



Citizens Rally to Aid Tsunami Victims

Community Shows Its Spirit In Face of Devastation

Jennifer Heyns

Southeast Asian countries lost more than 150,000 lives to the December 26, 2004 Tsunami, but the devastation ignited a storm of community spirit in Middleburg.

Tragedy brought out

the best in this area with fundraisers to support relief efforts originating in schools, churches, businesses and community organizations before New Year celebrations were underway.

Here are a few of the generous initiatives that were organized:

Maxwell's Pub

Casey Huetson of Maxwell's Pub proudly reported that the entire staff at Maxwell's voted to donate 25 percent of their tips and sales from business on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day to a charitable organization for Tsunami relief.

"Everyone had a different idea of where the money should be sent," said Huetson, "but most said the Red Cross, so that's probably where we will donate the money."

According to Huetson, the pub raised approximately \$2500 in just over 24 hours, through the generosity of the staff and customers, who not only gave healthy tips, but also contributed directly into the collection bucket.

Foxcroft

Foxcroft School students were also touched by the Tsunami tragedy, although in a much more direct way than

most.

Their schoolmate, Noon Kampanatsanyakorn was at home in Thailand when the Tsunami struck. Luckily, Kampanatsanyakorn, a sophomore at Foxcroft, survived the catastrophe and is now safely back in Middleburg.

"The community as a whole has a core value of giving back," said Foxcroft Director of Communications Sue Philbrick, "but I think because of Noon, it was something that really hit home - knowing someone who was in it makes it so much more real."

The students set a goal of \$5,000 to raise for Tsunami relief and are already 60 percent of the way there with their first endeavor - a barbecue in the parking lot of the Middleburg Bank on January 15.

The girls raised another \$200 with a dance class they organized in January, and, according to Philbrick, they are determined to reach their goal.

"We'll plan another fundraiser in the near future to raise more money," she said emphatically.

Hill School

According to Emily Tyler of The Hill School, students there have already raised approximately \$5000 for Tsunami relief.

Tyler said that the school organized a "Walk and Roll" benefit in which 70

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Late Reports Delay Council Decision

Council Asks for Another 30 Days

Jennifer Heyns

Mayor, C.L. "Tim" Dimos convened the Middleburg Town Council promptly at 7:30 p.m., on Thursday, February 10th. Those interested in the number one question currently on the Council agenda, the fate of the Salamander Inn and the Town Water Supply, would have to wait until the very end of the meeting, however, to hear that no decisions had been made during the past month, that none would be made until a special meeting in late February, and that the Council's discussions on that date would be held in a "closed session" of the Town Council.

Mayor Dimos explained once again that Council had spoken with Salamander Inn representatives in January and had asked for 30 days to gather reports from five key committees, and yet another 30 days for the Council to reach a decision.

Much to the distress of the Mayor, four of the five Council committees had

failed to complete their reports on time.

Betsy Davis of the Finance Committee claimed that she was "90 percent ready to make a report" and would have it prepared after the Finance Committee's February 21st meeting.

Helen Hyre, speaking for the Public Works Committee, said that they were only 75 percent prepared, but would meet on February 17th to complete their report.

Mark Snyder revealed that the Land Use Committee would also be meeting on the 17th to complete their report.

Eura Lewis of the Public Safety Committee said that her group would have a completed report following their next meeting on February 16th.

Only the Economic Development Committee, headed by

Mayor Dimos, himself, came prepared with a completed report.

Due to the lack of reports from 80% of the Committees assigned to prepare them, the Council had no choice but to agree to hold another meeting, now scheduled for February 24th at 6 p.m.

At that meeting the Council hopes to make the missing reports public and begin considering decisions that have been simmering for months.

Neither the public nor the press will have access to those discussions, however. By a unanimous decision the Council voted to deliberate in secret.

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Middleburg & Environs

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Champagne Sabering and High Romance at Books & Crannies

When all else fails, reach for your saber and behead the champagne bottle to set the mood according to Jason Tesauro, author of The Modern Lover and The Modern Gentleman who entertained guests at Books & Crannies on February 12th. Tesauro, a junior sommelier with Barboursville Vineyards, is also an etiquette coach and manners columnist for Men's Health magazine.



Dee Dee Hubbard



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News of Note

Wendy Wins Big on Project Runway

Grammy Awards Provide Inspiration and Put Local Designer in Final Three

Glenda Cudaback

Wow, said Tim Gunn, when he saw Wendy Pepper's show-stopping, orange, two-piece dress for the Grammy Award Challenge on Project Runway, Bravo Network's competition to find the best new American designer.

Gunn is the Chair of the Department of Fashion Design for the justifiably famous Parson's School of Design in New York City. Parsons partnered with Bravo to create Project Runway, and, if anyone knows what deserves a "Wow," its Gunn.

Once again, the Middleburg designer understood the brief and created an impeccable design, a delightful, flirty, two-piece dress for interviewer Nancy O'Dell to wear that would compliment her lovely legs, hide her bulky microphone equipment and not compete with the gowns worn by the many stars she would interview as they arrived for the 2005 Grammy Award Show.

"This is a beautifully proportioned garment," said Gunn. "It's just right. Wendy. You're going on to Fashion Week as one of the Final Three!"

It is important to note, that of all the design challenges to date, Wendy has won the two most market- and customer-driven challenges. Anyone who has commissioned and worn her designs understands why. She has ultimate respect for her client and brings a deep intelligence and sense of style to every garment she creates.

The Big Win

No one knows better than Wendy that making it to the Final Three is The Big Win.

Each of these three designers will create a collection to be shown at Fashion Week in New York. Although one of the three will be

chosen best of class, the distinct differences in the style and target market of each of the Final Three make it abundantly clear that the Bravo Network intends for each of them to go on to tremendously successful careers.

The Final Three designers include Kara Saun, the Hollywood costume designer, Jay McCarroll, the brilliant teenage-to-twenty-something designer and Wendy, the "I want to wear that..." designer of elegant, sexy, classically beautiful and modern garments.

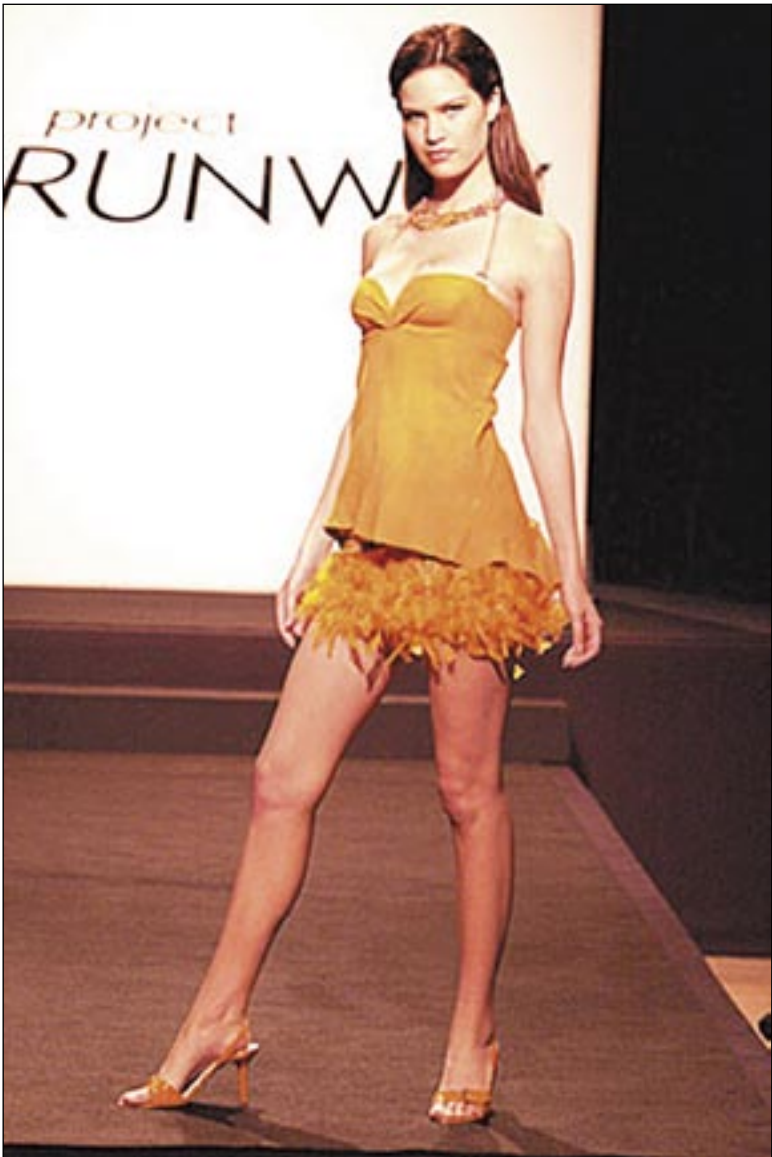
Although one of these will eventually be chosen as the best of the 2005 class, one can see the Bravo Network producers at work. They want each of these three designers to become tremendously successful. They have a terrific mix of talent to achieve exactly that: Kara and Jay have tremendous appeal for the twenty-something shopper who shops often and has a low-to-middle price range. With her win for the Grammy challenge, Wendy swept through this market territory but she also and absolutely owns the thirty-to-eighty market with her understanding of the female desire to be attractive, gracious, elegant, powerful and in control.

Now Wendy has an opportunity to illustrate her understanding of her market in a named collection on the runway on which every American designer must show to be successful.

What Next

It is impossible not to wonder whether or not these talented individuals had any idea when they auditioned for Project Runway that they were giving up all control of their image and personality to the Bravo Network.

Television is not only com-



BRAVO / Project Runway

Runway producers have shaped for her. Hopefully, she will step back and re-connect with the market in the Fashion Week Show.

Jay seems to be open to almost anything. He is a remarkably talented designer whom the Washington Post's Fashion Editor Robin Givhan could not help describing as gay and a former pornographer. Sadly for Jay, he is a brilliant designer who simply has not been able to break through with the judges as the Project Runway show has progressed. He is, without question, the one designer who moves farthest forward toward the future with each brief.

Wendy

For Wendy, the future is clear. Northern Virginia is growth territory, and the picture is not always pretty. Technology and manufacturing companies find the proximity to Federal Washington seductive, and, if the seduction is not enough, the powers that be court them as if there is no other category of business they would welcome.

Branded fashion is a tremendously viable and attractive business in any geography. It provides jobs at all levels, upper demographic appeal, blue ribbon investors, global reach and brand values that can only be fully understood if one is familiar with Ralph Lauren.

The establishment of a branded fashion business in Middleburg, Virginia that employs seamstresses, machine operators, weavers, managers, marketers, event and destination managers and more would nicely balance the unbridled growth county neighbors are suffering.

Bon Chance, Wendy! But, in reality, you've already won big for Middleburg. ✿

petitive, it is a cutthroat business and the foundation of all successful reality and competition shows today is that the contestants forego all rights to their image as edited and produced by the network.

Surely, Austin Scarlett, who channels the young Yves St. Laurent, had no idea he would be mocked universally for lack of originality. His immense talent has been compromised ruthlessly by film editors who brutally chop

the hundreds of hours of footage as they create each 22-minute show. He has been positioned as a prissy, neurotic who enjoys the hair and make-up artists more than any of the models. Did he ever imagine this would be the outcome?

Did Kara realize she would be encouraged to take the Hollywood image too far? It seems that this fabulously creative and original talent is being moved more and more closely to a role the Project

Why Can't Loudoun Read?

Monty Tayloe

According to the Loudoun Literacy Council, a Leesburg-based non-profit, 1 out of every 8 residents of Loudoun County is functionally illiterate.

Functional illiteracy is defined as being unable to read English beyond a fourth grade level.

The Loudoun Literacy Council will be marking its twenty-fifth year of serving the Loudoun community on February 17th, and the organization hopes to use that occasion to raise awareness of both the council's work and Loudoun's growing problem with literacy.

According to the organization's Executive Director, Yadir Ruiz, illiteracy rates in Loudoun are much worse than they were only ten years ago, when 1 out of every 10 Loudouners were functionally illiterate.

"What it means to victims of illiteracy is that they cannot read a basic training manual, cannot communicate effectively and cannot perform simple arithmetic computations. What this means to Loudoun is that these individuals are stuck in an endless cycle of dependency on unemployment and other social services furnished by you, our County government."

said Ruiz in a recent address to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors.

Ironically, much of the increase in illiteracy is related to Loudoun's rapid growth. Loudoun county is the fastest growing county in the United States, and many of those moving to Loudoun are immigrants from other countries, and for whom the English language itself is a major obstacle to literacy.

"Twenty years ago, literacy wasn't such an immigrant issue, but recent rapid growth has at-

tracted many people to the county, including migrant workers," said Ruiz. "While many of these new residents to Loudoun may be technically skilled workers and educated professionals in their home countries, their lack of facility with English often allows them to work only menial jobs. These are not just McDonald's workers, these are very educated individuals from other countries stuck cleaning toilets because they can't read," said Ruiz.

The Loudoun Literacy Council was founded in 1980 as a resource of the Regional Refugee Resettlement Office to combat precisely these kinds of literacy problems. The non-profit has grown along with Loudoun since that time and battles the county's illiteracy problem with two main programs.

The first helps families through a Family Literacy program, which focuses on non-English speaking parents of young children.

While Loudoun county schools do have English-as-a-Second-Language programs, the Loudoun Literacy Council doesn't believe these are sufficient, especially when young children don't speak English at home.

"If the parents of children can't read, how can that kid be educated?," said Ruiz. "Kids spend five or six hours at school versus all the time they spend with their parents. We work with the whole family."

Tutors in the council's Family Literacy program work to help both the parents and small children read and speak English, and are closely involved with Head Start, a county program that helps young children of at-risk homes get prepared for kindergarten.

The Loudoun Literacy Coun-

cil's second major program is geared towards adult literacy. In this program, tutors for the council work to teach English to adult students from over forty different countries, with students ranging in age from eighteen to forty-three.

"Our students come from all over the place. We have busboys and we have computer programmers from the Eastern Bloc", said Ruiz.

Adult applicants take a placement test to see how much they need to learn and then must be put on a waiting list of three to six months for classes due to the large demand. The classes taught within the Adult Literacy program are not limited to reading and speaking English, but include cultural education and citizenship courses as well.

Recently appointed, Director Ruiz has plans to expand the Council's role. According to Ruiz, the Council gets lots of requests for a program to teach children to read by themselves, a program not currently covered by the Loudoun Literacy Council's services. "Many kids, even non-ESL kids need help reading, and not everybody can afford Sylvan learning center," said Ruiz.

In order to grow, the Council faces some challenges. Recently, the Virginia Department of Education cut funding to the Loudoun Literacy Council in order to focus

more on programs emphasizing GEDs. Without that Department of Education funding, the Council has to depend on one or two grants and a smattering of private donations.

"That level of funding is certainly not enough to allow us to expand or improve. We can be more. Our current services are crucial and needed," said Ruiz.

Also hindering the Council is the disparity between the supply of tutors and the demand for them. Since tutors are unpaid volunteers and work usually with small classes of five to six students, it is often hard to match prospective students with teachers. Even when students and teachers can be matched up, they are challenged to find places to meet.

"We are constantly challenged for meeting space. We have a tiny office in Leesburg . . . and not many places can accommodate a class of five or six people. We need to reach out to the community to

get access to more resources," said Ruiz.

The need to reach out is what prompted Ruiz to address the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors on February 1st, which she did to raise awareness of Loudoun's literacy problems. The Board of Supervisors will be officially recognizing the work of the Loudoun Literacy Council on February 15, and the Council will have its own anniversary celebration at the Belmont Country Club February 17 from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

The events honoring the work of the Council will feature remarks from community leaders, volunteers, tutors, and students. ✿

For more information on the Loudoun Literacy Council, please contact them on the web at www.loudounliteracy.org or by mail at Loudoun Literacy Council, Inc. P.O. Box 1932 Leesburg, VA 20177





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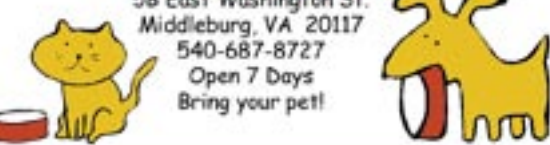
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News of Note

Town Council

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New Businesses in Town

The owners of two new local businesses came to introduce themselves to the Council: Lisa Patterson of Mello Out and Carol Jenkins and Donny Rodin of Home Farm.

Patterson served samples of Mello Out's signature handmade marshmallows to all those attending the meeting. When the business, on East Federal Street, opens in late February, she plans to offer lunches as well.

Jenkins and Rodin described Home Farm, as "a traditional village butcher shop." Located in the Old Bank Building at the corner of Washington and Madison in Middleburg, Home Farm opened December 11th offering lunch items and products from certified organic and humane farmers. The proprietors are currently working to assist farmers interested in converting their farms into certified organic and humane farms.

Public Comments

Mayor Dimos began the "Public Comments" portion of the Council Agenda by introducing Don Woodruff, a teacher from The Hill School, and two eighth grade students who were attending to observe the Town's administrative processes first hand.

When asked, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office liaison to the Council had nothing to report, but responded positively to a request by Councilman Mark Snyder to tell the Sheriff that more Deputies in sight around 5 a.m. on Route 50 might well serve to keep traffic running more smoothly.

Dimos congratulated the Project Helping Hand committee on the success of their Tsunami relief fundraiser, held at the Community Center on February 9th. Representing the committee, Dee Dee Hubbard thanked all those who had contributed and announced that proceeds from the event far exceeded expectations, bringing in more than \$30,000, all of which will be donated to Project HOPE. Hubbard said that the committee is already looking forward to working for another worthy cause next year.

Throwing Stones

The reading of a letter from disgruntled Chinn Lane resident, Jane Gaston, brought "Public Comments" to a resounding close. The letter, read for Ms. Gaston in absentia, complained about an ongoing dispute over Gaston's lawn and the public right-of-way. In an attempt to prevent automobiles from destroying a portion of her lawn, Gaston installed a barrier in the form of a large stone. Town authorities removed it, claiming that she had placed it on the public right of way.

In her letter Gaston blamed the Town and the Town Council for treating her unfairly. She claimed

that her stone barrier had been removed, but not similar stones put in place by her neighbors. She also charged that her complaints to Town Council members had been ignored.

Town Administrator Mike Casey agreed to look into the matter and respond to the Gaston letter.

Mayor Dimos, put off by the reading of Gaston's letter in absentia, later stated that he preferred for those who have comments for the Council to appear in person. It would have been most helpful, he noted, if Ms. Gaston had been present to name the Council members to whom, allegedly, she had spoken. On the other hand, Dimos agreed to see the matter resolved and Councilwoman Eura Lewis insisted that any response to Gaston note that the Council always does its best to treat citizens equally and fairly. The Council agreed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Town Administrator Mike Casey began his report by noting a hiccup in the production of water from one of the Town's four wells last month. The anomaly in water usage, Casey said, of 170,000 gallons per day, put the pump at 130 percent capacity. Water levels returned to normal shortly afterward, and according to Casey, now the town water now has improved levels of iron and manganese. Casey also reported that a new employee, Kevin Davenport, would be joining the Town's maintenance team on Valentine's Day.

Middleburg Police Chief Steve Webber proudly reported that the department has recently been awarded approximately \$180,000 in grants. Webber did not disclose what the grants were for.

Town Planner, Marchant Schneider began his staff report by pointing to a new decoration in the Council meeting room – an antique fabric Town plat, dated 1883, was framed by Caroline Casey and graciously presented to the Commission.

Schneider also noted that the Loudoun County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on February 28th. Important discussions of "CPAMs" (Comprehensive Plan Amendments) affecting development in South Riding and zoning designations for retirement housing in the county will be discussed.

Action Items

Three "Action Items" on the agenda were quickly summarized by Marchant Schneider and unanimously approved by the Council:

1) The Historic District Review Board's request to adjust application deadlines for Certificates of Appropriateness from seven days prior to a decision-making meeting to 14 days,

2) An amendment to the text

of a Town zoning amendment that will allow under special exception parking facilities to be built in the C3 district, and

3) A zoning location permit for the Middleburg Animal Hospital pump station.

The Council adjourned at 8:50 p.m. to the entryway where all enjoyed a chafing dish full of samples furnished by Home Farm. ✱

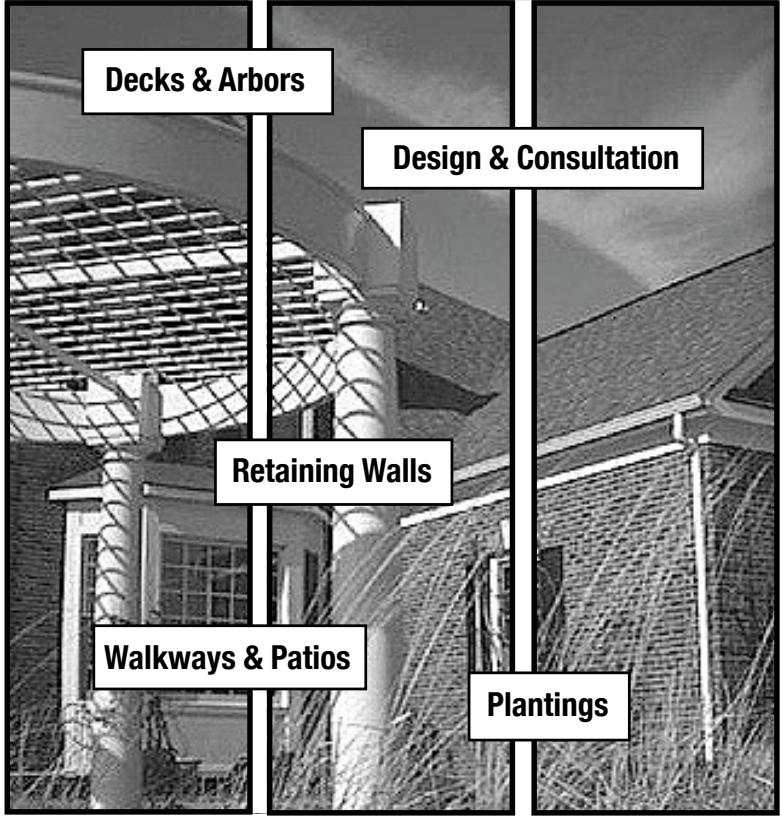


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News of Note

Citizens Rally to Aid

Continued From Page 1

walkers raised \$4,000. Hill students also participated in a bake sale and dress-down day, which earned a combined \$1,000, which the school will donate to a charitable organization, said Tyler.

Blue Ridge Middle School
Members of the Leo Club at Blue Ridge Middle School were bowled over by the level of participation of their fellow students during their "Loose Change Drive."

The club, in its first year at the Purcellville school, named their fundraiser "Make a Difference with Change." Organized after students returned from Winter Break, they, the staff members, and their families were asked to send in loose change to benefit Tsunami relief.

"I think about all the people who lost their family," said Leo Club President and 7th grade student, Alyssa Locke. "What if it were me? If I were in their situation, I would really want people to help."

"I think we should be helping people all over the world, even if we don't know them," said Chris Mace, Treasurer of the Leo Club and a fellow 7th grader.

Leo Club members set a school-wide goal of raising \$450 by the end of January. Amazingly, the balance raised, as of January 27, was nearly \$12,500. The school's principal, Joseph Mauck kicked off the drive with a generous donation of \$300.25.

Also included in the funds raised by the Leo Club was \$434 earned by a small group of girls who, despite the freezing temperature and snowy conditions, held a bake sale in front of the Purcellville Giant on a Saturday in January.

"It's important to give," said Telisha Trammell, Leo Club Secretary and 7th grade student, "...you can help them rebuild their world the way it was, or even better."

The Leo club is sponsored by the Leesburg Lions Club. Its mission is to strive to help others in the worldwide community.

Members have decided to split their donation equally among the American Red Cross and UNICEF.

"They chose funds that allowed them to specify that the money be used for Tsunami relief," said Connie Graham, Leo Club Advisor and Blue Ridge Middle School teacher. ✱



Project Helping Hand Donates \$30,000 to Project Hope

Project Helping Hand, a new organization created to give everyone in the area an opportunity to participate in outreach programs, organized an evening at the Middleburg Community Center to honor Wendy Pepper, one of the stars of Bravo Network's Project Runway and make a contribution to Tsunami Relief.

Delectable desserts, wine, coffee, a live auction of Wendy's designs, a silent auction of excellent items and moving remarks by John P. Howe III, president and CEO of Project Hope made the evening a smashing success.

By the conclusion of the festivities, that success was

even more evident when it was clear that \$30,000 had been raised for the Tsunami Relief effort.

"We could not have accomplished this without the help of everyone in the community," said Dee Dee Hubbard, co-chair of the event. "We did not have to spend one dollar on food or decorations or organization because everything was donated. So every dollar raised will go to Project Hope for the relief effort."

During the evening, the most recent episode of Project Runway was aired for the standing-room-only audience to view, and everyone cheered when Wendy won the weekly

challenge and became one of the final three designers in the competition.

Cathy Magee, Manager of Books and Crannies, noted that the handprint decorations in the Community Center that evening were the contribution of local school students.

"We wanted to get the kids involved and make them feel they are part of the project," said Magee. The children's donations, along with several of Wendy Pepper's original designs, decorated the room and everyone agreed with Wendy when she said, "I am so inspired by the turnout for this event!"

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Health & Well Being

Illness: Indicator of the More Highly Evolved

Topic of Cancer

Glenda Cudaback

Susan Sontag wrote about illness to liberate us from the wretchedly negative and lurid metaphors society concocted to confine cancer and AIDS patients to a bleak and hopeless landscape. Her recent death, at a ripe, old age, belies the fact that she fought cancer and won for over thirty years.

For at least that many years, I have wondered if individuals who are deaf or blind are more highly evolved members of our species. It made excellent sense to me that these individuals would be more focused and that they would not suffer from such intense and distracting sensory noise levels as "normal" people do. Surely, this increased clarity would lead to a higher level of understanding, sensitivity and intelligence.

When I was diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer three years ago, Sontag's books helped me understand why I was so frightened of talking about my prognosis. They convinced me that the concept of evolution should include individuals who have experienced serious illness.

It seems logical to me that serious illness is a formative experience, an experience that can lead to a more highly evolved state of being. Illness evokes changes that feel evolutionary to me. Everything is clearer and better bal-

anced; in some ways, ironically, I actually felt like a better person.

Sontag first tackled the social stigma of cancer in the late '70's, and then, a few decades later, she took on the social stigma of AIDS. Her point was simple, powerful and consistent: society condemns, fears and stigmatizes individuals with cancer and AIDS because these diseases are historic metaphors for death, violence and the apocalypse.

Cancer is frighteningly unpredictable, grows insidiously and provides an agonizing death. AIDS, of course, is a plague.

Sontag's impeccably argued position about cancer in "Illness as Metaphor" published in 1978, shocked society and provided an intellectual refuge for those with cancer. She spurred serious change in medical thinking about treatment and buoyed my own confidence immeasurably.

Why? Because Sontag firmly believed that the 'metaphors and myths' surrounding cancer created a hellish context for individuals who contracted the disease. I can testify that, once diagnosed, one really does feel cursed, or, as she said "punished" and doomed.

In the late 70's, Sontag suggested that the vocabulary of cancer would evolve for the better, and, by the time she wrote "AIDS

and Its Metaphors," in 1988, she could say that "...getting cancer is uttered more freely."

She could also point to a new brutal candor used with cancer patients, something I can absolutely identify with as I remember my doctor breaking down in tears as she told me, my husband and our son that my prognosis was "...very, very bad."

I remember toting my CAT scans everywhere and talking about my tumors and treatments until I felt like a science experi-

ment.

We all owe Susan Sontag a great debt, those of us who are, have been or will be ill, and even those of you who will never have that experience. She saw our society clearly, and she helped reshape it in an intelligent and hopeful way.

She did not believe that cancer was incurable, and she lived to prove herself right.

She did not believe AIDS was either a plague or an invasion: neither should we.

She did believe the way we talk about things that frighten us was powerful. So powerful we could hurt each other more with our metaphors than the illness itself.

Sontag was right, on both counts. Perhaps I am too. Perhaps the human becomes a stronger species through illness. If so, there may be an intersection ahead we can all look forward to where we flip the negative and find wisdom in those who are ill. ✱

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From the Editor's Desk

Community Defined at Helping Hand Benefit

Everyone wanted to help the victims of the recent Tsunami, but it took Project Helping Hand and the commitment of hundreds of Middleburg friends and citizens to illustrate what it means to be a real community.

Wendy Pepper was honored to help attract interest in our local benefit by using her name and recent stardom on Bravo Network's Project Runway, and help and contributions began to arrive the instant the announcement was made.

From pre-schoolers to Safeway, from Fox Chase Farm to merchants, from local plumbers to farmers, from church ladies to restaurants, from printers to food markets and from many, many others from far and wide who feel part of the Middleburg community.....all joined hands to contribute time, energy and money to help make the February 9th benefit a success.

The \$30,000 donation presented to Project Hope for Tsunami victims illustrated clearly what a wonderful success it was.

Thanks to every individual who helped show what we can accomplish when we all join hands. This really is community spirit at its best.

Middleburg Eccentric welcomes and encourages Letters to the Editor. Letters must be signed and include writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Please submit letter via email: editor@mbecc.com or P.O. Box 1768, Middleburg VA 20118

Open Season on Secrecy

After more than 18 months of discussion about the pros and cons of The Salamander Inn project, Middleburg's Town Council has announced they will meet in closed session to discuss their final position on the proposal.

Some critics of the Council's decision reluctantly support it, arguing that, at this point, nearly anything that will move the Council along is probably worth doing.

We at the Eccentric believe that the citizens of Middleburg, and all those who dare to drink our water, deserve to hear, first hand, the views of each and every member of the Council on this vital issue.

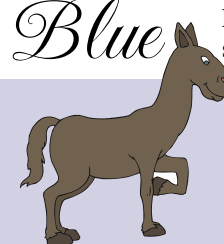
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Rants and Raves

Red vs Blue

Each month in this space Mark Tate (Red) and Dan Morrow (Blue) provide absolutely definitive, perfectly reasoned and indisputably global solutions to all the world's great problems . . . in 150 words or less. Send your problems to Mark and Dan at: redvsblue@mbecc.com



Dan Morrow

Does Sponge Bob Squarepants threaten the Republic?

For many of our self-appointed right-wing "Christian" friends and all too many of their political pals on the right, the answer is a definitive, Yes!

For these self-appointed prophets other silly sidebar issues pale in comparison to the insidious propagandist from the Pineapple under the Sea!

In case you missed this . . . while you were sleeping Sponge Bob (along with his evil friends Winnie the Pooh, Barney, and a host of other subversive cartoon characters) had the unmitigated gall to make a video! In it they sing "We Are Family."

Even worse, they and their "fellow travelers" use the video to call on our innocent children "to respect the sexual identity of others along with their abilities, beliefs, culture and race."

In my youth such "Christians" preached that black children shouldn't learn to read beside white children. Anti-black prejudice was shameful then. Anti-gay prejudice is shameful now.

Do low-slung Levis threaten the Commonwealth?

Sit down Sponge Bob! For the right wing of the Virginia House (the two-thirds that make both good Democrats and good Republicans cringe), the answer to this eternal question is easy!

For those of you who missed it, the solons of the Virginia lower chamber struck at the heart (so to speak) of moral corruption in the Old Dominion, and passed a law that would have made the wearing of low-slung fashion (and this is no joke) . . . illegal.

Underwear showing above the waistband? Fine! (the \$50 kind) and a Citation (not the kind for bravery.) Happily the Senate rejected this madness.

What about the REAL issues? What about plaid pants, or those with fish or ducks on 'em? What about socks with sandals! Or wing tips with Bermuda Shorts! Mini-skirts. Boxers vs. briefs! This is almost as embarrassing as Loving vs. Virginia.

Guess who's coming to football practice?

In 1967 "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" opened in my hometown, Danville, the "Last Capital of the Confederacy."

It was shocking. Hepburn and Tracy played a married couple (!) Their daughter brought her fiancé, Sidney Poitier, home to dinner.

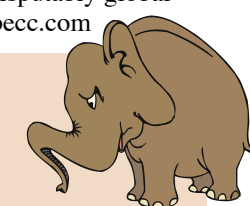
Screams of outrage greeted the film and the notion that a black man and a white woman might love each other . . . and marry.

Republican Dick Black recently led a crowd of self-appointed moralists in denouncing a play about the agonies suffered by a gay high school quarterback, written and performed by students at Stone Bridge High, Leesburg. Today praised the students and their Principal for behaving with " . . . more dignity and thoughtfulness than many of the political leaders elected to represent them."

We agree . . . and trust that, in time, good Republicans will reject Representative Black, Supervisor DelGaudio, and other non-compassionate conservatives.



Mark Tate



The controversy over Sponge Bob was not about Sponge Bob at all. At the center on controversy was a group called "We are family". This group has a mission of teaching diversity to kids and supporting same-sex marriage. So the real issue here is allowing parents to control what their children see on TV. Thousands of parents have come to trust shows like Sponge Bob believing there are no political agendas being pushed on their kids while they watch. Imagine the parent's shock when they found out they may not be able to trust Sponge Bob anymore. On this issue I come down on the side of letting parents be parents.

I agree it was a huge waste of time and there are many more important issues that need to be addressed. By the way it was not a right wing Republican who brought the issue up.

It was Delegate Algie Howell and Democrat from Norfolk.

Parents have the right to choose whether their children are taught sex education in school.

What can be wrong with them insisting their children learn about these issues ...sex ed, etc. at home. Parents need the right to be parents. And they should have the ability to control the education of their children. What happened to teaching the kids about academics in school.

I think the parents that objected simply wanted the option of not having their children be subjected to one set of opinions about a lifestyle without a certain amount of balance from the other side being presented.

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Our Earth

The Lunar Garden

The Plant Lady

Karen “The Plant Lady” Rexrode

My grandmother always gardened by the cycles of the moon. A very serious gardener, she was adamant about her gardening pursuits as they coincided with each cycle of the moon. She was not alone, the practice of planting in concert with the moons gravitational pull is practiced by lots of folks and I don’t doubt that this ancient earth science benefits all gardeners in their day to day activities. So how does this practice work?

It is understood that earth’s ocean currents and water levels are highest during the new and full moon and lowest in a moons 3rd and 4th quarter. This influence on water dictates how a seed will absorb moisture or a seedling will grow upwards just as it helps root crops burrow deeper into the soil, aided by lower water levels and the moons lowered gravitational pull. These reoccurring cycles run from 29 to 30 days and is also used to determine the best times to prune, fertilize and harvest crops.

One of the easiest ways to remember the moon cycles is to familiarize yourself with the letters D-O-C. With a new moon the moon is a crescent that is shaped like the curve of the letter D, to the right as you view it. The moon will fill out until it becomes the letter D, all part of the first quarter, a new moon. The second quarter is the filling out of the moon as it becomes full or shaped like the letter O. The second quarter continues until the full moon is passing. The full moon is the strongest period of the moons gravitational pull and it becomes stronger as it becomes full, waning as it passes. It is said that the best time for planting seed is 2 days

before a full moon, this lets seeds absorb moisture and then sprout with the strong upward pull. From there we move to the 3rd and 4th quarter whereby the moon becomes a crescent like the letter C. This is the best time for root growth and the best time to transplant seedlings as root growth is encouraged. A moons fourth or last quarter is the best time for pruning since a plants sap or water levels are at their lowest. This is also considered the best time to weed, apply

plants that produce their seeds on the outside (not inclosed in fruit) such as lettuce, broccoli, annuals and herbs. This is also a good time to transplant.

Second Quarter (half full to full, Gibbous);

The ideal time to sow seed as the seeds coat will readily soften as surface water is available from the moons strongest gravitational pull. This is the best time to sow seeds that produce seeds inside a pod or skin such as beans, tomatoes,



compost and eradicate pests.

The moon also moves through the sky around astrological signs and these too effect plants as these signs are earth, water, air or fire and favor particular types of crops. This is where an almanac comes in handy, isolating the best times to garden within these favorable time slots as they occur with lunar activity. To make things a little more simple I have listed the activities for each lunar quarter below. Our full moons in spring and summer of 2005 fall approximately in the third week of each month.

First Quarter (new to half full);

Lunar gravitational pull is increasing, sow seeds of

squash and pumpkins.

Third Quarter (full to half full)

The gravitational pull has subsided. This is the best time to plant root crops such as potatoes, onions, radishes and beets. Also plant perennials, flower bulbs, shrubs and trees to encourage strong roots. A good quarter to transplant seedlings.

Fourth Quarter (half full to new)

The moons gravitational pull is at its lowest. This is considered a resting time (for the moon), best to prune, pull weeds and apply mulch or compost.



22204 Willisville Road

Upperville, Virginia

Charming frame and log colonial on 17.55 acres in excellent Upperville location. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, pine and cherry floors, log family room, and 2 fireplaces. Improvements include 4 stall barn with tack and feed room, run in shed, 2 paddocks, in-ground pool with back terrace, mountain views. \$1,450,000.



Goldenrain

Middleburg, Virginia

Frame and stone residence in excellent condition, built in 1989, on 10 professionally landscaped acres with specimen plantings and pond. The residence features 4 bedrooms, 4 and a half baths, 3 fireplaces, vaulted ceilings, wrap-around deck and 3 car garage. \$1,325,000.



Land

Bloomfield, Virginia

90 acres of open land between Unison and Bloomfield, 10 minutes from Middleburg. Property is fully fenced with new four board fencing and cross fenced for paddocks. Mature grove of oak trees overlooking a large pond and views of the Blue Ridge and Bull Run Mountains make this a spectacular building site. \$2,000,000.



Longfield

Middleburg, Virginia

Built in 1986, stone house with slate and metal roof, 4 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths, 3 fireplaces, hardwood and onyx floors, and rear flagstone terrace. 96.73 gently rolling, mostly open acres with mountain views. Improvements include a 5-car garage, in-ground pool and spa, and cattle barn. \$3,900,000.



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Phoenix Hill

Middleburg, Virginia

Lovely brick colonial with 5 spacious bedrooms and 3 1/2 baths. Located on 14 pristine acres bordering Goose Creek in Middleburg. Improvements include inground gunite pool, pond and two paddocks. \$1,975,000.



9079 John S. Mosby Highway

Upperville, Virginia

Circa 1889, four bedroom home on 4+ acres in the village of Upperville. Home has been completely renovated with new kitchen and baths, new gunite swimming pool, gas and wood fireplaces, and plantation shutters. All the old charm of an old house with original floors, 9' tongue and groove ceilings, and extensive millwork. \$740,000.



Morven

Markham, Virginia

Morven is a stunning renovation and has been accepted for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Original portions are from 1826 and 1845. 14' ceilings and original pine floors through parts of this stucco over stone home. The modern addition includes a large kitchen with open family room and fireplace for today's living. Situated on 85 acres of open pasture and paddocks in 4 parcels. Improvements include a stone guest house built in 1819 and a 4-stall King Construction center aisle stable. \$3,500,000.



Land

The Plains, Virginia

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Pastimes

Oh Deer...

From Behind the Stove

Brian Lichorowic

People give me dead meat. Every fall, like clock work. Either it's Dr. Dave, my chiropractor who hunts on my property, tells me to meet him behind his office in the parking lot after my appointment, or the gentleman of whose name I'm not certain, but who, for five years appears at my front door smiling and says, "Nice year for doe. I've got some great loins and that burger you like." (I like??) He then hands me 20 pounds of frozen, dead meat. Next, I'm off in search of recipes and recipients. I'm sure this will come as no surprise, but this area is considered a culinary hotbed for fresh venison.

I've eaten venison for a long time. A couple times a year – tops – will do me. I think I'm like a lot of people that can stomach veni-

son in small doses. Maybe it's the whole "Bambi thing ". But if it's done right, venison is very enjoyable, very lean and pairs well with a nice, red burgundy.

Most recipes call for cooking the meat all day and drowning it in some sauce – usually ketchup or BBQ. In my opinion, the goal of these recipes is to cover up the taste of the meat. You could be eating a shoe and never know it.

I have assembled three venison recipes for all levels. The first is a great starter dish for venison newbies, the second graduates to a more southwestern, fusion dish for the more daring and bringing up the rear is a solid, winter wear stew perfect for keeping your "dear" friends and family warm.

Venison & Blue Cheese

Meatballs

I used a good Stilton, but any good blue cheese will do. (For those fearful, a more stringent cheese like blue, will lessen the "gamey taste").

5 pounds Venison, ground
1 bunch Scallions, chopped
1 cup Sour Cream
1/2-pound Blue Cheese
2 cups Breadcrumbs, unseasoned or saltines crushed

Combine well the blue cheese, scallions and breadcrumbs. Add venison and sour cream and turn over a few times. Roll mixture into small meatball sized balls. Cook thoroughly in a large cast iron fry-

ing pan with canola oil. Meatballs can be served on pasta or as an appetizer. Please don't use BBQ sauce for dipping. That's just foul.

Pan Roasted Venison with Spicy Cranberry Mexican Cinnamon Sauce

I caught a Bobby Flay episode about 5 years ago, tried it and it worked well. I don't use the port, just the gin. And I marinated it for 4 days. Call me crazy.

Venison

4 venison steaks
6 ounces each
1/2-cup Gin
2 cups Port wine
6 sprigs Thyme, fresh
6 Juniper berries
3 tbl Olive oil
Salt and freshly ground

pepper

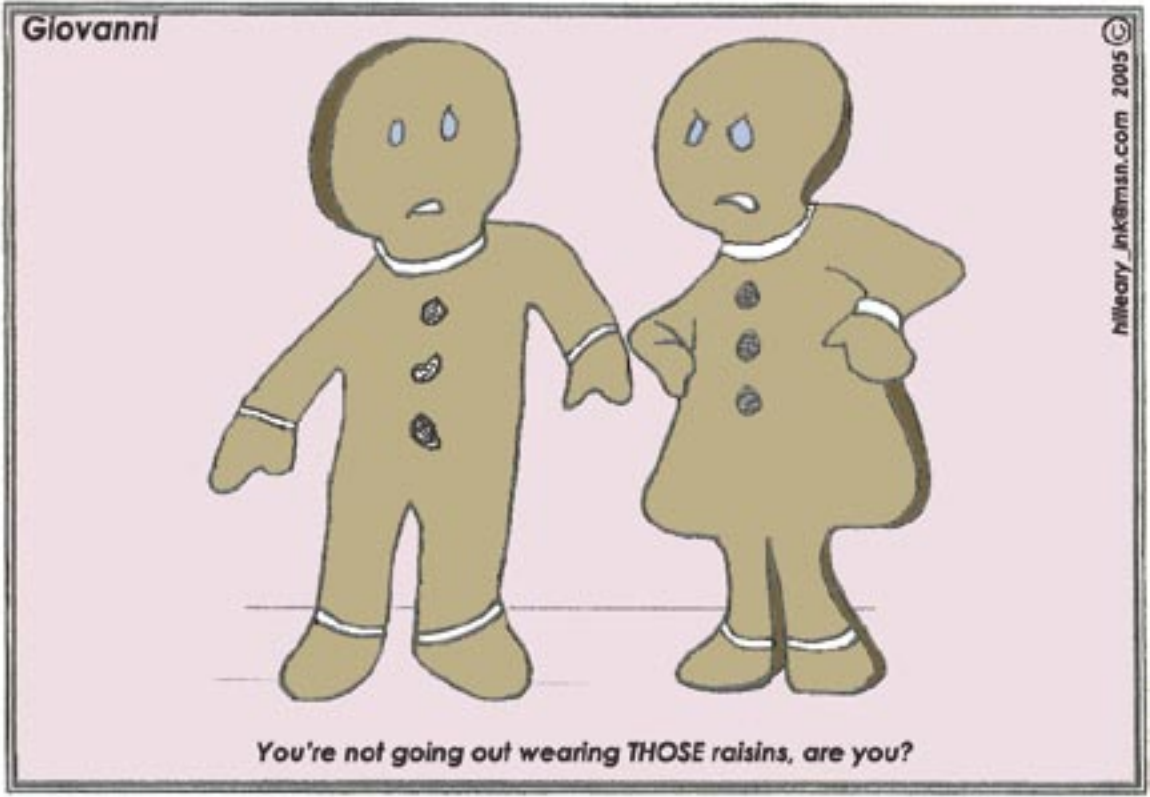
Combine gin, port, thyme and juniper berries in a medium shallow baking dish. Add the venison and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes (or 4 days)

Heat oil in a large sauté pan over high heat until almost smoking. Remove the venison from the marinade and shake off excess. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook on 1 side until golden brown. Turn over, reduce heat to medium and continue cooking until medium-rare, 3 to 4 minutes. Drizzle sauce over steaks.

Spicy Cranberry Mexican Cinnamon Sauce

4 tbl Cold butter

Continued Page 19



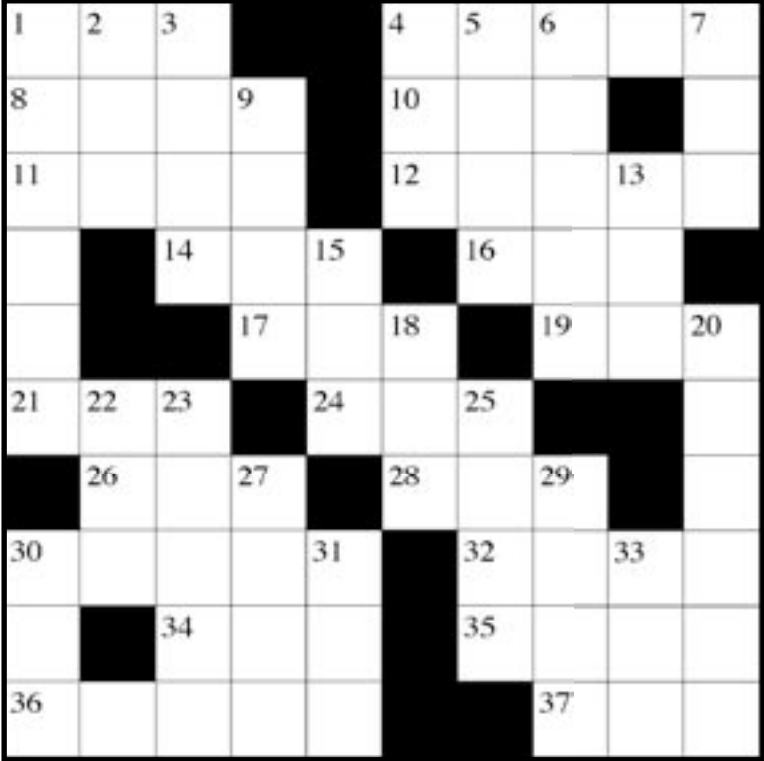
Crossword

ACROSS

1 Light meal
4 Urns
8 Irritate
10 I have
11 Beige
12 Stupid person
14 Biblical high priest
16 Penpoint
17 Hawaiian acacia
19 Minor falsehood
21 Newt
24 Convent dweller
26 Petroleum
28 Small cask
30 Suspension of breathing
32 Bedouin
34 Taxicab
35 Yearn deeply
36 Containing moths
37 Being at the middle

DOWN

1 Old measure of capacity
2 And so on
3 Land measure
4 Vitality
5 River in central England
6 Letter cross-line
7 Monetary unit of Japan
9 Unwieldy ship
13 Japanese sash
15 Electrically charged atom
18 Diving bird
20 Having barbs



22 Dandy
23 Tinged
25 Tides that attain the least height

27 Wife of Jacob
29 Harsh
30 Direct a gun
31 To endure
33 Black bird

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Celebrating on Board the Good Ship Salamander...

Ed McGushin

In January 2004 I took my wife Sandy on the inaugural sailing of the Queen Mary 2 on the occasion of our 38th wedding anniversary. Needless to say, it made planning for #39 something of a challenge! Of course, the QM2 is sailing the Caribbean again this year, but it would not be a once-in-a-lifetime event if we did it a second time. Casting about for an alternative, it struck me that the proprietor of Market Salamander (whose name slips my mind) has been stockpiling a talented group of young professional chefs under the guidance and direction of Executive Chef Todd Gray. At last count there were no fewer than seven twenty-something year old "Chefs-on-the-shelf", biding their time until the eventual opening of the contentious Salamander Inn and Spa - Dan, Scott, Chris, Vaughn, Alexandra, Spence, and

Michael. A little collaboration with Chef Dan Kalber produced a most memorable evening aboard the fabulous SS Salamander, "the Eight O'clock Sitting, if you please!"

As is generally the case on such occasions, Sandy knew only that we would be dining formally just as we did last year in the floating Queen's Grill. She left the actual destination in my hands. I don't know how I merit such blind trust. With snow falling, we pulled into the parking lot at Market Salamander to the tune of "What are we doing here?". Pastry Chef Alexandra Owens greeted us at the back door and we soon tucked into a fabulous eight-course tasting menu designed and executed by Chef Kalber aided by Chefs Michael Harris and Alexandra.

A trio of attention-getting canapés preceded a marvelous porcine

consommé with shredded duck confit served sake-style, poured from a small ceramic decanter into thimble size cups. A seared Dover scallop, which had apparently swallowed a slice of black truffle, quickly followed. It was served with a pineapple and lemon cream. The Taku River salmon that appeared next had the silken consistency of Foie Gras. From icy northwestern waters, It bore no relation to any fish we had previously tasted. It rested on a bed of braised fennel on a plate decorated with blood orange foam.

A single white truffle ravioli stuffed with seasoned marscarpone cheese was served in a light broth flavored with capers, anchovy, and sun-dried tomatoes. It led the way for dazzling pan-roasted Scottish pheasant accompanied by a lentil Ragout.

Next, Chef Dan trotted out a



local lamb T-bone steak with baby spinach and a turnip flan. A glass of vintage port chased down a fine trio of domestic cheeses leading to Chef Alexandra's grand finale, a sampling of three decadent sweets, a soufflé with a cointreau-flavored icing, a flourless chocolate waffle with a chocolate & cherry sauce,

and apple-raisin crostadas.

While the merits of the new inn and spa continue to fuel our daily conversations, we can all rest assured that our palates will soon be served by Middleburg's first true "destination restaurant", a dining experience that will rival any within a half-day's drive! ☘

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Joan Gardiner's Tiles Tell Stories of Our Times

Lucy Wittle Goldstein



When Joan Gardiner's Alphabet is formally installed at The Hill School this month, it will join a legacy of important work created by the local tile maker in her charming Unison studio.

The Hill School installation includes rhymes by Gardiner's husband, author John Rolfe Gardiner, and important contributions by Rick Conway, drama teacher at The Hill School whom Gardiner met when they were both teaching in an outreach program at the school.

"It is an honor to have a commission in Virginia," says Gardiner. "Very few works of art are commissioned here."

Joan Gardiner, the daughter of a military doctor, began her artistic training as a painting major at the Mary-

land Institute of Art in Baltimore. She learned to work with clay while apprenticed to Jill Hinckley a noted Washington D.C. potter.

It was her love of horses that drew her to the Middleburg area. "I wanted so much to live and work with horses," she said.

After she purchased her Unison farm 30 years ago, Gardiner worked as a farrier shoeing horses in the area. Since then she has completed installations in local schools and churches, designed many private works and, in 2001, showed her framed tile 'Bay of Pigs Invasion' work at The Museum of the Americas in Washington, D.C.

Gardiner and her husband met after she moved to Unison and, according to friends, he romanced her by building her surprises while she was away. Among those surprises were an arbor, a brick oven and her studio. She began designing tiles when they were putting an addition on their house.

"John had written a short story about a husband and wife who are both artists," Gardiner explained. "In the story, the wife makes a porcelain bas-relief piece of pottery, and I identified with this fictitious figure by visualizing my kitchen tiles in relief in my mind."

From then on, her main medium has been tile.

Discovery

Gardiner asked Weller Tiles in Ashburn to install her first kitchen tiles.

Mr. Weller told me he was confident his customers would want original tiles like these and it all started there. To this day, Weller Tiles installs all of Mrs. Gardiner's work.

Joan Gardiner's wonderful studio is a board and batten creative space devoted to art, getting your hands dirty and form and function. It overflows with life and energy and the passion of a woman whose life's work is creating art out of clay.

Joan Gardiner's tiles are not your run-of-the-mill bathroom-floor tile, although she'll be happy to make those too. These tiles are unique and vibrant works of art. Together they create large works of art that tell stories and create memories and capture intense color and movement.

She makes her tiles from terracotta because it looks more natural and it is closer to the European roots of clay. She says it's a gesture to Virginia red clay, giving her tiles local flavor.

Gardiner then applies slip and uses a Majolica glaze, an old European technique which requires careful control because of the watery but vibrant colors. She learned the Majolica technique while living in Portugal for a year.

In addition to being both decorative and functional, Gardiner's tiles have real texture.

Collaboration

Gardiner works closely with her clients in private home installations. Whether the tiles are for a kitchen, a backsplash, a shower or a bathroom, it is a cooperative exercise.

"It becomes a collaboration," she says. "I have to interpret what friends and customers want. Perhaps they've seen something in a store that I have not seen, or they would like a color combination I wouldn't have chosen."

Like everything Gardiner engages in, the planning process becomes a creative endeavor. Once the concept is shaped, she moves to her clay, or ceramic studio in Unison where she works in different techniques and clay bodies to complete the work.

One of her favorite projects is in a shower she once completed for a private residence.

"The tiles depict a police line that holds back crowds of crazed people – as if your

were at a Beatles concert – so the person in the shower will always feel desired."

Her creativity and willingness to explore all options keeps her customers coming back for more.

Public Work

Joan Gardiner finds the work she does in the public arena to be the most satisfying.

Her project currently on display at Purcellville Library was her first. "It's nice to think it's open to everyone."

Among her many public commissions is a 14-piece tile work of the Stations of the Cross for the All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church in downtown Washington and an Ashburn Library installation she created to illustrate the town's history by creating tiles that depict a cross section of the earth.

The Ashburn installation begins with the bones of prehistoric fish in lower sections, continues through the Civil War era with depictions of military artifacts, and concludes in the modern era with a man plowing farmland.

The Hill School alphabet installation in Middleburg will have a traditional black and white checkerboard look, and Gardiner hopes

it will have a timeless quality.

"Rick Conway has made an invaluable contribution to The Hill School work," Gardiner said. "Rick has worked in theatre and is a wonderful set designer. He quickly learned to scale his artistic vocabulary from theatre to tile design. He made all the field tiles and created some decorative tiles for this work."

Hill students also painted tiles for the installation. Each tile depicts objects of importance to the student painter.

Despite all the fanfare about her beautiful tiles, Mrs. Gardiner remains grounded, intelligent and creative. Now working on an art series that will depict a history of slavery, she hopes to do more framed-tile work but she says she is also waiting to "find the customer who would let me do scissors in their shower."

"I love scissors – they are all different sizes and shapes and for different purposes. I'm still waiting to find that customer who says, 'Yes! I definitely want tiles depicting scissors in my shower!'" ✱



Promises made... promises delivered.

Emergency Services Report Card *A+*

	Leesburg ER		Lansdowne ER	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
Volume (# of Patients)	11,535	13,736	29,662	31,736
Average Length of Stay (First Assessment to discharge)	2hrs. 21mins.	2hrs. 18mins.	3hrs. 37mins.	3hrs. 16mins.
Triage to Room (waiting room time)	5mins.	4.33mins.	19mins.	8.8mins.

And, Here's How We Did It...

- Added 65 new in-patient beds for a total of 155 beds
- Opened a second emergency room at our Leesburg campus which increased ED treatment areas from 21 to 36.
- Expanded radiology services at our Lansdowne and Leesburg campuses.

Our goal is *your* satisfaction. *Our* pledge is to continue improving efficiency and effectiveness thereby better addressing the health care needs of you and your family.



www.loudounhealthcare.org
Lansdowne Campus 44045 Riverside Parkway 703-858-6040
Leesburg Campus 224 Cornwall Street 703-737-7520

Pastimes

Oh Deer...

Continued From Page 14

1 Onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 Celery stalks, finely chopped
3 Garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 Carrots, peeled and finely chopped
1/2-cup Port wine
1/2 cup Cranberry juice
4 cups Chicken stock
1/4 tsp Mexican ground cinnamon (or regular ground cinnamon)
1/4 tsp Allspice
1/4 cup fresh Cranberries, coarsely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat half the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onions, celery, garlic, and carrots and cook until semi-soft. Raise the heat to high and add the port, cook until dry. Add the cranberry juice, stock, cinnamon, allspice, and cranberries and cook until a sauce consistency is formed. Add the remaining butter and season with salt and pepper to taste.

This sauce is also fabulous on pork, chicken and turkey.

Venison Cider Stew

3- 5lb Venison, shoulder or loins, cubed
2 tsp Allspice
1 tsp Peppercorns
1 tbl Rosemary
1/2 gallon Apple Cider (from local area farms)
1 bunch Parsley, chopped
1/2 lb Bacon, slab not sliced
Light Dusting Flour
1/4 lb Butter
1 Onion, medium chopped

2 Carrots large chopped
2 Apples, large
2 Celery, chopped
2 cups Brown or beef stock
1 Bay leaf

In a mortar and pestle, pulverize the allspice, peppercorns, and rosemary with a pinch of salt. Take 25% of the powder and set aside. In a bowl add the remaining 75% to 2 cups of cider and the parsley.

Cut the meat into 1" cubes and add to bowl with cider mixture making sure it's all covered. Marinate for 12- 24 hours.

Cut the bacon slab into 1/2" cubes and fry them until crisp on the outside. Reserve enough of the bacon fat in the pan to brown the meat. Drain the Venison and reserve the liquid. Cover the meat with a light dusting of flour and quickly brown the meat in a skillet over high heat. Transfer meat to oven safe dish or Dutch oven.

In butter, sauté the onion, carrots, apples and celery. Fold into meat mixture. Add bay leaf and the remaining pulverized Allspice mixture. Now you have a choice. You can add the marinade or just the remaining cider. Use either/or both until the mixture is covered. Cook covered for 1 1/2 hours in a 350 degree oven or until meat is tender.

Strain the liquid, skim any unwanted fat off the top and dredge the flour in to the liquid and thicken. Pour back to the Dutch Oven and re heat.

Serve over a bed of wild rice. This last recipe is "deer" to my heart. ❄

Comments or Catastrophes
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It's Your Business

Ultra Pure Water

Element H2O Offers Private Label Water

Element H2O Ultra Pure water is now available in Northern Virginia for 5-gallon home or business delivery, and nationally in custom-labeled bottles for special occasions or resale. Partners Jon and Marcus Stout of MJ Beverage, LLC, dba Element H2O have opened a new bottling and distribution center in Chantilly that is poised to address two fast-growing market demands: a thirst for the benefits of water designated Ultra Pure and a desire for personalized merchandise to mark the occasions of consumers and promote the brands of business and organizations.

"We haven't even officially opened yet, and the phone is already ringing off the hook!" said Jon Stout, a resident of Middleburg, Va. and the company's chief financial officer. The company is establishing delivery routes throughout Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford and Arlington Counties as well as the various municipalities in Northern Virginia. Residents and businesses can have regu-

lar delivery of 5-gallon coolers and bottles and/or cases of 12- or 20-oz. bottles; the company also provides retail coolers of Element H2O, private-labeled if desired, to coffee shops, delicatessens, convenience stores, health clubs and spas, restaurants and other commercial outlets. For the ease of their customers, the company's 5-gallon bottles feature an "easy lift" handle; they also offer the option of connecting the bottle directly to any refrigerator with in-door water and ice dispensers.

Ultra Pure Designation Means No Expiration Date; Ideal for Long-Term Stocking

Unlike spring water or mineral water, Element H2O Ultra Pure water has an unlimited shelf life. "Most consumers are not aware that spring and mineral water have an expiration date, generally 45 days to six months from bottling," explained Stout. Element H2O, through a unique five-step purification process that relies principally on distillation, produces Ultra Pure water that is ideal to stock

for emergency and Homeland Defense preparedness, as well as a variety of recreational purposes.

Ultra Pure Water Offers Unique Health Benefits

The most extraordinary benefits of Ultra Pure water are health-related (see accompanying fact sheet for details). In addition, several leading medical organizations have recently published reports cautioning against long-term imbibing of the spring and mineral water many people consume. Not only is the resulting calcification believed to be harmful to the body, but the high bacteria levels found in recent testing are detrimental as well. (See accompanying links provided to several health-related

sites.)

Company Website Offers On-line Ordering and Design of Private Label Water

While MJ Beverage has already begun serving commercial customers such as the Stadium Jumping Association, Leisure World of Virginia and the Wisp Ski Resort, on-line customers across the country can also now order and even design their own private-label Element H2O Ultra Pure Water. By visiting the web site (www.ElementH2O.com) customers can order a minimum of two 24-bottle cases of 20-oz. or 12-oz. water; choose from a selection of label templates or create one of their own; and select the shipping

turnaround. "So whether Mom is turning 50, the school is doing a fundraiser, you're involved in a political campaign or you have customers to impress (with a bottle of water bearing your company's name), you can make it happen without even having to speak to another person, if that's your preference," said Marcus Stout, a D.C. resident and the company's director of marketing.

Element H2O is based in the Westfax Industrial Park in Chantilly, Virginia. Those seeking more information can call 1-866-4-Purity (1-866-478-7489) or visit their website at www.ElementH2O.com. ❀

Beloved Banker Retires With Interest



After nearly 18 years of faithful service at the Middleburg Bank, Ethel Gibson began her well-deserved retirement on January 31.

Gibson began her career in 1987 by processing in-coming mail, said Branch Manager Debbie McDaniel and co-worker Thelma Furr. By the early 1990s Gibson moved up – literally – to the main floor and became a customer service representative "serving the clients of Middleburg, which she does really well," said McDaniel.

"It's a great job and great people to work with," said Gibson. "I enjoy helping people with their problems – banking problems."

Furr added that Gibson was a real asset at the bank, always offering a warm smile and cheerful disposition.

"She brings dedication, pride in her work, caring for her co-workers and a lot of support to the institution," said Furr, who choked back tears and expressed how much she will miss Gibson.

The beloved banker has agreed to stay on in a part-time capacity, but "...I'll miss seeing the people who come in on the days

I'm not here," said Gibson. "I've been here so long that I think of many customers as friends."

Customers and community members stopped by the Middleburg Bank on January 26 to wish Gibson well during a celebratory open house. Following the workday, co-workers, family and friends organized a more formal send-off, catered by the Backstreet Cafe with flowers by Country Way.

Gibson said the outpouring of emotion and thoughtfulness was overwhelming and greatly appreciated. She noted that her retirement decision stems from the desire to have more time for her children, her grandchildren and herself.

"I had a clock that counted down to age 65 for retirement – and it got to zero two years ago," said Gibson, "but it just didn't feel like the right time then. Now it's the right time."

Grateful that Gibson will still be serving her faithful clients even after her official retirement, McDaniel and Furr quoted what they consider to be Gibson's motto: "It'll be all right." ❀



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Things to Do

Camerata Cantores “Sing to His Name”

Camerata Cantores and Brass Classique will present two concerts of sacred music, March 12 and 13. Their unique blend of voices fused with the brass timbres and majestic organ add up to a memorable program.

The 28-member madrigal ensemble, founded and directed by Helen Dill, create a seamless blend of voices, with intricate harmonies of a variety of pieces. This concert will include pieces from the sixteenth century as well as selections from the John Rutter “Requiem” and the Durufle “Requiem,” two contrasting twentieth century compositions. Madrigal singing allows for an intimate and complex interpretation of music, featuring a cappella voices as in-

struments. Camerata Cantores performs music spanning the years – from Renaissance to Broadway; international folk tunes to spirituals and new works by living composers.

Brass Classique joins Camerata Cantores in this program of sacred music, rendering selections to support the sacred and serious theme. The versatile quartet, founded and directed by Richard Dill, also include spirituals, pop, Broadway, jazz, and Renaissance music in their repertoire.

Guest organist Anne Timberlake of the Warrenton Presbyterian Church will also accompany the group. Organ and brass will be featured in their own selections, and join Camerata Cantores to conclude the program in a per-



formance of “Sing To His Name” composed by Jane Marshall.

“Sing To His Name,” will be presented at Grace Episcopal Church in The Plains, Virginia on Saturday evening, March 12, 2005 at 7:30 PM. The encore performance will be held Sunday, March

13, 2005 at 4:00 PM at Trinity Episcopal Church in Upperville, Virginia.

Tickets are \$15.00 and will be available at the door. Advance tickets may be purchased at

g. whillikers and Aqua Mechanics in Warrenton; at Culpeper

Antiques at 137 S. Main Street in Culpeper; and in Middleburg at Books & Crannies at 15 S. Madison Street.

For more information, call 540-937-4044 or visit www.cameratacantores.org ✱

Loudoun Valley Vikings Athletic Association Annual Mulch Sale

Spring yard work is not far away! The LVVAA Annual Mulch sale is gearing up to bring you high quality shredded hardwood mulch in 3 cubic feet bags (larger than the chain stores bags of 2-2.5 cu ft) for the low price of \$4.25 per bag for orders

under 24 bags, \$4.00 for orders of 25-49 bags, and \$3.75 for orders over 50 bags. Free delivery is available within the LVHS cluster on orders over 10 bags.

Orders and payment must be received by Thursday, February 24, 2005. Pick up or delivery dates

are March 5th and 6th. The order form can be downloaded from the LVVAA web site at: www.loudoun.k12.va.us/schools/lvhs/, click on Athletics, and then on Loudoun Valley Vikings Athletic Association. Order forms will be available in some stores in the community

also. Questions? Call Mary Roth at 540-592-3546 or Tina Clay at 540-882-4191. ✱

The LVVAA, Inc is a non-profit organization that supports the athletic department at LVHS through purchases of equipment

and supplies not available to LVHS otherwise, as well as offering scholarships to student-athletes. The mulch sale is one of our annual fund-raising drives.

Master Singers



The Master Singers of Virginia, a 28-member choral ensemble directed by Erik Reid Jones, announce their Winter Concerts featuring works by French composers Frank Martin and Francis Poulenc. Frank Martin's Mass is considered by many to be the greatest a cappella choral work of the 20th century. In addition, the Master Singers will perform Poulenc's Chansons Francaises, eight of the most charming French folk songs ever set to music and filled with Poulenc's brilliance.

Concerts will be held on the following dates, times, and locations:

- Friday, March 4, 2005 – 8 p.m. at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls (pre-concert lecture at 7:15)
- Saturday, March 5, 2005 – 8 p.m. St. Peters Episco-

pal Church, 37018 Glendale St., Purcellville (pre-concert lecture at 7:15)

• Friday, March 11, 2005 – 8 p.m. at Our Savior's Way, 43115 Waxpool Rd., Ashburn (pre-concert lecture at 7:15)

• Saturday, March 12, 2005 – 8 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church, 14 Cornwall St., NW, Leesburg (pre-concert lecture at 7:15))

Tickets are now available for the Winter Concerts at \$12 for adults and \$9 for students. Discounted tickets for the Winter plus Spring concerts are also available for \$21 adults/\$16 students. For a complete concert schedule and to order tickets on-line, visit www.msva.org or call 703-655-7809 for more information.

In addition to Frank Martin's Mass, the Master Singers are also

privileged to present some of Martin's unpublished French chansons for choir and harp, courtesy of his widow, Maria. The Master Singers will cap off the concert with folk songs of Robert de Cormier, including the charming “Soldier, Soldier, Won't You Marry Me?” also with harp, and a rousing spiritual by William Dawson, “Ezekiel Saw De Wheel.”

This is the Master Singers' 10th season. The Washington Post has declared that “The Master Singers of Virginia is among the state's finest choral ensembles and one of the best-kept secrets.” The ensemble is dedicated to bringing the highest quality choral music to the people of Northern Virginia and Washington, DC. Concentrating primarily on 20th- and 21st-century choral music, the Master Singers use their concerts to enrich, educate, and entertain their audiences. ✱



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Music For The [Middleburg] Soul

Join us for the release party for local musician Nate Clendenen's new CD, “Old Soul,” on Saturday, February 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. We will have a live performance by Nate of some of the songs on his CD. He'll be accompanied by banjo master Robert Mabe of Winchester. “Old Soul” is the first production of their musical collaboration.

We are honored to be the venue for the launch of “Old Soul,” especially since Nate will soon head back to Australia for a tour. Until national distribution begins in April, Middleburg is one of only two places where “Old Soul” will be available for purchase. This is a completely original, independent, Virginia-based project, with all production done locally.

As always, we will serve wine and nibbles, along with some beautiful music and great conversation in our own unique setting.

If music be the food of love, play on. –Twelfth Night, Act 1, Scene 1, by William Shakespeare

*Spend a little time in our backyard ~ Middleburg, Virginia
This February and March 2005*

FEBRUARY	MARCH
FEB 13, 27 THE TUTTI & TOMMY SHOW 6:30 PM THE HILL SCHOOL 540-687-5897	MAR. 5 WINE AUCTIONS OATLANDS PLANTATION • LEESBURG
FEB. 18 & 19 C JAM BLUES 6:30-9:00 PM SHEILA JOHNSON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER HILL SCHOOL • MIDDLEBURG 540.364.1944	MAR. 18-20 EQUINE EVENT EAST DULLES EXPO CENTER • CHANTILLY 410.321.9559
FEB. 23 MARKET SALAMANDER WINE DINNER 6:30-9:00 PM MIDDLEBURG COMMUNITY CENTER 540.687.3710	MARCH 25 ART LECTURE SERIES IN THE AFTERNOON "THINKING OUTSIDE THE FRAME" 2 PM MIDDLEBURG LIBRARY
FEB. 26 MIDDLEBURG HORTICULTURAL SYMPOSIUM 6:30-9:00 PM HILL SCHOOL • MIDDLEBURG 540.364.6940	MARCH 26 PIEDMONT FOX HOUNDS PT. TO PT. SALEM COURSE • UPPERVILLE
FEB. 28 BOOK DISCUSSION THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE BY AUDREY NIFFENEGGER 7:00 PM MIDDLEBURG LIBRARY	

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Things to Do

Horticultural Symposium

Lucy Wittle Goldstein

If this wintry weather is making you yearn for the days of summer when you can sink your feet into soft soil and plant bulbs and mulch and mold the green of your garden into your own personal paradise, then sign up right away for the semi-annual Middleburg Horticultural Symposium. This year's symposium, entitled "Garden Inspirations" will take place on Saturday, February 26 from 8:30-3:15 in the Sheila Johnson Theater at Hill School. Sponsored by the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club, this all-day event will re-spark your green thumb and get your head back in the gardening game after a long winter's rest.

For an entrance fee of \$80, you will be treated to four world-renowned gardening experts speaking on some important gardening topics for one hour each. For the fully-invested gardener, Ken Drews will be speaking on, "Gardening: A Passion for a Lifetime." If you have a vision for the garden you've always wanted, Renny Reynolds will tell you how to get it in his talk, "My Garden, My Dream." In a nod to the Southern heritage of many of Northern Virginia's gardeners, Chip Callaway's talk is titled, "Trials and Triumphs: Reflections of a Southern Gardener." And for the sophisticated gardener, Patrick Chasser will explain how to raise your garden to a new height of aestheti-

cism in, "Design for the Senses." A boxed lunch is also included in the entrance fee.

The money raised from the Symposium will go to the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club's Civic and Community Project Fund. Specifically, the money will be used for the maintenance and restoration of historic Goose Creek Bridge.

Attendees of the event tend to be professional and amateur horticulturalists, as well as everyday "enthusiastic gardeners," says chairman of the Symposium, Elaine Burden. Burden remarks, "Through the help of all the members of the club, this has proven to be a very successful and well-received educational event."

The Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club is a member of both the Garden Club of America, as well as the Garden Club of Virginia. Since the club pays dues to both organizations, the Club fulfills its missions of aiding ecology, education, and preservation of gardens on both the national and the state level. It is the only garden club in the area that belongs to both organizations, and it currently counts fifty active members and ten associate members. The Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club participates in the Historic Garden Club and has a partnership of sorts with the Leesburg Garden Club.

To be a member of the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden

Club, one must have a garden, says Burden, but that is the only requirement. Anyone can join as long as they are willing to pay dues and occasionally host meetings in their house and garden. The club meets once a month and usually each meeting involves a program on anything from garden design to the propagation of horticulture. The club is also heavily involved in conservation and preservation of area gardens. In the past, it has been influential in the creation of bills in the Virginia state legislature having to do with land and garden preservation.

Burden says that the symposium is the club's only fundraiser. "We could have baked cookies and cakes and sold them to raise money, but we wanted to give our area an educational activity as a fundraiser," Burden comments. She also notes that advance ticket sales have been heavy, so people without reservations should check before arriving on Saturday.

As for Burden herself, she has been an active member of the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club for thirty years, which is also how long she has been married and lived in Virginia in her eighteenth century farmhouse. Her interest in gardening began when she went to the very horticultural symposium that she is now instrumental in running. Her garden which is a hodgepodge of "just about everything," including an herb garden, perennial borders, and a boxwood par terre, was featured in House and Garden Magazine in 1995. An eclectic and dedicated gardener herself, Elaine Burden is just the person to take charge of one of the premier gardening events to happen in Middleburg this year.

Call Elaine Burden at 687 6940 for information about symposium tickets. ☼

Winnie-The-Pooh



A frightening animal has come to the forest. It's Kanga and she's bringing a washtub with her to bathe little Roo. With soap! What could be more frightening than that? Then Piglet gets captured and bathed. Not only that, he has to take Strengthening Medicine! Yuk! It's Pooh Bear to the rescue! But uh, oh! He's stuck in the doorway! Rabbit, Owl and Eeyore do their part and everything comes out fine – just in time for Pooh Bear's birthday.

Weekend Performances Saturdays and Sundays 1:30 and 3:30pm

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Hunt Country Stable Tour Features Local Vendors

The Hunt Country Stable Tour is featuring the Second Annual Country Fair to be held in the churchyard of Trinity Church Upperville from 10 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 28 and Sunday, May 29, 2005. The fair is an opportunity for vendors of local products and produce, as well as horse-relat-

ed arts, crafts and literature to sell to the thousands of visitors who come to the tour. The fee is \$150.00 for both days and includes a listing in the tour brochure. For further information on how to reserve space, contact Louisa Barker at 540-364-1469 or louisabarker@aol.com. ☼

Parents & Progeny

Highland School

The Key Club delivered 21 bags of clothes, blankets and coats along with 100 bag lunches, a case of bananas, and 100 bottles of water and juice to the homeless in Washington, D.C. Twelve Highland School students participated in the effort including Ryan Dunn, Ace Chung, Lauren Kruck, Jillian Gorsuch, Hannah Savage, Sara Smith, Melissa Sanford, Justine Leu, Jocelyn Leu, Melanie Loba, Adrienne Rinella and Iulia Bebo.

This week's School-wide dress down day raised \$1,732 for our sister school in Kenya. The money will help pay teacher salaries there throughout the end of the school year.

New college acceptances this week include Stetson University, University of Mary Washington and Longwood University.

The annual faculty appreciation luncheon will be held Friday, Feb. 25. Help the effort by volunteering to send in your signature dish—appetizers, main dishes, side dishes and desserts are all needed. Volunteers are needed to help setup the luncheon as well as to substitute in classrooms for Pre-K through Grade 8 so that those teachers may attend. Sign-up sheets are posted in the Upper School office and on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the Lower School office. For more information, contact Wendy Hale or Whitney Petrilli.

Susan Barton, internationally recognized expert in the fields of dyslexia and ADD, returns to Highland School to conduct a workshop on Feb.17 from 7-9 p.m. in the Center for the Arts. Called "Dyslexia, Symptoms and Solutions,"

the event is free and open to the public. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m.

Chess Team advisor Ranjan Kaparti said recently that with three matches left in the season, the team still has a good chance of progressing to round 2. The team lost Tuesday to Madison High School at home with four losses and one draw. The next three matches are "must wins" in order for the team to advance to the final round and up the League ladder. "I am counting on Nathan Bryan, who was recently promoted to board 5, to give us the edge down on the lower boards," said Kaparti. "It really is a team sport to win a match." ☼

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Things to Do

Notre Dame Academy Announces AP Scholars

The following students earned the designation of AP Scholar from the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program (AP) Exams. AP Scholars are students who have earned a grade of three or higher on three or more AP exams.

Warren Carter, a senior from Winchester, Virginia

Sarah Dillon, of Ashburn, a 2004 graduate now attending the University of Virginia
James Dunn, of Leesburg,

a 2004 graduate now attending the United States Air Force Academy

Maura Galbraith, of Winchester, a 2004 graduate now attending the University of Notre Dame

Kayleigh Hearn, of Leesburg, a 2004 graduate now attending Christopher Newport University

Marissa Niemeyer, of Reston, a 2004 graduate now attending Randolph Macon Women's College

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program offers students the opportunity to take challenging college-level courses while still in high school, and to receive college credit, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on the AP Exams. About 17 percent of the more than one million high school students in almost 15,000 secondary schools worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to merit the recognition of AP Scholar. ✱

Middleburg Elementary School News

Geography/Spelling Bees

Congratulations to Middleburg Elementary students Grant Chungo and Anna Smallwood! Grant, a fourth grader, recently became the school's Geography Bee winner. He is the son of Marian and Jack Chungo of Middleburg.

Anna Small, a fifth grader, won the school's Spelling Bee. She is the daughter of Susan and Gary Smallwood of Middleburg. Both students

will represent Middleburg Elementary at the county-wide competitions to be held in February.

Service Projects

Middleburg Elementary students have been busy with a number of service projects. Recently, students were excited to receive a letter from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, currently serving in Iraq. Students had sent care packages and letters to soldiers recover-

ing at Walter Reed Hospital and to those serving in the Middle East. Principal Gary Wilkers read the letter to the student body, and a copy of the letter is included in the schools February Newsletter. Chaplain Dave Oravec thanked the students for their support of NMCB-23 and said how amazed he is at the constant dedication and courage of the soldiers serving in the Middle East. ✱

Local Students Make Dean's List at the University of Delaware

The Eccentric congratulates the following Middleburg Area University of Delaware students for making the fall 2004 semester Dean's List.

Allison Lynn Behrle - Manassas	Charles Theodore Murry - Herndon
Matthew Anthony Desieno - Centreville	Olin Kevin Biddy - Herndon
Kelley Colleen Pastic - Centreville	Douglas Edward Erickson - Herndon
Connor Alexander Schmitt - Centreville	Lori Rebecca Meanor - Herndon
Diana Marie Hall - Clifton	Michael Bruce Strasburg - Oak Hill
Mariah Joan Tyson - Clifton	Brian Patrick Sweeney - Oak Hill
Valerie Ruth Murphy - Round Hill	William Benjamin Rogers - Leesburg
Samantha Joy Rothermel - Ashburn	Thomas Anthony Drozd - Reston
Amanda Leigh Koppel - Chantilly	Sharon Melinda Levine - Reston
Bethany Suzanne Meuleners - Haymarket	Holly Noelle Wolcott - Waterford
Kelly Lenore Kern - Herndon	Gitta Shurberg - The Plains



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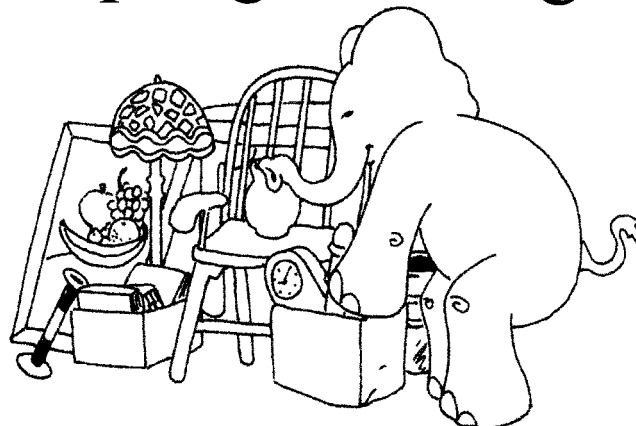
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EMMA IS NOW EMMETT



Emma the Emu is actually Emmett the Emu! We were advised that our wonderful fowl friend is actually a male! Male Emus are similar to Roosters in that they do best as a single male with female friends. Emmett is a great guy and is still looking for a good home.



HANNAH

Hannah is the last of the Mary pup group. Her mom is a short legged Beagle, ? dad! Hannah was the largest puppy in the group, she will grow to be a medium size dog. She is now 12 weeks old and is very sweet and special. A wonderful family friend!



MARMY- A super special young lady! Marmy has a big bubbly personality that goes along with her big bubbly body! She is a Sharpei/ Great Dane cross, about 11 months old. Marmy has started obedience classes and is doing beautifully! Marmy needs a lot of room to play and run, she would make a fun family friend.



LEONE- A lovely 14 year old Chestnut TB mare. Leone is a great babysitter with excellent ground manners. She has never been ridden but loves people and to be bathed & sprayed with the hose! She is an easy keeper too. Leone has a few friends like Starsky who need lawn ornament/ babysitter homes as well.



VINNIE

Vinnie was rescued from a slaughter sale last week. His paperwork shows that he was at the New Holland PA. sale recently and the dealer who brought him to the sale said that he had bought him from an Amish family. Two little boys rode this pony all day until we were fortunate to be able to buy him. Vinnie is sound, attractive and fun to ride. He is a bit sour right now and deserves some down time and genuine TLC.



Cindy Lu & Noel-

Two very special 1 year old kitties that were adopted from us as baby kit-

tens. Unfortunately their family did not make a life long commitment to them so now that they are no longer small and cute, they gave them back. Both have adorable round faces and gorgeous green eyes. Please come meet the girls!



Percy- Oh y goodness what an adorable little kid! Percy is a 2 year old Chihuahua mix- about 15 pounds. He has been chained all of his life so doesn't have great manners but has a wonderful fun personality and a heart of gold!



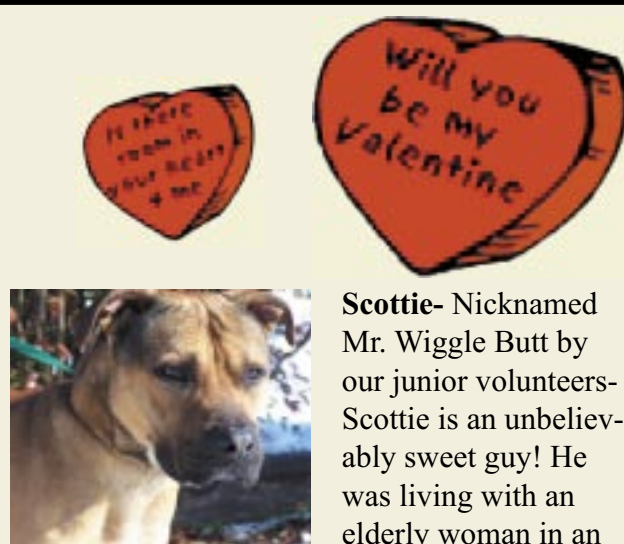
Sophie- An adorable, chunky little 8 week old lab/ Pit Bull ??? mix puppy. Sophie and her sister were found in the woods- in the middle of nowhere. They were freezing cold and hungry. Sophie is having lots of fun here with kids, cats, other

dogs and is enjoying tons of TLC from our volunteers. Sophie will grow up to be a medium sized gorgeous dog!



Angel- Angel lived at the same place as little Percy. They were both chained behind a trailer with little daily care. Angel is a 1 year old Shepherd mix. She is very sweet and loving and is currently learning basic manners. For the first time in her

life, she now runs free and plays with the other dogs!



Scottie- Nicknamed Mr. Wiggle Butt by our junior volunteers- Scottie is an unbelievably sweet guy! He was living with an elderly woman in an apartment and she was

forced to give him up. He is a huge Pitt Bull mix who lived with a cat and loves children. He now has many dog friends here at the shelter and is truly a gentleman! Scottie is the perfect dog for someone who wants a sweetheart dog in a tough guy suit!



Mini- Mini was surrendered to the local shelter by an elderly man who claimed his cousin was abusing her. She is a miniature dachshund cross, about 10 years old. She has a broken jaw and was in horrible body condition.

Mini is now doing beautifully! Her jaw surgery date is soon and her hair coat and body condition is improving daily! A dear little soul who truly deserves a gentle retirement.



Hannah & Lilly- Their mom died two weeks ago. Her dogs were her life. These two dear dogs are devastated and really don't understand why they are here. Hannah and Lilly are middle aged BEAUTIFULLY behaved girls. They are housebroken, walk softly

on a leash, are quiet and gentle and love children, cats and other dogs etc. We made a commitment to their mom that we would try extra hard to place them together. They are truly the sweetest, gentlest, and special dogs that you will ever meet.

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Albert's Corner

A monthly column for people who share their homes with four-legged friends.



While most of you may be unaware of it, I'm a celebrity. I've kept it under wraps for a little while now, but I cannot stand by for one more moment watching other celebrities get all of the attention. I, too, was on a reality show. It's still playing on the Hound network (arch rival -- Fox). The canine community follows Hound almost as closely as Animal Planet, but the people community just hasn't discovered it quite yet. There are lots of great shows on the network, including Paw and Order, This Old Doghouse, and The Chew Night Show. My show, however, is the best. It's so good, in fact, that another network copied us.

The show is called Pawject Runway. The premise is that I, along with 11 other competing canine designers, create apparel based on various challenges. Professional models (all paper-thin Whippets) wear our designs on the runway. Talented (but catty) judges rate our work. One dog is eliminated in each episode. Winners receive fabulous prizes, including the opportunity to design something for Banana RePUPlic's winter line. The overall winner receives enough seed money, magazine coverage, and industry support that he or she could become the next Ruff Lauren. I won't go into detail about every challenge, but I will summarize a few of them.

First, we had to design something out of materials we found in a grocery store. I chose organic dog biscuits and made a gorgeous coat. Unfortunately, the starving Whippets nearly consumed the entire coat before it got to the runway. Fortunately, the judges thought the minimalist approach was edgy. Next, we had to design a bathing suit. I took a huge risk and decided to break all the rules by designing nothing. I called it the Birthday Suit Bathing Suit. The judges loved my creativity and daring. Yet another challenge required us to redesign a postal worker's outfit. As you can imagine, this was a distracting task at best for a group of dogs. I'm embarrassed to say that I lost during this episode because I couldn't control the urge to bite the model when she was wearing the uniform.

I was destined to lose from the start, however, because I was up against an extremely gifted designer named Wendy Pawper. She's also from Middleburg, so I'm not too upset that she was better than I was. Anyway, it's all okay now. I've been selected to star in next season's Fur Factor. 🌟

Albert, a Jack Russell Terrier, is Chairman of the Board of Wylie Wagg, a shop for dogs, cats, and their people, in Middleburg.

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Céad Míle Fáilte

Steven Schwartz

Ellen Jones loves to share her love for things Irish. On a visit to her store, she said, “You see the phrase “Céad Míle Fáilte” (pronounced kay-ed meel-ah fall-cheh) all over Ireland. This Irish language phrase means “100,000 Welcomes” and embodies the hospitality and generosity of the Irish people.

For those who have visited Ireland, or have Irish blood, or for all who simply appreciate Irish culture and crafts, Middleburg’s own source is a store on Washington Street called The Irish Collection.

Manager Molly Musso will help you find what you’re looking for in the treasure trove of Irish gifts, books & CD’s, hand-cut crystal, modern and antique shamrock porcelain, jewelry, linens, clothing, sculptures, and art. The Irish Collection offers a selection not often seen. Ellen travels to Ireland 3 - 4 times a year to visit the cottage factories where craftspeople make the items by hand. She started 30 years ago in Occoquan as a working artist and on a trip to Ireland fell in love with the country, the people, and their crafts. Her gallery gradually evolved into a retail store and in the past year she opened a little store on Fox Chase Farm just outside of Middleburg on Route 50; last July she opened her store in Middleburg proper.

The store has everything a bride wanting an authentic Celtic wedding could need; classic Celtic designed wedding and engagement rings, custom made jackets, decorations, and even kilts and accessories (for rent or purchase) for the groom and groomsmen.



As for clothing, handmade Irish fisherman sweaters, custom made woolen jackets and capes, and a wide variety of Irish riding apparel fill the back room of the store. “I love to ride myself, and in the future will add more Irish-made items for horse people.” says Ellen. “I’ve always loved the town of Middleburg and am very happy to be here. I’m a former history teacher and think the town could use a little more “Irish”!

The Irish Collection
Monday - Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm
Sundays 12:00 to 5:00

102 W. Washington Street
Middleburg, Virginia 20118
540-687-3933
www.irishco.com



Adventures in Dining

Steven Schwartz

The other evening Chef Hump (from Humberto) Astorga welcomed this reporter to “Aster”, his brand new Middleburg restaurant, and an hour later any remaining shred of my journalistic impartiality had gone out the window.

Sure, he gave me a tour of the historic 1790’s building he has artistically renovated; starting with The Foyer, where I got the impression that Maitre d’ Craig Erion would forever remember my name. Next we viewed the bright, airy Porch with its large windows. Yeah, we saw the cozy Cartoon Lounge, stood surrounded by bottles of fine wine from all

over the world in the Wine Room, and gazed at the snowy view from the windows in the Garden Room.

But it was when the tour ended and we were comfortably seated in one of the two banquettes in The Alcove, and stylish French waiter Luc Sorano brought me a series of small plates, that my palate, cultivated in countless McDonald’s, was changed forever. Like a movie reviewer protecting a film’s plot

twist, all I will say is that when you and your companions are between courses, you will not be staring idly at the restaurant’s fine decorations. From the start to the finish of your meal, you will be exploring a new territory of tastes led by your guides, Sous Chef Aaron McCloud and his skilled assistants Sasha Drew and Michael Zawilanski. And I assure you, your taste buds will be in very, very good hands.

Chef Hump Astorga has brought Middleburg locals and visitors a wonderful addition to the many fine restaurants in town. But you’re going to have to try it for yourself, because you can’t take my word for it - I’ve joined the growing number of “Aster” devotees, and we’re hopelessly, and deliciously, biased. ✱

Aster
Proprietors - Chef Hump Astorga, Joanne Errico
101 South Madison Street
Middleburg, Virginia 20117
www.asterrestaurant.com

Open 5:30 - 10:00 Tuesday - Sunday
Closed Mondays
Call for Reservations 540-687-4080



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PROPERTIES IN HUNT COUNTRY

CHESLEY



Old Dominion Hunt Territory A magnificent manor on 245 acres of high rolling land. With domed-stair hall, Ballroom, Drawing Room, Library, Gourmet kitchen, Ornate and gilded detail throughout. Pool. Studio, 4 stall barn, Paddocks, Mountain views. **\$5,900,000**

WOODLEY FARM



Blue Ridge Hunt Territory 1835 Brick Manor House on 383 rolling acres. 6 bedrooms, 5 baths. Original details throughout. Tenant house, 8 stall Barn, Pastoral and mountain views. Streams. Northwest of Middleburg **\$3,900,000**

SALEM HILL



Orange County Hunt Territory 51 Acres, 5 BR home w/gourmet kitchen, Wine cellar, Master suite on first floor, Pool, Carriage house with 4-bay garage, guest suite, LR with vaulted ceilings, Extensive horse facilities, 9 stall barn, Covered arena, Sand Ring. **\$3,200,000**

LITTLE RIVER



Orange County Hunt Territory Custom Fieldstone home with beautiful views on 50 Acres in The Plains. 5 BR, 3.5 BA, Exposed beam ceilings in great room, open foyer, Main floor master suite includes private porch, paneled office, stone fireplace, 7 stall barn with 2 BR apartment. **\$2,700,000**

MONTVALLON



Country French style manor ♦25 secluded acres with breathtaking views ♦Approx 6500 sq ft of elegant living space ♦Manicured gardens enhance the pool and grounds ♦Flagstone terraces ♦Fabulous master suite with vaulted ceilings, fireplace, wet bar and deck **\$2,175,000**

POSSUM HOLLOW



Piedmont Hunt Territory Spectacular country estate. 6 bedroom 4.5 bath home on 29+ acres. New 6 stall barn. Fenced paddock and new riding ring. Heated pool surrounded by a Bluestone patio. Wonderful privacy. Separate studio/office with full bath **\$2,100,000**

WEST WIND



Orange County Hunt Territory Wonderful brick 4 bedroom home with attached garage on 20 acres♦ This property has many complimentary extras: pond, pool, gardens, terraces♦ Offering complete privacy♦ With beautiful mountain and pastoral views **\$1,990,000**

ALLWYN COURT



Piedmont Hunt Territory Ideal horse property at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Stucco main house w/3 BR 2 BA. Well designed 16 stall barn w/2 wash stalls, tack room, office, hay storage, 32+ board fenced acres, attached indoor arena 72x180, 2 large fields, 2 paddocks, and tenant house. **\$1,700,000**

CAELI FARM



Orange County Hunt Territory 406+/- acres with mountain views, streams (Hungry Run and The Little River), pond, stone walls. Presently being farmed. Abundant wildlife. Within five minutes of Middleburg. **\$12,500 per acre**

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