

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JUNE 30, 2022

Pot Dispensary Getting Ready To Open in Mount Vernon

Beyond Hello Cannabis Dispensary almost ready for grand opening.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Sandwiched between two car dealers in the northern part of Mount Vernon, the area's first cannabis distribution center is shaping up before their July 1 opening date for those with a medical directive.

The new center is named the "Beyond Hello Cannabis Dispensary," is plastered with signs and features a newly paved parking lot, black paint, renovations inside to look like a doctor's office, and a big question mark for many.

According to the Virginia Department of Health, "to obtain cannabis for medical purposes, a patient must have both (a) an unexpired written certification issued from a board-registered practitioner and (b) a current active patient registration issued by the Board of Pharmacy. As of July 1, 2022, patients will no longer be required to have an active patient registration issued by the Board of Pharmacy. However, if you wish to obtain a physical medical cannabis card, you will need to complete an application with the Virginia Board of Pharmacy. You can find more information by visiting the Department of Health Professions: Board of Pharmacy's website."

The Ourisman Chrysler and Jeep on the right had no comment and on the left, Ourisman GMC and Buick was hopeful. "I don't think it will cause any problems, maybe it would bring more customers our way," said Grant Nguyen at Ourisman GMC.

At that location, traffic heading south out of the City of Alexandria can access a side road to Beyond Hello with minimal problems, but those heading north need to navigate a plan beforehand. Once they see Beyond Hello, it's too late so it will require turning around in Alexandria in this heavy traffic area.

The Virginia Board of Pharmacy says "a patient, parent, legal guardian or registered agent may possess medical cannabis as defined in § 54.1-3408.3 of the Code of Virginia who has been issued a valid written certification from a Board of Pharmacy-registered practitioner and who maintains a current registration with the Board of Pharmacy. Before a practitioner can issue written certifications, he or she must register with the Board of Pharmacy. A patient/parent/legal guardian must have a written certification issued to them prior to applying for registration with the Board of Pharmacy and possessing medical cannabis products.

Homegrown

Too complicated? Then growing a plant is always an option, although it may take some time. According to the Virginia Cannabis rules, "Home Cultivation" became legal on July 1, 2021. Adults 21 and over may grow up to four marijuana plants per household (not per person), for personal use. Plants can be grown only at the main place of residence," the rules state. It can be given away as a gift, but not sold. Individuals who sell marijuana, or who possess with the intent to sell it, are



In the parking lot, an old rolling paper package was found, possibly indicating that this location is no stranger to marijuana.

subject to misdemeanor or felony charges, depending on the amount of marijuana involved, the Virginia law states.

Getting seeds to start a plant could take some creativity. It is illegal to sell marijuana seeds, clones, flower, or any other part of the marijuana plant in Virginia, the

SEE BEYOND, PAGE 5



A few months ago, the location had all the signs of a closed restaurant.



Beyond Hello is right off Richmond Highway, near Fort Hunt Road.



Six Local Artists Featured at Nepenthe Gallery in Alexandria

A special exhibit at Nepenthe Gallery, "Summer Solstice: A Curated Expo of Works by Local Artists," features a collection of paintings and other artwork by a select group of six talented artists from the Alexandria community. The

exhibit will run from June 23 to July 19.

The local artists participating in the exhibit are Maremi Andreozzi, Cornelia Atchley, Andreas Barrett, Debra Dartez, Tammey Laws and Shannon Lindblom.



Customers have to be 18 to get inside.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

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Spacious 3-level townhouse with 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths and elevator! Large living room, huge deck backs to green space.

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Body of Law The history of abortion in Virginia has many twists and turns.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The United States Supreme Court's decision to dismantle the right to abortion has upended the discussion over reproductive freedom. The Virginia General Assembly is about to consider outlawing abortion, and Alexandria's commonwealth's attorney is vowing to not prosecute patients who seek abortions or the doctors who perform them. Meanwhile, advocates on both sides of the issue are gearing up for an epic fight.

But this is a discussion that's been going on for centuries, long before Roe versus Wade granted a right that's now been vaporized.

Virginia outlawed abortion in 1847, a time when the abolitionist movement opposing slavery was gaining steam. At the time, abortion was entirely legal in Virginia. When the Constitution was written, women were able to get abortions under British common law up until quickening, the moment in a pregnancy when the movement of a fetus becomes noticeable. By the 1840s, several states were taking action to outlaw abortion.

"In the 1840s, we started seeing this idea that abortion might be morally wrong and that life begins before the woman can feel it," said Joanna Lahey, a professor at Texas A&M who has researched the history of abortion laws in the United States. "And they started having these new kinds of anti-abortion laws that punished women and punished doctors who gave abortions."

She says it's no coincidence that the Virginia General Assembly took action as the abolitionist movement opposing slavery was gaining steam. The debate over slavery was often lurking in the background of all kinds of policy decisions from the era, including whether Alexandria should leave the District of Columbia and return to the commonwealth of Virginia. The importance of the slave industry to Alexandria was an important motivating factor for leaving the District of Columbia, which was increasingly becoming a hotbed of abolitionists.

"People are pushing against slavery, and you've got a whole lot of turmoil happening in terms of these views of, are people chattel?"

AFTER WORLD WAR II, law enforcement officials began stepping up prosecutions of women who solicited abortions and the doctors who performed them as well as the people who aided and abetted the illegal activity.

In Fairfax County, Police Chief William Durrer went so far as to use secret listening devices to investigate women seeking abortions. His use of wiretaps became so controversial, he was asked to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington to explain himself in 1966.

"We need this investigative aid in the fight against crime," said Durrer.



"When you use a wiretap, do you go in the house?" asked U.S. Sen. Edward Long (D-Mo.).

"No," Durrer replied. "The men go up a pole down the street somewhere."

"Do you furnish your men with burglar tools and lock picks like some of the federal agencies do?" asked Long.

"No sir," replied Durrer.

BY THE LATE 1960S, opinions were starting to shift in Virginia. In 1966, Dr. Alan Guttmacher, a leading authority on birth control, told a statewide population conference that the time had come to be "more realistic" about birth control. He pointed out that aid for dependent children had increased 22 percent in the previous six years, and he argued that Virginia abortion laws should be liberalized. Gov. Albertis Harrison spoke at the conference, giving his stamp of approval to the effort.

"We have a simple message to get across, and that is that the size of any family is a matter for the individual to decide," said Gov. Harrison. "The alternative to planned and responsible parenthood is ultimately mass privation throughout the world."

At the time, abortion was legal only to save a mother's life. But the conservative Byrd Machine governor was adding his voice to those arguing that abortions should be allowed in cases of rape or incest. Colorado led the way with a law that created three-member abortion boards at hospitals to approve abortions if carrying the baby to term would cause permanent impairment of physical or mental health of the mother. The American Medical Association and the Medical Society of Virginia adopted resolutions supporting states to allow abortion in cases of rape or incest.

"This is a plea to do away with kitchen-table surgery done by ignorant dirty hands and to avoid the frightful deaths of young women at the early morning of their lives," wrote Dr. Christian Cimmino, a Fredericksburg physician in a 1969 editorial in Virginia Medical Monthly. "Perhaps generations yet unborn will look back on our present abor-

tion practices as we look back on theocracy's witch-burnings of colonial times."

AS THE 1970s APPROACHED, momentum grew for Virginia to relax its strict anti-abortion law. The Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs and the Virginia Council on Social Welfare passed resolutions supporting "therapeutic abortions." Abortions were already legal to save the life of the mother. But now many organizations were pressing lawmakers to allow abortions in cases of rape, incest or when the baby would be born with physical deformity or mental deficiency. Richmond's director of public health said abortion laws should be "brought up to 1969 thinking," and the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council eventually made a recommendation that the General Assembly liberalize Virginia's 1847 restrictive abortion law during the 1970 General Assembly session.

"This bill as presented is a conservative one," said Del. Lester Schlitz of Portsmouth during the debate on the House floor. "This is a humane bill, not a radical one. The medical profession is almost unanimous in support of it."

A few years later, the Supreme Court struck down state laws that outlawed abortion. That decision declared Virginia's old 1847 law on abortion unconstitutional. A few years later, in 1975, the Virginia General Assembly took action to align its criminal code with the new Supreme Court decision. The bill was paired in a "gentleman's agreement" with a separate attempt to impose a mandatory death penalty in cases of murder for hire, murder of a kidnapping victim and murder by a prison inmate. Part of the argument for revising the criminal code is that a successful court challenge would leave Virginia with no abortion laws at all, potentially allowing laymen to perform abortions.

"The question is not whether we approve or disapprove of abortion," said Del. Ford Quillen of Scott County. "What we're trying to do is protect people."

In the early 2000s, Republicans were able to create several new restrictions on access

HISTORY OF ABORTION IN VIRGINIA

- 1788: Virginia ratifies the U.S. Constitution; abortion is legal
- 1847: Virginia outlaws abortion with an exception for the life of the mother
- 1877: Virginia strengthens abortion prohibition, outlawing advertising for abortions or selling material to cause abortions
- 1970: Virginia allows abortions in cases of rape or incest
- 1973: Supreme Court guarantees right to abortion
- 1975: Virginia aligns criminal code with Supreme Court decision
- 2001: 24-hour waiting period is required for abortions
- 2011: hospital construction standards are required for abortion clinics
- 2012: ultrasound is required for abortions
- 2020: Reproductive Health Protection Act removes most restrictions on abortions
- 2022: Supreme Court gives states power to ban abortions

to abortion. In 2001, they required a 24-hour waiting period for abortions. In 2011, they required abortion clinics to meet hospital construction standards including the number of parking spaces available and the width of hallways. In 2012, they requiring an ultrasound at least 24 hours before receiving an abortion. All of those laws were repealed in 2020 when Democrats took the majority and passed the Reproductive Health Protection Act.

"No more will legislators in Richmond, most of whom are men, be telling women what they should and should not be doing with their bodies," said Gov. Ralph Northam at the time. "The Reproductive Health Protection Act will make women and families safer, and I'm proud to sign it into law."

Now Virginia is the only state in the south where abortion is available via telehealth. Patients can consult with prescribers virtually and receive pills by mail early in pregnancy (up to 77 days since the first day of the last period).

But the recent Supreme Court decision has opened a new debate about outlawing abortion. Gov. Glenn Youngkin is calling for a ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, and state Sen. Travis Hackworth (R-38) is calling for a bill that would declare life starts at conception, which would likely lead to a ban on abortions for rape or incest.

Meanwhile, Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter was one of nine Virginia prosecutors to sign a letter saying he would not prosecute patients seeking abortions or the doctors who perform them.

"Our criminal legal system is already overburdened," the letter said. "Enforcing abortion bans would mean taking time, effort and resources away from the prosecution of the most serious crimes — conduct that truly impacts public safety."

Steve Descano, Commonwealth's Attorney for Fairfax County, and Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington County and the City of Falls Church also signed the letter.

NOVA Parks Seeks Input into 5 Year Strategic Plan

Park users invited to comment before July 8.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

With 34 parks and 12,335 acres spread over six jurisdictions in Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax, and Loudoun cities and counties, NOVA Parks serves many northern Virginia people with a variety of park amenities. Whether you look for ornamental gardens, historical sites, golf, waterparks, biking, kayaking, cabins in the woods, holiday light shows, or simply the pleasure of enjoying time in nature along its many hiking trails, you can find a special place in the NOVA Parks system. Founded as a conservation organization over sixty years ago in 1959, the organization has acquired and now boasts ownership of “more parkland adjacent to the rivers of the region than any other public lands organization.” It generates 88% of its operating revenues from park programs and events.

Touching the lives of Northern Virginia’s 2.5 million people is a challenge and a responsibility, and NOVA Parks continues to reassess their approaches and look at “conserving natural and historic resources, making parks more central to the community’s life, and funding all of these vital community needs.”

As part of that on-going reassessment, NOVA Parks is asking the public’s help to provide feedback on their draft 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The plan addresses five “pil-



Paul Gilbert, Executive Director, NOVA Parks, “We want our parks to be open and welcoming to everyone.”

lars” of objectives: “environment, belonging, our team, building the future, and revenue and efficiency ... to help guide improvements, operations, conservation, and services in NOVA Parks over the next five years.”

Executive Director Paul Gilbert says, “A strategic plan sets the course for any organization. I am very excited about what our new strategic direction will mean for Northern Virginia. NOVA Parks can be a leader in a number of important areas. We can address the causes of climate change by focusing on how to make our lands absorb more carbon and how to reduce our carbon footprint. We live in a very diverse region, and we want our parks to be open and welcoming to ev-

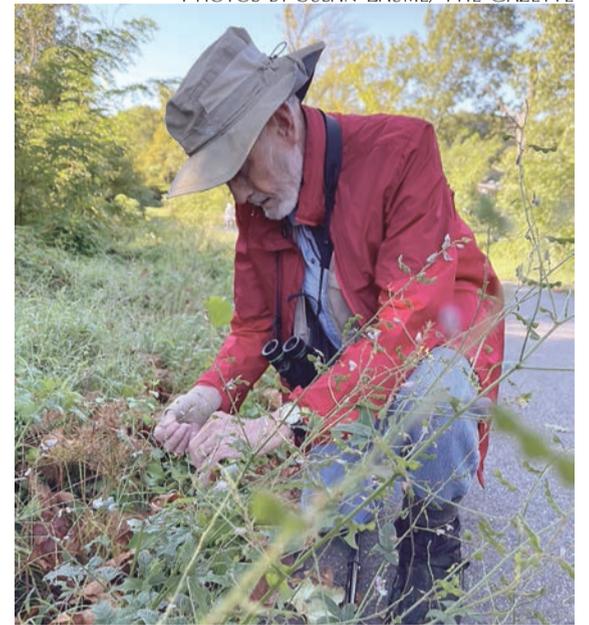


NOVA Parks, a large holder of waterfront parks, looks to establish a five year strategic plan

everyone. We have a whole section of the plan called ‘Belonging.’ We can become even more welcoming by being thoughtful about creating community partnerships and developing programs and facilities that are culturally relevant to different groups. This is a plan that will make our region better and, in the process, make our world a little better.”

The online survey asks only a few minutes of your time to give input, by answering two questions related to each of the five pillars, and a couple overall questions, ranking objectives within each area. Visit <https://www.novaparks.com/StrategicPlan> to review the plan and provide feedback by July 8.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE



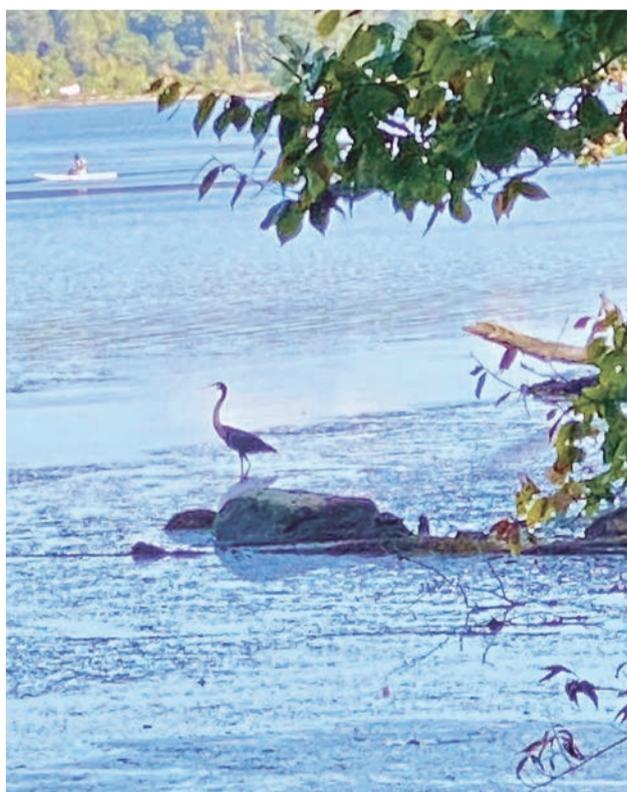
The Regional Park System is a favorite of citizen scientists, like Jim Waggener, who monitor seasonal birds, blooms, and insects in the area of Occoquan Bay

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

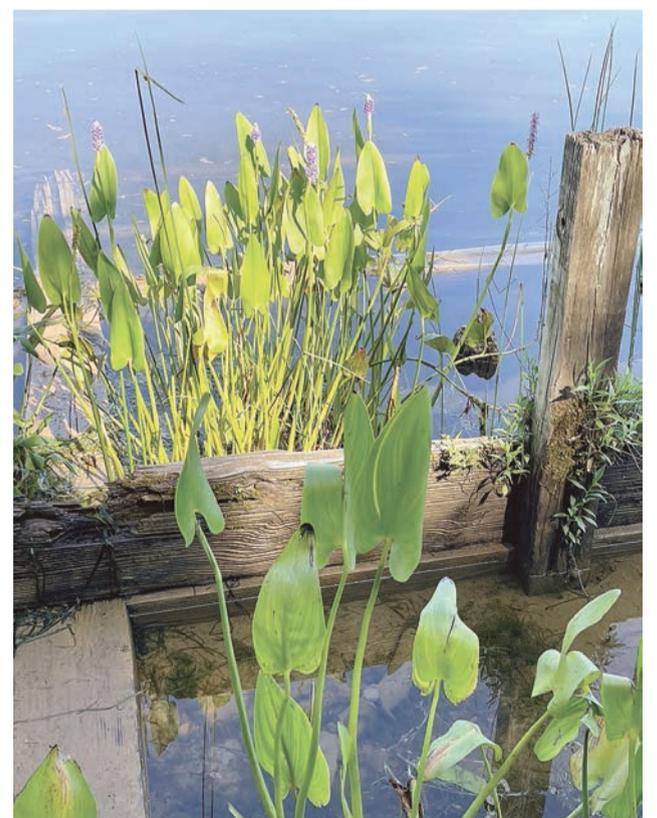
- Plant over 50,000 trees creating new areas of forest
- Create or improve trails with a focus on sustainability and an investment of over \$6 million
- Create a W&OD Visitor Center
- Create a new wetland park for environmental education and sustainability
- Invest in electric vehicles and mowers, and take other steps to lower carbon footprint
- Add five new parkland properties, and manage existing parkland to better sequester carbon
- Expand cultural events and festivals
- Lead effort to commemorate the Declaration of Independence with interpretive efforts focused on liberty, justice, and freedom
- Expand partnerships with community groups
- Grow entrepreneurial revenues to support park improvements
- Create a team and programs that are reflective of our changing and diverse community



The five year plan could include a new wetland park for environmental education



Parks in the regional system provide recreation and viewing an abundance of wildlife within their areas of conservation



Pickerelweed, a native aquatic plant blooms within the wetlands of Accotink Bay in the park

POLICE REPORTS

POLICE INVESTIGATE FATAL MOTORCYCLE CRASH

At 2:50 p.m. Sunday, June 26, Virginia State Police was alerted to a male lying in the westbound travel lane on I-495 near Telegraph Road.

Further investigation revealed the male subject was a motorcyclist who had been traveling west on I-495 in the Thru Lanes and then took the exit for Eisenhower Ave toward Mill Road. While on the overpass exit ramp, the motorcycle ran off the left side of the travel lane and struck the cement wall. The impact of the crash caused the motorcyclist to be thrown from his bike and over the cement wall. He then landed approximately 28 feet below in the travel lane. He was transported to a nearby hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

State police are still in the process of notifying the man's next of kin and the crash remains under investigation.

WOMAN DIES OF INJURIES FROM JUNE 17 ASSAULT

Detectives from Fairfax County Police Homicide Squad are investigating the deadly assault of a 63-year-old Alexandria woman.

A man is in custody for the deadly assault of Michelle Huntley, who was found at a bus stop in the 7800 block of Richmond Highway. After canvassing the Hybla Valley area, detectives located surveillance footage from several sources near the bus stop where Huntley, 63, was fatally assaulted on June 17. Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau dis-

tributed an internal bulletin, asking officers for help in identifying a person of interest.

Detectives continue to investigate to determine the relationship between Jones and Huntley as well as the circumstances leading to the assault.

Just after midnight on June 17, officers responded to a bus stop in the 7800 block of Richmond Highway. A passerby saw the victim suffering from trauma to the upper body. The victim, Michelle Huntley, was taken to a nearby hospital for injuries considered life threatening. Huntley succumbed to her injuries yesterday Saturday, June 25.

Detectives have reviewed hours of surveillance footage, conducted several interviews, and canvassed the surrounding area extensively to determine the circumstances that led up to the deadly assault. Detectives believe the injuries Michelle Huntley sustained were likely from blunt force. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine specific cause and manner of death.

Anyone who may have information about this assault is asked to contact detectives at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS

ROBBERY

3000 block of Furman Lane, 6/20/22, 9:54 p.m. A group of men approached the victim, assaulted him, and took property. The victim sustained minor injuries.



Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail Making a Difference
Some before and after of the rest area near Stone Bridge. Volunteers removed vegetation and cleaned the pavers yesterday as the first step in a renovation that will replace the bench, water fountain and bike rack.

Beyond Hello Cannabis Dispensary Almost Ready for Grand Opening

FROM PAGE 1

Virginia website states. Getting seeds is another question mark. (Although perhaps the seeds could be gifted.)

On July 1, 2021, "adult sharing," or transferring one ounce or less of marijuana between persons who are 21 years or older without remuneration, became legal. The "sharing," cannot have any exchange options attached to it though. Legal sales could begin in 2023, state documents say. Some states have open rules on marijuana, and they have marijuana bars as well that have smoking going on similar to bars where alcohol is the norm.

In 2014, marijuana was legalized in Colorado for example, but there were gray areas on where it could be smoked. There were tourists coming in, expecting to find it everywhere but many were disappointed. In 2021, Colorado reported \$2.2 billion in cannabis sales, and the state got taxes from those sales.

In Virginia, a suggested plan for the tax revenues is 40 percent for early childhood education for at-risk 3 and 4 year olds; 30 percent Cannabis Equity Reinvestment Fund; 25 percent substance abuse prevention and treatment and 5 percent for other public health programs. State officials have eyed marijuana taxes to go to social equity programs as well. This includes scholarships, grants for workforce development, youth mentoring, job training and placement, and re-entry services in impacted communities contribute to Virginia's Indigent Defense Fund and for money going



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

From the front, it has a welcoming appeal.

to the Cannabis Equity Loan Fund.

Bongs and Pipes

In the 1980s when marijuana was illegal, places like the Penguin Feather in Mount Vernon had waterpipes, or "bongs," with names like "Tokemaster," and colorful pipes called "carburetors," and rolling papers of all kinds. EZ Wider was a popular one. These were all sold with the premise that they were for tobacco — wink, wink. Now the Beyond Hello website has a pharmaceutical bong called a "Mini Beaker Eyce," (\$40)

and a pipe called "Spoon Eyce," that are more subtle. Gummies and sherbet with THC are available too. In addition to Virginia, there are Beyond Hello stores in California, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Nevada.

For more information, go to www.cannabis.virginia.gov

 Cannabis.Virginia.gov

The new official state moniker.

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U.S. Supreme Court Threatens Women's Fundamental Rights

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

Last week the U.S. Supreme Court issued three very important decisions: Carson v. Maikin, New York Rifle & Pistol Assn v. Bruen and Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org. (Dobbs). The Carson case relates to taxpayer funding of religious schools. NY Rifle affects firearm violence prevention. Dobbs eviscerates a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. This column addresses the Dobbs decision. I will discuss NY Rifle next week, Carson and the Governor's budget amendments in future columns.

The Dobbs case overruled the landmark Roe v. Wade decision which has been the law of the land since Jan. 22, 1973. That decision held that the right to privacy, embodied in various amendments in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights, gave women a constitutional right to make their own healthcare decisions. Justice Samuel Alito wrote that the Roe case was wrongly decided and should no longer stand.

The Dobbs decision does not change Virginia law -- yet. In Virginia, abortion is legal and in 2020 we even repealed a series of

restrictions on a woman's right to make this decision, limits put in place between 2010 and 2019, including requiring an external ultrasound and a picture of the ultrasound's results given to the woman, requiring a 24-hour wait after obtaining the ultrasound, the provision of medically inaccurate information, and revoking a mandate to the Board of Health to unnecessarily regulate abortion clinics like hospitals.

Today, a Virginia woman may obtain an abortion in the state without restriction during her pregnancy's first two trimesters or during the third trimester if three medical doctors certify that the pregnancy will lead to the woman's death or "substantially and irretrievably impair the mental or physical health of the woman."

After the Supreme Court's decision, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that he will propose legislation to ban all abortions after the fifteenth week of pregnancy. Another Senator has announced that he will introduce legislation to state that life begins at conception. These bills will not pass the current Senate Education



Surovell

and Health Committee, but after the 2023 elections, if the membership and control of the State Senate changes, Virginia's laws could be significantly modified or repealed.

I support a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. In 2020, I even introduced legislation to codify Roe v. Wade, to put that policy into Virginia's laws. Senator Dick Saslaw introduced legislation to start the process of placing Roe in the Constitution of Virginia. We withdrew our own bills at the request of several abortion rights organizations who did not want the legislation to be presented for various reasons. The current composition of the General Assembly along with Governor Youngkin's views make it impossible to pass these bills today, but that could change after 2023 or 2025 when we could try again.

I cannot convey how disturbed I am by the Supreme Court's decisions. While past precedents have fallen before, the Court has never taken away a constitutional right. Americans rely on the Court to follow our Constitution and the law through reliance upon prece-

dent and incremental change. Last week, the Court inappropriately behaved like a legislature.

Five of the six justices who signed on to Dobbs and the other two opinions were nominated by presidents who did not win the American popular vote. All six told Congress that Roe was settled precedent in their confirmation hearings. One was confirmed after the U. S. Senate refused to hold confirmation hearings six months before an election. Three were confirmed after the Republican majority changed internal rules and exempted Supreme Court nominations from the filibuster. All were confirmed by U. S. Senators representing a minority of America's population.

The Court's legitimacy derives from the public's trust, that the public believes that the court bases its opinions on the law and not on a judge's personal opinions or religious beliefs. This week's decisions have eviscerated public confidence and will further inflame the divisions that have plagued our country for the last five years.

I will do everything I can to protect the ability of Virginia's women to have access to contraception and make healthcare decisions without government interference.

Abortion Remains Legal in Virginia

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK



Krizek

Like many of you reading this, I am outraged and heartbroken, yet obviously not surprised, over the Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, overturning Roe v. Wade last week. Four years of Trump in the White House gave us three new extremely conservative justices willing to abandon almost 50 years of precedent and turn the clock back to the 1960s and ear-

lier when it was left up to the states to decide. Once again, that is the case. For now, the most important positive message I can share with you is that abortion is still legal in Virginia.

Starting in 2020, our Democratic majority in the General Assembly prioritized advancing reproductive freedom and abortion access across the Commonwealth. This year, when we saw that progress threatened with rollbacks, my pro-choice colleagues and I voted down those efforts, albeit by just

a one-seat majority in the State Senate, as the Democrats lost the majority in the House last year by just two Delegates.

What were the most impactful policies that we passed while in the majority?

Eliminated medically unnecessary and restrictive laws such as:

Mandatory 24-hour waiting period

Ultrasound and counseling requirements

The need to be a hospital to perform more than 5 abortions per month

Expanded access to reproductive care by allowing:

Nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives to provide services in the first trimester (after this pe-

SEE ABORTION, PAGE 7

Who Dropped the Ball

Did the Army Corps of Engineers communicate badly or did Fairfax County?

On June 14, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) presented its metropolitan Washington area Coastal Flood Risk Manage-

ment Study at Belle View School. By that point, USACE had only one alternative for the section of Fairfax County that is in a flood plain next to the Potomac River.

The reaction of attend-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEE WHO DROPPED, PAGE 10

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Abortion Remains Legal in Virginia

FROM PAGE 6

riod, only physicians)

Abortion services to be covered for Medicaid patients

Telehealth appointments offering first-trimester abortions and mail-delivery pills

But eight states around the nation have already enacted total abortion bans, with ten others expected to in the coming weeks and

months. As we see these bans take effect, those most at risk remain women of color, trans and nonbinary individuals, those with low incomes, and people who live in rural communities where healthcare may be far away and extremely difficult to access.

It is also critical to remember that just because abortion is legal, it does not mean that every-

one who needs care can afford it. This includes Virginians who are uninsured or whose plans do not cover abortion. In addition, there are only 15 clinics in the Commonwealth, meaning that many Virginians must travel a long way to access care. Because Virginia is a safe haven for abortion in the south, we will now see many traveling from out of state to access care here.

(If you feel called to and are able, please donate to funds such as Blue Ridge Abortion Fund.)

Now that abortion has been left up for each state to decide, to preserve these essential rights, we must remain vigilant and vote to elect (and re-elect) state legislators who will fight for the right of all Virginians to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions and

want Virginians to have the right to safe and accessible abortions. Nearly 80% of Virginians believe that access to abortion should be legal.

The right to conceive, carry, or terminate a pregnancy should always remain a private decision between a pregnant person and their healthcare provider. I will remain a fierce advocate for reproductive freedom in Virginia.

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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Richmond Highway (Route 1) Speed Limit Study Fairfax County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 7 p.m.
<https://www.virginiadot.org/Route1SpeedLimitStudy>

Find out about a study assessing the 45 mph speed limit on about eight miles of Richmond Highway (Route 1) between Belvoir Road/Meade Road and I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway) to improve safety for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users. Study recommendations will be presented at the meeting.

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at <https://www.virginiadot.org/Route1SpeedLimitStudy>. The study team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review study information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2409 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **August 1, 2022** via the comment form on the study website, by mail to Ms. Jessica Paris, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Richmond Highway (Route 1) Speed Limit Study in Fairfax County" in the subject line.

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In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at the same time.

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
FOR THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED
FORT BELVOIR NORTH AREA
DISTRIBUTION CENTER
FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA**

The U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir hereby gives Notice of the Availability (NOA) for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed construction of a distribution center on Fort Belvoir's North Area (FBNA) in Fairfax County, Virginia. The purpose of this project is to construct and operate an approximately 525,000 square foot warehouse and administrative building with associated parking and covered storage at FBNA for approximately 600 personnel. This facility would support the delivery and receipt of materials within and across the Washington Metropolitan Area, requiring close proximity within the National Capital Region to achieve distribution efficiencies. The action would also provide compliance with the federal Office of Management and Budget guidance that encourages "good stewardship of taxpayer resources" and increasing joint site usage.

The Draft EA has been prepared in accordance with the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Army's NEPA Implementing Regulations (32 CFR Part 651, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions). The Draft EA is available to view in printed form at the Fort Belvoir Library; at the Richard Byrd Branch, Kingstowne Branch, and Sherwood Regional Branch of the Fairfax County Public Library system; or for view/download electronically at the project website <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/FBNA/> or at the Fort Belvoir Directorate of Public Works-

Environmental Division website: <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>. To access the Draft EA, click "Programs & Documents" tab and scroll down to "NEPA Program" on the list. Once that is clicked, a drop down will appear with all of the NEPA documents available to the public. Search on Fort Belvoir North Area Distribution Center Draft EA.

Comments or questions on the Draft EA may be submitted by email to: FBNA@usace.army.mil, by mail to Fort Belvoir Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works, Building 1442, 9430 Jackson Loop, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060, or by phone to the Fort Belvoir Directorate of Public Works-Environmental Division at (703) 806-3193 or (703) 806-0020. Comments are requested to be received no later than 30 days after publication of this NOA. The publication date of this NOA is June 30, 2022, and the comment period closes on July 29, 2022.

CALENDAR



Take a tour of Historic Pohick Church on Saturday, July 2, 2022 in Lorton.

NOW THRU JULY 9

Retrospective Art Deco Exhibition. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive in Alexandria. The first retrospective on the work of Art Deco designer Edgard Sforzina will open April 30th at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial during the Art Deco Society of Washington's 39th annual Washington Modernism Show. Discount tickets are available at www.washingtonmodernismshow.com.

NOW THRU AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Learn techniques in drawing, mixed media, mosaic, jewelry, watercolor, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Sign up for the programs that inspire you and make your own "stay-cation" art experience. Visit the website: <https://DelRayArtisans.org/programs/creative-summer/>

JUNE 28 TO OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition. At the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. For those who can't get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds, a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer. The title of the show is "A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach.

JUNE 25-SEPT. 10

Yoga Sessions. 12-2:15 p.m. Yoga at the National Museum of the United States Army hosted by Honest Soul Yoga, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. Honest Soul Yoga and The Army Historical Foundation invites you to take a moment to de-stress by enjoying an afternoon of yoga at the Museum. Join trained instructors for an afternoon of flow and sound meditation. After class, grab

a coffee and some healthy snacks in the Museum Café or take some time to explore the exhibits.

SATURDAY/JULY 2

Historic Pohick Church First Saturday Tours. 1-3 p.m. At 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton (on U.S. 1 between Telegraph Road and Pohick Road). During the Colonial period, Pohick Church was the congregation of many of our country's most prominent families, including the Washingtons, Masons and Fairfaxes. The Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild will give free guided tours of the historic colonial church. Call the church office at 703-339-6572 or visit our website at <http://www.pohick.org>

SATURDAY/JULY 2

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs, 50 cents for large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

MONDAY/JULY 4

An American Celebration at George Washington's Mount Vernon. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Salute the first commander-in-chief during Mount Vernon's annual Independence Day event. Meet George Washington, watch made-for-daytime fireworks, and observe a moving ceremony in which people from across the world become U.S. citizens.

TUESDAYS, JULY 5, 12, 19, 26

Simpson Park Demonstration Garden. Tuesdays 10 a.m. - 11 a.m., Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. From The Ground Up - Garden Challenges? Simple steps to help your container garden or whole yard, whether it's adding soil amendments, the value of a soil

sample, or other easy solutions. Contact mgvnv.org.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 6

Natyabhoomi School of Dance. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Lee District Park Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Franconia. This school offers dance instruction in the Mysore Style of Bharathanatyam, while also providing cultural education to its students. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

FRIDAY/JULY 8

Alexandria History Trivia. At Lee-Fendall House & Gardens, Alexandria. Staff members at Carlyle House Historic Park and the Lee-Fendall House Museum combine their knowledge to create bi-weekly trivia nights throughout the summer in the beautiful gardens of the Lee-Fendall House. Test your knowledge on everything from pop culture to history. Registration must be done in advance. Limited capacity so register early! Tickets are \$8 per person and include snacks and one complimentary drink. Additional drinks can be purchased at our bar. Teams are limited to 6 people, ages 21+ only.

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Alexandria Birthday Celebration. 6 to 9:45 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison St, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria celebrates its 273rd birthday and the USA's 246th birthday on Saturday, July 9, with a performance by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and a grand finale fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. Enjoy the return of the big birthday experience of years past with cupcakes, local vendors, live music and an extended runtime.

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Old Town Pub Crawl. 2-6 p.m. hosted by Port City Brewing Company. At various locations throughout Old Town, Alexandria. This popular event is returning to the original live and in-person format for 2022. Visit eight of Port City's top bars and restaurants in Old Town, enjoy their daily specials and stamp your pass at each stop. Then turn in your completed pass for this year's Pub Crawl Pint Glass.

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CALENDAR

SATURDAY/JULY 9

Backyard Composting Basics. 10-11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Mother Nature can help you compost plant material into luscious amendment for your lawn and garden. Visit Green Spring's composting station to learn different composting methods, materials to use and not use, proportions, aeration, screening, critter control and compost use. \$19 per person. Code 0B1.NKOK.

ART CAMP 2022

Del Ray Artisans invites youth ages 8-12 to Art Camp 2022 for a week of professional art instruction! Campers will have an immersive creative journey: painting, sculpting, journaling and other artful planned activities. During nice weather, campers will even have outdoor time to get fresh air, unwind, and replenish their creative energy. All art supplies are provided. Choose July 18-22 or July 25-29; \$350/child; scholarship support available. Registration at DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp.

JULY 9-10

Del Ray Artisans' Summer Art Market 2022. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. An indoor event featuring original creations by local artists in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, glass, jewelry, mixed media, photography, and more. Shop original work from local artists at Del Ray Artisans gallery at 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria—perfect for gifts or treat yourself. Different artists each market day, so visit both days. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/summer-art-market

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.

JULY

Fri. Jul. 1: THE AMISH OUTLAWS & JASON D. WILLIAMS \$39.50
 Sun. Jul. 3: KINDRED THE FAMILY SOUL \$69.50
 Tue. Jul. 5: LEONID & FRIENDS
 Wed. Jul. 6: ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY \$35.00
 Fri. Jul. 8: GINGER BILLY'S Backwoods Comedy Tour \$45/\$75
 Sat. Jul. 9: Newmyer Flyer Presents LAUREL CANYON \$35.00
 Sun/Mon. Jul. 10 & 11: GRAYSON CAPPs to open for John Hiatt & The Goners.
 Mon/Tue. Jul. 11 & 12: JOHN HIATT & THE GONERS Featuring SONNY LANDRETH \$75.00
 Thu. Jul. 14: HERMAN'S HERMITS starring PETER NOONE \$49.50
 Fri. Jul. 15: Tarsha Fitzgerald Production Presents VOICES OF MOUNT TOWN \$35.00
 Sun. Jul. 17: THE HIGH KINGS \$65.00
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Being Naive Is Just Plain Stupid



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Even though I was unexpectedly diagnosed at age 54 and a half with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, I never felt compelled to look for additional trouble by ever having an age-recommended colonoscopy – until recently, that is. I figured what I didn't know wouldn't hurt me or rather, I had already been hurt enough (my pre-existing cancer diagnosis). As such, I didn't consider that cancer has its own set of rules and presuming otherwise is not a prudent course of action – or in my case, inaction. Incorrectly, I also thought that having one cancer diagnosis would somehow mitigate against having another cancer. I must have thought that there was some logic to the process. I should have known better. Cancer and logic aren't usually a part of the same diagnosis/prognosis.

But I rationalized that since I was regularly being CT-scanned, MRI'd, bone-scanned and P.E.T. scanned, I thought – wrongly, that if there was cancer to be found in my body somewhere, all these scans would find it, even if they weren't exactly looking for it. I mean, who's having more diagnostic scans than a "terminal" cancer patient undergoing active treatment? Given how much diagnostic process I was already enduring, I didn't/never really grasped the importance of doing more. I figured I was already doing more than my share. Not that share has anything to do with fending off cancer. Nevertheless, it made for plausible deniability and so it wasn't until nearly age 67, almost 13 and half years after my initial lung cancer diagnosis in 2009, that I acted my age and not my shoe size. I scheduled the procedure and am relieved to report that all's well that ends well, except that I still have a "terminal" form of papillary thyroid cancer. 'Terminal' in that the medication I'm taking, and which is working to keep me stable, has a limited shelf life: three years, expiring Sept. 2023-ish. So either I'll need new medicine or a stronger shelf.

But I can't worry about any of that. I must live my life like everyday matters and that means getting scanned/examined like my life depends on it because you know what? It just might. And in the process of paying attention/following doctor's orders/age-related protocols, I just might improve my quality of life by lifting that bale and toeing that line because it's probably not going to happen by itself. I'm a humanities person, not a science person and so there are lots of substance that is lost on me. Certainly, I can keep my eye on the ball but it's the ball I'm sort of paying attention to. The problem is? There's a lot more than the ball I need to be paying attention to. Fortunately, delaying this most recent procedure hasn't complicated my life. In a way, it's sort of unencumbered me. I'm less afraid now that the next procedure will result in something bad because I've been through one that wasn't. Not that I was paranoid, but when you've been diagnosed with cancer at a relatively young/unexpected age (54 for me), your entire orientation, how you think and feel, how you prioritize and analyze and theorize changes. On the one hand, you live and learn, on the other you value each day as if it might be your last. And when an oncologist tells you your prognosis is "terminal," as mine told me in late February 2009, you take him at his word, that the next day really could be your last.

But that was a long time ago and somehow, I'm still alive. And though I've been given no assurances of anything living forward, I am grateful for each day and will try to care for myself in a way that doesn't hasten my demise but rather prevents it. And if that means having colonoscopies annually so, be it. It's a small price to pay/minor inconvenience to endure to take advantage of the blessings I've been given.

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Who Dropped the Ball

FROM PAGE 5

ees was overwhelmingly negative. At least three people stood up to castigate USACE for poor communication, but they were blaming the wrong party.

Fairfax County did not inform affected residents about what it knew, or should have known, was in the study since November 2019.

A little history:

USACE and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) signed an agreement in July of 2017 "to evaluate the feasibility of Federal participation in the implementation of solutions to reduce long-term coastal flood risk..." in the metropolitan Washington region.

Fairfax County is a member of MWCOC. Since 2017, Fairfax County has been part of the study and was aware, or should have been aware, of the contents of the study.

Originally, there were 11 alternatives considered in the study, in addition to "no action." Of the 11 alternatives, five alternatives affected what the Corps calls the Belle Haven neighborhood (New Alexandria; Riverview; Belle View Condominiums; River Towers Condominiums).

These five included alternatives numbered 2 and 3, coastal surge barriers, which would block the entire Potomac River (and the entire DC metropolitan area) from a storm surge. One was projected to cost \$9 billion and the other was projected to cost \$600 million. These were dropped from the study without explanation.

Another alternative was number 4a, to put a flood wall along or on the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). This alternative was dropped when the National Park Service informed USACE that it

was bound by federal law to maintain the historic, scenic nature of the Parkway, which would be adversely affected by putting a flood wall on it, or by raising the Parkway to turn it into a levee.

In November 2019, USACE eliminated the three alternatives just discussed. Fairfax County knew, or should have known, that those alternatives had been eliminated and that there were only two alternatives left in the study that pertained to Fairfax County.

The two surviving alternatives that pertained to Fairfax County were alternative 6, a non-structural plan and alternative 5c, a flood wall surrounding the neighborhoods. In Corps parlance, a non-structural plan is one that does not include coastal surge barriers, flood walls, or levees. It means raising and/or flood proofing buildings.

When the Corps performed its benefit-cost analysis, it found that number 6, the non-structural alternative, would deliver a benefit of 41 cents for every dollar spent (table 5-4 in the study). The Corps will not consider alternatives that do not pay for themselves.

According to the Corps, alternative 5c, the flood wall, would deliver a benefit of \$1.30 for each dollar spent (also table 5-4 in the study).

After benefit cost analysis, there was nothing left but the flood wall.

Fairfax County Stormwater Management Division and Supervisor Dan Storck either slept through the progress of the study or decided that they could get the flood wall built this time.

The Army Corps of Engineers kept its clients fully informed of what it was doing.

Fairfax County did not keep its citizens informed at all.

Jim Gearing

Riverview / New Alexandria

Weaning from Fossil Fuels

Dear editor,

The nation must wean itself from fossil fuels. A small beginning is to not permit construction of new gas stations. Emphasis must be placed on increasing charging stations for electric cars/trucks. Fossil fuels are a public

health hazard which is killing thousands of people annually. We must lead the nation in addressing climate changes NOW.

Sincerely,

Patricia Rowell

Mount Vernon

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FREE INDEPENDENCE DAY LYFT RIDES

Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over 40-percent (41%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during the Independence Day holiday. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2022 Independence Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4 p.m. on Monday, July 4th (Independence Day) and operate until 4 a.m. on Tuesday, July 5th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during

this traditionally high-risk holiday. During this 12-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2022 Independence Day SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, July 4th on www.SoberRide.com

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.

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