

NPS Safety Changes To Begin on G.W. Parkway

On or about Tuesday, Oct. 4, the National Park Service will begin road work to enhance safety on the southern portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The changes are intended to make the parkway safer for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists while maintaining its historic character. The changes include reducing lanes as part of a road diet.

The NPS will restripe the road between the City of Alexandria and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and implement a road diet (changing markings so that there will be two northbound, one southbound and one turn lane) in areas between Stratford Lane and Tulane Drive. The road diet and other changes are designed to improve safety. NPS will also install new signs and delineators (flexible posts) at the intersections of Belle View Boulevard, Belle Haven Drive and other areas along the parkway to guide drivers.

The NPS plans to temporarily close one of two lanes in each direction while work is happening. Drivers should expect to see work on weekdays in:

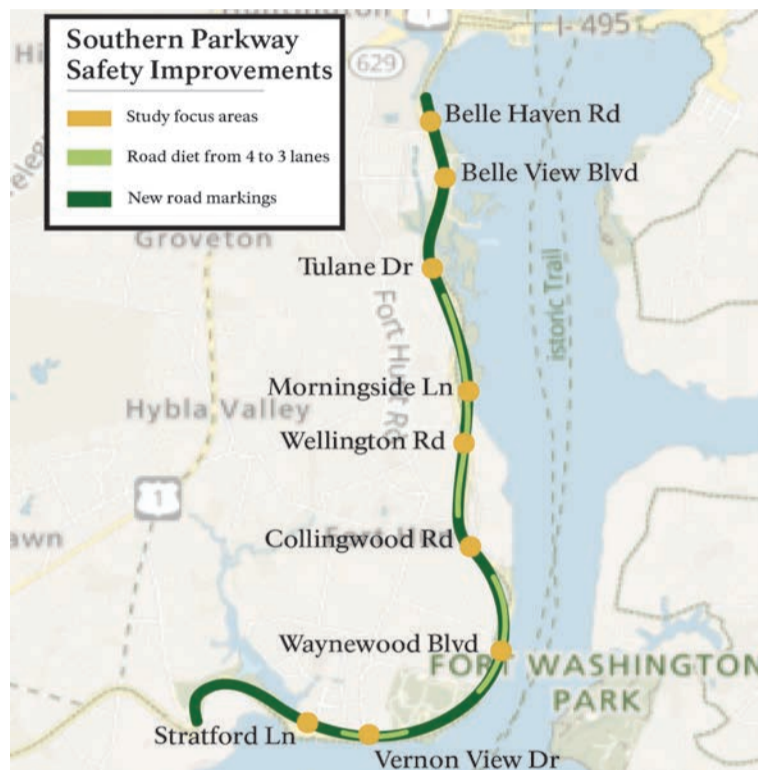
- * Northbound lanes from roughly 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. starting in late September at Mount Vernon and working north.

- * Southbound lanes from roughly 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting later in the fall near the City of Alexandria and working south.

"We will engage with the community as we assess other changes in the future," Superintendent Charles Cuvelier said. "We are committed to taking steps that make driving, walking and bicycling between Mount Vernon and Alexandria safer and more enjoyable."

These improvements are based on extensive public input, coordination with stakeholders and expert analysis of crash data and traffic modeling. Those models show that the improvements will not change the road's ability to accommodate pre COVID-19 levels of traffic. Once implemented, the NPS will continue to engage with stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of these changes recommended in the South Parkway safety study.

The study, which the NPS com-



The National Park Service has nine spots along the GW Parkway to implement a road diet.



Lane configurations like this are part of the safety plan.

pleted in April 2021, examined traffic and safety conditions at nine key intersections along the southern portion of the parkway between the City of Alexandria and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. The study identifies recommendations to improve safety through enforcement and engineering approaches.

At Belle View Boulevard, where many bicyclists and pedestrians sprint across, a median U-turn has been discussed as a partial solution. Adding delineators, which are movable posts between lanes from Belle Haven Boulevard to Belle View Road is on the NPS list for that location.

The Fairfax Alliance on Better Bicycling is also aware of the changes coming to the parkway, and the negative impact excessive speeds have to pedestrians and bi-

cycle traffic.

"We also strongly recommended road diets and other measures to calm driver speeds," FABB said in their blog.

Opened as the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway in 1932, the southern section was the first section of the current George Washington Memorial Parkway. The road's completion coincided with the nationwide celebration of the bicentennial of George Washington's birth.

The parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is a key factor in considering any changes so that they are context sensitive for a park setting. Today, this section of the parkway serves over 25,000 vehicles daily.

Complete report on the NPS park planning site at go.nps.gov/GWMPSafety

Down with Plastic Bags

Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and Fairfax County are simultaneously taking steps to reduce the negative environmental impacts of single-use plastic bags by adopting local plastic bag tax ordinances in each jurisdiction.

The Alexandria City Council and Arlington County Board adopted their ordinances during public hearings held Saturday, Sept. 18, which followed Fairfax County's adoption of their ordinance on Tuesday, Sept. 14. The plastic bag tax ordinance authorizes the jurisdictions to impose a five-cent (\$0.05) tax for each disposable plastic bag from grocery, convenience and drugstores.

"A decrease in plastic bags will lessen our environmental impact and improve quality of life for our Eco-City by reducing the plastic bags littering our roads and local waterways," said City of Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson. "This action, coupled with continuing outreach and education that empowers our residents as active partners in these efforts, is one of the many important steps Alexandria and our neighboring jurisdictions are taking toward achieving environmental sustainability."

The effective tax date would be Jan. 1, 2022, for all three jurisdictions. The City of Alexandria, Arlington County and Fairfax County have been working closely with the Northern Virginia Regional Waste Management Board to align outreach, education, timelines and common language for the localities to ensure consistency and clarity.

"Arlington is proud to take this step to reduce plastic bag waste in our community and to do so with our regional partners," said Arlington County Board Chair Matt de Ferranti. "We have long sought the legal authority for this small fee as a way to protect our environment and become a more sustainable community. We look forward to working with residents and neighbors on implementation."

In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly adopted Virginia Code 58.1-1745, which

authorizes any county or city in Virginia to impose a tax of five cents per bag on disposable plastic bags provided to customers by convenience stores, drugstores, and grocery stores. The Virginia Department of Tax Administration published final Guidelines for the Virginia Disposable Plastic Bag Tax on Sept. 1, 2021. <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/guidelines-virginia-disposable-plastic-bag-tax>

The tax would not apply to plastic bags intended for reuse; plastic bags solely used to wrap, contain or package certain items (ice cream, meat, fish, poultry, produce, unwrapped bulk food items or perishable food items); plastic bags for dry cleaning or prescription drugs; or multiple plastic bags sold in packages for garbage, pet waste or leaf removal.

"Working collaboratively with Arlington and Alexandria to address the issue of plastic pollution makes perfect sense," said Jeff McKay, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. "Environmental issues like pollution and water quality don't respect political or geographic boundaries, they are shared concerns that affect all of us equally. I hope not a single person will need to pay this tax as it is completely avoidable. I congratulate my peers in both Arlington and Alexandria on the adoption of their plastic bag tax ordinances. We look forward to working together to reduce pollution locally and to improve our natural environment in the years to come."

Until Jan. 1, 2023, for the first year in effect, retailers will be able to retain two cents for every five cents collected on each plastic bag. After Jan. 1, 2023, the amount will decrease to one cent.

Collected taxes may be used for environmental cleanup; providing educational programs designed to reduce environmental waste, mitigating pollution and litter; or for providing reusable bags to recipients of either Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) benefits.

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SENIOR LIVING

Let the Games Begin

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics competitions are going on around the region.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

It is a bright sunny day at Chesterbrook Swimming & Tennis Club in McLean on Sunday, Sept. 19 as the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO) diving competition leads off two weeks of events.

“Much better than the usual inside diving venues,” according to Kim Alderman, a long-time competitor. He explains the diving boards are much better.

“And it’s nice in the sunshine,” according to his wife Karen Alderman, also a long-time competitor.

Kim and Karen are from Arlington where there were no swimming pools available for practice during Covid. But Kim says he was lucky to find Montgomery Pool. However, Karen had Covid and had to recover for a while.

Mandy Whalen, who lives at Goodwin House in Falls Church, says she had no pool available for 18 months. “I was back in the water for the first time when we started to practice for this.”

This year the 12 competitors are from all over the N. Virginia area including Guinevere Meyer, Alexandria; Carol Mackela, Springfield; Carlos Rodriguez, Dumfries; Douglas Bell, Vienna; Mandy Whalen, Falls Church; Stephen Neal, Chantilly. The games

are held at venues all over the area and are open to competitors who will be 50 years and over by December 2021.

The diving event is divided into age groups with the 50-54 and 55-59 required to do 6 dives or skills; 60-64 and 65-69 required to do 5 dives or skills and 70-74 and older required to do four dives or skills.

Carlos Rodriguez from Dumfries says, “I’m 81 so there are only two of us oldies in my category.” He is entered in 15 NVSO events this year. “I’ve been competing in the NVSO for 10 years and every year I add 2-3 events. This year I’m entered in diving, swimming, field events and horseshoes.” In 2019 he entered in seven events in the National Senior Olympics in Albuquerque and is planning for the Nationals next year in Ft. Lauderdale where, he has relatives.

Jeanne Moscarillo from Lovettsville says, “I am competing for the first time this year. I haven’t dived since high school but someone just gave me a form in the Community Center so here I am.”

Five judges line the side of the pool with their flash cards ready to flip open after each dive. Kim explains all judging is relative and styles change. Twenty years ago a full out with 2 1/2 somersaults and 2 twists wasn’t judged very high. He explains it’s not pretty but when they started using it in the Senior Olympics, the judging changed.

“Judges are supposed to judge in the same manner but it changes from year to year. You wonder how they are going to judge today.” He doesn’t know if they’ll age-adjust today.

Carol Mackela is from Springfield, a long-time local as well as national and international competitor. She carefully adjusts the fulcrum on the diving board before starting her dive.



Jeanne Moscarillo, Lovettsville, is competing in her first NVSO diving event. She hasn’t dived since high school.

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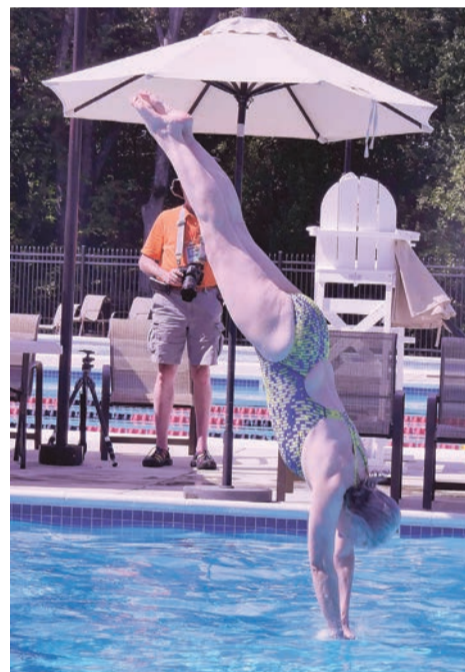
Carlos Rodriguez from Dumfries has entered 15 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics events this year although in the 81-year-old category “there aren’t too many competitors!”



Kim and Karen Alderman from Arlington compete in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics diving events Sunday, Sept. 19 at Chesterbrook Swimming and Tennis Club in McLean.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET



Carol Mackela, Springfield, long-time Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, national and international diving competitor.

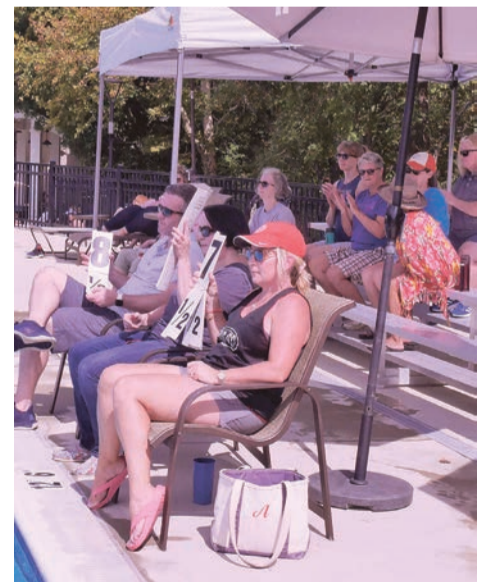


Guinevere Meyer, Alexandria, practices several dives before settling on her final five for the competition in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics.

Karen Alderman explains the fulcrum controls the springiness of the board. “I can only do my back dives with the fulcrum tight.”



Mandy Whalen, a resident of Goodwin House, just took up diving several years ago.



Judges sit ready with flip cards to record their score for each dive in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics diving events Sunday, Sept. 19 at Chesterbrook Swimming and Tennis Club in McLean.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that a fireworks display will take place as part of a private evening event at George Washington's Mount Vernon on **Saturday, September 25, 2021** between 9:00pm and 9:30pm (5 minutes).

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption. To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via e-mail, write to Events@MountVernon.org

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NEWS

Wild Rice Provides Multiple Ecological Services

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Wild rice's billowy crowns are shimmering in the breeze in Dyke Marsh and now reaching their height. These plants, which botanists classify as a grass, are particularly visible on both the east and west sides of the George Washington Memorial Parkway where Dyke Marsh extends under the road behind Belle View and River Towers condominiums.

The plant's inflorescence is a flower cluster or panicle on upright, broom-like branches with dangling branches below. These annual plants have light green, lance-shaped, alternate leaves, eight to 24 inches long and can reach up to 10-12 feet in one season.

For an up-close look, here's a description: "Examination of the large, terminal panicle reveals that the uppermost areas contain erect female spikelets, while the lowermost areas contain the purplish, pendulous male spikelets. Upon pollination, papery, bristly-tipped husks containing brownish, cylindrical fruits will form," wrote Janet Lyons and Sandra Jordan in *Walking the Wetlands*.

With separate male and female flowers on the same plant, wild rice is largely pollinated by the wind. The plant cross-pollinates which means that pollen must be transferred from one flower to another.

The seeds, purplish black in color, ripen in September and October. One acre of wild rice can produce more than 500 pounds of seed, wrote Ray Norrgard in the *National Wetlands Newsletter*. This fall's seeds will fall into the water, settle into the sediment and with favorable conditions, generate new wild rice plants in the spring.

Wild rice plants like water. They grow in 0.5 to three feet of water typically and thrive in wetlands, ponds, lakes and the edges of slow-moving rivers. "Natural wild rice generally requires some moving water, with rivers, flowages and lakes or wetlands with inlets and outlets being optimal areas of growth," wrote Norrgard.

Dyke Marsh apparently is for now ideal habitat as it has a soft, muddy bottom and as a tidal marsh, daily three-foot tides on average.

Wild rice is food for birds, especially ducks, including mallards, wood ducks, ring-necked ducks,



Wild rice in Dyke Marsh. Botanists classify wild rice as a grass.



Wild rice is visible on both the east and west sides of the George Washington Memorial Parkway where Dyke Marsh extends under the road behind Belle View and River Towers condominiums.

black ducks, pintails, teals, wigeons, redheads and lesser scaup. The stems provide nesting material for muskrats and some waterfowl. Wild rice provides habitat for fish. It is a host plant for the broad-winged skipper butterfly. Historically, people in China and North America have harvested the grain. In the U.S. today, people harvest seeds for food in the fall, in Wisconsin and Minnesota, for example.

The wild rice species in Dyke Marsh, *Zizania aquatica*, is native and found on the east coast of the U.S. and Canada and in the Great Lakes region. "Wild rice species continue to suffer from habitat loss," reports the National Wildlife Federation.

Ecological Services

Stands of wild rice can stabilize soils and form windbreaks. These

natural defenses or ecological services are particularly critical in Dyke Marsh because the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) found in two studies, in 2010 and 2013, that Dyke Marsh is eroding six-to-eight feet or 1.5-to-two acres per year on average. Without action, the marsh will be gone in 30 to 40 years, concluded USGS.

The National Park Service (NPS) published the "Dyke Marsh Wetland Restoration and Long-term Management Plan" in 2014 and is taking steps to stabilize the marsh. In phase one, NPS built a 1,500-foot breakwater at Pipeline Bay out into the Potomac River, visible from the parkway, and a sill north of the breakwater. Their goal is to stem erosion and encourage accretion of sediments to save Dyke Marsh.

In the meantime, wild rice is doing its part naturally.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

SENIOR LIVING

It Takes a Village

Senior Villages ease aging in place.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

A generation or two ago, many Americans assumed that, when they grew older and frailer, they would go to a nursing home or assisted-living facility. But aging looks different now. According to a recent AARP survey, today's older Americans — 88 percent of those 65+ — prefer to stay in their home and community for as long as possible.

Villages are nonprofit, community-based organizations committed to helping people live and thrive in their own homes, surrounding them with the extra help they need to stay active and engaged. This “extra help” is provided by volunteers who share a passion for helping their neighbors age well in their homes. A Village offers many of the benefits of a traditional retirement community — all in the comfort of the family home.

Villages provide a way for seniors to stay connected, safe and engaged. Now especially, during and after the pandemic, Villages are a lifeline for seniors, providing transportation, grocery shopping, errands, and help both inside and out of their homes. Villages stay in contact with their members -- providing regular check-in phone calls to their more vulnerable members and offering engaging social activities, in person or online as circumstances dictate.

Loneliness and social isolation are linked to serious health conditions, and seniors are at the greatest risk. Perhaps the most essential Village offerings are the engaging online and in-person activities and events: book groups, current events discussions, virtual art tours, birthday celebrations, educational talks with guest speakers, and much more that keep seniors connected with one another. Villages are an essential component of a community's senior safety net.

The Washington area leads the country in the growth of senior villages, going from about five in 2010 to 60 that are up and running or in development today. In Northern Virginia, you can find villages in the City of Alexandria, Arlington, Mount Vernon, and elsewhere relying on volunteers to provide the extra help and connection that makes aging-in-place possible.

Arlington Neighborhood Village, Mount Vernon At Home and At Home in Alexandria are three of the Washington area's more than 60 senior Villages.

More information can be found at: Arlington Neighborhood Village — www.arlnvil.org; Mount Vernon At Home — www.mountvernonathome.org; and At Home in Alexandria — www.athomeinalexandria.org.

Pre-pandemic volunteer driver from Mount Vernon At Home getting ready to take a member to a medical appointment. Volunteers and members adhered to all the necessary safety protocols during COVID-19.



At Home in Alexandria executive director Cele Garrett, left, helps an At Home in Alexandria member with plant shopping.



Arlington Neighborhood Village volunteer delivering groceries for a member during COVID-19. Village volunteers stepped up to help members with contactless grocery shopping and medication pickup during the pandemic in 2020.



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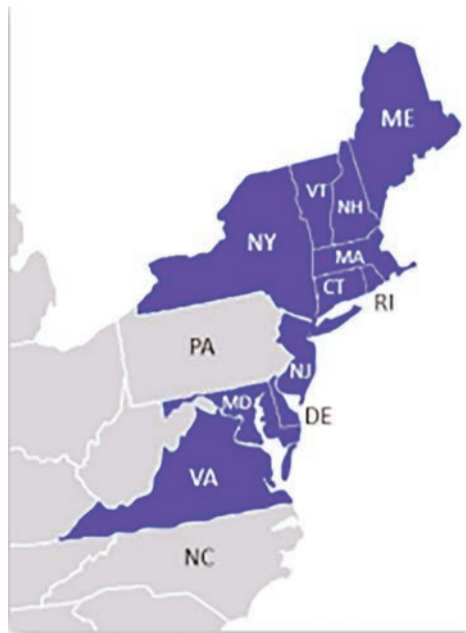
Fall Appropriations Report

BY DELEGATE
PAUL KRIZEK

On Monday, as I made my way down to Richmond for the September Appropriations Committee meeting to hear updates on Virginia's economic recovery from COVID-19, I thought about how far we have come since this pandemic started. A year and a half ago we were shedding jobs at a very concerning clip. We lost about 480,000 jobs in that first quarter. By December of 2020, about 200,000 of these jobs had been recovered. To date, Virginia's unemployment rate has declined for the past 15 months straight. And, as of this week, about 60% of the Virginia population is now fully vaccinated. Here in Fairfax County, 73% of adults are fully vaccinated, and 61% of the total population. Our economic recovery continues to outpace the nation, and a majority of our population have taken steps to protect themselves from COVID-19 infection.

In fact, throughout this pandemic, the General Assembly, in concert with our Governor, have acted in a fiscally prudent manner while supporting our small businesses and workers struggling to get by. We made record investments in our infrastructure, education, and public safety (all of which I have written about previously). We continue to prioritize the health and safety of all Virginians. These past two years of Democratic rule have laid the foundation for an economic recovery that is building back an even better Virginia—from providing for universal broadband, strengthening the behavioral health system, record investing in everything from high speed rail to reducing water pollution, improving ventilation and air quality in public schools, and funding for rental and utility assistance, and so much more.

First, at the committee meeting, we received the economic and revenue update from the Secretary of Finance, Joe Flores. Virginia's real GDP rose at an annualized rate of 6.6 percent in the second quarter of 2021, following 6.3 percent in the first quarter. Following two strong months of growth, the labor market added only 235,000

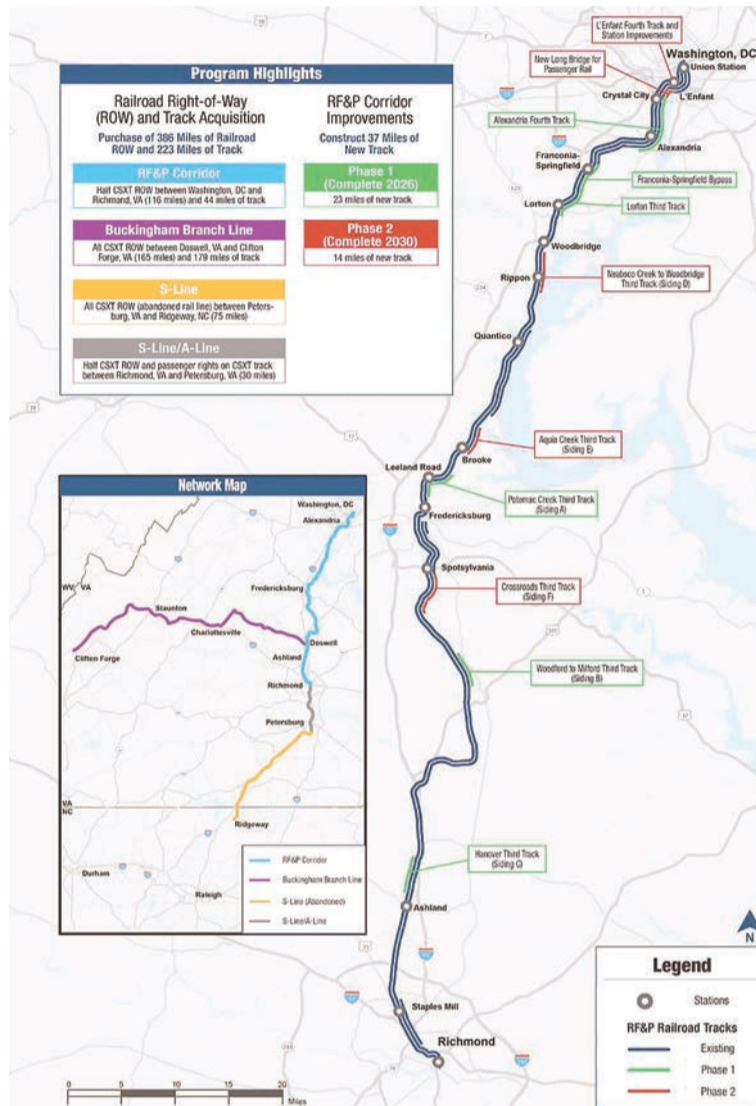


Participating Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative states.

jobs to payrolls in August, as the leisure and hospitality sector was flat. The national unemployment rate fell to 5.2 percent in August, and Virginia's unemployment rate is well below that at 4 percent. Initial claims for unemployment fell from 345,000 to 310,000 during the week ending on Sept. 4, which is the lowest level since March 2020 (although the Labor Day weekend holiday could be causing distortions in the data). In a healthy economy, new filings are typically below 250,000. Payroll employment rose 3.8 percent in August from August of last year. Employment here in Northern Virginia rose by 5.1 percent; Hampton Roads rose 3.1 percent; the Richmond-Petersburg area rose 1.9 percent. Our recovery is looking solid.

Then, we were briefed by the Deputy Secretaries of Transportation Nick Donohue and John Lawson who shared transportation updates with us, highlighting the sharp, and unprecedented, decline in transportation use over the last year caused by the stay-at-home orders around the country. Driving was down more than 60% in April of 2020, and mass transit use dropped by 40 to 90% depending on the system. Amtrak ridership went down more than 90%. From the start of the pandemic through FY21, state transportation revenues are down \$1.8 billion from earlier March 2020 estimates.

WMATA has received \$2.45 billion in COVID relief funds, to support WMATA through FY23/24 without major service cuts or subsidy increases. Both rail and bus services are still below pre-COVID



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation rail expansion map.

ridership levels, but ridership is beginning to recover on both rail and bus service with significant increases seen since January.

In April 2020 the Commonwealth signed agreements with CSX Transportation and Amtrak to advance a \$3.7 billion initiative to purchase 350 miles of right-of-

way and 225 miles of new track, the construction of a new Long Bridge over the Potomac River for passenger and commuter trains, and the construction of another 35-37 miles of track along the I-95 corridor. This deal provides many exciting transit opportunities for

SEE FALL, PAGE 9

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A Connection Newspaper



CALENDAR

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

Classic Car Show. 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. At the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria. Classic car show featuring a variety of Packards and other “orphan” vehicles. This show will bring together cars that are no longer manufactured – hence the term “orphans.” The show is free and is co-sponsored by Packards Virginia and the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum. Visit packardsva.org or call 703-424-5871.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

Hollin Hills House + Garden Tour. 12 to 6 p.m. Admission: Regular: \$50 per person; VIP: \$80 per person. (May be sold out) Registration at Hollin Meadows Elementary School, 2310 Nordock Place, Alexandria. This self-guided walking tour will showcase stunning examples of mid-century modern architecture, landscaping and interior design. New this year, participate in special activities throughout the day such as morning yoga, a furniture showcase and more. All ticket holders must check in at registration to receive a wristband and program that includes a listing and map of all the homes and gardens open during the tour. The tour will take place rain or shine. Sponsors and VIP ticket holders can register beginning at 10 a.m. and access the tour early at 11 a.m. Visit hollinhillsmodern.com

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

79th Historic Homes Tour, “Garden Glimpses.” 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. In Old Town Alexandria. The TWIG’s 79th Historic Homes Tour, “Garden Glimpses,” will include 14 addresses located in the southeast quadrant of Old Town, the majority of which are new to the tour. The tour will include gardens and backyard areas, with docents narrating information about the property. Tour maps can be picked up the morning of the event at the Alexandria Visitor Center, TWIG Thrift Shop, Boxwood and Old



The 79th Historic Homes Tour, “Garden Glimpses,” will take place Saturday, Sept. 25 in Alexandria.

Presbyterian Meeting House.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

Family Fall Festival. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. There will be activities for all ages, including classes for children and adults. Place a bid at the silent auction. Grab a meal at the food truck or a treat at the bake sale. Enjoy musical entertainment at the White Gazebo. Search for some new reading material at the book sale, and visit the vendors selling a wide assortment of plants and craft items. Call 703-642-5173, or visit Green Spring Gardens.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

Hollin Hills House + Garden Tour. 12 to 6 p.m. Registration at Hollin Meadows Elementary School, 2310 Nordock Place, Alexandria. This self-guided walking tour will showcase

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REBECCA MCMASTER, CHRIS PERRY, & KATHY HASSETT

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Documentary Explores a Place Formerly Known as ‘The Pits.’

Documentarian is also a reporter for the Mount Vernon Gazette.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

For me, the gravel pits behind Hayfield Secondary School started as the local fishing hole, which continued to be true into high school before other things piqued my interest like BB guns, motocross bicycles, and girlfriends. In the early 1980s, life went on and jobs took over the spare time, and by the next time I looked up in the pits, it was a huge construction site for a new place called Kingstowne.

Fast forward 35 years, and Kingstowne is my go-to spot for practically everything in my life but it's hard to picture the gravel pits anymore. Reminiscing picked up online, so I embarked on a documentary film project that taken over during the summer of 2021, entitled “The Gravel Pits: Before There was Kingstowne.”

Not sure how Ken Burns or Spike Lee does it, but getting pictures from an era before cell-phones was tough, but a bit of persistence paid off. It just so happens there were one or two people that rode dirt bike motorcycles in the pits that were also amateur photographers, so slowly the story came together, starting with the dirt bike enthusiasm which was big in the 1970s and early 1980s.

I wanted to reel in that enthusiasm for my film but was soon to find out that simply emailing all the motocross riders via email or reaching out on Facebook fell short for one reason or another. It might have been easier for some to sit back and talk a good game online, but when it came to action, I listened to the crickets.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Throughout the 1970s, motocross riding at the local gravel pits was popular.

If I did get any responses, they had moved out of the area and there wasn't the enthusiasm to do something online that could be used with the film. The plan was to finish it by Labor Day, but that was a loose deadline. I got the pictures I could off of the Facebook chatter page, and had a start.

June turned into July, and things started

falling in place. I got a few leads, talked to some local motorcyclists that were willing, and went into action with my camera and microphone. Hauling around a tripod, camera and lavalier microphone conjured up memories of my communications internship in 1986, so even I reminisced.

I pulled together photos, video clips, copyright free music and even rode my mountain bike through the gravel pits-Kingstowne area again, to see what I could see, and reached out to see if any of the locals wanted to be interviewed.

In the meantime, I designed a tee shirt, approached a printer with credit card out, and now ten of the people involved have a shirt to prove it. Soon, others inquired about the shirts so I may get the credit card out again, worry about the bill later. So far, any money spent on this has gone out, not in, but that's the life of a documentary filmmaker these days.

Halloween Is Coming

Get in the fright-night mood with all new outdoor haunted trail at the Workhouse Arts Center.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia's outdoor, walk-thru haunting tradition returns at the Workhouse's annual “Haunt.” This year's all new version is “The Collection.”

This year's Haunt will immerse guests in a highly-themed walk-through experience with creepy characters delivering contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel about the Workhouse campus to rarely visited areas in small groups for a 30-minute experience of abandoned, historic buildings and into the night-time woods.

“It was important for us to create an experience that was both highly entertaining and safe for all attendees and participants.” said Leon Scioscia, president/CEO, Workhouse Arts Center.

“All staff, actors, stage technicians, other contractors, and volunteers will be required to either be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide a negative COVID-19

test prior to the start of each weekend's performances.” Scioscia said. Guests are asked to wear a mask while on campus.

The Workhouse live, in-person, “Haunt: The Collection” is not only for patrons' entertainment, but as an extension of the Workhouse Performing Arts Program. The “Haunt” is providing opportunities for local youth to practice their acting skills, set production and overall theatrical skills.

“We are truly pleased to provide an artistic outlet for our young actors, set designers, stage technicians, and volunteers alike to participate safely in creating this incredible production,” said Joseph Wallen, director, Workhouse Performing Arts.

Even with the many challenges presented by the pandemic, “the outdoor, walk-thru design of ‘The Collection’ will allow visitors to enjoy the Halloween season despite COVID-19,” said Caroline Blanco, chair, Workhouse Board of Directors and co-chair of the Workhouse Haunt design team.

“People should definitely come check us out. I personally think we are one of the scariest haunted attractions in the state of Virginia.” said Alex Hansohn, one of the vol-



PHOTO BY MORGAN PRESCOTT

David Blanco in character for Workhouse Arts Center outdoor immersive “Haunt: The Collection.” Weekend nights Oct. 3 to Nov. 6, 2021.

unteers involved in “The Collection.”

For participant David Blanco, “the Workhouse enables my creativity by allowing me to bring out some ideas I have for how to design a haunted house. I am most excited to be back.”

“This year's story is better than ever and you will get to see stuff you have never imagined before.” added Morgan Prescott

Where and When:

WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER PRESENTS “Haunt: The Collection” at 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079. 15 weekend nights Sunday, Oct. 3 to Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021. Fridays and Saturdays, 7-11 p.m. and Sundays, 7-10 p.m. Recommended for guests 13 years of age and older. Timed-entry tickets available and must be purchased online. Tickets priced from \$25 per person on most nights and \$30 per person on Premium RIP Nights. Tickets pricing varies upon the night. For details, tickets, and health and safety information go to www.workhousearts.org.

who helped design the event and plays one of the unscripted creative characters on the haunted trail.

Get ready to explore the Workhouse's annual October “fright” event for something fun, frightening and highly entertaining.

Note: Opening night on Oct. 3, the Workhouse will honor area's first responders, teachers, active military, veterans, and health care workers by offering free admission when they reserve a timed entry ticket online and present a valid ID upon arrival at the Ticket Booth on campus. There will be premium nights with additional live entertainment on Oct. 16, 23, 30 and 31.

This is an outdoor event. The route includes paved and unpaved surfaces. Guests are cautioned to wear appropriate footwear. Snacks and beverages will be available for purchase at the Haunt Bar, located near the check-in area in the campus quad.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 7

stunning examples of mid-century modern architecture, landscaping and interior design. New this year, participate in special activities throughout the day such as morning yoga, a furniture showcase and more. All ticket holders are required to check in at registration to receive a wristband and program that includes a listing and

map of all the homes and gardens open during the tour. The tour will take place rain or shine. Sponsors and VIP ticket holders can register beginning at 10 a.m. and access the tour early at 11 a.m. Visit hillsmodern.com

SUNDAY/SEPT. 26

George Washington Patriot Run.
George Washington's Mount Ver-

non, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Join Mount Vernon and participants around the country for a 10-miler and 5K. This race is live and in-person, with a virtual option for participants who are outside of the area. Admission: Sept. 15 to 26: \$60 for in-person 5k; \$80 for in-person 10-miler; \$35 for either virtual run. Call 703-780-2000. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 30

The Taste of Old Town North. 3:30-8 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 North Royal Street, Arlington. The Taste of Old Town North is free, kid-friendly, and offers the chance to sample a variety of food from local restaurants including Cafe 44, Grateful Kitchen and St. Elmo's Old Town North. Visitors to the Taste can also shop at the local

farmers' market, try their hand at Art in the Park with KidCreate, watch a karate demonstration from Seichou Karate, and picnic in the park. Live music will be provided by two local bands - Sally and the Mander, starting at 5 p.m. and Three Man Soul Machine, starting at 6 p.m. Visit www.oldtownnorth.org or call 703-836-8066.

Fall Appropriations Report

FROM PAGE 5

Virginia, including the ability to separate passenger and freight operations along the corridor, doubling state-supported Amtrak service over the next 10 years, resulting in almost hourly service between Richmond and DC, a 75% increase in VRE service along the Fredericksburg line (including new weekend service), and additional service along the VRE Manassas line.

FY21 Commonwealth Transportation Fund revenue collections were \$365.8 million above the estimate. Transportation is supposed to receive two-thirds of undesignated General Fund surplus, which would amount to approximately \$115.8 million. FY22 through FY27 state transportation revenue estimates will not be updated until December. The Federal infrastructure bill and 'reauthorization' proposal, is pending in Congress.

Joshua Saks, the Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, and Chris Bast, the Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Environmental Quality gave us an update on Virginia's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Virginia joining RGGI was authorized by the 2020 General Assembly with the "Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act." Virginia is one of 11 participating states in RGGI, an emissions cap and trade program that reduces power sector greenhouse gas emissions over time, and raises proceeds to invest in climate-related programs. RGGI works by allocating individual state CO2 allowance trading programs aligned through a model. Each allowance is equal to one ton of carbon dioxide. Allocations are based on state budgets that are determined by baseline emissions. State budgets decrease annually at 3% per year for a total of 30% by 2030. State allowances are offered for sale through quarterly auctions conducted by RGGI, Inc. Allowances are fungible, bankable, and tradable—regulated sources and others can bid to purchase allowances for compliance or other reasons.

THE FINAL presentation was from Dr. Laurie Forlano, the Deputy Director for the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Epidemiology who introduced the Committee to the Virginia School Screening Testing for Assurance (VISSTA) program. In April of 2021, Virginia was awarded a \$275 million grant from the CDC to establish comprehensive programs of weekly COVID-19 screening in public and private schools across the state. The goal

is to support safe in-person instruction in K-12 schools by providing resources for schools to implement COVID-19 screening testing as a layer of prevention to protect students, staff, and teachers and slow the spread of COVID-19. The grant program acknowledges the importance of keeping schools open for academic, social, and emotional benefits for students, as well as the importance of doing so safely. The VISSTA program will offer:

Contractors to conduct pooled testing at least weekly and provide end-to-end support (e.g., supplies, staff to conduct testing, PPE, biohazard waste removal, reporting tools). Contractors will also support confirmatory testing.

Self-test kits that can be administered at home for diagnostic, close contact, or special event testing.

Special event support: staff and testing supplies to help schools add testing as a layer of prevention when extracurricular activities (e.g., athletics, performing arts) and events (e.g., school dances, graduation/awards ceremonies) are held.

Containment and mitigation support: VDH will continue to assist schools in responding to school-based cases and make resources available to advise on case-specific questions.

The program is open to public and private schools. In addition to the resources above, public schools will have access to funds to acquire:

School-based and regional staff: funding for additional staff to support the testing program (e.g., school-based nurses to advise on medical matters and mitigation/containment; administrative staff to support coordination)

Technology and supplies: funding for supplies used to implement the program, including technology resources and infrastructure (e.g., outdoor tents)

All COVID-19 testing must be voluntary; only individuals who consent will be tested.

VDH is currently working with a total of 77 school divisions/schools across the Commonwealth, including 38 school divisions/schools who have committed to the program and 39 additional who have expressed interest. Of these, 14 have been matched with a vendor, and 6 are holding school-based testing events. Participating and interested school systems here in Northern Virginia currently include Alexandria City, Falls Church City, Prince William County, and Manassas City.

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OBITUARY



Kemal Kurspahic with the editorial staff of the Sarajevo newspaper Oslobodjenje in 1993.



Legendary editor Kemal Kurspahic died Sept. 17 at the age of 74.



Kemal Kurspahic, center, welcoming then-Senator Joe Biden to the ruins of the bombed headquarters of the Sarajevo newspaper Oslobodjenje in 1993 at the frontline of the besieged city.

‘Courage in Journalism’ Kemal Kurspahic dies at 74.



Kemal Kurspahic with sons Mirza, left, and Tarik.



Kemal Kurspahic with his wife Vesna.



Kemal, Vesna, Mirza and Tarik Kurspahic on the Charles river in 1994.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

Kemal Kurspahic, the managing editor of The Connection Newspapers, died unexpectedly Sept. 17 as a result of a stroke he suffered after a minor surgery. He was 74.

“We are heartbroken and devastated,” said Connection Newspapers publisher Mary Kimm. “There aren’t words for what having Kemal as our heart and anchor at the Connection has meant to us, or how crushed we are by losing him.”

Kurspahic was the acclaimed ed-

itor-in-chief of Oslobodjenje, Sarajevo’s daily newspaper, from 1988-1994. He oversaw the publication of the newspaper during the three-year siege of the city in the 1990s. During that time he survived serious injuries suffered during a car crash while under intense sniper fire, an incident that would leave him with a lifelong limp.

“Global journalism lost a hero today,” said NPR correspondent Tom Gjelten upon learning of Kurspahic’s death. “He published Sarajevo’s newspaper every single day during the siege, holding a multi-ethnic staff together in the midst of interethnic strife.”

“Global journalism lost a hero today.”

— Tom Gjelten,
NPR correspondent

Kurspahic was born Dec. 1, 1946, in Mrkonjic Grad, Bosnia Herzegovina. He became a correspondent for Oslobodjenje as

a high school freshman in Sanski Most in October 1962. At Belgrade University Law School, he was an editor of the weekly magazine Student during student protests that swept Europe in 1968. He continued as a correspondent for Oslobodjenje in Belgrade in 1969, and since then was a correspondent in Jajce (1971-1973), editor of Sports, Politics and Newsroom de-

partments in Oslobodjenje (1974-1981), the UN correspondent in New York (1981-1985), and deputy editor-in-chief (1985-1988).

In December 1988 he became the first editor-in-chief elected by the editorial staff of Oslobodjenje.

Under his leadership, the paper waged three battles for freedom of press: breaking from the League of

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OBITUARY

Kemal Kurspahic Dies at 74

FROM PAGE 10

Communists control; defending its independence against nationalist parties in power in 1991; and publishing daily from an atomic bomb shelter during the siege of Sarajevo, 1992-1996.

For his efforts, Kurspahic received numerous awards, including the Courage in Journalism Award in 1992 (International Women's Media Foundation); the International Editor of the Year (World Press Review) and the Bruno Kreisky Award for Human Rights in 1993; the World Press Freedom Hero in 2000 (International Press Institute); and the Dr. Erhard Busek Award for Better Understanding in the Region in 2003 (South Eastern Europe Media Organization).

"Dad was always looking to make the world and his community a better place and journalism was his tool to do that," said Kurspahic's son Mirza. "Bringing together good people that had a similar mission in their lives was what we were exposed to all along and because of that we owe a great debt of gratitude to him. We learned from him and everyone that he has been involved with how to try to make our own communities a better place."

In 2000, Kurspahic was named one of the 50 Press Freedom Heroes from the last 50 years by the International Press Institute, citing "significant contributions to the maintenance of press freedom and freedom of expression" and "indomitable courage."

"It's easy to see he was a hero to many but the humility he displayed taught us to be humble as well," Mirza Kurspahic added. "It is difficult to stay humble but he made that look so easy. It came natural to him – to never look down on anyone and always offer a helping hand."

Kurspahic was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, a Clark Fellow at Cornell University, and a Senior Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace. He held lectures and seminars at universities across the U.S. and advised the highest-level decision makers of U.S. foreign policy, including President Bill Clinton and then-Senator Joe Biden.

Kurspahic served as the Managing Editor of The Connection Newspapers in Northern Virginia, 1997-2001 and again 2007-2021. Former editor Steven Mauren was a longtime colleague of Kurspahic.

"When publisher Mary Kimm first received Kemal's resume with his international stature for a position as a community newspaper editor at the Connection, she



Kemal Kurspahic with President Bill Clinton in Washington in April, 1993, six weeks after Biden visited Kurspahic and his paper in Sarajevo.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

'Global Journalism Lost a Hero Today'

Tom Gjelten www.facebook.com/tgjelten

"Global journalism lost a hero today. Kemal Kurspahic, the legendary editor-in-chief of Oslobodjenje, Sarajevo's daily newspaper, died as an exile in northern Virginia after suffering a stroke following minor surgery. I met Kemal in Sarajevo in 1993. He oversaw the publication of his newspaper every single day during the three-year siege of his city by murderous Serb nationalists who were determined to shut the city down. Kemal negotiated with the U.N. for newsprint and with local warlords to get fuel on the black market to keep his presses running. He promised his staff that Oslobodjenje would continue publishing "as long as Sarajevo exists," and he kept that promise. The paper got smaller and the press run was limited, but Oslobodjenje under his leadership became a symbol for Sarajevo of its own determination to survive. But not just as a symbol of perseverance. It represented as well the city's commitment to its own multi-ethnic identity. A Muslim married to a Serb, Kemal presided over a multi-ethnic staff, and the newspaper thereby stood for Sarajevo's remarkable cosmopolitan character. He also insisted that his reporters tell the war story honestly and accurately, even when it meant challenging his own government's interpretation of events. I was so inspired by the Oslobodjenje story under Kemal's leadership that I wrote a book about it, seeing its struggle as representing the ideological element of the larger Bosnian war story. After suffering grievous injuries during a car crash under intense sniper fire, Kemal went into exile and wrote his own book, titled appropriately "As Long As Sarajevo Exists." Remarkably, he ended up in northern Virginia as editor-in-chief of the Connection newspapers, serving a suburban DC population that exemplified the same multi-ethnic character he had defended in Bosnia. His journalistic and human values are an example for journalists everywhere. RIP, Kemal."

thought we could benefit just from meeting him, never thinking he would join," Mauren said. "He did; and our newsroom benefited inestimably from his depth of experience, his collegial leadership, and his always unruffled, reassuring demeanor."

Kurspahic was the Chairman and Founder of the Media in Democracy Institute, based in Washington, D.C., area and the author of four books.

As a diplomat he worked for five years (2001-2006) for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, first as the Spokesman in Vienna and then as the Caribbean Regional Representative, responsible for 29 states and territories.

Kurspahic is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 52 years Vesna Kurspahic, their two

sons Tarik (Mary Beth), of Lexington, Mass., and Mirza (Kristine), of Centreville, and four grandchildren (Andrew, Brynna, Rory, and Nev).

"Having a leader like Kemal in our newsroom was special magic," Kimm said. "He was always teaching, sometimes directly, always by example. He embraced community journalism and helped reinforce how important local reporting is to the community."

Added Kurspahic's son Tarik, "Dad was always surrounded by brilliant people in all sorts of different fields. We are grateful to have been able to travel all over the world following his work, giving us such a broad perspective on life. But in the end to us he was just 'Dad,' larger than life and to me my hero."

Hybla Valley Shooting Leaves One Dead, Suspect Arrested

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Police Department arrested Terence Butler, 40, of Alexandria, as a suspect in the fatal shooting of Raphael Pierce, 23, of Alexandria, on Sept. 7. The fatal shooting happened in the 7400 block of Vernon Square Drive in Hybla Valley, according to police.

Officers responded at 8:47 p.m. to an apartment after a neighbor heard a loud argument followed by a gunshot. According to police, when officers arrived, they found Pierce in an apartment suffering from an apparent gunshot wound to his upper body. Fire and Rescue personnel responded and pronounced him deceased. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the manner and cause of death.

According to FCPD, the preliminary investigation revealed that Pierce was attending a small gathering at the apartment when an argument en-

sued between Pierce and the suspect, Butler. Detectives believe Butler shot Pierce before leaving in a dark colored 2013 Chevrolet Impala.

Detectives believe that both men were known to each other, but the full extent of their relationship remains under investigation. Following the investigation, detectives obtained arrest warrants for Butler, charging him with 2nd Degree Murder, Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon.

After investigating the incident, Fairfax County detectives alongside with federal partners received information about Butler's whereabouts and safely took him into custody. Butler was taken to the Central Detention Facility in Washington, D.C. He remains in their custody until he is extradited back to Fairfax County to face charges of second-degree murder, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, police said.

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Fairfax County Police Publication of 'Shame List' Endangers Immigrant Residents

BY DIANE BURKLEY ALEJANDRO
AND LUIS AGUILAR

Nine months ago, Fairfax County adopted a Trust Policy to “ensure that the County is not a source of personal information that those outside the County can exploit for their own purposes.” This privacy right applies to all residents, but is especially critical for immigrant residents who fear information the County has could end up in the hands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD), the agency with the biggest trust deficit in Fairfax, is simply ignoring the policy. FCPD’s website allows the public to download a yearly arrest list that includes the full name, home address and date of birth of all persons arrested and charged. Over 19,000 charges are linked to identifiable individuals. FCPD is considering limiting disclosure to names, but that only reduces the privacy risk without eliminating it. It doesn’t matter whether a person

is charged with a minor misdemeanor or serious violent felony. Nor does it matter whether the charge is dismissed or the person is found innocent. The list of shame is not updated.

FCPD’s publication constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy and undermines the presumption of innocence to which we all are entitled. Most newspapers, including the Washington Post and The Connection, don’t publish the names of people arrested for routine offenses. Neither does Arlington County, Richmond or Virginia Beach. But “progressive” Fairfax does.

Imagine you are arrested for being drunk in public. FCPD lets your neighbors and boss know, subjecting you to public humiliation at a minimum. If you have a foreign sounding name, the consequences are worse. Such publication has a disproportionate impact and increases hate crimes against those of Latinx, Asian, Middle Eastern and African descent.

If you are undocumented, the consequences are draconian. Public dissemination can thrust you

into the deportation pipeline. Someone’s name and general location (they are arrested in Fairfax) gives ICE a roadmap to find them. ICE already has a vast database of people it suspects (often incorrectly) of being undocumented. ICE end-runs federal and state privacy laws by hiring powerful private data brokers including LexusNexus, Thomson Reuters and Palantir, to cross check this list against public or quasi-public data that can be used to track someone down.

Immigrant-haters help the process along as well. We can’t prove that ICE uses the online list. But the publication of thousands of foreign sounding names certainly provides locator information that ICE covets.

One thing is clear: the risk to undocumented immigrants in Fairfax is getting worse. In 2018, Fairfax was found to be an unfortunate “national leader” in the proportion of residents in deportation proceedings, with 12,000 people facing removal. The number has increased by over 4,000 since then, according to Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access

Clearinghouse. The percentage of Fairfax Latinx population in deportation is now 8.5%, up from 6.5% in 2018.

Of course, it is not “just” the residents being deported who are affected. There are over 370,000 immigrants residing in Fairfax. Most families are a mix of citizens, authorized and unauthorized immigrants. Deportation of one member affects them all.

We helped Fairfax County craft a robust Trust Policy to prevent this very problem. It is designed to make sure Fairfax doesn’t provide fodder for ICE’s civil immigration enforcement, directly or indirectly, unless disclosure is “required by law” or essential to fulfilling an agency’s mission. FCPD argues disclosure of arrestees’ identity is required by Virginia’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Other Virginia jurisdictions disagree, saying they are prohibited from disclosing any identifiers without a court order. Whatever the law actually means, we know what it does not mean: FOIA does not require online publication; nor does it require FCPD to give out 19,000

names when a single name will do. FCPD also says publication is a matter of administrative convenience because many people ask for this information. It cites “defense attorneys” as a prime example, because they use this information to look for clients.

These excuses are indeed shameful.

Despite Fairfax’s commitment to “do everything we can to help people, protect them from association with ICE,” FCPD continues to facilitate the deportation pipeline, sow distrust and separate immigrant families. We call on FCPD to enforce the Trust Policy.

Take down the list of shame.

About the authors:

Ms. Alejandro and Mr. Aguilar co-lead the years-long advocacy campaign for adoption of the Trust Policy and were architects of the model provisions submitted to the County and adopted by Fairfax in all major respects. Ms. Alejandro is a social justice attorney with over 20 years’ experience and the Lead Advocate for ACLU People Power Fairfax.

Mr. Aguilar is the Virginia Executive Director of CASA, the largest immigrant advocacy group in the Mid-Atlantic, with over 115,000 lifetime members.

ASO Launches Season with Beethoven’s Fifth & Rhapsody in Blue

BY MELINDA KERNC

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra will present Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 on Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021 (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021 (3 p.m.) at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center. This program is a repertoire change from the originally scheduled Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Alexandria Choral Society.

ASO is replacing the enormously popular choral symphony with another work of Beethoven, his iconic Fifth Symphony. Also on the program are George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue with pianist Michelle Cann, Copland’s inspiring Fanfare for the Common Man, and



Michelle Cann.

Valerie Coleman’s work Umoja: Anthem of Unity.

“We are delivering on our promise to ticket buyers by presenting three all-time orchestral favorites to replace the popular Ninth,” said

Hanson.

Renowned pianist Michelle Cann has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra and others. The Philadelphia Inquirer described her February 2021 performance with Philadelphia Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin as “exquisite.” A champion of the music of Florence Price, Ms. Cann is recognized as a leading African-American performer dedicated to artistic excellence and community engagement. Ms. Cann appears by arrangement with the Curtis Institute of Music.

“The clarion call for transformation, diversity, unity and joy embodied by Beethoven’s Ninth is being honored in our choice to combine his Fifth Symphony with

Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue and Valerie Coleman’s anthem of unity, Umoja,” says ASO Music Director James Ross.

“With Copland’s Fanfare kicking things off and Michelle Cann’s pianistic prowess, we’ve created a big musical tent to celebrate our return to the stage.”

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra is committed to providing a safe concert environment for patrons, musicians and staff. The concerts will be presented with no intermission. Schlesinger Concert Hall has been completely overhauled with a state-of-the-art ventilation system. Audience members, musicians, staff, and volunteers will be required to wear a mask for the duration of performances. All

audience members, musicians, volunteers and staff must be fully-vaccinated to attend.

The Alexandria Symphony is a fully-professional orchestra drawing from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region’s wealth of musical talent.

Many musicians perform with other orchestras and top military bands. Single tickets are \$20-\$85 for adults, \$5 for youth (18 and under), and \$15 for students (with ID).

The ASO also offers senior and group rates and a special discount for military employees and veterans for this performance. For tickets and more information, visit www.alexsym.org or call (703) 548-0885.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/SEPT. 25

NPS Trash Cleanup. 9-11 a.m. At Belle Haven Park, Alexandria. Join the Friends of Dyke Marsh and the National Park Service on National Public Lands Day to clean up trash along the Potomac River shoreline. Free. Meet at the registration table near the Belle Haven Park south parking lot to pick up supplies. NPS will provide gloves, tools, trash bags, and hand sanitizer. Please wear sturdy shoes, long pants and sleeves, and sun protection. Bring water.

WALKING GROUP

Let’s Walk! Let’s Walk! is a community walking initiative whose goal is to achieve and maintain optimal health through walking. The members consist of women who are retired or work from home and want to connect with others who share common interests, life experiences and fitness goals. The group meets at 2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at a central location on Fort Hunt Road and walks for approximately 1 hour weather permitting. Contact

information: 703-780-1145 or email; ecenglish@cox.net.

COMMUNITY MARKET ON SATURDAYS

Workhouse Arts Center hosts its Community Market Every Saturday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. through October 30, 2021. Located at 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. September celebrates Harvest Fest all month long. Local vendors include: Bites by Sam Apple Juice Tea Party

Honeycakes Bangkok Bites Bowls by Bowles Jen and Pat Designs

ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is hosting beginning-level adult English language classes from February to May. Due to the continued situation of COVID-19, classes for the spring semester will be held on virtual platforms only, which

require students to have a computer, tablet, or smartphone and internet access to participate. Registration runs through February 5, with options to register via text message, phone calls, or in-person at certain locations and times.

Classes offered this spring include:
❖ Beginning English Class: provides adult English language learners the fundamental skills to understand and communicate in English, helping them to better engage in the community and advance their careers.

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

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

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Obituary

ISABEL BISHOP SPANN (Age 97)



Of Mt. Vernon, VA, passed away peacefully on August 25, 2021 with her three children at her side.

Isabel Bishop Spann was born in Baytown, Texas and spent her early childhood in Venezuela, where her father developed oil wells for the Standard Oil Company. She later moved with her family to New York where she grew up and attended schools in Floral Park, Long Island, and subsequently attended the Maryland Institute of Art and American University.

She married Frederick Clayton Spann soon after his graduation from West Point and spent the next 38 years as a Army wife. Colonel Spann died in 2001. During the 58 years of their marriage, Mrs. Spann and her husband travel widely, circling the world and visiting 39 countries together.

She was an award winning artist, creating art in many mediums including watercolor, oil, pastels, acrylic, and computer graphics. She was a member of the Georgia Miniature Society, the Pennsylvania Watercolor Society, the Vienna Art Club, the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the National League of American Penn Women, and the Springfield Art Guild. She was also a volunteer at Mt. Vernon Estate, River Farm, Woodlawn Estate and had been a Girl Scout and Cub Scout Leader. She also served in many roles at her church.

She is survived by a son, Clayton, two daughters, Julianne and Joan, 5 grandsons, and 3 great grandchildren (with another on the way).

She is greatly missed. She was a very devoted mother and a great companion. She brightened the lives of everyone who knew her.

Obituary

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You Wanna Bet?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

No. Not really. Ever since I asked my father for \$10 to pay off a gambling debt (from a card game) I incurred in fifth or sixth grade some 50 plus years ago owed that I owed to Joey Friedman, older brother of Barry Friedman, my best friend at the time, I have been penny-wise and rarely pound/dollar foolish. The card game we were playing was called "Split the Up-rights." Two cards were drawn and placed on the table and similar to Black Jack/"21" it was mostly arithmetic (I realize that's minimizing the strategy involved.) The hope was to have the next card drawn from the deck being numerically between the two cards facing one another, #2 and a #10 as an example, and thus needing a 5 or any other number greater than 2 and less than 10 to win the cash. There was no strategy per se, just the level of risk one is willing to assume to bet on the random card to be drawn to be in-between the two facing cards. Then you win. How I ended up owing Joey Friedman so much money is beyond me, other than the fact that my card's number kept falling outside the numerical perimeters. But they most certainly did, and to a related effect, I sort of learned my lesson. A lesson which has mostly lasted a lifetime. Other than proposing to my wife, Dina, I've rarely wagered anything of value over all these intervening years.

Oh sure, over the years I've occasionally dabbled in football point spreads, over/under point totals, Super Bowl squares and NCAA brackets, but never had I over extended myself as I had all those many years ago. And I've mostly been true to myself in this regard. However, now comes online betting services like Fanduel, DraftKings, Caesar's Palace and MGM Grand, among others and regular, recurring television and radio advertising offering all sorts of unheard/impossible-to-lose enticements attempting to lure in us unsuspecting punters: "If any basketball team hits a "3," if any football team scores a touchdown," or if any tennis player hits an ace, as but a few of their hard-to-lose bets. Now granted, you can't actually get the cash this initial bet made you, but you can parlay that into another bet where your risk of loss is much greater and your dollars are likely to make less cents. They don't call it gambling for nothing. Nor are they in business to reward your betting acumen with huge payouts. But unlike the local Lotto's motto where you have to play to win, with the online services, there is no motto other than play at your own risk. (And if you develop a gambling problem, call 1-800-IGAMBLE. And if you do indeed want some help, you better listen very carefully as the spokesperson speaks this advisory incredibly fast.)

So far however, unlike the Borg, resistance has not been futile. I have not as yet taken the bait as I fear it will be a "Roach Motel" kind of outcome: I won't die, but I'll go in/place my bet, but never come out alive/realize any profit. What I will realize is that I'm likely betting uphill, with very little reliable information at my disposal to help me win the day and enable me to actually take my winnings in cash rather than an amount of money with which I can continue to bet. Presumably, their business model doesn't show the bettors winning. It bets that once bitten we'll eventually throw whatever caution we had not just out the window but onto our credit card. Wham bam. Can you say Joey Friedman? I can and I have said so for many years. It won't simply be good money after bad. It will be any and all money for a chance to get whole again. The problem is, I doubt the online gambling services are interested in my ever getting whole again. I refer to this as "The Whole Truth."

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

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SENIOR LIVING

Can Mentally Challenging Games Prevent Cognitive Decline?

Consistent brain fitness connected to improved memory, reasoning and processing.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

Every Sunday evening after church, 78-year-old Roger Knight has dinner with his two children and five grandchildren at his home in Alexandria. He plays chess with his 16-year-old grandson and does crossword puzzles with his 8-year-old granddaughter.

"Playing games is a way of having fun with my grandchildren," he said. "They keep me feeling young, especially when I beat them."

In the same way that exercise is credited with maintaining physical health, mental exercise has been linked to slowing down cognitive decline that can come with age.

"Memory, reasoning and processing ... are three cognitive domains which do decline with age," said Catherine Diaz-Asper, Ph.D., Department of Psychology at Marymount University, who studies mild cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. "However, I think the message here should be that by engaging in mentally stimulating activities you are helping your brain, irrespective of what those activities may be."

Programs like ElderLink, a nonprofit partnership between Inova Health System and the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging Programs, can provide resources for seniors who are looking for mentally challenging activities. "We recognize that brain exercises reduce the risk of cognitive decline," said Trina Mayhan-Webb, director of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Adult and Aging Division. "We provide evidenced-based, structured, fun activities to enhance cognitive memory skills."

"Research demonstrates that there are several steps aging adults may take to maintain and support brain functioning," said Tracey Smith-Bryant, Professor of Psychology at Montgomery College. "Remaining mentally engaged is essential. Think of the brain as a muscle and activate it daily." She recommends apps like Lumosity and Elevate, and activities like chess, sudoku or working cross-

word puzzles. AARP offers a brain health program called Staying Sharp, but cautions against believing that en-

gaging in mentally challenging games is a magic formula for eliminating cognitive decline.

"Games can be fun and engaging, but they are not the answer to prevent dementia the way many people think due to advertisements they have seen for brain games," said Sarah Lenz Lock, AARP senior vice president of policy, and Global Council on Brain Health executive director.

"People who use their brain like a muscle, exercising it by thinking, learning new things and challenging themselves seem to build up [their] cognitive reserve as they age

so they might be more resistant to adult cognitive diseases," Lock said.

Engaging in activities that stimulate your brain could delay onset of the symptoms of decline that some people experience as they age, said Lock. "Scientists describe that as cognitive resilience," she said. "If you truly want to slow cognitive decline, choosing a healthy lifestyle with habits like regular exercise and physical activity, a heart healthy diet, regular sleep, so-

cial interaction, and effectively managing stress combined with engaging your brain is recommended."

There are a variety of games that target specific areas of concern such as memory or processing. "Certain games help you practice particular skills," said Lock. "If a game encourages you to work on a particular skill enough, and ... what you do to play it becomes progressively more difficult, you will likely get

better at those skills over time. That is even true for skills that generally seem to get harder as we age, like recalling names or the ability to pay attention."

"While the science is still developing on this issue, there is some evidence that high

quality cognitive training can help you maintain your abilities because of the practice effects, and because that training becomes progressively more difficult so that you continue to learn new things," said Lock.

"My recommendation would be to seek out varied activities that interest you and really make you think," added Diaz-Asper. "You don't need to invest in expensive apps or computer training programs to see benefits."

By engaging in mentally stimulating activities you are helping your brain, irrespective of what those activities may be."

— Catherine Diaz-Asper, Ph.D.,
Marymount University

"Remaining mentally engaged is essential. Think of the brain as a muscle and activate it daily."

— Tracey Smith-Bryant,
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