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On October 6, listeners of every age and capacity were gathered at Pleasant Grove to listen to tales of blood and reverie at *Nevermore - a Celebration of Edgar Allan Poe*.

For Fluvanna — Nevermore!

By Wendy Edwards

On a young October night, the evening bore a perfect chill as the sun slid into an envelope of darkness. Gathered in the grove were listeners of every age and capacity, each with ears that hungered for tales of blood and reverie. The audience sprawled across the dark lawn of Palmyra's 19th century plantation home and waited, with nerves thrumming, to feed upon the eerie prose and cunning poetry of the Virginia Colony's dark genius; the master of macabre...

The evening, that took place on October 6th, is known as *Nevermore - a Celebration of Edgar Allan Poe*. The evening began on the steps of the plantation home at Pleasant Grove, entertaining a modest crowd of story lovers. Fluvanna County Parks and Recreation's Chris Henderson composed this evening of excellence with the help of the Poe Museum of Richmond, and the fine performances from "The Haunts of Richmond" (an acting troupe that provides haunted house and walking ghost tours in the heart of the capital city's oldest neighborhood.)

The "Haunts" performers held visitors entranced for recitation of Poe's unforgettable story of "The Black Cat." So transfixed were they that when the sound of a cat's mournful cry penetrated the air, there was a prickling on the back of the neck and a question as to whether anyone else had heard that. Gazes were soon assured as another, low murmur convinced the listener that the missing, black cat was, indeed, still alive as the tale had insisted.

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Fluvanna Hearing on School Future Ends in Chaos

By Barney Breen-Portnoy

Approval for a new high school in Fluvanna County will have to wait until Thursday. An emotionally charged public hearing ended in chaos last Wednesday without a vote by the Board of Supervisors.

The meeting drew to a close around midnight. Supervisors Donald Weaver and Gene Ott would not support a motion to extend the hearing to 1 a.m. The hearing already had been extended once an hour earlier.

Dozens of residents had turned out for the public hearing, and the adjournment drew the ire of the remaining attendees. Many began to chant "vote" repeatedly.

Supervisor Thomas Payne, the board's vice chairman, was disappointed by the adjournment.

"We can't keep putting this off," he said.

Before adjourning, the supervisors set a special meeting for Oct. 25 to fin-

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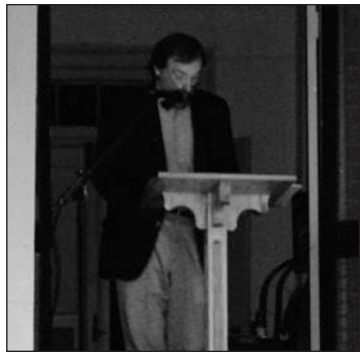
Save Money, Conserve Water

The Lake Monticello Owners' Association Lake Health Education Group is partnering with the Thomas Jefferson Soil & Water Conservation District to offer a Rain Barrel/Water Harvesting Workshop on Saturday, November 10, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Terrace Room and backyard at the Clubhouse. Participants will learn the many uses of rain barrels and how to build them during the workshop.

Collecting rain water can reduce demand on our water supply during dry periods like we're experiencing now and save money too. For instance, an inch of rainfall on a 1000 square foot roof can generate 600 gallons of water. Water harvesting with rain barrels also can reduce runoff and protect sensitive areas from erosion, while also providing free water for gardens and other uses.

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Far below the cool light of Fluvanna's stars, friends and families bundled together to listen to the next haunting story, told and portrayed as passionately, by head "Haunter" Scott Bergman. "The teeth! - the teeth! - they were here, and there, and everywhere, and visibly and palpably before me; long, narrow, and excessively white, with the pale lips writhing about them, as in the very moment of their first terrible development." came the words from a piece that Poe himself favored: "Berenice."

If ever there was a moment of time travel, it happened in Fluvanna that night. Those who caught word of this event were able to haul in their blankets or camp chairs. They were met with a rollback to a place and period when the written word was given great attention - before the dawning of radio entertainment - and it quite mystified this group. A soothing awe made its way into the gathering as speaker and direct descendant of the famed author, Dr. Hal Poe, stepped to the podium and introduced the works of his cousin.

Dr. Poe, then President of the Poe Museum of Richmond, delighted onlookers with his

patient voice and insider knowledge of the meanings behind some of the deceased Poe's classic poems and stories. He describes his cousin, Edgar, as a man who sincerely wished to be considered a serious poet. But, as Edgar learned, there was an audience for the unusual, and it seemed that people enjoyed being frightened, so his stories were fashioned for the readers of his time - but, in writing these, Poe has created timeless tales that will continue to treat his special audience of listeners long after we have gone.

The warm and clear recitations of Edgar Allan Poe's poems, "Annabel Lee," "Eldorado," "Eulalie," "To Helen," and the infamous "The Raven," from Dr. Poe were exquisite to listen to, and of special interest, as each poem was carefully detailed so that the listener could visit the author's state of mind and interest when he'd written it.

The fun of the night continued with the delivery of the stories "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Cask of Amontillado," which Dr. Poe told with a comfortable, scholarly accent. By the end of their time together, darkness had spread a fine cloak over Pleasant Grove. There was a quiet reverence between the listeners and performers that likely tucked each soul to bed that night.

This celebration of Poe could be an annual event for Fluvanna. Dr. Hal Poe has indicated that he would be willing to return for an engagement in the future. Next October, see that your eye is roving within its socket so that you don't miss the announcement of the next fascinating evening under heaven.

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ish the agenda from Wednesday's meeting. The meeting will be held at the Fluvanna courthouse at 7 p.m. Public comment will be accepted at the conclusion of the meeting.

During Wednesday's meeting, more than 50 Fluvanna residents stepped to the lectern to express their opinions on the new high school proposal--the first step of the "Domino Plan." Under that plan, the existing high school will be converted into a middle school and the middle school into an elementary.

The Domino Plan is expected to cost more than \$90 million.

Superintendent Tom Smith said that Fluvanna County High School already has 1,137 students, a number that is projected to rise.

The new high school would accommodate 1,750 students and could be easily expanded to 2,500. It is expected to cost either \$69 million or \$75 million, depending

upon the design chosen by the supervisors.

The new high school project includes the construction of an auditorium, which the current high school lacks, and a regional athletics complex.

"This will be the most important vote of my 12 years as a supervisor," said board Chairman Cecil Cobb, who will be leaving the board after the election in November.

Many county residents who spoke were concerned about where the money for the plan would come from.

"My taxes could double from this, and I can't afford to fund this plan," said Carrie Wigal of Cunningham.

Several senior citizens said they simply could not afford a hefty tax increase on their fixed incomes.

Numerous speakers called for a public referendum on the Domino Plan, an idea supported by Super-

visor Weaver.

Supporters of the Domino Plan made their voices heard as well. Jason Davis, a math teacher at Fluvanna County High School, delivered one of the more passionate speeches of the night.

"I'm scared of the taxes too but we need to suck it up because the children of this county are too important not to," he said. "Raise my taxes. Our children are worth it."

Other supporters of the plan expressed frustration that the new high school project has not been given the go-ahead, despite the fact that the Domino Plan was approved in 2003.

The years of inaction have allowed the cost of the project to increase, supporters of the plan said.

"I'd like a little less talk and a lot more action," said Lisa Hoffman, quoting country singer Toby Keith.

Conserve Water— continued from front page



The workshop fee of \$35 includes one 55-gallon barrel, supplies and handouts. Additional barrels are just \$25 each. To register and reserve your barrel(s), send a check to Thomas Jefferson Soil & Water Conservation District, 2134 Berkmar Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

This is an excellent family activity, so bring the kids. Also, bring a photograph of the location where you expect to set up your barrel. You will need access to a large vehicle to transport your completed barrel.

Lake Monticello residents, please note that the Environmental Control Committee recommends rain barrels be placed in an inconspicuous place on the side or rear of the home.

For more information about the workshop, call Garnett Mellen at 975-0224 or email garnett.mellen@vaswcd.org.

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The Loved Inn Look is Best

By Wendy Edwards

There is a place, only 20 minutes from Charlottesville, where you can walk among zinnias and moon flowers, sit with a warm cup of tea in a courtyard gazebo, tour and touch the rich history in a unique building that was borne of our rural culture back in 1882. It is space for you to get away from the relative forces of the modern workweek, to tuck away into luxurious bedding for as many nights as you can give yourself the freedom to indulge, but beware, you must be comfortable with being important.

Along the scenic highway of Scottsville's lazy hills, a single mom and her own mother have extended their talents and efforts to include a new look and feel of whimsy at High Meadows Vineyard Inn. Proprietress Cynthia Bruce is no stranger to luxury, having lived and worked in hospitality in Asheville, NC.

She was able to work out a purchase agreement with former owners of the historical bed and breakfast, but this did not come without faith in her own abilities nor the persistence needed to complete such a transaction. Cynthia shares that she wanted an opportunity to create a future for herself and her family and to do so she felt that being in business for herself was key. The opportunity to work with financing options and the incredi-

bly kind partners who were waiting for someone like Cynthia to take claim of the inn, has been an absolute reward - to Cynthia and to Scottsville!

She shares a quote from a former owner; "The inn is at its best when someone's loving it," words that Cynthia and her mother, Nancy, seem to have taken to heart. You can feel it from the moment you arrive that this team is working for your enjoyment.

There are a good number of stories shared about the two homes that were created years apart within the 1880's, but are now connected by a breezeway, seemingly making High Meadows Vineyard Inn one structure. The Inn has its own historical prestige that can be a great attraction for visitors, but what you must know is that the quiet opulence of the renovated building, the inviting atmosphere of its gardens, patio and vineyard, and the extravagance of the added touches are just as worthwhile.

Of the seven guest rooms, there is not one that doesn't promise true respite from the stressors of life. Cynthia and Nancy have created contented spaces that are delightfully intimate and yet invite you to explore. There are original furnishings, interesting books and artwork, blended antiques and new finds, and it all seems to say, "Come here. Just, breathe . . ."

You'll find Anichini linens on

your bed, Arbonne products in your shower or bath, and the most thoughtful finishing touches throughout your room. Every guest room has its own personality: the Robin's Nest with its original mantle and fireplace; the Peony, with dark, stained shutters and a romantic, recreated Boticelli wall hanging; the Willow of green accents and a gorgeous brass bed; the Daffodill's Victorian claw foot bath. There is something delightfully specific to every other room as well, including the public areas.

In the guest's parlor, there are several pieces of furniture and some fun artifacts from bygone days. There is also a mirror that was placed in St. John's Church, Richmond, for Patrick Henry's speech in which he coined "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

Whether you are a fan of homes on the National Historic Register,



or just need a break from the monotony of day-to-day effort, you can find comfort at this local bed and breakfast - and you do not want to miss Nancy's cooking! Breakfast plates are artfully presented, full of nutritious foods that are as local as the property's hen house and herb garden. The complementary meal is served wherever you'd like to sit amongst the property, and time is on your side because Nancy will prepare your breakfast when it is convenient for you - without being forced out of that divine bed before you're ready (not that you'll ever be!)

The High Meadows Vineyard Inn has so much to offer, from its

pinot noir wine to its outdoor cottage spaces, that you can see yourself returning again and again. While you can plan for special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, even proposals, there is room for the average workday to subside and for quality to surround you overnight - take advantage of the convenient location and trust your hostesses to have you on your way to work the next morning. One warning, though, your coworkers are going to wonder what you've done to take those years off of your face - and they'll hardly believe that one night at an inn has done it. But, in my experience, it so has.

