Mount Pernon Gazette

HomeLifeStyle
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HOLIDAY GUIDE II

Mount Vernon's Hometown Newspaper • A Connection Newspaper

DECEMBER 10, 2015



Mount Vernon by Candlelight Tour

Visitors were invited to enjoy hot cider and cookies, after the tour. Several bonfires were available for warmth and historical interpreters led guests in singing period carols. More photos, page 10.



The glow of candlelight marks the paths during the special evening tours.



"Good Neighbor Roy" hands a letter of introduction to a young member of the tour group. The letter is to be presented once the tour arrives at the mansion.



Guests were treated to period holiday music, by the Itinerant Band, at the end of

Small Things

Alice's Kids donates individual items to enhance student self-esteem.

By Tim Peterson and Gerald A. Fill The Gazette

s a seventh grader growing up in Long Island, current Mount Vernon resident Ron Fitzsimmons missed 60 days of school because he was too embarrassed to go. After his father abandoned them, Fitzsimmons' family survived on welfare, but only just.

"It was one thing to suffer in private," he said, remembering garbage piling up inside the home because they couldn't afford to have it picked up. "They were private indignities."

But Fitzsimmons also remembers how it felt when his mother was able to splurge and buy him a new pair of sneakers, "the wanting to go to school," he said. "It was a small thing, but it was important."

And though for years he couldn't participate in Little League baseball because of registration costs, Fitzsimmons was finally able to



Alice's Kids responded to a student referral from Riverside Elementary School on Old Mount Vernon Road with wellworn out shoes.

play on his high school team and was named a Suffolk County all-star his junior year. "Someone was recognizing me," he said. "I suddenly felt really good. I wanted to go to prom, college, do normal things."

He felt the power of self-esteem. Fast-forward to approximately four years ago, Fitzsimmons was conducting a survey to determine what would be the best mission for

SEE ALICE'S KIDS, PAGE 3

Police Make Arrest In November Shooting

airfax County Police arrested Andre Curtis Wilkins, 21, of Waldorf, Md. on Dec. 4 and charged him with malicious wounding related to the Nov. 18 shooting death of Marquel L. Davis, 21, of Audubon Avenue.

Wilkins was identified and reported by two callers who contacted police in the afternoon using the Crime Solvers tip line. He was seen around the Audubon Road area of Hybla Valley. The shooting took place in an apartment on the 7900 block of the same road.

Two other men were non-fatally wounded — police believe in relation to Davis' shooting — and hospitalized at the time.



Andre Curtis Wilkins

The Office of the Medical Examiner ruled Davis' death a homicide, due to gunshot wounds to the torso and extremities.

— Tim Peterson

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The Beacon of Groveton luxury apartments building won first place in this year's Southeastern Fairfax Development Corporation Mary Thonen Highway Beautification Awards.



Photos courtesy of Southeastern Fairfax Development Corporation

The landscaped grounds of Steve Mayer and his brother's Sunoco gas station at 8300 Richmond Highway won first place in the 2014 Mary Thonen Highway Beautification Awards, however in 2015 the station finished second.

Beacon at Groveton Wins Highway Beautification Award

he Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation recognized local businesses doing exceptional work to enhance their streetview image with the annual holiday open house and Mary Thonen Highway Beautification Awards.

"Curb appeal is very important," said Edythe Frankel Kelleher, executive director

of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation. "It leads to a better atmosphere for the community businesses, for people who want to live in the area and for people to be attracted to go shop. It's extremely important."

Curb appeal was a priority for Mary Thonen, a former board member with SFDC, and for whom the beautification award is named.

This year, the luxury apartment building Beacon at Groveton won top honors for its neatly trimmed and colorful landscaping around the building. Steve Mayer's Sunoco station, a repeat honoree, came in second, followed by Jiffy Lube. There were nine honorable mentions.

The open house was held Dec. 1 at El Paso

Mexican Restaurant at 6151 Richmond Highway in Alexandria.

"It was a great event," Kelleher said. "The folks at El Paso did a fabulous job. We brought in over 100 people and introduced them to a new eating establishment. El Paso went all out, even bringing on extra staff."

— Tim Peterson

The Jiffy Lube at 8540 Richmond Highway received third place recognition in the 2015 Mary Thonen Highway Beautification Awards.





Steve Mayer (left) accepts the second place Mary Thonen Highway Beautification Award from Vicki McLeod (right) recognizing his Sunoco station on Richmond Highway.

Alice's Kids Donates Items To Enhance Student Self-esteem

From Page 1

a new nonprofit to assist children in Fairfax County with personal items like shoes, glasses and Little League baseball registration.

The late Cynthia Hull, former director of United Community Ministries, told him, "We do not have a petty cash drawer."

As the primary social service network in the Mount Vernon area, UCM helps with transitional housing, basic needs and emergency food, medicine, literacy and job placement.

UCM receives many referrals from school social workers and though they can help with after-school snacks, food and other items to help students in lowincome families, "given our mission, we're not in the business of providing Ron Fitzsimmons of Mount Vernon started Alice's Kids.



shoes to each and every family or child," said Diane Hill, who handles development and communications for UCM.

Seeing a need there, Fitzsimmons decided to found Alice's Kids, named for his mother, with the primary emphasis on enhancing self-esteem in children up to 18 years of age by providing those individual items.

"We pay for the small intangibles," Fitzsimmons said. "We contribute to allow kids to access an event, such as a dance or field trip, or acquire a special item such as

a formal dress or purchase eyewear."

He receives referrals directly from school social workers — students looking for things like bus fare, beds, summer camp tuition or coats — and responds within 24 hours. The answer, Fitzsimmons said, is "Yes" 99 percent of the time.

A fundamental aspect of Alice's Kids work is making the donations quietly and anonymously, allowing the parent to facilitate a situation where it doesn't seem like charity.

"The contribution is typically a quick action on our part to fulfill a commitment that enables a needy child to realize a dream, goal or benefit," Fitzsimmons said. This past year 269 children have benefitted from Alice's Kids and he expects that number to more than double this year.

Richard Dobber, UCM director of social services, appreciates the anonymity of

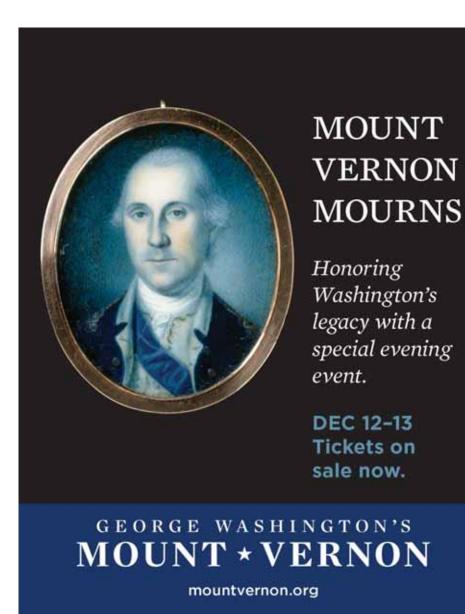
Alice's Kids' work that respects the dignity and the privacy of the family. "That emphasizes that child fitting in with their peers and not being embarrassed about the family's situation," he said. "It builds up a stronger family and community."

Dobber recalled a typical scenario when UCM was working with a single mother client in their transitional housing program for survivors of domestic abuse

As an immigrant from Bangladesh, she was taking English as a Second Language classes and had completed her General Education Development test. "We were very impressed by her resilience and willingness to get ahead," Dobber said.

However, she couldn't afford soccer cleats for her 11-year-old son. "We don't

SEE ALL THE SMALL, PAGE 4



All the Small Things

have funds for that kind of donation or support," said Dobber. "I immediately thought of Alice's Kids. I contacted Ron and within an hour he said, 'No problem. Do you think they can get to Sports Authority at Potomac Yard?' These small gifts that mean a lot, make that child feel special, and for all the child knows, it came from his mom."

Fitzsimmons and Alice's Kids ask supporters to make donations just one time a year. Other funds for their budget come from participating in the Combined Federal Campaign and grants from Mount Vernon Kiwanis, the Rotary, St. Luke's Church, Good Shepherd Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus.

In addition to the once-a-year donation campaign, Alice's Kids also started doing a fundraiser in the form of a gift-wrapping

"We have our niche of providing special things for kids," said Barbara Baker of Mount Vernon, a vice president in her fourth year on the board of Alice's Kids. "Not many organizations offer gift-wrapping over the holidays, so we're hoping this can be our thing in the Mount Vernon community."

The Alice's Kids Wrap-It-Up gift-wrapping fundraiser is scheduled for Dec. 19 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. at two locations: Good Shepherd Catholic Church at 8710 Mount



From left, Bob Fitzsimmons, Alice Fitzsimmons, Laura **Fitzsimmons Peters and Ron** Fitzsimmons, together in 1953.

Vernon Memorial Highway and Heritage Presbyterian Church at 8503 Fort Hunt

Community members can stop by to drop off gifts for wrapping by a team of volunteers by 1 p.m. or simply to enjoy holiday music and refreshments. All gifts must be picked up no later than 2 p.m. that day. The suggested donation is \$3 per gift. A Sign-Up Genius link to volunteer is www.signupgenius.com/go/ 4090c4ea5ad2d6-alices. Students can join as well and pick up service hours. For more information, visit Alice's Kids on Facebook or email aliceskids@cox.net.



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Unboxing Potential

Grants provide students with computers.

s Bucknell Elementary "boxes up" for school renovations, they have been unboxing new growth in technology literacy. This year, Bucknell has been given an opportunity to bridge the digital divide with grants received from Christian Relief Services and an anonymous donor to provide every fourth, fifth, and sixth grader with a laptop that will soon travel between school and home.

Classroom teachers have incorporated the new computers into

their classrooms as a resource for learning and a tool for publishing work.

Sarah Talley, the school-based technology specialist, and Carol Smith, the librarian, have been collaborating to teach students how to web search accurate information and find online educational outlets to pursue personal learning interests.

Sixth grade students are researching and designing digitally produced visuals to create a collaborative display case on international soccer to share with



Bucknell Elementary students Jashonn Brickhouse (center) and Johnathan Hernandez (right) with sixth grade teacher Amanda Frank.

students in K-5. Last month, Bucknell participated in the international Hour of Code for the second year.

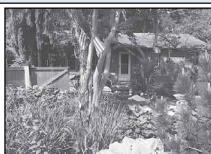
Meredith Cosier, the art teacher, is teaching video game design to fifth and sixth graders. Students are starting to learn how to create digital art and will apply it to programming in February. In art, students also learn about physical computing and will be creating functional game controllers with clay and Makey Makeys (circuit boards that connect to a computer)





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baths and 2 bedrooms, but 3rd bedroom could be easily configured from part of the large Family Room addition. Walk-in closet. Newer HVAC, replacement windows, new hot water heater. WAYNEWOOD ELEMENTARY.



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Alex./Mt. Vernon Woods 4006 Buckman Road \$449,900



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OPINION

Safety Net for Holiday Celebrations

It's an opportunity to talk about responsibility, alcohol and planning ahead.

he holiday party season is here, and we will almost all be celebrating in some way. Some ways will involve celebrations that include alcohol.

It's up to you to make a plan to get home safely.

Plan to bring a designated driver. Plan to party (and live) where you can take public transportation. Plan to celebrate at home or someplace where you can spend the night. Plan to abstain.

EDITORIAL

And if all of that fails, the Washington Regional Alcohol Project has a safety net for you.

WRAP, a local nonprofit organization, will offer free cab rides to would-be impaired drivers throughout Northern Virginia during the winter holidays.

The annual Holiday SoberRide program will operate nightly from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. starting Friday, Dec. 11, 2015, and continuing until Thursday, Jan. 1, 2016 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period.

During these times, area residents 21-andover, celebrating with alcohol can call the tollfree SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI for a no-cost (up to \$30 fare), safe way home. Callers will be responsible for fare amounts

over \$30.

WRAP also offers free cab rides for other holidays, including Halloween, Independence Day, Cinco de Mayo, and more.

Concerns about consequences of driving under the influence are well founded.

In Fairfax County in 2014 there were 740 alcohol-related crashes, which included 12 alcohol related fatalities and 476 alcohol related injuries. (Overall in Fairfax County in 2014, there were 13,680 total crashes including 32 fatalities and 7,649 injuries.)

In 2014, there were no fatal vehicular accidents in the City of Alexandria. But of the 1,777 total crashes, 99 were alcohol-related; and of the 757 injuries in crashes, 60 were alcohol-

In Arlington in 2014, there were 235 alcohol related crashes, with two alcohol-related fatalities and 78 alcohol related injuries. (Overall in Arlington in 2014, there were 2,469 with five fatalities and 1,094 injuries.)

In 2013, 10,076 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third of all traffic-related deaths in the United States, according to the CDC. Tens of thousands more were injured. Holidays lead to an increase in impaired driving, the Christmas through New Year season in particular.

Safe Ride Home

WRAP's 2015 Holiday SoberRide program will be offered from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. nightly from Dec. 11, 2015 to Jan. 1, 2016. To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294 (TAXI). You must be 21 or older to use the SoberRide service. See

Since 1993, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided more than 63,000 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

We know that many young people over 21 are living at home with parents, or will be visiting for the holidays. Parents, be brave. Have a conversation with your children, whether they are under or over 21. Be sure those over 21 have a plan, and are equipped with the SoberRide number.

SoberRide is not available for underage drinkers, but parents still should talk to their children about their plans, and tell them out loud that you expect them not to drive impaired and not to get into a car with an impaired driver. Tell them to call you, and you'll come get them if necessary.

The consequences and vulnerabilities of drinking to excess are significant, more so for underage drinkers and young adults, even beyond drinking and driving. Don't let the opportunity to talk about it pass you by.

> MARY KIMM MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

LETTER

How To Fix Recycling?

To the Editor:

As a Fairfax County resident who considers herself a dedicated recycler, I was shocked and extremely disappointed to learn that Fairfax County does not, in fact, recycle the glass it collects.

According to a news article in the Dec. 3-9 Mount Vernon Gazette, "Environmental Quality of Life," the glass that is collected by the county is considered a "discard" at area recycling plants and is shipped elsewhere for disposal by third-party "material processors."

Who knew? So, it is removed from our waste stream only to be dumped somewhere else. Not a great solution.

I understand there should be an economic, as well as an environmental, incentive to help make recycling work but I find it hard to believe that a viable use for this residents and our local and gov-

Carol Cooke

Alexandria

Domestic Violence and Homelessness

By Joe Meyer Executive Director & CEO Shelter House, Inc.

hat if you wake up one day in fear of your physical safety? What would you do if you had absolutely no access to any of your bank accounts? What if you found yourself completely isolated from your friends and family and had no resources? Unfortunately, these are the very real situations that victims of domestic violence find themselves in before they seek out support and shelter. Commentary

Shelter House, Inc. operates Fairfax County's only 24-hour emergency domestic violence shelter, Artemis House. This past year, Artemis House increased its bed capacity from 34 to 42 trying meet the needs of the 60-100 individuals who call the Artemis House hotline on a monthly-basis.

One recent Artemis House resident "had no access to the family account, credit/debit cards. [The abuser] did not even give her, as we often see, an 'allowance.' She could not even ask for feminine hygiene products. He made all the financial decisions and still accused her of stealing money," says Suzanne Pigg, director of Artemis House.

Statistics show that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. glass cannot be found. What can Chances are you either have been or know someone who has been in a situation of domestic violence. ernment officials do to change And in 2015, 41 percent of adults in families who were homeless reported that it was because of domestic violence. This is an alarming increase from 33 percent in 2014.

Because of the overlapping circumstances of

homelessness and domestic violence, Artemis House isn't the only safe-haven for victims of domestic violence. Shelter House operates two other family shelters — Katherine Hanley and Patrick Henry Family Shelters, that house an overwhelming amount of homeless families who have also experienced and been affected by domestic violence. This is an addition to Shelter House's transitional and permanent supportive housing services — programs that also see a large amount of cases where families are affected by domestic violence. Why are so many fami-

lies who are homeless affected by domestic violence? One big reason is 98 percent of domestic violence cases involve financial abuse. Many families who are homeless

have experienced having an abuser control their access to accounts, imposing a strict allowance of funds or coercing them into signing documents for loans or leases. The ways in which financial abuse occurs varies, but is consistent threat and serves as an effective and damaging way for an abuser to keep a victim under their control. Domestic violence, and the homelessness that it can lead to, are not separate or isolated issues. They are intertwined issues that affect individuals and families and communities. It is up to us as a community to speak out against abusers and stand in solidarity with those who have been victim of domestic violence and financial abuse. Help us raise awareness and make an impact by visiting www.shelterhouse.org and find out ways you can get involved.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, contact the 24-hour county hotline or Artemis House hotline to discuss: 24 hour hotline/helpline: 703-360-7273, TTY: 703-435-1235 Artemis House: 703-435-4940

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

THROUGH DEC. 11

Citrus Sale Deadline for Orders. The Mount Vernon Evening Lions Club will be taking orders for oranges and grapefruit. Order deadline is Friday, Dec. 11; delivery on Dec. 19. Call Andrea Corsillo, 703-960-4973.

THROUGH DEC. 15

Holiday Gift Drive. At Hollin Meadows Elementary School, 2310 Nordok Place. Donate an unwrapped gift to help Hollin Meadows students and families. Toys, books, LEGOs, puzzles, multicultural dolls, board games, and gift cards are being accepted. Contact Nancy Engler at recordingsecretaryhmpta@gmail.com.

DEC. 11-JAN. 1

Holiday SoberRide. 10 p.m.-6 a.m. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the annual Holiday SoberRide program will provide free cab rides up to \$30. Call 1-800-200-TAXI.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 9

Mount Vernon District Budget Town

Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at Carl Sandburg Middle School, 8428 Fort Hunt Road. Because projected costs for items such as student enrollment

growth, state mandated retirement, health insurance costs, and employee salary increases are increasing more than projected revenues, Fairfax County Public School anticipates a significant budget shortfall for the school year 2016-17 (FY 2017). Visit www.fcps.edu/

THURSDAY/DEC, 10

Business Breakfast. 8-9:30 a.m. at Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road. Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce holds annual breakfast meeting featuring Inova Mount Vernon Hospital. Cost is \$25. Call 703-360-6925.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway; and Heritage Presbyterian Church, 8503 Fort Hunt Road. Alice's Kids, a nonprofit that serves hundreds of needy children throughout Fairfax County, will be holding its third annual gift-wrapping fundraiser. \$3 suggested donation. Visit www.aliceskids.org for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 10

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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

United Community Ministries seeks volunteers to act as food pantry assistants, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office admin/data entry, community outreach, ESL teachers and co-teachers, and teacher aides. Visit www.ucmagency.org/volunteer-at-

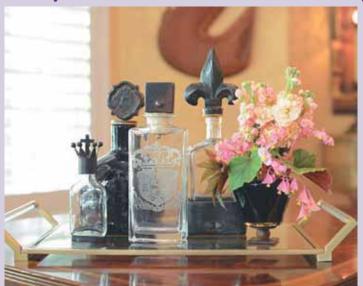
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Old Town Commons 815 N. Alfred Street, Alexandria VA

Sunlit 4 level brick end unit TH w/front porch, deck & rooftop terrace. Hardwood floors on 3 levels, heated tile on 4th. Gourmet kitchen w/island & counter seating. 2-car garage. \$974,500 Karen Leonard MLS # AX8634639



Manors at Mt. Vernon 8307 Centerbrook Place, Alexandria VA

Totally ready for you - Move in for the holidays w/a warm fire in beamed ceiling family rm off gourmet kitchen, 4 BR, 4.5 BA, 2-car gar, fin. Basement/tons of storage. Great value! \$939,000 Bonnie Rivkin MLS # FX8760765

Wellington Manor 1133 Arcturus Lane, Alexandria VA

Pristine three bedroom, 2 bath home on gorgeous .47 acre lot. Charming front porch, large deck and patio, gleaming hardwood floors. New Price! \$634,900

Karen Leonard MLS # FX8762034



Warwick Village 241 Burgess Avenue, Alexandria VA

Completely renovated 3 level town house in Warwick Village. \$560,000

Michelle Mitchell MLS # AX9529133

Open House Sunday 2-4pm Glebewood Village 2109 N **Brandywine Street, Arlington VA** Architecturally stunning brick townhome. Amazing N. Arlington location. NO HOA Fees/NO condo fees! 2 bed/2 bath/ hardwoods remodeled top to bottom, custom molding/fenced yard w/deck!. \$499,000 Lyssa Seward MLS # AR9503228



Alexandria 310 King St. | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.518.8300

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HomeLifeStyle

Ideas for Decking the Halls

Local designers create opulent holiday designs.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL THE GAZETTE

rom traditional to glamorous, fresh to faux and high-end to old school, local tastemakers tell how they create dazzling holiday design extravaganzas.

Karen Velehoski and the rest of the design team at Merrifield Garden Center in Fair Oaks spend nearly a year planning and building the holiday displays that overtake each store during the Yuletide season.

In creating the holiday wonderlands, the designers assemble each space around a theme, maintaining consistency in style, color and texture. Their goal is to dream up design concepts that will inspire.

"We hope that people will get ideas for their own homes, but the first step is to focus on color," said Velehoski. "You can incorporate family heirlooms or decorations that

you've had for years if you coordinate the colors. You can really use ribbons to tie the colors together easily."

For example, they designed a rustic

"I love the mood and ambiance of white lights.

- Gretchen Fuss, **Tchoupitoulas Furnishings**

space that draws inspiration from a snow-covered forest. "It's decorated



Gretchen Fuss, an interior designer with Tchoupitoulas Furnishings, created this holiday tree.

with things like branches, berries, birds and other outdoor animals," said Velehoski. "And we used red, plaid ribbon to keep the outdoorsy feel.'

There's another winter scene that sparkles with décor in hues of gold, copper and platinum, and a classic display that pays homage to time-honored traditions. "It appeals to people who like greens, reds and poinsettias," said Velehoski. "This year we incorporated a little bit of black with that red, white and green which is pretty."

There's even inspiration for those with a penchant for pastels. "It has an icy look," said Velehoski. "It has an icy, frozen winter

6821 Richmond Highway / Alexandria, VA 22306

wonderland feel with snowflakes and icicles. We used a lot of pale blue, pink and a touch of silver."

Simple, clean and fresh are words that Gretchen Fuss, an interior designer with Tchoupitoulas Furnishings in Alexandria, uses to characterize her holiday design aesthetic.

"I don't like to over do it when it comes to holiday design," she said. "I love the mood and ambiance of white lights. It changes the feel of a room. I like candlelit rooms."

Fuss says she uses a minimalist approach to incorporating family heirlooms with new acquisitions. "I do little vignettes where I'll have a piece, for example, that my mother once used to store ornaments in, and I'll use that to display fresh greenery."

The designer has even created holiday adornments of her own. "I've made holiday sculptures," said Fuss. "I even made little flower-shaped sculptures that I put together to make a six-foot tall Christmas tree."

Fuss adds white back-lighting, which shines through each flower petal, illuminating the

Candles, ribbons and bows hanging on a mantle, swags of greenery and garlands draped over wall art and mirrors are what visitors who enter the spaces created by the designers of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria will see.

"... A string of lights combined with ornaments might flow down the center of a table, or shine inside a cloche combined with a winter wonderland theme," said designer Amanda Mertins.

For an exterior space, Mertins advises using a twinkling wreath or a lit arrangement in an urn to greet guests at the front door.



Photo courtesy of Patina Polished Living

Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living advises using an urn to greet guests at the front door.

Maintaining thematic consistency is a precept that designer Jenne Whitlaw, of GTM Architects in Bethesda, Md., recommends when conceiving ideas for holiday spaces. "Pick a central focal point, and echo the sentiment around the space, for both indoor and outdoor," she said. "This allows the eve to bounce around your holiday canvas, experiencing asymmetrical visual harmony and balance."

For those who prefer holiday decor in muted hues, Whitlaw suggests, "neutrals [like] winter white and pale greys, when paired with light, reflective metallics and sparkle add elegance and a sense of timeless wonder to every room."

For a touch of whimsy, Whitlaw recommends adding decorations to unexpected places.

"For a surprising embellishment, how about placing ornaments around the vanity in your powder room?" asks Whitlaw. "Chandeliers are also a perfect theatre in the round for cascading trinkets and greenery."





CRIME

The following incidents were reported by the Mount Vernon District Police Sta-

ROBBERY: 7700 block of Richmond Highway, Dec. 3, around 6 a.m. A man robbed a 53-year-old woman at gunpoint as she was walking to work. The suspect took her purse and fled. He was described as black, between 20 and 25 years old, about 5 feet 6 inches tall and 140 pounds. He wore jogging clothes. The victim did not require medical attention. All of the victim's property was recovered nearby.

DEC. 8 **LARCENIES**

7600 block of Richmond Hwy, property from business

6700 block of Richmond Hwy, property from business

7400 block of Mount Vernon Square, property from business

7400 block of Vernon Square Dr., property from residence STOLEN VEHICLES

2800 block of Memorial St, 2003 **BMW**

2500 block of Parkers Lane, unknown year Ford Focus

6700 block of Tower Dr., 2004 Dodge Stratus

DEC. 7

LARCENIES

6100 block of North Kings Highway, beer from business.

5900 block of Richmond Highway, property from gym.

6300 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business.

6400 block of Richmond Highway, license plates from vehicle.

6900 block of Columbia Drive, property from vehicle.

6300 block of South Kings Highway, purse from business.

7400 block of Fordson Road, phone from business.

7900 block of East Boulevard Drive, phone from business.

8400 block of Richmond Highway, property from business.

9300 block of Mount Vernon Circle, property from vehicle.

DEC. 5 **LARCENIES**

6300 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise stolen from business

2900 block of Huntington Grove Square, property stolen from vehicle 7100 block of Fairchild Drive, license

DEC. 3

LARCENIES

plate stolen from vehicle

8500 block of Richmond Highway, property stolen from vehicle

7500 block of Richmond Highway,

property stolen from vehicle 7900 block of Fort Hunt Road, mer-

chandise stolen from business 1700 block of Olde Towne Road, property stolen from vehicle

3700 block of Heather Court, alcohol stolen from residence

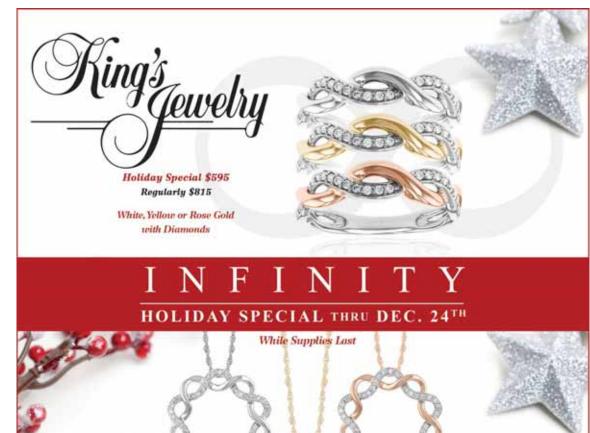
DEC. 2 **LARCENIES**

6700 block of Richmond Highway, beer stolen from business

7900 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise stolen from business 5800 block of North Kings Highway,

beer stolen from business 8700 block of Village Green Court,

property stolen from residence 7900 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise stolen from business.



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A blacksmith works on shaping a leaf that will become part of a handle, as visitors watch.



Tours by Candlelight

Debbie
Loughner is
one of the
many interpreters
leading the
Mount
Vernon by
Candlelight
tours.





The shops and Education Center are trimmed with Mount Vernon themed holiday decorations.

Photos by Renée Ruggles The Gazette



Several bonfires were available for warmth and historical interpreters led guests in singing period carols.



Guests were invited to the Greenhouse to learn a period dance. Conor Dillon takes turn dancing with one of the historical re-enactors, as his friend Charles Palmer stands ready for his turn.



CHRIS WHITE

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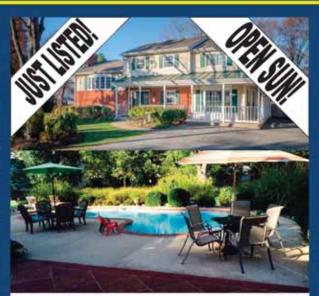
9329 Mount Vernon Circle \$1,195,000 One of Area's Most Admired Properties!

Classic Georgian manor home crafted by legendary master builder, Eugene Cullinane to serve as model for homes in upscale Mt Vernon on the Potomac neighborhood. Special home contains builder's trademark features including custom brickwork, elaborate plaster moldings, estates size rooms, stately 10' ceilings & imposing 13' wide foyer. Private marina access in area's leading waterfront community. True one of a kind



9119 Buckner Rd \$598,922 Character Abounds—Backs to Parkland!

Classic Cape, carefully expanded to maintain the character of the original home and capitalize on natural beauty of half acre grounds. Numerous features include 3 full baths with potential first floor master suite, hardwood floors, spacious family room overlooking grounds. Oversize carport. Expansive exterior decks overlook magnificent grounds. Uniquely beautiful, private setting backing to acres of parkland at Grist



8931 Fort Hunt Rd \$755,000 Prime Location—Updated Throughout!

Best value in prestigious Plymouth Haven! Fabulous updated 5BR home on magnificent half acre lot. Prime location just across from Ft Hunt Park. Spacious home is loaded with upgrades and custom features. Stunning beautiful grounds with custom in-ground pool. Waynewood School. Adjoining property just sold for \$1.6. Other recent neighborhood sales \$1.5 - \$1.7. Super value. Open Sunday 12/13, 1-4PM! GW Pky S; R-Fort Hunt Rd, stay R at park entrance to continue on Ft Hunt.



9408 Brambly Lane \$1,095,000 Spectacular New Price!

Spacious Colonial by Vakefield Homes-the rea's leading custom builder! Home has striking open floor plan accentuated by high

ceilings and large windows which bring light to every corner of the home. Numerous fabulous features include: 3 luxurious finished levels, open kitchen-family room, spacious master suite and oversize 3 car garage. Deck overlooks private wooded yard. Prime location on quiet cul-de-sac. Impossible to duplicate at close to this price!



8708 Plymouth Rd \$1,499,000

Classic American Four Square Design—Special Pre-Construction Price! Best of both worlds-classic American Four Square exterior combined with stunning modern floor plan and amenities. Numerous features include open floor

plan, high ceilings, top line kitchen and baths. Prime location on half acre level lot in popular Plymouth Haven. Pre-construction contract provides maximum opportunity to customize and discounted price!



3719 Riverwood Rd \$709,000

Fabulous Opportunity-Prestigious Riverwood! Exceptionally attractive price for updated Colonial in premier riverfront community. Recent work including custom interior paint and beautifully

refinished hardwood floors provide true "move-in" opportunity! Other features include main level family room w/fireplace & custom built-ins, bright white kitchen, 4 spacious bedrooms, thermal windows, 2 car garage. Gorgeous setting on large fenced lot.





\$659,000

Gorgeous Designer Kitchen!

8824 Stratford Lane \$949,000 **Best New Home** Value in Stratford





4005 Mavis Ct \$698,900 Stunning Open Floor Plan!

Spacious & open-truly spectacular property with stunning family room addition. Expansive glass

valls, soaring cathedral ceilings & open floor plan bring light to every corner of the home. Other features include custom, gourmet kitchen with huge 17x6 pantry. Updated baths and oversize 2 car garage. Huge deck capitalizes on private back yard. Prime location on quiet cul-de-sac in heart of Mt Vernon!



CHRIS WHITE 703.283.9028

www.chrisandpeggywhite.com chris.white@longandfoster.com Alexandria/Old Town Historic - 400 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314



Baked Treats Decorate Firehook's Holiday Table

The buche de Noel, sugar cookies, and sourdough bread won't disappoint at next holiday dinner party.

BY HOPE NELSON The Gazette

hink about the holidays for a moment. What comes to mind first? Maybe a Christmas carol, or maybe the Fraser fir that sits stately in the living room. But surely the thought of cookies and milk — or pies and pastries — isn't far behind. At APPETITE Firehook Bakery, such sweets (as well as savory treats) are

After more than 20 years in Alexandria, Firehook's bakers and staff have gotten their holiday season plans down to a science, says co-founder Pierre Abushacra. During the ramp-up to last year's Christmas season, "We were panicked because there was no panic!" he laughed. "... We're lucky in that

at the top of mind every day - and espe-

cially so during the holiday season.

we have same really great people and bakers that have been with us since Day One (and) are still with the company."

That longevity certainly comes in handy this time of year, when holiday items are being rolled out at a rapid pace. From sugar cookies to pear-cran-

berry almond tarts to many sweets in between, the treats are seemingly endless. But one stands out as a centerpiece just waiting to be put into the spotlight: The buche

"The one dessert that has been a staple for us at Firehook and has a little bit of personal history for me is the Yule log, the buche de Noel," Abushacra said, explaining that his own mother spent many holiday seasons decorating Yule logs in his uncle's bakery. Each year, "we would get a free Yule log for the family, and I never, never thought I would carry on that tradition years later."

But throughout the years at Firehook, Abushacra has done just that. And the Yule log has become one of the bakery's staples each and every holiday season.

So too have Firehook's breads, a savory treat so often overlooked (but desperately needed for the dinner table) during the holi-

day season. Whereas the bakery once played host to 250 different kinds of bread, Firehook has recently pared its selection down to 25. And that, Abushacra says, has made all the difference in terms of quality and bakers' inspiration. Now, bakers can spend more time on each loaf of bread and can



Holiday treats abound at Firehook Bakery on South Washington Street.

offer customers fresh-baked loaves on a set timetable, allowing for 5 or 6 breads on the permanent rotation every day of the week, plus a rotating schedule of a half-dozen more as each day goes by.

Along with the new bread lineup, Firehook has introduced a new sourdough starter that hits very close to home: Bakers harvested the grapevine garden grapes from Firehook's Cleveland Park location and made their own sourdough starter with it. That starter now serves as the base for all of the bakery's sourdough bread in every store, Abushacra says.

"The grapes came from a garden that's about 55 years old," adjacent to the former Roma Restaurant (and current Firehook) in Cleveland Park, Abushacra said. And in terms of the bread menu at large, "the quality of the breads really makes me proud of what we've done. Maintaining and bringing that back is great. It makes me feel

Longtime Alexandrians will remember that Firehook took over the space formerly occupied by the old Shuman's Bakery, another holiday destination year in and year out. Abushacra says it's an honor to have been in the space for so long.

"We are blessed that we started in Old Town and we remained as part of the community. We're very proud of our roots."

Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchen recessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

Details

Firehook Bakery

Address: 430 S. Washington St. Hours: 6:30 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday; 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.

For your holiday party: "The Yule log

tends to get the celebration started," cofounder Pierre Abushacra says. "... It's great because you can slice it thin and it keeps very well. It's a delicious, light cake. We have two - a chocolate and a Grand Marnier. It looks beautiful as a presentation for a centerpiece, and it's easy to serve. You can slice it and once it's sliced the slices look nice."

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Family Events

THROUGH DEC. 15

Holiday Gift Drive. At Hollin Meadows Elementary School, 2310 Nordok Place. Donate an unwrapped gift to help Hollin Meadows students and families. Toys, books, LEGOs, puzzles, multicultural dolls, board games, and gift cards are being accepted. Contact Nancy Engler at recordingsecretaryhmpta@gmail.com.

THROUGH JAN. 6

Christmas at Mount Vernon. 9

a.m.-4 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Visit George Washington's estate and see Aladdin the camel on the grounds, in honor of the camel that Washington paid to visit Mount Vernon in 1787. Stroll through Mount Vernon's modern buildings and view sparkling holiday decorations, featuring 12 dazzling Christmas trees, and historical chocolate-making demonstrations. Also visit the rarely-open third floor of the Mansion. All is included in the general admission price which is \$17 for adults, \$16 for seniors, \$9 for youth ages 6-11, and free for children 5 and under. Visit www.mountvernon.org/christmas for

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Breakfast with Santa. 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. Eat a pancake breakfast, make crafts, and play games. \$5 per person, families of 5 or more pay a flat \$25 family rate. Visit www.facebook.com/

MVHSClassof2019. Civil War Christmas in Camp at

Fort Ward. 12-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Visitors meet a Civil War-era Santa at this holiday event exploring how Christmas was observed during the Civil War. The program features living-history interpreters, a Victorian Christmas tree, refreshments, readings of The Night Before Christmas and a patriotic Santa Claus inspired by a Thomas Nast illustration for Harper's Weekly newspaper. Suggested donation is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children. Call 703-746-4848 or www.fortward.org.

Christmas Candlelight Service.

5:45-8 p.m. at Alexandria Presbyterian Church, 2405 Russell Road. This service of lessons and carols will feature APC choirs, brass quintet and carol singing. Reception to follow. Free. Visit www.alexandriapres.org for more.

"A Christmas Carol." 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. NYC actor

/ playwright, Greg Oliver Bodine performs "A Christmas Carol." This one-man play is based on the condensed version Dickens himself used on his historic reading tours of the United States. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for children. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 12-13

Christmas Tree Sale. 12-4:30 p.m. at 2911 Cameron Mills Road. Find 4-13 foot fresh-cut fir trees. Trees priced \$35-175. Call 304-703-1350

Historic Alexandria Candlelight

Tours. 6-9 p.m. on Saturday, 3-6 p.m. on Sunday at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St; Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St; Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St.; and The Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St. Tour Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Carlyle House, The Lloyd House and Lee-Fendall House. Seasonal libations may be purchased along the tour. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for active military and seniors (65 and older), and \$5 for children (ages 6-17). Visit

www.shop.alexandriava.gov.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 18-19 **Christmas Illuminations at Mount**

Vernon. 5:30-9 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.

Enjoy choir performances, fireworks, visit with re-enactors, learn 18thcentury dance moves, learn how chocolate was made in the 18th century, and more. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$20 for youth. Visit www.mountvernon.org/christmas

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

Brunch with Santa. 9-11:30 a.m. at The Pub by Wegmans, 7905 Hilltop Village Center Drive. Families are invited to a breakfast with a special brunch menu and a visit from Santa. Free to attend. Call 571-527-2465.

SUNDAY/DEC. 20

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. 5-8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Take character-guided tours, listen to caroling, watch 18thcentury dancing, and see a reproduction of Martha Washington's "Great Cake" recipe. "Mrs. Washington" and Aladdin the Christmas camel will also be on site. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$15 for youth. Visit www.mountvernon.org/christmas.

TUESDAY-THURSDAY/DEC. 22-24

Meet Santa. 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Union Street Public House, 121 S. Union St. Children get approximately five minutes to meet and take pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus. A \$20 fee reserves a time slot, professional photos with be available for purchase. Visit www.unionstreetpublichouse.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 24

Water Skiing Santa. 1-2 p.m. at Old Town Alexandria Waterfront, between King and Oronoco streets. Attend a holiday-themed watersports show along the Potomac. Free. Visit www.waterskiingsanta.com

THURSDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. 2 p.m.-12 a.m. at venues throughout Old Town and Alexandria. This 21st annual New Year's Eve celebration will feature more than 175 performances at 29 indoor venues, with live music, dancing, children's face painting and games. The afternoon's Seventh Annual Fun Hunt is accompanied by all-new activities for families and pets. There's an old fashioned carnival at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Del Ray, First Night's fireworks finale returns with a spectacular display over the Potomac River at midnight. Tickets are \$20 before Dec. 14, \$30 after. Admission for children 12 and under seniors, military, and volunteers are

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

www.firstnightalexandria.org.

Fine Arts

THROUGH JAN. 3

Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery: Winter Wonderland." Gallery hours at The Torpedo Factory Art Center-Studio 18, 105 N. Union St. Artists working in textile focus on "sparkle and shine, clean and white."

www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 18

Holiday Wine Tasting. 7-9 p.m. at The Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. The Factory Society, the official young-professionals group of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, hosts an after-hours holiday wine tasting. Attendees will have an opportunity to talk with resident artists in their studios and watch them work while meeting and networking with other young-professionals. Wines and light desserts will be paired with each studio along the tour. Tickets are \$30. Visit www.torpedofactory.org/ holidaywine.

Performing Arts

THROUGH DEC. 19

"A Christmas Carol." 8 p.m. Thursday-Friday, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. The Little Theatre of Alexandria performs the classic Victorian tale of Ebenezer Scrooge who travels with ghostly guides through Christmas past, present and

future to find the true meaning of the holidays. Tickets are \$15. Visit www.thelittletheatre.com.

THROUGH DEC. 27

"A Broadway Christmas Carol." Various times at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. Created by Kathy Feininger and directed by Michael Sharp, this MetroStage holiday tradition is a

cross between the classic Dickens' tale and Broadway parodies. Tickets are \$50. Visit www.metrostage.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Jane Franklin Holiday Celebration GiftFest Performance. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Watch a performance of "Incidence." Find a gift wrap challenge, raffles, food, and 'mystery gifts." Free. Visit www.janefranklin.com for more

THURSDAY/DEC. 10-13

"A Stable Christmas." Various times at First Baptist Church Alexandria, 2932 King St. Join the cast, chorus, and orchestra of First Baptist Church of Alexandria's 2015 production of the Living Christmas Tree, "A Stable Christmas." The production features traditional and contemporary holiday music, a 25-foot Christmas tree filled with 110+ singers and 50,000+ synchronized lights and the story of Jim and Dot, as they begin their lives together. Tickets are \$7 each plus a \$1 service charge per transaction. Visit www.fbcalexandria.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

"A Christmas Carol." 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. NYC actor

Dominion

/ playwright, Greg Oliver Bodine performs "A Christmas Carol." This one-man play is based on the condensed version Dickens himself used on his historic reading tours of the United States. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for children. Visit www.nvfaa.org

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

"Nutcracker in a Nutshell." 1 p.m. at Nannie J. Lee Center-Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. Metropolitan School of the Arts, of Alexandria and Lorton, presents a 30minute Nutcracker performance for younger audiences, who are looking for an abbreviated version of the classic Nutcracker. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for ages 9 and younger. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org.

Live Music

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Ave. The NOVA Community Chorus and Alexandria Band and Jazz Ensemble perform. Free. Visit www.nvcc.edu.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Chanukah Concert. 7 p.m. at Congregation Etz Hayim, 2920 Arlington Blvd., Arlington. Ein Lanu Z'man is the official band of Agudas Achim Congregation, located in Alexandria. Ein Lanu Z'man's music comes from the Jewish tradition, with a diverse repertoire that

SEE PAGE 14



individual

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ssiah

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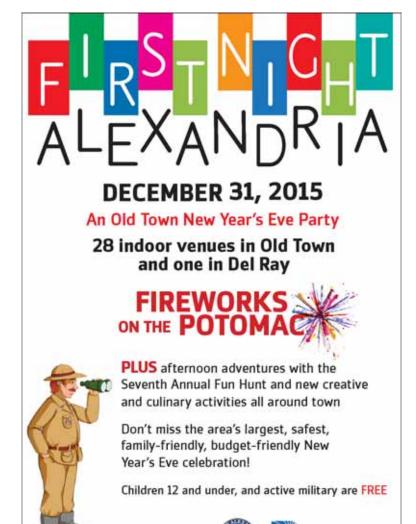
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Personalize Hostess Gifts for the Season

From one end of King Street to the other.

Want to branch out from the traditional flowers and wine to present a personalized hostess gift this year? Local Alexandria businesses offer a wide variety of gifts for that holiday party or dinner.

- SHIRLEY L. RUHE



Olio at 1223 King Street offers a combination of 50 olive oils and vinegars. Penny Willimann, an employee at the store, says the most popular purchase is the gift boxes which allow customization of a box of four small bottles of oil and or vinegars. At this time of the year fig basalmic and rosemary olive oil or cranberry basalmic and blood orange olive oil are popular combinations. William says the store has a tasting room so people can come in anytime and taste any of the selections before they decide on their purchase.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE GAZETTE;

Gift boxes of miniature peanut butter cookies shaped like Christmas trees, paw prints and candy canes greet the canine or human visitor to The Dog Park at 705 King St. Anna Fitzgerald, the owner, says the cookies don't have any sugar so they wouldn't taste good to us but dogs love them." She said a customer had just bought a box to take to a party for her boss's dog. Just inside the door is a wall of toys. "My Australian cattle dog mix loves this one, a gingerbread with a bite mark on the foot." There is also a selection of Hanukkah cookies as well as individual larger treats in bright holiday shapes. Holiday dog-themed towels are also a popular gift. A set of stone coasters for either dogs or cats proclaims "UR sitting in my chair" or "put down UR drink and pet me."

Blüprint Chocolatiers at 1001 King Street have two new holiday boxes with 12 candies each including "Let it Snow," the non-alcoholic selection, and "Holiday Cheer," the alcoholic selection including eggnog with dark rum, glögg with brandy and dry red wine and candy cane with Rumple Minze peppermint schnapps. Kim Gustafson, owner with her husband, said the most popular is the ginger, ginger, ginger which is a milk and dark chocolate ganache with fresh ginger, crystallized ginger and roasted ginger on top and also the simple vanilla bean with the "cute as can be colorful sparkling purple on top." Gustafson said the local support is about 70 percent of the business and has been great since they opened mid-April. She said, "If the store was burning down and you could take only one candy with you mine would be 'the porto,' a rich dark chocolate ganache with Six Grapes Port."



Carluccio's at 100 King St. offers a large selection of Italian products that would be perfect for hostess gifts. Mickey Asnicar, director of U.S. Marketing, says the Panettone or "big bread" is the traditional national Christmas cake in Italy. The legend is that Tone was working in a baking shop and sought to impress the daughter of his master so he made a big sweet cake and won her heart. In addition, Baci di Dama, hazelnut biscuits from the Piedmont, are a good gift if the family has children. Fiocchi di Neve are meringues with crushed hazelnuts, good for sharing at the end of a meal. And the hostess would especially appreciate a package of pappardelle fine egg pasta from Italy with a jar of porcini and tomato sauce or the fresh lasagna or Lugiana sausage or pesto sauce that she can serve the next day to eliminate cooking the "day after."

HOLIDAY GUIDE

FROM PAGE 13

features folk, classical, and rock influences, among others. Tickets are \$15 in advance for adults, \$18 at the door, \$10 for students, and \$5 for preschool-aged children. Visit www.focusmusic.org for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

Music in the Gallery: The Mount Vernon Flutes. 2 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. The Mount Vernon Flutes perform holiday classics. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

Colonial Handbell Ringers. 2 p.m.

and 4 p.m. at the Lyceum—Alexandria's History Museum, 201 S. Washington St. The Colonial English Handbell Ringers features performers from across the Maryland/D.C./ Virginia area clad in colonial attire, bringing a five-octave set of nearly 80 handbells from the world-famous Whitechapel foundry in London. Free. Visit www.alexandriahistory.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 14

The Aimee Mann & Ted Leo Christmas Show. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Aimee Mann and Ted Leo share the stage with Jonathan Coulton, Liz Phair, and more. Tickets are \$49.50 plus service fee. Visit www.birchmere.com for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 20

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: Family Holiday Concert. 3 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt St. Select musicians of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

\$20 and \$5 for youth. Visit

perform holiday classics. Tickets are

www.alexsym.org for more. **Carol Sing and Pageant.** 5:30 p.m. at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531

at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 85 Riverside Road. Cider and desserts will follow a children's nativity pageant. Free. Visit www.staidansepiscopal.com.

A Sinatra Christmas. 7 p.m. at The Carlyle Club, 2050 Ballenger Ave. Rob Zappulla performs Frank Sinatra's versions of Christmas classics. Tickets are \$28. Dinner additional. Visit www.carlyleclub.com for more.

TUESDAY/DEC. 29

Mint Condition Holiday Show.

7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. R&B group performs. Tickets are \$65. Visit www.birchmere.com for more.

Shopping

THROUGH DEC. 20

Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market. Various times at Del Ray Artisans,

2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Del Rav's annual Holiday Market offers handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists (including pottery/ ceramics, photography, jewelry, fiber, paper crafts and glass). Find different artists each weekend. Free to attend. Visit www.thedelrayartisans.org.

THROUGH DEC. 23

Alexandria's Holiday Market.

Various Times at John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle St. Visitors can enjoy live entertainment, traditional European food and sweets, wine and beer, while shopping for arts and crafts. Free.

www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com.

Food & Drink

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

All That Glows. 7 p.m. at Woodlawn, 9000 Richmond Highway. The Woodlawn Council invites the public to a holiday open house with a "reimagined" 19th century menu. Tickets are \$200. Visit www.eventbrite.com/e/all-thatglows-tickets-19335619358.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

Cookie & Beer Tasting. 1-6 p.m. at Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler Ave. Herndon's Noshy cookie company pairs up with Port City beer. Tours are \$10. Visit www.portcitybrewing.com for more.

FRIDAY/DEC. 18 Holiday Wine Tasting. 7-9 p.m. at

The Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St. The Factory Society, the official young-professionals group of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, hosts an after-hours holiday wine tasting. Attendees will have an opportunity to talk with resident artists in their studios and watch them work while meeting and networking with other young-professionals. Wines and light desserts will be paired with each studio along the tour. Tickets are \$30. Visit www.torpedofactory.org/ holidaywine.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

"Downton Abbey Christmas Tea."

1 p.m. at The Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. Discuss what may happen in the show's final season over a traditional tea. Take a private tour of the house showing the connections between the people and places of Downton Abbey and those of the Lee-Fendall House. Tickets are \$50 per person. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org for more.

CALENDAR

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

THROUGH DEC. 23

Alexandria's Holiday Market.

Various Times at John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle St. Visitors can enjoy live entertainment, traditional European food and sweets, wine and beer, while

shopping for arts and crafts. Free. www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

"Printed Matter" Opening

Reception. 6-8 p.m. at The Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Printed Matter features a mix of works (printed media, such as xerography, book arts, and graphic design) created using traditional techniques as well as newer or reimagined ones. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

Jane Franklin Holiday Celebration GiftFest Performance. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Watch a performance of "Incidence." Find a

gift wrap challenge, raffles, food, and 'mystery gifts." Free. Visit www.janefranklin.com for more.

"Art Uniting People" Reception. 6:30 p.m. at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. "Art Uniting People - A Celebration of Recovery, Creativity and Mental Health," is an art exhibition presented every year to showcase the artwork by local individuals. Free. Visit

www.artunitingpeople.wix.com. Holiday Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Ave. The NOVA Community Chorus and Alexandria Band and Jazz Ensemble perform. Free. Visit www.nvcc.edu.

THURSDAY/DEC. 10-13

"A Stable Christmas." Various times at First Baptist Church Alexandria, 2932 King St. Join the cast, chorus, and orchestra of First Baptist Church of Alexandria's 2015 production of the Living Christmas Tree, "A Stable See Holiday Guide, Page 18







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Sports

Thomas Enters First Season as MV Head Coach

Majors beat Friendly in season opener.

By Jon Roetman The Gazette

he Mount Vernon girls' basket ball team enters the 2015-16 season with a first-year head coach and as a member of a new conference.

The result of India Thomas' debut, however, was a familiar one for Majors.

Mount Vernon defeated Friendly 49-24 on Tuesday night at Mount Vernon High School.

Both teams started slow offensively, with the Majors taking an 18-13 halftime lead. Mount Vernon pulled away in the second half, outscoring Friendly 16-4 in the third quarter. The Majors led by as many as 28, when a pair of free throws by Elisa Solomon gave Mount Vernon a 49-21 advantage with 35.6 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter.

"I think this was a good starting point," Thomas said. "Our first win is in the books. Now, it's just about seeing what we do good, bad and improving and working our way up to the top."

While Thomas is in her first season as Mount Vernon head coach, she isn't new to the program. Thomas, a 2004 Mount Vernon High School graduate, played basketball for the Majors and continued her career at Northeastern University. She was an assistant coach at Mount Vernon for six seasons before taking over as head coach.



Mount Vernon head coach India Thomas called senior guard and team captain Elisa Solomon "one of the quickest kids in Northern Virginia."

> Photos by Jeff McQuilkin

"I really like Coach India, she's a great coach," sophomore center Susannah Anderson said. "She will coach people to bring them up in the game and she doesn't bring people down during the game, but she definitely gets her point across clear. She's not an easy coach, she's a tough coach, but for the best."

Thomas takes over a successful program that went to the 5A state tournament in 2014 under former head coach Courtney Coffer. The Majors won three consecutive National District championships from 2011-2013

Mount Vernon athletics spent two seasons as a member of 5A Conference 13 after the VHSL underwent a six-class realignment. This year, enrollment numbers increased and Mount Vernon moved up to 6A and joined Conference 7. The Majors will now compete against teams such as perennial power West Springfield, T.C. Williams and

Lake Braddock.

"There are a lot of great coaches [in Conference 7], a lot of great talent, and I think the main thing with this group of kids coming in [is] they have to understand that it's all about the little things now," Thomas said. "It's all about the correct passing, it's about rebounding, it's about the communication on defense and just really, really knowing their roles and playing basketball the right way."

Mount Vernon showed it has room for improvement in Tuesday's opener.

"I definitely think it was nerves — a lot of nerves," senior captain Chanise Ray said about why the Majors struggled at times Tuesday. "We have a lot of fresh players on the team, a lot of young players and some of the returners are having a hard time jelling with everybody else."

Solomon led the Majors with 10 points. Anderson scored eight points and junior



Sophomore center Susannah Anderson scored eight points against Friendly in the Majors' season opener on Tuesday.

guard Destiny Wilder finished with six.

Ray, Anderson and Solomon are team captains.

Ray will play point guard this season, something she has done in the past for the Majors.

"With Chanise over the years, she's kind of split — she's played point guard a little bit and the [shooting] guard [position]," Thomas said. "This year, she's going to spend a lot more time at the point guard."

Anderson can be a difference-maker as a 6-foot post player, but Thomas wants her to change her on-court demeanor.

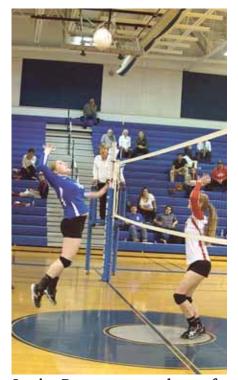
"My biggest thing with Susannah, even from last year to this year, is I want to see the physicality," Thomas said. "... I want her to be more aggressive down low in the paint — a little bit mean. Susannah is a sweetheart, she's a sweet kid, but I don't want her to be so sweet on the court. I want her show a little bit more aggression, get a little meaner, a little tougher."

Thomas said players look up to Solomon. "She's one of the quickest kids in Northern Virginia," Thomas said. "Now we want to get her knowing that and playing with confidence."

Thomas said the Majors are hoping to get 6 or 8 points per game, if not more, from sophomore Nori Solomon.

Mount Vernon will travel to face Bell Multicultural High School at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 11. The Majors will open conference play on the road against Woodson on Dec. 15.

West Potomac's Dorn, Lindsey Honored



Jessica Dorn was named one of West Potomac's November Featured Athletes of the Month.

enior Jessica Dorn and junior Zach Lindsey were named West Potomac's November Featured Athletes of the Month.

Dorn was a co-captain of the volleyball team. She always showed an outstanding commitment to the entire Wolverine volleyball program. She was recognized as a natural leader on and off the court and for setting an example by the level of her dedication and positive attitude. On the court, Dorn was one of West Potomac's top scorers in blocks and kills. Off the court, she organized and led a youth volleyball camp at West Potomac this summer. Dorn inspired younger athletes by her willingness to nurture, help and guide them.

Lindsey earned all-region honors after placing 15th at the regional cross country meet. He also earned first-team All-Conference 7 honors with a seventh-place finish at the conference meet and led the team to qualify for regionals. Individually, Lindsey qualified for the 6A state meet, where he finished 37th. He has been the team's top finisher in every meet this season. He earned a spot on West Potomac's all-time list at Burke Lake and has had top-20 fin-



Zach Lindsey was named one of West Potomac's November Featured Athletes of the Month.

ishes at two major invitationals. He was recognized for leading by example by consistently working hard and improving each week.



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- Ralph Waldo

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that two brief fireworks displays will take place as part of a public event at George Washington's Mount Vernon on the following date:

Friday, December 18 between 9:00 p.m. and 9:15p.m (15 minutes)

Saturday, December 19 between 9:00 p.m. and 9:15p.m.

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption. To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via e-mail, write to Events@MountVernon.org

The biggest things are always the easiest to do because there is no competition. -William Van Horne

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Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, City of Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, December 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 12-2-1 (ESTABLISHMENT; COMPOSITION; APPOINTMENT; TERM OF OFFICE; REMOVAL) of Chapter 2 (ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD), Title 12 (EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELFARE) of the Code of the City

of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

The proposed ordinance will reduce the membership of the Alexandria Community Services Board from sixteen (16) members to twelve (12) members. It eliminates the requirement that one member be a licensed physician. It increases, from one-third to one-half, the number of Board members who must be either consumers or family members of consumers. Reduction of members will be accomplished by attrition.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the Owner of property located at 700-710 North Washington Street to construct and maintain an encroachment for a bow window at that location. The proposed ordinance permits the owner of 700-710 North Washington Street to construct a bow window with a cornice

that encroaches into the air space above the public sidewalk at this location. This encroachment was approved by City Council on June 13, 2015.

The proposed ordinance accomplished the final adoption of Master PlanAmendment No. 2015-0001 to amend the height map and land use map in the Alexandria West Chapter of the Master Plan to allow the Gateway at King and Beauregard

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sheet No. 003.04 of the "Official Zoning Map, Alexandria, Virginia," adopted by Section 1-300 (OFFICIAL ZONING MAP AND DISTRICT BOUN-DARIES), of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, by rezoning the property at 4530, 4600, 4600B, 4600D and 4622 King Street and 3451 North Beauregard Street from, OCM(100)/Office Commercial Medium with Proffer to CRMU-H/Commercial Residential Mixed Use High in accordance with the said zoning map amendment approved by City Council on

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Rezoning No. 2015-0001 to rezone the property at 4530, 4600, 4600B, 4600D and 4622 King Street and 3451 North Beaure-

gard Street from, OCM(100)/Office Commercial Medium with Clinton, SC Proffer to CRMU-H/Commercial Residential Mixed Use High

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Title 5 (TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES), Chapter 1 (SOLID WASTE CONTROL), Article A (GENERAL PROVISION) and Article C (SOLID WASTE COLLECTION GENERALLY) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as

The proposed ordinance amends two section of the existing solid waste code to clarify what the residential solid waste fee covers and that the costs of collecting recyclable material and leaves are included in the costs covered by that fee.

AN ORDINANCE increasing the Mayor, Council Members and

Council Aides Annual Salaries.
The proposed ordinance establishes increases for the Mayor's Gray Funeral Home of Clinton annual salary and Council members' annual salaries starting

PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of the Report of the City Council Naming Committee on a proposed Plaque to be led at the Alexandria Union Station in Honor of Lois Walker

PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of the Report of the City

Council Naming Committee proposal on the naming of the Pat Miller Neighborhood Square.

RECOMMENDED

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLICATION. IT IS

THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL. JACKIE M. HENDERSON, MMC, CITY CLERK

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21 Announcements

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OBITUARY

the home of Ed and Cheryl Ettinger, 3028 Hopewell Church Road, Kinards, SC 29355.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society, 154 Milestone Way, Greenville, SC 29615 or the charity of one's choice.

Condolences may be expressed online at www.grayfuneralhome.com

21 Announcements

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 un-claimed 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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Notice of Availability of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for Founders Hall at the National Museum of the United States

14, 2015 to the Landmark/Van Dorn chapter of such master plan and to add a new chapter of the master plan known as the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan as Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 and no other amendments, and to repeal all provisions of the said master plan as may be inconsistent with such amendment.

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the Eisenhower West Chapter of the Master Plan Amendment No. 2015-0006 to adopt the United States Army Yadated September 2010. The changes include a building addition, "Founders Hall", to the National Museum of the United States Army Valued September 2010. The Changes include a building addition, "Founders Hall" to the National Museum of the United States Army Valued September 2010. The Changes include a building with a 29 spa tive effects on the quality of the human or natural environment. The family will greet friends following the graveside service at Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be pre-

> A copy of the SEA and Draft FNSI are available for review and comment at the following libraries: Fort Belvoir Van Noy Li-brary, Lorton Branch, Sherwood Regional Branch, and Kingstowne Branch. The documents are also available at:

> http://www.belvoir.army.mil/environdocssection2.
> asp. Comments on the SEA and Draft FNSI should be
> submitted to Mr. Felix M. Mariani, Fort Belvoir DPW Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Building 1442, 9430 Jackson Loop, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060, or usarmy.belvoir.imcom-atlantic.mbx.enrd@mail.mil.
>
> Comments must be received no later than 30 days after publi-

cation of this Notice of Availability

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HOLIDAY GUIDE



Tour Mount Vernon by Candlelight

The final installment of "Mount Vernon by Candlelight" will be on Sunday, Dec. 20. Take a character-guided tour of the estate (3200 Mount Vernon Highway), listen to caroling, watch 18th-century dancing, and see a reproduction of Martha Washington's "Great Cake" recipe. "Mrs. Washington" and Aladdin the Christmas camel will also be on site. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$15 for youth. Visit www.mountvernon.org/christmas for more



From Page 15

Christmas." The production features traditional and contemporary holiday music, a 25-foot Christmas tree filled with 110+ singers and 50,000+ synchronized lights and the story of Jim and Dot, as they begin their lives together. Tickets are \$7 each plus a \$1 service charge per transaction. Visit www.fbcalexandria.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 12

Breakfast with Santa. 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. Eat a pancake breakfast, make crafts, and play games. \$5 per person, families of 5 or more pay a flat \$25 family rate. Visit www.facebook.com/MVHSClassof2019.

Brunch with Santa. 9-11:30 a.m. at The Pub by Wegmans, 7905 Hilltop Village Center Drive. Families are invited to a breakfast with a special brunch menu and a visit from Santa. Free to attend. Call 571-527-2465.

Lecture. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 N. Union St., #327. Learn the history and impact of Jonathan Roberts, a Civil War Quaker Scout and Sheriff. Free. Call 703-746-4399 for more.

Civil War Christmas in Camp at Fort Ward. 12-4 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Visitors meet a Civil War-era Santa at this holiday event exploring how Christmas was observed during the Civil War. The program features living-history interpreters, a Victorian Christmas tree, refreshments, readings of The Night Before Christmas and a patriotic Santa Claus inspired by a Thomas Nast illustration for Harper's Weekly newspaper. Suggested donation is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children. Call 703-746-4848 or www.fortward.org.

Chinquapin Park 30th Anniversary Party. 1-6 p.m. at Chinquapin Park Recreation Center & Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St. Patrons will have free use of the facility, including the indoor pool, racquetball courts, fitness room, and soft play room. Additional activities will include class demonstrations; swim lesson skill assessments; facility tours; and light refreshments. Free. Call 703-746-4343 for more.

Candlelight S Alexandria Presbyterian Church, 2405 Russell Road. This service of lessons and carols will feature APC choirs, brass quintet and carol singing. Reception to follow. Free. Visit www.alexandriapres.org for more.

Chanukah Concert. 7 p.m. at Congregation Etz Hayim, 2920 Arlington Blvd., Arlington. Ein Lanu Z'man is the official band of Agudas Achim

Congregation, located in Alexandria. Ein Lanu Z'man's music comes from the Jewish tradition, with a repertoire that features folk, classical, and rock influences, among others. Tickets are \$15 in advance for adults, \$18 at the door, \$10 for students, and \$5 for preschool-aged children.

Visit www.focusmusic.org.

"A Christmas Carol." 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum,
201 Prince St. NYC actor / playwright, Greg
Oliver Bodine performs "A Christmas Carol." This one-man play is based on the condensed version Dickens himself used on his historic reading tours of the United States. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for children. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

Collective Delusion 9:30 p.m. at John Strongbow's Tavern, 710 King St. Local band plays rock songs from 1970s to present. Free. Visit www.CollectiveDelusion.net.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 12-13

Christmas Tree Sale. 12-4:30 p.m. at 2911 Cameron Mills Road. Find 4-13 foot fresh-cut fir trees. Trees priced \$35-175. Call 304-703-1350.

Mount Vernon Mourns Tours. 5-8 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. In honor of the anniversary of George Washington's death, take a special evening tour through the candlelit Mansion, meet costumed characters, along with history interpreters, who retell firsthand experiences of the events leading up to and following the death of George Washington. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$15 for youth. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

Historic Alexandria Candlelight Tours. 6-9 p.m. on Saturday, 3-6 p.m. on Sunday at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St; Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St; Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St.; and The Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St. Tour Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Carlyle House, The Lloyd House and Lee-Fendall House. Seasonal libations may be purchased along the tour. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for active military and seniors (65 and older), and \$5 for children (ages 6-17). Visit www.shop.alexandriava.gov.

SUNDAY/DEC. 13

"Nutcracker in a Nutshell." 1 p.m. at Nannie J. Lee Center-Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. Metropolitan School of the Arts, of Alexandria and Lorton, presents a 30-minute Nutcracker performance for audiences looking for an abbreviated version of the classic. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for ages 9 and younger. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org.

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