

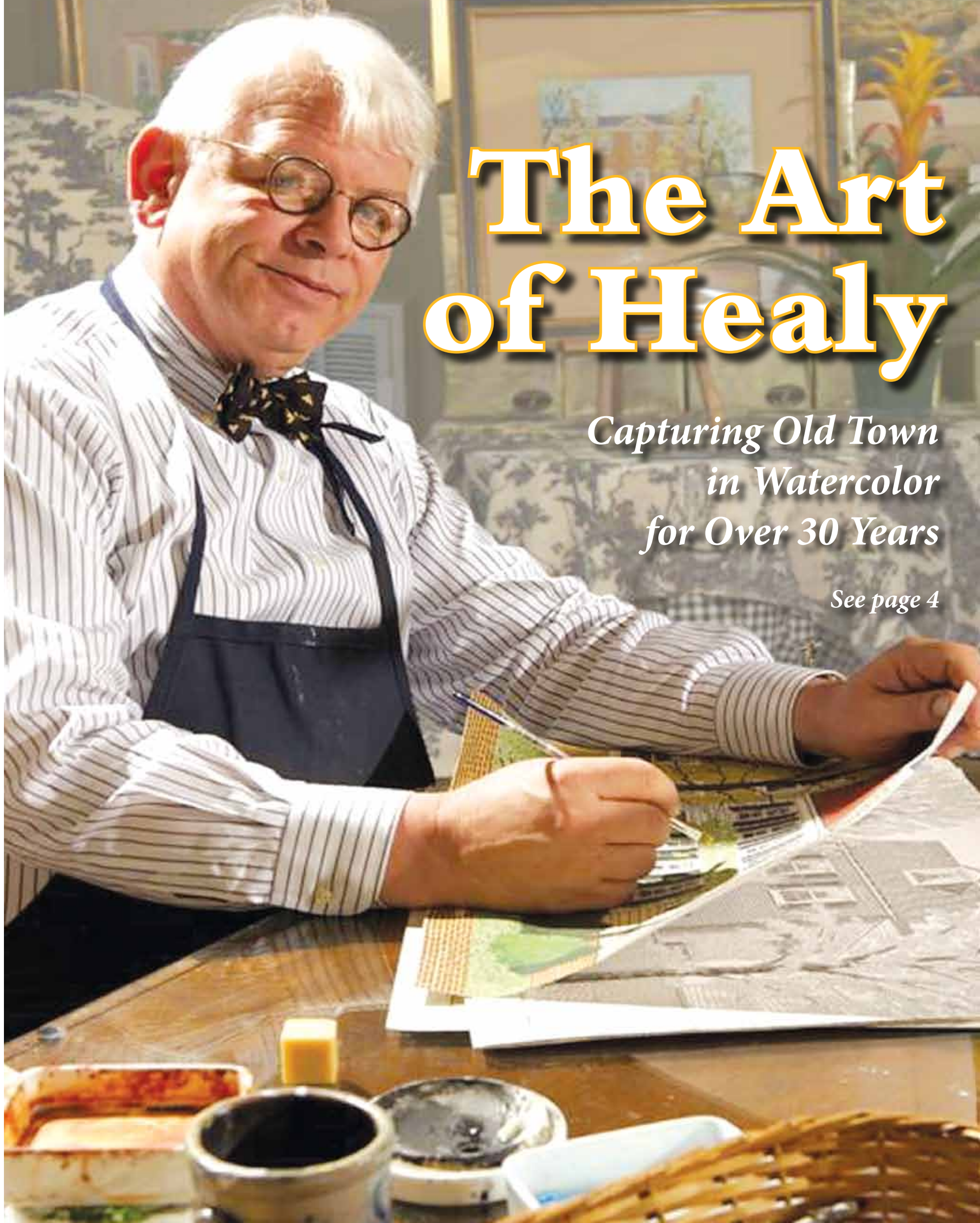
Zebra

It's **read** all over!
Vol 1, No. 1
December 2010

The Art of Healy

*Capturing Old Town
in Watercolor
for Over 30 Years*

See page 4



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  2010 Zebra Media, LLC
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Welcome to The Zebra!

There is an old joke that asks, "What is black and white and red all over?" The answer is usually a newspaper or sometimes a sunburned zebra.

I have worked in Alexandria for over 20 years. Out of college, I moved here for Virginia residency with the intention of going to law school after one year. But I caught the print media bug and found myself pounding the cobblestones selling newspaper advertising. Quickly, law school lapsed from my mind, and I became enthralled with the businesses and personalities that livened my life and hastened my steps around Old Town. While to most, I was merely a door-to-door salesperson with tucked newspapers under my arm smudging my jackets with ink, I fashioned myself the captain of a small ship which was my sales territory, King Street to Mount Vernon, and those that sailed with me – shop owners, realtors, entrepreneurs and restaurateurs.

I met folks like Beverly Gore, who designed handbags from her third floor flat on Cameron, to John McEneaney, lord of Alexandria's "real" estates. Bruce at Market Square decorated my townhouse, and Laurent at La Bergerie and Wendy at Tempo catered my annual Academy Awards parties with lemon tarts and ham biscuits. I pined when Santa Fe East closed as their chipotle chicken was a regular take home item along with The Warehouse's clam chowder. Old Town, and the surrounding landscape – Del Ray, Crystal City and Shirlington – were my home, my family. And I perhaps purchased more from the shops than they ever purchased from me, and I certainly ate very well along the way.

Early on, I stumbled upon Gallery Lafayette with Alice's discerning eye and a snappy, salt and pepper-topped artist sporting a bow tie by the name of Todd Healy, who quickly became a friend. I dabbled in real estate when it boomed and returned to advertising when the housing market bombed. And without apology, I soon realized that I could no longer work for other people because I still thought I was a captain, sailing my own ship. But in hard economic times, any company is leery of a salesperson who runs the occasional free ad and wants to steer editorial content to benefit the community.

So here we are. The Zebra. My publication. And yours. It is a lifestyle magazine, intended to enhance the lives of its readers by offering informative and entertaining content, well beyond city council meetings and water sewage proposals. The Zebra aims to please, bringing the best of the towns and the neighborhoods that you call home, and I call home. So please join me on this voyage, my quirky combination of a newspaper and a sunburned zebra, as I sail my ship into uncharted waters one issue at a time.

Mary Wadland
Publisher/Editor in Chief



Volume 1 · Number 1 December 2010

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Arlington Alexandria Alexandria West Ashburn Beverly Hills Braddock Heights Crystal City Del Ray	Fairlington Front Royal Great Falls Leesburg McLean Middleburg Mount Vernon Old Town	Park Fairfax The Pentagon Reston Rosemont Seminary Hills Shirlington
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Zebra is printed on the second Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

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The deadline for the receipt of all new advertising materials is 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, seven days prior to publication. Materials and space reservations will be accepted for proofed unchanged camera ready repeat ads until 5:00 p.m. Friday, the week before publication. Cancellations and changes cannot be accepted after Monday, the week of publication and no refunds will be made after that time. For advertisers wishing to see a proof before publication, the deadline for approval is Wednesday, seven days prior to publication.

For advertising information call 703-919-7533

“MapQuest really needs to start their directions on #5. I’m pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood.”
— Anonymous

W O R D P L A Y

Here’s one for the Librarian

The two-letter word ‘UP’ is very interesting.

This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv], [prep], [adj], [n] or [v].

It’s easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.

At other times this little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP.

We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP.

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary.. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don’t give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it soaks UP the earth. When it does not rain for awhile, things dry UP. One could go on & on, but we’ll wrap it UP, for now ... our time is UP!

— Contributed by Mike Sade



PHOTO | GREG KNOTT

Todd Healy at his drawing table.

Local Artist Portrays “Tradition”

BY CHUCK HAGEE

“I have dedicated my professional life to promoting Old Town Alexandria.”

That is how Todd Healy, owner of Gallery Lafayette, describes his 35 years as an Alexandria resident devoted to capturing the heart and soul of this colonial seaport city through his precise watercolor depictions of its homes and buildings. His work is the very essence of a labor of love, requiring a minimum of “100 hours to create an image of a single building.”

Each Christmas holiday season 12 of those images are offered to the public in the form of a calendar. His 2011 edition, unveiled November 6 at his gallery in Gadsby’s Arcade, 320 King St., marks the 30th anniversary of how Alexandria is portrayed through the eyes and emotions of Todd Healy.

“When I walk along the footpaths of George Washington, who first surveyed these original lots of Alexandria, Virginia I am drawn to the sense of home and community. I often think of the artisans who built

these homes and public buildings, by hand, using minimal tools, and how almost 300 years later they are still in use,” Healy writes on the back of his current calendar.

“Most of their names are lost to us forever, but they have achieved their own immortality through their craftsmanship, skill and effort,” he states. “My watercolors and illustrations are dedicated to these artisans and their significant contributions to this city.”

A native Virginian, Healy was born in Virginia Beach. His father was a U.S.Navy pilot during World War II and the family moved nearly every year until Todd was 10 years old.

His father was also an avocational artist, doing illustrations for a naval flight magazine. It was in his father’s home studio that young Todd began his love of art. “I started drawing in my father’s studio at home as a child. His assessment of my work was not always the most flattering,” Healy recalled.

But, Todd knew that art was his calling. First, he attended Mira Coaster Junior College in Carlsbad,

CA, and then San Diego State College in San Diego, CA.— in both instances majoring in art. However, as with most young aspiring artists, he wondered how he would make a living while perfecting his talent.

In Healy’s case, coming from a navy flier family, the choice was a natural — go to work for an airline. But, there was also the challenge of getting a job that you could walk away from after your eight hour shift in order to concentrate on perfecting your artistic skills.

“I went to work for National Airlines in ramp services — loading and unloading aircraft. This enabled me to work on my art in my free time without taking the job home with me,” he explained.


When National Airlines starting cutting back and laying off personnel in the Norfolk area in 1975 Healy was transferred to Washington and became an Alexandria resident in 1976. He and his wife Laraine were married in 1974. She remains in the airline industry as a pricing analyst for U.S.Air.

▼ See TRADITION on page 5



PHOTO | COURTESY

Healy’s images adorn many custom items available in his gallery



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OF THE
STACK!**

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▲ TRADITION from page 4

National Airlines eventually merged with Pan American Airways and Healy left the airline business in 1982. He then went to work for Colonial Parking as Director of Safety and Claims. That's when he decided to initiate his holiday calendar depicting the colonial charms of Old Town.

Healy works only in watercolor, starting with the original drawing of each residence or building. He also does hand coloring of limited edition prints.

Eventually he rented space in Gallery Lafayette, then owned and operated by Alyce Gambel, and became the gallery's artist in residence. It was located on Duke Street in the carriage house of the Lafayette House — thus the name Lafayette Gallery.

Upon Gambal's retirement in 1998, Healy bought the gallery which was then situated in its present location. He also expanded the framing element of the shop and added a wide variety of fine art gifts that include Christmas cards, holiday gift tags, ornaments, note cubes, trivets, serving trays, tote bags and much more.

"This is really three businesses in one. There is the art, the framing and our gift items, which, as well as being sold here, are wholesaled to other shops throughout the city," Healy said. "In fact, we have the largest selection of Christmas Cards depicting Old Town in Alexandria."

Gallery Lafayette specializes in "conservation framing." Each piece uses UV glass, acid free backing and matting, and hand painted frame bevels, according to Healy. But it is the art within the frame that commands center stage in each Healy creation.

"I am an artist that does framing. I want people to concentrate on the art that is within the frame. I want the frame to blend — to enhance what is being framed. Many of our customers leave the decision on framing completely up to us. They just bring in the art and say frame it," Healy said.

And, speaking of customers, the overwhelming majority are local residents. "They are the ones that have supported me. And, I am

"My art work is inspired by the sense of home and community that I discovered when I found my muse in this historic city."

extremely grateful to them. Tourism has never really touched my business to any significant extent," Healy emphasized.

"I love what I've done over the years. But, the last four years have been hard, primarily due to the economy," he said.

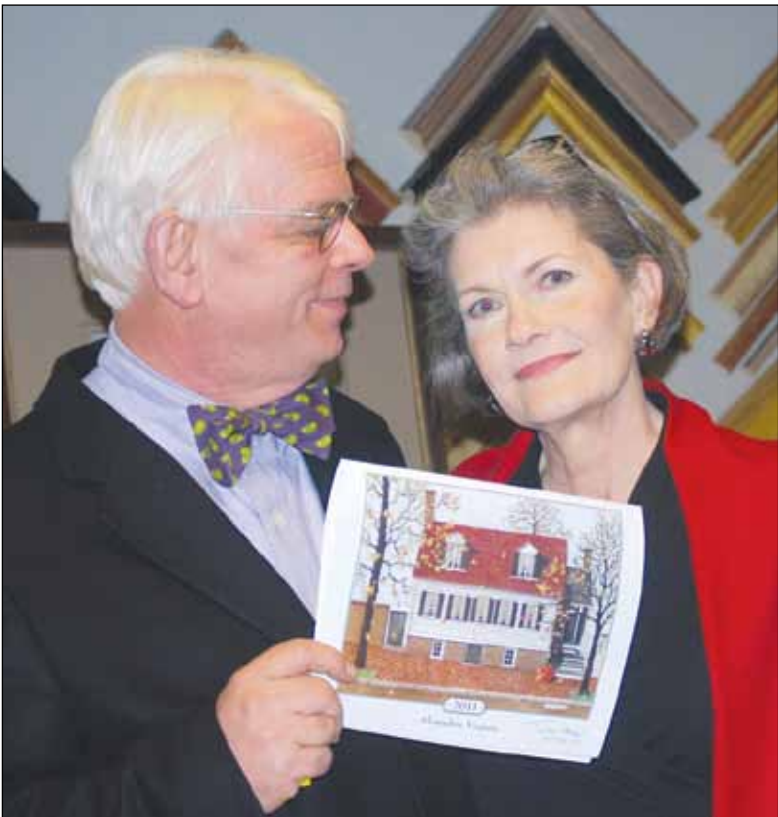
That recession impact is exemplified by this season's calendar sales, which retails for \$19.95. Healy has sold them in bulk at a reduced price to local businesses such as the real estate firms and Burke and Herbert Bank for distribution to their customers. However, some are not buying this year due to a drop in their businesses, according to Healy.

"I've sold the calendar to Burke and Herbert for 15 years with no price increase in the bulk rate. Then three years ago, with my production costs continuing to increase, I called them and said I'd have to raise the discounted bulk price by 25 cents a unit. They said they had decided to go "dirtier and cheaper," Healy said. "In my opinion they were successful."

However, after 35 years of following his artistic dream, the enthusiasm and dedication about and to that dream have not diminished. Plus, it has spread to his daughter Lauren Katherine, who also studied art and is now the fashion editor for Belle magazine in Richmond, VA.

"My art work is inspired by the sense of home and community that I discovered when I found my muse in this historic city," he said.

"My hours of effort honor the significant contributions of the craftsmen who built and made Alexandria a very special place to live and work then and now. Tradition, tradition, tradition — that's how I see it," Healy proclaimed.



Todd and Laraine at the 2010 calendar debut

PHOTO | MARY WADLAND

First Night ALEXANDRIA



12•31•10



Second Annual
Fun Hunt
starts at
1:00 pm

Four Spotlight Areas of Entertainment between the Masonic Memorial and the Waterfront featuring one hundred performances beginning at 7:00 pm

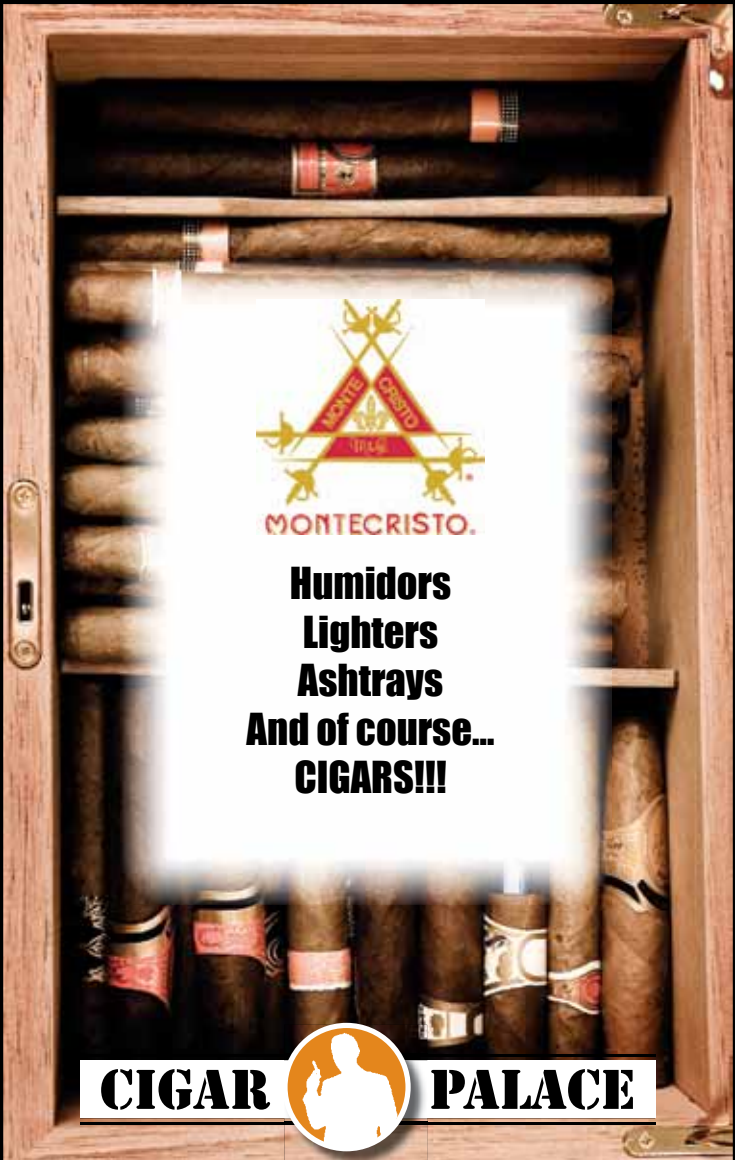
Admission badges are available online now through December 21 for just \$15. Children 12 and under, and active military are FREE (Dec. 31 pick-up only)

Don't miss the area's largest, safest, family-friendly, budget-friendly New Year's Eve celebration!

More information and retail badge sites at FirstNightAlexandria.org

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PHOTO | HARRY MERRITT

Senator Jim Webb and Congressman Jim Moran were guests at the Arlington Chamber of Commerce meeting.

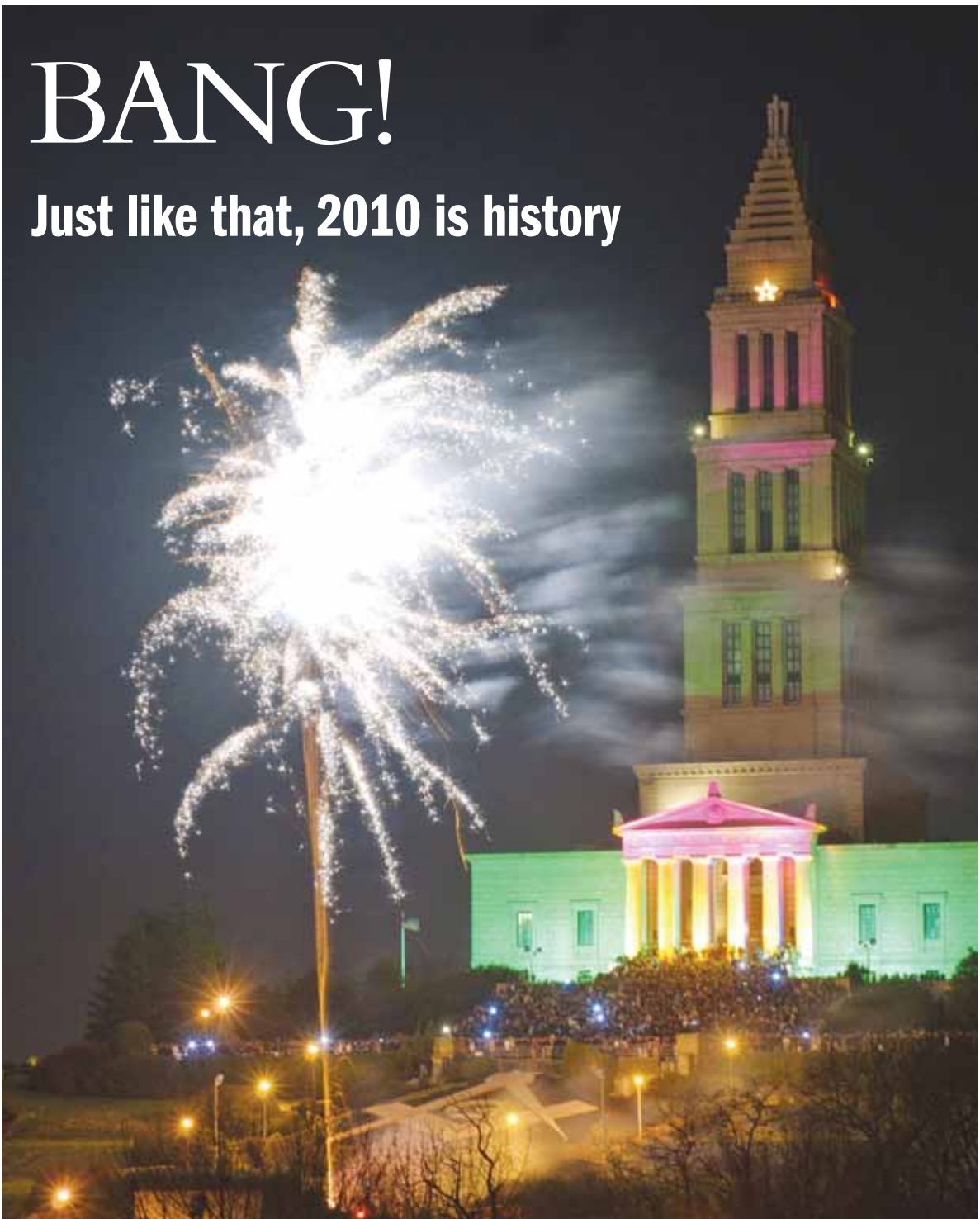
Senator Jim Webb speaks at the 86th Annual Arlington Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Senator Jim Webb was the keynote speaker at this week Arlington Chamber of Commerce 86th Annual Meeting held at the Sheraton National Hotel. He addressed an audience of over 300 people highlighting current financial issues in Congress, the GI bill and emerging Asian interest. The event was hosted by TD Bank. During the meeting numerous awards and administrative actions were completed. The current chairman Mr. Phil Keating emceed the event.



BANG!

Just like that, 2010 is history



Alexandria Readies to Ring in First Night

First it was TV megahits Glee and The Office . . . now First Night Alexandria is part of the nationwide a capella craze! The harmonies of two a capella ensembles are part of the colorful line-up of more than 100 live performances throughout Old Town Alexandria for First Night’s annual New Year’s Eve bash — professional a capella ensemble Musikanten and the popular College of William & Mary Stairwells. The Stairwells will usher in the New Year just prior to the fireworks finale.

Swing, Argentinean tango, Cajun, Russian folk, rock, blues, jazz, even a comedy magic show and entertainment for kids, are just some of the acts that can be found at 17 indoor venues throughout Old Town. With these performances, plus interactive kids’ activities and the all-ages, brain-teasing Fun Hunt, First Night Alexandria is the largest family-friendly and alcohol-free New Year’s Eve event in the region. Your ticket for the event is a First Night badge which gives you access to entertainment and activities at spots all around Old Town. This year’s First Night headquarters is the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street, just blocks from King Street Metro Station.

Starting at 7 p.m., with your First Night badge and schedule in hand, stroll Alexandria’s charming historic streets among venues, or hop on and off the free King Street Trolley to catch your favorite acts. Check out fabulous entertainment at venues

IF YOU'RE GOING ...

WHAT: First Night Alexandria

WHEN: December 31, 2010
Second Annual Fun Hunt: 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Kick-off Event at Durant Arts Center: 5 p.m.
100 Live Performances throughout Old Town:
7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Multimedia Fireworks Finale at George Washington Masonic Memorial:
12 midnight

WHERE: Headquarters: Durant Arts Center
1605 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314
Event: Throughout Old Town

INFO: www.FirstNightAlexandria.org; 703-746-3301

TICKETS: \$15 before December 21; \$20 after. Children 12 and under are free. Admission badges may be purchased online through December 25. Badges can be purchased in person at the Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House, 221 King Street. On December 31, all First Night venues will have badges for sale beginning 15 minutes prior to the first performance. Admission badges will also be available beginning at noon on December 31 at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street.

First Night Alexandria began in 1994 as a celebration of the New Year through the performing arts. Coffee shops, retail stores, hotels, museums and public buildings are turned into performance venues to showcase a variety of talent. First Night celebrations take place around the world and the event was founded in 1976 by a group of civic-minded artists in Boston as a meaningful alternative to traditional New Year's Eve revelry. To learn more, visit www.FirstNightAlexandria.org.

including the Torpedo Factory Art Center, the Little Theatre of Alexandria, historic Christ Church, and the Lyceum. Museums, public buildings, and even retail shops are

turned into performance venues to showcase incredible regional and national talent. Make a night of it

▼ See FIRST NIGHT on page 7

Q U O T A B L E :

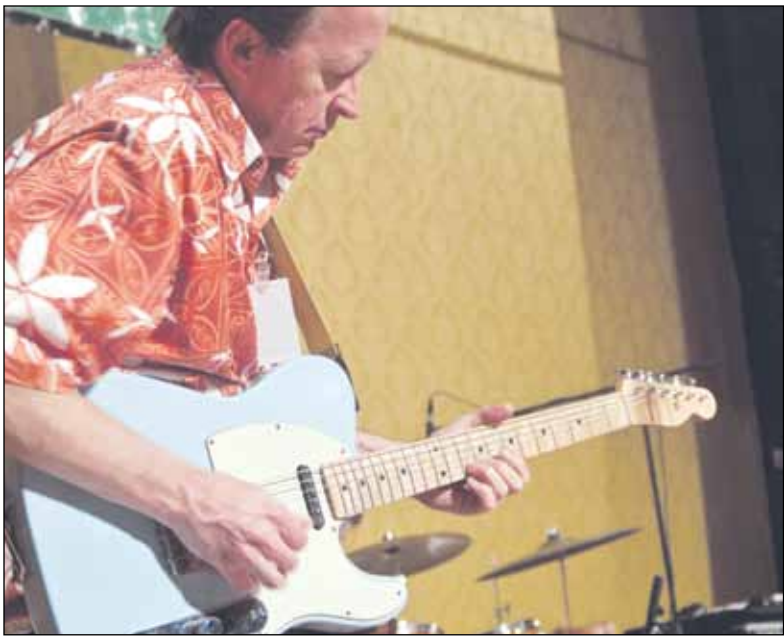
“You know you have a problem when you’re buying wine glasses in the vase department of Bloomingdale’s.”

— Elaine Stritch

PHOTOGRAPHER
GREG KNOTT
WWW.GREGKNOTT.COM



GREG@GREGKNOTT.COM
703-548-1921



▲ **TRADITION** from page 6

with dinner at one of Old Town's acclaimed restaurants, or grab a bite to eat at designated First Night venues.

Award-winning acts include Al and Amy's Celtic and Appalachian acoustic groove, as heard on the Emmy-winning Ken Burns documentary "The National Parks: America's Best Idea", Grammy-nominated Bill Kirchen's roots rock and roll, and 2009 WAMA Best Jazz Recording winner Al Williams. QuinTango serenades with sounds from Argentina, and Russkie Musikanti will play Russian folk music that might be heard in the village after a long day's work. The History of Acoustic Blues show includes authentic instruments from the 1920s and 1930s and is performed by Curtis Blues who was voted Solo Blues Artist of the Year.

Dance the night away with the irresistible swing dance band King Teddy plus country and honky tonk by the Folsom Prisoners, Americana roots music by the Grandsons, the Cajun tunes of Zydeco Crayz, and the lively sounds of the Irish Breakfast Band.

Delight in the a capella renaissance with the Stairwells' mix of musical genres and holiday favorites, or the inspiring choral chamber sounds of professional a capella ensemble Musikanten.

This family-friendly event is chock full of activities for kids including face painting, moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures, and interactive games. Try model boat building and sailing for an additional fee. Kids will also love the How-To Cowboy Joke Fest, sing-along and rhythm instruments with Mr. Don, and more. Alcohol-free venues keep it

fun and accessible for all ages – and children under 12 are free.

New this year, First Night Alexandria's New Year's Eve midnight finale is exploding into a complete multimedia spectacular with videos, lasers, music AND fireworks. The city's most visible monument, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, will be the focus, with pyrotechnics that explode from the roof of the building! Be sure to grab a seat on the memorial lawn for a great view and to hear an inspiring vocal performance by the College of William & Mary Stairwells.

For an extra adventure, start your New Year's Eve fun in the afternoon with the Second Annual First Night Fun Hunt – which, by popular demand, has been made even more challenging this year! The scavenger-style hunt uses puzzles and clues to take teams to sites around Old Town and completed clue sheets are eligible to win great prizes. The Fun Hun is not a timed event. Everyone that completes the hunt will be eligible for prizes. Winners must be present at the kick-off event at the Durant Arts Center at 5 p.m. to claim their prizes.

"First Night is a blast whether you are celebrating as a family, out with friends, or on a date," says Charlotte Hall, First Night Alexandria board president and vice president of Potomac Riverboat Company. "No other ticket in town will get you a more fun variety of high caliber entertainment as you ring in the New Year."

This year's First Night has been made more green through a partnership with Dominion and Dominion Green Power which purchased renewable energy certificates on behalf of the event.




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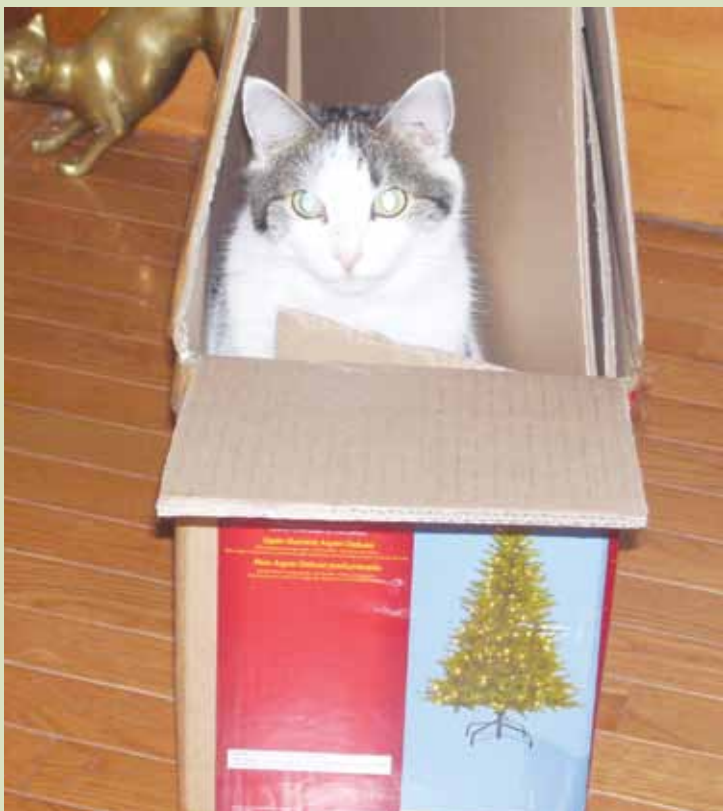


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“Always borrow money from the elderly.
They may die before you have to pay it
back.”

— Anonymous

C A T I N A B O X



Beeper finds his way into the Christmas Tree box in Manchester, NH.

If you own a cat, you know they can't resist climbing into boxes, and squeezing themselves in every which way. Next time it happens, snap a picture and send it to mary@zebramediasolutions.com. We'll select one or two every month for our cat-loving readers.

L I F E S T Y L E

Lost in Suburbia

My Holiday Newsletter 2010

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope this first decade of the new millenium has been a good one for you! As the year comes to a close, it's always nice to reflect on the things that made it special and memorable. Of course nothing can compare with just spending time with friends and family, whether it is as a guest at Buckingham Palace (really good tea!) or at the White House (love their dog, Bo!).

This has been a good year for us. With two of our own teenagers in the house now, you never know what you can expect! Then of course there were those ten refugee teenagers we took in for a few months following that nasty pygmy mouse stampede in the Congo. It was quite chaotic here for a while, as you can imagine, but since our kids are fluent in ten different tribal languages, at least there was no language barrier! Boy, good thing they did that African Language Immersion Pre-school!

We were fortunate to take some really memorable vacations this year. First stop was Alaska where we competed in the Iditarod and placed second! We would have won, but our sled dogs saw a squirrel and took off in the wrong direction. LOL! Still it was a lot of fun and it was really cool to be able to see Russia from our sled.

On the way home we went

through Alberta, Canada to join an archaeological dig where we helped discover several new species of dinosaurs. Don't be surprised when you hear about the new Beckermanasaurus!

The summer was pretty quiet. While the kids were off on a teen tour searching for the Lost Civilization of Lemuria (they found it!), the hubby and I went hunting for black truffles in Umbria, Italy to bring back to our friend Wolfgang who was featuring them in a dish at his newest restaurant. Wolfie was so grateful, he named one of the dishes after us. So now we have a dinosaur and a pasta both named in our honor!

Things were a little slow at work for my husband this year with the economy being what it is, so he used his free time to work on several privately funded projects including invisibility, teleportation, and time travel. He hasn't quite perfected the



first two yet, but he is making great strides with the third! We will let you know how that's going as soon as he gets back from 1963! By the way, if you watch that Zapruder film again, you might just catch a glimpse of him behind Kennedy's motorcade!

Meanwhile back at home, I've been doing the usual... taking care of the family, writing, doing laundry. I did have a little incident in the kitchen trying to get a stain out of a shirt. While mixing a couple of ingredients together I accidentally invented a clean bio fuel that will make gasoline obsolete. Everyone seems to be pretty excited about this. I'm just happy because it also got the stain out!!

Oh, and if anyone is looking for a kitten, we are trying to find some homes for a litter our dog Riley gave birth to last month. Yes, Riley is the first dog ever to have kittens. Pretty amazing, especially when you consider that Riley is a male!

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday and New Year!

The Beckermans

Tracy Beckerman writes the syndicated humor column, *Lost in Suburbia*® and is the author of the book, *"Rebel without a Minivan: Observations on life in the 'burbs."* For more *Lost in Suburbia*, visit Tracy's Blog at www.lostinsuburbia.net.

Letters to Dad

Just Another Naked Opportunist

As a senior in college, I'm already accustomed to my parent's disappointment. It's not easy to tell your parents you want to be a journalist. No, it's about on par with telling them you'd like to change your major to philosophy. You get the same stark look of distress that flashes across their face when they envision you sucking their 401k dry in the coming years. I first experienced that look four years ago, when I embarked for college, bound by my love of reporting, barreling full-speed ahead to the School of Journalism and Electronic Media at the University of Tennessee.

I knew this wouldn't be the last time I'd go against my parent's wishes, but it wasn't until a phone call three years later that I realized how much our ideals differed. "Dad, it's me," I said, over the celebratory music blasting in the background. "I've got some great news. I'm going to work for *Playboy*."

My dad took the news better than my mother, a southern woman who spends her spare time singing in gospel choir. "I'll call your aunt, I'm sure she can get you an internship somewhere else," she pleaded. But it was too late, I'd already been bitten by the sultry, sinful magazine that is *Playboy*.

The internship was part of the College of Communication and Information's Alex Haley/*Playboy*



Interview Scholarship, a fund established on behalf of the author, who conducted the first *Playboy* interview in 1963. As the recipient, I received \$5,000 towards my tuition and a paid summer internship as an editorial assistant. Family friends, and even my dentist, scoffed when I told them about my summer plans, usually saying in a sarcastic tone, "Right, because people read it for the articles". But the age-old mantra is quite believable if you've ever had a chance to flip through the publication. I worked with brilliant editors and had the opportunity to research materials for "Grown In the USA", about the economics of marijuana (much to my mother's dismay) and "Playboy Honor Roll", an insightful look at the country's most innovative academia.

Playboy Enterprises' headquarters is a mod, two-story workspace in a historic building on Chicago's

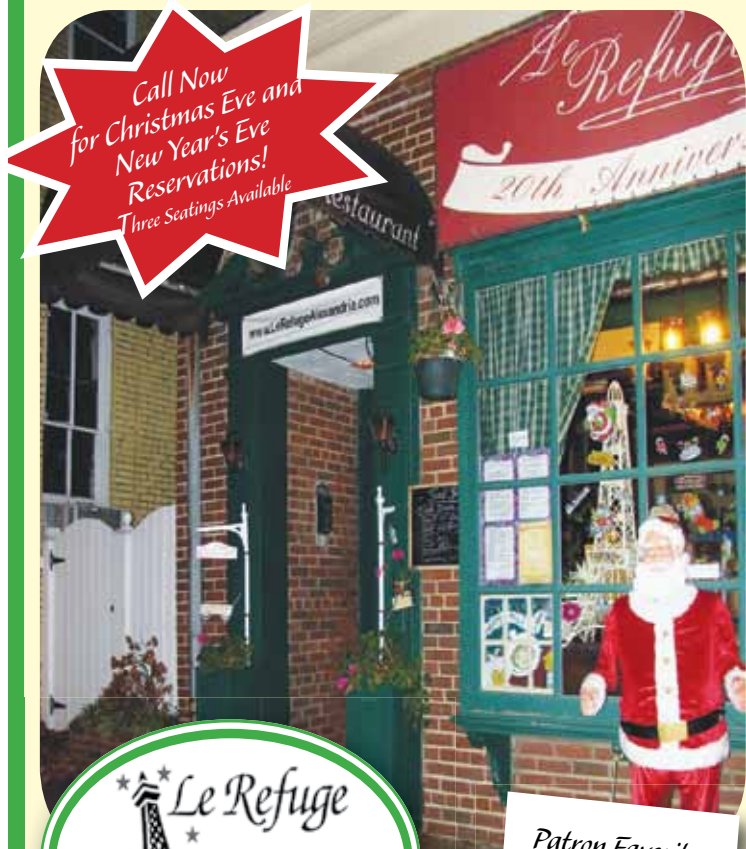
Lake Shore Drive. A golden bunny mounted on the wall and framed nude photographs greeted me each morning, but despite provocative decorations, the editorial department was a typical office space with rows of cubicles and busy employees. It wasn't until my last week of work that I actually encountered a naked woman. A stylist asked me to make a coffee and afterwards needed me to organize clothing and accessories for the shoot.

I caught a half-hour of the shoot and even stood on the set (fully clothed) with a fan blowing my hair for a few embarrassing moments. Afterwards, I spent hours in the *Playboy* closet, arranging shoes by color and size; occasionally taking breaks to model fur coats and stilettos in the mirror. When I had finished, I returned to the editorial cubicles, beaming to my boss, "They let me organize the costume closet." It wasn't until she laughed at my use of the word "let", that I realized how important enthusiasm is for any job, however menial. They made me organize a closet, but completing even the smallest tasks with fervor showed coworkers my willingness to learn. And surely *that* would make my parents proud.

Flora Theden is a senior journalism major at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

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Salmon en Croute

On Watch

A Forgotten Hero



‘Welcome Aboard’ is an old Navy saying and it is particularly apropos for the inaugural issue of the *Zebra*. I was asked to write a regular column on the military but rather than discussing Don’t Ask – Don’t Tell, China, Counter Insurgency operations, Iran, the Defense budget, or other lofty things, I settled on a reflection piece with an Alexandria slant.

I was walking in Delray on the evening of November 16. My course that evening took me past the Alexandria Recreation Center on Commonwealth Avenue and I stopped to look at the statue of Captain Humbert R. “Rocky” Versace, U.S. Army. It is a simple piece and beautiful in its simplicity. As a former Army brat and aspiring sculptor, I was struck that the piece depicting this Special Forces soldier, a prisoner who was ultimately executed by his Viet Cong captors and ultimately received the Medal of Honor is not in typical warrior garb. He is standing uncovered and talking with a little girl and a boy holding a ball. His hands are strong yet relaxed and his face holds his trademark peaceful smile.



PHOTO | COURTESY
Versace Statue on Commonwealth in Del Ray.

Rocky spent part of his childhood growing up in Delray here in Alexandria. His father was an Army Colonel and his mother Tere was an accomplished author who would write a short story “The Fifteenth Pelican,” the basis for “The Flying Nun.” A West Point graduate, class of ’59, he was a Special Forces advisor to the Vietnamese Army when he was captured in October 1963 during a six-month extension to his first tour in Vietnam. He was captured his last week in Vietnam and was going to leave the Army to become a Maryknoll missionary and work with orphans in Vietnam.

His Viet Cong captors brutally tortured Versace, then st Lieutenant James ‘Nick’ Rowe and Sergeant Dan Pitzer, attempting to exact propaganda from them. He

resisted these efforts and provided no information other than what was required by the Geneva Conventions. He cited the treaty from memory again and again. Four times he attempted escape, the first time crawling due to his leg wounds. Fluent in French and Vietnamese, he would, as Rowe put it, “give the Vietnamese hell in three different languages.” Throughout his captivity, Rocky Versace assumed the leadership mantle and agitated his captors so that he could deflect their horrors on himself and spare his fellow POWs.

The last time Rowe saw Versace he was singing ‘God Bless America’ at the top of his lungs. But the thing he remembered most about Rocky Versace however was his wonderful smile. He wrote about a moment when Rocky was standing in a little Vietnamese village surrounded by laughing children. Rowe said he had his hands out to the children looking up at him, smiled and said, “Aren’t these wonderful people!”

Veterans Day is now ‘passed and opening’ by the time you read this. On November 16th, 2010 in a White House ceremony Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta U.S. Army was awarded the Medal of Honor. Following the moving ceremony surrounded by family, the who’s who of the military, and fellow soldiers, this young man was interviewed in the news media and demonstrated the genetic humility, focus on family, and fierce loyalty to his fellow soldiers that is the common thread found in all Medal of Honor recipients. SSGT Giunta is very essence of the American warrior and possesses that rare moral character that we cherish and admire. He and ‘Rocky’ Versace are cut of the same bolt of American cloth and both wore the cloth of their nation.

When you walk through Delray next, take a moment to stop and look at Rocky Versace. I did and it looked like he was saying, “Aren’t these wonderful people?”

I was moved to tears. It might happen to you, too.

Marcus Fisk is a retired Navy Captain, Naval Academy graduate, sometime actor, sculptor, pick-up soccer player, and playwright. He and his wife Pamela live in Alexandria.

COMMUNITY VIEWS



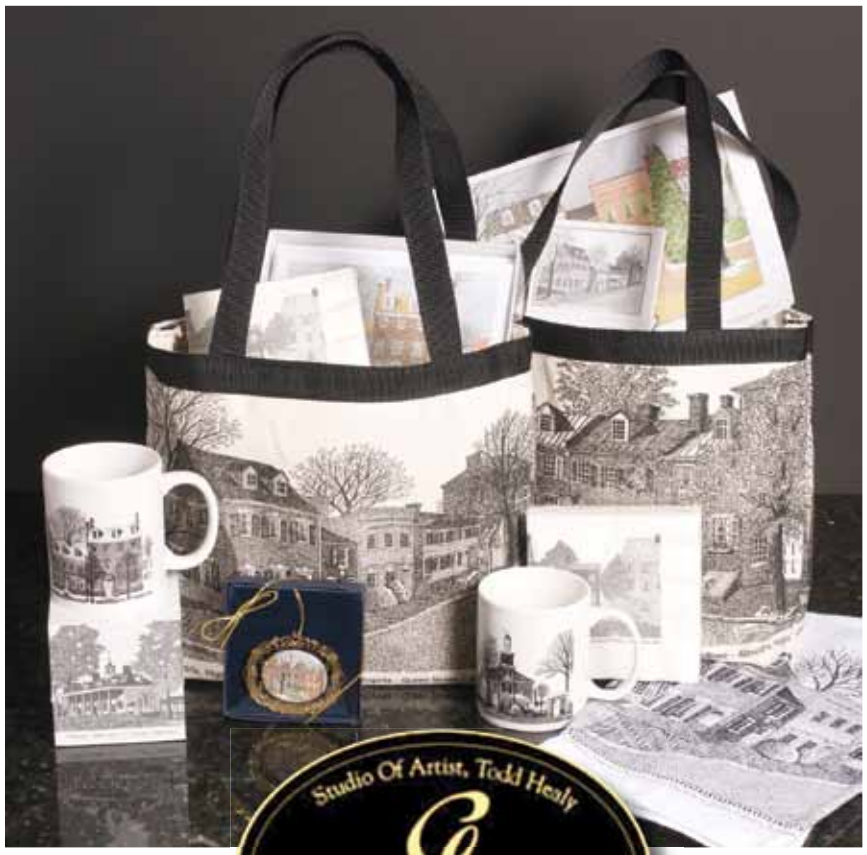
PHOTOS | HARRY MERITT

The Skate Shack at Pentagon Row

Pentagon Row’s The Skate Shack offers ice skating convenience to the skating enthusiast all week. Located in the Pentagon Row Plaza area behind the Fashion Center the skating rink is surrounded by both retail stores and restaurants for non-skating entertainment. This time of year the plaza is festively decorated adding to the ambiance of the skating experience. Pictured right, Andrew and Mom are in the lead while Adeline and Dad are still getting use to their skates.



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Kabbalah ... What's a Kabbalah?

Kabbalah is a word that has been heard a lot lately, but what is it? The word means “the received tradition” and it is a mystical interpretation of the Bible’s Old Testament or Torah that is as ancient as Judaism itself. It is the theology of the Jewish people and deals with the way Jews understand God, the world, and what God wants from humans. Kabbalah is not one particular book, and was an oral tradition for much of its history.

Lately, it has become a pop culture phenomenon that represents Kabbalah as a New Age, mystical practice. This pop interpretation has resulted in many inaccuracies and misunderstandings. As a result, a magical strain has grown that deals with amulets, unusual forms of meditation, superstition, and occult practices. In other forms, it is a serious spiritual study that can result in great self-understanding and calm acceptance of the suffering that life inevitably brings to all human beings.

Some historical traditions believe Kabbalistic knowledge was given to Adam and Eve, but was taken away or veiled after they disobeyed the old-testament God’s rules and ate of the forbidden fruit. Other traditions hold that Abraham was the first recipient of Kabbalistic wisdom, and that he passed it on to his heirs. Most traditions agree that Kabbalah was involved in Moses’ communications with God on Mt. Sinai. After all, tradition believes that he was up there 40 days, so he had time to do a lot of business with the Hebrew God, other than the Ten Commandments and the Torah.

Historically, to be permitted to study Kabbalah, one had to be male, 40 years old and married, have rabbinical training, and be considered very stable. Some believe that Jesus was a Kabbalistic Rabbi or teacher, and was involved in doing Kabbalah as well as Talmud (the study of the Law) in the Temple in Jerusalem.



ANNE ALDEN

Allegedly Jesus was very precocious, and was teaching when he was a boy of twelve. Because he did not meet the established qualifications for Kabbalistic studies, many in the Kabbalistic hierarchy may have been upset that a twelve-year-old boy, even Jesus was teaching Kabbalah.

An early written version of Kabbalah was the Sefer Yetzirah or the book of creation. The timing is not known but many believe it was composed somewhere between the third and sixth centuries. Kabbalah study was quiet until the twelfth century in Provence. It then spread to Spain where it had a great Renaissance during the golden age of Spanish Jewry. In 1280, the Zohar, the seminal work of Kabbalah was written. It teaches that everything in the universe is connected and that creation is an ongoing process. The Kabbalistic creation myth sounds a lot like the “big bang” theory of creation. After the crusades, the inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain caused the study of Kabbalah to go underground again.

It resurfaced in the Galilean town of Safed where Isaac Luria, the father of modern Kabbalah, shaped its form into the future. In the late 1600’s anti-Semitism ballooned and the study of Kabbalah went underground again until another resurgence in the last 20 years.

The secret or esoteric level of Kabbalah supposedly contains a

blueprint for the universe and a kind of map depicting the forces of creation as well as an explanation of the relationship between human beings and everything else in the universe. When we complain that life does not come with an instruction book, the Kabbalists would say take another look because the study of Kabbalah is just such a book. Additionally, its study provides a guide for daily living and self-knowledge.

The basic symbol of Kabbalah is the Tree of Life. It is a picture of the characteristics of the human psyche that is said to reflect the characteristics of the God consciousness. Many believe the Tree of Life is the picture of how human beings are thought to be created in the image of God.

Kabbalistic thought frees humans from either/or and good/bad ways of thinking. Passing emotions are put into perspective. Similar to Buddhist thought, light and dark feelings are both allowed to exist, and the lessons of both are embraced. One can discover their true self in this way, and learn to love and respect that self. Jews and others have used these principles for centuries for self-discovery, healing, and wholeness. Kabbalistic self-discovery does not deal with pathology or illness, but rather is a question of balancing the characteristics of the Tree of Life model of the human being. The inevitable wounds, illusions, and experiences of separateness of human life, including relationship and self-esteem issues, can be dealt with in this way.

Anne Alden is a practitioner of Integrated Kabbalistic Healing. She is committed to bringing Kabbalistic healing into the world, and helping others achieve the freedom that she has experienced. She can be reached at 703 521 4898.



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knowledge.”

— Rabbi Isaac the Blind



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ASK THE CLOCKMAN



PHIL WADLAND

Q: I have an antique mantel clock that belonged to my mother. I have it on the mantel in the living room, and it keeps good time except the chime is off. It always strikes the wrong number. No matter what I try, it's not right.

A: This is a common problem with older clocks and even new ones. I am going to assume when you say the "wrong number," you mean the time showing on the dial is different than the number of strikes produced by the clock movement. In most cases, this is a very easy fix. So easy that sometimes this simple fix is hard to understand. The "HOUR" hand is not positioned to the correct location.

If, for example, your clock strikes 4 and the time on the dial says 8, move ONLY the hour hand from 4 to 8. The hour hand is attached to the clock on a tapered post much like a ring on a finger. It will move! Now sometimes people call me and say the hour hand is always at 6, and that it just hangs there. This is because the hand has moved to the small end of the taper and is not fitting at all. Use the same fix: first move the minute hand to the hour and allow the clock to strike. However many times it strikes is where you should position the hour hand. Then set the clock to the correct time using

the minute hand.

Q: I have an old clock, and I was wondering what it might be worth. It's been in the family forever.

A: Wow! I get this question all the time. "Tell me what my clock is worth."

From the photo, I can only say this appears to be what is called a "black mantel clock" circa 1890. During the Victorian Age, life was good and Americans were buying all the latest goods. This clock is a copy of a French clock that was made of black marble or black onyx. The clock you have is American, and it looks to be made of painted steel. These clocks were also made of painted wood. I can tell it's American because of the distance between key holes in relationship to the center post. The French version has these holes closer together. Just as today, there are many products that look the

same, but have different levels of quality. In 1890, if one was to walk into a clock shop, the French clock would be selling for about \$15.00,

while the American version would list for \$3.50. From a short distance, to the untrained eye, these clocks were the same in look and function. Therefore, lots of American clocks were sold. As to the current value of your clock, if you were to walk into an antique shop and found this clock in perfect running condition, I would expect it to have a price tag of at least \$800.00

Phil Wadland is a third-generation clockmaker and horologist, residing in Manchester, New Hampshire. If you have questions for the Clockman, please email clockman@zebramediasolutions.com.



DID YOU KNOW?

Desperate for a sweet topping for an unexpected cherry pie she was given, and wanting to avoid a long grocery store line, a staffer stopped at Baskin Robbins to see if she could purchase just enough whipped cream to fill a medium-sized ice cream cup.

To her amazement, the pink-hatted clerk quickly retrieved a 15 oz can of ice-cold, real whipped light cream for \$4.99!

It was exceptional, far superior to the other store bought brands tried in the past.

A perfect find for your holiday desserts!



PHOTO | COURTESY

Christmas Concert an Overwhelming Success!

Bishop Ireton's Wind Ensemble, Choir, and Concert Band, along with special guests, the USAF Band's Brass Quintet and the Seika Girls High School Band, performed to a packed house in the Auditorium on Sunday, December 12. Special guests included the Ambassador of Japan in the U.S., Ichiro Fujisaki and wife Yoriko, as well as Air Attaché Yoshinori Ozaki and his wife Eri, the Deputy Director Japan Information and Culture Center Mayu Hagiwara, and Embassy of Japan Counselor Nakamura Kimitake.

Special thanks to the Conductors of the five groups: Yoshihisa Fujishige and Noriaki Sakurachi, Col. Arnald D. Gabriel, Barry Ward, Christen Reddig, and Dr. Randall Eyles.

Also present were Principal Mineo Kurakazu of the Seika Girls High School and BI Principal Tim Hamer.



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Take A Walk On The Sane Side Of Holiday Shopping



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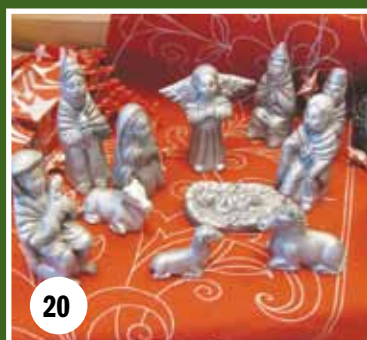
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BY CHUCK HAGEE

Had enough of the seasonal madness known as The Mall Crunch? How about some relaxing shopping, where there are items not found in the sardine shopping tubes and where merchant's actually know their merchandise? Then think small not mall.

Small as in small shops — not big box stores or mega malls. There are excellent possibilities in the Hollin Hall and Belle View shopping centers of Mount Vernon District as well as throughout Alexandria — Old Town, Del Ray and the West End.

Kevin Green, owner of **THE VIRGINIA FLORIST**, recently opened a new shop in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center at 7908 Fort Hunt Road. His original shop remains in the Belle View Shopping Center off Belle View Blvd.

Located next to The Variety Store, in space once occupied by The Blossom Shop, the new Virginia Florist shop offers a wide variety

of one-of-a-kind gifts such as the Winwood music boxes. Each has a miniature, mechanized holiday/winter scene inside a small model of a 1950's TV with rabbit ears on top.

Just switch on the vintage-style television and watch the scene come to life. It also has a volume control to raise and lower the holiday tune being played. The price is \$239.

Another possibility at the Hollin Hall Virginia Florist, for someone who is really in the spending mode, is a 1920's model of a square rigged sailing ship that is detailed from stem to stern. It's cost is \$4,995. For the less extravagant, there is an array of Sofia & Cloe gold necklaces and bracelets.

In Green's original store at 1632 Belle View Blvd., which this year features an actual antique sleigh from upstate New York in the window, there is the model of an 1880's handmade, plank-on-frame pond yacht priced at \$2,995.

For something more ornate, there is a varied selection of faberge-like goose egg creations. Some serve as ring and necklace boxes. Others present a delicate scene when the

egg opens. Some also serve as music boxes. They sell in the \$100 plus price range.

A most unique offering this year are the Lafco soaps and candles. A European creation, the soap is reported to be unusually smooth. Both items have been endorsed by Oprah Winfrey and featured on her television show.

As always, the shop offers a wide array of vintage framed maps of Mount Vernon area, art depicting various historic sites in Northern Virginia, and other items that appeal to discriminating shoppers who are searching for that certain, individualized something. Being a florist shop, there are also flowers — usual and unusual — arranged and/or boxed, at both shops.

At the other end of The Belle View Shopping Center, 1520 Belle View Blvd., is **HODGES GALLERIES** which specializes in art restoration and framing while offering an eclectic array of gifts. The art work ranges in price from \$45 to \$850 and framing is available for pickup right up to a few days before Christmas.

Some of the most intriguing items on display are tiny porcelain boxes portraying a variety of items and animals. Each has a "surprise inside" according to the display label. They sell for \$8 each.

For those who want to give or preserve cookies for Christmas there are figurine cookie jars in the form of a "cowboy" dog and Scottish piper for \$45. And, for a mental challenge how about a jigsaw puzzle at \$16 — there's a variety from which to choose.

This is one shop where the buyer must spend some time looking at the myriad items on display. There are antique tree ornaments, carved wooden conversation pieces that stand over five feet tall, toys, animal carvings, and other possibilities too numerous to mention.

After the shopping there is usually the chore of wrapping. Well, **THE VARIETY STORE**, 7902 Ft. Hunt Road, in Hollin Hall Shopping Center can solve that as well as having the gift container serve as an additional gift itself — a decorated gift box.

These keepsakes come in various

sizes each decorated with scenes of Christmas and winter wonderlands. They are fully decorated inside and out in both one and two dimensional art. Priced from \$2.99 to \$11 each require only a gift inside and possibly a ribbon, optional of course, to make them under-the-tree ready.

And, that's not all to be found in this long standing emporium that lives up to its name not only during the holiday season but year round. There are decorated bags, wrapping paper, ribbons, stocking stuffers, toys, outdoor and indoor decorations and supplies, and all the other necessities needed by Santa and Mrs. Claus prior to the big night.

The Variety Store has physically expanded this year by combining many of the items previously featured in the now closed Gift Store. Those more upscale and personalized offerings can be found in this expanded area.

Alexandria offers the avid shopper a limitless wealth of choices.

▼ See SANE SHOPPING on page 13

▲ SANE SHOPPING from page 12

Specialty shops for every age group and taste abound throughout the city.

What better place to start Christmas shopping than in **THE CHRISTMAS ATTIC** at 125 S. Union St. In addition to the annual White House Ornament, this year owner Fay Carter is offering a special gingerbread house assortment of ornaments that can be used on the tree or as a separate table display.

Each one is designed to hold a small light so that when arranged they create a miniature alpine village priced at \$17.95. There is also a special, limited addition holiday wine from North Mountain for \$16.95. Plus the Christmas Attic is packed with a myriad Christmas decorations on two floors.

A block closer to King Street on the opposite side of the street at 104 S. Union St. is **THE VIRGINIA SHOP**. It is filled with Virginia peanuts, foods, wines as well as assorted gifts and local souvenirs. Check out the colonial ginger jars on the mantle — Virginia, Maryland and Alexandria in both large and small sizes.

At the corner of King and South Lee streets are two shops that offer gifts for both adults and children that are nearly impossible to duplicate in the entire metro area. For children there is no place quite like **WHY NOT** at 200 King St.

Its two levels are floor to ceiling with children’s books, toys, clothing, games and a wide array of fun things. This year, owner Kate Schlabach is inviting shoppers to explore her newly expanded upstairs filled with more books, toys, costumes, and stocking stuffers.

One of Why Not’s real fun toys is its collection of puppets. They come in all sizes, both hand and finger as well as full size. There are even those that can be both a hand puppet and a hat.

On the opposite corner, 132 King St, is **ARTCRAFT**. Without a doubt the most eclectic shop in the area. Anyone looking for the true conversation gift, large or small, Artcraft is the place to visit. However, they also offer the more sane gift. This year it is a hand painted ornament depicting scenes of Old Town priced at \$30.

For those into the eclectic as apparel there is **GOSSYPIA** at 325 Cameron St. That also applies to the jewelry and Latin American folk art offered by owner Amanda Lasker.

For the season there is a collection of handmade nativity scenes from around the world priced from \$22 to \$700. Some are signed by the artist.

Speaking of one-of-a-kind nativity scenes, there is a collectors dream selection at **TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES**, 915 King St. This most unusual shop is a “Fair Trade” enterprize managed by Kate McMahon. Every item is hand crafted by villagers in third world nations enabling them to tell their stories while making a livable income.

This year McMahon is doing an “ornament club.” Anyone who buys 10 ornaments gets one free.

Nativity aficionados can find creations in all mediums crafted by villagers from 32 countries. Anyone buying five from five different countries gets one free. The selections range from \$10 to \$185 and from a seven piece, Peruvian pottery creation to a wood, hand carved set that incorporates a music box, to a pewter scene.

Two blocks west of Ten Thousand Villages is **TODAY’S CARGO** managed by Donna McIntyre at 1102 King St. For those into wristwatches she has silicone watches of “quartz and sparkling rhinestones” priced at \$20. There are also Diamond Dazzle sticks by Connoisseur for \$8 and a host of stocking stuffers.

And, what is Christmas without a model railroad circling the tree to the delight of “children” of all sizes and ages. The place to satisfy that passion is **WHISTLE STOP HOBBIES**, 130 S. Royal St.

Here the shopper can find model railroad sets of all gauges and all designs, including the new Lego trains. There are freight, passenger, military, and even Harry Potter train sets. And, as the shop name states, there are many other hobby items offered by owner Frank Kozuch ranging from motorboats to race car sets.

He also sponsors the annual Santa Train and Santa’s Workshop each Christmas season. Tickets for the train, at \$25 each, are still available at the shop for December 6 and 13. It’s a round trip excursion on a real train from Alexandria to Manassas and back with Santa as a special guest.

Santa’s Workshop will be held at **THE LYCEUM**, 201 S. Washington St., on Saturday, December 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free and offers a complete Lego train layout as well as the opportunity to create and purchase keepsake Christmas

crafts and other specialty gifts.

Leaving Old Town for Del Ray the holiday shopper can find not only the perfect gifts for children and adults but also for their furry pets. Once again, Kristina Robertson, owner of **KARING BY KRISTINA’S BARKLEY SQUARE**, 2006 Mt. Vernon Avenue, is offering a pet holiday dinner for \$16.

It includes snowman shaped mashed potatoes, vegetables, and Christmas meatballs of chicken, beef or turkey. For desert there is a decorated Christmas cookie. Call the store at 703-628-4311 to place an order which can be picked up as late as December 23. They will be ready by December 22, according to Robertson.

Across the street is **THE PURPLE GOOSE** at 2005 Mt. Vernon Avenue, a unique children’s boutique. This store features a wide variety of children’s clothing, gifts, and stuffed animals.

At 2205 Mt. Vernon Avenue is **KISKADEE** — a women’s apparel shop. It has a wide selection of holiday women’s apparel from \$60 up with complimentary jewelry priced from \$10 to \$200. The jewelry is designed by local artisans as well as those from New York and Los Angeles, according to co-owner Darby Rush.

And finally, as well as most fitting for this recession holiday season, are the offerings of Christopher St. Pierre at his shop, **AUTHENTICALLY AMISH**, in the Fox Chase Shopping Center, 4609 Duke St., Alexandria. The selections are both beautiful and lasting. “Something that can be passed from one generation to the next,” St. Pierre stated.

His inventory includes a wide selection of wooden toys from \$30 to \$100; children’s furniture such as a table and chairs set for \$300; a wooden rocking horse which serves as a three-in-one combo of horse, desk and high chair for \$290; regular rocking chairs from \$120 to \$160; and a wide variety of smaller gift items such as table runners.

All the wooden items are hand-made in Lancaster County, PA, home to the eastern U.S. Amish population. The craftsmanship, durability and beauty of their products are renowned throughout the world.

The true joy of Christmas, as can be attested to by the story of the first Christmas, is in the giving not in the receiving. And, that special something can be found only in special places.

Carlyle House Collectible Ornament on Sale in Museum Gift Shops, Online

Celebrate the holiday season and Alexandria’s heritage with the newest collectible ornament from the Office of Historic Alexandria! The year’s commemorative ornament depicts historic Carlyle House in a festive and wintry setting. This stunning ornament features an etched brass-finish design of the mansion decorated with a wreath and surrounded by a fresh snowfall. Each ornament costs \$16 and comes in an embossed gift box.

The ornaments will make memorable gifts for family and friends this holiday. Order your 2010 ornament online or stop by Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, Carlyle House Historic Park, the Historic Alexandria History Center and Museum Store, or another Historic Alexandria museum gift shop. For more information, please call 703.746.4242 or visit www.historicalexandria.org.

The Carlyle House mansion

was completed in 1753 by British merchant John Carlyle for his young bride, Sarah Fairfax. Their home quickly became a center of social and political life in Alexandria and gained a foothold in history when British General Edward Braddock made the mansion his headquarters in 1755. Braddock summoned five colonial governors to meet there to plan the early campaigns of the French and Indian War. Restored in 1976 during the Bicentennial celebrations, the house is owned and operated as a museum by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Carlyle House Historic Park is located at 121 North Fairfax Street in Old Town Alexandria, and is open during the winter Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays, noon to 4 p.m. For more information about Carlyle House, please visit www.carlylehouse.org or call 703.549.2997.



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| 1 | Fabergé eggs | 11 & 12 | Special Gingerbread ornaments |
| 2 | Lego trains | 13 | 2010 White House ornament |
| 3 | Miniature porcelian boxes | 14 | Virginia, Maryland & Alexandria ginger jars |
| 4 | Cowboy dog cookie jar | 15 | Open Fabergé egg with miniature decorated tree inside |
| 5 | Square-masted schooner | 16 & 17 | Puppets at Why Not |
| 6 | Model motorboat and race car set | 18 | Peruvian Nativity |
| 7 & 8 | Decorated boxes | 19 | Music box Nativity |
| 9 | Child party outfit | 20 | Pewter Nativity |
| 10 | Holiday wine at Christmas Attic | | |

BY CHUCK HAGEE

In this time of economic turmoil and uncertainty what better way to celebrate the holidays than returning to a era when the guiding principles of this nation set a new course for the world? That can be achieved with gifts from The Shops at Mount Vernon at the southern terminus of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

This Christmas season is a particularly appropriate one to find that special something which is available nowhere else but at The Shops. 2010 marks the 150th Anniversary of the restoration and opening of George Washington's beloved estate by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

To commemorate that momentous journey and accomplishment, initiated and led by Ann Pamela Cunningham, a new hardcover 192 page volume is available at **THE SHOPS** for \$26.95. Beautifully bound with a blue linen cover and gold-edged pages, it contains 400 illustrations and traces the compelling story of Mount Vernon's resuscitation from death due to neglect and indifference.

Edited by Stephen A. McLeod, it contains scholarly essays, detailed sidebars, and narrative captions as well as biographical sketches of the Association's leading ladies, Regents and Vice Regents, whose personalities and endeavors have shaped the meticulous restoration. And, as a tangible example of the most recent election season's philosophy, it has all been accomplished without one penny of government money — state or federal.

Another tribute to this anniversary, that would be a keepsake for any recipient, is the **2010 MOUNT VERNON ORNAMENT**. One side is the Mount Vernon Mansion as Cunningham took possession in 1860 — a collapsing hulk of rotting wood and abandonment. On the opposite side is today's restored edifice that has hosted more than 80 million visitors as "the nation's most visited and iconic historic home."

The two oval portraits of the Mansion are surrounded by a gold sculpted border that denotes the 150 year preservation effort. Also included is a detailed history of the Association's beginnings, a portrait of Cunningham, and a group picture of the Ladies on Mansion's piazza, where their initiative started the preservation movement throughout the United States. It sells for \$18.95.

But, the Founding Fathers and colonial patriots, including The General, were never about all work and no play. In their homes and battlefield camps, as well as throughout the deliberations in Philadelphia they enjoyed both whiskey and beer to ease the tension of the impending revolution.

Recognizing each of the preferences of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin for a particular beer,



Unique Gifts Of America's Past

the Yards Brewing Company of Philadelphia, in conjunction with Mount Vernon Estate, has created "**ALES OF THE REVOLUTION**." At \$3 per bottle, these would make a unique gift for beer lovers.

Each ale is an historic recreation based on the original recipes of the three founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson's Tavern Ale "is a strong golden ale which includes ingredients specified and grown on his Virginia estate," then brewed by

his wife.

Poor Richard's Tavern Spruce Ale is based on Franklin's original recipe "which included spruce essence and molasses." It was created by Yards in recognition of Franklin's 300th birthday this year and his "affinity for fine ales."

Washington's favorite ale is based on his admiration for Philadelphia style porters and the necessity to quench the thirst of his field officers, according to Yards. His recipe called

for a molasses-based ale. All three can be purchased separately or in a six pack.

Other taste treats in the food and beverage section of The Shops include various jams, wines, nuts, and **MOUNT VERNON HONEY** to mention only a few. The jams and honey are priced in the \$5.95 to \$6.95 range.

This year The Shops are offering two very special libations. The first is a **SPECIAL HOLIDAY RED WINE**

with its own exclusive holiday label depicting The Mansion and portraits of George and Martha. A "grape wine with natural spices added," it is vinted and bottled by North Mountain Vineyard & Winery, Maurertown, VA, especially for Mount Vernon. It is good either room temperature or heated, according to Julia Mosley, retail director, Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens.

The second is the first offering of a full bottle of **UNAGED RYE WHISKEY** distilled in Washington's restored distillery. "It took more than a month to distill this lot for The Shops and there are only 672 bottles available," Mosley said. Each sells for \$85.

The original batch of 471 bottles was introduced on July 4 at The Distillery using Washington's recipe. Being unaged, it differs from rye whiskey found in liquor stores in that it is clear. It is twice distilled and bottled at 43 percent alcohol. Each 375ml. bottle is sealed and labeled by hand with its own number to distinguish it from every other battle.

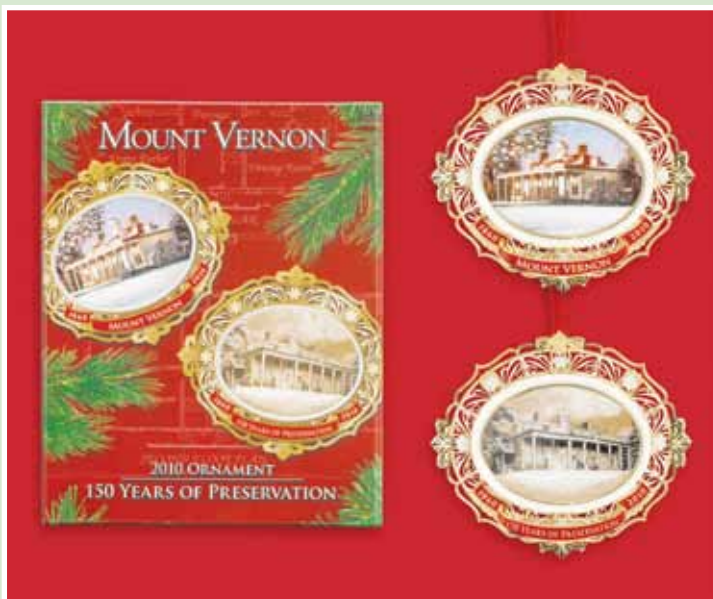
A side product of this process are **WOODEN "BUNG" ORNAMENTS** on sale in The Shops for \$6.95 and \$8 each. The former is in the shape of a barrel and the latter in the shape of a bottle which carries the rye whiskey label. As described, "A bung is a wooden stopper that is placed in the barrel when it is filled. It is extracted after the aging process when the barrel is emptied."

For avid readers on the Christmas list there is a wide array of historical treatises. Two new offerings this season are author Ron Chernow's "**WASHINGTON: A LIFE**" and Richard Beeman's "**PLAIN HONEST MEN: THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION**."

Beeman, a University of Pennsylvania professor, was awarded the 2010 George Washington Book Prize, one of the world's most generous literary awards at \$50,000, for his detailed account of the Constitutional Convention. It "has been praised by critics as the fullest and most authentic account of the Constitutional Convention ever written."

Chernow's 904 page work is priced at \$40 and Beeman's award winner sells for \$30. The other finalist in this year's GW Book Prize competition — Richard B. Bernstein's "**THE FOUNDING FATHERS RECONSIDERED**" and Edith B. Gelles' "Abigail and John, Portrait of a Marriage" — are also available.

For the high rollers there is a wide selection of antique jewelry including a **\$8,500 DIAMOND NECKLACE** made of 18 ct. white gold that contains a total of 196 diamond for a total of five ct.; a **\$5,000 18 CT YELLOW GOLD PENDANT** with a carved blue lapis and diamonds that can serve as a pin or a necklace; and a **\$4,500 PEARL, PLATINUM, DIAMOND AND ONYX BRACELET**. Or, how about a \$250



PHOTOS | COURTESY

Unique gifts from The Shops at Mount Vernon

Left: One of only 672 bottles available of the Unaged Rye Whiskey distilled in Washington's restored distillery (\$85); Top: Hand-made, hand-carved "Dove of Peace" tree topper (\$26.95); Right: 2010 Mount Vernon Ornament (\$18.95).

▼ See HISTORIC GIFTS on page 15

Craft Shows Are Great for Holiday Shopping

BY ANNE ALDEN

Do you want to find unique, artistic gifts for those on your gift list? Try shopping at the area’s many craft shows.

My friend Dan is impossible to shop for. He has several of everything. Long ago, I despaired of finding something for him, until I discovered craft shows. I have successfully found gifts that he has really liked. If you have a “Dan” in your life, check out these fun and interesting shows.

You will be amazed at the number of creative, artistic items that can be found there. You can find wearable items such as jewelry, scarves, clothing, and leather goods. You can find decorative items such as furniture and other wooden items, decorated boxes, dried flower arrangements, linens, ornaments, art glass, photographs and paintings, sculpture, cards and stationary, pottery and much more.

There are many kinds of shows. There are large shows that sell high-end items by professional artists from all over the world. These shows are generally held in convention centers, museums or other large public venues. There are shows that specialize in local artists whose items range from fine art to very creative amateur offerings. These shows are held in schools and community centers. Many local shows are benefits and by shopping there, you are helping good causes.

All high-ends shows are juried, and many local shows are too. To get really handcrafted unique items, stay away from shows that allow items that are not made by the vendors involved. Some shows allow items that are purchased by the vendor and resold. Often these items are mass-produced overseas and are of poor quality. Shows produced by organizations such as the Northern Virginia Handcrafters Guild have crafter-only rules. One can call the show promoters to find the answer to this question.

Many shows have food available,

but be sure to check first. At large shows, crafters usually take credit cards. At smaller shows, I recommend that you bring cash or checks. Most shows occur in the fall, but there are shows all year around.

If you have some artistic skills that you might like to turn into a business, consider becoming a crafter at shows. It is fun and

satisfying to create beautiful things that others enjoy and even pay you for. There are guilds of crafters that are all inclusive and generalized and some that are organized around specific crafts. Attend several shows of various kinds to get an idea of price points and booth set up. Most crafters are very generous and will guide you.

AREA CRAFT SHOWS

Village Marketplace

Open every Friday and Saturday Building B, North St. between Chain Bridge Rd. and University Dr in Old Town Village in the City of Fairfax, Virginia. (703) 569-9505. Hours are Friday 3–9 p.m. and Saturday 1–9 p.m. A wide variety of items, from pottery & jewelry to knits & handmade bags, provide new and eclectic ideas for holiday gifts.

Riverfront Holiday Market

Now through Dec. 18, 2010, 12–7 p.m. Tuesday–Friday and 10 a.m.–3 p.m. on Saturday. New Jersey Ave and M Sts. SE Washington, DC. The craft show features arts, crafts and gift items, hot food items, holiday garland, wreaths and trees from Ginko Gardens as well as a stage with live music. (202) 543-3370.

National Harbor Outdoor Holiday Market

Saturdays and Sundays thru December 20, 2010. Waterfront Plaza at National Harbor, MD. Regional vendors will offer holiday goods and specialty foods including handmade crafts, handmade scarves and mittens, hot chocolate, roasted chestnuts and hot apple cider. de glass, ceramics, photography, painting, and more.

Downtown DC Holiday Market

Thru December 23, 2010 Sidewalk on F Street between 7th and 9th in front of the National Portrait Gallery. Hours are noon–8 p.m. Enjoy a unique seasonal shopping marketplace in the Penn Quarter neighborhood of downtown Washington, DC. Find gift items by more than 180 exhibitors and artisans including fine art, crafts, jewelry, pottery, photography, clothing, prepared food and more. A wide range of live, local musicians and bands will entertain shoppers. Jazz, swing, blues, reggae, bluegrass, klezmer, a cappella, brass and more create a fun, energetic atmosphere.

Glen Echo Park Holiday Art Show & Sale

Thru January 9, 2011. Popcorn Gallery at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Boulevard, Glen Echo, Maryland. Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The exhibition will feature works by resident artists and will include glass, ceramics, photography, painting, and more.

Washington Antiques Show

January 6–8, 2011. Katzen Arts Center at American University. The show will feature 44 dealers from the United States and Europe offering a wide range of period furnishings and decorative arts, vintage jewelry, porcelains, ceramics, silver, architectural elements and garden accouterments.

▲ HISTORIC GIFTS from page 14

ANN HAND FRENCH SILK SCARF that pays homage to Washington and Marquis de Lafayette. It comes in red, dark blue and black. Maybe one of each?

Art lovers will find works in a variety of mediums and tastes. Prominent this year is a 12 by 20 inch, ready to frame and hang **PRINT OF MOUNT VERNON ESTATE IN 1857** by artist Eastman Johnson. It has been “carefully reproduced on canvas and hand-mounted on wooden stretchers in gallery-wrap style.” Its price is \$39.95. There is a smaller size for \$19.50.

Finally, there are fun and teaching gifts for those Christmas is really all about — children. A new addition to the George Washington Spymaster assortment this year is **“THE SECRET DECODER,”** suitable for either boys or girls.

The wooden wheel cypher, developed by Thomas Jefferson, while serving as Washington’s Secretary of State, is an “ingenious and secure method to encode and decode messages.” It consists of 26 cylindrical wooden pieces containing letters of the alphabet,

each on an iron spindle. By turning the wheels words can be scrambled and unscrambled. It’s also an excellent learning tool for \$22.95.

Another unisex gift is the **GEORGE WASHINGTON/KING GEORGE CHESS SET** named “American Revolution.” The pieces represent the British soldiers and American revolutionaries. Without the board it is priced at \$75. The board is an extra \$20.

Other possibilities in the children’s section of The Shops include: a new **NELLIE CUSTIS 12 INCH, PORCELAIN DOLL** for \$28.95; several sizes of **“BO,”** the White House Portuguese Water Dog, ranging in price from \$3.50 to a 10 inch stuffed version for \$10.95; and President Obama’s book for children, **“OF THEE I SING”** for \$17.99.

The latter was written for his daughter before the Presidency and contains information on 13 Americans he wanted his children to be familiar with. One of those was George Washington.

At the very far end of the children’s section is The Shops’ decorating area. Here shoppers can find a multitude of ornaments. One special ornament is the **“DOVE OF**

PEACE” tree topper that can also be adjusted to serve as a regular ornament.

Modeled after the Dove of Peace weathervane, it is three dimensional with a hand-carved, hand-painted, old fashioned look. It measures seven inches from olive branch to tail with a five and three-quarter inch wing span. It’s two and a half inch coil is painted antique cooper. It’s price is \$26.95.

These are only a few of the many intriguing gifts available for the discriminating buyer at The Shops at Mount Vernon. Other pluses of doing holiday shopping there is free parking and, for those who might get hungry, there is the Inn at Mount Vernon or the fast food court — both with a variety of offerings.

In addition to shopping, time permitting, take in the latest exhibit in the new museum/educational center. Entitled “Bringing Them Home,” it is a special exhibited dedicated to the 150 Anniversary restoration of the Estate featuring many original objects belonging to George and Martha. There is a charge, but it is easily reached from The Shops.

QUOTABLE:

“I love getting married, but then they want to come in the house.”
— Shelley Winters



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Constant Country French

There are only five numbers stored in my Blackberry – my parents, sister, niece, manicurist and Le Refuge, hence its importance. Established in 1983 by Jean Francois and his wife, Francoise, I first discovered it in 1988, and without apology, it is perhaps one of the most enduring and dependable relationships I have known. If the restaurant served breakfast, I would be there.

Situated on Washington Street across from Christ Church, the enchanting entrance, topped with a burgundy awning and flanked by a handwritten chalkboard listing today’s specials, is the quintessential



local country French bistro, a place you would find if you just walked around the corner from your Paris flat. Cascading seasonal trimmings welcome you inside to an intimate private dining room with iconic French culinary images stacking the walls – wine posters, wooden cheese



wheels, vintage plates – creating an atmosphere of casual elegance and unpretentious, relaxed simplicity. Francois’ daughter, Anne Claire,

orchestrates the front of the house with absolute aplomb, and dishes are delivered to the table as if in metered time. There is no waiting. You are immediately eating, drinking and sopping up, à la Julia Child, the succulent sauces with crusty French baguettes. Offering a full bar and extensive wine list, I tend to gravitate to the house cocktail of champagne, peach schnapps and a single plump raspberry, which I reserve until the last sip.

Appetizers comprise the best dinner party in town. Take a group, order a bunch of hors d’oeuvres, and circulate the plates. From homemade country pate

▼ See DINING on page 20

Zebra DINING DIRECTORY

If you want to be listed in our Dining Directory, Call us at 703-919-7533 or email dining@zebramediasolutions.com.

ALEXANDRIA

- Pizzaiolo Café and Bar**
Italian
3112 Mount Vernon Avenue
703/837-0666
cafebuzzaiolo.com
Exceptional New York and Neopolitan style pizzas. Tantalizing daily pasta specials and a warm atmosphere make this a charming Italian eatery. Dine-in, carry-out or delivery.
- Mount Vernon Inn**
American/Southern
3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway
703/780-0011
mountvernon.org
Located at the entrance to George Washington’s Estate and Gardens, this charmer offers an authentic 18th century atmosphere. The inn has six intimate dining rooms, featuring handpainted murals and working fireplaces. Colonial-costumed servers offer regional cuisine for lunch daily and dinner by reservation. The Mount Vernon Inn is an ideal venue for anniversaries, birthdays, weddings and meetings with private dining rooms available. Closed Christmas Day.
- Pizzaiolo Café on Fern**
Italian
1623 Fern Street
703/717-9234
cafebuzzaiolo.com
Exceptional New York and Neopolitan style pizzas. Tantalizing daily pasta specials and a warm atmosphere make this a charming Italian eatery. Dine-in, carry-out or delivery.
- Ramparts Tavern & Grill**
American
1700 Fern Street
703/998-6616
ramparest.com
Minutes from Old Town, this cozy, neighborhood restaurant and sportsbar has served up reasonably priced comfort food for 20 years. Ideal for gatherings.
- RT’s Restaurant**
American
3804 Mount Vernon Avenue
703/684-6010
warehousebarandgrill.com
Alexandria’s renowned neighborhood restaurant has been the place for fresh seafood in northern Virginia for over

- 17 years. Specialties including their famous Jack Daniels Shrimp, Spicy She-Crab Soup, Cajun Veal Oscar and their popular Crawfish Etouffée. This “Little Gem” is located in the heart of Alexandria. Ample parking.
- Tempo Restaurant**
Northern Italian/French
4231 Duke Street
703/370-7900
temporestaurant.com
Nestled in the West End, this is one of Alexandria’s best-kept secrets. This elegant, but unpretentious, neighborhood restaurant is where the locals dine. Tempo’s menu displays a blend of northern Italian and French cuisine, featuring fresh seafood. Plentiful parking. Reservations preferred.
- CRystal CITY**
- Café Italia**
Italian
519 South 23rd Street
703/521-9769
cafeitaliarestaurantva.com
Enjoy casual dining, featuring great-tasting Italian food. Mouth-watering entrees and delicious desserts made on the premises.

- Café Pizzaiolo**
Italian
507 South 23rd Street
703/894-2250
cafebuzzaiolo.com
Exceptional New York and Neopolitan style pizzas. Tantalizing daily pasta specials and a warm atmosphere make this a charming Italian eatery. Dine-in, carry-out or delivery.
- Freddie’s Beach Bar & Restaurant**
New American
555 South 23rd Street
703/685-0555
South Beach comes to Arlington. Enjoy fabulous décor and dining in a fun, hip environment with live entertainment, including the Freddie’s Follies Drag Show every Sunday night at 9:00 PM. Sunday Champagne Brunch.
- Kora**
Italian
2250-B Crystal Drive
571/431-7030
korarestaurant.com
Created by Morou and Heather Ouattara who brought you the highly acclaimed

- Farrah Olivia, this casual eatery is open all day, serving trattoria style Italian fare. Restaurant, bar and lounge.
- Tortoise & Hare Bar and Grill**
New American
567 South 23rd Street
703/979-1872
tortoiseandharebar.com
Enjoy a wonderful selection of classic appetizers, main courses and desserts in a relaxed, elegant atmosphere. Featuring the famous Stars and Stripes burger. Full bar. Dine-in or carry-out.
- Urban Thai**
Thai
561 South 23rd Street
703/979-0777
urbanthairrestaurant.com
Modern Thai cuisine with traditional seasonings in a modern venue. Dine-in, carry-out or delivery.

OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

- Bastille**
French/Mediterranean
1201 North Royal Street
703/519-3776
bastillrestaurant.com
Offering elegant and contemporary franco-mediterranean cuisine prepared in an attractive, comfortable setting, Bastille offers an array of daily specials and an electric wine bar. Seasonal outdoor seating and a rotating exhibit of local artistics. Ample parking. Reservations preferred.
- Hank’s Oyster Bar**
American
1026 King Street
703/739-4265
hanksrestaurants.com
This new King Street hangout is the Old Town annex to their Washington, DC hub. Classic oyster bar ambience featuring fresh seafood favorites along with the prerequisite, shucked delights. Reservations not required.
- La Bergerie**
French
218 North Lee Street
703/683-1007
labergerie.com
Award-winning French cuisine and Basque specialties with an intimate dining atmosphere featuring fresh seasfood and seasonal specials.

- Extensive wine list. Dining rooms available for private parties. Reservations preferred. Closed Christmas Day. Special holiday menus on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.
- Landini Brothers**
Italian
115 King Street
703/836-8404
landinibrothers.com
Traditional Italian cuisine in a cozy, old world setting, featuring fresh ingredients and daily specials. Don’t miss the grilled Portabella mushroom appetizer or the lemon veal piccata. Consistently good food since 1976. Private dining room available.
- Layla’s Restaurant**
Lebanese
907 King Street
703/684-3288
laylasrestaurant.com
Authentic Lebanese cuisine of fresh, traditional recipes, handed down from generations. Gorgeous mahogany bar and elegant dining room.
- Le Refuge**
Country French
127 North Washington Street
703/548-4661
lerefugealexandria.com
A celebrated Old Town favorite. Charming, intimate bistro serving authentic country French cuisine. A must for celebrations, gatherings and the romantic evening. Reservations preferred. Closed Christmas Day. Special holiday menus on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.
- Restaurant Eve**
New American
110 South Pitt Street
703/706-0450
restauranteve.com
This beautiful, critically acclaimed restaurant offers New American cuisine in the bar, the bistro and the luxe chef’s tasting room. Recently featured on “CBS Sunday Morning,” advanced reservations are a must.
- Vermilion**
New American
1120 King Street
703/684-9669
vermilionrestaurant.com
A fun, hip, urban sensibility in the heart

- of Old Town, with sophisticated new American cuisine and sensational bar. Excellent brunch featuring devastatingly delicious hush puppies.
- SHIRLINGTON**
- Bear Rock Café**
American
2751 Campbell Avenue
703/575-8055
bearrockfoods.com
Quick, casual restaurant characterized by a distinctive menu of hand-crafted sandwiches, hot and savory soups, garden fresh salads, loaded baked potatoes, oven-fresh breads and delectable desserts in an inviting, nature-inspired setting.
- Bistro Bistro**
New American
4021 South 28th Street
703/379-0300
bistro-bistro.com
Elegant dining featuring breads, entrees and desserts made fresh daily. Stylish wine bar.
- Capitol City Brewing Company**
American
2700 South Quincy Street
703/578-3888
capcitybrew.com
As the name implies, this eatery features a wide selection of beers along with classic American food as accompaniments. A fun, lively atmosphere.
- Carlyle Grand Café**
New American
4000 South 28th Street
703/931-0777
greatamericanrestaurants.com
High energy bistro serving innovative, award-winning food in a casual, fun atmosphere.
- Extra Virgin Restaurant**
Modern Italian
4053 Campbell Street
703/998-8474
extravirginva.com
As suggested by its name, olive oil is the running theme at Extra Virgin, not only in the cuisine, but in the décor as well. An inviting lounge features a cocktail and champagne list that combines creativity, including signature cocktails like the Dirty Virgin, accompanied by six bleu cheese stuffed olives.

Hail Sherry, Full of Grace



I am quietly walking about the clay floors of a two hundred year old Spanish cellar. Natural light silently and unobtrusively streams through the repetitions of small carved square windows fifty feet above me. The soaring ceiling is a series of barreled arches supported by regal columns. My Catholic sensibilities overwhelm me and I feel the hush of a Cathedral around me. The Bodega’s casks (called “butts”) diffuse the intoxicating aroma of the Sherry they hold like the incense of Benediction; stacked rows of butts now take on the illusion of rows of pews.

In my spiritual trance, my eyes suddenly fall across a scene that baffles me – yet, seems so natural in this setting. In the middle of this quiet bodega – in the dim and cool air, a single candle flickers before a carved statue of Mary. Regally sitting upon a stack of three lone barrels bearing the gold-leafed words, Ave Maria Gratia Plena, Saint Mary is serenely presiding over her beloved children – thousands of barrels of Sherry aging patiently and awaiting their glorious birth.

Along with a handful of other journalists, I was traveling to the far reaches of Jerez, Spain to learn about the region and her wine. Her wine is Sherry. In my mind, it was the wine that time forgot. Sherry is the wine sipped at noon by a few very old Bostonian ladies in red hats or by English gentlemen hopelessly caught in a never-ending Oscar Wilde play...

But, I knew little about this area of Spain and even less about Sherry. In religious terms, I am a Sherry agnostic – bordering on atheism. I traveled to southernmost part of the Iberian Peninsula (just across from Morocco) merely for an education. I left with a near spiritual experience and newfound belief in Sherry.

I left a convert. And this is my personal story of conversion.

Can I Get an AMEN!

Like most religions, Sherry has her fanatics. I met the first right off the plane waiting for my luggage. “The Passionate Foodie” a fellow journalist specializing less specifically in wine and more generally in all things gourmet and decadent, immediately began peppering me with the history of Sherry and Jerez –

The lost city of Atlantis is thought to be off the coast of Jerez.

Cadiz, a seaport city in the Jerez region, is thought to be the most ancient existing city in Europe.

The Moors (Muslims from



PHOTO | MARI STULL

North Africa) invaded Jerez in the 7th century and renamed it “Seris” – hence, the name Sherry.

In 1587, Sir Francis Drake invaded Cadiz and stole thousands of butts of Sherry – bringing them back to England and solidly establishing himself a hero to the Sherry-loving English.

The Passionate Foodie spoke passionately about Sherry-her Palo Cortados, Amontillados, Finos, and Pedro Ximenez (cooly calling it “PX”). Like an atheist at a Papal audience, I listened respectfully, but was not prepared to join his prayer group.

First Mass

The first bodega we visited was the famous Harvey’s – as in Harvey’s Bristol Cream. I already thought the name was unfortunate and misleading. A “cream” Sherry should be the consistency of Baileys, right? Wrong. “Cream” actually refers to a blend of different Sherry wines which make a unique “house style” of Sherry. Harvey’s was the innovator of both the technique and the term “cream.” Harvey’s Bristol Cream is a proprietary blend of three Sherry types — Fino, Amontillado and Oloroso, all created from the Palomino grape. Additional Sherry made from the sweeter Pedro Ximénez grape is then added to the final blend or cream. Huh. And I’d just been tossing it into my Lobster Thermidor this whole time...

And after I tossed my Harvey’s Bristol Cream into my Lobster Thermidor, I would take a sip. And was never wholly impressed. I was about to find out why.

We were served our Cream Sherry in highball glasses, over ice, and with a slice of orange. Another “huh” from me. Ever have a sip of warm Champagne? Doesn’t matter if it’s ’98 Krug; warm Champagne simply won’t offer the

same enjoyment as it does chilled. I was committing the same foul with Sherry – sipping it at room temperature. Sherry is meant to be sipped chilled. A properly cooled Sherry makes all the difference.

I took my first taste of Harvey’s Bristol Cream on the rocks. Almonds, fig and raisins filled my mouth. Are you kidding? This deep, mysterious palate is what I’ve been missing? If Cream Sherry is typically the starting point of Sherry, what about the more complex and sophisticated Sherries? It was at this point, sipping my highball glass of Cream Sherry, that I was determined learn more about this elusive religion.

Genesis

Sherry is one of the most difficult, complex, and mystifying wines produced. To understand her nuances and utterly unique character, it’s important to appreciate how she’s made and from where she hails.

In the southwest corner of Andalucia, Spain lies a province called Cadiz. Within Cadiz is the Sherry producing area of Jerez (aka Xéréz or Sherry). Just three grapes are grown in this region to produce every type of Sherry – Palomino, Pedro Ximénez, and Moscatel. The majority of Sherry is made from Palomino grapes.

Aside from Cream Sherry, in order or complexity and gutsiness, the other types of Sherry are:

- Finos/Manzanillas
 - Amontillado
 - Oloroso
 - Palo Cortado
 - Pedro Ximénez
 - VOS/VORS – Very Old Sherry, Very Old Reserve Sherry
- (Still with me? Good. You now know more about Sherry than 99% of the world. Let’s keep going.)

▼ See SHERRY on page 18

THE VINTAGE RECIPE BOX

Crowd-Pleaser Party Meatballs

Grab your crock pot and a box of toothpicks, and try out this recipe that was a catering classic in the late fifties and sixties. When guests ask for the recipe, you may be hesitant to pass it on. The sauce, you will discover, is a wacky concoction, but these are some of the most appealing pick-ups at any cocktail party.

Non-Cheater's Version

- Meatballs:
- 1 lb ground beef
 - ½ lb ground pork
 - ½ lb ground veal
 - Half cup of plain or Italian breadcrumbs
 - One egg
 - ¼ cup milk
 - Salt and pepper to taste

Sauce:

- 2 32 oz Concord Grape Welch’s Jelly (or equivalent)
 - 4 12 oz Heinz chili sauce
- Combine meatball ingredients and shape into round balls approximately the size of ping pong balls. Cook in small amount of cooking oil in a frying pan for about 15 minutes over medium heat, turning occasionally to brown all sides. Drain on paper towels.
- In the crock pot, combine the chili sauce and the jelly, mixing well. In the beginning, it will be very congealed, but as it cooks and you stir, it, it will thin to a glistening sauce. Add meatballs and simmer on low until guests arrive (the longer they simmer, the more tender the meatballs become).

Cheater's Version

Substitute homemade meatballs for one large bag of Costco’s Kirkland brand frozen Italian meatballs. Completely defrost meatballs and add to the cooked sauce.

Red Velvet Punch

- This is the ultimate killer holiday punch, given to the publisher by a very wise Southern woman. (Please remember not to let your guests drink and drive.)
- 1½ quarts cranberry juice cocktail
 - 3 6 oz cans pineapple juice
 - 2 6 oz cans frozen orange juice concentrate
 - ½ cup lemon juice
 - 2 cups light rum
 - 1 cup brandy
 - Fresh pineapple chunks (if desired)

In a large hard plastic or glass container, mix all ingredients together except pineapple chunks, taking care that the frozen orange juice concentrate is fully dissolved. (Do not add water to the orange juice concentrate.)

Submerge chunks of pineapple in the thoroughly mixed punch.

To serve, stir to redistribute alcohol and pour into glasses filled with crushed ice.



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STOVE OUT OVEN IN

The Better Bacon

Ever imagine there could be something more appealing than a nicely cooked piece of bacon hot out of the frying pan? Well look no further than your oven for the most succulent and superior bacon taste and texture. It is “the better bacon,” and healthy too because the bacon is not cooked in its own grease. Give it a try:

In a cold oven, place strips of bacon on a rack with a drip pan. Strips should not overlap. Use a cake cooling metal rack that sits inside a deep-sided disposable broiler pan.

Turn oven to 300 degrees.
After 10 minutes, flip the bacon strips.
After an additional 10 minutes, start watching the bacon. It should become crisp and glistening with no uncooked fat. Depending on your oven, it could take anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes total to reach maximum bacon perfection.

Remove bacon from oven, let rest for about five minutes and enjoy!

Editor’s Note: Use “thick cut,” as opposed to “center cut,” bacon. It will ensure the best oven-baked experienced!



QUOTABLE:

“Time heals nothing; time is a magazine.”
— *thirtysomething*

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▲ SHERRY from page 17

So, only three grapes make nine different types of Sherry. This fact alone is rather amazing to a wine-OH like myself. But, even more intriguing and extraordinary is Sherry’s very unique and long journey to her bottle. It’s a time consuming (minimum three years to over a century), hand-crafted and utterly remarkable process that’s as mysterious as it is romantic.

Once the wine grapes are harvested and pressed, the first juice of the pressing (and only this first bit of juice) is quickly fermented in steel vats. After this first fermentation, the wine is transferred into barrels or “butts” (by law, these butts must be American Oak). And here is where the mystery and romance of Sherry begins...

Mystical Transformation

The winemaker fills each butt about 85% capacity, leaving space in the head of the barrel. In this space, the mystery of sherry begins as a spontaneous layer of yeast, called “flor,” develops. This flor cannot be reliably introduced or fully controlled by the winemaker – it is simply part of sherry’s remarkable mystique. This enigmatic flor serves as a protective barrier between the wine and oxygen and allows the wine to age. As the sherry matures beneath the flor, it extracts some of its characteristics – such as caramel, green apple, honey and roasted nuts. Essentially, this flor takes the relatively unimaginative Palomino grape and transforms it into an elixir that is magnificently complex, nuanced and nearly indescribable.

The next captivating quality of sherry is her fractional aging process. Very rarely will you find a vintage sherry because each bottle of sherry is created with a blend of vintages through a unique technique called the solera system.

A sherry’s solera consists of 4-10 rows of botas, stacked one on top of the other. Each of these rows represents different ages of wine. With each year, wine to be bottled is drawn only from the oldest row of botas, which rests on the ground. About a third of sherry is taken from each bota, which is then replaced by wine from the next-oldest row just above it. Row after row is refilled with newest vintage always being poured into the youngest botas which rest at the top. The rows of botas continue to rotate and refill for years and years. Some have been continually filled with sherry for over a century.

So, when a winemaker bottles his sherry, he’s bottling the labor and love of generations before him. And when we sip a bottle of VSOP sherry, we may very well be partaking of the same sherry that Thomas Jefferson sipped hundreds of years before us. A very romantic and nostalgic image, indeed.

The Conversion

The complexity, history, and romanticism is enough to keep me mesmerized by sherry’s mass. However, it’s when I taste and explore the depths of her offerings that I completely abandon any skepticism and become an ardent believer.

I’m visiting Grupo Estevez, a family owned bodega whose brands



PHOTO | MARI STULL

date back to 1760. In an otherwise silent cellar, orchestral music is wafting between hundreds of rows of botas. The feeling of reverence overcomes my senses, once again. In every venerable Jerez bodega I encounter this curious religious feeling – but, the soft melodies of the violin and cello in this bodega add an almost heavenly dimension to the experience. Grupo Estevez President, Jose Estevez explains that he plays this music in his bodega because he wants his sherry’s flor to “enjoy a more agreeable, soft and harmonious ambiance.” The flor, is after all, a living organism and he believes may be influenced by his music’s “feelings and sensations such as happiness, sadness, hope, etc.” More sherry romance. And I am utterly taken in.

But, it’s not until I taste Sr Estevez’ Amontillado and Oloroso that I readily become baptized in sherry.

Valdespino

Amontillado Contrabandista - \$30
(Amontillado sherry from Grupo Estevez)

Amontillado begins her life quietly maturing under the flor for more than eight years. The flor then naturally breaks apart and dissipates leaving the sherry to age another eight years under the bota’s oxygen. At the end of this sixteen year barrel ageing, the winemaker adds a touch of wine produced from the Pedro Ximénez grape, which is dark and sweet. The result is a sherry that is filled with sensuality – hazelnut, toffee, but a touch of salt. Amontillado is both acidic and sweet. A study in contrast and contradiction.

Real Tesoro

Almirante Oloroso - \$25
(Oloroso sherry from Grupo Estevez)

Oloroso sherry is chosen by the winemaker to spend little time under the flor. To manually stop the flor from growing, the winemaker fortifies Oloroso to about 17% alcohol. The sherry is then aged in the oak botas for a minimum of 17 years, with each year becoming more concentrated and rich. The matured sherry is caramel in color and has notes of dried fig, roasted toffee, and golden raisins. About as sexy as it gets.

Religious Orders

Amontillado and Oloroso may have led to my baptism in sherry. But, I was prepared to swear vows to sherry when I experienced her Palo Cortado.

Palo Cortado, like all sherries begins her life under the flor. But, along the ageing process, the flor inexplicably dissipates. Traditionally, the flor breaks up on its own accord and without the intervention of the winemaker – a mysterious and rare occurrence. And when this curious phenomenon happens, pure hedonism results.

One of the more amazing Palo Cortados I sipped was from Bodega Lustau, founded in 1896.

Lustau

Almacenista Palo Cortado - \$35

Notes of coffee and nougat, but with a nervy edge of sharpness. Simply elegant. I realize this sounds impossible – but, this Palo Cortado has the elegance of Audrey Hepburn with the voluptuousness of Marilyn Monroe. Was so difficult to wrap my tastebuds and mind around her complexity. It was a gorgeous experience.

Exodus

And this is my true witness to my conversion to sherry. Sherry is the most misunderstood and under appreciated wines in the world. Bad news for Sherry and Jerez, but good news for wine-OHs like you and me. Because sherry is so under appreciated, it is under consumed. And just as any commodity’s price is set upon supply and demand, sherry offers incredible value today. Having witnessed the painstaking, time consuming, and costly process involved in a single bottle of sherry I am at a loss to explain how the sherry bodegas even break even.

But, after all – sherry is the wine of romance and mystery...

The Vino Vixen™ is a syndicated wine writer whose musings appear in over 25 publications nationwide. She’s also a correspondent on Wine Taste TV (WineTasteTV.com), Wine Educator to the French Wine Society, and Wine Critic to WinesTilSoldOut.com – one of the Internet’s largest (and cheapest) source of fabulous wines. Have a question or wine tip for The Vixen? Email her on VinoVixen@VinoVixen.com.

Winter Events

Christmas at Mount Vernon Thru January 6

Mount Vernon Estate
South End of GW Parkway
Alexandria
mountvernon.org
703/780-2000

Visitors receive an enchanting glimpse of an early-American Christmas, Washington style. The rarely-seen third floor will be open to the public for this tour exclusively. While viewing the third floor of the Mansion, visitors can see the refurbished Martha Washington garret chamber where Mrs. Washington resided after her husband's death.



An elaborately re-created dessert course will be displayed in the large dining room with the Washingtons' famed "Great Cake" as the feast centerpiece. Free copies of the "Great Cake" recipe and a version adapted to the 21st century will be available. The estate is open Christmas Day and New Year's Day. This special tour is included in the regular estate admission: \$13 adults/\$6 children (ages 6-11) Children under 6 free!

Ice Skating Thru March

Pentagon Row Skating
1201 South Joyce Street
Arlington
pentagonrowskating.com
703/418-6666

The ice skating rink is now open! \$8 adults/\$7 children. Skate rental \$3. Open everyday including the holidays with extended hours when school is closed.



Sunset Boulevard December 7-February 13

Signature Theatre
4200 Campbell Avenue
Arlington
571/527-1860
signature-theatre.org

The area's first staging of the Tony Award winning musical.



Colonial Handbell Ringers December 19

The Lyceum
201 South Washington
Alexandria
703/746-4994
alexandriahistory.org

Enjoy your favorite holiday music. Two performances. 2 pm and 4 pm. Free.

Waterskiing Santa December 24

Lady Bird Johnson Park
George Washington Parkway
Arlington
waterskiingsanta.com
703/280-1788

Looking for a unique family holiday experience? Gather at the banks of the Potomac River for the 22nd anniversary of this exciting, one-of-a-kind Washington tradition. See The Water-Skiing Santa and his Kneeboarding Reindeer. Also featuring the Flying Elves, the Jet-Skiing Grinch and Frosty the Snowman in a dinghy. Sing-along with the Candy Cane Kids. Free parking available at the Columbia Island Marina. 1:00 pm. Free!



"Let Me Down Easy" December 31-February 13, 2011

Arena Stage
1100 Sixth Street, SW
Washington, DC
arenastage.org
202/488-3300

Called "the most exciting individual in American theater" by *Newsweek* magazine, Anna Deavere Smith explores the power of the body, the price of health and the resilience of the spirit. Ticket prices vary.



First Night Alexandria December 31

First Night Alexandria
Old Town and Del Ray
Alexandria
firstnightalexandria.org
703/746-3299

Family-friendly affordable celebration of the New Year through performing arts. Tickets \$15/ children free accompanied by an adult

Tavern Toddlers - Colors January 3-April 25 Weekly

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 North Royal Street
Alexandria
gadsbystavern.org
703/746-4242

It is never too early for your kids to appreciate history! A special program for toddlers(walkers through 36 months) and their caregivers. Features weekly open playtime on Mondays anytime between 10:30 am and noon, and a new craft activity each week. Each week costs \$7 for a group of three, including one adult and additional people are \$3 each.



Baby, It's Cold Outside Del Ray Artisans January 7-January 30

Del Ray Artisans Gallery
2704 Mount Vernon Avenue
Alexandria
DelRayArtisans.org
703/407-6992

Celebrating winter and helping the homeless, the darkest days of January will be highlighted by an all-member show of mixed-media art. The show will also feature a drive to collect new socks for the homeless of Alexandria, benefiting the Carpenter's Shelter.

Works in Wax, Oil and Wire by New Member Artists

January 11- January 30
Gallery West
1213 King Street
Alexandria
Gallery-west.info

▼ See CALENDAR on page 20



"A Christmas Carol" Thru January 2

Ford's Theatre • 511 Tenth Street NW • Washington, DC • 202/347-4833

Join the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future as they lead the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge on a journey of transformation and redemption.

CALENDAR

▲ from page 19

703/549-6006

Works in wax, oil and wire by new member artists Susan Stayer, Caty Forden, Margret Lindsey and Sue Lindsey will dazzle and amaze you.

Bobcat Goldthwait
“Pushing the Envelope”
January 13-15

Arlington Drafthouse
2903 Columbia Pike
Arlington
Arlingtondrafthouse.com
703/486-2345

Comedian, Actor, Writer and Director appears live.



DINING FINDS

▲ DINING from page 16

to escargots or crayfish in garlic butter or tender-crisp asparagus topped with smoked trout to stuffed mushrooms, your palate will be enlightened with fresh, pure flavors that will forever change your definition of good food. It is no secret to my friends that I want Le Refuge to be my last meal before I depart this earth. If I am about to expire at Alexandria Hospital, I expect them to sneak it in!

The main courses are just as engaging. Heralded for their bouillabaisse, frog legs, beef Wellington, salmon in crust



and seasonal soft shell crabs, the veal Normande (veal scaloppini in a brandy cream sauce with mushrooms) is also a standout – perhaps the most perfectly cooked veal I have ever eaten. Finish with a crème brulee, profiteroles, or peach melba (including an exquisite

freshly prepared raspberry sauce), and you will be a happy person.

Le Refuge surpasses all expectations because when you return, again and again (and you will), everything will be just as good as the first time. Le Refuge is consistent – a constant in my life as I am sure it will become one of yours. Add it to your speed dial. Make reservations now for Christmas Eve or New Year’s Eve. Bon appetit!

Le Refuge serves lunch and dinner, Monday through Saturday. For hours and reservations, call (703) 548-4661 or visit lerefugealexandria.com.

CROSSWORDS

Across

- A double Best Actress winner and the shortest-tenured Academy president ever
- He won back-to-back Actor awards in 1993 and 1994
- The oldest male performer to win an Oscar
- A former host, she wasn’t afraid of any “Ghost”
- Oscar-winner Ethel or Oscar-winner Lionel (but not John)
- The only Best Picture written by William Shakespeare
- He won his Actor award for “To Kill a Mockingbird”
- He called the historic meeting that led to the Academy’s creation
- The Academy’s first Best Actor winner
- She won Acting awards as both Scarlett and Blanche
- He’s the Academy’s current president
- The category in which Bruce Springsteen and Eminem won their awards
- The late Isaac Hayes won an Oscar for this film’s theme
- Picture, Directing, Original Screenplay and Actress winner “Annie ____”
- He won an Original Screenplay award along with Ben Affleck
- She won Actress awards for “Butterfield 8” and “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”
- He won back-to-back Actor awards in 1937 and 1938
- The only Academy Award winner with this name is Mr. Hammerstein
- This Supporting Actor winner might be remembered more for his pushups
- Confronted by an Awards telecast streaker, he delivered the classic “shortcomings” line
- He hosted the most Academy Awards telecasts
- He won his Oscar for portraying the King of Siam
- He won his Oscar for “The African Queen”
- Art Direction and ____ Decoration
- George C. Scott refused to accept his Best Actor award for this film
- Nominated as actor, writer, director and producer in 1981
- Both Joel Grey and Liza Minnelli won Oscars for performances in this film
- He won his Oscar for “Scent of a

Woman”

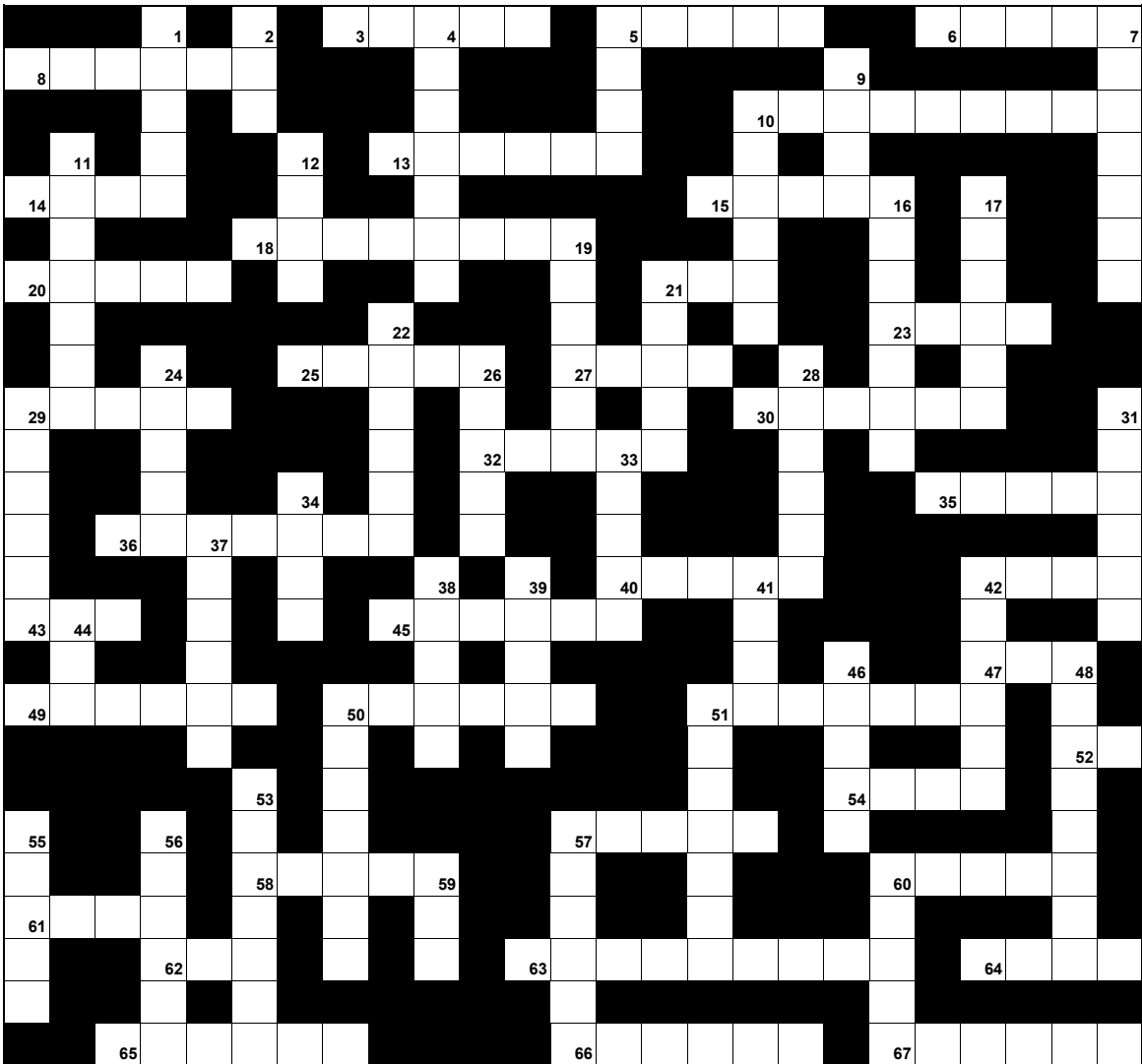
- The only brothers to win both the Directing and Best Picture awards
- She won the Supporting Actress award for “Shakespeare in Love”
- The only posthumous Acting award winner ... so far
- He showed “True Grit” when accepting his only Acting award
- 1987’s Best Actress winner ... and she never “snapped out of it”
- “I could have been a contender, instead of a ____”
- The Academy’s most-nominated male performer
- He won his Oscar for “Leaving Las Vegas”
- She won back-to-back Actress awards in 1936 and 1937
- She won Actress awards for “To Each His Own” and “The Heiress”
- Every member of this film’s cast was nominated for an Oscar

Down

- The theater where it all happens
- Supporting Actress winner for “L.A. Confidential”
- The highest box office grossing Best Picture ... so far
- He won his Oscar for “Kiss of the Spider Woman”
- He won his Oscar for “The Philadelphia Story”
- 1966’s Original Score and Song winner “Born ____”
- He sent Sacheen Littlefeather to decline his Academy Award
- Hitchcock’s only Best Picture
- The Academy’s Humanitarian Award is named for him
- He took home two Oscars for the same role in the same picture
- The Academy’s first Best Actress winner
- She won the Academy’s first Acting award for a foreign-language performance
- With her second Oscar, she finally felt that the Academy “liked her”
- She was the first African-American acting winner
- Oscar-winning actor Henry or his Oscar-winning daughter Jane
- She’s still the youngest Oscar-winning actress
- He won his Oscar for portraying both Tim Strawn and Kid Shelleen
- He holds the record for the most nominations and Oscars

COMING IN JANUARY!

The ZEBRA Academy Awards Contest
Winner receives a Dinner for Two at a prestigious Alexandria restaurant.
In the meantime, brush up on your Oscar knowledge with the puzzle below.

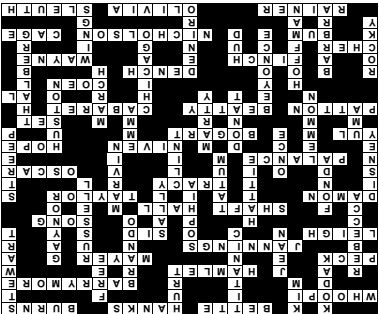


- The Academy’s most-nominated actress
- Nominated as an actor, director and producer -- but not yet for his music scores
- “Falling Slowly,” last year’s Original Song winner, came from this film
- He won Oscars for “Save the Tiger” and for portraying Ensign Pulver
- He was named Best Actor of 1939, over Clark Gable, Laurence Olivier, Mickey Rooney and James Stewart
- 1955’s Best Picture, Actor, Directing and Screenplay winner
- She won Academy Awards for acting as well as writing
- Oscar winner Walter or Oscar winner John or Oscar winner

- Anjelica
- David Letterman wanted Oprah to meet her
- He won Actor awards for “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and “The Best Years of Our Lives”
- The Testimonial Award given to a producer is named for him
- She sang three nominated songs (one in French) at the 77th Awards presentation
- The latest musical to be named Best Picture
- Oscar winner Dustin or Oscar winner Philip Seymour
- Stallone didn’t win an award, but he wrote and starred in this Best Picture
- She won Academy Awards for acting as well as songwriting
- He and Marlon Brando won

- Oscars for portraying the same character
- Both Melvyn Douglas and Patricia Neal won Oscars for their roles in this film
- The first film ever to be named Best Picture

Solution



Monthly Home Sales Recap

December 1-10, 2010

What’s happening with home sales in your neighborhood?

Be in the know: watch for this column every month and stay informed of recent home sales in your community. With interest rates still at historic lows, now is a great time to buy or sell!

Listings
courtesy
Becky Arnold,
REALTOR®
Prudential
Carruthers
Realtors
571-345-6175
becky.arnold@prudentialcarruthers.com



Area	Address	List Price	Bedrms	Full Baths	Half Baths	Levels	Firepl	Gar	Basmt	Acres	Age	Days On Market	Subdivision	Style
Aurora Hills/ Crystal City	1820 24th St. South	\$769,000	4	3	1	3	1	1	Yes	0.067	31	153	Forest Hills Commons	Colonial
	1300 Crystal Dr., #1403	\$500,000	1	1	1	1	0	1	No	0	29	54	Crystal Gateway	Contemporary
Fairlington	4810 29th St. South, #C1	\$310,000	2	1	0	2	0	0	No	0	66	223	Fairlington Village	Colonial
	2631 Uhle St. South	\$313,000	2	1	0	3	0	0	Yes	0.079	69	42	Longbranch Park	Colonial
	2720 Arlington Mill Dr. South	\$639,000	2	2	0	1	1	2	No	0	4	22	Shirlington Villag	Contemporary
	4212 36th St. South, #B1	\$264,900	1	1	0	1	0	0	No	0	70	24	Fairlington Glen	Colonial
DelRay/ Rosemont	309 Howell Ave.	\$439,900	3	1	1	2	0	0	No	0.066	48	124	River Terrace	Colonial
	303 Commonwealth Ave.	\$499,500	2	2	0	3	0	0	Yes	0.035	73	12	Rosemont	Colonial
Old Town	726 Union St. South	\$1,995,000	3	4	1	5	2	2	No	0.039	19	511	Fords Landing	Colonial
	220 St.Asaph St. North, #14	\$349,900	1	1	0	1	1	0	No	0	36	288	Whales Tail	Colonial
	501 Slaters Lane, #509	\$389,900	2	2	0	1	0	0	No	0	40	146	Marina Towers	Colonial
	1215 Powhatan St.	\$544,000	3	2	1	3	1	0	Yes	0.047	69	148	Virginia Village	Colonial
	1313 Abingdon Dr. East, #2	\$184,900	0	1	0	1	0	0	No	0	29	105	Harbor Terrace	Colonial
	607 Bashford Lane, #4	\$249,000	1	1	0	1	1	0	No	0	29	93	Harbor Terrace	Colonial
	815 Jefferson St.	\$509,900	2	2	0	3	0	0	Yes	0.038	69	50	Patrick Henry	Colonial
	119 Queen St.	\$865,000	2	2	1	3	1	1	No	0.03	39	31	Brandt Townhouse	Colonial
Park Fairfax	809 Gibbon St.	\$525,000	2	2	1	2	1	0	No	0.031	26	49	Old Town	Colonial
	1257 Madison St.	\$535,000	2	2	1	3	1	1	Yes	0.024	23	218	Braddock Place	Colonial
	3728 Valley Dr., #502-37	\$234,999	1	1	0	1	0	0	No	0	69	105	Parkfairfax	Colonial

P E T P O I N T E R S

Keep Your Furry Ones Safe during the Holidays

As pet owners, we love to include our pets in holiday celebrations. However, many holiday decorations and foods that we enjoy can put the family pet at risk. Veterinarians and other pet care experts recommend taking some special precautions to keep pets safe from holiday hazards.

Decorate with care

That glittering Christmas tree is sure to attract your cat or dog. Be sure it is well secured so that it won’t come toppling down if your pet bounds into or onto it. Select ornaments with your pet in mind. Don’t hang glass balls in reach of your pet and use garland, rather than tinsel, which can cause intestinal obstructions if ingested. Be sure to retrieve any ornament hooks that drop on the floor. Keep electrical cords and tree lights out of reach. Stagnant water can be a breeding ground for bacteria, which can lead to vomiting and diarrhea. If your pet is likely to try to drink tree water, don’t add preservatives or aspirin additives to it. You might also invest in a tree stand with a cover that will keep your pet out.

Food, dangerous food

Ingesting holiday foods is one of the biggest reason for emergency vet visits during the holiday season. Rich, fatty foods can cause stomach upset, or even predispose pets to life-threatening pancreatitis or bloating. Poultry bones can splinter and get stuck in a pet’s mouth, obstruct his throat, or perforate his intestines. Most pet owners don’t know that such foods as chocolate, macadamia nuts, raisins and grapes, coffee, alcoholic beverages and even bread dough can be fatal if ingested in quantity by a dog. Be careful not to leave these foods on coffee tables in reach of pets and be sure that the lid on the trash can is well-secured. Warn family members and guests not to feed holiday foods to your pets. Instead, have a supply of your pets’ favorite treats on hand



and offer them when others are enjoying all those delicious smelling holiday goodies.

Choose plants carefully

The poinsettia, though typically thought of as poisonous to pets, is fairly low in toxicity, but can cause digestive upset and irritation to a pet’s mouth and stomach. Holly berries, on the other hand, are extremely toxic when ingested. Just a few berries will cause vomiting and diarrhea. Mistletoe also causes digestive system upset as well as irregular heartbeats and possibly cardiac shock. Plants like the hibiscus and those in the lily family, which are not toxic to people, may also be harmful to pets, causing digestive system problems and even renal failure. If you must have these plants in your holiday décor, choose artificial ones to protect your pets. And don’t forget to check gift floral arrangements for sprays of dangerous plants.

Other holiday hazards

Children’s toys can present a poisoning or choking hazard. Be sure small toy pieces, plastic model cement, crayons and paints are put away or out of reach when not in use. Wrapping paper, ribbon, and tape also represent potential dangers. Remove them as soon as possible. Never leave lighted candles

unattended and be sure they are securely anchored so they won’t be dislodged by the swat of a paw or tail. Better yet, only use candles with domes or cylinders that enclose the flame. Liquid potpourris, fireplace colors and salts, Styrofoam, tinsel, angel hair and other tree decorations can also be toxic if ingested, cause skin or eye irritation, or cause intestinal obstructions. If you suspect that your pet has ingested something poisonous, seek medical attention immediately.


Preventing the great escape

With holiday guests coming and going, the front door will be opening and closing more than usual. An open door may be too tempting for some pets to resist. Be sure your pets have collars with identification tags – and wear them at all times – in case of an escape. If your pet DOES slip out, resist the urge to chase – which will turn it into a game. Instead, encourage him to come back to you by enticing him with a favorite treat. With a little thought and care, you and your pets can enjoy a dog-gone great holiday season. For more information on keeping your pet safe during the holiday season, visit the ASPCA’s website at www.aspc.org or the American Animal Hospital Association’s website at www.healthypet.com.

Q U O T A B L E :

“ Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.”
- Victor Borge

Z P I C K
O F T H E M O N T H



Streaming with Netflix

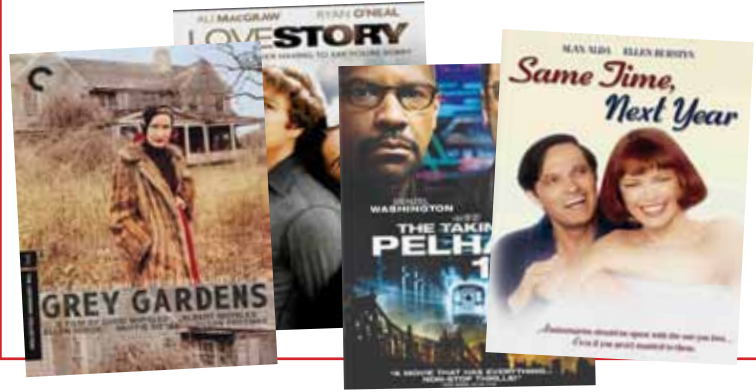
Forget Blockbuster’s, Redbox, and Amazon Video On Demand. The best bang for your entertainment buck is the new Netflix Unlimited Streaming Only package for \$7.99 +tax per month, which premiered December 14th.

With thousands of titles, from recent releases such as *Julie & Julia*, *District 9* and *Up* to Hollywood classics including *The Glenn Miller Story*, *The Way We Were* and the original *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, this is your magic window on the cinematic world. At your leisure, you can become reacquainted with a favorite movie you haven’t seen in 20 years, or view entire seasons of television shows as well as concerts and documentaries. It’s perfect for the entire family, providing extensive selections for children as well.

With numerous viewing devices to choose from, including Tivo, mobile phones, laptops and gaming consoles (check netflix.com for a complete list), it’s never been easier to explore the film media.

Best of all, you can pause within any scene and return to it at a later date, or restart the title from the beginning. In other words, you can bookmark multiple titles that will remain in your streaming queue. New titles are added weekly, and it is a tremendous thrill when you find something on the list you’ve always wanted to see or a favorite you thought you’d never see again.

So grab your popcorn, Raisinettes and Goobers, sit back and enjoy the shows.





The World's Cedar Chest

BY HOLLY BURNETT

There are few things more gratifying in life than to win an eBay auction. I would liken the experience to watching a horse race on which a hefty bet has been placed or reeling in the “big one” off the back of a Chris-Craft. The moment is exhilarating, satisfying and altogether sweet.

Yet for some, eBay remains an enigma, perceived as the greatest assemblage of swindlers racking up profits through hefty shipping costs to offset minuscule winning bids, a black hole of cashed checks and online payments for purchases that never arrive. In reality, eBay is a shopper’s “Shangri-La” – the mythical place depicted in James Hilton’s 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* – an idyllic hideaway approaching perfection.

eBay is the world’s cedar chest, an international Portobello Road, Mary Poppins’ bottomless carpetbag, a genie lamp with limitless rubbing wishes, and an endless scarf of many colors emerging from a magician’s tuxedo cuff. From the comfort of a computer, you can travel a million miles, exploring the offerings of the world’s best retail, flea market, craft fair and yard sale finds. You are no longer limited to what your neighbor has perched on a folding table across the street for Saturday morning passersby.

Nor are you restricted to what is currently manufactured for retail stores. If someone has an item and chooses to sell it on eBay, years, time and age suddenly fade away. A nickel baseball card or dime store plastic necklace may each wind up with 20 or more bidders and fetch sums far exceeding their original sale prices. This is because eBay final winning bids reflect current value for that item in today’s buying market. The website and

its riches change daily, and although you can never possibly visit every virtual push cart, you will find something you want that you will never be able to purchase anywhere else.

Case in point, a few months ago, my 80-year-old mother’s coffeemaker quit, and she wanted another, “exactly” like the one that had broken. So off I went, searching the usual online stores, and even the manufacturer’s website, looking for a machine that met her requirements. It came as no surprise that her machine – a Krups, 10-cup, programmable – and in forest green – was

no longer manufactured. However, eBay listed several of them, each with varying degrees of usage and wear. After about five minutes of reading through the relevant auctions, I located one in “never-used, mint condition in the original box.” A woman had received it as a wedding present and tucked it away in a closet until she discovered it again when packing to move. The auction opened at 99 cents and had several bidders. Three days later, it was mine for a mere \$12

plus shipping. Truth be told, this coffeemaker was probably only worth 99 cents since it was nearly 10 years old and carried no manufacturer’s warranty, but it was worth \$12 to me and worth \$11.99 to the person whom I outbid in the last 30 seconds of the auction.

eBay is the ideal place for purchasing unusual gifts, especially if you are hunting for something lost, discarded or remembered from years ago. For 99 cents, I reconnected with a “Tums for the Tummy” metal tin, circa 1950s, exactly like the one my grandmother carried in her purse, featuring a push-up bottom to eject the tablets (a feature that so fascinated me as a child). I also came upon a wonderful woman in Massachusetts who makes beautiful and sturdy fisherman knit sweaters for dogs. I was able to buy cases of the individual coffee packets that are provided in Courtyard Marriott guest rooms, but are not available to the general public. I lucked into a pair of Chinese foo dogs, salvaged by the seller from the eaves of a downtown Los Angeles bank building before it was demolished by a wrecking ball, each dog still affixed to its own barrel-roof tile.

To guarantee happy purchasing experiences on eBay, you need to pay particular attention to item descriptions and payment details. Also, ensure the photographs match the item descriptions. If



you are seeing a pair of red shoes and the auction describes black shoes, contact the seller for clarification. Never bid an auction that does not provide a photograph. You want and need to see what you are buying. Most importantly, hone your reading skills. A friend of mine learned this lesson the hard way. He purchased a cast-iron skillet for \$5 bearing the imprint “Reading, Pennsylvania” – his hometown – on the bottom. When it arrived, he sought me out, furious with the contents of his package. The skillet, cast-iron indeed with his hometown embedded on the bottom, was all of six inches across, including the handle. My friend insisted that he had been defrauded, but upon checking the auction information, I pointed out that the seller had provided the exact measurements of the miniature skillet he had received. My friend had failed to read the item description carefully and had no grounds to complain.

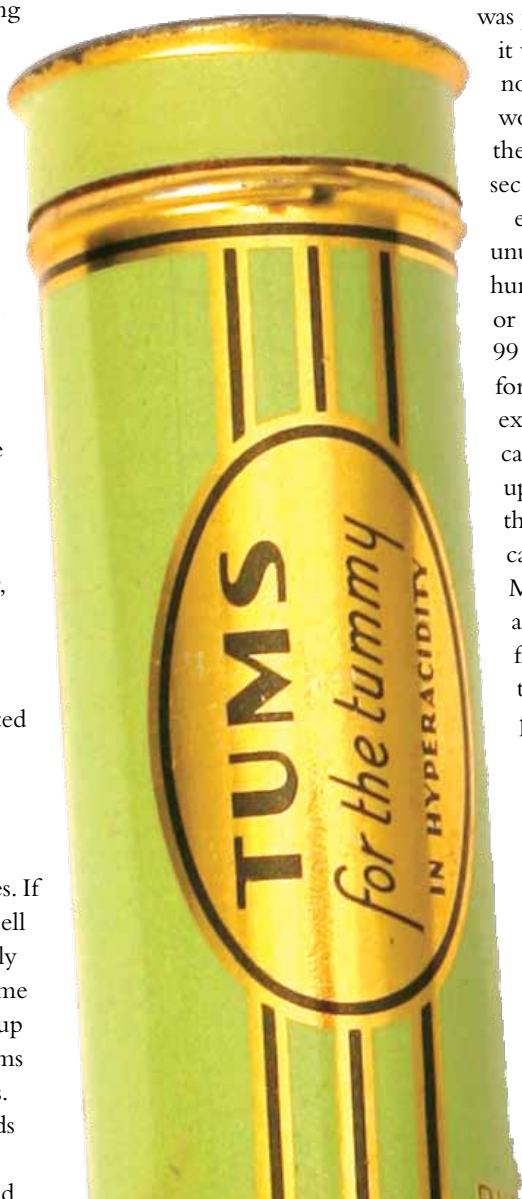
Of course, there are the auctions I didn’t win because I was not aggressive enough in my bidding or simply failed to remember when the auction closed. My greatest heartbreak remains a white, Eams Era side table, owned by the late Walter Matthau. The auction included a letter of authenticity from Matthau’s son and a vintage photo of the actor sitting next to the table in his Florida room.

You should always take a moment to read the seller’s feedback profile before you place a bid. This evaluation system, which allows buyers and sellers to rate and comment on each other, is an excellent indicator of the experience you will have with a particular seller. Do not be put off if someone has a few negative feedbacks. You are looking for habitual problems, not the ravings of one buyer out of 100 who was not satisfied. As a seller myself, I know it’s almost impossible to please every buyer because expectations fluctuate. However, most sellers are reputable, and their feedback profiles will bear this out.

Keep in mind that you will also have your own feedback profile based on your behavior as a buyer. Be pleasant in your communication with the seller. If you win, be timely with your payment. You’ll build your own positive feedback, and future sellers will feel more comfortable doing business with you.

As I first said, there are few things more gratifying in life than to win an eBay auction. It is far more satisfying than walking into a department store and purchasing the uninspired tie, the indecisive gift card or the kitchen gadget that flips burgers, beats eggs and comes with a bonus can opener and nutcracker. Go back to the simpler things in life – those that will put a smile on someone’s face – a lunchbox, a record album, a wooden spool, a metal band-aid tin. These are the treasures of our lives, and eBay is the purveyor of our memories – collective and individual – giving us the opportunity to once again place a value on those items we hold dear.

Holly Burnett is a freelance writer, film historian and member of eBay since 1998.



Alice - (Female)

Breed: Beagle / Dachshund Mix
Age: 7 Years
History: Owner Release



mom and my foster sister who I am laying with in the picture. She says I am an angel because I don't chew on anything and she can trust me when I am out of her site. I am not good with young children as they make me nervous so I would do best in a home with no children under 12 years of age. I prefer to be the only pet so I can get all the hugs and kisses. I walk nicely on a leash and am not a big barker

Description: Hi, my name is Alice. I am beagle/ dachshund mix. I am housebroken, crate trained and moderately active. My favorite past time is spending time with my foster

very smart lady dog and can do several fun tricks, including "What up dog?" (fancy shake), "Roll Over", and even balance a treat on her nose. If you think you could be Belle's best friend and provide a loving, calm home for Belle please send us an email and come meet her.

Bozey (Clinton) - (Male)

Breed: Shepherd Mix
Age: 2 Years
History: Owner Release



that he can not knock over. He is learning how to walk better on a leash and is showing great improvement.

Description: Bozey is a very happy, loving boy. He really enjoys playing with other dogs. He likes kids, but is big and strong so would do best in a home without small children

a puppy, so I do need training, I tend to pull on the leash and when I get excited I jump, but I get love or treats when I sit nice and quiet and I like that! I have so much love and companionship to give, I can't wait to find a home to call my own.

Buddy the Retriever - (Male)

Breed: Retriever Mix
Age: 4 Years
Weight: 63 Pounds
History: Owner Release



divorced. Buddy is now looking for a new home to call his own. Once Buddy has arrived back with us we can add more information.

Description: Buddy was adopted from our rescue about 3 years ago. He was 7 months old and thought he found his forever family. Now 3 years later the kids are grown and the parents are



shiba inu). I am housebroken and crate trained. My foster mom says I am an active girl and need a lot of exercise. I certainly have the chihuahua trait of being nervous

when I first meet you, but once I warm up I do just fine. I am not good with young children as they make me nervous so I would be best in a home with no children under 12 years of age. I am good with most other submissive small to medium dogs but I want to be the boss. My foster mom says no cats or other small animals because I am not nice to them

Cira - (Female)

Breed: Pit Bull Terrier Mix
Age: 2 Years
History: Owner Release



Description: Hello, my name is Cira and I need a new home since my owner died. I have been a little lost and confused since dad died, but AFH has been taking very good care of me. My foster mom

lets me hang out with her all day long and I get to sleep with her at night. I have foster brothers and sisters who I get to play with and we go to this place called a dog park everyday. Since my dad was a professional dog trainer, I am a very good little girl. I listen very well except when there is a squirrel since I MUST chase them as they are bad little creatures who must stay out of the yard. I am a member of an exclusive club called Pit Bulls. Because we a misunderstood group who are often discriminated against, I can only go to someone who owns their home. If you would like to meet me in person, please contact AFH right away so we can fall in love and live happily ever after...

Baby the Chi - (Female)

Breed: Chihuahua
Age: 2 Years
Weight: 5 Pounds
History: Owner Release



so it was amputated. Baby is now learning to get around on 3 legs. She is a wonderful little girl. She loves other little dogs but is not good with larger dogs or cats. Due to her tiny size (4lbs) she will not be placed with small children. She is mostly housebroken using potty pads. Baby is a lovebug but will also sound the alarm when someone comes to the door or she sees or hears something that she feels needs attention.

Description: Isn't she just adorable! Baby came to us from a shelter in West Virginia last year with a badly broken femur. After several surgeries her rear leg was not able to be repaired

BRADY BUNCH

Breed: Boxer Mix
Age: 9 Months--PUPPIES
History: Owner Release



Their mother is a pure-bred boxer and dad is 1/2 boxer, making these pups 3/4 boxer. They have the typical, adorable wrinkly forehead of a boxer and a coat like white velvet. There are 3 girls, Bella, Button, and Blizzard and 3 boys, Bear, Benji, and Bandit. Be sure to get those applications in because these gorgeous pups will be adopted quickly! Button, Bella and Benji are still available for adoption.

Description: Father Bandit is being returned to the rescue due to a divorce. These beautiful boxer mix pups just arrived and are already thriving in their foster home.

Belle the Beagle - (Female)

Breed: Beagle / Dachshund Mix
Age: 10 Years
History: Owner Release



sight. Belle warms up quickly to women and those who are soft spoken. Hanging out in the yard, going for car rides, or just hanging around the house are all things Belle has a good time doing if she is in your company. She would do well as an only dog or as a part of a dog pack. Belle enjoys the company of her many foster dog friends, but also craves to be the center of her loyal friend's attention. Belle is fully housetrained and crate trained. She is a

Description: Belle is a sweet dog in search of friendship, love and comfort. She tends to enjoy being a super loyal friend to mainly one person and doesn't want to have you out of her

Buddy the Cockapoo - (Male)

Breed: Cockapoo
Age: 7 Months
History: Owner Release



it. I am very playful and energetic but also enjoy laying by your feet or curling up on my dog bed but I prefer to be near my humans so I will lay close to you or on your lap if you let me and am especially fond of belly rubs. I get along well with my foster brother, a 50lb dalmation mix, but I don't have experience with cats, so they would likely be a curiosity for me. My foster mom says I am about 90% housetrained, I have not had any accidents in the house and I sleep in my crate throughout the night (about 7 hours) but since I am in a new home we are getting on a schedule and I am learning to signal when I need to go out. I am still

Description: I am a 7-month old neutered male Cockapoo with a very handsome blonde coat and according to my foster family, an adorable face; I will take their word for

Bugsy - (Male)

Breed: Black Labrador Retriever Mix
Age: 11 Weeks
History: Shelter



uncoordinated puppy romp is adorable as are his facial expressions. He has taken quite nicely to his chew toys and setting into his foster home. He will make a great addition to any family.

Description: Bugsy is a black lab mix puppy and a bundle of pure energy. If you are a lab lover ?this dog is for you! He is learning how to do stairs and exploring everywhere. His

Cierra - (Female)

Breed: Chihuahua / Shiba Inu Mix
Age: 4 Years
Weight: 17 Pounds
History: Owner Release

Description: Hi, my name is Cierra. I am a chihuahua mix (probably mixed with spitz or



LOVE
for the Holidays

Elizabeth - (Female)

Breed: Chow Chow Mix
Age: 11 Years
Weight: 36 Pounds
History: Owner Release



Description: Hi, my name is Elizabeth and I am looking for a new home. AFH rescued me from an awful life where I had to live outside all of the time. No one really cared about me

when I lived outside and I developed heartworm and had all sorts of infections and parasites. The doctor said I have the worst arthritis that he has ever seen. All of my infections are now gone. My heartworm has been treated and I have been eating good food so I look and feel much better. I would love to live in a home with carpet so I can walk around and follow my mom or dad or go into the other rooms to check things out. Oh, I am supposed to tell you that I am completely house trained, so no worries there.



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