

# and Oakton Vienna CONNECTION

During seventh period tech theater class at Oakton High School, senior Amanda Herman, right, rehearses scenes from the upcoming musical 'Little Women,' while theater teacher Vanessa Gelinas assists her in perfecting the scene.

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# SCHOOLS THEATRE

## Times and Tickets

“Little Women” runs at Oakton High School from May 14-16, beginning at 7 p.m. every night. Ticket information can be found at [www.oaktondrama.org](http://www.oaktondrama.org).

**Dancing during a musical number, Oakton students Amanda Herman, Gracie Terzian, Esther Workman and Madeline Paul complete a spin. ‘The upbeat songs have fun dance moves, but some were difficult to learn because they had to be appropriate for the Civil War era,’ Herman says. Herman plays Jo March in the musical ‘Little Women’, opening at Oakton High School on May 14.**



PHOTOS BY SARAH KASHANIAN/OAKTON HIGH SCHOOL

## ‘Little Women’ Comes to Life at Oakton High

By KIRIN GUPTA  
OAKTON HIGH STUDENT

The classic story of “Little Women” is being brought to life by students at Oakton High School May 14-16 as the performing arts department’s feature musical. Enhanced by a Broadway musical score, the novel by Louisa May Alcott is brought to the stage in the voices of adolescents who understand it best.

A cast drawn from all four grades of Oakton coordinates to tell the story of Jo March, a teenage girl struggling to find her footing amid the turmoil of the Civil War. At turns humorous, poignant and life-affirming, the play centers around the escapades of the four March sisters and is based in Massachusetts.

The principal character, Jo March, is played by four-year Oakton drama veteran Amanda Herman, an experienced actress and singer who colorfully depicts Jo’s exploration of life, love, and her true capabilities as a writer and young woman.

“This play really illustrates how Jo grows up. There’s a lot of fun music, but there’s also a lot of emotion, which makes it interesting for all of us,” Herman said.

After months spent on casting in the fall, the progress of “Little Women” truly began in the beginning of spring. First time director Vanessa Gelinas, choral director/choreographer Tiffany Powell and band director Cheryl Newton have cooperated to train the students who will be running the show come performance night.

A spectacular two-story set that is unusual for a high school production in both size and complexity was also student-designed and constructed. Student technical director Anthony Schiavo led tech classes at Oakton, and the crew that will be taking care of the behind-the-scenes has been practicing nearly as hard as the cast itself.

The high point of the play is the music, enchanting numbers that incorporate dance and larger-than-life costumes amplify the evocative scenes that tell this story, and provide “something for everyone” in Oakton’s spring musical.

## CALENDAR

Send announcements to [vienna@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:vienna@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday for the following week’s paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

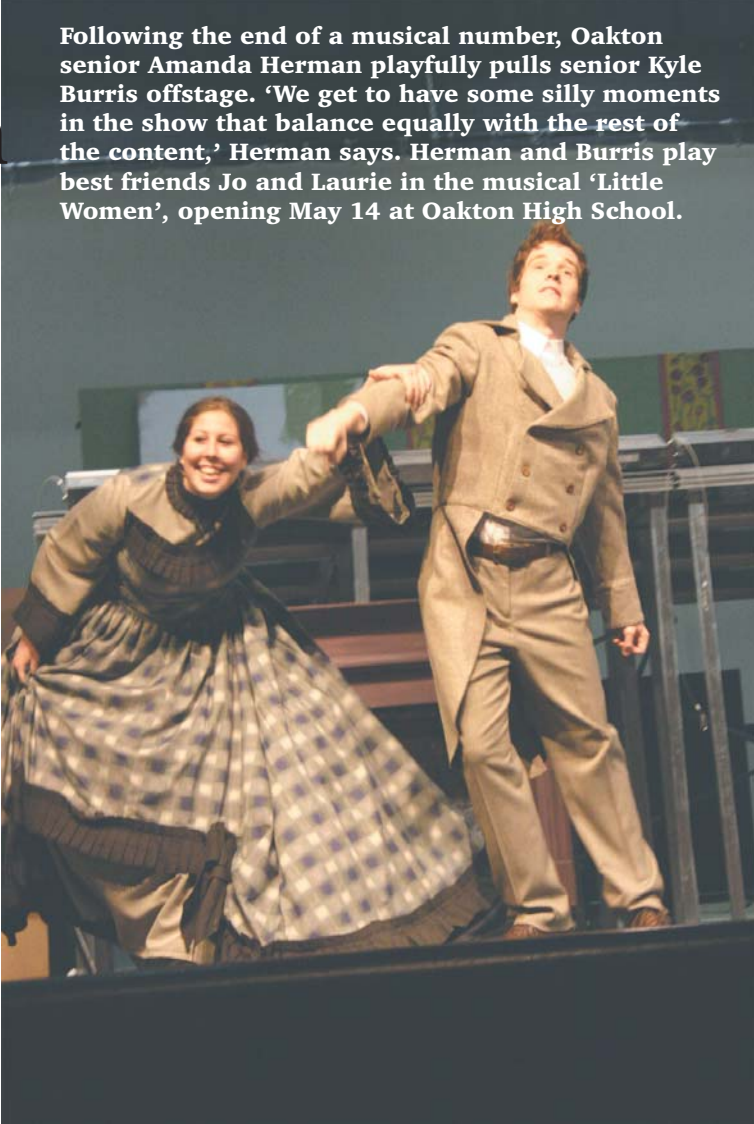
**WEDNESDAY/MAY 13**  
**Miss Mo’s Storytime.** 10:30 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Interactive folk tales. Age 3-5 with adult. 703-938-0405.

**George Stanford, Shane Gamble and Charlie Duda,** 7:30 p.m. at Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Classics for Brass.** 7:30 p.m., St. Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Classics for Brass showcases the Washington Symphonix Brass and trumpeter Vince Martino perform a range of brass favorites. \$30/adults, \$15/seniors and students. 703-356-0670 or [www.wsbrass.com](http://www.wsbrass.com).

**FRIDAY/MAY 15**  
**Enter the Haggis,** 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. at Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. \$15. 703-255-1566 or [jamminjava.com](http://jamminjava.com).

**Daryl Davis,** 8-10 p.m. at The Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. 7:30 beginner lessons. \$10.



**Bill Emerson and the Sweet Dixie Band.** 6:30 p.m., Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. Free. 703-255-6360 or [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

**English Conversation.** 10 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. For non-native English speakers of all levels. Adults. 703-938-0405.

**Pokemon League.** 3 p.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Learn and play. Age 5-18. 703-938-0405.

**Game On.** 6 p.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Runescape, DDR, Wii, Rock Band, pizza and soda. Age 10-18. 703-938-0405.

**“Little Women.”** 7 p.m., Oakton High School, 2900 Sutto Road, Vienna. Oakton High School will perform “Little Women.” \$10/person. Visit [www.oaktondrama.org](http://www.oaktondrama.org).

**“Tips for a Cure.”** Tavern at Great Falls, 9835 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Tavern at Great Falls will be holding its seventh annual Guest Bartender Night, where local business leaders and others will be bartenders to raise “Tips for a Cure” for Cystic Fibrosis. This year, the Tavern is supporting a Great Falls family whose seventh grade daughter has Cystic Fibrosis. Cal 703-757-4770.

**Don Giovanni.”** 7:30 p.m., McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Innovativi Riverbend Opera Company presents “Don Giovanni” live with English surtitles. \$20/person, \$15/students. E-mail [innovative.Riverbend.Opera@gmail.com](mailto:innovative.Riverbend.Opera@gmail.com) or visit [www.connincorp.com/iROC](http://www.connincorp.com/iROC).

**SATURDAY/MAY 16**  
**Breezing Along the Boardwalk.** 6-11 p.m., Sheraton Premiere at Tysons Corner, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. All proceeds from this event will

## CALENDAR

support the “Who Will Teach Them?” fund. \$200/person. Contact Monise Quidley or Sarah Caldwell at 703-941-8810 or [www.phillipsprograms.org](http://www.phillipsprograms.org).

**LEGO Building Competition.** 12:30-3:30 p.m., Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia is hosting a LEGO building competition for youths between the ages of fifth-tenth grade. Participants are required to raise \$75 to participate in the event to support the work of Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia prior to the event. Call 70 3-521-9890, ext. 105.

**Rockin’ The Hill.** 9 a.m., Hunter Mill Country Day School, 2021 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. Children’s music band Rocknoceros will perform. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 day of show. 703-281-4422 or [www.rockinthehill.com](http://www.rockinthehill.com).

**Saturday Jazz.** 6:30 p.m., Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. The James Madison High School Jazz Band performs. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. Free. 703-255-6360 or [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

**Victorian Hanging Basket Workshop.** 10 a.m., Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Laurie Short, horticulturist, on filling a moss-covered basket with foliage and flowering plants. Topics include soil mixes, fertilizers, maintenance requirements and appropriate plants. \$30/person. Reservations required; call 703-255-3631.

**Miss Belle’s Sing-Along.** 10:30 a.m. at the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Enjoy old favorites and original songs. Birth-5 with adult. 703-938-0405.

**“Little Women.”** 7 p.m., Oakton High School, 2900 Sutto Road, Vienna. Oakton High School will perform “Little Women.” \$10/person. Visit [www.oaktondrama.org](http://www.oaktondrama.org).

**Edward Faine.** 10-11 a.m., Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Smart Markets at Oakton presents children’s book author Edward Faine at its farmers’ market. Faine will read from his book “Bebop Babies,” which introduces children to famous jazz musicians and the musical instruments they played. Musical selections will accompany a slideshow featuring the book’s text and illustrations. Contact Jean Janssen at 703-463-0690 or [jean@smartmarkets.org](mailto:jean@smartmarkets.org).

**Michelle Renee Band.** 5-7 p.m., Palladium Civic Place Green, 1445 Laughlin Ave., McLean. The Michelle Renee Band will perform a wide variety of classic country, honky-tonk and western swing, including vintage sounds of Trisha Yearwood, Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline. Free. Call 703-288-9505.

**“Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.”** 7 p.m., Great Falls United Methodist Church, 10100 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Biblical saga of Joseph and his coat of many colors comes to life in this musical. Free. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m.; reservations recommended. Call 703-759-3705.

**VES Jammers.** 10:30 a.m., Vienna Town Green, 144 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. The Vienna Elementary Jammers, a percussion band consisting of third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade students, will perform. They will be performing on Saturday, May 16th, at the Vienna Town Green. The James Madison High School Jazz Band will follow.

**SUNDAY/MAY 17**  
**Asylum Street Spankers “Sausage Fest 2009.”** 8 p.m. at Jammin’ Java,

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## SCHOOLS

# Attracted to Drama at Oakton High

PHOTO BY SARAH KASHANIAN/OAKTON HIGH SCHOOL

For young actress, this is her final musical; for drama teacher, it's her first musical at the school.

BY ELLIE KAUFMAN  
OAKTON HIGH SCHOOL

As senior Amanda Herman prepares for a leading role in her final musical of her high school career, drama teacher Vanessa Gelinas prepares for her debut musical as Oakton High School's musical director.

For Herman, the musical, "Little Women," will be her final production, but for Gelinas, the musical is the beginning of her career as full-time theater director.

For the past four years, Herman has worked closely with Gelinas.

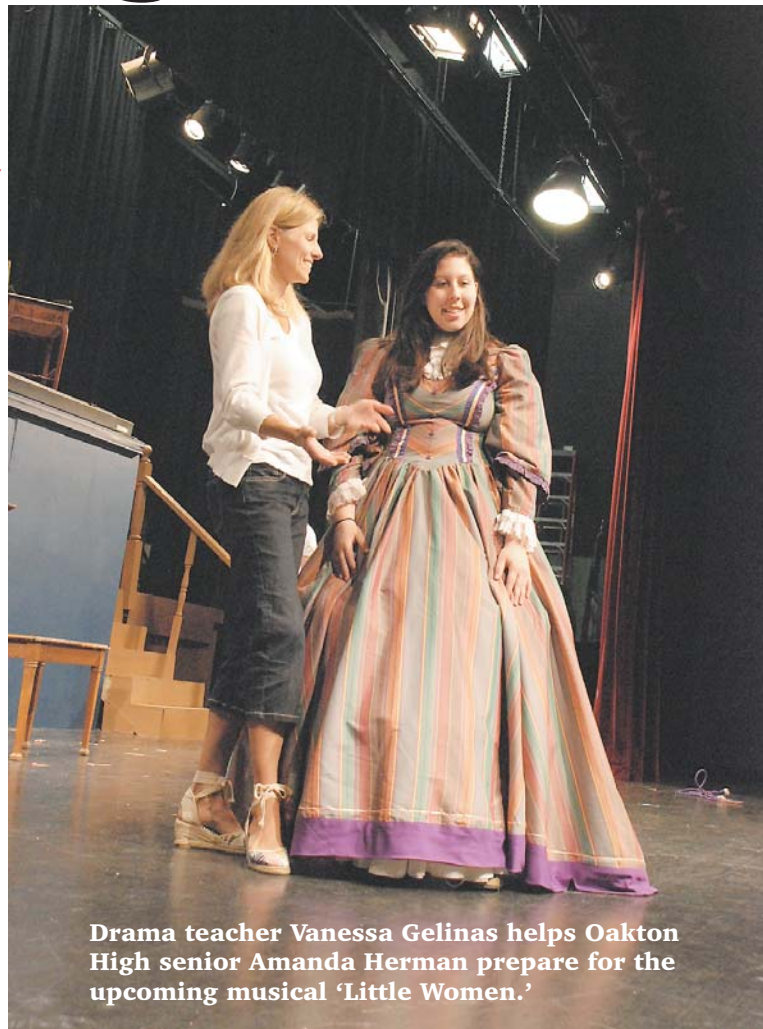
Although this is Gelinas' first year as a full-time teacher, Herman has worked with her in past productions and the two have become much closer throughout the course of the past year.

"I feel like Ms. Gelinas really understands who I am not only as an actress but also as a person," Herman said. "I learned a lot from just watching Ms. Gelinas direct us. I really benefited this year from having her as well, because we have worked on skills that will help us later on like resume head shots, auditioning skills and working on the shows altogether."

Before Gelinas took over at the beginning of the school year as full-time director, former drama teacher Skip Bromley was the head of the drama department. While Bromley brought important skills to the department, Gelinas offers something different.

"She has a lot of great publicity ideas, and she has worked a lot more in the professional theater than Mr. Bromley," Herman said. "She has a lot of knowledge about the business right now."

**FOR HERMAN**, the knowledge she has gained about the business as a whole is imperative to her future career choice. Herman will be attending James Madison Uni-



Drama teacher Vanessa Gelinas helps Oakton High senior Amanda Herman prepare for the upcoming musical 'Little Women.'

**"She is involved in every aspect and she loves every aspect of theater."**

— Vanessa Gelinas

versity in the fall where she will study theater, and hopes to work in theater after graduation.

"I would have discovered my love for theater at any school I went to, but I wouldn't have had as many opportunities if I hadn't gone to Oakton," Herman said. "If I wasn't given the opportunity to be cast all of the time and work backstage also, I wouldn't have gotten the whole picture."

Gelinas said she thinks Herman will be successful in her future career choice. Over the past year, Herman has demonstrated responsibility and dedication to the drama department as a whole.

"She is such a hardworking person in every aspect," Gelinas said. "For example, for this show, she is in my seventh period tech class painting the sets, she is in drama class working on scenes and she

is rehearsing after school. She is involved in every aspect and she loves every aspect of theater."

Herman and Gelinas have worked closely together throughout the year in making the transition from Bromley to a new musical director and in expanding Oakton's theater department.

"I didn't want it to be a huge change because the theater department works really well," Gelinas said. "We did join Cappies this year for the first time, and Amanda played a large role in starting that. She got our critics team organized, and a lot of their reviews have been published."

**FOR GELINAS**, the biggest adjustment has been time management. Herman has served as a stabilizing figure while Gelinas attempts to balance all of the many components that go into putting on a musical.

"Amanda has one of those memories where you ask her to do something, and the next thing you know she will show up and already have it done," Gelinas said. "I hope the younger kids see how hard she works and will follow her example."

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