



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

Scuttle (Emma Ekman) and the seagulls (Ellen Roberts, Brian Selcik, Winnie Hurd, Payson White and Anna Johnson) help Ariel (Emily Flack) get used to her new legs and self confidence with a little dance and song, "Positootivity."

Final Rehearsals for 'Little Mermaid, Jr.'

The Aldersgate Church Community Theater is in final rehearsal for the upcoming performances of "Walt Disney's Little Mermaid, Jr." Show dates are Jan. 18, 19, 25, 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Jan. 20, 21, 26, 27 at 2 p.m. Call 703-660-2611 or visit acconline.org for information/tickets. Aldersgate is located at 1301 Collingwood Road in Alexandria.



Prince Eric (Daniel Jarzen) proposes a dance to Ariel (Emily Flack) as a means to communicate since Ariel cannot utter a sound.



Chef Louis (Claire Havranek) prepares a fish dinner for Ariel and Prince Eric.



Ursula's henchmen, Flotsam (Lucy Roberts) and Jetsam (Brendan DeBie) persuade Ariel (Emily Flack) to visit Ursula.



Ursula (McKenzie Sterner) proposes a deal to Ariel (Emily Flack).

Antenna Wars

Mount Vernon residents hold out for more expensive and less unsightly cell coverage.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

The fight over a proposed cell tower at Sandburg Middle School several years ago now seems like a Waterloo moment, the end of a campaign to build large and intrusive cell towers at schools and in neighborhoods. As they had over and over again, residents in Mount Vernon opposed the proposal by Milestone Communications. Supporters like the idea that the design incorporated an existing light pole, and the Sandburg design would have created revenue streams from three separate antennas — some of which would be shared with the school. Opposition was so great that the plan was scuttled, and now large chunks of the Mount Vernon areas remain dead zones.

"These cell tower companies always want to construct these monoliths," said Riverside Estates resident Robert Reynolds. "And all of the neighbors have come to re-

sent having these show up in neighborhoods and at schools."

Like many people in the Mount Vernon area, Reynolds is a veteran of the antenna wars. Several years ago, he led an effort to oppose construction of a cell tower behind his house. Now he and many others in Mount Vernon are ready to go on the offensive by advocating for a new technology that uses a series of smaller antennas that are scattered around rather than a large monolithic structure that towers in the air. The drawback is that it's much more expensive for the cell tower companies, and so far no companies have come forward with a proposal to use Distributed Antenna System in the area.

"Colonial Williamsburg is really the model of what we are trying to do in Mount Vernon," said David Dale, former co-chairman of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. "You don't see cell towers hovering over historic

SEE HOLDING OUT, PAGE 6

Civil Rights Struggle In Richmond

Northern Virginia Democrats finally get traction on voting rights for nonviolent felons.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

The plight of the nonviolent felon has been a losing cause in Northern Virginia for decades. Year after year, Democrats introduce a bill that would restore voting rights for nonviolent

felons. And year after year, the effort fizzles in Richmond. So when Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell announced his support for automatic restoration of civil rights for nonviolent felons, many believed this might finally be the year supporters could see some

SEE GETTING, PAGE 6

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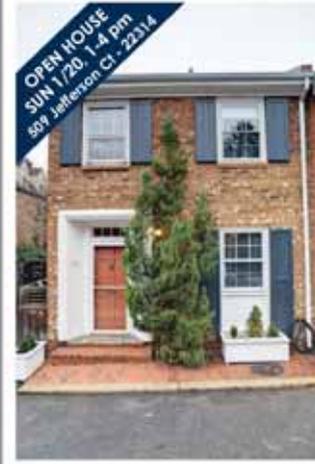


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Hollin Meadows Hosts Ice Cream Making and Gardening



Jen Finnegan is the outdoor education coordinator at Hollin Meadows Elementary School. She led some families through the school's monthly Second Sunday activities on Jan. 13. The families picked herbs from the school's garden to enhance the homemade ice cream they were about to make.



Volunteer Maddie Johnson helps children with their ice cream making project. The youngsters placed the ingredients in a plastic bag and then inside a bag filled with ice and rock salt. They shook the bags to make ice cream.

PHOTOS BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE GAZETTE



Jaden and her mother do some gardening before making ice cream.



Charlotte enjoys the efforts of her labors. The children made ice cream sundaes in the bags after the ice cream was frozen.



Anuj took his task, shaking his bag of ingredients, very seriously.



Aslan and Sammy enjoy some ice cream and conversation after all their hard work.



Sammy enjoys the first bites of the ice cream that he made.



Shachi and Charlotte are hard at work making ice cream in their bags.

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NEWS

Trainer Inducted Into Hall of Fame

Treating sprained ankles, separated shoulders and aching backs are everyday occurrences for Fairfax County Police Department's athletic trainer Nancy Burke.

Burke serves a vital role for the agency in keeping over 1,300 Fairfax County Police officers in top form despite the tough physical toll the job can have on one's body.

"Obviously physical fitness is critical for those in public safety; whether they are chasing a suspect in the dark or helping lift a person out of a wrecked car, it is a very physically demanding job," Burke said. She added, "It's extremely rewarding to be able to help treat and educate officers on how to get healthy, stay healthy and get them back to duty after they've had an injury."

Burke's efforts are now being widely recognized as she has been tapped for the 2013 Virginia Athletic Trainers' Association (VATA) Hall of Fame. The



Nancy Burke

VATA is an organization dedicated to the health and well-being of Virginians who are physically active and this is the third year for the Hall of Fame selection process.

Burke began her career as an athletic trainer in a secondary school setting after graduating from James Madison University in 1973. After earning her Master's Degree from Eastern Kentucky University, she continued her career in Fairfax County. Her expertise in sports medicine is nationally known as she served as the head athletic trainer for World Cup Sabre Fencing in 1992 and 1994, a site medical director for the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, and chaired the U.S. Lacrosse Association Safety Committee, where her contributions helped result in the mandate of protective

eyewear and new safety standards for goalkeepers' helmets.

For more information about the Fairfax County Police Department's programs or personnel, contact the Public Information Office at 703-246-2253.



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Mount Vernon Gazette



PHOTOS BY LAURA MARSHALL

Joe Quinn, Miles Gheesling, Alex Amico, Katelyn McConville, Eliza Lore and Hilary Canary

A Thirst for Human Flesh ...

**WPHS presents
"Night of the Living Dead."**

The classic horror "Night of the Living Dead" will open at West Potomac High School on Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. In the play, a group of people are trapped inside a farmhouse in West Virginia as legions of the walking dead try to get inside and use them for food.

Students starring in the play include Alex Amico, Hilary Canary, Miles Gheesling, Eliza Lore, Katelyn McConville and Joe Quinn

"Night of the Living Dead" will play Jan. 24 -26: Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening at 7 p.m. and Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10. All



Joe Quinn and Alex Amico

performances are at West Potomac High School in the Kogelman Theatre at 6500 Quander Road. Tickets are available at the door.



Alex Amico and Hilary Canary



Valentina Selnick and Katelyn McConville



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Alex./Mt. Zephyr \$429,900
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Lovely 4BR, 3BA Brick Split on a large .43 acre lot backing to woods. Freshly painted interior, replacement double pane windows thru-out main level. Large comfortable family room w/wood stove insert to the fireplace. Great location - mins to Ft. Belvoir, 15 mins to Old Town and Huntington Metro - 25 mins to Ntl Airport, 30-35 mins to Pentagon/D.C.



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./Yacht Haven \$589,900
4612 Tarpon Lane
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Alex./Riverside Estates \$2,850
8332 Wagon Wheel Road
Gorgeous 5 BR/3.5 BA Colonial with 1-car garage in prestigious Mount Vernon Community of Riverside Estates. Freshly painted interior; beautifully refinished hwd floors on main & upper levels. Updated baths, large bedrooms, 2 Fpls (1 gas & 1 wood), 3 finished levels w/5th bedroom, 3rd full bath & Rec room & storage rm in finished walk-up basement. 5 mins to Ft. Belvoir, 15 to Old Town, 20 to Ntl Airport & 30/35 to Pentagon/D.C.



Alex./Riverside Estates \$2,800
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Alex./Riverside Est. \$486,900
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Holding Out for More Expensive, Less Unsightly Cell Coverage

FROM PAGE 1

buildings in Colonial Williamsburg, and yet visitors don't have to enter a blackout."

DISTRIBUTED ANTENNA SYSTEMS are already in use in many places, including Colonial Williamsburg as well as many Northern Virginia locations — Dranesville, Merrifield and Reston to name a few.

Last year, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations adopted a resolution strongly encouraging the use of DAS technology instead of the large-scale towers that loom over the horizon.

So far, none of the companies that specialize in constructing cell antennas have been willing to put together a proposal to install the smaller-scale system, which would be more expensive than constructing a tower and provide smaller revenues

from leases to providers.

"They would have to show that DAS is not feasible," said Mount Vernon Planning Commissioner Earl Flanagan. "So far that hasn't happened, but technology changes all the time."

In Northern Virginia, a cottage industry of companies has emerged to construct cellphone infrastructure and lease it to providers. Some, such as Milestone, specialize in towers. Others, such as American Tower Company and Crown

Castle, offer both towers and DAS technology.

Once constructed, the facilities are leased to major providers such as AT&T, T-Mobile, Spring and Cricket.

So far, the business plan has not been able to support a proposal incorporating the less intrusive DAS technology.

"With the economic downturn, I wouldn't expect DAS technology to be coming to Mount Vernon anytime soon," said Flanagan. "They just don't have

the money to pay for it."

IN THE LAST six years, demand for data service has increased 8,000 percent nationwide, according to industry statistics.

As smartphones proliferate, more and more customers require more and more service as technology struggles to keep pace.

Some in Mount Vernon are hopeful that a new "cube" technology invented in Reston may be an answer that will provide service without unsightly cell towers.

Whatever technology comes down the pike, neighbors here say they are ready to oppose any effort to erect cell towers that many consider aesthetically unpleasant monolithic structures. "People who are directly impacted come out of the woodwork to oppose them," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland.

"With the economic downturn, I wouldn't expect DAS technology to be coming to Mount Vernon anytime soon."

— Mount Vernon Planning Commissioner Earl Flanagan

Getting Traction on Voting Rights for Nonviolent Felons

FROM PAGE 1

action on the issue.

"As a nation that believes in redemption and second chances, we must provide a clear path for willing individuals to be productive members of society once they have served their sentences and paid their fines and restitution," said McDonnell. "It is

"If you're a Republican, why would you support it?"

— Geoff Skelley, analyst with the University of Virginia Center for Politics

time for Virginia to join most of the other states and make the restoration of civil rights an automatic process for nonviolent offenders."

Within minutes of the speech, a number of civil-rights advocacy

groups spoke out in support of the governor's push. The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia praised the effort as a way to shed "this vestige of the Jim Crow era." Virginia Organizing and Virginia New Majority also issued written statements supporting the effort, which now had bipartisan appeal. State Sen. Don McEachin (D-9) even called on the governor to name the legislation in honor of the

late state Sen. Yvonne Miller (D-5), who was a longtime advocate for restoring civil rights to nonviolent felons.

Then House Republicans pulled the rug out. During a Monday meeting of the House Subcommittee on Constitutional Amend-

ments, members of the Republican majority rejected a bill introduced by Del. Charniele Herring (D-46). House Republicans

indicated that they were willing to break with the Republican governor, the Republican lieutenant governor and the Republican attorney general — a demonstration of diversity in a party that usually speaks in lockstep on major issues.

"A number of Republicans stood up on the floor of the House and essentially attacked the governor for supporting this," said Del. Rob Krupicka (D-45). "It's clear they don't intend to follow his wishes."

THE EFFORT is still alive on the Senate side, where state Sen. Louise Lucas (D-18) introduced SJ 266. On Tuesday, a Senate subcommittee was deadlocked on the issue and cast a 3-to-3 vote. That means the bill

will move on to the next meeting of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections next week without a recommendation. Supporters are hopeful that they can get the issue out of committee and onto consideration by the full Senate, which is evenly

divided between Republicans and Democrats. Because Republican Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling has already announced his support

for the initiative, he could end up casting a tie-breaking vote in favor of automatic restoration.

"The House of Delegates still has time to reverse their course by voting for the Senate's version of the bill," said John Liss, executive director of Virginia New Majority. "Automatic rights restoration opens the door for those convicted of non-violent felonies to become full participants in our community."

Currently, more than 350,000 Virginians have been stripped of their right to vote. That's more than one in five African Americans and 7 percent of the adult population. The way things currently stand, only the governor has authority to restore rights.

"Automatic rights restoration opens the door for those convicted of non-violent felonies to become full participants in our community."

— John Liss, executive director, Virginia New Majority

Since he became governor in 2011, McDonnell has restored rights to more than 4,000 people — more than any other governor in history. And yet even though the Republican governor has signaled that the issue is important to him, many Republicans oppose the move because it would increase the power of Democrats.

"If you are thinking about this in political terms, the majority of felons who would get their rights restored are probably more likely to vote Democratic than Republican," said Geoff Skelley, analyst with the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "If you're a Republican, why would you support it?"

FOR NOW, the effort is still alive on the Senate side. But even supporters acknowledge that it will have a very difficult time if it makes it back to the House after crossover. Even if the measure is able to get out of the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee on Tuesday, it will still face a vote of the full Senate and, ultimately, the same hostile members of the House subcommittee that already killed the effort this week. Then the bill must pass again next year after the election before ultimately being considered by the voters. "We must not lose the chance to put this question before the voters in 2014," said ACLU of Virginia executive director Claire Gastanaga. "For too long, Virginia has been out of step with the rest of the country by continuing to disenfranchise all felons for life."

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is the Thursday at noon.

THURSDAY/JAN. 17

Meeting. Mt. Vernon AAUW presents a program on "Senior Scams" at 7 p.m. at Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane. Get advice on ways to avoid scams, as well as detecting the signs of fraud and identity theft. 703-718-9902.

THROUGH JAN. 18

January Fruit Sale. The Mount Vernon Lions club will have a January fruit sale of naval

oranges, grapefruit and honeybells. Prepaid orders made by Jan. 18 with a delivery date of Jan. 26. Contact Andrea Corsillo 703-960-4973 or Tom Wilson 703-585-6327.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

West Potomac Science Fair. 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at the school. There will be 100 projects on display, showcasing what the students have learned in their honors classes. The top 20 projects will be invited to the regional fair at Robinson High School.

Joint Town Hall Meeting. 10 a.m. at Kingstowne Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway. Delegate Mark Sickles (D-43), Senator George Barker (D-39), Senator Adam Ebbin (D-30), Senator Toddy Puller (D-36) and

Supervisor Jeff McKay will discuss the 2013 General Assembly Session and how it will affect Fairfax County. There will be a question and answer period for each representative.

THURSDAY/JAN. 24

Meeting. Colonial Republican Women will meet from 6:30-9 p.m. at Virginia Hills Administration Center at Old Virginia Hills School, 6520 Diana Lane. Refreshments will be served. E-mail colonialrepublicanwomen@gmail.com or call Debbie at 703-768-1934.

SATURDAY/JAN. 26

Gala. The George Washington Chapter of the Sons

of the American Revolution will host a formal gala event at the Belle Haven Country Club. They will present the SAR Gold Good Citizenship Medal to U.S. Army retired General Frederick J. Kroesen, Jr.

SATURDAY/FEB. 9

Boater Education Course. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 8592 Richmond Highway. This course meets all the state requirements to allow people to operate boats. Contact Rich Miller at eaglesailor75@cox.net or 703-780-3765 to get an enrollment form.

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

SFDC Hosts Beautification Awards Ceremony



Jennifer Tillman (left) and Nakiya Wilson accepted the Award for Huntington Gateway. The certificates were handed out in honor of Mary Thonen, a long-serving board member and prior president of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation.



David Versel, executive director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, handed out several Beautification Awards to local businesses. They included Taco Bell, Chili's, Huntington Gateway, Mount Zephyr Commons and Montebello.



The Jan. 16 reception provided an opportunity for community members to network.

PHOTOS BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE GAZETTE



Doug Kennet, president of the Montebello Condominium Owners Association's Board of Directors, accepts the special plaque on behalf of the property.



The Beautification Awards included displays targeted at improving the image of businesses along Richmond Highway.

Economic Development Topic of Chamber Meeting

The future of economic growth in Fairfax County will be found in the new field of personalized medicine, along with the current growth sectors of IT and financial services according to Dr. Gerald Gordon, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority speaking to the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce.

To withstand current economic pressures, small businesses will need a cost and value proposition that shows they can do better than what larger businesses would do in-house, Gordon said. He also mentioned that trends show that minority and women-

owned businesses are growing disproportionately faster in Northern Virginia than in other areas of the county.

Fairfax County faces the same serious economic situation it did in 1977, Gordon said. Diversification of the types of businesses in Fairfax County will be essential to keep tax rates on homeowners low and to ensure a healthy local economy.

The Greater Richmond Highway corridor will find economic development opportunities with the growth at Fort Belvoir, Gordon said.

At the networking breakfast, the chamber of commerce also welcomed a new business member, American Disposal Services and regional manager Brian Taugher.



The Chamber Board welcomes Dr. Gerald Gordon, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, to the AM Network Breakfast: Jane Gandee, ServiceMaster of Alexandria; Gordon; John Barsa; Jay McConville, Lockheed Martin; Michael Gailliot, Century 20 New Millennium, and Tony Riolo, Burke & Herbert Bank.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

OPINION

Transportation Money **Eliminating the gas tax makes no sense.**

Virginia, and especially Northern Virginia, is woefully short on funds for transportation. One reason is that its gas tax, a logical way to fund transportation infrastructure, is one of the lowest in the nation, and has remained flat since the '80s, since it is not indexed for inflation. So the buying power of the gas tax has been dwindling.

It seems obvious that one way to fix this is to allow it to rise with inflation, or change it to a percentage of the price of a gallon of fuel. Tying road funding to gas consumption is a logical connection, and the increase encourages conservation and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Instead, Gov. Bob McDonnell has proposed eliminating the gas tax, replacing the funding with an increase in the sales tax plus a plan to shift money from other state spending, like education, human services and public safety,

to transportation.

With considerable agreement that Virginia needs about \$1 billion a year to pay roads and transit, this proposal would raise about one-third of that.

EDITORIAL

Part of the Governor's plan also calls for a \$100 annual fee on vehicles that use alternative fuels.

Raising the sales tax to pay for roads is particularly unfair to the many residents of Northern Virginia who have chosen to live in Arlington, Alexandria and other areas that are walkable and provide easy access to public transit.

Penalizing drivers of hybrid and electric vehicles by charging them more than six times what other vehicles pay is not in the best interests of anyone who breathes the air in Virginia, and is a stark slap at innovation.

The entire proposal makes about as much sense as forcing a select few Northern Virginia

residents, the drivers on the Dulles Toll Road, to almost single-handedly pay for rail to Dulles. Dulles airport is one of the key economic drivers for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Building rail to serve the airport is an economic investment that will have broad benefits in revenue for the state. A disproportionately small amount of that revenue will make it back to Northern Virginia. So it is welcome that the Governor's proposal calls for diverting some of the "new" transportation money to Dulles rail.

The current proposal would make Virginia the only state without a gas tax. It seems unwise for a state with such dramatic transportation deficits to abandon the one source of funding that makes sense. More money is needed; that requires addition, not subtraction.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

A 10-Year Mission: To End Homelessness

BY MICHAEL O'REILLY

Editor's Note: This month, The Gazette begins featuring a monthly column written by community leaders involved in Fairfax County's nonprofit organizations. Every year, thousands of Fairfax County residents volunteer with nonprofits in a variety of ways, whether it's driving a senior citizen to a medical appointment or serving meals to the homeless in one of the county's hypothermia shelters. According to Volunteer Fairfax — a nonprofit that matches volunteers with service projects — individuals volunteered 205,688 hours of service to the community. We launch this series with a column by Michael O'Reilly, chairman of the Governing Board of the Fairfax-Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Our Fairfax-Falls Church community is one of the most affluent in the country. Our schools are second to none. We are the home for many Fortune 500 businesses. Even with the challenging economy, our unemployment rate is among the lowest in the country.

Despite these strengths, our community also includes people who are homeless and are staying at emergency shelters, living in their cars or camping in the woods. Our community includes families with no place to sleep at night and children with no place to go after school. It saddens me to report that there were over 3,000 homeless individuals in our community this past year. It is unacceptable to have homeless men, women and children in our community.

Homelessness impacts every person in our community and each has a role in ending it. Through the good work of many non-profit and religious organizations, for many years we have directed our collective efforts to managing the homeless issues. However, little was done to find longer term solutions to prevent and end homelessness. That has now changed.

The leadership of Congressman Gerry Connolly helped to galvanize all of the energy and effort in the entire community. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors with leadership from Chairman Bulova and Supervisor Catherine Hudgins and all of our key stakeholders from the non-profit, government, faith

and business community came together to develop an impressive 10 Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The Plan recognizes the right of all people to have a safe, affordable place in which to live. The Plan envisions our entire community working together as partners to eliminate homelessness. We have some very steep goals and lots of hard work ahead to reach our goal of ending homelessness in Fairfax County by the end of 2018.

We have made huge strides in the development of the governance structure called The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness was established within Fairfax County. We have constituted a Governing Board made up of business leaders, elected officials, builders, clergy, law enforcement and others. We have created a new Consumer Advisory Council to ensure that currently homeless and formerly homeless have an active voice in the implementation of our plan.

We have much more work to do. We have recently moved our collective efforts to the Plan's goal of creating 2,650 new housing units. We have supported and will continue to support efforts to amend the County's housing code to permit more individual housing options. We hosted a day-long outreach program for our faith based communities which shows promise at increasing the housing stock.

Through our collective prevention and rapid rehousing strategies, community case management and the provision of other critical services, we prevented last year over 1,400 individuals from becoming homeless by providing community case management and other services. In addition, we have launched a Housing Locator Network to strengthen relationships with landlords and to help move the homeless in our community more rapidly into permanent housing. Through the work of our Partnership we have seen an impressive increase in homeless families and individuals placed in permanent housing from 482 in 2010 to 853 in 2012. Many adults and children have been positively impacted. This can only be at-

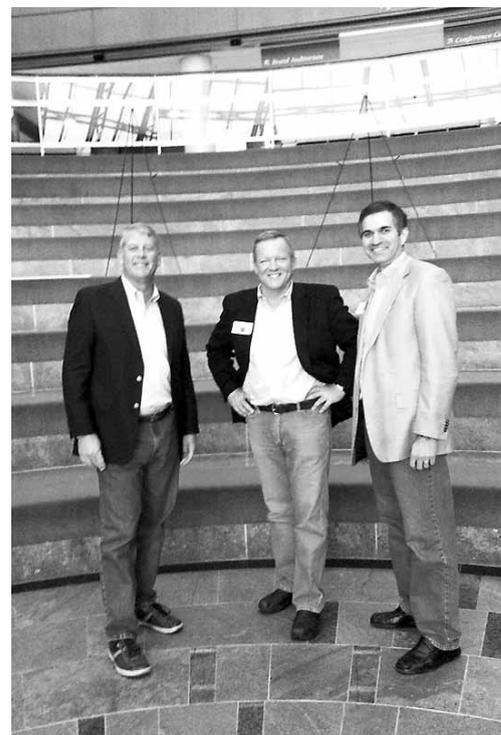


PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

From left: Michael O'Reilly, Jim Corcoran and Dean Klein during Jeans Day 2012.

tributed to the commitment that many in our community have made to end homelessness.

Our approach to preventing and ending homelessness is predicated on us doing so in partnership with a broad coalition of nonprofits, faith communities, businesses and government. Working together allows us to do amazing things.

I thank you for your interest and commitment and look forward to our continued work together with all of our partners in the coming years as we strive to prevent and end homelessness in our community. If you would like to become involved in this important work please go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless or call 703-324-9492 for more information.

Michael O'Reilly is chairman of the Governing Board of Fairfax Falls Church Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness.

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OPINION

Transportation Debate Begins

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL
DELEGATE (D-44)

Governor McDonnell's transportation proposal dominated the first three days of session. I welcome this long-overdue debate. The improvement of Route 1 is exactly the kind of project that has been stalled because of the lack of state money because it cannot be tolled or cannot be improved by a public-private partnership. It will only happen with real money from new tax revenue.

COMMENTARY

Virginia's gas tax, one of the lowest in the nation, has been at 17.5 cents since 1985. As roads crumble and Metro struggles to move more passengers, Virginians cannot expect to have a reliable transportation system without infusing more funds. This means we all have to face up to increasing the gas tax. The preliminary results of my constituent survey are that 55 percent of my constituents agree.

I commend the Governor for putting forth a transportation funding proposal for debate, but I do not view his proposal as the right solution. We will be debating several approaches.

THE GOVERNOR'S PLAN has five components: (1) eliminate the \$0.175 gas tax except for diesel and replace it with a new 0.8 percent general sales tax dedicated to transportation; (2) divert .25 percent of the existing sales tax from education, public safety and healthcare and fund transportation; (3) dedicate an new vehicle \$15/year registration fee and dedicate these funds to intercity rail and transit; (4) impose a \$100 annual fee on alternative fuel vehicles; and (5) dedicate sales taxes from internet sales to transportation, if Congress authorizes states to tax internet sales (a big if).

Three years ago, Virginia Department of Transportation's report, VTRANS 2025, concluded that the state's transportation maintenance and construction funding shortfall is between \$4-5 billion per year over the next 20 years. Governor McDonnell's plan will generate only \$3 billion over five years according to initial estimates. In other words, the Governor's plan funds no more than 12-15 percent of the actual shortfall. His math does not work.

Virginia's roads have always been funded with user fees — the more you drive, the more you pay. The Governor's plan abandons that principle and says that everyone should pay, whether they are using the roads or not, even when you walk to the store and buy a loaf of bread.

MILITARY NOTES

Army National Guard Pvt. Werner Van Der Heyde has graduated from Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, Lawton, Okla. Van Der Heyde is the son of Leroy and Maria Van Der Heyde of Reading Ave., Alexandria.

Air Force Airman Jean-Pearce E. Jenkins graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. He is the son of Thomas Jenkins of Alexandria, and Leslie Lefeat of Clarksville, Tenn. Jenkins graduated in 2010 from West Potomac High School, Alexandria.

Coast Guard Seaman Mitchell S. Piontek, a 2010 graduate of West Potomac High School, Alexandria, recently graduated from the U.S. Coast

Guard Recruit Training Center in Cape May, N.J.

Army Pvt. Keith A. Muschek has graduated from Basic Combat Training at Fort Sill, Lawton, Okla. Muschek is the son of Jill and stepson of Nick Chit of Alexandria.

Navy Seaman Apprentice David R. Ratcliff, son of Pilar M. and Ralph O. Ratcliff of Alexandria, was recently promoted to his current rank upon graduation from recruit training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill. Ratcliff is a 2010 graduate of West Potomac High School of Alexandria.

Navy Seaman Victor Kpeyibor, son of Rose A. Aduko and John Y.



THE ALTERNATIVE VEHICLE FEE is also troublesome. Hybrids and electric cars pay less in gas taxes because they use gas more efficiently, but there are only 91,000 on the road out of seven million vehicles in Virginia or 1.3 percent of all cars. Average American vehicle fuel efficiency is 23.8 MPG. If a hybrid driver gets 40 MPG and drives 15,000 miles, that driver saves about 255 gallons of gas or \$44.66 of gas taxes per year (and about \$867 per year in gas costs by the way). The Governor wants these drivers to pay that and another \$55 on top of that. That's not fair and creates reverse incentives. People should not be punished for conserving energy and polluting less.

Also, many Virginians purchased diesel passenger cars because of the cars' fuel efficiency. The 2012 Volkswagen Beetle, Golf and Passatt get 40-42 MPG on the highway. Not only will these drivers pay more with sales taxes, they will also pay the same gas taxes they do today simply because they purchased fuel-efficient vehicles.

There is no question that gas tax revenues are a declining source of revenue, but they also work. Thirty percent of gas taxes are paid by non-Virginians. People passing through Virginia should also pay for the cost of our roads, as we do when traveling in other states.

Again, I welcome the Governor's proposal and I look forward to working with him on better solutions to fix this problem once and for all. Let's avoid gimmicks.

During the week or so that my constituent survey has been online at www.scottsurovell.org/survey, about 100 people have responded. I hope to get more.

The initial results are interesting. Transportation has passed the economy as the #1 issue. For U.S. 1, 64 percent of 44th District residents support a Yellow Line Metro extension to Lorton over light rail (12 percent) or more buses (9 percent). Here are some other interesting results: 74 percent support paying more for renewable energy, 80 percent support no-excuse absentee voting for seniors, 55 percent support raising the gas tax and 49 percent support raising the sales tax for transportation. The top choice for improving schools is lower class sizes (30 percent) and 74 percent oppose the \$25 million tax credit for private schools passed last year.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please email me at scottsurovell@gmail.com and be sure to complete my online survey at www.scottsurovell.org/survey. It is an honor to serve as your state delegate.



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Dir.: Alex S on GW Pkwy. R on Belle View Blvd, R on Potomac St, R on I Street to 1111-B on right.



OBITUARIES

Helen D. Anderson

Helen D. Anderson died Jan. 9, 2013. She was the beloved mother of Earl and Thomas Anderson and grandmother to Dennis, Brenda, Nancy and Toni. A visitation was held on Monday, Jan. 14, at Cameron United Methodist Church, 3130 Franconia Road, Alexandria, where funeral services took place. Interment followed at Mount Comfort Cemetery.

Hilary Carr

Hilary Carr, 62, of Alexandria, died on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013. She was the sister of Malcolm Carr of Ventura, Calif.

A Memorial Service will be held on Monday, Jan. 28, at 11 a.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Memorials may be made to Wounded Warriors or the local SPCA. A guest register may be found at www.everlyfuneralhomes.com.

Edward Arthur Daggit

Lt. Col. Edward Arthur Daggit Ph.D., USA Ret., age 80, of Harrisonburg, Va., died on Friday Jan. 11, 2013.

He is survived by wife, Darla L. Daggit (nee Cullen); son, Andrew A. Daggit of Star Tannery, Va.; grandsons, Bryant T. Daggit of Winchester, Va. and Jonathan A. Taylor of Davenport, Iowa; his sister, Elizabeth M. Haynes of Springfield, Va., one nephew; three nieces; and nine grandnephews and grandnieces.

Edward was born in New Orleans, La., on June 15, 1932 and subsequently lived in the DC Metropolitan area. He attended local schools, mainly in Alexandria, through 10th grade. He graduated high school at Staunton Military Academy, Staunton, Va., and college at USMA, West Point, NY, in 1953 with a bachelor's degree and a commission in the Infantry. Later he received degrees at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y. (Masters in Mathematics, 1959) and New York University (Ph.D. in Mathematics, 1968).

During his 22 years of service in the Army, he had overseas assignments in Sendai and Kokura in Japan, Seoul, Korea, Heidelberg, Germany, and Dalat, Vietnam, where he was advisor to the dean of the Vietnamese Military Academy. Twice he was assigned to the Math Department at USMA where he gained six years of teaching experience.

After retiring in 1975, he filled in for a professor on a year's sabbatical at Clinch Valley College, Wise, Va. and subsequently taught 20 years at Grove City College, Grove City, Penn. During a leave of absence in 1992-1993, he and Darla visited over 100 ROTC units on behalf of the Officer's Christian Fellowship. Since January 2008, he has resided in a Health Care facility in the Sunnyside Retirement Community in Harrisonburg, Va.

Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Research for CA, Heart Association, Alzheimers Association, a

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Sydney College.

Tae Kim was recently initiated into Phi Kappa Phi. Kim is studying medicine at Pennsylvania State University.

George Forrest Allen, a graduate of West Potomac High School and the son of George and Susan Allen, was named to the dean's list at Hampden-



church, or other Christian works such as Sunnyside Retirement Community or The Officer's Christian Fellowship. Visit www.kygers.com.

Muriel S. Rector

Muriel S. Rector, 90, formerly of Alexandria, died on Dec. 19, 2012, in Kilmarnock, Va. Born Oct. 17, 1922, in Cincinnati, Ohio, she is predeceased by her parents, Jessie Allen Schmick and Walter Paul Schmick, four brothers, Walter, Allen, Philip, and Paul Schmick and one sister, Angela Schmick Ruttle.

Muriel graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1944 where she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, and later received a master's degree in elementary education from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She moved with her husband, George B. Rector, to Lakewood, Ohio, in 1953, and taught at Lincoln Elementary School there for many years. Each summer Muriel traveled extensively throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Russia, and studied in England and Italy. In 1984 she retired to Alexandria, where she volunteered at the Carpenter's Shelter and worked at Crown Bookstore in the Bradlee Shopping Center. She was a member of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church in Alexandria. Her other interests were knitting, studying the Civil War, and cooking for friends, family and neighbors.

Survivors include two sons, Cleland M. Rector of Wheaton, Ill., and Dr. James B. Rector of Boulder Colo., a daughter, Joy Rector Gwaltney of White Stone, Va., and five grandchildren, Darren Rector, Carey Rector, Jessica Rector, Ellen Gwaltney Johnson and William Blair Gwaltney.

A private graveside service will take place on May 4, 2013, at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Willard F. Townsend

Lt. Col. Willard F. Townsend (USAF-Ret.), age 79, of Pike Road, Ala. died on July 31, 2012.

Willard resided in the Mt. Vernon-area of Alexandria from 1972 to 1985 and during that time forged many close friendships that he maintained long after he moved to Montgomery, Ala. in 1985.

Willard's long service in the Air Force brought him to the area with assignments at the Pentagon and Ft. Meade, Md. Willard is predeceased by his first wife, Barbara Ann, and is survived by his wife, Diane Underwood Townsend; four children, Richard Townsend of Harrisburg, Penn., James Townsend of Alpharetta, Ga., Jamie Underwood of Lake Park, Ga., Tara Martin Marquis of Montgomery, Ala., as well as seven grandchildren. A Full Honors Military Funeral ceremony will be held at Arlington Memorial Cemetery at 3 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 25, 2013. A reception will follow at Ireland's Four Courts restaurant in Arlington.



Megan Elizabeth Epperson, majoring in biological sciences; **Shannon Kay Frydenlund**, majoring in elementary education; **Amanda Michelle Smith**, majoring in philosophy (law, liberty and justice); **Melissa Christine Beaty**, majoring in political science; and **Emily Anne Smoot**, majoring in pre-business, have been named to the dean's list at Clemson University for the fall semester.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Intergenerational Meal-Gathering

Noticed something sprouting at the Hollin Hall Senior Center? Youth from the Mount Vernon 4H Awesome Adventurers Community Club have joined with seniors from the Hollin Hall Senior Center on an intergenerational gardening project.

In August, the 4H Club was awarded a Youth Jumpstart grant from Generations United and The MetLife Foundation designed to promote intergenerational solutions to societal challenges and build stronger communities, with a 2012 focus on hunger and nutrition.

Building on their previous gardening project, the grant has enabled the 4Hers and seniors to build additional raised garden beds at the Hollin Hall Senior Center. Using the vegetables that will be harvested, they will prepare and enjoy meals together.

For more information about 4H in Fairfax County, visit <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/fairfax/programs/4h/>

The Mount Vernon 4H Awesome Adventurers Community Club is open to youth ages 9-18.

In addition to the gardening project, youth participate in technology workshops in collaboration



Vice President Sophia Gull assists Ed Raduazo in assembling a garden bed.



Club members Victor Fuentes, Geoff Gallante, Freddy Fuentes, Michele St. John and Margaret St. John prepared burgers, sweet potato fries and apple pie for Seniors at the Hollin Hall Senior Center in December.

with the Microsoft Store at Pentagon City, provide community service and work together to identify additional activities they would like to organize and participate in.

For more information, email mountvernon4H@gmail.com.

Seniors who would like to join in the intergenerational gardening project can inquire at the Hollin Hall Senior Center or email us at mountvernon4H@gmail.com

General Assembly Gets Underway

BY LINDA T. "TODDY" PULLER
STATE SENATOR (D-36)

The Virginia General Assembly convened in Richmond last Wednesday. So far one of the major issues is whether or not to lift the moratorium on mining uranium. The bill before us is one that would go forward to set up regulations should the ban be lifted. Many people have contacted me regarding this issue sharing studies and concerns pro and con.

COMMENTARY

Another issue gaining a lot of attention is Governor Robert McDonnell's reappointment of Helen Dragas to the University of Virginia Board of Visitors. Her reappointment must be confirmed by the General Assembly. After meeting with Ms. Dragas and considering the damage that has been done to our stellar, flagship public university, I have decided that I cannot vote for her confirmation and have informed Ms. Dragas of my decision.

I have introduced several bills to assist veterans with unemployment and to aid people with health care coverage. These include:

SB 829 would amend the Code of Virginia to enact a comprehensive program to reduce unemployment among veterans by assisting businesses to attract, hire, and retain veterans.

SB 831 would provide a tax credit for hiring veterans. SB 730 would provide an exemption for non-profit veteran's organizations to qualify for sales and use tax exemption.



In the area of health care insurance, SB 947 would prohibit a health insurer from making modifications to prescription drug coverage to increase the price of the drug or removing or altering the quantity allowed without 60 days prior notification. These kinds of changes can impact insured patients without giving them time to try to make different arrangements or find alternative coverage. Therefore, I believe this legislation is needed.

SB 945 would require health plans to allow "certain covered persons to pay their cost-sharing obligations under their health benefits plan in 12 equal monthly installments." This could be very helpful to people suffering from chronic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis that require excessively expensive medications. The Joint Commission on Health Care that I chair strongly supports this bill.

Two town hall meetings are planned: in Lee District, Saturday, Jan. 19, 10 a.m. at the Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway, Kingstowne, and in Mount Vernon District, Saturday, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria.

Please continue to let me hear from you on issues of concern. Email me at: district36@virginia.senate.gov; phone: 1-804-698-7536; and mailing address: Senate of Virginia, P.O. Box 396, Richmond, Virginia 23218.

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JUST LISTED

213 Woodland Terrace
\$1,759,000
Rare in Town Estate!

One of Alexandria's most admired homes! Magnificent property consisting of 18,000 sq ft manicured grounds, elegant main residence, two car garage and detached cottage.

Home has been tastefully updated and expanded with a careful eye on preserving its original charm and character. Fabulous features include: bright, open, free flowing floor plan, exquisite trim detail, hardwoods, custom built-ins, high ceilings and recessed lighting throughout. Striking gourmet kitchen any chef would envy. Magnificent family room open to kitchen. Stunning master suite with fireplace, luxurious bath & his and hers dressing rooms with custom cabinetry. Fabulous covered porch overlooks private rear grounds. Winner of the *Alexandria Beautification Award*, recognizing select Alexandria residences that beautify their surroundings. "Perfection" best describes this one of a kind offering!

STUNNING

Home features bright, open floor plan, expansive glass walls, high ceilings, gourmet kitchen with "Viking" range &ilestone counters, roof deck with seasonal river view, 2 large family rooms and garage parking. Ideal location just off GW Pky. **OPEN SUN 1/20, 1-4PM.** GW Pky S; R-Collingwood; L-Ashwood; L-Boulevard.

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\$1,150,000
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DOCK!

9410 Ludgate Dr
\$1,995,000
Custom Home with Semi-Private Dock!
Fabulous new home with all the bells and whistles to be built by Keswick Homes on gorgeous lot overlooking Potomac River with access to semi-private dock, to be shared by only 2 properties. Luxurious home with all the amenities that Keswick is noted for. Home was designed to capitalize on river views! Lot also available! Call for details.

JUST LISTED

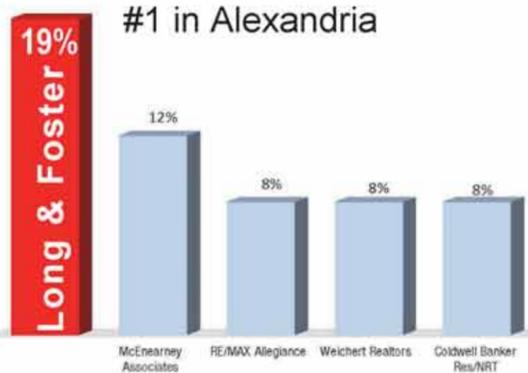
9226 Craig Ave
\$619,500
Extensive Updates!
Spacious home loaded with custom updates. Special features include 4 fin. levels, 5 BRs, 3.5 baths, fabulous updated kitchen with granite, SS appli and custom cabs. Hardwood floors, walkout lower level, 2 car garage, gas heat and hot water. Outside deck and patio overlook beautiful grounds. Property offers size, updated amenities and location for remarkable price!

JUST LISTED

9109 Chickawane Ct
\$580,000
Westgate Colonial-Custom Pool!
Classic 4BR Colonial in gorgeous setting on large lot fronting quiet cul-de-sac in prime Westgate location. Fabulous features include bright open kitchen, economical gas heat and hot water and oversize 2 car garage. Custom pool and much privacy located on what is widely considered to be one of Mt. Vernon's prettiest streets.

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*Source: Information based on data supplied by MRIS and its member Association (s) of REALTORS, who are not responsible for its accuracy. Does not reflect all activity in the marketplace. October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012. Information contained in this report is deemed reliable but not guaranteed, should be independently verified, and does not constitute an opinion of MRIS or Long and Foster Real Estate Inc. ©2012 All rights reserved.

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Colleen and Jim Harvey amid the bustle of the installation of their new Plymouth Haven home.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL K. BOHN/THE GAZETTE

A crane lifts a second-story module into place less than an hour after the crew set the last ground floor section.

A New Home in Five Easy Pieces Trend grows for modular homes.

BY MICHAEL K. BOHN
THE GAZETTE

The Plymouth Haven neighborhood is welcoming another new modular home, the third in the last five years. Last week, Plymouth Haven native, Jim Harvey, and his wife Colleen, watched a crane operator lift the modules of their new home into place. Jim Harvey had mixed feelings as the new house replaced the one he grew up in with six brothers.

“As we started to think about a replacement house,” Harvey said, “one of my brothers steered me toward modular homes. He said that we would be able to move in more quickly. And once we began digging into the

details, we were impressed with the quality of construction.”

HandCrafted Homes of Henderson, N.C. fabricated the modules and trucked them to the site. Harvey hired a general contractor to prepare the site, pour the foundation, which he accomplished in December, and handle the loose ends after the modules are assembled. The fabricator installed all of the modules and made the house waterproof in two days. The Harveys expect to move in during March.

Another family on Alden built a modular home two years ago, and a third homeowner commissioned one on Fort Hunt Road across from the park five years ago. A fourth recent modular construction is on the corner of Cedar Dale Lane and Collingwood Road.

All are substantial homes, with all of the features of traditionally-built houses, and should not be confused with a “manufactured” home — cousin Eddie’s trailer house.

Modular home sales increased 33 percent nationwide during the period 1992-2005, according to U.S. Census data, rising from 33,000 units annually to 44,000. However, the popping of the housing bubble in the late 2000s hit the industry just as hard as the site-built sector.

By 2011, national modular sales had fallen to 10,000 homes.

Homebuyers can get a better deal with modular homes, according to Kevin Flaherty, a spokesman for modular house matters at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). “When homeowners

choose modular construction, they experience measurable savings in cost and time.”

The NAHB reports that the national average time from start to completion for a modular home is five months, compared to nearly seven months for a site-built home. That reduced period translates to labor cost savings.

Further, the national average “permit value” of a modular home was \$77 per square foot, as of February 2012, versus \$94/SF for site-built. (Permit value is the figure that reflects the specifications in the building permit. Since many owners already own the lot, permit value excludes land costs.)

Flaherty said that modular sales were up 11 percent for the first nine months of 2012.



One of the Harveys’ neighbors built a modular home two years ago.



Just a block from the Harveys’ new home is a large modular construction with views of Fort Hunt Park.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

TUESDAY/FEB. 19

Genealogical Society Meeting. 1 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Hear a presentation on "Our Ancestors Did Not Live Alone," which talks about exploring the family of neighbors and other acquaintances to learn more about the ancestors. Visit www.mvgenalogy.org or 703-866-2478.

THURSDAY/FEB. 21

Meeting. Colonial Republican Women will meet from 6:30-9 p.m. at Virginia Hills Administration Center at Old Virginia Hills School, 6520 Diana Lane. Refreshments will be served. E-mail colonialrepublicanwomen@gmail.com or call Debbie at 703-768-1934.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Fairfax County needs a **Meals on Wheels coordinator** for the Mount Vernon area. Contact Fairfax County's Volunteer Solutions at 703-324-5406, TTY 703-449-1186, VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov, or visit Volunteer Solutions at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices and click on volunteers.

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 Jan. 2013. Visit www.aarp.org/taxaide.

ONGOING

Alzheimer's Association support groups provide a place for people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers, family members, and/or friends to share valuable information, caregiving tips and concerns throughout the Alzheimer's journey. Groups are facilitated by trained group leaders and are ongoing, free and open to the community. There is a meeting on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Highway. Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 703-359-4440 or 800-272-3900 before attending a group for the first time to verify meeting information, obtain directions or other information about the group. A complete list of all groups in the National Capital Area region can be viewed at www.alz.org/nca.

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at suzjdoyle@gmail.com or 571-403-0673.

The Boy Scout Troop 1906 is seeking members. They meet every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. at Bethlehem Baptist Church Parsonage, 7836 Fordson Road. Visit www.boyscouts-ncac.org/colonial for more.

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.

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 Rd. Those with Parkinson's and caregivers are welcome. No dance experience necessary.

Write

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Gazette
1606 King St.
Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

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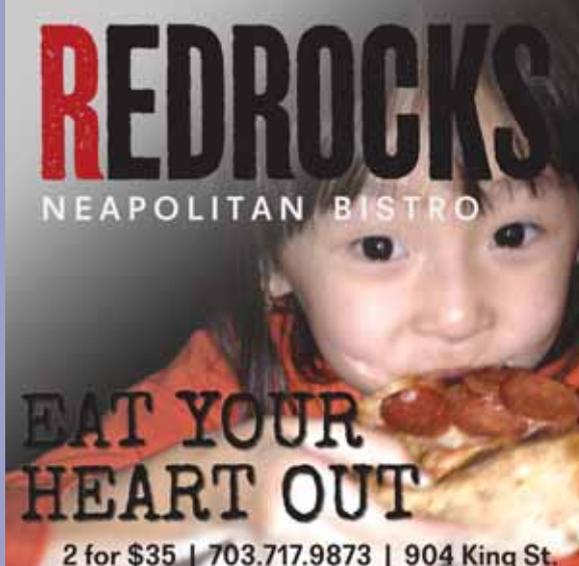
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ENTERTAINMENT

Birchmere Hosts Steep Canyon Rangers

Band returns to The Birchmere at the start of a busy year of bluegrass.

BY AMBER HEALY
THE GAZETTE

It's only the beginning of January, but the Steep Canyon Rangers have their whole year booked.

The Grammy-nominated quintet from North Carolina are about to kick off not only a tour of clubs, but also the four-day Mountain Song at Sea cruise in Miami in February before heading into the studio to record a new album, followed by another round of tour dates.

And on Jan. 25, they'll make their third stop at the Birchmere, a venue lead singer Woody Platt called a "legendary" place, especially in the world of bluegrass music.

"People have come up to us after shows and said I don't like bluegrass, but I love your band," he said. "We're not a typical bluegrass band. We dance around a lot, we sing, we have a really good time."

Bluegrass music "has a lot of layers" and different styles, from those deemed "classical" bluegrass to the more contemporary bluegrass/roots music made popular — and unexpectedly, Platt said — by groups like Mumford and Sons and the Avett Brothers in recent years.

Platt, the lead singer and guitarist, is joined in the band by banjo player Graham Sharp, mandolin player Mike Guggino, fiddler Nicky Sanders and upright bassist

Charles Humphrey III. The band started on a lark, as the musicians met while in college at Chapel Hill in North Carolina and began playing together "as a pure hobby," just for fun. As the time came for graduation, the band had developed "some momentum" and decided to make a go of it in the world of music.

"We're very lucky," Platt said. "A lot of bands come together because of their musical talent, but we were friends who happened to like playing together."

THE BAND'S BEEN SUCCESSFUL, too, earning their first Grammy nod for their last album, "Nobody Knows You." There has been one other Grammy nomination, but that was for an album the band recorded with their friend and part-year banjoist, Steve Martin. Yes, that Steve Martin, of Saturday Night Live and movie fame.

It turns out that Martin's wife was a friend of the band before she met him, Platt said. Martin's played banjo for more than 50 years, and when the band was invited to a dinner party while the Martins were on vacation in western North Carolina, an impromptu jam session turned into a musical relationship. Most recently, Martin joined the Steep Canyon Rangers on Late Night with David Letterman, The View and a concert on the Mall last summer.

"We couldn't have planned it any better,"



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Steep Canyon Rangers will be performing at The Birchmere in Alexandria on Friday, Jan. 25. Clockwise from left: Charles Humphrey III, Graham Sharp, Mike Guggino, Woody Platt and Nicky Sanders.

Platt laughed. "We're thrilled at how it turned out."

Martin won't be joining the Rangers at The Birchmere, but Platt said the partnership has helped bring people to gigs. He also credits the Internet with helping the band spread their music, as the digital technology for sharing music with thousands of people with a few clicks of a computer wasn't around, or as legal, when the band

started out more than a decade ago.

He also encourages people who've seen the Rangers perform before to come to the show later this month, as they'll be trying out new material from the upcoming record.

"We're really happy with everything right now," Platt said. "We're booked for the rest of the year. Festivals start booking early, and we've got the cruise, which we host. There's a lot going on."

Details

Tickets are still available for the Steep Canyon Rangers' upcoming show at The Birchmere and can be purchased at the club's website, www.birchmere.com.

Dine at Presidential Hotspots

Alexandria celebrates the inauguration with a special edition of Restaurant Week. Kicking off inaugural weekend and lasting for 10 days, Jan. 18-27, Alexandria's presidential hotspots and more than 50 eateries are offering \$35 three-course dinners or \$35 dinners for two. With fine dining plus acclaimed neighborhood favorites, patrons can see why President Obama and the First Family have frequented Alexandria eateries. Diners can treat their ears and their taste buds at piano bar shows by the White House pianist who performed for every president from Nixon through Clinton, and go back in time and dine at George Washington's favorite tavern, which has hosted all of the country's first five presidents.

Alexandria's presidential culinary connections include:

Barack Obama and the First Family: Several of the Obama's Alexandria eateries are participating in Restaurant Week.

Del Ray Pizzeria – Featuring presidential pies enjoyed by President Barack Obama.

The Majestic – Chef Shannon Overmiller presents selections from the First Family's menu for Michelle's mother's birthday, including a classic Caesar salad, fried oysters, fried green tomatoes, and the Majestic's signature meatloaf.

Union Street Public House – Sample trout and gumbo at this eatery visited by Michelle and Malia Obama.

White House Pianist for Nixon through Clinton: The Grille at Morrison House – Piano bar features Bob Smith, the White House pianist who performed for every president from Nixon through Clinton. Performances Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Throughout the week, Chef Brian McPherson presents fresh seasonal selections including a pumpkin soup with duck confit and an olive oil poached Scottish salmon.

Ronald Reagan: Ireland's Own (formerly Pat Troy's Ireland's Own) – Surprise visit by Ronald Reagan on St.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Del Ray Pizzeria

and Early Presidents: Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant – Favorite of George Washington and hosted all of the first five U.S. presidents. Restaurant Week menu includes an apple wood-smoked pork chop, seared chicken with nutmeg and sage cream, and a honey cake with cinnamon glaze.

Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant – Adjacent to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate.

Restaurant Week also features hot eateries beloved by foodie magazines, like Virtue Feed & Grain, named a Top 50 Best New Restaurant by Bon Appetit, and Cheesetique, honored on Food & Wine's 'Best Mac N Cheese' list.

View menus, book your table, and discover presidential connections at www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com.

Patrick's Day 1988. The restaurant features photos of Reagan, the original table where he dined and a bust of the president.

Laura Bush: Jackson 20 – Laura Bush dined here during her husband's presidency. This tavern was named for President Andrew Jackson and his visage on the \$20 bill.

George Washington

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Homeschool Studio Class.

Beginning in February at Art at the Center, 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 6-10 can participate. Register at www.artatthecenter.org or 703-201-1250.

Tavern Toddlers. Mondays, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Mondays through the end of April. Designed for walkers through 36 months and their caregivers. Tavern Toddlers features a weekly open playtime in Gadsby's historic ballroom. Gadsby's Tavern Museum is located at 134 North Royal St. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 17

Creative Writing Session. 1 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Get the creative juices flowing with the help of Camilla Clocker and Julie Ellis. Free, open to the public. 703-765-4573.

Blockbuster Thursday. 6:30 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Call for title. Free. 703-746-1702.

English as a Second Language Class. 10 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. All levels

welcome. Free. 703-746-1702.

Great Books Discussion. 7 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Call for title. Free. 703-746-1702.

Story Time. 10:30 a.m. or 3 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children ages 3-5 years. Free. Registration required. 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Paws to Read. 5:30 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Sign up to read to a dog. For children in grades 1 to 6. Registration required. 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Mother Goose Time. 10 a.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. One-year-olds can sing, enjoy fingerplays and bounces. Free. 703-746-1705.

Story Time. 11 a.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Children ages 3-5 can enjoy stories, play time and a craft. Free. 703-746-1705.

Classic Film Series. 5 p.m. at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Watch a "Farewell to Arms." Free. 703-746-1704.

Pajama Party. 7 p.m. at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Pajamas optional, but children ages 3-6 can enjoy stories, songs, games and crafts. Free. 703-746-1704.

Story Time. 4 p.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Children ages 3 and up can enjoy stories, songs,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 18



PHOTO BY SHANE CANFIELD

The "Hot Metal Boys" — Malcolm Lee (Noah), Keith Miller (Ethan), Michael Gale (Malcolm), Christopher Harris (Dave), James Hotsko (Jerry), and Jack Stein (Harold) — prepare for the no-holds barred finale of "The Full Monty."

The Bare Necessities

Little Theatre debuts
"The Full Monty."

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

The year is 1992 and unemployment is high in Buffalo, N.Y., where former millworker Jerry Lukowski hatches a plan to earn some quick cash by producing a Chippendale's-style strip show in "The Full Monty," now playing at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.

The cleverly written and composed musical comedy by Terrence McNally and David Yazbek is directed by Frank D. Shutts II, who has cast wisely and well for the LTA production of the 2001 Drama Desk Award winner for Best Musical.

"This is not about T&A," Shutts said following the Jan. 12 opening night production. "It's a love story about six guys that you want to root for."

With an energetic and appealing cast, the heartwarming story of six unemployed men who form an exotic dance troupe for a one-night only, no-holds barred strip show is buoyant and bawdy while keeping the same poignancy that made the original 1997 film such a success.

"Never in a million years did I think I would be taking my clothes off in front of 200 people," said Christopher Harris, who plays unemployed Dave Bukatinsky. "But this is such a heartwarming story and the audience is always cheering us on. It's really been such an amazing adventure."

In the pivotal role of Jerry is James Hotsko, with Michael Gale, Malcolm Lee, Keith Miller, Jack Stein and Harris rounding out the "Hot Metal Boys," as they have come to call themselves. Collectively, they form a formidable team with the young but versatile Colin Cech as Jerry's son Nathan.

Jennifer Strand rocks the role

of the droll, D-list piano pro Jeannette, who joins the act and draws blood as well as laughs with her razor sharp assessments of her amateur colleagues.

Other notable performances are turned in by Amy Conley as Pam Lukowski, Cara Giambrone as Georgie Bukatinsky and Annie Ermlick as the hot-blooded Vicki Nichols.

The commanding score is under the capable baton of Christopher A. Tomasino with particular kudos to the horn-driven charts. Highlights include "Big Black Man," delivered with panache by Lee, "You Rule My World" with Harris and Stein, and the tender "You Walk with Me" with Miller and Gale. As expected, the finale of "Let It Go" brings the audience to its feet.

(Spoiler alert: The playful choreography by Ivan Davila does include limited male nudity.)

The final moment before the lights dim is not hard to guess — a theatrical triumph for the stellar actors and the entire cast and crew of The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Without a doubt, you have to see it to believe it.

"The Full Monty" is playing now through Feb. 2 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. For tickets or more information, call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

Cast and production staff members celebrate opening night of "The Full Monty" Jan. 12 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.

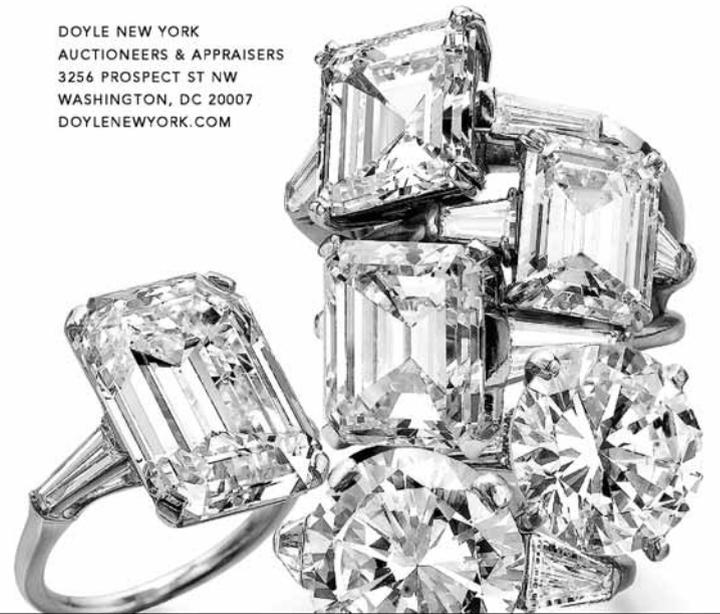
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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 16

movement and more, including a weekly craft or short film. Free. 703-746-1703.

FRIDAY/JAN. 18

Slam Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Fine Arts Society announces spoken word poetry events at the Athenaeum in Old Town. Admission is free for all, but attendees interested in competing in the poetry slam can pay an entry fee of \$10 for a chance to win a \$100 cash prize. Featuring live music, scheduled artists, and an open mic, SLAM ALEXANDRIA is hosted by Shelly Bell and co-sponsored by the NVFAA and Shelly B. Arts. The event starts at 7 p.m. and is located at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St.

Music and Dance. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Enjoy dancing to the music of the Mount Vernon Swing Band. \$4/public. 703-765-4573.

Tech Zoo Fridays. Noon at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Learn about e-reading devices or bring one already owned. Free. 703-746-1704.

Theater Performance. 7:30 p.m. at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, see Disney's "Little Mermaid, Jr." Visit acconline.org or 703-660-2611 for tickets and information.

Music Performance. 7:30 p.m. at Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. See Bottle Rockets perform with Marshall Crenshaw. \$27.50/person. Visit birchmere.com for more.

Wee Ones Story Time. 10:30-11 a.m. at Hooray for Books, 1555 King St. Children up to age 2 can explore the world with stories and songs. Free.

Visit www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Presidential Beer Dinner. 7-9:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. In partnership with Yards Brewery. Each course will highlight a different president. \$85/person. Reservations required. 703-746-4242.

JAN. 18 THROUGH JAN. 21

George Washington Presidential Scavenger Hunt. Children can explore Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, for clues that will lead to a prize. The 44th visitor through the gate will also receive a gift. \$17/adult; \$8/child 6-11; children under 5 free. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 19

Garden Design: Session Two. 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. \$35. Learn how to assess and improve growing conditions, discover great plants and create a sustainable garden. Register online at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173. Code 290 182 3201.

SOUP Saturday. 9 a.m.-noon at Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Select a handcrafted bowl donated by a local potter and get a complimentary serving of soup. Bowls are \$20 each, with proceeds benefitting United Community Ministries.

Pine Wood Derby Workshop. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Old Town Ace Hardware, 809 S. Washington St. Cub Scouts can bring their cars, with the design traced onto the car, and have them be rough cut. Sanders, sandpaper and tools will be available for additional work to be done on the cars. \$1 voluntary donation per car

accepted. 703-879-0475.

Saturday Stories. 11 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. All ages can enjoy stories and songs. Free. 703-746-1702.

Theater Performance. 7:30 p.m. at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, see Disney's "Little Mermaid, Jr." Visit acconline.org or 703-660-2611 for tickets and information.

Wee Ones Story Time. 10:30-11 a.m. at Hooray for Books, 1555 King St. Children up to age 2 can explore the world with stories and songs. Free. Visit www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Author Meeting. Local author Marfe Delano will launch her new book "Master George's People," based on research into George Washington and the slaves who worked his estate, from 3:30-5 p.m. at Hooray for Books, 1555 King St. Free. Visit www.hooray4books.com or 703-548-4092.

Book Signing and Lecture. 1 p.m. at the Lee-Fendell House, 614 Oronoco St. Honor the birthday of Light Horse Harry Lee with cake and champagne at the Lee-Fendall House, featuring historian/author Mike Cecere and "Wedded to My Sword: The Revolutionary War Service of Light Horse Harry Lee." \$7 per person, and may be purchased at the door or at 703-548-1789.

Author Signing. 1-3 p.m. at Lavender Moon Cupcakery, 116 S. Royal St. Local author Kara Carter will sign copies of her book "Abby's Quilt," which is about her grandmother. Free.

SUNDAY/JAN. 20

Music. Peter Mayer will perform with Copper Ponies at 7 p.m. at Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N.

Beauregard St. \$18/general; \$15/advance. Tickets can be purchased at focusmusic.org.

Annual Jury Information Session. 2-3 p.m. in Studio 31 at the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Visual artists who are interested in joining the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association can get more information. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

Family Tea. 3-4:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant, 138 N. Royal St. Children can bring their dolls and enjoy tea and period-inspired delicacies with their parents and Mrs. Dolley Madison. \$35/person. Reservations required. Visit www.gadsbystavern.org or 703-746-4242.

Don't Be a Drip: Using Water Wisely. 1:30-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. \$10. Learn how to handle excess water with rain gardens and more. Register online at www.greenspring.org or 703-642-5173. Code: 290 182 1901.

Theater Performance. 2 p.m. at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, see Disney's "Little Mermaid, Jr." Visit acconline.org or 703-660-2611 for tickets and information.

Choir Festival. 7 p.m. at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road. Enjoy the 18th annual Ventures in Community festival. Free-will offering will be distributed among several non-profit groups in the area. 703-360-4170.

THROUGH JAN. 20

Art Exhibit. See "Joys of the Season" at Site 2 Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. See all-media exhibits by five Torpedo Factory artists. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org or 703-838-4565.

MONDAY/JAN. 21

Theater Performance. 2 p.m. at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, see Disney's "Little Mermaid, Jr." Visit acconline.org or 703-660-2611 for tickets and information.

TUESDAY/JAN. 22

Billy Cobham's Spectrum Band "40th Anniversary Tour." \$35. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

Time for 2s. 11 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. For children ages 24-36 months. Free. Registration required, 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Baby Rhyme Time. 11:30 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children up to 11 months with adult. Free. Registration required, 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Game Night. 7 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children ages 8-12. Games change monthly. Free. 703-746-1702.

Songs and Stories. 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Children ages 1-4 can enjoy songs, fingerplays and stories. Free. 703-746-1705.

Paws to Read. 5:30 p.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Sign up at the children's desk or call 703-746-1783 to reserve a 15-minute slot to read to a dog. For students in grades 1-6.

Tuesday Tots. 11 a.m. at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Children ages 2-3 can enjoy stories, songs, games and making crafts. Free. 703-746-1704.

Mother Goose Time. 10 a.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Children ages 12-24 months can enjoy songs, games and interactive fun. Free. 703-746-1703.

Stories to Grow On. Children ages 2 and up can enjoy stories, songs, movement and interactive fun at 11 a.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Free. 703-746-1703.

Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Ainslie Arts Center at Episcopal High School, 3900 W. Braddock Road. Hear the National Chamber Players. Free. Visit www.episcopalhighschool.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 23

Author Series. 7-8:30 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. William Burton McCormick will speak about his novel "Lenin's Harem," a work of historical fiction set during the Russian revolution. Free. www.alexandria.lib.va.us or 703-746-1702.

Time for 2s. 11 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. For children ages 24-36 months. Free. Registration required, 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Spanish Story Time. 1 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. All levels welcome. Free. 703-746-1702.

Meeting. 7 p.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Learn about the Friends of Duncan Library. 703-746-1705.

Nature Program. 3:30 p.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. A Buddie Ford Nature Center naturalist will talk on various topics, often bringing animals. For children in grades K-5. Free. 703-746-1705.

Mother Goose Time. 10 a.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Children ages 12-24 months can enjoy songs, games and interactive fun. Free. 703-746-1703.

Stories to Grow On. Children ages 2 and up can enjoy stories, songs, movement and interactive fun at 11 a.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Free. 703-746-1703.

THURSDAY/JAN. 24

Art Focus Group. 7:30-9 p.m. Classes are \$25 each or \$200 for the 10 class series. A school or group of teachers can share the registration for the full series. At 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane. Call 703-201-1250.

Blockbuster Thursday. 6:30 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Call for title. Free. 703-746-1702.

Story Time. 10:30 a.m. or 3 p.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children ages 3-5 years. Free. Registration required. 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Fire Safety Story Time. 10:30 a.m. at Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Children ages 3-5 can learn about fire safety from a representative from the Alexandria Fire Department. Free. Registration required. 703-746-1702 ext. 5.

Mother Goose Time. 10 a.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. One-year-olds can sing, enjoy fingerplays and bounces. Free. 703-746-1705.

Story Time. 11 a.m. at James Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Children ages 3-5 can enjoy stories, play time and a craft. Free. 703-746-1705.

Short Story Discussion. 7 p.m. at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Discuss stories from "Other Voices, Other Vistas" edited by Barbara Solomon. Free. 703-746-1704.

Pajama Party. 7 p.m. at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Pajamas optional, but children ages 3-6 can enjoy stories, songs, games and crafts. Free. 703-746-1704.

Story Time. 4 p.m. at Kate Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Children ages 3 and up can enjoy stories, songs, movement and more, including a weekly craft or short film. Free. 703-746-1703.

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Help make history come to life for Mount Vernon's youngest visitors in the Education Center and Hands-on-History Center. Call Diana Cordray, Education Center Manager, at 703-799-8602 or email dcordray@mountvernon.org.

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MV Girls' Basketball Remains Undefeated In District Play

The Mount Vernon girls' basketball team sandwiched a one-point loss to a tough Highland Springs team between a pair of lopsided National District victories during a five-day span.

After beating Stuart 87-15 on Jan. 11, Mount Vernon suffered its second loss of the season — a 64-63 defeat at the hands of Highland Springs, which improved to 13-1. Three days later, the Majors bounced back with a 93-16 victory against Falls Church.

According to stats from the Washington Post's website, Mount Vernon had seven players score at least seven points against Stuart. Kelly Loftus led the way with 16 points. Tiffany Webster finished with 13 points, Chanel Shannon scored 11, Erin Irving added 10, Samantha Porter tallied nine, Taylor Dunham had eight and Chanise Ray finished with seven.

Against Highland Springs, Loftus led the Majors with 16 points. Shannon scored 15 points and Irving added 11.

Against Falls Church, Loftus scored a game-high 24 points. Webster finished with 18 points, Irving totaled 13 and Porter scored 12 points and grabbed 10 rebounds. Shannon scored 11 points and Dunham added 10.

Mount Vernon improved to 11-2 overall and 7-0 in the National District. The Majors' two losses were to teams outside of the Northern Region by a combined three points.

Mount Vernon will travel to face Washington-Lee at 7:45 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 17.

Mount Vernon Boys' Basketball Wins Fourth Straight

The Mount Vernon boys' basketball team defeated Falls Church 62-34 on Jan. 14, giv-



Freshman Erin Irving and the Mount Vernon girls' basketball team finished the first half of their National District schedule with a 7-0 record.

ing the Majors four consecutive victories and six wins in their last seven games.

According to stats from the Washington Post's Web site, Bryce Washington led the Majors with 15 points. Demarcus Edwards scored nine points, Trevor Breaux added eight and Shawny Lovitt finished with seven.

Mount Vernon improved to 8-6 overall and 4-3 in the National District. The Majors will host Washington-Lee at 7:45 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 17.



Javon Trice and the West Potomac boys' basketball team are in a three-way tie for second place in the Patriot District.

West Potomac Boys' Basketball Falls To Lake Braddock

The West Potomac boys' basketball team dropped into a three-way tie for second place in the Patriot District after losing to Lake Braddock 46-43 on Jan. 15.

According to stats from the Washington

Post's website, Brandon Pressley led West Potomac with 17 points. Kwame Camon finished with 11 points and DeMornay Pierson-El added eight.

The Wolverines dropped to 8-6 overall and 5-2 in the Patriot District. West Potomac is tied for second with Lake Braddock and T.C. Williams. Woodson leads the district with a 7-0 record.

West Potomac will travel to face T.C. Williams at 7:45 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 18.



Michaela Molina, Jordan Mc Cray, Jill Humphreys and Meghan Mallon.

'To Reach The Beach'

The West Potomac Dance Team took over the floor at the boy's varsity basketball game against Lee during halftime last Friday evening, Jan. 11. The team was joined by dancers from area schools for the performance as part of the ongoing preparations for the upcoming competition "Reach the Beach," to be held in Ocean City, Md. at the end of February.

The varsity dance team held a three-day dance workshop to teach area youth the dance that they performed at halftime of Friday's



Paola Vasquez, Addison Laragy, Mary Grace Mc Peek, Kiera McAllister and Alondra Alvarez.

game.

The next dance workshop will be held on Jan. 30, 31 and Feb.

1. Funds raised will help to defray the trip's costs for the dancers.

Off to the Movies

Mason professor has unconventional method of teaching complex concepts.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

An Arlington resident and George Mason University professor has an unconventional way of helping her students master complex concepts and evaluate their proficiency: She requires them to watch movies.

Laurie Meamber, an associate professor of marketing in Mason's School of Management in Fairfax, teaches a consumer behavior course in which students study the actions and motivations of buyers. Meamber teaches them how to analyze why and how consumers make certain decisions. The class studies characters in popular films to see the concepts they learn throughout the semester.

"A primary goal of a consumer behavior course is for students to better understand consumer behavior in order to become more effective marketing managers," said Meamber. "An additional goal ... is to enhance their knowledge of consumer behavior so that they as consumers can consume wisely."

Meamber says that through watching and analyzing movies, her classes examine the entire range of internal, external and situational influences on consumer behavior. She divides her class into three groups and each group focuses on one factor that affects consumer behavior: external influences, internal influences and decision-making.

"Students [write] a brief plot summary, providing descriptions of the major characters as consumers and analyzing concepts that they had learned in the course that appear in the film," she said. "They do this in a comprehensive fashion, after having learned all of the ideas taught in consumer behavior. This allows them to reflect upon, apply and synthesize the entire range of knowledge they have acquired in the course."

Mason spokeswoman Catherine Probst said, "Along the way, the students construct consumer profiles of the characters and examine reasons why and how

they make decisions throughout the film. Specifically, students are looking for influences on consumer behavior based on attitudes, motivation, income level and occupation."

Mason student, and Reston resident, Ben Coffinberger took Meamber's consumer behavior class during the fall semester. His group chose "The Devil Wears Prada."

"We presented it by dressing up as the four main characters and acting out small scenes from the movie that provided examples of important marketing concepts we learned throughout the semester," said Coffinberger. "I was forced to identify and apply the marketing concepts I learned in the consumer behavior course to the scenes in the movie. Before taking this class, I didn't think to really recognize consumer-marketing behaviors in movies, television and everyday life. Now I view things in a totally different light."

Meamber says the increasing popularity of social media makes the movie approach a successful learning tool. "As time moves forward, this type of assignment fits in with the interests and learning styles of this generation of undergraduate students," she said. "This type of assignment allows students to analyze and reflect upon movies as a medium that portrays many examples of consumers and of consumer behavior."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

George Mason University professor Laurie Meamber uses movies to teach students about consumer behavior.

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Importance of Recess

Pediatric researchers say unstructured play can help a child's cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Can climbing on monkey bars help a child's cognitive development? Can a game of tag boost preschooler's social skills? The nation's top pediatricians say "yes" and some local educators agree.

A policy statement released earlier this month by the American Academy of Pediatrics said recess, when provided in a safe environment and under supervision, provides children with cognitive, physical, emotional and social benefits. Additionally, the AAP recommended that unstructured play be used in conjunction with physical education in schools.

"Recess and unstructured play provide children with opportunities to explore, problem-solve and learn in ways that enhance their socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development," said Julie K. Kidd, associate professor and early childhood education academic program coordinator at George Mason University in Fairfax. "The physical and mental break from academic activities enables children to return to their studies more focused and ready to learn."

SOME LOCAL SCHOOLS agree that recess is an important part of a student's day. "In addition to physical education classes, our students enjoy unstructured recess every day," said Dick Ewing, head of school at the Norwood School in Potomac, Md. "Of course, there are the health benefits of the physical activity, and teachers will tell you that children are more focused in the classroom after recess, but there are also several social-emotional benefits. Children learn important life skills during recess. They learn how to effectively communicate, collaborate, cooperate and problem solve during various playground games. Creativity also comes into play as children make up their own games."

Joan Holden, head of school for St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in Alexandria, developed play areas known as "Tinkering Spaces" on campus, "dedicated spots where students work together with educational games, building tools and puzzles, where there are no assessments or evaluations, just a relaxing, fun atmosphere that brings out teamwork, creativity, invention and problem-solving," said Holden. "I thought it would be great to have age-appropriate spaces on each campus where students could tinker in a very informal way, with no instructions. The only ground rule is that you can't destroy what someone else has started. You can either build on it or start your own project."

American Academy of Pediatrics researchers and local educators concluded that re-



COURTESY OF NORWOOD SCHOOL

Students at Norwood School in Potomac, Md., enjoy outdoor recess. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that recess — when provided in a safe, supervised environment — offers children physical, emotional and social benefits.

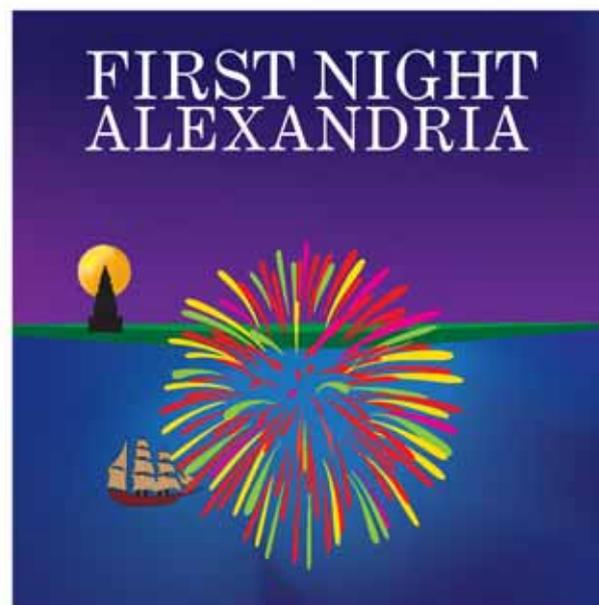
cess and free play activities are a critical part of development and social interaction that students may not get in a classroom.

American Academy of Pediatrics researchers also recommended that recess not be withheld from children as punishment. Shannon Melideo, chair of the education department and an associate professor at the School of Education and Human Services at Marymount University in Arlington, agrees: "Too often the children who are denied recess as a punishment are the children who need recess most."

Some local educators say that recess gives children an opportunity to learn how to manage their free time. "Current research in brain development highlights the connections between physical activity, attention and memory," said Dresden Koons, head of Lower School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac. "We ... [believe] that what happens outside the classroom benefits what goes on inside it, and vice versa. Most of all, we want our students to take appropriate risks in a safe environment and to experience repeated successes on the playground that will translate into their success as learners and as human beings."

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS STATEMENT stresses that recess should complement, not replace physical education classes, even for schools with limited outdoor space, and Reston-based National Association for Sport and Physical Education spokeswoman Paula Keyes Kun agreed. She said, "All children need a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Regular daily recess should be a part of every school day. It provides children with discretionary time to be active, helps them develop healthy bodies and enjoy movement."

She added that NAPSE is calling on schools across the country to find creative ways of increasing their students' physical activity levels before, during and after school.



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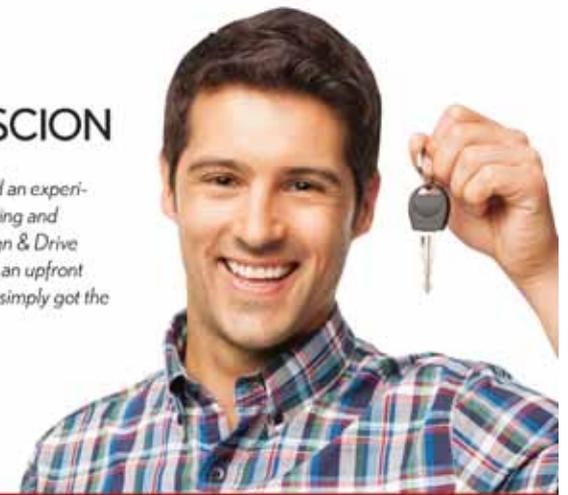
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