

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 29, 2020



Presentation to the Board, Speaker Harry Jackson on TJHSST Admissions



Presentation to the Board, Speaker Vern Williams on TJHSST Admissions



Superintendent Scott Brabrand, Fairfax County Public Schools



Laura Jane H. Cohen, Springfield District Representative



Tamara D. Kaufax, Lee District Representative

## Fighting Systemic Racism Leading to TJ Admissions

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Last week, the Fairfax County School Board continued to address systemic issues that impact student diversity at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. According to U.S News and World Reports, the school is ranked first in National and Virginia rankings, yet Black and Hispanic youth are significantly underrepresented, each at 2 percent. The Board voted unanimously, directing Superintendent Brabrand to “establish a plan for student talent development and put into action means for student potential identification and outreach.”

Plans might include, but not be limited to: “1. Strengthening the equity of access to advanced academic curriculum and strategies for all students regardless of AAP (Advanced Academic Programs) ... 2. Establishing a plan to have full-time Advanced Academic resource teachers in all remaining elementary schools, and a .5 in each middle school; 3. Increasing administrator and teacher awareness of the Young Scholars program in FCPS and strive to ensure it is administered uniformly and with fidelity with the goal of expanding it to all schools; 4. Developing a

communications plan to help parents understand how their children can benefit from participation in Advanced Academic Programs and invest in family engagement to facilitate participation of historically underrepresented students in advanced academic programs; 5. Providing an analysis of math and science curriculum offering in all elementary and middle schools; Providing an analysis of extracurricular STEM opportunities in all elementary and middle schools.”

**DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING** portion of the meeting, more than a dozen speakers addressed the Board that evening. Harry Jackson, a member of the Coalition for TJ, said, “We encourage and embrace diversity. We want to see more black and Hispanic children at TJ but this half-baked plan by the Superintendent, school board, and the school principal is not going to work. It will simply make TJ white again.”

Vern Williams said, “The school board would never select a superintendent, or any other administrator based on a lottery...The aforementioned groups would expect their accomplishments (to be) considered as well as being able to demonstrate a passion for doing the job. Students demand the same consideration when applying to TJ.”

## Pressure Mounts To Return to School

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Last week, the week of Oct. 19 held important information for Fairfax County Public Schools families. Superintendent Scott Brabrand held a virtual town hall Monday and proposed that pre-K and kindergarten students begin to go to school on Nov. 16. First and second-grade students are expected to return on Nov. 30. Grades 3-6 will tentatively return on Jan. 4, and grades 7-12 are scheduled to return on Feb. 1.

On Thursday, Oct. 22, eleven of the twelve Fairfax County School Board members met virtually for a regular meeting and took action on multiple agenda items, including Brabrand’s proposed timing.

On the Return to School Timeline, motion on the final resolution carried. Still, Laura Jane H. Cohen, Springfield District Representative, Tamara D. Kaufax, Lee District Representative and Karl V. Frisch, Providence District Representative voted no, with Elaine V. Tholen abstaining. Cohen said, “We must get this right, and when our principals tell us it cannot be implemented properly, especially with the new concurrent model if we try to speed this timeline up, I think we have to listen ...I will be voting against this.”

The resolution read: “Consider bringing group 7 (ES 3-6, Secondary Public Day Programs-Spec. Ed; Burke MS, Cedar Lane, Quander Road, and students with targeted learner profiles at the Davis & Pulley Center) and group 8 (Middle and High School Students in Grades 6-12 and remaining students at the Davis & Pulley Career Centers) back earlier than the Superintendent’s proposed schedule presented to the Board on Oct. 15. The Superintendent will provide a recommendation to the Board on Nov. 12 to see if there is a way to bring back 3-6th graders earlier than Jan. 4 (including 6h graders from the Mason district) and bringing High

School students back earlier than Feb. 1.”

The Board approved a second Return to School motion, directing the Superintendent to develop a clearly defined metric related to COVID positivity rates in the community. This metric would help dictate when schools would open or close. It needed to be easily understood and published regularly.

**THE BOARD** approved the FY2021 Revised Budget acting on Gov. Northam’s Oct. 8 announcement of new allocations of the CARES Act dollars, allotting \$32.2 million to Fairfax County Public Schools. The total is based on a formula of \$175 per pupil for fall enrolment. The figure for Fairfax County, the highest in the Commonwealth, is just under 1 percent of the County’s school budget of \$3.2 billion for this year.

According to the Office of the Governor, “The funding will support COVID-19 preparedness and response measures for the 2020–2021 school year, including testing supplies, personal protective equipment, sanitization, and technology for distance learning.”

Tamara D. Kaufax, Lee District Representative, said, “Time is of the essence,” referencing that funds must be spent by Dec. 30. The Board unanimously approved the funding and allocated it toward the Corona Relief Fund (CRF) with proposed expenditures to be determined.

The Board also approved the purchase of teacher replacement laptops and expansion of FCPSOn with student laptop purchases for grades 3, 4, and remaining to 5 up to the dollar amounts available.

The Board approved in part the school reassignment appeal of a student who possessed a firearm during the virtual instructional program in which other students were participating. The Board also approved modifying the Division Superintendent’s disciplinary decision.

Item	Total Device Counts	Total Cost
Teacher Replacement Laptops	4,500	\$4,275,000
Estimated Grade 3 Computer	14,300	\$7,132,670
Estimated Grade 4 computer	14,800	\$7,381,120
Estimated Grade 5 computer	8,300	\$4,151,270
Grand Total	41,900	\$22,940,060

The Board approved the purchase of teacher replacement laptops and expansion of FCPSOn with student laptop purchases for grades 3, 4, and 5 as shown.

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#WeAreAlexandria



**Old Town | \$1,565,000**

Exciting river views from this distinctive 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath Harborside townhouse featuring a new Lobkovich chef's kitchen, hardwood floors, 2 fireplaces and an elevator. A living room bay window looks over a private patio with the Potomac River beyond. The kitchen with adjacent family room offers glistening water vistas from floor-to-ceiling glass doors. More breathtaking views from a wall of windows in the primary bedroom suite including a marble bath with double vanities. Two car garage parking completes this pristine home.

**Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421**  
[www.BabsBeckwith.com](http://www.BabsBeckwith.com)



**Rosemont | \$1,350,000**

Exquisite in every way! Gourmet kitchen with high-end stainless appliances, soapstone counters, custom cabinetry, & energy-efficient double-pane windows. Fully landscaped yard with 100+ native perennials, pond, and potting shed. Easy walk to Metro.

**Robin Arnold 703.966.5457**  
[www.RobinArnoldSells.com](http://www.RobinArnoldSells.com)

**VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 10/31, 12PM**



**Del Ray | \$1,099,000**

4-bedroom, 2-bath expanded craftsman, located 2 blocks off "The Avenue" & blocks from Metro. Kitchen boasts stainless appliances and granite countertops. Great room with cathedral/vaulted ceiling, fireplace. Separate apartment/au-pair suite. 507 E Alexandria Ave.

**Jen Walker 703.675.1566**  
[www.JenWalker.com](http://www.JenWalker.com)



**Rosecrest | \$835,000**

Charming 3-bedroom, 2-bath home, first floor features lovely wood floors, 2 bedrooms, a renovated bath, formal living room & kitchen opening to a large dining area. The entire second floor is the primary bedroom suite with a sitting area. Expansive screened porch.

**Julian Burke 703.867.4219**  
[www.JulianBurke.com](http://www.JulianBurke.com)

**OPEN SUN 11/1, 2-4PM**



**Alexandria | \$719,900**

Spacious and charming! One mile south of Old Town is this 5-bedroom, 3.5-bath townhome with garage! With a RARE main-level primary suite this 3,000 SF townhome is freshly painted and with new carpet and classic updates throughout!

**Janet Caterson Price 703.622.5984**  
[www.JanetPriceHomes.com](http://www.JanetPriceHomes.com)

**OPEN 10/31, 12-2PM & 11/1, 1-4PM**



**Potomac Greens \$898,000**

The deck off the kitchen, rooftop terrace, and a 2-car garage are a few of the special features of this lovely 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath home. Steps from community pool & fitness. 707 Rose Sq.

**VIRTUAL OPENS:**  
10/31, 2PM Instagram @ jkhogangroup\_realtors.  
11/1, 11:30AM FB @ SweetHomeAlexandria.

**Lisa Groover 703.919.4426**  
[www.LisaGroover.com](http://www.LisaGroover.com)

**OPEN SUN 11/1, 2-4PM**



**Old Town \$875,000**

Welcome to the Moses Hepburn Home, a unique, circa 1850 semi-detached townhome with 2 bedrooms with en-suite baths, an office/library space with separate entrance, exposed brick walls, original pine floors and many special details. Fantastic location in the heart of Old Town. 206 N Pitt Street

**Jodie Burns 571.228.5790**  
[www.JodieBurns.com](http://www.JodieBurns.com)



**Belle View \$340,000**

Sought after 3-level townhouse unit. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, refinished wood floors & fresh paint. Open up the kitchen or move right in. Spacious lower level is great for an office or family room plus laundry room and extra storage. Plenty of parking and lovely courtyard. HayesWoodHomes.com

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The future of River Farm remains uncertain.



The future of River Farm remains uncertain.

# More Gather to Save River Farm

Board of Supervisors offers unanimous support.

BY KEN MOORE  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**T**he American Horticultural Society's intent to sell historic River Farm is still sending shock waves through those who believed the property and house were preserved forever. River Farm, northernmost of George Washington's five farmhouses, has a complicated history that was supposed to end with the horticultural society's purchase of the property with the help of Philanthropist Enid Annenberg Haupt in the early 1970s, under the condition that the property remain open to the public.

"This is a stunning announcement," said Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross. "The society was able to purchase the 27 acres agreeing to keep the property open to the public. That was a commitment to the public. It is imperative that we work to create whatever needs to be created to maintain this as something for the public."

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck informed the Board of Supervisors during its meeting on Oct. 20, 2020. Storck and Chairman Jeff McKay hope to save River Farm through historic designation.

"We believe we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve a piece of our nation and our country's history, but first we must collect all the information needed about the preservation process, timeline and legal implications to ensure sound, long-term decisions," said Storck.

Storck hopes to partner with the AHS Board, a divided board he said, "for them to slow down this process and give us time to come up with solutions that will allow River Farm to remain publicly accessible and not be sold to a private developer."

The Department of Planning & Development Heritage Resources staff will create an expedited Historic Overlay District for River Farm. "We further direct Heritage Resources staff to assemble and provide all this information and deliver it no later than three weeks from today's date," Stock said during the Board Matters portion of the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 20.

County staff has already started this process and the deadline is feasible, according to Storck.

"But the only real protection is for the AHS board to work with the community to preserve what's there," said Storck. "They have to be willing to work with us."

A public body or park authority would not be able to pay more than the appraised value, a reported \$18.2 million.

McKay said the situation was unusual and urgent.

"Given the sense of urgency here, and our opportunity and the narrow window we might have to have an impact here I think it was important to do that," he said.

"This is going to require some level of creativity at some point to save," said McKay. "We certainly can see all the options this Board could pursue. We need to have a wide open conversation about that to make sure we are using all the flexibility we possibly can to save a treasure here."

**"The only real protection is for the AHS board to work with the community to preserve what's there. They have to be willing to work with us."**

— Dan Storck,  
Mount Vernon District Supervisor

**PUBLIC OUTCRY** has been huge.

"It's sort of stunning to try to figure out the philosophical approach that the AHS has always had and then says, 'Oh let's sell it for development. It's diametrically opposed to what we thought was their philosophy,'" said Gross.

"When this stunning announcement was first made we all heard from people who said the county has to buy it. Well, that's not necessarily the approach, it needs to be preserved, it needs to be saved, it sounds like this is the approach we would need, but time is of the essence."

**AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** made its announcement on Sept. 4, 2020, and continues to defend its decision.

The majority of its Board, they said, called the sale, "the most viable option to allow for the continuation of our national nonprofit during very difficult financial times," said Terry Hayes,

AHS Board Chair.

"Like many national, member-based nonprofits, our revenue streams are being reduced by the on-line habits of a population outside our traditional community. ... With the added financial strain caused by COVID-19, we have reevaluated our priorities."

"The proceeds from the sale of River Farm will be used to create a significant endowment which has been the missing link in

our financial viability. And so, the time has come," said Hayes. "As we prepare to pass on the stewardship of River Farm, we share the community's hope of finding a new owner who will work to preserve and protect this beautiful and historic property."

**GEORGE WASHINGTON ACQUIRED** the 27.57-acre property at 7931 East Boulevard Drive in 1760, when it was called Clifton's Neck.

After a series of different owners and different names, the Soviet Embassy offered to buy the property in 1971 for use as a retreat for its staff. But during the Cold War, "many across the world objected to the thought of George Washington's farm becoming the possession of the Soviet Union," according to the board matter Oct. 20.

"As a result, Congress and the State Department asked Mr. Matheson to withdraw the property from the market," according to the Board Matter.

Philanthropist Enid Annenberg Haupt, a member of the American Horticultural Society, helped the organization purchase the property and make it the headquarters of the society under the condition that the property remain open to the public and in honor of former president George Washington, of the nation's first great gardeners and horticulturalists.

The property was named River Farm.

"AHS has long sought to make River Farm a living representation of its principles and organizational vision of raising awareness about and fostering sustainable, earth-friendly gardening and horticultural practices. Thus, we were greatly shocked and saddened by the news on September 4, 2020 that the AHS Board of Directors intended to sell the River Farm property," said Storck.

# A Good Place for Affordable Housing?

Proposal could be a step toward 5,000 unit goal.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE GAZETTE



Board Matters: James Walkinshaw

**“We have an opportunity to provide high quality housing in an area where there are thousands of employment opportunities, transit access, commercial offices nearby, retail nearby, and an elementary school in walking distance.”**

— Braddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw

**B**raddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw located prime real estate to create 200-250 family units of affordable housing: two parking lots of the Fairfax Government Center.

“It has been a priority of this Board since before I was elected to identify county owned land to devote to the construction of affordable housing. I don’t know that there is a better location in the county than this,” said Walkinshaw, at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020. “We have an opportunity to provide high quality housing in an area where there are thousands of employment opportunities, transit access, commercial offices nearby, retail nearby, and an elementary school in walking distance.”

The Board of Supervisors reports that at least 15,000 net new affordable housing units are needed during the next 15 years to help meet the housing needs of residents at all income levels.

“The market is obviously not providing low income housing. It’s up to us to figure out a way to do it,” said Dranesville Supervisor John Foust

THE COST OF HOUSING, including rentals, in Fairfax County is out of reach for many who work in Fairfax, said Lee Supervisor Rodney Lusk. “Housing is foundational,” he said.

“There are people working here in this building right now who need affordable housing,” said Chairman Jeff McKay.

“It absolutely cannot be overstated what a need we have for housing in our community,” said Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchik. “It’s not the easiest to find opportunities, I appreciate the opportunity to see what can be done here.”

“The Board made a commitment,” said Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith. “This is a

good place to see what could happen.”

Environmentally, taking existing parking lots at office parks to create housing in the county, is better than open space projects that require the destruction of trees.

“The idea of taking our parking lots which are underutilized [and] in some cases utilize them for public housing particularly when they are publicly owned is a no brainer. This is something we need to look at in a number of other different places in the county,” said Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn.

The Redevelopment Housing Authority in 2017 created 270 units at Residences at Government Center. Walkinshaw recommended advising the housing authority that this could be another viable project.

CHAIRMAN, Jeff McKay reminded everyone about the necessary land use process that includes the requirement of public in-

put. He said the Board’s action Tuesday simply advises the Redevelopment Housing Authority of the possibility, not that the Board has approved any specific project.

Mason Supervisor Penny Gross and Springfield Supervisor Pat Herry voiced concerns.

“I understand there’s no plans for this to be senior or disabled low income housing; those are my thresholds for approving certainly workforce housing,” said Herry.

“I have mixed feelings on this one. This gives me pause,” said Gross. “I do not object asking the question, and support this Board matter for asking the questions but do have concerns for the location.”

“We need to be very careful about the public space that we have here at the government center and the opportunities for large events that we don’t have any place else,” she said.

## Getting a Close-Up View of Native Fish

Fairfax County waters are home to 14 of Virginia’s 24 scientific ‘families’ of fishes.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

**B**ig Rocky Run, at Eleanor Lawrence Park in Chantilly, was the stage for a recent demonstration of stream monitoring and fish identification for Virginia Master Naturalist trainees during a day of field study. The demonstration was conducted by Fairfax County’s Stormwater Planning Division, which regularly monitors the species of fish in area streams as a direct measure of stream health.

The naturalists’ field trip, on Oct. 24, followed an earlier lecture on ichthyology (the study of fishes) by Fairfax County Ecologist Chris Ruck. During the field trip, Ruck, and members of his Stormwater Planning team, used a specially designed electro-fisher unit, which temporarily stuns fish within a limited range charge-line between two portions of the



Stormwater Planning Division Ecologist Chris Ruck, and team members monitor Fairfax County urban streams - identify fish.

equipment. Air in the fish bladders causes them to rise to the surface where they can be netted for study, then released.

Fairfax County includes more than 800 miles of streams. Monitoring assesses their water and natural habitat quality and gives a picture of the overall health of our waterways. It also is required by state and federal regulations. Our County is part of the watershed for the Chesapeake Bay, a water body protected by environmental regulations.

These efforts are not related to our drinking water since stormwater is not treated and runs through a separate drainage system. Rating following a 2019 sampling found 88 percent of county streams were

rated in fair to poor condition. According to the Public Works and Environmental Department, this means our streams are impaired and lack biodiversity.

The portion of Big Rocky Run through the park is considered to be in better condition than many other streams. On this occasion, the team netted 16 of the 210 species of fish common to Virginia waters. Fairfax County is home to 14 of the 24 fish families, found in the Commonwealth, which includes for example, eels, minnows, perches, suckers, and sunfish.

“Virginia Master Naturalists” is an all-volunteer organization which provides education, outreach, and service for the beneficial

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE



The Rosyside Dace is a member of the same scientific family as carp and goldfish.

management of natural resources and natural areas in the Commonwealth. The organization, its training program and projects are jointly sponsored by the following state agencies and departments: Virginia Cooperative Extension; Game and Inland Fisheries; Forestry; Conservation and Recreation; Museum of Natural History; Environmental Quality.

For more information on stream monitoring or the Virginia Master Naturalists Program, readers are directed to these sites: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater); [www.vmnfairfax.org](http://www.vmnfairfax.org).

OPINION

# October: Save a Pedestrian Month

Reaching for zero pedestrian deaths.

BY DAN STORCK  
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT SUPERVISOR



Saving pedestrian lives is each of our responsibility and takes each of our efforts, whether a vehicle driver, passenger or just walking. October has been named National Pedestrian Safety Month to draw attention to the number of highway deaths each year and remind each of us of our crucial role in getting to zero pedestrian deaths.

Most recently, between 2017 and 2018, the number of deaths have increased nationally by 3% to 6,283. Worse still, this is the highest number of pedestrian deaths since 1990.

Sadly, Fairfax County is not immune from pedestrian fatalities. There have been 12 pedestrian fatalities in 2020 thus far; four of those deaths have occurred along the Richmond Highway Corridor just since January. While drivers and walkers need to increase our mindfulness of the other, we are also doing the same for the Richmond Highway Widening and the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) improvements slated to begin construction in the next years.

Fairfax County's Pedestrian Program focuses on the three E's – Engineering, Education and Enforcement.

Engineering focuses on funding and construction of new facilities, like the BRT project, that meet Virginia and federal safety standards and guidelines for accessibility. Education refers to ensuring that state laws and safety tips are resident-focused with programs like the StreetSmart or DrivingItHome campaign and the "Yield to Pedestrian" sign program. Enforcement refers to police and their responsibility to enforce pedestrian and traffic laws, as well as educate residents about these laws.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as the seasons change and nights become longer, the risk pedestrians encounter increases significantly. Between September and Feb-

ruary, over 30% of pedestrian fatalities occur between 6 – 9 p.m. With the increased risk to pedestrians this time of the year and Daylight Saving time ending this Sunday, Nov. 1, please be extra careful as you walk or drive.

The NHTSA suggested safety tips for pedestrians: Walk on sidewalks when available or face traffic; stay alert and don't be distracted by handheld devices; use well-lit intersections or crosswalks while crossing the road; and be visible by wearing bright clothing during the day and reflective clothing and use of a flashlight at night. Additionally, it's important to make eye contact with drivers as they approach you to make sure you are seen.

Safety tips for drivers include to always watch for pedestrians; slow down when approaching

crosswalks; yield to pedestrians; follow the speed limit, especially in neighborhoods and school zones; and be cautious while backing up.

Due to COVID-19, many more of our neighbors are walking and enjoying spending time outside. Let's Look Out for each other;

Slow Down, and

Be Aware of our surroundings while we are driving or walking in our neighborhoods!

Helpful links:

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/pedestrian-safety/national-pedestrian-safety-month>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news2/what-we-can-do-to-prevent-pedestrian-crashes-and-fatalities/>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/walk/faq>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/chief/crime-and-safety/traffic/pedestriansafety>

<https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/programs/>

[http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/VDOT\\_PSAP\\_Report\\_052118\\_with\\_Appendix\\_A\\_B\\_C.pdf](http://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/VDOT_PSAP_Report_052118_with_Appendix_A_B_C.pdf)



## Dear Terry Hayes and Members of the AHS Board

As a member of the American Horticultural Society and a volunteer at River Farm, I need to express my concern over the recent actions of the board. In my experience, the recent emails from Terry Hayes to the volunteers and to the AHS members have been the only communication received by either regarding the board's earthshaking decisions. While I appreciate the frankness expressed regarding the dire financial circumstances, especially given the ravages of the Coronavirus pandemic, I am appalled that the whole AHS organization has not been informed and drawn into the struggle. Such a crisis ought to be faced by the entire organization, and not be preempted by a board decision of such far-reaching impact!

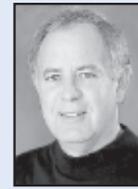
I cannot account for this as anything other than a colossal failure of communication, and an indifference to the needs and desires of members, staff, and

volunteers. Plus, having the former board chairman and vice chairman having an obvious conflict of interest in the initial decision to merge with APGA and sell River Farm to establish an endowment, makes the lack of communication all the more odious and suspect.

With new leadership of the board and the beginning of wider communication, I would like to suggest further transparency with members, staff and volunteers, and the opportunity to start the decision-making process over, with a wider range of options on the table, and ample time to consider all the possibilities. I feel strongly that all concerned would benefit greatly by that approach.

Lou Schuetze  
Mount Vernon

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**Alex/Riverside Estates** \$599,900  
8402 Bound Brook

Come check out this beautiful "Virginia" model, offering a 5BR, 3BA Split w/large 2 car garage & a lovely deck off the kitchen overlooking a private & fully fenced bkyd. Many updates including roof, vinyl siding, & double pane replacement windows in '04, furnace & A/C replaced in '19, HWH in '12. Beautiful refinished hwd floors on the main level which offers 4 spacious BRs, & 2 full BAs. The lower level offers a 5th BR, 3rd full bath & spacious family room w/a cozy gas FPL & walkout to the bkyd, all perfect for an in-law suite. This wonderful community is a short walk to Mt. Vernon Estate, 5 min drive (S) to Ft. Belvoir, 15 mins (N) to Old Town, 25 mins (N) to Reagan National Airport, 30-35 mins to D.C. and the Pentagon.



**Alex/Riverside Estates** Lower \$700s  
8503 Cherry Valley

Riverside Estates' largest split foyer model (Concord) w/2 car garage & lots of updates, i.e., roof 2001, HVAC 2012, baths 2010, furnace 2001, updated double pane windows 2019. Kitchen was opened to the dining & living rooms & is absolutely stunning: granite & quartz counters, large island w/seating capacity & beautiful hwd floors. Oversized MBR & MBA share a lovely gas FPL to add charm to the master suite. A large lower level offers a family rm which also has a gas FPL, a 4th BR & 3rd full bath. Plenty of storage behind the 2-car garage. Large lovely fenced bkyd, perfect for entertaining. 5 minute drive to Ft. Belvoir (S), 15 minutes to Alexandria, (N), 25 mins to National Airport (N) and 33 mins to the Pentagon (N).



**Alex/Hybla Valley Farm** Mid \$600's  
7720 Schelhorn Road

Are you tired of stairs and longing for 1 level living? A beautiful partially covered front porch that you can sit out & wave to your neighbors as they walk by? How about entertaining on a large deck that overlooks a large, fenced bkyd & watching your children/grandchildren congregate & play? We have that... plus 4BRs, 2BAs, beautiful refinished hwd floors & freshly painted interior. Throw in replacement double pane windows, 6 panel interior doors, a beautifully updated kitchen w/granite counters, SS appliances, that is open to the living & dining areas. Finally, an oversized 1 car garage w/a 12'x10' storage/workshop area on the end, & extensive parking available on a large driveway. Ideal location, less than 1 mile to Mt. Vernon Hospital & Sherwood Hall Library, 10 mins to Ft. Belvoir(S) & Old Town (N), 20 mins to Ntl Airport & 30 mins to D.C. & the Pentagon (N). Come take a look you won't be sorry.

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## Building Trust in our Police Officers

By SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

This column, number two of three columns, focuses on reforms to Virginia's policing practices, legislation I helped craft with Senator Mamie Locke. Last week, I reported on the criminal justice reforms that the Virginia General Assembly approved in our recent special session. Next week, I will discuss changes in Virginia's budget.



lize a use-of-force continuum and train to use deadly force only as a last resort.

### Improvements in Policing Practices

Under Virginia's current laws, if an officer commits misconduct, resigns mid-investigation and is terminated, there is no requirement to share that officer's employment records. This is how officers who use faulty judgment remain employed, by "hopping" or moving to another department.

Our bill requires police or deputies switching jobs to sign employment file releases, requires record-sharing and eliminates the law forcing termination of a decertification proceeding upon an officer's resignation. It encourages departments to require psychological screening for new hires.

The bill requires training in racial bias, mental health awareness, substance abuse disorders and cognitive disabilities and creates a state-wide mandatory baseline training. The bill prohibits law enforcement agencies from acquiring military equipment like mine-resistant personnel carriers, 50-caliber rifles and weaponized drones.

Today, officers can only be decertified for conviction of crimes or positive drug tests. Our legislation creates an officer code of conduct and use of force standards that can be grounds for decertification. We also allow decertification for lying in court and withholding "Brady materials," evidence tending to show a person is innocent.

Our legislation criminalizes sex between officers and people in custody. It prohibits chokeholds or shooting at moving motor vehicles ex-

cept in self-defense, prohibiting what occurred in the shooting of Bijan Ghaisar in the Mount Vernon area.

We require warning before deadly force is used if feasible, and created statutory standards for the use of deadly force. The bill creates an affirmative duty for officers to intervene when they see another officer using excessive force.

Virginia will become the third state to ban "no knock" warrants. A national ban proposed by Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul is pending in Congress. We also prohibited officers from serving search warrants after dark unless specific authorization is requested, justified and approved by a Circuit Court judge.

Earlier in 2020, we passed legislation requiring annual reports on the race of citizens and outcome of traffic stops. We recently built upon that law by also requiring annual reporting by all Virginia's law enforcement agencies on use of force and expanded reporting to pedestrian encounters where a search or arrest occurs.

### Making Records Available

Commonwealth's attorneys were frustrated by localities' refusal to provide records in cases of police shootings. For example, Fairfax County's delay in providing records in the John Geer case stalled prosecution for two years. Our legislation requires localities to turn over records to prosecutors for all criminal cases involving a police officer if the officer is being investigated or is a witness in a case.

We hope these reforms will make our law enforcement stronger by further professionalizing law enforcement agencies, building community trust through expanding transparency and ensuring that "bad apples" cannot jump departments.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. Please email me at [scott@scottsurovell.org](mailto:scott@scottsurovell.org) with your suggestions.

### Diverse Input Sought

During the drafting process, I sought diverse views in at least a dozen meetings with state and local law enforcement leaders. We held meetings with local officers on the street, community advocates, and heard testimony from national experts and state law enforcement leaders in a public hearing.

Despite some media reports, Virginia's law enforcement agencies supported most of these measures because most larger departments already train to these standards. Sixty of Virginia's 430 law enforcement agencies are accredited by state and national organizations that confirm they hold their officers to high standards and follow best practices. No department trains officers to use chokeholds or shoot at moving cars, and accredited departments already uti-

## Election Day Is the Day You Vote!

By DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

The Nov. 3 election ends in less than one week. And I say "ends" because the election has been underway for several weeks now, and over 60 million people nationwide have already

cast their ballots! As you can see on the graphic from the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP), over 2.3 million Virginians have voted already -- early in-person and by mail. This number dwarfs the total absentee votes that were cast in Virginia during the last presidential election in 2016 -- we are now well over four times that previous total -- and people are still voting. Here in the 44th Delegate district, our neighbors in Kirkside precinct have the largest early voting turnout to date with 48.9% of registered voters. Almost half of all voters! That is followed by record turnout by Hollin Hall and Marlan voters at 47.9 and 47.8% respectively. Bucknell, Hybla Valley, Belle Haven, and other precincts along Richmond Highway are running lower, but still at strong



early voting levels, from 30 to 40%.

It's not just in Virginia either. Around the country, some form of no-excuse early voting is allowed in 38 states and the District of Columbia this year, some for the first time ever with new laws passed or due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, Virginia is leading the nation in early votes cast, and in expanded voting accessibility, moving from the 49th hardest state to vote four years ago, to the 12th easiest place to cast your vote in 2020 -- the largest

### Ease-of-vote shifts

From 2016 to 2020, states with the most dramatic shifts in ease-of-vote ranks, with a rank of 1 being easiest and 50 being most difficult, based on the Cost of Voting Index.

State	2016 Rank	2020 Rank
Virginia	49	12
Michigan	45	13
Hawaii	19	6
Vermont	21	9
Ohio	44	34
West Virginia	16	35
Missouri	29	48
Iowa	5	24
Georgia	35	49
Alaska	23	36

Source: Northern Illinois University

jump in rank for any state, according to Northern Illinois University. Virginia joins New Jersey, Vermont, and South Dakota as tied for the fourth-longest early voting period in the country: 45 days prior to an election. Alabama allows voting 55 days early, Pennsylvania 50 days, and Minnesota 46 days.

This year is our first election with many of the voting access reforms enacted by our new Democratic majority in the General Assembly, and Virginia voters are taking full advantage of fewer barriers to their voting rights. Probably the most substantial is the enactment of no-excuse-needed absentee (early) voting. Why you would need an excuse to give

SEE ELECTION DAY, PAGE 7

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A Connection Newspaper



## OPINION

### Election Day

FROM PAGE 6

to the government about why you want to vote early never made any sense to me. That's your business, not the government's. Whatever your reason is to vote early, you are not alone, and here in Mount Vernon and Lee we have had long lines at our two early voting locations at the Government Centers at 2511 Parkers Lane and at 6121 Franconia Road, respectively. When I went on Saturday in the morning, the line moved fast and was no longer than 90 minutes. One voter told me that he had been waiting to vote for four years! With his mask on, hiding his smile, it took me a moment to realize he was joking, but obviously, folks recognize the significance of this election and are unwilling to wait another day to vote. Indeed, the long lines have been inspiring to witness. Note that curbside voting is also an option too if you are COVID positive or unable to walk inside due to health concerns or advanced age.

This Saturday, Oct. 31 is the last day for early voting prior to Election Day on Nov. 3 (now a state holiday). The budget that we passed during the Special Session included language and funding for prepaid postage on mail-in absentee ballots, fulfilling my initiative to provide this earlier this year with my bill HB 220. This was an important cause prior to COVID — eliminating more costs to voting — but this need was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and the push to increase the accessibility of voting by mail. Budget language also mandated that localities install dropboxes to receive absentee ballots, which has eased lines for in-person voting and alleviates fears about delays in the mail service. The requirement for witness signatures for absentee ballots has been temporarily waived, and I plan to introduce legislation eliminating this requirement altogether as it just another nonsensical barrier to voting. In addition, to further ensure that all votes are counted, especially those that are coming from overseas from our service members and Americans living abroad, the deadline for ballots postmarked by Election Day to be received in order to be counted has been extended to the Friday following the election by 5 p.m.

Also, election officials must contact a voter within three days if a mistake is discovered with their ballot that would keep it from being counted, and voters will have until noon on the third day after Election Day to correct it. Remember, your vote not only makes a difference but it is your constitutional right. Please exercise it and vote!

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**They risk their lives to keep us safe. But radical left-wing Democrats want to defund and abolish the police, and put suburban families in harm's way.**

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# Local Filmmaker Uses a Pie Recipe to Highlight Family Change

The family and sweet potato pie is one of many highlights in the upcoming Alexandria Film Festival.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The parallels between a growth in family relationships, and a recipe for the family's sweet potato pie all come together in Sam Houston's indie film "12 Ingredients Over the Generations." What stays and what gets left behind? Houston asks in the film's introduction. It's one of the locally produced pieces in this year's Alexandria Film Festival which is coming up in early November.

"The pie is a metaphor for how things change as you go through the generations," Houston said.



Sam Hampton and Dara Sanders on the stage at a past festival.

Houston is a former resident of Hollin Hills and this is the fifth year he has been part of the film festival. He moved to Hollin Hills in 2005 and became immersed in the "Docs in Progress," program in Silver Spring

before recently moving out to Seattle to be with his children, who are now adults. The sweet potato pie film was filmed entirely in Alexandria.

Documentaries are the film genre that



Film festival's Claire Ensslin and Margaret Wohler.

Houston likes the most, and through the years, subjects he's touched on include a film about a city woman dreaming of moving out to the country, a film about transgender transition, an African American doctor, and one about an Asian artist, to name a few. His "exploring issues of race, gender and culture, primarily from a personal perspective, is driven by the belief that storytelling through film is one of our most efficient tools to ignite empathy and inspire social change," he said.

But as films evolve, so do his subjects. Houston's next documentary is about a friend that finds a rare British car sitting unnoticed in a barn in Texas. Turns out, this car is a rare MG he says is "the oldest-known Morris automobile imported from the UK to the US." It is now in Woodstock New York being brought back to life after 71 years, and will be featured in MG Motors 75th anniversary celebration. "It's a really big deal," he said.

Houston loves the film festival atmosphere and has been in many throughout the years. "It's a great opportunity to go and meet your peers, and learn from other filmmakers," he said. He's been recognized in the DC Independent Film Festival; the Social Justice Film Festival - Seattle; Seattle Transgender Film Festival; Utopia Film Festival - Greenbelt, Md.; and the Miami Independent Film Festival in Miami, Fla.

He is dedicated to socially conscious filmmaking, even if the antique car film he's working on is not in that genre. "I decided to do something completely different," he said.

## Alexandria Film Festival

The Alexandria Film Festival is in its 13th year and continues to showcase up and coming faces in the film industry on a local scale. This year the festival runs from Nov. 12-15 at 500 Alexandria Avenue. "The Alexandria Film Festival brings high-quality short and feature length films, documentaries, filmmaker panels, and arts presentations to the historic port city of Alexandria, Virginia," the website states. In addition to Houston's documentary, this year's films touch on subjects such as love at first sight, mothers finding comfort in each other after a tragedy, deportation, and big brother's watching eyes — they're everywhere.

This year, the Alexandria Film Festival and the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra are partnering with a combined expertise to produce a special blend of orchestral music and original film. The two organizations will commission five new films to be screened "live to picture" with American orchestral pieces performed by the orchestra.

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## Alexandria Film Festival

# Alexandria Film Festival Unveils 2020 Program: 45 Films To Be Screened Virtually, including 18 Premieres

Tickets Available Now at AlexFilmFest.com

The Alexandria Film Festival, which will debut virtually this year Nov. 12-15, announced on Tuesday its 2020 programming of 45 short and feature length fiction and nonfiction films, representing every genre. Topics in the films range from family traditions and unsung artists to stories of survival and union organizing. Stories range from a father suffering through a hilarious Kafkaesque journey trying to make his daughter's birthday wish come true to a dazzling animated fantasy from Argentina tracing the journey of souls through varying dimensions of existence.

Anchoring the festival's opening night and its 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Showcase of films is "9 to 5: The Story of a Movement" by Oscar-winning filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar. The documentary follows a group of office workers in the 1970s that organize a national movement for gender equality in the workplace. The movement inspired the 1980 Hollywood film "9 to 5" starring Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton, and Lily Tomlin. The 7 pm screening on Nov. 12 will be followed with a live Q&A with one of the principal subjects of the film,

Debbie Schneider.

Opening night also brings the D.C. premiere of "Trust Me," directed by Oscar-nominated Roko Belic. The film takes audiences to the front lines of the worldwide information battle creating an avalanche of negative news and misinformation and creating a gap between how we perceive the world and reality. How do we know what and who we can trust?

"We are thrilled to be able to bring '9to5: The Story of a Movement' and the premiere of 'Trust Me' to the greater Washington, D.C. metro area," said Margaret Wohler, chair of the festival. "Not only can audiences view an amazing slate of films, many of them by artists in our region, but we're bundling live and pre-recorded Q&A sessions with filmmakers in order to deliver a memorable festival experience."

Among fiction feature-length titles, "Her Name Was Jo" will screen as part of the festival's "Girl Power Showcase" on Nov. 14. Described by one judge as "Thelma and Louise" meets "Beasts of the Southern Wild," the film's main character is 10-year-old Jo who spends her days on the Shenandoah River with her best friend Selma, fishing, scrapping for metal — surviving. But when her abusive junkie stepfather dies, Jo decides, Selma in tow, to dump the body, steal the car, and set off across the country in search of her real dad, a legendary folk singer in Los Angeles.

Another standout feature of this year's festival: women direct nearly half the films. "As our nation celebrates the 19th amendment guaranteeing women's right to vote, we are honoring this milestone of equality by featuring a number of films by women and about women," said Wohler. "One goal of the festival is to give underrepresented voices in the film world the opportunity to be heard."

Festival patrons can also look forward to the popular Burke and Herbert Bank Family Showcase, which features films by and about young people. Two "Salute to Service Members" Showcases are offered free of charge to active and retired service members to celebrate the Veteran's Day Weekend falling on the same dates as the festival. The Sunrise Senior Living Old Town Showcase features a menu of seven short films — including one World Premiere.

Accessing the films online is simple. Viewers can either watch the films as scheduled in the festival program or watch within a



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

## CALENDAR



The 25th Annual Art on the Avenue festival moves to a virtual format for 2020, running through the holidays. www.artontheavenue.org/



### NOW THRU THE HOLIDAYS

Art on the Avenue. The 25th Annual Art on the Avenue festival will move to a virtual format for 2020, running through the holidays. Over 150 artists will be featured, offering handmade items in a wide range of mediums, including wheel-thrown vases and bowls, tiles, sculpture, tote bags and purses, drawings and pastels, knitted and crocheted hats and gloves, woven scarves and shawls, gourmet food, fused and blown glass, jewelry, paintings, photography, and much more. Traditionally held each fall on Mount Vernon Avenue, Art on the Avenue is a multicultural arts festival that strives to reflect the vibrant mix of the Del Ray community through the artists and their work, and draws an estimated 75,000 visitors each year. Visit www.artontheavenue.org.

**NIGHTMARE ALLEY** The Workhouse Arts Center announces that "Nightmare Alley" Haunted Drive-Thru is coming to Lorton for this year's Halloween season. "Nightmare Alley" is the first immersive drive-thru Halloween experience in the region. Zombies, swamp creatures, creepy clowns, and scary dolls are among 13 different scary scenes taking up residence on the Workhouse campus. These new campus inhabitants will scare and entertain visitors experiencing the attraction from the safety of their cars. There will be 13 nights of fright, now through Saturday, Oct. 31. Fridays and Saturdays from 7-11 p.m. each weekend in October, and Sunday Oct. 25 from 7-10 p.m. Visit https://www.workhousearts.org/nightmare-alley/

### OCT. 28 TO DEC. 9

Forty+ Project II. 3-4 p.m. Via Zoom. Forty+ celebrates the collective creativity of people past the age of 40. Fall Project 2 is directed by choreographer Kelsey Rohr through weekly sessions on Zoom (with outdoor or in-person meetings as conditions allow). The project is open to people of all physical facilities. Cost is \$100. Visit the website: https://www.janefranklin.com/adult-dance/forty-plus

### FRIDAY/OCT. 30

Vampire's Ball. 8 p.m. The Synthetic Theater Vampire's Ball will return Friday, October 30 from 8-10 p.m. as a live-streamed, interactive digital Halloween Party! Re-imagined as the Virtual Vampire Ball, the event will include clips from classic Synthetic Shows, Halloween trivia, a creepy choreography tutorial, digital dance party, and a cyber costume contest. Tickets are Pay-What-You-Can starting at \$5 and the event is recommended for ghouls ages 10 and up. Tickets can be purchased at www.synthetictheater.org/virtual-vampire-ball/

### FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, OCT. 31 TO DEC. 5

Alexandria Drive-In Movie Encore Series. At the Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, 5001 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria. The Alexandria Drive-In Theatre, presented by Alexandria based businesses ALX Community and The Garden, will kick off its Encore Series on Oct. 31 through Dec. 5 and will feature a popular collection of movie classics

and family favorites. Cost: \$35 per car/per screening. No refunds. 100% of ticket costs go to local Alexandria based charities. Visit the website: www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com

Schedule:  
Saturday, October 31 - Casper & The Mummy (Double Feature)  
Saturday, November 7 - Nanny McPhee & The Race (Double Feature)  
Sunday, November 8 - Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw  
Saturday, November 14 - The Secret Life of Pets & Pitch Perfect (Double Feature)  
Friday, November 20 - Sea Biscuit  
Saturday, November 21 - How to Train Your Dragon & 42 (Double Feature)  
Friday, December 4 - The Bourne Identity  
Saturday, December 5 - The Grinch & Love Actually (Double Feature)

### SATURDAY/OCT. 31

"Magic of Music" - Halloween Family Program. 1 p.m. Drew Owen, magician and cellist | Elizabeth Pulju-Owen, special guest violinist. Fun for the whole family when musical wizard Musico the Magnificent and special guest astonish and amuse with stunning feats of magic and phenomenal music for cello; also featuring costume prizes, socially distanced photo station and sanitized, no-contact treats. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Visit https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/

### SATURDAY/OCT. 31

"A Venetian Halloween" - Chamber Music. 5 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Members of the National Symphony Orchestra: Marissa Regni, violin and String Quartet. The Secret Garden travels to Venice for a spellbinding program by string players from the National Symphony Orchestra; add a Carnival masque to your face covering for an elegant Halloween with gorgeous music, including the "Autumn" Concerto from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Puccini's "Crisantemi" and other Italian composers. Visit https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/

### SATURDAY/OCT. 31

T-Rex Meet Up. 3-4 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Calling T-Rex fanatics of all ages! Join us in your best T-Rex costume on the front lawn of Carlyle House for some great photo ops, line dancing, a small parade around the block and a roaring contest! And of course, we will have individual bags of treats for participating dinosaurs! All COVID-19 procedures will be in place.

### SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Trick or Treat. 4-6 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Join on All Hallow's Eve for good old fashioned trickery and treats! Bring your little ghosts, goblins, princesses and action heroes to one of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings. We'll be handing out candy in individual bags. In case of inclement weather please, call museum for status of the event. All COVID-19 procedures will be in place.

### SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Death Comes to Carlyle House. 6-8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N Fairfax Street, Alexandria. In September 1780, John Carlyle passed away and the family would have gone into

mourning. Join us for an evening tour of the house to learn about death and mourning in the 18th century. Tours will be led through the house at 6pm, 7pm, and 8pm. Reservations are required as space is limited. All COVID-procedures will be in place during this tour. \$10 tickets available on the website.

### NOV. 3-27

"Gratitude" Art Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2120 Crystal Drive/ Gallery City Shops, Arlington/Gallery Underground in November presents Gratitude: Representing Thankfulness in Artwork, an all-member all-media show. The year 2020 has presented us with multiple physical, moral, spiritual and emotional challenges. Member artists have created work in the season's spirit of giving thanks, representing images of those things for which they are still grateful, despite the current world we face. In our Main Gallery are new works by our members on all themes, in media including oil, acrylic, pastel, watermedia, sculpture, glass, ceramics, wood and metalwork. Visit the website: https://galleryunderground.org/

### NOV. 6-28

"Women's Right to Vote: 100 Years Since the 19th Amendment" exhibit (November 6-28) features artwork by Del Ray Artisans, local high school students and 2020 graduates; and celebrates the achievements of women over the past 100 years. The movement towards equality in America continues today. Lift your voice and vote. Opening Day Appointments: Friday, November 6, 12-8 p.m. View exhibit at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Details: www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

### SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Jane Franklin Dance: Hidden Talents at Inner Ear Studios. 7:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Jane Franklin Dance presents a performance streamed live from Inner Ear Studios. Enjoy a Zoom performance event that is filled with real time performance all from the ease of your own living room. Tickets: free with donations accepted (\$10 suggested minimum to help JFD & Inner Ear Studios). Registration is required. Info: https://www.janefranklin.com/talents

### SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Watercolor Workshop: Orchids. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Some subjects just scream to be painted in watercolors, and orchids are one of those subjects. Come to Green Spring Gardens and let botanical artist Dawn Flores teach you how to plan and execute an orchid-inspired painting. At the "Watercolor Workshop: Orchids," get information on orchid anatomy and lessons on color. A variety of watercolor techniques and transfer practices will be presented. If you own an orchid, you are welcome to bring it along to use as your specimen. You also may work from photographs provided by the instructor. This class is designed for participants age 16 to adult and is appropriate for any skill level. Cost is \$94 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

# Thank you!

To our doctors, nurses, EMTs and all the heroes in the medical profession. Thank you to our frontline businesses working long hours stocking shelves, cashiering, bagging and cleaning. Thank you to our government officials and leaders who are making decisions to keep us safe. We appreciate all of you!

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**Here's how you can help support small businesses during the Covid-19 outbreak**

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## Highlights of Most Recent FXCO Board of Supervisors Meeting

**Confederate items leave, outdoor dining and fitness conditions expand, solar facilities arrive.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

The regular meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020, began with a reminder from Chairman Jeffrey McKay. "We're living in a pandemic world that is affecting our entire community from our children and businesses, and those who are ill with the virus. I'd ask that we keep everyone in Fairfax and around the world in our thoughts," he said. Highlights of the evening meeting included in person recognition of local honorees, approval of outdoor dining in enclosed tents with fire resistant heaters and the installation of photovoltaic panels for on-site electric generation on county-owned buildings.

Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield District) questioned the possible end of the forty-year long tradition of Celebrate Fairfax. Supervisor Penny Gross (D-Mason District) said she had mixed feelings about affordable housing units considered on excess parking lots at the Government Center. While not objecting to the question, she said they had to "be very careful about the public space that we have here at the Government Center and the opportunities for using it for those large events that we don't have any place else."

### Highlights of Approved Board Actions

\* Return the Virginia Department of Historic Resources historical marker #262 to the State, transfer ownership of the John Quincy Marr monument to the Stuart Mosby Historical Society and transfer ownership of the two Dahlgren howitzers to the Manassas National Battlefield Park.

\* Fairfax Connector's Jan. 4, 2021, service changes in the Lee and Springfield districts.

\* Resolution that Fairfax Circuit Court order a two-year extension to issue county bonds for public safety facilities.

Highlights of Approved Board Decisions Following Public Hearings:

\* Redevelop a portion of Graham Park Plaza in the Mason District for 177 townhouses. "This is an opportunity to take a declining shopping center and make it into a vibrant community," said Supervisor Gross.

\* Amendments to an ordinance related to the COVID-19 emergency to temporarily continue outdoor dining, fitness and exercise activities with enclosed, heated tents. "The new tents need to be fire resistant and the heaters rated," said Barbara A. Byron, Director, Department of Planning and Development.

\* Amendments to leases of County-owned properties at 4600-A West Ox Road and 6410 Rolling Road (Springfield District) and 2610 Reston Parkway (Hunter Mill District) with CoxCom LLC.

\* Lease of county-owned properties to Sigora Solar to install solar photovoltaic panels for on-site electric generation at eight sites, the Herry and Pennino Buildings (Braddock District), North County Government Center and Reston Community Center (Hunter Mill District), Springfield Warehouse (Mason District), Noman M. Cole Pollution Control Plant Lab Building (Mount Vernon District), Providence Community Center (Providence District) and the I-66 Transfer Station, Worker's Facility Building and Truck Wash Building on West Ox (Springfield District).

According to the staff report shared during the meeting by Kate Daley, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination, staff will return to the Board at a later date with the 18 remaining Fairfax County Government-owned facilities listed in the RFP. Daley said, "Under its contract with Fairfax County, Sigora Solar offered a fixed rate of \$0.069 per kWh delivered for a 25-year contract term. The County-owned properties included in this request to authorize a public hearing are located in a service territory in which the current average cost of utility-delivered electric power is

SEE HIGHLIGHTS, PAGE 11  
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The Skrimp Shack is now open and ready for your business. Kenneth and Brenda McLeon were joined by Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Mount Vernon Lee Chamber, family and friends to open the restaurant.

# Restaurant of the Week: Skrimp Shack

The Skrimp Shack Mount Vernon celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Friday, Oct. 23, with Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

Located at 7700 E Richmond Highway in the Mount Vernon Plaza, this Skrimp Shack franchise is owned by Kenneth McLeon and his wife Brenda. McLeon is a retired Marine and he is proud to serve the Fort Belvoir / Mount Vernon community.

Tuesdays are "Military Appreciation" day when active duty and retired military receive 10 percent off their order as a way to say, "Thank you for your service."

The Skrimp Shack is "home to the fattest fish sandwich." The menu features lunch specials or family combos. Check out the shrimp, different types of fish, and the signature hushpuppies. There are sandwiches, po boys, and fish tacos with sides of fries, fried okra, coleslaw, mac 'n cheese, collard greens, green beans, and sweet potato fries.

You can feed the family with either fish by the

pound or shrimp by the count. All entrees come with their homemade sauces. Or add a side of crabmeat to any meal. For dessert you can choose from banana pudding or brownies.

You can order ahead and select the time you will pick up that is most convenient for you. Order on the website at <https://theskrimpshack.olo.com/menu/mt-vernon> or download the App and order at @skrimpshackordering

Mount Vernon Plaza has a selection of delightful outdoor seating options where you can enjoy a meal from The Skrimp Shack.

Kenneth and Brenda would love to welcome you to their new restaurant where you can enjoy the delicious food and feel like part of their family.

Skrimp Shack is the "Restaurant of the Week" from Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce. Restaurants are an industry deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Support local restaurants and help retain the variety of wonderful eateries in our community.

## Highlights

FROM PAGE 10

approximately \$0.085 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). At this cost, the County would save about \$0.016 per kWh of delivered electric power."

\* Establish the Scotts Run Residential Permit Parking District located in the Dranesville District which Supervisor Foust represents. The results of a survey verified that more than 75 percent of the total number of on-street parking spaces of the petitioning blocks were occupied by parked vehicles, and non-residents occupied more than

50 percent of those occupied spaces.

During the Public Hearing before the vote was taken, resident Sam Le, 40-year resident of the Mason District said he and his daughter visited the Scotts Run and parked in the neighborhood since the 40 spaces at the park were full. He said, "It was a great hike on a beautiful day, but it's the sort of day that will be impossible if this ordinance passes. This ordinance will block access to Scott's Run Nature Preserve...This code wasn't written for a pandemic... It wasn't written to just benefit a

handful of homeowners that have U-shaped driveways, multi car garages and multimillion-dollar home values."

\* Add requirements to the county code for home childcare facilities for additional out-of-state criminal background checks and sex offender registry searches for any adult who has lived in another state in the preceding five years.

To readily access links to all items on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Oct. 20, 2020 Agenda and read the extended documentation, visit the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors website.

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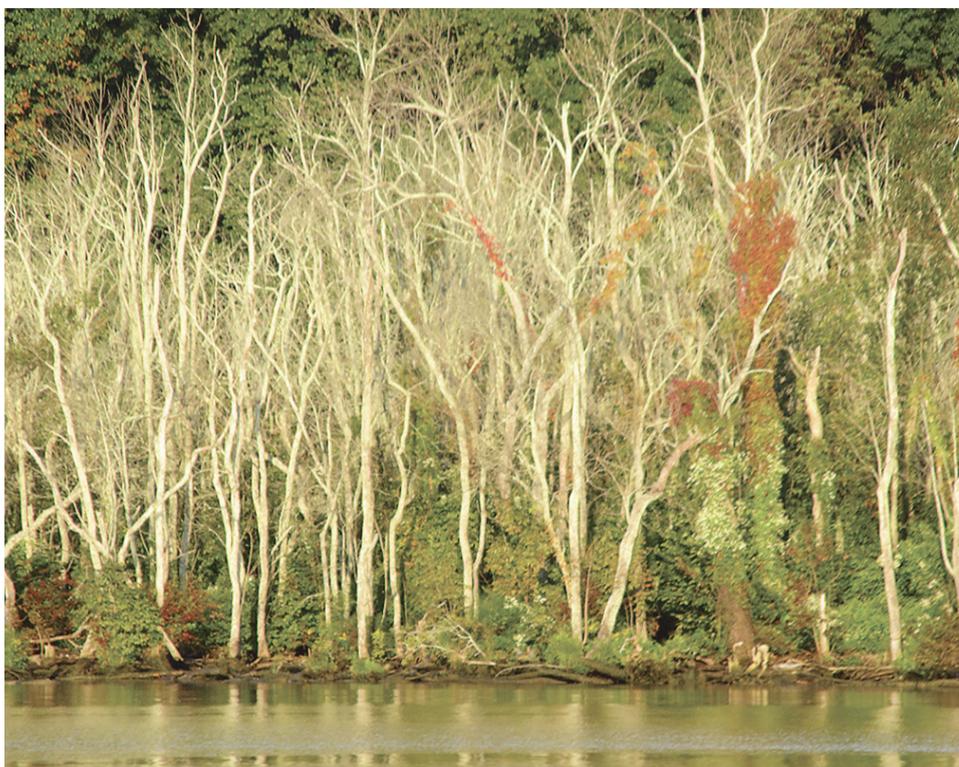
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Dead pumpkin ash trees infested by the emerald ash borer in Dyke Marsh.



The insect bores tunnels in the tree under the bark.

# Baseball Bats and Ash Trees Face an Uncertain Fate

**Don't plant ash trees; plant native trees instead.**

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**B**aseball bats don't top the U.S. Senate's agenda these days as legislators grapple with a U.S. Supreme Court nomination, the covid-19 pandemic and the Nov. 3 election. But for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, they are a priority.

The Rawlings Bat Factory in Dolgeville, New York, Schumer's home state, historically has turned out thousands of baseball bats made of ash wood, bats favored by many professional players. Today, the white ash trees that have supplied the bats' wood are threatened by a metallic green, wood-boring beetle, one-half inch long and one-eighth inch wide, the emerald ash borer (EAB).

It can kill all species of ash trees. "Less than one percent of ash trees are resistant to the emerald ash borer," says Brian Keightley, director of Fairfax County's Urban Forest Management Division.

It is "the most destructive forest insect ever to invade the United States," states Virginia's Department of Forestry website.

As an insect from Asia, this beetle does not have native predators, parasites or diseases that could control its populations in North America.

The emerald ash borer probably came to the U.S. accidentally in 2002 in cargo packing material. It has spread to at least 35 states and was found in Fairfax County in 2008.

The insect lays eggs on ash bark and its wormlike larvae burrow under the bark and feed on the trees' vascular tissues, which disrupts the uptake of water and nutrients.



Robert Smith is the Friends of Dyke Marsh project leader for the pumpkin ash project.



An expert with Bartlett Trees injects Tree-age into the root flares of a pumpkin ash tree in Dyke Marsh.

**"In the meantime, we encourage property owners interested in preserving ash trees to take advantage of the state's cost share program which will reimburse for half of the costs of treatments."**

**— Brian Keightley,  
director of Fairfax County's Urban Forest Management Division**

It leaves a D-shaped exit hole in the bark. Infested trees, if untreated, decline from the top down and die in one to three years.

Signs of infestation include branch dieback, D-shaped holes in the bark, leafy shoots growing from the lower trunk and S-shaped tunnels under the bark.

The federal government and Virginia pro-

hibit moving EAB articles, such as firewood, nursery stock and wood chips without a permit.

Saving Dyke Marsh's Pumpkin Ash Trees National Park Service (NPS) experts predict that the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve will lose at least 1,000 pumpkin ash trees to the emerald ash borer. Pumpkin ash

trees are named for their usually swollen or pumpkin-shaped base. They thrive in wet areas like swamps, floodplains and bottom lands, and can reach 130 feet in height. Many dead trees stand out in the marsh viewed from the river.

Since 2015, the Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM) have funded the treatment of 18 pumpkin ash trees in hopes of saving these 18. "All of our study trees are still leafing out in the spring and the females are producing seeds," observed project leader Robert Smith this summer, "in stark contrast with most other ash trees in Dyke Marsh." In partnership with NPS, FODM hired Bartlett Tree Experts to inject an insecticide, Tree-age, into the root flares of the 18 trees every two years. This is a 20-year effort and nothing is guaranteed.

### Fairfax County's Advice

The county's urban forestry staff urges people not to plant ash trees, to plant native trees instead.

"The USDA and Virginia Department of Forestry are researching why some ash trees are resistant and we're hoping to one day restore the ash tree population with what they learn," says Keightley. "In the meantime, we encourage property owners interested in preserving ash trees to take advantage of the state's cost share program which will reimburse for half of the costs of treatments."

Visit [http://www.dof.virginia.gov/info-pubs/\\_forestry-topics/FT0032\\_Emerald-Ash-Borer-Cost-Share-Program\\_2020-02\\_pub.pdf](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/info-pubs/_forestry-topics/FT0032_Emerald-Ash-Borer-Cost-Share-Program_2020-02_pub.pdf) or call 434-220-9034.

Of the 1,925 bats in the National Baseball Hall of Fame museum, 1,848 are made of ash. In the wake of the 2020 World Series, remember those ash trees that have brought home many base runners to the squeals of adoring fans, and don't spread the emerald ash borer.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/emerald-ash-borer-fairfax-county>

# SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Researchers at Marymount University helped establish programs to reduce the number of falls and resulting injuries among seniors.

## Preventing Falls

Physical exercise and home safety reduce risk.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

One of the leading causes of fatal injuries in older adults is falling. In fact, every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall and emergency room visits related to falling occur every 11 seconds. A group of researchers at Marymount University in Arlington is teaming with senior service organizations to lower those statistics locally. The coalition has won more than \$1 million in federal grants to create falls prevention programs that are available to seniors.

“It was a real academic-community partnership to provide a needed service to our community,” said lead researcher Rita Wong, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for Research at Marymount University. “Through the grant, we established the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance. This Alliance brings together senior-serving communities for advocacy, education, networking, and expansion of falls prevention initiatives.”

Three falls prevention programs were designed based on research by Wong; Sara Pappa, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance and coordinator of the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance; Uma Kelekar, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Healthcare Management; and faculty from the Physical Therapy program: Diana Venskus, Ph.D.; Cathy Elrod, Ph.D.; Julie Ries, Ph.D.; and Jade Bender-Burnett, DPT.

The research team created a regional training office for falls prevention at Marymount. “We train lay leaders to run these community falls prevention programs and we help organizations and senior community centers set up falls prevention programs,” said Wong. “Once they’re established, the centers take on primary responsibilities for sustaining the programs.”

Designed to address the needs of seniors at three levels of functioning, the team created three programs: SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life), which is a balance and strengthening exercise program geared to fairly active older adults. A Matter of Balance (AMOB) focuses on independent seniors who are worried about falling and want to learn preven-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc., leads a virtual SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) class for strength and balance.

tion techniques. And Otago Exercise Program (OTAGO), which is toward those who are frail and need closer supervision and an exercise program that is tailored to their specific needs.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, programs are now offered virtually. “Our SAIL classes are structured so we can provide strength, balance, and fitness classes,” said Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc. “We have two SAIL leaders in every class. One instructs while the other adapts.”

Those adaptations, based on ability, are categorized as “Level 1” and “Level 2,” says Robinson. “Level 1 is seated exercise with a steady pace and same routine as Level 2. Level 2 is standing exercise with a higher pace,” said Robinson. “The routine starts with a warm-up and about 20 minutes of aerobics. Then we do balance exercises and strength training exercises. We end the class with a cool down like stretching.”

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service reports that half of all falls happen at home, and they encourage home safety. “Remove clutter from your home or least areas where you walk a lot like the hallway or living room,” said occupational therapist, Brittany Ferri, of Simplicity Health. “Remove throw rugs, excess cords, and other items that can be tripped on; get non-slip surfaces for the bathroom like padding under the bathmat, grippies for inside the tub, and similar mats for catching water on bathroom tile.”

For more information in Virginia:  
<https://www.novafallsprevention.com/>

For more information in Maryland:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcfrs-info/tips/seniors/falls.html>

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
**-Werner Heisenberg**

## Missive or Dismissive



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the last few months, I have been receiving unsolicited emails from Tommy Chug; he being the other half of the 70's era comedy duo, "Cheech and Chong" with whom I spent countless hours in college laughing at their recorded routines, but beyond that I don't remember much. There were a few follow up movies - which I never saw, and more recently, I have found somewhat belatedly a early 2000s cop show starring Cheech Marin alongside Don Johnson: "Nash Bridges." Nothing at all from Tommy Chong until these emails began arriving.

The email is a solicitation followed by content about his life these last years, and the discovery he made after he had served a nine-month prison sentence for selling decorative bongos (there's a bit more to that story, but it's not particularly pertinent to this column). After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Tommy sought help trying to mitigate the effects of his chemotherapy treatment and perhaps even improve his quality of life. (he's 81 now, by the way.) In so pursuing, he met a doctor from Utah while on a plane, and the rest is Tommy's email.

The content is not exactly personalized but it does resonate. It resonates because it sounds reasonable and plausible and the remedy not too impactful to major organs, specifically liver and kidney, for which I'm very keen and concerned, given my nearly 13-year chemotherapy-plus treatment for cancer. However, the email has struck a nerve. It did so because as a cancer patient, it's easy to believe (hope certainly), there's a magic (often non-Western) cure to whatever ails you, especially when cancer is the culprit. I wouldn't necessarily characterize my feelings/emotions as susceptible but it's hard not to lean that way when you've been given a "terminal" diagnosis by your Western/conventional doctors. To say you have nothing to lose is a bit of a simplification. Still, hearing the words I heard on Feb. 27, 2009 (you bet I remember the date) at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, does cause your antennae to go up and out and all-around seeking an answer to what might very well be, the unanswerable.

When an oncologist tells you you're likely to die within "13 months to two years," all bets are off and caution no longer becomes an impediment. Standing pat and adhering exclusively to what your doctors are telling you seems like giving up sort of. For me, I didn't give up. I started trying alternatives, many of which I am continuing a decade-plus later. Now whether these non-conventional/non-Western methods have proven beneficial I certainly can't confirm, but if living is any indicator, they likely did no harm (the crux of the Hippocratic oath). So yes, on the face of Tommy's email about improving one's quality of life, I am open to some other possibilities to prescription medication.

In fact, to this day, I still consume about 60 pills a day and always wash it and most other things down with alkaline water. Moreover, I try to limit my sugar, which is impossible and I remain open to new ideas. Over the years, I have ingested spoonfuls of pureed canned asparagus, drank water with baking soda, drank water with apple cider vinegar, blended fruit and vegetable smoothies (how else does one tolerate kale?) and tried to be mindful of a maintaining an alkaline diet. The goal has been to enhance my immune system while eliminating toxins in order to enable my body to heal itself. Again, it's difficult to know what alternatives have worked and what hasn't. Whether it has been real or a type of placebo effect where I thought it was beneficial, I am not prepared to say. However, I am living proof of something.

As concerns what Tommy is selling, the problem is, as it was with all my previous choices, there are no guarantees. Unfortunately, that was a problem at the beginning, and I fear it will be a problem at the end.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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## NEWS

# Witchful Thinking

Ghouls still want some fun on Halloween.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**H**alloween will look different this year, with COVID-19 safety a priority as children and adults look for alternative ways to celebrate the ghoulish holiday.

While Halloween is not a city holiday, officials have been notified that the annual community gathering on Lee Street and the Del Ray Halloween Parade has been cancelled for 2020. But options abound to safely enjoy the holiday, ranging from the Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch to a scavenger hunt on Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray or a Ghost and Graveyard Tour in Old Town.

The Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch is open through Oct. 31 at the corner of Seminary Road and Quaker Lane. The pumpkin patch offers all sizes of pumpkins as well as homemade soups, baked goods, knit wear and autumn Halloween-themed crafts. [www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org](http://www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org)

In Del Ray, the Del Ray Business Association is hosting its first Halloween Scavenger Hunt featuring businesses that have festively decorated their storefronts. The hunt began Oct. 23 and continues through Halloween.

Walk the Avenue (in costume or not) and find Halloween-themed items in Del Ray's murals and decorated businesses. Four randomly selected winners will receive a \$50 gift card. Visit [www.visitdelray.com](http://www.visitdelray.com) for scavenger hunt clues and instructions.

The Old Town Ghosts & Graveyards Tour continues to operate under COVID-19 safety protocols and is also offering an online Zoom tour for anyone who would be more comfortable enjoying a virtual experience. [www.alexcolonialtours.com](http://www.alexcolonialtours.com).

Another pandemic-safe entertainment option is the Alexandria Drive-In Theatre. Presented by Alexandria businesses ALX Community and The Garden, the series will run from Oct. 31 to Dec. 5 at 5001 Eisenhower Avenue. A variety of movie classics and family favorites will be featured beginning with a double feature of Casper and The Mummy on Halloween night. For tickets and more information, visit [www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com](http://www.AlexandriaDriveIn.com).

The traditional Del Ray contests for Best Decorated House, Best Group Costume, Best Pet Costume and Best Decorated Block return this year in a virtual format. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, DRBA will partner with the Alexandria Boys & Girls Club and Community Lodgings in offering community members the opportunity to purchase a costume for a specific child. Visit [www.visitdelray.com](http://www.visitdelray.com) for more information on the contests or to purchase a costume.

For additional suggestions and guidelines from the Alexandria Health Department on how to celebrate Halloween safely, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/halloween](http://www.alexandriava.gov/halloween)



A bloody zombie welcomes visitors to the Fish Market Restaurant.



The Red Riding Hood skeleton celebrates Halloween in Alexandria.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



A Halloween display welcomes visitors on Prince Street's Captain's Row in Old Town.

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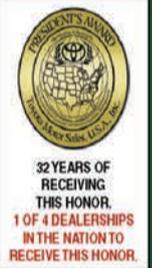
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OPEN SUNDAY 1-4PM!



**SALE**

4305 Sheridans Point Ct  
\$899,500  
JUST LISTED  
CLASSIC COLONIAL!



**SALE**

4620 Tarpon Ln  
\$875,000  
JUST LISTED  
FULLY UPDATED!



**SALE**

3517 Surrey Dr  
\$998,000  
SOUTHERN CHARM!



**SOLD**

8710 Yardley Dr  
\$630,000  
QUAINT COLONIAL!



**SOLD**

3115 Little Creek Dr  
\$729,900  
GORGEOUS UPDATES!



**SOLD**

4324 Tarpon Ln  
\$675,000  
PRISTINE CONDITION!



**SOLD**

9324 Old Mansion Rd  
\$1,990,000  
NEW BUILD, WATER VIEWS!



**SOLD**

3203 Battersea Ln  
\$580,000  
GREAT OPPORTUNITY!



**SOLD!**

9216 Old Mt. Vernon Rd  
\$898,500  
SERENE SETTING!



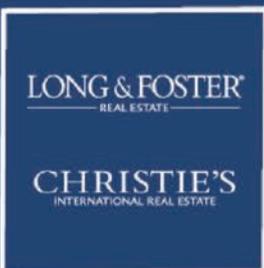
**SOLD!**

9315 Maybrook Pl  
\$685,000  
RARE OPPORTUNITY!



**SOLD**

8814 Surrey Ct  
\$850,000  
CLASSIC COLONIAL!



### 703.283.9028

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