

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

## County Takes Another Step with Solar Fire Stations



The fire station staff took part in the solar panel ceremony.

### Woodlawn station goes solar in Mount Vernon.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

Officials flipped the switch on Wednesday, Sept. 27 for the rooftop solar panels on the Woodlawn Fire Station that will provide 15 percent of the building's total electric consumption, save the county \$6,400 the first year and reduce the carbon emissions by 34 metric tons in another step for the environment.

Chairman Jeff McKay looked at the overall picture, helping the staff at the station too. "It's important that we invest in them, invest in the county and invest in the planet," he said. The Woodlawn Station and the Reston Station were the first two stations in the county to take this step with the solar panels but it is just a start.

"There's a lot more to come," said Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) who has been part of the green initiative that the county started in 2018. "We're on our way to a brighter future, a healthier future," Storck said.

Flipping the switch was the green equivalent of cutting the ribbon here, so McKay and Storck grabbed the large silver power switch on the side of the building and went at it. Suddenly things were happening with the solar panels.

The project cost \$469,257, the county said, but it is eligible for a federal tax credit and should generate savings to offset the cost within 22 years.

These two fire stations going solar isn't the only "green," event the county celebrated in the last few months. In late August, Fairfax County launched its first all-electric

trash truck as a start in that direction too. "This is an investment in our environment," said Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay when they officially plugged in the truck at the Cinder Bed Garage.

The stations and trash trucks are part of the Fairfax Green Initiatives launched a few years ago to begin to stem the growth of greenhouse gases which are dramatically altering our environment, our world and the people, places and property in our communities, the county said, driving climate change and more severe weather.



A hand-painted mural on the side of Station 24 in Woodlawn.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



Chairman Jeff McKay and Supervisor Dan Storck flip the switch to turn on the solar panels.



Chairman Jeff McKay speaks at the ceremony on Sept. 27 as Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District Supervisor; John Morrill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination; and John Silcox, the PIO of the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination look on.

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OPEN SUN 10/1, 1-3

### Del Ray | \$2,149,000

Gorgeously updated, complete renovation with designer finishes & custom trim work. 6 bedrooms & 5 full baths, beautiful kitchen, large pantry, mudroom, spacious basement & more. ADU with a bedroom, bath and kitchen. 317 E Howell Ave  
**Jen Walker 703.675.1566**  
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OPEN SUN 10/1, 2-4

### Seminary Ridge | \$1,550,000

Immaculate colonial in a fantastic location! 4 bedrooms, 4 baths, open floor plan with gas fireplace, finished basement and spacious yard with gorgeous hardscape for outdoor entertaining. 3705 Fort Worth Ave. TheLynnTeamRE.com  
**Margot Lynn 703.973.3722**  
**Hannah Lynn 703.973.8170**



OPEN SAT 9/30 & SUN 10/1, 12-2

### Pinecrest | \$1,350,000

This 5-bedroom, 3/1-bath home is a dazzling custom-built traditional – one of a kind! The unique lot provides a whole new level of suburban privacy with access to beautiful backyard forestry, including a meadow and creek. 4427 Brookside Dr  
**Jillian Keck Hogan 703.951.7655**  
**JillianKeckHogan.com**



OPEN SUN 10/1, 2-4

### Harborside | \$1,100,000

This 2-bedroom, 2-bath plus den townhome offers the perfect floor plan for entertaining with a main level kitchen and open living/dining room with gas fireplace & French doors to a lovely patio. Private elevator & 2 garage spaces. 25 Wilkes St  
**Mary Taylor 703.785.5619**  
**MaryTaylorRealtor.com**



OPEN SAT 9/30 & SUN 10/1, 2-4

### Hollin Hills | \$975,000

Spacious 2,300+ SF home has three additions including a primary suite with gas fireplace & private deck, 3 additional bedrooms, 2 full baths, plus an office, family room, and rare walk-out basement! Terrific outdoor spaces. 1947 Marthas Rd  
**Jodie Burns 571.228.5790**  
**JodieBurns.com**



### Vienna | \$819,900

Brick-front, one-car garage townhome with EV charger. Features 3 bedrooms, 3/1 baths, 2 fireplaces, wood floors, large deck & walk-out lower level. Easy access to I-495, 66, Metro, shopping, dining, and more. 8005 Trevor Place  
**Wendy Santantonio 703.625.8802**  
**WendySantantonio.com**



OPEN 9/27, 5-7 | 9/30 & 10/1, 1-4

### Old Town Village | \$773,000

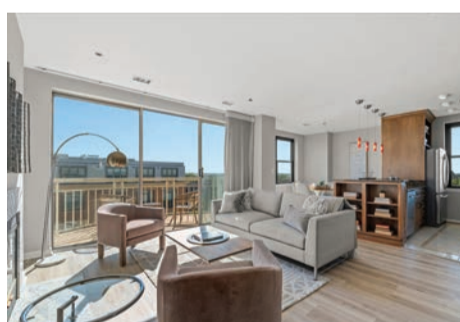
Fabulous townhouse-style condo in Old Town. Gorgeous, light-filled unit with open concept kitchen, dining, family room; stunning remodeled bathrooms; private deck; and assigned parking right outside your front door! 1420 Roundhouse Ln  
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**LisaGroover.com**



OPEN SAT 9/30 & SUN 10/1, 1-3

### Rosemont Park | \$738,000

Beautiful all-brick, semi-detached home in a sought-after neighborhood! The large living room is formal yet relaxing with warm wood floors open to the dining room. Finished lower level and fenced back yard. 6 blocks to Metro. 8 E Spring Street  
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### Braddock Place | \$599,900

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**The Irmer Group 703.346.7283**  
**TheIrmerGroup.com**



OPEN SAT 9/30, 11-1

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**RobinsonChristine.com**



### Auburn Village | \$249,900

Updated 1-bedroom, 1 bath condo! Living room has built-ins. Refinished floors. Kitchen boasts stainless appliances & granite countertops. Combination washer/dryer in unit. Walk to "The Avenue" & Potomac Yard. 3405 Commonwealth, #C  
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### Farrington Place | \$180,000

Located near Huntington Metro, this 1-bedroom, 1-bath condo offers a renovated kitchen & bath, large walk-in cedar closet, 2 new heating/cooling systems, in-unit washer/dryer, & 2 parking permits. 2303 Farrington Ave #201  
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**ShaguftaHasan.com**

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## Chief to Present Foot Pursuit Policy to Supervisors

Oct. 3 Public Safety Committee meeting will bring some long awaited responses from FCPD.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

**T**uesday, Oct. 3 at 3 p.m., the Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee will meet at the Fairfax County Government Center. FCPD media report that Police Chief Kevin Davis will present the department's foot pursuit policy to the Board. He is also expected to respond to recommendations by the Police Reform Matrix Action Plan Working Group.

Kevin Davis began his tenure as chief of the Fairfax County Police Department on May 3, 2021. In the Final Report June 2021 of the University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice, An Investigation into the Use of Force by the Fairfax County Police Department, researchers Michael R. Smith, J.D., Ph.D., and Rob Tillyer, Ph.D. recommended that "[FCPD should] consider adopting a foot pursuit policy to help reduce force and injuries to officers and suspects." This research project was supported through an agreement between the Fairfax County Office of the Independent Police Auditor and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

According to a different report, the April 2023 Fairfax County Police Department Review of Issues Surrounding Recent Police-Shooting Incidents by the Performance Executive Review Board (PERF), which Davis requested, the department did not adopt a foot pursuit policy as the University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice had recommended. In April 2023, Davis was one month shy of his second anniversary as chief.

PERF researchers said in the report that, at Davis's request, "PERF did not examine reports connected to the last [shooting] incident, which took place on Feb. 22, 2023, since that matter is under active review by the local prosecutor." That incident involved a nighttime foot pursuit by two Fairfax County police officers, one plain-clothed and one uniformed. They shot and killed a shoplifting

suspect outside Tysons Corner Center.

A man was allegedly stealing sunglasses from a store, as reported to the police. The man, later identified as Timothy Johnson, 37, was unarmed and ran out of the store, across the parking lot, and into a wooded area. Having been alerted of the possible shoplifting incident, the officers followed in foot pursuit. Johnson, alive after having been shot once in the chest, was pronounced dead at the hospital.

PERF researchers reported in 2023 that the Fairfax police department only recently began requiring its members to write "foot pursuit" in incident reports if they engaged in such a pursuit. In the past, department members may have described a foot pursuit using less searchable terms, such as "ran after subject" or "chased person."

PERF reported that between July 19, 2021, and April 20, 2023, the Fairfax County Police Department had eight police shooting incidents, three of which were fatal; in the seven years before July 19, 2021, there were eight police shooting incidents. Per Chief Kevin Davis's request, PERF examined all data until April 2023. Since the local prosecutor was conducting an investigation into the Johnson incident, PERF did not review any reports related to it.

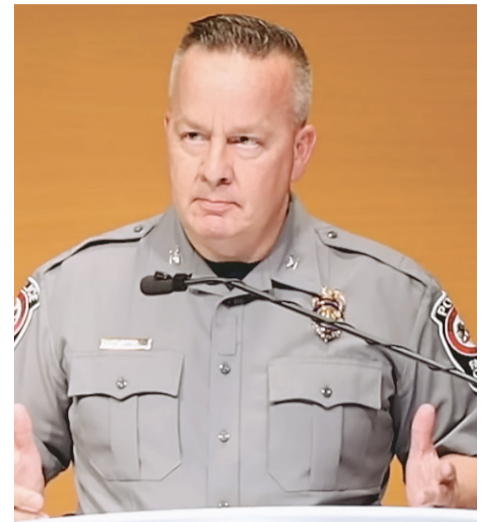
### Civilian Oversight and Transparency

In his 2021 Annual Report, Davis said, "There is always room for improvement." The report adds that the department "routinely ensures our policies and directives are consistent with best policing strategies, practices and reflect community feedback and values."

Multiple civilian groups exist in Fairfax County related to policing, including the Community Advisory Committee | Police (fairfaxcounty.gov), Communities of Trust Committee | Police (fairfaxcounty.gov), police-department-cy-2023-eip.pdf (fairfaxcounty.gov), Police Civilian Review Panel | Police Civilian Review Panel (fairfaxcounty.gov) and the Police Reform Matrix Group.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk



MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE  
Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis



SCREENSHOT

At the next Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee meeting Oct. 3, FCPD Chief Kevin Davis is set to present the department's foot pursuit policy, along with response to recommendations by the Police Reform Matrix Action Plan Working Group.

FCPD Media responded on Sept. 21 when asked how frequently Chief Davis had met with the Community Advisory Group, Reform Matrix Group, and other relevant civilian police groups over the past two months: "Each month, our district commanders meet with their Community Advisory Committees. Chief Davis also meets with the Chief's Advisory Council bi-monthly too."

So far, the FCPD has made no public response to the Matrix Working Group's recommended action plan. Supervisor Rodney Lusk's office created the matrix in 2020 to make publicly accessible all police reform recommendations made by community members and groups.

The Matrix Working Group met earlier this year and considered the more than 300 recommendations in the matrix, organizing them into eight primary topics with recommendations for an action plan.

Two members of the matrix working group, Phil Niedzielski-Eichner and Rev. Vernon Walton, presented the recommendations at the May Public Safety and Security meeting.

The upcoming Safety and Security Meeting with the Board of Supervisors on Oct. 3, featuring Davis, is public, as are all supervisor board meetings. The committee focuses on policies, projects, and programs that have the potential to affect the welfare and public safety of all county residents.

## Homes Sold Faster and Prices Jumped More

Median sold price for a home in August reached \$700,000 in Northern Virginia.

**E**ven though sales declined regionally and nationally, inventory was lower and prices grew faster in the Northern Virginia real estate market than nationally in August, according to the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors.

"Despite mortgage rate increases, demand for housing is outstripping avail-

able options in our region. Low inventory is much more pronounced in our region than nationally and is driving up prices," said Ryan McLaughlin, NVAR CEO.

Regionally, home sales continued to decline, dropping 12.4% from last August, but this was a smaller decrease than the overall market which fell 15.3%. Homes stayed on

the market only 17 days on average in August 2023 in the Northern Virginia area, two days less than August 2022.

In Northern Virginia, home buying options were significantly less, with only a 1.08 month's supply of inventory, down 1.4% from August 2022.

The tight supply pushed prices even higher as the median sold price for a home in August reached \$700,000 in Northern Virginia, up 11.6% over the previous August. Nationally, the median home price in August also grew reaching \$407,100. However, this was a much

smaller increase at 3.9% from August 2022.

In June, NVAR released a mid-year update to its NVAR Region 2023 Residential Real Estate Market Forecast. The forecast noted that a continued lack of housing inventory, pent-up buyer demand creating a sellers' market, and positive economic conditions peppered with mounting risks may be in store for the Northern Virginia housing market for the remainder of 2023. The update was created in cooperation with the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University.

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## OBITUARY

# Michael Freedman

**M**ike Freedman, who found respite in radio early on and would become a radio network executive, journalism professor and university administrator, died at home in Alexandria, Va., surrounded by his family, on Sept. 18 from pancreatic cancer. He was 71.

Michael Gene Freedman was born in 1952 in Detroit to Belle (Kosofsky) and Hymen Freedman, the youngest of three boys. His parents operated a Kosher butcher shop until his father died in 1958, when Freedman was 6 years old. In the years of struggle that followed, he found solace in a gift from his mother: a small, blue "Bell Futura" transistor radio that he would sneak beneath his pillow at night and fall asleep to Detroit Tigers games through the crackle of AM radio.

The experience sparked a lifelong love of radio, as well as baseball — feelings topped only by those for his wife of 49 years, Renee (Lacoff). In 1968, all three converged: He and Renee were fixed up on a first date, the Tigers won the World Series and Freedman received a reply to a letter he'd written to Tigers' announcer Ernie Harwell, seeking advice on getting a start in broadcasting. "The main thing," Harwell wrote, "is not to get discouraged."

Freedman broke into the industry sweeping floors and changing tapes. Later, he was on-air doing a 4-hour farm program on Sunday mornings, though his characteristic drive eventually led him to Detroit's top news stations and to dozens of awards as a reporter, sportscaster and news director. It led to a move to Washington, D.C., to become managing editor of



Michael Freedman

broadcast news at United Press International; to serve as a press secretary in Congress; and in 1998, to New York, where he achieved his childhood dream of being the general manager of CBS Radio Network News. There, he strove to reach and reinvigorate interest in CBS News's vaunted past, including returning to the air Walter Cronkite for several special projects, among them what would become Cronkite's final live report and his last CBS newscast as anchor.

SEE OBITUARY, PAGE 14

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that a fireworks display will take place as part of private evening events at George Washington's Mount Vernon on the following dates:  
**Saturday, September 30 (5 minutes) - between 9:30pm – 9:55pm**  
**Thursday, October 5 (5 minutes) - between 7:20pm – 7:50pm**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption. To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via e-mail, write to [Events@MountVernon.org](mailto:Events@MountVernon.org)

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S  
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# Brush Piles – Headaches or Havens?

From chipmunks to chickadees, these can shelter local wildlife.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

**T**ropical storm Ophelia soaked the Washington area last weekend, leaving behind, among other impacts, fallen limbs and sticks scattered around. Instead of becoming landfill or incinerator material, they can support local wildlife, from chipmunks to chickadees.

“Brush piles are a valuable habitat component for many wildlife species, especially in areas where good natural cover is lacking,” says the Virginia Department of Forestry website. A brush pile is a mound or heap of woody vegetative material. While some may see a brush pile as an unsightly jumble of sticks, brush piles can be valuable habitat. In fact, in some places, they are called “rabbittats,” used by rabbits like our Eastern cottontail.

Among others, DOF lists these animals as using brush piles: rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, box turtles, gray treefrogs and many insects. Birds often use brush piles as shelter during severe weather and feed on the pile’s insects.

Brush piles can offer a safe retreat from predators, provide areas to rest, feed and shelter from bad weather and be a place to raise young. Lizards, for example, may lay eggs in the rotten wood.

As a brush pile decomposes, it helps enrich the soil. As the materials biodegrade, they provide a home for invertebrates and micro-organisms for many years. Millipedes, sowbugs and pillbugs feed on the dead plant material. Lichens may grow on wood surfaces.

Fewer trips to the landfill means reducing pollution from gas-powered vehicles. Vehicular traffic is the major source of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in Northern Virginia. Fairfax County’s data show that transportation and mobile emissions are 42 percent of all carbon emissions.

## How to Build a Brush Pile

Most experts recommend starting with a sturdy base, putting the largest logs or limbs



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

**A brush pile supports many wildlife species.**

down first to create “tunnels” and air spaces. Some people use discarded wooden, untreated pallets or rocks as a base. Then just pile up branches, twigs or prunings, going from longer to shorter on top. Some recommend placing branches at different angles to form air spaces. Experts recommend not packing the materials down. Virginia DOF advises, “Effective brush piles are at least six to eight feet wide – usually larger – and at least four to six feet tall.”

Wildlife biologists urge avoiding materials that may have toxic substances, like pressure-treated lumber, lead-painted materials, tires or other petroleum-based products. A brush pile is basically just a pile of sticks.

Some people put evergreen foliage on top to create a dry place for birds to roost in the winter, especially if there are no evergreen trees or shrubs nearby. Some add discarded Christmas trees and cutback perennials and grasses. Some people grow flowering vines like trumpet honeysuckle and passion flower over their brush piles. The blossoms provide nectar for pollinators.

While some people may see a brush pile as unkempt and “messy,” incompatible with typical grassy landscapes, the piles can be



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

**Northern Cardinal**

tucked into a back corner, behind shrubbery or along a fence. And they cost nothing.

Here’s what Alonso Abugattas of the Capital Naturalist blog has to say: “Brush piles don’t just provide wildlife sheltering and feeding habitat, and occasionally nesting and basking sites, but also good locations to pile your leaves, branches and cuttings from your garden when you clean up. The native bees, chrysalis, cocoons, larvae and other ways that invertebrates spend the winter in them now have a safe place to overwinter and then emerge the following spring. And even if they don’t, they can feed birds and



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

**Eastern chipmunk**

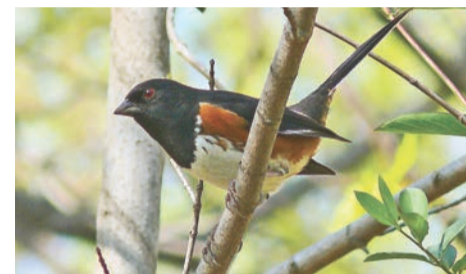


PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

**Eastern Towhee**



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

**Brown Thrasher**



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

**White throated sparrow.**

other wildlife, along with the seed heads that they may harbor. This is all part of us being a good neighbor for wildlife that is struggling to survive.”

“A brush pile is a place of life, death and regeneration,” says a Department of Forestry brochure.



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

**Male and female Northern Cardinal**



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

**A box turtle hiding**



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

**Cottontail rabbit**



First Place: ServiceMaster NCR. From left: Ed Reifinger, Andy Graves, Wes Stearns, Gunner Sanders

# More Than Golfers Win 25th Annual Chamber Golf Classic Benefit for the Mount Vernon Springfield Education Partnership.

BY DAVID GRIFFIN  
MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ServiceMaster NCR returned to the Chamber Golf Classic and took home the first-place trophy with a follow-up to their first-place win in 2022. The foursome of Ed Reifinger, Andy Graves, Wes Stearns and Gunner Sanders made history as the first team to win this community event two years in a row.

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce's 25th Annual Chamber Golf Classic at Laurel Hill Golf Club is the main fundraiser for the Chamber's Scholarship Fund. Over the course of 25 years, this popular event has provided \$285,000 in scholarships for local high school students to study business, preparing the next generation of business and community leaders.

Sponsors who helped make the event possible were CDI and Cisco as Premium Platinum Sponsors and Palo Alto Networks as the Presenting Sponsor.

More than 100 golfers competed for prizes and supported the Chamber's Scholarship Fund.

**First Place:** ServiceMaster NCR, Ed Reifinger, Andy Graves, Wes Stearns, Gunner Sanders

**Second Place:** Franconia District Police Station, Kevin Shaw, Brad Avery, Jon Bryant, Robert Ascencios

**Wacky Ball:** CDI, George Ksenics, Kendrick Navarro, Luca Farina, Jeff Kelly

**1st Place Second Tier:** Genuario Co., Rick Genuario, Sue Genuario, Mike Bufano, Kevin Arnold

**1st Place Third Tier:** Only Bathrooms, Larry Newman, Bob Enfield, Dan Fleming, Matt Guelcher

### Individual Event Winners

- Putting Contest, Joe Blasiolo, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital
- Men's Long Drive #1, Jason Jamula, InfoLock
- Women's Long Drive #13, Aehee Park, Cox Communications
- Closest to the Pin #4, Scott Lee, Safford Hyundai
- Closest to the Pin #8, Jon Bryant, FCPD Franconia Station
- Closest to the Pin #11, Jeremy Seay, Commonwealth Digital
- Closest to the Pin #14, Jason Misleh, Sophia's Cafe
- Closest to the Pin #16, Peter Kim, Safford Hyundai

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of commerce would also like to thank our Grand Sponsors: Sam Media Productions, Transurban and Infolock, as well as Gold Sponsors Calibre, Dominion Energy, Ourisman, INOVA and Wegmans.



Jeff Kelly, CDI, and Luca Farina, Cisco, received Scholarship Benefactor plaques at the Chamber Golf Classic.

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# Race for Soil & Water Conservation District Board

## Get to know the candidates, and the Board.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

In this year's General Election, Fairfax County voters are asked to elect three directors to sit on the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board. The candidates' campaigns mostly are self funded, without widespread use of campaign literature or advertising. Although on the ballot every four years, voters are often surprised to be faced with making a choice for this little understood seat. While the positions are considered non-partisan, and no party affiliations will appear on the ballot, political parties may, and have, endorsed candidates. The seats also are unusual in that they are elected but unsalaried. Seven contenders have put themselves forward to serve on the Board; three endorsed by the Democrat party, three by the Republican party, and one without party affiliation. Only one candidate is an incumbent.

**WHAT IS THE FUNCTION** of the Soil and Water Conservation Board (NVSWCD)? As with other county boards and commissions, this board is intended to promote two-way communication between citizens and county government. The Northern Virginia Board, one of 47 such boards across the commonwealth, takes direction from a state level board under the Department of Conservation & Recreation. It focuses attention on local land, water, and related natural resource conservation problems, and develops programs to address them. The Board serves as a source for general conservation and natural resource information, and approves soil and water conservation plans. Under their review purview are proposals submitted under the important Chesapeake Bay Act, and Tax Credit Programs; programs for which the Board has approval authority for resource management plans. The board also reviews proposals under The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The Board's elected directors are supported by two appointed directors, which they select, and a technical staff. The group is involved in assisting residents with drainage and erosion, conservation, stormwater management, and stream restoration, soil surveys, watershed cleanups, the rain barrel program, and early detection of non-native, invasive plant species. Our District is one of few urban territories within the state; most Soil and Water boards serve rural concerns.

As part of the Connection's continuing election coverage, we asked the seven candidates questions about their related experience, and why they felt suited to the position. Several have experience or education in conservation or engineering; others do

not. We summarize the five responding candidate answers; two candidates, Edward W. Monroe Jr. and Mary Ellen Flynn, did not respond.

### Questions for the Candidates

1. What do you feel best qualifies you for the position?
2. What volunteer experience do you have in conservation?
3. What top two issues require the Board's priority?
4. Describe your campaign outreach efforts and funding?

### Dana H. Barakat (Falls Church)

Age - 32

Education: M.A., Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 2015; B.A. Government & International Relations, George Mason University, 2013

Current Position: Executive Director, National Arab Women's Association; Strategic consultant; Conservation volunteer experience: Fogwater harvesting, Agadir, Morocco, Georgetown University

Barakat says her long residency in the county, and her "extensive work in community building, organizing, and advocacy" qualify her to serve on the board. She also indicates her "passion is educating and assisting underrepresented communities."

Barakat's top priorities for the Board are education and outreach, which she sees as "vital to embracing environmental stewardship." She includes educating citizens on stormwater mitigation as one area of needed concentration. Another is to provide information on grants and programs offered. She says underrepresented communities tend to lack the information and tools to use the resources that could be available to them, though they are in dire need. Further, she sees education needs to go beyond residents; that "developers must be educated and provided the tools to make better choices."

Barakat dedicates her campaign time to "getting the word out to faith and underrepresented communities, and organizing leaders." She says she talks with them about the importance of "being good stewards of the environment," hoping residents will pay as much attention to soil and water as to every other elected position. Barakat is endorsed by the Democratic Party.

### Rhonda J. Bitterli (Annandale)

Age - declined to provide

Education: M.S., Soil & Water Science, University of Arizona; B.A. English, Minor: Computer Science, Mathematics, University of Arizona.

Current Position: Retired, project manager, senior analyst

Conservation volunteer experience:

Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, "Dig It! The Secret of Soils," 2008-2010; Bikes for the World, [diversion from waste stream for reuse], (2014); NVSWCD, annual seedling sale, 2023

Bitterli points to her work experience in "various environmental arenas, including how hazardous waste sites are evaluated, domestic and international agriculture, municipal solid waste, and geothermal energy" as her qualifications to serve on the board, along with her educational background in soil and water science, and chemistry.

Bitterli's top priorities: "One priority issue is stormwater management, and erosion and sediment control ... especially as storms become more intense and flooding has become more frequent. A second priority is encouraging residents to take a more active role in addressing drainage and erosion problems on their residential property." She says this takes "enhancing outreach efforts so that residents know about all the NVSWCD resources available to them." She gives the example of the available website information on rain barrels, rain gardens, and use of native plant species, along with available technical guidance.

Bitterli's campaign is self funded and does not accept donations. Her outreach includes attending events where candidates are invited to speak, including an upcoming forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters on Oct. 11. She has a website and is on social media. She developed a single page flyer which she asks people to photograph or scan the included QR code for more information "in keeping with my desire to be environmentally responsible." She is endorsed by the Democratic Party. See [rb-soilandwater.com](http://rb-soilandwater.com)

### Christopher E. Koerner (Oakton) - Incumbent

Age - 69

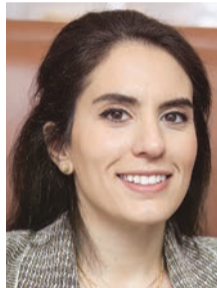
Education: B.S. Civil Engineering, Hydrology, University of Connecticut (1980); B.A. Chemistry, Biology, Colby College (1976)

Current Position: Registered engineer; retired, environmental engineer; retired Diplomat, American Academy of Environmental Engineers

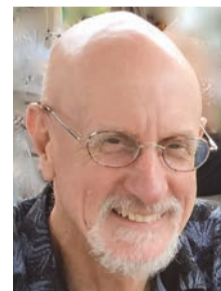
Conservation volunteer experience: Director/Treasurer, NVSWCD, 2019-2023; NVSWCD Associate Director/Secretary, 2017-2019; Sierra Club, since 1988, Executive Committee Chair, 2009-2012; Fairfax County Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exemption Review Committee Chair, 2016-2020; Vice-President HOA, 1996-pres-



Rhonda J. Bitterli



Dana Barakat



Christopher Koerner



Deborah Maddrell

ent [with county award for community lake restoration]; Fairfax Master Naturalist, 2017-present.

Koerner, a retired environmental engineer with over 40 years experience "as a technical expert developing and implementing strategies to clean up toxic waste sites; particularly difficult groundwater contamination challenges" in the U.S., Europe, and South America. He includes in his experience, leading and participating in engineering teams on high-visibility projects at Fort Detrick, Md., and with anthrax contamination. He shares that his experience here and abroad "has strengthened my belief in environmental stewardship, and clarified the recognition that we all must do everything we can to preserve our beautiful, but fragile planet."

For Koerner, his top priorities are "obtaining visibility and adequate financing to support our talented staff." He cites areas in need of funding to include: stormwater damage with increasing impervious surfaces and more intense rainfall events; grants for homeowners, HOAs, and places of worship to adopt conservation practices; community gardens in underserved communities; and protecting our drinking water supply; among others. He considers it a priority to work on "continually improving community education and growing our diverse network of citizen, county, state, and federal environmental group partnerships."

Koerner indicates his campaign outreach effort "is networking with environmental groups, speaking at public meetings to educate citizens on what the Board is and does, and helping HOAs and individual property owners solve environmental challenges." His campaign is self-funded, with minimal paper handouts and signs, "in order to reduce the environmental impact of the campaign." He is endorsed by the Democratic Party.

### Debra O. Maddrell (Vienna)

Age - declined to provide

Education: M. Sc., National Security Strategy, National Defense University; B. A., History, French, Capital University

Current Position: Retired, U.S. Naval Officer

Conservation volunteer experience: None  
Maddrell, a retired naval officer, points to experience in positions she held within the service in which she had responsibility for assuring naval vessels complied with federal and state regulations, to protect the St. John River and Mayport Harbor Basin, as qualifying experience. Also, that in Japan, her responsibility as installation head required compliance with Japanese land use and conservation regulations. She would rely on the "appointed members who bring the needed technical expertise to the table." She sees her role as "representing the interests and concerns of the taxpayers and citizens."

SEE GET TO KNOW, PAGE 10

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## OPINION

# Looming Crisis

## Understanding the impacts and consequences of a Government Shutdown.

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

By the time you read this, I can only hope that Congress has resolved the impending full government shutdown, but as I write this column the Sunday, Oct. 1 funding deadline looms. At this time, it is also unknown how long a potential shutdown could last. A federal government shutdown will jeopardize the paychecks of nearly 300,000 Virginians, including more than 140,000 civilian federal workers and more than 150,000 military members. I am very much against a government shutdown because it will harm Virginia families' economic stability. I have heard from my constituents, and they are very apprehensive and worried. These tactics by the Republican majority in Congress are dangerous for our nation and especially for Virginia, and represent the kind of harmful consequences we would see if Republicans take control of our state legislature in the November elections.

What is a government shutdown? Many federal government agencies and programs rely on annual funding appropriations passed by Congress. Each year, Congress must pass and the President must sign budget legislation for the next fiscal year, consisting of 12 appropriations bills, one for each Appropriations subcommittee. Congress has only enacted one of the 12 bills for FY 2024 that make up the discretionary spending budget. In a "shutdown," federal agencies must discontinue all non-essential discretionary functions until new funding legislation is passed and signed into law. Essential services continue to function, as do mandatory spending programs.

What services are affected in a shutdown and how? Each federal agency develops its own shutdown plan, following guidance released in previous shutdowns and coordinated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The plan identifies which government activities may not continue until appropriations are restored, requiring employee furloughs and the halting of many agency activities. Essential services – many of which are related to public safety – continue to operate, with payments covering any obligations incurred only when appropriations are enacted.

The public is likely to feel the

impact of a shutdown in several ways. For example, in a full shutdown:

- ❖ Social Security and Medicare: Checks are sent out, but benefit verification as well as card issuance would cease.

- ❖ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Potential delays in issuing benefits.

- ❖ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): 127,000 Virginians will lose WIC benefits, nutritional assistance for low-income and pregnant or nursing parents, as well as infants and children up to 5 years old. Half of babies born in the US benefit from this program.

- ❖ Environmental and Food Inspection: Site inspections for hazardous waste, drinking water, and chemical facilities may halt.

- ❖ National Parks: Visitor services are discontinued, leading to financial losses.

- ❖ Air Travel: Longer lines and potential travel disruptions.

- ❖ Health and Human Services: The National Institutes of Health may stop admitting new patients.

- ❖ Internal Revenue Service (IRS): Delays in tax refunds and other services.

Federal employees will be most affected by a shutdown. A full shutdown would be more extensive than the partial shutdown that started in December 2018. In 2013 and early 2018, approximately 850,000 out of 2.1 million non-postal federal employees were furloughed. Furloughed employees do not receive paychecks but are guaranteed back pay.

How and why do mandatory programs continue during a shutdown? Mandatory spending is authorized for multi-year periods or permanently, so it generally continues during a shutdown. However, some services associated with mandatory programs may be diminished if there is a discretionary component to their funding.

How many times has the government shut down? Since the modern budget process was introduced in 1976, there have been 22 "funding gaps," with four "true" shutdowns where operations were affected for more than one business day.

Government shutdowns do not save money. In fact, shutdowns tend to cost money due to contingency planning, uncollected fees, and back pay for furloughed employees.

Congress can avoid a full government shutdown by passing appropriations bills or continuing resolutions. A continuing resolution temporarily funds the government in the absence of full appropriations bills. Continuing resolutions can fund specific appropriations or all discretionary functions for the entire year. Continuing resolutions are frequently used when appropriations cannot be agreed upon by a deadline and they continue funding without regard to changing policy needs, wasting time, and disrupting agency activities.

The potential for a government shutdown is a serious concern that can disrupt the lives of millions of Americans and have lasting economic consequences. It is crucial for Congress to pass appropriations bills or continuing resolutions to ensure that vital government services continue without interruption. Shutdowns are costly, inefficient, and detrimental to the well-being of the nation. It's time for the Republicans running Congress to prioritize the stability of our government and the livelihoods of its employees and citizens.

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Many are attracted to the beauty of Lake Accotink Park.



Volunteers regularly participate in clean-up activities for litter that pollutes Lake Accotink.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

## Soil & Water Candidates Weigh In on Lake Accotink

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

**E**arlier this year, continuing discussion around sediment and flooding problems, including a recommendation to let Lake Accotink fill in and become a wetland, raised concern among some area residents.

Lake Accotink Park in the Braddock District attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually with its stunning trails, picturesque picnic areas and engaging waterfront activities. The 55-acre man made reservoir, which was built by the U.S. Army, has required regular dredging due to sedimentation.

However, extensive analysis by Fairfax County staff has led to the recommendation against further dredging due to the significant costs, \$395 million over the next 25 years; environmental impacts; and difficulties in processing and disposing of sediment. Instead, they recommend allowing the lake to fill up with sediment and return to a wetland park environment.

The idea of restarting the Park's Master Planning process, with a focus on fostering a sustainable future for the lake area and park, was recommended by county staff, raising opposition from many residents of the area opposed to losing the lake.

A 27-member task force, chaired

by former Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova held meetings to consider the proposal through the summer. Subcommittees of the task force reviewed the value of Lake Accotink Park to the county, impacts of and issues with the staff recommendation to end dredging, and possible options to consider, other than full dredging. As Braddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw said, "This task force will enable community members to be at the table to ensure that options are thoroughly explored, and that questions from the public are answered." The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for Oct. 2; with their final report due to the Board on Dec. 5.

Given the controversy of this conservation issue, The Connection asked candidates for director seats on the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board for their position on the lake's future. Here's what they said. Two candidates, Mell Flynn and Ed Monroe, did not respond.

### Dana Barakat

"Lake Accotink is an example of why it's important to act immediately rather than wait and see. The very high concentration of impervious surfaces in the lake watershed has created a situation where far too much sediment flows into the lake every time it rains. For those who struggle with the technical as-

pects: pollution, over use of household products, over use of fertilizer, not picking up our animals' feces, etc, cause these minerals to go into the lake watershed. While this may not seem catastrophic, it is to the ecosystem and the future of the lake. With that said, it is not under the purview of NVSWCD, so while formally we are not the ones to decide, we respect our partners and will continue to work with them to do our part. Moreover, the amount of funding needed is not feasible at the current moment.

### Rhonda Bitterli

"Even if cost were not an issue, there are environmental impacts  
SEE SOIL & WATER, PAGE 11

## Get to Know the Candidates, and the Board

PHOTO COURTESY CAMPAIGNS

FROM PAGE 8

Top issues: Maddrell sees "mitigating the destructive impact of utility scale solar farms on forests and green spaces," as her highest priority. She wants to work with State legislators to address solar farm impacts, by forcing utility compliance with State environmental quality regulations. She favors use of rooftop solar energy installations on commercial buildings, and would urge the Board of Supervisors to amend building codes to encourage them. Her second priority is to counter the effects of road runoff. She favors use of permeable cool road technologies, which she says would "improve stormwater management, reflect more solar energy, reducing ambient heat on urban roadways by 10 to 15 degrees."

Maddrell describes her campaign as "self-funded. My primary outreach effort is at the community level and through social media." She is endorsed by the Republican Party.

### Mary E. Strayhorne (Falls Church)

Age: 43

Education: Master of Law (L.L.M.), American University (2014);

J. D., Law, Faulkner University (2011);

B.A., American Studies, Queen's University (2007);

Associate of Science (A.S.), Multimedia & Web Design, Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale (2002).

Current career position: Consultant, management, contracting, public interest.

Conservation volunteer experience: None  
Strayhorne says "There is more to conser-



Mary Strayhorne

vation than just having technical knowledge in the science behind conservation efforts — it is also important to effectively communicate the soil and water needs to stakeholders ... Without the money and support from stakeholders to implement the advice of the Board, sustainable maintenance is a plan without action or results."

Strayhorne says her top priorities are to "Expand education outreach to inform the public on best practices, relating to over fertilizing and yard management, to effectively mitigate their impact on our environment that has led to a rampant increase in invasive species. And to help the board obtain additional funding from various sources, including from our new partners in commerce, to support conservation efforts ..." She points to current issues with invasive species and the need to "bring our community green spaces into a healthy, sustainable state of maintenance ..."

Strayhorne indicates the majority of her campaign time is spent "connecting with constituents and members of our community who have the expertise and understanding of what the issues facing soil and water are at present, and constituent concerns." In coming weeks, she expects to participate in forums, attend local events, such as back-to-school nights and football games, and reach out to women's voting and Latino community groups. She is working with other Republican candidates for Board of Supervisors and school board on conservation planning and education outreach. She is endorsed by the Republican Party. See [strayhornefornova@aol.com](mailto:strayhornefornova@aol.com)

*Editor's Note: The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area will host a virtual NVSWCD candidate forum on Oct. 11, 7 p.m.; to register go to <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/>. Find other League candidate forums held Oct 2 to Oct 16 at the same site.*

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# Soil & Water

FROM PAGE 10

associated with restoration activities. Area residents would be impacted for years by the presence of dredging equipment, by the noise associated with dredging operations, and by increased traffic in the surrounding community as truckloads of sediment are removed — and by the emissions produced by the trucks. Because of this, Fairfax County staff have recommended that the lake not be dredged, that it be allowed to turn into a wetland. This is the option that seems the most viable. The park and wetland would still offer recreational opportunities and would provide a habitat for wildlife. ... The Board of Supervisors will review the findings of the Task Force and will make the decision regarding how to proceed. Unless there are some major developments related to dredging, letting the lake turn into a wetland is likely to remain the most viable option. I see an educational opportunity here to let visitors to the park know about the history of Lake Accotink and the factors that are contributing to its degradation. Visitors could also learn about what Fairfax County does to help control runoff and erosion in the county as well as what we as residents can do to control runoff and erosion in our yards so that we can all play a part in protecting the streams and lakes in Fairfax County.”

**Debra Maddrell**

“The root cause of this crisis is a failure on the part of the county either to mitigate the effects of urban over-development, or to hold the developers accountable for making sure comprehensive storm-water controls and anti-erosion infrastructure are in place before beginning construction. Priority must be given to conserving forests, farmland, and green spaces. Letting Lake Accotink “be returned to a wetland area and park” does nothing to address the cause of the problem, and is an abdication of responsibility by the Board of Supervisors, and other government entities who have been kicking this can down the road for decades.”

**Christopher Koerner**

“The extensive siltation of Lake Accotink presents a very difficult challenge, over which the lake-side landowners have little control. The extensive siltation is caused by the high percentage of impervious surfaces in the heavily urbanized (greater than 29% impervious surfaces) watershed that continually causes unmanageable amounts of upstream sediment and debris to wash into the lake with every

storm event. The runoff, nutrient loading, and associated stream bank erosion is exacerbated by the higher intensity rain events that we experience due to the effects of climate change. The District leads a volunteer stream-monitoring program with 7 locations within the lake Accotink watershed; all have been rated unacceptable. The NVSWCD does not have the millions of dollars of funding or the authority to repeatedly dredge the lake or to make a decision on the future use of the Lake, but I believe that the Lake area is a valuable community and environmental habitat, and will advocate for the District to assist the County and community in any way we can to support the final decision. Some of the issues that our staff has expertise in include: Implementation of Best Management Practices, Low Impact Development, stormwater control structures, reduced nutrient loading, wetlands buffers, and community education.”

**Mary Strayhorne**

“We cannot allow Lake Accotink to become a wetland and lose local control of our county and state resource. Mismanagement of Lake Accotink will exacerbate the floodplain conditions if not properly maintained. Furthermore, if we fail to show a competency in managing our own natural resources, they become wards of federal control and will remain within federal control. We should not allow our federal government to come into Fairfax County and tell our homeowners and citizens what they can and cannot do with the land and resources within our own county. Now is the time to draw a line in the sand, choose to control our own resources or lose control to federal environmental mandates. Lake Accotink is a beloved source of natural beauty, recreation, and memories for generations of Fairfax County residents. It is part of our home, it is ours – let’s keep it that way. I’m confident we can find an abundance of funding and support opportunities within our community of new friends with commercial interests in the area who want to demonstrate their commitment to our community beyond the promise of limited tax revenue. After all, they came to our beautiful, prosperous state and county not only as entrepreneurs, but as neighbors and friends. Let’s find a way to come together to keep Fairfax County a home of beauty and prosperity through collaborative, common sense approaches to conserving it. We’re in this county together – let’s make a deal that everyone can live with and sustain.”

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## GWHS CLASS OF 1963 REUNION

The George Washington High School Class of 1963 will celebrate their 60-year reunion on October 5 and 6 in Alexandria. For additional information and registration please contact Viloa Miller at vem1006@verizon.net, Bud Mayo at mayo5304@cox.net or Jackie Bridges at jhuetbridges@gmail.com

## NOW THRU OCT. 8

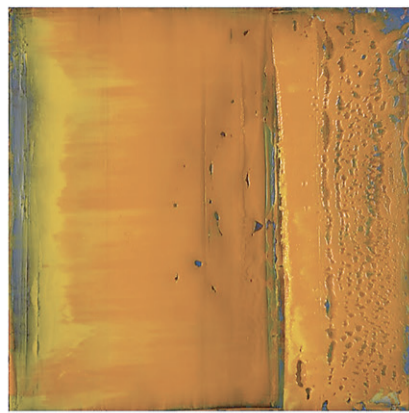
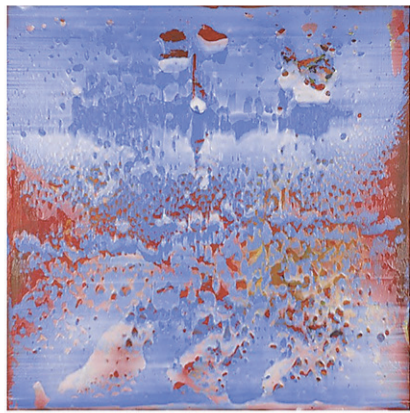
**Progression Exhibit.** At Multiple Exposures Gallery (MEG), at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union Street, Alexandria. The exhibition features a sequence of photographs, with each one chosen for its relation to the previous image. The relationships among the 56 included images may be based on composition, color, geography or other characteristics — the choice was left to each of the 14 contributing artists. Exhibition visitors are invited to observe each image as it appears in the sequence and consider what the connection to the previous image might have been. Exhibition Artists: Soomin Ham, Tim Hyde, Eric Johnson, Clara Young Kim, Irina Lawton, Sandy LeBrun-Evans, Matt Leedham, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sislen, Tom Slieter and Fred Zafran. Exhibition hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

## ALEXANDRIA COLONIAL TOURS' GHOST & GRAVEYARD TOUR

Wednesdays through Sundays in September at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Nightly in October at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria. Walk your way through 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.

## 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



The Cascades Art Exhibition will be held at the Van Landingham Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria on Oct. 2-29, 2023.



The 21st Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival will be held Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 2023 at John Carlyle Square in Alexandria.



"The Spirit Within" exhibit by Nina Tisara and Steven Halperson can be seen at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria from Oct. 3 to Nov. 13, 2023.



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/>

## SEPT. 1-30

**The "Farther Afield" Exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Featuring art by local artists that takes the viewer on a journey, whether that is someplace an hour away from Alexandria or halfway across the world. Opening Reception: Friday, September 1, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 1). Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## SEPT. 2-30

**Perspectives Exhibit.** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Landingham Gallery presents Perspectives, a juried membership show featuring artworks that showcase the talent and creativity of the TFAA. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, jewelry, works on paper, sculpture, and more. The following artists are featured in the main exhibit: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Helen Power, Karen Waltermire, Nancy Ramsey, Ann Barbieri, Tara Barr, and Lynn Chadwick.

## SEPT. 7 TO OCT. 15

**Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Stine.** At The Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist's Reception is Sunday, Oct. 1, from 4-6 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 imagery. "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.

## SEPT. 27-30

**Fall Book Sale at Duncan Library.** At 2501 Commonwealth Ave, Alexandria. Friends of Duncan Library Members can take advantage of a special Members-Only Preview Sale and will receive discounts throughout the rest of the sale.

## Book sale hours:

- ❖ Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023, 5-8 p.m. Members-Only Preview Sale
  - ❖ Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. General Public Sale
  - ❖ Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. General Public Sale
  - ❖ Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. General Public Sale
- Books will be priced at \$3 for hardcover, \$2 for paperback, unless otherwise marked. Book sale profits go directly back to Duncan Library to support the purchase of books,

programming, materials, community events, equipment and more.

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 30

**Native Plant Sale.** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 1701 N. Quaker Lane parking lot, Alexandria. Largest native plant sale in DC Metro Area hosts 12 vendors from VA, MD, PA, DC, and MA selling native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade. 20th anniversary of this sale! This event is free. Call 571-232-0375 or [www.NorthernAlexandriaNative-PlantSale.org](http://www.NorthernAlexandriaNative-PlantSale.org).

## SEPT. 30 AND OCT. 1

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** Sept. 30 at 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center. Oct. 1 at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial. Tchaikovsky's 4th & Brahms Violin – ASO at 80-oh! Brahms' violin concerto soars with lyricism and virtuosity—soloist Elissa Lee Koljonen brings it to life. Lester Green kicks off the ASO at 80 celebration with flair. Tchaikovsky's dramatic symphony concludes a powerful season opener. Elissa Lee Koljonen appears by arrangement with the Curtis Institute of Music.

## SEPT. 30 AND OCT. 1

**21st Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria. Visitors will see thousands of handmade-in-the-USA, exquisite pieces of art from every medium. Presented by the nation's top art festival producer, Howard Alan Events (HAE), the

Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival throughout the decades has become a hallmark staple event for residents and visitors alike. Visit [www.ArtFestival.com](http://www.ArtFestival.com).

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 30 AND OCT. 7

**Oktoberfest Festivities.** At Alexandria Bier Garden, Alexandria. Live bands and DJs Saturday and Sunday starting at 10 AM, with festive German music playing all day long. Stein Holding Contests will give guests a chance to win a \$50 gift card on 9/30 and 10/7. Oktoberfest Trivia on Thursday 9/28 and 10/5 at 7 p.m. (will be Oktoberfest themed), featuring fantastic prizes. Alexandria Bier Garden will end the Oktoberfest festivities with the unveiling of its much-anticipated Paulaner event room and Rooftop Bar. Oktoberfest brunch, featuring an array of German dishes to savor, will take place on 10/1. Sausagefest the next two Saturdays and throughout Oktoberfest, guests can enjoy traditional German dishes, including a hearty 2 lb. pretzel that's perfect for sharing with friends.

## TUESDAYS, OCTOBER 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

**Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens,** Tuesdays @ 10. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Simpson Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Meet and talk with Extension Master Gardeners in the Simpson Demonstration Gardens to learn the best uses for fallen leaves and other organic garden waste. Free.

## OCT. 2-29

**Cascades Art Exhibition.** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center (Gallery 311), 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Van Landingham Gallery presents a solo exhibition from Gregory Logan Dunn entitled Cascades, a collection of oil and acrylic paintings created during his studio residency at the Torpedo Factory this past year. Original paintings and print reproductions of the artist's work will be available for purchase.

## OCT. 3 TO NOV. 13

**"The Spirit Within" Exhibit.** At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Drive, Alexandria. Mosaic artist Nina Tisara and artist-photographer Steven Halperson will exhibit their art work in the Fireplace Art Alcove. MVUC members and friends are invited to an artists' reception on Sunday, November 12, 2:30 - 5 p.m. RSVP: [ninat@ninatisara.com](mailto:ninat@ninatisara.com).

## OCT. 6-8

**Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour.** 6-9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Taste samples from Virginia wineries after hours at George Washington's estate. Bring a blanket

# 'A Murder Is Announced'

Aldersgate Church Community Theater presents the Agatha Christie play "A Murder Is Announced" Sept. 29 through Oct. 15. [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org)



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROS

## Agatha Christie mystery opens at ACCT.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

In the quiet, little village of Chipping Cleghorn, an announcement in the local newspaper indicates that a murder will take place in the home of Miss Letitia Blacklock at 6:30 p.m. that evening. As Blacklock, her lodgers, and curious visitors begin to arrive, tensions mount and everyone wonders if it's all a silly joke.

But there is no joke as the victim proves to be an unexpected visitor and not Blacklock or one of the local villagers. Enter Inspector Craddock, who is joined by amateur sleuth Miss Marple in the Agatha Christie mystery "A Murder Is Announced," performing Sept. 29 through Oct. 15 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

"Agatha Christie is the second most bestselling author of all time," said director Eddie Page. "She is second only to Shake-

spare. Her endings are always completely shocking with an unexpected twist. 'A Murder Is Announced' is no different with her typical ingenious combination of crime and psychoanalysis. She is the absolute queen of suspense."

Christie's "A Murder Is Announced" was first published in 1950 and touted at the time as the author's 50th novel. It features the well-known female sleuth, Miss Marple, stepping in to solve the mysterious murder.

The award-winning Page directs a stellar cast that includes Patricia Smith as the iconic Miss Marple.

"Miss Marple looks like a harmless, friendly old lady, therefore, she can move about easily listening to and talking to many people in order to solve a mystery," said Smith. "She is curious and clever, and not easily fooled. Don't underestimate her."

Miss Marple uncovers that Blacklock is due to inherit a huge sum of money, but who would stand to gain from her murder? In a classic Agatha Christie tale of concealed identities, desperation, mixed motives, and another death, it takes a risky strategy to uncover the true identity of the murderer.

"Mysteries derived from Ag-

atha Christie promise amusement while testing the audience's powers of observation," said producer Charles Dragonette. "Eccentricity and evasiveness abound and as you chuckle at them, remember - someone did it!"

The novel was adapted for the stage in 1977 by Leslie Darbon and premiered in London's West End that same year.

"This adaption never once strays from the typical Agathia Christie style that I have come to love," added Page. "Miss Marple remains the most cherished fictional character, yet rarely appears in stage productions. Miss Marple was, in part, based on Agatha Christie's own grandmother, and her grandmother's friends."

Melissa Dunlap plays Letitia Blacklock, who has opened her home to family and friends only to find it the location of the announced murder.

"Letty Blacklock delights in providing a safe haven for her dear friend Bunny and three young adults who need a home," said Dunlap. "She welcomes neighbors and visiting friends, including Miss Marple, and is dismayed that such

SEE 'A MURDER IS', PAGE 15

### NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, BUILDING DIPOSITION REPORT, AND DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF UNACCOMPANIED ENLISTED PERSONNEL HOUSING AT JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall (JBM-HH) hereby gives Notice of the Availability (NOA) for the Environmental Assessment (EA), Building Disposition Report (BDR), and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for the construction of two Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing (UEPH) barracks and associated habitat restoration at Fort Myer which is part of JBM-HH. The Proposed Action involves the construction of two equal size, new UEPH barrack buildings and the restoration of approximately two acres of existing grass and scattered tree landscape to natural habitat. The Proposed Action would also include the construction of a parking lot with capacity for 65 vehicles. Additionally, the Proposed Action would include the realignment of Schoolhouse Road; extension of the pedestrian corridor; construction of new access roads, fire lanes, equipment pads, and walkways; new utilities; and landscaping. Construction of the proposed barrack buildings and the parking lot would require demolition of seven existing Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) duplexes, two residential garages, one swimming pool (abandoned/not operational), and one swimming pool house (abandoned/not operational). The existing seven NCO duplexes are family units that are in failed or poor condition, contain hazardous materials (lead-based paint and asbestos), and do not meet Army Standards or base programming needs.

The new UEPH barracks will provide additional, updated housing for Fort Myer. Currently, existing historic barracks are in failed and failing condition, are insufficient to support active-duty military, and do not meet Army Standards. Fort Myer has a current deficit of 200 beds needed for personnel. The consolidated housing on the Installation would support a more cohesive Army unit for training, mission readiness, and mobilization. Additionally, many of the personnel that would move into these barracks are currently housed off-base, competing for space within the local housing market. This EA has been prepared to identify, evaluate, and consider the environmental consequences of the proposed demolition of seven existing NCO duplexes, two residential garages, swimming pool, and one swimming pool house; construction of the UEPH barracks and habitat restoration in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations.

JBM-HH is located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and composed of Fort Myer, Henderson Hall, and Fort McNair. JBM-HH was created from the administrative reorganization of the Fort Myer Military Community (Fort Myer and Fort McNair) and the Marine Corps installation at Henderson Hall as part of the Congressionally mandated DoD Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 2005. Fort Myer and Henderson Hall are contiguous and located in Arlington, Virginia, adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). Fort McNair is located in southwest Washington, D.C., on the peninsula of Greenleaf Point (in the neighborhood known as Buzzard Point), at the confluence of the Washington Channel of the Potomac River and the Anacostia River. JBM-HH encompasses approximately 380 acres (152 hectares) including Fort Myer at 243 acres (97 hectares), Henderson Hall at 29 acres (12 hectares), and Fort McNair at 107 acres (43 hectares). Installation management responsibilities for all three sites is the responsibility of U.S. Army Garrison JBM-HH headquartered in Building 59 on Fort Myer, and integration of functions and services between all three sites has occurred to provide more efficient support of the on-installation and regional populations.

The EA has been prepared in accordance with the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, (Public Law 91-190, 42 USC 4321-4347 January 1, 1970), amendments, and the Army's Implementing Regulations (32 CFR Part 651, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions).

The NCO duplexes, swimming pool/pool house, and residential parking garages proposed for demolition fall under the recently executed Program Comment: Department of the Army Program Comment for Inter-War Era Housing, Buildings and Structures, and Landscape Features 1919-1940 (Program Comment/PC, enacted September 2020). The BDR has been completed in accordance with and as defined in the Program Comment's Appendix A Design Guidelines for Army Inter-War Era Housing (1919-1940). A BDR is prepared when it is determined that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to demolition. Comments received from the public during the public comment period should identify if the commenter believes there is a major deficiency in following the Program Comment Demolition Procedures.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act consultation on the appearance of the new replacement UEPH barracks and the habitat restoration area is ongoing with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties.

The Draft EA and BDR are available to view in printed form at the Arlington Central Public Library and the D.C. Southwest Neighborhood Library. It can be viewed/downloaded electronically at <https://home.army.mil/jbmhh/teamJBMHH/about/Base/environmental-management-division-website>. Comments or questions on the Draft EA/FNSI and BDR may be directed in writing to: Directorate of Public Works - Environmental Division, 111 Stewart Road, Building 321, Fort Myer, VA 22211 or by email to: [JBMHH\\_NEPA@usace.army.mil](mailto:JBMHH_NEPA@usace.army.mil). Comments must be received no later than 30 days after publication of this NOA.

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# OBITUARY

## Michael Freedman

FROM PAGE 5

Years later, in January 2020, Freedman reached his other long-held ambition to be elected president of the National Press Club, which he proudly guided through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. He'd been deeply involved with the organization, including 28 years (ending just this year) as executive producer of the many-lauled public affairs TV program, The Kalb Report, which explored the role of journalism in democracy with guests that ranged from U.S. Supreme Court justices to the nation's top newspaper editors, and which was filmed from the Press Club's audience-packed ballroom.

Freedman also spent more than two decades in higher education as a vice president at University of Maryland Global Campus and, before that, George Washington University, where he found a passion for teaching.

For 22 years at GW, through last fall, he taught a popular course on media history that revealed the past through guests who lived it, from a journalist imprisoned by the Nazis to a Pulitzer Prize winning photographer and national correspondents.

Fortifying all these efforts with loving support — and, more often than not with labor and charm — was his wife, Renee. They were a model of teamwork, togetherness and generosity.

At home, Freedman set out to be the dad he'd wished for himself: he enjoyed cartoons and old movies with his young sons, led a cub-scout den and took his sons to baseball games and flea markets.

He sought the lighter side of sometimes-somber Jewish traditions, like Passover, when he preferred to lead the service with a children's Haggadah and a toy-filled "bag of plagues."

It's a quality he carried into his role as a grandfather, always arriving with a treat or bauble, and erring on the side of ordering pizza. He and Renee created a summer tradition of gathering their family at the shore in Duck, N.C., where he'd hang a "Camp Quackers" sign above the door and, each morning in the role of "camp director," serve a landslide of sugary cereals.

Freedman enjoyed collecting radios, phonographs, telephones, historic newspapers and baseball memorabilia, and his home was a touchable museum where guests could hear doo-wop on a jukebox or answer calls on a candlestick phone.

SEE OBITUARY, PAGE 15

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# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 12

and relax on the east lawn overlooking the Potomac River and meet General Washington. Admission: Friday: \$49 for members, \$59 for general public; Saturday: \$53 for members, \$63 for general public; Sunday: \$43 for members; \$53 for general public. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org).

## OCT. 6 AND 12

**Staged Readings of "The Laramie Project."** 8 p.m. At the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. The LTA will present staged readings of "The Laramie Project" on Oct. 6 and 12, observing that it has been 25 years since the horrific abduction and death of Matthew Shepard. This is a play by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, written in response to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, in Laramie, Wyoming. Kaufman and the other company members visited Laramie on six occasions and interviewed residents, members of the police force, and Matthew's friends, to understand what happened, and why. Tickets are \$20.00. For further information regarding tickets, call 703-683-5778 (Ext.1).

## SATURDAY/OCT. 7

**28th Annual Art on the Avenue.** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Mount Vernon Ave. between Hume Ave. and Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. The

28th annual arts festival held in the Del Ray features more than 350 juried artists, from quilters to card-makers to cartographers, displaying their one-of-a-kind wares. Arrive with an appetite and grab a bite from 20+ food vendors and set to the soundtrack of live music along the avenue. Trolley transportation will be available from the Braddock Road Metro. Visit [www.artontheavenue.org](http://www.artontheavenue.org).

## SATURDAY/OCT. 7

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

## THE BIRCHMERE

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

## SEPTEMBER

Thu. 28: Yachtley Crew \$35.00  
Fri. 29: The Whispers \$95.00  
Sat. 30: The Whispers \$95.00

## OBITUARY

# Michael Freedman

FROM PAGE 14

He made friends easily — at Nationals Park he was on a first-name basis with the vendors, the play-by-play announcers and the team's owners. He was grateful to count as friends so many of his peers, as well as personal heroes including Harwell, Cronkite, acclaimed journalist Marvin Kalb, singer Tony Bennett and baseball icon Frank Robinson.

In part, that's perhaps because Freedman held himself to the same standards, whether at home or work. He believed that better angels — his own and others' — could win the day if given the chance; he believed that luck could be made and should be paid forward; he believed in personal integrity, and in the goodness that could be wrought from simple kindnesses.

Freedman is survived by his wife, Renee; their sons Brian (and fiancée Erin) and Danny (and wife Angela); five

grandchildren; and a brother, Larry (and sister-in-law Mimi); and a sister-in-law, Sandy. He was preceded in death this August by his brother Barry, and in 2004 by his mother, Belle.

A memorial service was held Friday, Sept. 22 at Temple Israel's Ira Kaufman Chapel in West Bloomfield, Mich.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to:

- ❖ The journalism scholarship established at his alma mater, Wayne State University (<https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/39528/donations/new>);

- ❖ The National Press Club Journalism Institute (<https://national-press-club-journalism-institute.networkforgood.com/projects/182297-support-the-national-press-club-journalism-institute-in-2023>);

- ❖ or to Goodwin Hospice in Virginia (<https://goodwinliving.org/giving/donation-form-hospice>)

# 'A Murder Is Announced'

FROM PAGE 13

a ghastly thing would happen in her house."

Steve Rosenthal plays Inspector Craddock, a 65-year-old chief inspector who almost despite himself becomes driven to solve the mystery regarding the death of Blacklock's intruder.

"It was a challenge having to interact with so many suspects," said Rosenthal. "Each interviewee requires a different tactic in order to pry out their secrets so that my character can solve the case."

The ensemble cast features Justin Meyer as the cocky and irreverent Patrick Simmons, Kate Bierly as the snarky and smug Julia Simmons, Patrick's sister and niece to Letty Blacklock, and Matthew Lore, who is

making his return to the stage as writer Edmund Swettenham.

"People adore the writings of Dame Agatha Christie," said Page. "Things are never as they appear. The audience should pay very close attention to the nonverbal actions of each and every actor since absolutely no actor is immune from suspicion."

Added Dunlap, "Agatha Christie has created quite the ride and I want the audience to enjoy each moment."

"A Murder Is Announced" is playing Sept. 29 through Oct. 15 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308. For tickets or more information visit [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org).

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Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

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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.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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# Stanley Herwitz



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

He was once a close friend of mine: in 9th grade. Then, in high school we veered off in different directions, apparently (I can't remember exactly what happened). Besides, his home was on the other side of Newton Centre (where I grew up) in a section known as Waban so we rarely would bump into each other to facilitate any kind of relationship. Why I am writing about him now is that my long-standing best friend from high school Cary called me from his home in Needham, Ma. the other day to tell me that Stanley had died. As my closest friend, Cary was familiar with the occurrence/dynamic I'm about to share — and had been present at its occurrence, and thought I'd want to know about Stanley's passing, especially since Stanley and I lived 500 miles apart and hadn't spoken in 40+ years. As such, my likelihood of having seen or spoken to Stanley since was almost zero. In fact, Cary would have more than likely than I, since he still lived in the area, to have heard something about Stanley. (And since 1969 when we first met and instantly became best friends, and from 1972 on when I attended college in Maryland, he's been my eyes and ears up there. He has always been well connected and full of lots of local who, what and where's.)

Stanley was a big part of my life in junior high school. I can't recall if we attended one another's Bar Mitzvahs, but 1967 was a long time ago. What I do remember, generally, are the many nights a group of us teenagers would spend playing pick-up basketball (keeping stats as well: rebounds, points, et cetera) at Stanley's house and then afterward sit in his room and listen to music. And it's the music he introduced me to, years ahead of its generally accepted time, as it so happened, that ultimately became the basis and foundation of my musical awareness and interest. In 1969-ish, Stanley introduced me — musically, to Frank Zappa, Steve Miller, John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers featuring Eric Clapton and one other band, The Allman Brothers Band, who specifically, became the center of my musical universe forever more. (Previously my musical taste had included bands like The Beatles, The Turtles and The Association.) And who, by the way, were the performers at the first rock concert I ever attended. It was at "The Boston Tea Party" in Kenmore Square near Fenway Park in Boston, Ma.

And what precipitated this literary journey down memory lane was news of Stanley's death and a reminder of the last time I saw him. It occurred in the fall of 1982 at the Newton South High School's 10-year class reunion, the first such occasion since we all had graduated. It was held in Copley Square at some hotel I can't recall, and we were all assembled in an appropriate-type ball room for the gathering. I can sort of remember standing around talking to some friends when I first saw Stanley as he slowly walked in my direction. I smiled when I saw him, and as we soon got close enough to engage verbally, Stanley spoke up. He was rather aggressive - and unpleasant, accusing me of something or other I had said or done to him in the past (high school presumably). He was openly hostile over the incident, an incident for which I had no clue or recollection - or context even. Whatever little we talked after his initial salvo, my sense was the damage — whatever it was, was irreparable, and we didn't talk anymore that evening. I was and have remained totally perplexed about Stanley's anger. That's the extent of the last interaction I had with him. And over the ensuing years, during the ongoing bi-weekly phone calls — and occasional visits, I had with Cary, I don't really remember Stanley's name ever coming up too much, and now it's too late.

I was then and now bewildered, disappointed and a bit despondent over the perceived slight that I had, unbeknownst to me, inflicted upon Stanley. Who knew Stanley had such intense feelings that the first thing he says/does when he sees me after 10 years is to mention/refer to some hurt I had caused him. Moreover, being that he still lived in Newton, Ma. and I lived in Bethesda, Md., eight hours away by car, it's not as if I could have transgressed much in the subsequent 10 years. If I had committed some figurative crime against Stanley while I was living in Maryland, I didn't exactly have means or opportunity to "faux pas." Still, Stanley was mad about something.

And now it's unlikely I'll ever know. I would however, like to reach out to someone who knew Stanley and hear how he lived his life, whether he had family, children, career, success, and so forth. It might lesson my guilt — about what I don't know.

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



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