

## Absurd Leverage Lawmakers to reconsider mandatory minimum for assaulting law enforcement.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

For one inmate of a Northern Virginia jail who was in a mood, the presentation of a meal created a buffet of problems. When a law-enforcement officer inserted the tray through the slat in the metal door, the inmate pushed the tray back. The tray fell to the floor, and some of the water bounced off the floor and landed on the officer's shoes.

"And so they charged him with assault on a law enforcement officer because the water hit his shoes," said James Abrenio, a lawyer who represented the inmate.

The inmate was being held on a minor probation violation when the incident happened. But that incident with the water on the shoes created a new problem for him. He was now charged with felony assault against the officer, a charge that comes with a mandatory minimum of six months behind bars. Suddenly that cup of water created a flood of problems that left him drowning in trouble. Abrenio says he would have loved to have brought that case to trial because of the absurdity of the charge, but the indigent inmate was more interested in cutting a deal with



Inmates who accidentally spill water on the shoes of sheriff's deputies can be hit with a mandatory minimum sentence of six months for assaulting a law enforcement officer.

prosecutors than challenging the system.

"Prosecutors know this is absurd," said Abrenio. "Despite that

they have such leverage that they offer a way out of felony and a way out of significant jail time for you to just cop a plea. And that's the

issue."

It's an issue that is dividing Democrats in the General Assembly. During the special session this

year, Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) introduced a bill that would have done away with the mandatory minimum sentence for assaulting a law-enforcement officer. It would have required independent investigations into incidents, rather than allowing officers to react in the heat of the moment. And it would have allowed courts to consider mental illness as a contributing factor to how people interact with police.

"Folks who are mentally ill and have interactions with law enforcement are hurt the most by this," said Surovell. "Because minorities are overrepresented given the way policing currently occurs, it tends to overly affect minority populations who tend to get charged with this a lot."

The bill passed the Senate on a party line vote in August. But a month later, Democrats in the House Courts of Justice Committee killed the bill after raising several concerns. One was that the statute could exclude children, setting aside felony prosecution of juveniles experiencing a mental health crisis. Another concern was that the bill might create harsher penalties for people with autism,

SEE ABSURD LEVERAGE, PAGE 11

## A Look Inside the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting Dec. 1 2020

Highlights of discussion and actions that impact all who live, work and play in the diverse county.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Dec. 1, marked the final Fairfax County Full Board of Supervisors Meeting with Public Comment of 2020. In a year historians will mark in history with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board held its meeting electronically due to the State of Emergency and the recent trend upwards in coronavirus cases.

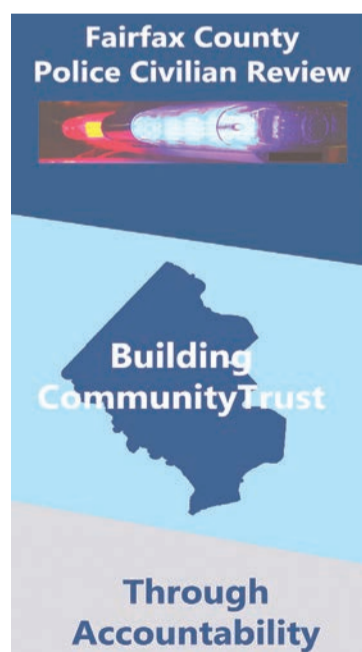
Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, At-Large presided with all nine Supervisors present representing residents in their districts- Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill, John W. Foust, Dranesville, Penelope A. Gross, Mason, Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield, Rodney L. Lusk, Lee, Dalia A. Palchik, Providence,

Kathy L. Smith, Sully, Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon and James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock. Each Board member receives annual compensation of \$95,000 per year, except the chairman who receives \$100,000 per year.

Within the county, 25.2 percent of households make \$200,000 or more, yet 6.2 percent of the population live in poverty, according to data released by Fairfax County Government Jan. 2020.

Previously recorded Board of Supervisors Meetings with captions and indexed per agenda items for rapid bookmark finding, can be viewed anytime at Board of Supervisors Meetings Video Archive.

SEE A LOOK INSIDE, PAGE 7



In one of its final motions, the Board approved to give the Police Civilian Review Panel the authority to receive public comment about any law enforcement related policy, practice, or procedure.



The Board approved the motion by Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District on the Proposed Plan Amendment for North Gateway Community Business Center (CBC) and Plan Amendment 2018-IV-T1, Planned Interchange at Richmond Highway and Huntington Avenue (Mount Vernon District). "This is truly transformative and historic. Huntington Gateway will truly be a gateway to not only Fairfax County but also Mount Vernon districts," he said.



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## First Female NFL Coach Got Her Start with the MV Majors

Mount Vernon native Callie Brownson is now a Cleveland Browns Coach.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ount Vernon High School alum Callie Brownson has become the first woman position coach in the National Football League, taking over this year as Chief of Staff for the Cleveland Browns.

"It's a different landscape this year," she said on the Cleveland Browns' "Coaches Corner," a local show in Cleveland. She's new to the position along with Kevin Stefanski, the new head coach, and she says they both work well under pressure so that might explain why the Browns have a winning record so far this season.

"Attitude is everything," she said on the show.

Brownson brought that positive attitude with her from Mount Vernon where she grew up in the 1990s, playing for the Mount Vernon Majors softball team, and then coaching the football team after graduating in 2007.

Nardos King was her principal, and could see the determination Brownson had, even pushing the

envelope in the sports world as a teenager.

"She was an active student," King said. "She was always a super fan of football," she added. King is now the FCPS superintendent of Region three.

After Mount Vernon, Brownson went on to play for the DC Divas in the Women's Football Alliance from 2010 to 2017. On that team she was a free safety and running back helping them win two National Championships.

She also won two gold medals playing with the United States women's national American football team. S

he returned to Mount Vernon High School after the Divas and was the assistant to head football coach Barry Wells, and coached softball in the spring.

She joined the New York Jets as a scouting intern in 2017 and was hired by Dartmouth as a quality control coach from 2018 to 2019. In 2020, she became the first woman to coach an NFL position group in a regular-season game when she filled in for the Cleveland Browns when one of their receiver's coaches was out.



On the softball diamond, Callie Brownson showed the competitive spirit there as well.



Callie Brownson coaching the Mount Vernon Majors.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLEVELAND BROWNS

Over the summer, she was moved up to Chief of Staff, and is enjoying taking part in a winning season this year. The Browns are

second place in the AFC North, right behind the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Browns came to Washington this past September and beat

the Washington Football Team, which must have been an experience for Brownson, beating her hometown team.

## Belle View Upgrades May Bring New Life to Shopping Center

Facade improvements continue during pandemic.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n early December, shoppers aren't the only ones busy at Belle View Shopping Center in Mount Vernon. Construction teams are on site as well, putting the final touches on the renovation project that has been ongoing.

The center still has the same tenants but out front, there will be new façades, roof supports and a fresh look for the center.

The first plan was unveiled over the summer by center owner Wire Gill LLP, who proposed to build a mixed-use facility on the 16-acre parcel consisting of retail, office, and mid-rise multifamily residential uses with a maximum building height of five stories. Local reaction against the proposal resulted in withdrawing the plan.

That type of development might be in line with the future Embark Richmond Highway plan that is being developed by county planners, but many people spoke out against the proposed density at Belle View.



The Belle View Shopping Center upgrades continue.



Sometimes a shopping center facelift will do the trick.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



# Living with Foxes They're tough to "outfox"

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**F**oxes are very adaptable to human environments, Fairfax County wildlife biologist Erin Thady told 70 attendees at a Dec. 6 Zoom talk sponsored by the Friends of Mason Neck State Park. Wily and agile, they can survive in suburban areas because of available food and denning sites provided by human-modified environments.

Urban landscapes attract rodents, Thady said. Resourceful hunters with excellent senses of sight, smell and hearing, foxes eat small mammals like mice, voles, squirrels and rabbits in the winter. In spring and summer, they also eat berries, caterpillars, crayfish and birds. "Once they find reliable food sources, they stay around," Thady explained. Adult foxes have few predators in the area and their populations are stable.

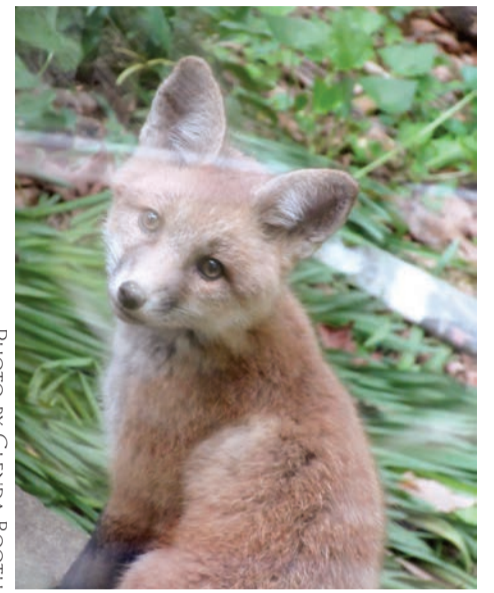
Virginia has both red and gray foxes. Red foxes weigh nine to 12 pounds, about the same as a cat; less common gray foxes, around eight pounds. Grays have a distinctive black stripe on their tails. With their semi-retractable claws, they can climb trees; hence, they are nicknamed "tree foxes." Most foxes generally sleep during the day and are more active at night than in daytime.

Non-migratory animals, foxes tend to have a home range of one to five miles. As "habitat generalists," red foxes can thrive in a variety of environmental conditions. Gray foxes prefer more specialized environments, like forests and wetlands.

People can easily confuse foxes with coyotes, another common animal in Virginia. Red foxes have a white tip on their tails and hold their tail out. Coyotes have a dark tail tip and point their tails down toward the ground. Foxes have a "prancing gait" and coyotes a "lumbering gait," Thady offered.



Two fox kits nursing.



Fox kit outside Glenda Booth's window.

In the winter, Thady's office gets alarm calls about high-pitched screams piercing the night. These howls can be the female or vixen mating or rival males confirming territory, she explained. Foxes breed from December to March and females have on average seven blind and deaf kits who emerge from their dens in two to three months.

### Living with Foxes

Foxes are naturally wary of humans and have a natural tendency to flee upon encountering people. "They are not dangerous to humans unless captured," she advised. A strong caution: Do not feed wildlife or they could lose their natural fears and ability to hunt. People should also avoid what she called "inadvertent feeding," such as having unsecured garbage containers, feeding cat colonies and putting pet food outdoors.

Adept diggers, foxes will den under low porches, decks and sheds and many return to the same den every year. She advised people to avoid disturbing dens until late summer when grown kits can hunt for themselves. She suggested several "humane harassment"



Grey Fox

techniques to move them, if necessary, like putting loose mulch, hot pepper, urine-soaked kitty litter, sweaty sneakers, reflective tape and shiny balloons at the den's entrance.

On fox-pet interactions, she said, "Foxes are not very interested in cats, but kittens or small cats could become prey. It's best to keep cats inside." Dogs and foxes have "a natural aversion," she asserted. Most dogs are not at risk of a fox attack unless the dog is threatening the fox's litter. However, miniature dogs could be "susceptible

to foxes." She recommended not leaving dogs outside unattended.

Evidence of digging could be the sign of a fox, but it could also be raccoons or skunks. When the ground is wet, wildlife might dig for grubs or earthworms. Deterrents she suggested include chicken wire spread and secured over an area, clanging pots and pans and spraying wildlife with the water from a hose.

"Everyone has a different tolerance level for wildlife," she offered and invited people to reach out



Mount Vernon Gazette and fox ... When raising young, parenting foxes bring things to the den for the kits to chew on. A favorite seems to be newspapers left in driveways. In my neighborhood, we have had many instances of "disappearing newspapers," only to find many with tooth-pocked plastic bags near fox dens.

to her office for advice on how to "co-exist successfully."

For information and advice: Fairfax County Wildlife Management: Dr. Katherine Edwards, Katherine.Edwards@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-246-6868; Erin Thady, Erin.Thady@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-0248; Ethan Chapmon: Ethan.Chapmon@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-0246

Fairfax County Animal Protection Police (non-emergency), 703-691-2131

Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline: 855-571-9003



Red Fox



Grey Fox



Red Fox in summer



# National Park Foundation Hero Award for Warner

**Award for his efforts to pass the Great American Outdoors Act.**

**M**onday, Dec. 7, at an outdoor and socially-distanced ceremony at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) was awarded the National Park Foundation's Hero Award by Foundation President, Will Shafroth. The award commemorates Sen. Warner's work in getting The Great American Outdoors Act, a bill he championed, signed into law.

"As a lifelong advocate of our national parks and public lands, I am honored to be an inaugural recipient of the National Park Foundation's Hero Award. I am incredibly proud that Congress was able to come together and pass The Great American Outdoors Act this year, which included my bill – the Restore Our Parks Act – that will allocate up to \$6.65 billion to the National Park Service to address critical maintenance needs at our beloved national parks," said Sen. Warner. "This bipartisan legislation represents a truly once-in-a-generation investment in our national parks and other public lands that will protect these cherished sites for decades to come. It's only fitting that we were able to celebrate at the Jefferson Memorial, which will in fact be one of the first projects to receive funding from the new law. Ushering in the bill's passage and eventual signing wouldn't have been possible without the tireless advocacy of the National Park Foundation."

"As we reflect on Senator Warner's leadership in passing the Great American Outdoors Act, the National Park Foundation is proud to recognize his commitment to national parks across our nation," said Will Shafroth, President & CEO, National Park Foundation. "A true park hero, Senator Warner has been a champion for Virginia's treasured places such as Shenandoah National Park, Great Falls Park, Petersburg National Battlefield, and Fort Monroe National Monument, among others. He has also been a great proponent for the Foundation's work to enhance national parks through philanthropy, and we are grateful for his ongoing support."

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**National Park Foundation President Will Shafroth gives the foundation's Hero Award to U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner at the Jefferson Memorial on Monday, Dec. 7.**

The Great American Outdoors Act is a product of Sen. Warner's nearly three year initial effort to provide relief to national parks in Virginia, where the maintenance backlog currently sits at \$1.1 billion dollars.

In June, the National Park Service released a report that estimated that an average of 40,300 direct jobs and 100,100 direct and indirect jobs would be supported nationally by the Restore Our Parks Act if passed as part of the Great American Outdoors Act. In Virginia, it is estimated that 10,340 jobs would be created or supported as a result of Sen. Warner's push to address the national parks backlog.

In addition, a recent NPS study highlighted the financial impact national parks sites have on Virginia's economy. Last year, 22.8 million individuals from around the world visited national parks in Virginia, spending \$1.2 billion. Additionally, national parks in Virginia helped support 17,300 jobs and contributed over \$1.7 billion to the Commonwealth's economy. Because of the economic impact national parks have on communities across the country, more than 800 organizations have pledged their support for the Great American Outdoors Act.

Sen. Warner's effort to address the maintenance backlog began in March 2017, when he worked with Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) to introduce the National Park Legacy Act, which would have eliminated the NPS maintenance backlog by creating a thirty-year designated fund to take care of maintenance needs at visitor centers, rest stops, trails and campgrounds, as well as transportation infrastructure operated by NPS such as the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Arlington Memorial Bridge. That same year, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced its own proposal, drawing heavily on the

initial proposal from Sens. Warner and Portman. However, the Administration proposal – which was introduced in the Senate as the National Park Restoration Act by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Angus King (I-ME) – would not have established a dedicated funding stream for NPS maintenance.

In March 2018, after extensive negotiations among Sens. Warner, Portman, Alexander, and King, the bipartisan group introduced the Restore Our Parks Act, a bipartisan consensus proposal endorsed by the Trump Administration, to invest in overdue maintenance needs at NPS sites. The bill would reduce the maintenance backlog by establishing the "National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund" and allocating existing revenues from onshore and offshore energy development. This funding would come from 50 percent of all revenues that are not otherwise allocated and deposited into the General Treasury, not exceeding \$1.3 billion each year for the next five years. In February 2019, Sen. Warner reintroduced the Restore Our Parks Act and, the bill was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in November.

In March 2020, following the President's announcement that he would back the bipartisan Restore Our Parks Act as well as full and permanent funding for LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund), Sen. Warner, along with Sens. Cory Gardner (R-CO), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Steve Daines (R-MT), Portman, King, Alexander, and Richard Burr (R-NC) introduced the Great American Outdoors Act, which would provide \$9.5 billion over five years to the National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and

SEE HERO AWARD, PAGE 6



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## Shop Local and Support Our Neighbors!

By DAN STORCK  
MOUNT VERNON SUPERVISOR

Just like every year, COVID-19 or not, the season of thanksgiving is followed by the season of giving. While there will be an even greater tendency to order holiday gifts on-line, it is especially important this year that we support our local and small businesses.

Harder hit than most may be the businesses located at the Belle View Shopping Center. Truly small, local owned businesses, these owners survived rebuilding from the 2019 fire and continue to persevere through decreased foot traf-

fic due to the pandemic. Whether you are up for a stroll through the shops or ordering a gift card from one of the restaurants, this holiday your purchases will truly help our neighborhood businesses to keep the heart of our community beating.

Of course, there are also many other local and small businesses struggling in our community, from the Workhouse Arts Center and Gunston Hall, to the Shoppes at Lorton Valley, Saratoga Plaza, Sacramento, Woodlawn and Hollin Hall Shopping Centers, to name a few. I hope you will use your holiday purchases to assist our neighbors and buy more locally.

There are several organizations in our neighborhoods looking for contributions to help those in need. The Mount Vernon Fire Station (as well as all other stations) is collecting new, unwrapped toys, books and games for Toys for Tots until Dec. 13. Community organizations such as United Communities (unitedcommunity.org) and the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) (lortonaction.org) are collecting for a variety of needs for their clients.

In addition, in lieu of the TEAM MVD annual food drive, it has been brought to our attention that there is a need for diapers of all sizes for babies and young children in our

area. Please help us help them by dropping off diapers at our Mount Vernon Government Center office between now and Jan. 5! Any and all sizes welcome.

Looking for a special and unique gift this holiday? Consider making a donation to Save River Farm (saveriverfarm.com)! Regular donations to the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) River Farm Fund are fully tax-deductible. 80% of the funds will go to land acquisition, 10% for advocacy related to River Farm, and 10% for administration of the campaign.

However you choose to give, I wish you a bright, peaceful and merry holiday season!

## Prepping for the 2021 Session of the General Assembly

By DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

The 2021 General Assembly session is a month away and my staff and I are busy in preparation. This is the short session, traditionally 45 days, but it could be as short as 30 days if the Republican minority is serious about their intent to vote against any rule that goes beyond the 30-day minimum as outlined in the Constitution. Rule changes require support of two-thirds of the body, and our Democratic majority is only 55 percent.

However, there are ways to work around such a compressed 30-day schedule that could include a round the clock and weekend schedule, or even by adjourning and then being called back into session by the Governor for a "special" session where the adoption of the rule governing the proceedings needs only a simple majority. However long we decide to meet this coming January, rest assured that we will complete the people's business, focused on the future of the Commonwealth, growing the economy, and to get through this

pandemic as quickly as possible.

In response to Covid, the House of Delegates will be meeting on-line and with a severe limit of just seven introduced bills. Compare that to last year when I introduced 27 and passed half of them. The Senate will be limited to 12 bills per member. This will create a combined total of 1,180 pieces of legislation. During the last "short session" in 2019, 2,362 bills were introduced. Fourteen bills have already been introduced by House members, and we will surely see a windfall of introduced legislation as we get closer to the end of the year. The size of our body, 100 members, plus essential staff, press and law enforcement makes any physical convening too large, no matter what measures are taken, especially given the age of our temporary offices located in the Pocahontas Building. We went on-line during the special session this summer, and though there were some early technical issues, for the most



part it was effective and worked well. The public was able to participate perhaps even more than they are normally by tuning in and giving testimony virtually, which allows even more citizens to be a part of the process without traveling long distances and fighting for space in our sometimes small committee rooms. We all now have much more experience at working remotely via our computers and mobile devices, and though it will be more challenging with multiple committee and subcommittee meetings added to the mix, I am confident that the session will progress smoothly and with the public's input and support.

This time last year I wrote about the many bills I would be introducing for what would turn out to be a historic session of progressive legislative change. We passed bills that made voting easier, the environment cleaner, workers safer, and bettered the lives of all Virginians. My five year long effort to require seat belts to be worn in all vehicles finally came to fruition and the new electric school buses Dominion is investing in are all equipped with shoulder harnesses too. We eliminated the barriers to voting and just witnessed the larg-

est turnout ever in the Commonwealth with early voting eclipsing by nearly five times the total absentee votes during the last presidential election in 2016. The deadline to submit legislation to be drafted in time for the session was over a week ago and now the difficult decisions need to be made on which of the many bills drafted should be introduced this session. The deadline for introducing bills to be considered during session is 10 a.m. on the morning of the first day of session, Jan. 13. It will indeed be a busy few weeks as I meet with stakeholders and make final edits to my legislation. As we head into session, I welcome your questions and feedback. Stay tuned, as over the next few weeks, I will publish more information about legislation that I plan to introduce. As there will be no way to meet in person as we normally would do in Richmond please stay in touch by sending me an email at DelPKrizek@House.Virginia.Gov. It is an honor to serve as your Delegate. Please stay safe, wear your mask in public, social distance, and practice good hygiene by washing your hands well. We must continue to be vigilant and not let down our guard now as we get closer to a vaccine roll out and an end to this health crisis.

## Hero Award for Warner

FROM PAGE 5

Bureau of Indian Education to address the deferred maintenance backlog at these agencies. The new law would also provide permanent, mandatory funding for the LWCF, which provides states and local communities with technical

assistance, recognition, and funding to help preserve and protect public lands. Virginia has received approximately \$368.5 million in LWCF funding over the past four decades to help protect dozens of national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, trails and more.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann  
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com  
@TheismannMedia

Marcia Hobson  
Community Reporter  
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore  
Contributing Writer  
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
sales@connectionnewspapers.com  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

Helen Walutes  
Display Advertising, 703-778-9410  
hwalutes@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com  
@MaryKimm

Art/Design:  
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,  
Ali Khaligh  
Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager:  
Ann Oliver  
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper



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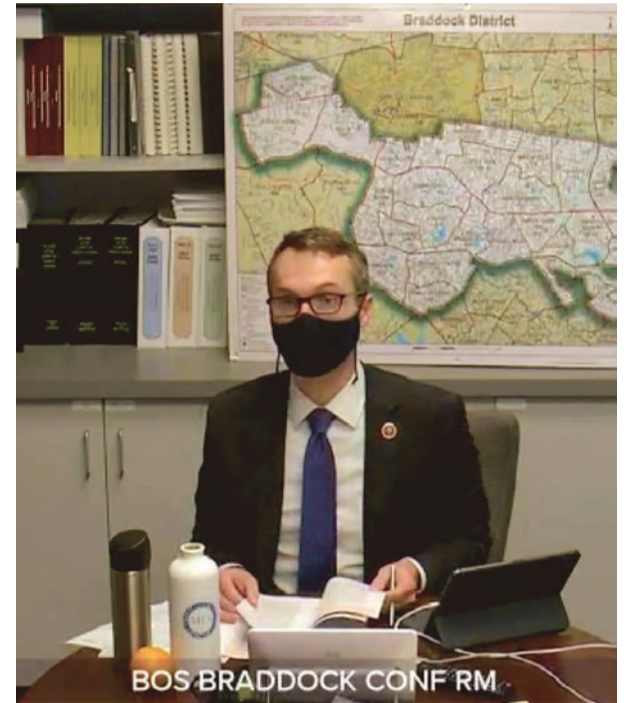
# A Look Inside the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting Dec. 1 2020

FROM PAGE I



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay opens the Dec. 1 Board of Supervisors Meeting saying, "All of us are concerned about uptick in (COVID-19) cases and we are monitoring that closely...If we could keep all of those affected by this pandemic in our thoughts and prayers."

PHOTOS  
SCREENSHOTS



Adoption of the 2021 Legislative Program for the Virginia General Assembly and the County's 117th Congress Federal Legislative Strategy and Principles. "The program contains the Committee's recommended legislative positions for the County at the 2021 Session of the Virginia General Assembly (and) an issue paper on human services needs is included as an addendum to this program," according to background material by county staff, Bryan J. Hill, County Executive. It addressed schools, transportation, human services' affordable housing options, diversion programs to connect people who come into contact with the criminal justice system for low level offenses, to treatment. Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District, said, "The state must find ways to increase investments in K through 12 and other essential local programs and services after years of state underfunding." Chairman McKay said, "When weighing packages like this we have to weigh the totality of what's before us." Supervisor Patrick S. Herrity, Springfield District said while there was "a lot of good stuff in this package" unfortunately there were "a lot of things" that he couldn't support. "I will not be supporting this package," Herrity said. Approved 9-1.

SEE A LOOK INSIDE, PAGE II

Be a part of our:

**Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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## NEWS



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The sidewalk and bike trail extension goes all the way to Lee District Park.

MAP BY FAIRFAX COUNTY DOT

# Sidewalk and Bike Trail Project Connects to Lee District Park

**Spot improvement projects along Telegraph Road improve traffic flow.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

A ground clearing operation is underway along Telegraph Road in Alexandria for a pedestrian connection project linking the intersection of South Kings Highway to Lee District Park in the Rose Hill area.

This project will construct 2,670 feet of sidewalk along the south side of Telegraph Road from 500 feet north of S. Kings Highway to Lee District Park. The project will also widen the road and install curb and gutter, storm drainage pipe and a retaining wall. The construction schedule is slated to run from October 2020 to Summer 2021.

The walkway project is on the opposite side of the Glendale Golf Course per coordination with Lee District Supervisor's office at the time when Jeff McKay was the District Supervisor, according to Robin P. Geiger, Head of Communications at the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. This project will include a turn lane and it is one of



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Looking south on Telegraph Road, the construction is off to the left.

several along Telegraph Road to keep things moving.

There is another project planned on Telegraph Road about two miles south of South Kings Highway at the Hayfield Road intersection that will add a second northbound through lane on Telegraph Road to a spot just north of the Coast Guard Station. This project aims to reduce congestion and improve safety and operations in the area of Telegraph Road and Hayfield Road, VDOT says.

In the pre-pandemic schedule that was on the VDOT website, the meetings on this \$3 million project were supposed to be held last summer. Construction was originally supposed to start in the fall 2022,

and be completed the next year.

A few years ago, another lane was added in the Fort Belvoir area when Jeff Todd Way was put in, and this was financed with federal money because it was part of the Base Realignment and Closure program. At the same time, the Telegraph Road intersection with Huntington Avenue was rebuilt, adding lanes and ramps to handle more traffic. Then the intersection of Telegraph Road and South Kings Highway was rebuilt, relieving a rush-hour bottleneck in 2013.

These spot improvements are all part of the traffic flow upgrades on this north-south corridor that sees much traffic from the subdivisions along this road.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

**ARTS PROGRAMMING DELAYED**  
The Center for the Arts in Fairfax and the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas will delay the start of indoor, in-person performances until March 2021, at the earliest.

The two performing arts venues, which are operated by George Mason University's College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), will continue to present digital performances and events through Mason Arts at Home and Hylton at Home, featuring a diverse lineup of renowned professional artists, community arts partners, and students and faculty of CVPA. The venues will gradually phase in a

small number of in-person, indoor performances when it is considered safe to do so, in coordination with state and George Mason University officials. Visit:

Center for the Arts: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/plan-your-visit/covid-19-updates> or Hylton Performing Arts Center: <https://hyltoncenter.org/plan-your-visit/covid-19-updates>

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13

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**Children's & Teens' Connection 2020**

During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

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**THE CONNECTION** Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC



## ENTERTAINMENT

# Support Restaurants By Ordering Delivery

To give restaurants an extra boost while still staying home, order from establishments that offer their own delivery service.

BY HOPE NELSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

When it comes to restaurant food delivery, there are two schools of thought: Spend all your dining-out money at the restaurant itself, or spread the wealth by ordering through a delivery service like GrubHub or UberEats. Both roads have their pros and cons, but if you're looking to give the restaurants themselves an extra boost while still staying home, it's best to order from establishments that offer their own delivery service. Here are a few of the top choices.

### Chadwicks, 203 Strand St.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Old Town favorite featuring American fare has been taking to the streets, offering delivery to hungry diners around the area. Order some burgers, ribs, shrimp and grits or pasta, maybe with a pumpkin pie or mud pie for dessert – and don't forget some beers or wine to wash it down. Delivery offered from 4 to 9 p.m. daily. 703-836-4442.

### South China Restaurant, 1302 Mount Vernon Ave.

Sometimes, the day calls for Chinese takeout and nothing else will do. When the craving hits, South China in Del Ray has you covered. Spring rolls, kung pao, lo mein, Mongolian beef – it's all here. As are some surprises, such as South China's Malaysian specialties, including Sayang Meehoon (fried rice noodles with tofu and shrimp) and chicken satay. Delivery offered from noon to 10 p.m. 703-549-5099.

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### RT's, 3804 Mount Vernon Ave.

Need a little Cajun flair to spice up your appetite? RT's has you covered. Feast on crawfish and shrimp beignets, gumbo, etouffee, jambalaya and more in the comfort of your own home. The restaurant offers delivery within a two-mile radius (call and ask if you're not sure your location fits the bill). Noon-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday; noon-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday; closed Monday. 703-684-6010.

### Thanida Thai, 835 N. Royal St.

From pad Thai to pad eggplant, from green curry to red curry to panang, Thanida Thai takes diners on a tour of Thailand – no passport required. Sweet and sour beef, chicken, pork or tofu will add a bit of tang and pop to the proceedings; the veggies chu chee will give diners a silky smooth sauce to accompany an array of vegetables. Don't forget the fried banana with ice cream for a sweet treat. 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. and 4 p.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; open until 9:30 Friday and Saturday. 3:30-8:30 p.m. Sunday.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).

## CALENDAR

### NOW THRU JAN. 3

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run. At Cameron Run Regional Park, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Opens nightly 5 to 10 p.m. Ice and Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run will return this year, featuring an ice rink, more than a dozen holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, retail area, food, music and more. The Ice and Lights Village is a short drive from Old Town. Masks are

required in all areas of Ice & Lights except when eating or drinking in the concession areas. Admission: \$8.16 for general admission to Village; \$20.68 for admission with skating; starting January 9, 2021, \$12.19 for skating. Visit [novaparks.com/events/ice-lights](http://novaparks.com/events/ice-lights)

### NOW THRU DEC. 31

Christmas at Mount Vernon. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At George Wash- SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14



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## IN THE KITCHEN

# Small Business Changes Course in Middle of Pandemic

### Mindy's delivery dinners spread like wildfire in Del Ray.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**E**rin White has just returned from delivering 50 boxed chicken kabobs, couscous salad and cornbread lunches to hospital workers at Inova Alexandria Hospital on Nov. 17. She says the hospitals are suddenly busy again with COVID patients, and the workers are so glad to be recognized and to have a good meal.

Erin and her husband Bobby White, who live in Del Ray, own Mindy's, a catering company based in D.C. in the Palisades. They have dramatically switched gears since the pandemic hit in March. She says, "It was as if someone turned off the faucet. All of the offices who ordered lunch, all the events were suddenly gone." They had just bought out their partners in the business six months before COVID hit. "After 19 years we were ready to start a new era."

The Whites shut down the business until May 1 while they decided how to move forward. All of the employees were furloughed to unemployment. When Mindy's reopened it offered delivery dinners for 2, 4 or more guests on three days a week so they could still do some catering on the weekends.

She explains that they couldn't afford to offer dinners for more than three days because they had to keep the staff at a basic level with a chef and three cooks. "My husband and I do everything else. He makes all of the deliveries. We do the bookkeeping, ordering, and there is still some event planning."

Erin says there have been a few micro weddings. "That's the lingo in the business these days." This kind of wedding will be for 10-20 guests with each dinner plated and served — no buffets. When they arranged a Cherry Blossom riverboat wedding in Alexandria this summer each guest received an appetizer box with three-to-four nibbles or tastes. When they did an Arlington backyard wedding on Vacation Lane in July, they had a buffet but the host had arranged one way in and one way out with groups related to each other entering together.

She says the business they are doing right now allows them to do 30-38 percent of their previous business, "just enough to keep us open." When they started the new home delivery model, they promoted it to their neighbors in the D.C. Palisades neighborhood who knew them.

"Just on a whim we let our friends and neighbors know in Del Ray where we live, and it just spread like wildfire. We mentioned it to some of our friends and boom." Now she says 75 percent of their customers are in Alexandria and N. Arlington." Although the business is based in D.C., she says they pay taxes to the localities where the exchange takes place like Alexandria and Arlington.

Erin continues, "Almost everyone is a repeat customer. We have a woman who has ordered every week for 28 weeks since we started. She says Friday is her favorite day of the week. It is Mindy's day."



Mindy's has reinvented their catering business and now delivers seventy five percent of their home dinners to Alexandria and N. Arlington.



One diner has received their Mindy's dinner order of cordon bleu, brussels sprouts slaw and fettuccine with asparagus and peas. They will save the potato leek soup and cheddar biscuits for tomorrow's lunch.

Some folks who live out of town order for customers who live locally. One person from Colorado sends a meal to Alexandria so her mother gets good food every week. "We do a lot of gift certificates, someone who just had a baby, to thank a teacher, to cheer up a sick neighbor."

Mindy's delivers about 100 dinners a week and has the capacity to almost dou-

ble it. They were preparing to deliver about 100 Thanksgiving dinners in one day. "We have never catered Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners in 20 years because that three weeks was always so huge for us with holiday parties."

Now this year those holiday parties are not taking place, and Mindy's is overwhelmed by Thanksgiving orders. Erin says she thinks

things have changed with people not traveling this year due to the pandemic. "They are staying home instead of going to mom's where she cooked the dinner so they are ordering a Thanksgiving dinner this year."

Erin says their food is meant to satisfy a variety of tastes. "We try Italian, Mediterranean, Asian so you can order week after week and not get tired of it." She says they have done 28 weeks of dinners so they will do some rotating. She has enjoyed experimenting, like with the beet and feta salad. And people ask for repeats. "A 13-year-old neighbor walked by our home the other day and said 'I miss your meatloaf' so meatloaf is on the menu of choices this week."

"The dips such as pimento cheese or hot mushroom and caramelized dip have been ridiculously popular." She says beef bourguignon is always one of the top picks the week when they have it, and fish has been a big seller. "I think people are intimidated by cooking fish so we always have choices like scallops, salmon, cod, halibut."

Each week offers several appetizer choices such as interesting and inventive mixed salads, dips and soups; main courses including a beef, a fish as well as vegetarian main course and a choice of two side dishes. A dessert such as s'more bars, magic bars or chocolate covered macaroons from Maribeth's Bakery in Alexandria are also included.

"Maribeth's is in the same shape we are and continues to do wholesale for people who need it. Vendor partners are super important." She said that it's been amazing the community support for local restaurants in Alexandria and Arlington.

On a delivery day Bobby pops out of the lobster truck wearing his apron and his large Irish smile. Erin says Bobby immigrated from Ireland to America in 1988 and became a citizen on St. Patrick's Day in 1996. Erin credits Bobby's Irish gregariousness for much of their success. She says they have two sons, one at William and Mary and the other at George Washington Middle School who have promoted the business through their social media friends.

Erin says that catered food is meant to be transported and then reheated. Also the portions are generous which is how caterers think, 10 percent overage rather than a plated meal. "I think people like this. This means you might have leftovers and things like the curry couscous will keep for the next day. People order the soup which is an appetizer choice but save it for lunch the next day."

Mindy's can't operate long term on its current home delivery model base. "My optimistic hope is that when things go back to normal that we are building a new customer base, that the customers who have been getting home delivery will mention us to their office for lunch or remember us for the 50th anniversary party."

Erin concludes, "making a small business work in this atmosphere is hard but I feel like Alexandria and Arlington embrace the small business owners more than others, and for that we have been very lucky."



# Absurd Leverage

FROM PAGE 1

although the bill had support from the Virginia Autism Project. The debate happened shortly after the Senate killed a House bill that would have ended qualified immunity for police officers.

"I have learned over the last several weeks that words, definitions and standards matter when we're talking about these very weighty issues," said Del. Jeff Bourne (D-71), who introduced the bill on qualified immunity.

"I've heard lots of times that we vote on bills, not ideas and so I'd like to get us to a place where we can vote on a great bill that eliminates the mandatory minimums and really captures the essence of what we all know is happening in these instances."

**MANDATORY MINIMUM** sentences have become a flashpoint in the conversation about criminal-justice reform, although the effort to rip this one out of the code did not end up working during a special session aimed at improving equity in policing and prosecutions. The six-month mandatory minimum sentence for assaulting a law-enforcement officer dates back to 1997, a time when lawmakers were trying to use the criminal code to crack down on crime. State Sen. Louise Lucas (D-18) introduced a bill that would have made assaulting a police officer a felony. At the time, it was a misdemeanor.

"Can you believe that?" she is quoted in the Virginian-Pilot at the time. "You would think it would be a felony already, wouldn't you?"

Her bill passed the Senate but failed in the House. Meanwhile, Del. Donald McEachin (D-74) was working with Lt. Gov. Don Beyer on a similar bill that would have imposed a mandatory minimum sentence for hate crimes. The chambers struck a compromise creating a mandatory six-month sentence for assaulting a law-enforcement officer or committing a hate crime. Republican Gov. George Allen signed the bill, although now Democrats are rethinking the consequences of the tough-on-crime politics of the 1990s. Earlier this year, Del. Ken Plum (D-36) and Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) worked together on a bill that added gender identity and sexual orientation to the hate crime bill while also removing the mandatory minimum sentence.

"The governor came out with a policy statement on not supporting minimums," said Favola in a committee hearing on the bill. Although lawmakers removed the mandatory minimum for hate crimes, the mandatory minimum

**"Folks who are mentally ill and have interactions with law enforcement are hurt the most by this."**

— Sen. Scott Surovell

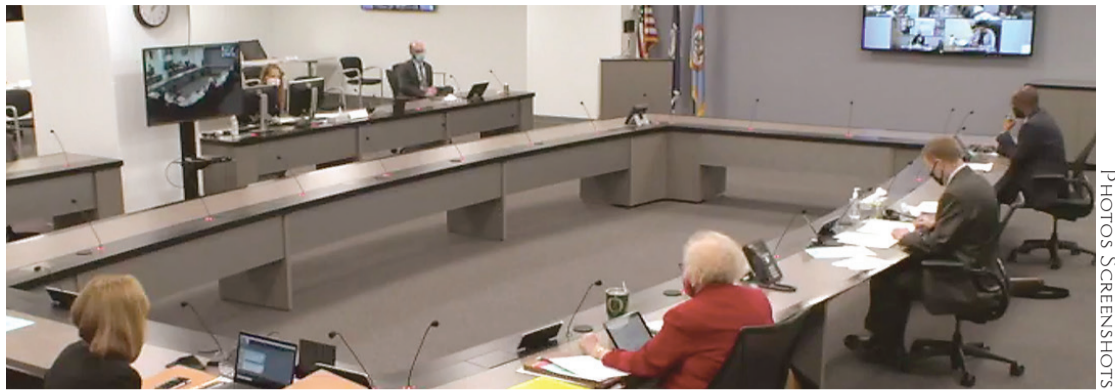
for assaulting law-enforcement officers is still on the books. Surovell says he plans to introduce the bill again next month, when lawmakers will begin the 2021 General Assembly session.

"It's my hope that with a more balanced discussion more legislators will be comfortable voting for it," said Surovell. "The bill got caught up in a lot of discussion about law enforcement, but in reality it's more about how law enforcement interacts with people with mental illness and people in crisis and mandatory minimums, which are well documented to have zero effect deterring crime."

Testifying in support of the bill during the special session, Virginia Autism Project president Teresa Champion said nobody is advocating in favor of attacks on law enforcement. She described arguments that the bill would be threatening to law-enforcement officers as "damaging hyperbole," adding that she hoped lawmakers would hear the voices of the disabled as part of the deliberations over the bill. "Many individuals with disabilities do not have what is called purposeful control over their bodies," said Champion. "My own son has a tick disorder where he spits constantly. That's assault under this law."

The Virginia State Police say they're concerned the bill would create a loophole for people who attack law-enforcement officials but do not inflict bodily injury, opening the door to the potential that officers who successfully block a punch won't be able to prosecute offenders. The Virginia Sheriff's Association said deputies across Virginia view the bill as diminished support for law enforcement. Republicans are united in their opposition to the bill, which received zero Republican votes in the House or Senate during the special session.

"I'm concerned that this bill will basically declare open season on police officers," said Del. Ronnie Campbell (R-24). "I just think it's bad for law enforcement, and it sends the wrong message to the public."



PHOTOS SCREENSHOTS

With everyone masked and at least six feet apart at the Dec. 1 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting, Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (center right) presides. Penny Gross who represents residents of the Mason District as Vice Chairman sits to McKay's left so he can pass the virtual gavel to her as needed. Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill is on McKay's right. Other county staff members support the meeting's processes in-person while the eight remaining Board Members attend the meeting electronically as seen on the screens.

## A Look Inside the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting Dec. 1 2020

FROM PAGE 7

The Board approved advertising for a proposed public hearing on January 26, 2021, 4 p.m. to convey Board-owned property at the Fairfax County Government Center to the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) in the Braddock District. FCRHA identified the underutilized five acres of Parking Lots G and H as a potential site for a new affordable housing complex.



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# Christmas Casual or Go All Out?

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**s with many traditions, the pandemic is altering celebrations. Whether extravagant and lavish, minimalist and understated or somewhere in between, inspiration for holiday décor abounds. A group of tastemakers are offering an array of design ideas to make any home merry and bright this season.

## Ease and Simplicity

“You can go casual and let yourself off the hook this year,” said Amy Rutherford, owner of Red Barn Mercantile in Old Town Alexandria. “Just iron your tablecloth and linen napkins, forage for greenery to put in a vase and call it a day.”

Understated décor is one of the themes that Sustainable Designer, Zelda Elisco of Abigail-Elise Design Studio is encouraging this season. “Decorate your mantle with a garland of greenery and wooden beads for the perfect minimalist look,” she said. “Arrange the perfect holly bouquet in a large glass vase.”

“If there’s one thing we’ve learned from the pandemic, it’s to simplify,” added Anne Walker of Anne Walker Design and Farm & Feast in Potomac, Maryland. “Focus on what’s really important. This principle applies to design as much as it does to life.”

A stunning tablescape doesn’t have to mean lavish and fussy, says Walker whose designs often incorporate reindeer antler candle holders and laser-cut wood Christmas trees in soft shades of beige. “The lack of embellishment allows each element to have a huge impact. A beautiful dining table is so restful in its simplicity [and] invites you to linger in peaceful, elegant spaces she said.

## Find inspiration in nature

While a daylong shopping spree in search of the most festive dining accessories might not be feasible this year, creating a tablescape with natural elements allows for simplicity while maintaining elegance.

“Grab a magnolia leaf and write a name on it for a place card and attach it to your napkins with twine. Simple twine is always a fun way to wrap napkins,” said Rutherford. “When you get your Christmas tree they have extra branches lying around. Pick up some of those and line them down the table. Sprinkle in candles, and fresh fruit like pomegranates, apples or oranges with cloves, which smell nice and are really pretty.”

“Evergreen is a beautiful smelling green and lasts a long time,” added designer Tina Yaraghi of The Enchanted Home. “I love mixing it in with fresh cut boxwood and eucalyptus. Keep a spray bottle with tap water on hand to spray every few days.”

Natural elements can also be used to add color. “Try adding a vase filled with cranberries or hurricane candle holders to a tablescape, suggests Yaraghi. “You can place it in the center of a festive wreath. I also add fresh greenery in a little mint julep next to each place setting, which is such a beautiful



PHOTO BY COURTNEY THOMAS, THE PICKET FENCE  
Tiny Christmas trees made from bottle brushes add a splash of color to holiday décor.



PHOTO BY ANNE WALKER  
Create an understated tablescape with reindeer antler candle holders and laser-cut wood. Christmas trees in neutral shades



THE ENCHANTED HOME  
Try decorating with unexpected patterns color combinations, like blue and white chinoiserie, this year.

**“You can go casual and let yourself off the hook this year, but just because it’s your immediate family and not the 30 people you usually host doesn’t mean that you can’t go all out.”**

— Amy Rutherford,  
owner of Red Barn Mercantile in Old Town Alexandria

and elegant touch.”

“Votive candles add understated elegance and are a must have for any holiday table,” she continued. “There nothing like the glow of candlelight [mixed] with greenery is always a beautiful look and I will often add faux white berries for a little something extra.”

## A Twist on Traditional Accessories

Dining tables aren’t the only spots to add Christmas cheer. “Fill your mantle with different styles of bottle brush trees in varying heights and put a wreath above it” said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke, Virginia. “Bottle brush trees, which, as the name suggests, are made of the brush-



PHOTO BY THE ENCHANTED HOME  
Etched hurricanes mixed with greenery and pinecones create an elegant tablescape.



COURTNEY THOMAS, THE PICKET FENCE  
Christmas villages are popular this year.

es that you use to clean bottles. They’re popular this year. They were big in the 1950s, so they’re kind of retro. You can also display them in groups of three or five and make a forest.”

“Christmas villages have been really popular this year,” continued Thomas. “Those are fun but for a side table, console or on a shelf.”

## There’s Nothing Wrong with Extravagance

Even using decorations that you already own, simple doesn’t mean lackluster. “Even if you normally go full tilt with glitter and glamour during the holidays, try something new this year,” said Walker.

“For table settings, I say go big or go home,” said Yaraghi. “I love bringing out all my silver, china, crystal. The more the merrier and if not for the holidays, then when?”

“Get a beautiful centerpiece and line the table with pretty candles,” said Rutherford. “Embrace the moment, embrace it even though it might be your immediate family and not the 30 people you usually host. Go all out. Just because it’s the four or six of you doesn’t mean you can go all out.”



FROM PAGE 8

**VIRGINIA OPERA CANCELS  
2020-2021 SEASON**

Virginia Opera, The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia, announces cancellation of all scheduled 2020-2021 Season productions due to the public safety concerns caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The determination follows a complete VO staff and Board review affecting statewide presentations in the Hampton Roads, Central Virginia, and Northern Virginia markets scheduled to begin February 2021. Visit the website – vaopera.org.

**NOW THRU DEC. 15**

Annual Membership Drive. The Port City Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL), a premier mother-daughter volunteer organization, invites women with daughters currently in 7th-12th grade, to join its chapter of 200-plus active mothers and daughters who reside in or attend school in Arlington, Alexandria, Springfield, Crystal City, or Washington, D.C. Visit the website: www.nationalcharityleague.org/chapter/portcity/

**DRIVERS NEEDED  
TO HELP SENIORS**

Mount Vernon At Home is a nonprofit organization serving senior citizens in the Mount Vernon and Alexandria areas of Fairfax County. They are in critical need for volunteers to assist members with driving to medical appointments and grocery shopping. Mount Vernon At Home will supply you with necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and can provide a donation receipt for your mileage. Volunteers can sign up for driving assignments through the online system which makes it easy to see and accept assignments. Give what time you can, there is no minimum or maximum number of hours. If you have some time to give to the community and can spare several hours a month, visit info@mountvernonathome.org, or call 703-303-4060.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnies517@verizon.net.

United Community (formerly UCM), 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, seeks volunteers for Food Pantry assistance, Early Learning Center teacher aides, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office administration/data entry, and community outreach. Flexible hours and schedules. Opportunities for all ages to serve, including community service hours. More info at ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@ucmagency.org.

Volunteer Fairfax makes it easy for individuals and families, youth and seniors, corporate groups and civic clubs to volunteer. Fulfill hours, give back, or pay it forward through a variety service options. Visit www.volunteerfairfax.org or call 703-246-3460.

**Announcements**

**Announcements**

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**Announcements**



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**Announcements**

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## "Medican't" Take It Anymore



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The non-stop - or so it seems, television advertising letting all of us viewers know that the 2020 Medicare Open Enrollment window is about to slam shut is nearly over. For those of us age 65 or older, this is not an opportunity to ignore. And given the frequency and repetition (the commercials are repeated, rarely ever different), at least on the channels that I watch (maybe that's the problem?), I feel like Bill Murray reliving his previous 24 hours endlessly in the movie, "Groundhog Day." However, unlike the movie, I can't do anything to undo what is constantly bombarding me on television. Switching channels during the commercials wouldn't really help because usually I'm watching a specific program - in between the commercials, and switching back and forth seems like too much effort. Besides, I might lose the continuity of the program I'm watching if I were to mis-time my switch. I suppose I could mute the commercial but I've heard Joe Namath - and others talk about the "give back benefit," the "zero dollar premiums in your area," and the possible additional benefits: "vision including contacts, hearing aids and batteries, home-delivered meals, dental and rides to your doctor's appointment" so often that even if I couldn't hear Joe actually promoting, I would still hear what he's saying in my head since I've probably heard it already a hundred times since the enrollment period began.

As I sit and write this on Tuesday, Dec. 1, the end is near however: Dec. 7, 2020. On that day the senior-centric advertising party (solicitation) will be over. Then the commercials will cease and desist - for now, only to return next year in November when the 2021 Open Enrollment period begins anew. Perhaps I'll be more inclined to act then. After all, I am their target audience. However, my being a senior with a pre-existing condition: cancer, limits and complicates my options. In addition, changing plans means changing doctors and though change can often be a good thing, for me, considering my life occasionally hangs in the balance, change might not be a good thing. In fact, it could be a downright bad thing. I mean, my oncologist has kept me alive for almost 12 years since my Feb. 27, 2009 non small cell lung cancer stage IV diagnosis. Granted, there may have been a slight revision of my diagnosis since three surgical biopsies performed earlier this year confirmed that what I actually have is papillary thyroid cancer. Nevertheless, changing now seems counterproductive, sort of. The damage is already done. I'm not sure there's much to gain now that a second opinion has similarly confirmed my updated diagnosis and has agreed with my current oncologist's treatment plan: Lenvima for me. But I do feel there's much to lose: nearly 12 years of treatment/experience with my present provider. And even though I understand that medical records can get transferred, I still feel I'd be putting myself at risk by forfeiting the knowledge that has been accumulated by the doctors who have been treating me/managing my care.

I imagine it's typical that a patient's survival depends in part on their emotional and psychological make-up. And of course on the doctors and staff that have been responsible for their care. And though I am not unaware of the possible mistake/blip on my medical radar with respect to my actual diagnosis, I still feel that I should stay on the horse on which I rode in on, if you know what I mean? Switching plans would mean switching doctors, staffs, procedures, et cetera. And I'm just not sure if I'm emotionally (there's that word again) equipped to deal with such upheaval in my life/care.

All of this being said - and sort of anticipated, listening to all those Medicare Open Enrollment commercials has made Kenny a very dull boy, and an aggravated one at that. I'm not sure I can take much more of it. Thankfully, mercifully, the commercials will stop after Monday, Dec. 7. Although I think Joe did an excellent job promoting his cause, I'm afraid it's fallen on deaf ears. Now that I mention that, I wonder if my current provider offers hearing benefits.

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

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

ington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Visit Mount Vernon this winter to participate in holiday activities and meet special guest Aladdin the camel. Learn about camels and George Washington's interest in exotic animals during Camel Talks, offered Friday through Sunday beginning on November 27. Specialty tours give guests a deeper look into the holidays at Mount Vernon. During the tour "Mrs. Washington's Mount Vernon," hear Martha Washington discuss the day-to-day planning needed for a busy holiday season. The "Holiday Dinner for the Washingtons" tour shares how food was grown, preserved and served during the holidays. Mount Vernon is open 365 days a year, including on Christmas Day. Admission: \$23 for adults; \$12 for youth (ages 6-11); free for children age 5 and below; extra cost for some activities. Visit [mountvernon.org/christmas](http://mountvernon.org/christmas)

### 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](http://www.artontheavenue.org).

### DEC. 1-31

Small Works Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington. "Small Works, Great Joy!" an all-member, all-media show of compelling small-scale works by our artists, priced affordably for holiday shopping. Visit the website: <https://galleryunderground.org/>

### STARTING DEC. 1

ArtWalk. At various locations along King Street (Union to Diagonal), and select side streets, Alexandria. Old Town Business Association is partnering with The Art League of Alexandria to offer a holiday themed ArtWalk in Old Town along King Street (Union to Diagonal) and select side streets. Each block will feature a work of art adorning a lamppost. Maps may be found at [oldtownbusiness.org](http://oldtownbusiness.org) beginning December 1, 2020. Keep an eye out for holiday trees located on both upper and lower King Streets. Visit [oldtownbusiness.org](http://oldtownbusiness.org)

### NOW THRU JAN. 30

Winter Wonderland. At King & Rye's courtyard (480 King Street, Alexandria) is transforming into a Winter Wonderland. In addition to general courtyard seating with heat lamps and holiday décor, new this year, book an igloo for private dining for up to eight guests. This is ideal for social distancing as you are only in the space with your party, and the area is sanitized between parties. The igloos will each have heaters as well as the option to play your own music via a Bluetooth speaker. The igloos will be reservation required with a \$50 rental and \$100 food and beverage minimum. The rental will include a hot cocoa and cookie bar. For food and beverage, enjoy a tapas style menu with a southern twist and, of course, festive cocktails. Reservations can be booked online or via [info@kingandrye.com](mailto:info@kingandrye.com), available as of December 2, 2020. Visit [kingandrye.com/event/winter-wonderlan](http://kingandrye.com/event/winter-wonderlan)

### NOW THRU DEC. 20

Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Different artists each weekend. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and more. Plus FUNdraising 2021

calendars, cookbooks, and upcycled tote bags. Free admission. Market is December 4-6, December 11-13, December 18-20. Fridays 6-9pm and Saturdays & Sundays 11am-6pm. Please wear a face mask and maintain 6' personal space. Located at 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2020](http://DelRayArtisans.org/event/holiday-market-2020)

### DEC. 5 THRU JAN. 8

Old Town Business Holiday Lamp Post Art Walk. Along King Street and select side streets, Old Town Alexandria. The arts are alive in Old Town this holiday season with the debut of its first-holiday art walk. Don't forget the exceptional shopping and dining Old Town Alexandria has to offer. Old Town Business collaborated with 25 artists from The Art League to create holiday-themed lamp post art pieces along King Street and select side streets. A map of the artwork will be created so folks can stroll the art walk at their own leisure. Lamp Post Art will be located in the following areas.

### THURSDAY/DEC. 10

Suffragist Night of Terror. 7-8:30 p.m. Online. Prof Alice Reagan describes women suffragists' incarceration at the Occoquan Workhouse and its meaning in larger historical context. Despite arrests, abuse, and prison, women refused to stop picketing the White House for the right to vote. The Night of Terror at the Occoquan Workhouse when they were beaten and tortured, led to public pressure that pushed Pres. Wilson to support for the woman's suffrage amendment. Go to AHS website to register at <https://arlington-historicalsociety.org>

### DEC. 11-13; AND DEC. 26-28

Winter Glow at Mount Vernon. From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Experience an enchanted evening of winter lights at Mount Vernon. See the estate illuminated with soft lights and holiday patterns as you listen to Christmas carolers and visit an 18th-century winter encampment. You can also meet Aladdin the camel, shop for artisan-made goods, purchase warm food and holiday drinks at the Mount Vernon Inn Food Truck and more. Admission: Starting at \$25 for members; \$30 for non-members. Visit [mountvernon.org/christmas](http://mountvernon.org/christmas)

### SATURDAYS/DEC. 12 AND 19

Holiday Candlelight Tours at Lee-Fendall House. 5 to 8 p.m. (tours on the half hour). At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Celebrate the holiday season with evening candlelight tours of the Lee-Fendall House decked out in Victorian splendor. The antique toy exhibit will also be on view. Space is limited and reservations are required. Face masks and social distancing will be in place throughout the tour. Admission: \$8 per adult; \$3 per child; free for children under 6 years old. Visit [leefendallhouse.org](http://leefendallhouse.org)

### SATURDAY/DEC. 12

"A Song for the Season" - Opera Arias and Festive Art Songs. 1 p.m. | 2:30 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Seasonal art songs and arias from Christmas- and winter-themed operas celebrate the season. Visit <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/>

### SATURDAY/DEC. 12

"Christmas in Russia and Around the World." 5 p.m. | 6:30 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess St, 711 Princess St, Alexandria. Featuring Musalliance Duo, Peter Omelchenko, domra and balalaika | Anna Kusner, guitar. A delightful selection of familiar and uncommon holiday folk music from Russia, Ukraine and other countries, in unique arrangements for the unmistakable sounds of domra, balalaika and classical guitar. Updates, programs and ticket details for all concerts available: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts-2/>



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