

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 25, 2014

## Santa Remembers His Daughter

Edward Smith brings smiles to children's faces during a trying time during the holidays.

BY VERONICA BRUNO  
THE GAZETTE

“Christmas is a little tough sometimes,” said Edward Smith, recalling his daughter, Kimberly Smith Aimes. She was 23 when she was killed by a drunk driver over 10 years ago.

“Everyone’s there, but to us, there’s still a void,” he said while talking about how much he misses her during the holidays. The tragedy was even more devastating considering that she had been three months pregnant at the time. “It would have been our first grandchild.” The drunk driver ran through six stop signs before hitting and killing Kimberly. “To us, it’s like it happened yesterday,” he added.

To keep her memory alive, he kept in touch with Kimberly’s friends. Many of them still lived around the corner from him in Beachwood, NJ. His niece and nephew also live there and they have children of their own. He decided to surprise all the children at their family Christmas party and dress up as Santa for the children about six years ago. On his way back, he would stop by his daughter’s friends’ houses afterwards.

“I started going to her friends’ houses who had children of their own, just to visit,” he recalled. “I would do Santa for their kids. It was just fun to do.” Playing Santa took on greater meaning when seeing Kimberly’s friends have families of their own, thinking of how things might have been. “I was inspired by seeing them with their children. It made a connection to me with Kimberly.”

His other daughter, Kathy, resides in Alexandria with her family. They have three children now, ranging from ages 2 to 7. The oldest, Lillian, graduated from St. Aidan’s pre-school and the middle child, Caroline, still attends. For the past few years, Smith has been the Santa at the St. Aidan’s Santa’s Workshop. He’s happy they haven’t figured out that it’s their granddad that’s behind the red suit. “They all still believe in Santa,” he



Ed Smith with his grandchildren Caroline, Lillian and Michael at St. Aidan’s Santa’s Workshop event last Christmas.

PHOTO BY VERONICA BRUNO/THE CONNECTION

“It made a connection to me with Kimberly.”

— Edward Smith, Santa portrayer in speaking about his daughter

said.

Smith also performs at Kathy’s house on Christmas Eve. It gets a little complicated surprising his grandchildren since he’s also staying there for the holidays. “I have to sneak around the back” in order to make the surprise “Santa” visit. “I really enjoy it.”

When asked what he looks forward to the most about performing the role, Smith said, “The expression on the kids’ faces, seeing them so excited.” He also added, “getting out of that hot Santa suit.”

Since he’s been playing the role for a while now, he also has some standard techniques that he employs. “I start by asking what their name is. I always assure them that they’re on my good list.”

SEE SANTA REMEMBERS, PAGE 5

## Fuller Forecasts: ‘Slightly Better 2015’

Realtors association hosts year-end economic update.

BY ANDREA WORKER  
THE GAZETTE

Most keynote speakers are used to a bit of fidgeting from the audience about 20 minutes into their spiel. Just goes to show the level of interest both the topic and the speaker generated when after almost two hours, the hosts of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) Year-End Economic Review with Dr. Stephen Fuller basically called the session “a wrap” to convince the attendees that the included lunch awaited them.

Fuller brings quite the collection of credentials to the role: Ph.D., Dwight Schar faculty chair and university professor and director,

SEE FULLER, PAGE 18



BY ANDREA WORKER/THE GAZETTE

Stephen Fuller from George Mason University held the stage for almost two hours at the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR) Year-End Economic Review. Fuller spoke to the issues that shaped 2014, as well as predictions for the coming year, and beyond.

## Recalling Warren Cikins

Former Mount Vernon supervisor dies.

BY GERALD A. FILL  
THE GAZETTE

Warren Ira Cikins, former Mount Vernon District Supervisor and John F. Kennedy White House staffer, died Dec. 13 at Fairfax Inova Hospital with his wife and two sons at his bedside. He died of complications following emergency spine surgery resulting from a fall down a flight of steps during a vacation at Lake Anna to celebrate Thanksgiving and his 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with his wife and family.

According to his son and family



Warren Ira Cikins

spokesman Dean Cikins, his father embodied the idealism and service to others that inspired millions of Americans during the ‘60s, and what President Kennedy said in his inaugural address challenge to the American people to “ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.”

SEE FORMER, PAGE 4

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# Happy Holidays

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Groveton Elementary School's new principal, Jim Swoger, welcomes everyone to the Winter Concert on Tuesday, Dec. 16. The gym was filled with parents, ready to listen to their children perform.

# Groveton Elementary Presents Winter Concert



Band teacher David Davis conducts his 5th Grade Trombone Students, who are playing their chosen excerpt from "Frosty the Snowman." The students began playing in October and only have an hour a week to learn. Each group was allowed to choose their own song, learned through memorization.



As the chorus members took their places, David Davis entertained the crowd with his solo rendition of "Winter Wonderland."



Longtime Chorus Teacher, Kate Hart, lead the 5th Grade Chorus who performed "Winter Wonderland."

PHOTOS BY  
RENÉE RUGGLES  
THE GAZETTE



Strings Teacher, Sarah Geiger, and her Advanced Strings Students, perform "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas."



Members of the Combined Chorus have fun performing the last song of the Winter Concert, "Mele Kalikimaka."

# Former Mount Vernon Supervisor Warren Cikins Dies

FROM PAGE 1

"Dad walked the walk," Dean Cikins said. "He lived by what he aspired to, by reaching out and asking others to work together to make our country a better place for all Americans. ... He often said that he wanted to make a difference and always meant to use public service as his chosen career."

Cikins' philosophy is reflected in his published personal memoir entitled, "In Search of Middle Ground," which he discussed in a Nov. 21, 2013 Mount Vernon Gazette interview in connection with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In that interview he said: "Seeking middle ground has been my mantra throughout my professional career and personal life." A Reform Jew, Cikins served as a legislative aide to former U.S. Rep. Brooks Hays (D-Ark.), a Southern Baptist, who fought against school segregation in Arkansas in 1957 that eventually cost him his seat in Congress. Several years later, when Kennedy was elected President, he asked Hays to join his Administration. Cikins rejoined Hays in the Kennedy White House where they continued their civil rights work to help lay the groundwork for the eventual passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

At the local government level Cikins was twice elected from the Mount Vernon District to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; first a one-year term to complete the unexpired term of Herb Harris who was elected to Congress, and then reelected to a four-year term. Among his local government accomplishments he played a critically important role in establishing the Mount Vernon Recreation Center. Cikins did not seek a third term. He joined the not for profit Brookings Institution "think tank" organization in Washington, D.C., and stayed for 15 years as a senior administrator. Among other responsibilities at Brookings he worked with Chief Justice Warren Burger in developing an annual conference to debate and formulate proposed federal judicial improvements, including prison reforms such as work-release programs. According to his family the close working relationship with Justice Burger and what was accomplished through the annual conferences was a highlight of



Warren Ira Cikins, surrounded by his family.

Cikins' career. In more recent years he participated as a volunteer on a citizens' task force that developed the justification to prevent the Mount Vernon Hospital from being closed. He also found time to teach political science at several local colleges.

Friends and former colleagues reflected on Warren Cikins:

Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors: "On behalf of our board I would like to express appreciation and gratitude for Warren Cikins' service to the residents of Fairfax County. He has been a real bedrock in our community. My heart goes out to the family, and I know he will be sincerely missed by all who knew him."

Jim Lutzweiler, Southern Baptist archivist for the late U.S. Rep. Brooks Hays: "What drew me, a southern Baptist, to Warren Cikins, a reformed Jew, was his passion for justice. From the first conversation many years ago justice was a continuous theme in our conversations. He never left home without it. He got that passion from the prophet Micah. His life was one long attempt to achieve the utopian world for all of men on earth. Warren was indeed a Prince of Peace through his relentless pursuit of justice and fair play."

## Warren Ira Cikins, 83



Warren Ira Cikins

- ❖ Born and raised in Boston, Mass.
- ❖ Parents: Anna and Harry Cikins
- ❖ Married to Sylvia Acitelli, 50 years.
- ❖ He is survived by his wife, two sons Dean and Neil; daughters in law Andrea and Traci; three grandchildren: Maya, Emme and Tori.
- ❖ Education: Bachelor's degree, Harvard College; Master's degree in political science, Harvard College Littauer Center (Kennedy School of Government)
- ❖ Member and one of the founders of Temple Rodef Shalom, Falls Church, Va.
- ❖ Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers: please donate to a charity of your choice.
- ❖ Published author: "In Search of Middle Ground; Memoirs of a Washington Insider," 2005
- ❖ A memorial service was held at the Temple Rodef Shalom on Dec. 17, 2014. He was buried at the Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria. A celebration of his life is planned in the spring of 2015.

Dr. Cleve Francis, cardiologist, Mount Vernon: "I knew him for many years as both a patient and dear friend. He was a wise man, brilliant, good family man and a dedicated public servant. From a medical point of view he never intended to die; he died unexpectedly of post surgical complications following an accident. He died with dignity. His image for me as a continuously engaged, positive, good and decent man will forever have a place in my heart."

Donald Santarelli, former Deputy Attorney General of the U.S.: "Warren was the godfather of important prison reforms in-

cluding the establishment of work-release programs and the development of prison industries. Warren served in all three branches of the federal government as well as an elected local government official. Those experiences uniquely qualified him to understand the making of public policy as well as the compromises required. ... Yet that never dimmed the principles and vigor that underpinned his pursuit of the ideal."

Rabbi Laszlo Berkowitz, Temple Rodef Shalom: "Warren Cikins was a happy warrior for social justice and the fulfillment of the American promise."

### BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

afforded a no-cost (up to \$ 30 fare), safe way home. Since 1993, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 61,002 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area. Visit [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com).

#### HOLIDAY SAFETY

**Free Cab Rides.** 10 p.m.-6 a.m. daily, Friday, Dec. 12-Thursdays, Jan. 1. Washington-metropolitan area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI and be

#### SATURDAY/JAN. 10

**Office Hours.** Fairfax County School Board Member Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Members of the community are invited to stop by to ask questions or to

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 5



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Monthly Networking  
Feb 13, 5:30-7:00 pm @ Hampton Inn Mt Vernon  
Mar 13, 5:30-7:00 pm @ Good Shepherd Housing

MOUNT VERNON-LEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
6821 Richmond Highway / Alexandria, VA 22306

Connecting Business and Community

# Santa Remembers His Daughter

FROM PAGE 1

Knowing the latest electrical gadgets can also be a challenge. Smith may not know every electronic toy that the youngsters ask for. "I sometimes have to give pat answers" when confronted with unfamiliar toy requests. He's also moved by the many Santa letters he's received over the years from children. "I've saved many of them."

But the Santa experiences he especially remembers around this time are with Kimberly's friends and their children. He recalled a memory of going to see the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. His wife Carol won tickets to the show two years in a row. The year before, Kimberly had gone with her. The year she died, they still had tickets. Smith decided to go with Carol this time. During the performance, he remembered the part when Santa was on stage and he was holding his list of names that he would get the toys for. He was sitting with his wife and the Santa on stage said, "Oh, we missed one." He picked up a

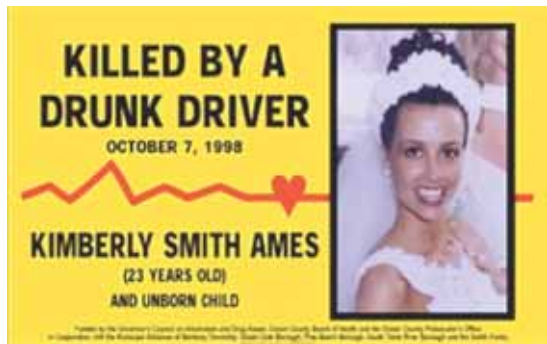


PHOTO COURTESY OF ED SMITH

**Kimberly Smith Ames, Ed Smith's daughter, was killed by a drunk driver in 1998. She was three months pregnant at the time.**

single letter and said, "It's from Kimberly."

With a father's tears in his eyes, he said, "It was as if she was there."

## Storck Schedules Office Hours

Fairfax County School Board member Dan Storck will host Saturday Community Office Hours in January 2015, and February 2015, as noted below:

❖ Saturday, Jan. 10, 2015, at the Lorton Library Conference Room, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

❖ Saturday, Jan. 10, 2015, at the Sherwood Regional Library, Conference Room 3, from 12:30-2:30 p.m.

❖ Saturday, Feb. 14, 2015, at the Lorton Library Conference Room, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

❖ Saturday, Feb. 14, 2015, at the Sherwood Regional Library, Conference Room 3, from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Members of the community are invited to stop by to ask questions or to discuss concerns, no appointment necessary. Those with questions about the community office hours should contact Dan Storck at Dan.Storck@fcps.edu or his assistant Mary Ellen Hook at mehook@fcps.edu.

## MILITARY NOTES

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Photos are welcome.

Air Force Airman 1st Class **Komla W. Ahligo** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Ahligo earned distinction as an honor graduate. He is the brother of Willie Collins of Alexandria. The airman is a 2014 graduate of Annandale High School.

U.S. Air National Guard Airman 1st Class **Daniel Lewis** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Lewis earned distinction as an honor graduate.

He is the son of Richard and Kathy Lewis of Alexandria; and the brother of Matthew Lewis of Chantilly, and of Katie Luong of South Riding. He is also the

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

discuss concerns, no appointment necessary. Contact Dan Storck at Dan.Storck@fcps.edu or his assistant Mary Ellen Hook at mehook@fcps.edu

❖ 10 a.m.-noon at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton, in the Conference Room.

❖ 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, in Conference Room 3.

**SUNDAY/JAN. 11**

**School Open House.** 2-4 p.m. at Burgundy Farm Country Day School, 3700 Burgundy Road, Alexandria. School serves pre-kindergarten to 8th grade. Call 703-329-6968 to RSVP or schedule a personal tour. Visit www.burgundyfarm.org for more.

**SATURDAY/JAN. 17**

**Winter Waterfowl Identification.** 9 a.m.-noon at Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge and State Park. Join an introduction to winter waterfowl identification, in preparation for the annual ASNV Waterfowl Count. Dress for an outdoor field trip/bird walk. Bring binoculars and a scope if available; leader will have a scope and waterfowl identification guides. Meet at the Woodmarsh Trail parking lot on High Point Road. Directions:

from Route 1 in Lorton, take Gunston Rd east. Turn right on High Point Road (toward Mason Neck State Park) to parking lot for the Woodmarsh Trail on the left. Free; advance registration required. Visit www.audubonva.org to register.

**SATURDAY/FEB. 14**

**Office Hours.** Fairfax County School Board Member Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Members of the community are invited to stop by to ask questions or to discuss concerns, no appointment necessary. Contact Dan Storck at Dan.Storck@fcps.edu or his assistant Mary Ellen Hook at mehook@fcps.edu

❖ 10 a.m.-noon at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton, in the Conference Room.

❖ 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, in Conference Room 3.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**Mount Vernon At Home** is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteer time to assist older adults aging in place in their homes. Volunteers are needed for local transportation to medical and personal appointments, errands, and

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 20

grandson of Joyce Lewis of Belmont, N.C., and of Joan and Ralph Kuhnel of Ocean Isle, N.C. The airman graduated in 2008 from Mount Vernon High School.

Air Force Airman **Ana J. Espinal** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Espinal is the cousin of Vanessa B. Mendez of Alexandria.

Air Force Airman 1st Class **Steven S. Klinger** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Klinger is the son of Steven S. Klinger of Ohatchee, Ala. and Deborah L. Reed of Alexandria.

He is a 2008 graduate of Exeter High School, Exeter, N.H. He earned an associate degree in 2012 from Great Bay Community College, Portsmouth, N.H.

Airman first class **Philip Bryant** has

graduated from the Basic Air Force Photjournalist Course at the Defense Information School, Fort George G. Meade, Md. This course trains selected enlisted personnel in the principles, techniques and skills required to perform the duties and functions of public affairs specialists. Bryant is the son of Gina Bryant of Bristow, Va. He graduated in 2009 from Mount Vernon High School and he earned a bachelor's degree in 2013 from Radford University (Radford, Va.).

Air Force Airman **Bradley M. Billings** graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Airmen who complete basic training earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force. Billings is a 2011 graduate of Mount Vernon High School.

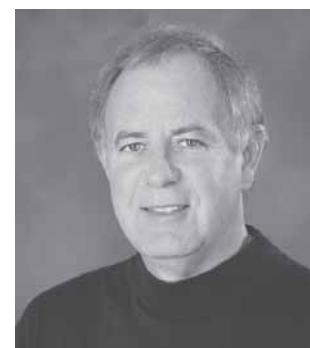
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Mt. Vernon is Rex's hometown. He moved here in 1960 when his father, an Air Force pilot, was stationed at the Pentagon. Rex also became a pilot, graduating from the Air Force Academy and flying for 20 years with the Air Force and Eastern Airlines.

Rex returned to his roots in Mt. Vernon where he and his wife, Doris, raised their four children, and where Rex embarked on a second career in Real Estate.

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**Richmond Highway approaching Kings Crossing: A sea of asphalt and concrete where storm water drains into storm sewers that enter Quander Brook behind the shopping center.**



**Severe erosion on the banks of Quander Brook below the storm water outfall from Richmond Highway and the acres of asphalt parking lots.**

# The Origin of Mount Vernon Watersheds

## Sorting through the variety of efforts to fix human impact on rivers and streams.

BY MARTIN TILLET

**T**he anthroposphere has altered and negatively impacted our watersheds by increasing the one way flow of energy and the cycling of material through the downward movement of matter by gravity and the water cycle to the Potomac estuary. We are harming the river by increasing the level of nutrients and toxic chemicals that are able to reach it through the infrastructure of roads, storm sewers, sidewalks, parking lots, blacktop playgrounds, buildings, and housing.

When Europeans first settled here, our watersheds held abundant life surrounded by a periphery of marshes and lands covered by a climax forest ecosystem. The native peoples lived in small villages and survival required harvesting resources from the land, marshes, water and subsistence farming where small areas of forest were burned and slashed away to grow crops until the soil nutrients played out and abandoning the site to undergo reforestation. The biodiversity of habitats, species and genetic inheritance over thousands of years of co-evolution enabling organism interactions in this system had created a functioning and healthy set of ecosystems that exhibited a dynamic stability.

The function, health and stability of that system declined after the arrival of Europeans and African slaves. Clearing forests to build shelter and create agricultural land for food, and a cash crop (tobacco) to start an economy was the first step in disrupting the forces of gravity and running water no longer moderated by surrounding forests. Trees had been the regulator of the water cycle, minimizing the effect of moving water and diminishing the flow of nutrients and sediments from the land. These forces drive erosion and shut down seaports by silting in their harbors.

The changes were treated as insignificant as they impacted small areas. By the mid-

19th century, changes in transport substituted for water conveyance. Land transport initiated changes in living patterns previously dictated by the need to live near the waterways for travel and trade. Towns and cities expanded and grew beyond the limitations of being linked to water. Late 19th and 20th century development patterns are reflective of this change leading to a reliance on transportation innovations culminating with an automobile-dependent society.

The anthroposphere of roads, storm sewers, sidewalks, housing, shopping centers, schools, businesses, warehouses and parking lots is the template upon which our society is built and operates. Much of this is a required component of a site development proposal by developers. For much of the 20th century there were few regulations of this design beyond ensuring that storm water did not flood the streets of our communities. Infrastructure only had to carry away storm water through a storm sewer system that would capture and direct the runoff to the nearest stream.

A storm sewer system is different from the sanitary sewer originating at homes and businesses. Water from such sites enters a closed pipe system that moves the water from our kitchens, bathrooms and laundry to a waste water facility. There it receives combined biological and chemical treatment to ensure that it is clean and free of nutrients before reentering the watershed. Storm water originating on your roof top, sidewalks, roads and parking lots goes into a storm sewer in your neighborhood that flows to the nearest stream. That water has nutrients like lawn fertilizers. Pet wastes from streets and chemical toxins from road and parking lot surfaces enter storm sewers to local streams and to the Potomac River.

Infrastructure increases the volume of flow during rain events into streams. Increased volume undercuts the banks and destabilizes surrounding trees by removing the soil around roots. Trees fall into the stream bed creating blockages to migratory fish. Development in some areas has led to a degree of imperviousness that the water volume overwhelms the infrastructure capacity to carry the water and flooding threatens property as happens in the Huntington neighborhood along Cameron Run.

By the end of the 20th century our local watersheds were impaired. Around the

same time, the new science of biodiversity was gaining recognition. The discipline teaches that as diversity disappears, ecosystems become weakened and inefficient thus threatening the health and maintenance of all life including ours. A Fairfax County Stream Assessment study based on biological diversity showed many impaired streams in Fairfax County with those in the Mount Vernon District being among the worst. Our watersheds are imperiled because the impact of the anthroposphere on the environment was not only interfering with the structural components of the ecosystem but these interferences are jeopardizing the biodiversity of the ecosystem with the precipitous decline of many species of plants and animals.

Some state, national and international governing authorities have responded with research and development leading to new technologies. These engineered solutions use a pretreatment process for storm water runoff from impervious areas before allowing the water to reenter the watershed. Ideas for cleaning the water before reentering our watersheds are a form of bio- and geo-mimicry where engineers replicate structures that were in the natural habitats that have been declining for the past four centuries. They function in much the same way as the original forests surrounding our watersheds where they acted as control mechanisms to soak up water and to hold materials, sediments and nutrients. They come in a variety of forms and applications.



**Storm water outfall behind Kings Crossing Center: Storm water from U.S. Route 1 and surrounding parking lots carries automobile toxins into Quander Brook.**

The larger, most common forms are bio-retention ponds which capture and fill with storm water during rain events. Suspended sediments and particulate matter settle out before releasing water back into a nearby stream. Some ponds are designed as wet ponds and maintain a constant level of water and eventually have emergent and submerged aquatic plants growing in them providing habitat for animal species. Others are dry ponds where water is drained in a few days and the pond area composed of low growing grasses and plants dries out.

Rain gardens are another form of bioretention. Storm water is directed to a depression area that is filled with absorbent soil and mulch and is planted with a variety of native moisture loving plants. They work well when it rains within a normal range of precipitation and can generally hold the water that comes into them. The plants living in the rain garden use the water for growth and transpire the water back into the atmosphere. The garden contains overflow valves if runoff from nearby surfaces exceeds a volume greater than the retention capacity of the garden. The excess water is directed to a drainage swale or storm sewer flowing into a bio-retention pond.

Green roof technologies are aesthetic and functional systems that trap water during rain events of an inch or less. Plants on the green roof are a type that can withstand extremes in temperature and drought with a low growing habit requiring little care. They grow in a thin layer of combined soil and other absorbent media. The roof keeps the water from becoming runoff and controls the volume that would drain from the roof to a storm sewer.

Individually, none of these systems alone will resolve the crisis. The technologies are designed to work in conjunction with one another. Combined on a development site with a high degree of imperviousness, these technologies can perform many of the ecological services that are missing due to the fractured habitats we have within our watersheds. They can lessen the impact of the anthroposphere on nature.

### Part 7 will conclude the series in January.

The author is a Mount Vernon resident since 1981. A retired science educator from Prince George's County Public Schools, he taught K-12 science at the Howard B. Owens Science Center in Greenbelt, Md., as well as community college, university and adult education classes in natural history, physical geology, ecology and environmental science.

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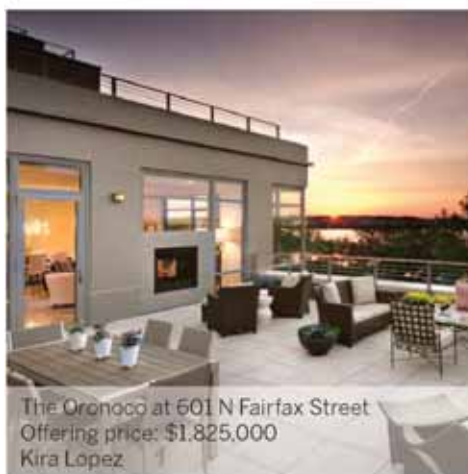
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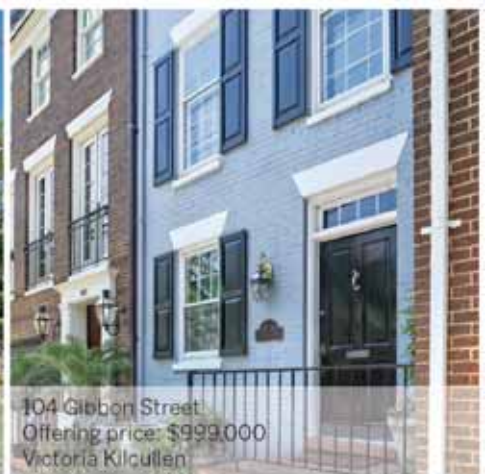
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# OPINION

## Merry Christmas

A message of peace and joy.

**M**erry Christmas. It's a magical time of year, and perhaps Connection Newspapers has over indulged in displaying the many rituals of Christmas on our pages in the past few weeks. In events around the area, a sense of community has infused holiday parades, Christmas tree lightings, menorah lightings, choral performances, singing of carols and other traditional events with warmth and joy.

But Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, the promise of redemption. So here, let us share the verse from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a

son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior

EDITORIAL

has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread

the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

## Happy Hanukkah

Happy Hanukkah, which lasts for eight days and this year began Tuesday evening. While Hanukkah is not one of the most important Jewish religious observances, it is a celebration that gets added attention from timing. Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of a one day supply of oil for the temple lasting eight days.

### Editor's Note about the Rest of 2014

This is our last regular edition of 2014. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish the children's edition, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. Our next regular editions will publish Jan. 7-8, 2015, with deadline for content and advertising of Jan. 2.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Do Fairfax County Police Act with Impunity?

BY JEFF STEWART

I would like to begin by saying that I have always and still do support the police as a whole. I appreciate the job that they do and the risks they take on a daily basis in an effort to keep the public safe. The ongoing policy in Fairfax County of police self-investigation, when officers are involved in possible crimes, has to change.

I am willing to bet that all of you have heard of Michael Brown and Ferguson Missouri? How many of you have heard of John Geer? Probably not near as many. I would like to share a story about another life taken by police. It happened right here in Fairfax County over 15 months ago.

On Aug. 29, 2013 I witnessed the homicide of my best friend of over 25 years by a still unidentified Fairfax County police officer. Late that morning John had found out that his partner of 24 years and mother of his two children was moving out. John became distraught and began to throw some of her property in the front yard. One of John's daughters called their mom and she immediately came home from work. After a heated discussion the police were called. John kissed his daughters and sent them to a neighbor's house. Nobody was in the home with John when police arrived. I arrived shortly after the police to find several officers on the scene. Two officers were holding John at gunpoint as he stood in the doorway of his home talking calmly with his empty hands resting on top of the storm door. John, feeling he had committed no crime, refused the officers' orders to come outside. The police were told that John owned firearms and reportedly he had expressed a willingness to use those firearms if the police tried to enter his home without a warrant. After around 40 minutes of what appeared to be calm conversation, John began

to lower his hands almost deliberately slow, with his clearly empty palms pressed against the screen. I thought for a second that this confrontation was ending and John was coming out of the home. When John's empty hands were about even with his face, he was shot once in the chest from less than 20 feet. John had made no quick or aggressive moves of any kind and appeared to be no threat to police, to others or to himself. John quickly hunched over, grabbed his wound and retreated into the house. He pushed the door shut as he retreated



# 483

**days since a still-unnamed Fairfax County police officer shot unarmed John Geer standing in the doorway of Geer's home in Springfield, then let him bleed to death on Aug. 29, 2013. No information has been released about the incident, officers involved not named, no explanation, no grand jury, no charges. (as of Dec. 10, 2014)**

and immediately collapsed on the floor less than 5 feet from the door.

This tragedy only gets worse. John lay just inside the door reportedly yelling for help. Despite his pleas for help, the officers on scene stood outside and did nothing while waiting for SWAT to arrive. The SWAT team entered an hour later to find that John had bled to death. It should be noted that the patrol officers on the scene had an entry shield and could have entered the house to rescue John with minimal risk yet chose to do nothing.

After 15 months, no officer has been identified, no charges have been filed, no grand jury has been convened and no reason has been given to the family or the public. In fact the Fairfax County Police Department, up until a recent legal action filed by the Federal Justice Department, had refused to provide requested information to anyone including the Virginia State Attorney. The attorneys for the Geer family have filed 127 requests for documents and in response, 122 objections have been filed by the county. Despite the incredible lack of cooperation from the Police Department, local county officials, the State Attorney General and the Governor have remained silent. It took over one year for Fairfax County supervisors to write a gently worded letter requesting that the case be resolved.

The case was turned over to federal prosecutors last January. The FBI conducted interviews in March. Still, no information has been released to the public and no resolution has been achieved. It has taken recent involvement from U.S. Sen. Grassley of the Senate Judicial Committee and legal action by Federal pro-

SEE FAILURE, PAGE 9

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A Connection Newspaper





# OPINION

## Failure of Self-Investigation

FROM PAGE 8

ecutors to get the Fairfax County Police Department to only recently provide the requested information, information that should have been made public a year ago. It would appear that this police department does not feel compelled to answer to any Virginia or federal official. This has to change. The family, friends and the public have yet to be told anything about John's death.

When possible crimes have been committed by police officers such as police shootings, nobody investigates the case but the police. There are no independent oversight procedures of any kind. Fairfax County supervisors endorse this policy and along with the Police Department, have rejected

every attempt to create any kind of independent oversight procedures. It should be noted that the Fairfax County supervisors hire the police chief. They also control the money dedicated to the department. This policy of self-investigation, no oversight and the inevitable obstruction that occurs as a result will continue until the public demands better from its elected officials.

To date, no officer in the 75-year history of the Fairfax County Police Department has ever been charged in a wrongful shooting. These include the deaths of John Geer and at least two other unarmed citizens since 2006, all shot by police under questionable circumstances.

*Jeff Stewart, a Chantilly resident, witnessed the shooting of his friend John Geer on Aug. 29, 2013.*

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Need Special Independent Prosecutor

To the Editor:

I have read the stream of letters supporting a civilian review board for our Fairfax County Police Department. I wholeheartedly support this, since I believe it will

help improve communication and trust between the police and the community, as it has in other jurisdictions where review boards have been established.

I would also advocate for the prompt assignment of an independent special prosecutor in the case of any civilian killed by

the police. As we have seen in the Garner case in Staten Island and, closer to home, the John Geer case in Springfield, local prosecutors have a symbiotic working relationship with the police which makes it difficult — and

perhaps impossible — for them to objectively pursue the truth in police killings. The public and the police will best be served by a fair and thorough inquiry.

**Louis Meyers**  
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*Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 19*  
1/21/2015 ..... A+ Camps & Schools  
1/28/2015 ..... Neighborhood Outlook  
1/28/2015 ..... Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment;  
Valentine's Preview

**FEBRUARY**  
2/4/2015 ..... Valentine's Dining & Gifts I  
2/4/2015 ..... Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month  
2/11/2015 ..... HomeLifeStyle  
2/11/2015 ..... Valentine's Dining & Gifts II  
*Valentine's Day is Feb. 14 • Presidents Day is Feb. 16*  
2/18/2015 ..... A+ Camps & Schools  
2/25/2015 ..... Pet Connection Pullout

**MARCH**  
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PROFILE

# How Does She Do It? Karen Garza's vision: the irresistible force moving the immovable object of Fairfax County Public Schools?

By TIM PETERSON & EDEN BROWN  
THE GAZETTE

**K**aren Garza is a good listener. And once she's listened, she is, admittedly, not very patient.

"If there's a real issue, I don't think it has to be debated for 10 or 15 years," Garza said in an interview. "Either we're going to do something about it or not."

In May and June 2014, less than 12 months after taking the helm as superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, Garza and her staff hosted eight community meetings on the topic of later start times for high schools. According to FCPS, 1,000 people participated in person, another 2,000 weighed in online.

By October, the School Board voted in favor of changing the start times, something it had been considering for years but never pushed forward. For the 2015-2016 school year, all county high schools will start classes between 8 a.m. and 8:10 a.m.

Another entrenched issue: moving from half-day Mondays at elementary schools to full-days. The half-day weekly teacher work period dated back to the 1970s.

"Once we identified we really have an issue here, we don't have enough time built into our elementary schedules, I met with the team and I said, 'Can we get this done?'" said Garza. "These are the reasons why we need to change it, our timeline is aggressive, but can we get it done? And they said, 'Yes we can.'"

The School Board broke with 40 years of half-day Mondays with a vote in June 2014. The change went into effect at the beginning of September.

"She looked at these with a new eye and was very eager to move on them," said Ryan McElveen, an at-large School Board member who was part of the group that hired Garza, "so we could get on with dealing with other issues."

McElveen said Garza's face-time at additional "listening tours," meetings she's been hosting around the county since she came to Fairfax from Lubbock, Texas in July 2013, have helped re-establish critical community ties.

"Under the previous superintendent," McElveen said, "there were perceptions the board and the central office had precipi-



PHOTO BY ALEX McVEIGH

**New Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Karen Garza speaks to parents and teachers at Sunrise Valley Elementary School Monday, Oct. 28, 2013.**

tously been removed from the viewpoint and perspective of the community. That was key in our hiring of Karen. We were looking for someone who could bring the community back into the fold."

**FORMER FCPS** Superintendent Daniel Domenech still lives in Fairfax County, and his perspective differs somewhat from McElveen. "It didn't seem to me there was a distance with [Garza's predecessor] Jack Dale," he said. "I always felt that Fairfax as a school system was very responsive to the community, very much in tune with what's going on."

The two men agree that community involvement is crucial to moving the school system forward. In a county of 180,000 students that's growing by 17 a day (according to Garza), that's a lot of parents with a lot of voices to listen to.

Debbie Kilpatrick, vice president of membership with Virginia PTA, is impressed so far with Garza being "inclusive" and having "contagious high energy."



**Dr. Karen Garza, incoming FCPS Superintendent and Dr. Daniel Domenech, former FCPS Superintendent, both in robes at Bryant Alternative School graduation, June 13, 2013, where Domenech was the graduation speaker.**

"She has a schedule not many people could keep up with and she really doesn't say no to anyone who wants her time," said Kilpatrick. "On the contrary, she says, 'No, I want to listen.'"

Tina Hone, a School Board member from 2007 to 2011 and founder of the advocacy group Coalition of the Silence, disagreed with Garza over her first budget proposal for the county.

"We had a little crossing of swords," said Hone. "What I really respect about Karen: I publicly made a statement, then she called me. I looked at the phone, pulled it away from my head and looked at it again. I was blown away by that."

Hone sees Garza in stark contrast to previous FCPS leadership that exhibited "very much an effort to control rather than respond." She cited the controversial closing of Clifton Elementary School in June 2011, when she said the board did little to consult

with the public first. "There was this sense there were members of the School Board who said they don't want to meet with people who disagreed with them," she said. "It takes courage to be a problem-solver,"

with the public first. "There was this sense there were members of the School Board who said they don't want to meet with people who disagreed with them," she said. "It takes courage to be a problem-solver,"

## Facts about FCPS

- ◆ 196 schools
- ◆ Employs 23,447 people
- ◆ Teaches 183, 895 students
- ◆ Receives 52.4% of the county budget (\$1,768.5 million)
- ◆ Spends \$13,472 dollars per student
- ◆ Educates more students in trailers than total enrollment of Alexandria City Public Schools

formance Pay initiative. "I had decided we'd do this, but honestly, I had no idea how to do it. Ordinarily I'd put it under HR but they weren't moving fast enough. Karen quickly took ownership. Of course I didn't have to ask Karen to take ownership," he said laughing. "This thing wasn't moving and she stepped up to the plate. It was tied to academics, so she figured she could do it as well as the HR folks could, and she did. That program continues today and is why Houston did so well."

Saavedra was referring to the district's educational improvement and performance management model, called ASPIRE (Accelerating Student Progress. Increasing Results and Expectations). The ASPIRE program paid over 18,000 teachers and instructional staff more than \$70 million in performance bonuses over three years based on the academic improvement of children.

After Garza's first year, the average reading scores of HISD students on the SAT test increased five points while the Texas and national averages fell.

Saavedra noted that one of the most unusual things about Garza was her relationship with the Houston Chief Financial Officer Melinda Garrett. "Usually in those jobs," Saavedra said, "there are silos formed between the financial folks and the academic folks. Not between Garza and Garrett. They became good friends and worked together to make positive changes happen."

Garrett confirmed Garza's achievements: "People in Texas miss her but realize Texas' loss is Virginia's gain. They were all happy she got this major superintendent's job. It is something she really wanted and deserved. She will be great for Fairfax. She is not afraid to make decisions. She always has her hand on the pulse of the people she is working with."



**Superintendent Karen Garza shares a moment with Debbie Kilpatrick, president of Fairfax County Council of PTAs at the Listening Tour on Dec. 6.**

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/ THE GAZETTE



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS

**Senior Robyn Smith explains Active Minds while Lindsay Laiks, Rachel Chalkley, Karen Garza and Kim Dockery listen at a March 2014 assembly at Woodson High School. More than 1,100 people gathered for comfort and advice in the aftermath of two student deaths.**

Hone continued, "to try to turn the ship against the tide, with courage and grace to get this stuff done."

That courage, grace and increased input from the community are helping Garza get traction on the issues she prioritizes with the School Board, still in its honeymoon phase with Garza.

"We are all happy with her, the board members," said at-large member Ilryong Moon. "I can say that with confidence. We made a right decision bringing her to Fairfax. She's been helping the members to look at issues in a certain perspective that we otherwise wouldn't have an opportunity to take advantage of."

Garrett noted that she and Garza shared the same background as school teachers; that love of working with children is something they both brought to their work in funding schools and making sound decisions for school districts.

### In Lubbock

As Lubbock's Independent School District's superintendent, a job Garza held for four years before coming to Fairfax, her accomplishments include implementing a standardized curriculum for the 29,000-student district, focus on student achievement, and financial stability. She left LISD with the largest fund balance they had ever had and worked through some hard times with state funding, getting gains for teachers, students, and taxpayers. Garza helped lead the effort to win voter approval of a \$198 million bond in 2010, the largest bond in the district's history. As

**BUT GARZA** is not a one-woman show, and she attributes her accomplishments in part to the cabinet and administrative structure she realigned within her first year. Unlike most new superintendents, Garza brought zero staff with her from the Lone Star State. Instead, she spent her first fall and winter assessing the team she inherited, before reorganizing in the spring.

Garza nixed the old eight-cluster administration group in favor of five regions and split the department of Professional Learning and Accountability roles among other departments. This eliminated five staff positions and saved \$637,000, according to John Torre, public information officer for the

Lubbock superintendent, Garza narrowed the achievement gap, increased the graduation rate and helped reduce the number of students who drop out.

Linda DeLeon, a Fairfax County resident who had served as a school board member in Lubbock, was delighted to see Garza come to Fairfax.

She was asked by someone to attend one of Garza's early public hearings in Fairfax. When her name was announced to the group, Garza lifted her head and gave DeLeon a big smile: "Well, here is Linda, someone I knew from Lubbock." DeLeon had been a school board member for 18 years in Lubbock under five different superintendents (but not during Garza's tenure) and had kept track of the things Garza did while there.

She was impressed: "Karen Garza was up to the challenge. What made her positive was she was willing to sit with groups of people and have discus-

## Bio

### KAREN GARZA

**Current Position:** Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent  
**Salary:** \$265,000  
**Age:** 51  
**Hometown:** Canyon, Texas

**Spouse:** Louis Garza  
**Children:** Four, grown  
**Education:** Ph.D., University of Texas-Austin, May 2002; M.Ed., University of Houston-Victoria, May 1994; B.S., University of Houston-Victoria, 1986.



schools.

"It's my view that to better align a large system, you have to narrow the number of people at the highest levels making the decisions," Garza said. "I can create stronger, better alignment with five people than I can with eight people."

One of Garza's hires was Marty Smith as chief of staff, to whom she delegated the lead role on full-day Mondays. Smith was previously the superintendent of Cluster 1.

"He understands and knows the system," said Garza. "He knows the players, the right people to bring to the table to get it done. And he's a good listener, which I appreciate."

"The biggest thing with Dr Garza is trust," said Smith. "She places a lot in the individuals who work for her. While I carried out her vision, she was able to really build consensus with the board in terms of an individual approach. She did much of the same with teacher and principal associations."

Even with a streamlined and realigned support team, "Obviously Dr. Garza is the CEO for them to execute the vision," said Moon. To be a passionate captain of the ship, Garza is motivated by her lifelong love of schools and learning. She started her career as an elementary school teacher, aspiring to be like her father, a college English professor.

"I love being in classrooms, and I'm amazed at how gifted our students are," said Garza. "I'm very mindful of the fact that we have such an opportunity for a positive impact on students' lives. I try to never lose sight of the fact not only are you setting students up for success at that next level, but in many cases making a memory. Make it a positive one."

Hone said the teacher in Garza is apparent and one key to her current success. "Everything she does, it's how a teacher approaches things," Hone said. "It's clear, explained, pulling people in instead of telling them what to do. That dictatorship thing doesn't work. There's always someone run-

ning. Decisions were made that were very tough, but she never wavered from being able to sit down with a group even if they were against the decisions she was looking to move forward with."

DeLeon said Garza made positive changes in Lubbock. One was to consolidate schools. "Closing the schools was the hardest issue for her. So many parents came to these hearings, and complained that closing schools was not right, that the school was the nucleus of the neighborhood. But Garza worked with them until you could see a transformation from those parents. It's true that now the kids have to go a little further, but what they did make it possible for 2-3 teachers to teach a 3rd grade class. They coordinated, they worked together, and they did a much better job serving the needs of the kids. You could also actually see the gap close between minority and 'anglo' kids."

## Schools Need Community's Help

Superintendent Karen Garza begins and ends her Listening Tour meetings with a plea to those in the room — parents, teachers, employees, unions — to help her achieve what needs to be done for their school system.

"I am going to need your help," she says to audiences who voice concerns about class size, resources for special education, and teacher salaries.

Garza says she hopes to have a lot more people engaged during the budget process this spring. "Come and testify. Talk with your Board of Supervisors at those meetings. It's usually filled with folks. But we need a lot more parents and advocates for our public schools to be in that room."

Garza explains: "We grow by 17-20 students every single day. We have grown by 20,000 students in six years. This is a huge strain on our budget. We spend \$25 million a year to support new students. We aren't happy with teacher salaries. We need to help people in our area understand our budget. Help us as we enter this next budget year."

"Read our 'Citizens Guide,'" says Garza. "There's lots of good information in there to help people understand how the system works and how they can help. This year it includes a section on why your year-end balance ends up

being what it is. The more we can get people to read that document, the more people will follow how the system works and make solid inputs. "We need to get more business and community leaders to understand: Poverty is growing, our county is definitely changing. We started some outreach this year with our superintendent round-tables."

The president of the Fairfax County Council of PTAs, Debbie Kilpatrick, underlined the need for more community involvement: "Karen Garza cannot do this on her own. Parents need to get more involved so they know what they can do to support Garza and their schools. They should look at the websites, come to PTA meetings, know what the issues are and vote on them. Can she get smaller classrooms achieved? If she says it, she will do it. But she will need help."

Steven Greenburg, president of Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, echoed Garza's plea. "Do we know as a group of people, as average citizens living in Fairfax County, how to take action? If this community sees value in education then voters have to make their views known. Karen Garza won't get what she wants without more involvement by the community," Greenburg said. "People will have to reach out to public officials and let them know where the voters stand."

na rebellion."

Garza will be tested when she and the board tackle the \$63.9 million deficit she projected for FY2016 — and it gets worse in FY2017.

"She is such a good diplomat and everyone likes her," said Fairfax County Federation of Teachers President Steven Greenburg. "But there is an expectation on the part of some stakeholders that she will generate revenue and hold county or state officials accountable for the decisions they take. The only thing that would limit what she wants to accomplish is lack of funds."

If she can manage the funds, Garza has a Texas-sized list of goals for the county.

## The Road to Fairfax County

A timeline of Superintendent Karen Garza's career in education.

- 1 1986-1991:** Elementary School Teacher, Yoakum, Texas (1,539 students, 38% white and 50% Latino and spends about \$8,000 per pupil).
- 2 July 1991-1994:** Education Specialist, Region III Education Service Center, Victoria, Texas. Victoria ISD has 13,680 students and spends about \$7,500 per pupil annually.
- 3 July 1994-July 1996:** Principal, East Side Elementary School grades 5-6, Palacios Independent School District (ISD), Palacios, Texas (1,508 students, \$10,269 per student, 68% economically disadvantaged).
- 4 July 1996-July 1997:** Curriculum Supervisor K-12, El Campo ISD, El Campo, Texas (3,465 students, \$9,735 per student, 67% economically disadvantaged).
- 5 July 1997-July 1999:** Associate Executive Director for Governmental Relations, Texas Association of School Administrators.
- 6 July 1999-October 2002:** Executive Director for Curriculum, Staff Development, and Accountability, Katy ISD, Katy, Texas (58,444 students, \$7,740 per student, 29% disadvantaged).
- 7 October 2002-August 2004:** Associate Executive Director for Governmental Relations, Texas Association of School Administrators.
- 8 August 2004-June 2005:** Deputy Superintendent, Corpus Christi ISD, Corpus Christi, Texas (38,041 students, spends \$8,240, 68% disadvantaged).
- 9 June 2005-July 2009:** Chief Academic Officer, Houston ISD, Houston, Texas. (200,944 students, \$9,231 per student, 80% disadvantaged).
- 10 July 2009-June 2013:** Superintendent of Schools, Lubbock ISD, Lubbock, Texas (28,476 students, \$8,163 per student, 62% disadvantaged).
- 11 July 2013-present:** Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools (186,785 students, \$16,880 per student, 26.4% free/reduced price meal eligible).

Sources: Fairfax County Public Schools, Washington Area Boards of Education, Texas Tribune

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Countdown to 2015

### Fireworks to culminate 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alexandria's First Night celebrations.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

The largest New Year's Eve fireworks display in the Washington region will take place along the Alexandria waterfront as First Night Alexandria celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a day filled with children's activities, dancing and live performances.

"The First Night board began brainstorming new ideas in March and we're pleased to introduce the #FNA20th Instagram Contest," said First Night executive director Ann Dorman. "It's another way for participants to engage with us and be eligible to win cash prizes."

What began 20 years ago as a small, family-friendly event has grown into the premier New Year's Eve celebration in the area attracting tens of thousands of visitors to the streets of Old Town.

The festivities begin at 2 p.m. with the sixth annual Fun Hunt, which will feature new activities for couples and families. Finalists in the student Battle of the Bands competition will be featured throughout the evening, along with more than 100 performances at 22 venues in Old Town and one in Del Ray.

"The Mount Vernon Recreation Center is once again a venue for children's activities,"

Dorman said. "First Night has turned into a fun-filled all-day event with participation by many retail shops, museums and restaurants."

Additional daytime activities range from tasting events to interactive art lessons and pet-friendly gatherings hosted by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. Returning kid-friendly activities are presented by the Torpedo Factory Art Center, The Art League, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum and Hooray for Books!

Live performances kick off at 7 p.m. featuring rhythm and blues, traditional Irish music, acoustic folk and more. New acts include the vocals of Virginia native Katherine Archer and 2nd Story Band Duo, performing a world blend of jazzy blues, pop rock, Caribbean and Samba rhythms.

Children's activities continue throughout the night, including face painting, a moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures and interactive games. New this year, children's performer Groovy Nate will bring his unique blend of music, movement, puppet skits and comedy to First Night, and the Old Fashioned Carnival in Del Ray will feature a ring toss, fortune teller, line dancing and more.

"We're excited about the Instagram challenge 'Extraordinary Exposures,'" Dorman said. "This 'selfie' contest is open to everyone that purchases an admission badge and attends First Night Alexandria's evening performances. Details and information on the cash prizes is available on our website."

**THE GRAND FINALE** takes place at midnight, with a spectacular fireworks display over the Potomac River. Volunteers for the event are still being accepted. Visit [www.firstnightalexandria.org](http://www.firstnightalexandria.org) and click on Get Involved. All volunteers receive free admission, a box dinner and a First Night apron to keep.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER

**Fireworks will light up the sky over the Potomac River to ring in 2015 as part of First Night Alexandria.**

"As First Night Alexandria celebrates its 20th anniversary, we want to thank the incredible long-time sponsors that have made this event possible," Dorman added. "They

include the City of Alexandria, Dominion Power, the Alexandria Hotel Asso-

ciation, ACVA, LCOR, Burke & Herbert Bank, Virginia Paving and our media sponsors."

For more information and a complete schedule of events, call 703-746-3301 or visit [www.FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://www.FirstNightAlexandria.org). Tickets are \$20. Admission is free to children under 12 and active duty military.

### If You Are Going

**WHAT:** First Night Alexandria  
**WHERE:** Event: 22 venues in Old Town Alexandria  
Headquarters: Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St.  
Fireworks Finale: Unit block of King Street and along the waterfront

**DATE:** December 31, 2014  
**TIME:** Afternoon activities: 2-5 p.m. including Sixth Annual Fun Hunt  
Performances: 7 p.m.-midnight at venues throughout Old Town  
Fireworks: Midnight along the Potomac River at the foot of King Street

**ADMISSION:** \$20; children 12 and under and active military free.

For more information and to purchase badges, call 703-746-3301 or visit [www.firstnightalexandria.org](http://www.firstnightalexandria.org).



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

**Madeleine Quill, 11, and Carmen Rivera, 7, pose for a photo with First Night Alexandria mascot Professor Arts Safari following last year's Fun Hunt.**



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER

**Acclaimed saxophonist Vaughn Ambrose will return to perform at the Principle Gallery as part of First Night Alexandria.**

# ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

## ONGOING

**Middle School Artists.** Art display by George Washington Middle School students, at St.Elmo's Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Working in peer groups, the students created a written explanation of their intent to accompany the display. Visit [www.stelmoscoffee.com](http://www.stelmoscoffee.com).

### Mount Vernon Virtual Tour.

Website users can now transport themselves to George Washington's Mount Vernon in a click of a mouse or touch of a screen through a new virtual tour. Featuring 29, 360-degree panoramic images, more than 200 points of interest, and dozens of in-depth videos highlighting architectural details, objects and anecdotes, the tour recreates the experience of being at the estate in an unparalleled way.

[www.mountvernon.org/virtualtour](http://www.mountvernon.org/virtualtour)

**Tavern Toddlers.** Weekly open playtime continues every Monday throughout holiday season. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Gadsby's Tavern Museum, North Royal Street, Alexandria. Caregivers, toddlers (walkers through 3 years) and visiting relatives are welcome to play, read, dance and color in the historic ballroom. No reservations required. Each week costs \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, and additional people are \$3. A three-visit pass costs \$18. On Monday, Feb.

16 Tavern Toddlers will be closed due to President's Day. [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org) or 703-746-4242

**Broadway Christmas Carol.** Runs through Dec. 28 at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. Enjoy the show Wednesday-Thursday, 8 p.m., Fridays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$50. Visit [www.metrostage.org](http://www.metrostage.org) for more.

**Art Exhibit.** Through Jan. 2 at 1717 King St. and 300 S. Washington St. BB&T Bank hosts an exhibition of portraits of African American and women Living Legends of Alexandria at its Old Town branches. Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Visit [www.AlexandriaLegends.com](http://www.AlexandriaLegends.com) for more.

**"Friend Me" Exhibit.** Through Monday, Jan. 5. Opening reception Thursday Dec. 11, 6:30-8 p.m. The Art League Gallery, Studio 21, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Jeweler Whitney Staiger melds together her friends' public avatar with an aspect of their private selves on her handmade brass cameos in a solo exhibit. [www.theartleague.org](http://www.theartleague.org) 703-683-1780.

### Christmas in Mount Vernon.

Through Tuesday, Jan. 6, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon decks the halls with themed Christmas trees on the estate and festive greenery in the Mansion. Visit [www.mountvernon.org/christmas](http://www.mountvernon.org/christmas) for more.

**Painting by John Trumbull.** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. through Jan. 7. at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. On loan from the Winterthur Museum, this portrait was painted by Washington's former

## FOOD & DRINK

**"Reveillon de Noel" Christmas Eve Dinner.** At Bastille, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Chefs Christophe and Michelle Poteaux will serve a four-course prix fixe feast, with wine pairings upon request. Menu highlights include lobster bisque with poached oysters; pan-roasted foie gras; tartare of Skuna Bay salmon; grass-fed Angus beef filet roasted whole in salt crust; Hudson Valley Moullard duck breast; and a chocolate hazelnut "Buche de Noel" with cranberry ice cream. \$85 per person, exclusive of taxes and gratuities. Call 703-519-3776 for more.

**"Reveillon de la Saint Sylvestre" New Year's Eve Dinner.** At Bastille, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. The first seating from 5-6:30 p.m. is a three-course prix fixe for \$79, exclusive of taxes and gratuities, with wine pairings upon request. After the market surprise amuse bouche, guests will enjoy menu highlights including butternut squash risotto and parmesan broth; braised lobster in a curried coconut emulsion; bacon-wrapped rabbit loin; and coconut cake with caramelized pumpkin butter and curry ice cream. Taking things to the next level with the second seating from 8-10 p.m., guests will enjoy a four-course prix fixe for \$99, or \$139 with wine pairings, exclusive of taxes and gratuities. After the market surprise amuse bouche, guests may choose from dishes including steak tartare; seared foie gras; sautéed Wild Turbot filet; and roasted spiced pineapple marmalade almond cake. Call 703-519-3776 for more.

**Old Town Farmers Market.** 7 a.m.-noon, Saturdays year round. Local farmers and artists have been selling products there since 1753. Located at Market Square, 301 King St. Call 703-746-3200 or email [oldtownfarmersmarket@alexandriava.gov](mailto:oldtownfarmersmarket@alexandriava.gov).

**Del Ray Farmers Market.** 8 a.m.-noon, Saturdays year round. Features fresh vegetables and fruits in season, meats, eggs, fresh pasta and sauces, Amish cheese, yogurt, bakery goods and more. Located at the corner of East Oxford and Mount Vernon avenues. Contact [pmiller1806@comcast.net](mailto:pmiller1806@comcast.net) for more.

aide-de-camp as a gift to Martha Washington in 1790. Regular admission rates: adults, \$18; senior citizens, \$16; children age 6-11, when accompanied by an adult, \$9; and children under age 5, free. Visit [MountVernon.org](http://MountVernon.org) for more.

### "Beyond the Board" Art Exhibit.

Through Feb. 22. Prudential PenFed Realty, 4900 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans' presents "Beyond the Board." A portion of artists' sales go to the

PenFed Foundation, supporting active military families, veterans and their families. Visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org/shows/gww/](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org/shows/gww/) for more.

### New Exhibit.

Mount Vernon invites visitors to explore George Washington's design for the grounds of his estate, through a new exhibition, "Gardens & Groves: George Washington's Landscape" at Mount Vernon through Jan. 12, 2016. Gardens & Groves is the first museum exhibition to focus

specifically on Washington's landmark achievements as a landscape designer combining rarely-seen original documents, artwork, and books with period garden tools, landscape photography, and a scale model of the Mount Vernon estate. Included in admission \$18/adult; \$17/senior citizen; \$9/child age 6-11; children under 5 are free. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) for more.

**Alexandria Cars & Coffee** invites car enthusiasts to meet for coffee at Hollin Hall Shopping Center in front of Roseina's, 1307 Shenandoah Road. Owners of classic cars, hot rods, exotic cars, motorcycles and more meet to share car stories and drink coffee. Group meets the first Sunday of every month. 8:30-11 a.m.

### George Washington's Mount Vernon

has joined Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and James Madison's Montpelier to expand the "Presidents Passport," Virginia's premier presidential trail. As an added bonus to this year's program, visitors to the Alexandria Visitors Center at 221 King St. showing or purchasing a ticket to any of the three presidential estates will, upon request, receive for free Alexandria's "Key to the City" pass, which grants access into nine historic sites and museums in Alexandria—a \$26 added value. Visit [www.PresPassport.Monticello.org](http://www.PresPassport.Monticello.org) for more.

**Fifty Years of Collecting.** Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays noon to 5 p.m. Fort Ward Museum 4301 West Braddock Road. An anniversary exhibit of objects from the Fort Ward collection. Free. Visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org) or call 703-746-4848.

**Dinner for the Washingtons.** Noon at George Washington's Mount

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## ENTERTAINMENT

Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. A walking tour that goes behind the scenes to find out how food was prepared and served before the era of microwaves and TV dinners. \$5 in addition to estate admission. Visit [www.mountvernon.org/](http://www.mountvernon.org/) for more.

### Second Thursday Music.

Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. 7 pm. Second Thursday of every month. Visit [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org) to view concert calendar and listen to upcoming Second Thursday Music artists.

**The Monday Morning Birdwalk** has been a weekly event at Huntley Meadows since 1985. It takes place every week, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7 a.m. (8 a.m. November through March), is free of charge, requires no reservation, and is open to all. Birders meet in the parking lot at the park's entrance at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Direct questions to Park staff during normal business hours at 703-768-2525.

### CAMPS, CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

**Tavern Toddlers.** Every Monday (except Federal Holidays) 10:30-11:30 a.m. Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Alexandria. Join other families with toddlers (walkers through 36 months) to have fun in Gadsby's historic ballroom. Playtime features a craft table, book corner, toys and group dancing. \$7 for a group of three. Visit [www.alexandria.gov/gadsbystavern](http://www.alexandria.gov/gadsbystavern) or call 703-746-4242.

**Photography Workshop.** 10:30 a.m.-noon at Multiple Exposures Gallery on 105 N. Union St. Photographers and enthusiasts of all skill levels are invited to share work, ideas, and questions at this free workshop held on the last Sunday of each month, except December. No reservations. Call 703-683-2205.

**Life Drawing.** Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions for anyone to develop life-drawing skills further. Just drop-in for the session and bring your supplies to draw or paint our live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Del Ray Artisans is located at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit [www.TheDelRayArtisans.org](http://www.TheDelRayArtisans.org) for a schedule.

### DECEMBER

**Tree Sale.** Weekends through December, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Enjoy music, warm drinks and cookies by the fire, while surrounded by frasier fir trees. Sales benefit of community outreach programs and local schools. Choose to have 10 percent of the sale amount go to St. Aidan's Day School or a local, public elementary school. St Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Visit [www.staidansepiscopal.com](http://www.staidansepiscopal.com) for more.

**Alexandria's Holiday Market.** At 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. Vendors will sell traditional European food, sweets and drinks combined with art and craft vendors to create a European holiday market shopping experience. The event also features the Holiday Sharing - Toy Drive program to support families in need, as well as the Hunger Free Alexandria initiative. Visit [www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com](http://www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com) for more.

- ❖ Dec. 22 and 23 —11 a.m.-8 p.m.
- ❖ Dec. 24, Christmas Eve —11 a.m.-2 p.m.

### MONDAY/DEC. 22

**A John Waters Christmas.** 7:30 p.m. The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. \$49.50. Visit

### TORPEDO FACTORY ASSOCIATE ARTIST GALLERY

**Studio 12.** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. About 20 artists will be showing their work in two-week exhibitions through the end of 2014. This dynamic pop-up gallery provides an opportunity for many of the associates to have their work on view. Visit [torpedofactory.org/events/](http://torpedofactory.org/events/) for more.

- ❖ **Dec. 15-28:** Fritz Des Roches, paintings; Barbara Muth, paintings; Norma Hintze, ceramics; and Marilyn Spindler, paintings

[www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for more.

### MONDAY-WEDNESDAY/DEC. 22-24

**Breakfast with Santa.** 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St., Alexandria. Have breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus before they take off for the big night. \$10 per child (age 0-12) and \$15 per person (age 13+) includes a continental breakfast, visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and tax. Tickets required. Limited amount for every seating. Reservations [www.unionstreetpublichouse.com/breakfast](http://www.unionstreetpublichouse.com/breakfast).

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

**Water-skiing Santa and his Kneboarding Reindeer.** 1-1:30 p.m. at Old Town Waterfront, between King and Oronoco streets, Alexandria. This is the 29th Anniversary of this one of a kind Washington, D.C. tradition and includes the Flying Elves, the Jetskiing Grinch, and Frosty the Snowman in a dinghy. Email [waterski.santa@gmail.com](mailto:waterski.santa@gmail.com) for more.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 27

**Live Music.** 7:30 p.m. at the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Performance by Southside Johnny and The Asbury Jukes. \$39.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for more.

### SUNDAY/DEC. 28

**Hank Williams Tribute Show.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$29.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

### WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

**First Night Alexandria.** Events take place throughout the day at numerous venues around the City of Alexandria. Visit [www.firstnightalexandria.org](http://www.firstnightalexandria.org) for more.

**Live Music.** 8 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Watch Seldom Scene, Bumper Jackson and The Hello Strangers perform. Tickets \$39.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 3

**Hal Ketchum.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$35. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

### SUNDAY/JAN. 4

**Evening of Musical Comedy.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$49.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

### TUESDAY/JAN. 6

**"Self Portraits: How Our Artists View Themselves."** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Feb. 8 at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St., Studio 18, Alexandria. A self portrait can be what our face/body looks like or it can be what we stand for, what we believe, what we love. Visit [www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com](http://www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com)

for more.

**Choral Evensong on the Feast of the Epiphany** 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Grant Hellmers, organist and choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, will direct the adult choir in a Choral Evensong on the Feast of the Epiphany. Music by William Byrd, Edward Bairstow, Malcolm Archer, and William Smith of Durham will be featured. The Three Wise Men will appear at this service. Open to all, followed by a reception. Donations and non-perishable foods will be accepted for St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry. Contact Grant Hellmers at 703-549-3312 or [grant@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:grant@stpaulsalexandria.com).

### WEDNESDAY/JAN. 7

**Boomerangs Square Dance Teaching Council.** 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Center, 4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria. Square Dance Lessons. Welcome singles, couples, and families for an evening of fun. Free. Call Nancy at 571-210-5480 or email [tom.nancystafford@cox.net](mailto:tom.nancystafford@cox.net) or visit [www.boomerangssquaredance.org](http://www.boomerangssquaredance.org).

### THURSDAY/JAN. 8

**Second Thursday Live: Cynthia Marie Concert.** 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Cynthia Marie returns with her soulful voice and captivating piano playing. Special guests join her this evening. Admission \$15. Call 703-548-0035 or visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) for more.

### JAN. 8-FEB. 22

**Exhibition "Unearthed | Unleashed."** In the Athenaeum Gallery 201 Prince St., Alexandria. An exhibition of the works of Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent. Gessner's mixed media sculptures are lyrical and reference a wide variety of natural forms. Kent's minimal works with thickly applied paint and wax appear to be a subtle, meditative reflection on organic elements and artifacts. Free. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) for more.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 10

**Chords of Courage Benefit Concert.** 7 p.m. at Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Chords of Courage, founded by Caron Dale, tells the stories of people who have performed an act of courage and suffered in the process or performed an act of inspiration born of tragedy. She will be joined by fellow folk musicians Kevin Dudley, Laura Baron, Bain Ennis and Matt Kohut, and members of the band R.S.V.P. With special guest Allison Silberberg. \$18/\$15 in advance. Call 703-380-3151 or visit [www.focusmusic.org/venue\\_alexandria.php](http://www.focusmusic.org/venue_alexandria.php) or [chordsofcourage.org](http://chordsofcourage.org).

### SUNDAY/JAN. 11

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# SPORTS

## Parent Coaches Searching for Balance

Coaching one's own child can be stressful, rewarding.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

**R**ick Sofield started coaching when he was in high school, helping his father coach his younger brothers in football. He continued when he was in law school, when he made extra money coaching various middle school and high school sports.

After starting a family with his wife, Alice, Sofield couldn't wait to coach his own children. The Sofields' first child was a girl named Charlotte, who turned out to be quite the athlete.

Sofield, who played four sports in high school on Long Island and four years of football and lacrosse at Harvard University, helped coach Charlotte in peewee soccer and T-ball. When she was in the first grade, Sofield coached Charlotte's lacrosse team after convincing the commissioner of a Fort Hunt rec league to let Charlotte play against girls several years older.

While eager to succeed, Sofield initially struggled as a youth lacrosse coach.

"I had no idea what I was doing and we got killed in our first game," Sofield wrote in an email. "Afterward, a mom gave me the rule book and suggested that I read it. We got better after that."

More than a decade later, Sofield is still coaching Charlotte. In the spring of 2014, the duo led the Bishop Ireton girls' lacrosse team to a historic season of success, including the program's first WCAC championship and first VISAA state title. The Cardinals ended their 20-win season with their first-ever victory against national power St. Stephen's & St. Agnes, 9-7, in the state championship game.

Charlotte, then a junior, led Ireton in

points with 48 goals and 67 assists. She was an Under Armour Underclass All-American and WCAC Player of the Year, and later signed to play lacrosse at the University of North Carolina. Sofield was named VISAA Coach of the Year and WCAC co-Coach of the Year.

Bishop Ireton will return the majority of its impact players for Charlotte's senior season in 2015.

"My dad started coaching me when I was in first grade," Charlotte wrote. "He hasn't been my only lacrosse coach, but he has been my main coach for as long as I can remember."

From first grade through high school, Charlotte and her dad experienced ups and downs on and off the field. As several coaches and athletes in the area acknowledged, a parent coaching his or her child can be a difficult, yet rewarding process.

"When my wife, Alice, and I started our family, I couldn't wait for the kids to get old enough to coach," Sofield wrote. "I have coached all four of our kids in a variety of sports: football, basketball, wrestling, ice hockey, T-Ball, and lacrosse."

Charlotte was the oldest child, and Sofield admits she was forced to deal with his mistakes as a first time parent/coach, including not being able to separate the two roles.

"The middle school years were particularly tough for me and Char," Sofield wrote. "I hadn't learned how to separate Dad from Coach. I also saw exceptional talent in Char and felt compelled to try and maximize her ability. She has always wanted to be her best so she didn't need all the extra pushing that I was giving her. Unfortunately for Char, I learned my lessons and made my mistakes on her as our eldest and I have been much more patient and understanding with her three younger brothers."

Charlotte also acknowledged middle school was a tough time.

"Every practice was a disaster," she wrote. "But I'm happy he didn't stop coaching. I would not be the player I am today without him."

Sofield said his wife helped him realize the need for separation between father and coach.

"By the time Char got to middle school, we used to talk about virtually nothing but lacrosse," Sofield wrote. "It was around that time that Alice gently, but firmly, reminded me through a series of conversations that there was much more to my relationship with Char off the field than lacrosse. She reminded me to keep lacrosse on the field, and be a father at home."

"I've gotten much better over the past 10-plus years in separating player and child," Sofield wrote. "I'm still not always as good at it as she deserves: I sometimes find myself projecting my own ambitions for her onto her. I'm aware of it now, though, and remind myself (or sometimes she reminds me) that it's her journey, not mine."

Keith A. Kaufman, Ph.D., a sport psychologist with offices in Washington, D.C. and Old Town Alexandria, said two potential



Head coach Rick Sofield and his daughter, Charlotte Sofield, left, are seen during a Bishop Ireton girls' lacrosse game.

PHOTO BY DELIA SULLIVAN

issues stand out for a young athlete coached by a parent.

"I think two issues that jump out to me are the athlete feels like they can never escape talking about the sport," Kaufman said in a phone interview, "or they feel too much scrutiny or not enough; like they feel like they're treated differently [than other members of the team]."

Kaufman said "it's absolutely essential there are boundaries," when a parent is coaching his or her child, and it's important the child is treated in the same manner as his or her teammates. While each case is different, he said the relationship can be beneficial.

"I think in an ideal situation," Kaufman said, "it can be a great way to connect or to share something, or to feel supported or encouraged or instructed by a parent."

While the potential for burnout exists, Charlotte said she often talks lacrosse with her father, and that's not a bad thing. She also said she never views Sofield as just a coach.

"During practices and games, my dad is still my dad," Charlotte wrote. "He will always be my dad. Sure, he is my coach, and personally I think he is the best coach I've ever had, but he is my dad. On or off the field."

"Having my dad as a coach gives me an edge over other players. I am constantly around the game. And I always have a sounding board to vent my lacrosse problems."

"Lacrosse is a huge bond for my dad and I. It's our thing together. Lacrosse is a constant. But it's not a bad thing. It is something that he and I both love."

When it comes to treating Charlotte the same as others on the team, Sofield said he holds his daughter to a higher standard.

"I encourage our players to 'play hard and make lots of mistakes. Make mistakes by playing fast and learn from them,'" Sofield wrote. "I find that I'm much more tolerant of the mistakes made by other players than

of mistakes that Char makes."

Sofield isn't alone.

"I would say most coaches are harder on their own kids than they are on the regular kids," Madison assistant volleyball coach Christine Zanellato said. "We tend to point out when they mess up more than you would with another kid."

Zanellato and head coach Carrie Hall each have a daughter on the Madison volleyball team, which was one point away from capturing the VHSL 6A state championship in the fall. Zanellato coached her daughter, Natale, when she was young, but stopped when Natale was in middle school.

Their relationship had some rough spots.

"When I was in [sixth] grade, I hated it," Natale said. "I would cry most nights. I would cry on the way home [from volleyball]. I was very sensitive. I would get a little upset when she would tell me to suck it up or do this and that. I wasn't as good with her criticism."

After a few years playing for other coaches, Natale started to appreciate her mom's volleyball knowledge. Zanellato played collegiately at LSU and coached the Fairfax High varsity from 2007-2011. When it came time for high school, Natale, who attended Lake Braddock as a freshman, wanted her mom as a coach. Zanellato joined the Bruins' staff as an assistant in 2012.

"I think what has worked out well for us is that we have a really solid relationship and she trusts that when I am working to improve her skills, I'm looking at her as an athlete," Zanellato said. "My criticism is all based on what she needs to do on the court. It's not about her personally. I think that's the hardest thing [about being a parent/coach] is kids sometimes personalize the comments. ..."

"I coached her early and then I stopped. I stepped away and let her be coached by a lot of other people ... then I let her come to me. When she was ready and comfortable, she started seeking me out for, 'Do I need this?' 'How does this work?' 'Does my approach look right?' 'Am I blocking too far in?'"

Natale would later transfer to Madison. After not playing high school volleyball her sophomore year, Natale joined the Warhawk varsity as a junior and was a key contributor at outside hitter for the 2014 state runners-up.

"I love working with my mom," Natale said. "I respect her. I know that she played great. She's a great coach. When I was younger, it was a little rougher. I was just like, 'I don't want to listen to you,' that kind of stuff. I respect her judgment and I respect what she's saying. I really respect her opinion. I love having her on the coaching staff."

Hall said she treats her daughter, Kendal, a standout junior setter for the Warhawks, no differently than any other member of the team.

SEE PARENT COACHES, PAGE 16



Hayfield's Molly Overstreet, middle, is a two-time VHSL state champion gymnast. Her mother, Kristin Overstreet, right, is an assistant coach with the Hawks. Also pictured is Hayfield head coach Michelle Pennow.

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(en Español); 6:30 pm

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## SPORTS

# Parent Coaches Searching for Balance

FROM PAGE 15

"It's not hard to me at all," Hall said. "I've been here 14 years and to me it's about the program. ... It's the program first, then my daughter."

Hall said the two talk about volleyball at home, but don't discuss strategy.

"We talk about if we think we had a good game or not that night, but nothing too elaborate," Hall said. "... That way she's part of the team, I'm part of the coaching staff. She doesn't need to know anything that's going on."

Kendal said she's appreciative of her mom's volleyball knowledge.

"It's definitely nice," Kendal said, "coming home and having someone to talk to who definitely knows what they're doing."

Langley football coach John Howerton started his sons on a path toward gridiron success at a young age. Jack, now a sophomore at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., and Tyler, now a sophomore at Langley, started strength and skill training before the age of 10. However, they did not play organized football until high school.

Howerton, who was inducted into the Shepherd University athletic Hall of Fame after garnering All-American status as an offensive tackle, taught his sons the basic fundamentals of offensive line play, such as getting in a proper stance. He also showed them the basics of strength training, including 15-minute workouts with a lightweight aluminum pipe.

Between the ages of 10 and 12, Howerton "started to get a little more serious with it." By the time Jack and Tyler reached high school, they were light years ahead of the other kids in both strength and technique.

Tyler earned all-state honors during his time at Langley. He could bench press 500 pounds and squat 675. He is now an offensive lineman at Stetson. Tyler recently completed his sophomore season as a starter on the Langley varsity. Both played right guard for the Saxons.

Howerton said he has tried to treat Jack and Tyler in an equal fashion to other players on the team, but admits he has higher expectations for his sons.

"I try to treat them as any kid out there," Howerton said. "As a parent, you probably have more expectations for your own sons. I try not to yell at them any more or less than anyone else. I do expect them to excel as much as possible because they've been exposed to me as a coach more than the other kids have. ..."

"I was probably a little tougher on Jack because he was the first one and we were trying to set the tone of how you're going to do things. As you learn, the second one is not quite a mystery because you've already been through it."

Howerton was coached by his father, Elton "Cig" Howerton, in youth football. Cig Howerton was an All-American at Randolph-Macon and was inducted into the university's athletic Hall of Fame.

Tyler said he questioned the purpose of the drills and hard work his father put him through at a young age.

"Even now, I still question that sometimes," Tyler said. "You have to realize that this is the best for me,

this is the best way to go [and] this will make me the best I can be."

While it's not easy having his father as a coach, Tyler said there are benefits.

"He's also able to work with me more than anybody else in the weight room and on the field," Tyler said. "He's able to tell me what I'm doing well, what I'm not doing so well. He always has that urge to make me better than everybody else."

Hayfield assistant gymnastics coach Kristin Overstreet started coaching her daughter, Molly, at a young age, as well, but it didn't take long for Molly to surpass her mother's teachings.

"I also coached Molly when she was Level 3 at Cardinal Gymnastics," Overstreet said. "She quickly surpassed my coaching abilities and moved up through the Level system in club gymnastics and became a Level 9."

Molly gave up club gymnastics prior to her sophomore year, but still competes at the high school level for Hayfield. Now a junior, Molly has already captured a pair of state championships, finishing in a three-way tie for first on vault as a freshman, and setting a state record on bars as a sophomore.

At the high school level, Molly rarely needs coaching help, allowing Overstreet to focus her attention on the team's less-experienced gymnasts.

"Molly is so knowledgeable that she can coach herself," Overstreet wrote in an email. "She knows the corrections she needs to make. I just remind her to have fun and do her best. She is also a great coach to the younger/newer girls. She demonstrates skills and gives them cues for making skills easier for them."

"I love working with the Hayfield girls. We have nine girls who have never competed in gymnastics before and they improve daily. They usually need my time at practice more than Molly does, but I am always watching her out of the corner of my eye. I rarely have to set limits on her. She knows what is expected and she does it."

Molly struggles with back pain "from years of overuse, training up to 25 hours a week and the constant pounding and hard landing," her mother wrote. The pain is to the point that Molly might have to walk away from gymnastics this year, according to Overstreet.

Molly said one of the greatest benefits of having her mom as a coach is when it comes to dealing with pain.

"Some benefits for having my mom as a coach are that she knows me the best, so when I'm in pain or anything like that, she can tell," Molly wrote. "My mom is a very understanding person and her being my mom and coach, it makes it that much easier to communicate with her about what's going on, or if I don't want to do something."

Like others in the same situation, Molly and her mother experience stressful times together. However, Overstreet, who used to coach at Edison and coached her two other daughters, as well, said coaching her child has benefits, like "Special time together, great memories, great pictures, laughing together," Overstreet wrote about the benefits.

"I think two issues that jump out to me are the athlete feels like they can never escape talking about the sport, or they feel too much scrutiny or not enough; like they feel like they're treated differently [than other members of the team]."

— Sport psychologist  
Keith Kaufman, Ph.D.

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

Obituary



**John Alfke Campbell,**

beloved father and faithful friend, died on Monday November 24, 2014 in Alexandria, Virginia. John is survived by his two daughters, Barbara C. Holt of California and Elizabeth C. Wilmot of Virginia. He will be deeply missed by his grandchildren, Lauren G. Wilmot and Jack Holt and his son-in-laws, Peter Adler and David Holt. He is predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Janet Campbell.

He was born in Bronxville, New York in 1924. He attended Middlebury College for a short while before enlisting in the Army Air Corps. He was a bomber pilot in World War II. He was a 1st lieutenant who flew 35 missions in a B-17. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and an air medal with 3 clusters plus 6 battle stars.

When he got out of the service he went to Columbia University on the GI bill where he met his future wife. He earned both his undergraduate and his Master's degree from Columbia.

He made his living as a salesman which was a career he was perfectly suited for as he could charm anyone into anything and made everyone who knew him feel special. He retired from Lord Abbett, a mutual fund company on Wall Street, having risen to the position of national sales manager. He and his family lived in New Canaan, CT for 40 years before retiring to Lake Placid, FL. He spent his summers at a cottage in the 1000 Islands. He moved to Virginia after the death of his wife to be with his daughter.

In Connecticut, he was active in the Senior Men's club and ran the Saint Marks Fair for many years. He was a fabulous bridge player having played on the train to New York City and he was in much demand as a bridge partner. He was an avid investor who carefully watched the market and was part of the "Ticker Club" in Florida. He loved music and the outdoors. He enjoyed skiing, hiking, fishing and travelling.

He was an outgoing man who found the best in every situation and the best in every person. He always had a twinkle in his eye, a smile and a kind word. He was a true gentleman. He is already deeply missed. A service was held for him at Paul Springs Retirement home and he will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. Donations in his name may be made to the Church of the St. Lawrence in Alexandria Bay, NY.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
-Werner Heisenberg

FROM PAGE 1

Center for Regional Analysis, School of Public Policy at George Mason University, not to mention chief economist for Cardinal Bank. Adding an arsenal of graphs and other analytical data to his expertise and experience, Fuller provided insights about the closing year, a preview of what to expect in 2015, and some long-term economic expectations for Northern Virginia, the District and Maryland.

"2014 was actually softer in all categories than expected, given the strength of the economic recovery exhibited in 2013," said Fuller, "particularly in relationship to the housing market. Fuller credited a number of factors for the reason that things slowed down in 2014.

Lower wage jobs, slower immigration and reduced international transfers, lower marriage rates, limited access to credit, degraded mobility (when the jobs being created aren't worth moving for), student loan burdens and even changing generational values and preferences were the reasons he cited.

"Perhaps most surprising is that for the first time in the memory of many, our local economy is under-performing compared to the rest of the country." Based heavily on direct and ancillary federal government employment, the area has previously been less negatively impacted by the recession than other areas of the country. "This is new territory for us," Fuller said. "Even more surprising, it didn't really make the headlines that our economy shrank more in the last year than it did during the recession." He likened the situation to a luxury liner with a small leak. "It may be hardly noticeable now, but someone had better start balancing and repairing soon."

**ACCORDING TO FULLER** and many of the sources he consulted, the "fiscal cliff" and the introduction of sequestration in 2013 are just beginning to make an impact on the local way of life — and not in a positive way.

All of the reports on the creation and status of jobs show that most growth, particularly in this area, is taking place in industries that on average pay less and that many of those who lost their positions in government or government contracting, have yet to be "re-deployed" in similar situations. "Health and education and local government were the key growth industries in the this area, and we can't sustain our economy on only these two sectors.

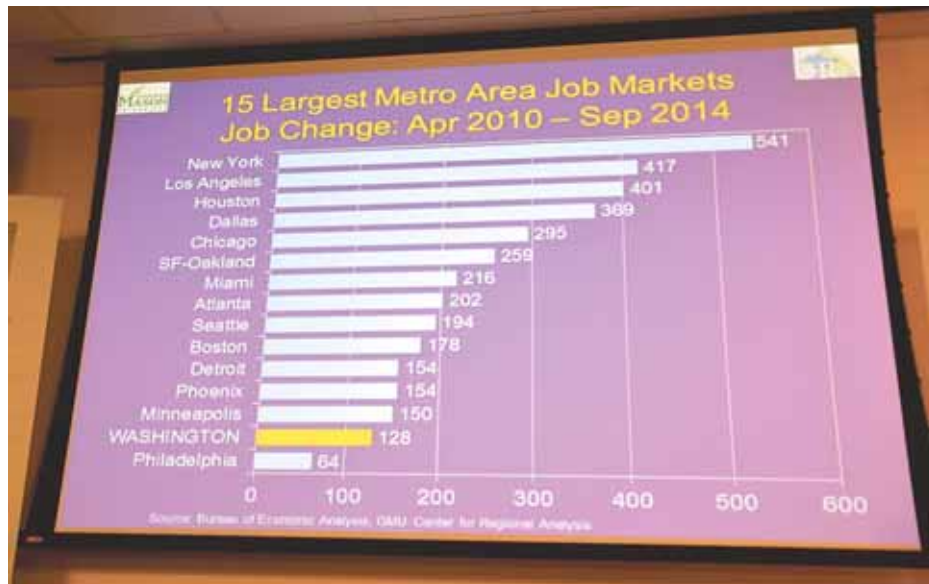
We definitely need wage growth, something we haven't had in this recovery so far," added Fuller. "During the recession, employers learned the lessons of productivity." With higher unemployment and older workers opting out of the workforce, employers could more easily pick and choose and keep pay rates lower.

The unemployment numbers are dropping, but according to Fuller, we still haven't reached the stage where employers must offer more to secure the best. And there is something else missing from the equation

Fuller Forecasts: 'A Slightly Better 2015'



Stephen Fuller went out into the crowd of attendees during his NVAR-hosted presentation on the past year's economy and the economic outlook ahead.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE GAZETTE

**The news could be better – according to Fuller and many of the charts and graphs he referred to during his presentation, the Washington Metro area, including Northern Virginia, is lagging well behind in many key recovery factors. Fuller discussed several reasons for the situation, not the least of which being the aftermath of 2013's "fiscal cliff" and the continuing impact of sequestration.**

in Fuller's opinion. "Where is inflation? There isn't any. And you need it to give merchants the opportunity to provide wage growth."

Despite a number of troubling indicators that he believes require immediate and significant attention, Fuller does predict a slightly better 2015. "We are still feeling that pent up demand that will push things a bit higher."

Fuller does not see a repeat of the flurry of increasing house prices that many sellers enjoyed not long ago. Instead, he believes that many luxury homes will come down in price and average time from list-to-sale may increase somewhat.

**WHEN ASKED** during the Q&A session to comment specifically on Fairfax County, Fuller cautioned that without creation of higher-wage jobs, the county would face a "real squeeze to services — fire, policing, education." Local government needs tax

money to do its job. Lower income and property taxes coupled with an increasingly aging population could mean even more challenging times ahead. "But interesting ones," he said. "Downsizing or rightsizing according to your view, things change."

This NVAR event was sponsored by RGS Title Company and hosted by the NVAR Small Broker and Real Estate Finance and Settlement Forums. NVAR has several economic outlook programs in store for the coming year. Visit its website at [www.nvar.com](http://www.nvar.com) to keep up to date on NVAR happenings.

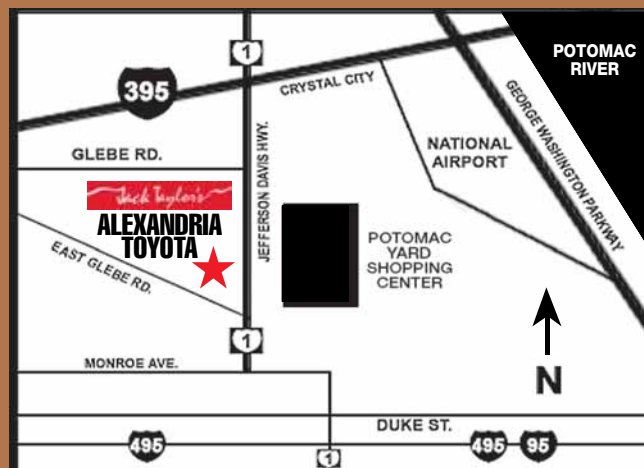
Fuller will speak at the 23rd Annual Cardinal Bank and George Mason University Economic Conference on Jan. 15, 2015. Pre-registration for the conference is available at [www.cardinalbank.com](http://www.cardinalbank.com). More on Fuller's update, review and the analytical data he presented are available on the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis website at [cra.gmu.edu](http://cra.gmu.edu).

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## FROM PAGE 5

grocery store trips; light handyman chores and home technology to name just a few. No minimum number of volunteer hours are required. Call Mount Vernon At Home 703-303-4060 or e-mail [info@mountvernonathome.org](mailto:info@mountvernonathome.org) to learn more. Visit [www.mountvernonathome.org](http://www.mountvernonathome.org).

**The Kingstowne Center** needs a van driver to take participants on outings and an ESL teacher. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Hollin Hall Senior Center**, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria, needs a DJ to provide a wide array of music from ballroom to line dancing, a Ballroom Dance Instructor and a volunteer with basic carpentry skills to build a "Little Free Library," for people to donate and borrow books from. Center will provide plans and materials. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Gum Springs Senior Center**. Spanish teacher for a beginner's class needed. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**Volunteer Advocates for Nursing Home & Assisted Living Residents** needed throughout Northern Virginia. Contact the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/lcombudsman/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/lcombudsman/), email or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703-324-5861, TTY 711.

**On-Call IT Specialists** to help older adults and adults with disabilities with basic computer issues. Schedule is flexible. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**Volunteers needed in Fairfax County** to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**Respite Care volunteers** give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or [Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov).

**The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Program** needs a volunteer to greet people and answer phones Mondays-Fridays from 9:15-9:30 a.m. to start as soon as possible. Contact Fairfax County's Volunteer Solutions at 703-324-5406, TTY 703-449-1186, [VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov), or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices) and click on volunteers.

**Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels** needs drivers and a coordinator. Contact Fairfax County's Volunteer Solutions at 703-324-5406, TTY 703-449-1186, [VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov) or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices) and click on volunteers.

**NOVA Long-Term Care Ombudsman** is in need of volunteer advocates for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities throughout Northern Virginia. Contact [lisa.callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:lisa.callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov) or

call 703-324-5861 to volunteer or for more information.

## ONGOING

**Telephone Support Group**. 7-8 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. For family caregivers of older adults.

Discuss "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly-Caregiving with Family and Friends." Share experiences, gain support and get information without having to travel. Free. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/)

## VIEWPOINTS

### What are your hopes for 2015?



**Nikki Houston, Mount Vernon:** "I hope for better jobs and housing. Hope for better people."



**Larry Simmons, Washington, D.C.:** "Next year should be a year of coming together, for everyone. Also, I don't like to see homelessness. People are on the street for different reasons. I'd like to see them all sheltered."



**Doug Woodward and granddaughter, Katie, Mount Vernon:** "I hope that the world gets more peaceful and the government gets more civil. Also, I hope for no more calamities, like the ones that we have been hearing about."

PHOTOS BY  
RENÉE RUGGLES  
THE GAZETTE

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