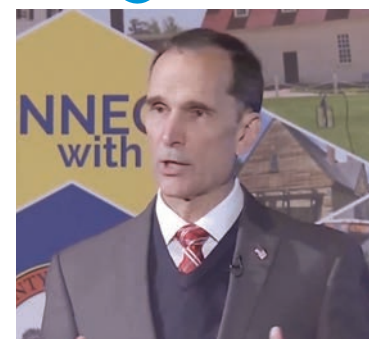
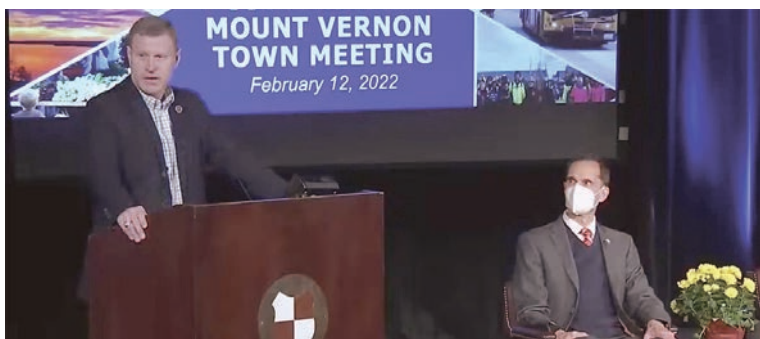


Mount Vernon Gazette



MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

FEBRUARY 17, 2022



Right, Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck (D) listens to speaker Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At Large) say, “never forget you have two supervisors if you live in Fairfax County, your district supervisor, and the chairman.”

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) shares how federal funding provided in the last few years is paying off for the Mount Vernon District.

Supervisor Dan Storck moderates the 35th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2022, bringing together federal, state, and local leadership with community members and vendors.



Speakers who participated in the Q & A included (from left) Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D); Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay (D-At Large); County Executive Bryan Hill; and Charles Cuvelie, Superintendent of George Washington Parkway for the National Park Service.



U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8) shares issues on the federal level important to Mount Vernon residents.



Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill.

PHOTOS SCREENSHOT

Mount Vernon 35th Annual Town Meeting

District tradition returns in person and a virtual option.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following a two-year COVID pause, Fairfax County Board Supervisor Daniel G. Storck (D-Mount Vernon) welcomed the community to the district’s 35th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 12. The event took place in person and aired live on Channel 16, Facebook, and YouTube. The video will remain on Facebook and be replayed on Channel 16.

Storck began with a moment of silence to commemorate Mount Vernon residents who died in the previous year. He then expressed gratitude to his predecessor, Supervisor Gerald W. “Gerry” Hyland (D-Mount Vernon), for initiating the town meeting tradition 35 years ago.

Storck honored the people who make “a huge difference” and “have a commitment and passion for the particular work they do,” the Mount Vernon district appointees to over 50 different boards, authorities, and commissions.

He acknowledged Gina Lynch for receiving the Virginia Animal

Control President’s Award and Will Freeman for receiving the Fairfax County Tree Commission’s 2021 Friends of Trees Award.

Storck welcomed leadership at the federal, state, and county levels, starting with two “special guests,” speakers Congressmen Don Beyer (D-8) and Gerry Connolly (D-11), who addressed current events on Capitol Hill.

As Chairman of the Joint Eco-

nomics Committee, Beyer said that the committee’s members are those responsible for putting together the Payment Protection Plan and direct impact payments. “Much of the money that went to sustain America through COVID came out of the research we had done,” Beyer said. His “little piece of making sure the vaccines are free” was incorporated in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Other significant

successes of 2021 include legislation, if passed are, the Equality Act of 2021, which would prohibit discrimination against members of the LGBTQ community, and the Women’s Health Protection Act of 2021, which codifies Roe and Wade.

Locally, Beyer said he was excited about reducing airplane noise, ensuring that flights departing National Airport fly straight to Fort

Washington before turning left or right. He is also pleased with the National Park Service’s release of its Southern George Washington Memorial Parkway Safety Study. There will be new signs, restriping, fewer lanes, and slower speeds.

Connolly emphasized the local government’s openness to residents. He spoke about how the pandemic tested us in new ways.

SEE MOUNT VERNON, PAGE 8






Charles Cuvelie, Superintendent George Washington Parkway for the National Park Service.

2021-22 projects underway

Current investment exceeds \$175M

- South Parkway striping, safety improvements
- Dyke Marsh Phase II
- Mount Vernon Trail Bridge 12
- N Parkway Rehabilitation
- Guardrail replacement
- Turkey Run Loop Road Paving
- U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial Comfort Station
- Netherlands Carillon rehabilitation
- Clara Barton NHS Roof repairs

External agency led

- Fairfax County Scotts Run / Carder rock Sewer
- I-495/American Legion Bridge – MDOT-SHA Long Bridge
- WMATA Yellow Line
- Reagan Airport – MWAA
- DC Potomac Interceptor – DC Water
- Crystal City VRE Improvements – FTA/VRE
- Highway Deed Easement East and West Abingdon
- Crystal City to Reagan National Airport Intermodal Connector
- WMATA - Trolley Line Bridge @ Wilson Lane
- City of Alexandria City Potomac River Generating Station Power Plant Redevelopment
- Alexander Renew- Construction

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OPEN SUN 2/20, 1-3PM

Mount Vernon on the Potomac | \$1,475,000

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Susan Taylor 703.927.3000
www.CallSusanTaylor.com



Old Town | \$1,625,000

Built in 1820, this semi-detached 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath townhome offers gracious rooms for living and entertaining, original floors, 4 fireplaces, and handsome millwork. Fabulous chef's kitchen plus a lovely patio with an artist's studio. 214 Wolfe Street
Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.BabsBeckwith.com



OPEN SAT 2/19, 12-2PM

Rosemont Park | \$1,050,000

Beautiful home with 4 bedrooms, 2 full baths. Gracious front porch. Large living room with wood-burning fireplace. Main level bedroom & full bath. Updated kitchen & spacious dining room. Large backyard features a studio with kitchen area & loft bed. 306 Rucker Place
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



OPEN SUN 2/20, 1-4PM

Stratford on the Potomac | \$825,000

This beautiful home has been meticulously maintained & updated throughout. Gleaming hardwood floors. Open-concept kitchen with huge island flows easily to dining & living rooms for entertaining. 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths. 8446 Porter Lane. crombieandolsen.com
Kristy Crombie 706.575.7926
Erika Olsen 202.262.1293



OPEN SUN 2/20, 12-2PM

Potowmack Crossing | \$265,000

Charming 1-bedroom, 1-bath brick condominium home beside the Parkway in the north end of Old Town Alexandria. Glorious light, wood floors, handsome moldings, nicely proportioned rooms, washer dryer in unit. 1810 W Abingdon Drive #201
Joel Miller 571.277.1321
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Climate Change Study Warns of Coastal Flooding in 2050

County program called “Resilient Fairfax,” would provide prevention steps.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Climate Projections Report was recently released by Fairfax County, and the look ahead to the extreme heat, heavy precipitation and inland flooding was part of a potentially bleak future. Rising sea levels would impact the parts of the county right along the Potomac River, and the Mount Vernon District might be the first to experience this.

According to the report, there could be a water level rise by 2050, and by 2085, the higher scenario suggests that most days of the summer will reach temperatures of or above 90 degrees.

On Page 30 of the report, there is a map with colors representing surface temperatures from 2013-2021.

In the Mount Vernon area, for example, the path of Richmond Highway is dark orange where the daytime summer average surface temperature is 126.95 degrees. They call that an urban heat island. “This suggests those areas currently experiencing hotter temperatures are at particular risk over the coming century,” the report says. On the other end of the spectrum, the lower surface temperatures are in blue. On the map, the areas in Mount Vernon that are blue are the Huntley Meadows Park and Fort Belvoir area that are somewhat forested.

A county program called “Resilient Fairfax,” is geared toward climate change, and bouncing back. That effort is spearheaded by Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) who is embracing Fairfax Green Initiatives. “I directed the county to create a resiliency plan to address all resiliency issues in the county, to include water levels rising on the Potomac River and the many streams and creeks in our area. This Climate Projections report is part of that process,” he said.

Residents near the water and throughout the district have already taken steps to safeguard their properties. “Some residents have begun installing natural shorelines and bulkheads to preserve their properties, but more will need to be done and the Resilient Fairfax plan is anticipated to make specific recommendations for future actions. In addition, the county is now requiring any new construction in New Alexandria to



At a past environmental expo in Mount Vernon, there are alternatives to the plastic bag.



Supervisor Storck discusses an exhibit with local scouts at a past environmental expo in Mount Vernon.



Figure 3. (Left) Tropical Storm Lee flooded Reston Park and Ride facility in Fairfax County (Source: weather.gov, courtesy of NBC Washington); (Right) Tropical Storm Lee damaged Lorton Road in Fairfax County (Source: Virginia Department of Transportation).

Recent rains have caused flooding problems.

be elevated,” Storck said. **Study Cites Particulars**

One section of the county study called “Coastal Flooding,” and on their map, it is projected by 2050 some parts of Mount Vernon could be impacted, such as the Little Hunting Creek area and Dogue Creek. Communities in that area that are part of the maps highlighted areas include River Village and the Mount Vernon Yacht Club near Dogue Creek, and the communities along Stockton Parkway, Stratford Lane and Wagon Wheel Road. Further north, the Dyke Marsh and Belle Haven Marina could be in trouble.

It’s a concern in other jurisdictions in Fairfax County as well. The Fairfax County Office of Environmental & Energy Coordination, is working to address both the cause and the effects of climate change

by reducing contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions that collectively feed into climate change. Emissions reductions are a global group project, but the county is working to do its part, OEEC said. These efforts are detailed in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) which includes recommendations such as transitioning to renewable energy and cleaner transportation.

In the report, they looked at four extreme events between 2010 to 2019 that were destructive and had big county-wide financial impacts:

- ❖ The North American Blizzard (2010) resulted in a \$2 million loss
- ❖ Tropical Storm Lee (2011) cost the county \$10 million in repairs to bridges and roads
- ❖ Hurricane Sandy (2012) cost the county more than \$1.5 million

❖ he July 2019 rainfall/flooding event led to costs of \$14.8 million, of which \$2 million were damages to Fairfax County Government property

Developing and implementing a plan allows the county to avoid economic, social, and environmental risks associated with climate change, the county said.

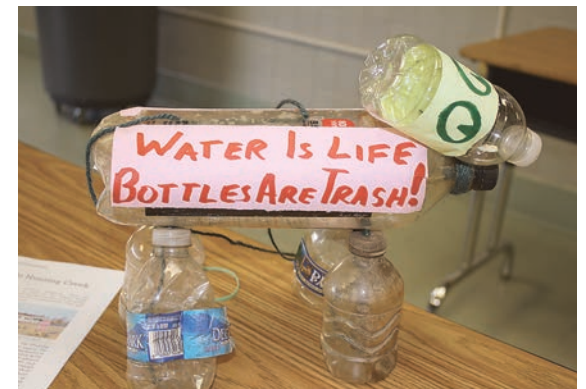
Fighting Climate Change at Home

According to the EPA, there are steps that residents can take to fight climate change, but some seem to have a dollar figure attached which are additional expenses to the daily budget. The EPA’s recommendations include Energy Star appliances, sealing windows, upgrading heating and cooling systems, including simple measures like smart thermostats,

the EPA said. For low-cost solutions, the EPA recommends adjusting thermostats and turning off lights when space is unoccupied, unplugging electronics when not in use, using Energy Star LED light bulbs, adjusting window shades to reduce heating and cooling requirements, and installing programmable thermostats.

Waste disposal is another area the EPA says will contribute to reducing global warming. Reducing food waste by shopping smart, plus reusing or repurposing items may reduce an individual’s impact, the EPA said.

In the transportation field, the EPA says to use greener transportation such as biking, walking, carpooling, and public transportation. “Cutting your shower time by even a minute can help save gallons of water,” the EPA said.



Environmentalists target plastic water bottles.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Police Shoot Armed Man in Lorton

Suspect was out on a warrant and in a van parked on a Newington area street; police say he pointed a gun at them.

By MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, Feb. 15, Fairfax County Police officers from the Mount Vernon District shot a man with a gun on a sleepy street in Lorton, just off Telegraph Road near Fort Belvoir. The victim, who was a fugitive in Fairfax County, was taken to a local hospital with a gunshot wound.

According to the police, the residents on Fitt Court reported seeing a van parked on their street with the windows blocked and out of state license plates so they called 911. Officers say they arrived at Fitt Court and visually investigated the van when the door on the side opened and the suspect pointed a gun at the officers; that's when they shot him.

"He raised the carbine in the direction of the officers," said Chief Kevin Davis, who arrived on the scene in the mobile police laboratory shortly after the shooting. "I don't believe the two officers knew there was someone in the van," Davis said.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE PACKET

Fitt Court is in the Newington part of Lorton, where an officer from the Mount Vernon district shot a man who pointed a gun at officers on Tuesday while they were investigating an illegally parked van.

The shooting victim was a 34-year male who was out on a warrant for firearm and drug charges, Davis said. The day of the shooting, the police were not releasing his name or the body camera footage, but Davis said these would be released within a few days. "He certainly has ties to Fairfax County," Davis said.

After further investigation, police report that the North Carolina license plates on the van were stolen. "A thorough investigation will follow," Davis said. He praised the presence of police body cameras.



SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis on the scene in Lorton after the shooting.



Norwood Drive House Fire

On Saturday, Feb. 12, at approximately 6:08 a.m., units responded to a house fire in the 8100 block of Norwood Drive in the Woodlawn area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on the scene of a two-story, single-family home with smoke showing. Crews quickly advanced one (fire) hose line to the first floor and extinguished the fire. One occupant was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. There were no reported firefighter injuries.

One occupant was home at the time of the fire. The occupant was on the second floor when she heard a noise downstairs. Upon

investigation, she observed fire in the living room. She then self-evacuated through the front door. The smoke alarm activated after the occupant was aware of the fire. Smoke alarms were monitored by an alarm company who then notified 9-1-1.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the living room. The cause of this fire is electrical in nature.

One occupant was displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was offered and accepted. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$187,500.



Hybla Valley Apartment

Hybla Valley Apartment Fire Caused by Electrical Malfunction

On Tuesday, Feb. 1, at approximately 2:54 a.m., units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the City of Alexandria Fire Department were dispatched for a reported apartment fire in the 7500 block of Vernon Square Drive in the Hybla Valley area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on the scene of a three-story garden apartment with smoke visible from the second and third floors. Crews located fire in a storage room and worked rapidly to extinguish it. Simultaneously, crews assisted multiple residents out of their apartments. One resident was rescued by crews. Several residents were evaluated by EMS on the scene. All declined further treatment and transport to hospital. There were no firefighter injuries reported.

There were approximately 64 residents in the building when the fire was discovered. An occupant heard the building smoke alarm sound and, upon investigation, discovered smoke in the building. 9-1-1 was called.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the terrace level utility/storage room. The fire was caused by an electrical malfunction involving the building's electrical wiring in the ceiling space.

64 residents were displaced because of the fire. The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management and Security worked with building management to address the immediate needs of all occupants. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$125,000.

COMMUNITY



Souper Bowl of Caring

Nativity Lutheran Church celebrated Super Bowl Sunday with the “Souper Bowl of Caring”

Nativity Lutheran and friends raised almost \$200 and 75 pounds of non-perishable food goods to “tackle hunger” in our community. These donations will go to United Community in southeastern Fairfax County, whose mission is to empower their neighbors in need to transform their lives.

Nativity’s ongoing effort is to support local organi-

zations and outreach to end hunger. We are uniting with schools, faith-based groups, community organizations and caring individuals in the fight against hunger. We hope you will help too.

Nativity Lutheran Church, 1300 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, Va. 22308

United Community <https://unitedcommunity.org/>
Cynthia Hull Food Pantry, 7511 Fordson Rd. Alexandria, VA 22306.



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OPINION

Fixing the Virginia Employment Commission

BY SEN. ADAM P. EBBIN

An important role of any legislative office is that of constituent service. Before COVID19, we received a variety of requests regarding various state agencies or affiliates, including some regarding unemployment. The pandemic highlighted a dysfunctional system under immense stress at the Virginia Employment Commission like never before. The VEC has been underfunded for years because their main source of funding is based on a federal formula that provides funds based on our state's unemployment rate, which has been historically low. This impacted their ability to do long planned, much-needed system upgrades. During some months my office received nearly 100 requests for assistance with claims. As the pandemic continued, the situations of constituents grew more dire as the delay of their benefits created broad repercussions.

It quickly became clear that there were several recurring issues at the VEC. First was inconsistent communication. Constituents received emails from the VEC constituent service team stating that benefits may be denied if they did not call back within a specific time frame, however, the number provided by the VEC rarely connected to anyone. Some constituents received conflicting information from different VEC employees depending on who they spoke to. Constituents received emails from constituent service team members stating that benefits may be denied if they did not call back within a specific time frame, however, the number provided rarely connected to anyone. Some constituents received conflicting information from different constituent service members, resulting in confusion and time lost for constituents. Additionally, many constituents who come to us have been told that all their claim issues had



been resolved, only to wait weeks for benefits to arrive, and meanwhile are not able to contact anyone at the VEC through phone or email to determine why they are not receiving their benefits. We even heard from some constituents with concerns regarding fraud that occurred on their claims or that misused their identity. Some of these issues were prevalent enough that the VEC was sued in Federal Court April 2021 for delayed payments.

My staff and I have met with some of the hardworking team members at the VEC to get answers on specific cases and learn how their systems operate. There is much work to be done to get the VEC running smoothly and efficiently for Virginians.

I am the Vice-Chair of the Commission for Unemployment Compensation. Our official mandate is to monitor and evaluate Virginia's unemployment compensation system relative to the economic health of the Commonwealth. This past summer, I insisted on a meeting of the commission to probe on issues outside that regulatory purview, during which we heard from the then-VEC Commissioner and I asked pointed questions about the transparency of communications and payments to claimants. I was far from satisfied with the pace of response from the VEC to the clear need and obvious calls for changes. I've written to Commissioners of the VEC, Secretaries of Labor, and other officials on the issue over the past year requesting prompt changes and solutions. Most recently, newly-appointed Commissioner Carrie Roth provided in-depth answers to specific questions that will allow my office to better assist constituents coming to us with concerns regarding fraud. I'm glad to see that in this area, Governor Youngkin is on the right track. This is a bipartisan issue that requires pragmatic solutions.

To that end, there are several bills this session

based on recommendations made in a thorough study by the well respected Joint Audit and Legislative Review Commission (JLARC) on the VEC process. The final report offered comprehensive legislative and executive recommendations. I introduced legislation to expedite the process to bring employers filing forms with the VEC online and require the VEC to plan for a pilot program that aims to reduce the confusion and complexity of the separation reporting process. My office worked with JLARC and the VEC on this legislation, which aims to accomplish two specific recommendations from their report. I am co-sponsoring an even more comprehensive bill with Sen. Jeremy McPike (D-Woodbridge) that implements further JLARC recommendations regarding administrative reforms and reporting methods. The bill requires the VEC to calculate and report important metrics and maintain an unemployment insurance Resiliency Plan for future spikes in unemployment. The legislation also creates within the Commission on Unemployment Compensation, a subcommittee that will be responsible for monitoring the VEC's management of the unemployment insurance program. The bill would also clarify the appeals process and establish a workgroup on staffing. I am also co-sponsoring legislation with Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) aiming to fight fraud. That bill would require certain verifications of identity for claimants, as well as an annual report from the VEC on fraudulent payments.

I take VEC complaints very seriously — there are constituents whose livelihoods depend on the status of their claims. Some constituents are at risk of losing their homes or are facing hunger. My Legislative Aide, Mollie Montague, has assisted hundreds of constituents with VEC cases. If you are struggling with an issue at the VEC, contact our office at district30@senate.virginia.gov and we will do our best to assist you.

It is my continued honor to serve the 30th District.

Last Week in Richmond: 25 Bills Moving

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

In the General Assembly, the first week of February is always the week we deal with difficult and controversial legislation and this year was no different.



would not be supportive of service in a part-time legislature like ours.

On a 35 to five vote, the Senate approved a bill I am carrying with Del. Israel O'Quinn to reduce Virginia's methane emissions. Methane is a plan-

et-warming greenhouse gas that is 85 times more potent than another greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. I am hopeful that the bill will incentivize utilities like Washington Gas to work with local sewage au-

SEE SUROVELL, PAGE 14

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OPINION

Half time in the House of Delegates

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

This week marks the halfway point of our 60-day legislative session in Richmond, or “crossover.” By Wednesday, the bills that originated in the House or the Senate must “cross over” to the other chamber for consideration. Monday and Tuesday of this week included long hours, tough votes, and impassioned debates on the House floor with my colleagues as we finished our chamber’s business. On Monday night, the House remained in session until after 10pm, and I was proud to vote to prevent rollbacks of many progressive laws passed by our Democratic majority during the last two years.

I am pleased to announce that as of this writing, twelve of my bills are now headed to the Senate to be heard, and six of these pieces of legislation passed the House unanimously.

After working hard all last Summer and Fall on a bipartisan and bicameral basis as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Charitable Gaming, I introduced eight bills regulating gambling in Virginia, to combat corruption and protect the many legitimate charities in this space. I am pleased that seven bills from my gaming reform package have passed over to the Senate and should have a good chance of final passage. The first one to pass over to the Senate was HB 571 which raises the minimum age to participate in historic horse racing from 18 to 21 to match Virginia age requirements for casinos, as well as every other state around the nation that has both casinos and historic horse racing. Electronic historic horse racing is a relatively new type of game, similar to slot machines, where players can bet on actual horse races from history. Some machines use real results to calibrate a player’s chances, while others are essentially random chance.

Another, HB 574, directs some of the tax money from these historic horse racing terminals to the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Fund, as these games can be addictive and every form of gaming in Virginia should pay into this important fund.

HB 763 restricts charitable gaming on electronic devices to social organizations. There have been electronic gaming devices that were supposed to be used for an organization’s charitable gaming found in restaurants and bars. I am sure that you have seen them. The intent of allowing charitable gaming was not to let gaming proliferate in bar areas of restaurants, especially when children may be there. Charitable gaming traditionally was relegated to the social quarters where the members, all volunteers, of the organizations run their operations, like a Moose Lodge or VFW. The aim of this legislation is to protect the good that these charities are doing and to weed out the bad actors that have been taking advantage of a code section riddled with loopholes and weak enforcement.

HB 764, which has now passed the House, clarifies the intent of the laws written in

2020 about charitable gaming, particularly Texas Hold ‘Em tournaments. When SB 936 passed in 2020, allowing Texas Hold ‘Em tournaments to be held in the Commonwealth, certain individuals reinterpreted the law to include cash games. HB 764 clarifies that tournaments are the only type of Texas Hold ‘Em permitted under SB 936. Also, charities without venues have been allowed to rent space from landlords to host their events. The problem that has arisen is that these landlords are not required to be permitted and can’t be audited making it easy for them to charge exorbitant rents taking advantage of the charities. HB 764 will require landlords to obtain a permit, allowing the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) to monitor and audit them.

HB 765 changes the role of the Board from a policy board to an advisory board, and shifts regulatory power to the VDACS. This way the charitable gaming industry can be run without conflict of interest, while the industry experts on the board will still be able to give their input.

Our final charitable gaming bills, HB 766, will have the Superintendent of the State Police designate an Illegal Gaming Enforcement Coordinator, and establish a tip line to report instances of illegal gaming across the Commonwealth. The coordinator would organize the enforcement of illegal gaming laws by the state and local law enforcement agencies. To round it out, HB 767, provides penalties for organizations that hold charitable gaming activities without a permit.

Legal charitable gaming does much good across the state but we need proper regulation to ensure that everyone who wants to play can play fairly and legally. The Charitable Gaming Board currently has the power to set those regulations and holds regulatory power over the charitable gaming industry, while they have personal interests in charitable gaming themselves. The current Chairman and Vice-Chairman are both landlords. Landlords and operators are allowed to run games without a charity member being present. They handle the money and decide how much money from charitable gaming goes to charity. My bills to fix these issues have moved through the House with bipartisan support, while companion bills from my colleagues in the Senate, Senators Bryce Reeves and John Bell, are moving to the House.

Of our many non-gaming legislative initiatives, we introduced two bills on native plants this year. The successful one, HB 314, was our first bill to pass the House 70-30. As passed in the House, HB 314 directs the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services to create a brochure on the value of native plants and the danger of invasives and noxious weeds. Plant retailers will be able to distribute these informational brochures in their stores.

Also, I worked extensively with Virginia’s seven federally recognized Tribal Nations this year to introduce a number of pieces of

SEE KRIZEK, PAGE 14



Mount Vernon living at its best

Classic and sophisticated Mount Vernon home located in a gated community of just 11 residences with outdoor pool, tennis and basketball courts, gazebo, and koi pond. Highlights of this spectacular home include an indoor pool, dramatic foyer with curved staircase, formal living and dining rooms, renovated kitchen and sun room with skylights, elegant family room, bonus room and study.

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Mount Vernon 35th Annual Town Meeting

FROM PAGE 1

“But you know what, the world did not come to an end. We experienced tragedy; we experienced loss; we experienced fear, but we soldiered on. Government continued to function,” Connolly said.

Connolly said the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 Relief legislation enacted last year halved child poverty in America. The \$1.2 trillion “transformative infrastructure plan” included universal pre-kindergarten and broadband. “Let’s remember we’re all Americans, and we will be stronger and better,” Connolly said.

STORCK OUTLINED investments of over \$30 million in roads, walkways, and trails between 2021 and 2022 in the Mount Vernon District. “Things that really make our connectivity improve,” he said. Additionally, more than \$270 million paid for new and refurbished county buildings and \$1 billion on stormwater, sewer, public health facilities, and other infrastructure.

“We have more than a billion dollars...for Richmond Highway,” Storck added.

Chairman Jeff McKay highlighted how he saw the county at its finest as it negotiated COVID. He expressed gratitude to county employees, first responders, instructors, and public works personnel for keeping the county open “every single day of COVID, serving residents.”

McKay said that 73 percent of the county’s population is fully boosted with the COVID vaccine, safeguarding the community’s residents. “I salute our health care workers but most importantly, our residents for taking advantage of those opportunities and caring enough,” McKay said.

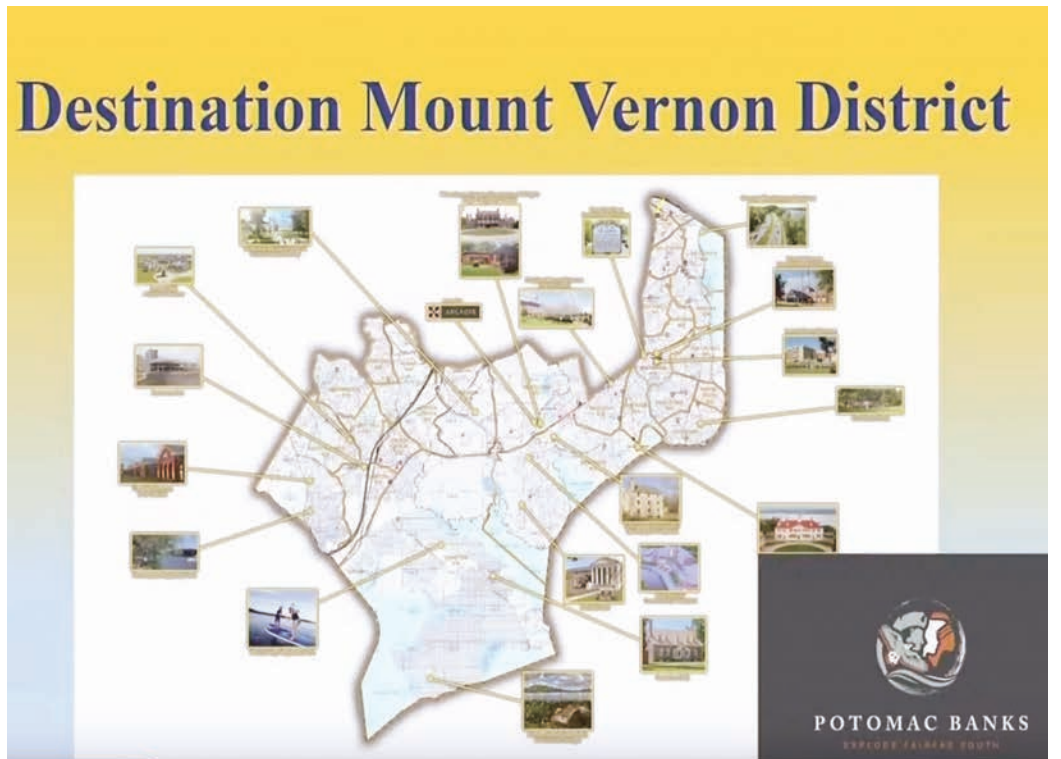
McKay outlined \$90 million in grants and assistance for Fairfax County’s small minority-, women- and veteran-owned companies. McKay highlighted the Fairfax Founders Fund, which was established to assist promising businesses and provide minority company owners with access to funding in ways that banks often did not. McKay detailed the \$50 million in funds for help with food, housing, and utilities for those who have lost employment or are coping with income loss or sickness due to COVID.

McKay addressed affordable housing. “We are not just concentrating all of our affordable housing in the places that it is acceptable. We are going to force the issue and build affordable housing in all corners of the county because it is the right thing to do for our economy, and it’s the right thing



Fairfax County School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon District) shares updates for the month of February in the school division.

The new Potomac Banks tourism branding for Mount Vernon captures Mount Vernon’s historical sights, recreational spirit, entertainment, arts, nature, and much more. The newly launched brand is designed to raise awareness, drive more visitors to the region, and create synergy between locations.



to do morally. Our board feels very strongly about that,” McKay said.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE Bryan Hill discussed how the county transformed its business model. The county has a new strategic plan with ten objectives that prioritizes how business is done and implements the equity foundations of One Fairfax. “(In) the strategic plan moving forward, access and equity are in every intentional decision making that we do in Fairfax County today,” Hill said.

Charles Cuvelier, superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, said that his responsibilities extend from Great Falls in northern Fairfax County to Mount Vernon. They put forward the Mount Vernon Trail Corridor Study and the traffic and safety context-sensitive solutions, particularly in South County. This is vital because, as resource stewards, they are accountable for both cultural and natural landscapes. These aid decision-making by directing priorities and expenditures to areas where they may compete for available funds within the National Park Service.

The NPS rehabilitated Arlington Memorial Bridge, a \$277 million investment in the park finished on schedule and under budget. The \$161 million GW Parkway Rehabilitation contract will reconstruct the parkway’s northern segment between Sprout Run in Arlington and the I-495 junction in McLean.

Karen Corbet Sanders, the Mount Vernon District School



Virtual flying tour of Mount Vernon District’s treasures with “pilot” Supervisor Storck shows the location of River Farm and local efforts to save it.



The new South County Police Station and Animal Shelter in Lorton will maximize resources in delivering services, according to Chairman Jeff McKay.



SCREENSHOT

Some of the in-person attendees at the 35th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2022.

District Tradition Returns in Person and a Virtual Option

FROM PAGE 8

Board member, focused on a trifecta of important events this month beginning with Black History. Sanders described how schools and the community ensure that people are aware of that history and that they embrace and celebrate the accomplishments of brilliant black scientists, innovators, medical professionals who helped invent the COVID vaccine, and others. “It is important because it is part of our history that we want to teach and tell the story about, the good and the bad.

Because if we don’t teach our history, we end up repeating history, and we know we don’t want to do that,” she said.

The second event is Public

Schools Week, Feb. 21-25, 2022. “Many people don’t realize that Virginia was the first state in the United States to actually incorporate into its constitution the promise of public education for every child in the Commonwealth,” she said.

A third event commemorates 125 years of PTA Parent Teacher Organizations. According to Sanders, there has been much chatter about whether or not parents should be included in the educational process. “I am here to say that 125 years in, we are proud to continue that promise of partnering with parents and teachers to advance the needs of public education,” she said.

Sanders described how Fairfax

County Public Schools reinvented many aspects of education, including introducing the science of reading, focusing on early literacy; adapting the John Lewis program at John R. Lewis High School which emphasizes leadership and public service; expanding the curriculum on preventing gun violence and gun safety; and securing board support to introduce Title Nine curriculum for grades K through 12, which teaches children from an early age what is harassment and assault.

Storck closed the meeting saying, “ Together we have accomplished much throughout this second challenging COVID year, and I know we will achieve far more in the future.”

BULLETIN BOARD

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

REALIGNMENT OF MOUNT VERNON TRAIL

On Feb. 14, the National Park Service, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and Virginia Department of Transportation, will begin a project to replace Bridge 12 and realign the Mount Vernon Trail to improve safety near Fort Hunt Park. During the project, trail users will be detoured around the construction area on a temporary trail. The NPS will straighten trail curves that lead to Bridge 12, located approximately 400 yards north of Fort Hunt Park.

The bridge will be relocated, allowing for a straighter alignment and a reduced grade leading to and from the bridge. The NPS will also upgrade the bridge railings and replace more than 350 tons of asphalt on the trail. Realigning the trail, replacing the bridge and laying new trail asphalt will reduce the severity and frequency of bike crashes on this section of trail. During this project— which is expected to be completed in late summer— trail users will be detoured on the adjacent southbound section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near Wayneswood Boulevard. To protect trail users on the detour, concrete barriers will be placed on the roadway and drivers will be guided into one lane. Trail users and drivers should expect temporary, short-term closures and should follow trail signs and directions from onsite flaggers.

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.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13

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Yvette Schuler is a State Farm Insurance agent and owner of her own insurance agency on Telegraph Road.



Roberta Tinch leads the team at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital as the President and CEO with more than ten years of hospital administration experience.



Jube Shiver Jr. is the second generation to own and operate Shiver Management Group, a local property management company.



Dr. Cynthia Coy, Uncaged Solutions, helps leaders transform their thinking and serves on the Chamber Board of Directors.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk, the first African American male elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Ron Chase documents the history of Gum Springs at the Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum.

Black History Month: Business and Community Leaders

BY HOLLY DOUGHERTY
MOUNT VERNON
LEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Black History month is a time to recognize and thank the many business and community leaders of African American heritage who contribute to the quality of life we all enjoy. The Mount Vernon Lee Chamber is pleased to introduce a few local business people and encourage you to support the businesses in our community.

Kenneth McLeon started planning The Skrimp Shack in Mount Vernon Plaza in 2020 and then the pandemic came. He and his wife Brenda persevered and navigated the difficulties of permits, a build-out, and inspections to open this amazing restaurant. Recognized by the Chamber as the 2020 New Business of the Year, The Skrimp Shack is a community gathering place for good food.

Yvette Schuler, owner of Schuler Insurance Agency Inc., is a local State Farm agent and a lifetime resident of the greater DC Metro area. Yvette has received numerous recognitions from State Farm Insurance including being a Silver Scroll winner, Legion of Honor recipient and Bronze National Convention Qualifier. Her most important recognition comes from the people who have been her clients for many years. She loves sports and serves as a volunteer coach with the Springfield Youth Club. Yvette's office is located at 5741 Telegraph Road.

Roberta Tinch is President and CEO of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital. She is an accomplished executive with more than a decade of experience leading hospital operations and we are fortunate to



Kenneth McLeon welcomes customers to his restaurant The Skrimp Shack in Mount Vernon Plaza.

have her at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital. She is a Fellow of American College of Healthcare Executives, a prestigious distinction that shows a professional in health management meets educational and professional requirements and is board certified and approved. She is a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors where she was recognized for her leadership at the hospital during the pandemic.

Jube Shiver Jr. is president of Shiver Management Group, a local property management firm, which manages two apartment complexes in Northern Virginia and has investments in single family homes, and other real estate from Costa Rica to Maryland. He is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Affordable

Housing Management Association and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. After a distinguished career in journalism that included work at the Washington Post, USA Today, radio and television, Jube became the second generation of leadership at family-owned Shiver Management Group.

Dr. Cynthia Coy is the Founder and CEO of Uncaged Solutions, LLC. She believes that everyone has purpose and untapped potential. The key lies in understanding how the way you think influences your life. "Your thoughts have the power to keep you caged in the self-limiting beliefs about who you are and where you are in the different areas of your life," said Cynthia.

She loves to teach leaders how to lead better, transforming the way they think by offering workshops, seminars, keynote speaking, and coaching. She is a John Maxwell certified coach, trainer and speaker. Cynthia has facilitated discussions at Leadership Mount Vernon Lee and serves on the Chamber's Board of Directors.

Sonja Caison is a CEO, an entrepreneur, lecturer and former chairman of the Mount Vernon Lee Chamber. After a stint on Wall Street, Sonja purchased the Alexandria territory of The Cleaning Authority franchise. With her superior customer service and strong business skills the company grew to more than 50 employees with 500 customers. This growth brought

recognition to her as one of the fastest growing businesses in the area. Since then, she has continued to grow the business with her bonded and insured professional cleaning crews serving more than 900 customers with reliable, environmentally friendly cleaning.

Rodney Lusk was elected as Lee District Supervisor in 2019 after a 31-year career serving the citizens of Fairfax County in human services, on the staff of Board of Supervisor members, and as the Director of the National Marketing Division for the Fairfax County EDA. It is difficult to find an aspect of Fairfax County government that Rodney has not influenced in some way during the past 35 years. Supervisor Lusk often mentions his grandparents, Eddie and Eleanor Dye, who called Alexandria City home for 60 years and taught him the importance of honoring commitments and giving back to the community. In honor of that legacy, Rodney is proud to be the first African American male ever elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Ron Chase is the Founder and CEO of the Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum and a treasure trove of knowledge on African-American history and culture in Fairfax County. The Gum Springs Museum is a collection of artifacts, portraits, and information on the founding of Gum Springs and its history as the oldest free African American community in Fairfax County. Chase is a descendant of at least one of the original 22 families in Gum Springs that included freed slaves such as his great-grandmother. The Museum and Historical Society document the struggles of the Gum Springs community for equality and inclusion since its founding in 1833.

Black History Month: Filling in the Gaps

African American parents are giving their children accurate and comprehensive lessons on Black history.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Tracy Grant's fifth-grade son Hunter came home from school one day during Black History Month several years ago, she recalls his recounting of a lesson that he'd just learned. He said that his social studies teacher told the class that most slaves were treated well because their owners saw them as an expensive investment. Grant was speechless.

"I was baffled by that level of ignorance. Did that teacher not know that slaves could have their finger chopped off for knowing how to write or that some small slave children were fed slop in the same trough that were used to feed pigs on the plantation?" asked Grant, a registered nurse and Springfield mother of two. "That was when I decided that if I wanted my children to learn about Black history, I would have to teach them myself."

In the age of racial tension and restrictions around the teaching of African American history, black parents are serving as history tutors to ensure that their children receive a comprehensive and unbridled education on the atrocities, both past and present, faced by members of the African diaspora. A few local parents share their ideas.

"I don't focus on blaming or bad mouthing anyone,

but I make sure my children know about the racist things that happened in the past," Anderson said. "They have to know our country's past actions so that they can understand what is going on today and why. Minimizing the realities of slavery does a disservice to not only Black students, but to society as a whole. How can we even begin to deal with racial problems in this country if children grow up with inaccurate views of the tragedies of our past?"

From slavery and lynching to the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights Movement, Grant uses trips to historical sites to give her children a lesson in Black history. "When I take my children and their friends to Mount Vernon, I don't go on the guided tour," she said. "I give them my own tour and explain our history. No matter how the media portrays us today, our children need to understand that we come from hardworking ancestors."

As an African American parent, Gloria Anderson, a Chevy Chase, Maryland mother of three, believes that it is her job to offer her children in-depth lessons rather than broad overviews. "Most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks when they think of Black history, but there are so many more people of color who have made great contributions to this country," she said. "Everyone should visit the African American History Museum. Even though we've made

SEE BLACK HISTORY, PAGE 13



PHOTO COURTESY OF VONETIA HARTLEY

African American parents and grandparents, like Vonetia Hartley, pictured here with three of her grandchildren, are giving their offspring in-depth lessons during Black History Month.

THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette POTOMAC ALMANAC

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Publishes:

February 23, 2022

Ads submitted by:

February 17, 2022

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU FEB. 28

Hunt for Washington. A fun and challenging game to uncover clues about Alexandria and George Washington. The hunt, which should take about 60-90 minutes to complete, will take individuals and families to places in Old Town Alexandria associated with the General. Start by printing a clue sheet from www.washington-birthday.com at home and bring it with you as you traverse the heart of Old Town and then use your sleuthing skills to find answers to the clues. Submit your findings to gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com any time before the end of the day on February 28. There are prizes and mementos associated with this event! Free.

NOW THRU FEB. 28

American Legion Post 24 Run, Walk, n' Roll. This George Washington Birthday Commemorative event is intended to build community and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional resiliency of participants—veterans and non-veterans alike. This month-long event during February 2022 encourages participants to run, walk and/or roll on their own for at least 24 miles in increments and routes they choose. Registration is \$24. Visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Alexandria/GWB24Run-WalkRoll> for more information.

NOW THRU MARCH 6

Artist's Exhibition: Oenone Hammersley and Darren Smith. At the Athenaeum Gallery, Alexandria. Artists Meet and Greet, Sunday March 6, 2 — 4 p.m. Oenone Hammersley's paintings depict abstract water patterns in mixed media on canvas and wooden panels. The panels are cut to resemble water cascading or waves breaking. Darren Smith uses his creative vision while leading the foreign-language editions of National Geographic Magazine. He applies the same skills to making his handmade photo collages. The Athenaeum Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday 12 to 4 p.m.

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Washington Revels Jubilee Voices in Concert. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Alexandria Black History Museum presents the Washington Revels Jubilee Voices in concert. Join the Revels as their members explore the rich history of African American music. Visit alexandriava.gov/historic

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Virtual Birthnight Banquet & Ball. 7 – 9 p.m. Join in the celebrations that have been ongoing for hundreds of years – General Washington's Birthnight Ball. Gather your bubble to honor our first President over Zoom. Begin the evening with a video presentation about the history of this event and hear from those that have participated in it for years. Have conversations about your favorite Birthnight experience. Then the General will be available live for all your questions! Lastly, enjoy English Country Dancing called by an expert Dance Master from the historic Ballroom that you can do with 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8 people at home. Period costumes of the 1790s encouraged! One virtual dance class on February 17th is included. Tickets are \$15 per person. A dinner from Gadsby's Tavern Restaurant and traditional

Birthnight Ball cake from Bittersweet are available for pickup with separate purchase of \$50. Visit AlexandriaVA.gov/Shop.

SATURDAY/FEB. 19

Learn To Speak for the Trees. 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Via Zoom. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Discover how you can help restore our urban forest – one yard at a time. Zoom into the "Virtual EcoSavvy Symposium: Restoring Urban Forests." The program, hosted by Green Spring Gardens, will help you understand the ecological imperative to preserve and grow our tree canopy. Learn what you can do to help improve the issue of tree canopy decline throughout the region. Discover steps you can apply in your community -- and in your own yard -- to reverse this disturbing trend. The cost is \$58 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

FEB. 20, 27

"George Washington's Alexandria" Tours. 2 to 4 p.m. Explore historic Old Town Alexandria as George Washington knew it. This popular two-hour guided walking tour will visit sites associated with Washington and his closest colleagues, including Christ Church, Light Horse Harry Lee's house, the Lord Fairfax home, Washington's townhouse, Gadsby's Tavern, Duvall Tavern, Wise's Tavern, the Carlyle House, Market Square, Ramsay House, the Apothecary Shop and Gentry Row. To register, visit eventbrite.com and search George Washington's Alexandria. Free.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Virtual Winter Lecture: Lift Every Voice. 1:30-2:30 p.m. (16-Adult) From sea to shining sea, Black people have made rich contributions to American garden history. Join horticulturalist and historian Abra Lee on this journey through the DMV and beyond as we celebrate these horticultural trailblazers. A Zoom link will be emailed before the event. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code UXS.V271.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Bits & Pieces. 5 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Bits and Pieces - Jane Franklin Dance is a performance of new works inspired by artworks by Oenone Hammersley and Darren Smith, alongside recent repertory about attraction and partnership. Featuring: Jane Franklin Dance with Philip Baraoidan, Carly Johnson, Kelsey Rohr, Amy Scaringe, Kevin White. Tickets are \$20. Visit <https://janefranklin.com/performance/bits>

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Free Admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon. February 21 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. February 22 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Celebrate the first president of the United States at his beloved home. Admission is free for Presidents Day and George Washington's birthday. Admission tickets must be reserved online in advance.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association Breakfast. 9:00 – 10:30



The George Washington Birthday parade will be held on Monday, Feb. 21, 2022.

a.m. Meet special guests and enjoy a hearty breakfast with members of this historic association. First appearance of the day of General and Martha Washington. Speaker: Mark Jinks, Retired Alexandria City Manager, relating his "hidden ghost" stories and other anecdotal experiences. Location: The Westin Alexandria Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Ticket Price: \$45, table of 10 \$400. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact Bill Kehoe, Secretary, kehoefd@aol.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution. 11 a.m. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they honor the soldiers of the Revolution. Location: Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 321 So. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. No registration required. FREE.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony. 12 – 1 p.m. Honor our Nation's Veterans, Active Military, and their families with music and demonstrations. Speakers include Alexandria's Mayor and the commanders of major military installations in the metropolitan area. Sign the Covenant Document and show your support for our Military as we honor our first veteran. Location: Parade reviewing stand at King & Royal Streets. FREE.

MONDAY/FEB. 21

George Washington Birthday Parade. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. The nation's largest George Washington Birthday parade marches a one-mile route through the streets of his chosen hometown! Location: Old Town Alexandria. For more information, including parking, maps, route and status, visit www.washingtonbirthday.com, email gwbirthdayevents@gmail.com or call 571-384-8170. Free.

TUESDAY/FEB. 22

Left Behind: Stories from the Underground Railroad. 7 to 8 p.m. Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold looks at what formally enslaved people left behind when they escaped to freedom. Freedom—it's what we

all desire, but if you had to leave something or someone behind, could you do it for the hope of a word called "freedom?" Through story, song and audience interaction, Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold, looks at the fugitive slaves from the Underground Railroad and shares what they left behind – family, clothes, name and even life. Visit alexlibraryva.org.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 23

George Washington's Hair. 7-8 p.m. Virtual. Keith Beutler's new book, *George Washington's Hair: How Early Americans Remembered the Founders*, explains how, between 1790 and 1840, popular memory took a turn toward the physical, as exemplified by the craze for collecting locks of George Washington's hair. This book uncovers a forgotten strand of early American memory practices and emerging patriotic identity. Visit the website: mountvernon.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Garden Artists: Fleeting Masterpiece Program. 1-2 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Participants 5 and older can explore the temporary art of Andy Goldsworthy, and use rocks, leaves, branches and even ice to create a personal, fleeting nature masterpiece. All attendees, including parents, must register. The cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Washington Symposium. 1 p.m. The George Washington Masonic National Memorial hosts leading scholars of the life and legacy of George Washington. The theme of the 2022 George Washington Symposium is "The Political Education of George Washington, 1758-1774." The George Washington Symposium is held annually to honor Washington's birthday by providing the public with enlightening contemporary research on the life of George Washington. Admission is free and free parking is available.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

George Washington Birthday Gala. Formal (white tie optional). Reception at 5 p.m. Entertainment in

the Memorial Theater at 6:30 p.m. Banquet in the Memorial's Grand Masonic Hall at 7:30 p.m. The presentation of the George Washington Memorial Award will take place during the banquet. Tickets are \$200. To purchase tickets, visit <https://gwmemorial.org/>. Tickets are limited.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Winter Garden Tour: Green Spring Up & Down. 10-11:30 a.m. (Adult) Extension Master Gardener docents lead a tour of Green Spring's winter landscape. View some upper demonstration gardens, then take the garden path less travelled to explore the naturalistic lower garden areas: the Virginia Native Plant Garden, woodland stream valley, and ponds. Finish at the Historic House with warm drinks. Tour involves a steep slope with loose gravel. \$15 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code V9N.BJ0T.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26.

Great Woody Plants for the Home Garden. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (16-Adult) Green Spring horticulturist Brenda Skarphol highlights beautiful flowering shrubs that grow well in Virginia home gardens. Get to know seasonal standouts for winter and spring. Learn the culture and care of these beauties and how to best showcase them in your garden. The program takes place outdoors. \$18 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code JC2.FE9S.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Garden Talk: Get Ready for Spring. 10:30-11:30 a.m. (16-Adult) Spring garden maintenance in Northern Virginia begins in winter and is a terrific way to shake the winter blahs. It's time to prune, transplant, fertilize, mulch and prevent weeds. Extension Master Gardeners give tips for selecting plants and starting seedlings. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code B58.AJW9.

NEWS

FROM PAGE 11

strides, stereotypes and feelings of victimization have caused members of our race to have a sense of hopelessness.”

“I have to make sure that my children know about Black heroes like Dr. Charles Drew, continued Anderson, referring to an African American surgeon who was known for his lifesaving blood plasma research.

Many Post-Civil War periods in African American history, such as the forced sterilization of African American women, are omitted from mainstream teachings, says Anderson. “Reading historical fiction gives children a sense of the psychological damage that African Americans have endured throughout history,” she said. “I make sure that all of my children read books like ‘Like Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry’ by Mildred Taylor. It paints a real picture of what life was like for sharecroppers. There are some children who grow up thinking that sharecropping helped Black people get on their feet and create a better life for themselves after slavery ended. In reality, Whites used

lynching, beatings and burnings to intimidate sharecroppers so they stayed chained to the land without the possibility of improving their lives.”

Presenting Black history in a way that young children can understand, preschool teacher Vonetia Hartley, Alexandria mother of three adult children and four grandchildren, uses the achievements of prominent African Americans figures to help her students and grandchildren realize that there are no limits to what they can achieve. “I want them to understand the importance of knowing who they are and how unique they are,” she said. “I want them to know that there are so many options in their future. Whether they want to be president, governor, doctor, police officer, airplane pilot or inventor, they can become it.”

Extending lessons on African American history beyond 28 days in February is what Grant encourages. “It should be woven into our everyday lives so that it’s not seen as something special to think about in February,” Grant said. “Our ancestors made contributions that affect us every day.”

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

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 donaldrea@aol.com.

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.

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.

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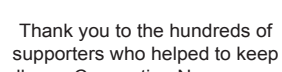
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Date With Destiny – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Despite having cancer and having been given a “terminal” diagnosis/“13 month to two years” prognosis in late February 2009, I rarely, believe or not, consider my own mortality. Well, occasionally in these columns, but day-to-day, hardly ever. Oddly enough, something occurred the other day which meant very little to me when I first heard about it until I read more about it today on the ESPN website. ‘It’ being that former Major League baseball player Jeremy Giambi had died. Mr. Giambi was 47, but initially no cause of death or any other particulars were provided. Today’s story, an Associated Press release filled in some of the gaps. His cause of death was suicide and listed his date of birth (finally the point of this column) as September 30, 1974.

Why should you care? Probably not for the same reason as I do. Jeremy Giambi and I share the same birthday: Sept. 30, though not the same birth year. Nevertheless, seeing a person you have heard of – which I have, or whom billions of others haven’t, die, and whose birthday is identical to yours is – sobering, and I don’t even drink. In an odd and complicated way, seeing/hearing/reading about someone dying with whom you share a birthday is unsettling somehow. To invoke a “Star Wars” reference, I feel something akin to a weakening of the force. And in this context, that feeling being whatever intangible/physical/spiritual ‘force’ keeps us alive. I don’t want to see anyone dying, especially anyone who has the same as birthday as I do. It’s as if any other person dying who has a September 30 birthday affects my mortality somehow, and that I’m at greater risk because of it, like we have some sort of connection. It’s like when another cancer patient succumbs to our shared disease. I don’t exactly feel their pain, but I feel the loss, as if I’ve lost a key member of Team Lourie. And as a cancer patient still undergoing treatment, I don’t need any negativity seeping in.

In fact, I can’t see how thinking about death in any context is helpful. Early on in my cancer life, I was told by multiple medical professionals how important – and helpful, maintaining a positive attitude would be – and has proved to be. Though there’s no real empirical evidence, anecdotal evidence suggests however, that there is a link between attitude and survival. As a longtime cancer patient who has remained positive about this incredible negative, I believe this to be way more than an abstract theory.

For me, and all of you, life goes on until it doesn’t, duh. Still, I don’t want or need to be reminded of my own mortality, in any context. Moreover, I realize I had already jumped to the head of the mortality class when I was diagnosed 13 years ago. Perhaps I’m overstating the significance of Mr. Giambi’s death to me? Perhaps, his having been a Major Leaguer who played his last season for the Boston Red Sox, my hometown team, and I’m a sports’ guy from Boston, intensifies the effect on me? Whatever it is, I don’t ever want to see my birthday associated with death.

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

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Krizek

FROM PAGE 7

legislation to support their interests and recognize their sovereignty. My bill HB 1136, which creates a code commission to review the Code of Virginia and recommend changes to the General Assembly that are needed to reflect the recent federal recognition of Tribal Nations that share territory with the Commonwealth passed the House unanimously.

It should always be easy for the public to report instances of judicial misconduct. The Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission was created by the Constitution of Virginia to investigate judicial misconduct charges by judges. My bill, HB 761, from a constituent, which also passed the House unanimously, would have required that the standard complaint form used by the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission is made available in paper form at every clerk’s office in all courts in the Commonwealth. However, the bill needed to be amended in order to pass and now only requires a sign to be posted in courts to direct people to the website where the complaint forms can be downloaded.

Manufactured or mobile homes are an often overlooked affordable housing option. Unfortunately, manufactured home parks are disappearing and tenants face difficult and uncertain living conditions in the few

that remain. Today, there are five manufactured home communities in my district: Harmony Place, Woodley Hills, Ray’s Mobile Home Colony, Audubon Place, and Penn-Daw Terrace.

I have worked with Supervisor Rodney Lusk and tenants in those manufactured home communities and introduced HB 1065, which directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to convene a working group, to bring those tenants and stakeholders across the Commonwealth together to gather information that the group will work on to draft new legislative ideas for next session.

Domestic violence survivors have had to pay for attorney fees and document reproduction costs on the behalf of the perpetrators. Many survivors are low income and having to deal with this extra burden exacerbates trauma. Another one of my bills that passed through the House unanimously, HB 1327, relieves victims of a crime from which a civil matter arose from paying the costs for document reproduction. This was also a bill brought to my attention by a constituent that suffered these outrageous costs.

So, the session is halfway through and my attention shifts now to the Senate where twelve of our bills will be heard and hopefully, make their way to the Governor’s desk.

Surovell

FROM PAGE 6

thorities to recover methane generated at sewage plants and landfills so that it can be captured and used instead of generating more methane from hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” for natural gas to heat homes and power buses, stoves and water heaters.

We also considered legislation addressing in-person learning and masking in schools. In the last month, major medical journal articles have reported that this pandemic is moving into an endemic phase and will persevere in ways similar to the common cold or the flu. Last week, Dr. Anthony Fauci, an infectious disease expert, confirmed that we are moving into an endemic and Fairfax County Public Schools announced a new policy that will effectively end the mask mandate once Fairfax County achieves certain metrics. In addition, the Prince William County School Board Chairman Babur Lateef said the mandate needs to end. The governors of Oregon, California, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware are moving away from universal masking mandates while the Biden administration is exploring adjustments to masking guidance.

Last week, we debated an amendment to one bill, SB 739, to standardize state masking optional policies. I voted for the amendment to include a mask policy in the bill that would be effective July 1, 2022. Several constituents have asked about my vote.

Unfortunately, our schools, school boards and communities are being torn apart because some are politicizing public health issues instead of respecting health experts. It is virtually impossible to have a rational discussion about the

effectiveness of masks, quarantines and even vaccines across party lines. Virginia school boards cannot even agree on what the Center for Disease Control guidance says. In many cases, Democratic-led school boards are concluding that mandatory masks are required and Republican-led school boards are saying that they are not.

Our school systems need clarity on this issue and we need to get school boards, teachers and children out of the political crossfire. As a state senator, I have to vote on policy for the entire state, not just Northern Virginia. I also want state legislators to be at the table in this discussion after our current masking law expires on Aug. 1, 2022, instead of creating more uncertainty by ceding the issue solely to Governor Youngkin, school boards and courts and perpetuating a climate in which school board members face death threats and citizens carrying firearms to local school board meetings.

I voted against the bill’s final passage because it restricted school boards’ ability to mitigate pandemic emergencies in perpetuity. Attacks on medical science have caused more Virginians than ever to doubt vaccines and challenge vaccine policy. No one knows when the next pandemic will arrive or whether we will start seeing localized breaks of measles or other viruses.

Unfortunately, Governor Youngkin added an emergency clause to the bill making it effective March 1 instead of July 1, refused to add a sunset provision to the bill, and three of my Democratic colleagues crossed over to support it. I remain opposed and expect litigation to ensue once again.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. I hope you will share your views with me at scott@scottsurovell.org

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