

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MARCH 5, 2026

Potomac River Sewage Contamination Declining

Concern about pathogens in the Potomac River remain, but it is now safe for recreation, says DC Water.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The Potomac River in the Washington, D.C. area is safe for recreation, DC Water said on March 2, after over five weeks of impaired water quality warnings following the Jan. 19 spill of over 200 million gallons of raw sewage into the river from a ruptured Potomac interceptor. The interceptor is a six-foot-diameter pipe that carries 60 million gallons of raw sewage a day 54 miles, from Dulles Airport to the Blue Plains Treatment plant in southeast Washington, D.C.

Various entities are monitoring the water. DC Water representatives say there has been no leakage since Feb. 8. They built a bypass to reroute wastewater, using pumps and part of the C&O Canal, hoping to complete repairs by mid-March.

Officials insist that drinking water is not affected. Fairfax Water's intake is located several miles upstream of where the spill enters.

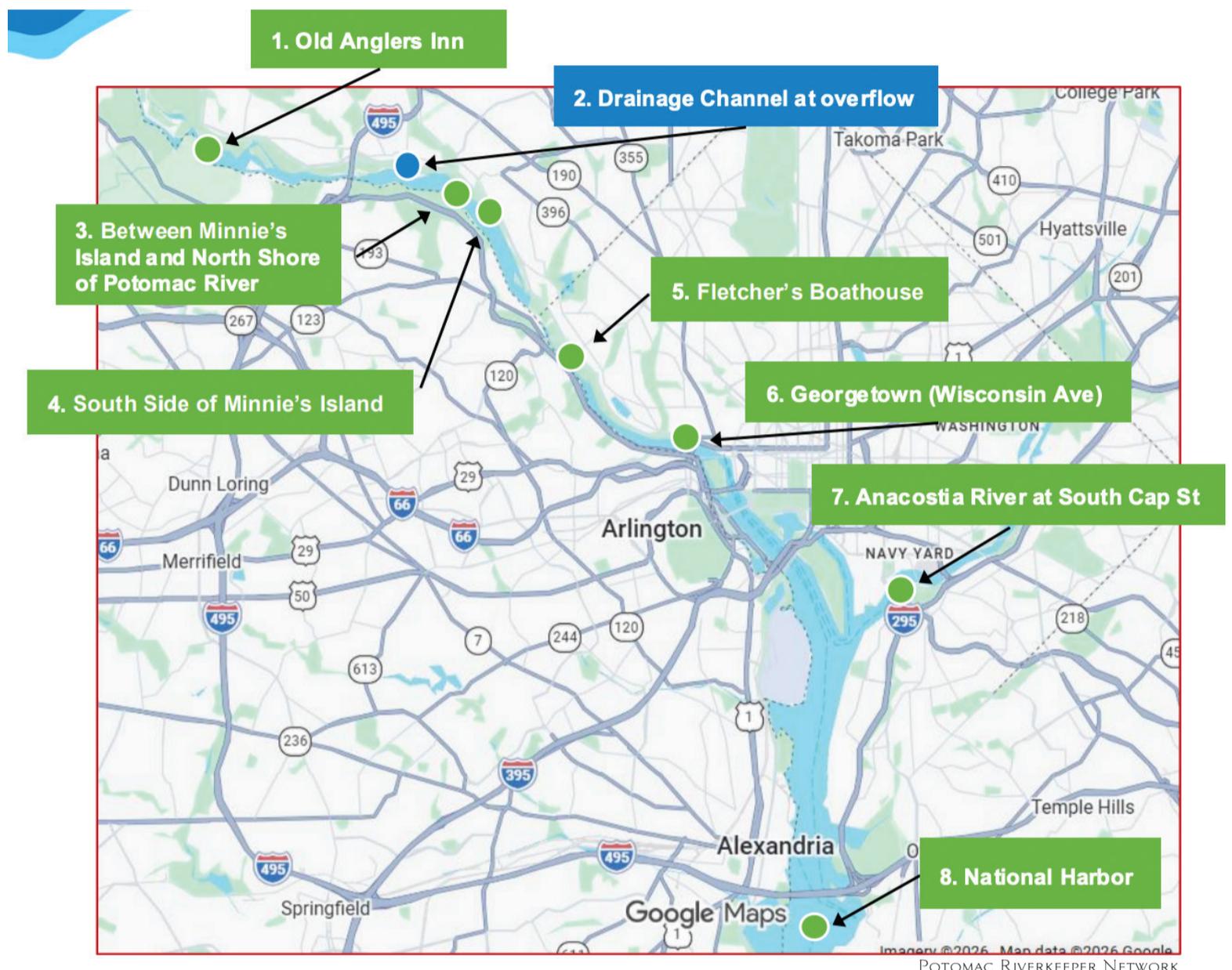
E. Coli, an Indicator

Several entities are conducting water quality sampling, primarily for E. coli. DC Water reports that E. coli levels are steadily decreasing.

DC Water's website says that variability in E. coli results are common. "For the Potomac River, historical water quality data shows E. coli levels may vary from a range as low as 10 MPN/100mL to as much as 5,000 MPN/100mL on a given day ... Swimming is not recommended when E. coli levels exceed 410 MPN/100 mL." (MPN is an estimate of the microbial concentration in the sample, expressed as MPN per 100 mL (milliliters).

The only acceptable level of E. coli in drinking water is zero MPN/100 mL, according to EPA

SEE POTOMAC RIVER, PAGE 8



Raw sewage spill in the Potomac River



POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK

Dean Naujoks of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network is taking many water samples to assess the Potomac River's water quality.

corcoran

MCENEARNEY



Belle Haven Legacy 6108 Vernon Terrace

\$1,995,000 | Built in 1926 and pristinely updated while preserving the classic features, this ideally positioned home is located on the premier flag circle in coveted Belle Haven. With three-stories the Colonial features blend timeless architecture with refined modern luxury. Six bedrooms and four and one half baths on an enviable landscaped lot!

Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



Del Ray 106 E Oxford Avenue

\$1,599,000 | Three large bedrooms and two full baths on upper level. The bright, open main level living area features a gourmet kitchen that flows out to a flat, fully fenced backyard.

Jen Walker Team : 571.237.2449
JenWalker.com



Stratford Landing 2100 Wittington Boulevard

\$1,185,000 | Three finished levels, five bedrooms and a two car garage! This residence offers more than classic architecture, it delivers an exceptional lifestyle.

Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



Old Town 416 S Fairfax Street

\$1,150,000 | This two-bedroom, two-bathroom home in Old Town Alexandria is full of character and elegance, perfectly set on a picturesque street with exceptional curb appeal.

Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
LaurenBishopHomes.com



Loisdale Estates 6816 Mayo Court

\$749,900 | Turn-key four-bedroom, two-bath single-family home with a two-tiered deck, a deep backyard, and an attached one-car garage.

Sheryl Lambson : 703.217.7012
SherylHomeSales.com



Taylor Run 110 E Taylor Run Parkway

\$735,000 | 3-bedroom, 2.5 bath, 1500 square feet on 3 levels. Gorgeous large deck overlooking Taylor run Creek and Angel Park, hardwood floors, large kitchen. Great location!

Robin Arnold : 703.966.5457
TheArnoldTeamSells.com



Park Fairfax 1705 Preston Road

\$465,000 | Investors dream! Rarely available three-bedroom, one-bath townhouse with a large patio overlooking green space. Close to I-395 and the Pentagon.

Sarah Picot : 202.251.5635
SarahPicot.net



Fairlington Villages 3000 S Columbus Street #B2

\$450,000 | Rare and unique Bradford model top-floor two-bedroom, one-bath unit offering classic charm and modern convenience in the coveted Fairlington Village.

Jillian Hogan Homes : 703.951.7655
JillianHoganHomes.com

live who you are

Proudly Serving Virginia, Washington, DC, Maryland, and West Virginia

Corcoran McEneaney | 109 S. Pitt Street | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.549.9292 | corcoranmce.com

©2026 Corcoran Group LLC. All rights reserved. Corcoran® and the Corcoran Logo are registered service marks owned by Corcoran Group LLC. Corcoran Group LLC fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Each office is independently owned and operated.

ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE

Woodlawn, Pope-Leighey House Have New Head



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

The Pope-Leighey House at Woodlawn, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.



The Woodlawn mansion, center of the 19th century Lewis family plantation.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Visitors to Woodlawn Mansion and the Pope-Leighey House can “have a true conversation about the human capacity for change,” says Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar, the property’s new executive director who started on Jan. 26. Asked to identify the challenges in managing this historic property in southeastern Fairfax County, she quips, “They are opportunities.”



Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar.

Newhold-Ravikumar came to this new post from Iowa State University where she was the designer-in-residence. She also previously served as the Smithsonian Institution’s first Undersecretary for Education, helping the 19 museums’ education staff work with interpreters, schools, scholars and visitors. Earlier, she was the president of the Kansas City Art Institute.

The 126-acre Woodlawn complex, a former plantation, became the first historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949.

Many Stories

Woodlawn mansion and the mid-20th-century Pope-Leighey House, designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, inspired her to explore how to tell the story of the two very different homes from two very different eras. George Washington carved out 2,000 acres from his Mount Vernon estate and built the Woodlawn mansion in 1805 for his step-granddaughter, Eleanor “Nelly” Custis, and her husband, Lawrence Lewis, all members of the gentry class of the time.

Woodlawn represents “a level of opulence” while the Pope-Leighey House represents “what people could afford” in the mid-

20th century, says Neuhold-Ravikumar. “Together they show the arc of human experience, what we need and want over time,” she explains. “The floor plans alone can show how the role of women has changed over time, for example.”

A Wright Fan

She is especially intrigued by Wright’s work and for many years has visited one Wright-designed home every year. The Pope-Leighey House is an example of the architect’s 100 or so Usonian houses built between 1936 and 1959, designed to be efficient, functional and affordable for middle-income people.

To build it, then owners Lauren and Charlotte Pope envisioned spending \$5,500, equal to about \$86,000 today, but ended up paying \$7,000.

The Quakers at Woodlawn

Another story Neuhold-Ravikumar is eager to tell is the Quaker experience at Woodlawn. In 1846, a group of the Religious Society of Friends bought 2,000 acres of the Woodlawn tract to create a farming community of free African Americans and white settlers, “a free labor colony,” to demonstrate that farms could succeed without enslaving people, an alternative to

Virginia’s plantation culture. The Lewises had enslaved around 100 people of African descent; George and Martha Washington, over 300. Unlike enslaved people then, these African Americans were allowed to own property.

Woodlawn can help people understand the country’s evolution, Neuhold-Ravikumar believes, for example, how enslaved people in the 19th century gained their freedom and moved to a path of sustainability.

Neuhold-Ravikumar came to the United States from India to study graphic design at Iowa State where she earned a master of fine arts degree in graphic design. She received a bachelor’s in fine arts from Stella Maris College in India. She teaches online design classes for the Maryland Institute College of Art and for Iowa State.

Why should people care about saving historic places? “They are tools for democracy,” she says. “Each place tells a unique story. We must look to the past to inform the future.”

Forthcoming Events

- ❖ March 1 to 31, 63rd Annual Needlework Show, with over 600 entries; daily except Tuesdays

- ❖ June, America’s 250th Anniversary Exhibit, the Quakers at Woodlawn

- ❖ Starting in April, Coffee and Conversation, every third Saturday, discussions with experts like John Garrison Marks, author of “Thy Will Be Done.”

Information

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

ROAD CLOSED

Paul Spring Rd (Rt 799)
Effective Friday, February 27
until Monday, March 9

VDOT

LEGEND

- Road Closure and Work Site
- Road Closure
- Detour

Paul Spring Road Closed for Urgent Pipe Replacement

FORT HUNT – Paul Spring Road (Route 799) is closed to through traffic between Fort Hunt Road (Route 629) and Rippon Road (Route 805) due to failed pipes at the Paul Spring Branch crossing, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Crews are expected to begin work to replace the pipes early next week, weather permitting. The closure is expected to be in place through Monday, March 9. Through traffic will be detoured via Fort Hunt Road, Mason Hill Road (Route 4220), and Rippon Road back to Paul Spring Road.

Historic Contributions of Northern Virginia's African Americans

The human economic engines that made those wealthy white landowners comfortable and successful were enslaved African Americans who toiled in servitude through much of American history without recognition.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The imposing mansions of many historic Virginia plantations, like Mount Vernon, Gunston Hall and Woodlawn, dominate visually and usually dominate the story. The human economic engines that made those wealthy white landowners comfortable and successful were enslaved African Americans who toiled in servitude through much of American history, without recognition.

African-American history is everywhere. It is American history, as several local programs explored last month.

The Masons at Huntley

At Huntley, Thomson Mason's country retreat near today's U.S. 1, 22 enslaved people lived and worked by 1831, mostly farming, growing wheat, rye and corn, Mikayla Ells of the Fairfax County Park Authority, explained on Feb. 19.

Park officials say that the families probably all lived in the Tenant House crammed into a space measuring 11.5 feet by 30 feet, with a loft atop. Some took or were given the last name of Mason. Others' names were Humphreys, Sommers, Lewis and Laws.

Among the places associated with the enslaved people was the basement. Those allowed into the house were largely restricted to the basement where they warmed food for the Masons in a fireplace and sent it upstairs on a dumb waiter. Some collected ice from the Potomac River, hauled it back to the ice well and hoisted it up for the Masons. They smoked meat in the combined smokehouse and "necessary." The meat's aromas helped mask the odor of human waste.

Thomson Mason freed one person, Milly.

Some enslaved people tried to flee Huntley, like Sally. An 1840 Alexandria Gazette notice blared, "All persons are forewarned from

SEE NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S, PAGE 5



Huntley was the country retreat of Alexandria's mayor, Thomson Mason.

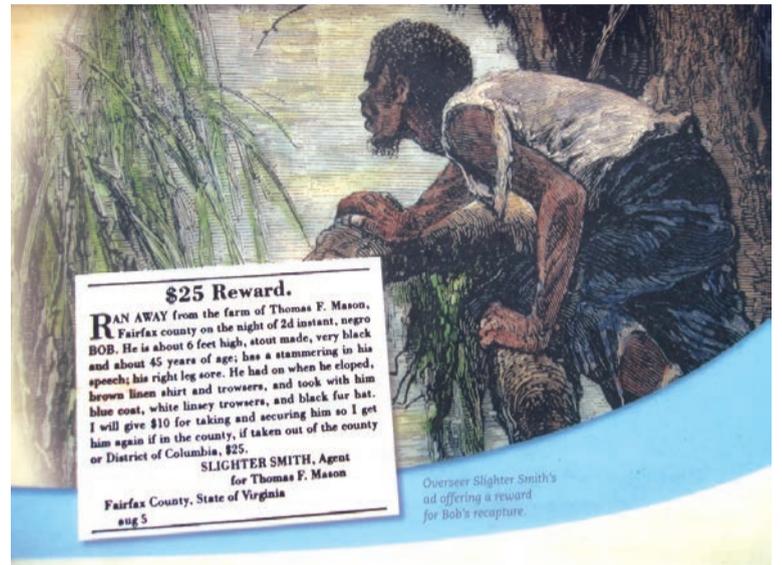


Enslaved people hauled ice from the Potomac River for storage in the ice well.

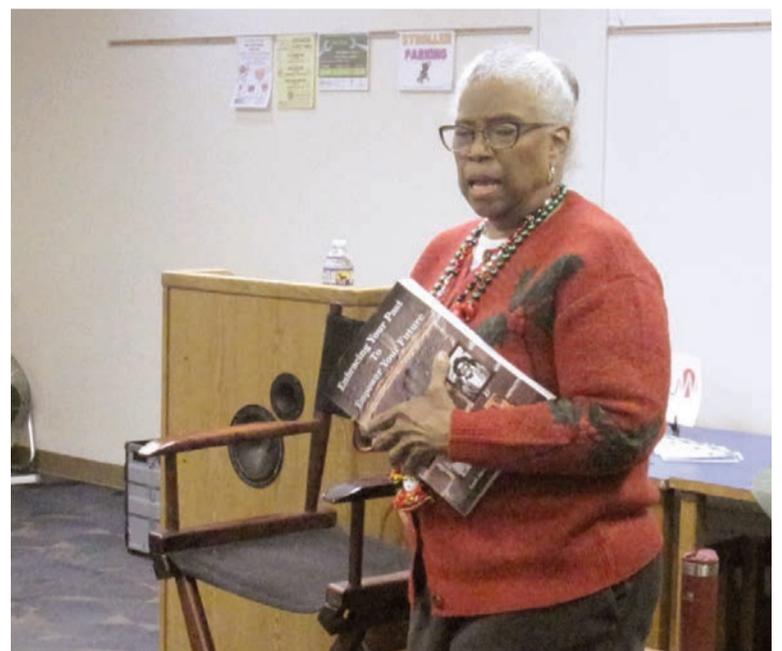


At Gunston Hall, Rosalyn Gaines portrays Nell, an enslaved woman who longs for freedom.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



The ad in which Thomson Mason offered a \$25 reward for capturing Bob, a man who ran away from Huntley and involuntary servitude.



Rev. Sherrie Quander preserves the history of many members of the Quander family.



Edwin Nkrumah introduced himself to Rev. Quander and said he is originally from Ghana, the country of origin of the first "Quanders."

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



The “necessary” and smokehouse at Huntley. Smoking meat in the same building as the outhouse helped counter unpleasant odors.

Northern Virginia’s African Americans

FROM PAGE 5

harboring a negro woman named Sally.” Mason offered a \$25 reward for Bob who ran away in 1828.

Several generations of Masons owned vast tracts of land in Fairfax County and Alexandria. The best-known, George IV, owner of Gunston Hall and Thomson’s grandfather, helped write the Fairfax Resolves and the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights. A fervent believer in individual liberties, his writings influenced the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights. But this statesman who supported freedom for his country never freed his slaves. He did call slavery “a slow poison.”



The Mount Vernon Branch of the AAUW sponsored the talk.

African-American Foodways

At Gunston Hall’s Feb. 14 “History in the Kitchen” presentation on Africa-based food, Lacey Villiva cooked an okra dish using an 18th century recipe by Mary Randolph. Randolph called it a West India dish, her term for the Caribbean, but okra is an African vegetable. Many African Americans brought to North America were first shipped to various Caribbean islands.

Villiva boiled the okra with salt, pepper, butter and sugar. She said that some white people brought some food from Africa to try to keep their African-American “workforce” healthy and to capitalize on their knowledge of growing crops indigenous to them.

The Quanders

Mount Vernon has a Quander Road and a Quander Road School, named for the oldest African-American family on record in the United States, Rev. Sherrie Quander told around 50 members of the American Association of University Women, Mount Vernon Branch on Feb. 17.

On the name’s origin, she said, “The story goes that in the late 1600s, two brothers were kidnapped in Ghana and put on a slave ship that brought them to Maryland where they were sold to different families.”

One was Egya Amkwandoh who when asked his name, answered “Amkwandoh,” which was misinterpreted as, “I am Quando.” Some of his descendants were enslaved at Mount Vernon and after being freed, acquired land in the Mount Vernon area and in Maryland.

Sherrie Quander described finding deeds and other treasures “stuck in drawers” in her mother’s house near today’s West Potomac High School. She has pieced together the story of her great-great-grandfather, Charles Henry Quander who worked at Woodlawn in the early 1800s when a group of Quakers demonstrated farming without slavery, taught African Americans to read and write and let them own land.

Sherrie’s grandfather Charles Henry Quander was freed, disappeared for seven years, and turned up at Spring Bank, a house built around 1809 east of today’s U.S.

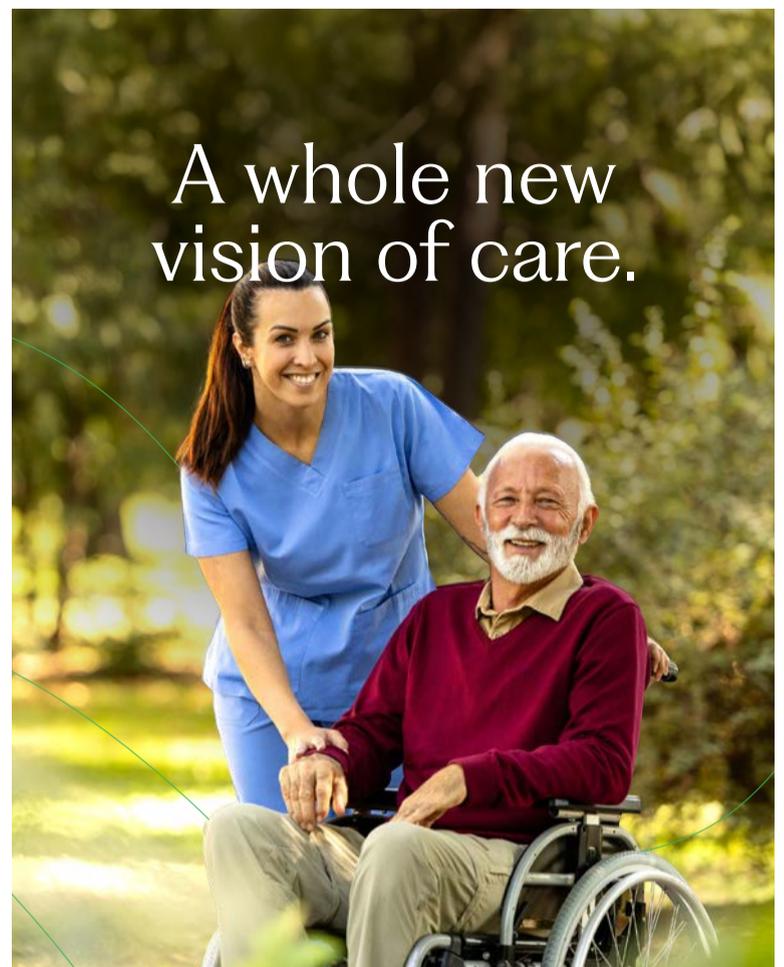
1 and South Kings Highway. He bought 80 acres there where freed slaves farmed and built homes. Sherrie found Charles Henry’s directive dividing up his land to six children, including Sherrie’s father. Some of the land was eventually sold to developers who built houses on it and some became Springbank Park.

Quander, an actress-turned-minister, attended the former Groveton High School and today lives in her parents’ house, built in 1960 on the last remaining piece owned by the Quanders. Referring to her father, she said, “Dad was born on this land and would die on this land.” Her mother said, “That’s what he did.”

“I’m learning something new every day,” Quander told her audience.

The talk was fantastic, Mount Vernonite Claire Coulter said. “She tied her history into where we live today.”

Elaine Kolish agreed: “It was fascinating hearing Ms. Quander discuss how her family has traced their roots over the centuries back to Ghana and how Quander Road came to be named after her family.”



A whole new vision of care.



Belmont Bay
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

Care, anew.

14906 Richmond Hwy, Woodbridge, VA
703.491.6167 / BelmontBayRehab.com



www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION

Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette

Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.

For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email sales@connectionnewspapers.com



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Results of Fairfax County Purple Can Glass Recycling.

Recycling in Fairfax County, a Mixed Bag

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Those blue recycling bins that people rumble out to the curb on trash collection day seem ubiquitous around Fairfax County, but recycling rates vary greatly and in some cases are declining, according to the recent report from the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC).

The Board of Supervisors committed to increase waste reuse and recycling. In the 2021 Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan, they set a target of 90 percent waste reduction by 2040. The Joint Environmental Task Force set a goal of 90 percent by 2030.

At-large EQAC member Eric Goplerud, author of the chapter on waste, said, “We need consistency in what can be recycled and accountability for actually recycling.”

“Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown

Coming Up

In an upcoming edition, we will publish an article on how people can recycle to benefit good causes.

away as trash and turning them into new products,” states the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Fairfax County, for example, collects glass containers which get new lives as new bottles or as construction materials. Paper and cardboard become new paper products.

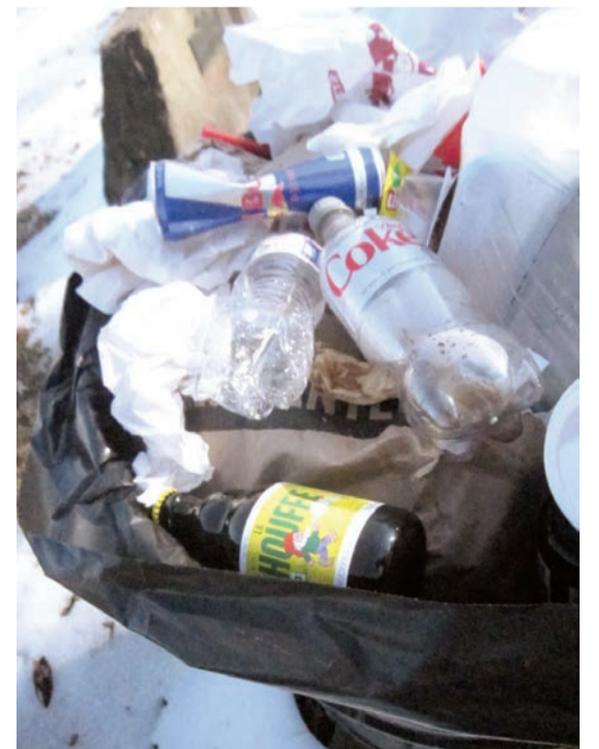
Recycling Rates

In 2024, the overall recycling rate of all waste collected of 44.7 percent was four percent lower than the average of the last 10 years, 48.7 percent. Recycled materials as a percent of overall waste fell by six percent. Paper and cardboard declined

SEE RECYCLING IN FAIRFAX, PAGE 7
MARCH 5-18, 2026



Fairfax County provides residents with recycling bins for curbside pickup.



Many items like bottles and cans can be recycled.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Recycling in Fairfax County, a Mixed Bag

FROM PAGE 6

by 26 percent.

“While Fairfax already recovers [recycles] significant amounts of yard waste (64 percent), construction debris (78 percent) and metals (over 50 percent), other major waste streams remain under-recycled,” reports EQAC. “Food waste is recovered at just five percent, paper at 25 percent, glass at 27 percent and waste wood at 31 percent. These materials make up a large portion of what is still burned and landfilled.”

There were “notable increases” in glass, food wastes, construction waste and metals. Though 27 percent of glass is recycled, “We’re still missing three quarters of the glass,” Gopelrud notes. Yard waste rates remained steady.

Recycling advocates boast that from 2022 to 2023 plastic bag use dropped 2.5 percent, and five percent from 2023 to 2024. Many attribute this to the Board of Supervisors’ creation of a .05 per plastic bag tax that retail outlets began collecting in 2022 and generated \$7.7 million between January 2022 and mid-2025.

By December 2024, even though over 3.4 million fewer bags were used, “That leaves a lot of bags, more than 32 million in 2024, still in circulation, still littering Fairfax streets, trees and waterways,” EQAC pointed out.

Many Northern Virginia groceries collect plastic bags which are used to make composite decking and other materials by companies like the Winchester-based firm, Trex.

The Waste Management Hierarchy

EPA’s website has a non-hazardous waste management hierarchy that ranks strategies from most to least environmentally preferred and emphasizes reducing, reusing, recycling and composting as “key to sustainable materials management.”

Reducing waste at the source is the most environmentally preferred strategy. This includes reusing or donating items, buying in bulk, reducing packaging, redesigning products and reducing toxicity.

Next is recycling which includes collecting used, reused or unused items that would otherwise be considered waste; sorting and processing the recyclable products into raw materials; and remanufacturing the recycled raw materials into new products.

Energy recovery is next, converting non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity or fuel, often called waste-to-energy. Lorton’s Reworld facility, for example, processes over 1,120,000 tons of waste and produces 93 megawatts of electricity around the clock, enough to power 67,000 homes for a year.

The least environmentally-preferred strategy is treatment and disposal. Treatment, like shredding and incineration, can help reduce waste’s volume and toxicity. Landfilling is the most common disposal method.

Fairfax County has two facilities: the I-66 Transfer Station and the I-95 Landfill Complex.

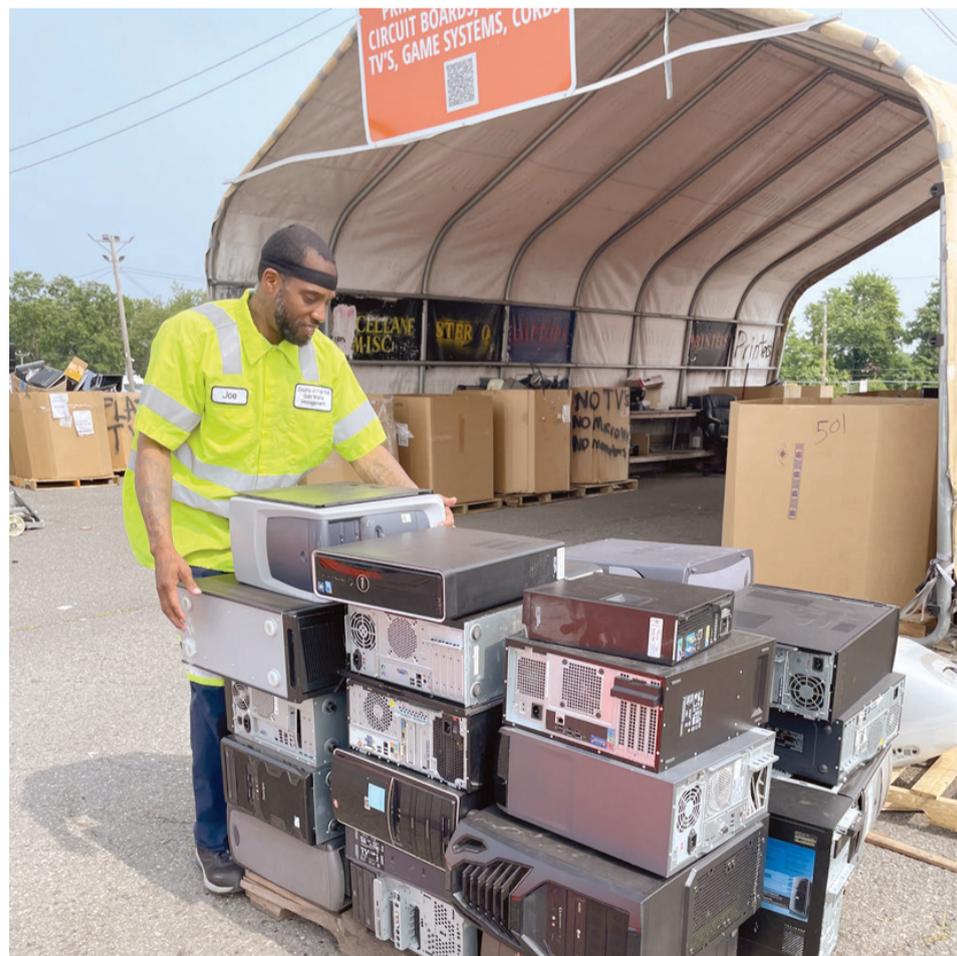
How to Boost Recycling

EQAC made several recommendations, including state legislation to allow localities to require haulers to collect organic waste and

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Fairfax County provides many ways to recycle, including e-cycling at the I-66 transfer station.



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
E-cycling at I-66 Transfer Station.

Information

EQAC Report, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/environmental-quality-advisory-council>

What Goes Where, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/residential-materials>

to authorize local jurisdictions to mandate organic waste collection. Del. Kathy Tran and Sen. Scott Surovell have introduced bills to encourage composting.

EQAC also calls for state legislation to authorize counties and towns to ban disposable plastic bags.

For more solutions, Gopelrud points to jurisdictions that require trash haulers to monitor bins for proper recycling and to reject non-compliant containers. The county “could impose pay-to-throw,” he suggests, charge a fee for waste by weight or size. “The more mixed trash you throw in the bin the more you pay,” he explains. “We need to create incentives for people to do the right thing.”

Virginia does not have a “bottle bill” that requires a refundable deposit on some drink containers.

Some people promote extended producer responsibility, an approach that makes producers responsible for the end-of-life management of products. EQAC’s report is silent on this strategy.

“The biggest impediment to increasing the county’s recycling rate is insufficient and inconsistent participation from waste generators,” Matt Adams, a county waste management director, said. “Overcoming this requires a comprehensive approach that engages and supports all sectors. To make a meaningful difference, residents and businesses across the county need to do their part by actively diverting organics, recyclables, construction and demolition debris and hard-to-recycle materials.”

Jen Cole of Clean Fairfax, a litter prevention group, commends the county. “We don’t know why recycling rates dipped in certain categories, but it is heartening to see the glass and food waste rate skyrocket because of the creative endeavors of the County and the commitment to the environment by the residents. More of that please!” she said.

Potomac River Sewage Contamination Declining

FROM PAGE 1
and other sources.

Alexandria, Fairfax County Impacts

At the request of Virginia Senators Scott Surovell and Richard Stuart and Delegate Paul Krizek, whose districts border the river, on Feb. 17, Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) collected water samples at 25 locations along approximately 49 miles of the Potomac from the Chain Bridge to the mouth of Potomac Creek in King George and Stafford Counties.

DEQ reported these E. coli levels from those samples at these Northern Virginia stations:

Hunting Creek/Potomac River, 313; Jones Point, 31; Belle Haven Marina, 158; Across from Fort Washington, 10; Little Hunting Creek/Potomac River, 85; Gunston Hall, 20. On Feb. 25, at National Harbor E. coli levels were 105 MPN/100 mL.

On Feb. 13, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) issued a recreational advisory for 72.5 miles from the American Legion Memorial Bridge (I-495) in Fairfax County to the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge in King George County, urging people and pets to avoid recreational water activities, such as swimming, wading, canoeing or kayaking.

With D.C. Water's March 2 lifting of the advisory that paused recreation use, activities like rowing teams' practice may resume.

Fairfax County's Deputy County Executive Jennifer Miller said that the county is monitoring the situation, that "Fecal indicator bacterial monitoring show no ongoing downstream impacts from the sewage release, and no long-term impacts are anticipated now that the spill is contained."

What Went into the River?

The Choose Clean Water Coalition reports that University of Maryland found the following:

- ❖ E. coli bacteria levels at the spill site were literally thousands of times above the water safety limit, 410 MPN, on Jan. 21, 28 and Feb. 3.

- ❖ Bacteria levels were over 100 times the contact limit on Feb. 12 and on Jan. 28, E. coli levels were over the safety limit at a site 10 miles downstream from the sewage overflow.

- ❖ On Jan. 21 and Jan. 28, Staphylococcus aureus was detected at the spill site and nine miles downstream. Overall, 33 percent of the sampled sites were positive for the pathogen.

- ❖ MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant strain of the S. aureus bacteria that

causes infections, was identified at the spill site.

Impacts on People, the Environment

In a Feb. 27 interview, Dr. Joan Rose, an international water microbiology expert at Michigan State University, explained that up to 100 different kinds of pathogens can be found in untreated wastewater at varying concentrations. Levels can peak if many people are sick, for example, during the 2020 COVID pandemic.

"It only takes a few pathogens for us to get sick. For example, if we have one million viruses discharged, even if 99 percent die off, we still have 10,000 viruses. You only need five to ten viruses for us to get sick," she explained.

Known as "the poop bacteria," E. coli is a group of bacteria that normally live in the intestines of people and animals. "Everyone has it in their feces. From one to three percent of E. coli are pathogenic," she said. Other pathogens commonly found in sewage include salmonella, hepatitis A and the norovirus. Pathogens in fecal waste can be "quite persistent," Rose said, adding, "They can persist in sediments and some can colonize, grow in sediments and last for months."

Nutrients from sewage, like nitrogen and phosphorus, "can exacerbate hazardous algal blooms, some of which have a toxin that can cause respiratory distress," she said.

Dr. Rose cited a study by Sam Dorevitch at the University of Illinois of the impacts water contaminated with wastewater on "limited-contact water recreation" like boating, canoeing and fishing. Over three years, he studied 11,297 people and the incidence and severity of illness, associations between water exposure and risk of illness.

He found that limited-contact recreation, both on effluent dominated waters and on waters designated for general use, was associated with an elevated risk of gastrointestinal illness.

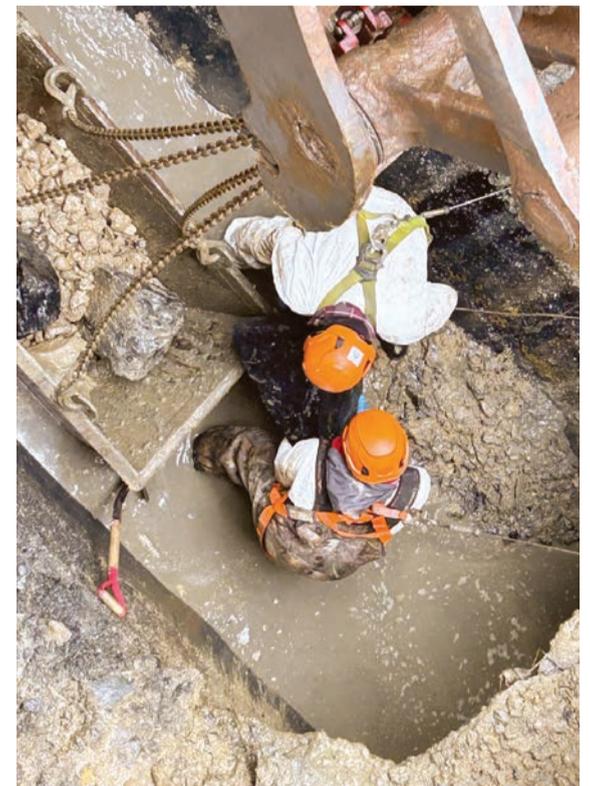
Ecological Impacts

How these pathogens affect natural resources "depends on how much and whether they accumulate along the shoreline or an island," Dr. Rose said. "If water pools, you can get a high organic loading and anerobic conditions which adversely affect benthic and other aquatic organisms that need air to survive. A single sewage spill can have a temporary effect, but consistent inputs of nutrients, from sewage for example, can disrupt ecosystems. A spill is like icing on



DC WATER

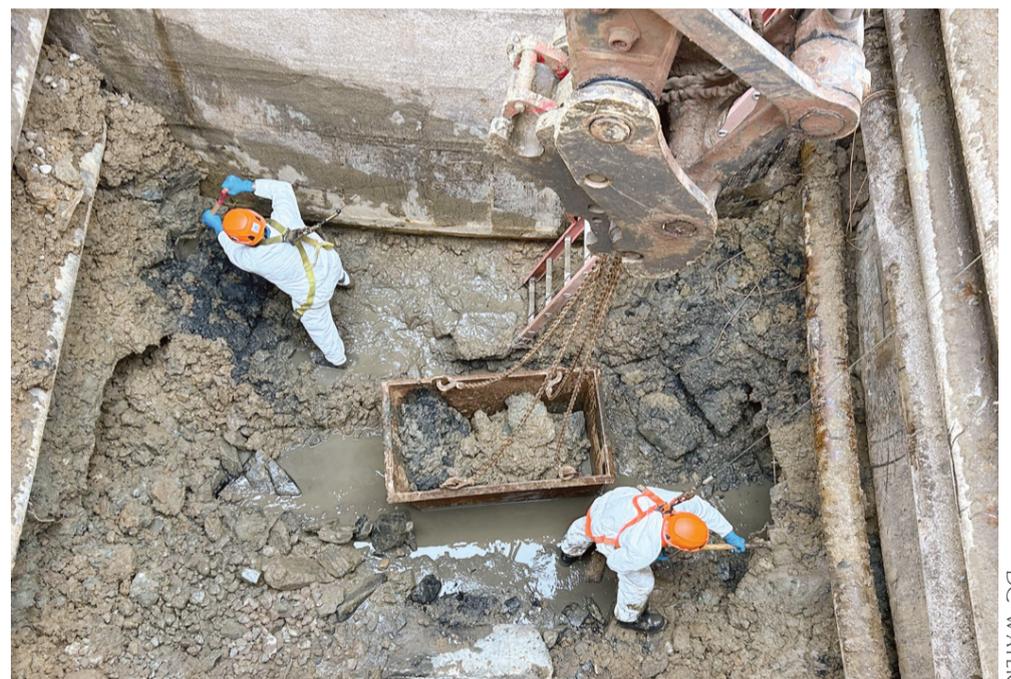
This photo shows the expanded excavation around the damaged section of pipe. As part of that process we install what are called trench boxes for shoring around the excavated section. This was done to reach additional sections of the pipe where a rock and debris dam were located.



DC WATER

Workers inside the damaged section of the 72-inch sewer pipe known as the Potomac Interceptor removing the large rocks and debris inside the initial collapse area.

The process of clearing rocks from the collapsed area includes workers manually shoveling out dirt, muck and debris that was inside.



DC WATER

the cake."

D. C.'s Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) reports, "Solids in sewage can smother aquatic habitats. Plants and animals can suffer infections from the bacteria, viruses and other pathogens; they can also suffer from acute toxicity in sewage chemicals. ... DOEE is planning fish and wildlife surveys beginning in the spring (some planned as early as late February) that will help indicate if the sewage spill has larger impacts."

Longer Term Prospects

A Potomac Riverkeeper Network

team led by Dean Naujoks has collected water samples at multiple sites. Naujoks urges officials to "look south beyond the Woodrow Wilson Bridge," and especially to support watermen who make their living from the Potomac. He worries that people will "lose confidence in the river."

"Blue catfish season starts in March," he noted in an interview. "Around 3.4 million tons are fished out of the Potomac each year. Will anyone buy and eat it?" Perception is a big concern so his group advocates for daily monitoring. They'll also work to focus federal dollars

on communities impacted for those who make living on the water.

Electeds Call for Funding

Virginia's Eighth District Congressman, Don Beyer, whose district abuts the river, is highlighting the over-60-year-old sewage system's vulnerabilities. He led ten other Washington-area members of Congress to seek funds to repair and modernize the Potomac interceptor and urged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) to identify a backup water supply for the Washington region, which currently lacks a secondary water source.

NEWS

Man Charged In Fatal Stabbing Of Woman in Hybla Valley

A man has been charged with second-degree murder in the fatal stabbing of a woman in Hybla Valley on Feb. 23.

On Feb. 23, at 7:16 p.m., officers responded to Richmond Highway and Arlington Drive in Hybla Valley for a death investigation. Officers arrived on scene and located Stephanie Minter, 41, of Fredericksburg, in the bus stop shelter with multiple stab wounds to the upper body. Officers began performing life-saving measures until relieved by Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel. She was pronounced deceased on scene. Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau responded to assume the investigation.

Through surveillance footage and interviews, detectives identified Abdul Jalloh, 32, of no fixed address, as the last person seen with Minter. Jalloh was seen exiting the bus with Minter at Richmond Highway and Arlington Drive.

On Feb. 24, at 4:01 p.m., officers responded to the 8600 block of Richmond Highway in Woodlawn for a suspicious person call. An employee recognized Jalloh as the

person of interest when he entered a business and immediately contacted police. Officers quickly located Jalloh and connected him to a larceny that occurred earlier in the day in the 8700 block Richmond Highway in Woodlawn. He was arrested and transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and charged with Petit Larceny, where he was held on no bond.

On Feb. 25, detectives determined Jalloh was responsible for the fatal stabbing of Minter according to police reports and obtained a warrant charging him

with Second-Degree Murder. Jalloh remains held on no bond.

Detectives continue to conduct interviews, collect video surveillance, and process evidence recovered from the scene to determine the circumstances that led up to the fatal stabbing.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at 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

FREE ST. PATRICK'S DAY LYFT RIDES
Preparing to combat that time

of the year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration figures, more than one-third (34%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area on St. Patrick's Day.

Easing Your Transition from Hospital to Home.



AlexandriaHC.com · 571.257.1896
900 Virginia Ave, Alexandria, VA 22302

Care, Anew.
A Revitalizing Recovery Experience

The Boulevard
Post Acute

9229 Arlington Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22031
703.385.0555 · Boulevardrehabhc.com

JOIN THE CHAMBER AND FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

MARKETING EVENTS COMMUNITY

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce stands as a prominent force in the metropolitan area, proudly representing more than 400 businesses in the eastern region of Fairfax County. Our commitment to cultivating a thriving business ecosystem is realized through an array of networking events, educational programs, advocacy initiatives, and invaluable resources. Learn more at mountvernon.springfield.com.

Phone: 703.360.6925 | Email: info@mountvernon.springfield.com | Website: mountvernon.springfield.com

Sign up for FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION to all of our papers

www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

Peace as Means and End At 2026 Student Peace Awards

Powerful community recognition reaches beyond sports and academic achievements.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Amidst a backdrop of significant international tension, Fairfax County honored 28 recipients of the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County during a reception held at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 1, at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax. Now in its 20th year, the program is presented by a coalition of 15 secular and religious organizations, led by the founding Herndon Friends Meeting and the George Mason University Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Margaret Fisher, an organizer and member of Friends, opened the reception saying that in the past year, there have been eight major wars and 28 other armed conflicts worldwide. Despite this, Fisher said the ceremony highlights a localized reality of peace-building where students “shine their lights” to show that peace is possible.

Ryan McElveen, Fairfax County School Board member at-large, added during speaker remarks that the students are honored because they “chose courage over cynicism, compassion over indifference and service over self-interest.”

“They did not begin their projects seeking recognition,” McElveen said. “They acted because they saw a need.”

The ceremony highlighted the “intentional peacemaking” of students who treat harmony as an active practice rather than a passive goal. Fisher cited a conservative estimate of 240,000 people killed in 2025, with many more maimed, traumatized, starved and displaced. She acknowledges that recent events have added to the suffering and that it’s easy to feel futility that “lulls one into inaction.”

“Why keep struggling when the destructive elements of human nature are so ascendant in human culture?” Fisher asked.

Speaker U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11, addressed the temptation to withdraw or accept defeat in the movement toward peace during his remarks. “We cannot afford to do that,” Walkinshaw said. He connects his optimism to the students and to history, noting

SEE PEACE AS MEANS, PAGE 11



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The 2026 Student Peace Awards recipients of Fairfax County gather for a group photo during a reception honoring their achievements at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1.



Sheba Ahmadzai, a Centreville High School senior who coordinated more than 50 volunteers to deliver supplies to 15,000 people in Afghanistan, is joined by her father, Shirshah Ahmadzai at the 2026 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County.



Damika Ravi, a Fairfax High School senior, codeveloped a presentation to school officials to influence local policy and foster a welcoming school environment.



Savanne Clark, center, a Mount Vernon High School senior who created a template for schools to display mental health resources, is joined by Mallory Whitehouse, left, her college and career specialist, and her mother, Michelle Willis.



U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11, says young people have repeatedly led the nation “out of the darkness and toward progress.”



Margaret Fisher of the Herndon Friends Meeting speaks during the 2026 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County ceremony.



School Board member Ryan McElveen praises honorees who “did not begin their projects seeking recognition” but “acted because they saw a need.”



Awardees of the 2026 Student Peace Awards and their families fill the seats at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1, waiting for the reception honoring the recipients to begin. Standing (far left) is U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11.



Special guests at the 2026 Student Peace Awards include (from left) U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, D-11; and Fairfax County School Board members Ryan McElveen, At-Large; Ricardy Anderson, Mason District; Robyn Lady, Dranesville District; Marcia St. John-Cummings, Franconia District; and Ilryong Moon, At-Large. They listen to the opening remarks at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on March 1.

Peace as Means and End At 2026 Student Peace Awards

FROM PAGE 10

that for almost 250 years, young people have led the country out of darkness and toward progress.

Walkinshaw cited John Lewis, a teenager from a sharecropping family in rural Alabama who listened to a radio program about the Birmingham bus boycott. Hearing that young people were organizing and fighting for equality and freedom “changed his life completely,” Walkinshaw said. Shortly after hearing that radio program, Lewis joined the boycott, launching a lifetime of advocacy that helped free all of us in many ways.

Attendees included the families and friends of the awardees, as well as Walkinshaw and Fairfax County School Board members Robyn Lady, Dranesville District; Marcia St. John-Cummings, Franconia District; and Ilryong Moon, At-Large.

While there are many awards for academics and athletics, the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County occupies a niche because of its grassroots origin. Peace is defined by the students themselves. The award consists of a monetary gift for each recipient and a matching donation for a peace-focused charity of their choice, Fisher said.

Sheba Ahmadzai is a senior at Centreville High School. As part of the award, she is gifted \$100 to give to a charity of her choice. Ahmadzai explained that the Afghan

Student Association should receive the donation to help refugees with mentorship and tutoring.

“Our goal is to bring the Afghan community at school together, especially (new) students who came from Afghanistan, refugees who are struggling ... We help them,” Ahmadzai said.

Damika Ravi, a senior at Fairfax High School, said she wants to leave a legacy of networking for change. Her peace work centers on raising awareness of microaggressions and school safety. Ravi explained that the key is making sure research is given to the right people so they can “really get it out there and spread the information and actually create change,” Ravi said.

Savanne Clark, a senior at Mount Vernon High School, said working for peace has changed how she interacts with friends and family.

“I’m learning a lot more about taking bits and pieces of each person’s perspective and then really working on putting them together, possibly to find a solution, and then sometimes not finding a solution, really just creating more understanding,” Clark said. “And I found that understanding is just as impactful as finding a solution.”

Among the many other recipients are Caleb Crawford, a junior at Cedar Lane High School. Crawford assists students who are anx-

ious or have difficulty with peer interactions.

Members of the Verdict school newspaper at Justice High School seek to inform students about current news with recent articles on sports betting, students’ interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and teen pregnancy.

Alden Walcott, a junior at South Lakes High School, writes about her Indian Nation and produced “How Indigenous Teens Stay Connected with Their Heritage” for PBS.

The award stands apart because 28 schools chose a recipient, including three groups, for the 2025-26 award. Unlike programs managed by government agencies, these are entirely volunteer-run and grassroots-funded. A single Quaker group, Herndon Friends Meeting, started the program in 2006. It has since grown into a coalition of 15 to 20 local organizations. Presented by the Herndon Friends Meeting and the Langley Hill Friends Meeting, the prize structure encourages students to research and engage with the larger world of advocacy.

Closing out the reception, McElveen said peace is not a passive state but a series of choices made every day.

“May your work continue to make Fairfax County and the world a much more peaceful place,” McElveen said.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Anwar Kiyar, a junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, chats with (center) Fairfax County school board representatives, Marcia St. John-Cummings and (right) Robyn Lady. Kiyar led a two-week computer programming course for children 9-to-12 years old and initiated a weekly math club.

Front Page News Stands the Test of Time

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

When my grandmother passed away in the mid 1980's, I was tasked with my nearby relatives to clean out the house and prepare it for selling, a job that's taken on by many families across the country through the years. It's part of life.

My grandfather was an admiral in the Navy and on both sides of the family, we had many links to the military, so the house just outside of Old Town Alexandria was full of Navy memorabilia. As we cleaned out closets and divided up some of the things, everything had a touch of military.

I was down in the basement in a musty closet, clearing old glassware off one of the shelves when I noticed an old newspaper being used as a shelf covering. I cleared the dust off and saw the headline: 250,000 NAZI CHUTISTS PERIL

EGYPT, it read. It was a newspaper they brought from their last residence in San Diego called The San Diego Union, dated June 23, 1942. I was amazed at this gripping artifact, but other family members, not so much. "What do you want that for?" they asked, as I tucked it away.

At that point in the war, June 1942, Germany had momentum and things looked pretty bleak on the warfront for our country. Rationing was impacting everyone, people were dying on the battlefield, and the United States had a war in the Pacific too, so everyone was involved. My grandfather had been an officer with a ship in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed 6 months earlier, so after that, they moved to San Diego and read The San Diego Union for their news.

The rest of the front page was covered with WWII news. Other items included a story on paratroopers in Italy, the Royal Air Force bombing German Gener-



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

A stirring front page of news that was used as a shelf covering.

al Erwin Rommel, the Japanese launching some shells into Oregon and the war on the Russian front where 10 million Germans were killed. There is a photo on the front page of a soldier in Oregon talking

to two young children who had a piece of a Japanese artillery shell that landed near their house. The outline read "Donna Jean Heffling, 3, is shown handing to Col. Carl S. Doney a piece of shell fired by an

enemy sub off Oregon. Her sister Jean, 9, looks on. The shell burst near their home. (A.P. wirephoto)". What happened to Donna Jean and her little sister? Who knows.

At that time, a paper cost five cents, and the Sunday edition was 10 cents. How things have changed, not only in cost but style of writing and formatting.

I found this newspaper at my grandmother's house 40 years ago and kept this bit of history through several moves, hanging it on my office wall from location to location. It's world history woven into family history with a touch of newspaper history all wrapped into one.

Is The San Diego Union still around? Yes, surprisingly, but somewhere along the way it must have merged with a paper known as "The Tribune" so now this San Diego local daily is "The San Diego Union-Tribune." In today's dwindling newspaper world, that's a good thing.



Performances are Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 8 at 3 p.m.; Saturday, March 14 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 15 at 3 p.m.



Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre presents "Seussical" at Bryant High School, 2709 Popkins Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre Performs Seussical

Imagination runs wild, hearts grow three sizes, and beloved Dr. Seuss characters leap from the page to the stage as Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre presents *Seussical*, a high-energy musical celebration of friendship, community, and believing in what others can't yet see.

Performances will take place at Bryant High School, located at 2709 Popkins Lane, Alexandria, VA 12 ❖ MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ❖

22306, on Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 8 at 3 p.m.; Saturday, March 14 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 15 at 3 p.m.

Seussical weaves together classic Dr. Seuss tales, including *Horton Hears a Who!*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *Gertrude McFuzz*, reminding audiences of all ages that "a person's a person, no matter how small." With colorful costumes,

playful choreography, and toe-tapping music, the production promises fun for the whole family.

This joyful production is directed by Emily Carbone, an MVCCT and West Potomac High School alum, who returns to the organization to guide the next generation of actors on stage.

"*Seussical* was one of the first musicals to really make me fall in love with theatre," said Carbone.

"To go from watching MVCCT's production 20 years ago, to now leading a new generation of young actors, has been so special, especially with the amount of talent and dedication everyone has brought to the process. These kids have been nothing short of incredible."

The cast features 44 young performers from more than 20 local schools, highlighting MVCCT's

commitment to providing children and teens in Northern Virginia with the opportunity to learn and grow through theatre.

Tickets are \$18 and are on sale now at www.MVCCT.org. Families, friends, and Seuss fans of all ages are invited to join the adventure!

For more information about *Seussical* or Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre, visit MVCCT.org.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

MEETS EVERY SUNDAY

Bird Walks. 8 a.m. At 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Friends of Dyke Marsh organizers lead bird walks every Sunday morning. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and everyone is welcome to join us.

MEETS EVERY MONDAY

Monday Morning Bird Walk. 7 a.m. Meets at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard Alexandria. The Monday Morning Bird Walk is sponsored by the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and takes place every Monday at 7 a.m. April-September and 8 a.m. October-March. Following the walk, members of the group gather at the nearby Denny's for breakfast and to compile the morning's bird list. Call (703) 768-2525.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Wednesday Night Bingo. 7 p.m. At Atlas Brew Works, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase, the company that brings you some of the DC area's best events, is hosting an amazing night of everyone's favorite game at Atlas Brew Works Alexandria. Win prizes on every round, and the winner of the final round gets a \$50 Atlas Brew Works gift card for your next visit! There's also \$6 select Atlas drafts! Plus pizza served from the world famous Andy's Pizza! Email at capitalcityshowcase@gmail.com

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. Courthouse 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.

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.

AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

Starting now through summer 2026,

Alexandria will host major events and experiences commemorating America's 250th birthday. Located on the Potomac River just minutes from Washington, D.C. and George Washington's Mount Vernon, Alexandria, Virginia invites families, friends and history-lovers to stay in, explore and commemorate America's 250th birthday in a city older than the United States itself with a dynamic lineup of events and immersive experiences. Learn more and find additional details on these and other events at VisitAlexandria.com/250.

250th Events Itinerary:

- ❖ March: A new, major exhibit will open at Mount Vernon. Called George Washington: A Revolution-

ary Life, the exhibit will immerse visitors in Washington's world through recreated spaces, interactive role-playing, lifelike figures and artifacts.

- ❖ March: A new exhibit will open at Gadsby's Tavern Museum highlighting Hannah Griffith, who ran a coffeehouse there from 1794-1800. The exhibit will explore her resilience during the Revolutionary War, its impact on families and her ties to Alexandria's modern entrepreneurs.
- ❖ May-November: A temporary public art installation from artist Sandy Williams IV will commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence as part of the City of Alexandria's Time & Place public art series.
- ❖ June 12-14: Alexandria's major signature 250th event, Sails on the Potomac, will host iconic tall ships as a Sail Virginia 2026 Affiliate Harbor and will feature a weekend packed with activities including Alexandria Jazz Fest performances.
- ❖ June: A new exhibit will open at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum. Called Stories of U.S. Collections Capture our History, the exhibit will bring out objects from the collection that are seldom seen.
- ❖ July 3-4: Enjoy evening Fourth of July fireworks shows at George Washington's Mount Vernon on July 3 and 4, and a daytime fireworks show on July 4.
- ❖ July 11: Take part in the City of Alexandria's 277th/USA 250th Birthday Celebration complete with fireworks, music and more at Oronoco Bay Park along Alexandria's waterfront.

NOW THRU MARCH 8

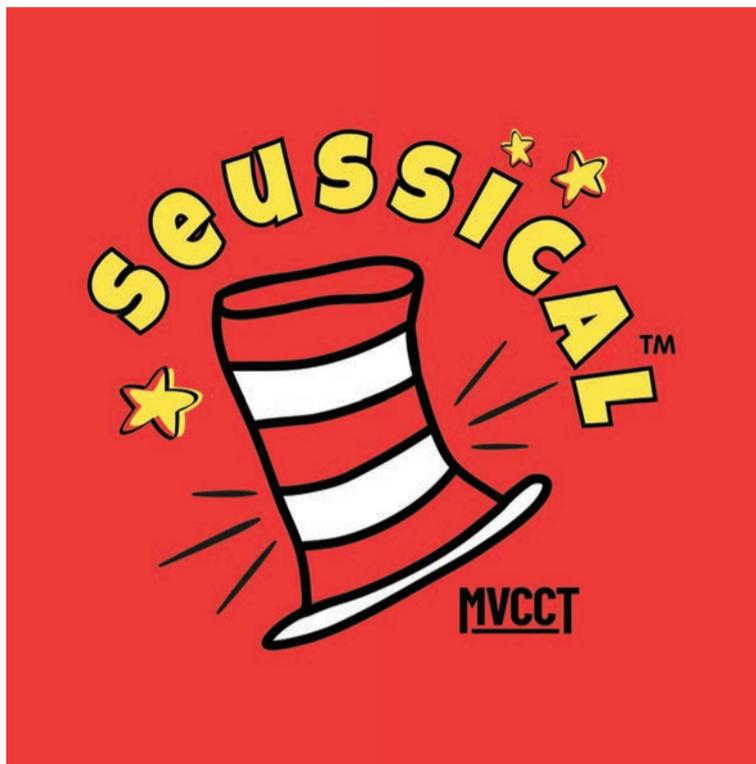
The Last Days of RFK Stadium. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. In this exhibition, Eric Johnson documents the ongoing demolition of RFK Stadium, a Washington, D.C. landmark for more than 60 years. His black-and-white photography captures the transformation of the stadium site as it progresses through its stages of demolition. It is both a record of the demolition and a farewell to a neighborhood fixture, marking a moment of transition as the city and team owners prepare for a new stadium and development on the site.

NOW THRU MARCH 8

Continuum: An Athenaeum Sculpture Invitational. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artists' Talk: Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m. Continuum is a full gallery sculpture show, featuring floor and wall-mounted art as well as site-specific installations that take advantage of the gallery's high ceiling and unique light-filled space. Seven artists were invited to explore the concept of Continuum. Their works explore the connections that persist through continuity and gradual transformation, and the stories that evolve.

MARCH 6-28

The "Assembly: Together We Grow" art exhibit explores the power of gathering and how it helps us grow, care for one another, and cultivate belonging. From shared meals and family traditions to festivals, and protests, gathering shapes our lives. View the member showcase at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria



MVCCT presents "Seussical" March 7-15, 2026 at Bryant High School in Alexandria.

VA. Opening Reception: Friday, March 6, 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

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

Joint After-Hours Concert. 7-8 p.m.

At National Museum of the Marine Corps, 1775 Semper Fidelis Way, Triangle. The National Museum of the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation will host a special evening performance on Friday, March 6, from 7:00-8:00 p.m., featuring the Dordt University Wind Symphony and the Quantico Marine Band. The concert is part of the university's spring break tour and is led by Dr. Onsbay Rose. Dr. Rose, a former United States Marine musician and conductor, previously performed with Marine Bands in Georgia and Louisiana and served with "The Commandant's Own" U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps. In 2025, his Symphony No. 2, "The Sacred Cloth," was premiered by "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band, further underscoring his enduring connection to Marine Corps music.

MVCCT PRESENTS

"SEUSSICAL"

Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre Brings the Whimsical World of Seussical to Life. At Bryant High School, 2709 Popkins Lane, Alexandria. Seussical weaves together classic Dr. Seuss tales, including Horton Hears a Who!, The Cat in the Hat, and Gertrude McFuzz, reminding audiences of all ages that "a person's a person, no matter how small." With colorful costumes, playful choreography, and toe-tapping music, the production promises fun for the whole family. Dates and times: Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 8 at 3 p.m.; Saturday, March 14 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 15 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$18 and are on sale now at www.MVCCT.org. Families, friends, and Seuss fans of all ages are invited to join the

adventure!

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

The Ballyshanners 43rd Alexandria

St. Patrick's Day Parade. 12 noon. In Old Town, Alexandria. As the DC region's first St. Patrick's Day Parade, Alexandria's annual celebration—held on the first Saturday in March—brings together pipe bands, Irish dancers, community organizations, and entertainers for a fun-filled day welcoming spectators of all ages. The parade route will begin at Wolfe Street and St. Asaph Street, continuing through Old Town Alexandria. A grandstand will be located at King and Pitt Streets, offering premium viewing for spectators. Additional best viewing locations include St. Asaph and Pitt streets, both north and south of King Street. Spectators are encouraged to arrive early to secure the best viewing locations.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

American Voices. 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

At George Washington Masonic National Memorial, Alexandria. Join WashMetPhil and the Alexandria Choral Society in American Voices at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Tickets are \$45 per adult and \$5 per child. This performance celebrates spirituality, nature, and human connection. Program includes Kauyumari by Gabriela Ortiz, Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story" and Make Our Garden Grow by Leonard Bernstein, and Earth Symphony by Jake Runestad.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Learn about Vultures. 3 p.m. At Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Wildlife rehabilitator Heather Shank-Givens will make an in-person presentation on Virginia's fascinating vultures and bring wildlife ambassador black vulture, Dusty. Vultures are a critical component of the ecosystem, but they are frequently misunderstood and maligned. Ms. Shank-Givens will explore the natural history of vultures in Virginia, their unique

biology and ecology, global conservation concerns and human-culture conflicts and mitigation strategies.

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

The Thirteen. 7:30 p.m. At Trinity United Methodist Church, 2911 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Presenting Bach's 'digestible delights' to the stage in Bach: The Early Masses II. Bach | Mass in A Major, BWV 234; Bach | Mass in G Minor, BWV 235; Bach | Concerto for two violins in D Major, BWV 1043; and Bach | Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, BWV 1050.

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

The Chamber ALX's 2026 Women's Leadership Forum. 7:45 - 10:30 a.m. At The Westin Alexandria Old Town, Alexandria. This signature morning experience brings together women (and men) for inspiration, connection, and real-world leadership insight. Hear candid conversation from a stellar panel of women leaders right here in our community, enjoy a beautifully curated atmosphere, and walk away energized, supported, and connected to a network shaping the future.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Alexandria Baroque. 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join Alexandria Baroque for a program of duos for violin and Baroque lute. The elegant, rarely heard repertoire includes works by Bach, Weiss, Hagen, and Rust as well as a solo by Telemann. Revel in the gracious harmony of this all-but-unknown 18th-century music.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

The Music of Words Featuring The Band Experiment. 6-8 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. KaNikki Jakarta presents The Music of Words featuring The Band Experiment. Sponsored by The Athenaeum. Join us for a night of soulful music and fulfilling poetry. Arrive when the doors open to enjoy complimentary appetizers and beverages. Witness what transpires when poetry and music collide!

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

The Chamber ALX's 2026 General

Assembly Breakfast. 8-10 a.m.

At The Hilton Alexandria Old Town, Alexandria. They are welcoming our General Assembly delegation—fresh from the action in Richmond! Join them for a timely and lively conversation as our delegation reflects on the 2026 session, breaks down the legislation that will most impact our community, and offers behind-the-scenes insights into the debates, negotiations, and defining moments that shaped the final outcomes. They'll also look ahead to the opportunities and challenges facing the Commonwealth in the months ahead—and what they mean for our region. Bring your questions and be part of the conversation about where Virginia goes next.

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

Send-Off Concert. 7 p.m.

At West Potomac High School, Alexandria. West Potomac Band invites the community to attend the West Potomac Band Music For All Send Off Concert. This is a huge honor for West Potomac's Period 1 Band, because they will be the only band from Virginia to participate in the Music For All Festival in Indianapolis.

Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.

FREE TOILET + \$1,500 OFF*

For your FREE information
kit and our Senior Discounts,
Call Today Toll-Free

1-877-591-9950



*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13VH11096000

Be prepared before the next power outage.



**It's not just a generator.
It's a power move.™**

Receive a free 5-year warranty
with qualifying purchase*
- valued at \$535.

Call 844-947-1479
to schedule your free quote!

*Terms and Conditions apply.

GENERAC

WHERE
THEY FELL

WHAT
THEY CLAIMED



Their lies come out of your wallet. Insurance fraud costs everyone in Virginia \$1,000 per year. Learn how to spot it and report it at TheCostOfFraud.com

**STAMP OUT
FRAUD**
VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
INSURANCE FRAUD PROGRAM

CLASSIFIED
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM
TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

Legals

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY REMEDIATION

Pursuant to the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code section 9VAC20-160-120, DCM Mid-Atlantic Inc., PO Box 338, The Plains, Virginia 20198, hereby provides notice of voluntary remediation at the following site:

Pear Tree Village Center
8800-8819 Pear Tree Village Court, Alexandria, Virginia 22309
VRP Number VRP00552

Environmental investigation has detected chlorinated solvents in soil, groundwater, and soil vapor at levels that could pose a risk to human health or the environment. The contamination is likely the result of former dry-cleaning operations at the site. To address the potential risk, DCM Mid-Atlantic Inc. applied to and was deemed eligible to participate in the Voluntary Remediation Program. A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) was reviewed and accepted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ). The RAP includes implementing restrictions on the use of groundwater beneath the site for environmental monitoring or dewatering purposes only and the continued operation of a sub-slab depressurization system (SSDS) in the vicinity of the former dry-cleaning operation. Additionally, the RAP requires that the site be maintained with an engineered cover (e.g. concrete, asphalt, 2+ feet of clean fill, etc.), with any disturbed areas restored following ground disturbance, and mandates that all earth-moving activities be conducted in accordance with a site-specific Health and Safety Plan (HASP).

Persons wishing to comment on the voluntary remedial action or request additional information should contact the following who is familiar with the site:

Cameron Funke
Terracon Consultants Inc.
19955 Highland Vista Drive, Suite 170, Ashburn VA, 20147
703-726-8030
cameron.funke@terracon.com

Written comments will be accepted until April 4, 2026.

The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY



\$1,500 OFF*

PLUS

ZERO Interest, ZERO Payments
financing for 12 Months**

OFFER EXPIRES 3/30/2026



CALL NOW (844) 945-1631

*Includes labor and product; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 3/30/26. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify/Participating dealers only. See your dealer for details. ©2026 Bath Concepts Industries.

Past issues of

**THE
CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS**

back to 2008
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

Twitter @MtVernonGazette

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
miksalmon6922@gmail.com

Glenda Booth
Contributing Writers

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper

Virginia
PRESS
Association
Award Winning
Newspaper



FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Video shows burglary suspects from Jan. 12 incident on Holly Berry Court, Annandale.

Eight Burglaries; Police Recommend Enhancing Home Security

Video from neighbors house may be a clue.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Detectives from FCPD Criminal Investigations Division are investigating eight residential burglaries targeting Asian American victims, most of whom are local business owners. In each case, suspects forced entry into the home and stole items including safes, cash, jewelry, designer handbags, and clothing, FCPD said.

Over the last two months, detectives have investigated the burglaries across the area in Woodlawn, Jefferson Manor, Fair Oaks, McLean and smaller communities in between. Police are still determining if the cases are connected, but there are similarities. In most cases, the suspects target master bedrooms, remove safes, and in some cases disconnect Wi-Fi or other electronics to avoid detection, police said. Detectives believe the suspects conduct pre-surveillance to determine their targets and police are asking for community members to call when suspicious people or vehicles are seen in their community.

“Cases like this, we’re often relying on our communities,” said FCPD Major Jim Curry in the Criminal Investigation Bureau. Curry called these crimes “organized burglaries.” Many of the victims are small business owners and may have cash at home, Curry said.

Somehow the burglary suspects found out about this, he added.

On Jan. 12, at 5:03 p.m., officers responded to the 3200 block of Holly Berry Court in Annandale for a report on burglary. When the victim returned home, she noticed her jewelry was missing. There were no signs of forced entry. Surveillance footage was located nearby prior to the burglary occurring.

On the video, three people are seen wandering through the yard. They appear to be three women. Curry said police are relying on these types of videos and recommended that other neighbors with outside video surveillance to contact police. The burglaries included:

- ❖ On Jan. 15, at 9:07 p.m., officers responded to the 3800 block of Roxbury Court in Woodlawn for a burglary report. The rear back door was broken and the home was ransacked. The victim reported jewelry, handbags, a safe, and \$7,000 in cash were stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 6, at 6:41 p.m., officers responded to the 2700 block of School Street in Jefferson Manor for a burglary report. A rear window was shattered, the home was ransacked, and a safe along with \$40,000 worth of jewelry was stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 12, at 6:36 p.m., officers responded to the 2600 block of Fort Drive in Fair Haven in Mount Vernon for a burglary report. The suspects entered the home by forcing entry on the second-floor balcony door. A safe containing \$7,500 worth of jewelry and \$6,000 in cash were taken.

- ❖ On Feb. 17, at 7:31 p.m., officers re-

sponded to the 2900 block of Graham Road in the Falls Church neighborhood of Woodley North for a burglary. The suspects entered the home by breaking the rear glass door. Handbags, \$80,000 worth of jewelry, and \$100,000 in cash were stolen.

- ❖ On Feb. 19, at 9:30 p.m., officers responded to the 4200 block of Kerrigan Lane in Fair Oaks for a burglary report. The rear back door was broken and the home was ransacked. Jewelry, handbags, and cash valued at over \$10,000 were stolen from her home.

- ❖ On Feb. 20, at 10:40 p.m., officers responded to the 7200 block of Evans Mill Road in McLean for a burglary report. Suspects entered the home by breaking the rear glass door.

The victims reported jewelry, cash, gold bars, and clothing valuing \$100,000 were stolen from the home.

- ❖ On Feb. 21, at 9:56 a.m., officers responded to the 1300 block of Northwyck Court in McLean for a burglary report. The victims returned from vacation and found their home rummaged through and jewelry valued at \$50,000 missing. The suspects entered the home by forcing entry to the basement door.

FCPD provided a few burglary prevention tips that include security cameras, exterior lighting, reinforcing doors and community awareness.

Report suspicious activity immediately. Call 703-691-2131 to report non-emergency concerns or 911 in an emergency. Timely reporting allows officers to respond quickly and identify patterns, the police said.

Welcome to the Club, Joan



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(And I say that with all sincerity.) The ‘club’ to which I refer to is the cancer club (and neither am I talking about astrological signs). Unfortunately, you may not have a choice but to join - whether you like it or not. To invoke the legendary Groucho Marx: he wouldn’t want to belong to a club that would have him as a member. He wasn’t talking about cancer (it was a snooty country club that would have him as a member), but the sentiment is certainly similar. Cancer - the disease, would have you as a member - so to speak, regardless of your race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whether you’re a democrat or a republican. If you live and breathe, you could be diagnosed with cancer. It is an equal opportunity life impactor.

For those of us worldwide millions who have already been diagnosed, cancer becomes unrelenting baggage - just so you know. And depending upon your attitude - about your new diagnosis, you will be either pleasant to be around or not (not that any of this is easy). Maintaining an emotional balance about this life-affecting circumstance can, anecdotally speaking, enhance your life, what there is of it (to quote the late Larry Fine from the 1938 Three Stooges short, “Healthy, Wealthy and Dumb”). You can be positive and exude hope, or you can be negative, and suffer the consequences. It’s always my intention when I talk to a newly diagnosed cancer patient to listen attentively to their answers and their understanding of how their life will be changing. Cancer will become the first thing they think of when they get up in the morning, the last thing they think about when they try (‘try’ being the operative word) to go to sleep in the evening, and pretty much most of what will preoccupy their life during the day. How they anticipate and work this reality into their lives is what I’m most interested in learning.

Being diagnosed with cancer is as large an obstacle and impediment to realizing your hopes and dreams as one could possibly imagine/realize. How you deal with it matters. If you deal with your diagnosis with confidence and a can-do approach; I want you on my team. And I want you on my team (part of the club) because I gain your strength and wherewithal from your attitude. We all live with uncertainty and when you express a willingness to walk the walk/talk the talk, it helps me to endure my cancer-related/caused demons. The best help I can get is from my fellow cancer patients. When they’re still seeing the world/circumstances as a glass half full - figuratively speaking, I want them in my life. Being selfish now; I can feed off their attitude and that will help me to endure the “slings and arrows” that cancer shoots every day and especially in bed at night when they’re alone with their thoughts. To update an old Bette Davis quote: cancer ain’t for cissies.

Joan is at the beginning of her cancer experience/indoctrination (into this not-exclusive club) and so far, she’s exhibiting all the signs of being a welcome addition. When I talk to her, I come away feeling empowered by her spirit and willingness to face facts and proactively live forward in spite of this potentially devastating predicament. Managing the many appointments, labs, scans, medical appointments, treatment, et cetera, is not easy. In fact, the profession has created a new position: nurse navigator, to help patients stay on track for the best possible outcome as they deal with this treacherous and demanding road, unlike any road they’ve ever been on, driving or not.

Having been there and done that is never more meaningful than when talking with a new member. Compassion, empathy - and understanding are most helpful when talking to a recent “diagnosee.” And more often than not, when talking with Joan, I come away feeling so much better than when it began. Diagnosis to date, she’s been a great addition. I look forward to speaking to her again. It will be my pleasure. I only hope she feels the same.

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



CHRIS WHITE
 FAMILY REAL ESTATE
 OF LONG & FOSTER



25 homes SOLD in 2026 so far and 80 homes SOLD in 2025!

CHRIS WHITE
 FAMILY REAL ESTATE
 OF LONG & FOSTER

We are pleased to announce our latest neighborhood sale! This home was listed by another agent with no success for over a month. We took the listing over and sold it in 6 days! Hear it directly from the seller:

"Chris did an extraordinary job in a difficult situation. The house, previously listed with a different realtor, had already lingered on the market. He took on the house in an uncertain market, in the winter, with an owner living in another country, and got it under contract and sold while also ensuring the house was safe and undamaged through extreme winter storms. His outstanding dedication and commitment were instrumental in getting the sale completed. I would highly recommend him without hesitation."



3713 Maryland St | \$780,000



4206 Pickering Pl | \$1,261,000



3903 Belle Rive Ter | \$3,700,000



6404 13th St | \$1,245,000



4008 Sulgrave Dr | \$960,000



3608 Center Dr | \$1,550,000



8047 Fairfax Rd | \$1,375,000



4302 Adrienne Dr | \$899,000



3713 Maryland St | \$780,000



4301 Laurel Rd | \$740,000



1600 Lafayette Dr | \$1,565,000



2410 Ryegate Ln | \$760,000



5304 Cedar Ct | \$599,950

LONG & FOSTER
 REAL ESTATE

Alexandria/Old Town Historic
 110 N. Royal St. 3rd Floor
 Alexandria, VA 22314

703.283.9028

www.chrisandpeggywhite.com
chris.white@longandfoster.com

BEST OF
WASHINGTONIAN
 TOP PRODUCING AGENT 2015 - 2025