Fun Highlights in Mount Vernon, Welcoming to All

T

throughout Mount Ver-

ton there are neigh-

borhoods that have a mix-

ture of longtime resi-

dents, shorter term resi-

dents with the military, younger people that are fresh out of college start-

ting their new careers. The area includes a full range of incomes and ethnicities. The Mount Vernon area is full of options that offer something for everyone.

In the southern part of the dis-

trict, the old Lorton prison has been turned into an art center where local artists practice their trade in the old dorm buildings that are divided into art studios. The center is home to live enter-

tainment, food, festivals and art shows as well.

If all the art touring generates a thirst for local beer, the Bunnyman Brewery opens soon, serving local craft beers. It is named for a local legend about an ax-wielding man in a bunny suit that terrorized the area years ago. Or maybe it was an escaped prisoner who was never recaptured and left a trail of dead rabbits. Is it true? Don’t know, but the brewery is there to discuss the whole thing while sipping on a sudsy beer.

If all that beer brings on a taste for locally made Mexican ice cream, the “Michoacan A Pedir De Boca,” is full of ice cream varieties. “All is fresh,” said owner Carina. They have offerings in dairy and water-based flavors so they don’t leave anyone behind that may have a digestive system not suited for dairy.

She pointed at the popsicle case, which has over a dozen flavors, with everything from pistachio to mango to cucumber with chili fla-


ted popsicles. “We manufacture all of these,” she said.

In fact, Mount Vernon is full of ice cream places. For the tradition-

alists, the Custard Shack in Belle Haven is open year-round and has a variety of traditional flavors, while Bruster’s just opened in the See Fun Highlights. Page 4

Photo Journal 2023: New Countywide Strategic Plan Shapes Fairfax

T

he Connection gathered photos of some recent projects and happenings since the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted its first-ev-

er Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The plan charts a shared future for all, enhanced quality of life, and equitable ac-

cess, driven by the vision of “One Fairfax.”

A key component of the plan is the ten outcome areas, represent-

ing the issues the Fairfax Coun-

try community cares about most. They were developed based on extensive community input and were reinforced repeatedly over an 18-month outreach period.

The areas include issues re-

garding cultural and recreational opportunities, empowerment and support for residents facing vul-

nerabilities, housing and neighbor-

hood livability, mobility and trans-

portation, the environment,

Recreational Opportunities; Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability: Lorton Community Center (2023); a 30,000 square foot facility co-located with the Lorton Library and Lorton Park. It provides space for the Lorton Senior Center and Lorton Community Action Center, plus services, programs, and activities for people of all ages and abilities.

Economic Opportunity. Cultural and Recreational Opportunity: At Mount Vernon, Alexandria, the new brand, “Potomac Banks: Explore Fairfax South,” creates synergy between the historical, recreational, cultural, and ecological venues in the region.
The Trusted Real Estate Resource for Alexandria and Beyond.

To learn more about our Associates and our firm, visit www.WeAreAlexandria.com

Old Town | $2,950,000
Nestled in the heart of Old Town, this magnificent 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath Victorian residence exudes sophistication and elegance. High ceilings, original floors, 2 wood-burning fireplaces, handsome millwork, eat-in kitchen with new stainless appliances, second level family room, sunroom, one off-street parking space, and other fine details showcase the perfect blend of old-world craftsmanship with modern conveniences. The sunny primary suite offers a private dressing room and updated bath. Expansive patio surrounded by mature plantings. 411 Prince St
Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.BabsBeckwith.com

Old Town | $785,000
Light-filled, 3-bedroom, 2-bath historic row home built in 1820. This charming home offers functional, versatile floor plan and preserved character. Original hardwood flooring & vintage lighting. Private brick patio and zoned for Lyles-Crouch ES. 409 S Washington Street
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com

Hollin Hills | $995,000
Remodeled & expanded 2-3 bedroom, 2 bath home nestled into a half acre of enchanting multi-tiered gardens with decks, patios, seating areas, a hillside studio, and a sauna. Updated kitchen and bathrooms and many special details throughout. 7316 Rippon Rd
Jodie Burns 571.228.5790
www.JodieBurns.com

Yates Gardens
$1,395,000
This picturesque, 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath home features an expanded kitchen, adjoining family room, and private back patio & garden. The versatile lower level includes a family room, bedroom, full bath, & kitchenette with front exterior entrance & garden access. 728 S Lee St
Lauren Bishop 202.361.5079
www.LaurenBishopHomes.com

Cameron Station
$755,000
In a coveted community west of Old Town, we present this striking, freshly-painted 4-level townhouse of sophisticated living space – sparkling wood floors, 3 bedrooms plus a den & garage. Amenities galore basketball court; swimming pool; tot lot; gym & more. 256 Cameron Station Blvd
Ann Duff 703.965.8700
www.AnnDuff.com

Colecroft Station
$623,000
Whether you commute or work from home, this 3-bedroom, 2-bath condo across the street from Braddock Road Metro is perfect for you! Terrific location and amazing view! 1 garage parking space included. 505 E Braddock Road #708
Lisa Groover 703.919.4426
www.LisaGroover.com

OPEN SAT 9/16 & SUN 9/17, 2-4PM

OPEN SUN 9/17, 1-4PM

OPEN SAT 9/6, 2-4pm & SUN 9/17, 1-3PM

OPEN SAT 9/16, 1-4PM & SUN 9/17, 2-4PM

Del Ray | $2,199,000
Gorgeously updated, complete renovation with designer finishes and lighting, and custom trim work. 6 bedrooms and 5 full baths, beautiful kitchen, large pantry, mudroom, spacious basement and more. ADU features a bedroom, bath & kitchen. 317 E Howell Ave
Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com

Arlington | $350,000
This spacious one-bedroom condo at The Grove features high ceilings, open layout, and modern finishes galore. Amenities include a gorgeous swimming pool, one garage parking spot, 24-hour gym, and clubhouse. 2055 26th Street S #5-204
Jillian Keck Hogan 703.901.5082
www.JillianKeckHogan.com

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The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

By Mercia Hobson
The Gazette

The pandemic led to massive economic disruptions all around the globe, including here in Fairfax County. As of this year, we are happy to see that we actually have more residents employed now than we did before the onset of the pandemic.

We want to continue this momentum and are doing so by working with our Economic Development Authority, county staff, and the community. Safety and Security— Fairfax County was again named the safest jurisdiction of its size in the county. We have remained the safest jurisdiction by having world-class public safety agencies and a community that cares. I am proud of the work we have done together and look forward to continuing this critical work.

Lifelong Education and Learning—“As a board, we prioritize investing in our schools each year, and this year is no different. Superior public schools are why businesses choose to locate here and how they can grow here with the available talent pool. It’s also a school system where all students can feel safe and heard. I help initiate, plan, fund, and implement in 2016 have resulted in the past two years alone in building or preserving more than 1,000 units of workforce and affordable homes, while more than a thousand middle-income homes were built or started construction. Substantial future “missing middle” homes are planned as well. Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District

Mobility and Transportation—Continue making progress on the re-development of the Springfield and Richmond Highway communities. Lifelong Education and Learning—We need to prepare our kids for the jobs of the future and help our residents gain marketable skills, training, and certifications that will enable them to pursue careers in innovative technology, the building trades, and medical technology. This is a foundational issue for me and a core focus of my office.

Housing and Neighborhood Livability—We need to continue to look at ways to provide more affordable housing options for our seniors, our first responders, teachers, and other public-facing members of our community.

The three most important issues in the Braddock District are continuing to invest in our schools, improving transportation options, and protecting our local environment. John W. Foust, Dranesville District

Many of the important issues in Dranesville are common across the county, like creating affordable housing, growing the local economy to provide good jobs and revenues to support county programs and services, and making our community more resilient to the ever-worsening impacts of climate change. Mobility and Transportation, Safety and Security—Making downtown McLean more vibrant and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Eliminating the awful congestion in the neighborhoods around the access ramp from Georgetown Pike onto the Beltway. Ensuring adequate infrastructure (including roads, trails, parks, and schools) is provided to serve the significant growth near the new Herndon and Innovation metro stations.

Pat Herrity, Springfield District

Effective and Efficient Government—The county's unsustainable tax increases are adding to residents' inflation concerns. Safety and Security Crime—Businesses and residents suffer from unprosecuted crimes and a police staffing crisis.

Lifelong Education and Learning—Schools, as parents, students, and teachers struggle to close achievement gaps from lost learning. We need to focus school resources in the classroom on teachers and kids, not on administrators and political agendas.

Healthy Communities—Addressing panhandling and the fentanyl public health crisis are also high on residents' lists of concerns.

Penny Gross, Mason District Supervisor:

Pedestrian safety, revitalization (redevelopment); affordable and attainable housing. There is a difference between affordable and attainable.

Kathy Smith, Sully District Supervisor:

Transportation and first responders/public safety.
Fun Highlights in Mount Vernon, Welcoming to All

newly-blossomed Hilltop Village off Telegraph Road. This ice cream shop has roots in Pennsylvania, and three walk-up windows for those ice cream lovers that are on-the-go. To work off all those ice cream calories, you can bike it off on the Mount Vernon Bike Trail that is a 17-mile stretch along the Potomac River. It goes past George Washington's Mansion, through Old Town, ending at Rosslyn. On the southern end, trail enhancements and a new bridge make it possible to ride all the way to Fort Belvoir. While at Fort Belvoir, be sure to tour the Army Museum that is full of tanks, helicopters and history.

The Mount Vernon Recreation Center off Beacon Hill Road is currently being expanded and is closed until 2025. There is a nearby recreation center in Franconia with a pool and fields for team sports.

In late August, Bruster’s ice cream opened their walk-up windows in Island Creek.

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month

ALL around the nation, people will be taking action to build stronger, more resilient and prepared communities during September, National Emergency Preparedness Month. This is an opportunity to look around and find ways to prepare yourself and others in your community for disasters. Taking action to prepare for an emergency before it strikes can lead to better outcomes and provide peace of mind.

Fairfax County’s Department of Emergency Management and Security has tools that are designed to aid the community in becoming more prepared for disasters. Take some time to think about ways you can make a difference during this year’s Emergency Preparedness Month.

Here are some tips:

- Prepare yourself and your family: The “Community Emergency Response Guide” (CERG) — available in multiple languages — has information on the types of threats and hazards local to Fairfax County, as well as tools to help you build an emergency plan and kit. It also has information on how to sign up for Fairfax Alerts so that you will receive alerts and warnings in the event of an emergency or disaster.
- Prepare your neighborhood: Once you have prepared yourself for an emergency, don’t stop there. You can be a leader in your neighborhood and organize a group of neighbors to help plan for how your neighborhood will help each other during a disaster.
- Prepare an emergency kit: Emergency kits include basic supplies and are tailored to every person’s need. We recommend every household keep three to five days worth of food, water and supplies in shelter-in-place kits for each member of the household.
- Read and download the Community Emergency Response Guide: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg

Emergency Pet Preparedness

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/petreresources/pet-preparedness

When potentially disastrous weather is in the forecast, it’s best to prepare early! It’s always better to be safe than sorry, and there’s no time like right now to make sure you have everything you — and your pet — need in the event of a weather-related disaster. Here are some things to keep in mind as you prepare:

1. Make sure your pets’ microchip information is up-to-date, and that your dogs are wearing collars with identification tags. In the event that your pet is separated from you, this safety measure can ensure that whoever finds them will be able to find you, too.
2. Make sure you have the needed supplies and important documents for each of your pets. Check out our Pet Preparedness Disaster Kit Checklist for a handy list.
3. If you are evacuating, make sure the place you’re going allows pets. There are pet-friendly shelters in Fairfax County, but please check to make sure they will be open. Hotels are not required to accept pets, so please plan accordingly.
4. If you absolutely need to shelter your pets while you get to safety, we will accept pets of Fairfax County residents for temporary safekeeping at the shelter and are preparing kennel space just in case. If you do need to bring your pet(s) to our shelter, PLEASE bring vaccination history and any medications they are on, and preferably a bag of whatever food they’re eating as well. If you need assistance getting your pets to safety, please call Animal Protection Police at 703-691-2131.
Celebrate Fiesta Fairfax on Sept. 23

Fairfax City is holding a new, community celebration to observe Hispanic Heritage Month. Set for Saturday, Sept. 23, from 3:30-8 p.m., it will be at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. The fun will include cultural performances, music, food and educational exhibits highlighting the contributions and experiences of the Hispanic, Latino and Latinx community.

The Old Town Square stage will host folkloric dance performances from various countries, as well as a salsa dance demonstration and class followed by a live band so attendees may try out their new dance moves. And Latin food vendors from around the area will offer a variety of dishes.

Local nonprofits will also be onsite to share information about services and opportunities to work with the Latino community. With Latinos comprising about 20 percent of the City’s population, the goal of Fiesta Fairfax is to bring people together to celebrate the City’s diversity.

Entertainment Schedule
3:40 p.m. Mariachi Estrellas de México
5:00 p.m. Alma Boliviana Fraternitas
5:25 p.m. Armonías Peruanas
5:45 p.m. La Decana
6:05 p.m. Azucar GMU
6:25 p.m. Dance Instruction w/ Laura Ortiz
6:55 p.m. Sol y Rumba Band.

— Bonnie Hobbs

FREE FALLS PREVENTION SEMINAR AND BALANCE SCREENING
Join team members from Inova’s Physical Therapy Center to learn more about preventing falls in the home.
Eligibility: All participants must be 60+. No recent surgeries in the past 8 weeks. Not currently on any restrictions of movement by a physician. Short lecture/discussion on facts about falling followed by balance screenings performed by Physical Therapy professionals, ending with practical tips on staying safe at home.
Registration required and limited to 30 participants. E-mail nandina.ustaris@inova.org, call 703-797-6900 option 4, or go to https://forms.office.com/r/X6XGyEx9jj to register.

GIRLS ON THE RUN REGISTRATION OPEN
Registration for the fall 2023 season of Girls on the Run is open! Girls on the Run (GOTR) is an out-of-school program designed to help young girls build key life skills through dynamic lessons. Teams are led by trained volunteer coaches who lead by positive example and have a passion for helping others be the best version of themselves.
Teams typically meet twice a week for 75-90 minutes and are led by volunteer coaches. The 10-week season will begin the week of September 11th and conclude at the celebratory 5K events the weekend of September 23.
Each practice has a corresponding lesson from the Girls on the Run research-based curriculum, which focuses on building social, emotional, and physical skills while encouraging healthy habits for life. While many teams meet at schools, GOTR NOVA also offers community teams based out of neighborhoods, community centers, and parks. If a team is not offered at your school, make sure to check out GOTR NOVA’s interactive map to find a team near you!
Girls on the Run programming is specifically designed for elementary school girls starting in grade 3 while Heart & Sole programming is created for middle school girls. Visit www.gotrnova.org.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAR FREE DAY 2023
World Car Free Day 2023 will be held Friday, Sept. 22 in the metropolitan Washington region, and registration is now open. This annual event organized by COG’s Commuter Connections program encourages residents, commuters, and students to choose a greener way to travel by going car free or cycling.
See Helping, Page 7
Steps taken to implement Fairfax County Strategic Plan.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

There was no community cake, no banners, speeches, or parades in February of this year when County Executive Bryan Hill shared the Year One Annual Report for the implementation of the first-ever Fairfax County Strategic Plan. Following the plan’s development in 2019 and interruption by the pandemic, the Board of Supervisors approved the strategic plan in October 2021, believing that county leadership must look ahead to shape the future of our community.

The 2023 Annual Report detailed the steps taken to implement the plan. It summarized the county's efforts to improve the value and vitality of its 406 square miles for all residents, visitors, and employees.

Four “key drivers” energized the countywide strategic plan: equity, data integration, inclusive engagement, and ten community outcome areas, which are:

- Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Opportunity
- Effective and Efficient Government
- Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability
- Environment and Energy
- Healthy Communities
- Housing and Neighborhood Livability
- Lifelong Education and Learning
- Mobility and Transportation
- Safety and Security

According to the plan, “These elements set a new foundation for the way different functions within county government must work together under a shared vision in pursuit of achieving consistent and measurable progress for the benefit of all people in Fairfax County.”

Bryan J. Hill, county executive, wrote in his 2023 message sharing the Year One Annual Report, “As we look ahead, we are fully aware that we still have a long way to go to achieve our vision of becoming One Fairfax.”

He added, “In Year Two, this will become an even greater focus as we strategically target the formation of infrastructure and strategy that fosters collective action around neighborhoods as the primary environments in which individuals access key opportunity structures.”

Fairfax County approved a revision of the county strategic plan in May 2023, in keeping with the intention that the framework of the plan would remain unchanged over time, but the details would be adapted as needed.

The following changes were made to the Countywide Strategic Plan in Year Two and are included in the FY 2024 Advertised Budget:

- Change the names of two community outcome areas to match the other eight: Health to Healthy Communities and Environment to Environment and Energy.
- Reorganize proposed strategies within the Ten Community Outcome Areas according to community success indicators.
- Incorporate recommendations from the Chairman’s Task Force on Equity and Opportunity into the strategic plan’s proposed strategies.
- To reflect Fairfax County Public Schools’ (FCPS) new strategic plan, revise existing language.
- To reflect the identified headline metrics, update the Economic Opportunity Sample Metrics.

In the Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan, revised in May 2023, Chairman Jeff McKay wrote, “Inequities persist, and access to opportunity can vary significantly based on one’s identity and location.” Such is despite the county’s “enviable rankings” in key indicators of community prosperity, such as median income, school performance, and public safety.

To review the Strategic Plan or related items as a document, download the following PDFs: Countywide Strategic Plan (Current - Revised May 2023), Countywide Strategic Plan (October 2021), Two-Page Plan Highlights (Drivers and Community Outcome Areas), Alignment with One Fairfax, and Community Engagement Highlights at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zdFror-By977xy4Y1SPQ5FeaHAFz1m7Z-AB_4as4DwYN/edit.
Waitlists Open for Affordable Housing

Individuals interested in applying to affordable housing waitlists have the opportunity to do so Sept. 11 through Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023, at 11:59 p.m., for select properties in the county:
- The Arden: Apartments located at 2317 Huntington Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22303
- Ovation at Arrowbrook: Apartments located at 1335 Fairfield Ridge Avenue, Herndon VA 20171
- Madison Ridge: Apartments located at 1406 Rydell Road, Centreville, VA 20121
- The Residences at North Hill: Apartments located at 7250 Nightingale Hill Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306

Instructions for using Rent Café can be found here:

Those who apply via Rent Café will be randomly placed on a waiting list for these properties. All applications received have an equal opportunity to be selected. Once a unit becomes available, the individuals on a waiting list will be contacted, screened, and determined eligible based on income level, household size, and the size of the rental unit. Households cannot currently be receiving other federal rental housing assistance to qualify.

Housing Funds Make a Local Impact in Fairfax

These affordable housing opportunities are made available through the Project Based Voucher program which provides rental assistance to eligible households to live in specific rental units. Through a contract with the owner of the unit, the FCRHA pays a portion of the monthly rent, while the household pays their portion of the monthly rent based upon 30% to 35% of adjusted gross income. The rental assistance is attached to the specific unit and remains at the property, even if the family moves. The FCRHA uses subsidies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Project Based Voucher program.

Reminders: MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

From Page 5

There are a mix of new and familiar vendors this back-to-school season! Those who apply via Rent Café will be randomly placed on a waiting list for these properties. All applications received have an equal opportunity to be selected. Once a unit becomes available, the individuals on a waiting list will be contacted, screened, and determined eligible based on income level, household size, and the size of the rental unit. Households cannot currently be receiving other federal rental housing assistance to qualify.

**How to Apply**

Interested individuals can apply online via Rent Café, from 8:00 a.m. on Monday, September 11, 2023 through 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, September 17, 2023. Instructions for using Rent Café can be found here:

Individuals who need assistance can call 703-246-5100 or come to the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development office at 3700 Pender Drive in Fairfax, VA.

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Our National Park

By Glenda C. Booth
Mount Vernon Gazette

It doesn’t have Yellowstone’s spewing geysers or Denali’s high peaks, but it is a national park. It’s the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which stretches from Mount Vernon Estate on the south end, with a break on Alexandria’s Washington Street, then to the Beltway/495 in McLean and the seven-mile Clara Barton Parkway in Maryland.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the parkway is a slow-speed thoroughfare, with 4,580 acres of parkland mostly paralleling the Potomac River. By design, it is not a multi-laned, superhighway, asphalt ribbon. The parkway is in fact a national park, with many sweeping vistas, a rich history and 25 possible stops in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Its designers envisioned a series of changing vistas that highlight special places. There’s no central visitor center, yet the parkway has approximately 7.3 million recreational visits a year and over 33 million non-recreational “visits.” Most of the latter are local and commuter traffic.

What’s There?
Here are a few sites to visit:

◆ Fort Hunt Park, where the 1902 Battery Commander’s Tower stands largely unchanged, built as part of the Spanish-American War’s coastal defense, from which the commander could coordinate firings from still-standing batteries. In World War II, Fort Hunt, known as PO Box 1142, was a top-secret camp used to interrogate over 3,500 German prisoners of war.
◆ The Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, a 480-acre, freshwater, tidal, narrow-leaved cattail wetland, one of the last along the Potomac River.
◆ Jones Point, home to one of the country’s last riverine lighthouses, which operated from 1856 to 1926. President George Washington chose this point as the southern tip of the new 10-mile-square-mile U.S. capital district.
◆ Tributes to war heroes -- the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial, Arlington House, Arlington National Cemetery and the Waves and Gulls memorial, honoring the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.
◆ Glen Echo Park, centered by a restored, 1921 Dentzel carousel. In its heyday, bands like the Dorsey Brothers and Bill Haley and the Comets performed in the 7,500-square-foot dance hall.
◆ The Potomac Gorge, a 15-mile, rugged river corridor, a nationally significant natural area.
◆ Great Falls, a series of cataracts and falls, one of the most ecologically significant natural areas in the entire national park system. British politician Lord Bryce wrote in 1913, “No European city has so noble a cataract in its vicinity as the Great Falls of the Potomac . . . ”
◆ The 17-acre Lady Bird Johnson Park and LBJ Memorial Grove, with a 43-ton, Texas granite monolith, looming amid white pines, dogwoods, azaleas and rhododendrons.
◆ Theodore Roosevelt Island, largely a woodland that planners intended it to be “similar in character to the natural primeval forests which once covered this and others of the Potomac islands.” A memorial honors the island’s namesake.
◆ Fort Marcy, well-preserved Civil War earthwork walls, trenches, rifle pits and a parade ground.

The south section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Many people enjoy the vistas from overlooks and other spots along the parkway.

Photos by Glenda Booth
At the height of summer, wetland plants like spatterdock are visible from the parkway in Dyke Marsh.

A Unique Road Envisioned

The Parkway's planners designed a road to preserve and enhance the Potomac River valley and honor the nation's first President, George Washington, by creating a grand gateway to his home, Mount Vernon.

They wanted to keep both banks of the river in public ownership. Lt. Col. Peter Hains, the first land surveyor, told Congress that the parkway should "have the character of a monumental structure, such as would comport with the dignity of this great nation ... and the grandeur of character of the man to whom it is dedicated ... It should be such a work as no American need feel ashamed of."

The road's designers sought to integrate the road with the natural undulating terrain and contours, winding in gentle curves and highlighting natural areas and vistas. The National Park Service has planted over 250,000 trees, shrubs and vines.

Sections between the 14th and Memorial Bridges were left open to offer sweeping views of Washington, D.C. Signs and lights are minimized and billboards are prohibited. Most of the bridges are made of reinforced concrete faced with hand-laid, rough-cut stone for a natural look.

Built in Stages

Some local businessmen, the Mount Vernon Avenue Association, initiated the idea in the 1880s, advocating for a national road from Washington to Mount Vernon. Officials deferred road construction in the 1890s and between 1892 and 1896, built the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Electric Railway through Alexandria to Mount Vernon, a trolley that carried Mount Vernon visitors, locals and farm goods. A trolley station sat in today's circle at Mount Vernon.

The initial federal sponsoring agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Public Roads, wanted to demonstrate modern highway design principles like overpasses, cloverleaves, limited access, wide-lane spacing and highlighting natural areas and vistas. The National Park Service has planted over 250,000 trees, shrubs and vines.

The original plans included a parkway from Fort Washington, Maryland, north to just above Great Falls, but this was never built, some say because there was no equivalent to the CIA or Dulles Airport driving its construction.

Respecting Nature

For an urban park, the parkway is especially rich in biodiversity. For example, for species counts, the parkway has at least 25 mammals, 243 birds, six native turtles, 99 trees and 591 wildflowers. At least 81 plants and animals considered rare, threatened or endangered in Virginia or Maryland.

Visitors might watch bald eagles fishing over a fish, as a jet descends to National Airport; great blue herons feeding as an Army or Marine helicopter passes overhead; a spring wildflower “show” at Turkey Run Park; a silver-haired bat darting around at dusk; turtles sunning and wild rice billowing in the fall breeze in Dyke Marsh.

It's a special road, but not just a road, a national park.

Much of the parkway is tree lined.

Sections built after World War II have longer curves and continuous safety medians.

By the late 1940s, the road went as far north as Spout Run. Builders completed the northern part in the 1950s and 1960s, partly spurred by the Civilian Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) headquarters locating at Langley. President Dwight D. Eisenhower cut the ribbon and opened the road to traffic on this part in 1959. By 1962, the parkway reached the new Belvedere.

The Parkway's planners designed a road to preserve and enhance the Potomac River valley and honor the nation's first President, George Washington, by creating a grand gateway to his home, Mount Vernon.

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It's a special road, but not just a road, a national park.

Information: www.nps.gov/gwmp

Let us know about an upcoming event.

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HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE SERVICES

see helping, page 7

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Mount Vernon Gazette • September 14-20, 2023 • 9
A Win For Virginia

By Delegate Paul Krizek

Last Wednesday, Sept. 6, the Commonwealth of Virginia took a significant step towards improving the lives of Virginians when the General Assembly returned to Richmond to vote on the final passage of the long-awaited budget deal. The clock is ticking now with the Governor having until this upcoming Friday, Sept. 15, to sign the amended budget into law. The good news is that this budget compromise represents a series of victories for the people of Virginia, as it prioritizes investments in key areas such as public education, healthcare and affordable housing, all the while providing relief for Virginia families, especially veterans and children. It is also fiscally responsible in that it recognizes that revenue growth may be subsiding and thus the focus is on one-time initiatives.

One of the most significant highlights of this budget is the substantial investment we made in Virginia’s public schools. With over $900 million allocated to public education, the budget seeks to address critical issues that have plagued the educational system. Notably, it lifts Virginia’s arbitrary cap on state funding for support staff, paving the way for an additional 3,670 support staff positions to be created across the Commonwealth. This move comes in response to the findings of this summer’s JLARC report on education funding, which highlighted the urgent need for investments in the state’s educational system. To support school divisions like Fairfax County with large percentages of low-income students, the budget allocates over $400 million in one-time flexible funding. This targeted funding aims to bridge the gap in educational opportunities and create a more equitable learning environment for all Virginia students.

In conclusion, the budget deal, which also includes strong investments in water quality, public safety, and support for 14 museums including the Gum Springs Museum and Cultural Center, approved by the General Assembly last week underlines a strong commitment to improving the lives of Virginians. By investing in education, providing one-time tax relief, and addressing healthcare challenges, this budget demonstrates a dedication to the well-being of all residents. My colleagues in the General Assembly and I are determined to put the needs of our constituents first, ensuring that no family has to make difficult choices between essential expenses, yet all the while recognizing that although we have made historic investments in education, there is even more education funding needed moving forward. That will be a battle for the next budget of 2024-25.

Six Months Late, Finally a Budget

Raising Virginia’s standard deduction from just $3000/$6000 to almost three times that amount causes an annual revenue loss of over $1.1 billion.

By Del Vivian Watts

The General Assembly finally passed a full budget for this year. It goes into effect at midnight Friday, Sept. 15, unless the Governor wants to amend it. If he does, there will be another 30-day delay. Politically, I doubt that will happen because it would delay taxpayers receiving a tax rebate check just before the upcoming November election of up to $200 for individuals and $400 for married filers.

The virtually unprecedented six-month delay in passing an updated budget, in fact, was all about taxes—just like it was the only other time a budget update wasn’t passed, before the start of the budget year July 1. That was 20 years ago and was over cutting the car tax. That year, an update of the second year of Virginia’s two-year budget never was passed.

This year, it was over how much we should permanently cut taxes given that tax cuts reduce Virginia’s revenue available to support education. Even though Virginia is below what most states give local schools, 52% to 55% of Virginia state tax revenue goes to support education.

In July, JLARC (our independent Joint Audit and Review Commission) released an extensive report documenting that Virginia’s level of state funding far underestimates what local schools actually cost. The state bases its share on just $10.7 billion, while what K-12 actually costs is much, much higher at $17.3 billion. The report concluded it would take an annual increase of over $3 billion in state funding support to address major areas of need it identified.

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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About Connection Newspapers in 2023

In the midst of the crisis which never ends, we at the Gazette still hear the call to serve our communities, with a bit of wonder that we are able to continue. We still seek to fulfill our mission by continuing to publish, even with reduced resources. It’s still our mission to provide information about where to get help and how to help; to tell the stories of those who are helping, of those who are hungry. It’s still our mission to tell the stories of those working for social and racial justice, and battling income inequality.

It is our mission, set out in the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution, to press local government every day for transparency, although this continues to become more difficult. Your local paper can be your window into the workings of schools, police, transportation, zoning, stormwater management, services, and a nearly infinite number of other functions. These are the things that impact our lives at home and work.

The public has a right to expect transparency from such local institutions. The founders clearly anticipated the ongoing need for the press to help in this role.

It is still our mission to deliver the local news you need, to help make sense of what is happening in your community, to advocate for community good, to provide a forum for dialogue on local concerns, and to record achievements, milestones and events in the community and people’s lives. It is still our mission to cover the normal news of the local community.

We publish photos and notes about personal milestones and community events, including births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, awards and obituaries.

We also publish items about news and events from local businesses. Notes about openings, an

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“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

— First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

mkkim@connectionnewspapers.com

ed States, beginning in 1784.

We are blessed with remarkable, award-winning staff, contributing writers and photographers who are dedicated to our mission. Most have been writing for the Gazette and Connection for years, some for more than a decade (or two, or three). Each brings areas of interest and expertise. Check the bylines. Don’t miss Bonnie Hobbs, Mercia Hobson, Jeanne Theissmann, Janet Barnett, Michael Pope, Mike Salmon, Susan Lau- me, Glenda Booth, Eden Brown, Shirley Rube, Hope Nelson, Marilyn Campbell and others. (Our late editor Kemal Kurshid used to refer to pay for writers as “symbolic.”)

Local newspapers, including the Connection Newspapers, are facing an existential threat from the combination of nationwide downturn in newspaper advertising that has been worsening over several years, compounded by the economic crisis.

Revenue has not nearly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, and we are going to need more help to keep going. We will renew calls for contributions and subscriptions. If you value local news and you have a budget for advertising and promotion, please endeavor to spend some of it with local newspapers including ours.

— Mary Kimm
Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, a delegate to the Continental Congress and a founding father of the United States, was a self-sufficient plantation from the 1750s to the 1790s. The hall was built as a model for the U.S. Bill of Rights and showcases the Mason family's wealth and prominence. The hall was mostly self-sufficient and tended by tenant farmers and enslaved workers. Today, the Gunston Hall garden and its surrounding grounds are open to the public and offer a variety of activities and events throughout the year. The garden is home to a variety of plants, including a heritage seed bank of plants that would have been grown in the colonial era. The garden is open year-round with daily and annual passes available.

Gunston Hall also offers Gunston Hall Picnics, where visitors can bring their own food or order from caterers. The park offers multiple picnic areas with grills and covered tables. Guests can enjoy their meals ($14-21; kids $8), and for 10 guests or more, catering can be arranged. Additional field space is available for large gatherings when seating is not required. A walking tour of the park and the history of Gunston Hall is open to the public, and tickets can be purchased online at https://gunstonhall.org.

Occupied by tenant farmers and enslaved workers, the hall was mostly self-sufficient and tended by tenant farmers and enslaved workers during Mason's days. The hall was built in the late 18th century as a model for the U.S. Bill of Rights and showcases the Mason family's wealth and prominence. The hall was mostly self-sufficient and tended by tenant farmers and enslaved workers. Today, the Gunston Hall garden and its surrounding grounds are open to the public and offer a variety of activities and events throughout the year. The garden is home to a variety of plants, including a heritage seed bank of plants that would have been grown in the colonial era. The garden is open year-round with daily and annual passes available.

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Interesting Places To Pair Food and Fun

The Center is home to the Lucy Burns Museum telling the story of suffragists incarnated at the reformatory for silent picketing at the White House.

From Page 13

an outgrowth of the very successful tourism campaign “Virginia is for Lovers,” recognized by Forbes as one of the top ten tourism marketing campaigns of all time. Following the first appearance in “Modern Bride”, March 1969, people travel from afar to collect photos with “Love” sign backgrounds, each has a unique setting and stylizing. See https://www.workhousearts.org/ and https://www.workhousearts.org/lucy-burns-museum

Bunnyman Brewing

Coming in March 2024, Bunnyman Brewery will be on site at the Workhouse Art Center’s quad. The brewery will offer food as well as an extensive array of IPAs, beers, ales, stouts, and hard seltzers. The brewery’s new location is made possible by a $6.3 million renovation project to a portion of the historic prison buildings on the quad. Bunnyman’s arrival will actually be a return to the reformatory grounds home of the legend from which the brewery takes its unusual name. The tall tale tells of a nearby bus crash in the 1900s, from which patients from an “insane asylum” escaped. One left a trail of gutted rabbits as the only clues to his movements. He was the only patient never found. The brewery name marks the legend perhaps best told with a stout in hand. https://bunnymanbrewing.com/

LEGO Discovery Center, 6563 Springfield Mall, Springfield

A new arrival to the area’s entertainment scene, the Discovery Center is turning accommodating parents and grandparents into instant subjects of adoration from local kids lucky enough to be escorted to the fun spot. The 32,000 square foot family entertainment attraction and store on the Springfield Towne Center’s lower level boasts several sections. Twelve zones include multiple activities: LEGO brick building areas, spaceship build, train ride with space pirates, Washington D.C. as a mini-world, 4D cinema, laser maze, and a hero zone sure to help wear out even those with the most energy to burn. Tiny critics often provide the insider’s tip that the laser maze and car race mountain are the areas they like best, of course after trying them all. Tickets start at $28.99 https://www.lego Discoverycenter.com/washington-dc/

Springfield Towne Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield

Have you noticed that lately “the mall” is being rediscovered as an entertainment center? Make a trip in the evening or on weekends, and find families with small children, couples, and teens making the mall a destination for having fun without having to spend much money. Play areas for tots and older children, window shopping, a food court, a multi-screen movie theater, and people watching, in a climate controlled, cheerful lighted space, with security and easy parking, makes the mall an easy choice. Some even take advantage of the controlled temperature for walking exercise. Enclosed, centralized shopping malls saw a boom period from the late 1960s through the 2000s. In recent years, as online shopping emerged as a major competitor, malls began to go out of business. Those that have survived, such as the local Center, typically include attractions, gyms, and movie theaters. The Springfield Towne Center is anchored by Macy’s and Target, and now includes the LEGO entertainment venue. It hosts many free events and programs, often with cultural themes, for the community and families to enjoy year-round. https://springfieldtowncenter.com/

Springfield Towne Center Restaurants - Located mostly along the Center’s Loisdale Road side are several restaurant options, beyond the Food Court fast food options located inside. Diners have a wide range of options from ethnic foods: Maggiano’s Little Italy; Italian; Mezeh, Mediterranean; Chuy’s, Mexican; and Nando’s, South African cuisine; to more traditional American food options at Dave & Buster’s, Silver Diner, and Yard House.

For a complete list of restaurants and their locations within or near the Center, see https://springfieldtowncenter.com/
September is Suicide Prevention Month, but it is always time to raise awareness, strengthen the dialogue and remind individuals, friends and families about resources that are available. Suicide is preventable and can affect anyone regardless of race, age, economic or social status.

Fairfax County offers numerous resources and support services to assist those in need. Call or text 9-8-8, the 24/7 Suicide and Crisis Hotline.

Suicide is a serious public health matter, and prevention efforts are critical. Suicide is preventable, and there are resources and support services available throughout the year to promote mental health and increase resilience.

Statistics:
- On average, there are 132 suicides per day.
- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Virginia.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14 and the 3rd leading cause of death among people aged 15-24 in the U.S.
- 59% of all suicides were by firearms.

Education and services are provided throughout Fairfax County and include community-focused workshops, campaigns to raise awareness about mental health and evidence-based suicide prevention and mental health trainings for all residents.

The Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia provides information and opportunities for all residents to raise awareness and share resources to prevent suicide.

Warning Signs - What to Look For

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration indicate the following behaviors as warning signs: Talking about being a burden to others. Giving belongings away. Looking for a way to kill oneself such as searching online or buying a gun. Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live. Talking about feeling trapped or unbearable pain. Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs. Acting anxious or agitated, behaving recklessly. Sleeping too little or too much. Withdrawing or feeling isolated. Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself. Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge. Displaying extreme mood swings.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness cites risk factors that could increase an individual’s likelihood to experience suicidal thoughts:
- A family history of suicide.
- Substance use: Drugs can create mental highs and lows that worsen suicidal thoughts.
- Intoxication: Analysis from the CDC indicates around 1 in 5 people who die by suicide had alcohol in their system at the time of death.
- Access to firearms.
- A serious or chronic medical illness.
- Gender: Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are four times more likely to die by suicide. Womens and girls are also at risk
- A history of trauma or abuse.
- Prolonged stress.
- A recent tragedy or loss.

How to Respond to Someone in Crisis
- Use clear language such as, “Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?”
- Calmly ask supportive questions like, “Can I help you call your psychiatrist?”
- Express support and concern.
- Don’t raise your voice, threaten or argue.
- If you’re nervous, try not to fidget or pace.
- Assess the surroundings and remove items such as guns, knives, pills or items that could be used as a weapon.
- Be patient.

Resources

Asking a person if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal ideation. Learn how to identify, talk to, and support someone who may be experiencing these warning signs by becoming a Mental Health First Aider and a Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper.

Sign up for Mental Health First Aid and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) trainings. Additionally, the Lock and Talk Northern Virginia safety program is a collaborative initiative of SPAN and CSB. This program offers free locking medi

See Suicide Prevention, Page 22
Superintendent Michelle Reid Shares FCPS’s Hidden Gems

Dr. Michelle Reid, superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, engages with students in the classroom and extracurricular settings, where students typically gather.

Did you know we have a Neurodiversity Specialist as well as a Twice Exceptional Specialist to ensure this population of students is supported? For those of you who don’t know, a twice exceptional student is one that has been identified as academically gifted in one or more areas and also identified as having a disability. Without support, those challenges can often hide the student’s abilities. These roles are unique to K-12 public education in the US. These staff members are such a great resource for our families and teachers. More detailed information and photos can be found here.

Kristen Haynor, Neurodiversity Specialist for Fairfax County Public Schools, first neurodiversity specialist in a K-12 school in the U.S. She hopes her appointment will encourage other districts to do the same. Haynor spends time in the classroom talking to students about her work.

Nonye Oladimeji began as the division’s first public school – Twice Exceptional (2E) Education Specialist. Rachel Rubio serves as the new FCPS Dyslexia Exceptional Specialist, a highly specialized role dedicated to the reading and writing disability that affects 20% of the population. Without teachers having the tools to recognize the signs, it can often go undiagnosed.

https://www.fcps.edu/blog/fairfax-county-public-schools-welcomes-first-nation-neurodiversity-specialist-amongst-trio

What are the most significant issues specific to the FCPS?

Strategic Plan: We are excited to be implementing our FCPS Strategic plan, which will serve as our North Star in ensuring excellence, equity and opportunity for all students through 2030. This plan reflects many months of hard work and input from students, staff and families: we reviewed more than 100,000 feedback survey responses and hosted more than 65 planning teams and community meetings.

Our plan includes five goals: Goal #1, a strong start for all students; Goal #2, ensuring all feel safe, supported, included and empowered; Goal #3, aHCIS commitment to academic growth and excellence; Goal #4 relies on equitable access and opportunity and Goal #5 is leading for tomorrow’s innovation. We will aim to meet our plan’s objectives by doing things like increasing Pre-K programs to meet community need, strong support for community literacy, boosting student participation in extracurricular and leadership activities, supporting successful completion of at least Algebra I by eighth grade, expanding availability and enrollment in advanced coursework and bolstering financial literacy among our student population.
Their faces are instantly recognizable from the world of sports and entertainment. But at one time, these notable individuals walked the streets of Alexandria, playing with childhood friends, attending Alexandria schools and performing in local theater productions.

In August of 1967, “Light My Fire” by The Doors was atop the charts with Jim Morrison having graduated only a few years earlier from George Washington High School. In August of 1967, “Light My Fire” by The Doors was atop the charts with Jim Morrison having graduated only a few years earlier from George Washington High School. In front of a crowd estimated at more than 4,000, Morrison gave what is reported to be his only performance in his hometown when The Doors performed at the Alexandria Roller Rink on North Saint Asaph Street (now the site of the Sheraton Suites). The group would go on to sell more than 100 million records worldwide.

“I have called Alexandria home for decades. There is no place else I would rather be.”

— Television personality and salon owner Monte Durham

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Willard Scott was America’s Star Search. Celebrities and athletes have called Alexandria home.

By Jeanne Theismann

Gazette Packet

Newcomers & Community Guide 2023

Celebrities and athletes have called Alexandria home.

World champion and Olympic bronze medalist Noah Lyles began his track and field career as a student at T.C. Williams High School.

See Celebrities, Page 20

Born Ellen Naomi Cohen in Alexandria, Mama Cass Elliot, center back, was a 1961 graduate of George Washington High School. John Phillips, right, was also raised in Alexandria and the two performed together as the Mamas and the Papas. He played basketball at George Washington High School.

Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden got her theatrical start at the Little Theatre of Alexandria.

Actor Dermot Mulroney was born in Alexandria and got his acting start at the Little Theatre of Alexandria.

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Entertaining Outdoor Pursuits

Easy Paved Bike Trails
Especially suitable for new, young riders just learning biking skills and older riders in need of less strenuous rides than unpaved trails often require, these trails provide pleasant biking adventures for all.

Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail
The 40 mile long trail runs through stream valleys and urban areas connecting many of Fairfax County’s largest parks. The south section between Braddock Road and the Occoquan River is mostly paved running along Accotink Creek and Pohick Creek. It passes Laurel Hill Park, and near the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center before ending near the Occoquan Regional Park dock.

Laurel Hill Park Central Green Loop Trail
A short trail through a nature area located near a new playground with climbing jungles and a globe carousel. This loop trail is very well suited to beginning riders with a level surface and short loop. It is near to longer, more difficult, unpaved riding for intermediate riders.

Carousels
Adventure awaits children of all ages on a galloping horse, or perhaps a unicorn, tiger or dragon, hummingbird or swan, or even an airplane or wagon, as each mount moves to the accompaniment of a special genre of music belonging to carousels. More than just a counter clockwise spin, the rider is transported to the days of 17th century knights who competed to spear small rings hanging overhead or who paraded on horseback around a courtyard.

Find carousels at:
- Burke Lake Park
- Clemyjontri Park
- Franconia Family Recreation Area
- Frying Pan Park
- Lake Accotink
- Lake Fairfax

Vienna to Hunter Mill Road on W&OD Trail
Enjoy this three mile trail as a six mile round trip near Vienna. The easy route is popular for road biking and walking; a round trip takes less than two hours at a leisurely speed.

Wakefield Park
Popular with bicyclists at all levels, this park has paved and unpaved trails suited for young children, two-to-twelve years old, near an easy biking paved loop.
Outdoor Pursuits

The wide, paved Michael A. Kane trail, popular with cyclists, walkers, and joggers connects Wakefield and Accotink parks.

Outdoor Pursuits

Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (W&OD) - Nicknamed the skinniest park in Virginia, the 45-mile paved trail runs between Shirlington and Purrsville. The former roadbed of the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad passes through cityscapes and into the country.

**Brookfield Park -** This park boasts a small bicycle pump track for riders of all ages. A pump track is a continuous loop of multileveled dirt that allows cyclists to generate speed without pedaling. The pump track derived its name from the pumping motion of the upper and lower body used by cyclists for balance as they move; **an adventure for those looking for a more physical biking experience.**

Kayaking Rentals

Local parks offer an opportunity to get onto area lakes and rivers via a small boat, a kayak. Propelled by a long double bladed paddle, kayaking is quiet and gives the feel of being part of the nature you're paddling through. Simple to learn and a perfect way to explore wetland areas and see water fowl, or just get a different type of exercise outdoors.

Kayak rentals are seasonal and can be found at:
- Burke Lake Park Marina (for fishing only - reopens Spring 2024)
- Fountainhead Regional Park (March - Nov. 13)
- Lake Accotink Marina (May - August)
- Lake Fairfax Park (May - September)
- Occoquan Regional Park (weekends thru Oct 31; reopens April)
- Pohick Bay Regional Park (weekends thru Oct 8; reopens April)
- Riverbend Park (reopens Spring 2024)

**Photos by Susan Laume/The Gazette**
Celebrities and Athletes Have Called Alexandria Home

From Page 17

joval weatherman, entertaining viewers of the Today Show with lighthearted antics and his trademark centenarian birthday wishes. But before the world took notice, Scott was just a kid from Alexandria with an early passion for radio.

"When Willard was very young, he built a crystal radio," said Tom Hulfish, who would play with Scott near the Scott home on Commonwealth Avenue. "Every afternoon he would get on his radio and broadcast the news to the neighborhood. Mind you he was only 8 or 9 years old when he did this."

Scott parlayed his boyhood passion into a lifelong career in broadcasting, spending 65 years with NBC, first in Washington then in New York.

"I don’t think anyone who knew him growing up was surprised at the success that he achieved," Hulfish said of the 1951 George Washington High School graduate and class president.

Other notable graduates of George Washington High School, now GW Middle School, include

John Philips and Cass Elliott of the Grammy-award winning Mama and the Papas.

Philips played basketball at George Washington High School, where he graduated in 1953, while Elliott, born Ellen Naomi Cohen, graduated in 1961.

T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School, has seen its share of graduates go on to national fame, including Chip Esten of the TV show Nashville, Casey Wilson of Saturday Night Live, and world champion and Olympic bronze medalist Noah Lyles, who delivered the commencement address for his alma mater in 2020.

Olympic boxer Troy Isley grew up in Alexandria and got his boxing start in the third grade when he joined the Alexandria Boxing Club at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

“Even here in Alexandria, we don’t all have the same advantages,” said Isley during a recent visit to Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, where he graduated in 2009. “But whatever your circumstances, if you stick to your goals and don’t lose focus, it is possible to make it out.”

Actor Chris Meloni of Law and Order: Special Victims Unit was the captain and quarterback of the 1978 undefeated St. Stephen’s football team while NFL Hall of Famer Joe Namath made his pro football debut on Aug. 7, 1965, in Alexandria.

Namath and the New York Jets took on the Houston Oilers in a preseason game at what was then George Washington High School.

Namath had just signed the richest contract in pro football history and as the Alexandria Gazette reported at the time, “the eyes of the sports world will be focused on Alexandria to see just how he fares against the play-for-pay boys.”

Sports history was made when Earl Lloyd, who grew up in a segregated Alexandria, became the first African American to play in the NBA when he took to the court for the Washington Capitols on Oct. 31, 1950, in Rochester, N.Y.

In the arts, Academy award winner Marcia Gay Harden and actor Dermot Mulroney both graced the stage at the Little Theatre of Alexandria early in their careers while television personality Monte Durham, a longtime Alexandria resident, opened Salon Monte at the Alexandria waterfront.

“While I was raised in West Virginia, I have called Alexandria home for decades,” Durham said when he opened his salon. "There is no place else I would rather be."

Actor and 1983 T.C. Williams graduate Chip Esten returned to Alexandria to perform a benefit concert for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria.

Actor and 1983 T.C. Williams graduate Earl Lloyd (11), playing in an NBA championship game in 1955, made history as the first African American to play in the NBA when he took to the court for the Washington Capitols on Oct. 31, 1950, in Rochester, N.Y.

Television personality Willard Scott, left, was born in Alexandria and graduated from George Washington High School in 1951.

Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters fame briefly attended Bishop Ireton High School and Annandale HS before dropping out to pursue a European concert tour.

Joe Namath talks with New York Jets coach Weeb Ewbank during Namath's professional NFL debut in Alexandria on Aug. 7, 1965. The Jets played their first preseason game against the Houston Oilers at what was then George Washington High School.
**ALEXANDRIA COLONIAL TOURS’ GHOST & GRAVEYARD TOUR**

**WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SUNDAYS**

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and At Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3501. To join the charming streets of historic Old Town Alexandria, follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria’s original Ghost and Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you’ll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge.

Visit alexcolonialtours.com.

**SEPT. 7-10 OCT.** Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Mine, At The Athenaeum, 1001 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist’s Reception is Sunday, Oct. 4 from 6-9 p.m. Award-winning painter Anne Stine debuts her latest collection of encaustic works titled, “Every Rock Has a Story,” in September, at the Athenaeum Gallery. Her collection of 20 geological paintings explores the interconnection between Earth and humanity through representational and abstract art. “Every rock has a story,” a popular geological phrase, meaning history is captured within the Earth’s formations from the majestic mountains to the tiniest pebbles that reside beneath our feet.

**SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 12** The Fall Garden Festival. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. This free event celebrates a world of unique plants, capturing garden accessories, live music that sets the perfect ambiance and delectable food options to satisfy your cravings. It’s not just any garden gathering – it’s a vibrant celebration of all things green and gorgeous. The Fall Garden Festival is your one-stop destination for gardening inspiration and unique finds. Gather your friends and family and join us for a day filled with nature’s beauty and the joy of the gardening community.

**SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 12** The HalowEED Art Market. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery 2701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features a variety of artwork from local artists celebrating the spooky and colorful sides of the fall season and aerial performances by Monarch in Flight. Join us for lots of fun at this outdoor, family-friendly, rain-or-shine event. HalowEED takes place at corner of Commonwealth and Mount Vernon Avenues. Details at DelRayArtisans.org.

**SEPTEMBER**

**SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 11** Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Mine, At The Athenaeum, 1001 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist’s Reception is Sunday, Oct. 4 from 6-9 p.m. Award-winning painter Anne Stine debuts her latest collection of encaustic works titled, “Every Rock Has a Story,” in September, at the Athenaeum. Her collection of 20 geological paintings explores the interconnection between Earth and humanity through representational and abstract art. “Every rock has a story,” a popular geological phrase, meaning history is captured within the Earth’s formations from the majestic mountains to the tiniest pebbles that reside beneath our feet.

**TUESDAY/SEPTEMBER 20** 8th Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Admission: $45/person. The Twig, The Junior Auxiliary of Inova Alexandria Hospital, proudly announces the 8th Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour to be held on Saturday, September 25. Now this year, a digital tour book guiding participants through the homes will be accessible to ticket holders via their mobile device. Hard copies of the tour book are available for purchase, in advance, for $5 each. Please note that this event sold out last year, so early ticket purchase is recommended. Visit therewig.org/home-tour.

**SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 24** Mount Vernon Makers’ Market. 12-5 p.m. At Port City Brewing Co., 3959 North Royal Street, Alexandria. This is the fall’s most fun sip-and-shop, featuring craft beer from the award-winning Port City Brewing Co. along with shopping and activities. The 手工手工艺品 and pet-friendly event will feature more than 20 artisans from Alexandria and nearby with a wide variety of crafts and artworks from the region. Visit www.portcitybrewing.com.

This year’s market will include:

- a scavenger hunt with prizes from Made in ALX and Port City Brewing Co.
- the National Breast Center Foundation Angel Wings photo station
- oracle readings with Alexandria’s Angel of the Year, Spiritual Millennial Sarah Locke
- new crafts and artworks from the region by artists, creators and makers

Food vendors will include Rockland’s BBQ and Maria’s Italiano and Filippo Food Truck, Watts Popcorn, Pickles & Cures, and Scotchline Bakery.

**OCT. 7, 2023**

**Unbook Sale** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Place, Alexandria. With a 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.fairfaxcountylibrary.org/branches/sherwood-regional.

**THE BICHRME**

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexand- renia. The market will be held 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact us at (703) 754-7950 or www.bichrme.com.

**SEPTEMBER**

Wed. 13: Jonathan Coulton & Paul & Storm $39.50
Thu. 14: Jack Lizyk with Sherry Grim $39.50
Fri. 15: The Jayhawks w/ Freedy Johnston $49.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 16: Tommy Emmanuel, CGP with Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams $95.50 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 17: Tommy Emmanuel, CGP with Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams $59.50
Mon. 18: Patty Griffin w/ Scott Miller $65.00 SOLD OUT!
Tue. 19: Josh Radin w/ Maddie Poppe $45.00
Wed. 20: The Utah Earl Keen (Solo) $65.00 SOLD OUT!
Thu. 21: Robert Earl Keen (Solo) $65.00 SOLD OUT!
Fri. 22: Putum Osvald: Effervescent $49.50
Sat. 23: 40 Fingers $35.00
Sun. 24: Therapy Geek Live! Lyle The Therapy Geek $29.50
Thu. 28: Yachtley Crew $35.00
Fri. 29: The Whispers $95.00
Sat. 30: The Whispers $95.00

**September 14-20, 2023**

**Mount Vernon Gazette**
Suicide Prevention Month

FROM PAGE 15

Call or text 9-8-8, the 24/7 Suicide and Crisis Hotline.

Call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Emergency Services at 703-573-5679.

Text “CONNECT” to 855-11 to contact PRS CrisisLink.

Lifeline Chat: SuicidePreventionLifeline.org/chat

Call PRS CrisisLink at 703-527-4077.

In an immediate, life-threatening situation, call 911.

If you are concerned, SPAN offers a Confidential Online Screening.

You can also come directly to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board’s Emergency Services office, which is open 24/7.

Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health
8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, Fairfax
703-573-5679, TTY 711

Deciding when to help someone who may be at risk for suicide can be scary, but taking one step to reach out for support could save a life.

Bulletin Board

FROM PAGE 16

community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services’ BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil (Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) at 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization

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www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Past issues of The Connection Newspapers back to 2008 are available at http://connectionarchives.com/PDF

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www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers
That JARCC report shifted the budget discussion towards a harder look at total tax relief. We had already cut state taxes over $4 billion last year by removing the sales tax on food, raising the standard deduction, and giving one-time rebates of up to $250/$500. Given the almost $3 billion in permanent tax relief in last year’s cuts, plus documented education under-funding and mounting concern about a federal government shutdown that would affect 30% of Virginia’s economy, the budget compromise we just passed only put an additional $280 million into permanent tax cuts while over $900 million will go back to taxpayers through the one-time $200/$400 rebate.

Over $900 million of the permanent tax cut will go to continuing the challenge of closing the large gap between the standard deduction Virginia taxpayers can take when they file their state income tax and what they get on their federal income tax. Five years ago, Virginia’s standard deduction was only $3000 for a single filer and $6000 for joint filers. It had been 15 years since it had been raised. Meanwhile, the federal standard deduction had grown to $12,000/$24,000.

Now, we've increased Virginia’s standard deduction to $6,500/$13,000. This constant push to lower taxes for most taxpayers by raising the standard deduction has resulted in Virginia’s income tax being more progressive. In sharp contrast, the original proposal to lower the highest standard deduction from just $3000/$6000 to almost three times that amount is an annual revenue loss of over $1 billion. That cost in the face of documented under-funding schools and the mental health crisis was why the General Assembly finally came to agreement that the bulk of the remaining current budget surplus needed to be re- turned to taxpayers as a one-time rebate and not as an even greater permanent tax cut.

Watts
From Page 10

Bulletin Board
From Page 22

Watts
From Page 10

Debit This!
By KENNETH H. LOURIE

I don’t know if what I am about to write comes under the heading of a rant, a pet peeve (ducks backing into parking spaces is my “numinous” uns irrational preoccupa- tion), or a logical conclusion but no matter for an ever-increasing, almost mandatory use of our respective lives: using a credit card reader when paying in person with a credit card, I have been in businesses where cash is not accepted (sob notwithstanding).

Apparently, cash is no longer king. More and more we pay our everyday expenses, the extra transactions, cash is further down the lane in the payment pecking order. Cash might as well be Green Stamps or the “red-headed世界一流”, given how little respect and ap- preciation payments receive for the receipt of paper money rather than plastic.

As accessing cash from an ATM though they are not 100% identical, they seem familiar enough from one to the next. All I ask, other than for a cancer free life to be realistic as to what really matters, is some uncharac- teristic but much needed government intervention into the private sector to facilitate the shopping/consump- tive in person and “universalize” the debit card readers. I would imagine helping/concurring consumers to consume in the easiest and most efficient manner would certainly be good for the GDP in addition to all our buy- ing/paying experiences. It seems logical, prudent even, that installing non-cash, whole-organization-wide systematics of the debit keys would benefit an aging population in specific, and society in general where everything every- where requires a 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