

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 15, 2021

Hot Summer Climate Flows into the Real Estate Market

With the pandemic shrinking, bidding wars are part of the house buying process.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The hot real estate market in Alexandria, Mount Vernon and beyond is keeping agents busy as multiple bids often result in higher prices for the nicer properties, but location is still a big selling point.

Chris White, a Realtor at Long and Foster office in Old Town, and his team have had 71 sales so far in 2021. White said the low interest rates and the attractions are bringing buyers in. Some are looking to live along the parkway in the Mount Vernon area for open space, larger lots and more greenery, he said. "I think the bike trail plays a big part," he said.

The Jen Walker Team is busy in the City of Alexandria, as well as points south such as Wayneswood in Mount Vernon.

"It's been crazy," said Nicky MacNaughton, an agent with the team. She listed a three-bedroom, 1.5 bath house in DelRay that attracted seven offers. "It showed well with a huge backyard," she said. "Charming but still walkable to yoga, Aldi and others, all in one package," she added.

It's that way across the board this summer in Northern Virginia and the signs keep going up in the front lawns, but they don't stay there long.

Donna Cramer at McEneaney Associates Realtors has seen many surges in the real estate market in her career, but a recent transaction with a mid-century modern house in Springfield was a good example of how hot this market is.

There were 26 offers and the house went for about \$300,000 more than listing price. "I had no idea mid-century modern was that hot," Cramer said. "It made my sellers very happy."

It's that way across the board this summer in Northern Virginia and the signs keep going up in the front lawns, but they don't stay there long.



This house in Hayfield Farm was listed at \$649,900 and after multiple bids, sold for \$748,000.

NVAR Stats for May Home Sales in Northern Virginia

❖ Inventory of houses on the market were 3,452 new listings in May 2021 compared to 2,174 in May 2020

❖ City of Alexandria had 1,318 sales from Jan-May 2021 compared to 889 for the same period in 2020

❖ Fairfax County, properties sold for 103.5% of list price

❖ A total of 2,656 homes sold in May 2021, a 63.8% increase above May 2020 home sales of 1,622

❖ Average home price in May 2021 was \$745,323 compared to the average price in May 2020 of \$641,002

Cramer said there are a lot of bidding wars, but not always. Sometimes a buyer comes in with a high bid and no one challenges it.

According to a comparison by the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, sales in April 2021 to sales in April 2020, the average home price in Fairfax County was \$714,564, which was up 9.7 percent from last year. Then a bidding war, caused by the demand for housing in this area, could push the price up from there.

Why the demand around here? The federal government, Pentagon and military bases around the beltway have always been a magnet for people relocating to this area. "This area offers, a proximity to the Washington, D.C. area, the ability to work from home, more affordable homes than in D.C., very good schools, and more square footage – especially for families with children," said Quinton Simmons from the National Association of Realtors.

Derrick Swaak, president of Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, said contributing "factors include historically low mortgage rates, a strong stock market and a



The red-hot real estate market in Northern Virginia is creating a lot of turnover for buyers and sellers.

robust local economy."

That economy is driven by new arrivals in the corporate world too, said Swaak. "Amazon is looking to fill 1,900 jobs in and around HQ2. Currently there are 1,600 employed there. The region also continues to attract new businesses, such as Starkist moving its headquarters to Reston, Guidehouse establishing a global HQ in Fairfax County, with 900 new jobs," he said. The DC metro area is a popular place for new college graduates to move to when they are starting their careers, and many stay here.

Karen Hall, a real estate agent in the Kingstowne area, recommends that in a market like this, make sure you hire an agent who is excellent at negotiations and strategy (two different things), and hunts for off-market properties. She added that it's best for buyers to double check that they are making their strongest offer so they won't lose sleep if they don't win.

Picture Restoration Unearths Local History

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

In an attic somewhere in Kansas, a Civil War descendant found a picture of a gathering of Union veterans on the steps of the Mount Vernon plantation. Many questions arose to the finder, who found the picture while cleaning out her grandparents house, so she reached out to "Maureen Taylor: The Photo Detective," who uncovered a slew of things

about the picture including the fact that the great grandfather survived being shot at 32 times and lived to pose at Mount Vernon. "It became a story about the Civil War and his remarkable story," said Taylor.

It turns out the man's name was Jessie Sturm, and Taylor picked him out in the photo, and while dodging the 32 shots, he hid behind a tree. "I think she had one of the bullets he dug out of the tree," Taylor added.

Taylor has used her degree in history, and some self-taught photo

skills, to build her business, finding stories like this all over the place. "People come to me with all kinds of mysteries," she said. "Families are not aware of the history and this is a good example of that," she said.

The Photo Detective business started when she had the position of a curator at a historical society. People would come to her with photos and questions, so her skills evolved over time. Now she investigates many situations a month.

SEE PICTURE, ON PAGE 4



The Civil War veterans on the side of the Mount Vernon plantation.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

McEneaney Associates has always had one motto in mind... not to be the biggest, but the best. For more than 40 years, our Associates have lived in and supported Alexandria, helping to build our town into the thriving community it is today. To learn more about our Associates and our firm, visit www.WeAreAlexandria.com

#WeAreAlexandria



OPEN SUN 7/18, 2-4PM

Stratford on the Potomac | \$879,000
Bring your swim suit! Private, backyard oasis with pool and portico. 3 bedrooms, 3 baths. Beautifully updated kitchen with adjoining family room. Living room with gas fireplace and built-ins. Finished lower level. Dive in! 9007 Greylock Street
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www.sue4homes.com



OPEN 7/17 & 7/18, 1-3PM

Riverside Gardens | \$879,900
Delightful 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath, 1-car garage home. Renovated kitchen (2019) opens to expansive great room with fireplace and adjoining sunroom. Tastefully renovated bathrooms, newly refinished hardwoods, & more! 8514 Buckboard Dr.
Margot Lynn 703.973.3722
www.MargotLynnrealtor.com



Alexandria | \$810,000
Built in 2012, this home has all the modern updates & amenities. The fully fenced-in backyard, large deck perfect for grilling while overlooking the pastures at Little Burgundy Farm. 5 bedrooms, 3 full & one half baths. 5712 Glenmullen Pl.
Jillian Keck Hogan 703.951.7655
www.JillianKeckHogan.com



OPEN SUN 7/18, 2-4PM

Alexandria House | \$875,000
Glorious views of Old Town! Luxurious, beautifully renovated, 2-bedroom, 2-bath SW corner condo. New floor-to-ceiling windows. 85-foot wrap-around balcony. Modern, fresh kitchen and baths. Great building amenities. 400 Madison St #1203
Sue Feintheil 703.819.1964
www.sue4homes.com



Fort Hunt | \$779,500
Great value in this delightful, all-brick home on a corner lot. Gleaming hardwoods, 2 fireplaces, updated kitchen, 4 bedrooms, and 3 renovated baths. Walkout lower level family room to patio. Side-load garage. 2104 Old Stage Road
Brenda Gail Brown 703.819.8406
www.BrendaGail.com



OPEN SAT 7/17, 12-2PM

Del Ray | \$699,900
Great 3 bedroom, 2 full bath duplex! Updated appliances, renovated baths, hardwoods. Large, fenced yard ideal for entertaining. You won't want to miss this one just blocks from restaurants & shopping on "The Avenue!" 16 E Monroe Avenue
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Arch Hall | \$725,000
Bright and spacious, this townhome offers a gourmet kitchen, formal dining space & gorgeous living room with fireplace and French doors accessing the private brick patio. Hardwood floors and fresh paint. 2 parking spaces. 623 S Columbus Street
Lauren Bishop 202.361.5079
www.LaurenBishopHomes.com



OPEN SUN 7/18, 2-4PM

Fairfax City | \$1,125,000
Light filled, 4-bedroom, 4.5-bath home featuring main level owner's suite. Kitchen boasts granite & stainless. Upper level with 3 generous bedrooms. Fully finished lower level. A wrap-around porch and attached 2-car garage 10094 Farrcroft Dr.
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



COMING SOON

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Potomac River and four blocks to King Street shops and restaurants. 456 S Union Street

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Mary Ellen Rotondo 703.472.5454



OPEN 7/17 & 7/18, 1-4PM

Old Town Village \$965,000
Terrific townhome! Fabulous kitchen, hardwood floors, large deck, gas fireplace and a garage are among the special features

of this lovely home. Enjoy a dip in the community saltwater pool and a walk to everything in Old Town. 1116 Duke Street

Lisa Groover 703.919.4426
www.LisaGroover.com



OPEN SUN 7/18, 2-4PM

Parker Gray \$795,000
Two blocks to Metro! Very nice expanded townhouse with great outdoor spaces! Updates include granite and stainless kitchen, 2 full baths,

electrical, HVAC, & windows. Hardwood floors main and upper. Finished lower level rec room/bedroom. 2 off-street parking spaces! 509 N Payne Street

Peter Crouch 703.244.4024
www.CrouchRealtyGroup.com



OPEN 7/17, 1-3PM & 7/18, 2-4PM

Arlington \$695,000
Charming and light filled, this home has 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, and a detached garage. Freshly painted, original hardwood floors, updated kitchen, spacious

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Evictions Coming

More than 2,000 tenants are already involved with the courts on evictions with the end of CDC moratorium looming July 31.

BY KEN MOORE
GAZETTE PACKET

Landlords have prepared to start evicting tenants when the federal moratorium ends July 31, 2021. More than 2,000 tenants across Fairfax County are already involved in the court system.

In fact, 608 writs of eviction have been issued in the county. A writ of eviction is a court notice sent to the Sheriff's Office to remove a tenant's belongings from a property, according to county documents.

Writs of evictions have been issued throughout the county, including 164 in Alexandria, 73 in Falls Church, 59 in McLean, 54 in Fairfax, 50 in Herndon, 40 in Springfield, 34 in Vienna, 32 in Reston, 31 in Centreville and 31 in Annandale.

As of June 14, 2021, 1,432 unlawful detainers have also been issued. Unlawful detainers are issued when a landlord seeks court assistance in removing a tenant from

a property. These include 366 issued in Alexandria, 137 in Fairfax, 113 in Annandale, 103 in Herndon, 103 in Springfield, 89 in Reston, 79 in Centreville, 73 in McLean, and 73 in Vienna.

MORE THAN 10,000 households have needed emergency assistance for rent, utilities and food during the pandemic in Fairfax County.

"We're hearing from residents in the community that have never had to reach out before," said Keisha Dotson, division director, Neighborhood and Community Services.

The county is bracing to hear from more since the existing Centers for Disease Control moratorium on evictions is scheduled to end July 31, 2021.

Many families who have been unable to pay their rent because of the pandemic economic crisis could be facing eviction and homelessness when the eviction moratorium expires.

"We can anticipate that we're going to



"We're hearing from residents in the community that have never had to reach out before."

— Keisha Dotson,
Neighborhood
and Community
Services



"Rental assistance is one of the best ways we can prevent evictions."

— Tom Barnett,
Housing and Com-
munity Develop-
ment

have a huge call volume," said Chairman Jeff McKay. "I want to make certain we have the resources on the ground to respond to them quickly."

"Rental assistance is one of the best ways we can prevent evictions," said Tom Barnett, of Housing and Community Development.

The county has distributed more than \$31.5 million so far. "There has been an unprecedented demand for assistance," Dotson said on June 29 at the Board of Supervisors Health and Human Services committee meeting, chaired by Dalia Palchik (Providence).

The county will spend \$75 million more in federal assistance to help prevent evictions and homelessness.

The county is also reaching out to landlords.

Supervisor District	Court Involved
Braddock	110
Dranesville	116
Hunter Mill	219
Lee	285
Mason	394
Mount Vernon	295
Providence	360
Springfield	88
Sully	150

* As of June 29, 2021

Writs of Eviction, Top ZIP Codes	
22306	54
20171	36
22312	34
22303	32

Unlawful Detainers, Top ZIP Codes	
22003	113
22306	112
22042	108
22303	96
22030	70

"We're not just reaching out to our typical clients, tenants requesting this rental assistance, but also the landlords themselves, with our nonprofit partners based in the community, Cornerstones and FACETs," Barnett said. "They have actually been engaging the landlords so that they understand the programs available to help pay rental arrears and so they can help get their tenants through this process."

At the time of the June 29 committee meeting, 975 landlords had applied.

Communities hardest hit by COVID are also those hardest hit or anticipated to be hit by eviction proceedings, in particular communities of color, Barnett said. "Clearly some neighborhoods are getting impacted more than others."

Seeking Equity in Access to Required School Supplies

Leveling the learning field from binders to graphing calculators.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Summer vacation hits the halfway point for students enrolled at Fairfax County Public Schools on Monday, July 18. With the division reaching out to parents, encouraging them to send their children back to in-person learning this fall compared to the fall of 2020 and the economic fallout of the pandemic, the need is greater than ever for equitable access to required school supplies.

Approximately 31 percent of students in FCPS qualified for free and reduced-price meals as of Oct. 31, 2019, reported FCPS. These are families who earn less than 130 percent of the poverty level and those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent.

Each FCPS elementary school has school supply lists posted to their school's website. Middle and High schools often supply these lists on their websites or provide them to students on their return to school, according to FCPS. Costs to purchase school supply items as viewed on the individual FCPS websites can run upwards of over \$100 per student with individual teachers, especially at the higher grades requesting additional supplies, such as a TI-83 series graphing cal-



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
The first day of school for 2021-22 for Fairfax County Public Schools is Aug. 23.

culator at \$125, and the need to replenish items throughout the year.

Asked how many children would require donated supplies and backpacks for the school year 2021-22 opening on Aug. 23, Jennifer Sellers, media outreach specialist at FCPS said, "Around 60,000 FCPS students live at or near the poverty level."

OPPORTUNITIES are available to students in need of supplies. The Foundation for Fairfax County Public Schools offers Collect for Kids, described as a strategic team-- comprising businesses, government agencies, and community organizations working together to organize and plan a fundraising effort that helps provide kits of supplies

for students in need. The goal is to ensure all students have the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom. Schools can customize their kits to meet the needs of teachers and students best.

The Collect for Kids monetary campaign allows the Foundation to streamline the distribution of backpacks and supplies. "A donation of just \$50 provides five students in need with the basic supplies necessary for academic success," states the Foundation's website.

Kids R First is a regional non-profit program "dedicated to the education and helping kids (grades K-12) from families of limited financial means with school supplies to receive the same opportunities as their peers," states the charitable organization's website. In 2020, Kids R First provided custom orders for every grade level at every participating school, according to Susan Ungerer, founder/CEO. Volunteers supplied required core items to 25,100 students in need in Northern Virginia and Maryland.

This summer, Ungerer said, Kids R First is working with 38 schools (K-12) in the Fairfax County communities of Alexandria, Annandale, Centreville, Chantilly, Falls Church, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Reston, and Springfield. "Each individual school order is put on a pallet, shrink-wrapped. Then the Fairfax County Schools warehouse group picks

them up and delivers them to the schools. All the supplies are given to students at the school with the hope they receive them before school begins," said Ungerer.

Some school districts nationwide have taken an initiative to increase educational equity among all their students, leveling the learning field. Schools provide the supplies students need for learning, the same as they do with books and other materials.

PROJECT Free Education at Bellingham Public Schools in the state of Washington provides supplies and opportunities to students at no cost. The budget priority attempted to close gaps. Since the program started in 2011, the division reported it eliminated the need for families to buy school supplies at elementary, middle, and high school; eliminated middle and high school course fees and supplied high school scientific and graphing calculators, and world language Advanced Placement (AP) workbooks.

Fairfax County Public Schools anticipates starting on the first day of school, Aug. 23, 2021, with bus routes and schedules back to normal with full activity, athletic program, and "academic excellence."

If students need assistance with school supplies, they can directly reach out to their local school.

Virginia Private Colleges Week

BY DELEGATE
PAUL KRIZEK

July 26-31 marks Private Colleges Week in Virginia. Virginia is fortunate to have a very strong higher education system, and private 4-year institutions comprise an integral part: there are 38 four-year higher education institutions in Virginia, 23 of which are private. Although our public colleges are some of the best in the nation, private colleges are uniquely able to meet the educational and professional needs of many Virginians — especially those underrepresented in public institutions.

The sticker price of private colleges is often more expensive than their public counterparts, but financial aid and grant programs can make them more affordable for low-income and underrepresented students. 64% of Virginia private colleges in a recent report have an average family income of less than \$100,000, as opposed to 28% of the reporting public colleges. Furthermore, 45% of students enrolled in Virginia private colleges utilize Pell grants, which is a fed-

eral program that provides money to students from low-income households that does not have to be repaid. I am a big supporter of the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) program, which provides annual grants to private college students. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, \$4,000 will be available per year for qualified undergraduate students and \$2,200 for qualified graduate and medical students. However, for those undergraduate students pursuing a career in teaching, payments will be increased by an additional \$500 in their senior year. These grants total approximately \$80 million per year. Indeed, if the 23,000 TAG recipients were enrolled at public institutions, the cost to the Commonwealth would be much higher.

Additionally, private colleges are also working to address racial inequities in the education system. 69% of the student populations enrolled in 4-year private colleges are from underrepresented populations, which includes non-white



Krizek

US citizens and permanent residents, Pell grant recipients, students over the age of 25, and students from localities with low rates of attainment. Out of our 23 Virginia private colleges, two are HB-CUs and one is a predominantly Hispanic serving institution.

As private institutions, these colleges are often more nimble and better equipped to address pressing economic and racial disparities in education. Having a Bachelor's degree is incredibly beneficial to students as they expand their knowledge base and advance their opportunities in the job market. According to a 2017 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, those with a Bachelor's degree make \$461 more per week than those with only a high school education. Private colleges are able to assist people from all backgrounds in reaping the benefits of higher education.

Beyond creating more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized or low-income individuals, Virginia's private colleges help us

all through their diverse degree programs. For example, 51% of Virginia's Bachelor's degrees in education are from private institutions, as are 45% of our nursing degrees. Private institutions also have various graduate programs including one pharmacy school and two osteopathic medical schools. These programs — and their graduates — are central to the health and economy of Virginia as a whole. As a Commonwealth, we need what private colleges can produce.

Private colleges are needed to meet the educational and professional needs of Virginians, especially those underrepresented in public institutions.

I encourage my high school constituents and their families, as well as adults looking to start or continue their higher education, to participate in the upcoming Virginia Private Colleges Week. You may be surprised and excited by the diverse and high-quality educational opportunities we have here in Virginia.

<http://www.cicv.org/Our-Colleges/Virginia-Private-College-Week.aspx>

Picture Restoration Unearths Local History

FROM PAGE 1
She's working on another book called "The Last Muster, Volume III," where she is going back to the Revolutionary War to find veterans that lived to have their picture taken.

Photography became available to the public in 1839, and some of the veterans from the Revolutionary War were still alive at that time, including a Mount Vernon resident by the name of John Gray. Her investigations showed that Gray lived from 1764-1868, and Taylor found his photo at the Library of Congress, and learned that I.N. Nolton was the photographer. His story grew from there.

As part of her investigation into photos, she looks for the clothing and hats to find a link or a timeframe that the photo was taken. Other knowledge about the person unravels from that.

One picture she investigated was of a little boy in a costume, as it appeared, and she referred to it as an "unusual outfit," around the 1890s. This is no homemade ghost costume or fangs from the corner drug store. "I'm pretty sure he went to some sort of costume party," she said.

And then there was a photo of

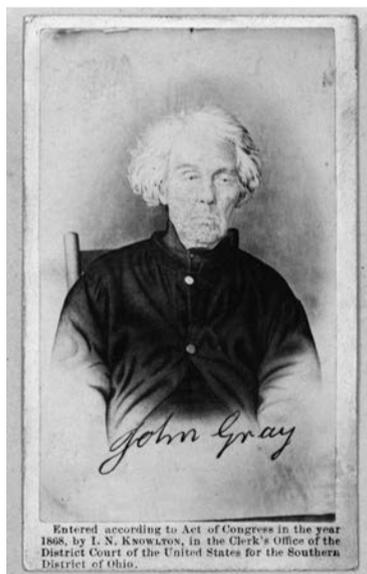


Maureen Taylor's grandparents.

her own grandparents, with her grandmother in a big floppy hat, which drew her attention. Up until then, Taylor had only seen pictures of her grandfather in later life, but in this picture, she could tell how much he looked like her father.

"Very touching to me, only photo I have of him at a younger age," she said.

Taylor has been sought out on



Mount Vernon resident John Gray that fought in the Revolutionary War.

talk shows, and she is a frequent speaker on photo identification, photograph preservation, and family history at historical and genealogical societies, museums, conferences, libraries, and other organizations across the U.S., Lon-

don and Canada. This includes shows like "The View," and "The Today Show." She's been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Better Homes and Gardens, The Boston Globe, Martha Stewart Living, Germany's top newspaper Der Spiegel, American Spirit, and The New York Times. She is a contributing editor of Family Tree Magazine.

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Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue.

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A Connection Newspaper





Volunteers fight the never-ending weed issue along the parkway.

Weeds and Blind Curves Along the Trail Keep the Volunteers Busy

The Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail are always looking for volunteers when it comes to weed control.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

The spring season this year was good to plants, so they grew at such a rate along the Mount Vernon bike trail that blocked visibility made safety a factor. So the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail jumped into action in early July with the clippers and weed whackers to clear things up.

There was a spot just south of the airport, and a few more by Daingerfield Island. Fingers pointed to the dreaded kudzu at the power plant bridge they are eyeing for a clean up as well as a couple of other bridges in that area. "Volunteers did extensive vegetation removal at three trail curves in June to help prevent crashes," they posted on the website.

Most of the blind corners that were worked on so far were identified in the Mount Vernon Trail Corridor Study which was a comprehensive assessment of trail conditions and safety. When it comes to the sightlines at curves, trail users have brought these to the attention of the Friends group, said president Judd Isbell.

The bike trail is part of the National Park Service, and the Friends group is an official partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway through a Philanthropic Partnership Agreement.

There is an annual work plan
www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Kudzu is a known invasive species that causes problems in parkland.

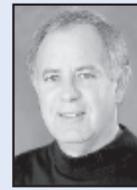
with George Washington Memorial Parkway that outlines the activities that the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail will conduct. They've been focusing mainly on improving sight lines through vegetation management, pressure washing bridges and also edging the trail and coordinating the schedule with the GWMP Trail Manager. "George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Trail Manager have been awesome partners to work with and provide a lot of technical assistance and tools," Isbell added.

Kudzu is known on the trails as the "vine that ate the South" because it is fast growing and can

quickly engulf trees and structures. "We'll be removing kudzu to help protect some trees and prevent it from growing over two bridges near the old power plant in Alexandria," Isbell said.

All of their volunteer events are designed to not require any special skills or expertise.

They're always looking for volunteers and noted that the volunteer events are perfect for organized groups like Scouts, church groups, civic organizations and businesses. Individuals interested in having a group volunteer event can contact the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail at mtvernontrail@gmail.com.



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OPEN
SUNDAY 1-4



Alex/ Riverside Estates \$819,900

8515 Mount Vernon Highway

Possibly the most stunning curb appeal in all of popular Riverside Estates. It adequately sets the scene for this spectacular renovated & expanded 4BR, 3BA Contemporary. Inside you will find beautiful hardwood floors, recessed lights, crown molding, energy efficient double pane windows, six panel doors, & 2 gas FPLs. A magnificent & expanded kitchen opens to the dining room & living room, boasting of granite counters, SS appliances, gorgeous cabinets & lovely marble flooring. The baths are updated including a whirlpool tub, travertine tile & heated floors. The dining room & Master bedroom each have beautiful decks which look out over a beautifully landscaped & fenced back yard. The lower level offers a 4th BR, 3rd BA, office, exercise room & utility room. Finally, a large detached 2 car garage w/water & electric which includes room for a workshop PLUS stairs to a floored upper-level w/tons of storage space. Walk to MVHS & Riverside Elementary, 7 mins (S) to Ft. Belvoir, 15 mins (N) to Old Town & Huntington Metro, 25-27 mins (N) to Pentagon, National Airport & D.C. This will go Fast!



Vienna/Acadia Condo \$394,900
9480 Virginia Center Blvd. Unit 120

Beautiful 2BR, 2BA Condo located in South Vienna. Good Sized Bedrooms each with their own walk-in closet and bath. Kitchen is open to the eating area and family room & has beautiful corian countertops. Attractive laminated flooring through the kitchen, family room and hallways. Don't miss the office station and the lovely balcony off the family room. 2 convenient garage spaces below are reserved for this unit. Tremendous community amenities highlighted by a wonderful swimming pool, gym, recreational room and office room. Finally, a perfect location with quick and easy access to Rt. 66, 495 and Rt. 50. If you want to leave your car behind, a quick 2 block walk will put you at the Vienna Metro Station. This wonderful property can be yours to enjoy!!



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Bees entering a hive.



John Ferree checking beehives at Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Backyards Are Buzzing with Beekeeping

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

When Mount Vernonite Liz Craver recently opened one of her backyard honeybee hives, she knew immediately something was wrong because the buzzing was unusually loud. She instantly diagnosed the problem. She had a queenless hive. Beehives need queens and without them, honeybees become agitated and aggressive.

Craver raises honeybees in her backyard, one of several area beekeepers who do it mostly for the intrigue, the science and the environment, not to sell honey.

An 18th century “Mount Vernonite,” U.S. president General George Washington and enslaved people kept bees too.

Today, John Ferree manages nine honeybee hives at the Mount Vernon Estate, where “his” bees have provided pollination services to the plantation’s garden and orchard plants for 20 years. Ferree also manages between 160,000 and 200,000 honeybees in hives on the roof of Washington, D. C.’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and several other spots.

Nearby, Jonna Sanders does Slovenian-style beekeeping. Traditional American beekeepers have vertical frames in their hives that they pull up and out for inspections. Sanders’ hives have pull-out horizontal frames that slide out and are covered by a cabinet door. Bees enter hives from the bottom and build combs on the frames.

Bees Bedazzle

“When I open a hive, I’m amazed at the wonderment of it all,” says Ferree. And peeking into a hive does provoke wonder. Apiarists check their hives off and on. The frames are covered with masses of brownish, squirming honeybees, some with tiny, yellow pollen puffs on their legs.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Liz Craver and Honey from her hives.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Liz Craver and friend.

Beekeepers look for larvae, broods, miniscule white bee eggs, the shape of a rice grain but one-tenth the size, and for pests. They listen to the constant hum, which to most apiarists is like a captivating symphony.

And they scan for honeybee queens which are larger than the worker bees. A queen will have a mating flight, mate, return, lay eggs and spend the rest of her life in the hive. Ferree’s seen queens fight until one is left and the win-

ner becomes the reigning queen. If the hive becomes too crowded, the bees swarm to form another hive.

Pollinators

Pollination produces seeds when bees carry pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma of flowers of the same species. Supporting plant pollination is a major reason to keep honeybees, argues Virginia’s state apiarist, Keith Tignor.

Bees will fly up to three miles.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

John Ferree with his beehives at Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.

Helping Pollinators

There are 19,200 bee species in the world. North America has around 4,000 bee species. Most are small, solitary bees that do not live in a colony and live in the ground. Settlers brought honeybees to the colonies around 1620 to make honey so they are not native to North America.

Pollinators include bees, butterflies, birds and bats. Pollinators are responsible for the reproduction of over 85 percent of the world’s flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world’s crop species, says the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

- Provide nest sites, like tree snags, bare ground and brush piles.
- Plant native plants. They support four times more bees than non-natives.
- Plant in clumps, clustering similar blooms together.
- Choose plants that bloom at different times of the year.
- Provide natural connectivity between land fragments.
- Avoid pesticides.

Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association, <http://www.novabees.org/>

Ferree’s Mount Vernon honeybees pollinate the estate’s gardens and orchards, crops like squash, apples and alfalfa. Craver’s bees fly a few miles to Huntley Meadows Park, she maintains.

Several studies have found that insect pollinators, including bees, are in decline. “During the past 30-plus years, our nation’s pollinator populations have suffered serious losses,” says the U.S. Department of Agriculture website. Stressors include habitat loss, non-native plants, a changing climate, pesticides, other chemicals and disease.

Assessing the Temperament

Craver, an architect and seven-year beekeeper, has about 300,000 bees, 40-60,000 each bees in six hives. “They’re booming this year,” she observes, “because we’ve had a long nectar flow. Spring flowers bloomed for a long time.”

Some beekeepers mail-order queens, but Craver prefers that her bees make their own queen. She takes a frame of eggs from one hive and puts it in a queenless hive where the bees select one of the

SEE BACKYARDS, PAGE 7

Backyards Are Buzzing

FROM PAGE 6

eggs, build a cell, feed the larvae royal jelly and grow a queen. Then the queen matures, goes on mating flight, mates and returns to the hive, a 28-day process.

When inspecting hives, Craver asks herself, is the hive queen right? This means the queen is there and laying, the brood pattern is good, the hive has workers and drones and the hive has a contented “temperament.” She can “read” the “demeanor of the hives,” she says. “It’s easy to tell if they’re happy.”

River Farm, the American Horticultural Society’s headquarters in Mount Vernon, has beehives too. AHS spokesman David Ellis, Director of Communications, explained, “We strive to make our grounds an ideal habitat for pollinators by providing a tremendous diversity of plant species, including plants that bloom at different times of the year, providing water sources from fountains and ponds and setting aside uncultivated, naturalistic areas that offer nesting sites and cover for native pollinators.” He added, “Hopefully the pollination services from our honeybees also extend to the vegetables and fruits grown by some of our nearby neighbors.”

Slovenian Beekeeping

Another Mount Vernon-area resident, Jonna Sanders, uses the Slovenian beekeeping system, the same approach that her great-grandparents used in Slovenia in the early 1900s.

After taking a class with the Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association and with Ferree as her mentor, she imported some Slovenian AZ hives, named for their inventor, Alberti Znidersi, and now has six hives in her yard with about 30,000 bees per hive. The Slovenian system has more weather protection, creates fewer hive disturbances and avoids using smoke to calm the bees, a common beekeeping practice. As someone with scoliosis, she sees the hives as easier to handle for people with disabilities.

A neighbor’s commercial mosquito spraying killed her bees at one time, she’s convinced, because the company used a class of insecticides called neonicotinoids that can disrupt bee’s reproduction, foraging and overall activity. Sanders was so concerned that she convinced Virginia Delegate Paul Krizek to introduce legislation earlier this year to discourage neonicotinoids’ use. The state is now leading a study group to examine ways to reduce the risk to pollina-



Jonna Sanders and her Slovenian-style beehive.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



The author ... at Mount Vernon Estate with Ferree.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



This is a queen cell that the bees made to raise a new queen.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

tors from neonicotinoid pesticides. Referencing her Slovenian ancestry, “Bees are in our blood, in our culture,” Sanders stresses. As a five-year-old, she played with bees. In the fall, she will start a Ph. D. program in entomology with a focus on honeybees. “It’s snowballed on me,” she chuckles.

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Bryan 'Bugsy' Watson Dies at 78

NHL great opened Old Town sports bar in 1983.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

To anyone who knew him, Bryan Watson was larger than life. The gritty National Hockey League defenseman turned Alexandria Sports Bar owner was a fixture in Old Town, where he made his home following his retirement as a player from professional sports in 1979.

"He was one of the last of the 'King Street Mafia,'" said Old Town Business Association representative Charlotte Hall referring to a group of early restaurateurs who took a chance on the 100 block of King Street in the early 1980s. "Gordon King with Bullfeathers, Mr. Ray with the Fish Market. Now only Ralph Davis and Franco Landini are still with us but even though they are not actively involved on a daily basis, I think back to how they all transformed that part of the city."

Watson opened Bugsy's Pizza Restaurant and Sports Bar in 1983, hanging up his skates for a second time in 2013 when he sold the business to longtime employee Bartolome Paz to spend more time with his family and enjoy his home on the Eastern Shore.

On July 8, Watson died at his St. Michaels retreat at the age of 78. The cause of death was listed as pneumonia but Watson had also battled lung cancer in recent years.

Born Nov. 14, 1942, in Bancroft, Ontario, Bryan Joseph Watson began playing organized hockey at the age of 13 in Peterborough, Ontario. He played junior hockey with the Peterborough Petes of the Ontario Hockey Association from 1960 to 1963 under the skillful eye of NHL coaching legend Scotty Bowman.

In 1963, he joined the National



Bryan Watson played three seasons with the Washington Capitals. He died July 8 at the age of 78.



Bryan "Bugsy" Watson, right, at his sports bar in 2013, died July 8 at the age of 78.

Hockey League as a 21-year-old rookie with the Montreal Cana-

diens, who won the Stanley Cup the following season. Standing just

5'9" and weighing 175 pounds, Watson was known for his aggressive play, earning him the nickname "Bugsy" as one of the most penalized players in the history of the league.

Watson's career spanned several NHL teams, including the Detroit Red Wings and Pittsburgh Penguins, before landing with the Washington Capitals in 1976. After three years with the Caps and a brief stint coaching a young Wayne Gretzky and the Edmonton Oilers in 1980, his 17-year NHL career came to an end.

But his passion for the sport continued locally as a player with Mount Vernon's Over-40 league and as a coach with Special Olympics. He was honored by the organization with a humanitarian award in 1978.

"Over the years I've had so much fun," Watson said as he turned over the keys to Bugsy's in 2013. "I had way too much fun playing hockey. And then with Bugsy's, I've been blessed to have two careers that were just too much fun."

Tributes to Watson poured in from around the country, none more so than from those he touched locally.

"Before the days of 'any hockey game, any time you wanted,' there was Bugsy's with a satellite feed,"

said Robert Fobian in a social media post. "Bryan always greeted me and my crew personally, just like he did everyone else. He made time for a few hockey stories and made you feel like you were the most important person in the joint. But he wasn't just an ambassador -- he was never above bussing a table, sweeping the floor, serving, cooking. When he played, he gave his team everything he had. He gave Bugsy's the same. What a tremendous loss."

Watson and his wife Lindy were regular fixtures at the restaurant, generously supporting local non-profits and youth organizations.

"Bryan never turned away anyone asking for a freebie," Hall added. "If someone needed a donation, he was there to give it to them. He was especially generous with St. Stephen's & St. Agnes, where his children attended school. He truly was a generous soul."

Watson's NHL career stats include 877 games and 2,214 career penalty minutes, leading to the sports bar's original name of The Penalty Box, which became a hang out for some of DC's professional athletes, including Russ Grimm and Joe Jacoby. The name was changed to Bugsy's in 1998 when Watson ended his original partnership with Armand's pizza.

When Watson sold the iconic restaurant in 2013, his wife said it was time to turn over the reins.

"After 30 years, this was a good time to get out," Lindy Watson said at the time. "Being in business with your spouse wouldn't work for all marriages but for Bryan and me, it has been the greatest thing we have ever done."

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, the former Lindy Wilson; their two children, Stephen Watson, who owns a restaurant in New Orleans, and Lisa Watson of Los Angeles; a sister; a brother; and two grandsons. A celebration of life is planned for October.

"Bryan truly made his mark here with Bugsy's," Hall said. "For many, it will always be known as the Penalty Box. It's sad. He was one of the pioneers. We have lost another heart and soul of 100 King."

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

THURSDAY/JULY 15
JLNV Membership Event. 7 p.m.

Virtual Event. Zoom call to learn more about membership in the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Go to https://members.jlrv.org/?nd=vms_public_form&form_id=341 to RSVP. Members will share their experiences and opportunities they've explored through the Junior League, and answer any questions you may have about becoming a member. Applications are still open for the Summer 2021 New Member class. Website: <https://www.jlrv.org/july-15th-jlrv-virtual-meet-and-greet/>

TUESDAY/JULY 20
DNA Genealogy Tools. 1-3 p.m. Via Zoom. Former police detective David Vasquez discusses how to use DNA tools such as GEDMatch in his July 20 presentation at the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society's monthly meeting. Register no later than July 12 to this free Zoom event at <https://mvgenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=111> OR by emailing your name and address to contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. Visit www.mvgenealogy.org and link to the Events Page for more information on this and other upcoming events.

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Time to Kill



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Again, not a cancer column. Given the title, it would be a pretty gruesome reference to my life in the cancer world if it were.)

No. Not even close to a cancer column. But I am writing about a similar mind-numbing experience. However, this experience has nothing to do with disease/dying. Instead, it has to do with the effort, patience and excruciating lack of success in attempting to contact, meaning speaking to an actual person, at the Internal Revenue Service and/or at the Social Security Administration. The phone numbers you're "googled" to call are the opposite of hot lines. They are frigid. Almost too cold to tolerate, but since your financial life expectancy may be at risk, somehow you have to hold on for dear life. Or else pay, or rather be unable to pay, the consequences.

So I'm on hold for 14 minutes and counting, sort of. More like listening to some unrecognizable instrumental between looped messages that say (A) You're still on hold and (B) They haven't forgotten you and your call will be answered in the order in which it was received. (Actually, you're hoping they remember you.) Unfortunately, you have no choice but to hold on. The answers you seek are only found at these places/numbers and unless you go to the source, you'll be barking up the wrong tree and/or not squeaking the right wheel. I'm fairly certain that if you don't call them, they're unlikely to call - back, or forward, especially if the reason for my two calls is to secure money coming to me instead of negotiating how I'm planning to pay them. So sit tight and be brave - and be near a bathroom to make sure nature's call doesn't interrupt your interminable wait on hold and/or be sure there are enough bars on your phone so a draining battery doesn't end your pursuit.

However, presuming the time it will take to speak to someone to be hours, not minutes, it can be an opportunity to while away your wait by multi-tasking and have the music offered up for your listening pleasure to serve as a kind of white noise as you go about some other personal business. In short, you can get things done rather than become increasingly frustrated that you're stuck by the phone accomplishing nothing. But you have to prepare and anticipate. This wait is not going to be a pleasurable experience. It's a means to an end, hopefully a rewarding one, but hardly one that's guaranteed.

If you can only talk yourself into realizing how good you'll feel once this phone task is completed. Roloids has nothing on the relief you'll feel when you're finished with this day's work (almost literally). Moreover, knowing you don't have to call them back tomorrow is nearly motivation enough. Crossing this task off your to-do list free's up not only time but mental space, as well. It's almost as if you've given your life back, at least for a few hours, anyway.

As I sit and continue to write this column, it is 38 minutes since I began this exercise in time utilization. And it's just now happened, a representative from the Social Security Administration has just interrupted the music loop and offered their assistance. Let me get my bearings and organize my thoughts so I'm clear in what I'm saying. I don't want to have to make this call again. I already have once before. I have called previously and after telling my tale, was put on hold while the operator researched my claim only to be disconnected when the operator returned to address my question. But this time, there was no disconnect. I received my answer in a reasonably timely manner and off I now go into the rest of my day. Next up: the IRS. Do I dare test my limits and call them on the same day as I called Social Security or do I reward myself and take a well-deserved break? Either way, it's one down and one to go. I think I'll call tomorrow. I don't feel like testing my patience yet again, and besides, I'm finished with this real-time column.

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

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ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY MICHAEL WISE

Their show is faithful to the original Black Sabbath sound of 1970's fame.

Rock the '70's Metal Scene with Black Sabbitch

The all-female Black Sabbath: Four women rocking the metal band's sound and energy.

By MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

The black leather, boots and heavy metal personas dominate the stage when the women of Black Sabbitch start cranking up the Black Sabbath tunes. It's all about the music for these women rockers who are playing at the Birchmere in late July.

"We use our musicianship to get inside this music, capture the spirit and energy Black Sabbath did in the early seventies," said band founder Angie Scarpa who plays the drums along with Melanie Makaiwi on bass, Emily Burton on guitar and Alice Austin on vocals. "I don't think there's another band of all-women doing it," she added.

They are redefining the concept of cover band, but fall short of being called a tribute band, and are not decked out in wigs and costumes. "The way we look on stage is the way we look walking down the block," Scarpa said.

Black Sabbath was a British rock band formed in Birmingham in 1968 by guitarist Tony Iommi, drummer Bill Ward, bassist Geezer Butler and vocalist Ozzy Osbourne. With the religious connotations surrounding their name and the satanic rumors that arose from the leader Osbourne, it's a label that just sort of stuck. Supposedly Osbourne bit the head off a real bat during one show, so this added to the craziness.

Scarpa knows about the rumors, and calls it a misconception. Sabbath was really more part of the hippy scene she said. "The vast majority is not like that," she said.

After their show at the Birchmere, the band is headed to Annapolis, then Pennsylvania and New York before going back to the west coast. In October, they go overseas to eight shows in the United Kingdom. Black Sabbitch was hand-picked by Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne to open the inaugural Ozz-fiesta.

After Europe, they are playing in the "Psycho Las Vegas," festival with The Flaming Lips, Danzig, Ty Segal, and Mercyful Fate.

When talking about the upcoming sched-



PHOTO BY JOHN TRAVIS

LA rockers Angie Scarpa, right, with Melanie Makaiwi, Emily Burton and Alice Austin are Black Sabbitch.

Thursday, July 22. 7:30p.m.

The All Female Black Sabbath Band - Performing the 50th Anniversary of "Masters of Reality" & "Vol. 4" in their entirety at The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. 703-549-7500 tickets \$35.

ule, Scarpa said it was tough to look ahead with the pandemic impacting everything. "It's a difficult time to be planning things," Scarpa said, but also noted that they are one of the live shows out there as the pandemic is fading.

What's in a Name?

No one seems to be offended by the name but every once in a while, a social media platform will say it's profanity and a web service will kick them off, but this is just a computer program. The name is part of their vibe. Scarpa said they do see their tee shirt sales remain consistent, and Scarpa is not surprised. "They just like what it says," she said.

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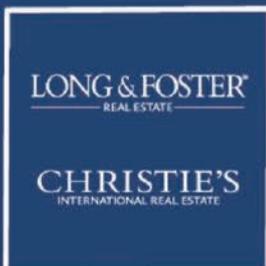
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