

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 4, 2023



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Fishing Fleet for Veterans Gets a Lift

Helping hands extended in thanks for military service at the core of Veteran Fishing Adventure; Ed Moore with World War II Veteran Val Dadamio, 100.

See Page 8



Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber Of Commerce Celebrates Small Business Week

BY HOLLY HICKS DOUGHERTY
AND DAVID GRIFFIN
MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Small Business Week is all about recognizing the important contributions of small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce salutes the small businesses that provide the goods and services needed for a vibrant community and who employ local residents.

Small businesses were responsible for more than 60% of new jobs created in the US between 1995 and 2021(1). Through paychecks and taxes, these businesses keep money circulating back through the local community and strengthen the local economy.

As Alex Thalacker of Fairfax County Economic Development Authority noted in the recent Economic Outlook 2023, an annual event from The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce and Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, the labor force, employment and job postings have all increased in the county as of the end of 2022. In addition, unemployment is also trending down as of February 2023, which is reflected in the over 12,000 active jobs ads for the Richmond Highway and Springfield area (2).

Within the region are small, community-based businesses and organizations that meet everyone's needs. Visit the Chamber's online business directory for a listing of local businesses at www.mountvernonsspringfield.com

Recommended by Your Chamber

Looking for local moving and storage options? Contact Dan's Van Lines, one of northern Virginia's most trusted moving

SEE MOUNT VERNON, PAGE 10

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

#WeAreAlexandria



Old Town | \$1,998,000

Historic 3-bedroom, 3.55-bath updated townhome offers original details combined with luxurious elements for today's modern living. Original refinished heart pine floors, spacious rooms for entertaining, handsome millwork, exposed brick, and 2 gas fireplaces. A stainless kitchen adjoins the family room with French doors opening to the covered outdoor porch, brick patio, and deep yard. The generous primary suite features a large custom walk-in closet, dual vanities, heated bathroom floor, and 2 pairs of French doors open to the private deck. 214 South Lee St
Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.BabsBeckwith.com



OPEN SAT 5/6 & SUN 5/7, 2-4PM

Fort Hunt | \$1,100,000

Center hall colonial with 5 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 2-car side-load garage located on a half-acre cul-de-sac lot. Family room walks out to an oversized screened in porch perfect for outdoor entertaining and wonderful yard. 8612 Lombardy Lane
Margot Lynn 703.973.3722
www.TheLynnTeamRE.com



OPEN SUN 5/7, 1-3PM

Wellington Estates | \$750,000

Oodles of charm on one convenient level. Walking distance to the shopping and restaurants of Hollin Hall Village, and simple commute routes in all directions. A must-see for anyone looking for a beautiful and comfortable place to call home. 8001 Fort Hunt Road
Sandy McMaster 571.259.2673
www.sandymcmaster.realestate



OPEN SAT 5/6 & SUN 5/7, 1-3PM

Fairlington Villages | \$559,900

This stunning Barcroft condo has been transformed from top to bottom. Open living area perfect for entertaining plus a rare, oversized stone patio. 2 levels, 2 bedrooms, plenty of storage space. Reconfigured & updated baths on both levels. 4811 S 31st Street #A1
Sallie Seiy 703.798.4666
www.SallieSeiy.com



OPEN SAT 5/6 & SUN 5/7, 1-3PM

Fairlington Meadows | \$515,000

Beautifully updated & bright 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo! Boasting 1,400+ SF, this 2 level condo features hardwood floors on main level, updated kitchen with granite countertops & subway tile backsplash. Private patio & assigned parking space. 3395 S Stafford St #A2
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



OPEN SAT 5/6 & SUN 5/7, 1-3PM

**Waterford
\$2,100,000**

Fabulous 4-level, 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath townhome in the sought after Old Town community. This home boasts a beautiful, bright, sunlit open floor plan, with hardwood floors throughout. Balcony, patio, 2 car parking garage. 313 S Union Street

Katia Recer 703.578.9728
www.KatiaRecer.com



OPEN SUN 5/7, 1-3PM

**Del Ray
\$1,299,000**

Fabulous 5-bedroom, 3.5-bath craftsman home. Impeccably maintained & improved with: first floor bedroom; large screened-in porch with fireplace, and entertainment space. Finished lower level with separate bedroom, full bath, workout space, and office. 2617 E Randolph Avenue

Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



OPEN SUN 5/7, 2-4PM

**South Kings
Station
\$499,000**

This bright & spacious townhouse welcomes you with an easy living floor plan and a treed view on the main level from the living/dining room. Finished lower level with fireplace and a generous yard. 2 assigned parking spaces. 6320 Chimney Wood Court

Mary Taylor 703.785.5619
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NEWS

Chronic Wasting Disease Means New Rules

Fawns from Fairfax County can no longer be rescued.

Calls to Fairfax County Animal Protection Police and Wildlife Management Specialists about white-tailed deer fawns will shortly begin. But this year, new rules apply. With the onset of fawning season, there are new restrictions related to disease management and deer herd health that will affect fawn rehabilitation within Fairfax County.

Effective May 1, the rehabilitation of deer fawns in Fairfax County is prohibited. Additionally, deer fawns originating from Fairfax County may not be rehabilitated in any other locality.

These restrictions on fawn rehabilitation, which are administered and enforced by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, are implemented to reduce potential transmission and spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) within deer populations in the Commonwealth.

Chronic Wasting Disease is a slow, progressive neurologic disease affecting white-tailed deer and other members of the deer family. The disease is always fatal to affected animals and there is no vaccine to prevent infection and no known treatment for infected animals. This past deer season, CWD was confirmed in a white-tailed deer harvested in Fairfax County for the first time. As such, Fairfax County is being added to a CWD Disease Management Area, which includes regulatory actions to limit the spread of this disease within the county and to new areas.

State wildlife regulations (4VAC15-90-294) and wildlife rehabilitator permit conditions prohibit the rehabilitation of fawns in any county (including the cities and towns therein) designated for disease management. Within northern Virginia, this includes



If you find a fawn, leave it alone.

It is especially important to make every effort possible to leave healthy fawns where they are found so they can have the best chance of survival.

Fairfax, Prince William, Arlington, Loudoun, and Fauquier counties. These measures are implemented to protect the health and welfare of the overall deer population since rehabilitation activities could unknowingly result in the translocation and/or release of infected animals.

Given that fawns can no longer be rehabilitated in Fairfax County, it is especially important to make every effort possible to leave healthy fawns where they are found to have the best chance of survival.

White-tailed deer fawns are born April through July, with most fawns born in May and June. Newborn fawns are often found on lawns, in flower beds, gardens, bushes or areas of tall grass near homes. It is common for people to encounter white-tailed deer fawns motionless and without their mother, then mistakenly assume it is orphaned or abandoned. In almost all cases, fawns are only temporarily left by their mothers for protection and just need to be left alone.

Female deer, called does, typically leave their fawns bedded down for extended periods of time while they are away foraging to avoid leading predators to their young. Young fawns are “hidiers” and will not try to run away when they are approached. If you see a fawn that appears abandoned, leave it alone.

The mother may be out of sight but is likely nearby. Does will return several times each day to move and/or feed their young. These visits are usually undetected by people because the mother deer only stays to feed the fawn for just a few minutes before leaving it alone again. The mother deer will be wary of you and human presence could prevent her from returning openly. Give the fawn space and keep children and pets away to allow the doe to return and care for her fawn.

A fawn's best chance of survival is to remain in the wild under the natural care of its mother. Leave fawns alone unless their health is truly compromised, as euthanasia would be the only option if a fawn is removed from the wild and cannot be reunited with its mother. If you encounter a fawn, do not handle or disturb it; this causes unnecessary stress for the animal. Do not feed the fawn or attempt to care for it yourself. Raising a wild animal in captivity is illegal in Virginia unless you have a wildlife rehabilitation permit issued by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

You should only seek help for a fawn if it is showing obvious signs of injury or distress, such as wandering and crying incessantly, has swollen eyes, shows signs of trauma such as visible wounds or broken bones, or if there is a dead lactating doe nearby. If an animal is displaying these signs that may indicate it is sick, injured, or truly orphaned, please contact the Animal Protection Police for further guidance and assistance. The Fairfax County Animal Protection Police can be reached through the Police non-emergency line at 703-691-2131.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPENED

A mix of new and familiar vendors will be selling local, farm-fresh produce – including strawberries and asparagus – and more at the McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 20), 21 farmers and local food producers will sell fresh vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs

and plants; and more. The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane.

This year's vendors are:

Arnest Seafood – crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more
The Big Brine – Fermented foods, pickles and pickled vegetables
The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacons
Grace's Pastries - cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch
Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries
Honeycomb Heroes – Honey and bees-wax-based products
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

Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs

Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers

Pasta Ilgatto – Fresh, handcrafted pasta and sauces

PorkStork – Forest-raised heritage pork products, including bacon and sausages

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

WeGrow - Microgreens.

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.

FAMILIES SOUGHT TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Families and individuals from the Washington, D.C.-metro region are being sought to become hosts for international students for 12 weeks, a semester, or an academic year.

Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures, including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and

more.

AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world.

Those interested in hosting an AFS Exchange Student are encouraged to contact 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit www.afsusa.org for more information. You can also get involved as an AFS-USA Volunteer. Visit www.afsusa.org/volunteer to get started or learn more about opportunities to make a difference.

FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED

Interested in becoming a foster parent? There is always a need

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

ROAD TRIP

Fort Hunt Alums Cheered Fellow Grad Outside 30 Rock in NYC

2018 road trip highlights included breakfast with alumnae Hoda Kotb and her co-star at the time, Savannah Guthrie.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

When you find out a fellow high school alum becomes a big star on a national talk show in New York City, what do you do?

ROAD TRIP!

That's what a pack of alums from Fort Hunt High School did in 2018 to see Hoda Kotb, the co-star of the Today show and a 1982 graduate of Fort Hunt High School. Keith Flanders was amongst the group that piled on a Greyhound bus to make the trip. It was an all-nighter, and they arranged to be there at 4:30 a.m. to get a spot out front by the window in Rockefeller Center where they displayed the school colors.

"We'd been planning this for two or three months, a chance to get Fort Hunt's name out there," Flanders said.

The name got out there at 30 Rock with their banner and waves when Hoda appeared at the window. "At the 8:30 break, we made plans to meet her," Flanders said. At that time, her co-host was Savannah Guthrie and when they went for breakfast, "she came too," he added.

The Fort Hunt group basked in the moment during the show, which they could see through the window of the television studio. It was April though, and the weather wasn't ideal so after it was all over, the plan to get back to Virginia wasn't really solidified. Some jumped on the first bus they could while others either stayed for the night or knew someone in town.

One alum, Janice Lee Beltrante, had a great time getting together with old friends on this spontaneous road trip, but all the walking in New York City was not expected, and it rained, making the 5-hour trip home a little uncomfortable. Beltrante said she would not do it again.

Hoda Highlights

In 1982, Hoda Kotb graduated from Fort Hunt High School, which is now West Potomac High School, and went on to Virginia Tech University where she got a Bachelor of Arts in broadcast journalism. She went on to be a local reporter in New Orleans and Fort Myers, Florida, and then the Today show with Kathie Lee Gifford between 2008 and 2019. Now she's the co-anchor of NBC News' TODAY and the co-host of TODAY's fourth hour, alongside Jenna Bush Hager.

Through the years, Kotb has won awards as a journalist and author. She is a cancer survivor, so she's also taken on several initiatives to raise awareness in that area too. Her awards include a 2016 Gracie Award for Outstanding Host in Entertainment/



Hoda gets miked-up for the show.



Keith Flanders still has the original t-shirt from the trip.

Information for her radio show "The Hoda Show on SiriusXM," and a Gracie Award for Outstanding Host in News/Non-fiction and a Webby Award in 2015. In 2008 she won the Alfred I. duPont - Columbia University award, a Peabody Award in 2006 for a Dateline NBC report, and several Daytime Emmys as part of TODAY's recognition as the best morning news program, the Today show information said.

Kotb now lives in New York City with her family.



Keith Flanders, left, with fellow Fort Hunt alums outside 30 Rock in NYC.



Excitement brewed on the northbound bus.

Huntley Meadows Park Celebrates Wetlands Day

Wetlands Awareness Day will be this Sunday, May 7, at Fairfax County Park Authority's wetland sanctuary — Huntley Meadows Park. Sign up online for this family-friendly free event.

Celebrate the significance of Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax County Park Authority's premier wetland sanctuary, by discovering the beauty and importance of wetlands during this fun event. Bring

friends and family to stroll the forested paths and immersive half-mile boardwalk trail to learn about the plants and animals that live in the park. See live raptors, reptiles and amphibians up close and enjoy interactive displays and activities. Collect a stamp at each station to receive a prize. Rain or shine.

<https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/huntleymeadowspark>

New Bridge at Lake Accotink Is an Upgrade for Hikers, Bikers

No getting wet or turning around.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Cyclists, joggers and walkers are now able to get around Lake Accotink without fording the spillway below the dam with the completion of a new bridge that has been under construction for a few years.

"The causeway was falling apart," said one frequent crosser, part of a local group of women who use the trail often. They even joked about having to take their shoes off and tip toe through the water. But not any more with the new pedestrian bridge.

Another woman with her dog "sweetheart," enjoyed staying out of the water. "It's nice," she said.

The Lake Accotink Loop Trail system is currently one of the most heavily used trails in the Park Authority serving communities around Lake Accotink and park visitors from throughout the region. The previous pedestrian and vehicular crossing at the outfall of the Lake Accotink dam flooded frequently, often stranding trail users and tempting them to wade

through swiftly running water. In the last five years, major storms required a total reconstruction of the trail twice, so this project will resolve these issues, enhancing safety and accessibility for park users.

The project consists of approximately 300 linear feet of asphalt trail improvements and 325 feet on an elevated concrete pedestrian crossing over the dam outfall in Lake Accotink Park.

On the southern side of the bridge, the new trail improvements went about 20 feet into the woods before linking with the existing trail which goes around the lake.

The FCPA is planning a formal ribbon cutting for the project in the next few weeks.

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) recently highlighted it on his social media feed. "The crossing at the Lake Accotink dam is now open to pedestrian traffic. The ADA accessible crossing now completes the full loop of the Lake Accotink trail, check it out!" he wrote.

In August 2022, the Lake Accotink Park celebrated its 60th anniversary. Since then, there have been debates on dredging the lake to maintain its status as a lake or possibly allowing it to fill in as a wetlands park, but that issue has not been finalized.



Trail walkers are not wading across the spillway anymore.



The new bridge clears the spillway.



Looking north down on the new bridge.

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PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

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Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

OPINION

Our Men and Women in Blue - Trust, Respect and Fairness

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Whether it is rescuing a bald eagle or preserving a life during a 34-hour standoff, our Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) officers are some of the finest and best trained in the country. Yes, we have challenges – staffing shortages, ongoing training needs, long shifts and overtime. However, our officers rise to the occasion day in and day out to protect and serve our community.

Fairfax County is the safest jurisdiction of its size. What does this mean? While as all communities do, especially along urban corridors, we still have incidents and crime, however, compared to other large counties and cities, our numbers of incidents are low. This is largely due to our officers being proactively engaged in our neighborhoods and our neighborhoods being actively engaged with our officers, as the survey information below confirms.

I want to share with you several recent positive developments. This week we voted on the FY 2024 Budget, which due to my and my colleagues' advocacy, contains additional compensation increases averaging 12.8% for department personnel, and over the past two years 22.1%. Paired with already enacted signing bonuses and an excellent benefits package, we are seeing our recruitment efforts pay off with our largest academy class in almost a decade, and one of the most diverse in FCPD's history.

The Department joined over

2,000 law enforcement agencies, neighborhoods and commercial centers in using the Flock Safety License Plate Reader (LPR) system, first installed on November 1. These stationary, solar-powered, pole-mounted readers interact with patrol officers and detectives, sending alerts in real-time to officers if a stolen car or a missing person passes by. In six months, officers have used the LPRs to recover 30 stolen vehicles, six firearms, dangerous drugs including fentanyl and methamphetamines, assist in 50 arrests and help locate four missing people.

The FCPD also completed a nine-month pilot program that engaged the community and sought additional ways to understand how the community feels about FCPD. The first set of results have just been released and here are the highlights:

- ❖ High levels of overall trust and satisfaction. Of the over 9,500 responses of residents who had recently interacted with an FCPD officer, 90% of respondents viewed their interaction as positive.

- ❖ Residents reported that their top local safety concerns were higher visibility of our officers, theft, and traffic concerns. All items are being addressed with enforcement and education initiatives this year.

- ❖ Residents feel respected and treated fairly. Residents strongly agree that FCPD treated them with respect (86%) treated them fairly (83%), officers listened to them (76%) and were understood (77%).

- ❖ Both positive and negative comments provided specific sug-



gestions to FCPD on how to improve.

Other FCPD highlights include the 30 x 30 pledge, committing the department to increasing the representation of women in police recruit classes to 30% by the year 2030. Since joining the initiative, FCPD has met or exceeded the 30% benchmark, resulting in an overall department representation of 29.7% women. In coordination with our regional partners, we are also showing crime doesn't pay in Fairfax. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is assisting our detectives by offering a \$5,000 reward to anyone who can identify the suspects involved in a series of commercial robberies. The suspects have committed two robberies in our County, and through our past partnerships, our detectives facilitated this reward. <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/2023/04/27/atf-offer-5000-cash-reward-to-help-identify-serial-robbery-suspects/>.

And, it is with great excitement that we look forward to opening the new Lorton District Police Station and Fairfax County Animal Shelter – Lorton Campus this fall. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/capital-projects/south-county-police-station-and-animal-shelter>.

I'm proud to support our Fairfax County Police Department each and every day and know you all do as well. Send us a note and we will share it with the station commanders. This way you can join me in thanking our hardworking and dedicated officers for putting themselves on the frontlines to keep us safe!

To learn more about these topics, and other FCPD news, check out and sign up for the police blog: <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/> and follow them on Twitter: @FairfaxCountyPD. If you are interested in a career in law enforcement, consider joining our men and women in blue: <https://joinfcpd.org/>.

Equity Out— Opportunity In?

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN"
PLUM

The person who planned the mandatory "inclusive excellence" training for faculty and staff at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) may have been in for a big surprise last week when the guest speaker from the Governor's Office proclaimed that "DEI is dead," that is diversity, equity and inclusion.

The guest speaker was Martin D. Brown who went from being

a manager of a Chick-fil-A to the Governor's Chief of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion, an office created when the Governor dismantled and fired the previous professional staff of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

In a text of his speech obtained by the Washington Post, Brown said, "Let's take a moment right now to kill that cow. DEI is dead. We're not going to bring that cow up anymore. It's dead. It was man-

SEE PLUM, PAGE 14

Let Us Know Your View

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A Connection Newspaper



OPINION

Ethics Problem?

To the Editor:

The Supreme Court has a serious ethics problem, and the latest revelations about Clarence Thomas should be alarming to every American.

For twenty years, Thomas has accepted high-end, luxury, all-expense-paid vacations around the world from Republican megadonor Harlan Crow. And he never disclosed any of it to the public. What's more, he also sold three properties to the billionaire and never reported it on his financial disclosures. The vacations are blatantly unethical, and not reporting the real estate sales is potentially illegal.

Supreme Court decisions impact every facet of American life. Because of this, justices must be held to the highest ethical standards. When Americans see news like this about Clarence Thomas—or anything other justice—the Court demonstrates that it cannot hold itself accountable and it doesn't take its responsibilities seriously.

A Court with no legitimacy only hurts the American people. It's time for Congress to pass a Supreme Court code of ethics to bring legitimacy back to the court.

Susan Turner
Alexandria

Double Murder-Suicide in Springfield

Fairfax County police detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau continue to investigate a double murder-suicide after three people were found dead inside a home.

At 3:47 p.m. Thursday, April 27, officers responded to a home in the 8500 block of Wild Spruce Drive, in Springfield. The housekeeper found Meskerem Belachew Solomon, 38, Amanuel Belachew Solomon, 31, and Tiku Berhane Gebreeyesus, 47, suffering from apparent gunshot wounds to the upper body in the basement of the residence. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel declared all deceased at the scene. The family nanny and a child were inside the home and were found uninjured.

Preliminarily, detectives believe Tiku shot his wife, Meskerem, and her brother, Amanuel, before shooting himself. A firearm was recovered in the basement. Detectives continue to conduct interviews and review evidence to understand the circumstances that led to the shooting. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will be completing autopsies to confirm the manner and cause of death.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), is a credentialing authority. The CALEA Accreditation program seals are reserved for use by those public safety agencies that have demonstrated compliance with CALEA Standards and have been awarded CALEA Accreditation by the Commission. The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) has been accredited with CALEA since 2016.

FCPD will undergo regular assessments with CALEA through policy and procedure review. Additionally, on-site assessments will be conducted every four years to ensure the department is in continued compliance with CALEA's highest professional standards.

Public Comment Portal: Beginning in 2023, as a way to further the accreditation process' objective of providing agencies with information that supports improvement and fosters professional excellence, CALEA updated their public comment mechanism from call-in sessions and public hearings to a web-based comment portal.

The purpose of this public portal is to receive comments regarding an agency's compliance with CALEA standards, engagement in the service community, delivery of public safety services, and overall candidacy for accredited status. These comments can be in the form of commendations or concerns.

CALEA is not an investigatory body and subsequently the public portal should not be used to submit information for such purposes. There will be no response other than to acknowledge submissions

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please visit here.

Complaints can be filed with the Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecivilianreviewpanel/> or the Independent Police Auditor <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policeauditor/>

The link to the CALEA portal can be found here: FCPD CALEA Public Comment Portal.

Fatal Motorcycle Crash on I-66

Virginia State Police is investigating a fatal crash in Fairfax County. The crash occurred April 21, 2023 at 11:25 p.m. on I-66, near the 50 mile marker.

A 2006 Suzuki GSX-R 600 was traveling east on I-66 when it rear-ended a 2003 Honda Odyssey. The impact of the crash caused the motorcyclist to be ejected and thrown into the travel lane. Both the motorcyclist and the motorcycle were then struck by two additional vehicles. The motorcycle caught fire.

The motorcyclist, Jeffrey R. Armstrong, 29, of Sterling, Va., died at the scene. He was wearing a helmet.

No other drivers were injured. Speed is being investigated as a factor in the crash.

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Fishing Boats Retrofitted for Improved Service to Veterans

Veterans Fishing Adventures returns to fleet of four.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

Veterans Fishing Adventure rechristened two boats in its fleet on April 29th at Pohick Bay Regional Park's marina. But it's hard to tell if the story starts there or somewhere else. Does it start dockside at Pohick Bay, with a bottle broken on the bow, or on the battlefield in a foreign land, or in a retired Marine's living room as he talks with his daughter over popcorn and a movie? For this telling, we will make a start in the small town of Milton, population 4,482, located along the Salmon Falls River in southeast New Hampshire, and home to the Eastern Boat Works.

Volunteers from Veterans Fishing Adventures in Lorton traveled to the New England town recently to reunite with two of the boats from their fleet after about six months in retrofit. Then they escorted the boats back to Virginia for continued service providing veterans and their families fishing and boating trips on the Potomac and Occoquan rivers. The non-profit organization has offered such trips, without charge, for four years, operating on donations and volunteer help. Although open to all veterans and their families, Veterans Fishing Adventures offers those with physical limitations an opportunity to participate and take their children fishing. With four specially fitted boats in the fleet, Veterans Fishing Adventures makes as many as three trips per week, allowing Veterans with disabilities to enjoy a pastime that most can enjoy without much thought for the logistics.

Veterans Fishing Adventures volunteers, many themselves veterans, were greeted warmly in New Hampshire by Milton residents. First responders with lights flashing gave escort along streets lined by waving town residents on their way to the "reveal" of the two retrofitted boats, including "4 Freedom," a 248 Explorer. Smiles and applause greeted the trailered boat as it moved from behind Eastern Boat Works large manufacturing building for its first viewing after upgrades. Addressing the crowd of well-wishers, boat works owner Greg Hopkins said, "It's not about what you have; it's what you do, and what you do for others, to make every day special. We have

our own challenges, but these people [VFA] showed me that there is no challenge you can't overcome."

He listed the refitting tasks done by Eastern Boat Works crew on "4 Freedom" to include the impressive flag wrapping and new sponsorship decals; a lot of sanding, buffing, painting and waxing; a new motor and impressive electronics, redone interior cabins, and the handicap accessible door for wheelchairs. He added "it's kinda tough when you cut a hole in a boat."

Hopkins joined VFA's founder Ed Moore, Tim Majewski and other volunteers in returning the boats, overland, to Pohick Bay for the rechristening event.

Also on hand were Iraq War veteran Chris Walker, a triple amputee as a result of an IED detonation injury, and World War II veterans Val Dadamio and Henry Miller. During the Iraq War, from 2003-2011, IEDs were used extensively by insurgents against U.S.-led forces causing significant injuries and deaths.

Dadamio and Miller served at the five week long Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 to January 1945. It was Germany's last offensive on the Western Front in World War II; described as the largest and bloodiest single battle fought by the U.S. in that war.

A bagpiper, gathering of first responders, veterans, and others saw the three veterans and some family members on a short cruise on the Pohick Bay near the docks.

SEE VETERANS FISHING. PAGE 10



Helping hands extended in thanks for military service at the core of Veteran Fishing Adventure; Ed Moore with World War II Veteran Val Dadamio.



World War II Veteran Val Dadamio, 100 years old, is all smiles after his cruise of Pohick Bay, with VFA's Ed Moore.



Iraq War Veteran Chris Miller (seated center) breaks a bottle for the boat christening celebration.



Veterans Chris Miller, Val Dadamio and Henry Miller return to dock on Veteran Fishing Adventure's flagship, "Not 4 Gotten".



A large crowd gathers to welcome Veteran's Fishing Adventure boats return to the fleet after retrofit, and to thank honored veterans for their service.



Veteran Fishing Adventure's flotilla passes before the colored water cannon of TowBoatUS.



Fairfax County's rescue fleet now includes an airboat intended for shallow water rescues in the muddy areas of Pohick Bay.



Fishing vessel "4 Freedom," retrofitted with a new motor, wrappings, electronics and a handicap accessible door, returns to service in Pohick Bay and adjacent rivers.



Retrofit details include a new interior as well as new motor and electronics.



Residents of Milton New Hampshire line the route to welcome Veteran Fishing Adventure Veterans and volunteers to reunite with their retrofitted boats serviced at Eastern Boat Works.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

PHOTO COURTESY VETERAN FISHING ADVENTURE

PHOTO COURTESY VETERAN FISHING ADVENTURE

Veterans Fishing Adventures Returns to Fleet of Four



Well wishers gather at the boatyard for the reveal of "4 Freedom".

FROM PAGE 8

The flotilla included the VFA fleet, Fairfax County Marine Police boat, and county and private rescue boats, including Fairfax County's newly acquired air boat. Two boats equipped with water cannons provided a red-white-&-blue water arch in celebration of the flotilla parade, fit for a New York Harbor celebration, albeit on a smaller scale.

Returning to dock, well-wishers

formed a long line to thank the three veterans for their service. Miller was asked if he will return for a fishing trip to go for the enormous Blue catfish that inhabit the rivers. He said he is awaiting completion of a rod and reel set accommodated for his prosthetics, "so the fish don't take these arms back to sea with them."



Ed Moore

organization, see [veteransfishingadventure.org](http://www.veteransfishingadventure.org).

To see *The Connection's* award winning story on VFA's support of Ukrainian veterans, see <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2022/nov/29/injured-ukrainian-soldiers-enjoy-fishing-adventure>. For a link to VFA



Retrofitted boats are trailed home to Virginia.

PHOTOS COURTESY VETERAN FISHING ADVENTURE

Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce Celebrates Small Business Week

FROM PAGE 1

companies. Dental work for your children? SuperKids Pediatric Dentistry recently opened their bright and inviting location in Mount Vernon, providing dental services and orthodontic treatments.

Village Hardware, located on Fort Hunt Road, provides everything from watch battery replacements to glass cutting. For the perfect spring dress, stop by Top It Off, a women owned business creating fashionable clothing and accessories.

For landscaping, Campbell & Ferrara is an award winning, third generation family-owned and operated business. Kingstowne Lawn & Landscaping has worked on more than 3,500 properties throughout Alexandria and northern Virginia.

For inside the home, LIGHT by Alexandria Electric, located in the Belle View Shopping Center, provides all sorts of lighting options while shopping in a more intimate setting.

Those looking to upgrade their kitchen and bathrooms have relied on Brian J McGarry Interiors since 1993, while Only Bathrooms LLC recently opened a new showroom which beautifully displays tiles, fixtures and more for those of us who need to see visuals before making a decision.



Solo Flooring installs an array of flooring materials in both commercial and residential buildings. Choosing the right windows has also been made much easier with the help of Vinyl-Lite Window Factory, which manufactures their own windows in their factory on Telegraph Road. For more than 75 years, Vinyl-Lite has manufactured and installed over 530,000 windows right here in the metro area.

It's no secret that animal lovers are a big part of the community, and entrepreneurs have taken notice to provide every pet owner with what they need. Pampered Pet Boutique & Barkery specializes in all things pet related while Felix & Oscar, located in Kingstowne and a member of the community for over fifteen years, helps keep pets healthy by focusing on nutrition, education, and information. To keep our best friends' health

up-to-date, there's Harmony Animal Hospital, Hayfield Animal Hospital and Colonial Animal Hospital.

From the business-to-business industry, the Mount Vernon and Springfield area has everything covered, starting with LeMay & Company, a CPA firm specializing in accounting, tax preparation, and financial management for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and individuals.

Those looking for attorneys known in the community have options with The Dean Law Firm PLLC; Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley and Walsh PC; Bean Kinney & Korman, PC; and Redmon, Peyton & Braswell.

In the IT department, OptfinITy offers managed IT services, cloud solutions, security systems, hardware services, business communications and more.

Restaurants work with Johnson Brothers Service Distributing of Virginia, one of the largest wine wholesalers in Virginia. For lending, Burke & Herbert Bank is a family owned and operated local bank offering personal banking, business banking, online banking, and wealth services since 1852.

When it comes to dining, there's no shortage of choices: Belle Haven Pizzeria

SEE SMALL BUSINESS WEEK, PAGE 15

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Hemlock Overlook Park Recognized as Old Growth Forest

Trees are “treasures in our backyard”

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

Called “treasures in our backyard” by Fairfax County Board Chairman Jeff McKay, the old growth forest at Hemlock Overlook Regional Park was inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network on April 17th during a brief ceremony in the forest. The Hemlock Overlook includes the first trees in Fairfax County to be included in the network, raising Virginia’s count to eleven recognized old-growth forests.

The Old-Growth Forest Network (OGFN) is the only national network in the United States of protected, old-growth, native forests, where people can experience biodiversity and the beauty of nature. OGFN aims to preserve at least one forest in every county in the U.S. that can sustain a forest. OGFN works to identify forests for the Network, ensure their protection from logging, and inform people of the forest locations. Founded in 2012 by Dr. Joan Maloof, “The national count is 190, across 32 states, and is rapidly growing,” said Jeffrey Wright, Old-Growth Forest Network Board President.

The Hemlock Overlook induction ceremony included unveiling of a permanent sign marking the forest’s location and importance. Additional signs will be added to educate visitors on the history and importance of these ancient forests. McKay said, “Parks are so important for conservation and the protection [of the environment]. Equally important to me, is becoming a strong source of education. We must educate our people not only on the importance of preserving nature, but also our history, how we got to where we are now, and things people can do to stand up for and protect our environment. These things are worth fighting for.”

Old-growth trees like the Eastern hemlocks growing on the banks of Bull Run in Hemlock Overlook Regional Park are exceptionally rare; less than one percent of these original forests are thought to remain in the eastern United States. The trees offer exceptional ecological value, such as providing valuable canopy layers that shelter hundreds of species of birds, insects, and mammals. Old-growth trees also retain more pollution-causing carbon and nitrogen than younger trees, and slow growing hemlocks are especially good at absorbing carbon from the air and holding stream banks in place.

Hemlocks Overlook is a 400 acre woodland along Bull Run in southern Fairfax County, which was acquired by NOVA Parks in 1962. There are stands of old-growth eastern hemlocks along steep slopes adjacent to Bull Run, some as old as 250 years. In addition, there are old-growth sycamore and several old-growth stands of tulip poplars. A large canopy of American beech, white oak, red oak, and mountain laurel predominate. Well maintained trails through the steep topography allow visitors access to the old-growth forest areas (13220 Yates Ford Road, Clifton).

“We are thrilled to be recognizing one of the few old-growth forests in Northern Virginia,” said Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chair of the NOVA Parks Board. “NOVA Parks has been a conservation leader for 64 years. One of the properties saved in its early days was this remarkable stand of hemlock trees that

is several hundred years old.”

Another forest in the OGFN is Glencarlynn Park. Although located in a highly urbanized area, it includes examples of mature, old age natural forests, unique water resources, and a great diversity of native flora. In addition to high native plant diversity, the park includes a number of Champion and Significant Tree specimens. The active floodplain and lower slopes are documented as Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, with Oak Hickory and Oak Heath forests occupying the drier slopes. The estimated age of the community is 100+ years. It is most likely the second oldest extant growth of natural forest remaining in Arlington, and appears to pre-date the large-scale forest removal associated with the Civil War. The oldest forest remnant is most likely Arlington Woods

within Arlington Cemetery. (301 S Harrison St, Arlington, VA 22204

The celebration of the Hemlock Overlook trees came at a time of year when our nation celebrates Arbor Day; the last Friday in April. The first American Arbor Day occurred on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska City, Nebraska, when individuals and groups were encouraged to plant trees. On that day an estimated one million plus trees were planted in Nebraska. Planting trees has grown in importance as their benefit in helping to reduce the effects of climate change has become better understood. By absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂), removing and storing the carbon and then releasing the oxygen back into the air, they are helping to deter climate change. For more information on OGFN, see <https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/>



PHOTOS COURTESY NOVA PARKS

NOVA Parks and Fairfax County Park Authority employees and park visitors gather to recognize Hemlock Overlook forest’s age and beauty.



Old-Growth Forest Network board president and Virginia Master Naturalist Jeff Wright, and Mid-Atlantic Regional manager Brian Kane, a landscape architect, celebrate Hemlock Overlook Regional Park’s induction into the Old-Growth Forest Network, by hugging a Hemlock.



NOVA Parks Executive Director Paul Gilbert; Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay; NOVA Parks Board Chair, Cate Magennis Wyatt; Supervisor, Pat Herryty; and OGFN Board President Jeff Wright, with new educational signage at Hemlock Overlook Regional Park.



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CALENDAR

SPRING WILDFLOWERS

Lace up your hiking shoes, grab your camera and enjoy the ephemeral wildflowers that bloom in our parks. Ephemeral flowers are those that bloom temporarily. Their short-lived beauty allows them to grow and reproduce quickly before the canopy of the forest comes alive. Take advantage of the opportunity to get out, during this limited time, to see many of our native ephemeral blooms including bluebells, toad lilies, spring beauties, may apples and more!

Spring Wildflowers Programs
 May 6 (Noon to 1 p.m.): Wildflowers Walk and Craft, Burke Lake Park, \$8
 May 7 (3 to 4 p.m.): Wonderful Wildflowers, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, \$7

FARMERS MARKETS OPENING AROUND THE COUNTY

The Fairfax County Park Authority hosts 10 markets at locations throughout Fairfax County, where residents can find a variety of fresh and locally grown produce, delicious baked goods, prepared foods and family-friendly market activities, including live musical performances. Check out the full market schedule for the latest times and locations.

WEDNESDAYS

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/mccutcheon-mount-vernion>
 Open through to Dec. 20, from 8 a.m. to noon
 Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane

Oak Marr

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/oak-marr>
 May 3 to Nov. 8, from 8 a.m. to noon
 Oak Marr Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road

Wakefield

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/wakefield>
 May 3 to Oct. 25, from 2 to 6 p.m.
 Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road

THURSDAYS

Annandale
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/annandale>
 May 4 to Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to noon
 Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike

Herndon

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/herndon>
 May 4 to Nov. 9, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
 Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn St., by the Red Caboose

FRIDAYS

McLean
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/mclean>
 May 5 to Nov. 17, from 8 a.m. to noon
 Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road

Kingstowne

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/kingstowne>
 May 5 to Oct. 27, from 3 to 7 p.m.
 In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

SATURDAYS

Burke
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/burke>



The Unruly Theatre Project will perform Friday, May 5, 2023 in McLean.

Through Dec. 16, from 8 a.m. to noon
 VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway

Reston

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/reston>
 Through to Dec. 3, from 8 a.m. to noon
 Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza

SUNDAYS

Lorton
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/lorton>
 May 7 to Nov. 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd.

For a complete list of park authority market times and locations, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets>. For questions, contact the Community Horticulture Office at 702-642-0128.

NOW THRU JUNE 25

Falls Church Arts All Member Show. More than 155 artists will be featured in the All Member Show at the Falls Church Arts gallery from April 22 to June 25. To handle the expansive show, the exhibit will be held in two parts this year: submissions from members with last names from A-K will be on view from April 22 to May 21. Submissions from artists with last names from L-Z will be on view from May 27 to June 25. The show features the work of emerging and established member artists from Falls Church Arts and encompasses an extensive range of media from the more traditional watercolor, acrylic, mixed media, pastel, fused glass, oil, photography, and sculpture to a wide variety of mixed media and printing techniques. The Falls Church Arts gallery is at 700-B West Broad St. (Route 7), Falls Church. Admission is free and the gallery is open Tuesdays-Fridays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Artworks can be viewed online at www.fallschurcharts.org. All pieces can be purchased at the gallery or on the website.

NOW THRU MAY 31

Candytopia Opens. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Candytopia, in partnership with Tysons Corner Center announces the arrival of its sweet interactive concept to the center. It will feature 16,000 square feet with 14 different interactive environments, Instagram-worthy photo opportunities,

and delectable tastes of your favorite sweet treats. There is a candy art gallery, a state-of-the-art candy confetti room, complete with confetti-farting pigs, a marshmallow pit filled with a quarter-million marshmallows, as well as DMV-inspired elements throughout the experience. The journey includes candy samples throughout the experience. Visit www.candytopia.com.

THROUGH JULY 27

Senior Slow-Pitch Softball Seasons. 9 a.m. to noon. At Braddock, Wakefield, and Nottaway Softball Fields. Join NoVa Senior Softball, men 50+, women 40+, average age 66. Skill-level assessment. 24 teams, three levels of play. Tuesday/Thursday morning double-headers. Begin Spring Training now. 703-663-7881. Visit the website: www.nvss.org

NOW THRU JUNE 3

"Urinetown." 7:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. In a Gotham-like city, a terrible water shortage, caused by a 20-year drought, has led to a government-enforced ban on private toilets. The citizens must use public amenities, regulated by a single malevolent company that profits by charging admission for one of humanity's most basic needs. Amid the people, a hero decides that he's had enough and plans a revolution to lead them all to freedom! Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/urinetown>

NOW THRU MAY 7

Mojada by Luis Alfaro. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Mojada, written by Luis Alfaro who takes the chilling ancient Greek tale of Medea and re-imagines it in a Los Angeles Mexican-American immigrant community. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$50 general admission, \$47 seniors (65+), \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/MAY 4

Foreign Language Film. 1 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden's foreign language movie series is curated by Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff, with more than a little help from audience members! The series has a few surprises thrown in. Schedule subject to change.

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ENTERTAINMENT

5 Dates to Circle in May

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

From art openings to fan dances to Mother's Day shopping, the amount of food-and-drink festivities around town is plentiful this month. Circle some of these dates on your calendar for safekeeping.

Art Mart Happy Hour at Canal Center Plaza, May 5

Kick off Cinco de Mayo with an Art Mart Happy Hour at Canal Center and start the weekend in style. The Alexandria Art Alliance and Alexandria Celebrates Women are joining forces for an event teeming with female art vendors, an all-female art gallery opening, birria tacos and margaritas and live bossa nova from Sara Y Zhu. Canal Center Plaza Waterfront, Old Town. 5-9 p.m.

Secret Language of the Fan – and Chocolate Bon-Bons, May 6

Learn a new language of sorts

and work on your fan skills at this event at the Carlyle House Historic Park. A 19th-century staple, these fans were often used by women to convey various emotions and thoughts; try your 21st-century hand and see what you can communicate, too. And lest you get peckish during the proceedings, take heart: Bon-bons from Potomac Chocolate await! 121 N. Fairfax St. 6 p.m. \$40.

Maifest Celebration at Village Brauhaus, May 6

Celebrate spring in the German fashion with Village Brauhaus' annual Maifest celebration. Partake of Maibock beer (in a stein, or if you're feeling more adventurous, a boot) along with sausage and giant pretzels while you kick back and listen to music by Johnny Koenig all afternoon. Visit villagebrauhaus.com for reservations. 710 King St. Noon.

Mother's Day Market at Lost Boy Cider, May 12

Oh, no. Don't tell us you've waited until the last minute to pick



Fans and chocolate.

something up for your favorite mama on Mother's Day weekend! Well, just in case you find yourself in this predicament, Lost Boy Cider has you covered. Local vendors selling such gift items as candles, sweets, cards, artwork and more will be stationed inside the cidery to help you in your hour of need. 317 Hooffs Run Drive. 6-9 p.m.

Wright at Twilight at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, May 12

Ring in the weekend with a glass of wine and some complimentary snacks as dusk falls at the Pope-Leighey House. Take a tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright construction, play lawn games, listen to music and watch how the changing light highlights the architecture. Bring a picnic and breathe in the spring air. 9000 Richmond Highway. \$25.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU JULY 15

Alexander D'Agostino: "A Shrine for the Forgotten" Exhibition. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Baltimore-based solo artist exhibition recipient, Alexander D'Agostino, presents "A Shrine for the Forgotten." The work explores queer histories and images, through performance, installation, and reclaiming material from queer archives and other cultural resources related to the historic marginalization of LGBTQ people.

THURSDAY/MAY 4

The Chamber ALX's Coffee & Connections. 8:30-9:30 a.m. At The Landing Alexandria, 2620 Main Line Blvd., Alexandria. Featuring Marcia Call, CEO of TalentFront. Cost is \$15 for Members | \$25 for Prospective Members.

THURSDAY/MAY 4

Authors & Appetizers. 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Great Publishing Company LLC in conjunction with the Athenaeum presents Authors & Appetizers, the new release edition curated by KaNikki Jakarta, Inaugural Poet In Residence at the Athenaeum. This event will feature author reads by Vinele Timmons and Dawne Horizons. Followed by a mini panel discussion, and an audience Q&A. Enjoy appetizers, network with authors, and find out how these awesome writers became authors at an event perfect for book lovers, poets, writers, readers, and aspiring authors. For ticket link email: greatpublishing@yahoo.com

FRIDAY/MAY 5

Building Safety Month Kick-Off. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Market Square, 301 King Street, Alexandria. Building Safety Month is an annual public awareness campaign to help residents and businesses understand what it takes to create safe and sustainable structures. The event focuses on promoting building safety as well as the businesses and organizations involved in maintaining building safety throughout the City. This year's theme is "Building Safety Starts with You!" Questions regarding donations, participation in the event, or to receive posters, contact Pete Mensinger by calling 703 746-4210 or by email to pete.mensinger@alexandriava.gov



The Sherwood Regional Library will hold a used book sale on Saturday, May 6, 2023.

Used Book Sale

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. 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 and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

FRIDAY/MAY 5

Art Mart on the Plaza. 5-9 p.m. At 99 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria. Vendors, Libations, Bossa Nova from Sara Y Zhu.

MAY 5-27

The "Prints in May@DRA: Exploring the Possibilities" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans gallery features traditional printmaking techniques such as reliefs, intaglios, monoprints and handmade prints with mixed media, along with artworks created using computer graphics programs and other objects enhanced with block prints or imprints. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed May 28). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/MAY 6

Spring Garden Tour. 10-11 a.m. (Adults) Enjoy a guided tour of Green Spring's beautiful demonstration gardens with an Extension Master Gardener docent. Hear about our 18th century origins and our mission today. Find inspiration in our horticulturists' plant choices and garden

bed designs and take their ideas home to try in your own landscape. Garden tours run rain or shine. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code AUH.WQZD.

SATURDAY/MAY 6

Garden Talk – Problem Plants & Better Alternatives. 10:30-11:30 a.m. (Adults) Fast-growing invasive plants spread like wild-fire, covering your garden and anything that does not move! Give invasives an inch and they'll take over your yard. Learn about Fairfax County's new mandate against bamboo aggression and hear from Extension Master Gardeners about the best native alternatives for your garden. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code AL8.KOA5.

SATURDAY/MAY 6

Write Like A Woman. 1 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Enjoy an afternoon of engaging conversation and writing! Facilitated by poet, author, and Athenaeum Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta, this workshop welcomes

amateur to professional women writers ages 18-100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles. Space is limited, RSVP to greatpublishing@yahoo.com

SUNDAY/MAY 7

Wonders of the Wetlands. Noon to 4 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Explore a thriving wetland sanctuary during Wetlands Awareness Day! Join us in celebrating the significance of Huntley Meadows Park and get connected with the treasured homes and habitats of the wildlife throughout the park. Enjoy an up-close view of live raptors, reptiles and amphibians and interactive displays and activities. Bring the whole family, and your neighbors too, to stroll the forested paths and immersive boardwalk trails throughout the park. See the plants and animals that live in the park and learn how they play vital roles in the ecosystem. Grab a discovery guide when you check in and visit different activity stations, receiving a stamp at each station to earn a prize. Call 703-768-2525 or visit Huntley Meadows Park.

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OPINION

Plum

FROM PAGE 6

dated by the General Assembly but this Governor has a different philosophy of civil discourse, civility training—living the golden rule, right?” Brown is reported to have started his speech with a prayer as his boss often does, a prayer directed straight to Jesus.

There were many indications in the governorship campaign and in the Governor’s early actions that he opposed the progress the Commonwealth was making over the last half dozen years in having the state be more open and inclusive in its work force and equitable in its programs and services. VMI was central in identifying the need for a change in state policies as it had taken more than a decade and a Supreme Court decision for the college to accept women as students, and a study completed several years ago found racism and sexism prevalent on its campus. Previous Governor Ralph Northam, who himself is a VMI graduate, set up the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that the representative of the current administration has proclaimed as dead.

The persons at the training session where this announcement was made found themselves in a front row seat of a cultural war that is becoming a hallmark of the current administration. Professional staff who want to do their jobs and create an excellent institution find themselves in the crossfire among the Old Guard who want no changes in the institution, the far right who stoke the fires of opposition to any changes, and the opportunists like the Governor who sees the political gain that might be realized by furthering the divisions on issues like diversity and equity.

Those in the broader community who saw opportunities open up for them in education and the workforce with the DEI effort may have to wait another day. Those who worshiped the granite statues that have been removed from public spaces may get some momentary satisfaction in stopping or at least delaying equitable and inclusive programs that can bring about changes for a fairer society.

The Governor is scheduled to speak at the VMI commencement program later this month. Will he respond before that time to demands of the Legislative Black Caucus and the NAACP that Brown be fired? Maybe he can use the opportunity to give some clarity to this issue. Is diversity, equity and inclusiveness dead in his administration? What will he be doing to bring about the golden rule in educational institutions, the workplace, and society? Does he have plans beyond a prayer meeting?

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Small Business Week

FROM PAGE 10

& Custard Shack, pollo a la brasa at Peruvian restaurant Capital Chicken, fine dining at Cedar Knoll, Greek and Italian plates at Mamma's Kitchen, innovative cuisine at Dishes of India, and many more.

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce is proud to represent all of these small businesses.

Together, they create a vibrant community for both those living in the area as well as

the thousands of tourists visiting every year. We encourage you to visit the business directory for a listing of local businesses at www.mountvernon.springfield.com.

Sources:

U.S. Chamber of Commerce. 2023. www.uschamber.com/small-business/state-of-small-business-now

Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce. Recap: Economic Outlook 2023. <https://mountvernon.springfield.com/record-economic-outlook-2023/>



BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

for caring foster parents looking to open their homes to foster youth. Get in touch to learn more. Visit fcsvanow@gmail.com or www.FCSVA.org. Or call 703-817-9890.

LOOKING FOR SOFTBALL PLAYERS

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit the web site www.goldengirls.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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.

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) at 703-324-4547.

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CENTRE VIEW

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 Robert Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

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The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now ominous clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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Kicking the Bucket - List



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Whether it's literally been true or not, it feels like I've been off the Kenny-with-cancer-go-round for a few months, especially since I've been focused/preoccupied with my brother's death and its impact on me (see lots of previous columns). And if the reason for the break-in-the-cancer action wasn't so horrible, I might have enjoyed the past few months of non-cancer centrality. Because if there's one thing a cancer patient needs are time/life when cancer isn't front and center, but rather back and to the side. These non-cancer moments may be a delusion, but oh, what a feeling!

And therein lies the key to surviving/trying to thrive with cancer. Living like you're living, not "Living like you were dying," as Tim McGraw sang in 2004. Moreover, for me, it's living as if you have something to live for, not just die from. And while you're living, not just dying, let's stop blaming the cancer. God knows (and everyone else knows to) that cancer is a great excuse for not doing a whole host of things. Nevertheless, as much as possible – and it's not always possible, I've tried not to use it as an excuse. If it were used, it's so easy, so acceptable; using it as the ultimate excuse becomes almost narcotic. Once you start using it, it's hard to stop. Although a cancer diagnosis is hardly a privilege, it is an explanation for whatever you don't want to do. Be it household, personal or business. And these decisions are not always intended. The cancer has a way – through its many emotional tentacles – and physical challenges, to control one's subconscious. Without really thinking about it, doing – or not doing, almost is out of your control. And so, you blame the cancer.

But I don't want to. I want to blame me. I want to take responsibility for myself/my actions – or lack thereof. In addition, I don't want to be seen as Kenny-with-cancer. I want to be treated as if I didn't have cancer: for good, bad, or indifferent. Nor do I want to do things/go places/make lists just because I'm diagnosed with a "terminal" form of cancer. Again, I don't want to live like I'm dying because if I do, I know I'll do whatever I'm doing because I'm dying, and I want/need a certain experience. To me, that would be reinforcing a negative (premature death; although aren't they all?) which is exactly the vibe I don't want in my life. I want normalcy. 'Normalcy,' to me doesn't equate with dying. It equates with living. You just have to work in the cancer stuff as if it's just another variable, not an end-of-life, do-and-die set of insurmountable hurdles. If I've accomplished anything in my 14+ years as a cancer patient, it is that I never (or tried to never) let it get the best of me or have it be the dominant reason for my decisions/choices. I've tried to treat cancer as just another blip on life's radar. Sometimes, it has mattered, and other times, it has not.

Even watching my brother's struggles to survive and then overcome the septic shock that hospitalized him for six-plus weeks didn't adjust my thinking. I was doing exactly – by visiting him every day, what I wanted to do, cancer be damned. The diagnosis was not going to interfere with my responsibility to my brother. And being there every day for a few hours, being in surgical intensive care, medical intensive care, a regular room or in the rehab center adjacent to the hospital, my cancer situation was so far onto the back burner that it was completely out of sight. In fact, it was so far out of my mind that Kenny-with-cancer was replaced by Kenny-whose-brother-was-possibly-dying. And for the nearly three months in total, until his death on Dec. 3rd, I was a complementary player of sorts. I was living to benefit my brother and trying to help him in any way he needed.

And I wouldn't have had it any other way, other than wishing he had survived. I was a cancer patient who for the many moments that transpired during Richard's nearly three-month struggle to survive, did not ever think I needed to be anywhere else because I was "terminal" and needed to check an item off a list. Hardly. My brother was my list. My brother was – despite my cancer diagnosis, the most important consideration in my life and I was going to do everything I could to help him. I did for him everything I would have done regardless of my cancer diagnosis. I was going to treat his situation as normally as possible. I didn't necessarily neglect my own health but rather didn't let it get in the way of my priorities: Richard's recovery. "Cancer sucks," for sure. But septic shock turned out to be worse.

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



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