

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 30, 2014

## WINTER FUN



PHOTO BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE GAZETTE  
Ariana smiles at her mother as she puts her figure skating lessons to use during the open skating session at the Mount Vernon RECenter.

MORE WINTER FUN, PAGE 3.

## Lack of Funds for School Renovations

Aging schools collide with increasing student enrollments.

BY LISA SPINELLI  
THE GAZETTE

While the 2015 to 2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) passed at the Fairfax County Public School Board meeting on Thursday, Jan. 3, many board members expressed concerns with the program.

“Our funding is inadequate and has been inadequate for many years,” said Mount Vernon district school board member Dan Storck about the school’s capital improve-

ment budget — which has an annual cap of \$155 million by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. “This program takes us to the next step, but we still have a long way to go.”

Fairfax County public schools are bursting at the seams. An influx of 20,000 school-aged children enrolled in the system within the last eight years and there is no end in sight to the growth rate. With many buildings reaching 50-plus years old and enrollment projected at 184,500

“Our funding is inadequate and has been inadequate for many years.”

— Dan Storck, Mount Vernon district school board member

SEE BUDGET  
FRAY.  
PAGE 22

## Honoring Beautification Efforts Along Route 1

SFDC presents businesses with Mary Thonen Awards.

BY JANELLE GERMANOS  
THE GAZETTE

Steve Mehr, owner of the Mount Vernon Sunoco on Richmond Highway and a member of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, said it isn’t too difficult to keep his business’s landscape looking nice.

“I just put a little extra time into it,” said Mehr, who has owned the



JANELLE GERMANOS/THE GAZETTE  
Steve Mehr, owner of Sunoco on Richmond Highway, was a gold level recipient of the Mary Thonen Award for his business’s beautification efforts.

SEE SALES TAX, PAGE 5

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Exquisite 2-bedroom, 2.5-bath condo at Liberty Row just one light to DC! 1,480 sq.ft. with grand entry hall; two-sided fireplace separates living and dining rooms; gourmet kitchen; large balcony. Walk to Metro, shops, and restaurants. 600 Second St #304. MLS# AX8186509

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416 South Fairfax Street is an enchanting home located on a picturesque street in historic Old Town. Two bedrooms and a spacious, yet cozy den with wood-burning fireplace. Truly a unique Old Town gem! 416 S Fairfax Street. MLS# AX8228380

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Luxury townhome minutes to DC or Crystal City via the GW Parkway! Four levels, 3.5 baths, rooftop terrace, and 2-car garage. Gourmet kitchen with stainless appliances, granite counters, breakfast nook. Gas fireplace in large living room and gleaming hardwoods. MLS# AX8223906

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# WINTER FUN

MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN  
703-778-9415 OR GAZETTE@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Winter Fun at the Mount Vernon RECenter

Get in shape, learn to skate this winter.

**A**lthough it's open all year round, the Mount Vernon RECenter is perfect for the winter months. With a 25-meter heated indoor pool, a spa, and a large ice arena, the RECenter is a winter paradise for those looking for some recreation and a refuge from any future Polar Vortexes.

Membership passes are also discounted until Feb. 14, with a 15 percent discount on four- and 12-month passes.

The RECenter's ice arena, the only one in the area that is publicly owned, includes public sessions, as well as Adults Only, Rock

### Hours of Operation

Facility: Monday-Thursday, 6 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Friday, 6 a.m.-7 p.m.  
Saturday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.  
Sunday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

sions, and Stick & Puck and Pick-up Hockey, specialized sessions for adults, skating enthusiasts and hockey players.

Beginners of all ages and abilities can take a learn-to-skate class, as well as ice-hockey classes.

A Mount Vernon RECenter membership pass includes access to the center's 1,500



**Instructor Margo Ritter (right) explains the next activity as the students of Snowplow Sam 2 and fellow instructor, Julia Suarez (left) listen. The children are part of one of the many ice skating classes taught at the Mount Vernon RECenter.**

square foot fitness center, as well as the Drop-In Group Fitness Program, which includes group Zumba, yoga, and Pilates.

"I've always loved ice-skating and just hanging out at the RECenter," said Daniel

Singer, who used to live in the Mount Vernon area but has recently moved to Springfield. "I may try one of the classes as a New Year's Resolution."

— JANELLE GERMANOS

### VIEWPOINTS

What is your idea of winter fun?

**Ben Reynolds**  
College student  
"Winter fun is fun in the snow."



**Alex Pino**  
Worker at Staples  
"Snow slushies, obviously."

### OUT AND ABOUT IN WINTER

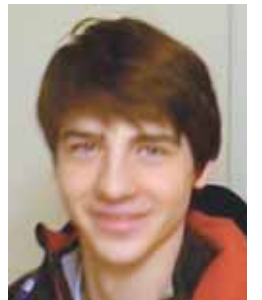


**Youth Services Assistant Jill Burgard reads to a group of children at the Martha Washington library branch. Preschool Storytime is one of many regularly scheduled library activities.**



**PJ Dunn (center, green coat), a part-time naturalist at Huntley Meadows, led the program "Drummers and Drillers" The group went into the woods to spot woodpeckers. Huntley Meadows offers classes, bird watching walks, and tours, year round.**

**Drew Staples**  
College student  
"Getting school canceled is awesome."



**James Lewis**  
College student  
"Sledding, eating snow outside my friend's house."



**The active bird feeders at Huntley Meadows make a great place for birdwatching, during the winter months.**



**Michele Krause prepares to throw a ball for Rudder, one of the many dogs playing at the Westgrove Dog Park.**



**Dogs can have fun, year round, at the Westgrove Dog Park.**



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**Alexandria \$249,850**  
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**Belle Haven \$1,799,000**  
**2106 Wakefield Court.** Fabulous 6 bedroom, 3.5+5 bath center hall Colonial with 5 fireplaces, 4 finished levels and attached 2-car garage. Ideal for entertaining with elegant foyer, exquisite mouldings & architectural details throughout. Amazing Chef's kitchen with breakfast room & adjoining family room. Spacious Owner's Suite with New luxurious bath. Walk-out lower level recreation room & game room. Lovely yard with deck & patio. *Christine Garner 703-587-4855*



**Alexandria \$864,900**  
**1663 Hunting Creek Drive.** Fantastic town house in Old Town Greens features 4 bedrooms/4.5 Baths on 4 spacious levels. Convenient to D.C. & Old Town. Pool, Tennis Courts. Stroll to shops, restaurants & Braddock Rd METRO. *Gretchen Wilkinson 703-597-8089*

**OPEN SUNDAY 1-4**



**Arlington \$238,650**  
**5300 Columbia Pike #303.** Spac. Min to D.C., Shirl, Max use Lv Spc. Lrg Balc. SGD's fr LR & BR. Hrdwds. HVAC (2006), new wall-to-wall MSTR BR. New Granite Cntrps, SS sink. HUGE WIC. Loads of storage. Marble foyer. Eat-in Kit. W/D. Freshly painted. Xtra strge avl. Bldg amen incld GARAGE PARKNG. Fitness Cntr & pool. Stps to Metro bus serv. Warr included. *Sandy McConville 703-402-1567*

**OPEN SUNDAY 1-4**



**Old Town \$2,100 per month**  
**105 N. Alfred Street #3.** Urban Flat located in the historic St. George Gallery just steps from shops & restaurants on King Street. Tall ceilings and windows, living/dining room, kitchen with pantry and spacious bedroom with full bath. ALL UTILITES AND 1 PARKING SPACE INCLUDED. Blocks to King St. METRO. *Christine Garner 703-587-4855*

**RENTAL**



**Alexandria \$750,000**  
**8801 Black Alder Dr.** Located Next to Mount Vernon Golf Course on non-thru street/Mins. To Mount Vernon, Ft Belvoir. Full Front Porch/Private Pool/2 Level Deck/Sprinkler System/Whole House Generator/Freshly Painted/New roof w/vent & "clog free gutters/New HVAC sys/Updated Kitchen/3 updated baths/Master Sitting Room can convert to 4th BR/Laundry on BR Level/See List at Home w/complete List of Upgrades and Conveyance. *Dave Ingram 703 380-9264•Debbie Ingram 703 380-8966*



**Alexandria \$799,000**  
**3207 Old Dominion Blvd.** Thoughtfully updated, beautiful home. Handsome expanded kitchen. Window-wrapped family room. New Baths. Spacious patio. Lovely azalea gardens. Plus Garage. Don't miss it! *Sue Feintheil 703-819-1964*



**Alexandria \$639,900**  
**130 Union St N.** Privacy & quiet in the heart of Old Town. End town house w/private Xtra-large terrace - meticulously landscaped. Private center hall entrance, gleaming hardwood flrs, cozy wood-burning FP w/ antique mantel. Soaring ceilings in dining rm w/tons of light. Relaxing owner's suite & dramatic loft w/vaulted ceiling or another master suite. Easy garage parking - best spot. One block to River or King St. *Julie Hall 703-786-3634*



**Alexandria \$725,000**  
**2603 Terrett Ave.** 3 Bed/1.5 Bath Spacious Detached Bungalow Boasts Hardwood Floors, Kitchen With Stainless Steel Appliances, Formal Dining Room, Finished Lower Level, Slate Patio & Fully Fenced Back Yard with Putting Green! Paved Driveway and Detached Garage For Convenient Off-Street Parking. *Bobi Bomar 703-927-2213*



**Old Town \$925,000**  
**718 Washington Street.** Rare freestanding 2-level building in booming North Old Town. Well-situated for easy walk to Old Town shops, River, 6 blocks to Metro, 5 mins. to Reagan Nat'l, 10 mins. to N.W. and Capitol Hill. Exceptional off-street parking of 8-10 spaces. Uniquely works for professional office, retail, RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL or combination. *Scott Elkins 703-725-8901•Rick Lane 703-751-8154*



**South of Old Town \$3,500/month**  
**8403 Morey Lane.** Tastefully renovated brick Fort Hunt home. Gourmet kitchen with breakfast bar. 4 bedrooms, 2 updated baths. Cozy living room fireplace, wood floors. Closet organizers/abundant storage. With warmer weather, enjoy large flat back yard with deck and slate patio. Near G.W. Parkway/bike path. Rent includes grass/leaf removal. *Greg & Joni Koons 703-209-7678*

**RENTAL LISTING**



**New Alexandria \$2850 per month**  
**6407 E. Fourteenth Street.** Charming 2 bedroom, 2 bath Cape Cod facing "The Meadow". Ideally located just blocks from shopping & restaurants in Belle View Shopping Center, the riverfront bike/jogging trail. Living room with fireplace, dining room opens to gourmet kitchen with granite breakfast bar. Updated main level full bath and multipurpose room. Upper level with 2 bedrooms and full bath. Fenced yard with patio, garage & driveway. Minutes to Old Town & D.C. *Christine Garner 703-587-4855*

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# NEWS

**Willy Williams of Boston Market, SFDC President Walter Clarke, SFDC Executive Director Edythe Kelleher, and Yaw Opoku of Mount Vernon Square Apartments at the Mary Thonen Awards. Boston Market and Mount Vernon Square Apartments were silver level recipients for the Mary Thonen Awards, which celebrates beautification on Richmond Highway.**



PHOTO BY JANELLE GERMANOS/THE GAZETTE

## Celebrating Beautification along Route 1

FROM PAGE 1

business for 28 years. "It takes minimal effort."

Mehr is among several other business owners along Richmond Highway who were honored for their beautification efforts at the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation Open House and Mary Thonen Awards. Sunoco was awarded a Gold Level Award, the highest possible category.

According to Edythe Kelleher, executive director of SFDC, a committee was sent out in the middle of summer to judge business along Richmond Highway. After comparing notes, the Community Appearance, Planning, and Transportation Committee decided the award level for the nominated businesses.

Vicki McLeod, treasurer of the Lee District Association of Civic Organizations, knew Mary Thonen very well and said the two were very close friends. McLeod used to drive Thonen to the civic association meetings, and said Thonen was the one to turn to if you wanted to know something.

"I know she would love these beautification efforts," McLeod said. "She was very active in Lee District."

Thonen was a civic activist who sat on the planning commission for Lee District. According to McLeod, Thonen started recognizing businesses along Richmond Highway for their beautification efforts.

"These businesses really add to the beautification of Route 1," McLeod said.

Sunoco, Mount Vernon Plaza and Red Roof Inn were recipients of the gold award. Silver awards went to Cityside Huntington Metro, Boston Market, Mount Vernon Square Apartments, and Taco Bell.

Bronze level recipients included Traveler's Motel, Huntington Gateway Luxury Apartments, Montebello, Beacon of Groveton, Groveton Baptist Church, Cherry Arms Apartments, The Village of Gum Springs, Cooper Center, Jiffy Lube and Mount Zephyr Community. Gum Springs Glen received an honorable mention.

### Supervisor Gerry Hyland

invites you to attend his

### 27th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting

Saturday, February 1, 2014

7:45 AM-1:00 PM

Mount Vernon High School "Little Theatre"

8515 Old Mount Vernon Road

- 7:45 - 9:15 **Coffee, Doughnuts and Exhibits**
- 9:15 - 9:45 **Welcome, Introductions & Presentations**
- 9:45 - 10:00 **County Priorities**  
Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
- 10:00 - 10:15 **Fairfax County Issues and Budget**  
Ed Long, Fairfax County Executive
- 10:15 - 10:30 **Fort Belvoir Update**  
Colonel Gregory Gadson, Garrison Commander, Fort Belvoir
- 10:30 - 10:50 **Q/A Session**
- 10:50 - 11:15 **Mount Vernon School Current Issues and Challenges**  
Dr. Karen Garza, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools  
Dan Storck, School Board Representative, Mount Vernon District
- 11:15 - 11:30 **Q/A Session**
- 11:30 - 12:30 **Virtual Bus Tour**  
Gerry Hyland, Supervisor, Mount Vernon District
- 12:30 - 1:00 **Final Question and Answer Session & Conclusion**

Gerald W. "Gerry" Hyland  
Board of Supervisors, Mount Vernon District  
2511 Parkers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22306-3273

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**Alex./Riverwood \$744,900**

**3713 Riverwood Road**

Fabulous 5 BR, 3.5 BA Colonial in prestigious river front community of Riverwood. 3 finished levels, updated & expanded kitchen w/plenty of storage - large sun room addition with wrap-around deck overlooking a beautiful, fenced bkyd. 425 SF of storage below sun room - remodeled baths - finished walk-out lower level w/2 BRs, rec room, den and full bath. 5 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 15 mins to Old Town, Alex, 25/30 mins to Pentagon/D.C.



**Alexandria City**  
**Cameron Station \$724,900**  
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Cameron Station's finest offering! Beautiful 4 level brick townhome, end unit, with 2 car garage. Gorgeous upgrades throughout and meticulously maintained. Spacious, open floor-plan, gourmet kitchen with granite and SS, high ceilings, hardwood floors, beautiful bathrooms, trex decking, dual zone HVAC, etc. It's a 10! Fabulous location inside the beltway, close to Old Town, Pentagon, National Airport, and D.C. Community shuttle to nearby metro.



**Alex./Mt. Zephyr \$519,900**  
**8529 Richmond Ave**

Large beautifully updated 4BR, 2.5 BA Split w/large spacious 2 car garage. Updated kit w/cherry cabinets & corian counters-2.5 updated baths w/12" ceramic tile floors & newer vanities & mirrors. Replacement double pane windows throughout plus lovely

screened porch overlooking large landscaped backyard with beautiful privacy fence. 5 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 15 to Old Town, 25 mins to Ntl Airport- Short Sale-In great condition, Super Buy.



**Alex./Riverside Estates \$609,900**

**8310 Cherry Valley Lane**

Large spectacular 4BR/3BA Split w/2 car garage and 3100 sq ft. with a 640 sq ft addition adds an expanded MBR/MBA suite. Beautifully updated kitchen & baths. Updated HVAC system, hot water heater and replacement windows. Professional

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**Alex./HollinHall Village**  
**\$419,900**

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Beautiful home, loaded w/charm, on a quiet cul-de-sac. Hwd floors, new furnace and newer windows. Side addition adds separate Din Rm or office. Adorable kitchen w/granite & new appliances. Sun Rm/Fam Rm in back w/vaulted ceiling, skylights & cozy breakfast nook. Lovely fenced bkyd w/brick patio & shed. Local shops and restaurants. Walk to pool. WAYNEWOOD ELEM! 8 mins to Old Town, 12 mins to Ntl Airport (N), or Ft. Belvoir (S)- 20 mins to Pentagon/D.C.



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**WELLINGTON** \$3,295,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/AX7731151](http://ttrsir.com/id/AX7731151)  
This elegant waterfront residence offers fabulous water views, gracious formal rooms, the finest finishes, a home gym, dock with 2 boat slips and lift, and a 2-car garage.  
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**WELLINGTON** \$2,950,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/FX8249143](http://ttrsir.com/id/FX8249143)  
This home reminiscent of a French Country Chateau offers stunning views of the Potomac River and over 8,500 sf of elegant living space on .61 acres of landscaped grounds.  
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**BRITT PATTERSON** +1 703 517 0630



**OLD TOWN** \$1,495,000  
This historic renovated home offers a blend of modern and traditional design, 3 BRs, 3 BAs, top-of-the-line kitchen, spacious LL, dramatic master suite, and off-street parking.  
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**MAXWELL RABIN** +1 202 669 7406



**OLD TOWN** \$3,700,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/AX7731151](http://ttrsir.com/id/AX7731151)  
One of Old Town's most preeminent residences, this circa 1790 restored and updated gem on 1/2 acre features a pool and detached carriage house.  
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Exemplifying the heritage of beautiful Virginia architecture, yet embracing today's design elements, this home offers 5 bedrooms, pool and cabana on 1.3 acres, and is only minutes from Old Town.  
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**TAYLOR RUN** \$2,600,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/21064841](http://ttrsir.com/id/21064841)  
Exclusive home and guest house on 1-acre lot, recently renovated and offers a gourmet kitchen, mahogany library, formal/informal spaces, screened wrap-around porch, pool, and 3-car garage.  
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**PLYMOUTH HAVEN** \$1,295,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/FX8223028](http://ttrsir.com/id/FX8223028)  
This handsome Colonial is sited in the heart of Plymouth Haven offering 6 BRs, 6.5 BAs, 2-car garage, professional chef's kitchen, main level master and separate apartment.  
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**BRITT PATTERSON** +1 703 517 0630



**JEFFERSON PARK** \$1,085,000 | [ttrsir.com/id/AX8258899](http://ttrsir.com/id/AX8258899)  
Renovated Colonial with impeccable attention to detail. Features 5 BRs, 3.5 BAs, gorgeous kitchen, flagstone entry and outside entertainment area complete with fire pit and flat screen.  
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## PEOPLE

# Her Harp Provides Musical Therapy

## Debbie Doyle eases stress at Mount Vernon Hospital.

BY GERALD A. FILL  
THE GAZETTE

**D**eborah Mary Doyle has been playing the harp for patients and staff of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital for the past three years. "The effect of harp music on me when I was a patient gave me a feeling of serenity and well-being. It was a healing and soothing sound; I vowed to one day learn how to play the harp for others so that they too would have the experience of serenity and peace which the harp gave to me," she said.

"My musical ministry is a dream come true, that after years of teaching and performing as a musician in churches and schools, I have this exceptional opportunity to serve the patients and staff at Mount Vernon Hospital."

Doyle is part of Mount Vernon Hospital's Department of Chaplain Services, which is managed by the Rev. C. Phillip Bush. "Debbie brings to her harp playing a genuine love for the patients and families. And

if the staff on a unit is having a stressful day, I know that a visit from Debbie will smooth the waters," Bush said.

Doyle gives credit for her presence playing the harp at the hospital to Acting Hospital Administrator and current Medical Director Dr. Donald Brideau.

In March, 2011 Brideau invited her to come to the hospital as part of his effort to improve patient experience and relieve stress on the staff. He recognized the power of music to, as one hospital staffer said, "change everything."

Doyle is by profession a music teacher, currently employed by the Nativity school and Nativity Church in Burke as a music director. She also plays the piano and guitar.

"I enjoy spending time with the patients and staff I meet in the hospital, listening to their stories, and bringing them a touch of comfort and peace through my harp music ministry," Doyle said.

**Debbie Doyle provides musical therapy at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.**

PHOTO  
CONTRIBUTED



## BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon.

### JUDGES NEEDED

**Science Fair.** The Mount Vernon Science Fair will be held Thursday, Feb. 6 and judges are needed. Judging is easy. The fair will be held after school in the library and cafeteria. A two-judge team will listen to student presentations about their projects and evaluate their work. From there, the judges will convene to pick 1st, 2nd, 3rd place and Honorable Mention winners. The time commitment for judging is from 2:30-4 p.m. and refreshments will be served. If interested, e-mail Katrina Tran [ketrans@fcps.edu](mailto:ketrans@fcps.edu) or Cameron Mathison at [ccmathison@fcps.edu](mailto:ccmathison@fcps.edu).

### FRIDAY/JAN. 31

**Nomination Deadline.** Nominations for 2013 Fairfax County Citizen of the Year are being accepted. Visit [www.fairfaxfederation.org/COY/COYApplication.html](http://www.fairfaxfederation.org/COY/COYApplication.html) to send in a nomination.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 1

**Town Hall Meeting.** 10 a.m.-noon at Kingstowne Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway. State senators Toddy Puller, George Barker, Adam Ebbin and Del. Mark Sickles, along with Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, will host their annual town hall to update constituents on the 2014 General Assembly Session and their legislative agendas. Free.

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 12

**Public Open House.** 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Indigo Landing on Daingerfield Island, One Marina Drive. See the draft plan/environmental impact statement for restoration of Dyke Marsh. Visit [parkplanning.nps.gov/dykemarshdeis](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dykemarshdeis) for more.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 13

**After Hours Networking.** 5:30-7 p.m. at Hampton Inn, 8837 Richmond Highway. Hosted by Mount Vernon Rotary Club. Free to members and their guests. \$10/pay at the door. Visit [www.mtvernon-leechamber.org](http://www.mtvernon-leechamber.org) for more.

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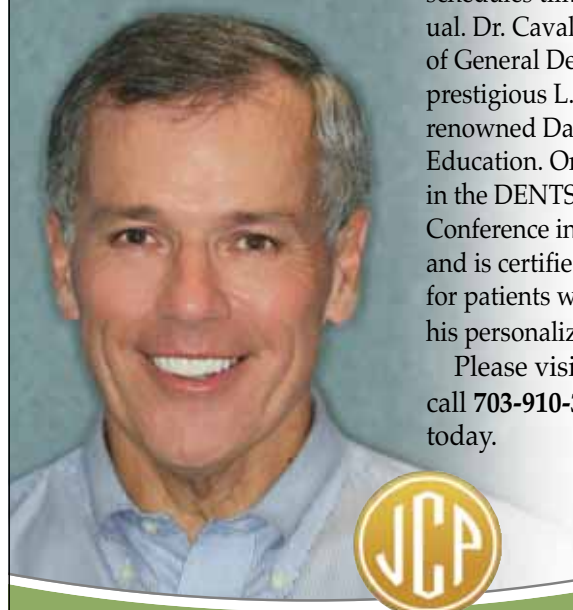
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# A Drive To Succeed

BY JANELLE GERMANOS  
THE GAZETTE

**M**ajor General Marcia Anderson of the Army Reserve at Fort Belvoir is the Army's highest-ranking African-American female. She spends much of her time mentoring others, and is continuing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy by promoting inclusion and diversity in the Army Reserve.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**Major General Marcia Anderson**

**Q: Growing up, who was your role model, and where did your work ethic come from?**

A: Both my parents, and my grandparents. My dad served in the Korea War, and was in the Air Force at the time, which didn't have a lot of opportunities for African-Americans at the time, but he persevered. My mom was a very strong person in my family, and although she had to defer her dreams of going to college, she always made it very clear that her expectations for me and my brother were for us to excel. It was very clear they had high hopes and expectations for us.

**Q: Your mother helped to integrate Catholic schools in St. Louis, Mo. What did you learn from that**

experience?

A: My mom was one of the first African-American young women to integrate the Catholic high schools in St. Louis. It just so happens that she was a freshman or a sophomore and a person who ended up being one of my teachers in eighth grade had been a senior when my mother was at the school. She remembered her and told me things about my mom that I didn't know, including the fact that my mom played on the intramural basketball team. You never think about your parents being athletic. She was a pretty outgoing person. Beyond her telling me the story that she helped integrate the schools, the teacher kind of rounded her out for me as a person and that she had contributed to the community in a lot of ways.

**Q: Was it challenging serving in the Army Reserves as an African-American woman?**

A: It was more me putting hard requirements on myself. I really didn't feel from Day One that anyone was setting barriers

## Highest-ranking African-American female Army officer reflects on achievements.

for me. For example, there was this opportunity to go to Parachute Training School, and I thought, that's a challenge that I want to set for myself. It didn't even occur to me that there weren't a lot of women until I got there. Then it was simply more about me overcoming my own fears about heights and some of the training I had to. Truly, it didn't feel that anybody was setting up barriers.

**Q: Did you feel overwhelmed when you became the highest-ranking African-American female Army officer?**

A: When I was notified that I would be promoted, it was a shock to me because I never thought I would ever reach that particular level. As I thought about it, I saw myself as kind of continuing the legacy of people like the Montford Marines, the Tuskegee Airmen, the African American women who served as nurses during World War II and have almost been forgotten by history. I was simply carrying on their legacy, and it was humbling. It also filled me with a lot of pride that we were one step closer to continuing to demonstrate that not only can we do this job, we can do it well, and in some cases better than a lot of other people. I also wanted to make sure I used this time that's been given to me to try to

inspire and mentor as many people as I possibly can. I spend a lot of time trying to work with young officers and sergeants and encourage them to reach for the stars.

**Q: How has Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy inspired you in your role today?**

A: I am 56 years old, so I actually remember a lot about Dr. King and the things that he did. I remember the day we got the news that he was assassinated. That is just one of those moments in history that just stays with you. I still feel that it is incumbent on me to try to realize his dream in ways that maybe he even hadn't envisioned. His vision at the time was focused on segregation. As we move forward now, we are looking at diversity and inclusion. In the Army Reserve, there are over 200,000 citizen soldiers. Over 22 percent of those in the Army Reserve are African-American. I'm sure Dr. King never thought about that when he was marching and trying to work towards the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act, so I think it is incumbent on me, and all of us, to try to take his vision even further, talking about inclusion. I think we've truly arrived when we include people all across the spectrum, multi-cultural, multi-gender, and make sure all of those perspectives help us make our organization more successful.

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10:30 am; 12:00 Noon; 2:00 pm (en Español); 6:30 pm

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# OPINION

## For Nonpartisan Redistricting

Virginia is a purple state, gerrymandered to bleed red.

Consider that in statewide elections, Virginia voters have chosen Democrats in the last two presidential elections, for U.S. Senate, for Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General.

Almost none of these elections was by a wide margin, but it's clear that Virginia is a purple state leaning blue.

Here are the actual numbers:

**2012**  
McAuliffe (D) 1,069,789; Cuccinelli (R) 1,013,389  
Northam (D) 1,213,155; Jackson (R) 980,257  
Herring (D) 1,103,777; Obenshain (R) 1,103,612

**2012**

Obama (D) 1,971,820; Romney (R) 1,822,522  
Kaine (D) 2,010,067; Allen (R) 1,785,542

It's reasonable to assume that a state so evenly divided would be about evenly divided in political representation.

How is possible then that Virginia House of Delegates consists of 67 Republicans and 33 Democrats?

Why is it that Virginia's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives consists of 11 Republicans and three Democrats?

The split in the Virginia Senate makes sense, a 20-20 split with a Republican Lieutenant Governor breaking tie votes the last four years and a Democratic Lieutenant Governor poised to break ties in the coming four years (pending this week's recount in the special election in District 6 to replace Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam).

Virginia's 11 Congressional districts should

be split about evenly. You could understand a split five Dems and six Republicans; or five Republicans and six Democrats. A four and seven split would smack of some unusual circumstance. But three and eight?

The answer is gerrymandering.

Both political parties have been guilty of this when in power, although new technology and better data have made the process more egregious, the effects more damaging.

Political parties should not control the drawing of political districts. Gerrymandering thwarts the will of the electorate. It is especially damaging in a Dillon rule state, like Virginia, where localities have only the power explicitly granted to them by the General Assembly,

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

### EDITORIAL

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Bonuses for All County Employees?

To the Editor:

I sent the following letter to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors strongly objecting to the recent use of taxpayer, surplus funds paid to all (eligible) Fairfax County employees (merit and exempt) as bonuses of \$850 and \$500.

It is not appropriate for the county to award all Fairfax County employees bonuses during such a harsh economy when so many taxpayers, including myself, are struggling and having a hard time making ends meet. According to the Board of Supervisors' minutes (summary reports) of the July, September, and October 2013 meetings of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, discussions and motions were made to reallocate surplus taxpayer funds and provide bonuses to Fairfax County employees (eligible) across-the-board (merit and exempt).

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously and the motion passed. Approximately \$10.2 million was paid to about 12,000 regular, eligible, merit employees (\$850 each bonus). Approximately another \$300,000 was paid and given to approximately 870 exempt, eligible employees bonuses of \$500 each. The Mount Vernon District supervisor, according to the minutes/summary report, made motions to increase the bonuses to \$1,000 and \$1,250, but the motions failed; a meal's tax is also desired by him.

Bonuses should not be treated lightly as it appears the Board of Supervisors has done. Their recent action sets a bad precedent and could have future adverse affects. For example, it reduces the incentive for employees to excel and continue to do outstanding work to receive a cash bonus. Some mediocre employees whose work may be marginal may lack incentive to do better since bonus money will be forthcoming anyway. Such across-the-board bonuses promotes mediocrity and not good

policy. I do not buy the argument that Fairfax County employees haven't had regular pay increases and deserve the bonuses; I know many in Fairfax County who have not had a pay increase in many years but are happy to still have a job and to have the doors of their business remain open.

The Board of Supervisors has done an injustice to the many hardworking, struggling taxpayers by approving and paying out the bonuses. The board could have put the surplus funds in a reserve fund to pay for future expenses. The board's usual practice of raising real-estate taxes year after year on over-taxed homeowners and taxpayers is oppressive. According to Fairfax County budget documents, the county has more than 100 different taxes and fees that include a sick tax to use ambulances and a going-out-of business tax. Research reveals that the average Fairfax County merit employee earns about \$68,000 a year which is much more than many Fairfax County residents earn. County residents should call their supervisors to express their views about using tax dollar surplus funds to give bonuses instead of returning the money to the taxpayers or using it for future, essential needs and not raise taxes. You can get your supervisor's name and number by calling: 703-324-3151.

**Miriam Sullivan**  
Mount Vernon

## Where's School System's Focus?

To the Editor:

Re: "Into the Budget Fray," Mount Vernon Gazette, Jan. 23.

So the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman, "... shall from time to time give to ..." the citizens of Fairfax County, "... information of the State of the ..." County? In my 14 years here I had not yet come across this. It was a pleasant, anodyne read, though it reflected the near-universal tendency in government communications to effect a mildly self-important tone, use many words where few - or none - would suffice, and to trot out tired

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 18

## Mount Vernon Gazette

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Rita McCauley-Redmond 703-518-6164



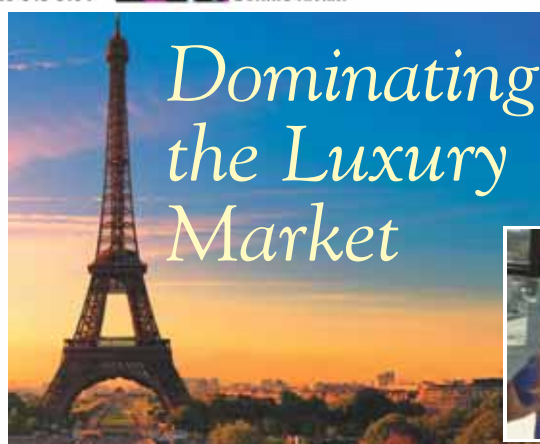
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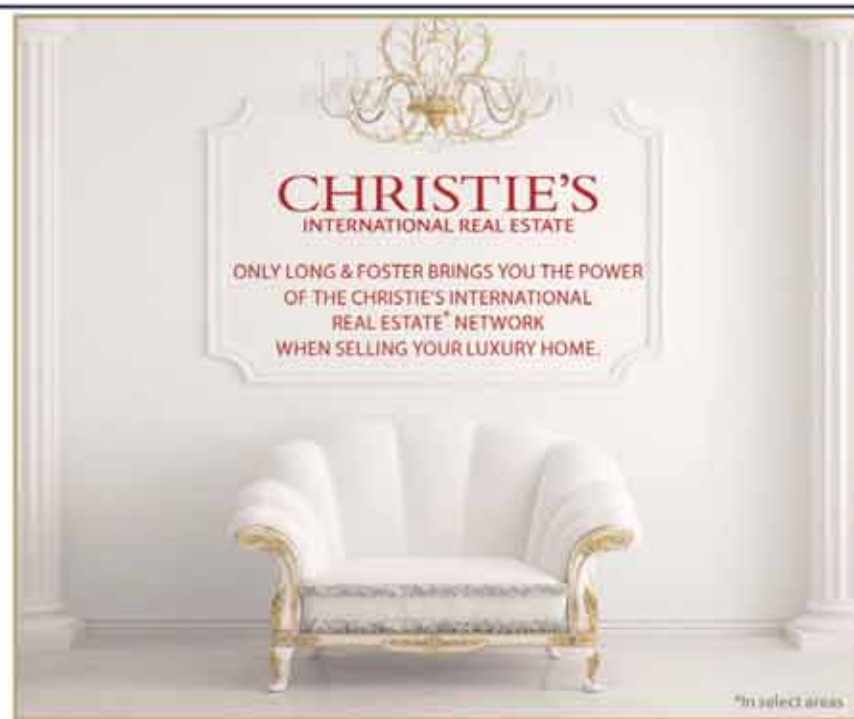


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# WINTER FUN & ENTERTAINMENT

## A Knight to Remember at Port City

Port City debuts fringe comedy “Ballad of the Red Knight.”

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

He’s not exactly a knight in shining armor, at least not in the traditional sense. But a prince known as the Red Knight must save the Kingdom of Medieval Story Land from the clutches of the malevolent Lord Fango and his Bat People in the hilarious original comedy “The Ballad of the Red Knight,” now playing at Port City Playhouse.

“When I was little, I used to pretend to be knights with my friends,” said playwright and director Scott Courlander. “This is a world that already existed in my head.”

The Red Knight, played by the charismatic Christopher Herring, is a lover not a fighter. But when his father King Marthur is murdered by the evil Bat Lord, the Red Knight must marry Lord Fango’s daughter in order to save his brother, Prince Richard, from the sinister Fruit Bat Dungeon.

“I wrote this as a prequel to ‘Medieval Story Land,’” said Courlander of his widely acclaimed 2012 Capital Fringe Festival hit. “The show is very dear to my heart.”

Playing the evil Lord Fango is the devilishly delightful Charles Boyington with Katie Zitz as his ditzzy daughter Fanglett. Herring and Zitz have great chemistry and their comedic timing is especially entertaining when Red gets drunk on their wedding night, forcing Fanglett to wait for the “ro-



PHOTO BY AARON SKOLNIK

**The cast of “The Ballad of the Red Knight” includes: John Stange (Gloom Mage), Matthew Sparacino (Green Knight), Kyle McGruther (Prince Richard), Bob Sheire (Blue Knight), and Edward C. Nagel (Yellow Knight). Partially hidden is Stephen Mead (Narrator).**

mantic blood sucking” between them to begin.

Kyle McGruther is Richard, the hot-headed heir to the throne, John Strange as The Gloom Mage and Stephen Mead as Narrator to both the audience and the on-stage characters.

Rounding out the cast are Edward Nagel as the Yellow Knight, Matthew Sparacino as the Green Knight, Bob Sheire as the Blue Knight, and Brendan Edward Kennedy and Carl Brandt Long as the Bat Guards.



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE

**Playwright and director Scott Courlander, center, celebrates with the cast on opening night of “The Ballad of the Red Knight” Jan. 24 at Port City Playhouse.**

Original music by William Yanesh and piano accompaniment by Jonathan Tippens and Arielle Bayer augments the colorful costume design by Brittany Graham and JoAnn Abbott.

The world premiere of The Ballad of the Red Knight was co-produced by Red Knight Productions — a creative group grounded in improv and sketch comedy and Port City Playhouse.

Will the Red Knight overthrow Lord Fango and free Prince Richard before they both are covered in jelly and devoured by a horde

of ravenous fruit bats? Along the lines of “Spamalot,” “Shrek” and “The Princess Bride,” “The Ballad of the Red Knight” is a

clever and fun fable with some of the finest acting seen on stage. It’s a must-see knight to remember for all ages.

“The Ballad of the Red Knight” is playing now through Feb. 8 at Port City Playhouse, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Tickets may be purchased at

**“When I was little, I used to pretend to be knights with my friends. This is a world that already existed in my head.”**

— Scott Courlander, playwright

the box office one hour prior to showtime. To purchase tickets online or for more information, visit [www.PortCityPlayhouse.org](http://www.PortCityPlayhouse.org).

### CALENDAR

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Photos and artwork are encouraged. Deadline is Thursday at noon.

#### ONGOING

**Art Exhibit.** Artist John Gascot of Studio 4, 218 N. Lee St., suite 101, creates an art exhibit to honor the life journeys of transgender individuals. It will be on display through January. Gallery hours are Thursday-Saturday, noon-7 p.m. and Sunday from noon-5 p.m. or by appointment. Visit [www.studio4oldtown.com](http://www.studio4oldtown.com) for more.

**Art Exhibit.** See “Primary Colors” art exhibit from Jan. 3-Feb. 2 at The Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Artists use the three primary colors without mixing them. Free. Visit [www.TheDelRayArtisans.org](http://www.TheDelRayArtisans.org) for more.

**Theater Performance.** See “The Ballad of the Red Knight” by Red Knight Productions at Port City Playhouse, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Runs Jan. 24 through Feb. 8. Performances are Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

For tickets visit [www.portcityplayhouse.org](http://www.portcityplayhouse.org).

**Art Exhibit.** The results of the latest art challenge issued by Artistic Artifacts, “Mixed Media Metallics,” will be exhibited Jan. 18-Feb. 8. Many of the entries are included in a silent auction benefiting Food for Others. On display at Artistic Artifacts, 4750 Eisenhower Ave. Admission is one non-perishable food item, which will be donated to Food for Others. Visit [www.ArtisticArtifacts.com/metallics](http://www.ArtisticArtifacts.com/metallics) for more.

**Art Exhibit.** See a solo photographic exhibit “Darkness Visible” by Timothy Hyde at Multiple Exposures Gallery in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Runs Jan. 7 through Feb. 16. Hyde’s photography examines the mysteries hidden in the shadows. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org) for more.

**Theater Performance.** Arts on the Horizon presents “Under the Canopy,” a 20-minute interactive, nonverbal show for children up to age 4. Performances are Feb. 12-14, 16, 17, 19-21, 23 at 10:30 a.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. \$5/person. Visit

[www.artsonthehorizon.org](http://www.artsonthehorizon.org) for tickets. They can be purchased at the door.

**Celebrate Black History Month.** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 1-28 at Mount Vernon Estate. In observance of Black History Month, George Washington’s Mount Vernon highlights the lives and contributions of the slaves who built and operated the plantation home of George and Martha Washington. A wreathlaying and presentation occurs daily at the slave memorial site throughout the month of February. Black History Month activities are included in admission: adults, \$18; senior citizens, \$17; children age 6-11, when accompanied by an adult, \$9; and children under age 5, free. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-780-2000.

**Art Exhibit.** See “Reincarnations” art exhibit at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Features art from salvaged items, art from encyclopedias and more. Free. Runs Feb. 7 through March 2. Visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org) for more.

**Art Exhibit.** See “Frances Gallardo: Meteorology” Jan. 18 through March

2 at the Target Gallery in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org/](http://www.torpedofactory.org/) target for more.

**Art Exhibit.** See “Songs of the Shore,” archival inkjet prints by Chantilly resident Peter Toth in the Margaret W. and Joseph L. Fisher Art Gallery, of the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, 3001 N. Beauregard St. Runs Feb. 7 through March 16. Visit [www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/gallery.html](http://www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/gallery.html).

**Theater Performance.** See “Ella Fitzgerald: First Lady of Song” at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St., from Jan. 23-March 16. Performances are Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets may be ordered by calling 1-800-494-8497 or online at [boxofficetickets.com](http://boxofficetickets.com). For group sales and information call the theatre at 703-548-9044. Visit [www.metrostage.org](http://www.metrostage.org) for more.

**Occupied City: Life in Civil War Alexandria Exhibition.** At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington St., through Sunday, March 23. This exhibit traces life in Alexandria

following Virginia’s decision to secede from the Union in May 1861. The Lyceum is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. Suggested admission is \$2. Visit [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org) or call 703-746-4994.

#### CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

##### Metro Club After-School Program.

Through June, the Metropolitan School of Arts presents an after-school program for grades 1-6. The program is located at both the Lorton studio at Workhouse Arts Center, 9517 Workhouse Way and in Alexandria at 5775 Barclay Drive. Programs will focus on the arts, including music, dance, theatre, yoga and academics, as well as designated homework time. The program will run Mondays, 1-6 p.m., and Tuesday-Friday, 3-6 p.m. Tuition runs from \$130-150. Call 703-339-0444 or visit [www.metroartcenter.org](http://www.metroartcenter.org).

**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



# WINTER ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY PAT BAYLY SMITH

## 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

T.C. Williams High School Drama Department will present "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The classic by William Shakespeare is directed by Hope E. Bachman-Miller with Leslie A. Jones as producer. Isabel Hollins is student director and Aaron Fordwright is stage manager. Shows are Friday, Jan. 31 and Saturday, Feb. 1. All performances start at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for ACPS employees, students and senior citizens, and \$10 for adults.

## CALENDAR

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.

**Photography Workshop.** 10:30 a.m.-noon at Multiple Exposures Gallery on 105 N. Union Street. 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.

**Intro to Machine Sewing for Children.** Saturday, Jan. 18 from 10 a.m.-noon at Art at the Center, 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane. Learn the basics of a sewing machine and beginning sewing skills. \$35. Visit [www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm](http://www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm) to register.

**Quilting for Children.** A six-week machine quilting class on Saturdays, Jan. 25-March 1 at Art at the Center, 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane. \$180. Kits are available for purchase. For children ages 8 and up. Visit [www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm](http://www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm) to register.

**Winter Sewing Classes.** A six-week introduction to machine sewing on Thursday, Jan. 23-March 6 or Saturday, Jan. 25-March 1 at Art at the Center, 2804 Sherwood Hall Lane. \$200. For children ages 8 and up. Visit [www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm](http://www.artatthecenter.org/registration.htm) to register.

**Dance Classes.** Metropolitan School of the Arts, 5775 Barclay Drive, #4, will hold adult classes starting in February. Ten percent of the fees will be donated to American Heart Association. Visit [www.metropolitanarts.org](http://www.metropolitanarts.org) or 703-339-0444 for a schedule.

## CONTEST

**Spotlight on Pet Adoptions.** From

Jan. 27 to Feb. 14, ACTION Alexandria is holding a photo contest for animal lovers in Alexandria. Participants are asked to post a photo of their adopted pet on ACTION with a short description of their pet. All contest participants are encouraged to sign up to be a Social Media Animal Ambassador for an animal who has been in either King Street Cats or the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria for a longer period of time. To participate visit [actionalexandria.org](http://actionalexandria.org).

## FRIDAY/JAN. 31

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. The Bottle Rockets will perform with Marshall Crenshaw. \$27.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for tickets.

**Theater Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at T.C. Williams High School. See the drama department stage Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." \$5/ACPS employees, students and seniors; \$10/adult.

**One-Act Play.** 7 p.m. in the Kogelman Theatre at West Potomac High School. "Evolution of a Black Girl" by Morgan Avery McCoy will be performed. The kickoff will also include performances by the Pom Team, Sandburg Middle Step Team, and African Student Dancers. Tickets are \$10.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 1

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. James McMurtry will perform. \$29.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

**Warehouse Sale.** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Browse high-end boutique merchandise during the 9th annual Old Town Boutique District

Warehouse Sale. Visit [www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com](http://www.oldtownboutiquedistrict.com) or [facebook.com/ALXWarehouseSale](http://facebook.com/ALXWarehouseSale) for more.

**Lecture and Book Signing.** 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Join the authors of "African Americans of Alexandria, Virginia: Beacons of Light in the 20th Century" for a discussion of Alexandria's civil rights trailblazers. Free. Reservations encouraged. 703-746-4356.

**Special Tours and Demonstrations.** 1-4 p.m. at Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105-107 S. Fairfax St. Discover items from poison bottles to dragon's blood and find out how they were used and if they worked. There will also be demonstrations. Recommended for children in 3rd grade and older. \$6/person. Reservations recommended. Visit [shop.alexandriava.gov](http://shop.alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-3852.

**Free Coffee.** 3-4 p.m., get free coffee at St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Ave. Browse the exhibition of "Living Legends of Alexandria: African American Activists" for Black History Month. The exhibition features 13 African Americans who have been chronicled as part of the Living Legends of Alexandria project. Visit [www.Alexandrialegends.com](http://www.Alexandrialegends.com) for more.

**Country-Western Dance Lessons.** Lessons at 6:30 p.m., dancing from 7:30-10 p.m. at Lincolnia Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St. Couples and singles can dance to music by a DJ. \$10/NVCWDA; \$12/non-member; \$5/children under 18. Visit [www.nvcwda.org](http://www.nvcwda.org) or 703-860-4941 for more.

**Theater Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at T.C. Williams High School. See the drama department stage Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." \$5/ACPS employees, students and seniors; \$10/adult.

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## WINTER ENTERTAINMENT

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Special thanks to *Mount Vernon Gazette*



Cast of Ragtime

## 'Ragtime' Tony Award-winning musical opens at LTA.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

From the opening strains of "Ragtime," it's apparent that The Little Theatre of Alexandria has mounted a spectacular production of the Tony Award-winning musical by Terrance McNally. As the cast of characters make their introductions, we glimpse America's epic melting pot story come to life.

Based on the 1975 novel by E. L. Doctorow, "Ragtime" tells the story of three families reshaping life in the early 20th century. The audience first meets Father (Shaun Moe), Mother (Jennifer Lyons Pagnard), Mother's Younger Brother (Ben Cherington) and the Little Boy (played on opening night by Brian McNamara), who find their complacent life in New Rochelle, N.Y., upended by the discovery of a black infant in their garden.

In a moment of desperation, the baby was abandoned by Sarah (Aerika Saxe), a cleaning woman who conceived the child with Harlem piano player Coalhouse Walker Jr. (Malcolm Lee).

The third story follows Latvian immigrant Tateh (Michael Gale) and his daughter (Lindsey Gattuso) as they survive the squalor of Lower East Side tenements and rise to the heights of the burgeoning film industry.

Making cameo appearances are historical figures like the showgirl Evelyn Nesbit (Claire O'Brien), Harry Houdini (Jonathan Cagle-Mulberg), the radical Emma Goldman (a rousing Janette Moman) and

**Malcolm Lee**  
and **Aerika Saxe**  
star as **Coalhouse Walker Jr. and Sarah in The Little Theatre of Alexandria production of "Ragtime."**



the captains of industry J. P. Morgan (Larry Grey) and Henry Ford (Buzz Schmidt).

Saxe and Lee lead a stellar cast with Pagnard turning in a poignant performance as the privileged white mother.

Directed by Michael Kharfen, the entire production crew – sets by J. Andrew Simmons, choreography by Ivan Davila and costumes by Jean Schlichting and Kit Sibley – achieves perfect synergy for one of LTA's finest productions.

"Ragtime" is playing now through Feb. 15 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. Limited tickets still available for the Feb. 4 performance to benefit the Alexandria Police Foundation. For more information call 703-746-1909 or visit [www.alexandriapolicefoundation.org](http://www.alexandriapolicefoundation.org).

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6821 Richmond Highway / Alexandria, VA 22306



# WINTER ENTERTAINMENT

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. James McMurtry will perform with Curtis McMurtry. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 2

**Downton Abbey Tours.** 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. The current owner of Highclere Castle, the real world castle where Downton Abbey is filmed, is a direct descendent of the original owner of Lee-Fendall House. The tour will compare similarities between people and places within the world of the television series and those of Lee-Fendall House and also include the rarely seen servant's wing and kitchen area. \$5/advance; \$7/day of. Visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or 703-548-1789 for tickets.

**Closing Reception.** 2-4 p.m. at The Art League in the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. See "Community Canvas Project" and "SOHO Photography Exhibit" before it closes. The project is nearly 600 pieces strong. Visit [www.theartleague.org](http://www.theartleague.org).

**Opening Reception.** 4-6 p.m., meet Katie Runnerstrom and see drawings and paintings at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. The show reflects her exploration of several areas of science such as mycology and the study of jellyfish. Free. Visit [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org) or 703-548-0035.

## TUESDAY/FEB. 4

**Special Tour.** 1:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon Estate. Take a special tour of the new Fred W. Smith National Library for the study of George Washington. Included in admission. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) or 703-

780-2000.

**Discussion Series.** 6-8 p.m. at Morrison House, 116 S Alfred St. Catherine Hollan on the "Growing American Silver Market" has been rescheduled from January. Free. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org/morrison/](http://www.torpedofactory.org/morrison/).

**Arts Extravaganza: An Evening of Fine and Performing Arts.** 7 p.m. at West Potomac High School Springbank Arts Center, 6500 Quander Road. All ages can enjoy "Tuesday Night Live," a parody of "Saturday Night Live," browse art exhibits and create with clay, paint and more. There will also be music and competitions and more. Free.

## WEDNESDAY/FEB. 5

**Dance Workshop and Book Signing.** 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Metropolitan School of the Art's Alexandria studio, 5775 Barclay Drive. Middle and high school students can enjoy a workshop by Tim Federle, a Broadway choreographer. \$50/open to advanced dance, theatre and music students. Visit [www.metropolitanarts.org](http://www.metropolitanarts.org) to register.

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Travis Tritt will perform. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

## THURSDAY/FEB. 6

**Free Frozen Yogurt.** From noon-9 p.m. at Menchie's Pinecrest Plaza, 6550 Little River Turnpike. Print off a coupon at [facebook.com/mymenchie](http://facebook.com/mymenchie) and bring it in for a free six-ounce cup of frozen yogurt. Valid only on that day. Visit [www.menchie.com](http://www.menchie.com).

**Lecture.** 7-8:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. "How France

Embraced and Rejected American Values." Free, donations accepted. Visit [www.alexandriacaen.wordpress.com](http://www.alexandriacaen.wordpress.com).

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Vanessa Carlton with Patrick Sweany will perform. Rescheduled, all tickets from Oct. 17 will be honored. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

## FRIDAY/FEB. 7

**Opening Reception.** 7-10 p.m. see "Reincarnations" art exhibit at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Features art from salvaged items, art from encyclopedias and more. Free. Runs Feb. 7 through March 2. Visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org) for more.

**Opening Reception.** 7-9 p.m. meet Chantilly resident Peter Toth, artist of "Songs of the Shore," archival inkjet prints in the Margaret W. and Joseph L. Fisher Art Gallery, of the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, 3001 N. Beauregard St. Visit [www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/gallery.html](http://www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/gallery.html) for more.

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Arlo Guthrie continues his tribute to Woody's 100th birthday. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 8

**Barnes & Noble Bookfair.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Potomac Yard, 3651 Jefferson Davis Highway. Support Jefferson-Houston PTA while enjoying student performances, book readings and crafts. Visit [bn.com/](http://bn.com/)

bookfairs and enter ID #11271368 if you would like to support the school online.

**Swordsmen's Rendezvous.** Noon-4 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 138 N. Royal St. Enjoy a re-enactment of 18th-century swordplay, displays, discussions and more. Includes audience participation. \$6/person. Reservations required, [shop.alexandriava.gov](http://shop.alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4242.

**Civil War Recruiting Day.** 1-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Meet soldiers and civilians of the 3rd U.S. Regular Infantry, Company K. There will be demonstrations and information about how to become a re-enactor. Free. Snow day is Feb. 22. Visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org) or 703-746-4848.

**Closing Reception and Silent Auction.** 3-8 p.m. bid on some of the entries from "Mixed Media Metallics." Proceeds benefit Food for Others. On display at Artistic Artifacts, 4750 Eisenhower Ave. Admission is one non-perishable food item, which will be donated to Food for Others. Visit [www.ArtisticArtifacts.com/metallics](http://www.ArtisticArtifacts.com/metallics) for more.

**Teen Production.** 7:30 p.m. at Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. See MVCCT's production of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." \$12. Visit [mvcct.org](http://mvcct.org) for more.

**Music Performance.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Arlo Guthrie continues his tribute to Woody's 100th birthday. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or call 703-549-7500.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 9

**Valentine Card-Making Party.**

Noon-4 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans in the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Free, but a donation for a make-and-take card is requested. Visit [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org) for more.

**Downton Abbey Tours.** 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. The current owner of Highclere Castle, the real world castle where Downton Abbey is filmed, is a direct descendent of the original owner of Lee-Fendall House. The tour will compare similarities between people and places within the world of the television series and those of Lee-Fendall House and also include the rarely seen servant's wing and kitchen area. \$5/advance; \$7/day of. Visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or 703-548-1789 for tickets.

**Winter Warmer Tea.** 3-4:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 138 N. Royal St. Eat period-inspired delicacies while enjoying tea and American Heritage Chocolate. A historic guest will be visiting. \$35/person and is all inclusive. Reservations required, [shop.alexandriava.gov](http://shop.alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4242.

**Teen Production.** 3 p.m. at Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. See MVCCT's production of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." \$12. Visit [mvcct.org](http://mvcct.org) for more.

**Christie Dashiell.** 6-9 p.m. at The Carlyle Club, 411 John Carlyle St. The Hoop Academy Project presents an Evening with Christie Dashiell, accompanied by the Vaughn Ambrose Quartet. Proceeds benefit the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame Project. \$35 per person. Cash bar and full dinner menu available. Contact Julian Haley at 571-217-9951 or [aaahalloffame13@gmail.com](mailto:aaahalloffame13@gmail.com).

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# Hybrid Tax Repealed, Senate Shakeup and Death Penalty

BY SCOTT A. SUROVELL  
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)

**T**he second week of the General Assembly Session saw the end of the Hybrid Tax, sharpening rhetoric on Medicaid, debate on firearms safety and the death penalty, and brought clarity on the composition of the Senate.

First, the House voted to repeal the Hybrid Tax 89-9. Both Chambers have now approved repeal. We must pass each other's bills after crossover and the Governor has indicated that he will sign the legislation. I am pleased the legislature has listened to the 7,500 people who signed the petition gathered by myself and Senator Ebbin.

My budget amendment to provide \$4 million of funding for the preliminary engineering of U.S. 1 road and transit improvements was given its first hearing. The co-cChair of the Mt. Vernon Council of Citizens, Jim Davis, testified in favor and the Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce provided a letter in support.

The consequences of November elections continue to play out. Last week, Jennifer Wexton won Attorney General Mark Herring's open senate seat in Loudoun County and Western Fairfax. On Jan. 27, the recount concluded in Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam's open senate seat at

the Senate moved back to a 20-20 tie with Democratic Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam holding the tie breaking vote.

As I write this on Tuesday, Jan. 28, everyone is waiting to see what happens in the State Senate where the new majority is likely to retake control and re-establish committees this afternoon. This change will reverberate all session. Stay tuned.

The House passed legislation I co-sponsored allowing Dominion Power to seek approval to charge approximately \$0.40/mo per year increasing over 10 years to approximately \$4/month to being the process of "undergrounding" power lines. The plan is to put 350 miles of power lines per year underground until 4,000 miles have been buried.

Dominion Power requested this legislation, in part, due to increased customer complaints about power outages such as those heard at my town hall meeting on Sept. 11, 2012 at Sherwood Library after the Derecho of August, 2011. I am pleased that Dominion is responding to the community and able to achieve it at a very low cost. Next, we need to ensure that our area is at the front of the list for improvements.

Virginia has been experiencing problems administering the death penalty. European drug manufacturers have refused to provide the U.S. with lethal injection drugs. In the last three months, two states have turned

to American compounding pharmacies to create new "cocktails" for extinguishing the condemned person's life.

Two legislators introduced legislation allowing them to force an inmate to be electrocuted if the state could not locate drugs. I also introduced legislation permanently banning Virginia's electric chair for different reasons, but leaving lethal injection as an available method. My legislation was killed, but the legislation forcing the electric chair passed the House of Delegates on a largely party-line vote and it's now on to the State Senate.

The House of Delegates also passed legislation providing reciprocity for any out-of-state concealed weapon permits. I argued against this because Virginia has some of the toughest concealed weapon permit restrictions in the U.S. - this is why many states do not give us reciprocity.

If the law we passed clears the Senate, a

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 10

metaphors regarding the rolling up (never down ...) of sleeves. Still it is good to read of progress, however incremental. I learned again of the Beltway Express lanes, which allow, for example, drivers from points south and east to speed along to gridlock in points north and west. For the first time I learned that that hulking relic of bad '70s' design (redundant, I know ...), the Springfield Mall, has been newly renovated.

I was thus in a mildly somnolent state when I passed over the first of Superintendent Garza's remarks. I snapped awake at the second, and rounded back on the first. I was - and remain - alarmed.

Have we so lost our moorings that the superintendent has to appear to wonder aloud, "... what our community expects of its schools"? Really ...? Whether our "community" knows it or not, a school provides - or should - an education. Not to sound hopelessly 19th century in this era where something called "21st century skills" is all the rage, begin with reading, writing, and arithmetic, and proceed from there ... to higher levels of these basics ... to the arts and sciences ... to the trades ... include athletics in the mix, and so forth. Does anyone not know this ...?

In the face of declining budgets, the superintendent seems pleased to announce that one of her "big projects" is to employ a "broad-based community committee to develop the "Portrait of a Graduate." Apologies for repeating myself, but ... really? Does she - and we - really not know what it means to be a high school graduate? Again, are we so adrift?

I'm not a "broad-based community committee," but I know that a high school graduate is someone who can function in the world after high school. No doubt the committee will eventually - and tortuously - arrive at the conclusion that the "portraits" will vary. To cite just a few examples out of what is an incredibly broad spectrum of students, those who wish to go on to university should be provided a solid grounding

Virginian convicted of stalking, sexual battery, acquitted of insanity, legally incompetent, or recently discharged from inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment could be denied for a Virginia concealed weapon permit, but obtain a permit from a state like Florida and use that permit in Virginia. Florida only requires an applicant to be 21, legally present, and not a felon and will sell a permit to any American. I aggressively fought this bill on the floor, but it passed on a largely party-line vote.

You can watch many of these debates or my Town Hall Meeting from this past Saturday on my YouTube channel. If you are a total geek, you can tune in to a live stream of our floor sessions online every day at noon. This week will bring some clarity on the House of Delegates ethics reforms package and Standards of Learning reforms.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your delegate.

in the liberal arts; those heading for the trades should be prepared for - and begin - apprenticeships; those who would like to start a chain of pet food stores should get a mix of the first two; those who wish to take advantage of the promise of the internet should be given ample opportunity to learn computer coding ... and some mix of the first two; and so forth ... Additionally, all should be prepared to vote intelligently.

It's really not that difficult to define what a high school graduate should be. FCPS high schools, to the extent that they can exert influence on the outcome, will achieve this ideal to greater and lesser degrees. A motivated student, imbued by his parents with a work ethic, sense of responsibility, and knowledge of the value of education, will, under the tutelage and care of FCPS, achieve success both as a student, and in later life. For the unmotivated student, imbued with little of the above, FCPS can offer the same path; some will take it, a disappointing number will not. However well-intentioned, no long lists of action items from interminable committee and sub-committee meetings will change these outcomes.

I have little doubt that Superintendent Garza really does know what a community expects from its schools, and could, unaided, paint a portrait or two of a successful graduate. Why then, in this roll-up-one's-sleeves era of apparently inadequate budgets, are she and her staff expending precious resources seeking answers to questions long since answered, and otherwise engaging in, and - more importantly - nurturing a culture that tolerates such collective navel-gazing? More practical thinking is required. Schools have one mission: to educate. To do this, they need teachers who can pass information, some measure of knowledge, the occasional pearl of wisdom, and perhaps even a note or two of Bach's into the brains of their charges. They need a basic support structure - shelter, lunch, electricity, etc. - in which teachers ... teach.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 19

## Helping Military Families

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

**T**hree weeks into session and the excitement continues, each day bringing a new group of constituents and advocates who visit my office and impress me with their passion and commitment to a wide range of social and economic issues.

Three of my bills have pass the third reading in the Senate and will be heading over to the House of Delegates on Feb. 11. The one bill I have been working the longest on, SB 11 passed just today and will make it easier for active duty, overseas voters to return their absentee ballots securely and on time. The time to pass this legislation is now. These men and women are putting their lives on the line for us, they are living on aircraft carriers, in submarines and makeshift bases in Afghanistan and they deserve to have their vote counted. This bill has broad, bi-partisan support in the Senate, and the House of Delegates, especially in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, where most of our military men and women live.

I am still hard at work on several pieces of legislation, including SB 201 which would make health insurers give patients who take prescription drugs that are part of "specialty tiers" notice when these drugs are moved from one tier to another, affecting cost and insurance coverage. This is common sense legislation that will help families' budgets and keep them on their

life-saving medications. Similar legislation has passed in other states, most recently in Delaware, and Virginians deserve the same protections.

One final bill I will highlight is SB 481, which was voted unanimously out of the Senate Education & Health Committee and referred to the Senate Finance Committee. This bill would extend the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to those qualifying families who have lived in Virginia for five years, even if they have a second primary residence elsewhere. Military families get moved frequently and sometimes residency is just a concept. If a family is stationed in Virginia for five continuous years and then the military spouse is killed or 90 percent disabled and the children wish to stay in Virginia and attend college here, they should have that opportunity. Both of my children went to James Madison University thanks to this program and it was a great benefit to our family.

I will be at a town hall this Saturday, Feb. 1 at the Kingstowne Thompson Center from 10 - 11:30 a.m. along with Senators Barker and Ebbin, Delegate Sickles and Lee District Supervisor McKay. I look forward to meeting my constituents at those town halls and giving an update on the legislative session.

As always I am honored to represent the 36th senatorial district of Virginia and look forward to working hard for my constituents. Anyone with an issue or concern should contact my office in Richmond at district36@senate.virginia.gov or by phone: 804-698-7536.



FROM PAGE 18

As the budget process moves forward, Superintendent Garza and her staff need to fund, as best they can, those things which directly support the mission, eliminate those which do not, and recognize that they can not cure all the ills of society. She does not need to expend further energy seeking that which is already manifestly evident.

**John Fagan**  
Alexandria

## Restore And Destroy?

To the Editor:

In the recently published proposed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed restoration of Dyke Marsh, the National Park Service (NPS) proposed three alternatives, alternative A (do nothing), alternative B (preservation and modest restoration), and alternative C (preservation and more comprehensive restoration). NPS has indicated that it prefers alternative C, but that alternative appears to be at cross-purposes to the comments received from the public when alternatives A-D were proposed in the 2008-2009 time frame.

In the NPS report concerning comments it received in 2008-2009, the most comments received (21.74 percent) concerned impacts on Belle Haven Marina. The second most were in opposition to previous alternative D "full restoration" (15.26 percent). These two categories dwarfed the next highest percentage (6.48 percent in favor of alternative D). Most of the commenters concerning the marina opposed any action that would materially impact its operations. Current alternative C includes what are described as optional restoration aspects that would essentially eliminate the marina from existence if enacted.

The EIS states that options which would effectively destroy the marina would not be exercised "unless the marina were to become economically infeasible and were to close for reasons unrelated to the Marsh restoration ...." What this means is that so long as proposed restoration of Dyke Marsh includes options that would destroy the marina, that destruction can become a self-fulfilling prophecy should the political winds blow in the direction of NPS unconscionably raising the marina's rent to make its operations economically infeasible. So long as the proposed restoration includes any options that could conceivably destroy the marina, this will be the case. As such, it is imperative that those

options be stricken from any proposal to restore Dyke Marsh.

From the Wilson Bridge to Pohick Bay, the only public access to the Potomac River in Fairfax County is at Belle Haven Marina. During a public meeting of Supervisor Hyland's Visioning Task Force in 2009, former MVCCA Co-chair Katherine Ward bemoaned this lack of public access and suggested that perhaps it would be appropriate to obtain such public access along the riverfront. No one else publicly supported this suggestion, but it points out the value of Belle Haven Marina to our community and the need to retain it at all costs.

Additionally, in the EIS, NPS concedes that implementation of alternative C would likely adversely impact private properties to the south of Dyke Marsh:

"If the NPS were to restore marsh south of the breakwater, water levels to the south of the project area would be expected to become somewhat shallower over time, as sediments accreted in the restored marsh area and adjacent to it, as discussed in the hydrology section. However, water depths would not be anticipated to change enough to change the use of the existing docks south of Dyke Marsh."

Apparently, NPS is not aware that property owners to the south must construct docks over 300 feet long to merely obtain water depths of perhaps 3 feet at low tide in many cases. Any siltation whatsoever resulting from restoration efforts at Dyke Marsh will materially impact the ability of those property owners to moor a reasonably-sized vessel at their docks. It would be unconscionable for NPS, with full knowledge of material impacts to property values of downstream properties resulting from their actions, to go ahead and take those actions anyway. Government takings without compensation are forbidden by the Fifth Amendment to our Constitution. NPS would be well served to strike from any proposed restoration plan any possibility of actions that could conceivably materially impact water access of downstream properties.

It is clear that the proposed EIS is materially flawed and requires significant revision to ensure that Dyke Marsh is preserved in its current form without adversely impacting adjacent properties or the valuable resource of Belle Haven Marina, as preferred in public comments NPS previously received. Please listen, NPS.

**H. Jay Spiegel**  
Mount Vernon

## Ethics Dominates News Headlines

BY ADAM P. EBBIN  
STATE SENATOR (D-30)

The major news story that broke last week was the 14-count felony indictment filed against former Governor McDonnell and his wife for ethics violations. There is no question that public confidence in government officials has diminished. The people of Virginia expect accountability from their elected officials, and my colleagues and I have invested a lot of time and effort in crafting legislation to meet that expectation. Many provisions I proposed have been endorsed by the Senate Rules Committee.

Last week also marked a big victory for proponents of marriage equality in Virginia when Attorney General Mark Herring announced that, after a thorough legal review, he concluded Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage violates the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. Virginia has a proud history as the birthplace of the Bill of Rights, but too often our Commonwealth has been on the wrong side of history, as we were in *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967 arguing against interracial marriage. It is exciting and refreshing to see Virginia waking up from history and looking forward, not backward.

Several of my other legislative proposals have made progress. One of these bills (SB27) would reinstate the option for individuals to receive their tax refunds in the form of a paper check instead of a pre-loaded debit card. Consumers around the state complained that the debit cards being used were fraught with fees and not consumer-friendly, and I am pleased to report this bill passed unanimously through the Sen-

ate.

Another bill I've co-sponsored with Senator Bryce Reeves of Fredericksburg (SB96) would prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors. These e-cigarettes contain nicotine and have addictive properties. We need to regulate them in the same manner as we regulate traditional cigarettes by not allowing their sale to children.

I have also introduced legislation (SB663) to establish a mental health pilot program at eight community college campuses around the state. This bill would provide important services given the alarming increase in violent tragedies at campuses around the country.

Thanks to all who attended the Mt. Vernon Town Hall Meeting last Saturday with Sen. Toddy Puller and Del. Scott Surovell. For those who could not make it to that one or who live in other parts of the district, there are two additional Town Hall Meetings:

\* Lee District: Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Kingstowne Thompson Center (6090 Kingstowne Village Parkway, Alexandria) with Del. Mark Sickles, Sen. George Barker and Sen. Toddy Puller.

\* Alexandria/Arlington: Feb. 15, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Charles Houston Recreation Center (905 Wythe Street, Alexandria) with Del. Rob Krupicka.

If you're in Richmond between now and March 8, please stop by my office and see me. You can also email me at [district30@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district30@senate.virginia.gov) or call 804-698-7530 with your thoughts on legislation or state-related matters. I am active on Facebook and Twitter (@AdamEbbin) and more information is available at [www.AdamEbbin.com](http://www.AdamEbbin.com).



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# Sharpshooting Richards Leads West Potomac Past TC

Senior guard scores 22 points, makes six 3-pointers.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

West Potomac senior Joe Richards figured members of the T.C. Williams boys' basketball team would start defending him with a little more urgency after he knocked down a few 3-pointers early in the teams' Jan. 25 contest.

But as the game went on, Richards kept getting open. So he kept knocking them down.

Richards buried a career-best six 3-pointers and finished with 22 points as the Wolverines defeated the Titans 62-50 on Saturday night at West Potomac High School.

After making a trio of 3-pointers in the first half, Richards made two more in the first three minutes of the second half, helping West Potomac open a 43-29 advantage.

"They weren't guarding me as I thought they were going to guard me," Richards said. "They definitely sagged off a little bit and that's definitely when the chances came open."

Richards' final 3-pointer came with 3:31 remaining in the fourth quarter. He knocked it down from the left corner, giving West Potomac a 57-42 lead.

"He's streaky, but he's been kind



Joe Richards knocked down six 3-pointers during West Potomac's 62-50 victory over T.C. Williams on Jan. 25.

of hot the last couple weeks," West Potomac head coach David Houston III said. "I saw he missed one from about 25 feet that kind of went in and out, so I knew. The focus in the second half was to try to get him the ball. It looked like he was feeling it."

Each of the rival schools entered Saturday's contest with a losing record. While West Potomac earned its fifth victory during a

rebuilding year, T.C. Williams' struggles continued. The Titans lost to West Springfield on Tuesday, dropping their record to 2-14.

The Wolverines and Titans are scheduled to play again on Feb. 4 at T.C. Williams High School.

"It feels good to get a win," Houston said. "T.C., that's a good win — I don't care what anybody says their record is."

DeMornay Pierson-El scored 11



West Potomac senior DeMornay Pierson-El attempts to dunk during a Jan. 25 contest against T.C. Williams.

points off the bench for West Potomac. Pierson-El is committed to play football at the University of Nebraska and originally planned to skip his senior basketball season. He had a change of heart.

"I made a selfish decision to not play and I'm just not a selfish person," Pierson-El said. "It just wasn't in me. This is my last time

around these guys. I probably won't see them for a long time. We'll have contact, but I won't get this year back."

Freshman guard Alan Treakle scored 13 points for West Potomac.

West Potomac defeated South County on Tuesday to improve to 6-8. The Wolverines will host West Springfield at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 31.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE GAZETTE

## Correction

In last week's Mount Vernon Gazette, the wrong photo accompanied "Mount Vernon Girls' Basketball Showing Improvement." It should have been the photo of senior forward Samantha Porter.

## West Potomac's Thompson Places Second at W-L Invitational

West Potomac senior Monica Thompson placed second in the all-around competition at the Barbara Reinwald W-L Gymnastics Invitational on Jan. 25 at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington.

Thompson posted a score of 35.425. Fairfax's Rachel Barborek won the competition with a score of 35.975.

Thompson placed second on vault (9.55), fourth on floor (8.85), sixth on bars (8.325) and seventh on beam (8.7).

"I was happy with [Thompson's performance]," head coach Pete Novgrod said. "She did a good job on beam. Bars ... she made everything in [her routine]. Pretty clean. ... Floor, she did a nice

[job]."

Thompson competes in club gymnastics for the Arlington Aerials.

Other than Thompson, the West Potomac gymnastics team doesn't have much in the way of club experience. On Saturday, the Wolverines placed fifth in the team competition with a score of 90.825. Washington-Lee won the event with a score of 104.975, followed by Yorktown (104.95), T.C. Williams (102.95) and Mount Vernon (91.225).

West Potomac will compete in the Conference 7 meet at 6 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 31 at Lake Braddock.

— JON ROETMAN

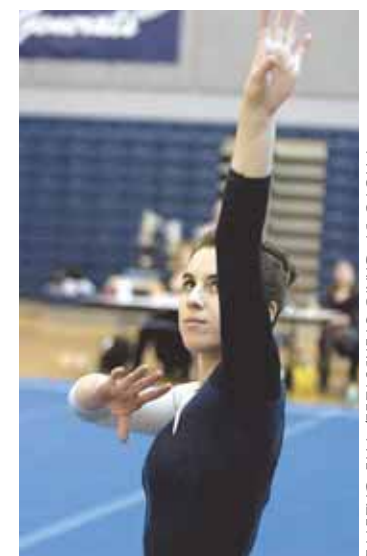


PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac senior Monica Thompson



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## School Funds

FROM PAGE 1

for next school year, overcrowded schools are becoming a mainstay.

The CIP five-year plan includes a queue of which schools have planning funds and construction funds approved, and includes the construction of two new elementary schools as well as one new high school. The total bill for this CIP is \$697.7 million, with \$371.7 million of that unfunded.

One of the major sticking points among board members was the treatment of legacy high schools: Falls Church, Herndon, Langley, Oakton and West Springfield. All these schools were built in the 1960s, and none have received a full renovation. Some are still not in the queue to receive funds for upgrades as of this CIP.

"We're stuck between a rock and a hard place," said Providence District Representative Patty Reed citing not enough funding and too many schools in need. "And Falls Church is no further along than it was before."

The CIP did not list Falls Church in the queue for high schools needing renovation — which many members felt was a gross oversight since the school was built in 1967 and is without science and computer labs — putting its students at a severe disadvantage to remain competitive for jobs and acceptance into top colleges, said Reed.

At the meeting last week, an amendment to the CIP passed to further examine renovations needed at legacy high schools.

While the CIP focuses on renovating/enhancing existing schools and building new schools, the Facilities Planning Advisory Committee — and some members at the board meeting — suggested examining the entire process for which the board determines the renovation priorities.

The facilities planning committee suggested in a January report that an overarching study on school boundaries and changing those boundaries by 2018 could help alleviate much of the overcrowding in schools across the county — especially high schools. With the current CIP, Facilities Planning Advisory Committee wrote that in just five years 45,397 children will be attending schools at more than 115 percent of capacity — approximately one in four students. Currently, there are no ongoing or planned boundary studies in place, said John Torre, public information officer with FCPS.

Another measure At-Large Member Ted Velkoff suggested to ensure schools were receiving a more adequate amount of capital improvement funds was to integrate the county government and the school's capital funding plans and have criteria set by both boards for which facilities would enter the list.

Currently government-related buildings — including fire departments, detention centers, courts etc. — receive 58 percent of the county's capital improvement funding while taking up 19 percent of the total county facilities square footage, whereas the school system receives 42 percent of the money with 81 percent of the square footage, cited Braddock District Representative Megan McLaughlin.

### 21 Announcements

**ABC LICENSE**  
Fionas, LLC trading as Fionas Irish Pub, 5810 Kingstowne Ctr, ste 160, Alexandria, VA 22315. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine, Beer and Mixed Beverages on Premise license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Martin White, Member/owner  
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

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### 21 Announcements

#### Obituary



**Lila B. Zimmerman**  
Williamsburg Landing Resident

Lila Breshears Zimmerman, 97, peacefully passed away Wednesday January 15th at her Woodhaven residence in the Williamsburg Landing retirement community. She was preceded in death by her sister Lillian and Gil Zimmerman, her loving husband of 51 years who passed away in August, 2012.

She was born in the Breshears Valley near Warsaw, MO and moved to Washington D.C. along with her sister Lillian in the 1940's to go to work for the U.S. Government as a secretary. It was there that she and Gil met and subsequently married in June, 1961. He was a high ranking lawyer with the U.S. Attorney's Office prior to both of their retirements from the government.

Lila and Gil were longtime and highly regarded residents of Old Town Alexandria, VA for many years prior to moving to Williamsburg Landing in 1995. While in Alexandria, she was active in charity work and was a volunteer for Nelly's Needlers, a group of talented women who made beautiful quilts to raise money for the preservation of Woodlawn Plantation, a historic home south of Alexandria that was originally a part of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate and was the residence of he and Martha Washington's granddaughter Nelly Custis. In addition to her quilt making, Lila was a talented oil painter and created several beautiful still life paintings.

She is survived by her author step-son Gerry A. Zimmerman of Scottsdale, AZ. At her wish, there will be no public memorial services and following her cremation at the Nelsen Funeral Home, her ashes will be sent to Missouri where they will be buried along with the ashes of her beloved husband, Gil, in a family plot in Wheatland, MO.

Online condolences may be expressed at [www.nelsencares.com](http://www.nelsencares.com).

### Legal Notices

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
Pursuant to the provision of section 4-1-16 of the code of the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Police Department located at 3600 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 is now in possession of unclaimed bicycles, mopeds, lawn equipment, money, scooters, and other items. All persons having valid claim to the property should file a claim to the property with reasonable proof of ownership or the items will be sold, destroyed, converted or donated. For a complete listing go to <http://alexandriava.gov/police/> and contact the Police Property Section at (703) 746-6709.

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### 21 Announcements

AT&T Mobility, LLC is proposing to install new wireless telecommunications equipment at 4600 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 and 2727 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. New generators will be installed at grade on a 5' by 11' concrete pad at each site. The height of the generators is not to exceed 10 feet above grade. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61140111-TC c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail S, York, PA 17403 or via telephone at 339-234-2597.

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AT&T Mobility, LLC proposes to install new wireless telecommunications equipment at 501 Slaters Lane, Alexandria, VA 22314. A new +/- 10-foot tall generator will be installed at grade on a 5-foot by 11-foot concrete pad. Any interested party wishing to submit comments regarding the potential effects the proposed facility may have on any historic property may do so by sending such comments to: Project 61140019-TC c/o EBI Consulting, 6876 Susquehanna Trail S., York, PA 17403 or 339-234-2597.

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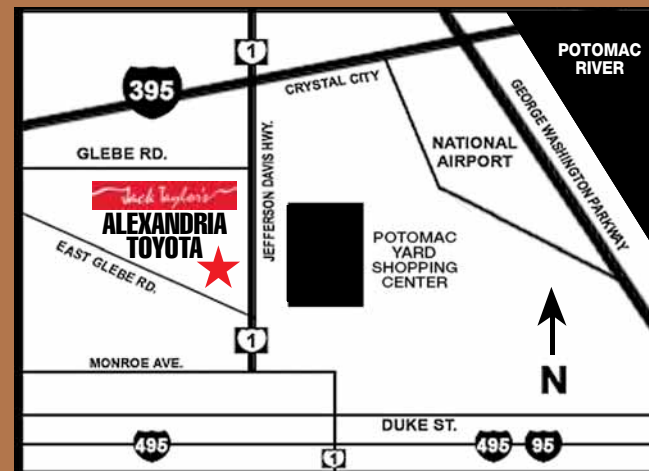


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