

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

## Save River Farm Committee Wins Award for Conservation

The Garden Club of Virginia, a long-time champion of conservation in Virginia, awarded its 2022 Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Conservation to the Save River Farm Committee for its grassroots and successful efforts to save an important property and landscape from development.

The Dugdale Award for Conservation is given annually to an organization, industry or individual who has rendered outstanding service in conservation and wise development of natural resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia and is not a Garden Club of Virginia member.

The award will be presented at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society, on Sept. 28, 2022, at 10 a.m.

River Farm, on the banks of the Potomac River south of Old Town Alexandria, has served as the American Horticultural Society's (AHS) headquarters since the 1970s. When the AHS urgently needed revenue to weather the effects of the pandemic, the AHS listed the property for sale. The threat of development of this open, green, waterfront and historic public space spurred the Save River Farm effort, a grassroots initiative which spread to the local community and on to the state and national level — all thanks to the Save River Farm Committee.

The Committee's campaign brought together like-minded his-



River Farm, threatened and saved.

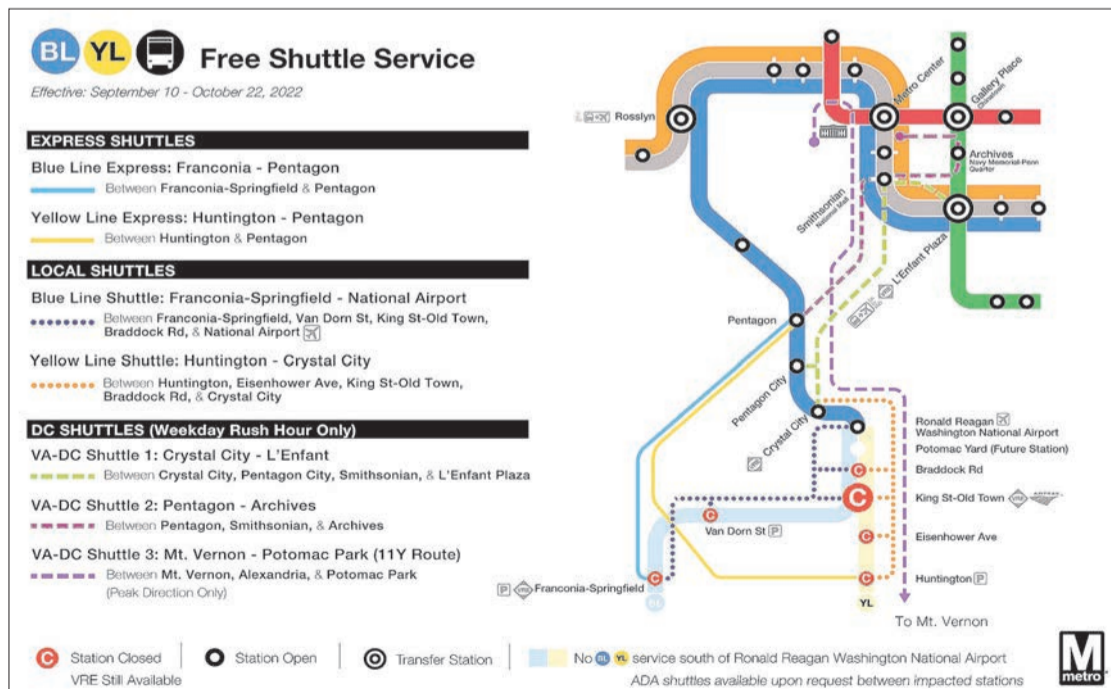
torical, architectural and conservation organizations, parks groups, civic associations, committed neighbors and political leaders. Committee members worked with local government authorities to establish an Historic Overlay District on the property as a measure to control development in case the property ended up being sold.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust stepped up to house the Save River Farm effort under its auspices, and the Northern Virginia Park Authority mobilized efforts to buy the property.

Local volunteers played a key part in keeping the public informed, involved and up to date about ongoing developments in

the struggle to protect the property. After a year-long battle, the property was taken off the market and AHS announced that River Farm will continue as the AHS headquarters and remain open to the public. This outstanding work in conservation resulted in the protection of this beautiful historic property.

“That this committee coalesced in the height of the pandemic and organized a monumental effort to generate support to save River Farm is quite a feat,” said Debbie Lewis, president of the Garden Club of Virginia. “They combined strategy with passion to strike up a great band of like-minded partners.”



Between Sept. 10 and Oct. 22, all Metro stations south of National Airport will be closed with alternative transportation provided through free shuttle services.

## Metro Shutdown Begins Sept. 10

All Alexandria stations to close through Oct. 22.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Commuters throughout Northern Virginia should be prepared for a longer commute as rail services in Alexandria will be impacted for the next several months as major construction begins Sept. 10 on the Blue and Yellow Metro lines.

The construction will rehabilitate the Yellow Line tunnel and bridge between the Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza stations and connect the new Potomac Yard Station to the mainline rail system. During this time, all six stations south of Reagan National Airport on the Yellow and Blue lines will be closed from Sept. 10 through Oct. 22.

The Yellow Line tunnel and bridge rehabilitation work will require the Yellow Line to remain closed through May of 2023.

Phase one of the construction  
SEE ALL ALEXANDRIA, PAGE 9



McEneaney Associates has always had one motto in mind... not to be the biggest, but the best. For more than 40 years, our Associates have lived in and supported Alexandria, helping to build our town into the thriving community it is today. To learn more about our Associates and our firm, visit [www.WeAreAlexandria.com](http://www.WeAreAlexandria.com)

#WeAreAlexandria



**Hollin Brook Park | \$899,000**

Stately brick center-hall colonial on an impeccable lot! On the main level, there is a formal living, dining & kitchen area with office space, a sitting room with doors that lead to a large flagstone patio, and a bright sunroom. 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths. 7809 Evening Lane  
**Tracy Dunn 571.212.3658**  
[www.tracybdunn.com](http://www.tracybdunn.com)



OPEN SAT 9/10, 2-4PM

**Wessynton | \$875,000**

Rarely available Meadow model! Mid-century modern. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths. Open floor plan, 3-level split, generous room sizes, huge basement, attached 1-car garage. Awesome HOA amenities! Located just off the GW Parkway, Mt. Vernon. 3318 Wessynton Way  
**Cindy Clemmer 703.966.0403**  
[www.ClemmerAndSchuckHomes.com](http://www.ClemmerAndSchuckHomes.com)



OPEN SAT 9/10 & SUN 9/11, 1-3PM

**Annandale | \$799,900**

4 bedroom, 3 full bath home on a wooded lot in the sought-after Truro community. Fabulous mid-century modern home with a wood-burning fireplace & deck. Primary bedroom with en-suite bath. Lower level bedroom, bath, kitchenette. 2-car garage. 4020 Iva Ln  
**Jen Walker 703.675.1566**  
[www.JenWalker.com](http://www.JenWalker.com)



OPEN SUN 9/11, 2-4PM

**Belle Haven on the Green | \$769,900**

Offered in the prestigious enclave of Belle Haven on the Green, this carefully curated update backs to the Belle Haven neighborhood. Featuring four finished levels and two primary suites, this garage unit is move-in ready. 1827 Duffield Lane  
**Janet Caterson Price 703.622.5984**  
[www.JanetPriceHomes.com](http://www.JanetPriceHomes.com)



OPEN SAT 9/10 & SUN 9/11, 2-4PM

**Springfield | \$729,900**

Gorgeous single-family home with 4 bedrooms and oversized carport in West Springfield High School pyramid. Renovated kitchen and bath with quartz countertops, multi-level patio and more! This home is truly a gem, don't miss it! 7910 Harwood Place  
**Margot Lynn 703.973.3722**  
[www.TheLynnTeamRE.com](http://www.TheLynnTeamRE.com)



OPEN SUN 9/11, 2-4PM

**Oakton | \$249,900**

Bright & sunny 1-bedroom Vistas of Vienna condo features a large living room, separate dining room, brick-walled sun porch, eat-in kitchen, in-unit laundry, and off-street parking. Expansive bedroom with walk-in closet & updated full bath. 10214 Bushman Dr #112  
**Wendy Santantonio 703.625.8802**  
[www.WendySantantonio.com](http://www.WendySantantonio.com)



**Olde Belhaven Towne  
 \$915,000**

Exquisite townhome in sought-after community across from Bell Haven C.C. 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, light hardwood floors, & updated kitchen with quartz countertops. Lower level rec room with gas fireplace, sunroom addition, & two patios. 6315 Fort Hunt Road

**Rebecca McCullough 571.384.0941**  
[www.RebeccaMcCullough.com](http://www.RebeccaMcCullough.com)

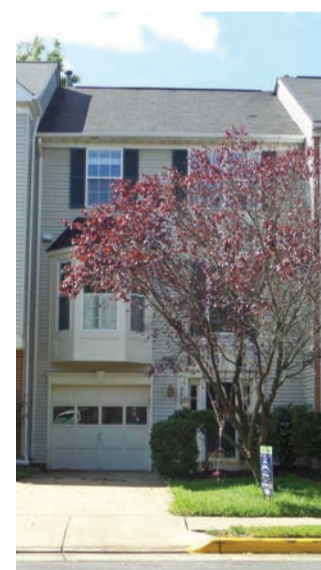


OPEN SUN 9/11, 2-4PM

**Governors Grove  
 \$750,000**

Stunning 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath with a three-story bump-out! Open concept main level, two gas fireplaces, two back decks, two-car garage, two walk-in closets in primary, freshly painted, hardwoods on main, new carpet in bedrooms. Must see! 5661 Governors Pond Circle

**Heidi Burkhardt 703.217.6009**  
[www.RealtorHeidiB.com](http://www.RealtorHeidiB.com)



**Kingstowne  
 \$659,900**

Lovely garage townhome with 3 bedrooms, 2.55 baths, family room with access to the fenced back yard and patio, spacious kitchen with a sunny breakfast nook, living and dining area has a gas fireplace and opens to a large sunny deck. 6627 Kelsey Point Circle

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## Deer Archery Program Begins Sept. 10

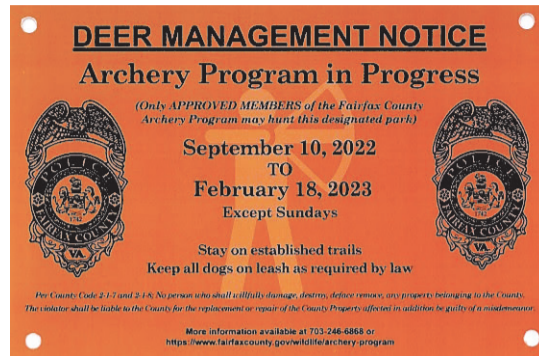
The Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program begins Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022, and runs through Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023.

Under the oversight of the Fairfax County Police Department, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Park Authority, NOVA Parks, and other public landholders, the archery program is conducted in parks and other locations throughout Fairfax County.

The archery program began in FY 2010 and is part of an integrated Deer Management Program to reduce and stabilize the white-tailed deer population in Fairfax County in efforts to minimize safety and health hazards and other impacts related to an overabundance of deer. These impacts include deer-vehicle collisions, potential spread of diseases, and environmental damage attributed to deer that can impact the ecosystem. The program was approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2000 and is recognized as a safe and efficient method of deer population control by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Because of its track record of safety, archery is a preferred deer management method in Fairfax County. Archery is a compatible use with residential areas and community parks, allowing for deer population management in urban and suburban areas. Since Virginia began tracking hunting injuries in 1959, no bystanders have been injured by an archer hunting deer anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Fairfax County Deer Management Program is conducted on approximately 100 properties countywide. Last year, 726 deer were harvested through the use of archery by hunters in the county program. The archery program accounted for 94% of the total deer harvests in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program.

Fairfax County's Archery Program standards require that all archers meet state hunter licensing, education and safety requirements and must pass qualifications to demonstrate skill and marksmanship, in addition to carrying program identification.



Signs are posted in archery program areas, at park entrances and trailheads.



Archers are also required to have completed additional training through the International Bowhunter Education Program to participate in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program. All archers must also pass a criminal background check to be eligible for the program. Only hunters that have gone through this screening and selection process



Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program begins Sept. 10, 2022, and runs through Feb. 18, 2023.

with the Fairfax County Police Department may hunt within the designated parks. All archers must comply with state and federal game laws and regulations, local ordinances, and program

rules.

Parks remain open to the public during the archery program. Florescent orange signs are posted in parks where hunting is authorized. Hunters can only take shots at deer from elevated tree stands; hunting from the ground level is prohibited in county parks. Tree stands must not be located closer than

100 feet from property lines or closer than 50 feet from established park trails. Archers are not allowed on private property without permission by the owner or tenant. Archers are approved to hunt at assigned sites Monday through Saturday during legal hunting hours, 30 minutes prior to sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

No hunting is allowed on Sundays in county parks.

More information about the Fairfax County Deer Management Program can be found at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/deer-management-program>.

## Here Come the Senior Olympians

The opening ceremonies of the 40th Northern Virginia Senior Olympics will take place Saturday, Sept. 10 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 S. 2nd St. Arlington. NVSO Chair Herb Levitan of Arlington, said, "The public is invited to attend the opening starting at 9:30 a.m. and stay for seven track events that will follow."

The annual competition is made possible by the sponsorship of eight Northern Virginia jurisdictions, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun,

**The oldest participant is Vera Punke of Arlington, age 107, who is registered to play duplicate bridge.**

Fauquier and Prince William. Participants in NVSO must reside in one of the jurisdictions.

Competition will take place at 25 different venues throughout Northern Virginia and continue through Saturday, Sept. 14. Levitan reported that 831 senior adults have set a new record for participation. They will be competing in 70-plus events.

Pickleball, track, field and table tennis have garnered the most registrants. The oldest participant is Vera Punke of Arlington,

age 107 who is registered to play duplicate bridge, said Levitan. The complete schedule of events is on the NVSO website, [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us). Results of each event will be posted on the website as the competition continues. All events are open to the public.

"We are also fortunate to have 15 Gold Patrons this year who have contributed \$1,000 each," said Levitan.

The Patrons are Aarondale Assisted Living, Advanced Hearing Services, Anthem Health-

Keepers Plus, Ashleigh of Lansdowne, Chesterbrook Residences, Goodwin Living, Greenspring Retirement Community, Facial Plastic Surgery Center, Heatherwood Retirement Community, The Jefferson, Koons Toyota Arlington, Paul Spring Independent and Assisted Living, The Wellington by Lake Manassas and Westminster at Lake Ridge.

NVSO is a non-profit-C-3 organization and 100% of money donated is used entirely for NVSO activities.

For more information, check the website [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us) or email [nvso1982@gmail.com](mailto:nvso1982@gmail.com).



# Pokeweed: Beautiful and Misunderstood

Native pokeweed is beneficial to wildlife; birds feast on the berries.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

It may have the word “weed” in its name, but American pokeweed (*Phytolacca America*) is a common native plant in northern Virginia that can grow to ten feet tall. Generally, a weed is a plant that humans may consider undesirable in a particular location, but taxonomically, the term “weed” has no botanical significance, says Wikipedia.

In the height of summer, pokeweed plants sport small white flowers which become berries or what botanists call, fruit. This herbaceous, perennial plant has clusters or racemes of white blossoms which turn into green fruit that become glossy purple, almost black, as they mature. Especially stunning are the plant’s magenta-colored stems. The partially-hollow stems turn from green to bright magenta in late summer and fall and support drooping clusters of the ripening dark purple berries.

A pokeweed’s taproot can be over a foot long and four inches thick and the plants resprout from the taproot in the spring. These plants usually grow in open areas, forest edge habitats, in fence rows, under power lines and in similar areas. In Northern Virginia, pokeweed comes up along roadsides and in some woody areas, but the plants are often cut down because people, lawn companies and maintenance crews view them as an unsightly nuisance weed.

Beware!

Birds feast on the berries, but people should not. “The fruit may be lethal if eaten,” says the American Horticultural Society’s Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. In fact, all parts of the plant are poisonous to humans, most authorities say,

## Poison Control of the National Capital Area

“Poison Control gets a lot of calls about children who ate purple berries. Usually, they picked pokeberries growing in their yards. The tell-tale clue is purple stains in and around the mouth, on their hands, and on their clothing. ...

“How can you prevent children from eating pokeberries?”

The best way to keep very young children safe is to watch them closely outdoors.

Consider digging up pokeweed plants or cutting them down, though that might be difficult when the plant is large.

If you find pokeweed in your yard, you might consider keeping it cut down when it reappears next year.

Children should be taught never to eat wild berries unless they first check with an adult.

If your child eats pokeberries, rinse out his or her mouth and give some water or milk to drink. Then, use the webPOISONCONTROL online tool for guidance or call Poison Control 24 hours a day at 1-800-222-1222. You will be asked some questions about your child and what he or she ate. Then, you’ll be told what to do. Often, watching a child at home will be enough. If emergency room care is needed, you will be directed to the emergency room”.

Rose Ann Gould Soloway, RN, BSN, MSEd, DABAT emerita

Clinical Toxicologist

<https://www.poison.org/>

especially the roots.

Nevertheless, in some parts of the country, especially the South, some people eat young shoots in the spring after boiling them at least twice and discarding the cooking water each time and then sauteing them until they are tender. It’s called poke salad or sallet. The narrator of a Southern Foodways film by Joe York says that in early spring, pokeweed leaves are used as other greens like turnip greens and that they have lots of vitamins.

“American pokeweed has a long history in the United States,” reports the University of California’s weed science website. Native Americans and European settlers may have used it for medicinal

purposes. Some have used the berries as a clothing dye and a colorant for wine. Civil War soldiers likely made ink from the berries for writing. Some localities celebrate pokeweed, like Harlan County, Kentucky, which in June had its 67th Poke Sallet Festival.

If you are tempted to try pokeweed salad in the spring, follow reliable cooking instructions very carefully. Let this valuable native plant do

what it does best – provide bright, magenta hues to the landscape and give the birds a banquet, birds like robins, cedar waxwings, warblers, eastern bluebirds, northern cardinals, northern mockingbirds and red-bellied woodpeckers, among others.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Pokeweed fruits developing.

### It’s Inspirational

In July, Ada Limón, of Lexington, Kentucky, became the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States. In a July 27 PBS News Hour interview with Jeffrey Brown, she talked about connecting to nature, including the pokeweed on her land. “I love that it’s called pokeweed, right?” she said. “Like, that’s just a fabulous name. And you have got birch trees and black oaks. But that, to me, is -- that’s so much more musical right off the bat than ‘tree.’”

Elvis Presley and Tony Joe White up the plant to music in a song dubbed “Polk Salad Annie.” In 1970, Elvis sang that pokeweed’s a plant that grows “down South” and “looks something like turnip greens.” Annie’s daddy was “lazy and no ‘count” and “her mama was a workin’ on a chain gang.” Down in Louisiana, Annie picked a “mess of it. That’s about all they had to eat.” She “hung it on the clothesline dried it out and smoked it. She made the alligator look tame.”



This series shows the plant stems becoming magenta and the fruit developing.



# Catalytic Converter Thefts Are Up in Fairfax County

By MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

**W**hen the family car is still out in the driveway in the morning, it doesn't necessarily mean a theft has not occurred. Thieves are now targeting the catalytic converter underneath the car as a quick way to make a few bucks, costing the owner hundreds of dollars when it comes time to replace it.

In 2021, there were 409 reported catalytic converter thefts in Fairfax County, and 119 so far this year, Fairfax County Police said.

The thefts are rising nationwide but at the FCPD, there is a new catalytic converter task force to address this crime spree, consisting of Criminal Investigations Division and Special Investigations Division. They look for patterns and keep up with theft numbers to try and get an edge on the culprits using a multi-faceted and proactive approach, said Sgt. Lance Hamilton. "We've had directed patrols in the County to deter and apprehend those responsible, put out new educational information to inform the community, collaborated with media members on joint messaging, and engaged the public directly to help stop these thefts from happening," Hamilton said.

On a FCPD catalytic converter video, police were called to the scene on Loisdale Road in the Springfield area last winter and three men had a jack, and ran when the police arrived but were caught shortly after.

At Wright's Complete Automotive in the Springfield area, they've had drivers come in to get the catalytic converter replaced because theirs was stolen. It can run anywhere from \$500-3000 because many times, when a thief takes it off, other parts of the muffler system get damaged and the whole muffler system has to be replaced. "It can be pretty expensive," said the Wright's mechanic.

Catalytic converters are designed to turn harmful exhaust emissions into less harmful gasses, using precious metals like platinum, palladium or rhodium in this process. These metals can be a valuable item to steal and resell. This makes hybrid cars a good target for thieves because hybrid cars don't run as hot as gas-powered vehicles, so their catalytic converters offer an even greater supply of precious metals. Prius, Tacoma, Lexus SUVs, Accords and vans are some of the most targeted cars for catalytic-converter thefts.

According to Allstate Insurance, vehicles manufactured after 1974 have catalytic converters, so there are a lot of cars on the road that might appeal to catalytic converter thieves. However, thieves often target taller vehicles, like pickup trucks or SUVs, because they can easily fit under the vehicle to access the catalytic converter.

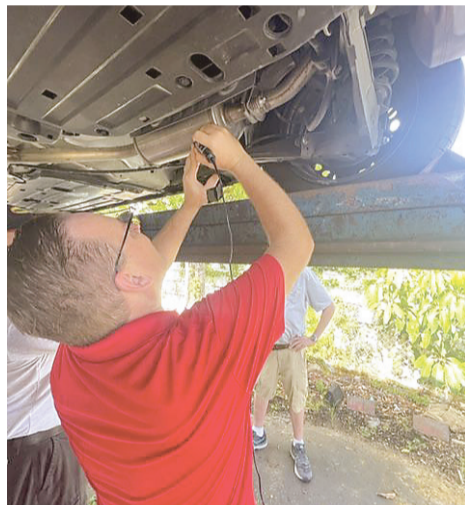
There is a way to fight back though. Earlier this spring, the Crime Prevention Unit from the Sully District Police Station partnered with G&C Tire and Auto Service in Chantilly, to apply free anti-theft labels to people's catalytic converters. These are designated as ultra-destruct labels, laser cut with a unique

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PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

At Midas, some of their stores are holding events to etch an identification mark on the catalytic converter to thwart the thieves.



The county catalytic converter task force recommends a tag for the converters.

Consider these tips to help protect your car from catalytic converter theft:  
Source: Allstate Insurance

Know if your car is a likely target: hybrids, SUVs and trucks have valuable or easily removable catalytic converters. Etch your license plate number or VIN onto your catalytic converter — this may help alert a scrap dealer that it was stolen and make it easier to identify the owner.

Park in well-lit areas close to public entrances, regularly move your car's spot or use a closed garage.

Install an anti-theft device  
Install motion-sensitive lights and cameras in your parking area

Paint your catalytic converter to deter buyers — some local police departments even offer free programs for painting

code and the URL of a secure, accredited database - the International Security Register (ISR) — on to the catalytic converter. It will break into pieces if an attempt is made to remove them. In addition, a fluid that etches into metal is applied to the labels so that, even if they are removed, the code and URL will remain clearly readable.

Certain Midas dealers have been etching identification on the catalytic converters during their "etching events." At these events, they etch an ID into the converter for identification, not necessarily for any kind of action if they are removed.

# 20th Annual ALEXANDRIA OLD TOWN (previously on King St.) ART FESTIVAL

Sept. 17th - 18th  
Sat./Sun. 10am - 5pm

Outdoors at John Carlyle Square  
300 John Carlyle Square  
Alexandria, VA



Bashar & Roula Jarjour

FREE ADMISSION





## 988: It's a Lifesaver

BY JOSEPH GETCH  
CEO, PRS

**S**uicide is a public health issue in our communities which we are growing in our capacity to openly discuss. When someone in your own life dies by suicide, the pain and grief can feel immeasurable. In my work, I hear from many individuals that share their personal stories of how a friend or family member died by suicide. In July, a friend of one of my daughters died by suicide, and I saw firsthand how it affected her.

As a culture, we are increasingly more conscious and accepting of discussing mental health, environmental, and social challenges contributing to suicide. This is good news given that the stressors we face are high — especially as we continue to navigate through this pandemic era. In fact, data collected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows how vulnerable we are:

- ❖ Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10–34 and the 12th

leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

- ❖ 1.2 million adults attempt to end their lives each year

- ❖ 12.2 million adults have serious thoughts of suicide each year

We can all contribute to a suicide safer community by educating ourselves about improving mental wellness, talking openly about suicide and pain to help reduce the stigma and increase help seeking, and being a resource to family and friends by connecting them with services and supports. You can also get involved directly by supporting or volunteering with organizations like PRS.

During September—which is National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, it is a time when we reflect, educate, and remind about how to keep our loved ones and community safe from suicide through our #CallTextLive Campaign. Throughout the month, PRS will be offering tools, tips, resources, and volunteer opportunities. We encourage our community to visit our Facebook page and website ([www.prsinc.org/calltextlive](http://www.prsinc.org/calltextlive)) to engage.

One of the biggest ways each of us can help is

to make sure our loved ones and friends know there is a quick way to connect: 988, the new national suicide prevention number to link people with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors.

PRS operates the crisis call center for most of Virginia — including Northern Virginia — and is a national back-up center and core chat center for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. If someone in crisis reaches out, PRS trained crisis workers evaluate their call, help deescalate the crisis when possible, and work collaboratively with local jurisdictions to connect individuals to appropriate services.

Reaching out to a trained and empathetic person can ensure someone in crisis moves beyond their darkness moment. A call to a crisis hotline, 988, text to 988, or sending a chat via [988lifeline.org/chat](http://988lifeline.org/chat) can save a life. Throughout September, learn more about being a lifesaver by participating in our #CallTextLive campaign.

*Joseph Getch is CEO of PRS, a mental health nonprofit serving Virginia.*

## Help Ease Pain During Sickle Cell Awareness Month

**D**uring Sickle Cell Awareness Month in September, the American Red Cross emphasizes the importance of a diverse blood supply to help meet the needs of those with sickle cell disease — the most common inherited blood disorder in the U.S.

Sickle cell disease impacts more than 100,000 people across the country, most of whom are of African descent. Regular blood transfusions are critical to managing extreme pain and life-threatening complications faced by many. Unfortunately, they may develop an immune response against blood from donors that is not closely matched to their own. However, because most individuals who are Black have unique structures on their red blood cells that are not often found in other donor populations, 1 in 3 African American blood donors is a match for people with sickle cell disease.

Seasonal changes can trigger pain crises for those battling sickle cell — possibly increasing the need for lifesaving blood transfusions. As summer ends, book a time to give blood by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). As a thank-you, all who come to give through Sept. 18 will get an exclusive Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

### Life-threatening complications

Sickle cell disease distorts soft, round blood cells and turns them

hard and crescent-shaped, which can cause severe pain. “When cells harden, they can get caught in blood vessels, potentially leading to stroke and organ failure,” says Lisa Macaluso, Regional Donor Executive for the Red Cross in the DMV. “Transfusions provide healthy blood cells, unblocking blood vessels and delivering oxygen, minimizing crises patients with sickle cell may face.”

### Teanika Hoffman's Story

Teanika was diagnosed with Sickle Cell Type SC Disease around the age of two. By the time she was 10 years old she had already had four surgeries. And as part of the pre-operative care for each, she underwent a blood transfusion.

“I remember watching Sesame Street while being transfused and thinking I'm a big girl and I can handle this,” Teanika said. “But in reality, it was the blood transfusions—they were necessary to keep me alive on the operating table.”

Teanika remembers a turning point in her fight, the first time she experienced a severe sickle cell pain crisis. It occurred when she was in the fifth grade.

“I was in English class and remember raising my hand, but I couldn't describe what I was feeling or what was happening to my body,” Teanika said. “Somehow I was able to stand and walk to the hallway, but in the hallway I just collapsed. It was like time slowed down — and I'm not sure how I made it to the nurse's office, but I did.”

### Joined by Blood

To help ensure patients have the blood products they need, the American Red Cross is working with partners in the Black community to grow the number of blood donors who are Black through the sickle cell initiative, which launched in 2021. In the first year of the initiative, the number of first-time African American blood donors who gave with the Red Cross increased by 60%. In September and October 2022, the Red Cross is launching Joined by Blood, a fall component of the initiative where the Red Cross is teaming up with community organizations, like the National Pan-Hellenic Council and others, to host blood drives and inspire donors who are Black to give blood to support patients with sickle cell disease. To learn more, visit [RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood](http://RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood).

To find an upcoming blood donation opportunities, enter your

zip-code at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org)

### Testing for Sickle Cell Trait

At a time when health information has never been more important, the Red Cross is screening all blood, platelet and plasma donations from self-identified African American donors for the sickle cell trait. This additional screening will provide Black donors with an additional health insight and help the Red Cross identify compatible blood types more quickly to help patients with sickle cell disease. Donors can expect to receive sickle cell trait screening results, if applicable, within one to two weeks through the Red Cross Blood Donor App and the online donor portal at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org).

### How to Donate Blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

### Let Us Know Your View

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
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Mary Kimm  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Jeanne Theismann  
[jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Ken Moore  
Contributing Writer  
[kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com)

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

Helen Walutes  
Display Advertising, 703-778-9410  
[hwalutes@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:hwalutes@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Art/Design:  
Laurence Foong  
Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager:  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

A Connection Newspaper







Many new citizens have prepared for years to meet the stringent requirements to take the oath of citizenship.

## League of Women Voters Registers More Than 2,300 New Citizens in Northern Virginia

A cooperative effort by multiple local Leagues in the Northern Virginia area is underway to register new citizens at naturalization ceremonies.

Following a two-year break due to COVID-19, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) once again welcomed League of Women Voters (LWV) in-person participation at Northern Virginia's naturalization ceremonies. Since April, more than 160 local League volunteers have spent close to 600 hours registering over 2,300 new citizens.

Many of the new citizens have prepared for years to meet the stringent requirements to take the oath of citizenship, in which they commit to supporting and defending the Constitution and, when required by law, bearing arms, doing noncombatant service, and performing work of national importance under civilian direction. Before being allowed to take the oath, applicants for naturalization must have demonstrated an ability to read, write and speak basic English, good moral character and a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government, among other requirements.

In the words of one newly minted citizen, "I have worked and waited for this day for so long. And now I can vote as an American. What an honor." Another said, "In my old country, we could not vote – we had no voice. Now I have a voice and I want to use it. This is a great country – the best country."

Members from the Leagues of Fairfax Area, Arlington-Alexandria City, Falls Church City, Prince William-Fauquier Area, and Loudoun County all participated in the voter registration effort.

As the nation's largest and longest-standing grassroots voter registration organization, LWV volunteers across the country register hundreds of thousands of voters each year. For the second year, LWV of the Fairfax Area will be hosting voter registration events at each of Fairfax County's 21 public libraries on Sept. 20 in honor of National Voter Registration Day.

LWV volunteers will also provide information about voter registration and the Nov. 8

national election at the

- ❖ Sept. 10 Burke Center Festival,
- ❖ Sept. 17 Reston Multicultural Festival,
- ❖ Sept. 24-25 Merrifield-Mosaic District Fall Festival, and the
- ❖ Oct. 1 Vienna Oktoberfest.

For additional information about the LWV of the Fairfax Area, go to: [www.lwv-fairfax.org](http://www.lwv-fairfax.org).

In order to register to vote in Virginia, go to: [www.elections.virginia.gov](http://www.elections.virginia.gov)

*The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.*



For the second year, LWV of the Fairfax Area will be hosting voter registration events at each of Fairfax County's 21 public libraries on Sept. 20 in honor of National Voter Registration Day.



# FALL 2022

**SEPT 9-18** Old Town Cocktail Week

**SEPT 17** 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival (at John Carlyle Square)

**SEPT 24** 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour

**OCT (Nightly)** Alexandria Colonial Tours' Ghost & Graveyard Tour

**OCT 1** 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Art on the Avenue

**OCT 15-23** Old Town OysterFest

**OCT 22-23** Fall Harvest Festival at Mount Vernon

**OCT 30** Del Ray Halloween Parade



For more fall events and activities, check out: [VisitAlexandria.com/Fall](http://VisitAlexandria.com/Fall)

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PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/GAZETTE PACKET

Acro net training. It takes a team to make one acrobat propel another. Because it is such a big net, they would not go very high if it were one person jumping. It must be done precisely, with a team getting the bounce timing correct. The team can propel the acrobat up to 45 feet in the air.

# Behind-the-Scenes at Cirque du Soleil KURIOS

## Reopening the Cabinet of Curiosities in Tysons.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

**S**poiler alert. Before you take your seat at KURIOS, know you may want to run away and join Cirque du Soleil. It is billed as a contemporary circus of “rule breakers and moment makers in a world of wonder and magic.”

Cirque du Soleil “KURIOS-Cabinet of Curiosities” is touring under the Big Top in the round at Lerner Square, 8025 Galleria Drive, Tysons, through Sept. 25. Produced by Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group, based in Montreal, Canada, the company is rebuilding its business after suspending all 44 shows in response to the COVID-19 shutdown. Gradually the company reopened in the summer of 2021. It is currently recapturing revenues by providing live entertainment globally, with over 20 shows, some of which are touring, such as KURIOS, and others of which are resident.

“We are thrilled that Cirque du Soleil is returning to Washington, D.C. for the first time since 2019,” said Mike Newquist, president of Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group’s Touring Show Division. Now more than ever, being reunited with our incredible audiences means the world (to us).”

The first thing through the gate for this reporter was a COVID test, and with its negative result, onto the entrance tent. What would follow would be a tour of the artistic tent featuring wardrobe, training, workouts, and warm-up, and a stop in the 2,500-seat performance tent to view the bounce and rebound of acro net training.

According to Becky Williams, the senior publicist at Cirque du Soleil, KURIOS three tents require a six-day setup and two-day teardown. There is staff for nearly every job. The kitchen team serves between 300



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/GAZETTE PACKET

Costumes are custom-made and fitted

and 400 meals a day. A front-of-house team welcomes guests. Engineers, electricians, IT technicians, riggers, and more ensure the special effects and world-class acrobatic feats go on.

Performers and others hired by Cirque du Soleil come from across the world. Outside the performance tent, the flags on top are all the countries the staff presents. Generally, the artists specialize in various disciplines. They are the athletes, clowns, dancers, action sports athletes, and musicians. Arias said that the entire staff to produce KURIOS is about 120.

Rachel Williams is KURIOS’s artistic director. “It does take a village of people to put this show on, and every single one of them does it because they have passion,” she said.

Touring shows, like KURIOS, typically perform 270 to 310 times a year. Artists train on average 12 hours a week in addition. They are on-site for approximately 9-weeks each tour. Lodging is a private room at a hotel, or staff can rent a home or apartment through a company like Airbnb, generally going in together. The company will ship up to three suitcases for each person.

This reporter witnessed some of the work that goes into the two-hour theatrical-style show that immerses the audience in the explosive and strangely confounding curio cabinet of an industrial-age inventor, the Seeker. His worldly characters like Klara, The Kurios, and Mr. Microcosmos enter the Seeker’s improvised mechanical world, which is set in the late 1800s.

The Seeker’s curiosities come to life one

by one through the power of his imagination, and they create a world of curiosity “when anything seems possible.” When the audience enters, they should look for the clock set to 11:11 and double-check it when they leave.

The original music by two composers sets the style and tone of the show’s steampunk-inspired universe. “The musicians perform everything from Mozart to a little bit of techno during different points in the show, but there is a coherent theme that attaches to the story,” Williams said.

The wardrobe department of KURIOS is housed in the artist tent along with a gym, performance equipment where the cast practice their routines, and a lounge area.

A look at the process of maintaining the

SEE KURIOS, PAGE 10

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



# FCPD Names New Head of Public Affairs

**K**atherine Hayek is the new Director of the Fairfax County Police Department's Public Affairs Bureau, effective immediately.



Katherine Hayek

In this role, Hayek will work with Chief Davis to develop and implement an overall communications strategy and direct efforts to expand and amplify the FCPD's standing as a premier police department in the nation. She will be responsible for providing oversight and direction to Public Affairs Bureau staff, establishing priorities, developing core messaging,

strengthening public relations, web presence, internal messaging, and media.

There was no word in the initial release about Hayek's appointment about a process for community involvement in guiding the "overall communications strategy."

Prior to joining FCPD, Hayek served as spokesperson and communications advisor for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's Washington Division. There, she developed and implemented award-winning strategic communi-

cation plans, media relations programs, communications support for area partners, and broadened agency media coverage – best practices of which are now used across the country.

Hayek received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in both Strategy and Leadership from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. A Lebanese American and D.C. Metro native, she is looking forward to working back in her home area, after spending over a decade working in Federal law enforcement.

## Mount Vernon District Station

**ROBBERY:** 7900 block of Audubon Avenue, 8/26/22, 12:53 a.m. The victim arranged a meeting to sell property through an online marketplace application. Two men approached the victim. One man displayed a handgun and took the property. No injuries were reported.

**COMMERCIAL ROBBERY:** 8500 Richmond Highway (Shell Gas Station), 8/28/22, 12:20 a.m. Two juvenile males entered the business, displayed a handgun and took merchandise. The victim was treated for minor injuries.

**COMMERCIAL ROBBERY:** 5638 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (7-Eleven), 8/31/22, 6:05 a.m. A man attempted to take merchandise without paying. When confronted by a store employee, the man assaulted him and left in a vehicle. No merchandise was taken. No injuries were reported.

**STOLEN VEHICLE WITH APPREHEN-**

**SION, PURSUIT and PIT:** Richmond Highway/Fort Hunt Road, 8/31/22, 4:50 p.m. Officers saw a stolen 2017 Nissan Rogue enter Fairfax County on Richmond Highway near Fort Hunt Road. The Nissan was reportedly involved in a carjacking in Prince George's County, Maryland. Officers attempted a traffic stop and a pursuit ensued. During the pursuit, a precision immobilization technique (PIT) was successfully conducted, disabling the vehicle. The four occupants were arrested and treated for injuries that were not considered life threatening. One officer was treated for minor injuries. Two firearms and narcotics were recovered from the vehicle. The driver, a 20-year-old man from Maryland, was charged with grand larceny-auto theft, possession with intent to distribute marijuana, disregard police command to stop and driving without a valid license.

An 18-year-old from Maryland was charged with grand larceny-auto theft and possession with intent to distribute marijuana. Two 19-year-old from Maryland, were charged with possession with intent to distribute marijuana and receiving stolen goods.

### FRANCONIA DISTRICT STATION

**ROBBERY:** 6844 Franconia Road (Tobacco Hut), 8/27/22, 11:48 a.m. A man assaulted the store employee and took money. The victim sustained minor injuries.

**COMMERCIAL BURGLARY:** 9308 Gunston Cove Road (Sunoco), 8/29/22, 2:43 a.m. Someone forced entry into the business, damaged property and took merchandise.

**ROBBERY:** 7600 block of Highland Woods Court, 9/1/22, 4:13 p.m. A man assaulted the victim, took property and ran away. No injuries were reported.

## All Alexandria Stations to Close Through Oct. 22

FROM PAGE 1

tion will run through Oct. 22 with phase two taking place Oct. 23 through May of 2023. Free bus shuttles, free parking and additional alternatives will be provided through both phases of the station closures. Affected stations include Braddock Road, King Street-Old Town, Eisenhower Ave., Huntington, Van Dorn Street and Franconia-Springfield.

Yellow Line service will be closed throughout both phases of construction with trains being rerouted through Rosslyn. Yellow Line stations north of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station will be served by the Blue or Green lines.

Free Metroway bus service and parking will be provided at the Franconia-Springfield, Huntington and Van Dorn Street stations through Oct. 22 with the non-rider parking fee waived at the Franconia-Springfield station through summer 2023.

In September and October, Virginia Railway Express will offer free service in the affected areas. Virginia Railway Express service is

available at Franconia-Springfield, King Street-Old Town (VRE Station Alexandria), Crystal City and L'Enfant Plaza stations.

### Phase One – Sept. 10 to Oct. 22

Seven free shuttles will be offered during Phase One, including local and express shuttles in Virginia and three limited-stop shuttles crossing the Potomac River. The shuttles will be available during all Metrorail operating hours.

Blue Line shuttles will provide service every 10-20 minutes between Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn Street, King Street-Old Town, Braddock Road and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Yellow Line shuttles will operate between Huntington, Eisenhower Avenue, King Street-Old Town, Braddock Road and Crystal City stations every 10 to 15 minutes. Yellow Line shuttles will not stop at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Express shuttles will be available from 4:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekends. A Franconia-Pentagon Express service will operate between the Franconia-Springfield and

Pentagon stations every 6 minutes as will a Huntington-Pentagon Express between the Huntington and Pentagon stations.

### Phase Two - Oct. 23 to May 2023

Beginning Oct. 23, all rail stations south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport will reopen with Blue or Green lines serving the Yellow Line stations.

Metro will continue to provide three limited-stop free shuttles crossing the Potomac River during weekday rush hours only.

Virginia Railway Express service will continue at Franconia-Springfield, King Street-Old Town (VRE Station Alexandria), Crystal City and L'Enfant Plaza stations.

The Potomac Yard Station will be located at the southern end of National Landing on Metro's Yellow and Blue lines between the existing Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Braddock Road stations. It is expected to open later this fall.

More information and a trip planning calculator are available at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com)

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# Behind-the-Scenes at Cirque du Soleil KURIOS

PHOTOS BY MATHEW TSAN

FROM PAGE 8

lavish costumes provided a glimpse into the world of the untraditional big top that defies convention.

All designer costumes are custom-made in Montreal, three for each performer. They must be washed and dried after each use of the up to three daily shows, six days a week. Because they are on stage so frequently, even the technicians wear costumes. Seven people work as permanent staff in the wardrobe department. The company hires two locals to launder and iron.

"We don't only have costumes as traditional fabric items that you wear over your body, we have props that artists wear, so they are considered part of the wardrobe department, including our big robot," Williams said. Other examples would be the Winch and Plunger.

Because so many other materials and processes go beyond what a wardrobe department traditionally uses, it takes much more craftsmanship than just sewing skills. Milliners and textile artists could be seen pre-

paring costumes for performances.

The cast is taught how to apply their makeup, an integral part of their costumes. It can take anywhere from five minutes to two hours, depending on the steps they learn in Montreal.

According to Rachel Lancaster, artistic director of KURIOS, every Cirque du Soleil show is created by a different team of people. "We have five big top shows, but they are all different." Lancaster is a former artist who decided to leave the stage and make a career transition. Opportunities are offered to support artists throughout their careers with Cirque du Soleil.

For acrobat Anne who performs on a bicycle, it is about doing things at the right time for every trick. "It is about being calm and concentrating enough to trust that you have to wait for the right moment," she said.

For ticket information, visit <https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/usa/washington/kurios/buy-tickets> To view the official trailer, visit <https://youtu.be/RXSpuKlWeVs> [youtu.be].



  
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## NEWS

# Husband Charged With Murder of Wife

**Preliminarily, detectives believe James Johnson, 62, shot his wife before shooting himself.**

Detectives from Fairfax County Police Major Crimes Bureau are investigating a domestic-related homicide that occurred inside a home in the Mount Vernon section of Fairfax County.

At approximately 3:19 a.m. on Sept. 4, officers responded to the 7900 block of Central Park Circle for a report of a shooting. Shortly after arriving, officers heard a gunshot and entered the residence to find Daphne Saunders-Johnson, 59, and James Johnson, 62, suffering from gunshot wounds. The married couple lived in the home and were both taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. Saunders-Johnson was pronounced deceased at the hospital. Johnson remains at the hospital in critical but stable condition.

Preliminarily, detectives be-

lieve Johnson shot his wife before shooting himself. A firearm was located within the home. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will complete an autopsy to confirm the manner and cause of Saunders-Johnson's death.

After consultation with the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney, Johnson was charged with second degree murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Johnson will be transferred to the Adult Detention Center upon his release from the hospital.

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Division of the Department of Family Services coordinates resources for people experiencing domestic violence. The 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline is 703-360-7273; TTY 711



### SEALED BID SALE SALE OF REAL ESTATE 8846 Ox Road Lorton, VIRGINIA PMI 6798

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in the office of the Northern Virginia District Right of Way and Utilities Division located at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030, until, but no later than, September 27, 2022 for the following property:

Wooded lot, located at 8846 Ox Road (Tax Map #1062-02-0001C) in the Springfield Magisterial District of Fairfax County, on the corner of Route 123 and Rommel Drive. The lot consists of 0.4484 acre, more or less, land, is relatively level at an elevated grade with a slight slope towards the rear of the property. Percs for a conventional three bedroom septic system.

The value placed on this parcel is \$298,000.00.

Employees of VDOT, their immediate families or any person employed with the valuation and/or acquisition of this property are ineligible to bid. The property is being sold "as is" with conveyance by deed without warranty. For further information and proposals, contact VDOT at the above address or call Jordan Cheresnowsky at (703) 259-2971.

## 2022-2023 NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

THE CONNECTION  
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Our annual Newcomer's and Community Guides, for each of our 8 communities, provides inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, their real power players, how to get involved and more. Inside you'll find information about local history, schools, parks, libraries, local people, elected officials, county/city offices, how decisions are made, and other vital community information.

This year's guide will also include a SENIOR LIVING section. We'll cover topics like local senior services, senior villages, cultural and social activities like Senior Olympics, education, jobs and volunteering.

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# Off the Menu: Restaurant News and Notes

BY HOPE NELSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

**F**rom grand openings to final closures, September is a season of change in Alexandria's restaurant scene.

## Elizabeth's Counter Shuts Its Doors; Railbird to Open This Winter

Effective immediately, Alexandrians will need to find another spot for their doughnut fix: Elizabeth's Counter, formerly Sugar Shack, closed for good on Aug. 28.

**APPETITE** "After making it through the pandemic we have determined that our hand-made donut model is not well suited to the current economic realities of the restaurant business," the company said in a statement.

But all is not lost: This winter, the company is planning on reopening under the name of Railbird Kitchen, bringing along a new concept featuring "comfort food" with both traditional and vegan options.

## King Street's Handover Becomes Handover by the Slice

From sushi to pizza, it's a makeover for the restaurant formerly known as The Handover. Emerging from a period of transition, Handover by the Slice is opening its doors with offers of pizza by the slice for hungry Alexandrians and assorted visitors.

Upstairs, the King's Ransom will remain as it has been, offering up classy cocktails and light bites.

## Mackie's Closes for Good

Mackie's, the venerable local pub and grill midway up King Street, has closed its doors for the final time. The restaurant, located at 907 King, closed for good on Aug. 30. Known for its steaks and burgers as well as its "Cheers"-like atmosphere up front, the restaurant was certainly a locals' hangout, generating a faithful following over its years of service.

"Thank you to all who have loved and laughed with us," the staff posted on social media for their final evening in business.

*Award-winning columnist Hope Nelson is author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).*



That's a wrap. No more doughnuts at Elizabeth's Counter.

## CALENDAR

### CHECK OUT THESE PLANT CLINICS

The Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 203 E. Oxford Ave, Alexandria is open on Saturdays from 8:30-11:15 a.m., and will operate through September 24.

The Alexandria Old Town Farmers Market Plant Clinic, located at 301 King St., Alexandria, operates on Saturdays from 7:00 - 9:30 a.m., through September 24.

### NOW THRU 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.

### 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 en-



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.**

joying 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.

### 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](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

### 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.

### THURSDAY/SEPT. 15

Debbly Brisker Burk is featured artist at Nepenthe Gallery ART + WINE + CHEESE. Debbly's recent work (that is currently at Nepenthe!) "Surf's Up" earned Debbly the recognition in Art Folio's 2022 listing of "world's most dynamic artists." ART + WINE + CHEESE every Thursday at Nepenthe Gallery from 6-7:30 pm. 571-347-7961 [www.nepenthegallery.com](http://www.nepenthegallery.com)

### THURSDAY/SEPT. 15

**Old Town Art Walk.** At various locations in Old Town Alexandria. Enjoy a self-guided tour of Old Town Alexandria and explore the fine art and studio crafts found in art galleries and boutique shops on the third Thursday of each month, May to October. The stroll is a great activity after an early dinner,

or before enjoying a meal at one of Old Town Alexandria's restaurants. The Old Town Art Walk is presented by the Old Town Business Association.

### SATURDAY, SUNDAY SEPT. 24, 25

The Annual Civil War Books, Relics and Memorabilia Show will be held at the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22031, on Saturday and Sunday Sept. 24 and 25, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. both days. Admission is \$5.00 per person. Vendors are welcome.

For information, call Bud Mayo, 703-389-1505 or [mayo5304@cox.net](mailto:mayo5304@cox.net)

### 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](http://www.Birchmere.com).

### SEPTEMBER

**Fri. 2: Third Annual DANNY GATTON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION** featuring Redd Volkaert, David Chappell, Daryl Davis, John Previti, Dave Elliot, Steve Wolf, Anthony Pirog, Big Joe Maher, Pete Ragusa, Tommy Lepson, Steve Windsor, Bruce Swaim, Chris Battistone, Chris Watling, Rick Whitehead \$39.50  
**Sat. 3: Raheem DeVaughn \$79.50 SOLD OUT!**  
**Sun. 4: Raheem DeVaughn \$79.50**  
**Thu. 8: Blue Oyster Cult \$85.00**  
**Fri. 9: Adriana Calcanhotto \$45.00**







## And Now We Wait



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When my sister-in-law Vanessa and I were first requested to attend a "family meeting" with the chief attending physician in SICU, the surgeon originally scheduled to perform the Colo-rectal surgery on Richard, the consulting oncologist, and the head of Palliative Care at the hospital, Richard's recovery was far from certain. Still, the hospital felt it timely and prudent to get feedback from the patient's immediate family.

Basically, they wanted to know what kind of person Richard was/what mattered to him. They were trying to gain an understanding from us – since Richard was unable then to express/indicate even his wishes concerning what he was willing to endure, risk and possibly live with should he recover from the surgery, a surgery which was fraught with danger and whose success, given the size and location of the tumor was hardly guaranteed. The surgeon offered up some percentages for success, which were still an estimate given the unknown/unpredictability of what and where they'd find the mass and, if there were other organs impacted. The scans can only show so much, unfortunately. Moreover, the surgeon said she won't know definitively my brother's prospects until she has him on the operating table. Given that "chemotherapy failed," according to his longtime primary care physician, the surgery may be his only option, as risky as it is.

Now, Richard is awake and talking and very much aware of his condition and his 'failure,' and that surgery, however frightening is the next and only remaining option. And barring any unexpected setbacks from his previous septic shock, and presuming he continues to "get stronger," per his surgeon's assessment, Richard will indeed have his surgery on Tuesday, Sept. 6, two days from when I'm writing this column. When that date was first mentioned at the family meeting, it seemed like an eternity before we'd ever get there, Richard's tenuous recovery notwithstanding. Now the surgery is very nearly here. It all seemed so unrealistic six weeks ago. Then, all we were thinking about was day to day. Now, almost seven weeks have passed. We were all afraid to hope for this day thinking it was too great a leap. Nevertheless, our faith in Richard and the staff has been rewarded and here we are two days before the date. As George Allen famously said in 1971 when he became coach of The Washington Redskins: "The future is now!"

I can't imagine the excruciating time (Vanessa and I) will endure as we sit idly by at the hospital waiting for the surgeon to come out of the operating room and update the family. (Covid rules mandate only two people can be present per day and as of a recent inquiry, those two people can't be visiting the patient/hospital at the same time. We've been so preoccupied even getting to this point that we haven't yet asked if we'll both be allowed in the hospital.) Somehow, we'll get through it. It will give us time to talk about Richard's next phase. We don't know exactly what his schedule will be or his whereabouts, either. I guess he'll return to SICU after surgery and whether he returns to a regular room on a hospital floor or is immediately transferred to a Rehabilitation Hospital, we also don't know. Whatever happens, we'll be ready to accommodate the patient. For what he's accomplished these past few weeks, surviving against difficult odds, it's the least we all can do to assist him in whatever help he needs to adjust to his new normal. He's made us all extremely proud to be a part of his extraordinary recovery. We'll do whatever we can now during his rehabilitation/recovery to support him during this next challenge. He's certainly earned it.

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 keep all our 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.

Please, help save these historical papers. Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide.

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.

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>  
Connection Newspapers... Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette, Centre View, Potomac Almanac  
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## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 13

8:30 to 9:30 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m. Walk your way through the streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost & Graveyard Tour. During this tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge.

Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old  
Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street  
[alexcolonialtours.com](http://alexcolonialtours.com)

### FALL WINE FESTIVAL & SUNSET TOUR

Friday-Sunday, Oct. 7 - 9, 2022, from 6 - 9 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon.

Admission: Friday: \$49 for members, \$59 for general public; Saturday: \$53 for members, \$63 for general public; Sunday: \$43 for members; \$53 for general public  
703-780-2000  
[mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org)

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

**ACPS- Help Provide Meals to Children.** Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) will provide two days worth of breakfast and lunch meals with a snack pack free for any enrolled ACPS student on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Friday distribution will include a meal(s) for Saturday. Volunteers will meet at various schools to assist with packing boxes and loading buses with boxed meals. Then, volunteers will ride the bus along to distribute the meals while on site at a few ACPS mobile pop-up locations. Click on each location to sign up: Francis C. Hammond Middle School, TC Williams High School, or Jefferson Houston School. [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org)

Alexandria Dept. of Community and Human Services-

**Volunteer Guardian.** Looking for individuals who can assure the well-being of an incapacitated Alexandrian living in an Assisted Living Facility or Nursing Facility. Volunteer Guardians are appointed by the Court to make decisions for older Alexandria residents who have lost the capacity to understand the consequences of their decisions. The volunteer will visit the resident monthly and follow the person's wishes as much as possible. [www.volunteerallexandria.org](http://www.volunteerallexandria.org)

**Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors.** The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. [www.volunteerallexandria.org](http://www.volunteerallexandria.org)

**ALIVE! Volunteers** are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/ALIVE>

**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,



## HalloWEIRD art market

Saturday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Colasanto Park, adjoining Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. HalloWEIRD Art Market features a variety of artwork from local artisans that celebrates the spooky and fun sides of the season. Rain or shine outside Del Ray Artisans. Free. Go to [elrayartisans.org/exhibits/#event=halloween-market-2022](http://elrayartisans.org/exhibits/#event=halloween-market-2022)

email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org). Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com).

**STEM Professionals Needed.** Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

**Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed.** Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil ([Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov)) at 703-324-4547.

**ALIVE!** offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).

**RSVP** a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

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