too," he said, adding that children start the show knowing the puppets — an English sheepdog named Woofy and Chico, a mind-reading monkey — are puppets, "but by the end they come up and ask to pet my animals. They think they're real."

But at Christmastime, children are already ready for unexpected things to happen, he said. "They're super excited. They see everything as magic. Unbelievable things happen at Christmastime," he said.

Lecture Explains Loss of Acres of Dyke Marsh

FROM PAGE 1

from native Americans fishing and hunting, the railway from Washington to Mount Vernon, to bootlegging, hiding house boats that were thought to provide prostitution, and then in response to the destructive environmental impact of dredging, for the U.S. Congress to designate the protective stewardship that comes with becoming part of a national park."

However, the erosion — begun because of years of dredging — continues unabated and restoration plans have to take place, and soon, according to the advocates and scientists who commented during the evening presentation.

Through most of the Dyke Marsh history, Virta discussed how farmers, business people, residents, and others seeking recreational activities lived in relative harmony with the wetlands, and were able to benefit from its qualities as a source of food, farming, and recreation. It was not until the owners of an Alexandria city dredging company, Smoot Sand and Gravel, began to dredge the wetlands area that Dyke Marsh began to erode. His presentation made several references to the early years of reporting about Dyke Marsh by the Alexandria Gazette as part of his documentation of its colorful early human history. In one story the Gazette characterized it as "a grand wild place."

Left without careful restoration efforts, the rate of loss of the wetlands has gone from an area covering 180 acres in 1940 to 53 acres by 2010. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the loss is accelerating and that it is currently eroding at the rate of 1.5 to two acres per year on average. Unless something is done to stop the erosion, Dyke Marsh will be gone in 30-40 years.

Currently, the National Park Service is in the midst of an overdue Environmental



An aerial view of the loss of the Dyke Marsh wetlands. From left: The 1930s when there was approximately 180 acres to 2010 when the acreage was down to 53 acres.

Impact Statement and by mid-2013 will issue a report with recommendations to arrest the decline and restore the marsh for the long term. There will be a public comment period including a public hearing before a final Environmental Impact Statement is issued.

Stopping the decline will protect a vast array of fish and wildlife that call Dyke Marsh their home. It is a "rare, unique freshwater tidal marsh" in the National Park system, and the only tidal wetlands of its kind according to Dr. L.K. Thomas, retired research biologist with the National Park Service who has studied Dyke Marsh for the past 53 years. He spoke about the marsh's special place in the world as a vibrant ecosystem with many unique features, and his desire that the federal government fund a restoration program to ensure its long-term viability.

A restored and healthy Dyke Marsh would

More

Topics covered by Matthew Virta, cultural resources manager, U.S. National Park Service:

- ❖ Native American habitation and artifacts found in the vicinity.
- ❖ George Washington labeled it a hell hole swamp because of its impassability.
- ❖ Westgrove Plantation, which stretched to the Potomac River and Dyke Marsh.
- ❖ Col. Augustine Smith's futile efforts to dike and "reclaim" the land.
- ❖ Dyke Marsh as a fishing and hunting paradise.
- ❖ Boats and/or "arks" that provided cover and havens for brothels, whiskey bootlegging during Prohibition.
- ❖ Smoot Sand and Gravel dredging.

continue to serve as a freshwater wetlands area which is now home to 300 species of plants, 6,000 arthropods (insects, crustaceans, arachnids), 38 species of fish, 16 types of reptiles, 14 types of amphibians, and more than 230 species of birds. One Georgetown University entomologist said,

The Dyke Marsh Preserve

The Dyke Marsh Preserve is a 480-acre freshwater, tidal wetland on the Virginia shoreline of the Potomac river in northern Mount Vernon District, two miles south of Alexandria city. It is a unit of the U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior. The marsh is said to have begun forming in the 15th century. The U.S. Congress added the area to the National Park Service in 1959 "so that the fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount." (Public Law 86-41.)

Glenda Booth: "Matthew Virta's talk illustrated how humans can live in harmony with nature for literally hundreds of years, and how humans can cause harm, most significantly the 32 years of commercial dredging and dumping that destabilized Dyke Marsh. Now the challenge is to right those wrongs and restore Dyke Marsh."

Matthew Virta: "While Dyke Marsh has been recognized as a natural resource gem, its cultural history is lesser understood and appreciated. The stories my research has uncovered regarding its human history demonstrate the varied and colorful past the marsh and its surrounding lands have witnessed; a past inclusive of the ordinary populace and not just the more famous figures of American antiquity. It is a history that helps fill out the broad spectrum of former lives that have helped influence and shape the present"

Booth circulated a petition to be submitted to the U.S. Congress, urging their support for the federal funding that will be required to implement the restoration plan that will emerge from the NPS environmental assessment report next year.

Join

Friends of Dyke Marsh
P.O. Box 7183
Alexandria, Virginia 22307
www.fodm.org

that counting bacteria, there may be 18,000 different organisms in Dyke Marsh. In addition, the marsh also serves as a water filter, and a buffer against flooding, although its diminished wetlands acreage consequently has for the present time been less effective than it has been in the past.

Legislators To Consider Lifting Ban

FROM PAGE 5

byproduct known as "tailings," a sand-like substance left over after the uranium is milled. Some legislators say they are concerned that the radioactive byproduct could flow downstream into the Hampton Roads area. That means Pittsylvania County could see the economic benefits while the Hampton Roads area has to deal with the pollution.

"I don't want to sell the public health at any price," said state Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30). "We should be serious about other kinds of economic development besides dirty energy."

The ban was originally enacted in 1982, although supporters say technological advances have made the practice of mining for uranium much safer than it used to be. One idea under discussion involves burying the tailings where they found, which could prevent the radioactive material from travelling downstream. Ultimately, though, the debate this year will be about overturning the ban. If that happens, the details about how the mining process would work would be dealt with in a future session.

"Contrary to popular belief, the vote — if we have it this year — is not whether to mine uranium or

not," said Del. David Albo (R-42). "It's to lift the ban so they can present plans on how they are going to do it."

Legislators say they have been lobbied heavily on the issue, and they expect the debate to be one of the hottest issues in the upcoming session. Virginia Uranium has 19 lobbyists registered from five different firms, an indication that the company is eager to present their case as forcefully as possible. An analysis from the Virginia Public Access Project shows that 15 percent of the company's campaign contributions have gone to Democrats while 84 percent of donations have gone to Republicans.

"Democrats have a tendency to be more opposed to it because of the possible environmental effects, but there are also Republicans who are not exactly robust in their support of it for the same reason," said Geoff Skelley. "So far, the environmental concerns have outweighed the possible economic benefits, but that could obviously change if the lobbying efforts have some effect."

The governor's uranium working group is scheduled to present its findings to the Coal and Energy Commission on Dec. 1.

Moran Endorses Herring

FROM PAGE 6

"I endorsed Charniele in that race," said Moran. "And now I'm endorsing her again."

HERRING WAS BORN in the Dominican Republic while her father was stationed there in the Army, and she led a difficult life before entering politics. She was homeless during part of her high school years, when she was raised by a single mother struggling to make ends meet. She has a bachelor of arts in economics from George Mason University and a juris doctorate from Catholic University. She is a trial lawyer, and her home precinct is the Ramsay Recreation Center. When asked about the upcoming election for governor, Herring said the Democratic Party needs to build on the

success of 2012.

"Virginia is a left-leaning state, actually, not a right-leaning state. So I think the votes are there," said Herring. "The issues that the Democrats care about, the voters care about. So it's just about making sure they have a good grassroots operation."

Alexandria has been a traditional seat of power for the party, and several leaders have come from the city. Vice Mayor Kerry Donley is a former chairman of the state party, and he said he thought Herring would be an excellent choice to lead the party.

"First off, it's always great to have someone from Northern Virginia and Alexandria," said Donley. "But I think it would also mark the first time we've had an African-American woman as the chair of the party."



Pastor Keary Kincannon and his wife Judy with his father Cdr. Chuck Kincannon, USN (ret) and mother Murice.



Volunteers Deborah and Michael Cushmir take a break.



Volunteers Annabel Baer and Capt. Bob Rositzke, USN (ret.) take time to relax.



Rising Hope staffer Mary Hamilton joins forces with volunteer Barbara Nekoba who manages Rising Hope's Web site.

Rising Hope Gala Relieves Pastor of Sleepless Nights

FROM PAGE 1

But ticket sales were lagging.

Kincannon was faced with a desperate situation. "I was fearful we would have to cut back in what we do, but the need out there continues to be so great."

Then came a sudden hopeful development.

The day after the Sunday service in which Kincannon shared his worries and prayers

with his congregation, an anonymous donor, an area businessman, presented Rising Hope Mission with a check for \$25,000.

Four days later, after ticket sales suddenly surged and auction sales rang up large sums, the Rising Hope Gala, organized by Christ Church of Fairfax Station with a team led by Christ Church staffer Debra Merrill, was a great success netting a projected \$30,000.

Not only was the gala a financial rescue at \$125 a ticket, it was a stress-relieving, joyous occasion. As Kincannon and his staff circulated through the crowd, Rising Hope supporters dined, danced and bid on a dizzying array of auction items.

"I was delighted. I felt a lot of relief and a lot of thankfulness for the support of Christ Church and all the churches in the community." Now that the mission has the means

to finish out the year, Kincannon is turning his attention to Christmastime fundraising for next year's budget. As the numbers of those in need continues to rise with the troubled economy, Rising Hope must gather more in donations than last year. The fundraising goal is \$120,000.

As requests for donations are soon to be mailed out, said Kincannon, "We're asking everyone to give a little bit more."

Taste Trumps Nutrition

FROM PAGE 1

herbicides cause toxicity in animals and the feedstock on which cows, chickens, and pigs rely on for their food. The extent of damage to the livestock and ultimately the consumer is a hotly debated subject that continues today.

De Juana Jones, hostess of the AAUW November Public Forum on Food, began her welcome remarks by saying that she comes by this nutrition program honestly. She has had a lifetime interest in policies and practices which ensure food production which is safe, doesn't harm the environment, and is of high nutritional value.

"The purpose of our AAUW food program is to create an awareness of the dangers that lurk in harmful foods and illustrate how healthy nutrition can save lives," Jones said. "Our goal is to make pure food a national priority."

Other attendees' comments included Joanne Clark's: "Between the film and the panel discussion people learned a lot about the importance and availability of food."

Sandra Price said, "The movie was shocking; I am sure anyone who sees it will rethink the purchase of some food products they usually buy."

The movie is an attempt to take on a \$23 billion food conglomerate.

More

Food and nutrition information on the web or available in books:
www.foodinmovie.com
www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov
www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/super.market.campaign.php
 "Food Politics," by Marion Nestle, Berkley California UC Press
 "Chew on This," by Charles Wilson. Houghton Mifflin, N.Y.

ate. As the movie and at least one panelist described it, some small victories are being made to promote the purchase of organic food products. Walmart was cited in the movie as one example that their analysts, seeing a trend toward organic food, has begun to stock their shelves with organic food products. Walmart sees the economics of the organic food trend and have joined others in the commercial food industry who see organic food as one of the fastest growing food niches in the U. S.

Still, according to the film, U.S. government is willing to subsidize agriculture while at the same time tolerating anti-competitive and anti-consumer production and labeling practices.

The panelists each described their background and experience based on their specialty, and made some general comments in refer-



Food panelists, from left, are Edouard E. Sooh, food supplement representative; James Bourne, organic farmer; Christopher Johnson, naturopathic doctor, and Hope Warshaw, dietician and diabetes consultant.

ence to the film. Calvert County organic farmer Jim Bourne and the dietician Hope Warshaw said that organically grown fresh fruit, vegetables, and livestock was the safest and nutritionally most beneficial way to buy and consume food. Warshaw recommended following five basic principles of good eating habits:

- ❖ Eat a plant-based diet rich in fresh fruits, whole grains and vegetables.
- ❖ Purchase the least amount of processed foods that you can.
- ❖ Pre plan your food purchases and meals.

- ❖ Prepare food at home; eat as a family.
- ❖ Exercise.

She cited statistics about the current American trend regarding the lack of healthy eating: "Today there are 80 million Americans who are pre-diabetic (type 2 diabetes). Eighty percent of those over 65 are pre-diabetic. Among minority children 1 in 2 have type 2 diabetes." She went on to discuss the poor eating habits of many who consume an excess of calories, sugar and sodium in our daily diet.

The food supplement employee,

Edouard Ekemba Sooh, extolled the virtues of food supplements to enhance one's health. On questioning from the audience, he conceded that some supplements such as fish oil have come under criticism for not containing the supplement advertised on the label. The fourth panelist to speak, Christopher Johnson, is a trained naturopathic doctor located in Alexandria. He discussed his formal training and the type of patients he counsels, and supported the practice of using food supplements and purchasing organically grown food products.

Mount Vernon Girls' Basketball Has High Expectations

Seniors Loftus, Dunham, Webster to play college ball.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

On Nov. 14, the Mount Vernon girls' basketball program celebrated seniors Kelly Loftus, Taylor Dunham and Tiffany Webster for choosing where they would attend college.

Loftus, a sharp-shooting guard, signed with Division I Hofstra. Dunham, who head coach Courtney Coffey called "the best point guard in the region," will play Division I ball at the Naval Academy. Webster, a slashing guard and defensive standout, is headed to Division II Barton College. Dunham and Webster plan to sign in the spring.

While each member of the talented trio has her college plans figured out, the Majors have some lofty goals to work toward back at the high school level.

Mount Vernon returns all but two players from a team that reached the Northern Region semifinals last season, falling one win short of a state tournament berth. The Majors won their second consecutive National District championship and finished with a 25-2 record, with their only losses coming against eventual state champion



PHOTO BY GWEN LOFTUS

From left: Mount Vernon seniors Kelly Loftus, Taylor Dunham and Tiffany Webster are seen during a college signing party at MVHS on Nov. 14. Loftus signed with Hofstra. Dunham plans to sign with Navy in the spring and Webster plans to sign with Barton College in the spring.

Oakton.

Loftus, Dunham and Webster have been on varsity since they were freshmen. In 2010, Mount Vernon lost to Oakton in the region quarterfinals. In 2011, the Majors lost to T.C. Williams in the region quarterfinals. Last year, Mount Vernon got past the quarterfinals with a win over Annandale, but lost to Oakton in the semifinals.

"I think going to states is a must," Dunham said. "Winning states is definitely the goal, but it's no longer OK for us to just lose at regionals."

Dunham is the team's floor general. She comes from a military family, which helped

in her decision to attend Navy.

"I honestly believe she's the best point guard in the region this year, as a senior," Coffey said. "She can actually control the game for us. We can put the ball in her hands and we can tell her, 'This is the type of game we want to play, you implement the game plan, you be [a coach] out on the floor,' and she can do that."

"And then, if we're having an off night, she can get you 15 to 20 points, as well."

Loftus is the Majors' top offensive threat.

"She's a flat-out shooter," Coffey said. "If you leave her open, she's going to knock

the shot down from anywhere on the floor. She's added range to her shot, but most of all, she's a playmaker. I think a lot of people don't really know that about her game — she's able to make plays off the bounce. She's able to get in the lane and dump it down, she's able to see someone open and give them a backdoor pass and things like that. Just the dynamics of her offensive game is really what makes her very dangerous."

Webster can produce points and is one of the team's best defensive players.

"Every team needs a slasher," Coffey said. "We have a lot of shooters and she brings that slash game to us."

Webster said years of playing with Loftus and Dunham has helped build a strong relationship on the court.

"We know how each other plays," she

said. "We always know to be ready for a pass, or that they're ready for a pass and we always know where somebody is on the floor."

Another key returner is junior Samantha Porter, who brings toughness and a strong work ethic near the basket. During last year's regular season matchup with Oakton, Porter continued playing after getting one of her front teeth knocked out.

"Most coaches say that there's one kid that you can't play without," Coffey said. "With all this talent that we have, if we don't have [Porter] on our team, we're not going to achieve our goals. She's all the hustle, she gives us 180 percent of her heart every night, she's tough [and] she rebounds the basketball."

Senior guard Deja Wanzer and juniors Morgan Kuhns (guard), Erika Irving (forward) and Chanel Shannon (guard) also return. Junior post Kelly Quigley provides the Majors with size in the paint. Freshmen Chanise Ray (guard), Jasmine Collier (guard) and Erin Irving (wing) are expected to contribute.

Mount Vernon will travel to Fairfax High School for a scrimmage on Saturday, Nov. 24. The Majors will open the regular season at West Potomac at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27.

"This is my last chance. This is my last go-around," Loftus said. "Me, Taylor and Tiffany have been together since we were freshmen. We saw [former Mount Vernon standouts] Tracy [King], Jasmine [McDonald] and Jalinda [Venable] have their season end early. We saw how it felt, how they looked, [how] they cried. We just don't want that to happen. We want it to be a happy ending."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Mavericks The 9U Mount Vernon Mavericks, a travel baseball team composed of players from Fort Hunt Little League, competed this fall season in the Future State Prospects Baseball League against other travel teams from across Virginia. The team had a 15-7 overall record, culminating in a second-place finish in the playoffs, held Nov. 10-11 in Ruther Glen. Team members include: Nick Castrilli, Alex Catanzaro, Austin Copeland, Nathan DeWitte, Owen Enfield, Chris Fiori, George Pacious, Noah Potholm, Grant Radoski, Nico Rapollo, George Stamos and Peter Webster. Coaches include Glen Copeland, Bob Enfield, Tom Fiori and Tony Castrilli.

Wagner Wins Figure Skating Gold

Ashley Wagner, the reigning U.S. and Four Continents champion, won gold last week at 2012 Trophée Eric Bompard as part of the 2012 International Skating Union Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series. Wagner, attended West Potomac High School and represents the Skating Club of Wilmington, trains in Aliso Viejo, Calif., and is coached by John Nicks and Philip Mills.

Fresh off her first Grand Prix title at 2012 Hilton HHonors Skate America earlier this fall, Wagner finished the week with 190.63 points and became the first U.S. lady to win multiple Grand Prix titles in a single season since Sasha Cohen in 2003. After placing second in the short program, Wagner performed a flawless free skate to music from "Samson and Delilah," which featured six triple jumps and received positive grades of execution on 11 of her 12 elements.

With two gold-medal wins this season, Wagner has qualified for the 2012 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final, set for Dec. 6-9, in Sochi, Russia, home of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Alexandria native Ashley Wagner recently won at 2012 Trophée Eric Bompard.

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