

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 21, 2023

Celebration Collage, Abram
Larkin, 2nd grade, Fort Hunt
Elementary, Andrew Green,
Art Teacher.



Children's & Teens'
Gazette 2023

McENEARNEY ASSOCIATES



WISHES YOU A

MERRY & BRIGHT

HOLIDAY SEASON AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

During the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to our communities and to our clients. From our family to yours, we hope your holidays are filled with warmth and cheer.

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Fireworks were one of the “illuminations,” for Mount Vernon’s Christmas Illumination.

George Washington’s Mount Vernon Decked Out Holiday Style

Kicking off the holiday season with the annual Christmas Illuminations.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Over 5000 people attended the “Christmas Illuminations,” event at the Mount Vernon Estate Dec. 15 and 16. Food and drink were served at the plantation while attendees shopped at the holiday market, experienced the winter encampment, enjoyed the candlelight tours and the fireworks out over the Potomac River that concluded both nights. General and Mrs. Washington were seen among the crowd in period costumes.



Periodic ornaments hung from the tree at the Christmas Illuminations event at the Mount Vernon Estate.



A fancy dinner setting.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria resident Douglas Goist, right, poses for a photo with members of the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19 at the White House.

Frozen Fun

White House ice rink hosts local athletes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

With the White House as the backdrop, Alexandria resident Douglas Goist demonstrated his goaltending skills at an ice rink installed by President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden as part of an exhibition by the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19.

“This is a great opportunity for athletes of all abilities to come together and enjoy being on the ice,” said Goist, who has been the goalie on the US team since it was formed in 2018.

The rink is the first to be installed on the South Lawn in

43 years. First Lady Jill Biden officially opened the temporary 50-by-70-foot rink Nov. 29. It will operate by invitation only throughout December.

Area schoolchildren and children from families with service members, frontline workers, first responders and teachers are among those who have been invited to skate.

The National Hockey League and the NHL Players Association has provided lessons through their “Learn to Play/Learn to Skate” program, which provides first-time participants with free equipment, weekly sessions and coaching.

Goist and his teammates skated alongside special needs athletes, including deaf players and those in wheelchairs, who used sleds on the ice.

“It was a great experience to be here tonight,” Goist said.

“This is a great opportunity for athletes of all abilities.”

— Douglas Goist
of the US National
Blind Hockey Team



Alexandria’s Douglas Goist tends goal as part of an exhibition by the US National Blind Hockey Team Dec. 19 at the White House.



1. Construction

In the first frame, construction workers are shown building a Threshold.



2. Ignition

The threshold is seen "igniting", opening a portal to a different dimension, as a scientist looks on with awe.

Five Frame Story, A Diorama in Minecraft

Peter Scoma, 14, Grade 9, Mount Vernon, 5 Frames in Time, (Five Frame Story || A Diorama in Minecraft), Global STEM Thomas A. Edison High School.

Starting with a blank slate in the Minecraft computer application, Peter Scoma built all of the functional diorama and manipulated the people to communicate a story in 5 frames.



3. Exploration

A new dimension is being explored and mapped by researchers in hazmat suits.



4. Colonization

A large base is being constructed to harness the unique materials on the other side of the portal.



5. Destruction

In the final frame, it is clear that the researchers probed too far into the unknown, waking something dark. As scientists flee the scene the technicians on the other side attempt to close the threshold to contain the destruction.

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED

Interested in becoming a foster parent? There is always a need for caring foster parents looking to open their homes to foster youth. Get in touch to learn more. Visit fcsvanow@gmail.com or www.FCSVA.org. Or call 703-817-9890.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexi-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



Alvin Scoma, 13, Grade 8, Mount Vernon, Elements of Art Accordion Book (mixed media) (p1.), Lines (p2.), Color (p3.), Value (p4.), Shape (p5.), Space (p6.), Form (p7.), Texture (p8.), Carl Sandburg Middle School, Mount Vernon, Va., Ms. Su, art teacher

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TOY DRIVE



Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, left, and State Senator George Barker (D-39) help children from Gum Springs Head Start select toys as part of the 25th annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue toy distribution Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Firefighter Lt. David Saunders as Santa greets a child at the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

Making Spirits Bright

Firefighters mark 25 years of toy donations.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue marked its 25th year of serving families in need with a toy distribution day Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

"This is one of my favorite events of the year," said Bruce Witucki of Union Street Public House. "It's hard to believe this was our 25th year of providing for the community."

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue was founded by Willie Bailey, recently retired as Deputy Chief of the Office of the Fire Marshall with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. Bailey credits Witucki with generating significant early support for the organization.

"Bruce has been a sponsor since the organization was founded," Bailey said. "He was instrumental in building support for us, through his own donations and with introductions to his wide circle of friends and businesses in the community."

The annual event has grown from serving the Route 1 corridor to helping families, schools and nonprofits throughout Northern Virginia.

"This year we gave away over 3,000 toys, 50 bikes, and \$3,000 in gift cards to over 50 schools and nonprofits," Bailey said. "For 25 years individuals like Bruce and our many business sponsors have helped us provide for those less fortunate in the community."

Children from the Gum Springs Head Start program selected a toy of their choice while having the opportunity to visit with Santa and interact with Caring Angels Ther-

apy dogs. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck and State Senator George Barker (D-39) were among the volunteers helping distribute toys.

"It's important to be involved in helping people, particularly children," Barker said.

Sponsors for the event include: Ken and Kelly Savittiere Foundation; Apple Federal Credit Union; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax; Local 2068; Fire and Rescue Retirement Association; Nationwide Credit Corporation; John and Jack Taylor; Chadwick's Restaurant; Union Street Public House Restaurant (Bruce Witucki); Alexandria Toyota; Andrew Mitchell; Daniel Rowe; Bernie Cabral; Energesco Solutions LLC (William Bennett); Modern Technology Solution,

Inc.; Medocracy, Inc.; DWCNV; PROMAX Realtors; The Movement Studios; Accenture Federal Services; Five Guys (Sam Chamberlain); FRANSMART; FCAC Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Mount Vernon Gazette; Rotary Club of Tysons Corner; Caring Angels Therapy Dogs; Kelly's Irish Times Restaurant; Fairfax County Police Department; Walmart (Store #2258 - Richmond Hwy.); and Primo Family Restaurant.

"It's hard to believe but we have been providing gifts during the holidays for a quarter-century now," Bailey said. "I am so thankful to our sponsors and supporters for making this a special time of year for so many families."

This is one of my favorite events of the year."

— Longtime toy drive supporter
Bruce Witucki



Firefighters and Friends founder Willie Bailey, right, and longtime supporter Bruce Witucki enjoy a visit with Santa, aka firefighter Lt. David Saunders, Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue founder Willie Bailey, third from right, poses for a photo with retired firefighter volunteers Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

OPINION

What's 'Germinating' In the General Assembly

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

As I hinted last week, this week's column will delve into the environmental legislation that I have "germinating" in drafting. I am actively working with relevant stakeholders and constituents during this ongoing drafting process to ensure that these bills are ready for introduction in January.

I plan to introduce legislation urged by many of my constituents that aims to combat the invasive plant species *Hedera helix*, which is commonly known as English Ivy. English Ivy is designated as an invasive plant by the Commonwealth and all local jurisdictions in Virginia. As an invasive species, English Ivy can cover the forest floor, excluding tree seedlings and understory plants from nutrients. It can climb trees up to 90 feet, where it blocks photosynthesis and weighs the tree down. Ivy is also a host for bacterial leaf scorch. Ivy spreads from private plantings into natural areas through bird droppings and is expensive to control and remove, costing localities millions. As you may know, in 2017, the General Assembly gave localities the ability to control for running bamboo, a similarly invasive and aggressively spreading plant. This bill would give localities the ability to provide for the control of English Ivy, requiring landowners to properly upkeep and contain English Ivy on their property to control spread.

From a constituent active with soil and water conservation, I am

drafting a bill to establish a state income tax incentive to install solar equipment on residential and commercial structures, brownfields, parking lots, and transportation amenities. I am also drafting legislation to amend The Virginia Brownfield and Coal Mine Renewable Energy and Grant Fund Program, which was established in 2021, to allow state funds to be used for grants. This fund awards grants on a competitive basis to renewable energy projects located on brownfields or previously coal-mined lands. Current law only allows grants to be made using federal funds, which is not always available. Eliminating this federal requirement will hopefully encourage more renewable energy projects on former coal fields and brownfields.

Another legislative effort I have in the hopper is establishing a cooperative program that would fully fund ongoing protection and preservation of lands of ecological, cultural, or historical importance, lands for recreational purposes, and working farm and forest lands for the benefit and enjoyment of all current and future citizens of the Commonwealth. Virginia has 42 wonderful state parks and 2,440 local and regional parks which employ 109,000 Virginians and have an economic impact of \$9.4 billion. A stable, dedicated funding source will create even more opportunities to prevent further loss of Virginia's



Krizek

critical natural areas.

Also from a constituent, I am pursuing legislation that would limit a homeowner association's (HOA) ability to prohibit homeowners from installing managed conservation landscaping, such as using landscape practices

that incorporate environmentally sensitive design to address storm-water runoff, reduce pollution, protect clean air and water and support wildlife through the use of native plants. After incorporating some of these landscaping changes on their properties, several of my constituents have faced pushback from their HOAs, which tend to favor turf grass. Over 2 million Virginia residents live in a homeowner association, and as we face the current climate crisis, Virginia residents should have the flexibility to more sustainably manage their private land.

Finally, I am working on a bill to create a stakeholder workgroup to study the current Litter Tax and other litter prevention and mitigation approaches in the Commonwealth and recommend reforms to modernize them.

It's so wonderful to represent this district where so many tirelessly dedicate themselves to advocating for the protection and preservation of our environment. Our efforts together will play an instrumental role in ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for the generations to come.

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GRADES K-8

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FROM PAGE 5

ble, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.seniorscientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaldrea@aol.com. Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

United Community (formerly UCM), 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, seeks volunteers for Food Pantry assistance, Early Learning Center teacher aides, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office administration/data entry, and community outreach. Flexible hours and schedules. Opportunities for all ages to serve, including community service hours. More info at ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@ucmagency.org.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil (Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) at 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Fort Hunt Elementary

ANDREW GREEN
ART TEACHER



Family Gram, Lillian Anderson, 1st grade



Family Gram, Colleen Curran, 1st grade



Dante Smith, Shapes Collage, Kindergarten



Celebration Collage, Abram Larkin, 2nd grade



Celebration Collage, Audrey Larkin, 2nd grade



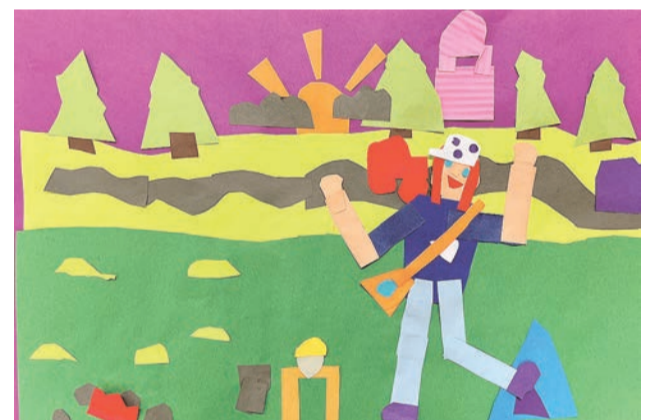
Celebration Collage, Calvin Kennealy, 2nd grade



Celebration Collage, Caroline McAsey, 2nd grade



Celebration Collage, Frances Bruns, 2nd grade



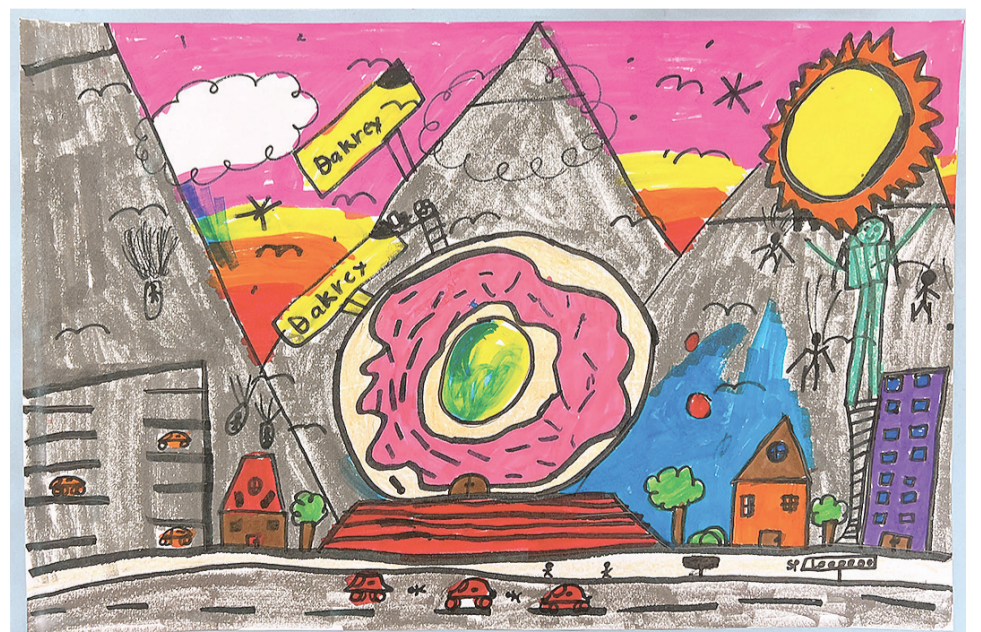
Celebration Collage, Lillian Bowers, 2nd grade



Family Helper Robot,
Elijah Tilghman, 1st grade



Family Helper Robot,
Vera Hall, 1st grade



Duck Architecture Drawing, Heidi Buchman, 2nd grade

Fort Hunt Elementary

ANDREW GREEN
ART TEACHER



African Mask, Blaise Wing, 3rd grade



African Mask, Britta Pederson, 3rd grade



African Mask, Charlotte Hills, 3rd grade



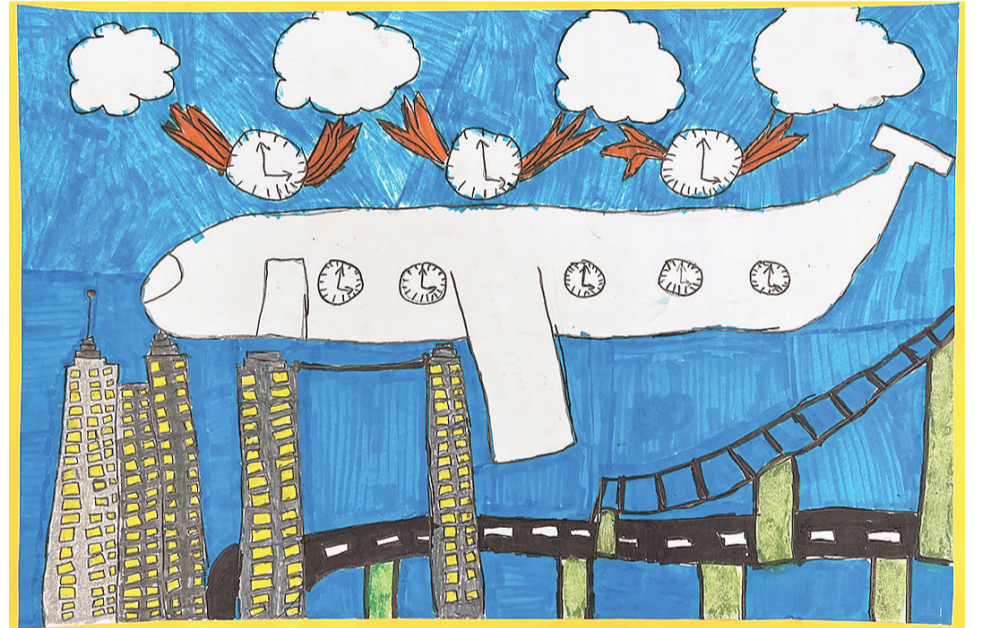
African Mask, Jameson Riley, 3rd grade



African Mask, Liv Lipovsky, 3rd grade



African Mask, Samuel Kennealy, 3rd grade



Time Catchphrase Drawing, Time Flies, A.J. Keane, 4th grade



Cultural Identity Drawing, Keia Pedregon, 3rd grade



Cultural Identity Drawing, Madi Dattaro, 3rd grade



Cultural Identity Drawing, Olivia Ong, 3rd grade



Cultural Identity Drawing, Xander Mullings, 3rd grade

More Fort Hunt Elementary, Page 10

Fort Hunt Elementary



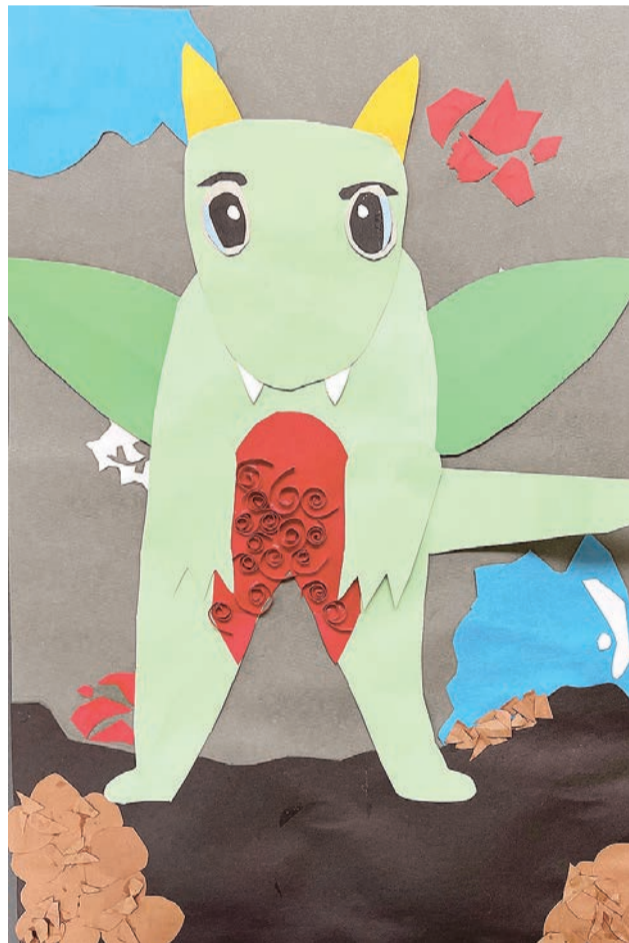
Superplant Collage, Hanna Burroughs, 4th grade



Superplant Collage, Maria Pfarr, 4th grade



Superplant Collage, Lily Chambers, 4th grade



Superplant Collage, Amelia May, 4th grade



Superplant Collage, Cecilia Parila, 4th grade



Landmark Collage, Dayanna Portillo Mercado, El Salvador, Monumento al Salvador del Mundo, 5th grade



Landmark Collage, Mount Fuji, Noah Moller, 5th grade



Landmark Collage, Washington Monument, Lilia Wing, 5th grade

CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

Sixth Grade, Orange Hunt
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

The Fireball

By: Colin Clark

Colin Clark (memoir Fireball)
 12 years old

Sixth Grade Orange Hunt
 Teacher: Brenda Patrick

One time we were on vacation in a rental house in West Virginia. On one of the nights we had planned to have steak, corn and potatoes for dinner. We were all excited since we had been having fun and we all liked steak. I was also really excited because I liked grilling and was looking forward to making the steak with my dad.

While my dad and I were going to make the steak, my mom was going to cook the corn and potatoes. We liked grilling things and we had a charcoal grill at home. There was a gas grill on the back porch. My dad got the steak ready to cook by putting some spices on it. My two sisters were doing something in the house that didn't involve dinner.

Once we were ready, my dad and I went out to the back porch and went over to turn on the grill so that we could cook the steaks. He turned the knob and pressed the igniter. Nothing happened. He tried it again. Still nothing happened.

"Why isn't it working?" I asked.

"I Don't know." my dad said.

We were both confused as to why the grill wasn't turning on. My dad made sure the gas valve was open. It was at that point we didn't know what to do, so we went back inside to try to figure out what was wrong and why it wouldn't light.

After a little while, we decided that we were going to get a lighter from the kitchen and use it to light the grill that way like we did at home, except that the grill at home was a charcoal grill and not a gas grill. My dad went to the kitchen and after a minute he found the lighter and went outside to light the grill.

"I hope this works, I say".

"Me too." says my dad.

If it didn't work we wouldn't know what to do. We went back outside and moved over to the grill and we turned on the gas. My dad moved the lighter in position to light it. Then he lit the lighter and suddenly, a fireball erupted from the grill.... Later that evening we were eating dinner.

No one got hurt from the Fireball because it was small and had only lasted a second. The rest of the cooking had gone without incident and we had a nice dinner. The lesson I learned was to be patient, and persevere. Even if you don't succeed the first time, try again.

The End

The Big Match

By Caroline Rakip

Caroline Rakip (memoir/The Big Match)

12 years old

Sixth grade Orange Hunt
 Teacher: Brenda Patrick

FWEEET!! The ref's whistle rang in my ear like the school bell. My legs were shaking in the thought of losing. I heard whispers around me. "You got this!", "Let's go!", "Serve it!".

I looked over at my coaches who were signaling me to go. I looked over at the ref who was staring at me, basically telling me I only had ten seconds to serve the ball over the net. I looked straight ahead of me, just to see the other team staring me dead into the eye, their determination filling the room.

My heart sank. My throat burned. I felt my insides swell, and my vision started to blur. I wanted to sob. I wanted to run away and never return. The pressure was on me, me to carry this team to a win.

But I had to stay, so I threw the ball into the air and hit it. It went flying across the gym. I followed the ball with my eyes, it soaring through the wind. I watched as the other team swung their arms, trying to hit the ball, but missed! The ball fell to the ground, giving us a point.

My team clapped, and my coaches cheered.

"Just one more point!" My coach pushed.

"Just one more," I mumbled under my breath. "Just one."

The whistle was louder than the last. My heart beat in my chest, making it feel like a drum circle. I shut my eyes hoping it would end, and we won, all because of me. I knew that I would have to serve it in order for that to really happen, so I threw the volleyball up and served, better than ever. The adrenaline pounded in my head, making my blood boil. I stared down at the ball, praying it would hit the ground, leading to a win. Then there were the dreaded words, the words that made me feel sick, "OUT! OUT!" Someone on the other side yelled.

Oh no. I thought, Out of bounds, now how will we win?

The ball came swooshing down, as everyone leaned to the side, watching for the ball to be out. I held my breath, as if it would affect the movement of the ball.

I turned around just in time to miss the land. Just to hear my coach scream and cheer for joy.

"You did it!" She called. She was jumping up and down in excitement. My entire team came up to me and we all exchanged high-fives.

We won! I thought. I could not believe it. My team had never won any game, we were used to losing. My shoulders felt like a giant weight got lifted off. My happiness flooded through me, into my face, stretching a smile across my face. We had just earned our first win, and it was because of me.

I learned that day that no matter what, your team will always be there for you. Wins or loses, your peers care about you just as much as anyone else.

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' GAZETTE

St. Stephens and St. Agnes School



Sophia Voudouris, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.

Yabsra Tewodros, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.



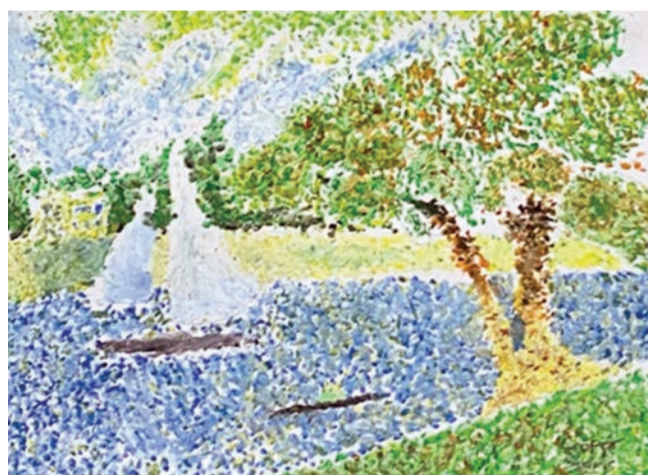
Anabel DeLucia, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



Brody Hark, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



Alex Blaker, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Kati Towle, art teacher.



Cooper Spies, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Brandon Royal, art teacher.



Addy Petron, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Augusta Jay, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Sean Riley, art teacher.



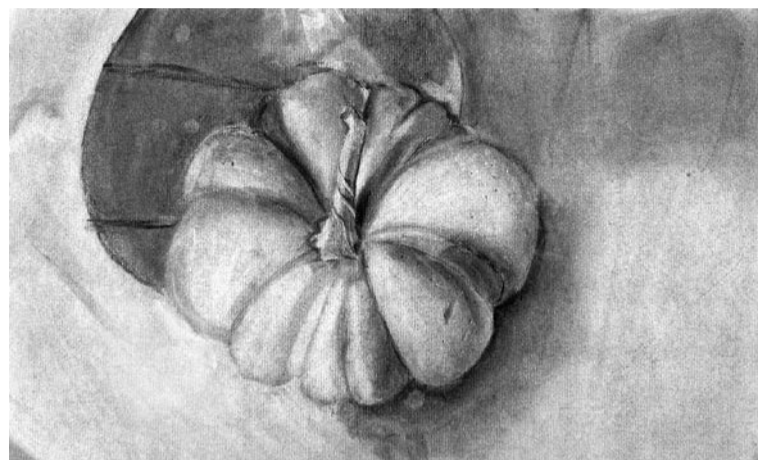
Michael Hu, Grade 9

Welcome the the Children's And Teens' Gazette 2023

The art and writing of local students is always a bright spot. We offer many thanks to the art teachers who guided these artists and compiled the art to appear here. You can find the other Children's and Teens' editions by going to <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and then scrolling down to Children's. Thanks for reading.

Now the Gazette will be on a break until after the New Year, with our next publication appearing the week of Jan. 10.

In the meantime contact us, for advertising contact debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com or sales@connectionnewspapers.com. For the newsroom, contact editors@connectionnewspapers.com



Everly Kunz, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Cecil Gregg, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Tom Bunnell, art teacher.



Caeli Boris, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Kate Elkins, art teacher.

ENTERTAINMENT

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

NOW THRU JAN. 7

National Treasures | Leanne Fink. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. National Treasures is a collection of oil and cold wax paintings by Leanne Fink that pays homage to the grandeur of America's National Parks. Inspired by the beauty of the natural world, Leanne is known for her visually dynamic landscapes. The Athenaeum Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

"Breakfast with Santa" will take place every weekend in December, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in three locations in Alexandria:

Joe Theismann's Restaurant
Mia's Italian Kitchen
Ada's on the River
Tickets range from \$0-\$65 and include a hearty and festive breakfast feast that will delight your taste buds. Children will receive take-home treats to continue the holiday spirit at home, while adults can indulge in some celebratory Prosecco.

Tickets can be purchased here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/breakfast-with-santa-in-old-town-alexandria-by-arp-1039279>

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. In locations around Old Town Alexandria. First Night Alexandria, known as the largest family-friendly and affordable New Year's Eve festival of music and more event in the region, returns with its day into night of celebration showcasing performing arts throughout Old Town. The annual event (in its 29th year) will feature a variety of activities, activations, dance parties, live music and more. The festivities kick off at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at midnight as thousands welcome in the New Year.

A tradition that started in 1994, First Night Alexandria has become a staple in the region to bring in the New Year as an affordable event filled with a lineup of entertainment and activities. Proceeds from the event supports Alexandria's middle and high school students' activities with a musical background in choir, orchestra, and band.

New this Year:

Twilight Fireworks - This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m. on Alexandria's waterfront geared to families who want to enjoy the show



First Night Alexandria takes place on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023 in Old Town Alexandria.

with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront.

Fun Hunt - Add adventure, exploration, and education to the last day of the year! After 5 years, the Fun Hunt returns with new ways to enjoy an afternoon in Old Town Alexandria. Ticketed guests have the opportunity to turn a day of Fun and entertainment into potential prize winnings. The adventure concludes at the Block Party at Market Square just prior to the Twilight Fireworks.

Daytime Block Party - Join us at Market Square from 4 - 6 p.m. for a time of music, a "Cool Happy New Year" demonstration and special fun just prior to the new Twilight fireworks display.

For more information visit www.firstnightalexandria.org.

JAN. 5-27, 2024

"Visions of Resilience: Art for Climate Justice" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, in partnership with the Changing Planet Justice Foundation, raises awareness about climate change and its impact on marginalized communities. By conveying issues through the universal language of image, we encourage action towards a just, climate-friendly future. Reception: Friday, January 5, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (closed January 28). DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/FEB. 3, 2024

Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Maestro. 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. When the orchestra is ready to begin their concert and suddenly discover the Maestro is nowhere to be found they begin

to panic. Thankfully the world's greatest detective is available and agrees to take the case. All the musicians are suspects and thus Sherlock Holmes must investigate each of the instrument families to deduce who is behind the mystery. With Enrico Lopez-Yanez, Guest Conductor.

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

DECEMBER

Wed. 20: A John Waters Christmas \$59.50
Fri. 22: Tarsha Fitzgerald Presents "The Voices" Christmas Show \$35.00
Sat. 23: A Very MAYSA Christmas \$69.50
Fri. 29: Hank Williams Tribute featuring Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Daryl Davis, Jake Blount, Robin & Linda Williams, Patrick McAvinue, Alex Lacquement \$35.00
Sat. 30: Bela Dona Band \$39.50
Sun. 31: New Year's Eve with The Seldom Scene & The Porch Delights -7:30pm- \$49.50

JANUARY

Fri. 5: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder \$49.50
Sat. 6: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder \$49.50 **SOLD OUT!**
Tue. 9: The Musical Box commemorates "Selling England By The Pound" \$55.00
Fri. 12: Preacher Lawson \$39.50 (Rescheduled from 10/6/23)
Sat. 13: Last Train Home \$35.00
Sun. 14: Patrice Rushen \$55.00
Wed. 17: ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE: An All-Star Band Celebrates THE BEATLES 60th Anniversary in America, featuring Kasim Sulton, Steve Kimock, Prairie Prince, Gil Assayas, Bobby Lee Rodgers, Mark Rashotte, Andy Forgie, with narration by Michael Des Barres \$64.00
Fri. 19: Newmyer Flyer Presents LAUREL CANYON: Golden Songs of Los Angeles 1966-72 \$35.00
Sat. 20: Lyfe Jennings \$75.00
Wed. 24: Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone \$55.00
Fri. 26: Who's Bad - The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50
Sat. 27: Dar Williams with The Nields \$45.00 **SOLD OUT!**
Sun. 28: Forever Tina - A Tribute to the Queen of Rock N' Roll \$39.50



Visions of Resilience: Art for Climate Justice can be seen at Del Ray Artisans Jan. 5-27, 2024.

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Tommy Can You Hear Me?

The Who's rock opera hits the Workhouse this winter.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

When English rock legends "The Who," took on the story of "Tommy," to create the first rock opera, it blossomed into a play, a movie with Elton John wearing a huge pair of boots, and a story of a deaf, dumb and blind kid playing unbelievable pinball. It was the 1970s, but "Tommy" saved The Who's career as part of the British Rock phenomena and now has landed at the Workhouse Art Center's stage in Lorton.

"Based on the iconic 1969 rock album, the story of the pinball-playing boy who triumphs over adversities has inspired and amazed audiences for more than 40 years," the Workhouse description reads.

Fairfax resident Jackie Madejski has the role of Tommy's mother and at the age of 29, she wasn't around in the mid 1970s but remembers a car trip with the family to Disneyland. "My brother sang The Who the whole time," she said. Her father didn't

threaten to stop the car on the roadside either. "My dad was a really big Who fan."

In the movie, Ann Bancroft plays Tommy's mother who has an extra marital affair, leading to murder and there's a song for the peaks and valleys of the theatrical presentation. At the Workhouse, there's more music than anything, and it carries the story through the ups and downs of Tommy's life. Juliana Cooper plays Tommy, and "she's really grounded in her part," Madejski said.

Madejski has been in a couple of Workhouse productions and jumped into the role without seeing Ann Bancroft playing her evil mother part, or Elton John's oversized boots as he hammered out his version of the "Pinball Wizard," song



Jackie Madejski

in 1975. The movie and album have history, but that was years ago and Madejski is now. "I want to come at it from my own place," she said. Since it's all singing, it has its own stress for the cast. "I am trying to match the intensity of Roger Daltry singing," Madejski said. Daltry played Tommy in the movie and is lead singer of the Who.

Pinball Wizard was a hit by The Who in 1969 and again by Elton John in 1975, reaching the top 40 with Casey Kasem back in the day. In 1975,

the film won the award for Rock Movie of the Year in the First Annual Rock Music Awards. Jack Nicholson and Tina Turner were in the film also, and Mick Jagger tried out for one of the parts.

A Complete Whiff



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a longtime married man, I can speak to the various responsibilities that one another has to help nurture/maintain the framework that "Keeps Hope Alive," to invoke Jesse Jackson – out of context, that any relationship needs to thrive. For my wife Dina and I, as it pertains to the subject matter at hand/inner workings of our marriage, one very clear delineation exists: Dina handles the social, I handle the business/money. Sometimes however, the twain can be on different twacks (as my later father would always joke), even with the best of intentions. Getting the tracks to coalesce into one takes patience, courage, conviction, and most importantly, accommodation.

And it was in this context that I prepare you readers for something specifically to do with yours truly. What I am about to divulge is/was 100% my fault. Being responsible for the business/money side of the marriage means that I am expected to be organized concerning how much money is coming in, and most importantly, how much is going out, and moreover, when pay or play options are feasible/prudent. Meaning, I know how much money is due when certain relatively important bills arrive. In addition to the monthly recurring obligations, this also means I'm to be aware of the ones due less frequently (quarterly, semiannually, and of course, annually). And then there's other category of bills which require not so much payment as they do require a renewal. The renewal that I refer to now is for our health insurance, a special health insurance that because of means and/or seriousness of condition (cancer qualifies) enables me to not incur any costs for drugs, co-pays, co-insurance et cetera. As you might imagine for a cancer patient nearing his 15th year under the proverbial gun so to speak, there are regular/recurring costs associated with my care and now is no time to decide care options based on money/ability to pay, instead of what the doctor recommends. Simply stated: my life might very well be at stake, certainly it might be at risk. And yet, this is exactly what I did. I completely forgot to submit our annual renewal due Sept 1-ish for an Oct. 1-ish restart date. It didn't hit me until I went to check in with the receptionist for the PET scan, I had scheduled for Nov. 27 that I was told I had a co-pay due. (The other part of this story being the anxiety about the results and all I wrote about in the column entitled: "Uncertainty.") "Co-pay due? I just signed up for this in September," I said. That's when I was told that my plan had expired in Sept. because I hadn't renewed it for the '23-'24 year. I was off by three months or so. I totally missed the deadline. I don't begrudge the health insurance for not reminding me. Nor do I think Dina should have said something. This was on me, totally. There's no more important business in a family than its health insurance, particularly when one of its payors/covered individuals has been diagnosed originally with "terminal" cancer. I mean cancer is not exactly the kind of thing that goes away on its own. Often, when it goes away, it takes the patient with it.

Moreover, as a former insurance broker, I am aware of the costs and consequences of neglecting one's insurance responsibilities. And if one is not an experienced agent as I was, there's plenty of news stories and articles available online about devastating decisions that some families have had to make between rent, food, and buying drugs needed to keep them alive. And when the receptionist advised me of my plan's expiration (or my participation in it, I should say), it was the furthest thing from my mind. I was not thinking at all about having to renew/re-apply at all. Not that I thought for second that it was an automatic self-renewing kind of coverage(I knew it wasn't). It was just as we used to say in the back yard, whiffle bat in hand after missing the whiffle ball: "a complete whiff."

It's not exactly a total disaster, I/we still have health insurance, And I can re-apply for this special plan at any time; I will just have incurred unnecessary expenses in the interim. Hopefully, there won't be too many cancer-related decisions that cost us money until I'm able to re-qualify (it's hardly guaranteed). I just hope that Dina stays in her lane and doesn't veer from the social lane into my business lane. I never really planned it this way. I tried in the early days of our marriage to never make the decisions without consulting the manual (my wife). However, over time and over wrought, it became clear to me that since she was minding her business, I should be minding mine, except her business was social; mine was business – with some potential real world consequences, unfortunately.

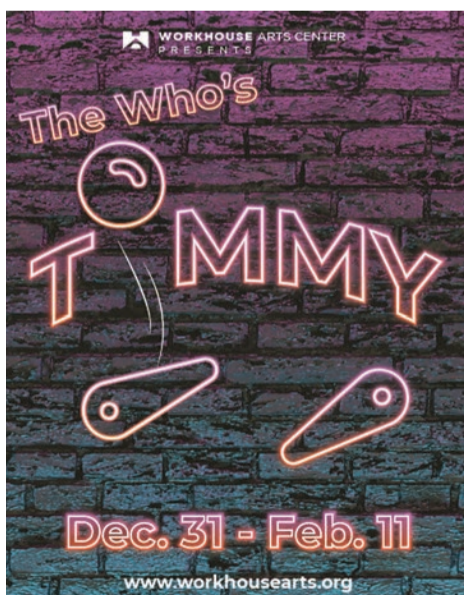
Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

Dates:
Sun Dec 31, 2023
Sun Feb 11, 2024

Fri/Sat at 8pm,
Sun at 2pm

*Sun Dec 31 tickets are priced higher, and include a post-performance NYE reception with Midnight Champagne toast to welcome in the New Year.

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