

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 27, 2023

Sensational Spoonbills

Did you miss seeing the spoonbills that visited in 2021?

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Two pink roseate spoonbills caused quite the sensation among their human observers the week of July 10. On July 12, Joan Mashburn photographed two that she believes were displaying courtship behavior in Hunting Creek, although they are likely too young to breed, she clarifies.

Larry Meade, president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club, says, "These roseate spoonbills seem to be mostly young birds that have dispersed north."

There are a few spoonbills in Virginia and Maryland this year, but not as many as there were throughout the region in 2021. I am not sure what is pushing them north from their normal range, well south of here along the Gulf Coast and Florida."

The young birds that Mashburn captured with her camera are paler than adult spoonbills, which get a darker pink plumage in their third year, according to Meade. "Roseate spoonbills get their pink coloration from the foods they eat," according to Cornell University's All about Birds. "Crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates contain pigments called carotenoids that help turn their feathers pink." Adults have scarlet patches and a yellowish-green head.

These wading birds have six- to seven-inch, spatula-like bills resembling long-handled spoons that they sweep back and forth to feed. As they slowly step across the water, they scoop up fish, crustaceans and other prey, especially small aquatic creatures, as the water passes through their bills. The birds can be up to 33 inches tall, weigh between 2.5 and 4 pounds and have a 47-to-50-inch wingspan.

Recently, spoonbills have been reported in a few other areas, including Washington, D.C.'s Kenilworth Gardens, but unlike 2021, when throngs of people flocked to Huntley Meadows Park to see them, there have been no reports of them there this year so far.

North America has one of six worldwide roseate spoonbill species. They breed mostly in Florida and Texas and are typically seen in coastal southeastern U.S. states and South America. They are common in coastal Texas year-round and young ones may stray "far north and inland" after breeding, reports the National Audubon Society. In the 1860s, plume hunters almost caused their extermination, reports Audubon.

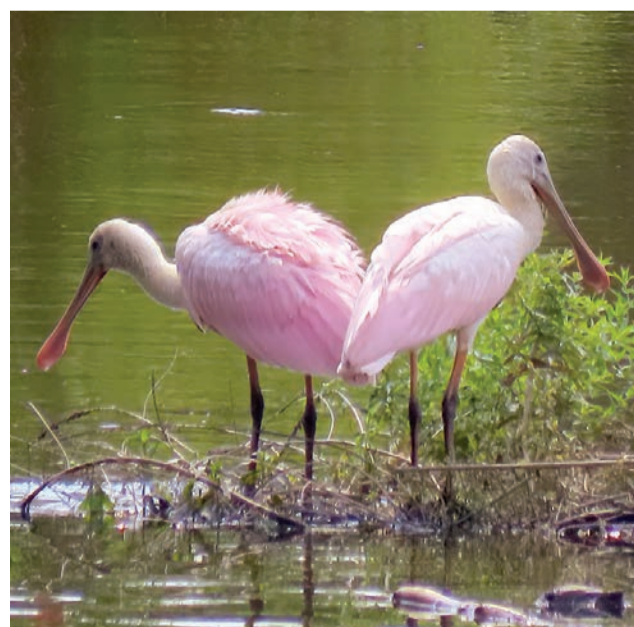
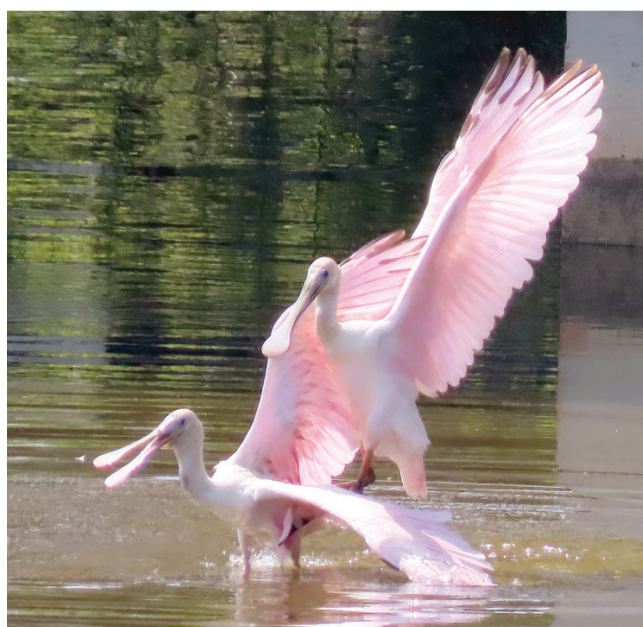
"These birds were clearly displaying courtship behavior and followed each other closely, which is another indication of courtship," said Mashburn. "It was magical to watch."



PHOTOS BY JOAN MASHBURN



Two young Roseate Spoonbills in Hunting Creek, a long way from their normal range, breeding primarily in Florida and Texas.



Two young Roseate Spoonbills, a rare sight here, far north of their usual range.

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Students Express Artistic Talents at Nepenthe Gallery



The students at Nepenthe.

By MIKE SALMON
THE MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The Nepenthe Gallery in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center opened their doors again this summer to highlight some up-and-coming student artists from around the country in their “2023 Student Art Anthology,” highlighting a variety of student art.

There were students from as far as California and others from schools in Fairfax

County and Alexandria taking part in the event.

“It’s encouraging them to continue with their artistic talent,” said Carolyn Johnson at Nepenthe. The student art was selected by Nepenthe curators Beth Hamed and Patty Owens and will be up until Aug. 1.

Nepenthe co-hosted this student event with Renée C. Gage Photography in Fort Hunt. Nepenthe is a Greek term for “a place of no sorrow,” and they opened a little over one year ago.



Noah Elshami.



Reese Haggerty from VCU.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The student roster included:

- Emmett Cook** - University of California at Berkeley
- Elizabeth Crown** - NOVA
- Noah Elshami** - College of Charleston
- Brady Gage** - Auburn University
- Lila Garwood** - Alexandria City High School
- Leanna Grimes** - Orange County High School
- Reese Haggerty** - VCU
- Olivia Myers** - VCU
- Alexandra Arnoldi Nanis** - West Potomac High School
- Roland Payabyab** - George Mason University
- Margo Semancik** - Home School
- Juliana Skopp-Cardillo** - Montclair State University
- Kaela Smith** - VCU
- Hunter Valentine** - NOVA
- Nina Weaver** - Garrison Forest

George Washington Prize Nominees Announced

One of America’s largest literary prizes; special author discussion and book signing at Mount Vernon Aug. 24

Four books published in 2022 by prominent historians were recently named finalists for the George Washington Prize. The annual award recognizes the past year’s best works on the nation’s founding era, especially those that have the potential to advance a broad public understanding of early American history.

Created by George Washington’s Mount Vernon, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and Washington College, the \$50,000 George Washington Prize is one of the nation’s largest and most notable literary awards.

For the first time, this year’s George Washington Prize nominees will convene on one stage for a panel discussion of their work on Thursday, August 24, 2023, at 7 p.m. at George Washington’s

Mount Vernon. The event will be free and open to the public. The nominees will be available to sign books following the event. Please register here.

The 2023 George Washington Prize finalists are (in alphabetical order):

- ❖ Mary Sarah Bilder, *Female Genius: Eliza Harriot and George Washington at the Dawn of the Constitution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022). 360 pp.

- ❖ Fred Kaplan, *His Masterly Pen: A Biography of Jefferson the Writer* (New York: Harper, 2022). 657 pp.

- ❖ Stacy Schiff, *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams* (New York: Little, Brown, 2022). 422 pp.

- ❖ Maurizio Valsania, *First among Men: George Washington*

and the Myth of American Masculinity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022). 403 pp.

“Each of these four books sheds new light on an extraordinary American from the Revolutionary era,” said Adam Goodheart, Director of Washington College’s Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience. “Together, the nominees prove that the saga of our country’s founding still has the potential to surprise and enlighten us.”

Each year, an independent jury evaluates between 50 and 100 books published in the past year that explore the history of the American Founding era. These four books named finalists for the Prize are outstanding examples of how rich and robust this field of study has become.

“For the first time, the finalists for the Washington Prize are all biographies,” said Patrick Spero, Ph.D., Executive Director of the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon. “Each book contains important lessons from the past that resonate today; perhaps most important of all is

the power of individuals to shape their world.”

The George Washington Prize winner will be announced in New York City on Sept. 21, 2023.

More information about the George Washington Prize is available at www.mountvernon.org/gwprize

Fort Hunt Little League

All registration for Fort Hunt Little League is open. Spread the word to friends and neighbors that it is time to get ready for some fall baseball.

To register for the fall season, [CLICK HERE https://fhbaseball.leagueapps.com/leagues](https://fhbaseball.leagueapps.com/leagues)

Have questions about the different divisions or what equipment is required or anything else? Please visit our website to help get some answers: [CLICK HERE https://forthuntsports.org/baseball/parents/](https://forthuntsports.org/baseball/parents/)

Looking to be a coach or volunteer for the board, please let us know as we start to plan for the fall season. Be a part of the planning of the league. Join the board and help FHLL thrive.

We look forward to seeing you on the field this fall season.

FCPS Responds to State Policies for Trans Students

Reactions and concerns.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

On Tuesday, July 18, the Department of Education of Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin published the final 2023 Model Policies, which addresses transgender students attending public elementary and secondary schools throughout the Commonwealth. That includes students attending Fairfax County Public Schools. The Code of Virginia § 22.1-23.3 mandates the Department to adopt model policies that address the treatment of transgender students in public schools and make them available to school boards to adopt or adapt.

The July 18 release from the Virginia Department of Education summarized: “The 2021 Model Policies purposefully kept parents in the dark about their child’s health and wellbeing at school; the 2023 Model Policies restore parental rights in decision-making about their child’s identity.”

According to a statement in the policies, “Parents are in the best position to collaborate with their children’s health care providers to decide what names, nicknames, and/or pronouns, if any, teachers and school staff should use for their child, whether their child participates in any counseling or social transition at school that encourages a gender that differs from their child’s sex, or whether their child expresses a gender that differs from their child’s sex.” The policies also advise: “Students will now use bathrooms corresponding to their biological sex, except to the extent the federal law requires. The same will be in place for sex-segregated sports and school programs.”

On July 18, when the department released the final model policies, most Virginia public schools were closed for summer vacation, preventing the kind of protests that occurred last fall. The policies, albeit just recommendations and not mandates, catapulted students, parents, staff, and school divisions,



Students at Herndon High School and others protest the Youngkin administration’s revised ‘Model Policies’ on trans students.

like FCPS, into confusion.

Michelle Reid, superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, wrote the day after the policies were released in her online message, “I understand the concerns that our students, staff, families, and community members may have about what this change of direction by the state may mean for our school division, particularly for our LGBTQIA+ community.”

The VDOE Agency Response to its Comment Forum, July 18, 2023, says that the 2023 Model Policies considered the over 70,000 comments submitted to the Department during its public comment period. Page after page shows the majority of commenters opposing the new Youngkin model policy. Comments can be viewed on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall site at <https://townhall.virginia.gov/1/comments.cfm?G-DocForumID=1953>.

The previous, student-centered VDOE 2021 Model Policies, adopted on March 4, 2021 during Gov. Ralph Northam’s (D) ad-

ministration considered the treatment of transgender students in public elementary and secondary schools “in accordance with evidence-based best practices.”

Reid said in her message, “We believe our current FCPS policies are consistent with federal and state anti-discrimination laws.”

Fairfax County Public Schools has not changed its policy since the school board incorporated many elements of the VDOE 2021 policy to support transgender and binary students. The Fairfax County School Board did not heed VDOE’s 2022 Model Policies.

Reid added, “I want to be clear that FCPS remains committed to an inclusive and affirming learning environment for each and every student and staff member, including those who are transgender or gender expansive. Our schools will continue to be safe, welcoming, and respectful learning spaces.”

Twelve anti-trans bills were defeated in the 2023 General Assembly, according to the ACLU of Virginia in “Virginia Department of Education Ignores Public Opposition and

Greenlights Anti-LBGTQ Student Policies.” Portions of the model policies attempt to do what the bills failed to do when they were defeated: “(1) Deny youth access to mental health services for fear of being forcibly outed; and (2) Deny them opportunities to participate in school athletics that align with their gender identity, which is in conflict with Virginia High School League policy and federal law.”

Student Bas Rawat of Fairfax disagrees with the revised 2023 policy that emphasizes parents’ rights. A second-year George Mason student, Rawat, who uses they/he pronouns, said on July 24 that if he had to go to a school under the 2023 policies, his “overall mental health would’ve tanked.”

“I would’ve dreaded coming to school every day, knowing that school wasn’t truly a safe space. ... I never would have been able to come out. My parents didn’t agree with my name change or pronouns at all. I would’ve had to go to school every day, deadnamed and misgendered constantly... The school could’ve told my parents, which would’ve gotten me in trouble,” Rawat said.

Retired FCPS teacher and advocate Robert Rigby said on Monday, July 24, “Youngkin’s ‘Don’t be Trans’ policy makes being a parent or caregiver of LGBTQIA+ children really difficult in Virginia; it makes the lives of transgender students unlivable. Many families are preparing to leave Virginia before the new school year starts. Even students in school systems that don’t adopt the policy will be traumatized for decades.”

The ACLU Virginia says the 2023 Model Policies: Prohibit school districts from safeguarding children from forced “outing” to their parents; Limit student access to gender-inclusive toilets; Erect barriers for trans and nonbinary pupils accessing counseling; Calling students by their affirming names and pronouns requires written parental consent; Allow teachers and staff, depending on their beliefs, to ignore parents’ written instructions and misname and misgender students in school; Create facilities and sports policies that bar students from accessing and participating in activities consistent with their gender identities.

Executive Director of Police Review Panel to Resign

Richardson served less than 18 months in the newly created position.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Steven Richardson, executive director of the Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel for slightly less than 18 months, will resign voluntarily on Aug. 1, 2023, a county spokesperson confirmed on Monday, July 24. No reason for Richardson departure was given.

“I am extremely disappointed to learn of Steven Richardson’s resignation. Steven has been a very strong advocate and champion for transparency in the work of the panel, and relentless as it relates to community engagement,” said Dr. Vernon C. Walton,

senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Vienna. “While I am not aware of all the day-to-day operations, I am extremely concerned about the narrative around the reason for the abrupt resignation and whether or not it was voluntary.”

Walton serves on the Fairfax County Police Reform Matrix Working Group. He and nine other members presented a proposed action plan on May 12, 2023, to Rodney Lusk, chair of the Safety and Security Committee of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The plan was titled “Community Recommendations for More Equitable Policing in Fairfax County.”

The Board of Supervisors appointed Rich-

ardson effective Feb. 28, 2022. He previously served as operations captain for the George Washington University Police Department and also served as criminal magistrate for North Carolina’s Judicial District 26; project manager and courts and corrections senior advisor for the Cook County, Illinois Sheriff’s Office.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will not designate an interim director. The panel’s work will be continued under the coordination of the Chairman of the Panel, the remaining panel staff members, and the help of the Office of the Independent Police Auditor, the county spokesperson said. The panel will continue to function normally and have

access to all information to avoid delays in reviewing investigations.

According to Walton, the panel’s effectiveness will largely be determined not by its executive director, whoever it is, but by its ability to function with full independent investigative authority, which the Board of Supervisors must authorize. The state statute now permits the panel to have independent investigative authority, but did not at the time the panel was formed.

“If Fairfax County wants to remain in the forefront, this must be done immediately. A framework has been provided by the Police Reform Matrix Committee established by

SEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAGE 5
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Executive Director of Police Review Panel to Resign

FROM PAGE 4

Supervisor Lusk," said Walton.

"Steps have already been taken to ensure a seamless transition until a review of the position is completed and the Board of Supervisors determines the next steps," the spokesperson said.

The nine-member panel reviews completed Police Department investigations into complaints alleging abuse of authority or serious misconduct.

The matrix working group recommends expanding the panel's authority:

"Effective July 1, 2021, the Virginia General Assembly gave localities the authority to substantially increase civilian oversight. Other Virginia jurisdictions of Arlington, Alexandria, Richmond and Virginia Beach have passed ordinances providing expanded authority, as have many large urban jurisdictions nationally. The State of Maryland enacted a law similar to Virginia's, but made oversight boards mandatory.

"As such, the MWG is recommending a two-pronged approach that grants some expanded authority immediately, while also directing the CRP [Civilian Review Panel] and the IPA [Independent Police Auditor] to draft a coordinated plan for implementing full expanded authority by a certain date."

Richardson could not be reached for com-



Steven Richardson, executive director of the Fairfax County Police Civilian Review Panel, will resign on Aug. 1.

ment.

For more on the Police Civilian Review Panel, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policecivilianreviewpanel/>

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Annie Harper, The Hidden Gem of Gum Springs

BY: DELEGATE
PAUL KRIZEK



Krizek

Last Saturday morning, the public witnessed a rare and wonderful event taking place on Fordson Road, the unveiling of the Annie E. Harper Virginia historical highway marker in Gum Springs. It was followed by a reception at Bethlehem Baptist Church, with special exhibits, and a community celebration. The event was the culmination of a lot of hard work by a number of community members including the leadership of the indefatigable Queenie Cox, who acted as the MC, and was joined on the planning committee by Brenda Faison, who spearheaded the project, with Martha Coleman, David Carter, Carla Dobson, Ada Johnson, Brenda Page-Murphy, Cassandra Mc-

Clerkin, Gerald Peteet, Connie Royal and John Spears. It's important to recognize everyone involved because of the significance and difficulty of bringing it to fruition. It would be an injustice to not thank them publicly for their dedication and hard

work.

The invocation was led by the Rev. Dr. Darrell K. White, Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church and Minister Marcus McCallum-Ferguson provided the scripture, followed by a number of special guest speakers. Those included Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax representing the Virginia Department of Historical Resources which is responsible for the historical marker program. She is a social justice professor at Norfolk State University and gave a terrific speech on why this marker is so important. Dea-



Annie Harper's daughter-in-law Rev. Evelyn Harper.

E 159 HARPER v. VIRGINIA BOARD OF ELECTIONS
African Americans Annie E. Harper and Gladys Berry, who lived on Fordson Road in Gum Springs, and Curtis and Myrtle Burr, who had previously lived on Fordson Road, filed a federal lawsuit in March 1964 challenging Virginia's poll tax, which residents had to pay before registering to vote in state elections. The case was later combined with a similar suit initiated by Evelyn Butts of Norfolk. A federal court ruled against the plaintiffs in Nov. 1964. On appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court determined in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* (1966) that the poll tax requirement in state elections violated the 14th Amendment, invalidating the tax in Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas.



New marker recognizes historic importance of Annie Harper's activism.

con-In-Training Clifton S. Johnson Sr., a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church, then provided a very moving real-life experience related to voting under the poll tax. Finally, some elected officials including me spoke on the importance of the marker and the recognition of Deaconess Harper, who was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church too.

Though this historical event was some sixty years ago, we were joined by Annie E. Harper's daughter-in-law, Rev. Evelyn Harper, and granddaughters Eldalene and Malanie Harper too. It was in March

1964, that Allison W. Brown Jr., an attorney and executive board member for the ACLU and the NAACP in Washington, D.C. filed a suit on behalf of four Fairfax County residents, two of whom lived in Gum Springs, Annie E. Harper and Gladys Berry, and in Springbank, Curtis and Myrtle L. Burr. They courageously agreed to join the fight against the poll tax which was included in the Virginia Constitution in 1904 to suppress the Black vote. It was blatant discrimination and members of the Gen-
SEE HELPING, PAGE 10

Examining and Correcting School Funding Formulas

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

The underfunding of Virginia's public schools recently made headlines, when a new study concluded that Virginia's K-12 education system receives 14 percent less funding than the average system in America even though Virginia has the 10th highest median family income. This independent analysis collides with Governor Youngkin's persistent call for more tax cuts.

This year, the state legislature should be adopting budget amend-

ments to reflect adjusted revenues, but we have been unable to agree because of the Governor's insistence on more tax cuts. Cutting taxes means less revenue for state responsibilities like education and mental health.

As someone whose 20 years of education were subsidized by Virginia taxpayers from kindergarten through law school, I fully appreciate the importance of robust investments in public edu-



Surovell

cation.

Schools Are Underfunded

Two weeks ago, Virginia's nonpartisan independent auditor, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission or JLARC, published a long-awaited analysis of the adequacy of funding for Virginia K-12 education. The study found that Virginia's system receives 14 percent less funding than the average U.S. public education system

after adjusting for labor costs or about \$1,900 per student. Among neighboring states, we also invest less than West Virginia, Kentucky and Maryland and slightly more than Tennessee and North Carolina.

The report highlighted several disparities baked into our existing education funding approach that hurt our area. First, existing funding underweighs Northern Virginia's higher increased labor costs and caps state funding for school support employees like guidance

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Examining and Correcting School Funding Formulas

FROM PAGE 6

counselors, nurses, social workers and teachers' assistants — an approach that pushes these costs onto local government.

State funding also does not adequately account for English as a Second Language (ESOL) students, special education or children in poverty, students we broadly label as "At-Risk Students." This is significant because

public schools must teach whoever walks in the door and Fairfax County Public Schools report that elementary students speak 182 different languages or dialects at home.

Schools cannot control the number of at-risk students in their classrooms and Northern Virginia has a disproportionate share of ESOL students compared with the rest of the state and FCPS At

Risk Student population would be the 5th largest school division in Virginia if it were its own school division. In addition, state funding for at-risk students has declined on a net basis while actual expenditures have risen, costs funded by local governments.

Fourth, while we do have a program to supplement localities with high labor costs called "cost to compete," this funding is in-

sufficient. Arlington receives nine percent more funding while its labor costs are 40 percent more than average.

JLARC did find that the formula currently used to allocate funds called the "local composite index" (LCI) does work. The LCI measures a locality's ability to pay by comparing each locality's relative income, real estate taxes and student population. Wealthier jurisdictions receive less state funding and less-wealthy divisions receive more.

The study also highlights concerns unique to rural areas. It is important to realize that we must construct policies for jurisdictions as large as Fairfax County's 1.1 million residents and 180,000 students and a system like Highland County, Virginia, with 2,295 residents and 195 students.

The JLARC analysis basically leaves two questions. First, how do we craft a funding system that more equitably distributes more funds to elementary-secondary education in Virginia. The solution must ensure that ESOL, special education and low-income students are accurately assessed and accounted for in the funding formulas. We also must

correctly account for localities' true labor costs and needs.

The Senate Moved Forward

This year, the Senate Democratic Caucus took a first step by proposing to eliminate the cap on state reimbursement for support employees, investing significantly more funds in at-risk students and proposing higher teacher raises. Sadly, the House of Delegates Republicans and the Governor are prioritizing tax cuts. Hence, the budget stalemate.

The second issue is finding more resources to invest in education. Annual tax cuts like those proposed by the Governor will not help us make longer-term investments in schools. Virginia's tax system also needs serious modernization so that revenues keep up with demands for the high-quality services the public expects.

I am fortunate that public education gave me a foundation for success that I have enjoyed in life and I will continue to fight for policy choices that make those opportunities available to everyone. Please email your views to me at scott@scottsuovell.org

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU JULY 30

Hues Exhibit. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311 - Van Lanningham Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Lanningham 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 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](https://www.DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer)

NOW THRU JULY 31

Monochrome Exhibit. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union Street, Studio 312, Alexandria. Monochrome, a fine art photography exhibition juried by Sandy Sugawara, features monochrome images from 13 artists: Soomin Ham, Tim Hyde, Clara Young Kim, Irina Lawton, Sandy LeBrun-Evans, Matt Leedham, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sisen, Tom Sliter and Fred Zafran.

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](https://www.DelRayArtisans.org/art-camp)

JULY 25-SEPT. 17

Captured: Plants and Places. 1-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Step into the world of plants across the region and in still life at a season-spanning photography exhibit July 25 to Sept. 17 at Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center. The lyrical collection "Captured: Plants and Places" features botanical imagery drawn from the Washington area to Maine, including studio photos, intimate outdoor vignettes and landscape scenes. The photographers' varying visions and styles in color and black-and-white invite viewers to explore the wonder of wild and horticultural lands. An opening reception with the artists is July 30 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Atrium at Green Springs Gardens Horticultural Center.

SUNDAY/JULY 30

Lesson Zero. 7 to 8 p.m. At Fort Hunt Park, 8999 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. The United States Park Service presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO for a free show. For additional information see: www.youtube.com/lessonzero and www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero

AUG. 4-26

The "Treasures of the DMV" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that celebrates



Take a tour aboard the Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center in Alexandria's Waterfront Park.

Wednesdays Through Saturdays

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

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](https://www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

prospects and share a 60-second commercial with all the attendees. Each attendee will get to address the group and share their business. Virtual - Zoom Link Available After Registration. Go to <https://web.alexchamber.com/>

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.RobinsonLanding.com/WaterfrontEvents.

AUG. 5, 2023

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

SATURDAY/AUG. 5

Open House at Woodlawn. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring free self-guided tours of the Woodlawn mansion, arts and crafts tables, lawn games, and more! Bring your family to learn about this unique local historic site and enjoy our outdoor space. Visitors are encouraged to bring a blanket and enjoy a picnic on the lawn. Drinks and snacks will be available for sale.

SUNDAY/AUG. 6

Running Strong Powwow. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street, Alexandria. Come join the 2nd Annual Running Strong Powwow to celebrate Native American cultures with others and create long-lasting memories with one another. Be a part of the growing awareness of Native American Communities, History, and Culture of the region. Be a part of remembering how Native American People, Communities, Contributions, History, and Land will always be the heritage of the United States of America.

TUESDAY/AUG. 8

August Networking Breakfast. 8:30-9:30 a.m. Share your brand across Northern Virginia from your home or office. Join the Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce for this virtual installment of its Networking Breakfast Series. Develop new

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

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

JULY

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

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 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

THURSDAY/AUG. 24

River Farm Anniversary Picnic. 6-8 p.m. At River Farm, Alexandria. Celebrating 50 years of AHS at River Farm; featuring Soulfire. Free and open to the public

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At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.

All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

JULY

Fri. 28: Anthony Brown & group therAPy \$39.50

Sat. 29: MAYSA \$69.50

Sun. 30: The Stylistics \$65.00

Mon. 31: Joey McIntyre 'Solo Joe Tour' \$45.00

AUGUST

Tue. 1: Kamasi Washington \$69.50

Thu. 10: Asleep At The Wheel w/ Michelle Lordi \$39.50

Fri. 11: Jon B. \$69.50

Sat. 12: 1964: The Tribute \$45.00

Sun. 13: An Evening with Bebel Gilberto \$49.50

Tue. 15: Calexico "Feast Of Wire 20th Anniversary Tour" w/ Brian Lopez \$39.50

Wed. 16: Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with The Guilty Ones w/ Dead Rock West \$45.00

Thu. 17: Ziggy Alberts "Rewind Tour" w/ Kim Churchill \$35.00

Fri. 18: Kandace Springs \$39.50

Sat. 19: Chante' Moore \$69.50 **SOLD OUT!**

Sun. 20: Dave Koz Summer Horns w/ Candy Dulfer, Eric Darius, Maysa \$110.00 **SOLD OUT!**

Mon. 21: WAR \$79.50

Wed. 23: Steve Earle: Alone Again Tour - Solo & Acoustic w/ Danny Burns \$65.00

Fri. 25: Al Stewart with The Empty Pockets \$49.50 (Resched from 3/16/23)

Sat. 26: Kim Waters \$35.00

Sun. 27: The Robert Cray Band \$59.50

Wed. 30: Iris Dement \$45.00

Thu. 31: Black Violin - The Black Violin Experience \$90.50

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NEWS

Annie Harper

FROM PAGE 6

eral Assembly were not shy about that. The new Virginia Constitution instituted an annual poll tax that excluded over 85% of Black voters! Annie E. Harper's poll tax was \$4.71, equal to \$41.69 today, and she had to pay it each year or 5% interest was added too.

Annie E. Harper, age 79, was a retired domestic worker living on social security. Gladys A. Berry, age 42, was an unemployed domestic worker. Curtis and Myrtle Burr were the parents of nine children. Curtis, then a 41-year-old veteran of World War II, supported his family on less than \$3,000 annual-ly as a brick mason.

In 1964, the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified prohibiting poll taxes in all Federal elections. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was adopted prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. And, in August 1965, the Voting Rights Act was adopted prohibiting states and localities from imposing voting qualifications or prerequisites to voting, or standards, practices, or procedures that deny or curtail the right of a U.S. citizen to vote on the basis of race, color, or language.

By 1964, only four southern states, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia, still implemented a poll tax for state and local elections.

These states clung to a 1937 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that poll taxes were not racially discriminatory and therefore legal. But, thanks to Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections, in 1966, combined with a similar case initiated by the civil rights activist, Evelyn Butts of Norfolk, in a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court ruled poll taxes to be unconstitutional. This put an end to more than sixty years of inequality for Black voters in the United States. The current Virginia Constitution, adopted in 1971, expressly prohibits the prerequisite of a poll tax to register to vote in Virginia.

Annie E. Harper died at age 98, in 1983, and is buried locally in Snowden Cemetery. She, and the others, deserve this recognition today and forever. We can thank the many community members of Gum Springs who came together on a warm Saturday morning for making this historical marker possible and reminding us of history being made in this historic Black community.

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CELEBRATION



American Horticultural Society celebrates 50 golden years at its beloved River Farm headquarters with the River Farm Anniversary Picnic Thursday, Aug. 24, 6 to 8 p.m. Free and open to the public. Registration is available through Eventbrite.

50th Anniversary for River Farm and AHS

The American Horticultural Society celebrates 50 golden years at its beloved River Farm headquarters with the River Farm Anniversary Picnic featuring live music from the band, Soulfire. Guests are encouraged to pack a blanket and picnic basket with food and beverage favorites, find a comfortable spot on River Farm's welcoming lawn, and relax and enjoy the music, stunning gardens, and spectacular views overlooking the Potomac River. The BYOB outdoor community picnic – to be held on Thursday, Aug. 24, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. – is FREE and open to the public. Registration is available through Eventbrite.

Soulfire's repertoire includes well over a thousand songs ranging from the foundational rock of Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley and the funk musings of Kool and the Gang to the British beats of The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, and The Who.

While River Farm is known as part of George Washington's farmland, its exciting, memorable history with the AHS is truly one for the books. 50 years ago, a generous philanthropist Enid Haupt donated the purchase price of River Farm to the AHS. This gift saved River Farm from being sold to Russian diplomats during the Cold War of the 70s and ensured River Farm as the home to the AHS in perpetuity. In 2020, River Farm once again was saved from being sold thanks to the rallying cries of the community and the terms of Haupt's agreement. The River Farm Anniversary Picnic celebrates these joyous occasions, all the memories in between, and the future of River Farm as a local and national treasure.

The celebration picnic and concert is made possible by River Farm neighbor, fan and advocate Katherine Ward who sponsored Soulfire, and the band's lead singer Randy Benn who serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network. The AHS and River Farm applauds the Potomac Riverkeeper Network's mission to protect the public's right to clean water in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers and their tributaries. Their work to stop pollution is critical to enhance the safety of drinking water, protect healthy river habitats and increase public use and enjoyment.

Save the Date! In addition to the Anniversary Picnic, the AHS is celebrating its 50th golden anniversary at River Farm at its annual gala, this year themed Simple Pleasures of the Garden featuring renowned interior and garden designer Charlotte Moss. The gala will be held on Sept. 23, 2023. Details and tickets can be found at www.ahsgala2023.org

River Farm is the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society where the organization strives to live its mission of horticultural excellence. The nonprofit relies on private contributions to help maintain, beautify, and preserve the 25-acre site that is part of George Washington's original farmlands. River Farm is located at 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria, Virginia 22308. It is open to the public and free to visit Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (excluding special events). For more information, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114 or visit www.ahsgardening.org



River Farm Anniversary Picnic will feature live music from the band, Soulfire. The band's lead singer, Randy Benn, serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped 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.

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The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk.

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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.

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An Inadvertent Friend-Type Request



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

This column has nothing to do with Facebook, though the title is a bit of a tease, to encourage you to read further. And what you're reading about is not exactly a surprise that it happened, it's more a flashing, neon-type sign that shopping online has matured from a transactional one between a buyer and a seller to something so much more. Not so much more as to make it sinister, but enough to make it more personal. Personal in that your online/website searches/inquiries are in essence, the beginning of a friendship. A friendship whereby the company (the seller) is becoming more like a friend in its willingness (algorithm) to offer opinions, dare I say encouragement to you (the buyer) to spend money on merchandise you've recently clicked on as sort of a starting point. But it's interpreted by the computer/website host (AI, I suppose) to be one which – with some electronic prodding, views this interaction as a potential final sale with only a credit card required to consummate this new/budding relationship.

The problem/reality is, I wasn't necessarily looking to buy and/or consummate this retail partnership/purchase just yet. This initial process when I'm searching, clicking, perusing, calculating, perhaps even actually contemplating, is my time, honestly. It's not the company/seller's time. Just because I'm looking, doesn't mean I'm ready to be leaping. To my way of thinking, this initial search is simply a consideration, not a calculation per se. Granted, I'm likely doing some math while I'm reading and then writing. But I don't need the website host hounding/gently nudging (depending on your perspective) me any more than I want to be accosted/offered assistance (again, depending on your perspective) when entering a retail establishment where merchandise can actually be touched and examined while up close so the purchase becomes personal, not merely professional.

What precipitated this most recent rant are the almost daily reminders I receive in my inbox from sites I visited previously. Their intent being to try and consummate our computer relationship by getting me to enter my credit card information/cozying up to me in an increasingly familiar manner, as if we were friends, and that by researching and clicking on their website I have somehow brought us closer together than merely a buyer and a seller, but rather more like friends in the pursuit of wholesale/retail justice.

I guess if I were to be naive and gullible, I would interpret these electronic reminders as I would indeed respect and appreciate a friend's suggestion/recommendation about whether I should be making a particular purchase. But that's not how I'm reacting to these many missives. I'm reacting to them as attempts at hostile take-overs – of my money. Moreover, I feel their reach is intrusive and presumptive. Certainly, when I read their heading in the subject box I can press delete and completely ignore their communication. At that point however, the psychological damage has already been done. By simply reading their headline and understanding its lineage, I have already been hooked, so to speak. I know why the email is there. It's not to ask how I'm adjusting to my late brother's semi unexpected death or asking if I think the Red Sox will be buyers or sellers at the trade deadline. Oh no. They're asking for money/commitment. They want to know how and when, not why and where I'll be otherwise spending my money – or not at all. They're not understanding. They're manipulating. And once they're through with me, they'll move on to the next site-clicker. I'll merely be a blip in their artificial computer code. Code that reacts to my computer research in their products/services as an inevitable buy and sell opportunity. It views my soliciting their help/information as a buying signal and the more help they offer/email, the more inevitable the sale becomes as it believes more is more rather than less is more.

But I object to this presumption of facts not yet agreed to. And I further object to presuming a familiarity which absolutely does not exist. I don't know this caller from Adam. Like my disdain for cold-callers – for whatever solicitation – whether for business, charity or community when the caller addresses me by my first name. That's a no-no, never a yes-yes. It's an automatic click. As for these computer emails that remind me of a previous interest/inquiry on their site/for their product or service, we are not in any kind of relationship. If anything, we might be in the middle/the beginning of a transaction. If this 'relationship' is about anything, it's about business, not pleasure.

Transact this!

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



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