

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 29, 2012



Finn Higgins looks over the Christmas tree that his parents Kathy and Mark selected. With the Higgins are volunteers Sylvain and Caroline Richard.



Signs of the Season

Volunteers gathered at Saint Aidan's last week awaiting the arrival of Fraser fir trees from North Carolina. The trees and wreaths will be on sale weekends through Dec. 9. Six local schools — Riverside, Hollin Meadows, Waynewood, Fort Hunt, Stratford and Hybla Valley — are participating in a giveback program. Ten percent of the purchase price will be donated to the respective PTA. Coupons are available in the main office of each of the schools. Saint Aidan's is located at 8531 Riverside Road.

Caroline Richard adjusts a decoration on one of the wreaths for sale at the church.



Volunteers Bill and Kyle White, Charles and Caleb Sims and Caroline Richard.

Fee Could Make Impact

Should Fairfax County create new transportation impact fee?

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

Nowhere is the idea of a transportation impact fee more popular than the clogged Route 1 corridor, where the Wal-Mart at Kings Crossing has added to the gridlock that has long plagued the region. Because the developer did not ask for increased density or other variances, no rezoning was needed. And because the project was developed "by-right," county officials were not able to use the proffer system to ask developer J.B.G. Rosenfeld for the money needed to extend the turn lane into the popular retail mega-store.

Enter the impact fee.

If Fairfax County created a new transportation impact fee, county officials could charge the developer for the cost of the turn lane — regardless of whether a rezoning was needed or not. It's an idea that's gaining popularity in Mount Vernon, where the gridlock at Kings Crossing has created a lingering distaste for the shortcomings of the proffer system.

"I think it's a fair way of dealing with by-right development, and I certainly don't think that it would keep a project from being devel-

oped," said Jim Davis, co-chairman of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. "It is imperative that we do have a more balanced system to spur growth and have a way to mitigate things that can degrade the quality of life here."

The idea has yet to receive formal consideration, although people have been talking about it informally since last spring. The Southeast Fairfax Development

Corporation has not yet formally considered the idea, and so the organization does not have a position. But president David Versel says the idea is likely to generate a variety of responses.

"If you are talking to somebody who owns a property who wants to do

something by-right, then I would have to believe they would not support paying an impact fee they currently don't have to pay," said Versel. "But maybe there's another business that wants to see traffic improved, and they would support it."

SINCE 1989, the county has had the authority to levy impact fees. But the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors never took advantage

SEE FEE COULD, PAGE 5

"It is imperative that we do have a more balanced system to spur growth and have a way to mitigate things that can degrade the quality of life here."

— Jim Davis, co-chairman, Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations.

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Backstage at the Ballet

Final dress rehearsals are underway for this weekend's performances of "The Nutcracker." West Potomac Academy and Alexandria Community Dance are teaming up to present their fourth annual joint performance of "The Nutcracker," the traditional holiday story with a modern twist, on Nov. 29, 30, and Dec. 1, at West Potomac High School.

Four shows will be performed: Thursday, Nov. 29, at 5 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 30, at 6:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 3, at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m.

West Potomac Academy's Dance students will participate in the entire production, both on stage and behind the scenes, and Advanced Dance students will have featured performances. The performance will include ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, lyrical, modern, and hip-hop dance and gymnastics.

More than 100 dancers from the Alexandria area of Fairfax County auditioned for

the performance. Students from the following Fairfax County public schools are represented in the production: Belle View, Fort Hunt, Hollin Meadows, Stratford Landing, Washington Mill, and Waynewood elementary schools; Sandburg Middle School, and West Potomac High School. Performers range in age from four years old to adult.

Alexandria Community Dance has a business partnership with West Potomac Academy.

Groups are welcome to attend the performances. For the first time, residents from Paul Spring Retirement Community will attend a performance, followed by a meet-and-greet with the performers.

Tickets are \$10 for students and \$12 for adults in advance, or \$12 for students and \$15 for adults at the door. For more information and tickets, visit www.alexandriadance.com.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/THE GAZETTE





**Inova Mount Vernon
Hospital Auxiliary**

invites you to

**Join Us for the
31st Annual Lights
of Love Ceremony**

Living trees lighted in the memory of loved ones and to honor special friends will be lit at the 31st Annual Lights of Love Ceremony.

Mount Vernon community family and friends are invited to join us and welcome the holiday season in a very special way.

Ceremony includes Festival of Music by Cleve Francis, MD and Donald Brideau, MD.

Reception follows in the cafeteria.

Saturday, December 1, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.
in the Hospital Main Lobby

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital
2501 Parker's Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306

Admission is FREE

**Special Guest Appearance by Santa Claus
to greet all the children.**

To honor a family member or friend, call 703.664.7260 to make a \$5 donation or for more information about the 2012 Lights of Love ceremony.





Kyle Hayden carries a tree selected by the Karlisch family to the trimming station.

Kiwanis Holds Annual Holiday Tree Sale

The trucks pulled into the parking lot at the Belle View Shopping center early Saturday morning, Nov. 24, laden with Fraser firs, wreaths and garlands. Mount Vernon Kiwanis members spent the morning sorting trees by size and setting up for the annual tree sale. All proceeds of the sales support local charities and schools in the Mount Vernon area.



Chair of the annual Mount Vernon Kiwanis Christmas Tree sale Paul Mehler watches as Dick Peterson trims the base of an 8-foot Fraser fir tree.

Fee Could Make Impact

FROM PAGE 1

of that power. When board members considered whether or not to adopt such a system several years ago, the elected officials determined that they wanted to stay with the current proffer system rather than trying to create a hybrid system with both.

"I think if we tried to do both, we would end up with a classic battle with our development community," said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland in an interview last year. "We came to the conclusion many years ago that we would get more out of a proffer system, which is why we decided to go that route."

Now the gridlock created at Kings Crossing has reopened the Board of Supervisors' long-standing decision against seeking impact fees. Last year, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations passed a resolution urging the Board of Supervisors to impose impact fees on any development needing a building permit. Once a fee system had been created, the resolution suggested, county officials could use the revenue to pay for "building reasonable transportation infrastructure to benefit the development." Hyland's office responded with a memorandum outlining concerns about redeveloping the Route 1 corridor. "Staff is concerned that an impact fee program would apply to all redevelopment in the corridor," the memo reported. "Impact fees may discourage redevelopment in this area and undermine the county's goal to foster redevelopment in this designated commercial revitalization area."

MANY MOUNT VERNON residents say the impact fee is a desperately needed tool that should be used when developers do not need to rezone. Without it, they say, residents are stuck with gridlock and taxpayers are eventually handed a bill to fix the problem. Those who are pushing for the creation of an impact fee say concerns about redevelopment should take a backseat to concerns about quality of life.



Back-ups on the left-turn lane at the Kings Crossing Wal-Mart have added to existing gridlock on Route 1.

"If by-right development does not improve transportation infrastructure, it should not be built," wrote Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association Transportation Committee Chairwoman Catherine Voorhees.



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OPEN SUNDAY

Alex./Hollin Hall \$489,000
7926 New Market Road
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Alex./Wessynton \$624,900
8802 Four Seasons
Large, stunning, contemporary Colonial in popular Mount Vernon Community of Wessynton. This lovely home is highly updated: kitchen remodeled in '07, HVAC & hot water heater replaced '07, energy-efficient replacement windows, freshly painted interior - family room w/vaulted ceiling off kitchen - large beautiful picture windows throughout overlook a large, private, landscaped lot on a quiet cul-de-sac - In-law bedroom & bath on main level - 5 minutes to Fort Belvoir - This is a Keeper!



Alex./Yacht Haven \$914,000
4721 Tarpon Lane
WATERFRONT! Live the life you've imagined: Come home to this spectacular Colonial located on a waterfront lot (.61 acre) w/full working dock & quick navigable access to the Potomac River. Less than 100 yds to prestigious Mt. Vernon Yacht Club. Stunning rms & open floor plan on main lvl provide for fabulous entertaining. 5 BRs, 3 Full BAs + 2 half baths. 3,462 sq.ft. of above ground living & finished basement. Gorgeous Great Rm addition w/expansive windows, vaulted ceilings. Beautiful remodeled kit w/lighted cabinetry, granite counters, & center island. Kit, Great Rm & Den off of kit all offer deck access via French doors. 2 FPLs. Sunken living rm. French doors off MBR lead to beautiful "Lounge Rm" w/two lg skylights, & a wall of windows facing the waterfront side of the property. This home is a 10!



OPEN SUNDAY

Alex./Yacht Haven \$589,900
4612 Tarpon Lane
Lovely, updated 4BR, 4BA Split in sought-after Waterfront Community of Yacht Haven. Stunning sun rm addition w/vaulted ceilings, sky lites, hwd flrs and wall of windows overlooking a manicured backyard. Newer HVAC, updated baths, and replacement windows. Just down the street from prestigious Mt. Vernon Yacht Club w/all its amenities. 5 mins to Ft. Belvoir, 18 mins to Ntl Airport. This is prime property at a GREAT PRICE!



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Alex./Belle View \$259,900
6612 Boulevard VW #A2
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Alex./Riverside Est. \$489,900
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Alex./Mt. Vernon Woods \$299,900
7901 Martha Washington Street
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FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Schools Using Diversity for Student Benefits

Immersion, ESOL programs aim to take advantage of area cultures.

BY ALEX McVEIGH
THE GAZETTE

As Fairfax County has experienced massive growth in its international population, its effects have spread to its educational institutions. Forty-four percent of the Fairfax County Public Schools students come from homes that speak a language other than English, which includes 160 different languages.

In 2006, the county came up with the goal to eventually have all graduates be able to communicate in two languages. The county currently offers 11 different languages.

"We highly value the diversity of our population, because it's advantageous for our students to grow up here, as global citizens," said Teddi Predaris, director of the county's Office of Language Acquisition. "We believe it's a huge asset for our students in their future endeavors."

Approximately 28 percent of the county's current population are foreign born, with Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu and Chinese/Mandarin being the most common languages spoken in the homes of elementary school students.

The county's kindergarten two-way immersion program is one method used by schools to take advantage of increasing diversity. The program consists of half English speakers and half who speak the immersion language.

"In this program, the teachers and students are language models for each other, and they spend half the day working at each language," Predaris said. "Our criteria for adding these programs is having a large enough population of the non-English speaking group to make a 50-50 mix possible. This is one of the models we hope to expand in coming years."

The county has five Spanish kindergarten two-way immersion programs, at Bailey's, Braddock, Lake Anne, London Towne and Rose Hill Elementary Schools. New this year is a Korean two-way immersion school at Colin Powell Elementary School in Centreville.

THE PROGRAM AT COLIN POWELL was designed to take advantage of the area's large Korean population. The Korean students who are in the program all could speak a little English

"The program is a niche that fits very well in our community. For the native English speakers, it helps them understand more about the culture of the people they share the community with every day. It gives everyone more understanding of the people that walk through our doors every day," said Principal Linda Clifford. "Walking into a classroom the other day, I was amazed at how many non-Korean students were able to understand Korean very well."

Clifford said she hopes in future years that the school can expand the program beyond kindergarten, eventually to every grade at the school. The school also offers an after school program to all students who are interested in learning Korean, and they even have a pre-school program to teach immigrant families about school programs and other information they might not otherwise be familiar with before their children start school.

Students in the program at Bailey's Elementary take health,

math and science in their native language. As a magnet school, students from across the county can apply, which the school uses mainly to fill its English-speaking requirement.

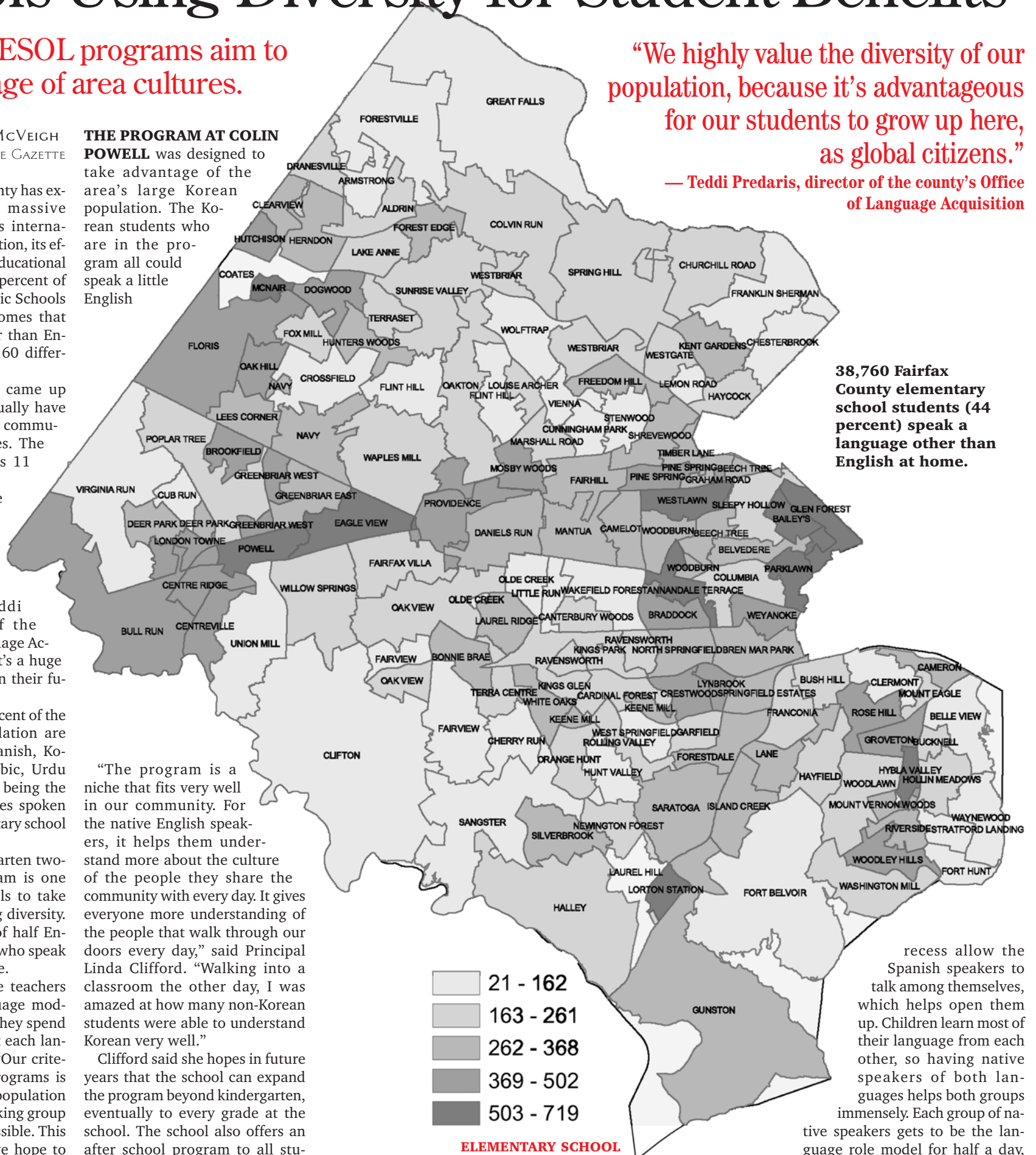
"The native Spanish speakers come to Bailey's with a wide range

of English skills, depending on where they come from," said Assistant Principal Rachel Charlton. "Some come from very rural areas where they have little to no schooling. There's always a silent period in the beginning, but periods like lunch and

"We highly value the diversity of our population, because it's advantageous for our students to grow up here, as global citizens."

— Teddi Predaris, director of the county's Office of Language Acquisition

38,760 Fairfax County elementary school students (44 percent) speak a language other than English at home.



recess allow the Spanish speakers to talk among themselves, which helps open them up. Children learn most of their language from each other, so having native speakers of both languages helps both groups immensely. Each group of native speakers gets to be the language role model for half a day, with the other students learning from them. It really boosts their confidence."

COUNTY SCHOOLS also feature immersion programs in Japanese, German and French at elementary and middle schools.

Another area of growth has been the county's English for Speakers

of Other Languages program, which started 35 years ago with 300 students. Since then it has seen a steady increase, with 15,000 in fiscal year 2001 and 31,000 this year.

Janet Funk, principal of Gunston Elementary School in Lorton, where approximately 300 students come from a home where another language is spoken, says everyday interaction with new cultures is an important part of early education.

"Interesting conversations can be heard in the lunchroom, especially when students from other countries bring their food from home. Children are very interested in bringing their favorite foods, which naturally flows to a discussion of traditions and celebrations," she said. "With these informal discussions, the students learn the importance of accepting classmates for who they are. This supports our goal of cultural acceptance an collaborative interaction among our school community."

But with such diversity comes challenges, especially when it comes to Standards of Learning tests.

"Classroom teachers and ESOL teachers work diligently to help the students learn the English language. Many of our students from other countries are still learning English and are reading below grade level expectations," Funk said. "These students receive reading instruction in the classroom setting and the ESOL classroom. They are receiving a 'double' dose of reading on a regularly scheduled basis. However, when it comes time to take the SOL tests, they are required to take the test on grade level in a language in which they are not proficient."

In Virginia, SOL tests must be taken in English, but in Texas, for example, standardized tests can be taken in Spanish.

CHANGES to the state's licensure requirements this year have also caused some difficulties. This year, the state required teachers in elementary school programs to not only be licensed in their language, but also for elementary education.

"We've struggled this year due to the new requirement," Charlton said. "We've had to use some long-term subs until as recently as two or three weeks ago before we had enough full time teachers that met qualifications. Now I think the universities are aware of the change, so it might be better in future years, but it can definitely make it difficult to find people."

George C. Marshall High School has a student population representing more than 90 nations.

PHOTO BY
DONNA MANZ/
THE GAZETTE



"Marshall has an international student body from all walks of life, from the four corners of the world ... We are the face of what Fairfax County is in 2012."

— George C. Marshall High School Principal Jay Pearson

Marshall High Is the Face of Fairfax County

Ninety-plus countries represented by student population.

VIEWPOINTS

What was your biggest concern or fear when moving to U.S. schools?

—DONNA MANZ

BY DONNA MANZ
THE GAZETTE

The schools that feed into George C. Marshall High School are the academic home to children from all over the world. It's not surprising, then, that Marshall is an international community, a Tysons Corner United Nations, so to speak. Many of the students come for the prestigious I.B. (International Baccalaureate), but most are in the Marshall district, which embraces students from Tysons to the far reaches of Vienna. From Italian to Swahili, there is a myriad of languages native to Marshall's students, who represent more than 90 nations.

"Marshall has an international student body from all walks of life, from the four corners of the world," said principal Jay Pearson. "Our kids cross so many boundaries. We don't refer to it as 'diversity,'" Pearson said. "For our students, this is the norm. These kids are very accustomed to moving between groups of students from everywhere, so, there aren't 'cliques.'"

"We are the face of what Fairfax County is in 2012."

FIVE INVITED STUDENTS gathered in a roundtable discussion at Marshall recently. What they agreed on is that American schools are less-intense academically, less-academically pressuring than schools outside the U.S. In other countries, it is academics-only that define your future, a se-

lected group of students said in the recent discussion with Pearson and an interviewer. In the U.S., the students said, you have extracurricular programs that enhance the total person. What the U.S. does not have, however, that international schools stress, is an emphasis on foreign language fluency.

English is a compulsory curriculum in many school systems the world over. Some students, such as Kasthury Paramiswaran, a Marshall senior from Malaysia, speak multiple languages, fluent in each. Kasthury's family moved around the world as part of her father's job, and Kasthury mastered four languages in her journeys. She said she still works very hard in her I.B. subjects, getting "A's in every one of her classes. She is applying to colleges in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Jia Loh, a Malaysian native who has been in the U.S. for two years, said the transition to schools here was "hard," even though the academic environment is less intense than in Malaysia.

"I had to adjust to different cultures. It was hard to find friends who share my culture."

Dalila Ferrara's family moved around Italy; her father is in the military there. In the early 1990s, he was assigned to a U.S. base in Texas and his experience there was not a good one. "He warned me not to tell people I'm Italian," Dalila said. "He told me not to be proud-

SEE CURRICULUM. PAGE 21

Kasthury Paramiswaran, senior, Malaysia

"I had a close group of friends there and I didn't know anybody here," on leaving Malaysia when she had made friends in her native high school. "I still work very hard in my [I.B.] classes."



Dalila Ferrara, junior, Italy

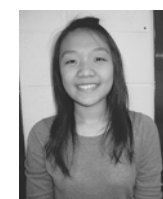
"Actually, I was really happy to move here. My only fear was that I wouldn't be accepted. That didn't happen. My biggest dream is to get an MBA from Harvard."



Millan Mbise, senior, Tanzania

"The cultural aspect. For example, in Tanzania there is little interaction with teachers. The teachers are strict, classes are very intense. It's not like that here. I played varsity soccer last year and that helped me a lot with the transition to Marshall.

"I figured out what I wanted to do with my life when I moved here. I want to be a pharmacist."



Jia Loh, senior, Malaysia

"My biggest fear was finding friends. Still find it hard

to join cliques. Most of my friends are international students. I'm still working on that part of the transition. My dream is to find a high-paying job I like, accounting or law."



Amber Holder, senior, Panama

"My biggest fear was that I wouldn't

have the same friends throughout my academic career. My dream is to establish a music education system that would produce more diverse, well-rounded musicians, not just musicians who are skilled in just one instrument."

OPINION

Learning in a Global Community

Students in Fairfax County speak 160 languages.

This week our ongoing series about immigration in Fairfax County takes a look at county schools and some of the joys and challenges of having a diverse student body that speaks as many as 160 different languages at home.

Find the series compiled online at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/Immigration/>

For the director of language acquisition in Fairfax County Public Schools, the 44 percent of students who speak a foreign language at home present an opportunity to create language immersion classes where half a kindergarten is learning Spanish or Korean while the other half is learning English.

For principals of some elementary schools where more than half of their students are not proficient in English, the need to have students meet benchmarks in a variety of subjects is a relentless process. In addition to limited English, immigrant students come from varied backgrounds, some with good basics in their

own languages and some with limited previous education in any language. The parents of these students are similarly varied.

Meanwhile, representation of Latino and African American students in Fairfax County's top instructional centers for gifted students lags dramatically.

EDITORIAL

FCPS is conducting two critical sets of public meetings this week and next. The call for public input is not specifically about growing diversity in the schools, but related challenges make both the possible expansion of centers for the county's most talented students and the selection of a new superintendent of schools that much more important.

A fast moving proposal to expand the number of centers to provide "advanced academic" services is the topic of meetings this week. The meetings will run from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 27, in the Westfield High School cafeteria; Wednesday, Nov. 28, in the Lee High School cafeteria; Thursday, Nov. 29, in the Kilmer

Middle School cafeteria.

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Jack Dale will be retiring in June of 2013. The School Board has hired a search firm, Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, which will be gathering community input. Many of the challenges facing the new superintendent will revolve around growing diversity, and a track record of open communication and achievement in this will be key to success.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- ❖ **Dec. 3 - 7 p.m.**, cafeteria, South County HS, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton, VA 22079
- ❖ **Dec. 4 - 7 p.m.**, cafeteria, Langley HS, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101
- ❖ **Dec. 5 - 7 p.m.**, cafeteria, Robinson SS, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, VA 22032
- ❖ **Dec. 6 - 10 a.m.** Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 Room 1600
- ❖ **Dec. 6 - 7 p.m.**, cafeteria, Annandale HS, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale, VA 22003
- ❖ **Dec. 6 - 7 p.m.**, cafeteria, Groveton Elementary School, 6900 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306
- ❖ **Dec. 7 - 1 p.m.**, Gatehouse Administration Center, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 Room 1600

tionally most beneficial way to buy and consume food." My position is that consumers may want to consider buying some foods known, when grown conventionally, to contain significant pesticides. See the Dirty Dozen and Clean 15 from the Environmental Working Group: <http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary/>. However, I don't believe it's necessary at this point to buy all so-called organic foods to eat healthfully.

❖ I provided several statistics about diabetes which were cited incorrectly. The following are correct: Nearly 80 million Americans have prediabetes. About 50 percent of Americans over 65 years of age have prediabetes.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Praise for Cub Pack 1504

To the Editor:

I commend Cub Scout Pack 1504 for their compassion and dedication in conducting an annual food drive to serve our neighbors in need. Last year over one ton of food was collected from giving neighbors and given to UCM.

To all members of Cub Scout Pack 1504, keep up the exemplary service to our neighbors in need. Your service to them and our communities are invaluable. Thanks again.

Frank Medico
Mount Vernon

Offering Some Healthy Corrections

To the Editor:

I was pleased to see the Mount Vernon Gazette cover the recent American Association of University Women (AAUW) showing of the movie "Food, Inc." with a panel discussion in which I took part ("Taste Trumps Nutrition," Nov. 23), however, several corrections to the article are in order.

❖ The title insinuates nutritious, unprocessed healthy foods and meals can't be healthy. Reality is they can. With a bit of effort people don't have to choose between taste and nutrition.

❖ I did not make the statement that organically grown foods are the "safest and nutri-

Fox Trot



PHOTOS BY TRACY HUTCHISON

More than 500 people — and dogs — gathered on Saturday, Nov. 17 at Fort Hunt Park for Fort Hunt Elementary School's 11th Annual One Mile Thanksgiving Fox Trot. The after-school running club, the Fleet Foxes, their families and friends from neighboring schools gathered for the one mile race. At left, Jackson Culver and Cory Culver cross the finish line. At right, Fort Hunt Elementary School third grade teacher Barbara Bonnet crosses the finish line with her dog.

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

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A Connection Newspaper

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

Children born after the year 2000 have a 1 in 3 chance of developing type 2 diabetes and minority children (African American, Hispanic Americans, etc.) have a 1 in 2 chance. The source for these statistics and many others about diabetes is the CDC's National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2011 http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf

Thanks to the Gazette for coverage of this important topic.

**Hope Warshaw, MMSc,
RD, CDE**
Alexandria

Write

The Gazette welcomes views on any public issue.

The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Send to:

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



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Every year between Christmas and New Year's, The Mount Vernon Gazette turns its pages over to the contributions of local students. We are seeking artwork, photography, poetry, opinions, short stories and reflections. We welcome contributions from public schools, private schools and students who are home schooled.

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

Mount Vernon Gazette

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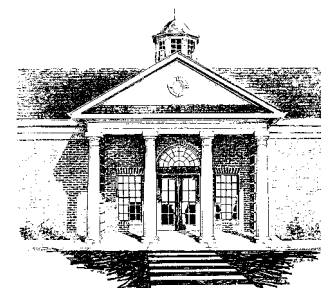
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NEWS



PHOTO BY DIANA HILL

Stop Hunger Now

On Sunday Nov. 4, Messiah Lutheran Church hosted a "Stop Hunger Now" food packing event. More than 50 volunteers helped create 10,000 dehydrated packaged meals. In assembly line style, they packaged the ingredients, weighed the meals, sealed them, counted them for boxing and sealed the boxes which were then put in the truck to await delivery to hungry people around the world. Members of Messiah church, its pastor, Robert Lewis, and members of the community participated in this event as well as contributing donations.

POETRY

She Remembers the Splendor

She remembers the splendor,
when we reminisce

Of moments so tender and
innocent trysts

And when she, relenting,
permitted a kiss

But nothing more intimate
rendered than this

The other contenders she
gently dismissed

The endless temptations she
learned to resist

'Til sprays of carnations affixed
to her wrist

Conveyed approbation of
imminent bliss

The clergyman's sermon on
love in our midst

Her splendid attendants and
friends she would miss

Her twittering sisters all fit to
assist

Should anything, Heaven
forbid, go amiss

The ways that we've wended,
each bend and each twist

And blessings unending too
many to list

— JOHN J. FINERTY, JR.

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was dug
to a new
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This home is the perfect gathering place for entertaining. The well designed gourmet kitchen flows seamlessly to family room, formal dining room and fabulous outdoor living space.
Edward Pagett 703-518-6161



NEW LISTING

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Beautifully maintained end brick 3BR/3.5BA townhome with hardwood floors, 2FP/2CG plus brand new \$40,000 windows! Only minutes to downtown D.C!
Donnan C. Wintermute 703-518-6156



OPEN SUN 1-4PM

River Towers \$269,900
6641 Wakefield Drive 409, Alexandria, VA 22307
New Price for rare 2BR/1.5 BA, Balcony Condo w/ hardwoods, renovated BA, lots of closets & many updates. Offers best of both worlds convenient location in a resort like setting.
Denise Davis 571-332-8531



OPEN SUN 1-4PM

River Towers \$198,000
6641 Wakefield Drive 906, Alexandria, VA 22307
This is a Wow! Tastefully renovated 1 bedroom condo w/ granite in kitchen and hardwoods thru out. Great location, ample free parking and peaceful community.
Denise Davis 571-332-8531



Mason Hill \$763,990
2005 Mason Hill Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307
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Wilton Woods \$621,000
6118 Beech Tree Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310
Charming stone front colonial in lovely Wilton Woods, 5BR on upper level, 1 CG, hardwood floors on 2 levels, deck & hot tub in private treed backyard.
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8140 Stacey Road, Alexandria, VA 22308
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OPEN SUN **INTERVIEW**

4003 Belle Rive Ter
\$1,495,000
AMAZING \$500,000 BELOW TAX VALUE!
8775 square feet river front mansion at incredible bargain price. Owner wants immediate sale & close by end of year. One of area's best water front opportunities in years! Designed by leading custom builder to capitalize on stunning water views from virtually every major room in house. **OPEN SUN 12/2, 1-4!** GW Pky S; L-Old Mt Vernon; L-Rive; R-Belle Rive.

CONTRACT

9317 Old Mansion Rd
\$859,000
Stunning Colonial in Riverfront Community!
Classic colonial tastefully expanded and landscaped. One of area's most distinctive properties! Fab features: 3 fin levels, expanded custom kitchen opening to sunroom and elevated stone terrace overlooking garden. MBR with dual granite vanities, separate shower & whirlpool tub. 4BR, 3.5BA, 2FP and 2 car garage. Community path to river access.

9032 McNair Dr
\$449,750
Spacious Rambler - Great Price!
Rare large Rambler on gorgeous 1/2 acre lot in prime Mt. Vernon location. Home has huge potential with 4 BR on main level including master with private bath. Other features include fireplace with marble surround, oversize two car garage, hdwd flrs & huge lower level. Home needs a little TLC & is priced accordingly. Exceptional Value

JUST LISTED **CONTRACT**

4002 Belle Rive Terr
\$798,500
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Unique opportunity to purchase river view home in prestigious Belle Rive for under \$800K! Fabulous custom all-brick colonial on cul-de-sac with stunning views of Potomac River! Gorgeous kitchen featuring all SS appliances, farmhouse sink and carrera marble counters. Hdwd flrs and plantation shutters abound. Recently finished walk out lower lvl. New Pella doors.

CONTRACT

3618 Old Vernon Ct
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Fabulous opportunity! Spacious 5BR Colonial with updated modern floor plan. Numerous features include: high ceilings, 3 finished levels, stunning master suite, custom built-ins and oversize two car garage. Prime location on large, fenced lot fronting quiet cul-de-sac in the heart of Mt. Vernon. Nothing like it on market at close to this price.

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8614 Camden St
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Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264

\$ 1,149,000
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Backs to parkland, this 5BR / 4BA brick Colonial was totally renovated - 2 main level family rooms, gourmet kitchen, luxury Master Suite including marble bath, sunken tub, jetted shower, deck. Walk-out lower level with fireplace, nanny room with bath opens to brick patio. '06 new HVAC / HWH / thermalpane windows & more! Classic slate roof. Garage. Owner/Agent.

Suzanne Backus 703.338.3594



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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Scottish Walk Weekend Events

The 42nd Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend kicks off the holiday season Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 as more than 30,000 participants and families descend on Old Town for a weekend of festivities that is consistently ranked by the Southeast Tourism Society as one of the top 20 events in the South.

With the exception of the Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market, parade, tour of homes and Holiday Boat Parade, all listed events take place at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria.

FRIDAY/NOV. 30

Christmas Marketplace — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Heather and Greens sale — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Deck the Halls With Santa, A Children's Party — 1-3 p.m.
Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market — reception 6-9 p.m., 2704 Mount Vernon Ave.
Taste of Scotland — 7 p.m. for Patrons Pub, 8 p.m. general reception.

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Holiday Homes Tours — 11 a.m.-4 p.m. (various locations)
Heather and Greens sale — 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 2704 Mount Vernon Ave.
Scottish Walk Parade — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Massed Band finale — 1:30 p.m. at Market Square
Holiday Parade of Lights along the waterfront — 5:15 p.m.

SUNDAY/DEC. 2

Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market — noon to 4 p.m., 2704 Mount Vernon Ave.

Find more information on these and other holiday events at www.visitaalexandriava.com.



The Holiday Boat Parade of Lights will wrap up Saturday's festivities.

Drum major Brian Brendel salutes visiting dignitaries as the Northern Virginia Firefighters Emerald Society Pipe Band passes the reviewing stand.



Drums kick off last year's Scottish Walk Parade in Old Town.



Megan Murchie-Beyma performs with the Thistle Dancers to begin the Mass Bands finale of the 2011 Scottish Walk Parade in front of Market Square.



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

COURTESY OF CAMPAGNA CENTER

ENTERTAINMENT

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

THURSDAY/NOV. 29

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

THURSDAY-FRIDAY/NOV. 29-30

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

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 29-DEC. 1

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

FRIDAY/NOV. 30

Free Concert. 8 p.m. Enjoy an evening of music for Clarinet at The Lyceum located at 201 S. Washington St. This

free concert is offered as a public service. Call The United States Air Force Band's Concert Line at 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

Book Signing. 6:30 p.m. Hooray for Books is sponsoring a book signing at their store at 1555 King St. Author/archaeologist Jordan Jacobs will be signing copies of his book, "Samantha Sutton and the Labyrinth of Lies." Hooray for Books is located at 1555 King Street. Visit www.hooray4books.com or call 703-548-4092.

THROUGH NOV. 30

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

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 30-DEC. 1

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

Kwanzaa Celebration

The Alexandria Black History Museum and Culture Kingdom Kids will host a Kwanzaa Celebration program on Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Museum. The cost of admission for this event is \$5.

The museum's annual program explores the history and significance of Kwanzaa. Learn about the principles of Kwanzaa, a seven-day cultural celebration that begins Dec. 26 and ends Jan. 1, and find out how to incorporate it into your holiday season. The program will be produced by Culture Kingdom Kids. Jessica Smith, Director of Culture Kingdom Kids and a Kwanzaa expert, will lead participants in learning fun ways to celebrate the seven days of Kwanzaa through a variety of creative games, interactive songs, dances and hands-on crafts.

Culture Kingdom Kids is an educational arts company that produces children's programs celebrating African-American cultures. Since 2010, Culture Kingdom Kids has promoted cultural pride and heritage awareness through fun and interactive performances and workshops at schools, festivals, community centers and museums. In 2011, Culture Kingdom Kids founder and owner Jessica Smith received the Africa Showcase Award for Excellence in Children's Cultural Programs. In 2012, Smith was recognized as one of the Forty UNDER 40 by the Prince George's County Social Innovation Fund for her exceptional contributions in education through Culture Kingdom Kids. Visit www.culturekingdomkids.com.

The Alexandria Black History Museum is located at 902 Wythe Street in Alexandria's Parker-Gray Historic District and is open from Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Patrons needing special accommodation must notify the museum two weeks prior to the event. The Museum is within walking distance of the Braddock Road Metro on the Yellow and Blue Lines. Visit www.alexblackhistory.org.

Alexandria, 2932 King St. Call 571-969-1377 or visit www.harmonizers.org.

Craft Sale. Heritage Presbyterian Church will hold a "Made By The Bell" Christmas Boutique on Nov. 30, from 3-7 p.m. and on Dec. 1, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Handmade Christmas décor, ornaments, hand knitted items, baked goods, and unique gifts

are among the items for sale. Heritage Presbyterian Church is located at 8503 Fort Hunt Road. One hundred percent of the proceeds go to support Heritage Presbyterian Women's outreach programs for children and women. Call 703-360-9546.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 30-DEC. 2

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

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 16



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CALENDAR



Five of the small works from Target Gallery's 5x5(x5) show.

5x5(x5) exhibition

Target Gallery hosts 5x5(x5), which examines artwork on a very intimate scale, with all work being no larger than 5 inches in any direction. This all-media, juried exhibition includes 112 works by 68 artists and runs Dec. 8-30. Target Gallery will host a reception Thursday, Dec. 13, 6-8 p.m., and a juror talk with Stefanie Fedor at 7 p.m. Target Gallery is located in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street. Visit www.torpedofactory.org/target.

FROM PAGE 15

Sunday. Visit TheDelRayArtisans.org/HolidayMarket.

Artfête Weekend. Open house and holiday party celebrate expansion of Madison Annex. Exhibits of instructor artwork, artist demos, a wearable art runway show. Food and drinks are provided by Chadwick's and Lavender Moon Cupcakery. Live music by Orquesta Tropikiimba. Ceramic and jewelry sales continue throughout the weekend. Artfête holiday party is on Friday, Nov. 30, 6-9 p.m. Ceramic sale is noon-9 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday, and noon-5 p.m. on Sunday. Jewelry sale is noon-9 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, and noon-4 p.m. on Sunday. At The Art League's Madison Annex, 305 Madison St. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-2323.

NOV. 30 THROUGH DEC. 16

The Little Theatre of Alexandria's "A Christmas Carol." 8 p.m. Ring in the holiday season with a return of the classic by Charles Dickens. Ebenezer Scrooge. Complete with special effects, Victorian carols, and Tiny Tim, "A Christmas Carol" is a must for the entire family. Little Theatre of Alexandria is located at 600 Wolfe St. Call 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com for showtimes or to purchase tickets. \$15 (does not include service fees).

SATURDAY/DEC. 1

Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat

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

An Advent Quiet Day Workshop.

9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. With David Vryhof, SSJE of The Society of Saint John the Evangelist. Pause to consider the nature of gratitude, the expression of gratitude, and the lens of gratitude through which we can see the world and all its creatures. In McMurray Commons. Registration begins at 9 a.m. The \$35 fee covers breakfast and a light lunch, as well as tea and coffee. Contact Phil Lyons at PhilipBLyons@AOL.com or 703-960-6468.

Barbershop Harmony Concert.

1 p.m. Free. Celebrate the holiday season with the Harmony Heritage Singers at Sherwood Regional Library. In classic barbershop style, the 40-member Harmony Heritage Singers perform traditional Christmas songs such as "It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas" and "Angels We Have Heard on High" spiced with a few chorus favorites like "Delta Dawn" and the Beach Boys hit,

"Barbara Ann." All are welcome. At Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Call 703-765-4779 or email brandtron@verizon.net.

Holiday Craft Fair.

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

Christmas Walk.

11 a.m.-4 p.m. Stroll through lovely properties in the historic district of Alexandria dressed up for the holidays by acclaimed interior designers and local florists. Part of the 42nd Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend, the proceeds from the tour go directly toward the programs of The Campagna Center. Purchase tickets at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt St.

Concert.

7:30 p.m. Chris Smither will bring his new album Hundred Dollar Valentine to The Birchmere at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets are \$25. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

SATURDAYSUNDAY/DEC. 1-2, 8-9, 15-16

Historic Candlelight Tours.

5-8 p.m. Join "Mrs. Washington" as she hosts an evening of candlelight tours, fireside caroling, and hot cider and ginger cookies. Tours include merry music, and characters from the Washingtons' world guiding visitors through the first and second floors of the home, adding ambiance and authenticity to a traditional Christmas evening at Mount Vernon. Tickets may be purchased at the Ford Orientation Center (9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily), or through MountVernon.org. Admission is \$22 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. Call 703-780-2000 or 703-799-8697 or visit www.MountVernon.org.

DEC. 1-25

The Christmas Attic's Holiday

Advent Calendar.

Each day at sundown, the store will reveal "advent art" featuring a variety of local holiday creations. All art will be placed either in the windows or on the brick of the building on the front side facing Union Street. Visitors can picture the entire building being transformed into an advent calendar. There will be holiday entertainment and activities inside the store for shoppers to enjoy on a variety of nights. At the closing of the Advent Calendar event, the canvases of advent art will be available for auction at a post-event celebration (to be scheduled). Proceeds from the auction will go to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic. At The Christmas Attic, 125 S. Union St. Call 703-548-2829 or visit www.christmasattic.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 2

Christ Church's Nine Lessons and

Carols service. 5 p.m. The Festival

of Nine Lessons and Carols is a worship service celebrating the birth of Jesus that is traditionally followed at Christmas. Contact Jason Abel at jabel@ccalex.org or 703-549-1450 ext. 104. Christ Church is located at 118 N. Washington St.

Photos with Santa Claus.

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

Annual Toys for Tots.

1-5 p.m. The City's 38th annual Toys for Tots Benefit Square Dance will be held at Lee Center Exhibit Hall, 1108 Jefferson St. This year's theme is "Feel'n' Great at Thirty-Eight" and features a special 3 p.m. performance by Capital Squares Demonstration Team. The annual square and round dance benefits the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Drive. Recommended donation for each couple is a new, unopened toy or a \$10 minimum contribution (singles \$5). All toys and proceeds from this dance will remain in the Washington metropolitan area. To donate a toy, drop off donation until 3 p.m. at the Lee Center. Call 703-746-5592 or 703-746-4343.

THROUGH DEC. 2

Free Art Exhibition.

This juried photography exhibition — open to all artists nationally and internationally — explores the theme of upheaval in our personal lives and throughout the world. A reception on Nov. 8, from 6-8 p.m. occurs during 2nd Thursday Art Night and features a talk by juror Brie Castell at 7 p.m. Target Gallery (Studio 2), 105 North Union St. Call 703-838-4565, x4 or visit www.torpedofactory.org/target.

MONDAY/DEC. 3

Fabricated: An Exhibition of

Wearable Art.

(Deadline for entry is on Dec. 3. (Exhibition will be from Feb. 2 through Mar. 3, 2013. Fabricated is an all-media exhibition featuring "wearable art." While the making of any article of clothing or other wearable object typically involves aesthetic considerations, the term wearable art implies that the work is intended to be accepted as a serious and unique artistic creation or statement. It is open to all artists nationally and internationally. Visit www.targetgallery.com.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 17

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 16

THROUGH DEC. 3

Free Photography Exhibition.

Andrew Zimmermann: Cold River. This solo exhibition of large-format black and white photographs captures the “character of blankness.” The opening reception takes place on Nov. 8 from 6:30-8 p.m., during 2nd Thursday Art Night. The Art League Gallery, 105 North Union St. Call 703-683-1780 or visit www.theartleague.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 4

Author Series with Nathan Leslie.

7-8:30 p.m. Leslie will discuss his book, *The Tail of Tommy* Twice at the Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Free. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1702.

Free Concert. 7:30 p.m. Guest violinists Jonathan Carney and Benny Kim join the National Chamber Players, a chamber ensemble made up of members of the National Symphony Orchestra, in a performance of Corelli's Christmas Concerto and Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. The concert is free and open to the public. At Pendleton Hall, Episcopal High School, 3900 W Braddock Road. Visit www.episcopalhighschool.org, or email vdp@episcopalhighschool.org, or call 703-933-4135.

Researching George Washington's Religious Convictions. 6-8 p.m. Free. Mary Thompson, research historian at Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, will discuss George Washington's religious values through research using the assembled primary documents at Mount Vernon Estate. At Morrison House located at 116 South Alfred St. Call 703-838-8000 or visit morrisonhouse.com.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 5

Author Series.

7-8:30 p.m. Free. Elizabeth Schuch will discuss her personal memoir, “More Than Bipolar: A Memoir of Acceptance and Hope,” at the Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1702.

THURSDAY/DEC. 6

A Peter White Christmas. With Peter White, Mindi Abair and special guest at the Birchmere. \$49.50. Visit www.peterwhite.com. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

Art Focus Group. 7:30-9 p.m. Clay in the Classroom: Sculpture, Sensory Exploration and Community Building. Learn about the many benefits of good clean play with mud in the classroom. Classes are \$25 each or \$200 for the 10 class series. A school or group of teachers can share the registration for the full series. At 2804 Sherwood Hall Ln. Call 703-201-1250.

Free Concert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. The 2013 Living Legends of Alexandria nominees will be introduced with a musical tribute, featuring music by the NOVA Community Chorus, the NOVA Jazz Ensemble and the NOVA Alexandria Band in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Hall, 3001 N. Beauregard St. The nominees of 2013 Living Legends of Alexandria are introduced to the community at 6:30-7:15 p.m. Free, parking in the Beauregard Parking Garage is \$6. Contact Nina Tisara at NinaT@ninatisara.com or Lisa Eckstein at leckstein@nvcc.edu.

FRIDAY/DEC. 7

Holiday on the Avenue. 6-9 p.m. The entire community comes together to light the neighborhood Christmas

tree. Even Santa attends. This joyous celebration is followed by an evening stroll down the Avenue, which is illuminated by thousands of candles, called “luminarias.” Del Ray Farmer's Market at Mount Vernon Ave. and E. Oxford Ave. Call 703-746-3301 or visit www.visitalexandriava.com.

1964 The Tribute. 7:30 p.m. 1964 The Tribute is cheered worldwide by recreating a Beatles concert performed live, with exact detailed reproduction of the songs, voices, instruments, suits, haircuts and even the iconic “Beatle Boots” made famous by the Fab Four. Now it will appear at The Birchmere Music Hall located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets are priced at \$35 available at www.ticketmaster.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 7-8

Sweeney Todd at TJ. 7 p.m. For a bloody good time, attend Stephen Sondheim's classic tale of “Sweeney Todd - the Demon Barber of Fleet Street” about a vengeful London barber and his landlady's scrumptious but mysterious meat pies as performed by the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology's student choir along with the TJ faculty, parent and alumni choirs. Tickets are \$10 at the door on performance days at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology at 6560 Braddock Road in Alexandria. Visit www.tjchoir.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 7-9

Del Ray Artisans' 17th annual

Holiday Market. Handmade work from local artists plus bake sale. Reception is on Friday, from 6 to 9 p.m. The hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday and noon-4 p.m. on Sunday. Visit TheDelRayArtisans.org/HolidayMarket.

SATURDAY/DEC. 8

Christmas Open House.

12-4 p.m. Join a Civil War-era Santa at this family-fun holiday event that explores how Christmas was observed during the Civil War. At Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Rd. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children. Call 703-746-4848 or visit www.historicalexandria.org.

Breakfast with Santa. 9 a.m. The elves will begin seating at 9 a.m. to await Santa's arrival. There will be plenty of time to sit on Santa's lap and share lists with him. A full breakfast buffet will be available. At Carlyle Club, 411 John Carlyle St., Call 703-548-8899 or visit www.thecarlyleclub.com. Admission is \$28.95 for adults; \$15.95 for kids age 4-12; free for age 3 and under.

Holiday Gifts Jewelry Workshop. 2-3 p.m. Free. Make four unique holiday gifts, stamp tags, and make your own gift boxes. Limited to 12 participants. At the Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us or call 703-746-1702.

Artisans Holiday Marketplace. 3-6 p.m. At Durant Center, 1605 Cameron St. Entrepreneurs Class 2012, Fall Semester Showcase of Graduates' Micro-Businesses Graduation Ceremony Artisans Holiday Marketplace. Complimentary homemade appetizers and art desserts. Proceeds benefit EWI and our local artists and creative entrepreneurs. Holiday selection include one-of-a-kind jewelry, scarves, designer aprons, skin and beauty products, fine art, note cards, holiday ornaments and more. Free, but RSVP required. Visit ewint.org.

Free Ice Skating Show. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The public is invited to watch figure skaters show off their moves at Mount Vernon RECenter's Holiday Ice Show, where most

experienced skaters, as well as beginners of all ages will perform together. Mount Vernon RECenter is located at 2017 Belle View Blvd. Contact Carl Kirtley, at 703-768-3224 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov.

Civil War Christmas in Camp.

noon-4 p.m. Learn how Christmas was observed during the Civil War by attending Fort Ward Museum's annual “Christmas in Camp” Open House. Suggested donation is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site is located at 4301 West Braddock Road. Call 703-746-4848, or visit www.fortward.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC.8-9

Historic Alexandria Candlelight

Tours. Tour Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House and the historic Bank of Alexandria building by candlelight. Special this year – a holiday taste of historic chocolate, co-sponsored by the Historic Division of Mars, Inc. Saturday from 6-9 p.m.; Sunday from 3 to 6 p.m. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.historicalexandria.org. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors and \$5 for children.

SUNDAY/DEC. 9

Christmas Music. 9:45 a.m. The Plymouth Haven Baptist Church Children's Choir will present their Christmas music presentation in the Fellowship Hall, 8600 Plymouth Dr. Open to the public.

Holiday Evening with Raul Malo. 7:30 p.m. \$29.50. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

Bell Ringing. 2-3 p.m. Alexandria's Browne Academy musicians will deliver their Handbells performance at the Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Refreshments will be served. Open to the Public. Call 703-746-1702 or visit www.alexandria.lib.va.us.

Concert. 4 p.m. New Dominion Chorale, conducted by Artistic Director Thomas Beveridge, will present J.S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center on the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 North Beauregard St. Tickets \$5-\$30. Tickets at the door or online. Parking is free. Call 703-442-9404 or visit www.newdominion.org.

Holiday Market – Women, Art and Shopping. 1-5 p.m., Charles Houston Recreation Center, 905 Wythe St. Free. More than 25 local, female artisans will display their wares during an afternoon of fun, art and friends. Proceeds will benefit the Alexandria Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs. This event is also a collection site for new toys and gifts for children of the clients of the Alexandria Battered Women's Shelter. Call 703-746-3123 or visit www.alexwomen.com.

THROUGH DEC. 9

Old Town Boutique District's

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

MONDAY/DEC. 10

A John Waters Christmas

‘Command Performance’ at the Birchmere. \$49.50. John will be signing copies of books purchased at the show. The Birchmere Music Hall is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

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Dancers To Perform in 'Billy Elliot,' 'Nutcracker'

Dancers from Just Dance Studio in Alexandria will make their dance debut at The Kennedy Center and Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore this month.

Natalie Edwards, 11, of Alexandria, who joined the U.S. touring production of "Billy Elliot the Musical" in September, will perform

with the cast when it stops at The Hippodrome

Theatre in Baltimore, Md. Dec. 18-30. Natalie has been studying dance for eight years under Sally Tierney, owner and director of Just Dance in the Fairfax County part of Alexandria, in the Belle View Shopping Center off Fort Hunt Road.

Other students and former stu-

dents of Tierney's, Emma Feddo, Kailey O'Farrell, Elena Pipkin and Sydney Webster, will perform in Ballet West's "Nutcracker" at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Dec. 5-9. Emma, 11, has been dancing for six years; Kailey, 13, has been dancing for nine years, including six with Tierney; Elena, 12, has been dancing for nine years; and Sydney, 10, has

been dancing for three years.

Tierney opened her school in 2003 for girls ages 3 through 12 for instruction in classical ballet, Broadway tap, Broadway jazz, Cecchetti and pointe.

She has 25 years of teaching experience, is an American Ballet Theatre certified teacher and member of the Cecchetti Council of America and Dance Masters.



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From left: Elena Pipkin, owner and director Sally Tierney, Sydney Webster, Kailey O'Farrell and Emma Feddo at the Just Dance Studio.

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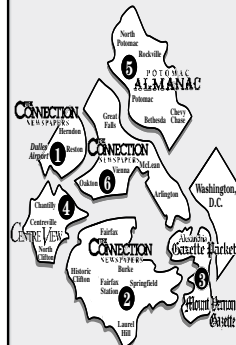
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OBITUARY
Robert D. Martini
"Bob"

Robert D. Martini "Bob", 78, of Alexandria and Arrington, died Friday, November 23, 2012 at his home in Arrington. Born June 6, 1934, he was a son of the late Thomas Martini, Sr. and Geneva Zehring Martini. Robert had been a self-employed meat broker. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Bertha M. Martini; a son, Robert Martini, II and a daughter, Lisa Martini. A graveside memorial service will be held 11 a.m. Wednesday, November 28, 2012 in Mount Comfort Cemetery by Pastor Dan Lee.

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OBITUARY
Hansel "Hank" Mundy

On November 25, 2012 in Alexandria, VA. Hank served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific during World War II and later retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He spent the rest of his career as a Construction Estimator in the Philadelphia area. In 1995 he moved to Alexandria, VA. He was preceded in death by his wife of 44 years, Patricia Ann Pietro Mundy. Hank is survived by his daughter, Alicia Mundy; and sister Jackie Mundy. A memorial service will be held on Friday, November 30, 2012 at 3 PM at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA 22302. Interment will be held at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery. Flowers and a guest register may be found at www.everlyfuneralhomes.com

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OBITUARY

Joyce Diane Helmus, 64, of Rineyville, died Monday, November 19, 2012 at Hardin Memorial Hospital. She was a native of Earle, AR. She served in the U. S. Army for eight years and retired after 30 years from Civil Service in Alexandria, VA with Human Resources Command. As a member of the Screen Actors Guild, she portrayed a Soldier in the 1981 movie "Stripes". She was preceded in death by her brother, Howard Hodo. She is survived by her husband, Mark Helmus; a daughter, Shelley L. Hermann of DE; a son, Bart Allen Helmus of VA; mother, Virginia Bowen of W. Memphis, AR; father, Jesse Hodo of Huntingdon, TN; a step-brother, Dwayne Hodo of Huntingdon, TN; a step-sister, Laura Hodo of Huntingdon, TN; and two grandchildren, Kati A. Hermann and Gavin C. Helmus. The funeral will be 10 a.m. Monday at Brown Funeral Home with Rev. Chris Thorson officiating. Burial will follow in Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff. Visitation will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may take the form of donations to Brown Cancer Center. Condolences may be expressed online at www.brownfuneral.com.

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THURSDAY/NOV. 29

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

SUNDAYS/DEC. 2, 9, 16 AND 23

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

MONDAY/DEC. 3

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 5

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

THURSDAY/DEC. 6

Business Lunch. 11:30 a.m. Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis will speak to the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce on "What the 2012 Elections Mean for Business" at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road. A Capitol Hill Insider, Davis will give an assessment on what businesses can expect with taxes, regulations, and the upcoming "fiscal cliff." For reservations, contact the chamber office at 703-360-6925 or visit MtVernon-LeeChamber.org.

THROUGH DEC. 7

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

MONDAY/DEC. 17

Sight and Hearing Screening. 6-8 p.m. The Mount Vernon Evening Lions Club will be having the Sight and Hearing Screening Van at Walt Whitman School's Family Fun Fitness night. Used eyeglasses and hearing aids will be collected at this site. Call Andrea Corsillo at 703-960-4973.

ONGOING

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

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

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We Are the World, at Garfield

Teachers discuss challenges of teaching English as a Second Language.

BY MICHELLE KAIN
THE GAZETTE

Garfield Elementary School in Springfield, like all of Fairfax County, has a population that reflects a wide range of backgrounds. With 33 languages spoken, the school's ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program has had to expand. The school has a first grade class of 60 students, 58 of whom are ESOL students ranging from levels one through four.

Jane Cofie-Raczko, who has been a teacher for the past 13 years, teaches one of three first grade classes in which all 20 of the students have English as a second language.

The majority of these students are from Hispanic or Middle Eastern backgrounds and common languages include Spanish, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese. The challenges involved with teaching these students depend on their proficiency with the English language.

"For students who speak almost no English, it can be difficult to communicate to the students that you want them to succeed and that you are there to help them. It can also be difficult to get the students to ask for help, mostly due to their lack of confidence in their speaking ability. For students with a better knowledge of the social language, it can be tough to give them a similarly strong academic language. Add the already difficult material to learning English for the first time and it can be very challenging," said Cofie-Raczko.

"The success of the students with the curriculum and their preparedness for middle and high school depends on the schooling they received in their home country as well as when they enrolled



Jane Cofie-Raczko gives her first grade class the details regarding their upcoming test.

at Garfield," said Rozi Khakpour, an ESOL teacher at Garfield Elementary.

Students who have attended Garfield from the start get the opportunity to develop oral language at an early age through programs such as Lunch and Bunch in which kindergartners with English as a second language meet twice a week to have lunch and practice this important skill.

The program, along with others, have proven to be successful as "students who have been at Garfield since kindergarten often exceed in high school and earn positions on the honor roll," Khakpour said.

"Another thing that has proven to be helpful," said Kirsten Howard, another first grade teacher, "is Garfield's social curriculum." This social curriculum, which concentrates on teaching students cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control, has given students a greater awareness outside themselves and has helped them in middle in high school as demonstrated by their willingness to take on leadership positions.



Mariana Del Cid-Quintanilla, Spanish, Parents from El Salvador



Anmul Jan, Pashtu, Born in Pakistan



Michael Opuni, Akah, Parents from Ghana (Michael born in US)



Yusuf Ouanina, Arabic, Morocco



Tracy Huynh, Vietnamese, Vietnam



Mohammed (Jafar) Abdulridna, Arabic, Iraq

PHOTOS BY MICHELLE KAIN/THE GAZETTE

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

'Hidden Curriculum'

FROM PAGE 6

of being Italian." Dalila carried that warning with her when she entered Marshall. The dire warning turned out to have no basis at her new school. "When I tell people here I'm Italian, they say, 'oh, I love Italy' and then, I'm so relieved. Yes, I am proud to say I'm Italian here."

In Italy, it was always school and studying through late evening, Dalila said. She had no social life there.

"When I came here, it was such a relief," she said. "I was so happy I finally had time for myself."

Millan Mbise, from Tanzania, was pleasantly surprised by the degree of interaction between students and teachers. Teachers are less approachable than in the U.S. Millan, whose native language is Swahili, grew up speaking English,

up their native language.

"Studies show that bilingual students do better academically."

Bloom said the school helps newly-immigrated students to transition by embracing the families as they enter the school. Relationship-building is how he refers to the partnership. "When you establish that relationship with new families from other countries, you get rid of a lot of hurdles. When you do that, the families feel valued and a part of the Freedom Hill family. We have students learning from one another simply from their exposure to each other."

The children of Freedom Hill Elementary School are so accustomed to establishing relationships within the classroom, they don't recognize barriers, Bloom said. "It's a representation of the world."

Bloom refers to the school's di-

"There's so much value in having a school where children from all over the world can come together."

— Scott Bloom, Freedom Hill principal

as well. English is compulsory in the schools, and, Millan calls it the "unofficial" language of Tanzania.

Millan is bused from Marshall daily to Falls Church High School for a class in "pharmacy technology." He learned what he wanted to do with his life while living here and attending an American school. He wants to be a pharmacist some day.

FREEDOM HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL feeds into the Marshall pyramid. Like Marshall, Freedom Hill is the world in microcosm. There are more than 42 languages spoken in the students' homes and the children of Freedom Hill represent more than 53 countries. Some Freedom Hill students are from diplomatic families, already bilingual or multilingual with English exposure. Others are new to English. The school, through its many ESOL levels, works with these students to help them adapt to English.

"Within the realm of school, the kids are held accountable to communicate in the English language," said first-year Freedom Hill principal Scott Bloom. As the kids interact with their peers, they pick up English.

"I like to think we also recognize the importance of kids having that dual-language skill," Bloom said. "We want them to learn English, but, we don't want them to give

versity as a "hidden curriculum."

"There's so much value in having a school where children from all over the world can come together," Bloom said. "You set the stage for the children to share their history, backgrounds, culture, and experiences. "There's so much power in bringing all these different cultures together that I think it's justified to call it a hidden curriculum."

"The kids don't even know they're learning from this diversity."

Marshall's roundtable students eager to discuss their new lives all said that school life is more pressured in their native countries with little opportunities within the school system to learn nonacademic things. Schools do not promote extracurricular activities as they do here.

"Students are pushed by their parents to excel academically in Malaysia," Kasthury said. "Many of these kids commit suicide. They're told, 'if you're not the best, you'll never succeed.'"

Amber Holder has found a multitude of extracurricular activities to engage in. In Panama, there was only a single option. Here, she said, she's involved with the marching band, the literary magazine and other programs. "In Panama, you have to find one place to fit in. But, here, you can fit in in many places."



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- Nov. 30 **A Christmas Marketplace**
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- Dec. 1 **Soldier's Christmas**
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SPORTS

MV Edges West Potomac

Majors beat Wolverines for first time since 2009.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Second-year Mount Vernon head boys' basketball coach John Wiley stood outside the visiting locker room at West Potomac High School on Tuesday night and said it takes three years to build a successful program.

Last season, Wiley's first with Mount Vernon after coaching at Bowie High School in Maryland, the Majors lost nearly twice as many games as they won. "I'm in my second year. This year is going to be better than last year," Wiley said. "By my third year, I want to contend with the top teams in the area."

Whether Mount Vernon once again becomes one of the top teams in Northern Virginia will be determined in time. Meanwhile, Wiley's quest for improvement took a step in the right direction.

Mount Vernon defeated West Potomac, 63-59, in both teams' season opener on Nov. 27, giving the Majors their first win against the Wolverines since 2009. West Potomac point guard Brandon Pressley buried a runner with 3.1 seconds remaining, cutting Mount Vernon's lead to 61-59, but the Majors were able to run out the clock and junior forward Shawny Lovitt put the finishing touch on the victory with a layup at the buzzer.

"It feels great," Mount Vernon senior Robert Decardi-Nelson said after the win. "Finally beat West Potomac."

Mount Vernon trailed, 20-9, at the end of the first quarter, but battled back to tie the halftime score at 28-28. West Potomac held a 44-43 lead late in the third quarter when Mount Vernon junior guard Kwadwuo Diawuo came up with a steal, drove to the basket and scored on a tough layup, giving the Majors a 45-44 lead they would not relinquish.

A bucket by senior forward Don Smith gave Mount Vernon its largest lead of the night at 53-45 with less than four minutes remaining in the fourth quarter. West Potomac pulled to within one when Caleb Williams' three-point play cut the Majors' lead to 57-56 with 1:29 remaining, but the Wolverines couldn't complete the comeback.

Decardi-Nelson, a 6-foot post player, scored nine points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Majors.

"[I] work hard in the paint," Decardi-Nelson said. "I treat it like it's my house; I just protect it."

Diawuo scored eight points and played energized defense for the Majors.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon senior Robert Decardi-Nelson (5) scored nine points and grabbed 10 rebounds on Nov. 27.

"Those are my two captains: Robert Decardi-Nelson and Kwadwuo," Wiley said. "[They have] a lot of heart, a lot of hustle [and] a lot of passion."

Bryce Washington led Mount Vernon with 13 points off the bench. The junior forward knocked down a pair of 3-pointers, the second giving the Majors a 48-44 lead early in the fourth quarter.

"It takes courage and knowing you can shoot the shot," Washington said about hitting perimeter shots in a low-scoring game. "I just have to knock it down."

Lovitt scored 10 points for Mount Vernon. Lucas and senior guard Patrick Bender each added nine. Bender knocked down a trio of 3-pointers.

Williams, a senior, led West Potomac with 17 points in his first varsity game. Pressley scored 16 points for the Wolverines and Kwame Camon added 11.

Six-foot-2 senior post Javon Trice scored 10 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Wolverines.

"I thought he played tremendous," West Potomac head coach David Houston III said about Trice. "[It was the] best I've seen him ever play."

West Potomac was without junior guard Demornay Pierson-El, who was injured. Houston III said he expects Pierson-El to return soon.

Mount Vernon will host Oakton at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 4. West Potomac will travel to face Herndon at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 30.



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SPORTS

Mount Vernon Girls' Basketball Smothers West Po in Opener

Six Majors score in double figures.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

After Tuesday's season-opener, West Potomac girls' basketball coach David Sawczuk made an effort to track down Mount Vernon head coach Courtney Coffey. Sawczuk thanked Coffey for Mount Vernon's intense effort and hoped the experience would help West Potomac down the road.

One of the teams in the Route 1 rivalry will be competing for a Northern Region championship this year. The other is looking to build on last year's two-win season. It wasn't hard to figure out which was which.

The Mount Vernon Majors defeated the West Potomac Wolverines, 82-39, on Nov. 27 at West Potomac High School. Mount Vernon, which fell one win shy of the state tournament last season, used full-court pressure early to build a commanding lead before cruising to victory. The Majors forced 40 turnovers and had had six players score in double figures.

"Most importantly, the team defense was the thing I was proud of the most," Coffey said. "They're playing good basketball right



Mount Vernon senior guard Kelly Loftus scored a game-high 17 points against West Potomac on Nov. 27.

now. Hopefully, we can continue to get better and better."

Senior guard Kelly Loftus led the Majors with 17 points. Senior guard Taylor Dunham and junior guard Chanel Shannon each had 14, and senior guard Tiffany Webster, junior forward Samantha Porter and freshman guard Erin Irving each had 10.

Shannon knocked down a trio of 3-pointers.

"Chanel Shannon was incredible tonight,"



Mount Vernon junior guard Chanel Shannon scored 14 points against West Potomac on Nov. 27.

Coffey said. "She's the X-factor for us. When she has it going, this basketball team has a whole extra dimension that makes us that much better."

Mount Vernon built a 29-5 first-quarter lead by forcing 16 turnovers in the opening eight minutes. West Potomac struggled against the Majors' full-court press and didn't reach double digits on the scoreboard until a free throw by Tayla Dawson made the score 32-10 with 6:04 remaining in the second quarter. The Majors held a 50-14 halftime advantage and led by as many as 53 points in the second half, when a free

throw by junior forward Erica Irving made the score 79-26.

Mount Vernon finished with 30 steals, including 10 by Loftus.

"It gives us confidence," Loftus said of the team's pressure defense. "Turnover after turnover, we get layups off of it."

Irving grabbed 10 rebounds for Mount Vernon and Porter finished with six.

West Potomac sophomore forward Maddy Zdebski scored a team-high 13 points and grabbed seven rebounds. Senior forward Blossom Pierre scored 11 points and senior guard Asia Mills-Burch added eight.

Sawczuk returns for his second season as head coach. Last year, he was the Wolverines' third head coach in as many seasons.

Sawczuk is trying to institute "a lot more accountability and responsibility for [the players]," he said. "Until now, they've never been held accountable because it's been a different coach every year. So now it's accountable for being on time, working every day, showing up and doing what you're asked to do — the basics. But also for us, it's accelerating the pace of the game."

Mount Vernon will travel to face Oakton at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 4. Oakton was the only team to defeat the Majors last season, beating Mount Vernon twice.

West Potomac will face Falls Church in a tournament at Stuart at 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 29.

PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE GAZETTE

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Nancy Dunning was my friend. Thirty years ago, she envisioned Del Ray as a community full of active citizens, thriving businesses and excellent schools. Not only did she work tirelessly over the years to help create this community, but she inspired many of us to join in her effort. For those of you who did not know Nancy, read this beautiful tribute written by her daughter, Elizabeth. For those of you who did, join me in remembering her contribution to Del Ray and Alexandria.

—Jack Taylor, Alexandria Toyota



*Nancy
Dunning*

The Best Mom In The World

A Eulogy for Nancy Dunning written and read by her daughter, Liz

A lot of people, I think, have moments when they imagine that they have the best mom in the world. I was lucky enough, however, to be absolutely certain – for a long time – that I actually did. My mom was my best friend. We talked just about every day. And, anyone who knows her, knows a couple of things about my mom, one of which was that she was more or less always right. When I was a teenager, that pissed me off sometimes. I mean, seriously, when you're sixteen and supposed to be going through that phase where you know everything, it puts a crimp in it to live with someone who actually does.

But, another thing that you must know if you met my mom was that she wasn't smug about her omnipotence. Like any good superhero, my mom used her powers for good, not evil. To make other people – not just herself – feel good and be better. She taught my brother and I how to do that, too. I hope we were paying attention. I'm pretty sure we were.

My mom also taught me just about everything I know about optimism and joy. Those were things at which she excelled. It started, when my brother and I were kids, with crazy names for things. I bet that you thought that playground on Old Dominion was just the Beverly Hills Co-op. Nope. It was the Super Deluxe Playground. And, back when the Mt. Vernon school playground was that log-thing which is probably now illegal in most states, a trip to the Super Deluxe Playground was an adventure indeed. Every day was an adventure. Whether we were sneaking food into movies when I was younger, or she was singing hilariously bad opera while she made breakfast, my mom made clear that every day had something good in it, something to be happy about. Even if it was just that they'd just started selling Christmas Blend at Starbucks. These small events and details weren't small – they were big. They warranted a phone call. So did a great song on the radio. So did anything that made her smile. These were great calls to receive. Random, sometimes, but great. I mean, who doesn't want to know that she busted the person next to her at the last traffic light picking their nose in the car? Who didn't want to hear her joyful voice, her laugh? She loved to laugh and there isn't a better feeling than making my mom laugh. Because, if you really got her going – and there are lots of ways to do this – she'd just get to that level where she's crying because she's laughing so hard. That's when you know that you've really won. Bonus points are given if you do that while one of you is driving.

Her gift with joy, with optimism, gave her part of her gift with people. She had, what I jokingly called, her secret decoder ring. That was our short-hand – and there is always short-hand – for her ability to listen, really listen, to people when they talk. And, more than that, to understand what they're really saying and, who they are and where they're coming from. That's why she wasn't just people's neighbor, or real estate agent, or neighborhood activist, or columnist, she was their friend. It didn't take much to be my mom's friend. She didn't make you jump a lot of hoops. Or wear overalls and a baseball cap with the same aplomb that she did. (And thank god, because really? Who can pull off overalls and a baseball cap like my Mom? Nobody.) She wanted to learn more about people and know more people. So she lit people up when she talked to them.

And, as a consequence, people mostly did what my Mom wanted them to do, or what she asked of them. Because her ideas were smart. They were filled with the energy and the joy that she carried with her all the time. And they reflected an understanding and awareness of the thoughts and values of everyone involved. So, if you did what she wanted you to do, you were also doing the right thing.

But, mostly, she wasn't a superhero – complete with secret decoder ring – to me. She was my Mom. She was better at that than anything else. She told my brother, and me, and my Dad that she loved us at the end of every phone conversation. That's what our family does. And so, individually, knowing that the last words we said to each other were, "I love you," helps.

There wasn't a day of my life – and there won't be one – when I wasn't sure that my mom loved me, that she believed in me, that she was proud of me. And with or without a secret decoder ring, a cape, or a phone booth to change in, it truly takes a superhero to, in this crazy messed up world, love people so well and so much. So perfectly. It takes all that to be what I have – the best mom in the world.

On December 5, 2003, Nancy Dunning was murdered in her home in Alexandria, VA. Nancy's family, friends and co-workers have not forgotten her and celebrate her life daily. We will not give up and believe that the person who murdered her will be caught and prosecuted.

A \$100,000 reward available for the individual who comes forth with information leading to the arrest and conviction of this murderer.

If you have any information, we urge you to please call the Alexandria Criminal Investigations Section at 703-838-4711 or e-mail them at <http://alexandriava.gov/dunning>.