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FIVE CHILDREN AND IT -- Today at 11:30 a.m. Ages 8 and older. A film based on Edith Nesbit's 1902 book about five children who accidentally discover Psammead, an ancient sand fairy, on the beach of their uncle's mansion. The fairy reluctantly agrees to grant the children one wish each day. National Gallery of Art, East Building, Auditorium, Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue NW. Free. 202-789-3030.

THE POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST -- Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. High school state winners compete for scholarship and cash prizes in this contest that focuses on spoken word poetry as an art form. Presented by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. Lincoln Theatre, 1215 U St. NW. Free. 202-397-7328.

DISNEY LIVE! MICKEY'S MAGIC SHOW -- Thursday at 7 p.m. Friday at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. May 21 at 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. Mickey and Minnie are joined by Donald, Goofy and other Disney characters for this magic show that's full of laughs. National Theatre, 1321 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. \$19.50-\$39.50. 202-628-6161.

BARBIE DIARIES -- Saturday at 10 a.m. Ages 3-8. The animated movie stars Barbie and her friends, who play in a band together and begin a new school year. The Avalon Theatre, 5612 Connecticut Ave. NW. \$5. 202-966-6000.

MARYLAND FAERIE FESTIVAL -- Saturday-May 21, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Make fairy houses, have a tea party with Posie the Faerie, visit the Wishing Tree, play in the Children's Craft Cove and more. Patuxent River 4-H Center, 18405 Queen Anne Rd., Upper Marlboro. \$7, ages 3-11 \$3, under 3 free. 888-607-9134.

ANANSI DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE: AN ASHANTI TALE -- Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Ages 5-10. A reading of an African tale retold by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Lisa Desimin. Followed by an art activity. National Museum of African Art, 950 Independence Ave. SW. Free. 202-633-4600.

MCLEAN DAY FESTIVAL -- Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The annual community event features carnival rides, face painting, a model airplane show, pony rides, children's rides, a moon bounce, food, live entertainment, and arts and crafts booths. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Rd., McLean. Free. 703-790-0123.

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Stanley Kunitz, A Surrogate Father of Poets

By Bob Thompson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, May 16, 2006; C01

Stanley Kunitz was a poet who touched lives -- and not just through his own work.

Kunitz, who died Sunday in his Manhattan home at the age of 100, was one of the most celebrated poets of more than one generation: He began writing in the 1920s and survived to be named U.S. poet laureate in 2000.

Paul Nemser remembers how Kunitz remade his world. A poet and translator who is a partner at the Boston law firm Goodwin Procter, he studied with Kunitz at Columbia in the early 1970s. "People always ask how I got to be a lawyer," Nemser said yesterday. The answer is: He trusted Stanley Kunitz.

As an eager but debt-burdened young poet supporting himself as a bookstore clerk, Nemser sought out his teacher one day, explained his situation and asked what he should do. Kunitz "looked up into the sky," Nemser recalled, then looked down and said, "the law." He added, "You love poetry so much that you will never give it up."

Three decades of law and poetry, for Nemser, have proved him correct.

Others who knew Kunitz recalled him yesterday with emotion, admiration and deep gratitude.

Mark Rudman, a poet who also studied with Kunitz at Columbia, recalled that Kunitz might read a poem and say: "Well, it's an artful construction." Painful, perhaps, but it was "the best Geiger counter or lie detector" a poet could have.

One of the reasons he wanted to work with Kunitz, Rudman said, was the older man's reputation for doing, for contemporaries like Theodore Roethke, "what Pound did for Eliot" -- in other words, improve a fellow poet's work with bold, unflinching editing. Rudman told a story about bringing Kunitz a long poem he'd written.

"Stanley took the 15 pages or whatever it was," Rudman said, "and shuffled them around like a croupier." After about six minutes, he said: "There's your poem."

How could he do that?

"I've done a lot of editing, so I learn to take in things globally," Kunitz explained.

He was "a kind of surrogate father to a lot of poets younger than he," said Galway Kinnell, who counted himself among that number when the two first met in New York in the late 1950s. Kunitz would invite him to sit in on his Columbia classes, Kinnell recalled, and "the students asked me questions as if I were a real poet and not simply an aspiring poet.

"He gave me some confidence there."

Kinnell and his wife used to give an annual Kunitz birthday party. A "very sociable person," Kunitz loved to sit in the middle of the table with 10 or 12 other poets and "talk to his equals, as he thought of us -- though we didn't really think that way."

"He was so beloved," said Lee Briccetti, the executive director of Poets House, a New York City archive and meeting place for poets that Kunitz helped found. Briccetti spoke yesterday of Kunitz's empathy for young artists and of his desire to build the kind of community around poetry he felt he'd lacked in his own youth.

She also recalled the poet's fondness for martinis. She once asked him for a glass of cranberry juice instead, but Kunitz returned with "an elegant martini beaker filled with olives. 'My dear,' he said, 'I have my reputation to uphold.' "

Greg Orr, another former Kunitz student who now teaches at the University of Virginia, recalled a recent visit that evoked Kunitz's undying passion for language. Orr was visiting him in Provincetown, Mass., and the old poet's current caregiver was asking his guests to each read three pages from "Moby-Dick" aloud.

Kunitz took his turn as well. "He read Melville's ornate, rhetorical sentences beautifully," Orr said. "Language always brought him alive again. He would just wrap his voice around the sentences in a kind of rapture."

Which is what poetry is, Orr added: "It's the rapture of rhythmical language."

"God bless the poet who lives 100 years," said Dana Gioia, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. But Kunitz almost didn't make it that far.

In 2003, when it appeared that he was on his deathbed, his friends gathered to say goodbye. Orr drove up from Virginia. Kinnell, Rudman and Briccetti were among many others who came.

People read Kunitz's favorite poetry aloud. Kinnell read some Yeats ("I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree") and some William Blake -- who he thinks may have been Kunitz's favorite poet -- including Blake's "Jerusalem."

I will not cease from mental fight, he read. As he left, he asked Kunitz if he remembered the line. Kunitz said he did.

"Will you?" Kinnell asked him.

"I will not cease from mental fight," Kunitz replied. The next morning, Kinnell came to his apartment expecting to find him gone. Instead, he found his friend eating breakfast.

"Our thinking," Orr said yesterday, "was that he had so much fun at his farewell party that he didn't want to leave."

The Times-Tribune

05/16/2006

Scranton student to recite poetry in Washington DC

BY ERIN L. NISSLEY

It was just one option out of hundreds, but the poem struck a chord in West Scranton sophomore Chris Estevez as he flipped through the anthology.

He was looking for poems to prepare a performance for a local poetry recitation contest in March. But “Bilingual/Bilingüe” struck a chord deep inside Chris, who moved to Scranton with his mom and brothers from the Bronx in 2004. Both his mother and his father, who are divorced, are from the Dominican Republic and speak mostly Spanish. Chris, like the poem’s author Rhina P. Espaillat, is straddling the divide between Spanish and English — speaking one language mostly at home and the other almost everywhere else.

At a recent Scranton School Board meeting, Chris performed the poem after being honored for snagging a spot in the national Poetry Out Loud contest, which is being held today at the Lincoln Theater in Washington, D.C. He planted his feet, turned to the audience and began to speak. The rustling paper and chair squeak sounds, so common at school board meetings, died as the auditorium at South Scranton Intermediate filled with Chris’ words.

“‘English outside the door, Spanish inside,’ he said, “‘y basta,’ ” Chris recited. ‘But who can divide the world, the word — mundo y palabra — from any child?’ ”

Chris said his drama teacher, Geri Featherby, first pointed the poem out to him. He researched the author and found that she was from the Dominican Republic, which made the poem all the more meaningful.

“I know what the speaker (in the poem) means, how her father wants her to stick to her roots, but she wants to speak English as well,” he said. “I think she sees English as a way to bring both cultures together. I feel the same way, because you can express things in Spanish and in English.”

Both his father, Pedro Estevez, and Ms. Featherby accompanied him to the national competition today. He’ll perform two poems, and if he gets into the final five, will perform a third. The winner receives \$20,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

Performing is a means of escape for Chris, a quiet and intense 16-year-old. When he first moved to Scranton and started his freshman year at West Scranton, he didn’t know what to expect. He signed up for a freshman speech and drama class at the recommendation of his guidance counselor.

Ms. Featherby remembers that class.

“He was quiet, very quiet,” she said. “I couldn’t get him to speak (in class) for almost a year.”

It was different when Chris got up on stage. It was like he was transformed, Ms. Featherby said, and the limelight loved him.

Chris, who has had roles in West Scranton’s productions of “Into the Woods” and “The Crucible,” said he likes having that attention and being able to direct it.

“Maybe it’s because of his quietness,” Ms. Featherby said. “He comes on stage, and he just commands attention.”

Contact the writer: enissley@timeshamrock.com

The Washington Times

Poetry in motion

A dozen high school students from across the country, all masters in poetry recitation, will showcase their skills for a chance to win \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends -- including \$20,000 for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion -- during the Poetry Out Loud National Finals tonight at 7:30 at the Lincoln Theatre.

The 12 students will be selected from among 51 participants scheduled to compete in three semifinal rounds today, with Suzanne Fields, a columnist with The Washington Times, serving as one of the honorary judges.

Featured speakers and guest judges for the evening national finals include National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Dana Gioia; John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation; Caroline Kennedy; Scott Simon, host of National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition Saturday"; Azar Nafisi, author of "Reading Lolita in Tehran"; Pulitzer Prize-winning book critic Michael Dirda; and Curtis Sittenfeld, author of "Prep: A Novel."

It's all theatrics for contestant in poetry reading

John Faherty

The Arizona Republic

May. 16, 2006 12:00 AM

If all you knew about Jordan McAlpin were her interests, you would expect her to be a drama queen of the highest order.

McAlpin, now finishing her sophomore year at Cactus High School, is into plays and heavily involved in poetry.

But before you cringe at the possibilities of the theatrics her parents face, know she is also totally grounded and perfectly charming.

Today McAlpin, 16, will represent Arizona in the **Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest**.

She will compete at Lincoln Theater in Washington, D.C.

The competition was created by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation. The goal is a competition in which high school students memorize and perform poems. "Poetry Out Loud," according to organizers, "invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word and theatre into the English class. This exciting new program helps students master public-speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage."

We talked to Jordan about her poetry.

Question: Let's start with the most obvious question. How dramatic are you?

Answer: I have to say I am not that much of a drama queen. I think I am one of those "non-dramatic" dramatic types. You see these people doing these totally over-the-top recitals of *Oh Captain! My Captain!* but I am not one of them.

Q: You are doing *Litany* by Billy Collins and *Beauty* by Tony Hoagland. How did you choose those poems?

A: I admit picking the poems was not easy. I went through dozens and dozens before I chose them. The first thing is you have to really understand the poem. And you have to like it. I think both of these poems and these poets are amazing. Billy Collins is very modern. He does so much with words. *Beauty* is great. It is very gripping. Especially for a teenage girl.

Q: You won a state competition to go on this trip. What makes you so good at it?

A: I try to just have a conversation with the audience. My teacher at Cactus, Susan Thompson, told me the greatest thing. She said that poetry was never meant to be read. It was meant to be heard. It all made sense to me after she said that.

Q: These poems are long! I presume you have them memorized by now?

A: (Laughs) Yes, I know them.

Q: How often do you recite them as you prepare?

A: I try to keep them fresh in my mind, so I recite them a couple of times a day. One of the things you are judged on is accuracy.

Q: What else?

A: Difficulty. Are they long poems? Are they difficult to recite? But the big thing is presentation.

Q: Good luck.

A: Thank you. Thanks for your interest.

Arts & Entertainment

Books

The Big Mis-Read

We reported here last Tuesday that the National Endowment for the Arts that day officially launched "The Big Read," a program encouraging reading modeled after one-book-one-community projects in America and Great Britain.

Although we had all the details correct -- 10 cities getting a total of \$265,000 in project money -- we described the wrong program. That was a Big Read pilot plan the NEA started at the end of last year.

The full-scale effort unveiled by the NEA in New York last week calls for enrolling 100 communities and is funded by a \$1 million grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Communities must apply for grants ranging from \$10,000-\$20,000 and select a title from this list of novels:

"Fahrenheit 451," "My Antonia," "The Grapes of Wrath," "Their Eyes Were Watching God," "A Farewell to Arms," "The Great Gatsby," "The Joy Luck Club" and "To Kill a Mockingbird."

For more information, call the NEA at 1-202-682-5400 or visit www.NEABigRead.org.

The NEA's communications office refused to release details of The Big Read launch in time for our May 9 story. Instead, we were referred to a Web site where the outdated information was posted.

However, both the Associated Press and USA Today were given advance information exclusively by the NEA for their May 9 reports.

Books

Changeling tale brings change of life to author

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

By Bob Hoover, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The Metro stop in Wheaton, Md., is far enough from downtown Washington, D.C., to give novelist Keith Donohue time enough to work on his fiction.

"Thank God for the subway," says the Scott native. "Going back and forth from my job, I can manage to write a page a day."

Donohue, 46, is enjoying the fruits of his commute these days with the debut of his first novel, "The Stolen Child." The blend of fantasy and everyday life has been his dream for years since he came to Washington in 1984 after earning his second of two degrees in English from Duquesne University.

International Poetry Forum director Samuel Hazo, a professor emeritus at Duquesne, was his thesis adviser, and the two still stay in touch.

"I did my undergrad work in Irish literature and read a lot of William Butler Yeats," Donohue said. "I read his poem 'The Stolen Child' back then, and it's made a lasting impression on me, clearly."

His novel of the same name is the story of changelings, two boys who trade places.

"It's really a way to look at the question of identity through the eyes of a grown man and an un-aging 7-year-old boy," he explained. "They are my metaphors for the two time periods."



Author Keith Donohue
 Click photo for larger image.

■ Related article

['Stolen Child' debut creates literary magic](#)

The novel was written several years ago when Donohue was briefly out of work after 14 years of writing speeches and publications at the National Endowment for the Arts.

He's now at the National Archives in its national historical publications and records commissions, a department that helps local historical groups preserve records

"I really finished the novel before I went to the archives," Donohue said. "The writing wasn't the problem because I had been writing speeches and papers all those years. Finding an agent was.

"When that happened, it didn't take long for the book to be sold to a publisher. It's been an amazing and surreal time. I'm even hearing about a possible film deal."

Donohue has started a second novel during his commute, a book that "may or may not have angels in it," he said.

"I'm interested in why people believe in what they believe. We're in a [book] cycle right now when people are more responsive to fantasy novels," he said. "The 'Harry Potter' books probably have a lot to do with it."

After living in Scott's Birdland neighborhood as a child, Donohue and his family moved to Maryland, but he returned for college and still has a large contingent of relatives in the Pittsburgh area, including a daughter who works at a hospital in Mount Pleasant.

He also admits to being more of a fan of the Pirates than the Steelers.

"I've never forgotten seeing Roberto Clemente in the 1971 World Series," he said. "We went to the first game in Baltimore, sat in right field and watched Roberto hit a triple right in front of us."

Keith Donohue will be signing copies of "The Stolen Child" at 7 p.m. Thursday at Joseph-Beth Booksellers, 2705 E. Carson St., South Side, 412-381-3600.

(Post-Gazette book editor Bob Hoover can be reached at bhoover@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1634.)

May 16, 2006

Authors Meet Fans Far From Bookstores, at Company Events

By [MOTOKO RICH](#)

SEATTLE, May 10 — On a sunny spring afternoon, Debra Dean, a first-time author, perched on a table before a lunchtime crowd of about 40 to read passages from her newly published historical novel, "The Madonnas of Leningrad." The group listened, seemingly riveted, then asked questions about her research into the Nazi siege of Leningrad and the collections of that city's Hermitage Museum. Afterward, nearly everybody lined up to buy books.

It was all fairly standard for a bookstore reading. Except it wasn't at a bookstore: Ms. Dean was appearing in a dull conference room at the corporate headquarters of Starbucks, the coffee-house giant.

With authors fiercely battling for attention in a media-saturated world, an increasing number of writers — from first-time novelists like Ms. Dean to celebrities like [Madeleine K. Albright](#), the former Secretary of State — are visiting people where they spend much of their time: at work.

"It is easier to get people through the eye of a needle into the kingdom of heaven than it is to get people into a bookstore at 7 o'clock at night," said Suzanne Balaban, publicity director of Scribner, a unit of Simon & Schuster that recently started a program to bring authors into companies. "So we have to constantly reinvent what we do."

A growing roster of corporations, including Microsoft, Boeing, Google and Altria, the owner of brands like Philip Morris and Kraft Foods, have played host to writers in their offices. Even the [United States Treasury Department](#) has invited nearly 40 authors to speak over the last two years. Executives see the author readings as akin to other perks like in-house gyms, subsidized cafeterias and financial advice.

The idea is to reach people who rarely buy books and might otherwise never attend a reading. "I scarcely ever go to bookstores," said Carolyn Fletcher, an accountant in the Starbucks tax department, after she had her copy of "Madonnas" signed by Ms. Dean. Ms. Fletcher said she had been to at least 10 such events at Starbucks and bought books at most of them. "I don't think I had ever heard an author speak prior to coming to one of these."

The effort to reach new audiences comes at a time when book publishers are experiencing only modest growth and the population of readers is dwindling. According to a 2004 National Endowment for the Arts survey, only 56.6 percent of adults had read any book at all in the 12 months through the end of 2002, down from 60.9 percent a decade earlier. And the amount of time devoted to books has declined, too: according to a report by Veronis Suhler Stevenson, a private equity firm serving the media industry, Americans will spend an average of 106 hours reading books this year, down from 123 hours a person in 1996.

"Any kind of fresh way to attract people to books is exciting," said Jane Beirn, a director of publicity at HarperCollins.

Bookstore owners, however, are less thrilled about the idea. In-store author appearances are often crucial lures for book buyers, so booksellers worry that if their potential customers are seeing the writers at work, they won't make the trip to the stores.

The tension is particularly pronounced in Seattle, where several companies now welcome authors. "If we are doing an event at our Bellevue store, if there is also a Microsoft event, that can affect sales," said Stesha Brandon, events and programs coordinator at University Book Store, a 106-year-old independent bookseller with several locations in the area.

Company employees represent a totally new market, said Kim Ricketts, Ms. Brandon's predecessor at University Book Store, who now coordinates author readings at companies and nonprofit groups. "To expand the audience for books," she said, "we need to get them out into people's lives in a way that is easy for them."

In the three years since she set up shop coordinating corporate author events, Ms. Ricketts has expanded from organizing five readings a month to 20 or 30 now. In addition to getting a fee from the company holding the reading, Ms. Ricketts generally splits the revenue from book sales 50-50 with the publisher, just as a traditional bookseller does.

Ms. Ricketts said that most corporate events draw anywhere from 30 to well over 100 people. (Or, in the case of an author like Ms. Albright, many more.) On average, more than half of the people who come to a reading at work will buy the book, Ms. Ricketts said. By contrast, Ms. Brandon of the University Book Store said that about one-quarter to one-third of the people who attend author readings in bookstores buy the books.

But store owners say those figures do not take into account the multiplier effect of a reading. Long after an author has gone, the staff may continue to promote the book, and customers who come to readings often end up buying more than one book by that author, or books by other writers.

Criticizing corporate readings, Robert Sindelar, managing partner at Third Place Books, an independent bookstore in Lake Forest Park, a Seattle suburb, said: "The publisher who decides to do that kind of

event in lieu of a bookstore event is being very short-sighted in terms of their future in this business. You get the illusion of breaking out into a new market, but ultimately you are only selling one book."

There is no question, though, that employers like having the authors speak to their workers. "We have a lot of people who are very smart and interesting and creative, and in some ways are bored easily," said Craig Nevill-Manning, engineering director in the New York office of Google, which employs about 500 people in Manhattan. "We are trying to provide an environment that is not just technologically stimulating but stimulating in other ways."

So on a recent Wednesday, Simon Schama, the [Columbia University](#) historian, appeared before a roomful of about 60 Google employees in New York. In his loose-fitting suit, Mr. Schama looked overdressed among the crowd sporting khakis, T-shirts and, in one case, a head of bright green hair.

Sitting on a stool not far from a pool table, Mr. Schama fielded questions about his most recent book, "Rough Passages," an account of the black slaves who fought with the British during the American Revolution.

The employees were particularly intrigued by an 800-page diary Mr. Schama said was available online. ("I was about to say, 'You can Google it!' " he quipped.) Afterwards Mr. Schama signed books sold by a local bookseller.

Mr. Schama, a veteran of the book tour circuit, said this was his first appearance at a private company. "It is fun to talk among the profoundly unconverted," he said. For the rest of his "Rough Passages" tour, though, Mr. Schama will be speaking at bookstores.

For now, publishers say they are committed to sending authors on tours that include plenty of bookstores. "Our booksellers are always going to be a first priority for us and our authors on a book tour," said Stuart Applebaum, a spokesman for Random House.

But the store owners may not be wrong about what corporate events could do to their customer base. At Ms. Dean's reading at Starbucks, Monica Minneman-Ioset, a senior buyer of store equipment, was one of the first in line to buy a book and get it signed.

"I try to go to as many of these events as I can," said Ms. Minneman-Ioset, who said she had heard authors like the thriller writers J. A. Jance and Ridley Pierson as well as the historian David McCullough at Starbucks. "I used to go to bookstore events, but I don't anymore. Mostly, I buy my books here now."

A Creative Crossroads

By Richard Florida
Sunday, May 7, 2006; B03

No more a quaint government town with a reputation for Southern sleepiness, today's Washington is a booming, far-flung region that's a key node in what I call the Creative Economy. Now if it could just act like a grown-up metropolis.

The region's economy is riding high . . .

The Greater Washington region is already one of the largest economic units in the world, cranking out nearly *\$80 billion* in annual output. That makes it the sixth-largest regional economy in the world, bigger than *London* or *Seoul*.

It has everything it takes to be a major global player . . .

Washington has become a hub of the Creative Economy, which spans science and technology, the arts, culture and entertainment, as well as medicine, finance and law. Today, about 40 million Americans are employed in this rapidly growing sector, which pumps more than \$2 trillion in wages and salaries into the economy. Greater Washington is a standout on all three factors driving the Creative Economy.

TECHNOLOGY

Even longtime residents are often surprised to learn that the biggest sector in the local economy is not government, but technology. The region is second only to San Jose in high-tech electronics industries and ranks third in total software employment. It's a player in the biotech industry, and a growing media center.

TALENT

Home to 1.2 million creative workers, Washington boasts the largest creative class concentration -- 40 percent of the workforce -- in the country. It's first in the percentage of people with advanced degrees, and first in the number of scientists and engineers, with double the number of those in Silicon Valley.

TOLERANCE

Open and diverse, the region has long been a bastion of great black thinkers, writers, musicians and business people. It's a lure for recent college graduates and young singles; 25- to 34-year-olds make up 15 percent of the population. New immigrants are flocking to outlying suburbs in Montgomery, Arlington and Fairfax counties.

. . . and people love it here.

CULTURE

Greater Washington has great symphonies, credible theater and a re-emerging music scene. It scores very high on my Bohemian Index, an aggregate measure of working artists, entertainers and musicians, as well as designers, editors and media types.

WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE

The region also does amazingly well on major dimensions of life satisfaction, according to a recent Gallup poll. Residents boast the highest level of satisfaction with their work of any city or region surveyed, and the second-highest level of satisfaction with their personal lives. About three-quarters of area residents cited the region's physical beauty and the availability of parks, open spaces and trails as its greatest assets.

. . . as long as it doesn't let its success undermine its future.

Emerging problems with traffic and housing threaten to erode the very quality of place that brought people, companies and jobs here. The region has already reached the threshold where it doesn't have the roads and infrastructure to handle more outward growth.

Half a million exurbanites now make the commute to offices around or inside the Beltway. A recent study by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments found that the region's major commuting routes are virtually choked off at rush hour. Imagine what things will be like in 25 years if regional employment grows by 50 percent as forecast.

The lack of affordable housing close in means that more workers face long commutes, businesses have to pay premiums to attract certain kinds of workers, and young people and others may be getting priced out of the region.

Here's where the creative thinking comes in. When a region reaches the point at which Greater Washington is today, it must develop differently if it wants to continue to grow. American cities such as New York and Chicago and major European centers such as London and Paris confronted this reality a century ago -- and they moved toward denser, more vertical, transit- and rail-centered modes of development. This is the only road to maintaining our quality of place and of life and to generating lasting economic prosperity.

The region needs to stop its pell-mell scramble toward more sprawl and start expanding Metro and increasing density around existing Metro stops. It should bring Metro to Tysons Corner and come up with a visionary urban development strategy for that area, which could be transformed into a real city with walkable streets and mixed-use development.

Density is also the best way for the region to maintain its tolerance, and here it confronts the great paradox of diversity in the creative age. Even as Greater Washington has become more diverse by ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and age, it has become more homogeneous and stratified by income, education and class. Higher-income households are pushing out lower-skilled ones. This is why the District can grow in wealth while losing population, as smaller, wealthier households replace larger, less affluent ones.

This gentrification may be good for the tax coffers, but when the rich get richer, a place becomes unaffordable for critical service professions such as police officers, firefighters and teachers. And if only the people who have already made it can afford to live here, it reduces the creative friction and synergy that come from having all types of people rub shoulders in a great urban center. As the late urbanist Jane Jacobs once told me, "When a place gets boring, even the rich people leave."

The answer to this is a better integrated region. Even as Greater Washington competes at the global cutting edge, it continues to think of itself as a relatively minor economic player, an awkward amalgamation of disparate population pockets and a political center rather than a broad economic force to be reckoned with. The region needs to develop a shared vision of sustained regional prosperity. As well off as many of them are, the area's various bits and pieces can no longer thrive by going it alone.

It's also time to expand our vision of the region, which already encroaches into West Virginia and parts of Pennsylvania. But the real opportunity lies in making our neighbor to the north -- Baltimore, a city with great urban neighborhoods, huge revitalization potential and cultural assets -- part of an integrated regional solution.

And finally, taking a lead from the area's residents themselves, its leaders must find a way to foster the more intangible -- but most important -- assets of the modern creative economy: openness, aesthetics, diversity and accessibility.

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Richard Florida is the Hirst professor of public policy at George Mason University and the author of "The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent" (Collins). Jesse Elliott assisted with this article.

May 7, 2006

In the Region | New Jersey

Desperately Seeking Artists

By ANTOINETTE MARTIN

[JERSEY CITY](#)

WHAT comes first — the artists, or the funky warehouse-type buildings with big open spaces and lots of light? It is the buildings, of course. Everybody knows that artists find good buildings; buildings do not come looking for them.

In Orange, though, where the city and a nonprofit developer want to create an arts district, they are starting with industrial buildings and hoping draw artists. About 30 big old empty factories and warehouses straddling the city border are ripe for conversion into lofts and studios.

And here in Jersey City, the footprint of the old warehouse district is the site of the Powerhouse Arts District, an eight-block area being redeveloped as a live-work community for artists that has about 140 structures available for conversion.

A few smaller buildings in the Powerhouse district have already been rehabbed and are starting to open for occupancy or creative pursuits. A handful of others are being worked on, and developers are fighting over the rights to renovate dozens more. The builders are promising city planners and arts agencies that they will try their best to instill new life into old structures without denuding them of their vintage industrial charm.

And in one case, a developer is instilling classic industrial features into a brand-new building in order to cater to artists. "Maybe sometimes a building does come looking for them," said James F. Caulfield Jr., one of two brothers who run Fields Development Group, which is constructing the complex.

The project, called Waldo Lofts, is a 12-story, 82-unit condominium building at 159 Second Street scheduled to open in September. Mr. Caulfield said he takes it as a compliment that people walking by comment on the lovely restoration.

The Waldo is specifically designed with the industrial amenities that artists prize — tall ceilings, tall windows, hoist beams for lifting large artwork or heavy materials, shop sinks for washing paintbrushes

— and it includes cutting-edge kitchen appliances and free wireless hookup.

The combination has already proved attractive, Mr. Caulfield noted, not just to artists, but also to people who like to live alongside them.

"There is a niche of people who can afford the market rate, and who want this type of lifestyle," he said.

In addition to the amenities tailored to artists, a patio will be set up on a loading dock that will extend out to the sidewalk, Mr. Caulfield said. He said that he and his brother, Robert, envision it as a place for residents to "sit, read a book, play the guitar and soak up street activity."

Regulations require that a certain number of the units in every arts district building be made available at below-market prices — in this case \$250,000 to \$350,000 — to artists certified by the city's Arts Commission. All seven such units at Waldo Lofts have been sold; about half of the other 75 units have been sold for \$300,000 to \$700,000, all to people who are not certified by the Arts Commission.

Gary W. Heinz, 33, is among the buyers who are not artists. He recently quit his job on Wall Street to start GWH Ventures, which he describes as a "preservation-oriented real estate development company." He plans to set up a home office in his Waldo Lofts apartment.

"Waldo Lofts is new construction," he said, "but it still retains character. That's very appealing to me." Mr. Heinz said the idea of buying in the Jersey City arts district as it begins to flower was also appealing.

"It's like buying into TriBeCa when it was starting to happen as a place for artists, and getting in on the excitement of that," said Mr. Heinz, who currently rents an apartment in Jersey City.

Jersey City already has the greatest concentration of artists living within its boundaries of any municipality in [New Jersey](#), according to a study by the Urban Land Institute. The Powerhouse neighborhood, named for a gorgeous but decrepit turn-of-the-century power plant building that is a candidate for restoration, has a particular history with artists and their admirers.

Even before the idea of a formal arts district surfaced about a decade ago, many artists found havens in the gritty warehouse district at the edge of Jersey City's downtown. A group called ProArts has held an annual tour there for years, putting works on display in vacant buildings.

In Orange, the development has centered on the old industrial area too. The Valley Arts District is planned for the neighborhood straddling the city's border with West Orange. Though that area has no history with artists, developers and city officials are certain that they will flock to a neighborhood of converted factory buildings — and that people who are "birds of a feather" with the artists will, too.

Patrick Morrissy of Hands, a nonprofit development company that has been working to revitalize neighborhoods in Orange and East Orange for a dozen years, said plans call for creating 80 to 100 live-

work spaces for artists that will remain moderately priced. Hands plans to create a total of about 700 loft condominiums in a number of old hat factory structures for the Valley Arts District.

The ratio of affordable arts space to market-rate lofts may seem a little low, Mr. Morrissy said. "But the truth is you don't have to have too many artists to make other people want to be there," he said.

Mr. Morrissy said he believed that creating an arts district could accomplish many goals for the economically depressed city: "revive businesses, beautify a neighborhood, expand recreational opportunities, create careers and attract people back into Orange."

He added that it could improve academic achievement, too. "We know that for kids who are really into the arts, their academic achievement is generally higher. If little Johnny plays violin, he does better at math. So, we are really looking to reach those goals, not just to bring in people to sip chardonnay and look at some paintings."

Mr. Morrissy said that a recent grant from the Wachovia Regional Foundation was being used to finance community arts programs — artists working with schoolchildren, for example — but that work had not yet begun on the buildings.

Meanwhile, in Jersey City, the Fields Group is already planning a second major project on Morgan Street, to be called the Hudson. An existing packing warehouse will be renovated to create a 400-seat theater, and a new 260-unit condominium building will be adjacent to it, with shop space at street level and a pool and sundeck on the roof.