

Reston Author Looks at Diversity



Tom Finn

BY LESLIE PERALES
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Reston resident Tom Finn has been working as a consultant to managers and teams for more than 17 years both overseas and in the United States. After working with many of them he began to see a pattern of clueless business practices that led him to write the book "Are You Clueless?"

"I just kept seeing people missing opportunities," Finn said. Managers and team leaders at businesses were not seeing all of the talents of their employees or were unknowingly sending customers away, he said. "If people are clued in there's a chance to get some business," he said.

For example, Finn was consulting with a bank which had recently hired a Spanish-speaking manager. After placing a sign on the outside of the building advertising that Spanish-speaking staff was available a Hispanic couple was drawn into the bank and the manager asked why they had never come into the bank before. Finn said the couple told the manager that before the bilingual sign was up

they thought "it was a bank for white people."

Finn said many times people just do not see things multiculturally. "That's part of the message of the book," he said. "It's natural, but be aware." He said many times businesses are turning people away from their company without even knowing it and the message is not just cross-cultural but also deals with gender and other factors. "I'm defining culture broadly, it's not just ethnic groups," he said. Finn said many car dealers might drive away a female shopper by assuming they need a large enough car to hold all of their shopping purchases.

The title of the book is intended to grab people right away, which is why it may seem obnoxious, Finn said. He said for businesses the information in the book could be a vital way to increase the consumer base and profits. "There are so many ways that a business gives off the message of who is welcome there," he said. It can also help companies keep the employees they have, Finn said. "It happens out-

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BRIEFS

TOWN TO PICK UP CHRISTMAS TREES

The Town of Herndon will pick up Christmas trees for residents from Jan. 2 through 16. Residents should place Christmas trees at curbside on their regularly scheduled trash day or bring it to the parking lot opposite the recycling center at 1481 Sterling Road. Trees should not be wrapped in bags or netting and ornamental decorations and wires should be removed prior to recycling or curb placement. Call 703-435-6853.

MEETING PLANNED TO DISCUSS COUNTY BUDGET

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Catherine Hudgins will host a town hall meeting for county residents on the Fairfax County budget for Fiscal Year 2010 on Jan. 7. The event will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Dr. in Vienna. The town hall meeting will include representatives from the Department of Management and Budget to address questions and concerns of residents, and discuss economic challenges the county faces in FY 2010, which begins July 1, 2009. Registration for the meeting is encouraged at 703-478-0283, TTY 711. For reasonable ADA accommodations, call 703-246-5101.

RA TO HOST PLAY DATE FOR CHILDREN

Andy's Parties and Reston Association will co-sponsor a morning of fun for children 3 to 5 years old on Monday, Jan. 12. The event will feature activities and crafts at Brown's Chapel from 10 to 11 a.m. The cost is \$3 per child payable at the event. Registration required as space is limited. Call 703-435-6530.

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Herndon Chamber Prepares for 50th Year

The Herndon Chamber of Commerce has announced a series of special programs for 2009 to celebrate its 50th anniversary. The chamber turns 50 in January. Launching the celebrations will be the Birthday Party Mixer, taking place at the Herndon Municipal Center on Jan. 15.

The chamber will stage its premiere celebration with an anniversary gala titled "Hour Story: Eat, Drink and Dance Your Way Through Five Decades." This will be among the biggest events ever staged by the Cham-

ber and will include silent and live auction, a scrolling visual history of the chamber events and leaders interspersed with major events of those decades.

The event is being held Saturday, Feb. 21, 7 pm to midnight, at Westfields Marriott in Chantilly. Other events include a series of mixers and events throughout the town during the year.

The Herndon Chamber of Commerce, begun in January 1959 with three members and with Town Attorney Marshall Martin serv-

ing as its president, has grown steadily and now represents the largest chamber in Fairfax County.

Among its contributions have been the launch of the Herndon Dulles Visitors Center, the Friday Night Live concert series (contributing more than \$100,000 to Herndon schools), leadership to bring rail to Dulles, ESOL classes and trainers' training for the community, its long partnership with Herndon High School, and more. Visit www.dullesregionalchamber.org.

CELEBRATING KWANZAA

Joan Fort sings for the Kwanzaa celebration at the Herndon Senior Center on Monday, Dec. 29. Also performing were the Hudlin Family Orchestra, the Heritage Fellowship Church Choir, and "A New Voice." About 50 people attended the event, which commemorated the annual holiday. The program was organized by senior center member Khadijah Baltrop.

Observer Photo by Leslie Perales



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rested for drunk in public at 8:48 p.m. on Dec. 27 in the 800 block of Park Avenue.

- A vehicle was reported broken into and a stereo was stolen at 1:09 a.m. on Dec. 25 in the 900 block of Branch Drive.

- The window of a residence was reported damaged between 4 p.m. Dec. 24 and 2:30 p.m. Dec. 26 in the 900 block of Park Avenue.

- A noise complaint was reported at 10:34 p.m. on Dec. 27 in the 800 block of Locust Street.

CENTER DISTRICT

- A 31-year-old male with no fixed address was arrested for drunk in public at 8:12 p.m. on Dec. 27 in the 1100 block of Elden Street.

- The window of a residence was reported damaged at 2:56 p.m. on Dec. 16 in the 1200 block of Alabama Drive.

- Three people were being disorderly and broke a computer terminal at a business at 6:18 p.m. on Dec. 23 in the 1000 block of Elden Street.

- A 30-year-old Herndon man was issued a summons for drunk in public at 11:06 p.m. on Dec. 24 in the 1200 block of Elden Street.

DUIS AND OTHER INCIDENTS

- It was reported that the Herndon Police issued summonses for one incident of reckless driving, five incidents of

speeding, nine incidents of driving without an operator's license, two incidents of driving while on a suspended or revoked license and 173 incidents of expired or missing Town of Herndon stickers.

- A 41-year-old Suitland, Md. man was arrested on Dec. 22 on one count of credit card theft and three counts of credit card fraud stemming from an incident that occurred in June 2008.

- A 19-year-old Herndon man was arrested for several counts of credit card fraud while conducting business transactions between Oct. 29 and Nov. 17. An additional 32 cases have been identified and are currently under investigation.

Reston Police, From Page 5

- iPods, a camera and GPS units were reported stolen from a business in the 2500 block of Centreville Road.

- A stereo was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 12800 block of Fantasia Drive.

- An iPod was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 2500 block of Farmcrest Drive.

- A GPS unit was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 13300 block of Glen Echo Circle.

- A GPS unit was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 2300 block of Glen Echo Road.

- A generator was reported stolen from a residence in the 900 block of Leigh Mill Road.

- A GPS unit was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 2400 block of Masons Ferry Drive.

- Tools were reported stolen from a vehicle near the intersection of Olde Crafts Drive and South Lakes Drive.

- A GPS unit was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 2300 block of Rolling Fork Circle.

- A GPS unit and cellular phone were reported stolen from a vehicle in the 2300 block of Rolling Fork Circle.

- An iPod was reported stolen from a vehicle in the 13300 block of Spofford Road.

- A wallet was reported stolen from a business in the 12000 block of Sunset Hills Road.

Finn, From Page 3

side with your customers and inside with your employees," he said.

Finn said employees who feel as if they are a part of the organization are proven to be 20 percent more productive than those who do not feel included and are 90 percent more likely to stay at their job long term. He said often at companies there are "insider" and "outsider" groups and many managers may not even realize they exist. Finn said simply by going out to lunch with the same group of employees continuously may make others feel as if they do not belong.

Because the U.S. continues to become a more diverse place, Finn said he expects his book to be relevant for a long time. "I still see in the companies that I work with, people missing the clues," he said. "There are still lots of subtle things that influence us." Finn said the book, which came out last spring, is mainly targeted at

business owners, managers and leaders. Since publishing the book, he has began using it when he consults with businesses. He said having the book available helps with his consulting because people are able to go back to reference it and keep the clues in mind.

Finn graduated from Brown University in Rhode Island with his bachelor's before receiving his master's in international business at Georgetown University. He began his career at St. Luke's Episcopal/Texas Children's Hospitals in Houston, Tx., and also worked for Westinghouse for a number of years. Some of his past clients include Booze Allen Hamilton, ETrade Financial, Inova Health Systems, Verizon and The World Bank. For more information visit www.AreYouClueless.com or e-mail TFinn@areyouclueless.com.

FIRST FATHER-DAUGHTER DANCE

The Town of Herndon will host its first Father-Daughter Dance in February. The event will feature an evening for fathers and daughters and their friends to dance to popular music. The semi-formal dance will include dancing, appetizers, drinks, a photo of the couple and a keepsake. Daughters may be accompanied by an uncle, grandfather or other male guardian. The dance will be held at the Herndon Community Center, located at 814 Ferndale Avenue. The event, to be held Feb. 7 from 6:30 to 9 p.m., is for girls ages 4-12. The cost is \$50 per couple and \$25 for each additional daughter. Call 703-787-7300.



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