

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 22, 2021



Donated bikes await pick up during the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.



A volunteer checks a list of requested toys as part of the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

‘Bigger Demand Than Usual’

Firefighters continue annual toy drive.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, in partnership with Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue, continued its annual toy drive with distribution day Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11. “Over 60 schools, shelters, and nonprofits requested our assistance this year,” said Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Deputy Battalion Chief

Willie Bailey. “In the end we were able to distribute over 3,500 toys, including bikes and gift cards.”

Representatives from local organizations provided information to the firefighters and picked up bags full of gifts collected by the firefighters and provided by sponsors. “Though we remain in a pandemic our sponsors were not going to let that prevent them from supporting the event this year,” said Bailey, who began the toy drive more than 22 years ago. “We received several calls from our sponsors hoping that we would find a way to pull off the distribution and as always, the sponsors stepped up to make this event a great success.” Sponsors for the toy drive in-

“The support of our sponsors was certainly needed this year because we had a bigger demand or help than usual.”

— Firefighters and Friends toy drive founder Willie Bailey

clude: Ken & Kelly Savittiere Foundation; Jack Taylor Alexandria Toyota; Apple Federal Credit Union; Chadwick’s Restaurant; Five Guys (Sam Chamberlain); Union Street Public House Restaurant; Energesco Solutions LLC; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax; Local 2068; Fairfax Fire & Rescue Retirement Assoc.; Nationwide Credit Cor-

poration; SEIU-512 ; Kelly’s Irish Times; Democratic Women of Clifton and Northern Va.; Medocracy, Inc.; Dr. Fauzia Abbasi; Heart Care Imaging; Rotary Club of Tysons Corner; Fairfax County Police Department; and Movement Studios.

“The support of our sponsors was certainly needed this year because we had a bigger demand

for help than usual,” Bailey added. “Also, because of COVID we did not invite the children to pick out their toys in person, which our volunteers always look forward to. But thanks to the generosity of so many they will all be receiving their holiday gifts.”

Firefighters and first responders in the community have supported the event for more than two decades.

“When we are not running 911 emergency calls, we are trying to find other ways to help the community,” Bailey said. “This holiday season it’s ensuring that local children have a wonderful Christmas. It’s teamwork that made the dream work for them this holiday season.”



Firefighters and Friends founder Willie Bailey, center, with volunteers Bruce Witucki and Al Chadsey at the annual toy distribution day Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.



Fairfax County Police Capt. Jeffrey Reiff, First Lt. K.J. Shaw and Deputy Chief Brian Reilly hold toys ready for distribution at the Firefighters and Friends toy drive Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.



Fairfax County firefighters bring bags of donated toys to waiting social service representatives as part of the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 10 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

During the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to our communities and to our clients. From our family to yours, we hope your holidays are filled with warmth and cheer.

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Shopping Cart Killer Suspect Is in Custody

Four murder cases of spanned Richmond Highway to Harrisonburg, where other bodies found.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The police have dubbed the murderer of four women recently as the “Shopping Cart Killer,” linking him to victims in Mount Vernon and Harrisonburg. The grisly case has a suspect in custody in the Rockingham Jail in southwestern Virginia.

“He meets victims on dating sites,” said Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis at a briefing on Friday, Dec. 17. “He preys on the weak and the vulnerable,” Davis added.

Two of the four victims, women ages 34 and 54, were found in a lot near Harrisonburg, Va. on Nov. 23. The FCPD worked with Harrisonburg Police Chief Kelley Warner to link the cases through digital data. According to the Harrisonburg Police Department, the two individuals were identified as Alene Elizabeth “Beth” Redmon, 54, of Harrisonburg and Tonita Lorice Smith, 39, of Charlottesville.

The other two victims were found last week near the Moon Inn in the 6100 block of Richmond Highway. “The remains were in a container near a shopping cart in the 2400 block of Fairhaven Avenue in the Alexandria section of Fairfax County,” the police said.



The shopping cart pictured was located in an isolated wooded area near where human remains were found on Wednesday in the Alexandria section of Fairfax County.

In that case, a shopping cart was spotted in a wooded area off the highway, and upon further investigation, the police found a container with “what appeared to be human remains,” inside said Major Ed O’Carroll, Bureau Chief, Major Crimes, Cyber and Forensics.

One of those victims found in Mount Ver-

non was tentatively identified as Cheyenne Brown who had a distinct tattoo, but the police are still waiting for the DNA confirmation to positively identify her.

The Harrisonburg Police Department arrested Anthony Robinson, 35, of Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, Nov. 23. Robinson is charged with two counts of first-degree mur-



HARRISONBURG
POLICE DEPARTMENT
Police identified the suspect in custody as Anthony Robinson of Washington, D.C.

der in addition to two felony counts of concealing, transporting or altering a dead body, the Harrisonburg police said. Through further investigation, he was linked to the Mount Vernon killings. “We have determined the suspect in Harrisonburg was communicating with Miss Brown,” Davis said.

According to Officer Tara Gerhard of the FCPD, it was the phone data that linked Robinson to the Mount Vernon murders. “Our detectives authored a search warrant for cellular data and confirmed Ms. Brown and the suspect were at the same location the night she went missing,” Gerhard said. The fourth victim has yet to be identified. “The decomposition was so bad,” Davis said. Detectives are continuing to follow additional leads and would like to hear from anyone who may have information about Robinson, this case, or may have had past interactions with Robinson. To contact detectives, please call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2.

Fatal Pedestrian Crash

Detectives from Fairfax County Police Department Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred at 8:08 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 9 on Richmond Highway at Napper Road in Gum Springs. Detectives report that Andres Romero, 57, of Alexandria, was crossing Richmond Highway from west to east near Napper Road outside of a crosswalk. The driver of a 2018 Ford Mustang was traveling north on Richmond Highway and struck Romero in the roadway. Romero was transported to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors for the driver. Detectives continue to investigate whether alcohol may have been a factor for the pedestrian.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone -1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

This was the 12th pedestrian fatality in Fairfax County to date in 2021.

Hypothermia Prevention

For 15 years, the Hypothermia Prevention Program has provided shelter for residents actively experiencing homelessness during the winter months. Each year the program serves over 1,000 individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are exposed to dangerously cold weather. This year’s Hypothermia Prevention Program will operate from Dec. 1 through March 31.

If you see someone who is unsheltered and you think is at risk, contact the non-emergency public safety phone number at 703-691-2131.

“The Hypothermia Prevention Program provides warm shelter, food and other supportive services to connect guests to a variety of basic needs to include clothing, employment, housing and more,” said Tom Barnett, deputy director of the Department of Housing and Community

Development. “These services are made possible through the extraordinary assistance and contribution of local non-profits, houses of worship, and dozens of volunteers to work tirelessly to ensure that nobody should have to sleep outside during the winter.”

SHELTER LOCATIONS

Individual adults in need of immediate shelter, food and other supportive services may contact or visit any of the following locations (note that some locations may have limited hours of operation):

- ❖ Eleanor Kennedy Shelter (24/7), 9155 Richmond Highway, Fort Belvoir
- ❖ Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church (6:30 p.m. to 7 a.m.), 8220 Russell Road, Alexandria
- ❖ Embury Rucker Community Shelter (24/7), 11975 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston, 703-437-

- 1975
- ❖ North County Human Services Center (5 p.m. to 7 a.m.), 1850 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston
- ❖ Bailey’s Shelter and Supportive Housing (24/7), 5914 Seminary Road, Falls Church, 703-820-7621
- ❖ Friends of Falls Church Winter Shelter (6 p.m. to 8 a.m.) Contact KStanley@NewHopeHousing.org or LHyman@NewHopeHousing.org
- ❖ Rotating Faith Community Sites in Falls Church and Alexandria 703-820-7621
- ❖ Rotating Faith Community Sites in Fairfax and Centreville 703-352-5090

Adults with children (up to age 17) should contact Coordinated Services Planning at 703-222-0880 (TTY 711), Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for referrals to fami-

- ly-oriented support and services. If you need assistance after hours, please contact or visit one of the county’s family shelters:
- ❖ Katherine K. Hanley 12970 Katherine Hanley Court, Fairfax, VA 22030 571-522-6800, TTY 703-988-0256
- ❖ Embury Rucker Community Shelter 11975 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston, VA 20190 703-437-1975, TTY 711
- ❖ Patrick Henry Family Shelter 3080 Patrick Henry Drive, Falls Church, VA 22044 703-536-2155, TTY 711

For more information, contact the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness at 703-324-9492, TTY 711, or OPEHGeneralMail@fairfaxcounty.gov or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/hypothermia-prevention-program>



A Univision reporter interviews Evelin Urrutia of Tenants and workers United representing tenants at Harmony Place Trailer Park.



Evelin Urrutia of TWU speaks to the press in front of a group of Harmony Place tenants.

PHOTOS BY KATHERINE FODDEN

Tenants Press for Repairs by Next Owner Of Harmony Place Mobile Home Park

BY MARY PADEN
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Mobile home owners at Harmony Place Trailer Park, just south of Costco on Richmond Highway, pressed for health and safety repairs to the run-down infrastructure of their park at a press conference Friday. They called for improved stormwater drains, upgraded power lines, filling of potholes, and creation of a play area, as well as a rent freeze.

The repairs will be up to the new owner, which will be decided soon, when the current owner accepts one of two bids on the property: one from a private mobile home park company, Six Rock Properties, and another from a nonprofit, CFH, which could offer more stability to the residents.

Six Rock, which owns a number of parks in North Carolina, signed a sales contract with the current owner and set a closing date of Wednesday, Dec. 22.

CFH and partners recently made a bid, backed by the county, under a new state law that says owners must consider offers from nonprofits backed by 25 percent of the residents made within 60 days of posting the original offer. Habitat for Humanity and Tenants and Workers United, representing the tenants, are partners with CFH. The offers are not public, but are reported to be competitive.

The law is intended to offer residents a chance to halt the sale of mobile home parks to developers or investment groups. Mobile home parks owned by nonprofits or cooperatives have been shown to provide stable affordable housing in many parts of the county.



Trailers (This email) : Harmony Place Trailer Park has about 86 homes packed tightly together.

CFH, which successfully purchased and stabilized a mobile home park in Manassas, planned to renovate the park, work with residents, and keep rents at a level needed to maintain the park. The county arranged financing for the nonprofit group. It also asked Six Rock to sign an agreement to make specific repairs in exchange for maintenance financing, but it had not done so at the time of the press conference.

“Whoever buys this land, we don’t want our community to be a business where big companies profit off low-income families. We want a dignified community to live in,” resident Amilcar Benitez told reporters.

Tenants and Workers United Executive Director Evelin Urrutia noted that the 86-unit Harmony Place is a tight-knit community where many residents have lived for more than a decade. Tenants and Workers United has been organizing residents for more than a year to demand better conditions

and has cooperated with an effort lead by Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk to prepare the nonprofit package.

Dipti Pidikiti-Smith, deputy director of advocacy legal services of Northern Virginia, and Larisa Zehr,

attorney and legal fellow at the Legal Aid Justice Center also spoke at the press conference. Pidikiti-Smith filed court papers in late November to restart the clock on the 60-day window for tenant-non-profit bids because the current owner had not notified the tenants of the impending sale as required by law.

Most of the 1,200 families who live in mobile homes along Route 1 are threatened by the county’s EMBARK development plan, which would upzone the land making it more profitable to sell to developers. A county task force on manufactured housing is examining possible new policies. Currently, mobile home owners who cannot move their older trailers are not compensated for their loss.

Tenants and Workers United and tenants are scheduled to meet with a Six Rock representative Tuesday to press again for a written agreement to make repairs.

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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A Connection Newspaper





PHOTO COURTESY OF ENCORE CREATIVITY FOR OLDER ADULTS

Adults 55 and older with a passion for performing live and in person can do beginning in Januar.

Encore Creativity Resumes In-Person Song

Those over 55 with a passion for music can now practice and perform in person, with precautions.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

Betsy Kutscher and Judy Termini sang in their high school choral group, but building their careers and raising their families became a priority and their musical performances became a thing of the past.

“I missed singing, but between teaching and raising a family I never got around to looking for a choral group to join,” said Kutscher, of Arlington. “I was also intimidated by the idea of auditioning.”

Kutscher, Termini and other music aficionados who are 55 and older, can fulfill their passion for performing in-person concerts when Encore Creativity for Older Adults, a choral organization for over 55 that does not require auditions, returns to local performance centers including the Lubber Run Community Center in Arlington and Beth El Hebrew Congregation in Alexandria.

“We are requiring masks and vaccinations and employing three-foot distancing for the singers,” said Joshua Vickery, CEO, Encore Creativity for Older Adults. “We have been following the guidance of Chorus America’s best practices and protocols for choral singing and we have been very diligent about it.”

With safety precautions in place, some seniors believe that the benefits of practicing and performing in person outweigh risks.

“I grew tired of virtual rehearsals, and I was excited to get back to singing with my groups,” said Judy Termini of Alexandria. “We got through our fall semester with no COVID cases, and it was just wonderful to be singing together again.”

Social connections and emotional support are other needs that in-person choral singing could fulfill. “When I had an aunt with dementia and eventually on the path to her death, ENCORE singing and fellowship once a week was my mental therapy and my escape from being a caregiver,” said Betsy Kutscher. “It always lifted my spirits when we were singing together and learning new music.”

For those who prefer to sing virtually, Encore is also offering Encore University, a comprehensive online program of singing plus enrichment courses in music history, music theory, dance and movement classes.

Singers can combine both in-person singing with online classes for a full musical experience.

This season begins in mid-January. For more information, visit www.encorecreativity.org or call 301-261-5747.

“We are requiring masks and vaccinations and employing three-foot distancing for the singers.”

— Joshua Vickery,
CEO, Encore Creativity for Older Adults.

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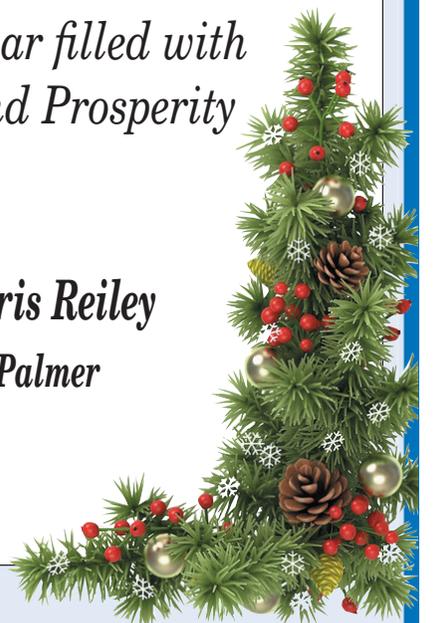
Season's Greetings

During the Holiday Season, I find myself reflecting on the past year and on those who have helped us shape our business.

Thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you and yours a Happy Season and a New Year filled with Peace and Prosperity

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PHOTO BY JAMES FATEMI

This Huntley Meadows toad is king of his domain.



PHOTO BY LUIS FERNANDO PINZON

Summer Moon Silhouette.

Huntley Meadows Wildlife Is Focus of Photo Contest

Toad, bird and a praying mantis top the list of winners this year.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

Huntley Meadows Park is a vast expanse of wetlands in the middle of Mount Vernon so there's many opportunities for the amateur and professional photographer to capture that scene to exemplify this 1,452 acre park in Fairfax County. Throughout the month of November, the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park invited those photographers to show off their work in the "2021 Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Photo Contest," and the response was positive. This year they received 79 entries from 31 photographers. Most photographers enter in the "adult" category, but there were three youth entrants – including one in elementary school. The

top photos went on display Dec. 12 at the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center at Huntley

Meadows Park. The five photo categories included birds, flora, insects, landscapes, mammals and reptiles-amphibians.

Of the top three photos, first place went to James Fatemi, 14, and the toad he called "King of his domain." This picture was first place overall and first place for the high school entry. Second place was the "Summer Moon Silhouette," bird by Luis Fernando Pinzon, and third place went to Tibor Molnar, who caught a praying mantis sunning himself in a picture he called "Is this my good side?"

The photography contest was judged by Chris Dyer, Laura Marshall, and Tyler Reber. Dyer has a background in art history, Marshall is a photographer (both have been judges previously), and Reber is a photographer and the immediate past winner of the

contest. They judged the contest on impact, technique, composition, lighting, subject/center of interest, originality/creativity, and story/mood.

"What really makes the winning photos stand out year after year is the impact, creativity, and story," said Katie Baker at Huntley Meadows. "When the photo shows an interesting scene and evokes a feeling, that is what will rise to the top," Baker added, noting that the toad picture clearly engaged the imagination of the judges. "One can imagine that toad taking in his surroundings, king of his domain," she said.

All photos are hung in the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center through Saturday, Feb. 26. In addition to the ribbons awarded by the three judges, there is also a People's Choice Award, and visitors to the show can vote for their favorite through Feb. 26 at the center.

Norma Hoffman, who the visitor center is named for, was a champion of Huntley

Meadows Park. She co-founded the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park in 1985, serving as the president and helping to protect the park.

At the Park

Huntley Meadows Park is located in the Hybla Valley area of Fairfax County, between Telegraph Road and Richmond Highway. The park features a visitor center, a beaver-created wetland with boardwalk, wildlife observation platforms, and an interpretative trail system. The park is full of wildlife and a forested area with several small, native-grass and wildflower meadows around the wetland habitat. The main bodies of water that flow through the park are Dogue Creek at the western border of the park, Barnyard Run, the source of the park's Central Wetland, and the headwaters of Little Hunting Creek. It's a good place for bird watchers and the park officials sponsor bird watching activities throughout the year.

Lidl Groundbreaking at Liberty

Lidl, twice-ranked a Top-10 U.S. Grocer by Food & Wine Magazine, has commenced construction at Lorton's Liberty Market. A groundbreaking ceremony was held Friday to celebrate the milestone. The new 30,000 square-foot Lidl will be located at 9001 White Spruce Way, Lorton, Va. An opening date will be announced at a later date.

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, present for the groundbreaking, said: "The adaptive reuse of the former Lorton Prison has brought many new opportunities to this area. This latest, the groundbreaking for Lidl, not only provides a strong and important anchor for Liberty Market, but also brings a local, walkable grocery store to the many sur-

rounding communities of Liberty, Laurel Hill and Spring Hill."

Elm Street Development's James Perry said at the ceremony, "The commercial portion of the Liberty project, Liberty Market, is approved for about 100,000 square feet of space, split between the historic prison structures and new construction. Delivering that much commercial space in one location is only possible if you have a vibrant, attractive anchor tenant that draws people to your center. Lidl is that anchor tenant for Liberty Market."

Liberty Market is the commercial component of the 80-acre project called Liberty, which includes 172 apartments, over 180 single-family and townhomes, and the retail and commercial center.



At the groundbreaking, Casey Whitmarsh, South County Chamber of Commerce; Larry Clark, South County Federation; Alan Weiss, Fairfax County Assistant County Attorney; Christine Morin, Chief of Staff; Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck, Fairfax County Mount Vernon District; Jim Perry, Elm Street Development; Nick Cacaci, Lidl; Gasim Elfaki, Fairfax County DPWES Public Private Partnership Coordinator.

Fatal Pedestrian Crash

Detectives from Fairfax County Police Department Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred at 8:08 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 9 on Richmond Highway at Napper Road in Gum Springs. Detectives report that Andres Romero, 57, of Alexandria, was crossing Richmond Highway from west to east near Napper Road outside of a crosswalk. The driver of a 2018 Ford Mustang was traveling north on Richmond Highway and struck Romero in the roadway. Romero was transported to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors for the driver. Detectives continue to investigate whether alcohol may have been a factor for the pedestrian.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone -1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

This was the 12th pedestrian fatality in Fairfax County to date in 2021.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

MONDAY/JAN. 17

Trail Cleanup. 10 a.m. to noon. At Mount Vernon Trail, 615 Slaters Lane, Alexandria. The Friends of Mount Vernon Trail will be improving the trail near Marina Towers in Alexandria. Volunteers may perform some of the following work: Using pruners and loppers to remove invasive vines; Using hand saws to cut tree branches; Hauling away vegetation and fallen tree branches; and Picking up trash.

TUESDAY/JAN. 18

Finding Genealogical Records. 1-3 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center and Zoom, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Certified Genealogist Sharon MacInnes will guide you through sources that even experienced genealogists sometimes overlook at Mount Vernon Genealogical Society's January meeting.

Register at contact-us@mvgenealogy.org for this free event. Visit the website: <https://mvgenealogy.org/eventListings.php?nm=20#er531>

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.

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10



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Edward Brawn, Grade 2nd



Britney Argueta Hernandez, 6, Grade 1st



Ezra Lujan, 7, Grade 1st



Jonah Waring, 5, Kindergarten



Jasmine Montano Espinoza, 7, Grade 1st



Yuha Kim, 8, Grade 2nd



Margot Seebach, 7, Grade 1st



Madelin Romero Romero, 7, Kindergarten

CALENDAR

FRIDAY/DEC. 24

Stuff the Van. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At the Animal League of Alexandria, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Join the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria to donate goodies for cats, dogs and other furry friends. You can participate in person or remain physically distant while helping to fill the AWLA van with holiday goodies that will keep homeless animals entertained all year long! Register at AlexandriaAnimals.org/StufftheVan.

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

Make a Ship's Biscuit. 1-5 p.m. At the Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Alexandria. A nearly complete ship's biscuit from the 18th century was found in Alexandria recently. Make your own ship's biscuit to commemorate the discovery and the city's waterfront history! Each biscuit will be stamped with the new year and then baked at home to track its preservation. No registration required.

Artisans Gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The "Little Monsters" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans gallery features artists' interpretation of their own little monsters—from scary to funny. Check out related workshops. Gallery hours are Thursday 12-6 p.m., Friday 12-9 p.m., Saturday 12-6 p.m., and Sunday 12-6 p.m. Details at: <https://DelRayArtisans.org/event/little-monsters>

JAN. 7-29

Little Monsters Exhibit. At Del Ray

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

NOW THRU JAN. 2

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Open nightly 5 to 10 p.m.; January 8 to February 27, 2022 (ice skating only), open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring an ice rink, multiple new holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, a retail area, food, music and more. Admission: \$9 for general admission to Village; \$22 for village admission and skating; beginning January 8, \$14 for ice skating; free ages 2 and under. Visit novaparks.com/events/ice-lights

FRIDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. At Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Founders Park (351 N. Union St.) and Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.) Gather along

SEE HOLIDAY, PAGE 10



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The Waterskiing Santa event will be held Friday, Dec. 24, 2021 in Alexandria.

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Oh, Deer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I didn't see you coming and from the look of you, neither did you see/understand/anticipate where I was going. Otherwise, you would have side-stepped the traffic, hesitated a bit and perhaps not landed on my windshield. Fortunately, I wasn't hurt. However, I'm guessing you were. I couldn't see where you landed as my windshield was smashed into a thousand cracks. As a result, I could barely see two feet in front of my face. Besides, the shock of it all, especially the impact of the deer hitting my windshield flush in its face left me a bit shaken.

Since I was not far from home, I decided, after getting out of my car and examining the damage - and getting my bearings, that the car was drivable; it was however very difficult to see through the windshield. Moreover, given the lowered position of the rearview mirror caused by the impact buckling the windshield/roof from the accident, I could barely see behind me either. Nevertheless, two miles or so from home, I decided I wanted to base my accident-related operations from home, rather than on the street/in a parking lot.

At first glance at my windshield, without thoroughly reviewing the entirety of the damage/impact, I thought the repair was simply a windshield replacement as covered by the Comprehensive coverage of my car insurance policy. No fuss, really. I even booked an appointment online for the next afternoon. But later that night, looking out from a second-floor window in my house which overlooks the driveway where my car was parked, I noticed a little something glistening in the night and decided I needed a closer look in the morning/daylight. That next morning, I discovered the real extent of the damage. The windshield damage was significant for sure, but the roof had buckled as well, and it was sagging toward the dashboard. A major complication. Immediately I went back inside and canceled my windshield replacement appointment and called my car insurance company instead.

After hearing my tale of woe, the insurance company representative made rental-car arrangements for me and called a tow company to come to my house to collect the car. Which, a few hours later, it did. When the tow truck driver saw the damage, he predicted, given the damage to the roof as well as to the windshield, that this impact was likely to result in a "total" loss. Sure enough, a few days later, the insurance adjuster called to deliver the bad news. Though the settlement was more than fair, it still meant that my 13 years of car-payment-free driving was likely over.

Since the accident occurred, I've driven by the scene a few times and saw no sign of the deer. Perhaps he bounced off my windshield and somehow got the better of our collision and simply wandered into the woods nearby. I can hope, can't I? Remembering what I saw of the deer at our impact, it did not appear to have any doe. Otherwise, in addition to my cost for a replacement car, the deer might have been out a couple of bucks as well.

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

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

website: torpedofactory.org

historic Alexandria's Potomac River waterfront for a spectacular show by Waterskiing Santa and his merry crew. Come early to see the pre-show (on jet skis). Visit waterskiing-santa.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 31
Olde Year's Day at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 1 to 5 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. The whole family can celebrate the close of 2021 at Torpedo Factory Art Center. Find hands-on activities, meet artists working in their studios, and get inspired for 2022. Visit the

FRIDAY/DEC. 31
First Night Alexandria. 12 p.m. to midnight. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Experience the region's signature New Year's Eve festival of music and more. Enjoy live performances throughout the day and into the evening for kids, teens, adults and seniors. New events include a kick-off at Market Square and a "Battle of the Buskers," leading up to the midnight countdown and fireworks finale over the Potomac River. Visit the event website for a full schedule of events. Visit the website: firstnightalexandria.org

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

THE BIRCHMERE
At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

December
Sun. 26: MAYSA Holiday Show \$69.50
Mon. Dec. 27: MAX WEINBERG'S JUKEBOX \$65.00
Wed. 29: Hank Williams Tribute w/ Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Robin & Linda Williams, Phil Wiggins, Patrick McAvinue, Mark Schatz \$29.50
Thu. 30: Bela Dona Band \$35.00
Fri. 31: New Years Eve with The Seldom Scene, Eastman String Band, & Wicked Sycamore -8pm- \$49.50
January

Sat. Jan. 1: THOMM JUTZ to open for Last Train Home.
Sun. Jan. 2: Cheryl Wheeler and Buskin & Batteau \$39.50
Fri/Sat. Jan. 7 & 8: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder \$45.00
Sun. Jan. 9: THE S.O.S. BAND \$69.50
Wed/Thu. Jan. 12 & 13: Musiq Soulchild \$79.50
Fri/Sat/Sun. Jan. 14, 15, 16: Eddie From Ohio \$49.50
Thu/Fri. Jan. 20 & 21: Keb' Mo' Band with special guest The Brother Brothers \$89.50
Sat. Jan. 22: A Tribute to JOHNNY ARTIS featuring Johnny Artis Legacy Band & Friends with Ron Holloway, Regina Blackman, Stacy Brooks & Gary Thomas \$35.00
Sun. Jan. 23: JOSH ABBOTT BAND \$35.00
Mon. Jan. 24: J. BROWN \$35.00
Wed. Jan. 26: SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK \$45.00

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

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.
 - ❖ **Family Learning Programs (FLP):** provides English language instruction for parents or caregivers, so that they can better communicate with their children and support their education.
- Classes are \$85 with books and assessment included. Registration is required for enrollment. Please understand that no children are allowed at in-person registrations. If possible, please bring your interpreter for the process. Strict social distancing precautions will be enforced. Face masks will be provided. Registration times and dates are available at LCNV's distance learning page (<https://lcnv.org/distance-learning-session/lcnv-classes/>), or call 703-237-0866.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school

year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.seniorscientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaledrea@aol.com.

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

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

Fairfax County's Community Services Board is seeking volunteer office assistants. Volunteers are needed to assist CSB staff with greeting guests, making reminder phone calls, data entry, filing, shredding, stocking shelves, and other duties as needed. Hours are flexible, but would be during normal business hours. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm for more.

Line Dance Instructor needed for the Gum Springs Senior Program once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Volunteer Solutions, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711.

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

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Chris's comments on our local market:

"The last 18 months have been especially strong for the market in our area. Space, both inside and out, has become a priority. The quest for the home office, extra bedroom, or a yard for the dog has brought a whole new set of buyers attracted to the attributes of our area. While we don't have a crystal ball, our extensive experience derived from just having sold 106 homes in 2021 in the Mt. Vernon/Fort Hunt area, places us in a unique position to provide an educated answer to what the future holds for local real estate.

Looking forward, there are a few unknown factors such as interest rates, inventory, and national/international events that could impact the local market. However, we do know interest rates are still hovering at historic lows and buyer preferences have remained consistent. With the market momentum staying steady, it appears the start of 2022 will pick up right where 2021 left off. Our area is extremely unique in that every neighborhood, street, and house is highly nuanced. If you'd like a custom-tailored evaluation of what your home is worth in today's market, reach out any time!" - *Chris*



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