

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

FCPS Principals and Pups

SEE MORE, PAGE 8



Mount Vernon: Quander Road School Principal Frank Tranfa Jr.- “This is me, Frank Tranfa, principal at Quander Road School, and my Boston Terrier, Ike. Ike’s favorite thing to do is sunbathe and play with his friend Ozzie, the French bulldog.



Vienna: Kilmer MS Principal Amy Miller and her dogs, Rosie and Pepper.



New FCPS Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid and her dogs Nita, Zeus, and Rufus. All three pups made the cross-country road trip with Dr. Reid from Oregon.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Springfield: Garfield ES Principal April Cage and her dog Beaux, who loves “Frosty Paws.” It’s ice cream for dogs, and he loves to do zoomies around the yard and inside the house. He’s so fast!



Oakton HS Principal Jamie Lane and her dog, Zeus. “Zeus is a three-year-old Great Pyrenees Mountain Dog. Zeus always wants to be in the lead and loves hiking and playing in any rivers or creeks he can find.”

PET GAZETTE

Mount Vernon: Wayneswood ES Principal Katie Cachine with her yellow lab, Wilson, when he was a pup. He’s a Caps fan.

Thanks to Kathleen Miller, FCPS, who helped gather the snapshots and captions for the “FCPS Principals and Pups” feature in our Pet Connection.



Mount Vernon: Woodlawn ES Principal Laura Elliott and her pup, Milo – “Road trip. Milo enjoys sniffing everything on his walks and cuddles on the couch,” Principal Elliott says.



Mount Vernon: Bucknell ES Principal Rashida Green enjoys kisses and snuggles from her Mini Goldendoodle, Willow Wiggles, as a form of self-care.



Mount Vernon: Bucknell ES Principal Rashida Green – “This is me and my three daughters and Willow Wiggles.”

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NEWS

Park Volunteers Awarded for Efforts Against Invasive Species

Their efforts are recognized with a
Elly Doyle Park Service Award for 2022.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

This summer, The Fairfax County Park Authority Board announced two recipients of the Elly Doyle Park Service Award for 2022, and both recipients are part of the fight against invasive plants that are popping up all over the county. One of the Elly Doyle winners is Stephen Markle, an Invasive Management Area Volunteer Site Leader and a Park Volunteer Team Leader at Gil McCutcheon Park in Alexandria, while Willow Martin, the second 2022 Elly Doyle Award winner, is an Invasive Management Site leader for Oakton Community Park.

Markle worked in and around Gil McCutcheon Park in the Fort Hunt area since before it became a park and has become an integral part of the park's formation ever since. He is heavily involved with the removal of invasive plants such as English Ivy, Kudzu and bamboo. As part of that effort, he's incorporated some volunteer assistance and helped the area scouts, hosting nine Boy Scout Eagle Projects, one Girl Scout Gold Award Project and one Duke of Edinburgh Project for a Scout visiting from England. "There is still lots to do, but we are making progress and having a positive effect on our natural world," Markle said.

Willow Martin lives out in the Oakton area and has become a positive contributor to Oakton Community Park. Clearing out invasive species is one of the tasks she's taken on through the years, which started with the removal of invasive plants in her own yard. "I began volunteering at Oakton Community Park last year after being asked by Lauren Crum, an officer of the Greater Oakton Community Association, to help lead invasive plant removal efforts at the park. Prior to becoming an official volunteer Invasive Management Area site leader, I was mentored by two IMA site leaders, Heidi Allen and Sara Holtz, who are both very knowledgeable and dedicated IMA site leaders. I also completed IMA Site Leader training provided through the IMA office," Martin said.

Martin has seen her efforts pay off. "In areas where invasive plants have been removed, we are starting to see native plants



Willow Martin Kudzu is armed with a saw at Oakton Community Park.

emerge. Trees that have been burdened by invasive vines are beginning to recover," she said.

Elly Doyle Award

The Elly Doyle Park Service Award was established on Dec. 20, 1988, in recognition of former Park Authority Board Chairman and member Ellamae Doyle's years of outstanding service toward the preservation of parkland and establishment of natural and recreational areas for the benefit of Fairfax County residents. The award publicly recognizes volunteers for outstanding contributions to Fairfax County parks.

The FCPA has put effort into the battle with invasive plants, forming an Invasive Management Area program to keep the fight going. In the past year they've had their most successful year yet, with 3,000 volunteers donating 16,404 hours removing non-native invasive vegetation at 65 sites. In 2021, they treated 417 acres of parkland

for invasive species, and recently initiated a "Tree Rescuers," team to help residents save trees from invasive vines.

Friends of the Mount Vernon trail has also been fighting the battle against invasive plants growing onto the trail, blocking sightlines and threatening trees. Just about every weekend in the warmer months, they are fighting the battle somewhere along the trail. Their latest effort on Aug. 13 was invasive plant removal near the stone bridge in Mount Vernon. "On Saturday, volunteers removed invasive vegetation at the stone bridge. Trail users can now better see auto traffic and other trail users at this intersection," their social media post read.

A Nationwide Effort

Invasive species are a nationwide problem, and the Environmental Protection Agency is trying to do something about it. The EPA estimates that damages from inva-

PHOTOS BY FRIENDS OF MOUNT VERNON BIKE TRAIL



Willow Martin amongst the invasive plants.

sive species, including only those damages that can be expressed in monetary terms, have been as high as \$138 billion per year, according to EPA website. These damages affect agriculture, rangeland, forests, people's homes and yards, human and animal health, food supplies, fishing and boating, outdoor recreation, and many other areas.

Invasive species are thought to have been involved in 70% of this century's extinctions of native aquatic species, and 42% of current endangered species are impacted significantly by invasive species.

The Department of Interior has a National Invasive Species Council, which consists of representatives from 16 different government entities, including the DOD, DOT and NASA to name a few. Their goal is to prevent, eradicate, and control invasive species, as well as recover species and restore habitats and other assets adversely impacted by invasive species, Interior information stated.

Nepenthe Gallery artist

Local Mount Vernon artist, Andreas Barrett, at this past Thursday's ART+WINE+CHEESE event at Nepenthe Gallery in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center. Andreas is pictured with John Jackson, his fellow musician and composer, friend, and now collector of Andreas' painting, "One Trick Pony." At the event, there was a gallery full of the local community and friends to welcome Andreas' works into Nepenthe. He gave a short presentation on his background, music career, and transition to the world of art.

PHOTO BY THE NEPENTHE GALLERY



Support West Potomac Performing Arts

Tag Day 2022: Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022

Tag day is an annual fund raiser for the West Potomac Performing Arts Department. Teams of four-to-five students will canvas homes in the community to distribute "tags" which include performance dates for the band, chorus, theatre, orchestra, and guitar groups. Teams may sing, act, or perform for the neighborhood and welcome any donations which will go towards new instruments, uniforms, costumes, and transportation. Your thoughtful and generous support of the West Potomac Performing Arts is appreciated and affords wonderful opportunities for our students.

'All About the Kids'

Backpacks, haircuts provided for back-to-school.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Representatives of more than 50 schools and nonprofits from across Northern Virginia turned out Aug. 16 at Penn Daw Station 11 for the Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue annual back-to-school backpack and school supply distribution.

"This was one of our biggest events to date," said Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Battalion Chief Willie Bailey, event organizer and founder of the nonprofit Firefighters and Friends. "We gave away over 1,500 backpacks filled with school supplies, and the following day provided more than 90 free haircuts and stylings as part of our KidsCuts event at the Gum Springs Community Center."

Volunteers helped nonprofit representatives and children select new backpacks filled with school supplies with free haircuts provided the following day from volunteer barbers and stylists.

"Today is all about the kids," said barber Gary Bailey. "It is about them looking great, making them happy and giving them confidence as they head back to school."

In addition to Gary Bailey, free haircuts were provided by volunteers from Paul Mitchell's the School-Woodbridge. Activities for the day included entertainment by cartoon characters and Caring Angels Therapy Dogs for attendees to pet and enjoy.

"We also had other fun activities for the children at Gum Springs," Bailey added. "There were public safety vehicles for the children to sit in, Caring Angel Therapy Dogs for the kids to pet, more backpacks filled with school supplies, and Mickey Mouse and firefighters and police officers visiting with the kids."

Bailey begins his planning for the backpack drive months in advance.

"There is a lot of fundraising that goes into this," Bailey said. "We spent \$45,000 on backpacks and school supplies this year and a lot of the fundraising comes from relationships we have built over the last 10-15 years. But we still ran out of backpacks. There is never enough for the needs that are in the community."

Bailey credits the success of the events to the generosity of the volunteers, hair stylists and sponsors.

"The backpack distribution and KidsCuts events were a huge success and would not have been possible without the support of so many in the community," Bailey



Volunteers and sponsors gather for a photo at the annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue backpack distribution day Aug. 16 at Penn Daw Station 11.



More than 1,500 backpacks filled with school supplies await distribution to families in need at the Firefighters and Friends backpack day Aug. 16 at Penn Daw Station 11.



Captain Latasha Byrd and Fire Medic Daniel Holton help distribute more than 1,500 backpacks to families and students in need Aug. 16 at Penn Daw Station 11. The back-to-school drive was sponsored by Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

said.

Sponsors for the backpack drive include: Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department; Apple Federal Credit Union; Savitteree Family Foundation; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax County; Local 2068; Jack Taylor Toyota; Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Retirement Association; The Clifton Community; Nationwide Credit Corporation; Fairfax County Federation of Teachers; Medocracy, Inc.; Fairfax County Police Department; Fairfax Education Association; Primo Family Restaurant; Supervisor Dan Storck's Office (Mt. Vernon District); Supervisor Rodney Lusk's Office (Lee District); Mount Vernon Gazette; and Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue.

Sponsors for the Gum Springs haircuts event include: Pro Image Barber Shop; Paul Mitchell School (Woodbridge); Bailey Barber Shop; Main Event Barbershop (Haymarket); Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax County; Local 2068; Apple Federal Credit Union; Savitteree Family Foundation; Gum Springs Community Center; Fairfax County Police Department; Caring Angels Therapy Dogs; and the Mount Vernon Gazette.

"When I'm ready to give up on



Volunteers and sponsors gather at the back-to-school free haircuts day Aug. 17 at Gum Springs Community Center.



Mickey Mouse visits the Gum Springs Community Center as part of the back-to-school haircuts day Aug. 17.

humanity, days like these make it all worthwhile," Bailey said. "The kids leave here looking good, feeling good and ready to return to

school with the tools they need to succeed."

To learn more or to donate, visit www.ffandfriends2therescue.org.

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A Connection Newspaper



Shooting in Mount Vernon Leaves One Dead, One in Custody

Mid-day shooting on Tuesday, just before school bus arrived.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

One man was killed and an arrest was made in a shooting in the Mount Vernon Square apartments on Tuesday, Aug. 30, the Fairfax County Police said.

According to the police, shots were fired around 2 p.m. prompting the police to swarm the 7400 block of Vernon Square Drive in, where they “encountered a man with multiple gunshot wounds to the upper body,” said FCPD spokesperson Katherine Hayek on the scene following the shooting. “He died on the way to the hospital,” Hayek added, at the press conference with Major Eli Cory.

Another resident was on the scene, and he helped with the police efforts resulting in an arrest, so they referred to him as a “good Samaritan.” The two handguns recovered were described as semi-automatic handguns.

About the time the officers arrived following the shooting, a school bus pulled up to drop off students, but the officers intervened to ensure the safety of the



FCPD spokesperson Katherine Hayek, and Major Eli Cory at a press conference on the scene in Mount Vernon following the shooting.

students and driver.

Following the shooting, the crime scene is being investigated, Hayek said.



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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Bright eyed, newly rescued beagle Vermont, with new “parents” Donna Ann Winterling and Andy Crook, was the first of the Envigo dogs adopted from the Fairfax County Animal Shelter



PHOTO COURTESY DONNA ANN WINTERLING

Vermont, 4 months, quickly makes the transition from sterile kennel life to plush comfort with new brother, Utah, 10 years, setting an example



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Ryder, a purebred Hovawart, enjoys exploring his new home, especially the water features, as owner Ann Kising thwarts his fun



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

From a working group breed, Ryder tries the Journalism profession, quickly taking up the reporter’s notebook during his photo shoot



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTIE LAVIN

Bitsy, another Envigo beagle, rescued thru Homeward Trails by long-time beagle fancier Matt Lavin and his family, shown here with Christie Lavin

Rescue or Purebred?

Stories of the path to dog ownership.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

For many northern Virginians, having a family dog is an absolute must.

This, even though dogs have been relieved of their traditional jobs for watch, livestock guarding/herding, and hunting, performed in earlier decades and more rural settings. In today’s suburbia, the only “job” most family dogs have is companion. Just as varied as the number of dog breeds, are the reasons why people still elect to have a dog, and so too, the reasons why they select a particular pooch to be part of their lives.

Some might seek a dog like one from their childhood, to remind them of a past favorite or carefree times, or one that has an attribute they find particularly appealing, such as long ears or a clown-like behavior. A breed may be popular through association with a movie; such as Dalmations and Cocker Spaniels in Disney movies, or Pugs in “Men in Black”. Or a breed may be known through connection with a famous person, such as Queen Elizabeth’s Corgis, or President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Beagles.

Sadly, there are more dogs available than can fill the homes of dog lovers. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) estimates that 390,000 dogs are euthanized every year. Recognizing that high number of unwanted healthy dogs, it’s become a source of pride and “badge of honor” to rescue a pet from a community shelter or rescue organization. Adopting families often are quick to share that they have helped by adopting one of the approximately two million dogs that find a home each year after entering a shelter. A common response one hears when asking about a dog

is: “He’s a rescue,” or “We’re not sure of her age/breed/background; she’s a rescue.” These owners don’t need to know the details. They are committed to giving the dog a home.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, other owners are keen to own a “pure-bred” dog; to contribute toward preservation of the variety of 199 dog breeds recognized in the United States by the American Kennel Club (AKC) and 360 breeds officially recognized world-wide by the World Canine Organization. From the tiny as a teacup Chihuahua to the giant Great Dane, full breed dogs are bred to exacting standards and requirements of the breed’s intended use or job. National organizations and breed clubs seek to maintain the purity of breeds by maintaining registries and lineage records.

These days, few owners will admit to buying a dog from a puppy store, a “backyard breeder,” online seller, or along a roadside, as these sources have become notorious for high prices, unhealthy stock, sourcing from factory puppy mills with horrid conditions, and even making buyers into victims of selling scams where there is no actual dog provided. Unfortunately, too many potential dog owners are unaware of the options for finding a puppy, the buying hazards of the loosely regulated pet industry, and comparative purchase prices when looking for a new family member.

Meet two dogs; one a rescue with a nationally publicized back story, and one a pure breed not commonly found in the United States. Arguably, they are at the extremes of what a dog goes through to end up in the same place — a loving family home.

VERMONT IS A BEAGLE. He was recently adopted by Andy Crook and Donna Ann Winterling of Chantilly. At just four months old, he is already a celebrity wherever he goes. He is one of more than 4,000 beagles who



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTIE LAVIN

Bitsy, after two years used as a breeder at the Envigo facility, is calmed by the presence of her new family and “brother” Moose, a Lab

started life at a medical research breeding facility in Cumberland Virginia. After federal citations for cruelty under the Animal Welfare Act, he was one of the 4,000 Beagles surrendered in a settlement overseen by the United States District Court. The story drew national media coverage as the facility closed. The Beagles were transported in small groups by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to shelters and rescues throughout Virginia and around the country. Vermont is one of the first group of 16 beagles to come to the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. The shelter is working with HSUS to find family homes for several, facilitating final placements and much better lives for the rescued dogs.

Beagles, a small breed, are described as merry, amiable, even tempered, intelligent, gentle, determined and happy-go-lucky. Part of the Hound group, the Beagle breed was developed in Great Britain primarily for hunting rabbits in the 1830s. They became very popular in the United States, holding a position in the top ten most popular breeds

in the AKC’s registry for many years. Beagles, Uno and Miss P, won the large and prestigious Westminster Dog Show in 2008, and 2015, respectively.

Beagle fanciers, the Winterling-Crooks had heard the Envigo Beagles’ story in national news coverage and on social media. They were determined to give one of the rescued beagles a home with them and their ten year old Beagle, Utah, and began watching for availability at local shelters. When Crook saw six would be available the next day at Fairfax County Animal Shelter while drinking his 6 a.m. morning coffee, he and his wife quickly hatched a plan. Winterling would camp at the Shelter door on Friday morning at 8 a.m. in preparation for the opening at noon. Neither the rain nor the wait deterred her, and she was first in line. She passed the time waiting by volunteering her help with shelter tasks: loading pet food into a van and making up kitty litter boxes. Other potential adopters started showing up after 9 a.m.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Thistle, another adoption from FCAS with new “mom” Jenny Elrod, of Laurel, Md.

and an adoption queue formed behind Winterling. Near opening time, Crook arrived with their beagle Utah, for the recommended existing family dog meet and greet. Their well executed plan worked. Winterling said, “We were done with the whole adoption process in under an hour. So we did officially adopt the very first Envigo beagle from FCAS.”

About two weeks have passed and Vermont, whose shelter name was Joe Pye, (all named for wildflowers) is busy learning new things, just as any young pup would be doing. (See The Connection, Springfield edition, August 11, page 8) Unlike most other pups, spending his first three months at the breeding facility, he knew only a concrete floor and caged kennel environment, and had limited human contact. Since being



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Thistle, who struggled having confidence in his new situation and with climbing stairs, finds comfort wrapped in warm snuggles.

with his new family, he learned to climb stairs in two days, to jump up on furniture in three days, to “escape” his designed level and explore the whole house during the day, and cuddle between his human parents in the evening. He is adapting to crating at night and house training, with only a few “accidents.” He enjoys bothering his older “brother” Utah for play bouts, and likes to watch dogs on television. It’s unclear if he’s glimpsed himself on TV in his celebrity persona. He does enjoy that bit of celebrity status when out and about as people ask “Is he one of those beagles?” given away by the tattoo on his ear that will be a lasting reminder of

how close he came to a far different life than the one he is now enjoying to the fullest. It’s clear that the rescued medical research beagles are winning hearts in the Commonwealth and beyond. The Crook-Winterling’s, and even Utah, are heartily in that number.

NEXT MEET Ryder. He is a Hovawart. His breed, originating in Germany, is considered “rare” in the United States. So rare that Ryder’s people, Ann Kising, of Occoquan, and her husband Rick, brought Ryder to Virginia all the way from Slovenia. The Slovenia breeder’s was the closest litter they could find after a prolonged internet search. In fact, the breeder found them after their previously unsuccessful inquires to the U.S. national Hovawart breed club.

As a former competitive cat fancier, Kising knew more about the hazards of internet dog buying than the average person. After the contact, Kising carefully researched the breeder and her site for evidence of responsible breeding. The breeder’s site highlighted her adult dogs and their accomplishments and information on breeding, rather than including testimonials from puppy buyers, and selling and shipping information. The site showed the breeder concentrated on the single Hovawart breed with a

limited number of dogs and breedings over the years, and showed strong participation in dog competitions where her dogs, champions, were judged. Beyond the championship titles there was evidence of testing for hereditary disorders prior to breeding for both her dams and the sires. All positive signs since puppy mills typically have multiple breeds, a large number of dogs, frequent litters, and no evidence of peer review, genetic information or testing.

Hovawarts, large dogs, are described as alert, faithful, kind, extremely intelligent, and with even dispositions and protective instincts. They are part of the Working Group,

used for watch, guarding, tracking, and rescue; their name is derived from German words for “watch-yard”.

Kising was attracted to breed’s loyalty, companionable traits, and ability to bond to one person. She plans to enter Ryder in conformation competition early, when he is a few months older. Conformation refers to visible structure and appearance. Conformation shows are not beauty pageants but a measure of how well a particular dog compares to the “ideal” or agreed “standard” of the breed. It’s where a dog “earns” the right to breed, since fanciers want only the best examples as sires and dams to continue the breed line. Though every dog owner may think their dog is “the best”, the sport and serious business of conformation dog shows provides an opportunity for impartial peer review and judgment.

Ryder may or may not go on to father future generations of Hovawarts in the United States.

But for now he is enjoying the puppy life and enrichment activities of exploring new territories, making new friends, and learning basic commands given by hand signals. He loves water and walks on park trails, already walking close by Kising’s side. He too is winning hearts and being a good ambassador for his less common breed.

Surely the debate will continue on solutions for the problem of overpopulation of dogs. Some owners will continue to favor rescue and others will favor strict adherence to limited responsible breeding. Those seeking a dog are urged to be wary consumers. To think carefully about the commitment they are making to a life-time of care for the dog so they don’t add to the numbers filling shelters. Responsible ownership demands careful investigation of the source, or relying on area shelters and rescues to help make a connection with the right dog for the family situation that will last. As American writer Carolina Knapp put it, “Before you get a dog, you can’t quite imagine what living with one might be like; afterward, you can’t imagine living any other way.”



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FCPS PRINCIPALS AND PUPS

FROM PAGE 1



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Ft. Belvoir Upper Elementary School Principal Jamey Chianetta and “Beau” (center) are ready for fall football season! Jamey’s husband, James (left), is also FCPS. “Beau is a ‘mutt’ that our son adopted while he was in the Army, while he was stationed at Fort Drum, NY. We don’t know what kind he is, but we suspect he has some Australian Cattle Dog. We’d love to do a doggie DNA kit. Beau LOVES to be outside to catch frisbees, go for long walks, and play in the snow. He loves his treats too, and according to his vet, he needs fewer of them because he’s in a family who loves to treat him. Beau is a snuggler and will kick you off the couch for his favorite spot. He’s the best pup in the world.”

Franconia Elementary Principal Andrew Smith and Lola Jane. “Lola Jane is a 20-month-old Pitbull-Terrier and Beagle mix. She loves finding the squeaker inside her toys, snuggling with family on the couch, and playing tag with her best friends Arlo and Murphy.”



McLean High School Principal Ellen Reilly and her dog Joy Ful, who passed away last year- Principal Reilly had Joy Ful, a mixed breed rescue, for 13.5 years. Joy Ful was the social butterfly of their cul-de-sac. Every afternoon she visited with neighbors to get treats, take a nap at their house, or just stop by for a visit. She sometimes got lucky and stayed for dinner.



Thanks to Kathleen Miller, FCPS, who helped gather the snapshots and captions for the “FCPS Principals and Pups” feature in our Pet Connection.

CALENDAR

REGISTRATION OPEN

2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, Sept. 10-24. Register online by Aug. 31 at www.nvso.us, \$20 for unlimited events. Go to the website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email nvso1982@gmail.com.

NOW THRU 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.

AUG. 31 TO OCT. 5

Waterfront Wednesdays Music Series. 5-7 p.m. At Robinson Landing Promenade and Pier, 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Head to Robinson Landing for the Waterfront Wednesday Music Series presented by Yellow Door Music Concert Series featuring a range of music genres by local musicians. Bring a chair or simply stop by to enjoy some beautiful waterside beats.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 1

Del Ray's First Thursday: Show Your Spirit. 6 p.m. to dusk. At Mount Vernon Ave. between Hume Ave. and Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. Wear your team colors and join the Del Ray community for live music and themed activities benefiting a local nonprofit.

SEPT. 2 TO OCT. 1

"The Big 3-0" Members Showcase. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features artwork in a variety of media and celebrates Del Ray Artisans 30th Anniversary. Join us for the exhibit reception and anniversary party on Saturday, September 3, 3-6 p.m. The event will be inside and outside (rain date is Sept 10). Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed October 2). Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/SEPT. 3

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>.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 3

Watercolor Workshop - Landscapes. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Artist Dawn Flores helps you translate the beauty of nature into a watercolor painting by showing how to paint skies, trees, water, mountains and rocks. Learn strategies for building depth and focus in your work using color
SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

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What a Difference Five Weeks Makes



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The first call I received from my sister-in-law, Vanessa, from the hospital that Sunday, nearly six weeks ago, was to tell me that my brother, Richard (her husband) had been ambulated to the hospital earlier that day due to pain in his leg which prevented him from walking. The second call from Vanessa a few hours later was to say that the pain in his leg was so severe the doctors were considering amputating it. The third call, even later, was Vanessa crying and saying the doctors didn't think my brother was going to survive the night. With that news, my wife, Dina, and I were on our way to the hospital, Covid rules be damned. (Vanessa had suggested on an earlier call that we wait until further notice. This was officially 'further notice.')

What we saw when we arrived in SICU (Surgical Intensive Care) was my brother lying in a hospital bed, completely sedated in front of a phalanx of IV pumps (eight total) infusing him with everything necessary to sustain his organs, all of which had shut down because of the septic shock which ensued when an infection in his leg shot through him unabated. This occurred because his white blood cell count - after two chemotherapy infusions, was barely measurable, one of the attending physicians told us and left him vulnerable. In addition, he was hooked up to a 24-7 dialysis machine, a ventilator (with a tube inserted in his mouth), a heart monitor, electrodes, a blood pressure cup on his left upper arm, an EEG machine monitoring brain activity, a wound V.A.C. to vacuum out any miscellaneous debris/infected tissue still in-and-around his infected leg, all managed by a full-time nurse. Typically, in the SICU, a nurse covers two patients. However, my brother was so sick that his nurse was not assigned any other patients. Her entire focus was on my brother. As I wrote in a previous column, and it bears repeating, one of the attending critical care physicians characterized my brother as "the sickest patient in the hospital," a hospital whose number of beds exceeds 900. Unable to make any significant progress (get the patient to wake up/respond to instructions) with my brother's condition, he said he had one option left: "a hail Mary," as he called it. It was some sort of infused drug that he said could only be used once. He was out of ideas, otherwise. I certainly can't recall its name, but I believe its color was red.

Well, it worked. Not immediately mind you, but very slowly and occasionally surely; Richard got better. Three weeks later, he was finally transferred from SICU to a regular bed on the wards. Unfortunately, 12 hours or so later, a bleeding event got him transferred back to an ICU, this time it was Medical Intensive Care. After a few days of rest and recovery there, his doctors thought it safe to move him back to the ward, where he has remained for the past 10 days or so. And it has been within this private room where his remarkable recovery has really sped up. To the point where there's discussion about transferring him to a rehabilitation facility because he no longer requires the type of hands-on care provided in a regular hospital ward, and it's now considered time/appropriate to rehab his entire body.

Disconnected from nearly every medicine and machine now, and with his trach tube replaced with a plug sort of a thing, he's still not able to walk, but he can sure talk, according to Vanessa who visited him yesterday, as she has every day - and some nights, too. I skipped my visit today because, according to Vanessa, as Richard has been weaned off the ventilator, breathing on his own has been exhausting so all he wants to do is sleep. And he doesn't want me sitting at his side just to hear him snore.

I'll see him tomorrow for sure. It will be the first conversation we'll have had in over a month. I can't wait. I will congratulate and encourage him on a recovery well done, and we'll have a few laughs, but unfortunately, we may not be through the worst of it, oddly enough. Surgery looms (as he's no longer a candidate for chemotherapy, he "failed it" they said), and it's risky, his surgeon said. But due to his amazing recovery, it is possible he is now a candidate for surgery. Who would have thought? A month ago: nobody.

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

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

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The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning of 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

and value. Get techniques for building texture and masking to preserve the white of the page. A supply list will be emailed before the program. Bring a lunch. \$102 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 68EJJE4

SATURDAY/SEPT. 3

Forest Bathing Walk in the Gardens. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Experience Green Spring Gardens with all of your senses. Join Ana Ka'ahanui, co-founder of local nonprofit Capital Nature for a slow, meditative walk around the gardens. Contemplative, but more active than meditation, this forest bathing walk will help reduce blood pressure, boost immunity, and enhance mood and creativity. Decompress and feel a deeper connection with the natural world. Bring something to sit on the ground, which may be damp, and a water bottle. \$35 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code Z0Y.ZVJ0

SATURDAY/SEPT. 3

Garden Talk: Fall Veggie Gardening. 10:30-11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Planting a fall vegetable garden will extend the gardening season so you can continue to harvest fresh produce. Many cool-season vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts produce their best flavor and quality when they mature during cool weather. Extension Master Gardeners share tips and recommendations. \$12 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 3A3. XWES

TAG DAY 2022:

SATURDAY, SEPT. 10, 2022

Tag Day 2022 is an annual fund raiser for the West Potomac Performing Arts Department. Teams of 4-5 students will canvas homes in the community to distribute "tags" which include performance dates for the band, chorus, theatre, orchestra, and guitar groups. Teams may sing, act, or perform for the neighborhood and welcome any donations which will go towards new instruments, uniforms, costumes, and transportation. Your thoughtful and generous support of the West Potomac Performing Arts is appreciated and affords wonderful opportunities for our students.

ON DISPLAY

Artist Andreas Barrett. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Nepenthe Gallery is pleased to announce that local talent and one of Nepenthe's newest artists, Andreas Barrett, will be the featured artist. Ann Sklar's exhibit, the originally scheduled feature, has been rescheduled for Dec. 8. Andreas made his debut at the gallery in June as one of six local artists who was part of a special exhibit showcasing select local talent.



The Floral Design workshop Indian Summer will take place at Green Springs Gardens in Alexandria on Thursday, Sept. 8.

Floral Design Workshop

Indian Summer. 10-11:30 a.m. At Green Springs Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Enjoy the flowers of late summer in this floral design workshop. Certified floral designer Betty Ann Galway walks you through this jewel-toned arrangement for your home. Register for both the class and the supply fee. Bring disinfected shears and a short box or container that will help you transport your arrangement home. \$42 per person (plus \$35 supply fee). Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes

Andreas is a lifelong musician who turned his creative expression to visual art amid the pandemic. Using mixed media on canvas, Andreas creates contemporary works that are inspired by the world around him - people, current events, other art or experiences. More than a dozen of Andreas's paintings will be on display on Thursday evening. The artist will also be on hand and will share a brief presentation on his works, his process and his inspiration. Ph: 571-347-7961 www.nepenthegallery.com



PHOTO BY JANE GAMBLE

"A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," features works from more than 20 area artists and includes hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. Through Oct. 17, 2022, free to the public, at the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria.

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.

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