

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 25, 2023



Students at the West Potomac Academy studio.



The music production is high tech, but it still takes a band with guitars, drums and vocals.

FCPS Signs with Sound Studio To Teach Music Production

Students now have musical options in technology.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Students from West Potomac Academy in Mount Vernon are jumping into sound technology including the fields of sound engineering, music production and recording. They were introduced through a new workforce development partnership between Fairfax County Public Schools and Trilogy Sound Studio.

The students released a new album on May 15 during a signing ceremony at West Potomac Academy between the studio and Fairfax County Public Schools. West Potomac Academy students formed a band called fivetwofive, and showcased an original 16-track album called "Chromantic" that they produced in their Music and Computer Technology class. Trilogy supplied all the live sound equipment for the event. There were about 200 people in attendance for the album release and it is available for streaming and download.

"It's a different take on music production," said Sarah Benrazek at Trilogy. "In their classes, they're learning music production electronically," she added.

For the musical students in Fairfax County, there's band, chorus and orchestra, and then there's the MCT program at Trilogy, which is Music and Computer Technology. "We're doing the production behind the scenes," she said.

So far, their achievements are looked on as just a start, with 20 to 30 academy students participating, but officials are hoping to increase that number. One student recently completed an internship through the program and he sings, produces music, and engineers in the studio. Three others are doing an externship now, and are part of a project to improve sound quality in one of the studios – which will involve measuring, calculating, building, and installing new acoustic panels.

Trilogy is looking ahead to next September when another batch of Academy students will come through the doors to learn this music technology.

It's Academic

West Potomac Academy is part of the six High School Academies within Fairfax County Public Schools and is a "school within a school," that offers specialized health sciences, communications,



Left to right: Adam Purohit, senior; Erin Wallace, CTO/owner of Trilogy Sound Studio; Sarah Benrazek, CEO/owner of Trilogy Sound Studio; Matthew Faunda, MPACE director/instructor at Trilogy Sound Studio; Russ Wallace, owner Trilogy Sound Studio; Luke Pierce, West Potomac Academy Teacher.

the arts, workforce development and more courses for highly motivated high school students, FCPS said. Students enrolled in the academy courses come from approximately 20 different high schools within FCPS. Each Academy class is taught by highly qualified instructors who have worked or are currently working in the field of which they teach, school officials said.

The Academy provides students with a foundation for post-secondary education or workforce readiness in certified health-related professions, music and tv production, dance, law enforcement, and early childhood careers, the FCPS said. <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/high/career-and-technical-education/academies-and-specialized-programs>

In May 2013 West Potomac

Academy was awarded the designation as a Governor's Health Science Academy by the Virginia Department of Education.

Trilogy Sound Studio is a minority and veteran-owned, woman-led music studio based in Burke. Trilogy was founded in 2021 with the mission to empower artists and provide them with the tools, education and skills to succeed in the music industry, Trilogy said.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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NEWS

Train Reaction Officials celebrate opening of Potomac Yard Metro.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Dignitaries from across the region were on hand May 19 as the long-awaited Potomac Yard Metro Station was officially opened, connecting Braddock Road and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport stations on the Blue and Yellow Metro lines.

“I am a proud Alexandrian and former member of the Alexandria City Council and I know firsthand what it took to get here,” said WMATA Board Chair Paul Smedberg. “It was not easy but I could not be prouder to celebrate here with you.”

Smedberg noted that the new station is expected to generate billions of dollars in private sector investment, supporting 26,000 new jobs and 13,000 new residents.

“We can all agree that this station will enhance the connectivity of the fastest growing area in Alexandria,” Smedberg said. “It is very exciting to imagine what is going to become of this station, this city and this region.”

Smedberg was joined by several officials in celebrating Metro’s newest station, including Virginia’s U.S. senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson, Virginia Tech president Tim Sands and Metro General Manager Randy Clarke.

“Wherever Metro goes, community grows and this is going to be another great example of that,” said Clarke, who noted that more than 1,300 riders had already passed through the station in the first few hours of its opening.

Potomac Yard is Metro’s 98th station and second infill station, built between existing stations. The station is located near Amazon’s HQ2 East Coast head-



Metro General Manager Randy Clarke is joined by WMATA board chair Paul Smedberg, Virginia’s U.S. senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8), Mayor Justin Wilson, and other officials in cutting the ceremonial ribbon to open the Potomac Yard Metro Station May 19.

quarters in Arlington with walkable access to the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus and connections to other regional transportation

“It is very exciting to imagine what is going to become of this station, this city and this region.”
— Metro board chair Paul Smedberg on the Potomac Yard Metro station

systems, Bike & Ride facilities, and walking paths to the station from the surrounding area.

“As a proud Alexandrian this is great news not just for the city, not just for Northern Virginia, not just for the Commonwealth but for the whole DMV,” Warner said.

Added Beyer, who is also a resident of Alexandria, “This station is living proof of the value of hope, and persistence and relentlessness, and courage and grit.”

The station was initiated by the City of Alexandria and funded by tax revenues and developer contributions generated by planned

new development in the Potomac Yard neighborhood, as well as state grants, loans and regional sources. It is Alexandria’s fifth Metro station, joining Braddock Road, King Street-Old Town, Eisenhower Avenue and Huntington Station.

“What a great day to be an Alexandrian,” said Wilson, who noted that he was the sixth Alexandria mayor to be involved in the project that was years in the making. “This station is going to change lives forever and we made it happen together.”

www.wmata.com



Metro General Manager Randy Clarke speaks at the grand opening celebration of the Potomac Yard Metro station May 19.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Potomac Yard station between Braddock Road and Washington Reagan National Airport services the Blue and Yellow Metro lines.

Warming Up to Ticks And Mosquitoes

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

While ticks and mosquitoes can be pesky, disease-spreading nuisances, “We want to respect the niche of every living organism,” Kasha Helget told the Friends of Dyke Marsh in a May 17 online presentation. “We need to protect native pollinators and beneficial insects,” she said.

Helget is a certified master naturalist and past board member of the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists. She covered identifying these insects, their life cycles and roles in the environment and eco-friendly management responses.



Kasha Helget



House mosquito, *Culex pipiens*



ARY FARAJOLLAHI, BUGWOOD.ORG
Asian Tiger Mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*

MOSQUITOES

Yes, mosquitoes will bite people because they need protein, she explained, adding, “Males don’t bite.” As spring weather warms, adult females start looking for protein. She stressed, “Not every bite means a disease transmission,” but some mosquitoes can transmit diseases like West Nile virus.

Mosquitoes are important food for many animals like birds, frogs, bats, dragonflies and fish. They are pollinators that move from plant to plant and live two to three months. Virginia has around 60 species.

A female can lay 300 eggs at one time. They lay their eggs in stagnant water in places like saucers, gutters, ditches and storm drains. Some typical backyard mosquito “hangouts” are stagnant water from fountains, leaky hoses, bird baths, toys, pet bowls, clogged gutters and open trash bins. “They only need a bottle cap of water,” she noted.



SUSAN ELLIS, USDA APHIS PPO, BUGWOOD.ORG

Lone Star Tick, *Amblyomma americanum*



SCOTT BAUER, USDA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE, BUGWOOD.ORG

Blacklegged (Deer) Tick, *Ixodes scapularis*

TICKS

With global warming, tick season is lengthening in many areas, including the mid-Atlantic, studies show. Northern Virginia has six tick species, active from March to September.

What good are ticks? They are food for birds, reptiles and small mammals. “Opossums are tick vacuums,” she commented.

Ticks vary in size with some adults being about the size of a sesame seed and their larvae the size of a piece of pepper. The female lays from 3,000 and 18,000 eggs per clutch and they grow from egg to larva in leaf litter and ground vegetation.

Ticks do not fly or jump. They find food through a behavior that entomologists call “questing.” “They hang out and wait,” Helget said, waiting for a host to pass by. They seek a moist, quiet spot like between people’s toes or in the groin or armpit. “Ticks must eat blood at every stage to survive,” says the Center for Disease Control.

Some ticks carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, for example. They transmit pathogens by attaching to a host and injecting a pathogen. Some ticks do not carry diseases.

MANAGING TICKS

- ❖ Do tick checks on people and pets after being in wooded or leafy areas.
- ❖ Keep grass cut.
- ❖ Walk on trails.
- ❖ Wear light-colored clothing and tuck pant legs into socks.
- ❖ Put clothes in a hot dryer.
- ❖ If you have a tick, don’t squeeze it with tweezers or your fingers. “It could spit on you,” she said.

Insects Are Necessary but In Decline

Insects and other invertebrates make up 94 percent

SEE TICKS AND MOSQUITOES, PAGE 7

VIEWPOINTS

What do you think about state officials lowering the speed limit on Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon?

QUESTIONS AND PICTURES BY MIKE SALMON



“A lot of pedestrians have been getting hit, it’s a good idea.”
– Aaron Manda, Shoppers Food Warehouse clerk, Mount Vernon



“I think it should be based on the data, but I thought it was a pretty safe road.”
– Brittany M., Prince Georges County, Maryland



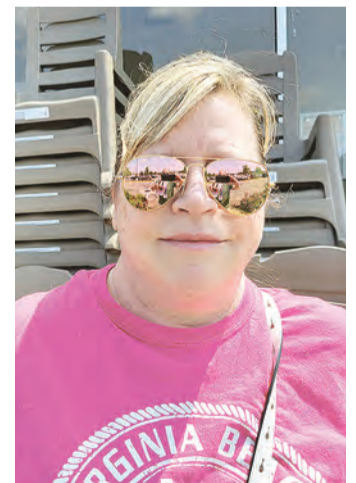
“For the safety, maybe that’s good”
– Ali, Alexandria



“I don’t think it’s going to work”
– Tonika Siler, Mount Vernon



“I think that’s terrible, no one is going to obey it.”
– Jasmine, retail clerk, Mount Vernon



“I don’t see any reason for that.”
– Charmaine McMahon, South County

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Slow Down, Save Lives

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

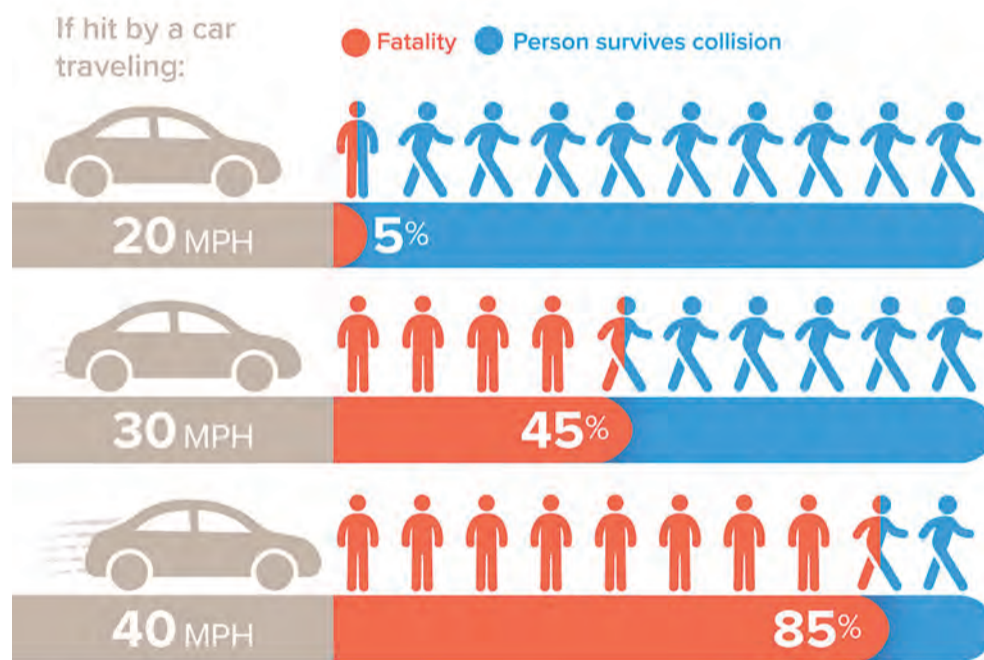
Last week, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) publicly announced the official change of the speed limit from 45mph to 35mph on a seven-mile stretch of Richmond Highway (Route 1), between Jeff Todd Way and the Capitol Beltway. On Tuesday, May 23, new signage was installed and the change went into effect. This is a long-awaited change that I, as your Delegate, am fully in support of. Here's why.

Area of VDOT Study

VDOT conducted a speed limit study at Fairfax County's request in August 2021 between Belvoir Road and the I-495 ramps, due to mounting concerns about pedestrian and vehicular safety, including several pedestrian crashes that resulted in pedestrian fatalities. During the study period, VDOT held two virtual public meetings to review the study and its preliminary results in November 2021 and July 2022. VDOT approached this study in an exceedingly transparent way, holding comment periods ahead of and immediately following each public meeting for residents to share their positions on potential changes. Based on the comments of residents who weighed in, a majority of the public favored lowering the limit. These meetings were also recorded and are available on the project website. The study provided recommendations, endorsed by Fairfax County Police, that the speed limit on Richmond Highway between Jeff Todd Way and I-495/I-95 be reduced from 45 mph to 35 mph while the speed limit between Belvoir Road and Jeff Todd Way be maintained at the current 45 mph. This recommendation and subsequent public support is a departure from a 2007 VDOT study that examined lowering the Richmond Highway speed limit. At that time, VDOT failed to recommend any change and the



Map shows the speed limit study area.



National Traffic Safety Board (2017) Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles. Available from: <https://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf>

Likelihood of a pedestrian being killed when struck by a car depends on the speed the car is traveling.

public voiced their opposition. Crash records for Richmond Highway analyzed during the study (from 2016-2020) were significantly higher than the statewide average. For this stretch of Richmond Highway, during this period, there were 1,203 crashes, including 404 injury crashes and 9 fatal crashes, of which 7 were fatal pedestrian crashes. Just this year, there have been at least 102 vehicle crashes on the Fairfax County section of Richmond Highway, injuring 75 people, according to state data. In March, a 36-year-old

woman was tragically killed while simply walking on a sidewalk along Richmond Highway in Groveton after a car hit an SUV and spun off of the roadway, killing her. Fairfax County police noted in their report that speed was a factor in the crash that caused the pedestrian fatality. Many residents in our community rely on walking, cycling, and public transportation to get around. The study noted that while pedestrian crossings are present at all but two of the 30 signalized intersections along this stretch, sidewalk facilities are spo-

radically located and are often disconnected and do not provide a continuous pedestrian access network through the length of the corridor. A significant number of the unsignalized intersections within the corridor do not have marked crosswalks and there is often a considerable distance between marked crosswalks. Many bus stops along the corridor are not located adjacent to crosswalks. This combination of factors results in a significant number of locations where pedestrians cross without signalization. In addition, no dedicated bike lanes are present on Richmond Highway north of Jeff Todd Way. With the noted limited pedestrian and cycling-friendly infrastructure on Richmond Highway, we must do more to ensure their safety on the roadway. Survival rates of pedestrians hit by a car increase significantly when speeds are lowered from 45 to 35 mph: from four survivors in ten to seven in ten as documented by the highly respected AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. For pedestrians over age 70, the survival rate increases from two-in-ten to five-in-ten when the speed limit is lowered to 35mph. Improving road safety, includ-

SEE SLOW DOWN, PAGE 11

What Is Going On with Virginia Taxes?

BY DEL. VIVIAN WATTS

First in a series of monthly columns from Del. Vivian Watts

Virginia normally passes a two-year budget and, then, we update it going into the second year. Thus far, even though the second year starts July 1, we've only passed a few technical amendments focused on our rainy day set aside, retirement funds, and federal income tax provisions.

Why the holdup? Essentially, it started last December with a proposed \$1.4 billion-dollar permanent tax cut versus funding K-12 education and the mental health crisis. Resolving the budget has been made significantly more challenging by the federal debt ceiling standoff and efforts to control inflation.

When Gov. Glenn Youngkin proposed his tax cut, state income and sales tax revenues were running well ahead of what was needed to balance the budget. Ever since then, monthly collections have been falling and, now, the total for the first nine months of this budget

year is up just 0.6%.

The good news is that part of the drop in revenue is due to tax cuts we passed last year. Income tax refunds are way up due to increasing the standard deduction and allowing low-income working families to get the federal tax credit. As of April 1, refunds totaling over \$2.5 billion are going back to taxpayers compared to just \$1.1 billion as of April last year.

The month after month fall in state revenues since December has made Virginia Senate and House budget negotiators reluctant to agree to \$1.4 billion permanent tax cuts proposed by the Governor. Added to that downward trend, national speculations about the impact on the economy of an unprecedented refusal to raise the federal debt ceiling are very disturbing. With 30 percent of our workforce dependent on federal spending, resultant job losses will hit Virginia harder than virtually any other state.

Just as our state revenue is affected by federal decisions, local government budgets are affected by Virginia not updating the state

budget. This is particularly true for K-12 school funding. The lower the share the state ends up funding, the more pressure on the local real estate tax. In other words, cuts in the state income tax and in the corporate tax – which are taxes based on ability to pay – may well result in higher local real estate taxes. This isn't good tax policy given real estate taxes are based on the re-sale value of the home – not on

the current owner's income.

Even if the federal debt ceiling crisis is resolved, the federal budget negotiations that follow will still leave Virginia revenues in jeopardy given our military and civilian federal workforce and related private sector support. If, by July 1, Virginia budget negotiators nonetheless decide a tax cut is necessary to get a budget passed that increases funding for educa-

tion and mental health, hopefully, it will be as we did last year: give all taxpayers an equal, one-time rebate. This is far preferable to the House budget that gives a permanent and sizable tax cut of \$1000 and \$1000 to those at the high end. Minimum wage workers will get nothing, most beginning teachers get \$30-\$35, and three-quarters of all other taxpayers get less than \$100.

Warming Up to Ticks and Mosquitoes

FROM PAGE 4

of all animal species, according to the Xerces Society. The late Dr. E.O. Wilson called insects “the little things that run the world.” They pollinate plants, disperse seeds, provide food, recycle nutrients and decompose animal and plant matter. “Insects pollinate approximately 80 percent of the flowering plants in the mid-Atlantic region, reports the Audubon Field Guide to the Mid-Atlantic States.

University of Delaware entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy has explained that without insects, food webs would collapse, plants would not be polli-

nated, animals would vanish and people would be left with bacteria and fungi.

“The creatures that keep us alive are disappearing,” Tallamy says. One-quarter of land-dwelling insects have disappeared in the past 30 years. The world is facing what some call the “insect apocalypse.” More than 40 percent of the world's insect species face possible extinction, a 2019 study in Biological Conservation found.

And we know so little about insects. “Of an estimated three to 30 million insect species on the planet, only one million have been identified by scientists,” wrote Laura Tangley in a 2020 article.

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Monticello Madness Birding Team Raises Funds for Local Park

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Elizabeth Lyons set out on the path at Monticello Park at 6:30 a.m. on May 4. It was sunny but quite cool when she started. It was her first Monticello Birdathon, and she was determined to see as many birds as possible to raise money for the Stretch the Parks initiative announced May 1. She said the idea is to improve the habitat around the parks by forming partnerships with neighborhoods, conservation groups and other community groups to plant trees, remove invasive species and buy and install bird boxes.

“Usually I am part of a team that works together and visits many locations across the area,” Lyons says, “To do a Birdathon in just one location was new for me.” Monticello Park is a 7-acre neighborhood gem in Alexandria near the Arlington border. It features a walking trail, small stream and old growth forest and is well known as a stop-over during spring warbler migration.

The “drink your tea” call of the Eastern Towhee is the first to penetrate the early morning air. As usual Lyons hears the birds before she spots them. Soon from deeper in the woods she hears the trilling call of the Wood Thrush.

Lyons says she was joined by some great birders for part of the day with Andreas Seitzer in the morning for several hours, then Bob Butterworth midday and Matt Felperin in the afternoon. “We called our team Monticello Madness because when the big rush of migrating birds arrive the deluge of activity and song is delightful madness for bird watchers. She says having all of those eyes and ears really helped because both in the number of species and the number of individuals there weren’t too many birds. “And we were a bit too early for the warbler migration season.”

By the time the day is over she and the team have tallied 52 different species of birds including 7 different warblers. She decides to make one last trip to the top of the park to see if she could see anything flying in from neighboring houses and was rewarded with a flicker as the final bird of the day and bringing the team’s grand total to 54.

Lyons decided to try birding again May 11. “I decided to try it again but this time solo, and I wanted to beat the first day’s total.” After an initial walk of the park she took her thermos of coffee and



PHOTO BY BILL YOUNG

Wood thrush at Monticello Park, one of the first birds heard and then spotted at Birdathon.



PHOTO BY BILL YOUNG

Hooded warbler, one of 35 possible warbler species at Monticello Park.

stool and retreated to the knoll at the top of the park. “I heard a lot of woodpecker chatter and looked up to see an adult Hairy Woodpecker feeding a chick in a tree hole.” She says she retreated because “obviously the parents were upset with me being there.”

Lyons remembers, “The birds did not disappoint. All together I saw 19 different species of warblers—the full rainbow of colors—the blue-winged, redstart, black-throated green, chestnut-sided.”

She said there were times when there were so many calls and so many birds flying around that “I didn’t know what to listen to nor where to look.” In addition to the warblers there were scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks and Baltimore orioles!”

Monticello Park is along the migration route for warblers who fly from South and Central America north every spring to their nesting grounds in the northern US and Canada. They are attracted

to the park as a stopover on their long journey because of the high tree canopy and the small stream for drinking and for bathing their feathers.

The MPNature website, established by Bill Young in 2018, has recorded 35 warbler species in the park. Young says if you visit the park regularly during the spring, a birder has a good chance of seeing 20-25 species of warblers. Although the maximum time for spotting warblers is generally between May 7-17, years may differ due to weather, food supply and other variables, and all the species don’t come through at the same time.

About midday Lyons finally got a good long glimpse of a Canada warbler who popped out of the tree canopy for a few seconds with its bright yellow throat and its chest adorned with its black necklace.

After about 11 hours Lyons was at exactly 54 species and it was getting dark. “A friend told me there



PHOTO BY MIKE POLLACK

Elizabeth Lyons, President of Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNVA) and Monticello Madness team member.

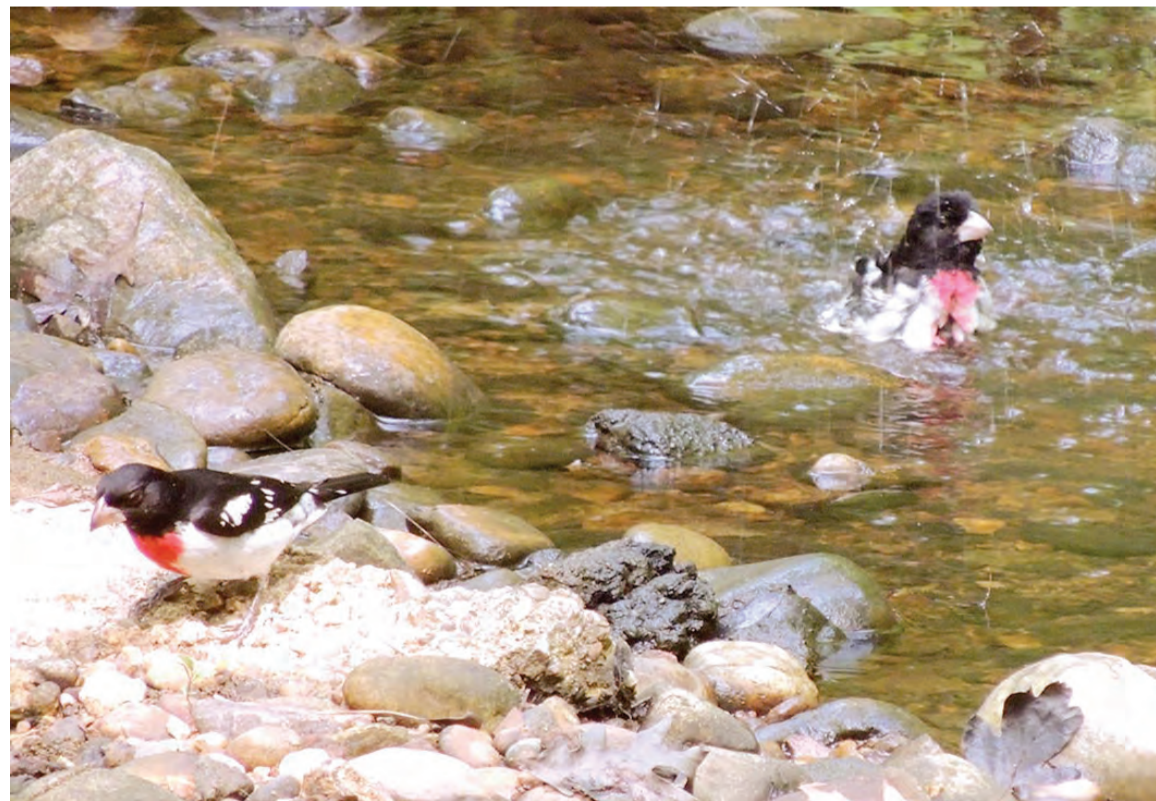


PHOTO BY ELIZABETH LYONS

Rose-breasted grosbeaks bathing in stream at Monticello Park.

was a Hermit Thrush up the hill. I walked up and found it! Then I walked to the top of the hill to better be able to see the sky and saw a flock of Cedar Waxwings swirling overhead. It was 7 pm, and I was

ready to go home. I walked down into the park but just at the bottom heard the familiar call of an Acadian flycatcher. I and another birdwatcher dashed up the hill and spotted it in the dimming light—57

species.” Lyons, President of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, says she has always been interested in nature so has bird lists back to the 80s and 90s. “But I really

got hooked in Kenya in 1998.” Then she started birding more locally after 2013 when her kids had fledged “left the nest.” She discovered Monticello Park in 2018.

Lyons started the Stretch the Park Initiative to focus on four local parks including Monticello Park and Four Mile Run Park in Alexandria and Upton Regional Park and Powhatan Springs Skate Park in Arlington.

Stretch the Park is a community-based conservation effort — to help stretch wildlife friendly habitat out from parks, to engage communities to enjoy and conserve their parks, and to help park authorities meet the needs of wildlife and people, be they bird-watchers, dog walkers, runners, or families. Parks mean many different things to many people.

For more information see <https://www.audubonva.org/stretch-our-parks>

Lyons says the donations received from the Birdathon Monticello Madness birding team will go toward supporting projects at Monticello and Four-Mile Run. She says the fundraiser ends June 2 and donations may be made to <https://www.audubonva.org/monticello-madness>.



PHOTO BY CLENDIA BOOTH

Summer Arrives

Summer travel has no doubt begun. On May 19, at 9:20 a.m., 36 tour buses were parked and four were arriving at Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens.

ASC to Honor Hodges, Coffield

High school athletes to be awarded \$50,000.

Tom Hodges, a standout quarterback at Alexandria’s former Hammond High School (class of 1961) and the University of Virginia, will be honored at the 66th annual Alexandria Sportsman’s Club Athletes of the Year Awards Banquet May 30 at the Westin Alexandria Hotel.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Native Alexandrian and national sports reporter Jessie Coffield will serve as the keynote speaker.

The event will honor this year’s outstanding high school athletes and coaches from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, St. Stephens and St. Agnes School, and Alexandria City High School. The Club will also award college scholarships to meritorious seniors. Since 2016, the organization has given \$245,000.00 in scholarships to students from the four high schools located in the city.

The awards gala will be held at the Westin Alex-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jessie Coffield

andria Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$80 each. For more information or to purchase a ticket, visit www.alexandriavasports.org.

— JEANNE THEISMANN

CALENDAR

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.

Caregiver Corner

Services Help Older Adults Stay in Their Homes.

BY DEBORAH TOMPKINS JOHNSON
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Dear Caregivers: Statistics tell us, and we know from our own conversations and experiences, that as our loved ones age into their 70s, 80s and beyond, most prefer to stay in their own home rather than move into a care facility.

“Yes, most people want to stay at home,” concurs Pamela Austin, with the City of Alexandria’s Division of Aging and Adult Services. “This division is designed to help adults do just that — stay safely and supported in their homes.” The Division works in concert with other agencies such as Senior Services of Alexandria, other nonprofit providers and various other City agencies.

Austin says the first step is to call their office where a specialist will begin the process of gathering information and completing an assessment.

Information and Referral -- 703-746-5999. “We do like to get calls from the person who might need services,” said Austin. “Caregiv-

ers may make the call to us as well. However, we will want to speak directly to the prospective client, when and if possible. We would like their involvement early on as well as their consent to receive our services.”

“We coordinate the support if the older adult needs and wants assistance. Most people, once they come on with us, stay with us. The timeframe that we will support them is usually unlimited,” Austin adds.

The Division of Aging and Adult Services acts as the City of Alexandria’s Area Agency on Aging. If you are not in Alexandria, call your local social services department to find the Area Agency on Aging in your city or county. These agencies assist adults age 60 and older.

In Fairfax County, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-area-commission-on-aging>

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING:

Once a care specialist completes a thorough assessment by phone, if there is a need to move forward, the next step is a home visit.

The home visit will determine if your loved one can perform their daily living tasks, for example, bathing, dressing, toileting and feeding themselves. The ability



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE

Division of Aging and Adult Services representative Pamela Austin, left, speaks with Deborah Tompkins Johnson about caregiving options for older adults.

to prepare meals on their own, do house-keeping, laundry, manage money and phone usage are additional key activities that are assessed.

Available In-Home Services: Besides managing the initial intake, the Division of Aging and Adult Services offers programs or information on adult day centers, recreation, light home cleaning and personal care to name a few. And in coordination with partners, older residents can receive support like transportation assistance and Meals on Wheels delivered through Senior Services of Alexandria. These are just a couple of examples.

Though support is offered, if the client at some point cannot navigate the activities of daily living, then they might want to consider transitioning to a level of care that is outside the home.

MOVING FROM HOME: Apartments, condominiums, retirement communities, or independent living facilities are options for some. But many will move into an assisted living community. Assisted living is generally private pay and often includes meals, housekeeping, laundry service, social and recreational activities, round-the-clock

emergency care/response and medication monitoring.

For a very limited number of people moving into assisted living, a grant option could be available to supplement costs.

Auxiliary Grants: These grants — which cover basic room and meals in an assisted-living facility — are available only to those with lower incomes. According to Virginia’s Department of Social Services, the grant should be sought prior to admission to an assisted living facility. If the older adult meets the income requirement, then further information will determine their eligibility. Still, the availability of these grants is limited and all facilities do not offer them.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: 703-324-5861. Finally, adults in long-term care facilities or those receiving long-term care in the community can request an ombudsman when quality of care is questioned or the client has complaints. An ombudsman assists clients in resolving issues with the facility or agency providing services. The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is available in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax City and County, Falls Church and Loudoun.

“We coordinate the support if the older adult needs and wants assistance.”


— Pamela Austin,
Division of Aging and Adult Services



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OPINION

About the Attack On Staff at U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly's Office

A sad day for all parties involved in this tragic event, and for the mental health community.

BY NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND NAMI VIRGINIA

On Monday, May 15, Congressman Gerry Connolly released this statement, "This morning, an individual entered my district office armed with a baseball bat and asked for me before committing an act of violence against two members of my staff. The individual is in police custody and both members of my team were transferred to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries."

Monday was a sad day for all parties involved in this tragic event, and for the mental health community. NAMI Northern Virginia joins NAMI Virginia in sending warm thoughts to Congressman Connolly, his staff, and the Pham family.

Mr. Pham's father, Hy Pham, told The Washington Post that his son has schizophrenia and has dealt with mental illness since his late teens. Due to Monday's attack, Mr. Pham is now in the criminal justice system, a system not equipped to respond to mental health medical emergencies.

Symptoms of a mental health crisis manifest in different ways. For example, one may show signs of delusions, mania, or sadness. Although these symptoms might be difficult for many people to understand or identify, family members and caregivers often recognize the signs and comprehend that a crisis

could result. Family members seek help for their loved ones, especially when they see a loved one's mental health condition deteriorate. When family members reach out for help on their loved one's behalf, they are turned away creating frustration in families. Families understand that sometimes one with serious mental illness is too sick to seek out help on their own. Laws must be reexamined to provide family members and caregivers recourse when symptoms show extreme deterioration of mental health. At the same time, the rights of individuals with mental illness must remain protected. Care for an individual with a deteriorating mental health condition must be forefront coupled with empathy and an understanding that mental illness is a treatable medical condition.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has started taking steps to transform the state's mental health system. Transformation measures focus on providing a system that offers a variety of behavioral health medical and support services to meet individuals with mental illness where they are in their recovery. This work in Virginia, including the work being done locally in Northern Virginia, must continue with commitments and substantial funding to fix the broken behavioral health system found throughout Virginia.

SEE SAD DAY, PAGE 14

Slow Down, Save Lives

FROM PAGE 6

ing minimizing pedestrian and cyclist crashes, is a multifaceted issue that will take work and cooperation from our state and local leaders, law enforcement, and the public. Reducing the speed limit along this portion of Richmond Highway is an important step towards this goal. While not analyzed during this study, Richmond Highway will see significant change during the next decade with the completion of the Route 1 Widening Project in 2028 and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in 2031. Many pedestrian

and cycling improvements will be included in both of these projects to accommodate increased safety for our growing community. In the meantime, pay attention to your speed and keep your eyes on the road. Arriving at your destination a few moments earlier is not worth losing your life or ending someone else's.

If you are interested in reviewing the complete results of the VDOT speed limit study, you may do so on the study website at https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route_1_speed_limit_study.asp.

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Community Matrix: Path to More Equitable Policing

Police Reform Matrix Working Group shares recommendations at public safety committee meeting.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Equitable policing is, in part, an agency's policy and regulation designed to create unbiased and fair treatment of everyone law enforcement encounters. But how to get there can be complicated. Jurisdictions and police departments across the United States are struggling with how best to accomplish it. Fairfax County is no exception.

On May 16, Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, convener of the Police Reform Matrix Working Group, and Dr. Vernon C. Walton, senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Vienna, presented "Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County" to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee. Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia), chairman, Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock), vice-chairman, and all board members serve on the Safety and Security Committee. The proposed action plan by the Police Reform Matrix Working Group presented eight topics, from rethinking policing to independent oversight and more.

Lusk noted that the "Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County" would inform a series of presentations later this year. Fairfax County Chief Kevin Davis would have an opportunity to respond to the matrix group's recommendations.

Opening Remarks

Niedzielski-Eichner said when he chaired the Use of Force subcommittee of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission (2015), the board and police department followed the subcommittee's recommendations. Niedzielski-Eichner recalled in his presentation that rewriting use-of-force policies emphasized "de-escalation as a first response to provocation; giving officers access to tools less lethal than firearms; supplying and requiring body-worn cameras; and strengthening the use of force reporting and transparency."

The subcommittee realized it would be a mistake to declare "mission accomplished," Niedzielski-Eichner said. Other initiatives, such as this one, Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing, should follow.

To set the stage for the upcoming "matrix" discussion, Walton said that when the country faced twin pandemics, Supervisor Rodney Lusk, chair of the Public Safety Committee, requested community input and police reforms. "We were wrestling with a major health crisis compounded by racial unrest," he said. Walton described the assassination of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white Minneapolis police officer.

"This awareness and level of heightening sensitivity were felt here in Fairfax County," Walton said. He added that Black and brown

individuals are more likely to experience a force disparity in arrest. Demographics of the population can reveal a pattern of "police behavior or racial profiling."

"A dramatic rise in police shootings [in Fairfax County] over our ten-year average is cause for concern and warrants reflective conversation about the sanctity of life. Trust is paramount, and where there is an erosion of trust, it is difficult for a community to be its best self," Walton said.

Lusk explained that the ten members of the citizen-led Police Reform Matrix Working Group helped synthesize the more than 300-plus recommendations from the community compiled in the matrix. "The hope is that we will craft those into a set of policy recommendations," said Lusk.

He named the Working Group members: Diane Burkley Alejandro, Sadaf Atashbarghi-Nehr, Dirck Hargraves, Prince Howard, Mary Kimm, Jennifer Lockwood-Shabat, Philip Niedzielski-Eichner, Convenor Adrian Steel, Eric Ubias, and Vernon Walton.

Suggestions captured in the spreadsheet dubbed "the matrix" by Lusk and maintained by Fairfax County Police Department grew into a "cumbersome compendium" of over 300 ideas, according to Niedzielski-Eichner. They were reviewed and commented on by the police. The Working Group met to synthesize the matrix's recommendations into a proposed action for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

The action plan recommended that the initiatives meet four criteria:

- ❖ Does it provide policy or program-level direction that can be acted upon by the board or the police chief?
- ❖ Is it a policy- or program-level initiative with the potential for significant positive impact?
- ❖ Is it evidence-based, which can include a member's lived experiences?
- ❖ Is it consistent with national best practices, or does it have the potential to become national best practices?"

Policing Use of Force

"The public, through the matrix, understands that historically, police have largely, by default, been tasked with being first responders when a behavioral health crisis arises ... (This) criminalizes the affected population," Niedzielski-Eichner said. A summary statement on policing and the use of force calls for a rethinking of policing. It assigned non-safety responsibilities to clinical and social service professions, expanded Diversion First and co-responder programs, and identified and is open to other policing models.

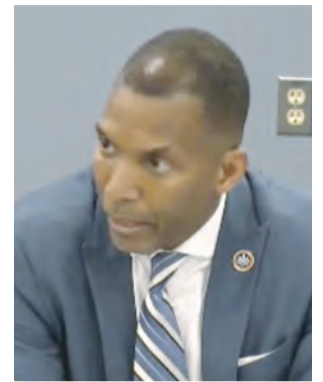
The use of force policy and accountability is a work in progress, based on findings from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and evaluated by Fairfax County's Use of Force Community Advisory Committee. "They warrant active reconsideration,"



Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, convener of the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group.



Dr. Vernon C. Walton, senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Vienna and one of ten members of the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia), chairman of the Safety and Security Committee.

Niedzielski-Eichner said, referring to an alternative standard to the "objective reasonable" standard.

"We recommend moving to a standard where the use of force must be, in principle, necessary and proportional," Niedzielski-Eichner said. "We recommend that pointing a firearm be considered and documented as a use of force." They recommended that the county implement key policy and program reforms, such as the de-escalation policies that are currently in place.

Walton noted that the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and General Order 540 (2022) adopted several recommendations, but most still need to be fully implemented.

"Pointing a gun or any other threatening weapon should be a reportable use of force action and subject to review ... We're asking that the board direct that a foot pursuit policy be established with community participation," Walton said. A Fairfax County Police Officer shot and killed Timothy Johnson, an unarmed shoplifting suspect, during a foot pursuit in Tysons earlier this year.

Oversight

Even though Fairfax County was among the first jurisdictions to establish a civil review panel, Walton said that "the panel is only as good as the authority the panel has."

"This body is responsible for the parameters of the panel. The community is asking, the committee is asking that you open the lanes ... Give the civilian review panel independent investigating authority that is now permitted by the Virginia General Assembly," Walton said.

Police Officer Excellence

The Fairfax County Police Department's recent recruitment success, according to Niedzielski-Eichner, must be followed by the retention of highly effective officers. They must be held accountable for their actions, accept responsibility for the "total community," and have access to physical and mental fitness to perform their demanding jobs. He recommended conducting regular "customer survey audits" of police department personnel to facilitate dialogue between officers and supervisors.

Community Engagement

Research and national best practices support

the benefits of authentic community engagement and the likelihood that a solution will be widely accepted, Niedzielski-Eichner said.

Most importantly, community engagement encourages the development of a trusting relationship. While the FCPD has designed and implemented numerous programs, more needs to be done, particularly to engage community members who perceive themselves to be marginalized. This policy would build on the One Fairfax policy.

"Engagement is how we build trust," Walton said. "People love to be heard, and there's a tremendous sense that many voices are not being heard."

Data

Although FCPD has made "great strides," as Niedzielski-Eichner stated, "current public data discourages year-over-year comparisons ... Standardized formats rarely include measures of disparate treatment among classes of community members."

He said FCPD leadership "needs to be consistently careful about offering premature judgments or information about an incident that is either exculpatory outside the scope of an officer's behavior or judgmental about a person of interest due to previous law enforcement history."

Specialized Police Units

Following the recent shootings by Tyson's Urban Team officers, Niedzielski-Eichner said the community and CAC recommend looking at the FCPD's specialized units for their policy frameworks. The Working Group suggests that a subset with the greatest community interest be examined for value-impacted practices, particularly those affecting people of color.

Evaluating Program Progress

The fundamental questions, according to Niedzielski-Eichner, are whether the program is intended to improve policing in Fairfax County; whether it achieves the intended purpose(s); whether resources are well-allocated; and "what lessons are learned through the implementation that will make the program much better?"

Walton concluded his presentation by saying that he reluctantly agreed to participate in this process. "I didn't want to serve on another

SEE COMMUNITY MATRIX, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

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.

NOW THRU MAY 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

NOW THRU MAY 28

Tribute Art Exhibition. At The Torpedo Factory, Van Lindingham Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Lindingham Gallery presents Tribute, a juried membership show featuring artworks that pay tribute to a cause, event, or subject that has special meaning to them personally. The following artists are participating: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Jon Kandel, Nancy Ramsey, Rebecca McNeely, Lisa Schumaier, Gregory Dunn, and Ileen Shefferman. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, multimedia works, photography, ceramics, and sculpture.

NOW THRU JUNE 11

Women's Work. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. In Women's Work three artists, Kirsty Little, Donna McCullough, and Kathryn McDonnell use non-traditional media to explore concepts related to the role of women in the arts and society. Each with a strong voice, the artists come together to offer a surprising and cogent statement about the place females have in our current world. Artist Talk: Sunday, June 11, 2 p.m.

MAY 23-JUNE 25

Kandinski. At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show "Kandinsky" which will run from May 23, 2023-June 25, 2023, featuring fiber art interpretations of Kandinsky's paintings.

FRIDAY/MAY 26

Garden Talk - Gardening for Bees. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adults) Bees are under threat from habitat loss, pesticides and climate change. Bees do more than make honey. Honey bees are also responsible for pollinating about one-third of our daily diet. Extension Master Gardeners show you how to attract and nurture bees by growing a

variety of plants that support them. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 3F6.OJ4Y.

FRIDAY/MAY 26

Historic Garden Tour.

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, Alexandria. Discover the history of the Lee-Fendall garden from its 18th century beginnings to the present. Learn how the use and appearance of the garden has changed over time and see recent efforts to restore the garden and create an educational space and urban wildlife habitat. Call (703) 548-1789 or email contact@leefendallhouse.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 27

Lee-Fendall House

Events: Beyond the Battlefield: A Civil War Walking Tour of Alexandria. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This walking tour shares the stories of soldiers, citizens, and self-liberated African Americans in Civil War Alexandria. It covers the military occupation, the conversion of public and private buildings into hospitals, and emancipation. Tickets are \$15 per person and must be purchased in advance. The tour is limited to 12 participants and lasts approximately an hour and a half. Walking tours take place rain or shine, so wear appropriate shoes and clothing. Call (703) 548-1789 or email contact@leefendallhouse.org.

TUESDAYS, MAY 30

Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, Tuesdays @ 10 - What Bugs You? 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. What can homeowners do that is kid safe, pet safe, environmentally responsible, and budget friendly to control those pesky mosquitoes, ticks, and other garden pests that emerge in the spring? And, what about those naughty invasive plants? Stop by the garden from 10:00-11:00 every Tuesday morning where you can get answers to these questions and more from Extension Master Gardeners. Each month, a different "garden of the month" will be highlighted that can inspire ideas for your own garden or even a favorite container.

JUNE 1-AUGUST 31

Creative Summer Programs. At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, mixed media, mosaic, jewelry, watercolor, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. For children and/or adults, free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Visit the website: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer



Women's Work – Jane Franklin Dance will be held on Friday, June 2, 2023 at The Athenaeum in Alexandria.

JUNE 2-25

The "American Patchwork" exhibit.

At Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernone Ave., Alexandria. Features art that highlights the diversity of cultures, landscapes, and artistic styles that make up the American experience. The exhibit broadly explores and captures the patchwork spirit of the United States and her people. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Reception: Friday, June 2, 7-9pm. Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](https://www.delrayartisans.org/exhibits)

FRIDAY/JUNE 2

Women's Work – Jane Franklin

Dance: NVFAA at the Athenaeum. 7:30 pm. At 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance returns to the Athenaeum with works that respond to the current exhibit Women's Work in coordination with the exhibition by visual artists Kirsty Little, Donna McCullough, Kathryn McDonnell. Visit the website: <https://janefranklin.com/performances>

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria

JUNE

3 Wicked Sycamore (Contemporary Folk)
10 Let it Flow Band (R/B, Soul)
17 The Box Tops (Pop, Rock)
24 Kadencia Orchestra (Bomba, Plena, Salsa)

JULY

1 Fast Eddie & The Slowpokes (Blues)
8 Robin and Linda Williams (Folk)
15 DuPont Brass (Soul)
22 Rebekah Todd (Rock, Soul, Blues)
29 Scott Kurt & Memphis 59 (Southern Rock)

AUGUST

5 Incendio (Latin)
12 The Gibson Brothers (Bluegrass)
19 Mariachi Estrellas (Mexican folklorico)

26 The 19th Street Band (Country Rock)

SATURDAY/JUNE 3

Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street on the Potomac River. Volunteer Alexandria is thrilled to present the Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair. The fair features local and regional artists and crafters who showcase their pieces across various mediums, including pottery, stationery, fabrics, paintings, jewelry, photography, and more. Visit the website <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/events>

JUNE 3

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>.

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.
MAY
Wed. 24: Christette Michele \$69.50
Thu. 25: Christette Michele \$69.50
Fri. 26: Bela Dona Band \$39.50
Sat. 27: The Smithereens with Marshall Crenshaw \$39.50 (Rescheduled from 3/17/23) SOLD OUT!
Sun. 28: The Seldom Scene & Larry Keel Experience \$35.00

JUNE

Fri. 2: Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy \$45.00 (Resched from 3/4/23)
Sat. 3: Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes \$59.50

Sun. 4: Leonid & Friends \$59.50 SOLD OUT!

Tue. 6: RIOPY \$29.50

Fri. 9: Marcus Miller \$69.50

Sun. 11: TWEET \$45.00

Tue. 13: America \$119.50 SOLD OUT!

Wed. 14: America \$99.50 SOLD OUT!

Fri. 16: NRBO \$45.00

Sat. 17: Atlantic Starr \$59.50 SOLD OUT!

Sun. 18: Atlantic Starr \$59.50

Tue. 20: Happy Together Tour 2023 featuring The Turtles, Little Anthony, Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, The Vogues, The Classics Iv, And The Cowsills \$99.50 SOLD OUT!

Thu. 22: The Voice of The Moody Blues JUSTIN HAYWARD with Mike Dawes \$79.50

Fri. 23: Tarsha Fitzgerald Productions Presents "THE VOICES" Tribute To Motown \$35.00

Sat. 24: After 7 \$75.00

Fri. 30: Newmyer Flyer Presents The Songs of Burt Bacharach & Hal David \$39.50

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Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Mr. Joseph Cammaratta (VMRC #23-0172) is requesting a permit from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to install two (2) open-sided boat houses (36-foot by 17.5-foot and 30-foot by 16.5-foot) to cover two (2) existing wet slips at the channelward end of an existing private pier in the Potomac River adjacent to riparian property situated at 5901 River Drive, in Fairfax County.

You may provide comments on this application (VMRC #2023-0172) at <https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/habitat/comments/>. We will accept comments by the USPS provided they are received within 15 days of this notice to: Marine Resources Commission, Habitat Management Division, 380 Fenwick Road, Bldg. 96, Hampton, VA 23651

NEWS

Sad Day For All

FROM PAGE 11

Virginians were horrified earlier this year when video clips emerged showing the tragic results of a broken system when Mr. Otieno, a young man experiencing a mental health crisis, died. Mr. Otieno was met with force as opposed to medical intervention to treat his mental health condition. System change is needed now to provide individuals with the medical care they need, when they need it, to avoid negative outcomes.

NAMI Northern Virginia and NAMI Virginia continue to serve on the frontlines in advocacy for mental health services, funding, housing, workforce development, jail diversion programs, the use of compassionate, non-combative de-escalation training, increased mental health education, and the need to have knowledgeable, empathetic mental health professionals in a leading role in crisis situations to mitigate violent outcomes.

One in five Virginians experiences a mental illness each year.

The population of Virginia in 2021 was 8,642,000 people. That means that 1,728,400 million of our friends, family, neighbors, and our other fellow Virginians, are affected by mental illness each year. In Northern Virginia, 750,000 adult residents (39 percent of the Northern Virginia population) are impacted. System transformation must continue to make great strides in Virginia's behavioral health system to provide compassionate behavioral healthcare and services and prevent injuries or death.

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.

INOVA OPENS FIRST POST-ACUTE CARE HOSPITAL IN REGION

Inova is pleased to announce the opening of the new Inova Select Specialty Hospital in partnership with Select Medical. Located within Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, the new hospital celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 16 and will welcome the first patients May 23. The Specialty Hospital is the first of its kind in Northern Virginia, offering specialized treatment to critically ill patients who require an extended stay, but no longer need the intensive care provided in an acute care hospital. The Specialty Hospital fills a much-needed care gap in the community. This specialized post-acute service is not currently offered in this region, requiring patients to be transferred to facilities in Charlottesville, Richmond, or out of state. With the opening of the new hospital,

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Community Matrix: Path To More Equitable Policing

FROM PAGE 12

task force that would produce a body of work that would ultimately sit on the shelf without the possibility of becoming a living document,” Walton said. He added that he came because of his belief in political will and that this body, the Board of Supervisors, has the political will to do what is right.

Walton said he felt compelled by moral conviction to present the document and the enclosed recommendations on behalf of Fairfax County residents, hoping that the supervisors would give it full consideration and eventually adoption. Walton said, “We respectfully ask that you are bold and courageous and do it without delay.”

Lusk said the board must allow Chief Davis to look at the recommendations and provide feedback. As for rethinking policing, they have been working hard to hire the mental health clinicians the county needs for the co-responder implementation. “This is a tough task,” Lusk said. “We do have three of our four units up and running. So we need one more unit to cover the county.”

Lusk said that they must work on training, de-escalation, and determining patience, time, and distance — all of which are critical to reducing the use of force.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 14

patients can now receive specialized care closer to home. All five Inova hospitals will be able to seamlessly transition patients needing this level of care to the Specialty Hospital, expanding Inova’s continuum of care. This 32-bed hospital will serve patients with specialized needs, including post-ICU patients recovering from chronic, critical illness such as infectious diseases, surgical complications, orthopedic, wound or post-trauma conditions. The hospital will also provide ongoing treatment for pulmonary conditions, neurological disorders, cardiac conditions, or renal disorders. Inova Select Specialty Hospital is licensed as a long-term acute care hospital (LTACH), and will operate as a hospital-within-a-hospital.

For more information, visit www.inova.org.

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

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 beeswax-based products
- House of Empanadas – variety of empanadas
- King Mushrooms – variety of locally grown mushrooms

They have been working with the civilian review panel under independent supervision and have hired an executive director and an assistant to that director to help them build out their infrastructure. The issue of granting the civil review board additional and expanded authority was raised by Lusk, and the board discussed it last year.

According to Lusk, transparency and data are critical. “If you want trust and accountability, you need to have transparency in the data ... We can continue to make progress ... This is a document that’s not completed; it will continue to evolve over time and improve over time. I’ve read [recommendations] clearly and carefully and understand what the request is, and we will be working to bring back to this body the responses from the department and then the responses from this board.”

Readers can access the video starting at minute 38:11 at https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/2890?view_id=9&redirect=true&h=aa406817dd910e9c28e63c0a2dedf8b7 and a text overview of the recommendations is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/boardofsupervisors/files/assets/community%20recommendations%20for%20more%20equitable%20policing.pdf>.

- 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.

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

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We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784

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. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

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

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

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning 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 omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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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Winging It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Without my wingman, my recently deceased brother, Richard, I have no doubt that living forward, there will be many occasions when I would have loved to consult the manual; that manual being my older, wiser, more experienced, and reliable brother. If ever there was an ideal resource to have at the ready, I nominate — in arrears, my brother, Richard. Losing his counsel, compassion and understanding of most things KBL (me) seems almost like a physical loss/handicap because the emotional loss is so massive (to quote the Brits), it feels physical, if that makes any sense?

And unfortunately, losing a foundational piece of your emotional architecture is not easily replaced. Let me be more specific: it's impossible, never to be replaced, always a void, and I feel diminished somehow and less interesting by his death. Though we weren't exactly joined at the hip, we were entangled nonetheless with all manner of likes, dislikes, preferences, motivations, and most of all: familial responsibilities; to one another, our deceased parents (every day one of us visited them for a few hours when they lived in Leisure World), our wives and miscellaneous other extended family (neither one of us had any children).

As close as Richard and I were, that bond was solidified even more during our parent's brief stay in Maryland. When our parents first arrived in Maryland, my mother was unexpectedly in a wheelchair, unable to walk at all. It wasn't physical, but emotional, she didn't have the physical strength. Something happened when she boarded the plane for Washington, D.C. from Florida. After months of pills (to treat her presumptive depression), we took a more aggressive route: E.C.T., electroconvulsive therapy. After only four treatments, my mother regained her form and once again, became the mother she had always been: loving, nurturing and focused on her family.

A few months after my mother's recovery, my father suffered the first of his two strokes. Though he wasn't totally incapacitated, speaking, as often happens, became challenging for him. Given these two conditions, Richard, and I both felt our place, as often as possible was with our parents. We had encouraged their move from Florida with this exact scenario in mind: what if something happened to them? How could we manage their care long distance? We couldn't so they agreed to move north. And without any hesitation, Richard and I happily welcomed their arrival and remained committed to our parents for the rest of their lives.

As a result of this arrangement/commitment, Richard and I spoke at least once a day for a parental update. And as you can imagine, life got way more complicated after my father had his first stroke. Though my mother was back to her old self (affectionately referred to), she had her own challenges: she had suffered hearing loss due to nerve damage years earlier and it had taken a toll. She (I can still hear my father admonishing me: "Don't call your mother 'she'") really couldn't take care of my father any longer so we ended up hiring a live-in caregiver, Maria, who was, as we were fond and sincere in saying, "an angel of mercy." She couldn't have been more kind, loving and dedicated to my parents. She treated them with respect and dignity and enhanced their lives; especially as their health failed. Still, Richard and I didn't convince our parents to move to Maryland to leave them alone with a caregiver, no matter how wonderful she was, so we alternated our days (evenings actually) and did a split-shift on Sundays (Maria's day off) for the rest of our parent's lives to assure them that there would always be family in the house.

When my brother went into septic shock in mid-July, Vanessa (his wife) and I organized a similar daily schedule to what Richard, and I had committed to for our parents. And after six weeks of his being in a coma of sorts, and on a ventilator, a dialysis machine — and so much more, he finally woke up. A month or so later he was transferred to a rehabilitation hospital and a few weeks after that he was discharged. I met Vanessa and Richard at home to help her transport him into their home. He could barely walk. Given his initial prognosis (not good), it was a miracle that he was home. Vanessa didn't need me to come over every day, but I certainly called Richard once a day, at least. And so it remained that way for the next two months or so until he died at age 73. I lost so much more than a brother, I lost part of my universe, too.

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



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