

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 13, 2023

## Coming Home and Preaching In His Father's Footsteps

### Community Invited to Celebrate

Community invited to celebrate the return of another Pastor Duley to the Pulpit, followed by a Potluck Community Picnic, along with music provided by a local band performing on the front lawn. Sunday, July 23, 12:30pm - 3pm, Aldersgate UMC Front Lawn 1301 Collingwood Rd, Alexandria, VA 22308 (703) 765-6555

**O**n Sunday, July 23, Aldersgate United Methodist will welcome a young visiting Pastor — Jason Duley — who will deliver the sermon at both 9:30 and 11:00 services. But he will not be the first Pastor Duley who has preached from that very same pulpit. That's what makes this both a special occasion and a real treat for this Mount Vernon area congregation.

James L. Duley served as the Senior Pastor at Aldersgate United Methodist during the period between 1960 and 1976. While there are only a few members of the current congregation who might remember Pastor James Duley, they all know that he served during a period of significant growth. Under his visionary guidance, membership skyrocketed to more than 2,500 members, the church built educational wing additions, and on a glorious day nearly 60 years ago in 1964, the present sanctuary was dedicated. Located at the corner of Collingwood Drive and Fort Hunt Road, Aldersgate United Methodist stands as a beacon to the entire community.

While Pastor James Duley was no doubt proud of these accomplishments, he was surely even more proud of his family as a young son, Jason, joined the family mid-way through his ministry at Aldersgate. At that time, who would have known that he would follow his father into the ministry, graduating from Duke University school of divinity. Jason currently serves as the Pastor of Galilee United Methodist Church and Chapel in Sterling, Va.

Pastor Jason, even though very young at the time, recalls being a bit of a "trouble maker" who would crawl under the pews while



Pastor James Duley with his young son Jason.



Countdown to the steeple raising, Aldersgate UMC in 1964.



Pastor James L. Duley, pastor of Aldersgate UMC 1960-1976.



his Dad preached. And no doubt he continues to be understanding of youngsters who may be impatient in church. He was born, baptized and attended the Day school at Aldersgate, but being a "preachers kid," he never pictured himself as a Pastor ... until he got a higher calling a bit later in life.

The Aldersgate congregation is so fortunate to have Jason coming home and sharing a message.

Aldersgate United Methodist Church has always endeavored to serve the surrounding community. When the church was founded in the 1950s, the area was relatively

**Jason Duley with his father and daughter at his graduation from Duke Divinity school. Pastor Jason Duley will be visiting Pastor at Aldersgate UMC this weekend.**

undeveloped. As the church continued to grow during the tenure of Pastor James Duley, the community changed and grew along with it. It would be realistic to attribute the growth of the church to that of the community. However, the relationship also works in reverse. A vital church can play a key role in the development of the neighborhood in which it is located. Aldersgate has a tradition of involvement and outreach in numerous areas of the community.

That tradition continues this Sunday as Aldersgate UMC welcomes everyone in the community to join them to celebrate the return of another Pastor Duley to the Pulpit, followed by a Potluck Community Picnic, along with music provided by a local band performing on the front lawn.

## Annie E. Harper Memorial Marker Unveiling

**B**ethlehem Baptist Church and the New Gum Springs Civic Association will unveil the historical marker in honor of Annie E. Harper Saturday, July 22, 2023.

Annie E. Harper who resided at 7735 Fordson Road, was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church, and was instrumental in the elimi-

nation of the poll tax.

Annie Harper will be honored with a marker unveiling ceremony on Saturday, July 22, 2023, at 10 a.m.

The site of the marker will be across the street from St. John's Baptist Church located at 7730 Fordson Road, south of the intersection of Fordson Road and Rich-

mond Highway. Afterwards, there will be a reception at Bethlehem Baptist Church, at 7836 Fordson Road, Alexandria, Va, 22306.

### A Brief History:

Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections, 383 U.S. 663 (1966), was a case in which the U.S. Supreme Court found that Virginia's

poll tax was unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The Twenty-fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1964) prohibited poll taxes in federal elections. Five states (Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia) continued to require poll taxes for voters in state elections.

The Supreme Court's ruling in Harper's case banned poll taxes in state elections. We salute Annie Harper for her great efforts in making it possible for all African

American citizens in Virginia to freely vote and for ending this method of disenfranchisement at the polls.

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## Coming Soon...the Budget?

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

**W**e adjourned the General Assembly session without completing the off-year amended budget, instead passing a “skinny budget” to keep the Commonwealth running. Although negotiations between budget conferees have continued into the summer and past the July 1 start of fiscal year 2024, no agreement is in sight, jeopardizing a \$3.6 million surplus. At this point, there are no plans for a special session of the General Assembly on the budget. While Virginia will avoid a government shutdown, additional funding adjustment amendments have been set aside.

During an even year when the biennial budget is created, the Secretary of Finance provides revenue forecasts to the General Assembly, which serves as the basis for the two-year budget. However, adjustments are necessary during the session when subsequent reports on actual funds become available, accounting for discrepancies or surpluses. In some cases, important funding efforts are cut due to insufficient funds, but they can be reinstated in the amended off-year budget. Many of these measures include



small “home-cooking” amendments that legislators file to benefit their local communities. Examples of such projects include the funding I requested for the Gum Springs Historic Society and Museum, the WISH workforce development center in Hybla Valley, and a study on salt runoff in local waterways. Unfortunately, local projects like these across Virginia are currently on hold.

As a Democrat, I support using the surplus funds to make historic investments in teachers, counselors, and support staff, targeting academic achievement and addressing the challenges of learning loss. An investment of \$1 billion in our schools will improve teacher pay, provide mental health support for students, reduce class sizes, and enhance resources for repairing and replacing outdated school buildings. This investment in public education will ultimately create a strong and attractive workforce as companies consider relocating to Virginia, as exemplified by Amazon, Lego, Boeing, and others.

On the other hand, Youngkin and the Republicans plan to divert funds from education through a \$1 billion tax cut favoring the wealthy and corporations. This proposed tax

cut would be an ongoing annual occurrence, which is not fiscally responsible.

The budget reflects the values of our Commonwealth. We should demonstrate to Virginians that we prioritize the quality of public education and the success of Virginia students over tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy. Any budget surplus is irrelevant when critical needs such as affordable child-care, funding for high-quality teachers, and an accessible healthcare system to support mental health remain unmet.

Furthermore, this week the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) released an 18-month report, spanning 160 pages, on Virginia’s K-12 Funding Formula. The findings are alarming, revealing that public schools are severely underfunded, with students bearing the consequences.

Virginia allocates approximately \$1,900 less per student than the national and regional average, even after accounting for regional differences in labor costs. Schools across the Commonwealth face challenges with staffing shortages, lost learning time, a growing mental health crisis, and critically low state funding for vital programs. Fully funding Virginia’s public schools is crucial to providing students with the tools they need to succeed.

## Guitarist Delves on Life’s Challenges

**Singer-songwriter climbing the musician’s ladder.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

**L**ocal musician Bridget Artman is impacted by uncertainty and covid, so her latest song delves into these factors with a new slant from anything she’s done. Her one-person show has even changed and now she is using a drummer to get the sound right on this new song, which doesn’t even have a title yet. “It’s my most ‘me’ song yet,” she said.

This new song deals with making mistakes in life and repeating those mistakes in one form or another. One lyric, “why do I keep doing this,” is focused on those mistakes and the stress that surrounds them. She hopes it’s “something they can listen to and tune out the world,” she said. There’s a 1980s musical slant to her music, and groups, “The Pixies,” and “Still Woozie,” are influences for her.

Grant Hamilton is a drummer that she’s joined up with recently, and he adds another dimension to the songs. “If I want to go in the indie rock direction, live drums is



Mary-O’s in New York City.

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Mon., July 31, 6-8 p.m.

essential to that.”

Both Artman and Hamilton live in the Collingwood community of Mount Vernon.

“I worked with a new producer on this,” Artman added, and has a demo track she uses for promotions.

Artman started playing the guitar at a young age and graduated from West Potomac High School in

SEE MUSICIAN, PAGE 5



On some Thursdays, the Nepenthe Gallery in Hollin Hills has local musicians as guests at their open houses.

### Let Us Know Your View

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
**Local Media Connection LLC**

**1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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A Connection Newspaper





Mount Vernon at Home president Paula Lettice with Jim Zalewski of Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home, David Frantz and Jennifer Ferrara at the May 24 MVAH gala at River Farm.



Del. Paul Krizek, back right, with Mount Vernon at Home vice president Deborah Matthews, MVAH member Arlyne Goodweather and Khloe Krizek May 24 at the River Farm gala.

# Celebrating Seniors

Mount Vernon At Home marks 14 years.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon At Home held its annual gala May 24 at River Farm, celebrating its 14th year as part of the Village network serving area seniors.

“We have over 80 people here tonight so I think we are doing well post-COVID,” said Mount Vernon at Home president Paula Lettice of attendees that included Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck and Del. Paul Krizek.

Mount Vernon At Home is part

of the Village network, serving local residents aged 55 and over who are choosing to remain in their homes and communities as they age. The Village to Village Network consists of over 300 villages across the nation.

**“We are helping seniors stay in their home giving them support.”**

— Mount Vernon At Home president Paula Lettice

“We are helping seniors stay in their home giving them support,” Lettice said. “We are giving them the assistance they need so they can age gracefully while remaining in their home.”

Said member Mel Goodweather, “I like it very much. It makes a difference to take advantage of this.”

[www.mountvernonathome.org](http://www.mountvernonathome.org)



Mount Vernon At Home member Mel Goodweather, left, with MVAH president Paula Lettice and Mitch Opalski, CEO of Synergy Home Care at the May 24 Mount Vernon At Home gala at River Farm.

# Soar Like an Eagle

Scouts receive \$1,500 Rotary scholarship.

The Alexandria Rotary Club presented Eagle Scouts from the Colonial District with \$1,500 scholarships at the organization’s June 6 meeting at Belle Haven Country Club.

“For the past 25 years we have worked with the Colonial District to raise funds to help

support Boy Scouts,” said Rotarian Donald Simpson Jr. “We especially support those attaining the rank of Eagle Scout in our community and raise funds to give them college scholarships every year.”

Alexandria City Council Member Aliya Gaskins was on hand to congratulate those receiving scholarships.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Councilmember Alyia Gaskins, center, stands with Jack Reeder, Colonial District Chairman Vincent Kiernan, Caden Ritchie, Colin Tridone, Keenan Pallone, and Colonial District Commissioner Damon Baldini at the June 6 Alexandria Rotary Club luncheon at Belle Haven Country Club where each Eagle Scout was presented with a \$1,500 scholarship.

PEOPLE

# Musician's Ladder

FROM PAGE 3

2020. She's played a few coffee shops and restaurants in Alexandria including the Nepenthe Art Gallery in Hollin Hills. Word of mouth seems to work. "The more gigs I play, the more I get," she said. "Sometimes you have to pester people until they let you play there," she added.

In addition to playing music she takes on the role of sound technician and took a course at the Omega Recording Studios in Rockville, Md. She runs the audio board at a few clubs in the area and is happy to be one of the few women in a field where she sees a lot of men. "It's cool to see other girls doing that," she said.

She has family roots in New York and took a trip to New York City earlier this summer to play a few places there as well. One place was Mary-O's in the lower east side and



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

In New York state Bridget Artman played in a place overlooking the water.

they have invited her back next year. "The place was filled, it was a fun night," she said.

Artman's song comes out on July 30 and she plans to launch it to fans on July 31 when she plays at the Light Horse in Old Town.



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# To the Rescue!

Help save trees from alien killers.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

**B**e on the alert — killer aliens are invading! There is no need to look to the sky for unidentified craft — they won't be using spaceships. As in a scary Hollywood movie, their spores travel on the wind, or arrive by animal or bird dropping; perhaps even by human hand or foot. These killer aliens are invasive non-native vines which, left unchecked, will kill our trees.

The non-profit group, Plant NOVA Natives, wants you to spot alien vine species in your yard and your neighborhood, to be alert and put others on the alert, to the damage non-native vines inflict.

Plant NOVA Natives' effort is part of their Tree Rescuer and Plant NOVA Trees campaigns.

In Fall 2021, Plant NOVA Natives launched their focus on planting native trees to increase the native tree canopy in Northern Virginia. The goal: to plant 600,000 trees by 2025. Native trees are known to provide a myriad of benefits to the ecosystem, including as host plants for early stages of pollinators, and are important to reducing climate change by capturing carbon, cleaning air and clearing pollutants from stormwater. This is especially important here in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Virginia is one of five states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, tasked by the federal government with taking actions to offset damage to the Bay created by polluted runoff from roofs, roads, and lawns, causing damage downstream.

Despite tree planting efforts, the tree campaign reports, "Northern Virginia is gradually losing tree canopy. Multiple factors contribute to tree death. Some are hard to change on a local level, such as the stress on trees from climate change. Others are within human control, such as poor planting and mulching practices or the sacrifice of trees for more roads, buildings, and park amenities." Consider the number of trees coming down along the Beltway for expanding express lanes.

One year after the tree planting campaign launch, residents self-reported 7,850 trees and shrubs planted, on the group's website. During the same timeframe, Tree Rescuers sampling survey of about 4,000 residential acres found an average of one mature tree at risk per acre. The number of at-risk trees on commercial acreage was higher; 6.5 per acre on about 6,000 acres surveyed. That's over



Supervisor Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District, shows interest in doing more to eliminate invasive vines attacking area trees.



This mature tree likely succumbed to the weight of English ivy stealing nutrients and to Porcelainberry in its canopy denying sunlight to its leaves.



Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck, head of the Board's Environmental Committee, meets with Plant NOVA Natives Outreach Chair Margaret Fisher to discuss the scope of the number of trees at risk in Fairfax County.



Margaret Fisher, Plant NOVA Natives, shares the Tree Rescuer campaign's door hanger brochure for home owners with Supervisor Dan Storck.

## Recognizing Trees at Risk

- ❖ English Ivy reaches more than 1/4 of tree trunk
- ❖ Vine cover in tree canopy
- ❖ Vine twisted around tree trunk
- ❖ Vine weight causing broken branches

40,000 mature trees at risk, just in the surveyed areas of the county.

It soon becomes obvious that planting small tree seedlings, even in large numbers, cannot make up for losing thousands or millions of large, mature trees. Saving one mature native tree provides huge environmental benefits.

Yet millions of large trees are at risk of being smothered to death. Vines typically attack trees in the sun along wood edges, but may also be present in open gardens, or almost anywhere. Vines leaves

block air and light from the tree bark and canopy, and the vine's roots compete with the tree for nutrients in the soil beneath. When vines get big and spread, they suffocate the tree. Often trees are unable to recover during vine dormancy.

The amount of time it takes to do serious damage depends on the tree and the type of vine. One of the fastest growing vines, Kudzu grows out of control quickly. It is able to spread through runners, rhizomes, and by vines that root at the nodes to form new plants. Once established, kudzu can grow at a rate of one foot per day with mature vines as long as 100 feet, according to Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Nicknamed the "plant that ate the South," Kudzu can form a continuous blanket of foliage which chokes out competing na-

SEE HELP SAVE, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Help Save Trees from Alien Killers

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE



Kudzu, 'the plant that ate the South,' can form vast blankets of vines crossing meadows pushing out any other native plants and climbing into and suffocating trees. Shown here in Laurel Hill Park before chemical treatment killed the Kudzu and allowed planting native trees to restore the area to forest.



Not all vines are tree killers, such as this native Virginia Creeper, whose lighter weight and compact habit are not as great a strain on its host, and in turn is a host to other native wildlife.



Last Fall volunteers cut invasive English Ivy vines at ground level and in a window pane pattern to help save this tree at serious risk with vines covering about 80 percent of the trunk. This season, though fewer shoots, the ivy is adding growth, trying to come back. Without use of chemical sprays, cutting must be repeated to weaken the unwanted plants over time.

FROM PAGE 5

tive trees and vegetation.

Another vine, Mile-a-minute weed is a fast-growing, barbed vine native to Asia. It gets its name from its ability to grow up to 6 inches per day, or 25 feet in six to eight weeks. It also forms large mats of plant material that choke out native plants, leaving no space for tree seedlings to sprout. Other prolific invasive vines in our area include: English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, Porcelainberry and Asian Wisteria.

Invasive vines are a problem on all types of land, not only on private lawns and public parks, but also on commercial properties, home owner association (HOA) common areas, the grounds of houses of worship, military bases, Virginia Department of Transportation easements, and railroad and other rights of way.

To some, eliminating invasive vines and other invasive plants seems an impossible task, hard to change on the local level given the size of the problem. But Margaret Fisher, Chair, Plant NOVA Natives Community Outreach Committee, says, "I'm not ready to concede that it's impossible." She does know that it will take a concerted effort; one that will need to involve action beyond what volunteer groups do now in area parks.

Fisher sets a scene that would chill a Hollywood sci-fi script writer. She warns, "The problem is growing every year, with nothing so far to stop it. The work that is being done is on such a tiny scale

compared to the need, that one can easily predict that by the end of the century, if not sooner, Fairfax County's remnant natural areas will be almost entirely destroyed. When the trees fall, it is game over, since once the light gets in, the invasive shrubs and perennials explode."

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, in one year a mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange. This makes trees a very important part of our climate change response. When a tree dies, the carbon it had captured is released back into the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency says, "the buildup of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases like methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is causing the Earth's atmosphere to warm, resulting in changes to the climate we are already seeing today."

## What Can Be Done on a Large Scale Locally?

The first part of the locally focused effort has been to help northern Virginians recognize the vines and their danger. Tree Rescuer volunteers look for vines in communities and leave informational door hangers. Their work adds to volunteer groups who have worked

in conjunction with the county's Invasive Management Area (IMA) group to attack invasive vines and other plants in area parks.

Recently, Fisher has begun asking for county supervisors' help, to use the county's many communication vehicles to include more tree saving information, as a service to residents, adding to the Tree Rescuers and park volunteer effort. In addition, her group advocates for county leadership in including tree saving efforts when contracting for its own landscaping services, and creation of public-private partnerships with businesses, both for trees on their properties and by adopting nearby parks. Plant NOVA Natives encourages engaging the many landscaping and lawn service companies operating in the county to learn about invasive vines and do more to eliminate them. For example, instead of mowing only to a customer's wood-line or property edge, or to a tree's mulch ring, contractors could cut invasive vines. Their regular visits for service would be useful in weakening the vines without need for use of chemical treatment. Even clipping back a vine once per season, even if it doesn't kill it, saves the attacked tree for a period, perhaps years, until the vine regrows to tree-lethal level.

Fisher reports that county supervisors to whom she's talked so far have been receptive.

The Board of Supervisors environmental committee chair, Dan Storck, expressed interest in "reviewing county efforts to address invasive plants broadly and to move actions forward to create more awareness." While Storck acknowledges he wants to speak with board members and other groups in the community, he has a long standing interest in environmental improvements and draws some parallels with work he and other board members have accomplished recently with the running bamboo problem. His Environmental Committee meets in July and again in October.

## What Can Be Done Now by Residents?

Homeowners with invasive vines are urged to tackle them early each season for easiest control. Two types of attack plans may be used: mechanical and chemical. Mechanical means include pulling up by the roots, either by hand or using tools like weed wrenches or root jacks; by suffocating, using

double or triple layers of plastic to deny the plants nutrients from the sun; or cutting or mowing. Cutting thick mature vines may include cutting the vines as close to the ground as possible to deprive them of nutrients.

For English Ivy, adding a 'window pane' cut of six to twelve inches around the tree also cuts off nutrients to the vine, risking less damage to the tree bark than pulling the vines off the tree.

Chemical applications may involve foliar application or cut stem treatments for woody stemmed vines. The Virginia Department of Forestry recommends using only state certified chemical spraying professionals. Homeowners can spur interest in this kind of work by asking their landscape and mowing service providers about this kind of service.

For help in identifying invasive vines, or to volunteer as a Tree Rescuer, see <https://www.plantnovatrees.org/tree-rescuers-volunteer-program>.

Plant NOVA Natives/Plant NOVA Trees is a partnership made up of representatives from state and local agencies, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, and numerous concerned residents, pooling their resources to work toward this common goal.

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# THEATER

PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS



Joyce Tischer (Glendine), Victoria Rose (Ima Jean), Tricia Politte (Laura Lee), Anne Hilleary (Bobreta), and Carole Preston (Violet) star in the comedy "Wedding Belles," playing July 7-23 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater. [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org).

## 'Wedding Belles'

**Aldersgate Church Community Theater comedy runs July 7-23.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET


It's the summer of 1942 in the mythical small town of Eufaula Springs, Texas. The members of the local garden club—happily married Bobrita (Ann Hilleary), happily many-times-married Glendine (Joyce Tuscher),

spinster Violet (Carole Preston), and widowed Laura Lee (Tricia Politte) — are filling their time with gossip when their meeting is interrupted by the arrival of a stranger.

Ima Jean (Victoria Rose) is a frazzled 18-year-old who has just

SEE ACCT THEATER, PAGE 11

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

**Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU JULY 30

**Hues Exhibit.** At Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311 - Van Lindingham Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria.

The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Lindingham Gallery presents Hues, a juried membership show featuring artworks that showcase artworks that emphasize bold and vibrant colors. The following artists are participating: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Abol Bahadori, Jon Kandel, Lynn Chadwick, Rebecca McNeely, Gregory Logan Dunn, Eileen O'Brien, and Andrea Cybyk. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, multimedia works, photography, mosaics, and embellished digital works. Additionally, the gallery offers small gifts, art cards, block-printed totes and tee shirts, and jewelry and unframed works by Tara Barr, Ileen Shefferman, Lisa Schumaier.

## 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 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](http://DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer)

## NOW THRU JULY 23

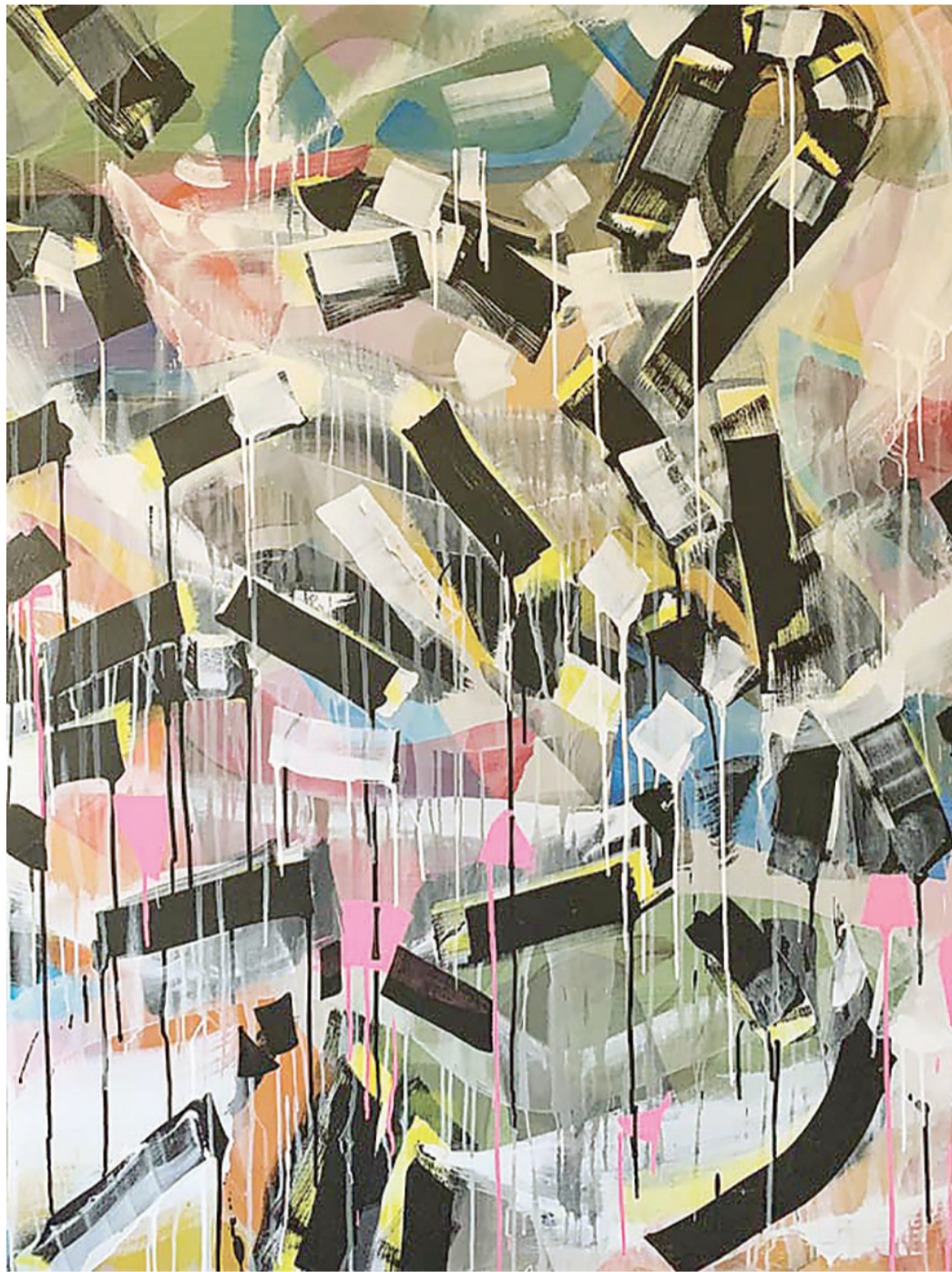
**Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan Exhibit.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan are presenting a vibrant body of work at the Athenaeum Gallery. Drefs and Nolan both play with bold lines and color in a way that is complementary of the other's work and style. Dref's abstract pieces are highlighted by their layered components, and almost transparent hues that show all the details in the paintings. While Nolan shows more figurative forms that have a raw quality to the finished product through the strong paint strokes and bold gestural motions, which display the realness of the subject.

## NOW THRU JULY 24

**"Spring Awakening."** At Ainslie Arts Center, 3900 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. Monumental Theatre Company will stage Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater's Spring Awakening. Based on Frank Wedekind's 1891 play of the same name, the story follows a group of German teenagers who discover and explore their sexual identities. This alternative rock musical is a timely and timeless story that invites audience members to reclaim the narrative surrounding the often taboo subjects of sexual education, love, and acceptance. Tickets will be available online at <https://www.monumentaltheatre.org/>.

## NOW THRU JULY 23

**Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan.** At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist Talk on Sunday, July 23, 2023 at 2 p.m. Drefs and Nolan both play with bold lines and color in a way that is complementary of the other's work and style. Dref's abstract pieces are highlighted by their layered components, and almost transparent



The Mark Drefs and Leslie Nolan art exhibit will be held at The Athenaeum in Alexandria through July 23, 2023.

hues that show all the details in the paintings. While Nolan shows more figurative forms that have a raw quality to the finished product through the strong paint strokes and bold gestural motions, which display the realness of the subject.

## SATURDAY/JULY 15

**Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop.**

1 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Enjoy an afternoon of engaging conversation and writing! Facilitated by poet, author, and Poet Laureate of Alexandria, 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](mailto:greatpublishing@yahoo.com)

## TUESDAYS - JULY 18 AND 25

**Simpson Park Demonstration Garden:** Tuesdays @10. 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Garden challenges? Extension Master Gardeners will show you simple steps to help with your container garden or your whole yard. Free. No registration necessary.

## JULY 17-21 OR JULY 24-28

**Art Camp.** Del Ray Artisans invites youth ages 8-12 to Art Camp 2023 for a week of professional art instruction! Campers will have

an immersive creative journey: painting, sculpting, journaling and other artful planned activities. During nice weather, campers will even have outdoor time to get fresh air, unwind, and replenish their creative energy. All art supplies are provided. Choose July 17-21 or July 24-28; \$350/child; scholarship support available. Registration at [DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp](http://DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp)

## AUG. 4-26

**The "Treasures of the DMV" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that celebrates the wonders of DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Come see famous and overlooked regional gems from the perspective of local artists. Opening Reception: Friday, August 4, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed on August 27). [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

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

**JULY**  
14 Burn the Ballroom (Alternative Rock)  
21 King Teddy (Swing)  
28 The HalfSmokes (WHFS Playlists/Alternative Rock)

## AUGUST

4 Kadencia Orchestra (Bomba, Plena, Salsa)  
11 Collaboration featuring Lori Williams (Jazz)

18 Crack The Sky (Rock)  
25 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)

## FRANCONIA NIGHTS

### CONCERTS

**Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30 p.m.** At Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.

### JULY

12 The Pietasters (Ska)  
19 Chuck Brown Band (Go Go/Funk/Soul)  
26 Silver Tones Swing Band (Swing Dance)

### AUGUST

2 Pablo Perez El Alcalde de la Salsa (Salsa)  
9 Alexandria Harmonizers (Chorus)  
16 The Nighthawks (Blues)  
23 Dave Kline Band (World Jazz Fusion)

## OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

### WATERFRONT MUSIC SERIES

**Free Concerts.** Wednesdays from 4-7 p.m. At Old Town Alexandria waterfront. Join in the Waterfront Wednesday Music Series featuring a range of music genres by local musicians. Bring a chair or simply stop by to enjoy some beautiful waterside beats. Free. Weather permitting.

July 12 - Melissa Quinn Fox  
July 19 - Vaughn Ambrose and the SJE  
July 26 - Amafujo's Moodswings  
August 2 - Chris Barrick Vibes and Organ Trio  
August 9 - Sol Roots  
August 16 - Delta Spur

## SUNDAY SOUNDS

### ON THE PROMENADE

**Free Concerts.** 11:30-1:30 p.m. At 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Yellow Door Music Concert Series presents a musical lineup of artists on select Sundays.

July 30 - Vaughn Ambrose Jazz Trio  
Aug. 27 - Trifilio Tango Music  
On Aug. 27, in honor of National Dog Day that weekend, Robinson Landing encourages individuals to bring their dog out for a yappy social for play and fun for your furry ones. The full event schedule of Robinson Landing programming is located at [www.Robinson-Landing.com/WaterfrontEvents](http://www.Robinson-Landing.com/WaterfrontEvents).

## JULY 21-23

**South Asian Music Festival.** The DC South Asian Arts Council Inc, a non-profit arts organization, unveils the 1st ever DC South Asian Music Festival from July 21-23. From the soul-stirring classical vocal and instrumental masterpieces to the mesmerizing Sufi, Ghazal, and Evergreen Bollywood, it promises to be an unforgettable musical journey. Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan and sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash, open the festival with their enchanting classical traditions on Friday, July 21. Saturday, July 22 starts with a Singing Competition, a showcase of exceptional local South Asian talent, taking the stage. On Saturday July 22 and Sunday July 23, the exceptional performances continue.

Wheaton High School, 12401 Dalewood Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20906  
For the full schedule, passes and tickets, visit <https://www.dcsaaci.org>

## THE BIRCHMERE

**At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.** All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).

### JULY

Fri. 14: Kindred The Family Soul - 20th Ann of "Surrender To Love" Album Tour \$75.00  
Sat. 15: Kindred The Family Soul - 20th Ann of "Surrender To Love" Album Tour \$75.00  
Sun. 16: Rodney Crowell: The Chicago Sessions with Rob Ickes & Trey Hensely \$59.50  
Thu. 20: Tab Benoit w/ Anthony Rosana and the Conquerors \$45.00  
Fri. 21: Don McLean "American Pie 50th Anniversary Tour!" \$69.50  
Sat. 22: Who's Bad - The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50  
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# THEATER

## Aldersgate Church Community Theater

FROM PAGE 8

stumbled off the bus with plans to marry her infantryman fiancé before he ships off for World War II. Despite that said fiancé is nowhere to be found at the moment, the women impulsively decide to throw the couple an elaborate wedding, and their lives and friendships are thrown into turmoil as they race to accomplish the nuptials in one frenzied afternoon.

Directed by Bob Sams, the 90-minute comedy by Alan Bailey and Ronnie Claire Edwards first premiered off-Broadway in 2009.

“What first drew me to this play is that it is funny,” said Sams. “It is touching without being maudlin. It is about people who when faced with a choice always choose to help rather than ignore a problem, not because it is ‘what they ought to do’ but because it is their natural way of behaving.”

Set against the backdrop of WWII, “Wedding Belles” is a lighthearted play showcasing a “Golden Girls” comedy cast of friendships.

“I hope that the audience will laugh and enjoy themselves watching these characters fuss about,” said Politte. “But I also hope the audience takes away that when bad things happen, sometimes we just have to accept that we can’t change them, but if we adjust, we can still find joy in our lives. And it’s a gift to have friends who are willing to help you.”

Added producer Marg Soroos, “This is a story of relationships and the interactions of women who have known each other for many years. They still hold back and need to

resolve inner conflicts and turmoil.”

The entire play takes place on a veranda, which posed a challenge for Soroos.

“The biggest challenge that I had as a producer was the set,” Soroos said. “We literally built a clapboard house board by board. It was a real challenge and we are very proud of the results.”

The cast of characters includes Laura Lee as a take-charge woman who hides behind busyness — hosting the annual garden club gala and collecting for the war effort. Glendine is the often-married romantic who keeps relying on love as her way to happiness. Bobrita is the slightly shrill older sister

with an eye for others’ flaws and Violet is the frail younger sister who has never quite taken charge of her own life.

“A major challenge is found in the structure of the play,” Sams said. “It has many elements of farce which require a rapid pace while still allowing the audience to keep up with what’s happening. The play also has some rather emotional scenes which must be handled with care to give them the honesty they deserve.”

The show opens on July 7 and closes on July 23. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org).

“Besides having good laughs and enjoying the play, I wish every individual watching the play thinks of and appreciates the presence of their friends in their lives,” Tischer said. “Sometimes we take friends for granted not realizing how much those friendships enhance our lives.”

Wedding Belles, July 7-23, Aldersgate Church Community Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308 [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org)

**“This is a story of relationships and the interactions of women who have known each other for many years.”**

— Producer Marg Soroos

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

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#### 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](http://www.goldengirls.org).

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Each local newspaper 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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## A Dieter's Delight (This Dieter, Anyway)



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Finally, after a lifetime of being overweight – and of occasionally committing to a weight-loss regimen, I have, at age 69 (Yikes. 69. I can write it. It's hard to say it though) found a not-so-much-a-diet-as-an-alternative to gaining weight. Let me try to explain. First, a little context.

As a mother in the 1950s, my mother was advertised/felt compelled to make sure her two boys (Richard and me) drank eight glasses of milk per day (“to build strong bones” was the tag line), thanks to its calcium content. My mother took this campaign very seriously. But she had a dilemma: how to get her two growing boys to drink a half-gallon of milk every day. Though ours was not a kosher home, we were not allowed to drink milk with our meals (separation of meat and dairy), dessert was another meal, however. And so, my mother’s solution: buy us something sweet for which we’d need the milk to wash it all down. In our house then, milk and cookies were a way of life. I mean their consumption (in addition to other related desserts/snack cakes/et cetera) was the order of the day, five times. And since we couldn’t (by way of our religious I’d-hardly-call-them-convictions) ever have a glass of milk with our meals, it meant we needed a non-main course incentive to give us the opportunity to drink all that milk. Ergo, dessert, and frequently. It began at breakfast; continued with our bagged lunches for school, then at home after school before dinner (an afternoon snack), then of course dessert after dinner and once more before bedtime. I guess we were short three glasses. Nonetheless, my mother felt she had done her dietary duty for her children.

To say my brother and I simply ate sweets and washed it all down with milk would be an understatement. We consumed sweets morning, ‘noon, late afternoon, early evening and finally just before we went to bed. And each time, we drank milk. We were professionals, not exactly connoisseurs or paid for our work, but we were diligent and consistent in our daily routine. Cakes, cookies, snack cakes, donuts, bakery, and pastry items, and as a daily topper: ice cream with jimmies – most often from Brigham’s. The dessert brands that were most popular: Hostess, Drakes, Nabisco (Oreos particularly), and Keebler (And if anyone is curious, Tastykakes were not available in Newton, Massachusetts at that time).

Now back in our time, Nabisco only made single stuff Oreos. Now we finally get to the substance of the column. If I do say-so myself, and I do, I was years ahead of my time. My Oreo-cookie-eating technique was neither to twist off one chocolate wafer and lick off the cream or dunk the entire cookie into my glass of milk. Amateurs. My preferred route was to twist or bite off off the Oreo cookie wafer from two Oreos leaving two wafers with all the cream. I would then sandwich the two cream-covered wafers together to make my own double stuff cookies – 60 odd years ago. It was heaven. It was as if I had discovered plutonium (as George Costanza once joked on an old Seinfeld episode).

Now, we get to my having-my-cookie-and-eating-it diet. For almost the entirety of my Oreo-eating life; progressing from the original (“single”) Oreos to “Double Stuff” and even to “Megastuff” available now, I have always twisted/bit off one wafer from two cookies and made my heavy-on-the-cream sandwich doubles, quadruples and octuples, if you will?. And previously, until very recently, I would eat the semi-abandoned cream-less chocolate wafers and then eat the Kenny-original cookie bursting with cream. The calm before the storm, you might say.

Now the diet that I’ve stumbled onto: I am no longer eating the cream-less semi-abandoned chocolate wafers. I am tossing them and just eating the stuffed-with-cream creation, continuing a long-sitting tradition, as explained. As a result, I am reducing my caloric intake by sacrificing/not eating these cream-less chocolate wafers. Multiply this reduction by hundreds, if not thousands of Oreo cookies, and perhaps you can do the math, too. Finally, a diet I can live with, but hopefully not one I will die from.

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