

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 3, 2022

Huntley Meadows Haunted by Car Burglaries

Increased lighting and police patrols are on the suggestion list.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The shattered car window glass in the Huntley Meadows Park lot just off Lockheed Boulevard was a sign that a car had been burglarized, alarming park hikers who frequently walk in this wetlands park in Mount Vernon. There are signs at both parking lots to lock the doors, which may create awareness, but for Sam Reeves who lives down the street, it's something he does without thinking when he visits the park as much as four times a week. "I lock my car all the time," Reeves said, noting that "the Sheriff was here this morning."

There are two entrances to the park, and Reeves parks on the South Kings Highway side and the car glass was over on the Lockheed Boulevard. The lot on the Lockheed side is a little more isolated, and in the corner, glass from a broken car window littered the corner parking space.

Another park visitor had her car broken into twice, and in the end it cost her about \$1000. "My car lock was punched in and door handle was broken at Huntley Meadows on Oct. 7," she said in an email. "After I got it repaired, I went back to Huntley Meadows twice and shortly after the second



Park goes questioned the parking donation request in the South Kings Highway lot for Huntley Meadows.

visit discovered that the lock was tampered with and broken."

These burglaries came to the attention of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the director of the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Franconia District Supervisor.

Gary Robinette's car was broken into, which he reported to Supervisor's Rodney Lusk's (D-Franconia) office as well as the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Board of Supervisors. He would like to see more lighting and questioned the enforcement of the park closing at dark. Robinette has seen work going on at other parks so he questioned the funding excuse.

"To add to the frustration, I saw a maintenance crew fixing the

spotlights for the Green Spring Park entrance sign, so obviously that is more important that fixing parking lot lighting at Huntley Meadows," he said.

Dave Nickle used to work at the park, sometimes cleaning up the remnants of late-night beer parties, and noted there were two incidents then too. As far as a police patrol, "not very often," he said.

Supervisor Lusk is aware of the situation at Huntley Meadows. "My office is in constant contact with the Fairfax County Police department regarding crime trends in our district. I am aware of recent incidents involving vehicle breaks in our community and today

SEE HUNTLEY MEADOWS, PAGE 5



Shattered car window glass could be seen in the Lockheed Boulevard lot for Huntley Meadows.



A sign in the Lockheed Boulevard lot for Huntley Meadows.



A sign in the South Kings Highway lot for Huntley Meadows.

Captured Halloween Capers

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE



Witches were seen taking to area skies in increased numbers in the lead up to All Hallows eve.



What's Halloween without a haunted house? This one cleverly make with balloons, eerie lights, and popcorn plastic flooring creating creepy foot sounds for every walker brave enough to enter.

Normally quiet neighborhoods heard sounds of screams, squeals, and shrieks ... of delight, as locals celebrated the favorite holiday of many, children and adults alike. After what was a two year hiatus from normal trick or treating, even rain could not dampen the enthusiasm of ghouls, witches, and, of course, of super heroes.

An increased number of witches have been seen flying in the Springfield area for weeks. On All Hallows eve there was an uprising of mummies seen in the Ridge Road Estates neighborhood. We have also learned that our firefighters boast a level of bravery that is not diminished by ghosts. A comfort given the number of bizarre sightings this year. It was a wild world out there and we hope you had fun.

SEE MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 5



We learned our brave fire fighters are not even afraid of ghosts.

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Bats Should Be Better Loved

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Bats get a bad rap, from their association with witchcraft to blood-sucking vampires to rabies spreaders. But “We could not survive without bats,” Deborah Hammer, a bat educator told the Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM) on Oct. 26. Hammer is a board member of both FODM and Bat Conservation and Rescue of Virginia.

Over 500 plant species rely on bats to pollinate their flowers, including species of mango, banana, durian, guava and agave. Some plants are partially pollinated by bats, including coffee, chocolate and sugar.

“If you like to eat, think of bats,” she said. Also, bats disperse seeds.

Bats are the only mammal capable of true flight, said Hammer, adding, “Their acrobatics are quite extraordinary.” They have elongated forelimbs and wing membranes connected to their long fingers, so basically, they “fly with their hands and have same dexterity as humans,” she said.

Like all mammals, bats have hair, their young are born live and mothers feed young with their milk, she explained. They have keen hearing and are most active at night. Bats have an adaptation called “echolocation” to find insects and dodge obstacles in the dark. They are not rodents. Their next closest relatives are canines.

Many species make a high-pitched, twittering sound inaudible to people. After daylight, most bats roost throughout the day, hanging from tree hollows, caves or other homes by their hind feet, usually upside down, with their wings draped around their bodies.

In temperate regions like Virginia, in the winter, bats hibernate or migrate south. In summer, they often roost in trees.

Hammer unreeled even more bat facts: Worldwide, there are around 1,400 bat species on every continent except the polar regions and some deserts. The smallest bat is the bumblebee bat, weighing about two grams. The largest is the giant golden-crowned flying fox bat with a six-foot wingspan. Virginia has at least 17 bat species and observers have seen at least seven bat species in Dyke Marsh. A 2013 survey identified three bat species on Fort Belvoir: the tri-colored bat, big brown bat and the red bat. “Little brown bats have been previously



Deborah Hammer giving water to a red bat being cared for by Bat Conservation and Rescue of Virginia.



Hoary bat smiling for the camera.

How to Help Bats

“Simply left alone, bats are harmless and highly beneficial,” says Bat Conservation International. Like most wild animals, they want to avoid human contact.

Leave dead trees if they don’t pose a hazard because many bats roost in tree cavities and the spaces between the bark and wood.

Put up a bat house, see <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/bat-houses/>.

- Reduce outdoor lighting.
- Avoid insecticides.
- Stay out of caves and places where bats hibernate.
- Keep cats indoors.

recorded from Fort Belvoir,” the study stated, attributing their absence to possibly the harmful fungus, white-nose syndrome.

More Information

Virginia Bat Guide, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/>
Bat Conservation, <https://www.virginiabats.org/> and <https://www.batcon.org/about-bats/bats-101/>

“Almost all bats in Northern Virginia are insect eaters,” Hammer said. A big brown bat can consume 3,000 mosquitoes a night, she remarked. “One little brown bat has been documented eating upwards of 600 mosquitoes in one hour,” reports the Virginia Department of



Deborah Hammer.

Wildlife Resources.

Threats

The world’s bat populations are declining. A major cause is loss of feeding or roosting habitat, usually wooded areas near water sources.

Since its 2006 discovery, white-nose syndrome has afflicted bats in at least 35 states and Canada and killed millions. A white fungus appears on the nose, ears and wings of infected bats. Some infected bats have atypical behavior, like flying outside during the day.

Other threats include outdoor cats, night lighting, pesticides, herbicides, noise and collisions with power lines, vehicles and wind turbines.



Big brown bat being shy.

Myths

Ever heard the expressions “dingbat,” “going batty” or “blind as a bat”? People have coined several derogatory and misleading colloquialisms for bats. “Bats see perfectly well,” says DWR’s website. Bats are no more likely to have rabies than other rabies vec-

tor species, DWR also notes.

So, about vampire bats, of the 1,400 species, only three drink blood, Hammer explained. They are found in Central and South America.

The program was sponsored by FODM, the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and the Friends of Accotink Creek

Marine corps marathon

Alexandria resident Kevin Hillery won the hand cyclist race of the Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 30 in Arlington. Hillery completed the 26.2-mile course in 1 hour, 19 minutes and 25 seconds. First time MCM participant Kyle King, an active-duty Marine from California, won the men's division of the race in 2:19:19 while Chelsea Baker of the United Kingdom was the first woman across the finish line in 2:42:37 seconds.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



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

The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back, Nov 6, 11 AM ET + Annual Meeting/Elections, 12:15 PM | Cognito Forms

SUNDAY/NOV. 6

"The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back." 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Via Zoom. The Generations After, an organization primarily comprised of children of Holocaust survivors, as well as survivors, and grandchildren of survivors, will present a program on antisemitism. "The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back" will feature guest speakers Mark Weitzman and Jonah Cohen. Mark Weitzman is Chief Operation Officer of the World Jewish Restitution Organization. He previously served as Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Weitzman spearheaded the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) 2016 adoption of the Working Definition of Antisemitism. Cohen is the director of communications for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA). His articles on Jews, Israel, and human rights have appeared in numerous publications. Following the program, The Generations after will hold their annual meeting and elections, at approximately 12:15 PM. To register for the program and/or the annual meeting, copy this link:

ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

So many of our Military families today find themselves in financial crisis, now more than ever. This will be especially true during this Holiday Season. To give back, Able Forces Foundation (AFF) is once again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Warrior Family Christmas program. As in years past, Able Forces Foundation will adopt families from each of the five Military Service branches. All adopted families are identified by military Advocates on military bases or military Recovery programs in the Washington, DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have: • A Christmas Tree • Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8) • Stocking Stuffers • the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child 100% of all donations go directly to support this program. There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go to: www.ableforces.org/adopt to SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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"Christmas Hat" By Kim Smith Oil on Board



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

A block party with well organized chaos, 'Boo Crew' shirts, activities, food, haunted house, and themed movie viewing kept the attention of young celebrants in the Ridge Road Estates community.

Captured Halloween Capers

FROM PAGE 1



An uprising of mummies was reported in a West Springfield community.

Huntley Meadows Haunted by Car Burglaries

FROM PAGE 1

introduced a Board matter that will improve our street light infrastructure across the county. My Board Matter is just one step my office is taking to discourage vehicle break-ins. My office and the Fairfax County Police Department encourage residents to remove their valuables and lock their car doors when leaving their vehicles unattended."

In late October, the Fairfax County Police Department reported four auto thefts around the corner from Huntley Meadows Park but these thefts were in the residential area. They didn't report any complaints about the park directly. The Fairfax County Park Authority is working with the police and "we will be meeting with them to discuss their investigation and potential safety alternatives in the near term," said FCPA

spokesperson Judy Pederson.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows are putting out the word concerning the parked cars getting broken into. On their website, they have some tips:

- When you visit Huntley Meadows:
 - ❖ Please plan to carry your valuables with you or leave them at home.
 - ❖ Car break ins are occurring. To help discourage this activity, please do not leave anything people would want to take.
 - ❖ The Fairfax County Police are doing extra patrols, but with everyone's help of leaving nothing of value to steal, this will make the parking lot unattractive to this activity.

FCPD officer Zirker arrived at the Lockheed Boulevard lot to use the portable restroom and said the lot was a regular stop on his route.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



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Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run
November 18 - January 1

Plaid Friday: Alexandria's Black Friday Experience
November 25

Small Business Saturday
November 26

51st Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade
December 3

22nd Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights
sponsored by Amazon
December 3

"Tiny Tim's Christmas Carol" at The Little Theatre of Alexandria
December 3 - 17

Del Ray Holiday Tree & Menorah Lighting
December 4

Christmas Market & Holiday Craft Show at Carlyle
December 10

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon
December 16 - 17

First Night Alexandria Festivities & Fireworks
December 31

For even more holiday events and things to do, check out:

VisitAlexandria.com/Holidays



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Actively Aging in the Mount Vernon District

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Dedicated, beautiful 55+ communities like Spring Hill, The Fairfax and Gum Springs Glen make the Mount Vernon District a great place to age in place. Not only do we have these dedicated communities where seniors can grow and thrive, we also have many senior centers where older residents can learn, recreate and engage. I was pleased to host my 4th Senior Safety Summit this week to bring older adults together with information, education and resources, as well as to answer questions about aging and living in our area. The Summit at Hollin Hall Senior Center included presentations by County Police, INOVA, Elderlink, Department of Family Services, County Fire & Rescue, plus an exhibit hall with many

resources. Thank you to all who attended.

The opening of the new Lorton Community Center and Library on October 15 was a huge community success and is a wonderful addition to our County services for older adults. The tiny former Lorton Senior Center in the Gunston Plaza Shopping Center was welcomed into the new community center with bright, airy rooms, modern amenities and new programming. Activities and programs include: bingo, book club, meditation, discussion groups, total body workouts, painting, yoga, belly dancing, rummikub and so much more. The campus includes an open gym, fitness room, fitness/walking trail and computer labs. Seniors can bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the adjacent park, watch exuberant youngsters on the playground and grab a book from the library to read

in the sun. COVID helped us all realize the importance of connecting and interacting with others, making senior centers a perfect place to fill those social, physical and mental needs that promote wellbeing. We are fortunate in Mount Vernon to have several senior centers at Lorton, Hollin Hall, Kingstowne and another new center at Original Mount Vernon High School. There is also an option for those who prefer to engage from their own homes, the Virtual Center for Active Adults. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/virtual-center-active-adults> to discover live events, on-demand programs, services, resources and self-directed activities.

Did you know the County also offers Adult Day Health Care, Meals on Wheels, congregate meals, transportation, therapeutic recreation services, technology educa-

tion and a variety of other services for our older residents? Learn more here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/older-adults>. You can also learn about a myriad of activities, events and services in the County's Golden Gazette publication (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/golden-gazette>) Community based organizations also support this age group with programs like neighbors helping neighbors, free transportation and bi-lingual Spanish support lines, including Mount Vernon at Home, Shepherd's Center Fairfax-Burke and NV Rides. Please contact our office at mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-780-7518 if you think there are other ways we can improve our community for all who live here.

See you around the neighborhood!

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

Each November, we recognize Native American Heritage Month. It is dedicated to celebrating the rich and diverse cultures and traditions, and the important contributions of Native people and American Indian nations that have stood the test of time. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations, under variants of the name (including "Native American Heritage Month" and "National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month") have been issued each year since 1994. It is also a state-designated recognition.

The lands that would later become known as Virginia have always been home to indigenous people, with an estimated population of 50,000 comprising at least 15 separate nations prior to the arrival of the English settlers.

Below I have listed the 11 state-recognized tribes in Virginia. The first seven tribes listed are also federally recognized.

- ❖ Pamunkey (Pamunkey River/King William County)
- ❖ Chickahominy (Charles City County)
- ❖ Eastern Chickahominy (New Kent County)
- ❖ Upper Mattaponi (King William County)
- ❖ Rappahannock (Indian Neck/

- King & Queen County)
- ❖ Monacan Indian Nation (Bear Mountain/Amherst County)
- ❖ Nansemond (Cities of Suffolk and Chesapeake)
- ❖ Mattaponi (Mattaponi River/King William County)

- ❖ Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) (Courtland/Southampton County)
- ❖ Nottoway of Virginia (Capron/Southampton County)
- ❖ Patowomeck (Stafford County)

This year, I worked with Virginia's federally recognized tribes on several pieces of legislation related to tribal matters. HB 1136 created a code commission to review the Code of Virginia and recommend changes to the General Assembly that are needed to reflect the recent federal recognition of Tribal Nations that share territory with the Commonwealth. The Speaker's office is tasked with forming this commission according to the law passed, and I have relayed to his office the representatives each tribe has selected to serve. As each established commission is required to submit an annual report on its interim activities and work by the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly (which will be Jan. 11, 2023), I expect the first meeting will occur in the coming weeks. I look forward to working with this commission and pursuing any legislative fixes that it will recommend. At the request of the



Krizek

tribes, I plan to reintroduce legislation that would require consulting with federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth when evaluating certain permits and reviews with potential impacts on environmental, cultural, or historic resources or that would have tribal implications. Consultation at its core is a key element of recognition of tribal sovereignty.

There are many ways to celebrate Native American heritage, not just in November, but all year long. I encourage you to visit the National Museum of the American Indian in DC, and the Mantle monument in Capitol Square in Richmond (located beside the Bell Tower). You can also attend one of the many powwows held by Virginia Tribes each year. In fact, the Nottoway Tribe will be holding their 30th annual Corn Harvest Powwow this weekend, on Nov. 5-6. I was lucky to be able to attend two this year – the Rappahannock Powwow in King George, and the Monacan Nation's Powwow in the Amherst area. This site collects information on tribal powwows in Virginia: <https://calendar.powwows.com/events/categories/pow-wows/pow-wows-in-virginia/>. I also recommend to you the 6th Annual Pocahontas Reframed film festival at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Rich-

mond. The Festival aims to raise awareness about Native American language, cultures, and societies through films that share Native American perspectives and is the only one of its kind on the east coast. Notably, the VMFA board of directors is now led by Lynette Allston, Chief of the Nottoway Indian Tribe, the first Native American to hold the position.

Also, each year on the day before Thanksgiving, a ceremony as part of a peace treaty from 1677 continues to this day in which citizens of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey tribes deliver their traditional tax payment to the Governor on the grounds of the State Capitol in Richmond, usually a couple of deer and a turkey. I hope that you will consider visiting the Capitol in Richmond in front of the Governor's mansion on the morning before Thanksgiving to witness this important tradition going back centuries and predating the establishment of our nation.

Knowledge of the history of Native Americans is essential to understanding our history. Their story is the origin story of Virginia and America, yet too few Americans know much about them. Native American Heritage Month celebrates the heritage of our Indigenous people and is an opportunity for both native and non-native to celebrate the many aspects of native culture, both historic and contemporary.

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Holiday Shows ‘Light’ Up the Season

NOVA Parks Offers Three Popular Light Festivals.

BY SUSAN LAUME
GAZETTE PACKET

If you are one of those charged with setting up the family’s holiday house or tree lights, and recall the struggles of taming tangles, locating bulb outages, reaching power outlets, and the challenge of packing it all away again after the season, then you might begin to empathize with the job of Evan Inkley. He and his crew of special event employees create the “Festival of Lights” at Bull Run Park, arguably the largest such display in Northern Virginia.

Imagine, if you can, the effort needed to manage a festival of more than a million bulbs and thousands of strings of lights and power cords; enough to extend over the 64-mile distance of the Capital Beltway. The largest individual display is 40 feet tall and almost seven feet wide; just one of 600 light displays. Forty some of those displays with animation require individual set-up and programming using laptop computers.

Employees communicate in an elf-like code, using names for displays like: “Jack & the Beanstalk,” “Flight School,” “Elf Cottage,” and snow tubes. They have a dedicated workshop where one can imagine the magic created rivals that at Santa’s famous workshop at the North Pole. Questions asked by crew reveal the intricacy of their work and set-ups, “Does the snowflake arch cord running across the road need a male end on the left side or right side?”

What does it take to put all these elements together to create such a huge show with new features every year? Inkley says that “many hands and several months” is the short answer. Although the events crew works year-round creating new displays and making repairs, intense activity occurs between mid-August and the show opening in early November each year. The eight to ten member regular staff is increased during crunch time by pulling crew members from other park maintenance teams and the park system’s headquarters, to reach 25 helpers.

They may pull 12 hour shifts to be ready for opening night. This year on November 11th. Old style bulbs have been replaced with more efficient LEDs in all displays and the old bulbs recycled. Generators line the storage area ready for duty remote from permanent power sources. The closed park is active now at night with large crane equipment stretched out in the darkness, like metal brontosaurus reaching high into the trees, to place lights in the canopies and on tree trunks. Pick-up trucks and carts move materials like a roving army of ants. Many of the displays are lit up, viewed only by wildlife and the crew members, who know that perfection can only be achieved in the dark. Displays set up in the day do not look the same at night, and night reveals missing bulbs and unplugged cords.

The show displays coexist, for the most part peacefully, with the park’s abundant wildlife. Inkley says animals typically avoid the lights at night. On occasion, daylight reveals a hoof print where a deer has stepped on a wire without injury ... to the deer. One curious fox, of the several that make the park home, has shown an ongoing interest in the happenings inside the large maintenance and storage facility and workshop. One wonders if the woodland creatures see themselves depicted in several of the light displays? Or if the deer are in awe of the arching leaps their light counterparts achieve over the road?

Recall your own attic, garage, or closet storage space available for seasonal items. Then appreciate the vast number of elements under Inkley’s stewardship. The park’s dedicated 3,000-square-foot maintenance and storage building contains shelves with row upon row of large plastic containers, a number that makes one’s home storage pale in comparison. Still, the building and bins are not sufficient to hold it all. Twelve 53-foot van trailers and three shipping containers supplement storage for the seasonal items.

At the culmination of this colossal preparation effort, from the ease and comfort of



Night work reveals any missing bulbs or unplugged cords before show opening.



A fleet of van trailers is needed to store all the materials that make up the seasonal display.

your car, you and your family can enjoy the festival’s sparkling, colorful lights, which add to the uplifting spirit of the holidays. Drive along the two and a half mile stretch of holiday light displays, and expect to hear ooh’s and aah’s continue as passengers recognize fa-

vorite symbols, characters, or representations of outdoor activities. Bull Run’s festival hosted over 62,000 vehicles in 2022. With timed entry tickets sold by vehicle, it’s estimated that about a quarter of a million people saw last year’s show. It’s become a traditional hol-



NOVA Parks huge “Festival of Lights” welcomes seasonal celebrants with hundreds of displays.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/GAZETTE PACKET



Shelves full of display materials, power cords, and generators await service along the event route.



Special events manager Evan Inkley demonstrates the heights and lengths he and his crew go to inside the 3,000-square-foot storage building to make the festival a memorable holiday excursion.

iday outing for many. Bull Run’s festival is the first show undertaken by NOVA Parks, which now offers three light shows in the area.

Your festival driving adventure of 30 to 45 minutes might end with a stop at the park’s Holiday Village for a hot cocoa by the bon-

fire, fun at the carnival, posing for photos, shopping for holiday merchandise, or a camel ride — yes, a real live camel lets you image yourself as a biblical Wiseman ... or Wise-child. After the final drive through of the festival’s close on January 8th, Inkley and crew start the two to four month process to take down all the displays ... perhaps after a celebratory hot cocoa of their own?

When asked if he decorates his own home for the holidays, given his almost year-long immersion in holiday decorating, Inkley says, “I do decorate but it takes extra motivation.” That motivation comes, not just from his young family, but also from a friendly neighborhood lighting contest. With his professional background, does he have an edge? Says Inkley, “They changed the rules recently to have no back-to-back winner.”

Bull Run’s Festival of Lights is located at 7700 Bull Run Dr, Centreville; for reservations, event calendar and discount dates, see <https://www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights>

Other area light shows by NOVA Parks include: Meadowlark Park, Winter Walk of Lights, a half-mile walk through lighted features with a nature theme (9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct, Vienna)

<https://www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights/ticket-information>; and Ice & Lights, a lighted winter village with walls through, and with day and night time skating (4001 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria), <https://www.novaparks.com/events/ice-lights>



Inside the workshop, rivaling Santa’s famous operation, employees Kelly Gilfillen and Evan Inkley hold elements which will become part of the magical glow.

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AFF gratefully acknowledges the support of the city of Alexandria and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts.

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 4
make a contribution.

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 21), 18 farmers and local food producers will sell fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more.

This year's vendors are:
 Arnest Seafood – crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more
 The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacon
 Grace's Pastries - cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch
 Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries
 Honey Brook Farms - meats and vegetables raised with no chemicals, gluten-free baked goods
 House of Empanadas –variety of empanadas
 King Mushrooms –variety of locally grown mushrooms
 Layla's Lebanese Restaurant – Lebanese hummus, eggplant dip, garlic sauce and more
 Linda Vista Farm - fruits and vegetables, specializing in Asian and Latin produce
 Memis - gluten-free paellas, quiches and more
 Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs
 Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers
 Salsa Las Glorias - fresh salsas, guacamole and chips
 Sharkawi Farm - herbs, spices, teas, plants and flowers
 Three Way Farms – vegetables, melons and herbs
 Traveling Shepherd Coffee Co. – variety of freshly roasted coffee
 Twin Springs Orchard - fruits, vegetables, cheese and more
 Valentine's Bakery & Meats - meats and baked goods.
 All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles. The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon market is one of 10 farmers markets run by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA); for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.seniorscientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaldrea@aol.com.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

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

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

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

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 or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Line Dance Instructor needed for the Gum Springs Senior Program once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Volunteer Solutions, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711.

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

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


Yoga Teachers are needed. Help improve a person's well-being by teaching yoga classes to adults who are staying in a residential facility. The day/time is flexible, but would be during the week. Prior yoga instruction is required. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm for more.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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HALLOWEEN



Fair Oaks District Station Cmdr. Camille Stewart and Asst. Cmdr. Patrick O'Hara.



From left, police 2nd Lt. Matt Kourt, CAC Chair Kim Barber and PFC Steve Monahan.

Halloween Costumes, Decorations and Candy Galore



Virginia State Police Trooper Alex Pak.



FCPD Chaplain Michael Shochet and wife Denise.



From left are Juvenile Court's Megan Wright and Paula King.



Bumblebee Amelia R., 2.

Fairfax County police & friends' Trunk-Or-Treat was Oct. 19 outside the Fairfax County Government Center.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE GAZETTE



Most Creative winner: Fairfax County Animal Protection police, (from left) 2nd Lt. D. Pitts and administrative assistant Dana Grimm.



Excavator Liam Molina, 3, with Fair Oaks police Capt. Camille Stewart.



Brothers (from left) Benjamin, Isaac and James Seibert with lots of candy.



Grandma Linda Crocker with Dylan, 3-1/2, and mom Logan Nolan holding Jackson, 9 months.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU DECEMBER

Nightly Spirits. Thursdays through Sundays from 7:30 to 10 p.m.; 8:30 to 11 p.m. Admission: 21 and over at \$25 plus tax. Tours meet at The Alexandrian, 480 King Street, Alexandria. Sip a local beverage and listen to the secret and spooky lore of Alexandria's haunted past. Hear tales of the ghosts that wander the streets of Alexandria and haunt local establishments. These tours are for individuals ages 21 and over. Haunted private tours are also available for all ages.

OCT. 6-NOV. 13

Woodcuts Exhibit. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Featuring works by Joan Mayfield and Ruth Trevarrow. Woodcuts is a mixed-media exhibition that focuses on different types of wood, how we view it, and its transformative properties as part of nature. Mayfield and Trevarrow came up with the concept for the show because they saw a lot of affinity for their individual work as a commonality in their practices. Artist Reception, Sunday, October 16, 4-6 p.m.; Artist Talk, Sunday, November 13, 2 p.m.

THURSDAY/NOV. 3

Chamber Networking. 5:30-7 p.m. At Wine Gallery 108, 108 N. Asaph Street, Alexandria. The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network Evening of Perfect Pairings: Wine + Chocolate, Women + Business. Contact Maria Ciarrocchi at mciarrocchi@thechamberalx.com.

NOV. 4-5

Mapping the American Revolution: The 2022 George Washington Symposium. At Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. This two-day event examines the 18th century cartographic revolution and how maps became vital political, economic, and social tools. Attendees will hear from leading historians, tour the mansion, and view historic documents and objects. Visit <https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/mapping-the-american-revolution-the-2022-george-washington-symposium/>

NOV. 4-27

\$100 & Under Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans "\$100 & Under" exhibit showcases members' artwork all priced at \$100 or less. The art will be sold on an art-to-go basis. The gallery walls are packed with great art at prices all art-lovers can afford. Opening Reception: Friday, November 4, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

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 paperback, and 25 cents for mass market paperback. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-re>

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

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A Distinction Without a Difference



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I've had health insurance with the same provider for 20+ years. For the past seven years I had been accepted into a special, more fortunate subgroup. Initial qualifications were simple: Serious illness (like my cancer) qualified. The application was a two-page pamphlet asking half-a-dozen, token-type questions. Nothing beyond name, rank, and serial number – and disease, of course. Naturally, I was accepted. The plan paid all co-pays for office visits, scans and such, and every dollar of any prescription medication I was prescribed. It was a freebie, so to speak; and to invoke Dennis Eckerley, formerly of the NESN/ Boston Red Sox television broadcasting crew (while describing a particularly fortuitous event on the field): "It was a beautiful thing." And when you consider the cost of cancer drugs, receiving a pass such as this, was instrumental in my survival – financially (you'll learn why: keep reading). Not incurring these costs has been a Godsend for my family.

A year or so ago however, my provider changed the rules. No more would seriousness of disease be the trigger. It would now be means-tested requirement where you had to make less than minimum wage, if you know what I mean? But the application was still modest in its initial approach. I answered a few questions and amazingly made the cut somehow and the benefits were renewed for another year, until Oct. 4th of this year. Apparently, the provider felt the pinch of its generosity. In response to my renewal application submitted 30 days before this year's expiration, the provider responded by mail a few days before my coverage was scheduled to terminate; that they needed additional financial documentation: tax returns, (all schedules), W-2s, 1099s, et cetera. They further advised that I could expect a response 45 days after receipt. This meant that I would be out of time/coverage when my cancer medication was due to be refilled. The timing could not have been worse.

I tried to reorder the medication as near as possible to the end of my current coverage so it would last through the 45 days until I was possibly renewed (hardly guaranteed), but I was advised by the pharmacy that the order was placed too soon, and I'd have to wait until, you guessed it, as it happened, after this special coverage had ended. Frantic, I called the provider's home office, spoke with a pharmacy coverage specialist, and explained my dilemma. She was understanding and said the provider offered a once-per lifetime accommodation for these exact transitional-type circumstances (when the patient now has to pay), to pay for the medication as they previously had: zero dollars. I was ecstatic. I thanked her profusely and hung up. When it was timely to reorder, I called the pharmacy and submitted the order. A day or so later, I received a text advising me that my medication was ready, and the co-pay would be \$985 – for one month. Disappointed (to say the least, panicked to say the most), I called the local pharmacy which was processing the order and asked if they were familiar with this special one-time dispensation. They said they were. Then I said, that's what this order was about. I was then put on hold as the pharmacy tech. went "to get the pharmacy manager," she said. (I feared this day of reckoning would occur one day. Not to be a fatalist, more so a realist, but I figured this amazing benefit had to end at some point. I couldn't be this lucky forever. Now however, I might say the eagle has landed. Moreover, given the co-pay I received today, let me amend that statement to say the eagle has crashed and burned.)

Within 30 seconds or so the pharmacy manager comes on the line and asks if she can help. I briefly review with her the basic components of my expectation and ask why the co-pay is \$985 (I'm rounding up, to be fair). She says: "You are covered." "This is not the price that the home office told me I would be paying. It sure doesn't sound like I'm covered." I pleaded, calm. Then she said those words that led to this column: "I'm afraid that one-time offer doesn't apply for this medication." I snickered. You can probably imagine what I said to myself. Then I said: "I don't consider \$985 'coverage.'" Again, she assured me: "You are covered." I snicker, louder and more aggressively this time. You call \$985 for one month, "covered?" She responds that my regular policy still covers medication, just not like the special coverage I had previously did: free; and this \$985 is my current co-pay due. Otherwise, the medication would cost upwards of \$20,000." I hem and haw and eventually hang up the phone after asking how long the prescription will remain available for pick up. I still have a few weeks before I have to decide to pay the piper or not take my cancer medication. Either way, I'm worse off than I am now. Hardly a prescription for future good health.

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

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We Need Your Help Again

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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.

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. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11
gional.

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

Andrew McKnight Performs. 7 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. In conjunction with World Folk Music Association, FocusMusic presents award-winning folk/Americana artist Andrew McKnight's musical journey which has traced nearly a million miles of blue highways, and earned him a wealth of critical acclaim and enthusiastic fans for his performances and 10 recordings. Visit www.wfma.net

SATURDAY/NOV. 5

Rotary Club of Alexandria Taste for Giving: After the recent hiatus due to the pandemic, the Rotary Club of Alexandria invites you to attend its annual Taste for Giving on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 7-9:30 p.m. at the Atrium Building, 227 South Washington Street in Old Town. <https://alexandriarotary.org/taste-for-giving-2022/>

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 9

Book Talk: Feeding Washington's Army. At Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Ricardo A. Herrera discusses his new book that examines the Continental Army's leadership and performance through a foraging operation during the Valley Forge winter of 1778, followed by a book signing.

NOV. 11 - DEC. 29

An Eye for Nature Exhibition. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Nina Tisara and Steven Halperson have teamed up for an exhibition of Tisara's mosaic art and Halperson's fine art photography. The exhibit may be seen from 10 a.m. to noon, Mondays and Tuesdays and 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursdays except for Thanksgiving. To schedule other hours contact ninat@ninatistara.com.

SATURDAY/NOV. 12

Art on the Avenue. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. In front of the Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans will present artist demonstrations, sell up-cycled tote bags made from exhibit banners, and share information about our nonprofit organization (booths W-192 and W-193). Visit <https://delrayartisans.org/calendar/#event=art-on-the-avenue-2022>

SATURDAY/NOV. 12

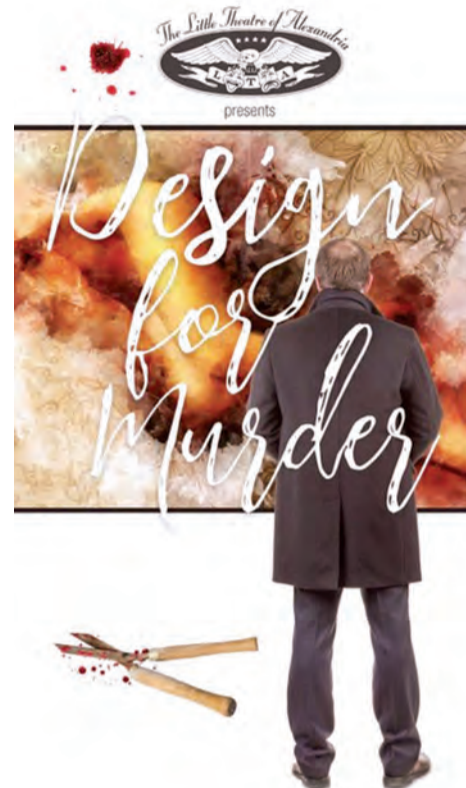
Scouting Food Drive. Alexandria-area youth of the Boy Scouts of America's Colonial District will hold their 34th annual Scouting for Food drive on Saturday, November 12. Local residents are invited to leave bagged donations on their doorstep by 8:30 a.m. that morning for pickup by the Scouts. Held annually prior to Thanksgiving, Scouting for Food is an important program for many local food banks which rely on it to stock shelves for the upcoming holiday months when demands are the greatest. On the weekend of November 5, Scouts will canvass neighborhoods across Alexandria and surrounding areas placing notes on doors reminding residents about the Scouting for Food pick-up to take place the following weekend. Residents may reach out to colonial@ncacbsa.org until Saturday, November 19, to coordinate a missed pickup.

SUNDAY/NOV. 13

Del Ray Urban Sketchers. 1-3 p.m. At St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Bring your supplies and join them outside at the cafe to produce still life, figure, or architecture subjects in your sketchbook. Del Ray Urban Sketchers operates on a drop-in basis and typically meets the second Sunday of each month at St. Elmo's Coffee Pub in Del Ray. Visit <https://delrayartisans.org/programs/sketchbooking/#event=urban-sketchers-2022>

MONDAY/NOV. 14

Pen/Watercolor Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon



The Little Theatre of Alexandria Presents "Design for Murder" through Nov. 5, 2022 in Alexandria.

The Little Theatre of Alexandria

Presents "Design for Murder." Wednesdays through Sundays at 8 p.m. Admission: \$21 to 24 per person. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Murder, romance and comedy are the three best ingredients for a fun, suspense-filled evening of theatre. This fast-moving, highly tense whodunit treats the audience to a remote mansion, a sleazy black-mailer, a trench coat-clad detective and even a dark and stormy night. A once-wealthy mother and son struggle to keep up appearances at the old mansion, but when a maid is murdered, everyone becomes a suspect.

Ave., Alexandria. Learn traditional and contemporary pen and ink drawing techniques including hatching, cross-hatching and stippling, and explore wet-into-wet techniques in watercolor. More details at: <https://delrayartisans.org/workshops/#event=pen-ink-watercolor>

TUESDAY/NOV. 15

Life Drawing Session. 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Drop-in and practice life drawing on one Tuesday evening each month. Bring your supplies and join us at the gallery to draw or paint a nude model. Details: <https://delrayartisans.org/programs/life-drawing/#event=life-drawing-nov-2022>

SUNDAY/NOV. 27

Sunday Funday. 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. At Ainslie Arts Center, 3900 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. This event will feature a cast of local musical theater talent and singing drag queens, a three-piece band, as well as bottomless signature drinks. Presented by the Monumental Theatre Company. Tickets will be available online at <https://www.monumentaltheatre.org/>.

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.

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SERVICE & PARTS HOURS: MON-FRI 6A-7P & SAT 7A-5P

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