

Clifton in Black and White

Author signs copies of book that chronicles town history through photographs.

For Clifton resident and historian Lynne Garvey-Hodge, using mostly pictures to tell the story of Clifton's history was a tall order. She wrote over 100,000 words for her original manuscript. Arcadia Publishing, known for its "Images of America" series, limited her to 18,000, 350 for every chapter and just 70 per caption. She joked that it was an exercise in brevity.

On Sunday, Jan. 25 Garvey-Hodge hosted a book signing event for "Clifton" at The Canary Cottage bed and breakfast she operates on Main Street of town. From 1-4 p.m., a gathering of friends, colleagues and residents filled the main floor while Garvey-Hodge signed copies of her book at the rear of the home.

"Clifton" uses photographs from a multitude of different sources to paint a timeline of the town's history stretching back to its purchase by Englishmen in 1710 to the Civil War and subsequent change to the town's cur-



Author Lynne Garvey-Hodge signs a copy of her book 'Clifton' for Doug Detwiler, a former Clifton resident.

rent name through the modern progressive era. Garvey-Hodge said in addition to the photos she was able to procure from her town neighbors, some of whom have lived in Clifton for generations, she also spent a good deal of time researching at The Virginia Room in Fairfax and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.. Because the book was a pictorial essay, some aspects of the town's history without photographic evidence, like the string of reported UFO sightings in 1952, didn't make it into the book. Still, Garvey-Hodge said the format had its advantages. "I knew it was something I

could do without years and years of research," she said.

Garvey-Hodge said Clifton represented a very affluent cross-section of the country's history.

"I really think we are what America is all about these days," she said.

"Clifton" by Lynne Garvey-Hodge is available at major retail outlets including Borders, and Barnes and Noble for \$21.95. It is also available in local stores within Clifton such as The Clifton General Store on Main Street and The Cottage Arts on Chapel Road and from internet outlets such as Amazon.com.

— DEREK B. JOHNSON

PHOTO BY DEREK B. JOHNSON/THE CONNECTION

Middle School Set For 2012

School Board gives final OK to new school.

The Fairfax County School Board gave final approval to the construction of a new South County Middle School Jan. 22, promising to complete the school by 2012.

The new middle school was originally scheduled to open several years from now, but residents in the Fairfax Station and Lorton area have lobbied the school board, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia General Assembly and even congressmen to push up its start date.

Community members said the new middle school is needed to relieve capacity problems at South County Secondary School, which has been one of the most overcrowded schools

"This is \$30 million we don't have to build a building we don't need."

— School Board Member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill)

in the county since it opened in 2005. When the new middle school opens, South County Secondary will be converted into a high school and the student population will be spread across the two buildings.

"I'm really, really relieved. This has been a long time coming. It really completes the South County area and will accommodate all the growth that is taking place," said School Board member Liz Bradsher (Springfield), who, as a South County parent, led the effort to get both the secondary school and the middle school built.

SOUTH COUNTY parents hope the new middle school would cause the School Board to redraw some of the South County school boundaries. Currently, some families that live within a mile of South County Secondary School attend Hayfield Secondary School approximately 7

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"I really think we are what America is all about these days."

— Lynne Garvey-Hodge

Local Businesses Go Virtual

Online chamber of commerce seeks to meld modern technology with sense of community.

BY DEREK B. JOHNSON
THE CONNECTION

Over the next 10 years, the southern portion of Fairfax County is expected to be one of the fastest growing regions of the county. A congressionally mandated consolidation of military and defense personnel (BRAC) will bring more than 19,000 federal jobs to Fort Belvoir and surrounding areas, along with thousands of private sector support employment by 2011. A new elementary school in Laurel Hill is currently being staffed and a new middle school is in the works.

A group of South County businessmen, unsatisfied with their memberships at chambers of commerce in Springfield or Alexandria, were looking for a way to begin coordinating with their neighbors on an

overall business strategy for the developing area.

"You know this part of Fairfax County is probably the fastest growing area in the Washington region," said Peter Weyland, vice chairman and co-founder of the newly formed South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce.

In a time of national recession, the Lorton and Laurel Hill areas continue to plan and build office space, townhouses and retail outlets to ensure that enough infrastructure is available to service the expected surge in population and foot traffic.

"We have new businesses, new people have moved in. We really didn't feel a close affiliation with the existing chambers," said Weyland, who owns Look.net, LC in Lorton, a Web-based company. "We're a new area, other chambers are legacy chambers who

have been around for a long time [and] have issues other than a newly developed area."

KEEPING WITH the theme of looking forward, Weyland, along with fellow founders Shep Crow of The Cricket Box in Kingstowne and Tim Rizer of ITEM Inc. in Alexandria, decided to make the chamber almost a completely online experience. They had caught wind of a company based out in Quincy, Calif., that developed a software program called Chamber Nation, which is designed specifically for transitioning brick and mortar chambers of commerce to the online world.

Instead of spending money finding a building, hiring staff, printing newsletters and dealing with the assortment of other costs that come with running a chamber, the three businessmen decided to jump right onto the net and build a foundation there.

"We're going to be the new kind of cham

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Chamber Goes Online

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ber, the future chamber, the electronic chamber if you will," said Weyland.

Richard Scully, owner of Chamber Nation, said that building a chamber online has many advantages, not the least of which is the ability to reach an untapped audience.

"Most chambers are all feel-good. It's 'join the chamber, we'll put you on the directory and you're supporting the community,'" said Scully. "The younger generation is not there."

If chambers of commerce are interested in continuing to be the go-to stop for local businesses, they have to at least consider adding a rigorous online component to their physical model, he said.

The online chamber model does have its downside. According to Weyland, the chamber would be less centralized and more reliant on the work each individual owner puts in to advertising and promoting his business. The South Fairfax Chamber will not host any community-wide events or promotions, except in a supporting role if such an event is already being organized.

THE CHAMBER, already up and running online, already boasts over 70 members from in and around southern Fairfax County. Weyland said they hope to have 100 before an inaugural meeting of businesses takes place on Feb. 19.

Chamber member David Saville Jr., owner of the American Bar-B-Que and Catering in Lorton, said one thing immediately jumped out at him when he caught wind of the idea.

"It's directly in my community," he said.

While he said he had not fully familiarized himself with the way the online model worked and hoped to get more information at the meeting, he said the prospect of moving chamber business to the web made sense.

"I think it will be easier, I really do. The way things are going today in my industry, people are finding us more through e-mails and online technology than



PHOTO BY DEREK B. JOHNSON/THE CONNECTION

Hidden Oasis Spa and Salon on Silverbrook Road in Lorton is one of over 70 businesses to join the newly formed South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce.

they are getting in their cars and seeing us face to face," said Saville.

Isabella Bratchelli, owner of the Hidden Oasis Spa Salon in Fairfax Station, said she was looking to join a chamber of commerce closer to her area of business when one day "out of the blue" Crow entered her store and passed along word of the newly formed chamber. She quickly joined, saying other chambers could not provide a focus on the Lorton and Laurel Hill area customers that formed an estimated 80 percent of her regular business.

"Especially when you're a small business, your community is your business," said Bratchelli.

Board Approves Middle School

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miles away because South County is too overcrowded to accommodate all of the students who live nearby.

Some members of the school system's facilities department and School Board members from other parts of the county have expressed doubts about whether the South County Middle School is needed or not. Earlier in the process, staff had recommended the School Board either redraw the school boundaries or add an addition to the secondary school to deal with its overcrowding.

The school system has limited capital funding and while some people have doubts about the need for a South County Middle School, everyone agrees that other buildings in the school system that need renovations, said Dean Tistadt, the school system's chief operating officer.

"There is some ambiguity about the South County Middle School. ... But there is no ambiguity about the need to renovate Langley and West Springfield," he said.

At a time when the school system has insufficient

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— School Board member Liz Bradsher (Springfield)

construction funds, School board member Stu Gibson (Hunter Mill) said the new South County Middle School was going to push back other projects that everyone on the School Board agreed needed to be done.

"This is \$30 million we don't have to build a building we don't need," said Gibson, who has regularly opposed pushing up the middle school in the construction queue.

"To balance the needs of children in South County on the backs of other children in the county is wrong. In my view, this is a political decision and I think that is sad," he said.

— JULIA O'DONOGHUE

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