

# Mount Vernon Gazette

VOL. XX, No. 51

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 21, 2009



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

**On a Harley** Santa arrives at Stratford Landing Elementary School with an escort of elves on cycles along with Mrs. Claus and Frosty the Snowman.

MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 17

## Goodwill or Trashville?

Property owners to be warned of potential code violations from collection boxes.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

The large receptacle bins along Richmond Highway offer a convenient way to donate to charity, with motorists stopping to drop off clothing or other items while running errands. But some business leaders say many of the bins are not maintained properly, leaving a trash-strewn landscape of code violations and nuisance.

SEE COLLECTION BOXES, PAGE 3

## She's Reading Teacher of the Year

Reading Council honors Woodley Hills' Elmore.

BY JEFFREY AARON  
THE GAZETTE

When Judi Elmore was asked to sit for this story, the newly named Reading Teacher of the Year by the Greater Washington Reading Council was reluctant. "I don't know if I'm ready for this," she said.

After being named by the council, Elmore didn't even realize when she drove her car into the parking lot at Woodley Hills, where she has taught for five years, administrators had celebrated the recognition by congratulating her publicly on the school's sign.

"When someone asked me whether I saw the sign, I said 'yes, it said something about turkeys. What's nice about that?'"

"No Judi," her colleague said, "you didn't see the other side." In bold letters, the school had honored her achievement: "Congratulations Judi Elmore, Teacher of the Year, Greater Washington Reading Council."

"That would be Judi," Principal Sharon Aldredge said.

"She has had a hard time with the recognition. She's just being who she is: a person who does what's right because that's the quality of person she is.

"She plays a tremendous role. She's an amazing teacher, educator, and person. This woman is dedi-



PHOTO BY JEFFREY AARON/THE GAZETTE

**Named Teacher of the Year by the Greater Washington Reading Council, Judi Elmore coaches a Woodley Hills student in reading.**

cated. She's helped to turn our reading program into something successful."

**AS A CHILD**, Elmore acted out the role of a teacher in the basement of her best friend Joyce's house in her hometown of Yardley, Pa., where her friend's mother had installed a chalkboard.

Before going off to William and Mary College in Williamsburg, she told her high school teachers that she wanted to become a teacher. They discouraged her. "They all said anybody could become a teacher. You should become someone important," they said. So: she decided to become a lawyer.

During her first two years at William and Mary,

SEE SHE'S READING TEACHER, PAGE 15

## \$100 Million for Rt. 1?

Transportation improvements passes in House Defense Appropriations Bill, on to Senate.

BY GERALD A. FILL  
THE GAZETTE

Twenty-six association representatives of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association attended the year's final meeting last week to hear Supervisor Gerry Hyland's announcements, debate and vote on two proposed resolutions, hear committee reports, and thank the outgoing co-chairs for their service: Katherine Ward, David Dale,

and Patrick Rea; and welcome the new co-chairs: Al Bornmann, Bob Reynolds, and Dave Plummer.

Hyland reported, from a conversation with U.S. Rep. Jim Moran, that the House Defense Appropriations bill contains \$300 million for BRAC transportation improvements for Bethesda area and for northern Virginia. Next step is for the Senate to act on the bill before

SEE STEP CLOSER, PAGE 3

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# Step Closer for \$100 Million for Route 1

FROM PAGE 1

House-Senate conference reviews, marks up, and recommends final passage. Hyland estimates that if enacted, the Defense Appropriations bill will likely contain about \$100 million for the Northern Virginia Route 1 corridor expansion and upgrades.

Moran's press announcement of the defense appropriation bill stated: "At Fort Belvoir, the Army Corps of Engineers estimates that without this infrastructure investment commuters who use I-95 or route 1 would have experienced a three to four hour delay each rush hour." ..... "In northern Virginia the principal purpose of the money is to widen route 1."

Hyland released a Dec. 9 Board of Supervisors' letter to Moran listing the county's short-term transportation needs totaling \$189 million.

The letter listed the following needs:

- ❖ \$110-135 million for the widening of Route 1 from Route 235 south to the Fairfax county parkway.
- ❖ \$15-40 million for the reconstruction of the existing I-95 HOV flyover at Newington.
- ❖ \$5 million for a study of the feasibility of providing rail service to Belvoir.

In addition, Hyland released a



**Patrick Rea, Katherine Ward, and David Dale, — outgoing co-chairs — were recognized at Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association's meeting last week.**

letter dated Oct. 12, from Gov. Timothy Kaine to Moran which "establishes the statement of need" requested by Moran to justify the allocation of funds needed to address the projected traffic congestion triggered by the BRAC Belvoir expansion. The letter points to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which projected 3-4 hour traffic delays on I-95 and route 1 during peak hours. The Governor's letter stated that money needed "to avoid the negative transportation effect of BRAC would be \$446 million."

In this letter, Kaine outlined the following short-term projects that need funding immediately (and which parallels the Board of Supervisor's letter listing its transportation priorities):

- ❖ Construction of a Direct Access Ramp from the I-395 general purpose and HOV lanes to the Mark Center.
- ❖ Reconstruction of the existing I-95 HOV flyover at Newington to accommodate a direct access ramp into the Engineering Proving Grounds (EPG).
- ❖ Widening of Route 1 from

PHOTOS BY GERAUD A. HILL/THE GAZETTE



**New co-chairs for the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association: Al Bornmann, Bob Reynolds, and Dave Plummer.**

Telegraph road in the south to Woodlawn Plantation in the north.

**IN OTHER MATTERS,** Hyland announced the formation of a citizens advisor task force to review and comment on the nominations for revisions to the county's master land use plan. He announced the appointment of Susan Fremet and John Byers as co-chairs of a task force numbering about 20 citizens. Their first meeting is scheduled for Jan. 20 at the Mt. Vernon Governmental Center. The Task

Force's deliberations will continue to April, 2010.

The MVCCA debated two planning and zoning resolutions up for a vote but decided that both should be returned to the Planning and Zoning Committee for additional analysis. They were:

- ❖ Rezoning Application to permit building two hotels at 8850 Richmond Hwy.
- ❖ Rezoning of the Scannell property for 118 acres located between Telegraph Road and Cinderbed Road just south of the Fairfax County Parkway.

# Collection Boxes Present Potential Code Violations

FROM PAGE 1

That's why leaders of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation say they are working with elected leaders to send letters to commercial property owners informing them of their responsibility under the county's zoning ordinance. Debi Sandlin, who is the executive director of the development corporation, recalls a meeting with county officials when she spread a series of photographs across a conference table. She said the litter-strewn images created an undeniable impression that something had to be done.

"You couldn't ignore it," said Sandlin. "You couldn't walk away from that meeting and say it's not a problem."

Since that meeting, the county published a brochure titled Clothing Donation Drop Boxes, which explains guidelines for property owners. In the next few weeks, Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry

Hyland and Lee Distinct Supervisor Jeff McKay plan to send letters to commercial property owners. Sandlin said she suspects some property owners might not even be aware of the presence of the drop-boxes on their property, and they need to know that they will be responsible for any code violations. "There's a right place for these donation boxes and a wrong place," said Hyland. "They should not be placed up and down Richmond Highway willy nilly."

**NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS** say the donation boxes allow for convenient donations, increasing the number of donated items and revenue from salvage buyers. At the four Goodwill donation boxes on Richmond Highway, a contractor known as World Trade maintains the site and pays the nonprofit \$1.5 million a year to collect donations from the site and resell them to salvage buyers. Goodwill's contract with World

Trade requires that the sites' boxes be emptied more than twice a week, and the revenue from the company goes to Goodwill's job-training program.

"It's disappointing that some people seem to think allowing for convenient donations is a bad thing," said Branden Hurley, a spokesman for Goodwill of Greater Washington. "Our market research shows that most people make donations based on convenience."

Regardless of how the debate over the drop-boxes plays out over the next few months, Hurley said Goodwill's drop-boxes will soon be a thing of the past. Now that a new Goodwill has opened a new store in the area, revenue from World Trade will no longer be needed because donations can be made directly to the storefront location. That leaves 20 to 25 donations boxes from other nonprofit organizations that collect revenue from contractors that are required to



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE

**Goodwill of Greater Washington donation box across from the Ft. Belvoir Tulley Gate entrance of Richmond Highway.**

maintain the sites.

"Property owners need to be aware that they are going to be responsible for code violations, not the nonprofit organization listed

on the donation boxes," said Sandlin. "Our purpose here is not to police the nonprofits. It's to create an attractive environment for redevelopment along Richmond Highway."



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# The Bandleader Remembered

Real-estate agent turned musician was well known in the community.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Once Mort Langstaff started telling a story, listeners were taken in for the duration. This is a quality that helped his real-estate career and his comrades on the golf course. But more than anything, it was what drew people to Langstaff — a well-known musician player in Alexandria who was a regular performer at the Alexandria Bar Association annual Grid-iron show. On Dec. 7, Langstaff died from complications due to pneumonia. He was 80.

An accomplished piano player and consummate joke teller, Langstaff performed at the Marriott Hotel Washington for more than a decade, also appearing at venues such as Phillips Seafood, 219, the Serbian Crown and St. Elmo's Coffeehouse in Del Ray. He also played regular gigs at Goodwin House retirement communities in Alexandria and Falls Church, as well as many area special events and parties.

"He was always a member of the band, someone who would play to accompany the other musicians," said Bill Rowe, a drummer and longtime friend. "Until it was his time to solo. That's when he became the star of the show because he was a master improviser."

**BORN ON** Nov. 22, 1929 in Paducah, Ky., Morton attended Sewanee Military Academy, the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., and George Washington University in the District of Columbia. He moved to Virginia in 1949 and served on the Air Force drum and bugle corps at Bolling Air Force Base.

Langstaff started his professional career at the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative before taking a job working for U.S. Rep. Frank Stubblefield (D-Ky.). For most of his career, he was a real-estate agent — first with Macklin Hansen Real Estate and later with Kettler Brothers at Southwood in Mount Vernon. In 1975, he established his own firm: Langstaff Real Estate.

"He was very good at real estate because he was the most outgoing person I've ever met," said Nancy Macklin, a former colleague and longtime friend. "Once you met Mort, you never forgot him."

Although he was a successful Realtor, friends and relatives say his true vocation was music. In 1984, he helped to develop the West End Dinner Theater in Alexandria to present Broadway-style community productions. He also participated in many shows at the Little Theater of Alexandria, singing and acting along side his daughter Molly Langstaff.

"He was an excellent musician, someone who could really play anything," said Councilwoman Del Pepper, who hired the Mort Langstaff trio to play political events. "He was very generous with his time and energy — just an all-around good guy."



Morton Langstaff

**LANGSTAFF AND** his wife family lived in Arlington for eight years before settling in Alexandria in 1962. That's when they moved to the Rosemont neighborhood, where they lived for 38 years. For the past decade, they have lived at Watergate at Landmark in Alexandria. Langstaff was a member of Columbia Pike Community Chorus, and the chancel choir at Trinity Episcopal Church in Arlington, where he also served in the vestry and taught Sunday school. He was a member of the Alexandria Real Estate Assessment Board, served on the vocational education program board at T.C. Williams High School, taught real estate training courses at Northern Virginia Community College and volunteered for the Carpenter's Shelter.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years Cathryn Langstaff, children Molly Langstaff of Alexandria; a son Bradshaw and daughter-in-law Kerry Langstaff of Saratoga, Calif.; a daughter Kathryn Langstaff and son-in-law Stuart Cowan of Portland; and two granddaughters Kelly Langstaff of New York City and Sophia Cowan of Portland. He was preceded in death by granddaughter, Kaitlyn Langstaff.

A celebration of his life will be held Jan. 17 at 2 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church at 2217 Columbia Pike, Arlington. For more information, call 703-920-7077. He will be interred at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery. The family suggests that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Molly Langstaff Continuing Education Fund. Checks can be made out to Trinity Episcopal Church 2217 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204.



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# OPINION

# Happy Holidays

A time to reflect,  
a time to share.

For the observant of any faith, and even for the more secular among us, the close of the year brings ritual, magic, reflection and hope.

In events around the area, a sense of community has infused holiday parades, Christmas tree lightings, menorah lightings, choral performances, singing of carols, and other traditional events with warmth and joy.

In Great Falls, it was the 19<sup>th</sup> lighting of the Christmas tree, with holiday songs by the Langley Madrigals. In Reston, Santa arrived by boat across Lake Anne in a snow squall. In Alexandria, the Scottish Christmas Walk announced the beginning of the season despite the wet snow. In Clifton, the Christmas spirit was celebrated in a candlelight homes tour, among other events. In Fairfax, one congregation built a 7-foot-tall menorah out of Legos. And in every community, volunteers have come together to provide food, clothing and some holiday cheer for the needy.

2009 has been a challenging year for many families, businesses, schools, charitable organizations.

As the year comes to an end, we can count our blessings. Here in the Washington suburbs most of us have been spared the intense difficulties of the economic downtown. We'll all likely to welcome 2010 with optimism and relief.

Next week between Christmas and New Years, look for our annual Children's Connection, when we turn our entire paper over to the contributions of area students — artwork of many kinds, poetry and other writing. Our next regular edition will come out the week of Jan. 4, 2010.

From the all the staff here, we wish you a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, joyful holidays and a wonderful beginning to the New Year.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Give Locally

Remember that more local families are in need right now than ever before; thankfully, most of us are in a position to help. It's not too late to brighten the holidays for a needy fam-

ily as many organizations are reporting record demand for holiday meals and help with providing children at least one present. The need will continue into the New Year as well.

## Where to Donate

- ❖ ALIVE (Alexandrians Involved Ecumenically) [www.alive-inc.org](http://www.alive-inc.org)
- ❖ The Campagna Center in Alexandria 703-549-0111
- ❖ United Community Ministries, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306. UCM's Food Pantry is open weekdays 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. the first Sunday of each month (except January, July and September, open on second Sunday). Enter through gates on right side of building, drive around to opposite side of building and ring bell at green door.
- ❖ Lorton Community Action Center, 9518 Richmond Highway, [www.lortonaction.org](http://www.lortonaction.org). [lcacvolunteer@msn.com](mailto:lcacvolunteer@msn.com), 703 339-5161,
- ❖ National Capital Food Bank, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia 703-541-3063, [www.capitalareafoodbank.org](http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org) Food donations accepted Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fully equipped with refrigeration and freezers, so can accept non-perishable food items, plus produce, any kind of meat or dairy products and frozen food.
- ❖ Good Shepherd in the Route 1 area, 703-768-9404
- ❖ Lorton Community Action Center, 703-339-5161



## Bringing the Christmas Story to Life

Karen Miller as an Angel with Kacie Greenwood-Ekman as Elizabeth.



The Guards are Dan Murray and Dale Roach.

Aldersgate United Methodist Church brought the Christmas season and Journey to Bethlehem to life on Dec. 14 and 15. About 1,500 visitors attended the annual community event which involved more than 100 church volunteers of all ages. The shepherds are Samantha Niepling, Christian Marchant, and Isabelle Norton.

## Mount Vernon Gazette

[www.MountVernonGazette.com](http://www.MountVernonGazette.com)

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# PEOPLE

PHOTOS BY LASHAWN AVERY/THE GAZETTE



**Courtney Chauncey is ready to perform in "The Nutcracker" at West Potomac High School on Dec. 5.**



## On Stage

**Spencer Ferry plays an angel.**



**Haley Narins plays Clara.**



PHOTOS BY LASHAWN AVERY/THE GAZETTE

## Part of Candlelight Tour

**The Martin Family Band plays 18<sup>th</sup> century and Irish music for guests during the candlelight tour at the Mount Vernon Estate on Dec. 4.**



## Supporting Woodlawn

At the November meeting of Nelly's Needlers, Chairman Claudia Dideum (right) presented Laurie Ossman, director of Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey, with a check for \$10,000 for Woodlawn's Endowment Fund and a \$10,000 check to repair the brick terrace by the historic Smoke House located on the property. Other recent gifts to Woodlawn from Nelly's Needlers — a non-profit group organized for the purpose of preserving the art of needlework and raising funds for Woodlawn — include \$10,000 toward the restoration of Woodlawn's historic Smoke House and \$10,000 to underwrite the expenses of the 2010 Annual Needlework Exhibition, held every March at Woodlawn. For more information on either Nelly's Needlers or Woodlawn, call Woodlawn at 703-780-4000.



## Service Award

Former U.S. Rep. Herb Harris receives the Northern Virginia Service Award from the 11th Congressional District Committee at its annual awards ceremony last Saturday. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly presented Harris with the award "for distinguished and honorable service to our communities, our commonwealth, and our nation." Harris was elected to Congress from Virginia's 8th District in 1974. He served three terms.



**Laurel Philbin and Patricia Gilfillan hand out hot apple cider.**



## For Distinguished Service

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented the Lawrence V. Fowler Award to Bill G. Evans at its Dec. 7 meeting. The award recognizes the distinguished service of a longstanding member of a Fairfax County board, authority, commission or committee. Evans has been the Mount Vernon District representative on the Fairfax County Water Authority (Fairfax Water) Board since 1970. Early in his tenure, Evans' influence and leadership was critical in the consolidation of all of Fairfax Water's administrative and engineering employees under one roof. He has been an instrumental leader in shaping water policy for Northern Virginia. Working closely with the Virginia State Water Control Board, Evans played a key role in negotiating the adoption of the Occoquan Policy that establishes key source water protections for the Occoquan Reservoir.



PHOTO BY ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Firefighters' Toy Drive

Lisa Jones works with volunteers to fill social service agencies and school requests of holiday gifts for clients and students in Fairfax County and Alexandria.



## FOR THE HOLIDAYS



The Shops at Mount Vernon has a large collection of estate jewelry from all over the country, ranging in price from \$150 to \$10,000.



Handmade in the Blue Ridge Mountains, this cherry wooden ware is created via the same process as followed by the country's forefathers.

## Not Too Late ...

The Shops at Mount Vernon offer a variety of items for this gift-giving season. Estate jewelry, handmade crafts, an ornament commemorating George and Martha Washington's 250th wedding anniversary, and more. In the spirit of giving, it is also good to know that a portion of every purchase supports education and preservation programs at Mount Vernon. The shops are open 9-5 daily. Online orders received by Dec. 21 can still arrive by Christmas. See [Mountvernon.org/shops](http://Mountvernon.org/shops).

— MECHELLE SCHLOSS



Peanuts were a staple of the colonial diet. Virginia peanuts have the largest kernels and are grown in southeastern Virginia. Mount Vernon peanuts are cooked in pure peanut oil to keep them cholesterol-free and to preserve the natural peanut taste. No artificial preservatives are added.



Mount Vernon's 2009 holiday ornament honors the 250th wedding anniversary of George and Martha Washington.



These handcrafted George and Martha Washington 3rd Edition Carolers are 12" tall, and sold exclusively at the Shops at Mt. Vernon.



*Be Tan Be Fabulous*

*Don't Let that Summer Tan Fade*

Mount Vernon Athletic Club  
703-360-7300  
[www.MTVAC.net](http://www.MTVAC.net)

Unlimited Tanning for 1 year  
Only \$199.00

7950 Audubon Ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22306  
Find us on Facebook



# Winter Clearance!!

## 25-80% off Winter Apparel

Sale Begins Dec. 26th

HUGE SALE • HUGE SALE • HUGE SALE



### kiskadee

A specialty boutique in the heart of Del Ray

2205 Mount Vernon Avenue  
703-549-0813

Store Hours	
Monday - Saturday	10 - 5
Thursday nights until 7	
Sunday	12 - 5

## Ready for a change? We can help!



# 703-684-7702

[www.techpainting.com](http://www.techpainting.com)

20% Winter discount on jobs performed between January and March 2010! Call now for a free estimate and mention this ad!

Major credit cards accepted.







# CHRIS WHITE

Happy Holidays from Chris & Peggy White!



# LONG & FOSTER

ALEXANDRIA/OLD TOWN HISTORIC  
#1 Long & Foster Office in Northern Virginia



Managing Brokers  
Anne Rector & Bill Jourdan

**3102 Waterside Lane \$798,500**  
**Waterfront Value!**  
Updated and expanded home on gorgeous elevated grounds overlooks Little Hunting Creek! Private dock, custom glass walled family room, updated kitchen with granite, stainless & custom cabinets, hardwood floors, two car garage and much more! Unique opportunity - do not miss out!

**3906 Rive Drive \$998,500**  
**Stunning Property!**  
The most spectacular property you will ever find has been completely updated with breathtaking results! Bright & open floor plan, 3 fin lvls including full w/o LL, 4/5BR, 3.5BA, updated gourmet kitchen, stunning MBR suite and custom river view screened porch house with deck. Expansive glass window walls capture river views and natural beauty of almost full acre site.

**4816 Stillwell Avenue \$525,000**  
**Renovated!**  
Unique opportunity! Exceptionally large 5/6 BR home is located in a gorgeous setting on a 1/2 acre lot bordering acres of county parkland. Renovated throughout, it features an updated kitchen, refinished hardwood floors, finished lower level, in-law suite and large deck. A recently remodeled home of this size in a premier setting creates a truly one of a kind value!

**806 BEVERLEY DR Alexandria \$819,900**  
**CHARMING** Beverley Drive Red Brick Cape with huge curb appeal, quality two-story addition, deep treed lot for further expansion, 2/3BR, 3.5BA, granite kitchen, family room, office, living room fireplace, the one you've been waiting for...

**JUST REDUCED!**  
**318 PRINCE ST #7 Alex / \$719,000**  
**RARE - PRINCE ST CLUB!** 3 level, 2BR, 2.5BA former model is spectacular. Main level entertaining space, cat-in kitchen w/access to Royal St (only unit with this benefit). 20ft ceilings w/column detail in living/dining, custom built-ins for TV, CD & speaker systems. Direct access from unit to prkg space. Huge brick common area. Walk everywhere!

**1915 QUAKER LA #211-19 Alexandria City \$299,900**  
End unit Madison (2 level / 2 Bedroom) with brand new Maytag washer & dryer upstairs. Freshly painted throughout and newly refinished floors.

**9316 Allwood Drive \$540,000**  
**Stunning!**  
Home features bright, open floor plan with soaring cathedral ceilings in the main living area. This fabulous property has been substantially updated and is in absolutely impeccable condition. Gleaming hardwood floors, track lighting, finished lower level, garage and much more. Gorgeous setting on half acre tract fronting a quiet street in the heart of Mount Vernon.

**8311 Mount Vernon Hwy \$779,000**  
**Brand New Home!**  
Stunning opportunity! Leading builder's model home has been loaded with options and was planned to sell for over \$1,000,000! Fabulous special features include: bright and open floor plan, high ceilings, four levels, upgraded kitchen and baths, hardwood floors, custom trim detail, spacious screened porch and two car garage. Prime location convenient to everything!

**4401 Jackson Place \$475,000**  
**Special Value!**  
Spacious brick home on gorgeous half acre lot with open floor plan, hardwood floors, family room with fireplace, covered parking and extra driveway space. Fabulous custom deck overlooks magnificent level grounds. Rare opportunity to find a well maintained Mount Vernon home for under \$500,000!

**OPEN SUN 1-4**  
**300 COMMON-WEALTH AVE #1 Alex / \$344,900**  
WALK TO METRO & DEL RAY! Charming 2BR sparkling home, hdwds, darling screened in porch off kit, off-st assigned parking - only 3 blks to King St METRO, shops & restaurants. Located in a gorgeous single family neighborhood.

**116 ROBERTS LANE #301 Alexandria \$330,000**  
**ALEXANDRIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET!** The location and space you need, the updated kitchen you want. 2 bedrooms, 2 full baths, granite counter-tops, stainless steel appliances. Come check out this move-in ready unit.

**2220 N FAIRFAX DR #308 North Arlington \$429,000**  
1BR / 1.5BA + Den in Park at Courthouse. Highlights: light-filled living/dining rms, kit w/SS & granite, ceramic tile in Baths, HW floors, crown molding, abundant closet space, w/d, & 1 gar prkg space. Located just blks from Courthouse Metro & Clarendon.

**1208 Tatum Drive \$875,000**  
**Villamay!**  
Magnificent Colonial in exceptional condition on one of prestigious Villamay's nicest streets! Three finished levels, large room sizes, updated kitchen and baths. MBR suite has private balcony which provides panoramic vistas of the area with seasonal river views. Elevated grounds afford the ultimate privacy with gorgeous custom pool.

**1810 Hollidale Dr \$625,000**  
**Gorgeous Setting!**  
Estate sale of spacious rambler on gorgeous 3/4 acre grounds in premier location just minutes from Old Town in prestigious Hollidale/Mason Hill area! Home features five bedrooms, three full baths, large room sizes, open floor plan and oversized two car garage. Fabulous potential to remodel or build your dream home on this special site with rural ambiance in "close-in" location convenient to everything!

**Peace on Earth, Good Will to All**  
*Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year*  
from the  
*Agents and Staff*  
of  
*Long & Foster Realtors*

**1638 MT EAGLE PL #972-16 Alexandria \$362,500**  
**PARKFARFAX.** Lovingly cared for and outstandingly renovated, this Madison end-unit has a bright treehouse setting on a quiet cul-de-sac. Move in ready for the New Year, all the work has been done. Close in historic neighborhood with great commuting options. AX7190532

**945 POWHATAN ST Alex / Old Town \$699,000**  
**NEW AT OLD TOWN GATEWAY.**  
Elegantly appointed Brand-built Madison model with 2BR, 2.5BA, media room, breakfast room, built-in wine bar, living room gas fireplace with French doors to private patio, parking. Top quality.

**8108 East Boulevard Dr \$2,395,000**  
**Premier Property!**  
Custom Boucher built classic on magnificent full acre lot just 3 miles to Old Town! Spacious residence with elegant Colonial detail, custom brick exterior, 3 finished levels, handcrafted cabinetry and brick work, gourmet kitchen, 4.5 luxurious baths, high ceilings, 4 frpls and 3 car garage. Magnificent private setting on professionally landscaped grounds, convenient to everything!

**4413 Ferry Landing Road \$559,900**  
**Yacht Haven!**  
Recently installed top quality gourmet kitchen with custom cabinets & granite counters, hardwood floors, large deck & covered parking. Bright, open floor plan overlooks gorgeous half acre grounds in one of the area's leading waterfront communities! Less than 5 mins from Ft Belvoir, GW Pkwy, Mt Vernon Yacht Club & Mansion House Club. Home warranty!

**RENTALS**  
6631 Wakefield Dr #906A \$1,150  
River Towers Hi-Rise 1BR/1BA  
Klanci Vanderhyde 703.919.4460  
6619 10th St #A-2 \$1,275  
Belle View Garden 2BR/1BA  
Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264  
5911 Edsall Rd #806 \$1,425  
Highpointe Hi-Rise 2BR/2BA 1 assigned garage  
Suzanne Briar 703.728.4999  
3101 North Hampton Dr #111 \$1,700  
North Hampton Place Hi-Rise 2BR/2BA 1 assigned garage  
Deborah Alea 703.477.1315

**RENTALS**  
5901 Mount Eagle Dr #118 \$1,700  
Montebello Hi-Rise 2BR/2BA  
Mindy Brubaker 571.242.9913  
1405 North Van Dorn #1405-C \$1,800  
Parkside at Alexandria Garden 2BR/1.5BA  
Susan Batchelder 703.919.8359  
5901 Mount Eagle Dr #1214 \$2,000  
Montebello Hi-Rise 2BR/2BA 1 assigned garage  
Annise Smith 703.505.2533  
505 East Braddock Rd #608 \$2,100  
Colcroft Hi-Rise 2BR/2BA 1 assigned garage  
Sheryl Lambson 703.217.7012



CHRIS WHITE 703.283.9028  
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chris.white@longandfoster.com

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www.OldTownAlexandria.com



# E

ARTS ♦ ENTERTAINMENT ♦ LEISURE

## Christmas At Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon is again joyfully decking the halls for Christmas at Mount Vernon, a special daytime program offered from now through Jan. 6. Themed decorations (including 12 Christmas trees), a gingerbread Mount Vernon by former White House pastry chef Roland Mesnier, historical chocolate-making demonstrations, and 18th-century dancing will be offered. Back by popular demand will be "Aladdin," who plays the role of a Christmas Camel! George Washington was fond of unusual animals and plants, and he paid 18 shillings in 1787 for a camel to live at Mount Vernon for his guests during Christmas.

Christmas at Mount Vernon is included in regular Estate admission: \$15 for adults, \$7 for children ages 6-11, and free for children under 6. Call 703-780-2000; 703-799-8697 (TDD); or go to [Visit.MountVernon.org](http://Visit.MountVernon.org)

## Alexandria To Honor Its Living Legends

Twelve individuals or teams have been named this year's Living Legends of Alexandria. The Committee considered 32 nominations and will honor all nominees at a reception on Feb. 7, at the Lyceum, 201 North Washington Street.

Created in 2006, Living Legends of Alexandria is an ongoing, not-for-profit photo-journalism project, which identifies, honors, and chronicles Alexandria's citizens. Living Legends recognizes individuals who have contributed at least one tangible improvement to the quality of the City's life that would likely be missing without that person's vision and energy and those who have demonstrated long-term service to Alexandria, especially through work on commissions, committees and service organizations. The project is unique among recognition programs in that the records are donated to the Alexandria Library for future research and to inspire others.

The Legends of 2010 are: Chet Avery, Rosalind Bovey, Rodger Digilio, Nelson Greene, Sr., the team of Alice Merrill and Linda Odell, T. Michael Miller, John Porter, Joan and John Renner, David Speck, Pat Troy, Lois Walker and Betty Wright.

## Fun Hunt to Kick Off the New Year's Eve

First Night Alexandria will kick off with an inaugural Fun Hunt on Thursday, Dec. 31. Teams of friends, family and colleagues are invited to participate in the unique event starting at 2:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

Fun Hunt participants will pick up clues at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria. Speed doesn't matter, but solving all of the clues does.

The hunt will run until 4:45 p.m., when completed forms must be turned in at the Embassy Suites Hotel. During the First Night Alexandria official kick-off at 5 p.m., a Fun Hunt drawing will take place for first, second and third prizes. All teams that correctly finish the hunt by 4:45 p.m. and are present for the drawing will be eligible to win.

"There has already been a lot of buzz about this new event and we are fortunate to have generous sponsors providing some fabulous prizes," said Denny Auld, First Night Alexandria Board Member and Fun Hunt creator. "Our first prize winners will take home \$500, as well as a two-night stay at The Morrison House, with dinner one-night, and other great gifts. Similar prizes will be awarded to the second and third teams drawn."

The Fun Hunt is open to the first 250 teams registering. There is no fee to participate, but each team must have one First Night Alexandria badge visible at all times.

First Night Alexandria badges can be purchased online through Dec. 23 for \$15. Badges are also available for \$20 at several retail locations throughout Alexandria, and will be sold starting at 12 noon on Dec. 31, at the Embassy Suites Hotel on Diagonal Road, First Night Alexandria Headquarters that day. At least one venue in each of the First Night Spotlight Areas will sell badges too, starting 15 minutes before performances on New Year's Eve.

Admission badges are required for entry



**Alexandria City Mayor William Euille presents First Night Alexandria board chair Charlotte Hall and Vice Mayor Kerry Donley, First Night Alexandria's chair-elect, with a "Fair Weather Proclamation" at the Alexandria City Council Meeting on Dec. 8.**

to First Night Alexandria venues and provide access to any and all of the performances throughout the night. Children 12 and under are free when accompanied by an adult, and active military personnel will

receive complimentary badges.

For Fun Hunt details, a list of badge retail sites and a full schedule of the evening's venues and performers, visit [www.FirstNightAlexandria.org](http://www.FirstNightAlexandria.org).

## Alexandria Restaurant Week

More than 40 dining establishments will be showcasing their culinary expertise during the second-annual Alexandria Restaurant Week, Jan. 15-24.

For 10 days throughout the City of Alexandria, diners can sample \$35 pre-fixe three-course dinners, or \$35 dinners for two, or \$3.50 sweet treats at participating restaurants.

This 10-day gourmet and gourmand event enables residents and visitors to enjoy tantalizing multi-course meals and distinctive treats prepared especially for the occasion showcasing the culinary diversity offered throughout the city.

For event details and online reservations, go to [www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com](http://www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com) or call 703-746-3301.

### List of Participating Establishments

#### \$35 THREE-COURSE, PRIX FIXE DINNER

219 Restaurant  
A La Lucia (+)  
Bastille (+)  
Bilbo Baggins  
Cafe Salsa  
Chart House  
Columbia Firehouse  
Del Merei Grille (+)  
Finn & Porter (+)  
Fish Market  
Geranio (+)  
Jackson 20  
Joe Theismann's Restaurant  
La Bergerie (+)  
La Strada (+)  
La Tasca (+)  
Laporta's Restaurant (+)  
O'Connell's Restaurant  
Raw Silk, Indian Restaurant & Lounge  
RT's Restaurant  
Tempo Restaurant (+)  
The Carlyle Club (+)  
The Jamieson Grille  
The Warehouse Bar & Grill  
The Wharf  
Union Street Public House

GRAPE + BEAN wine bar

#### \$35 DINNER FOR TWO

Bombay Curry Company  
Chadwicks Old Town  
Cheesetique  
Dishes of India (+)  
Duke's Bar & Grill  
FireFlies  
Fontaine Café & Creperie  
King Street Blues (+)  
Mango Mike's (+)  
Monroe's, An American Trattoria  
Murphy's Irish Pub  
Overwood (+)  
Ramparts (+)  
Seagar's Restaurant (+)  
Thailand on Royal Street  
Villa Di'Este

#### \$3.50 SWEET TREAT

ACKC  
Bittersweet Catering

Price does not include tax and gratuity. All prices are subject to change.

(+) Indicates online reservations offered

# CALENDAR

## FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

**Tea Dances.** 1-3:15 p.m. Group class from 1-1:30 p.m. Ballroom, Latin and Swing music. \$11/person. At the Dance Studio Lioudmila, 18 Roth Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor (off Duke Street), Alexandria. Call 703-751-8868.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 24

**St. Paul's Old Town Music Offerings.** 6 p.m. (Choral prelude begins at 5:30 p.m.) St. Cecilia Choir, St. Paul's Choir Women, Good Shepherd Ringers, and parish Instrumentalists; Douglas Beck, conductor. At St. Paul's Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria. Call 703-549-3312 or email: douglas@stpaulsalexandria.com.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.** 9:30 a.m. The Vocal Ensemble of Westminster Choir, with Carolyn Carmack (soprano), Molly Roden (soprano), Elizabeth Blakeslee (harp), Michelle Clover (flute), Heather Hyde (trumpet), Richard Stone (timpani), and Paul Stetsenko (organ). At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Call 703-549-4766.

**St. Paul's Old Town Music Offerings: Christmas Holy Eucharist.** 11 p.m. With St. Paul's Choir, Instrumentalists; Douglas Beck, conductor. (Choral prelude begins at 10:30 p.m.) At St. Paul's Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria. Call 703-549-3312 or email: douglas@stpaulsalexandria.com.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 31

**First Night Alexandria.** New Year's Eve celebration with music, dance, performing arts for all ages with more than 100 performances in 25 indoor venues throughout Old Town. All ages are welcome and all venues are alcohol free. Noon to midnight. Fireworks at midnight. Entrance fee. Call 703-746-3301, www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com or www.FirstNightAlexandria.org.

## SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

**Storytelling Sessions.** 2 p.m. Children enter a world of fantasy and fables when costumed interpreters weave three tales together during Mount Vernon's storytelling session, "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon," at Historic Mount Vernon in the Hands-On History Room in the Donald W. Reynolds Education Center. "Once Upon a Time at Mount Vernon" is included in regular Estate admission: adults, \$15; youth ages 6-11, \$7; and children under 5 are free.

## JAN. 1-4

**MAGFest 8 — Music and Gaming Festival.** Offers 24-hour console, arcade and PC game rooms, 10 live video game cover bands, a vendors area and guest speakers from the video game industry and fan scene. Live video game music cover bands and 24-hour gaming. In Alexandria. Go to <http://magfest.org>.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 3

**Bach Vespers at Westminster.** 6 p.m. Organ works included: J.S. Bach, Prelude and Fugue in c-minor ("Bjg"). Chorale Preludes "Helft mir Gotts Güte preisen," "Das alte Jahre vergangen ist," "In dir ist Freude" and Fugue on "Magnificat." At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Go to [www.wpc-alex.org](http://www.wpc-alex.org)



## DEC. 27, 28, 29

**"The Nutcracker."** 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Presented by The Virginia Ballet Company and School. At Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus in the Ernst Community Cultural Center Theater. Tickets are \$30/adults; \$20/children, students and seniors. Go to [www.virginiaballetcompany.org](http://www.virginiaballetcompany.org) or call 703-249-8227.

**Twelfth Night.** 6 p.m. A celebration of the Epiphany and the Winter Solstice. Armonia Nova, a Medieval and Renaissance ensemble of historical instruments and voices. At Christ Church, 118 N. Washington St., Old Town, Alexandria. Call 571-482-9052 or [www.armonianova.org](http://www.armonianova.org).

## MONDAY/JAN. 4

**Tavern Toddlers.** \$7 admission. Weekly open playtime between 10:30 a.m. and noon every Monday. (For ages walkers through 36 months). At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Old Town Alexandria. Call 703-838-4242 or visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org).

## JAN. 4-5

**Auditions for "Urinetown."** 7-10 p.m. Presented by the Metropolitan Performing Arts Theatre. Sing up to 32 bars, bring sheet music (accompanist provided). Callbacks are Jan. 7. The performance dates are March 19-27. At 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.



**BumpKin Pie with Michael Dunkley and Suzanne Ives of Alexandria.**

## SUNDAY/JAN. 10

**Hungry for Music Concert.** 7 p.m. Four folk/Americana duos perform. Starring Siobhan Quinn and Michael Bowers; BumpKin Pie with Michael Dunkley and Suzanne Ives; Lisa Taylor and Dana Connor; and The Sweater Set. At Church of the Resurrection, 2280 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria. Tickets are \$18/door; \$15/advance at [FocusMusic.org](http://FocusMusic.org). Contact Kay Coyte at [kay@focusmusic.org](mailto:kay@focusmusic.org) or 703-501-6061

Email [danilo.stapula@gmail.com](mailto:danilo.stapula@gmail.com) or visit [www.metrotheater.org](http://www.metrotheater.org)

## SATURDAY/JAN. 9

**Rockin' in a Winter Wonderland.** 10-11 a.m. Featuring Rocknoceros and benefitting the St. Clement Episcopal Day School in Alexandria. Cost is \$10/advance; \$12/door. At Grace Episcopal Day School Auditorium, 3601 Russell Road, Alexandria. For tickets, go to <http://preschool.fufa.net>.

**Women's Handyman Classes.** 10 a.m. to noon. Basic electrical, plumbing and handyman classes for interested women hoping to learn about everything from hanging a ceiling fan, repairing a leaky faucet, installing a door knob or replacing ceramic tiles. At Michael and Son headquarters building, 5730 General Washington Drive, Alexandria. Visit [www.michaelandson.com](http://www.michaelandson.com)

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 13

**All About Dogs.** 7:30 p.m. Friends of Duncan Library are hosting Robin Bennett, author of All About Dog Daycare: A Blueprint for Success and Off-Leash Dog Play. At Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Call 703-838-4566 or visit [www.alexandria.lib.va.us](http://www.alexandria.lib.va.us).

## JAN. 15-24

**Alexandria Restaurant Week.** More than 40 dining establishments participating in this second-annual event. Offering \$35 pre-fixe three-course dinner or \$35 dinner for two, or \$3.50 sweet treats. Throughout the City of Alexandria. Menus, event details, and online reservations at: [www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com](http://www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com). Call 703-746-3301

## TUESDAY/JAN. 19

**Winter Concert.** Works by Philip Glass with Dana Tae Soon Burgess Dance Co. Schönberg "Verklärte Nacht". At Episcopal High School, in Pendleton Hall in the Ainslie Arts Center, 1200 North Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Call 703-933-4135.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 23

**Civil War Ball.** 8-11 p.m. In Gadsby's Tavern ballroom. \$45/advance; \$50/door. Period attire, either civilian or military, is encouraged. In preparation for the Ball, dance classes will be offered at Gadsby's Tavern Museum from 7:30-9:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21. Learn the waltz, polka, Virginia Reel and more. Cost is \$12/each of \$30 for the series. Call 703-838-4242. Visit [www.gadsbystavern.org](http://www.gadsbystavern.org).

## JAN. 23-24

**"Mint Condition."** Jan. 23 at 8 p.m.; Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. Jane Franklin Dance and Washington Saxophone Quartet perform in a shared evening. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Tickets are \$28 - \$16 can be purchased by phone 703-933-1111 or at [www.janefranklin.com](http://www.janefranklin.com)

## SATURDAY/FEB. 13

**Tamburitzans Perform.** 7 p.m. Duquesne University Tamburitzans perform. Tickets are \$22, \$25 and \$30. At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. Call 1-877-826-6437.

**George Washington Birthday Classic 10-K Race and 2-K Fun Run.** 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. rain or shine. Certified race course through Eisenhower Valley and Alexandria's parklands. Prizes, T-shirts and refreshments will be provided for runners, with the proceeds benefiting the Alexandria Police Youth Camp. Cost is \$25; after Feb. 10: \$30.

**La Strada**  
1905 ON THE AVENUE

## New Year's Eve Prix Fixe Tasting Menu

### Three Courses

*Antipasti or Insalata; Primi or Secondi; and Dolce \$45.00 plus tax & gratuity per person*  
*With wine pairings above (Tasting Glasses)*  
*\$60.00 tax & gratuity per person*

### Five Course

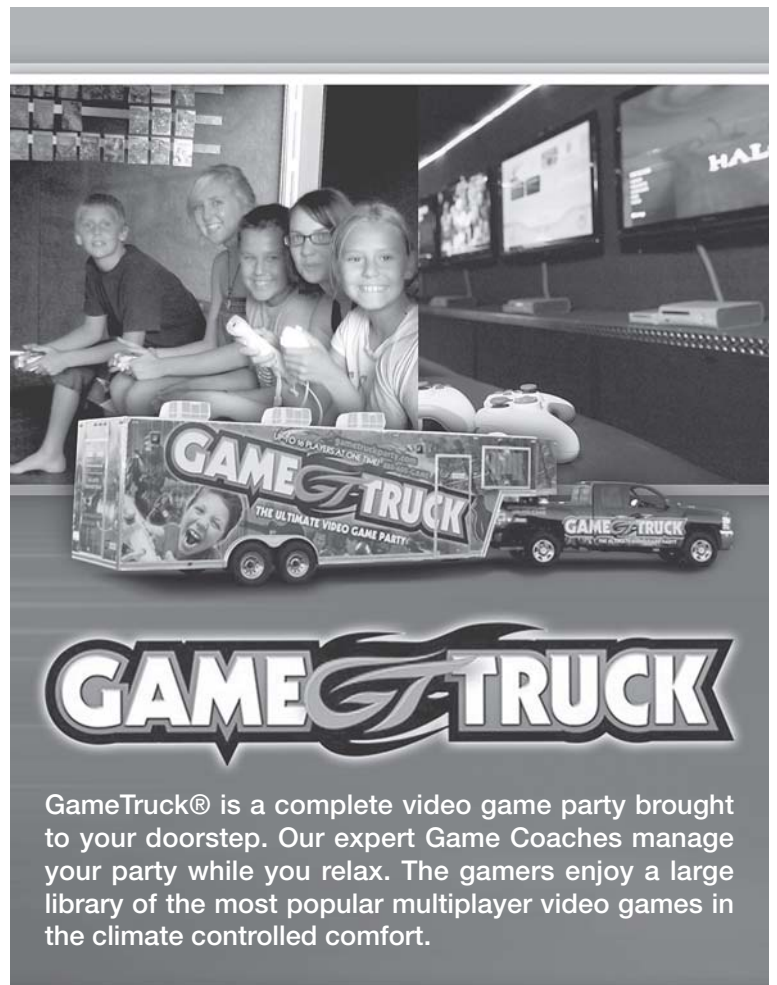
*\$65.00 plus tax & gratuity per person*  
*With wine pairings above (Tasting Glasses)*  
*\$85.00 tax & gratuity per person*

### BUON ANNO

*Happy holidays from the Scott family and staff.*

Please call 703-548-2542 or  
[www.lastrada-ontheave.com](http://www.lastrada-ontheave.com) for menu or to make  
reservations for 1 of 3 seatings; 6pm, 8pm or 10pm

**La Strada**  
1905 Mount Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria (Del Ray)  
**703-548-2542**  
[www.lastrada-ontheave.com](http://www.lastrada-ontheave.com)



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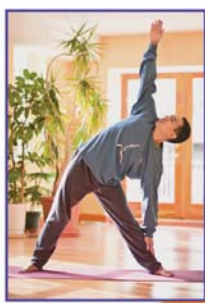
## Have a Healthy, Happy 2010 with Yoga in Daily Life®

Enroll in the next session of yoga classes at Yoga in Daily Life® and learn stretching, yoga exercises, meditation, and deep breathing techniques for maintaining muscle tone, developing flexibility and mobility, and minimizing everyday stress...for a healthier, happier you.

### Register today

- Next six-week session begins January 4
- Register by 2 p.m., January 2 for the pre-registration discount
- Offering *Yoga for Seniors* every Wednesday at 12:15 p.m.
- Unlimited class passes available—call for details
- 15% off registration with this ad *Please call for discount*
- Drop-ins welcome

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## FINE ARTS



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NOW THROUGH JAN. 3

### New Mythology/Tracey Clarke

Tracey Clarke's otherworldly work pairs dramatic images with short narratives that both answer — and ask — questions. An artist's reception will be held Sunday, Nov. 22 at 4 p.m. On display at the Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Call 703-548-0035 or visit [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org).

NOW THROUGH DEC. 31

### Gallery West Presents: The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration/Small Works Show

Join the members of Gallery West in a month-long celebration of the gallery's 30<sup>th</sup> year. The gallery is located at 1213 King Street in Old Town Alexandria's Boutique District, between Payne and Fayette. Shopping and fine dining are nearby. The gallery is open from 11 – 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Images of work by the members are on view at the gallery's Web site: [www.gallery-west.com](http://www.gallery-west.com). Call 703-549-6006.

NOW THROUGH JAN. 3

**The Kiln Club Show.** Runs Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with Thursdays open until 9 p.m. Scope Gallery is located at 101 North Union Street, ground floor Studio 19, Alexandria. Call the Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit [www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope](http://www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope).

NOW THROUGH JAN. 3

**Size Matters: Two Shows-Two Jurors.** Juried by Peg Koetsch and Brett John Johnson. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except second Thursdays 2 to 9 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Street, #312, Alexandria. Call 703-683-2205.

JAN. 5 TO FEB. 20

"White Ice." At the Potomac Fiber Arts



NOW THROUGH JAN. 4

### Pamela H. Viola, "The One Less Traveled."

Photographer Pamela Viola's solo artist exhibit at The Art League Gallery, "The One Less Traveled," features dreamlike, mysterious landscapes that challenge the viewer to see the world in a new and different way. Opening Reception: Thursday, Dec. 10, 6:30 – 8 p.m. Gallery Hours: Daily, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sundays, 12 noon – 6 p.m. Open Thursdays until 9 p.m. Exhibitions and events are free and open to the public. The Art League, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria.

Gallery. Artists interpret in fiber the cool, clear, sparkly, sheer, and smooth nature of Ice. Jewelry, sculpture, clothing, and wall pieces are some of the items that will be exhibited. Located in Studio 18 of the Torpedo Factory Art Center at 105 North Union Street in Old Town Alexandria. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., except on Thursdays when it is open from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Free admission.

TUESDAY/JAN. 5

**"Morrison House Presents: From the Torpedo Factory to the Mount Vernon Trail."** 6-8 p.m. Torpedo Factory artist Christopher Erney will discuss his creation of the George Washington Mural, the longest realistic mural in the United States. Part of a salon-style series celebrating culture through arts, literature and history discussion. At the Morrison House, 116 South Alfred Street, Alexandria. Visit [www.morrisonhouse.com](http://www.morrisonhouse.com) or call 703-838-8000.

JAN. 8 TO JAN. 24

**New Work for a New Year.** The Del Ray Artisans' (DRA) January show for 2010. This exhibit provides local artists a platform to show recent work that has not been previously exhibited. The show will open on with a reception on Friday, Jan. 8 from 7 – 9:30 p.m., and close Sunday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m. Gallery hours are: Thursdays, noon to 4 p.m.;

Fridays, noon to 9 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sundays, noon to 6 p.m. Admission is free. At the Del Ray Artisans gallery at the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, 2704 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Call 703-838-4827 or [www.thedelrayartisans.org](http://www.thedelrayartisans.org).

NOW THROUGH JAN. 10

**Pandora's Box Exhibition.** Pandora's Box is an exhibition that had artists create a visual interpretation of the Greek Myth and express how it relates to modern times. Reception Dec. 10 from 6-8 p.m. Juror talk with Landria Shack: Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. Pandora's Box Youth Outreach Art Project: Dec. 10-Jan. 10; with VIP reception on Dec. 10, 5:30-6:30 p.m. At The Torpedo Factory Art Center on the waterfront in Old Town Alexandria at 105 North Union Street; call 703-838-4565, ext. 4; Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org)

FEB. 3-28

**Gallery West Presents: The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual National Juried Show** Gallery West invites the public to view works selected for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual National Show, juried by Jack Rasmussen, Director and Curator of the American University Museum. Reception: Saturday, Feb. 6 from 5 – 8 p.m. Second Thursday Reception: Feb. 11, 6 – 9 p.m. Located at 1213 King Street in Old Town Alexandria's Boutique District. Visit [www.gallery-west.com](http://www.gallery-west.com) or call 703-549-6006.

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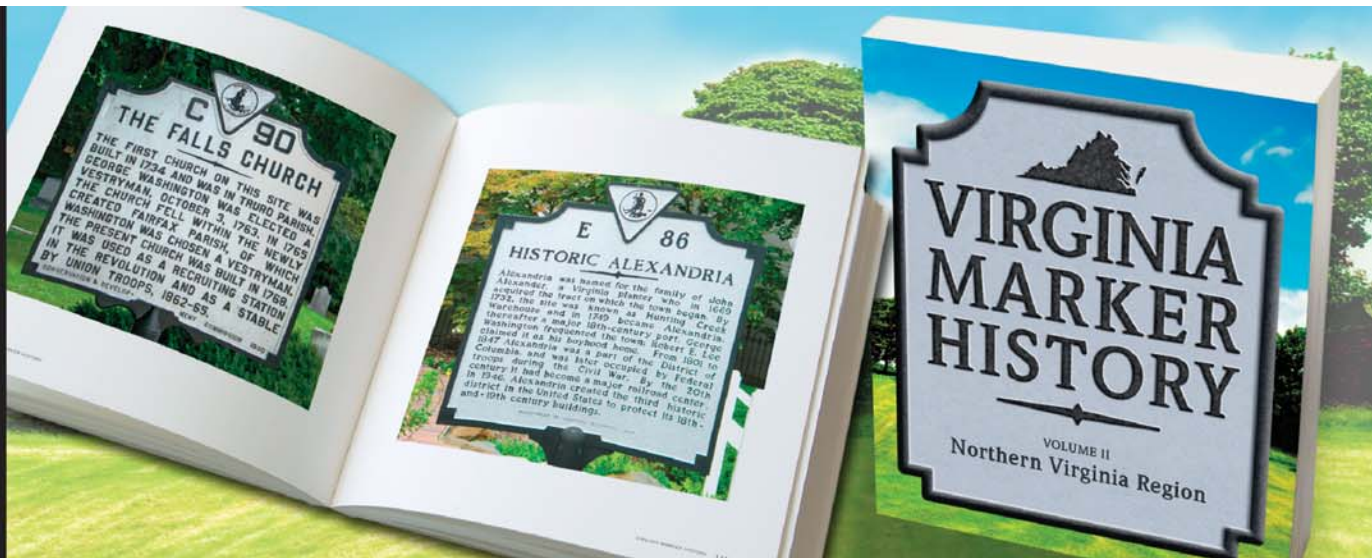
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# SCHOOLS

## She's Reading Teacher of the Year

FROM PAGE 1

she took undergraduate courses in preparation for law school. Attending classes every day, she met other students who also wanted to study law. "They really — really — wanted to become lawyers. They were passionate," she said.

**TWO YEARS LATER**, the day came when she had to make a decision about a career that she didn't feel much passion.

"I had signed up for an education course during my junior year and I liked my professor. On the last day of add/drop, I went to him and said 'What would I have to do to change my major?' He said 'How many education courses have you had?'"

"He sat with me for an hour. I dropped every class I had signed up for except choir and education. He mapped out how I could finish my degree in four years because I told him my mother wouldn't let me stay any longer than four years. This was the days before computers so I ran up in down the campus to all professors, got them to sign off on my plan, turned in the paperwork and called my mother. 'Guess what I just did?' I said, and that's that. When all was said and done that was what I wanted to become: a teacher."

For the last 30 years, Elmore has been fulfilling her passion. She spent 25 years at Stratford Landing Elementary in Alexandria, teaching kindergarten, first, second, third, and sixth grades, 10 of those 25 years as a reading specialist.

One of her best friends, Judith Kaiser, a retired Stratford Landing teacher who now substitutes, helped to get her her first job there in 1980, "but I think it would be really mean to include that number," Elmore said, laughing.

Thirty years later, she could retire from Fairfax County Public Schools, but she's far from it at 51. And "my youngest daughter — Cate, 19 — is in college [Elon University, North Carolina]; so that definitely doesn't make me eligible." Her oldest daughter, Beth, 23, teaches English in Shanghai.

**WOODLEY HILLS** sits on property once owned by George Washington, and just minutes away from his Mount Vernon estate. The school, which serves kindergartners through sixth grade, has 663

students; 228 who speak English, 327 who speak Spanish, a small fraction who speak Chinese and French, and others who speak 85 additional languages.

**"It's an amazing thing to watch how she can motivate a child who has had a long history of difficulty and she seems to know what to do to break through their struggle to understand our language and access it."**

— Principal Sharon Aldredge

From her office lined with books from the floor to the ceiling, among them the "Wayside Schools" to the "Junie B. Jones" series, she helps three other reading teachers map strategy to teach all of those students to read and

comprehend the English language.

Elmore's award is in the form of a journal, silver plated, and engraved with her name and the name of the award. "I haven't written in it," she said.

The council, whose membership comes from Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudon, and Prince William counties, concentrates on promoting literacy and literacy education. Elmore was nominated by her colleagues.

"This has been a very nice honor; it's just a reflection of the people that I work with," she said. "You're not on an island but a cog in a wheel."

A cog, maybe, but an important one, said Aldredge.

"Judi deserves this because of all the work she does with children and teachers. It's an amazing thing to watch how she can motivate a child who has had a long history of difficulty and she seems to know what to do to break through their struggle to understand our language and access it. She's phenomenal."

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# Mount Vernon Gymnasts Balance Learning, Fun

Coach encourages beginners to join team.

BY JON ROETMAN  
THE GAZETTE

**Z**sa Zsa Valdez (pronounced Sasha) is competing on the beam when she starts to giggle. The Mount Vernon senior is struggling to keep her balance, and it appears her composure, as well.

Her laughter is misleading, however. Valdez isn't nervous. Actually, she's keeping herself focused on her gymnastics goal.

"I'm in it just for the fun and just to hang out with my friends," she said.

And the giggling?

"I can't take it too seriously, or if I do, I'll start freaking out," she said. "So I have to take it kind of light hearted for me to do well."

Valdez's approach is not uncommon on the Mount Vernon gymnastics team. Of the 26 athletes on the roster, only two have more than minimal experience — neither of which are club gymnasts. There are 11 freshmen on the team. Many athletes start learning the most basic of moves once they join the Majors.

Linda Fisher is in her ninth season as the program's head coach. She attended Mount Vernon and was on the gymnastics team for four years.

"We're starting from the very beginning — cartwheels, roundoffs and just hoping they can at least get on the bar, get on the beam, even if it's elementary skills just to get them up there," Fisher said. "That's how the team's always been, ever since I've been in high school. It's not anything new to me.



Mount Vernon senior Zsa Zsa Valdez goes through a routine on the beam while head coach Linda Fisher watches. Valdez said the beam is her favorite event.

I just want to keep the sport going, so regardless what ability I have, we try to work with it.

"We're not going to win; that's not my priority. It's to get them to learn something, to enjoy it and come back next year."

For Fisher, coaching the Majors is her escape from the daily grind.

"This is my stress reliever for the day," said Fisher, a full-time accountant who also coaches gymnastics at a dance studio.

Fisher attracts students to the program by letting them know it's open to all skill levels.

"Sometimes we do preseason conditioning, end-of-the-season conditioning [and] kind of let it open up to everybody and let everybody know that it's open to anybody," she said. "If I only told everybody, 'You have to [be able to do a] back handspring [to be on] the team,' I would have like four people,

maybe."

The 26 athletes are more than Fisher usually keeps, but Fisher is trying to maintain interest in the team, especially after nearly losing the program to budget cuts last season. She usually has a few more gymnasts with experience, but nothing too serious.

Senior Meg Earley and junior Sarah Locke are the most experienced Majors.

"We don't really have a lot of expectation," Earley said. "We just go. We play it by ear."

Early, junior Sarah Marie Wood and sophomore Sidney Nesbitt are co-captains.

On Dec. 16, Mount Vernon placed third out of five teams during a meet at Yorktown. The Majors finished with 93.3 points, 2.3 ahead of fourth-place Yorktown.

Locke posted the team's best all-around score with a 26. She was Mount Vernon's top finisher on the vault (8.3) and the floor (8.0).



Sophomore Sidney Nesbitt said the floor is her favorite event because she can express herself during the event.

Valdez said her favorite event is the beam. She was the highest-scoring Major in the event with a 6.35. Lydia Pope and Mackenzie Rumley each scored an 8.0 on the vault.

Nesbitt scored an 8.1 on the vault and a 7.7 on the floor.

"I like the floor most," she said, "because you can express yourself more."

Mount Vernon won't win many events, but the team enjoys the opportunity to participate. Last year, when losing the program was a possibility, the Majors made blue T-shirts that said "save gymnastics" on the front and wore them to districts.

As long as the Majors are enjoying themselves, where they end up in the standings isn't important.

"I just want to place not last," Nesbitt said, "and have a good time."

Well, maybe slightly important.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Mount Vernon Girls Ticketed for California

The Mount Vernon girls basketball team will travel to Westlake Village, Calif., for a holiday basketball tournament on Dec. 26 and 28-30. Head coach Terry Henderson said the Majors raised money for the trip and he hopes the team can jell while on the West Coast. The team leaves Christmas night and returns Dec. 31.

"Basically, I wanted to do something different," he said, "and give the girls a new experience and a chance to get away and bond and play against some top-notch competition."

Last holiday season, the Majors traveled to Newport News and won the Lady Greyhound Classic.

Henderson said the team has activities planned for free time during the trip. Depending on the tournament schedule, the Majors could go to Magic Mountain, the Hollywood Walk of Fame or other destinations.

"It's really going to bring us together as a team," Henderson said.

"It's an opportunity to bond with each other and then play against some tough talent. ... [The girls can] use this experience as a life experience. Some of these kids might not ever make it out to California again."

Mount Vernon faced Washington-Lee on Dec. 18, Potomac High on Dec. 19 and Edison on Dec. 22. Results were not available before the Gazette's deadline.

### Mount Vernon Boys To Host 35th Annual Tournament

The Mount Vernon boys basketball program will host its 35th annual holiday tournament Dec. 26 and 28-29. Yorktown, Paul VI, Stonewall Jackson, Forest Park McKinley Tech, Robinson, Oakton and Mount Vernon comprise the tournament field.

Among the Majors' potential opponents are a National District foe (Yorktown) and the team which handed Mount Vernon its first loss (Paul VI). Also, Stonewall Jackson guard Darren Warren (6-foot-2) is a college prospect, according to ESPN.com.

"I think it will be some good compe-

tion," Mount Vernon head coach Alfonso Smith said.

Skylar Jones (18.3 points per game), Robert Smith (14.3), Jesse Konadu (13.7) and Sean Stewart (11.3) were carrying Mount Vernon offensively through three games. Smith said playing three games in four days at the holiday tournament provides others a chance for increased contribution while the minutes of the "big four" are scaled back.

Three games in four nights is "an opportunity for us to have guys step up in different roles," Smith said. "You can't just lean on the big four. ... We're going to need some of those other guys to [score]."

Mount Vernon faced Washington-Lee on Dec. 18 and Edison on Dec. 22. Results were not available before the Gazette's deadline.

### Majors' King Nominated for All-American Honors

Mount Vernon senior Tracy King was nominated as a potential McDonald's All-American, Majors' head coach Terry Henderson said. King, an all-state selec-

tion last season, has not played since tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee during the Majors' regional semifinal loss to Oakton in late February. Henderson said King's target return date is Jan. 8 against Yorktown.

### West Potomac To Play at Westfield

The West Potomac boys basketball team will participate in the Westfield Bulldog Bash on Dec. 28-30. The Wolverines lost to South County, 76-61, on Dec. 15. West Potomac faced Centerville on Dec. 18 and Lake Braddock on Dec. 22. Results were not available before the Gazette deadline.

### WP Girls Coach Searching for Tournament

West Potomac girls basketball coach Vincent Tate said his team was scheduled to play in a holiday tournament at Oakton, but the tournament was cancelled, leaving him looking for someone

to play.

The Wolverines lost to South County, 54-34, on Dec. 15. Kiara Artis led West Potomac with 15 points, while Talya Dawson added nine. West Potomac faced Centerville on Dec. 18 and Lake Braddock on Dec. 22. Results were not available before the Gazette's deadline.

### Avengers To Host Hawks

The Alexandria Avengers, a professional basketball team and member of the Eastern Basketball Alliance, will host the Nova Hawks at 7 p.m. Jan. 10 at Mount Vernon High School.

### Wrestling League

A wrestling club for second-eighth-grade boys and girls will be available from 7-8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting Jan. 12 in the West Potomac High School wrestling room. The club is non-competitive and runs through March. Cost is \$85 and the first two practices are free. Contact Chuck Africano at africano5@cox.net or 703-655-3995.



Second grade teacher Cali French dances with Santa last week on Tuesday afternoon at Stratford Landing Elementary School.

## Santa Arrives on a Harley

The Fairfax County Motor Squad escorted Santa and Mrs. Claus along with Frosty the Snowman on a visit to eight elementary schools — including at Stratford Landing Elementary School — last week on Tuesday.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

Frosty the Snowman greets the 700-plus students at the entrance of the school on Riverside Road in Mount Vernon.



Stratford Landing school counselor Mrs. May gets a hug from Santa.



Santa greets all of the students and the teachers with high fives.

COMMENTARY

## Give Wisely

BY GERALD A. FILL  
THE GAZETTE

**T**he holiday season is here. Inevitably one's thoughts turn to those less fortunate. Unemployed, handicapped, hungry, homeless, and alone. Why not give a contribution to those organizations who look after the less fortunate? Absolutely the right thing to do.

**THE NEW MIDDLE AGE**

Most Americans are very generous, compassionate, caring, and giving. But wait; be careful. Intelligent giving requires some checking out unknown organizations, no matter how emotional and effective their appeal. The best of the organizations make certain that your money or in-kind donation gets to the people who need the help. Most of us who celebrate Christmas or

Hannukah or other holiday observances are regularly inundated with solicitations to give for this or that good cause. Here are a few tips to make sure your charitable giving gets to the intended needy people.

First, give to those organizations you personally know and are satisfied that the money or in-kind contribution goes to those in need.

Secondly, give to local organizations which you can check out with a site visit or you have a friend who knows them and can assure you that the contribution reaches the intended recipients. In this category see below some, but by no means all, the local organizations in the northern Virginia area that will use your contribution effectively.

For all other organizations which solicit you and you are considering but know nothing about, there are several Web sites which you can use to check out the legitimacy and effectiveness of the organization.

They include:

- ♦ CharityNavigator.org: provides ratings and analysis on more than 5,400 non-profits.

- ♦ GiveWell.net: provides in-depth analysis on individual charities; focuses on how well programs work.

- ♦ GuideStar.org: has non profit reports and tax forms for almost two million charities.

Local area Northern Virginia non profits:

- ♦ United Community Ministries: ucmagency.org
- ♦ Lorton Community Action Center: lortonaction.org
- ♦ Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services: goodhousing.org
- ♦ New Hope Housing: newhopehousing.org
- ♦ Rising Hope United Methodist Church: risinghopeumc.org
- ♦ Progreso Hispano: progreso-hispano.org
- ♦ Beth-El: bethelhebrew.org
- ♦ Brain Injury Services: braininjurysvcs.org
- ♦ Housing and Community Services of Northern Virginia: hcsnv.org
- ♦ National Capital Food Bank: capitalareafoodbank.org
- ♦ Women of Mount Vernon: womensgroupofmtvernon@gmail.com
- ♦ Mount Vernon At Home: mountvernonathome.org

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# EMPLOYMENT

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