

## National Park Service User Survey Comes to an End

**Paved Trails Study looks at six trail networks in metro area including Mount Vernon.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

This fall, the National Park Service gathered information for the Mount Vernon trail improvements as part of the "Paved Trails Study" in the National Capital Region that included the George Washington Memorial Parkway, C&O Canal National Historic Park, the Potomac Heritage Trail, Rock Creek Park trails and others in the National Mall and Historic Parks area.

The National Park Service paved trail network spans more than 95 miles and links together some places that have significant cultural heritage, natural resources, and outdoor recreational assets, the NPS said. In addition to five NPS park units, the NPS paved trail network travels through two states, the District of Columbia, five counties, and the City of Alexandria making it a complex network.

The George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) — a unit of the National Park Service — owns, maintains, and operates the 18-mile Mount Vernon Trail. This paved, multi-use trail corridor stretches from George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate to Theodore Roosevelt Island, and has approximately 1 million users annually.

Along the Mount Vernon Trail, there are needs in the southern area at several crossings, said Judd Isbell, president of the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail group. The area near Belle Haven is being looked at.

"Anyone who's crossed the Parkway on foot or bike to get to the trail or a bus stop or to grab ice cream at Custard Shack can



There are plans for improvements at various points along the trail.

tell you how frightening an experience it is," Isbell said. He said the proposals in the Environmental Assessment for lane reduction, crosswalks and pedestrian refuges will go a long way.

There are also some spots where the trail is not wide enough to meet the current standards. In some parts of the northern section, it gets crowded and a narrow trail increases the danger. The root bumps throughout the area are a problem too and the Friends group has been working on that aspect for the past few months. "The Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail started grinding down



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Parkway pedestrian crossings have also been suggested.

trail bumps last fall and have removed 236 of the 695 bumps identified but these repairs don't provide a permanent fix to the cause of the trail bumps," he said. Trees will continue to grow.

For nearby resident John David Coppola, the drivers out on the parkway don't heed to the changes that have been implemented recently and the speeding makes it worse. At Waynewood Boulevard, "the 'shoulder' turns into a head-on lane with no warning," he said. "I propose putting those tall rubber posts like at the Belleview and Belle Haven intersections, right in the middle of that 'neutral zone' starting maybe 1/4 mile before any northbound turn lanes," he added.

### Parkway Wish List

Realigning Bridge 1 is another item on Isbell's wish list. This is a dangerous spot where there were several crashes including

one that included Isbell himself. "The odd entry angle combined with constantly wet conditions has been the cause of multiple crashes and injuries including my own crash in 2016 that caused a rib injury," he said.

If there were room on his wish list, Isbell would like to see a bike bypass at the Gravelly Point park to separate bike and park activities, and some engineering fixes at Fort Hunt Park where the bikes have to share the space with cars.

There are eight goals of the study and number eight is to leverage multiple funding sources to sustain the network and achieve regional plan priorities. The recent survey may move the Mount Vernon wish list up in priorities. The Friends are advocating for a few changes alongside the Sustainable Mobility of Arlington County, WABA, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling and the East Coast Greenway.

## School Board Candidate Disqualified from Ballot

**Write-in campaign underway for Dem-endorsed candidate.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

An aggressive write-in campaign is underway for Democratic-endorsed school board candidate Marcia St. John-Cunning, @marcia4schools, who is still running to be the Franconia District School Board Member.

On one page of her Petition of Qualified Voters, which was due April 17, St. John-Cunning's street address is listed incorrectly. The street address error invalidated a number of required signatures on

St. John-Cunning's form, and thus, without them, she no longer has the required 125 signatures to appear on the ballot as a candidate for Fairfax County School Board Member by District.

On Oct. 25, St. John-Cunning was disqualified from the ballot in Franconia District following the ruling by Judge Richard Gardiner, Fairfax County Circuit Court.

Her opponent for Franconia representative on the school board, Kevin Pinkney, endorsed by Fairfax GOP, remains on the ballot.

It brings up one of the potential complications of early



SCREENSHOT

Marcia C. St. John-Cunning

voting. Over 3,000 people had already voted in this race, according to St. John-Cunning, and "now their votes don't count."

While her name remains on the ballot, voters who want to cast their vote for St. John-Cunning

should not fill in the bubble next to her printed name. Votes cast in that way will not count.

Judge Gardiner heard the case of Eighth Congressional District Republican Committee et al. v. Eric Spicer, General Registrar and Director of Elections for Fairfax County, in the Circuit Court of Fairfax County. Gardiner ruled that Spicer, in his official capacity, should have invalidated the page.

"The page ... does not have her address on the front page. Instead, it lists 4429 Shannon Hill Rd., Alexandria, VA 22310, which is not an actual address. This petition page and the signatures on the front and back page(s) are invalid as a matter of law," wrote Judge Gardiner.

Hence, St. John-Cunning is dis-

qualified from the ballot.

Voters who wish to vote for St. John-Cunning must print her full name as "Marcia C. St. John-Cunning" on the line beside "Write-in" on the ballot, according to @FairfaxDems.

"I am going to keep running because I am passionate about what I have been doing for the past 25 years. This is not a political move for me. I love our teachers and our families in Franconia District," said Cunningham on her candidate page.

Lauding the ruling, 8th District Republican Committee Chairman Andrew Lopper responded to the disqualification of Marcia St. John-Cunning. "We will not stand by while any party or candidate at-

SEE DISQUALIFIED, PAGE 6

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# Lorton District Police Station and Animal Shelter Open

Residents tour and celebrate.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

The Lorton area saw another significant opening on Oct. 28. Government officials, police, animal shelter employees, volunteers, and residents celebrated the new South County Police and Animal Shelter. Sited on Lorton Road on land once included in the Lorton Workhouse and Prison property, in history, inmates toiled and farm animals grazed there. Now the site is home to modern police force and animal care operations.

Serving as emcee for the opening event, Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck called it “ironic” that the new building with all its modern services stood on former prison grounds, across from the 1950s era Nike missile base, and near the 1980s landfill, now closed and slated to become a new park in 2025, “with roots that are unique.” Storck noted the hundreds of millions of dollars Fairfax County has invested in updating the Lorton area, now blossoming into a “true community that has value and is respected.” He and other speakers commended the service and vision of former District Supervisor Gerald “Gerry” Hyland (Mount Vernon Supervisor 1988-2015) who was on hand for the opening and championed improvements for the area. Storck’s other acknowledgements included a long list of county employees, community activists and organizations.

The well landscaped building includes the approximately 30,000-square-foot police station, and the 23,000-square-foot animal shelter and adoption center. Its arched covered front walkways and gabled

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE



Claire Craig, Officer with the Honor Guard sings the National Anthem

end walls compliment the nearby Workhouse. The site also includes 20,000-square-feet of outdoor space, with dog kennel runs and fenced walking areas, electric vehicle charging and traditional fueling



Girl Scout Troop 52053 leads the Pledge of Allegiance

SEE POLICE AND ANIMAL SHELTER, PAGE 4

# Strong Bonds Form with Animals

A look at those special relationships.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

As the Lorton community celebrates the opening of Fairfax County’s new animal shelter and adoption center, it’s clear that for anyone involved with companion animals, their caring encompasses a whole lot more than a building. Pets in all their many shapes, sizes and species, can establish a connection with their human caretakers, creating strong bonds.

Here we note some of those special connections.

Evelyn Grieve is president and co-founder of Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. She leads the fundraising nonprofit group in supporting the shelter, providing resources for needs beyond the shelter’s available budget. FFCAS often provides the life-saving or corrective surgery, dental work, or medical treatments which provide the animal with the best opportunity of finding a home. Grieve, and many of her group of dedicated volunteers, have served animals since 2006, benefitting many animals. See [www.ffcas.org](http://www.ffcas.org).

Shelter employees, like new caretaker Katie Hughes, hired just two months ago, typically come to the shelter operation with a veterinary technician background, and a passion for animals nurtured over many years.

Volunteers like Linda Wilkerson and Brooke Kowal typically make the shelter a long-term volunteer time commitment. They may walk, play, or groom dogs, foster kittens, or answer questions about individual animals under their care for potential adopters. Last year the shelter boasted their team of volunteers logged about 15,000 hours; the equivalent of a full-time job.

SEE NEW ANIMAL SHELTER, PAGE 6

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PHOTO BY REBECCA CAVEDON

This young couple moved their wedding ceremony up by two hours to improve their chances of adopting Daisy, a German Shepherd puppy in need of a family



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Evelyn Grieve and her foster dog, Molly Sienna. Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter helped Molly by funding surgery for her leg which was severely injured due to abuse.



Speakers at the ceremony included Supervisor Dan Storck (2nd right), Chief Kevin Davis, Congressman Gerry Connolly, Supervisor Pat Herrity, Shelter Director Reasa Currier, and Board Chairman Jeff McKay; also pictured Karen Corbett Sanders school board member, and Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

## Police Station and Animal Shelter Open

FROM PAGE 3

stations, and parking. The space includes a satellite office for the District Supervisor and public community rooms. It was designed to meet LEED Silver Certification standards for environmental sustainability, including stormwater handling, tree preservation, infrastructure for solar panels, and energy efficient systems and materials that promote indoor air quality.

Presence at the site means the police department eventually can organize smaller patrol areas to decrease response times to calls, which Board of Supervisors Chairman, Jeff McKay pointed out, benefits the whole county. Police chief Kevin Davis, also speaking at the opening, commented that the addition of the new police station means a lot of things; one being that officers want to be part of this new well equipped police force. McKay noted that two weeks ago, the police academy graduated its largest class of recruits; and one of the most culturally diverse, fluent in multiple languages, and including 30 percent women. Additional staffing is expected to allow the police force to soon return to use of three shifts, instead of the current two shifts.

This second county animal shelter and adoption center “campus” for improves access to critical animal services, such as behavior and training support, pet wellness services, and pet supplies. Director of animal services, Reasa Currier, noted the importance of “valued animals and the important relationship they have in our lives.” She described the building’s ability to bring health and happiness to animals under their temporary care, designed to provide sunlight, noise abatement in separate sections



Director Reasa Currier says, “Pets are family and all deserve the love and companionship that pets provide.”

for dogs, cats, and small mammals, and create an environment more like a home. The space, which includes extensive veterinary care and surgical areas, will allow for expansion of pet care services to families facing financial hardship.

Not everyone who toured the facility on this first day of operation went home alone. On its first day of adoptions, two dogs and 12 cats were adopted into new homes.

The new facility is located at 8855 and 8875 Lorton Road, Lorton. Learn more about the new animal shelter campus operations and services at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/lorton-campus-operational-guidance>.

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# Now Is a Good Time To Vote!

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



In a time filled with much turmoil, challenges, and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, it's easy to get disheartened and wonder if voting is even worth it. Yet, despite the myriad challenges we face today, it remains a great time to be an American, especially living in beautiful Virginia. Indeed, the very essence of the United States, rooted in its history, diversity and resilience, is a source of optimism and inspiration. You are an important part of the fabric of our community, someone who cares enough to read this newspaper, and to you, as we have one week left to vote, I offer this quick reminder of the greatness that is the United States of America.

One of the most remarkable aspects of being an American is serving as a witness and participant in the country's rich history of progress and change. Since its founding, America has consistently moved forward, striving for a more perfect union. This relentless pursuit of national improvement has given birth to groundbreaking social movements like Civil Rights and Women's Suffrage. It's a testament to the American spirit that citizens can come together to advocate for justice, equity, and equality. These movements, and many others like them, bring about profound societal changes, reminding us

that progress is possible even in the face of incredible adversity.

Innovation is another shining beacon of hope in America. The United States is a nation that celebrates science, entrepreneurship, and creativity, fostering an environment where groundbreaking ideas flourish. The research and educational powerhouses of Virginia's universities like VA Tech, UVA, and George Mason, not to mention so many other great schools, and countless startups and new businesses, are all testament to the innovative spirit that continues to propel America forward. Our capacity for innovation has led to technological advancements that have transformed our lives for the better.

Diversity is a cornerstone of American identity, and this diversity has an incredibly positive impact on our culture and society. It's the reason why you can enjoy cuisine from every corner of the world within a few miles of your home, or why people of different backgrounds and faiths can live side by side in harmony. This diversity is not just a strength but also an endless source of inspiration, leading to the fusion of food, of course, but also cultures, ideas, and traditions that have shaped American society, enriching our lives, and broadening our horizons.

The American dream, often described as the belief that anyone can achieve success through hard work, is very much alive. Opportunities

abound for those who are willing to seize them. Public education is accessible and of a very high standard, and countless success stories demonstrate that no matter your background you can achieve your goals through grit, determination and effort. This enduring belief in the American dream has inspired generations to strive for a brighter future where the pursuit of success remains an attainable goal.

Moreover, the power of community and resilience in the face of adversity defines the American spirit. Time and again, Americans have shown their ability to come together and overcome challenges, from natural disasters to economic crises. The outpouring of support and unity that follows in the wake of these events is a testament to the strength of the American people. I am confident that even the most difficult issues we face today can be tackled and eventually overcome.

It is a great time to be an American. The United States continues to evolve and progress, sometimes through fits and starts, I will admit. But along the way, it is embracing its rich history as an enduring democracy, celebrating diversity, fostering innovation, and upholding the American dream. No doubt America's story is still being written, yet the chapters ahead are filled with the potential for greatness and positive change.

More than ever, it is a good time to stay involved, be a caring community member, and vote!

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**NEWS**

**School Board Candidate  
Disqualified from Ballot**

FROM PAGE 1

tempts to bypass the rules that safeguard our electoral process," Lopusser said, according to an online statement at [vagog8cd.org](https://vagog8cd.org). He added that the case upholds the Republican processes that ensure only valid candidates reach the ballot. The 8th District Republican Committee is an arm of the Republican Party of Virginia.

In the meantime, the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, and Fairfax Education Association remain strongly supportive of St. John-Cunning. "We will fight for Marcia St. John-Cunning, and I am confident she will be the next FCPS School Board member from the Franconia district," Bryan Graham, chair of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, said in a statement.

"We need you to vote for Marcia St. John-Cunning. She needs to be written in on your ballot," said Fairfax Education Association President Leslie Houston.

David Walrod, union president of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers said, "We want to emphasize that she will be a strong advocate for students, educators, and the community."

Judge Gardiner's ruling came 14 days before the Nov. 7 general election, 47 days after early voting began on Sept. 22. According to St. John-Cunning, she "was certified

as a qualified candidate back on March 7, 2023." That is 232 days before Gardiner's ruling.

"This decision not only ignores the votes of more than 3,000 citizens who have already voted in the Franconia district, but the confusion caused by this decision is harmful to our democracy and the sanctity of the electoral process," said Graham.

According to Lopusser, the decision by Judge Gardiner and the Virginia Department of Elections to disqualify St. John-Cunning was not "an act of disenfranchisement but a reinforcement of the rule of law, and there were legitimate grounds for the disqualification."

As a write-in candidate, St. John-Cunning is not required to file any ballot access documents; however, she will need to be in compliance with Campaign Finance requirements.

In November 2019, the most recent election for the four-year term Fairfax County School Board members, Franconia District, then called Lee, reported 71,853 active registered voters, with total votes of 28,481 or 39.6 percent.

For more on St. John-Cunning, see <https://www.marcia4schools.com/>

For more on Kevin Pinkney, endorsed by the GOP, see <https://pinkney4school-board.com/>



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

The photo of Officers Pitts and Prucnal, with Wallace, captures the joy of the moment of celebration with the community.

**New Animal Shelter Bonds**

FROM PAGE 3

lent of seven full-time positions.

Animal Protection Police officers (APPO), like Second Lieutenants Desiree Pitt and Kathleen Prucnal, share the passion and

compassion for animals, and wildlife found in our community. Too often they also see the cruelty that can be visited on voiceless animals. Officers have been honored with

SEE NEW ANIMAL SHELTER, PAGE 13  
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# To the Rescue

First responders distribute thousands of new coats to families in need.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**F**airfax County Fire and Rescue Chief John Butler, Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck and Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk joined first responders and volunteers from throughout Northern Virginia to help distribute more than 2,000 new coats destined for children in need as part of the Oct. 31 Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue annual coat drive.

Held at Fire Station 11 in the Penn Daw section of the Route 1 corridor, Butler, Storck and Lusk helped prepare coats that were distributed to representatives of more than 50 schools, shelters and nonprofits. Children from the Mount Vernon Head Start program in Gum Springs were on hand to pick out their own coats.

"Today is always one of the best fall days," Storck said. "I see kids who are excited and energized to get a new coat and they get to pick out their own coat – that's really unusual that they can feel so empowered and get so much joy from doing something that many of us take for granted. It's the best day of the year."

Bailey founded the Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue nonprofit as part of a holiday toy drive more than two decades ago. The coat drive began 18 years ago.

"This is the 18th year distributing coats to the community," Bailey said. "We have come a long way. The first few years we gave away a few hundred used coats. Now fast forward 18 years later and with the help of Operation Warm we are providing thousands of new coats to families in need."

Coats are obtained through the national nonprofit Operation

Warm with local volunteers sorting and distributing to those in need throughout the region.

"The work Willie does here on behalf of the fire department supports those in need in the community," Lusk said. "We both grew up in austere conditions so we understand what it's like to sometimes not have food or other things that normal people have. Making sure that those in this community get that support, whether it be backpacks, coats, toys for the holidays, Willie and the fire department have been exceptional. For me personally it's great to see the kids' facial expressions when they get their coats on – it really is very special."

In addition to Operation Warm, sponsors for the event include: Ken & Kelly Savittiere Family Fund; Apple Federal Credit Union; Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax Inc.; Local 2068; Fire & Rescue Retirement Association; PROMAX Management, Inc.; Nationwide Credit Corporation; Fairfax County Federation of Teachers; Medocracy, Inc.; Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.; Mount Vernon Connection; D & D Services; and Primo Family Restaurant.

"Our job is always helping people," said Domenick Iannelli, president of the Fairfax County Retired Firefighters Association. "This is a way to give back after we have retired – our way of still being involved in the community."

Added Bailey, "A new coat means so much to a child. It provides a child both physical and emotional warmth. It helps a student attend school, socialize with their peers and play outside with pride. And it reminds them that there are those in their community that care about their well-being and future."



First responders and volunteers pose for a photo at the Firefighters and Friends new coat distribution Oct. 31 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/THE GAZETTE



Firefighters and Friends founder Willie Bailey, left, greets children from the Gum Springs Head Start program as part of the Oct. 31 Operation Warm coat distribution at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk poses for a photo after helping a child pick out a new coat Oct. 31 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Kids present a sign of thanks at the Firefighters and Friends coat distribution Oct. 31 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Chief John Butler, second from left, is joined by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk and Firefighters and Friends founder Willie Bailey at the new coat distribution Oct. 31 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



A Fairfax County Fire and Rescue volunteer checks the fit of a coat on a child at the Firefighters and Friends new coat distribution Oct. 31 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.





PHOTOS BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

Bullfrog and painted turtle.

# Learning to Love Amphibians and Reptiles

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**Information**

❖ The presentation, [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org)

They may not be cuddly, charismatic or cute to many humans, but amphibians and reptiles are fascinating and important. That was the message on Oct. 25 when Alonso Abugattas gave a tutorial to 85 people on herpetofauna.

Amphibians and reptiles are two related but different groups. “Herps” are vertebrates and ectothermic or cold blooded, meaning they cannot regulate their body temperature and rely on their environment such as sunlight or a warm surface. Most undergo a dormant state in winter called brumation.

To see these animals, you have to go to the right habitat at the right time of year, Abugattas advised.

**Amphibians**

Amphibians live in and on both water and land. They produce eggs in the water and have an aquatic, gill-breathing, larval stage, typically followed by a terrestrial lung-breathing adult stage. They go through metamorphosis, for ex-

ample, from a tadpole to a frog. Virginia’s amphibia include 28 frog species, 59 salamander species, nine lizard species and 34 species and subspecies of snakes.

❖ Capital Naturalist, <http://capitalnaturalist.blogspot.com>

Award winning naturalist, storyteller, and environmental educator Alonso Abugattas, the Capital Naturalist, shares his insights on the natural world. Some of the wonders of the natural world found right around the Washington, DC Metropolitan area will be shared using his own photography and his life-long experiences. Search “Capital Naturalist” on Facebook.

The green frog is the area’s most common frog. Abugattas cautioned that color is not a reliable way to identify a frog. A tip: if the eardrum is larger than the eye, it is a male; if it’s the same size as the eye, female.

SEE LEARNING TO, PAGE 15



Habitat: Bullfrog, painted turtles, watersnakes and cardinal flower.

TURKEY TROT

# 5K

## CAN the Bird

**Thanksgiving Day**  
**November 23, 2023**  
Race Starts 8:00 a.m.  
Walmart, 5885 Kingstowne Boulevard

SCAN TO REGISTER

Medals will be awarded for

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Overall men and women
- 12 years and under / 13-19 years
- 20-49 years / 50 + years master runners
- Doggie Duo and Stroller Run

[www.mountvernonspringfield.com/can-the-bird-5k/](http://www.mountvernonspringfield.com/can-the-bird-5k/)

CANned Food Drive for Koinonia Foundation  
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# ENTERTAINMENT

## WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

## 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. 19 TO NOV. 26

**Fleeting Moments | Street Photography.** At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Fleeting Moments features photographs that capture candid moments, revelatory interpretations, and brilliant reflections of the mundane — work commonly referred to as "street photography." In 1943 the New York Times referred to the street photography of Helen Levitt, as, "fleeting moments of surpassing lyricism, mystery and quiet drama." Those qualities are the hallmark of the works selected for this show.

## THURSDAY/NOV. 2

**Loyal Service: Working Dogs at War "Meet**



REFLECTION UNKNOWN | Fred Zafran | Through November 19, 2023

### "Reflection Unknown" Photography Exhibit by Fred Zafran.

At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Alexandria. Opening Reception: Sunday, October 22, 2023, 2 - 4 p.m. Fred Zafran has long been interested in photography as a distinctive means of storytelling. His work examines the artistic possibilities of photographs that combine the poetic with a representational view of the world. The resulting photo essays which Zafran calls "poetic narrative," are post-documentary in that the stories are open ended, subjective, rich in symbolism and metaphor, and encourage consideration and interpretation by the viewer.

**the Artist" Gallery Talk.** 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. At the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Alexandria. The public is invited to a gallery talk with renowned artist James Mellick. Mellick will describe the process and purpose behind his creation of 16 wooden

sculptures featured in the Museum's current special exhibit Loyal Service: Working Dogs at War. The traveling exhibit, which is open to all Museum visitors, features sculptures that symbolize the sacrifice of those dogs who have served in war alongside their service

member handlers.

## THURSDAY/NOV. 2

**Wine + Chocolate, Women + Business.** 5:30-7 p.m. At Goodwin House Alexandria 4800 Fillmore Ave., Alexandria. Sponsored by The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network. Join them for an unforgettable night of curated wine and food pairings, networking, and celebration. Presented by The Goodhart Group Real Estate.

## NOV. 3-26

**The Housemates exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Exhibit showcases art from Del Ray Artisans members celebrating the beings we live with. Housemates may have fur, feathers, fins, scales, or be human. Opening Reception: Friday, November 3, 7-9 p.m.. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on Thanksgiving Day). Plus bring in donations for cat and dog rescue groups. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/event/housemates](http://DelRayArtisans.org/event/housemates)

## SATURDAY/NOV. 4

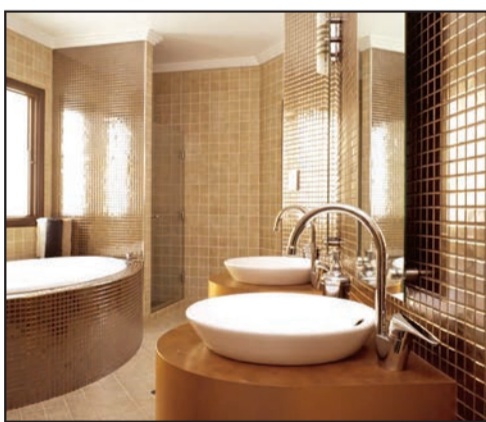
**David Buskin with Heather Aubrey Lloyd.** 7 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. David Buskin's songs and jingles have been recorded by many great artists; a sample: Judy Collins, Peter, Paul & Mary, Johnny Mathis, Astrud Gilberto, Tom Rush, Dixie Carter, Roberta Flack, Mel Tormé, Take 6, Phoebe Snow, Richie Havens and Arlo Guthrie. He is a New York Nightlife Award, Bistro Award and Clio Award winner and tonight he's joined by local singer/songwriter Heather Aubrey Lloyd for a special night of "melodic, sensual pop, folkie grit and killer wit". Visit [www.focusmusic.org](http://www.focusmusic.org)

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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Food For Neighbors serves more than 5,800 students  
at 41 middle and high schools in Fairfax, Loudoun  
and Arlington counties.

# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 5

## SATURDAY/NOV. 4

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

## SATURDAY/NOV. 4

**Fall Open House at Pope-Leighey House.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. Come celebrate the completion of the recent roof renovation with free self-guided tours, lawn games, concessions and more! Bring your family to learn more about Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic architecture and enjoy our outdoor space. The event is free but registration is encouraged.

## SUNDAY/NOV. 5

**Alexandria Fall Festival.** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr. in Alexandria. Food trucks, pony rides, magic shows, beer garden, bounce houses and more. A lineup of local culinary favorites will be in attendance including Goodies Frozen Custard & Treats, Rocklands Barbeque and Grilling Company, Port City Brewing Co., Lost Boy Cider, Paradise Springs Winery, DC Slices, Big Boy Tacos, A.M. Kettle, The Little Well, Milaap Chai, Taste of Asia and F.T. Valley Farm at Mont Medi. Expect all your fall favorites — from kettle corn and hot chocolate to apple treats and much more! There will be plenty of family-friendly fun at River Farm — two magic shows from The Great Zucchini, cari-

capture drawings from Capital Artworks, face painting from Sunrise Face Painting, pony rides and petting zoo from Mary's Go Round Petting Zoo, Big Country Amusements bounce houses, Something Vintage lawn games and more! Visit [alexandriafallfestival.com](http://alexandriafallfestival.com).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 5

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: New World Symphony "Going Home" featuring Stephen Seifert, Mountain Dulcimer.** 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria. Sweet tones of Appalachia imbue Conni Ellisor's concerto for mountain dulcimer featuring Stephen Seifert. America's beauty and diversity inspired Czech composer Antonín Dvořák's New World Symphony. The program opens with a surprise guest artist. Saturday concert attendees are invited to the pre-concert talk with Maestro Ross at 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace section. Adults: \$20-\$89; Students: \$15; Youth: \$5.

## WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8

**"60 BEEUTIFUL YEARS."** 10 a.m. Social Hour, 11 a.m. Fashion Show, 12:15 Luncheon. Fashion Show, Luncheon, Silent Auction and Raffle featuring Sara Campbell. At Mount Vernon Country Club, 5111 Old Mill Road, Alexandria. Cost: \$60.00. Founded in 1963, the Yacht Haven Garden Club works to further education in horticulture, floral design, and conservation among its members and surrounding communities. For details and reservations, contact: [YHGC.2023@gmail.com](mailto:YHGC.2023@gmail.com)

## SATURDAY/NOV 18

**61st Holiday Shop.** 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Artisan vendors of many styles and mediums plus baked and canned goods, jewelry, household collectibles, lunch, and quilt raffle. Come and enjoy a day of

shopping. Visit [www.mvuc.org](http://www.mvuc.org).

## THE BIRCHMERE

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

## NOVEMBER

Wed. 1: Tower Of Power: Celebrating 55 Years! \$90.50 SOLD OUT!  
 Thu. 2: Gaelic Storm \$55.00  
 Fri. 3: The SteelDrivers w/ Troubadour Blue \$55.00 SOLD OUT!  
 Sat. 4: Loose Ends featuring Jane Eugene \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
 Sun. 5: All-Star Purple Party Trib. to Prince & Morris Day w/ Edward "Junie" Henderson \$39.50  
 Tue. 7: Damien Esobar: Victory Lap Tour \$69.50  
 Wed. 8: Boney James: Detour \$95.00  
 Thu. 9: Chris Isaak: It's Almost Christmas Tour \$115.00 SOLD OUT!  
 Fri. 10: Sheila E. \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
 Sat. 11: Charles Esten \$59.50  
 Sun. 12: Jonathan Butler \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
 Mon. 13: Jeff "Skunk" Baxter \$45.00  
 Tue. 14: Keiko Matsui \$45.00  
 Thu. 16: Rufus Wainwright \$69.50  
 Fri. 17: Paula Poundstone \$59.50  
 Sat. 18: Paula Poundstone \$59.50  
 Sun. 19: Marc Roberge (of O.A.R.) with Stephen Kellogg \$69.50 SOLD OUT!  
 Fri. 24: The Seldom Scene & Dry Branch Fire Squad \$45.00  
 Sat. 25: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston \$59.50  
 Mon. 27: Musiq Soulchild \$89.50  
 Tue. 28: Musiq Soulchild \$89.50  
 Wed. 29: Three Dog Night \$85.00 SOLD OUT!  
 Thu. 30: A Peter White Christmas with Mindi Abair & Vincent Ingala \$59.50

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

## MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

A mix of new and familiar vendors will be selling local, farm-fresh produce — including strawberries and asparagus — and more at the McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 20), 21 farmers and local food producers will sell fresh vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more. The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane.

This year's vendors are:  
 Arnest Seafood — crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more  
 The Big Brine — Fermented foods, pickles and pickled vegetables  
 The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacons  
 Grace's Pastries - cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch  
 Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries  
 Honeycomb Heroes — Honey and beeswax-based products  
 House of Empanadas —variety of empanadas  
 King Mushrooms —variety of locally grown mushrooms

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 14

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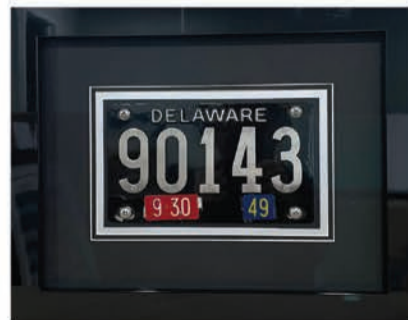
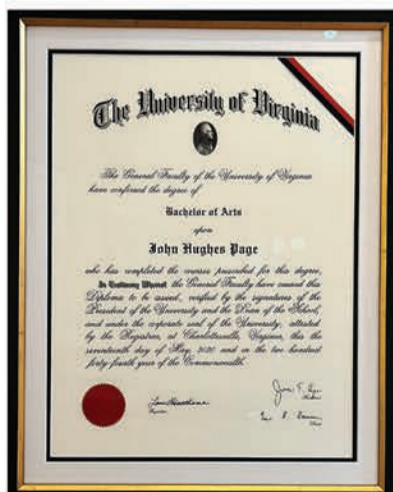
571.347.7961

OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY

11:00A.M.-6:00P.M.

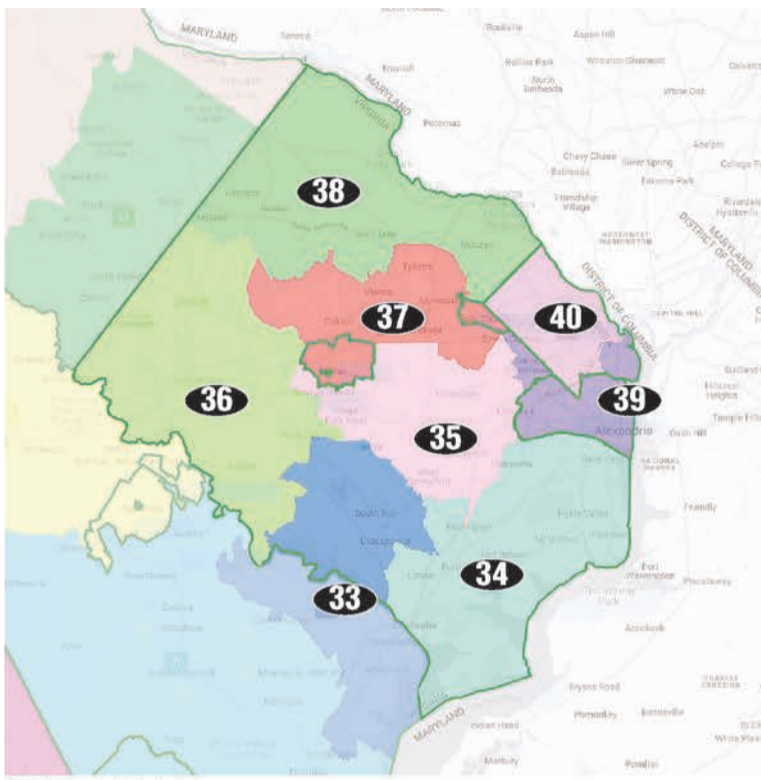
SUNDAY 10A.M.- 3 P.M.

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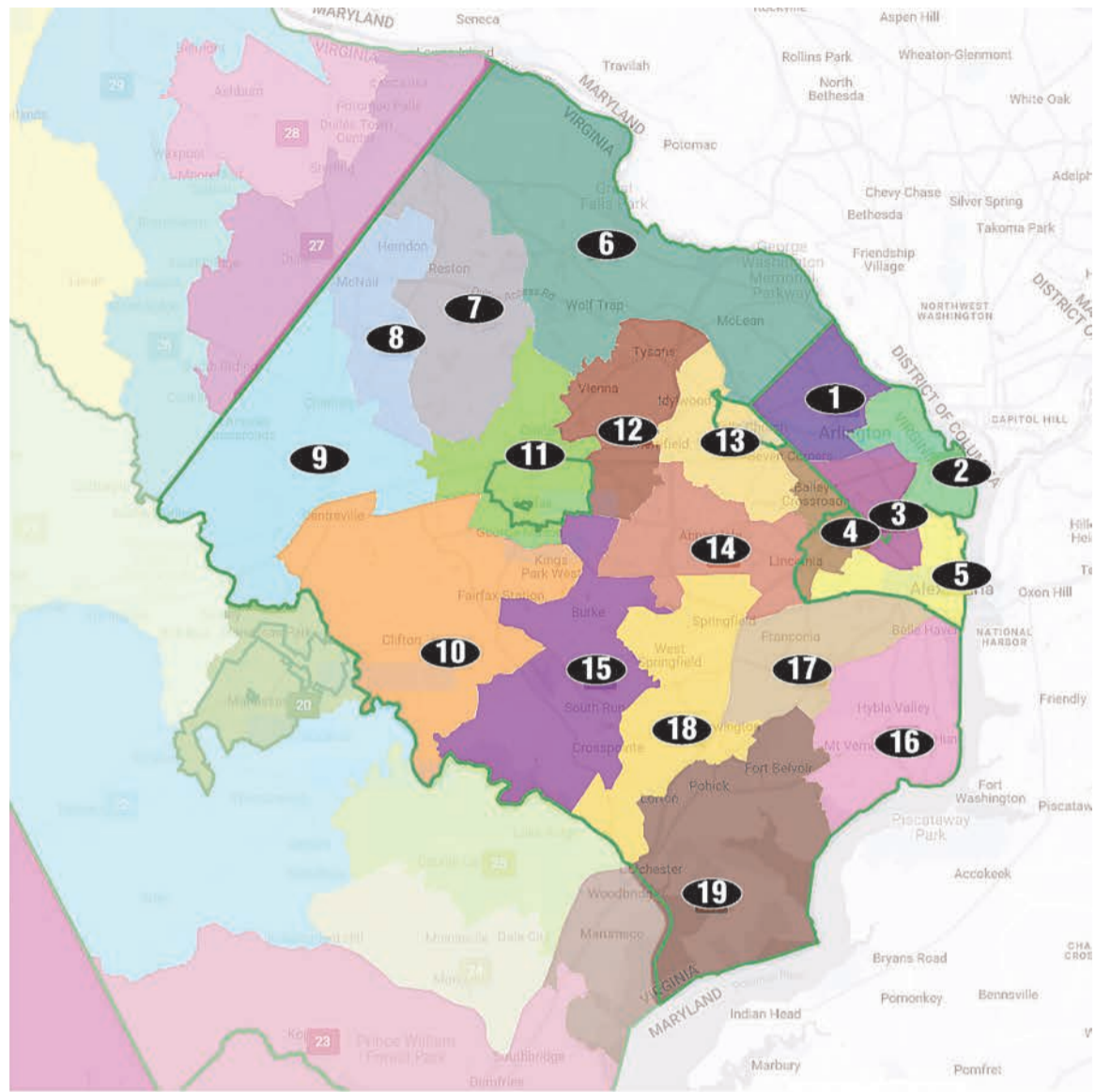


ALL ORDERS PLACED IN NOVEMBER  
 WILL BE FRAMED AND READY IN  
 TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!

# CANDIDATE CONNECTION



Va Senate District



Va House of Delegates Districts

# Go Vote

## Turnout could alter state political control.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

A slight shift in the vote in Fairfax County's midterm elections on Nov. 7 could determine which party controls Virginia and what legislation is passed. The potential ramifications could be far-reaching, positioning the 2024 election on abortion and Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin's (R) national prospects.

The Virginia Democratic Party lost its 2019 election trifecta in the gubernatorial and state legislative elections in 2021. A state government trifecta occurs when one political party holds majorities in the governor's office and the state legislature's two chambers, the House and the Senate. Following the November 2021 election, the Republican Party controls the office of the governor, as well as the House of Delegates.

If Virginia Republicans win both chambers of the General Assembly on Nov. 8, 2023, by retaining or increasing their slim majority in the state House and gaining the Senate, it will be a Republican trifecta. The trifecta would allow Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) to push through his conservative agenda, including his 15-week abortion ban, which the Democratic-controlled Senate rejected. Despite a Republican-controlled Virginia House of Delegates since January 2022, a Democratic-controlled Virginia Senate has limited the governor's ability to pass much of his agenda.

What could make this November's midterm elections a wild card is that all 100 seats in the GOP-controlled Virginia House

of Delegates and the 40 Senate seats are up for grabs under new, untested district maps that were purposefully drawn without regard for where legislators lived. The final maps paired or even tripled incumbents in the same districts. Legislators retired, and seats became available, making predictions more difficult and setting the stage many for first time legislators.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) was the first Republican in Virginia's gubernatorial election to win a statewide election since 2009. Youngkin won by the narrowest margin in a Virginia gubernatorial election since 1989, with 50.6 percent of the vote to Democratic candidate Terry McAuliffe's 48.6 percent. It was also the first time that a Virginia statewide candidate did not win in one of the Northern Virginia counties of Loudoun, Prince William, or Fairfax, or one of their independent cities.

The Fairfax County School Board will have record turnover, and is not immune from the culture battleground seen around the country.

There is an unexpected twist in the plot for the Franconia school board seat.

Candidates were asked to provide a short bio and share a story of their interaction with a voter that led them to a commitment to take action, with a tight word limit. Candidate responses are printed in the order they appear on the ballot.

More than 57,000 voters have already voted, and more than 650,000 active voters have not voted. Early voting continues through Saturday, Nov. 4. Election Day is Nov. 7, voters must vote at their assigned polling place, and all polling places will be

open from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.

For information on how and where to vote, including voting early, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>

Don't miss this week's Candidate Connection featuring candidates for General Assembly. Here are links to previous week's Candidate Connection:

**Candidate Connection**  
Candidates for Sheriff, Fairfax County, City of Fairfax  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/11/candidate-connection/>

**Clerk of Court for Fairfax County**  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/11/clerk-of-court/>

**Election - Chairman-Board of Supervisors**  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/18/candidate-connection/>

**District Members, Board of Supervisors**  
Dranesville, Hunter Mill, Providence & Sully Districts  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/25/north-district-members-board-of-supervisors/>

**District Members, Board of Supervisors**  
Braddock, Franconia, Mount Vernon,

Providence & Springfield Districts  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/25/south-district-members-board-of-supervisors/>

**Member School Board by District**  
Dranesville, Hunter Mill, Mason, Providence & Sully districts  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/25/member-school-board-by-district/>

**Member School Board by District**  
Braddock, Franconia, Mount Vernon, Providence & Springfield Districts  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/25/member-school-board-by-district-south/>

**Candidate Connection: School Board At Large**  
Three open seats, zero incumbents, nine challengers  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/11/candidate-connection-school-board-at-large/>

**Vienna Town Council**  
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/oct/25/vienna-town-council/>

**Soil & Water Conservation District Board**  
<https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2023/sep/27/race-for-soil-water-conservation-district-board/>

# CANDIDATE CONNECTION: SENATE DISTRICT 34

## Senate District 34

### Mark A. Springman (R)

Mark A. Springman (R). I grew up in a military family, and because of that, I grew up all over the country. As part of that, I developed an appreciation for comparative politics — seeing how other places do things and using that as a model for how things should or should not be done. That is the best thing I can offer voters — someone who isn't willing to call it good enough and constantly seeks to improve.

Response: I was chatting with a constituent



Mark A. Springman

in the Saratoga precinct. She started off by saying she had just moved up here from Florida and was a registered Democrat there. We chatted for a bit and eventually found we both shared a deep appreciation for history.

We started talking about education. One of the things we discussed was efficiency in education and Latin. We discussed how Latin, if taught over the course of K-12, gives students a basis in English, Grammar, Romance Languages, Classical Literature, History, Science, and Law.

I would sponsor a bill to create a merit-based scholarship to allow more Virginia high schoolers to attend UVA's summer Latin program and another bill that would cover part of the cost for teachers to attend if they committed to teaching Latin at their respective schools. [MarkSpringmanforVA.com](https://www.MarkSpringmanforVA.com)

### Scott A. Surovell (D)

Scott A. Surovell (D) Senator Scott Surovell has represented Eastern Fairfax County in the General Assembly since 2010. Surovell is a lifelong Mount Vernon resident and graduate of West Potomac High School, James Madison University, and UVA Law. He practices law and has dedicated his legislative career to fighting for Northern Virginia's fair share, protecting consumers, and preserving our environment for future generations.

Response: In 2015, I was elected to serve Prince William County for the first time. One issue my new constituents made me aware



Scott A. Surovell

of was the potential for water contamination at the Possum Point Power Plant. Dominion had four clay-lined ponds containing toxic chemicals right on the banks of the Potomac River. The neighbors I spoke with in that community convinced me we needed to fix the issue immediately. Some neighbors of the plant said that they were drinking exclusively bottled water, and many were worried about the potential for widespread contamination if extreme weather caused the ponds to breach and overflow into the river. This was an issue in our backyard and several communities across the Commonwealth. I worked with industry representatives, grassroots advocates, and my constituents to pass legislation forcing Dominion to spend \$1 billion more than they wanted to to clean up the problem and do it right. <https://scottsurovell.org/>

# CANDIDATE CONNECTION: HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Candidates were asked to provide a short bio and share a story of their interaction with a voter that led them to a commitment to take action, with a tight word limit. Candidate responses are printed in the order they appear on the ballot.

More than 57,000 voters have already voted, and more than 650,000 active voters have not voted. Early voting continues through Saturday, Nov. 4. Election Day is Nov. 7, voters must vote at their assigned polling place, and all polling places will be open from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.

For information on how and where to vote, including voting early, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>

## House of Delegates, District 16

Candidate Paul Krizek (D) runs unopposed

## House of Delegates, District 17

Candidate Mark Sickles (D) runs unopposed

## District 18 House of Delegates

### Edward F. McGovern (R)

Edward F. McGovern (R) I am a retired Federal Employee, Department of the Army Civilian, who worked in resource management. I have lived in Springfield since 1993. My wife and I raised our two kids here. We chose Fairfax County for its excellent schools and opportunities for everyone. Those are now in question. I earned a master's degree in public and international affairs from the University of Pittsburgh and a political science degree from Shippensburg University.

Response- Two items have come up frequently with voters in the 18th. Taxes are a real problem; people cannot afford to stay in Fairfax County with skyrocketing assessments and car tax values. Voters are unhappy to hear that what we get back on the tax dollar from Richmond has plunged over the last ten years from over 30 cents on the dollar to 21.5 cents.

This accelerated with the Democratic one-party rule. Fairfax County did much better in Richmond when both Republicans and Democrats sent delegates to the General Assembly. Special taxes for Fairfax County are not the answer. We received more of our hard-earned dollars back when there was a balance. America is about checks and balances at every level, not one-party rule.



Edward F. McGovern

There is ambivalence regarding abortion in the 18th District, but voters do not support my opponent's extreme position on abortion. They are not happy that a multi-billion-dollar special interest group has poured out-of-state money into local politics. With advances in medical knowledge, there is interest in looking at Virginia's current stance, which is 22-24 weeks. My view is that the government does not solve problems, but legislation can reflect community values.

Moving restrictions to 15 weeks in Virginia would be an opportunity to develop a full discussion on a complicated, sensitive topic. It is also important to note that special interests that fund political campaigns will not reflect our community values. [EdMcGovernVA.org](https://www.EdMcGovernVA.org)

### Kathy K. L. Tran (D)

Kathy K. L. Tran (D) First elected in 2017, Kathy Tran has pushed to expand healthcare, fully fund our public schools, and make Virginia more inclusive. She is a former child refugee from Vietnam and now leads the Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus. Kathy, her husband, and five children live in West Springfield.

Response: In 2021, a constituent told me her husband was killed in the line of duty while in the military, but Virginia's tax ex-



Kathy K. L. Tran

emption for Gold Star widows did not apply to her.

Currently, the Virginia Constitution provides tax relief for surviving spouses of servicemembers killed in action. However, a group of surviving spouses are omitted from this tax exemption. For example, the spouse of a soldier killed in a combat zone by a helicopter crash due to the malfunction of their helicopter would not be eligible since the soldier was not killed by enemy fire. However, if the soldier survived, was determined to be 100 percent disabled, and passed away, their surviving spouse would be eligible.

We must honor the sacrifices of service members and surviving spouses equitably. My constituent and I passed a law giving localities the option to provide these surviving spouses with tax relief. Fairfax County then passed a resolution giving these spouses relief in our county.

In 2023, we worked to pass legislation as the first step toward amending the Constitution to include this exemption.

This year, I'll collaborate with my constituents to pass legislation as the final step before Virginians can directly vote to amend the Constitution. <https://www.kathyfordelégate.com/>

## House of Delegates, District 19

Candidate Rozia Henson (D) runs unopposed

# New Animal Shelter Bonds

FROM PAGE 6

formal recognitions, like the January 2022 Virginia Federation of Humane Society Humanitarian Award to three officers, McLemore, Ankers, and Lugo, for their response in a dog cruelty case (see Springfield Connection, January 13-

19, 2022, pg 6,10), And informally, with frequent deliveries of baked goods from grateful dog owners following rescues.

Adopters are another special group with a high degree of affection for companion animals. People who "rescue" by adopting enjoy a certain pride. Potential adopter

Samara Wilkins always wanted a rabbit. Chelsea Stearns and Derrick Burks feel adopting a cat would create a shared family for them.

Certainly the most touching animal bonding story of the day, if not the year, belongs to a young couple whose wedding ceremony was planned for the same day

and time as the shelter's opening for adoptions. The pair learned that a German Shepherd puppy, named Daisy, would be available for adoption for the first time on opening day; their wedding day. They knew adoption applications are taken on a first-come basis, with no animal holds. So they ad-

vanced their wedding time in order to be first in line at the shelter to offer a new home for Daisy. The three left together the same day. We expect Daisy will be helping the couple celebrate the first day of their union and many wedding anniversaries to come.

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**Announcements**

Concerts at St. Luke's will present **QuinTango**, the 2023 Best Latin Artist-Group, on Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria 22308 703-765-4342. \$25 for adults, \$10 for students. Dancing in the aisles will be encouraged! free parking.

**BULLETIN**

FROM PAGE 11

- Layla's Lebanese Restaurant – Lebanese hummus, eggplant dip, garlic sauce and more
  - Linda Vista Farm - fruits and vegetables, specializing in Asian and Latin produce
  - Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs
  - Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers
  - Pasta Ilgatto – Fresh, handcrafted pasta and sauces
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  - Sharkawi Farm - herbs, spices, teas, plants and flowers
  - Three Way Farms – vegetables, melons and herbs
  - Traveling Shepherd Coffee Co. – variety of freshly roasted coffee
  - Twin Springs Orchard - fruits, vegetables, cheese and more
  - Valentine's Bakery & Meats - meats and baked goods
  - WeGrow - Microgreens.
- All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles. The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon market is one of 10 farmers markets run by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA); for more information, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets).

**FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED**

Interested in becoming a foster parent? There is always a need for caring foster parents looking to open their homes to foster youth. Get in touch to learn more. Visit [fcsvanow@gmail.com](mailto:fcsvanow@gmail.com) or [www.fcsva.org](http://www.fcsva.org). Or call 703-817-9890.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**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](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov)) at 703-324-4547.

**Operation Paws for Homes**, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

**STEM VOLUNTEERS.** The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at [www.seniorscientist.org](http://www.seniorscientist.org). To volunteer, contact [donaledge@aol.com](mailto:donaledge@aol.com).

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Eastern ratsnake, also beneficial, at Huntley Meadows.



Redbacked salamander.

PHOTOS BY  
ALONSO ABUGATTAS

# Learning to Love Amphibians and Reptiles

FROM PAGE 9

The American bullfrog is North America's largest frog, up to eight inches in size. "These are the boys that make all the noise," he quipped, but some females also call. "The bullfrog is a mighty predator. It eats everything including other frogs. In a small pond, he's the king," he commented.

Salamanders can regrow their tails, limbs and organ parts and they eat each other. They do not move very far, so if people destroy their habitat, it could take years for them to return. The Eastern red-backed salamander, with a reddish stripe on its back, is Northern Virginia's most common salamander, normally found under woodland logs and debris.

## Reptiles

Virginia has 71 reptile species, including 25 species and subspecies of turtles. Reptiles can have claws, scaly skin on part of all of their bodies or shields. Young reptiles are miniatures of their parents.

The woodland box turtle, our only land turtle, has a domed carapace or shell and can close itself inside its shell. This turtle can eat almost anything, including poisonous mushrooms.

Eastern painted turtles have two yellow spots behind their eyes, long front claws and red marks on the bottom of their carapace.

Abugattas dubbed the 11-inch-long red-eared slider the "pet store turtle." Originally from the Midwest, they are now the most common turtle worldwide. They typically have a red splotch behind their eyes which

gets darker as they age. They compete with native turtles for the same food and nesting and basking sites.

The snapping turtle is the largest freshwater turtle here, around 18 inches long with a long neck that cannot fit inside its shell. These turtles can weigh 75 pounds. Noting that the snapping turtle can lay 100 eggs, Abugattas called it "highly predatory."

Some advice: If you have to pick up a turtle, grasp its back. Grabbing its tail can damage the turtle's spine.

Most snakes are harmless and help control rodents. Snakes won't attack you if you don't bother them, Abugattas explained, adding that most people who've been bitten by a venomous snake were trying to kill or capture it. Leave them alone, he urged.

Northern Virginia's most common snake is the Dekay's brownsnake, a tiny gray to brown snake with paired spots along the back. In the fall, it seeks places to hide.

The Eastern ratsnake, the area's largest, has a checkerboard belly, climbs trees and eats anything. The cold-tolerant, Eastern gartersnake, our state reptile, is out year-round.

The copperhead is the only venomous snake here. "No one in Virginia has ever died from a copperhead's bite," he said.

Abugattas, a naturalist and environmental educator, founded the Capital Naturalist.

The program on amphibians and reptiles was sponsored by four "friends" groups: Friends of Dyke Marsh, Huntley Meadows Park, Mason Neck State Park and Little Hunting Creek.

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

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

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

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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## A "Madder" of Perspective



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

My wife, Dina and I have been married for almost 45 years. In that time, we have discovered, among other admissions; that we don't think alike, eat alike, drink alike and joke alike, as an extremely brief sample. In general, we have much less alike that would lead one to consider – on paper, anyway, the logic of our potential togetherness. Given that that ship has sailed, and we have survived this test of time, it's worth mentioning/summarizing that we don't always get along. And just recently I was reminded of that reality from a very unexpected source: a website of a company from whom I regularly purchase my vitamins, minerals, supplements, et cetera. Maybe being reminded of our ongoing dilemma from an unexpected and totally independent/non-partisan source might have an affect on me. (I won't say that it could actually impact our marriage because to say so would confirm how little I've learned during our marriage. Rome wasn't built in a day. And neither is the communication between a married couple so easily transformed. It takes work, lots of work, and unfortunately for Dina, this experience is brand new – to me.)

This electronic missive, which was this pill provider's second attempt to encourage me to re-order (which according to their records, I was past time to do so) was friendly enough and certainly reasonably intended. However, I didn't take it as such. I took it as bothersome. My knee-jerk reaction was to say – out loud: "Stop bugging me!" It was this verbal counter punch that reminded me of the nature of the relationship/marriage I share/experience with my wife, and the motivation for this column.

Typically, and this won't come as a news flash to those who know us, I am the more responsible party. To clarify – for the sake of this column and my life, I'm the one who's more aware/responsible for times, dates, bills due, people/procedures to follow to solve problems; in short, the mundane and boring; that's me. As a rest, our reality is that I'm the one doing the reminding about such and such. It's my nature. I'm happy to do it and for me, it's no problem. Dare I say, it's my job. Still, as much experience as I have in this capacity, I have on occasion said something to Dina about something I felt was time-sensitive - or felt that I was being helpful/necessary in what I was saying, that she didn't feel was nearly as important as I did. Moreover, she may have felt the intrusion into her comings and goings was more frequent than it needed to be. On this too-frequent occurrence, Dina would invariably say: "Stop bugging me." (Finally, the point of the column.) And I would invariably respond: "I'm not bugging you. You're being bugged by me." Which from perspective, means I'm acting within my hypothetical marital rights (and apparent wrongs) in saying this because it's not about me. It's more likely about us or her. I'm merely stating a fact whose utterance was meant to be helpful, not bothersome, and certainly not nagging.

Since I'm the one writing this column, I will admit that these types of conversations/interactions are my opinions and do not reflect Dina's opinion/reaction. In fact, often, they didn't always go so well. Most often they go badly. And despite my best intentions, as has been made abundantly clear to her numerous times, I was not being helpful at all. And after receiving this second email from the pill provider (they are not prescription medications, they are over the counter), a business from whom I've bought thousands of pills over 14-plus years, I sort of snapped; well for me, snapped: I talked back to the computer in an irritated tone. (Dina also hates when I use tone as another method of communication.) And what did I say, exactly, to the computer? "Stop bugging me." And then I laughed. So that's how Dina has felt all those times when she felt compelled to tell me to stop bugging her. From 1978 to 2023, finally now we're simpatico, sort of. I suppose turnaround is fair play – or at least possible (I think I'd hold off saying probable).

You see it is possible to teach an old dog – or in this case, an old husband, new tricks/new behaviors. I don't think I'll have similar agreement with this pill provider so I will refrain from subjecting myself to whatever ridicule or response I'm likely to receive – regardless of their tone, from the company when I ask them to spare me their marketing initiatives. As a businessman I can appreciate valuing and remaining connected with your active/existing clientele. As one of those active/existing clientele, I don't have to like it, especially if they're initiating more than I feel they should. Then it becomes a losing proposition. The exact opposite of what the company – and our marriage, is supposed to be.

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



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