

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 21, 2025

## Saving and Restoring Ash Trees

10 Years Friends of Dyke Marsh with NPS have worked to save 19 pumpkin ash trees from emerald ash borer.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**T**his year marks the tenth year that the Friends of Dyke Marsh in partnership with the National Park Service have worked to save 19 pumpkin ash trees from an emerald ash borer infestation.

"This year has been very good for the study trees, except for some violent storms, and they are producing more seeds than last year," Robert Smith, the project leader said. "All the trees are still prospering." A wetter than normal spring perhaps helped the trees produce above normal numbers of seeds.

When the emerald ash borer moved into Northern Virginia, NPS experts predicted that as many as 1,000 pumpkin ash trees in Dyke Marsh, a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, were at risk. This insect is a metallic-green beetle originally from Asia and has threatened ash trees across North America since the early 2000s. The emerald ash borer does not have native predators, parasites or diseases here to control its populations. It probably came to the U.S. accidentally in cargo packing material and was found in Fairfax County in 2008.

The insect lays eggs on ash bark and its wormlike larvae burrow under the bark, cre-

SEE SAVING AND RESTORING, PAGE 7



Bartlett Tree employees inject an insecticide into the trees' roots every other year.



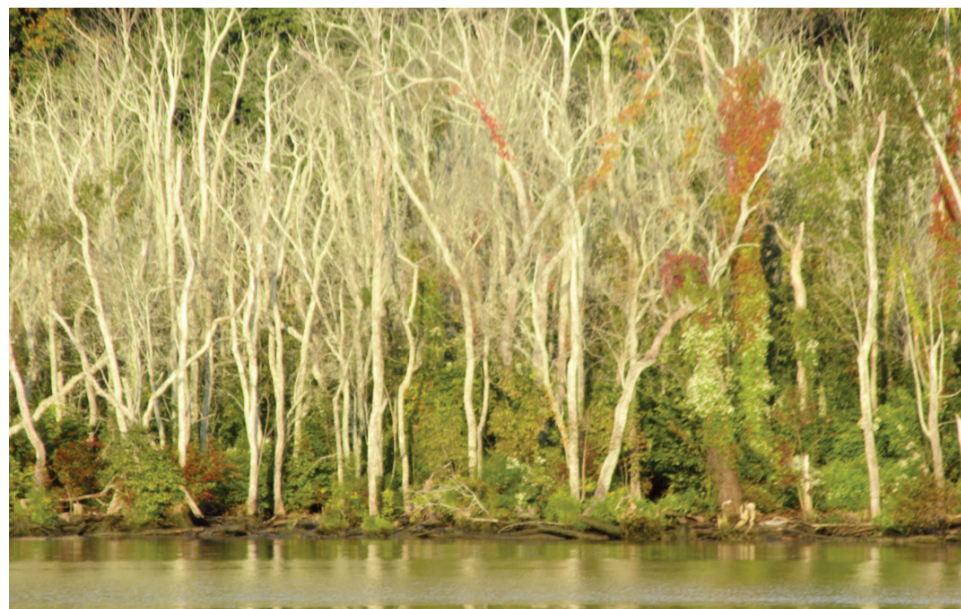
Pumpkin ash seeds

### What Is a Pest?

"Humans often define plants, animals and even microorganisms that have a negative effect on us as pests. Maybe they can eat crops, vector disease or damage our homes, but when we step back and look at these living organisms, we often find that they, too, have roles. A pest is context dependent. In some settings, a pest species may be beneficial, such as an ant in a natural area aerating soil and moving seeds, as opposed to ants swarming your kitchen counter. The need to respond to a pest is also dependent on its population. More specifically, population levels might be so low as to not be harmful or at levels kept in check by natural enemies.

"Pests are often a symptom of a problem, not the problem itself, so trying to simply get rid of the pest often isn't effective as solving the underlying issue. Carpenter ants may arrive at your house because wood is exposed and older or maybe there is a leak and they are drawn to the water. Bare soil can be fertile ground for weed seeds to take root. The best way to keep these species where we want them and not where they can be harmful is to adjust our surroundings so they cannot thrive."

— AARON ANDERSON, PESTICIDE PROGRAM SPECIALIST,  
XERCES SOCIETY FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION



Dead trees in Dyke Marsh along the Potomac River shoreline.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



PHOTO BY DAVID BARBOUR

Three of the team members who treated trees in May 2025: Brent Steury, National Park Service; Jose Sanchez, Bartlett Trees; Jim Gearing, Friends of Dyke Marsh.

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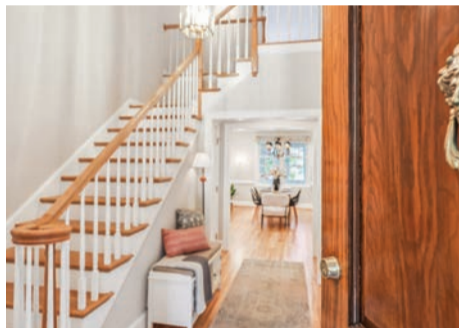
### Old Town

510 Wolfe Street

\$8,500,000 | The most distinguished home in Old Town is available for the first time in 40 years! Built in 1854, this 14,000+ sq ft historic gem sits on a 1/2-acre lot. The stately brick façade, original iron fencing, and grand 3-story interior showcase timeless elegance. The home features 13 fireplaces, original pine floors, oversized windows, antique chandeliers, 4-car garage, and a lush private yard with a spacious patio and wisteria-covered pergola. The main level boasts an expansive great room, formal dining room, butler's pantry, and a sunroom with original brick floors. Upstairs, 7 bedrooms, including a serene primary suite, provide luxurious living. Additional highlights include a vast attic, widow's walk with stunning river views, and a historic beehive ice house. 2 private apartments on the ground level offer rental income or guest space. Own a piece of Alexandria history in this magnificent home, steps from the waterfront, shops, and dining.

**Babs Beckwith** : 703.627.5421 | OldTownAlexandriaLiving.com

**Lauren Bishop** : 202.361.5079 | LaurenBishopHomes.com



### Arlington

4610 17th Street N

\$2,795,000 | Quality new home by Spring Street with a one-bedroom ADU, 5 bedrooms, 5 baths, expansive screen porch overlooks 8,400 sq ft level lot. Glebe, Dorothy Hamm, W-L pyramid.

**Betsy Twigg** : 703.967.4391

BetsyTwigg.com

### Hamilton

39260 Charles Town Pike

\$1,750,000 | Discover unparalleled luxury in this stunning 4-level custom-built estate on 3.3 acres. With four bedrooms and 6.5 baths, it offers elegance, privacy, and convenience.

**Jecholia Jessee** : 301.300.6224

JecholiaJessee.com

### Eddington Terrace

2929 Eddington Terrace

\$1,699,000 | Stunning 4-bed, 3.5-bath brick Colonial with 2-car garage, 3 gas fireplaces, refinished hardwood floors, beautiful sunroom, 9' ceilings, sprawling primary suite, and walk-out lower level.

**Heidi Burkhardt** : 703.217.6009

RealtorHeidiB.com

### Old Town

516 Gibbon Street

\$1,049,000 | This distinguished 3-bed, 2.5-bath semi-detached residence offers 1,848 sq ft, updated kitchen, spacious living areas, wood-burning fireplace, private backyard, and premier location near parks, shops, and dining.

**Lauren Bishop** : 202.361.5079

LaurenBishopHomes.com

OPEN SUN 8/24, 1-3PM



### Olde Belhaven Towne

6321 Barrister Place

\$895,000 | This all brick 3-bed, 3.5-bath townhome along the river checks all the boxes! Hdwd floors, fireplace, bay window, brick patio plus new air conditioner! Near shopping, parks, and new rec center!

**Susan Dickerson** : 703.380.0153

Susan.Dickerson@CorcoranMCE.com



### Old Town

110 Cameron Street #101

\$675,000 | Charming 1-bedroom, 1-bath corner unit with private entrance, hardwood floors, renovated kitchen, wood-burning fireplace, in-unit laundry, extra storage, and dedicated parking.

**Lauren Bishop** : 202.361.5079

LaurenBishopHomes.com



### Porto Vecchio

1250 S Washington Street #820

\$620,000 | Top-floor 1-bed, 1-bath condo with open-concept living, gourmet kitchen with quartz counters, updated bath, enclosed balcony with scenic river views, and 2 dedicated parking spaces.

**Mason Bavin** : 703.338.6007

MasonBavin.com



### Belle View Condos

6624 Boulevard View C-1

\$325,000 | Renovated top-floor, two-bedroom unit is ideally situated set back from the main road, within a lush courtyard setting. Newer HVAC, windows, LVP flooring, and ample parking. Laundry & storage in same entry!

**Heidi Burkhardt** : 703.217.6009

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## Student Membership and Projections SY 2024-25 to SY 2029-30

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SCHOOL TYPE	MEMBERSHIP	PROJECTIONS				
	SY 2024-25	SY 2025-26	SY 2026-27	SY 2027-28	SY 2028-29	SY 2029-30
Elementary	91,436	92,656	91,982	91,402	90,022	89,174
Middle	27,892	27,841	28,099	28,029	28,436	28,421
High	58,841	58,757	57,856	57,814	58,072	57,795
<b>FCPS Base Total</b>	<b>178,169</b>	<b>179,254</b>	<b>177,937</b>	<b>177,245</b>	<b>176,530</b>	<b>175,390</b>
Special Education Centers	519	486	489	486	474	472
Preschool Resource Centers	946	1,130	1,130	1,130	1,130	1,130
Alternative School Programs	93	93	95	98	97	97
Alternative Court Programs	124	125	127	128	129	130
<b>CIP Planning Total</b>	<b>179,851</b>	<b>181,088</b>	<b>179,778</b>	<b>179,087</b>	<b>178,360</b>	<b>177,219</b>
Other	533	574	565	556	561	559
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,384</b>	<b>181,662</b>	<b>180,343</b>	<b>179,643</b>	<b>178,921</b>	<b>177,778</b>

Source: FCPS, Proposed CIP FY 2026-30, January 2025.

Fairfax County Public Schools student enrollment projects for school years 2024-2025 to 2029-2030 (via FCPS)

SOURCE: FCPS CIP

Fairfax County Public Schools' student membership projections, according to its Capital Improvement Program (CIP), projected membership to increase in School Year FY2025-26, but decrease thereafter.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE GAZETTE

From left, Town of Herndon young residents, Muaazm, 5, Emaan, 9, Usman, 6, and Taha, 5, pose for a photo as they await the Fairfax County School bus.

# New FCPS School Year

First day  
in photos.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Public Schools started the 2025-2026 school year on Monday, Aug. 18. It is the largest school division in Virginia and one of the largest in the U.S., consistently ranking 10th or 11th in size in the nation.

Approximately 1,625 buses ran on Aug/ 18 to transport students to and from school. The FCPS transportation department utilizes its large fleet to serve a significant portion of the student population, which can present logistical challenges. To help overcome this, among other things, FCPS instituted a staggered bell schedule to optimize bus routes and reduce the number of buses required.

For instance, the start and end times at elementary schools in Fairfax County vary. The earliest bell schedule is 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., and the latest is 9:20 a.m. to 4:05 p.m. However, that means an elementary school bus route may not finish until after 4:30 p.m., or

SEE NEW FCPS, PAGE 10  
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Moises, Axel and Elmer wait at a Fairfax County Public School bus stop.



Fairfax County Public Schools is hiring bus drivers even on the first day of school.

## SENIOR LIVING

# Former Courtroom Artist Brings Skills To Senior Community in Fairfax County

Expressions, color and feelings are important to convey.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

As the tension mounted in a New York City courtroom years ago in the trial of Bernhard Goetz, artist Bob Smith was there, capturing all the emotion with his colored pastels as the top courtroom artists do. He's now at Brightview Senior Living in Woodburn, but his sketching hasn't lost its luster. He recently sketched scenes around Brightview like the in-house poker group, a choir and a college-aged piano player entertaining the residents.

Smith is now rediscovering his passion by teaching his fellow seniors at Brightview. When he captures a resident during a birthday celebration or singing, he gives them the pictures and many times it ends up in a frame on their apartment wall. "All the drawings I've done down here are in house," he said.

One outside project he's working on is a totem pole at the Thomas Jefferson Library where he teaches an outside class. The totem pole is made entirely of coffee cups.

"Everytime we have an entertainer, he does a sketch," said Lisa Semonick, the Brightview Vibrant Living Director.

### His Court Appearances

Back in 1981 when he was just getting started, Smith was at the trial of Mark David Chapman, the shooter who killed John Lennon. "One of my courtroom drawings made the cover of Newsday in New York City," he said. This wasn't just any drawing either, as the John Lennon shooting had ramifications that went far beyond the musician's death. His sketches of that trial were published abroad too, conveying more emotion than a photograph might have done in that instance.

The Chapman picture was among a list of more famous, or infamous, people he's drawn in a New York City courtroom. Other



At Brightview, Bob Smith, retired from a career as a courtroom artist, teaches his craft to fellow residents.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

famous cases include Jean Harris, Bernhard Goetz, the Central Park Jogger case, the Brinks Robbery, Baby M, Imelda Marcos, and Ariel Sharon.

Jean Harris was the headmistress of The Madeira School for girls in McLean who was tried and convicted of the 1981 murder of Herman Tarnower, cardiologist behind the Scarsdale Diet. "My drawing was sent out on the wire services," Smith said.

Bernhard Goetz shot four young Black men in 1984 on the New York subway, with intense publicity, sparking national debate.

Smith had a spot on the television show Law & Order, where he appeared as a courtroom artist extra.

### Not Always Allowed

Cameras and microphones were banned from courtrooms around the country following the 1935 trial of the Lindbergh baby, a kidnapping and murder case that generated a public uproar, similar to some trials recently. Think OJ Simpson or the Menendez Brothers.

In March 2023, bill S.858 the "Cameras in the Courtroom Act," was passed by congress saying "The Supreme Court shall permit television coverage of all open sessions of the Court unless the Court decides, by a vote of the majority of justices, that allowing such coverage in a particular case would constitute a violation of the due process rights of one or more of the parties before the Court." This may impact the courtroom artist but there still is value in a hand-drawn impression by someone sitting there with charcoal pencil and pastels.



Bob Smith's impression of the choir at Brightview.

## Farmers Market Help for Seniors

What is the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (Senior FMNP) in Fairfax County? The Virginia Office for Aging Services, in partnership with FRESHFARM, helps eligible older adults and seniors in Fairfax County. This program provides a \$50 benefit to help seniors purchase fresh produce and herbs from participating farmers at local farmers markets.

How does the program work? Senior FMNP offers financial support to improve food access and nutrition for older adults by:

- ❖ Providing a \$50 benefit to eligible seniors for purchasing fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs
- ❖ Partnering with local farmers markets where seniors can redeem their benefits
- ❖ Aiming to enroll up to 772 older adults and seniors before the

application deadline on Sept. 30

This program encourages healthier lifestyle habits and supports local farmers, creating a win-win for the community.

How can seniors apply or learn more? Interested seniors can apply for the Senior FMNP benefit until Sept. 30. For more information and application details, visit Virginia Senior FMNP – FRESHFARM <https://www.freshfarm.org/virginia-senior-fmnp>



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## SENIOR LIVING

# Poster 'Child' for Seniors Prioritizing Self Care

**Eddie Biggar  
at 106 shares  
insights.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

**E**ddie Biggar is a resident of the senior living community Sunrise at Reston Town Center. Biggar, who is 106, recently shared his insights on healthy aging and wellness. He focuses on maintaining mobility and independence as he ages. By prioritizing exercise and self-care, Biggar maintains his physical abilities for emergencies and overall wellness.

"The more you move, the more your body stays with you," Biggar said.

Biggar explained that he works out at the gym once or twice a week. He emphasized that staying active ensures his muscles are ready when needed in an emergency.

Biggar is well-qualified to offer this advice.

At 106 years old, he possesses the lived experience of staying active and adapting to challenges. Biggar's advice is grounded in the importance of regular exercise to maintain muscle strength.

"They are there to help me keep myself out of trouble," he said.

"If I sit, all I do is get broad. Yes, broad, that is as neat as I can put it," Biggar said.

Despite the summer heat and bright sun bothering his eyes and limiting outdoor walks, Biggar continues to move nonetheless. Biggar recommends incorporating daily activities like climbing stairs and walking indoors to stay active when outdoor conditions are unfavorable.

"One of the things I do around here is climb stairs. I just walk out my room door, and there's a stairway to the third floor." While he isn't yet ready to reach the top, he has progressed past the second-floor landing and completed the first of two sections leading upward, he said.

"You have to get up every day and put one foot in front of the other," Biggar said. "But you have to do it right because if you do it wrong, you can wind up on the ground."

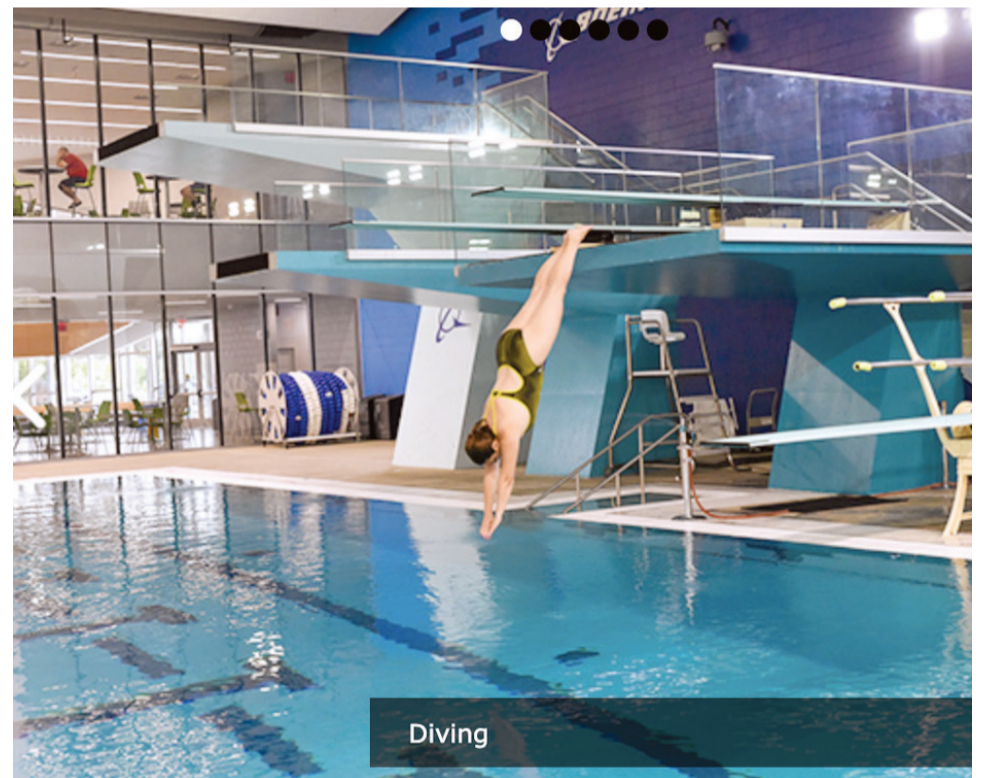


OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR WALTER ALCORN

**Eddie Biggar with Fairfax County Board Supervisor Walter Alcorn (Hunter Mill) at the Reston YMCA. Biggar works on the machines once or twice a week.**



Disc Golf



Diving

## Northern Virginia Senior Olympics Registration Closes Aug. 29

**R**egistration for the 2025 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO) to be held Sept. 13-30, closes Friday, Aug. 29. Registration chairman Herb Levitan of Arlington said, "We are on track to exceed the record-breaking numbers reached last year." With over 70 events in 5, 10 and 20 year age groups and most by gender, Levitan said, "We have events for everybody both indoors and outdoors." To par-

ticipate one must be 50 years of age by Dec. 31, 2025 and live in one of the sponsoring jurisdictions. The registration fee is remaining the same at \$20 for an unlimited number of events. Registration is online only at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us).

Events will take place in 30 different venues located in the sponsoring jurisdictions. All events are open to the public including opening day, Saturday, Sept 13 at the

Thomas Jefferson Community Center in Arlington. Nine track events will follow the opening ceremony. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals will be awarded after all events. For links to all events see <https://nvso.us/events/>

New events this year are duplicate bridge, 50 yard butterfly in swimming and poker (Texas Hold'em). Persons registering for poker have an early deadline to reg-

ister, by Saturday, Aug. 24.

The NVSO website, [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us), has a full list of events and schedules and other pertinent information. NVSO sponsoring jurisdictions are the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church.

Additional support comes from Gold Patrons:

AARP Virginia, Adobe, The Bea-

con Newspapers, Belmont at One University, CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield, Goodwin Living, Greenspring by Erickson Senior Living, John Hopkins Health Plans, The Landing and The Riviera in Alexandria, Retirement Unlimited Inc. United Health Care, Vinson Hall Retirement Community, Woodbine Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center and Woodlands Retirement Community.

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# Saving and Restoring Ash Trees

FROM PAGE 1

ate tunnels and feed on the trees' vascular tissues, which disrupts the uptake of water and nutrients. Signs of infestation include D-shaped exit holes in the bark, branch dieback, leafy shoots growing from the lower trunk and the tunnels.

The Virginia Department of Forestry describes the emerald ash borer as "the most destructive forest insect ever to invade the United States and has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees in urban, rural and forested settings."

This insect has "made itself at home" in the county and most of the state, says Fairfax County's website.

There are nine ash species in North America, with the white and green ash most widely distributed, according to the U.S. Forest Service. Pumpkin ash trees are named for their usually swollen or pumpkin-shaped base. They thrive in wet areas and can reach 130 feet in height. The Dyke Marsh project's leaders chose 19 trees in a cluster for treatment because the trees have male and female flowers and are wind pollinated.

In Dyke Marsh, many of the untreated, affected trees are resprouting, but to what degree they will grow or whether they will survive is uncertain at this time.

Friends of Dyke Marsh has funded Bartlett Tree Experts to inject an insecticide, Tree-age, into the root flares of the trees every two years, a 20-year effort.

## Hoping for More Trees

Seed clusters are usually ful-

ly developed by September. Last fall, FODM volunteers and Park Service staffers collected seeds. Earth Sangha, a nonprofit nursery in Springfield, planted them and some are sprouting. The project's team may plant some seeds in Dyke Marsh eventually.

## The Emerald Ash Borer in Fairfax County

Fairfax County's foresters report that all ash species are susceptible to emerald ash borer. "It is not feasible to provide an exact count of the trees that have died from emerald ash borer or the number that have survived, as the insect has been widespread for many years and affects both public and private properties," emailed county spokesperson Sharon North.

Any still living today are either small trees undiscovered by the ash borer or are treated trees. North added, "Research over the last three decades indicates that white ash tends to show slightly more resistance to emerald ash borer than green ash. However, once an ash tree reaches about one inch in diameter, it is at risk of infestation."

## More Invasive Insects

On July 24, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services announced that observers found another invasive Asian insect, the box tree moth, in Loudoun and Clarke Counties just west of Fairfax, which can significantly damage and potentially kill boxwood plants. "The caterpillars are ravenous feeders, and heavy infestations can completely defoli-

ate host plants. After the leaves are gone, they feed on the bark which eventually kills the plant," the Department of Agriculture said.

## What You Can Do

Fairfax officials discourage the planting of ash trees. The county does not give builders tree canopy credits for planting ash.

The state and federal government require a permit to move emerald ash borer articles, such as firewood, nursery stock and wood chips.

DOF can offset up to 70 percent of the treatment costs for ash trees. See [https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/emerald-ash-bor-](https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/emerald-ash-bor-er-treatment-program/)

er-treatment-program/.

For the box tree moth, Department of Agriculture urges people to report this insect at <https://www.DepartmentofAgriculture.virginia.gov/press-releases-250724-invasive-box-tree-moth-detected.shtml>.

To learn more, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/trees>.

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## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
BUCHANAN	3833	602	INDIAN CREEK ROAD	INDIAN CREEK	7/29/2025
TAZEWELL	18608	641	ROUTE 0641	JACOBS FORK CREEK	7/21/2025
NELSON	12572	673	EAST BRANCH LOOP	HAT CREEK	7/21/2025
FRANKLIN	7875	643	ADNEY GAP ROAD 643	N FORK BLACKWATER RIVER	7/14/2025
HALIFAX	9248	637	CHERRY CREEK ROAD	S FORK BUFFALO CREEK	7/11/2025
PULASKI	23631	693	FARRIS MINE ROAD/693	BIG REED ISLAND CREEK	7/10/2025
SCOTT	16799	665	MANVILLE ROAD	BLACK OAK BRANCH	7/8/2025

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit [vdot.virginia.gov](http://vdot.virginia.gov) and navigate to Traffic and Travel/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact [haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov) or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

*The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or [corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov).*



PHOTO BY ROBERT SMITH

Healthy, treated pumpkin ash trees in Dyke Marsh.

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# A Summer Like No Other

BY JOHN LOVAAS  
INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

Is the hot, humid summer in Virginia and the hot air from the felon in the White House getting you down? We felt that way, so we recently took a break from them by way of an 8-day vacay in Denmark with two favorite traveling companions. It was 96 degrees in Reston the day we left and 72 in Copenhagen ... an easy choice.

One concern gave us a momentary pause about the trip. How might we be received in the country that administers Greenland since our president has been threatening to seize the island from the Danes? Might they resent our presence? So, we thought we'd wear maple leaf buttons so that the Danes might think we were Canadians, folks facing similar threats from our felon president.

It turned out that the Danes had more important things on their minds. We could see that from our first day when we walked through beautiful Tivoli Gardens, a several square-block park in Copenhagen

with restaurants, entertainment, and rides, including one of the world's first roller coasters. In fact, Tivoli is said to have been Walt Disney's inspiration for Disneyland. It was easy to see why.

We got our exercise sightseeing on foot in Copenhagen. What a charming city, a mix of the ancient and the ultramodern! On virtually every block there were eye-catching building shapes and colors as well.

Danish architects make marvelous use of great glass and steel facades, in the more modern office and residential buildings. But I found that I had to be careful walking and focusing on architecture at the same time. Between sidewalks and car lanes are lanes reserved for fast-moving bicycles, the main transportation mode in Denmark. In fact, I barely missed being run over more than once by accidentally straying into that lane.

Besides visiting the requisite cathedrals and old churches, we saw several classic museums dedicated to the arts and Danish history as well as an Illusions Museum and National Happiness Museum.

Yes, there really is a museum dedicated to happiness, but sadly it was closed. Our guides and a few Danes we'd chatted with told us that in fact the mission of their government is to improve the lives of the Danish people, to make them thoroughly enjoyable!

Danes look fit. Perhaps that's one factor in being happy? In any case, I saw precious few whom I'd characterize as overweight. In addition to riding bikes or walking everywhere, despite the cool weather Danes were swimming in the canal across from our hotel every day, all ages, morning, noon and night. And the temperatures at night were in the fifties and only upper sixties during the day.

Taxes are high in Denmark, into the upper forties percentage wise for most people in this most equitable of societies.

As you might expect, the question among the American tourists was "How do the people feel about such high taxes?" Our tour guide responded that it wasn't much of an issue, even in political campaigns in this parliamentary democracy. High taxes are accept-

ed as a done deal. He reminded us that in Denmark, some of the world's best healthcare is free as is education through college level. Daycare is subsidized.

Then what do candidates for election argue about? The answer I got from the guide as well as a young Danish bus driver was that candidates tend to be asked what they'll do to improve the appearance of the city or a particular government service. I didn't talk to a lot of people, but none of those I talked with was particularly unhappy with government. The government must be doing something right because Denmark is now ranked the second happiest country in the world.

Meanwhile, across the big pond our government is focused on: taking health care and basic food away from nearly 20 million people so that billionaires can get another tax break; sending masked people to disappear hundreds of thousands of people off our streets and sent to gulags; and, massive corruption to enrich themselves and their families. We are not a threat to take the happiness title.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Stop Mass Deportation

Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF VA) firmly opposes the further allocation of state resources to enforce mass deportation quotas. We believe safety and security are built through trust—a trust that continues to be eroded and broken in Virginia.

On Feb. 27, 2025, Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed a 287(g) agreement, enabling state and local agencies to act as federal immigration enforcement. The Virginia State Police and Department

of Corrections entered into these agreements immediately, stoking fear and deepening mistrust between our communities and law enforcement. We have witnessed the consequences of these partnerships, including increased ICE's arrests outside of courthouses across the commonwealth.

Yesterday, Aug. 5, 2025, Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights, informed us through a source at Virginia Public Media that Governor Youngkin is preparing to commit

the Virginia National Guard to support ICE in its mass deportations. This marks yet another attack on Virginia's immigrant communities – and a dangerous misuse of state resources to serve harmful federal priorities.

We are witnessing the damage caused by 287(g) ripple across our state. This new commitment of military resources only deepens the trauma, fear, and instability our communities are already experiencing.

These fear based policies encour-

age racial profiling, strip away due process and break families apart, targeting all immigrants and their allies for upholding their rights to dignity and to simply exist.

We will not stay silent. We call for an immediate end to all collaboration with ICE in Virginia.

This is a moment that demands resistance; demands action; demands care rooted in power.

Report any and all poli-migra (poli-ICE) activity with PODER VA: 1-844-253-7882.

## Importance of Local News

Great August 8th edition of the paper. Packed full of a great mix of information and well written articles. Thank all of your reporters/staff. The Connection Newspapers continue to be one of the brightest lights for allowing the local news to shine through.

the chaotic and sometimes overwhelming national news scene. Good and creative things are happening in our own neighborhoods and com-

munities. And we do have responsible local elected officials who take time to listen to our voices. Community newspapers are essential in allowing us to keep what seems to be an upside down world in perspective. The Connection should be a weekly habit for all county residents.

We appreciate you.

Merrily Pierce  
McLean, VA

## Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name.

Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

### Send letters

Online [www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/)

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By mail to: Letters to the Editor The Connection  
1606 King St., Alexandria VA 22314

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mary Kimm  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Jeanne Theismann  
[jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
[miksalmon6922@gmail.com](mailto:miksalmon6922@gmail.com)

Glenda Booth  
Contributing Writers

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager:  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

A Connection Newspaper





Madison High School

FCPS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Fairfax County Public Schools will have a bond referendum on the Nov. 4 General Election ballot.

# Voters to Decide on \$460 Million FCPS Bond

Last school bond was approved by voters for \$435 million in November 2023.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Public Schools will have a bond referendum on the Nov. 4 General Election ballot to support the division's 2026-30 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Virginia code requires bond obligations to be decided by voters through a referendum.

If approved, it would authorize the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to sell up to \$460 million in bonds to finance capital improvement projects for the school system. Bonds are a type of long-term borrowing used by local governments to finance large-scale projects, such as the construction or renovation of public infrastructure. The county would sell these bonds to investors and then repay the debt over time, with interest. This spreads the expense of significant projects over time, rather than requiring the entire amount to be collected in the current tax year. The funds are intended to finance new construction, renovations, and other capital facility projects.

Projects funded could include the site acquisition for a future high school in the

western part of the county; renovations to Cub Run Elementary School, Union Mill ES, and Centreville High School (HS); inflation adjustments for prior bond projects; security vestibules; adjustments for Net Zero Energy to previously approved projects; and other major maintenance projects, according to FCPS. "The School Board reserves the right to modify, substitute, or change projects in accordance with the CIP, which is amended from time to time based on shifting needs."

The \$435M bond referendum from 2023 is currently funding construction and renovation at Bren Mar Park ES, Brookfield ES, Lees Corner ES, Armstrong ES, Willow Springs ES, Herndon ES and Dranesville ES. It also supported, or is supporting, planning and design at Cub Run ES, Union Mill ES, Centre Ridge ES, Poplar Tree ES, Waples Mill ES, Sangster ES, Saratoga ES, Virginia Run ES, and Franklin Middle School.

The most recent School Bond Referendum was approved by 67 percent of county voters in November 2023. Historically, Fairfax County voters support school bond questions by a similar margin.

For more see <https://www.fcps.edu/bond2025>

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE GAZETTE  
Parents wave goodbye to their children as the bus pulls away from the curb.



The traditional first-day-of-school photos as their children climb aboard the school bus.



The youngest children need a little assistance with the tall bus steps to board on the first day of school.

# New FCPS School Year

FROM PAGE 3

even later, nearing December's earliest sunsets at 4:47 p.m.

## Quick Facts and New Policies

❖ An unconfirmed increase in enrollment: The county planned for a slight rise in enrollment for the SY 2025-26 academic year, expecting it to rise to 181,662 students from 180,384 students in the 2024-2025 school year, according to the County CIP Student Membership and Projections for SY 2024-

25 to SY 2029-30. However, enrollment can change due to various factors, and the final number will remain uncertain until the official count is conducted. FCPS typically conducts its official enrollment count on Sept. 30 of each year. The Virginia Department of Education uses the official student enrollment number to determine state funding for the school year.

❖ Still hiring bus drivers: As of Aug. 17, FCPS was still actively hiring bus drivers, as indicated in the job listing at <https://www.topschooljobs.org/job/2195554/bus-driver/>.

Many other districts across the country face a shortage of school bus drivers.

❖ Girls flag football program: The girls flag football program will run from September to November, starting in the fall of SY2025-26, planning for a team consisting of 25 members at each high school. The Saxon Scope, the student news source at Langley High School, reported that Geoffrey Noto, the student activities director, said Fairfax is going to get a grant from the

Washington Commanders for all 25 high schools in Fairfax County to have one girls team for each school.

❖ More speed cameras: Fairfax County rolled out 10 new cameras in two batches, ahead of the SY 2025-26 school year. Learn more at [https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/speed-cameras?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/speed-cameras?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social).

❖ Students need healthy meals to learn. The cost of breakfast is \$1.75, and lunch SEE NEW FCPS, PAGE 11



Town of Herndon Chief of Police, Steven T. Pihonak, introduces the department's "very well behaved" service dog to students at Herndon Elementary School on the first day of classes.



Crowds of children pack the entrance to Herndon Elementary School on the first day of the Fairfax County Public Schools.



SOURCE: FCPS

Weapons detection system- OPENGATE devices will be installed this fall at all FCPS high schools and middle schools.

# New FCPS School Year

FROM PAGE 10

costs \$3.25 for elementary students and \$3.50 for middle, high, and secondary school students. Students from families who earn less than 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals, and those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level qualify for reduced-price meals. Families must complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FRM) application before the start of each school year. Approved applications may also qualify students for additional benefits. The law allows the school division to share information about eligibility for free or reduced-price meals with Medicaid and FAMIS.

❖ Goodbye cell phones: Elementary and middle school students with phones will be required to put them away for the entire school day. “Starting in school year 2025-26, high school students can no longer use their cell phones and other personal devices (Air-Pods, smart watches, etc.) during passing period,” according to FCPS.

High schoolers must store their cell phones away except during lunch, when they can use them.

❖ Weapon detectors, without the use of harmful radiation: Students can expect the installation of OPENGATE devices at all Fairfax County Public Schools’ high schools and middle schools, a spokesperson for

FCPS said. There is a release about it on the FCPS website: <https://www.fcps.edu/news/weapon-detection-system-expanding-fcps-middle-schools>. The weapons detection system is more sensitive than a metal detector, providing faster screening of individuals with backpacks, purses, and bags, among other items, to detect a wide variety of metal threats, such as guns and knives, while minimizing false alarms like keys. Students will walk between two free-standing pillars. Funding for the pilot program came from one-time year-end funds and a settlement from a class-action lawsuit against a vaping company. The FY 2024 Budget approved the funding for the project.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE GAZETTE  
Herndon Elementary School announces the first day of school activities in English and Spanish on its two-sided sign.

**FEDERAL INCOME GUIDELINES:** Your child(ren) may be eligible for free meals benefits or reduced-price meals benefits if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines chart shown below.

Income Chart for Free or Reduced-Price Meals Benefits			
Effective July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026			
Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$557
2	\$39,128	\$3,261	\$753
3	\$49,303	\$4,109	\$949
4	\$59,478	\$4,957	\$1,144
5	\$69,653	\$5,805	\$1,340
6	\$79,828	\$6,653	\$1,536
7	\$90,003	\$7,501	\$1,731
8	\$100,178	\$8,349	\$1,927
For each additional family member, add:	\$10,175	\$848	\$196



SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY, PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

A photo speed camera- Fairfax County installed 10 new photo speed cameras in two batches, ahead of the SY 2025-26 school year.

Warning sign alerts drivers of the photo speed camera ahead.

# Vietnam War Exhibit Coming to Northern Virginia

**‘Virginia and the Vietnam War’ on display Sept. 15 to Oct. 27**

By GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

It was the nation’s most divisive war. It was the first television war. It was a helicopter war. These are the labels some attach to the United States’ war in Vietnam, waged from 1964 to 1973.

An exhibit at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center in Fairfax City titled “Virginia and the Vietnam War” from Sept. 15 to Oct. 27 weaves together the perspectives and experiences of Virginians affected by the Vietnam War. Over 2.3 million Americans served in Vietnam in every branch of the U.S. military. Over 230,000 Virginians served in Vietnam and 1,490 Virginians died there.

The exhibit introduces Virginians who were diplomats, veterans, refugees, family members, war supporters and anti-war activists through 27 oral histories, personal memorabilia, artifacts and photographs.

## A Controversial War

The Vietnam War roiled college campuses, spilled into the streets and pitted young people against their elders, veterans against civilians. A Youth International Party, counterculture Yippie flag from an anti-war demonstration, symbolizes the protests.

## A Television War

The war was dubbed America’s “first television war” because the realities of the war came right into living rooms from on-site television crews and print journalists reporting from combat zones.

In a display showing a couple watching television, visitors read, “Families on the home front often received contradictory messages from soldiers who sought to reassure them, and news reports, which showed the violence of America’s first ‘television war.’ Images of battles, crashes, and coffins troubled Virginians, many worried about their sons, brothers, fathers, and friends as casualties mounted and as men went missing or became prisoners. Loved ones carried an emotional weight that few soldiers grasped during the war.”

## A Helicopter War

The UH-1 Huey helicopter be-



Used by soldiers to carry mines and their accessories. American Red Cross volunteer Susan Bradshaw McLean used this bag to deliver supplies to soldiers in the field. In appreciation, they gave her pins representing their military units. Tied to the bag’s handle is a headband woven by a Vietnamese female villager.

came the vehicle of choice in the war and a powerful symbol. American forces relied on up to 12,000 helicopters for combat, transport, medical evacuation and resupply missions.

In an oral history, a soldier painfully recalls putting his injured buddies on stretchers and sending them up to the chopper.

Susan Bradshaw McLean’s bracelet, made from a helicopter tail rotor chain, was a reward for surviving a crash. McLean was a Red Cross volunteer called a “Donut Dollie,” women who took supplies to the servicemen.

Also featured is McLean’s 1970 Claymore bag. Soldiers carried mines and accessories in these canvas bags. Hers, repurposed, has pins representing the military units she supported.

The little solace that soldiers could find is represented by a ticket to a 1971 Bob Hope Christmas show in Da Nang. Entertainers like Hope and Les Brown, Bibles and prayer books provided some comfort. A silk blood chit displayed has 14 languages to help aviators communicate with locals if they were downed.

“There small objects told big stories about the politics, policies and operations of the war, as well as its emotional impact,” wrote curator Emilie Raymond.

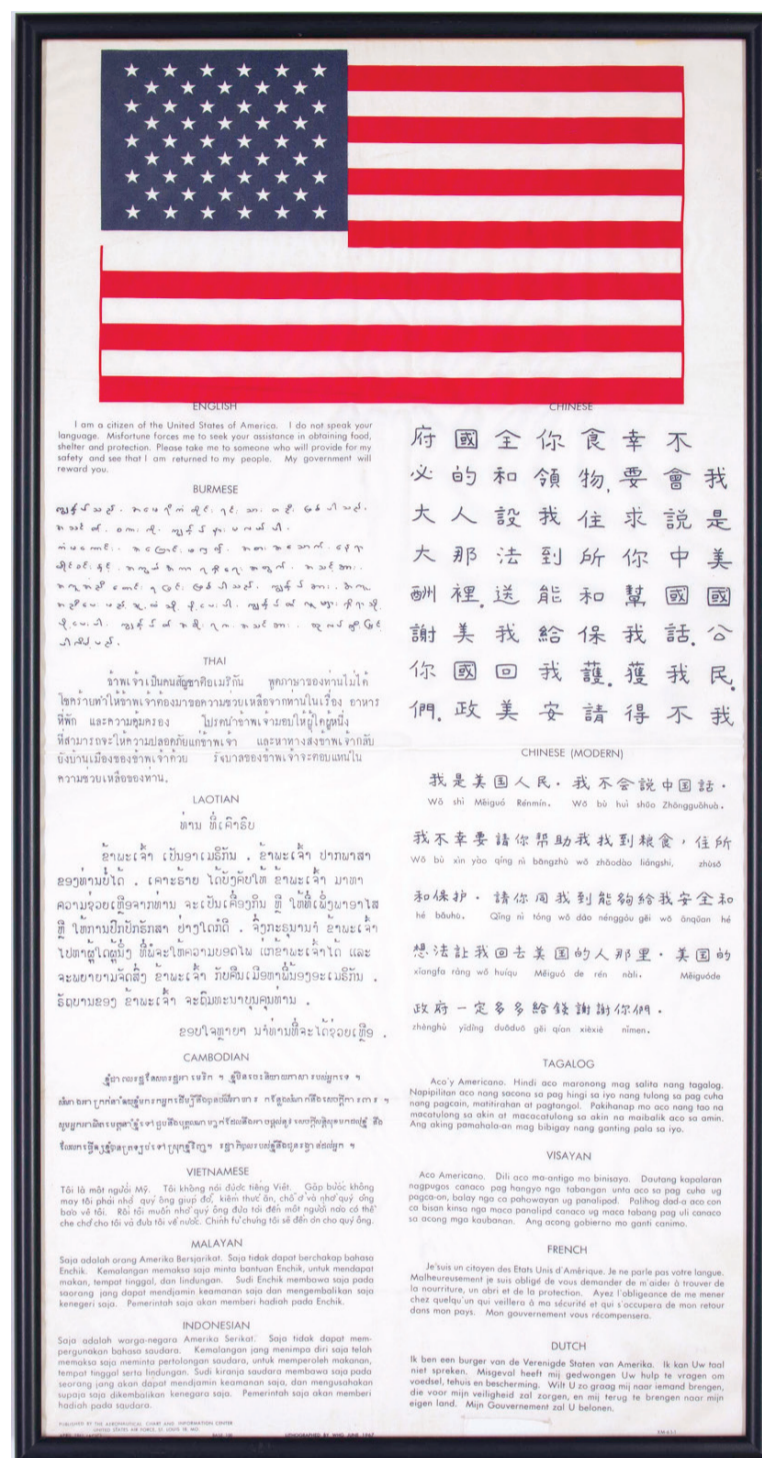
The “Families and the Homefront” exhibit highlights support from the homeland. Portsmouth Virginia students made and sent fruitcake care packages. Richmonder Phyllis Galanti embroidered a Merry Christmas message on a towel and sent it to her husband, Paul, who was a prisoner of war from 1966 to 1973.

## Agitation and Aftermath

The controversy swirling around the war surfaces in the section titled “Activism,” through protest buttons, bumper stickers and banners. Some men tore up their draft cards and became draft dodgers. Some conscientious objectors left the country. Two Virginians interviewed were objectors. Philip H. Wilayto advised people to avoid this “bad war,” an “unjust war” and Ben Ragsdale organized protests.

Visitors learn that unlike the World War II “greatest generation” heroes who returned to grateful Americans many Vietnam veterans faced cold receptions. Some veterans were silent about their war experiences for years and tried to forget it. A Vietnam veterans cap symbolizes one soldier’s “coming out,” says the exhibit.

After the war ended in 1973 with the Paris Peace Accords, the last American troops left Vietnam and North Vietnam captured South



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE  
U.S. aviators carried a “blood chit” to communicate with non-English speaking people. Made of silk, leather, cotton or rayon, it could be used as a safe-conduct pass for a downed pilot needing assistance.

Vietnam’s capital, Saigon, in 1975.

Thousands of U.S. personnel and South Vietnamese were evacuated. Len Tran in his oral history and a display recounts how his family fled in 1982 on a 20-foot-long fishing boat with 23 others. They eventually made it to Richmond in the dead of winter without warm clothes. His second-grade drawing of his home in Vietnam is a poignant symbol of the trauma of displacement.

Virginia today is home to 60,000 Vietnamese-Americans. One group of Vietnamese merchants set up shop in the Clarendon section of Arlington informally called “Little Saigon,” but were displaced by

Metro subway construction.

The Eden Center in Falls Church today is one of the country’s largest Vietnamese-American shopping centers. It is named after the Eden Arcade market in Ho Chi Minh City.

The oral histories are available online and at the exhibits. Dr. Raymond is Professor and Director Graduate Studies, Department of History, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Information: <https://virginiahistory.org/> and <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/Fun-Facilities/Cultural-Arts-and-History/Fairfax-Museum>

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU SEPT. 21

**Sally Kauffman - Pleasure Park.** At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Sally Kauffman, a Washington, DC-based visual artist, is known for her large-scale, abstract yet illusory paintings depicting people and animals in social and communal settings. Her recent series, inspired by scenes from Malcolm X Park, captures Washingtonians engaging in activities including picnicking, hula hooping, Jiu Jitsu, juggling, gymnastics, skating, playing, dancing, and listening to music. These works celebrate the joy of gathering after pandemic isolation, emphasizing the fundamental human instinct for connection and restoration.

## MGNV PLANT CLINICS ARE OPEN

**The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St.,** Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 7 - 9:30 a.m. Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 8:30 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N. 14th and N. Court-house Roads, Arlington operates on Saturdays from 8 - 11 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, operates on Sundays from 9 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Central Library Plant Clinic at 1015 N. Quincy St. will be open on Aug. 6 and 20 and operates on Wednesdays from 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.

## YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

**Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

## NOW THRU SEPT. 14

**REVISITED Exhibit.** At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. REVISITED is a solo fine art photography exhibition by Stacy Smith Evans. In her series of color images, Evans explores a deep connection to nature, the land, and memory, revisiting the places she turns to for solitude and renewal, and when joined by family and friends, for celebration and tradition. Through the exhibition, Evans invites viewers to join her as she traverses the rivers, mountains, and forests that shape the Eastern landscape.

## ONGOING

**Revolutionary War Exhibit.** At the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Alexandria. The National Museum of the United States Army has opened a special exhibition, Call To Arms: The Soldier and the Revolutionary War. The two-year exhibition commemorates this year's 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army and next year's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This 5,000 square-foot exhibition features a rare collection, specially curated by the Museum, that includes Revolutionary War artifacts from the original colonies, England, France and Canada. Among the exhibit's highlights are a pair of General George Washington's pistols, the original flag of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment carried by the Army's first African American Soldiers, and a complete Loyalist uniform—one of the rarest items in the collection. The sword of British General Charles Lord Cornwallis, presented to Washington at the surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, will also be displayed for a limited time.

## AUG. 1-30

**"Lovely As a Tree" Art Exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans members explore all the ways in which trees impact our lives and the earth and bring aspects of this natural phenomenon to artistic life. Join them for the Opening Reception on Friday, August 1, 7-9pm. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits



The Chalk-a-Block Party takes place Sunday, Sept. 7, 2025 in Old Town Alexandria.

## AUG. 7 TO SEPT. 29

**Masterpiece Mini Golf. Thursday: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.;** Friday and Saturday: 11 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Sunday: 12 – 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Masterpiece Mini-Golf isn't just a game—it's an interactive journey through the world of art like you've never seen before! Imagine 18 artist-designed holes bursting with bold colors, iconic imagery, and mind-bending creativity. From Monet's water lilies to Banksy's graffiti walls, every twist and turn brings you face-to-face with art history's greatest paintings—reimagined in wild, surreal, and playable form. It's part gallery, part game, and 100% fun for all ages. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/masterpiece-mini-golf>

## THURSDAY/AUG. 21

**The Art of the Duo: Tom Teasley & John Wubbenhorst. 7 p.m.** At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Master percussionist Tom Teasley teams up with acclaimed Indian bansuri flutist John Wubbenhorst for the final concert in the 2025 Art of the Duo series. Wubbenhorst—renowned for his mastery of the bamboo bansuri, honed under the legendary Hariprasad Chaurasia—delivers “a stunning virtuoso display of the bamboo flute... the compositions and arrangements are equally impressive,” according to The Washington Post. His deeply expressive performance melds the meditative power of North Indian raga with improvisational depth drawn from jazz and world music traditions.

## FRIDAY/AUG. 22

**Wright at Twilight. 6:30 to 9 p.m.** At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, and watch the changing light bring out the architectural details. Visit the website:

<https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

## AUG. 22-31

**Alexandria Restaurant Week.** At restaurants throughout Alexandria. For 10 days and two weekends, dozens of restaurants in Alexandria will offer multi-course prix fixe dinner menus at \$30, \$40 or \$50 per person. Find additional special offers at select fast casual restaurants throughout Alexandria, making it easy to sample a wide range of cuisines at every budget. Alexandria Restaurant Week showcases the creativity of local chefs and showcases the global cuisine available in neighborhoods throughout the city, including Old Town, Old Town North, Del Ray, Carlyle and Eisenhower, Arlandria-Chirilagua and the West End. In August, a digital flipbook of menus at participating restaurants will be available at AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 24

**Summer Afternoon Serenade. 2 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join in an afternoon of chamber music! Music will include pieces by Samuel Barber, Paquita D'Rivera, and George Gershwin. Also featuring: Alyssa Primeau, flute; Amelia Merriman, oboe; Chanse Morris, clarinet; Bridget Piccirilli, bassoon; and Ava Conway, french horn.

## AUG. 30-31

**Begonia Show.** At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Hours: Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 12:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Feast your eyes on this free show sponsored by the Potomac branch of the American Begonia Society. Be tempted with splashes of color and shapes for homes, terrariums and greenhouses that last long after frosts have put our outdoor gardens to bed. The accompanying sale offers a wide variety of begonias, including tropical and

subtropical species.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 31

**The Origin of Manners. 1 to 3 p.m.** At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Concepts of courtesy and good manners have defined cultures through the ages and made social interaction run smoothly. Learn how manners have changed from medieval times to the Victorian era to the present day and consider the differences between “good manners” and “etiquette.” \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only). To register, call Green Spring Historic House 703-324-3988.

## SEPT. 5-27

**The “Second Time Around” exhibit** at Del Ray Artisans gallery features artwork made out of recycled materials. This exhibit focuses on the thought-change concept of sustainable creativity and enhancing artistic environmental ethos, from the art to the earth-conscious workshops and events. View at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Opening Reception: Friday, September 5, 7-9 p.m.. Gallery hours: Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 6

**First Saturday 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.fairfax-county.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 6

**Writers in Residence Reading. 12 to 1 p.m.** At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. Each summer, Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House collaborates with The Inner Loop to invite writers to the historical site to explore place, ownership, and history to bring awareness to critical social and environmental issues we face today. These writers will be sharing their experiences with an on-site reading on Saturday, September 6th.

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 6

**Introduction to Basketweaving. 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Join expert basket maker Sharon Shaeffer for a hands-on workshop where you'll learn the art of basket weaving from start to finish. Sharon will guide you through each step of the process— from selecting materials to adding personal embellishments—so you can create a beautiful basket to take home. Whether you're a beginner or looking to refine your skills, this class offers inspiration, instruction, and everything you need to get started. Bring a lunch. \$66 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code MGM.QFWG

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 6

**Little Gardeners. 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.** At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (2-6 yrs.) Explore the ever-changing landscape of the garden. Each week, participants will explore and discover the changes in the garden. This program will feature seasonal activities that can include planting seeds, pollinators, harvesting vegetables, digging in the soil and exploring plant parts. Adults must attend with a registered child. Kids must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who does not need to register for the program. \$10 per child. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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unclaimed property to the Virginia Department  
of the Treasury by the deadline.**

- Reporting is mandatory with penalties for non-compliance.
- All businesses, legal entities, non-profits, & corporations must report.
- Reporting is an annual requirement, not a one-time task.
- Unclaimed property includes account balances, uncashed checks, deposits, refunds, etc.

**May 1st** - deadline for insurance companies to file.

**Nov. 1st** - deadline for most businesses, corporations, etc.

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## BULLETIN

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 the event. Or email to [calendar@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:calendar@connectionnewspapers.com)

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551- 2488, or [donaledge@aol.com](mailto:donaledge@aol.com).

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to [cancer.org/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, [brianmorreale@gmail.com](mailto:brianmorreale@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at [suzjdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:suzjdoyle@gmail.com) or 571-403-0673.

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit [www.novasecondsaturday.com](http://www.novasecondsaturday.com) for more.

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# New Businesses and Organizations

BY DAVID GRIFFIN  
MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD CHAMBER

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce welcomes 13 new members who joined during June and July 2025. This group represents a wide array of industries, from healthcare and legal services to cybersecurity and culinary arts, illustrating the rich variety of businesses that are choosing to grow and connect in southeastern Fairfax County and surrounding areas. These additions strengthen the Chamber's network and speak to the area's ongoing appeal where businesses of all types can thrive.

The Chamber, which serves as a vital resource for business development, networking, and advocacy, continues to grow as local entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and national corporations alike recognize the value of membership.

"When a business joins the Chamber, they're becoming part of a supportive ecosystem committed to community success. We welcome each of our new members and look forward to helping them thrive," said Holly Dougherty, President of the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

## June 2025 New Members

❖ Evergreen Disposal, a locally owned and operated waste collection company, was among the June additions. Known for its dependable trash and recycling services, Evergreen serves communities across Northern Virginia and parts of Southern Maryland. Their commitment to environmental sustainability and community cleanliness makes them a welcome partner in the region.

❖ George Washington Health & Rehabilitation, located in Mount Vernon, brings an advanced and holistic approach to health-care, offering short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, and dementia services. Their emphasis on lifestyle enrichment alongside medical care positions them as a forward-thinking facility for aging residents.

❖ FVCbank, serves businesses of all sizes across the DC-Maryland-Virginia corridor. With over \$2.2 billion in assets, the bank is known for its white-glove service and customized lending and cash management

solutions. Their addition strengthens the Chamber's financial and professional services network.

❖ Snack Circuit Vending, LLC, is on a mission to provide high-quality, fully stocked vending machines to workplaces and community hubs. This locally-owned business is focused on reliability and customer satisfaction, they bring convenience and service to the forefront.

❖ The Joint Chiropractic – Springfield is preparing for its grand opening on Sept. 9 and offers a modern approach to wellness through affordable, no-appointment-needed chiropractic care. As part of a national brand, this new Springfield location will cater to families and individuals seeking non-invasive, drug-free health support.

## July 2025 New Members

❖ The Chamber saw continued growth in July with the addition of ArentFox Schiff LLP, a nationally recognized law firm providing sophisticated legal counsel to businesses across key industries. Their DC-area presence brings legal strength to the Chamber's membership, with a focus on helping businesses navigate today's complex regulatory and economic landscape.

❖ Bare Beauty Medical Spa & Wellness Center, with locations in Springfield and Woodbridge, combines science and serenity to provide a range of aesthetic and wellness services. From microneedling and injectables to IV therapy and PRP treatments, their offerings cater to clients looking to enhance their well-being and confidence.

❖ Cherry Blossom PACE, operating under the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), delivers comprehensive medical and social services to seniors who prefer to age at home. Based in Alexandria, the organization works with Medicare and Medicaid to provide individualized care plans that include transportation, meals, and rehabilitation therapy.

❖ CTAB Hoops (Cross-Training Athletes into Believers) is a nonprofit organization that uses basketball training as a vehicle to teach life skills, discipline, and character development. Their specialized coaching and mentoring programs serve student-athletes across the region, helping shape not just players, but also well-rounded individuals.

❖ Hollin Hall Pastry Shop, a beloved bakery in the Fort Hunt community, recently joined while celebrating 20 years in business. Known for its exquisite pastries, cakes, and French desserts, the shop is especially renowned for its custom wedding cakes, making it a regional favorite for high-end celebrations.

\* Mezal Exports LLC, based in Fairfax, is an international distribution company specializing in grocery supplies and frozen protein commodities. By forming strategic relationships with top-tier suppliers, Mezal ensures quality products and competitive pricing for clients in the global marketplace.

❖ Palo Alto Networks, a leader in global cybersecurity, has also joined the Chamber's growing tech and IT cohort. The company provides advanced, AI-powered solutions to protect digital infrastructure across cloud, mobile, and on-premise networks. Their mission to safeguard digital life aligns with the Chamber's vision of a secure and innovative business environment.

❖ Safford Hyundai of Springfield is a newly built dealership and the ninth location for the Safford Automotive Group. Located at 7615 Loisdale Road, the store offers a large inventory of new and used Hyundai vehicles, along with a state-of-the-art service department. The dealership is one of the largest Hyundai stores on the East Coast and a significant new player in the local automotive market.

## Why Businesses Join the Chamber

Businesses and organizations of all sizes choose to join the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce to access a range of benefits — networking opportunities, visibility within the community, advocacy on key local issues, and access to resources that support business growth.

From ribbon cuttings and member mixers to business breakfasts and legislative forums, the Chamber provides a platform for members to connect, collaborate, and contribute to a thriving local economy. In addition, members gain access to promotional opportunities through newsletters, social media, and Chamber events.

For more information about member benefits or how to join, visit [www.mountvernon-springfield.com](http://www.mountvernon-springfield.com).

## Clear as Mud



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Even though I have the time, and the place to write this column, I do not as yet have the clarity. The clarity to which I refer has to do with the results/meaning of my recent every-four-week standing lab order to draw blood. One of my levels spiked nearly 75%. Never a good result, up or down actually. And so, I am cautiously not optimistic. Sure enough, before I even had time to investigate (meaning google the subject matter/result - and try to remember the examples/explanations given are not necessarily relevant/about me), my oncologist emailed me (he keeps a close eye on my results). He recommended that I go in for a retest in less than the usual four weeks, 10 days in fact, which times perfectly with our next previously scheduled in-office appointment when we can discuss what's happening and why - and more importantly, what we're going to do about it.

Fortunately, that in-person appointment is fairly soon as I write this column, just a few days in fact so the waiting won't be the hardest part, it will sort of be the shortest part. And though I don't presume too much about what this means, what it does mean is something is going on. However, my 16+ years as a cancer patient has taught me a few things. One in particular: this elevated level might not mean as much as I think so I should try and not overreact until I hear the sound of the oncologist's voice. I don't want to get all existential on you regular readers, but very often during these blips, as I call them, the meaning of life reasserts its curiousness and envelopes (you'll note I didn't say overwhelms) one's mind as you try to navigate the time until your next appointment. That's when I'll learn, two days from now, if this is a 'blip'/precursor or whether it's an outlier.

Having endured/experienced this kind of discrepancy before I am well prepared for any eventuality. And let me state for the record right here: self-diagnosing is no help nor is reading about some random cancer patient on the internet. Moreover, anything I say or do in the interim is not going to affect the outcome. Therefore, for the next few days I'll have to pretend that there is nothing really wrong with me and think as many positive thoughts as possible. Also, it's sensible to remember that not every medical complication is cancer related. I am nearly 71 years old and as they say in Aiken, South Carolina: "Manure Occureth." Being a cancer patient certainly complicates my care, but a 'blip' can simply be a blip. That's how I roll anyway.

A long time ago - not in a far-off Galaxy, but right here, when Team Lourie was initially ensnared in this whole cancer world, when my "prognosed" life expectancy was "13 months to two years," it was impossible not to jump to conclusions and grasp at straws. I can remember sitting in an examining room waiting for my oncologist to come in and tell me the results of my latest scans and quite frankly whether I was going to live or die. Having survived that sort of experience provides you with a sort of perspective/understanding of the inevitability - or not of what a "terminal" diagnosis means and how one manages their life and interprets all this new data.

To say what else new is a bit simplistic and not necessarily rhetorical. As a cancer patient, much of what the patient endures is more of the same, only different. Reading too much into results not yet "contexted" by one's oncologist is an unanticipated side effect of your treatment. I've felt pain in my lungs and my scans were good, and I've felt nothing, and the scans were not good. It's not exactly a what's up is down and what's down is up-type existence. But neither is it ever a straight line so to speak between what you think you know and what your oncologist will tell you what there is to know. And even though I've been here and done this for almost 16 and a half years, it's not as if it ever gets any easier; it's just more familiar, if that makes any sense.

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

## ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

703-642-5173. Code ZF6.IPJ5

### SUNDAY/SEPT. 7

**Farewell to Lafayette:** A Bicentennial Tribute. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. In collaboration with the American Friends of Lafayette, this event will take place during the final weekend of bicentennial celebrations in honor of Lafayette's 1824-1825 tour of America. Join us as we reflect on Lafayette's legacy, his enduring influence on American liberty, democracy, and friendship at a site Lafayette visited during his celebrated visit to America. Schedule of events:

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Open House Tours at Woodlawn  
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Specialty Presentation: "Lafayette at Woodlawn"  
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: "Embodying Lafayette"

### SUNDAY/SEPT. 7

**Chalk-a-Block Party.** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. In Old Town Alexandria. Chalk artists will transform the sidewalks and parking lots of Old Town North into their canvases. Live music will fill the air from a variety of artists including local favorites The Okays, The Frontier, and Alejandro Villareal. Local artisans and makers organized by Made in ALX will be on hand to showcase their works. From stained glass to stationery to jewelry to spices to baked goods

and more, there's something for everyone!

### SUNDAY/SEPT. 7

**MIN ~ World Music Duo. 2 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Saïs Kamalidiin & Leonard Brown have performed together, in various contexts, for more than ten years. They have traveled to every continent (except Antarctica) studying and performing in many of the world's great music traditions. Dr. Saïs Kamalidiin performs on nine different instruments and has taught music at the collegiate level for more than a quarter century. Maestro Leonard Brown helps lead one of the world's great music organizations and has also taught music for more than a quarter century.

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