

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 2, 2026

Stone Bridge Puppets Capture Attention

Arresting likenesses of Trump and cohorts, made of papier maché.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The big papier maché puppets looming over the bridge turned heads and generated a steady soundtrack of toots and honks as vehicles sped up and down the south George Washington Memorial Parkway in Mount Vernon on March 28, No Kings Day. The protestors waved homemade signs, swirled American flags and wore pointed stickers, hats and creative costumes under a bright afternoon sun. And even “America’s only king,” Elvis Presley, showed up.

Led by Mount Vernon organizer Lisa Finn, the 250 locals chanted, “No kings!” “No thrones!” “No monarchy!” “No war.” The event



“No Faux King Way”

was one of over 3,000 across the country, the third nationwide protest dubbed “No Kings” decrying the Trump administration’s policies.

“Everyone needs to show up for democracy,” said Arina van Breda. “We’re going to lose it if we don’t protest. Protesting and voting. It’s that or revolution.”

Ann Allman said, “It’s not a fight about right and left. It’s a fight about right and wrong.”

SEE STONE BRIDGE, PAGE 8



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/ MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The protestors posed with the puppet likenesses of Trump officials, here, Kash Patel, Steven Miller, Karoline Leavitt, J. D. Vance, Pete Hegseth and Pam Bondi.



Ron Taylor protested as Elvis Presley, “America’s only king.”



Around 250 people protested on the stone bridge crossing the south George Washington Memorial Parkway.

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\$2,295,000 | Tucked within the coveted southeast quadrant of Old Town, this exceptional historic flounder house is a rare offering and one of only a small number of surviving examples of this distinctly Alexandrian architectural form. Set discreetly behind a high brick wall, the property reveals itself through an iron gate, opening to an enchanting courtyard.

Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
LaurenBishopHomes.com



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Martine Irmer : 703.346.7283



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JanetPriceHomes.com



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Jodie Burns : 571.228.5790
JodieBurns.com



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Donna Cramer : 703.627.9578



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RebeccaMcCullough.com



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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE

Ribbon Cutting Scheduled for Mount Vernon Woods Park

By MIKE SALMON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

After a few years of discussion, planning and construction the residents of the Hybla Valley section of Mount Vernon now have a place to skateboard, play basketball and enjoy the outdoors at the newly renovated Mount Vernon Woods Park.

County officials and park representatives from Supervisor Dan Storck's office will cut the ribbon on a park that borders Huntley Meadows in a neighborhood that needed a park. Just in time for summer too.

"Mount Vernon Woods Park is a wonderful addition to our broader community, offering a welcoming space where residents of all ages can gather, stay active and connect

If you go...

Mount Vernon Woods Park Ribbon Cutting Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Mount Vernon Woods Park, 4014 Fielding St. Alexandria

with one another," said Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D). "Its impact will be felt by so many who live, work, and play in the community."

The new features include an expansive open lawn play field, a multisport court that supports both futsal and basketball, an all-abilities playground designed for users of all ages, and a skate park developed with input from the surrounding community. The park also includes a fitness area, picnic pavilion, drinking fountain and passive seating areas set among newly installed landscaping, according to the FCPA.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, there will be skateboard demonstrations and instruction with Fairfax Surf Shop, soccer activities with Golden Boot Soccer and other community recreation for all ages, FCPA said. Shuttle service between Gum Springs Community Center



The original plan was to look something like this.

and Mount Vernon Woods Park will be available from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

This park borders a forested portion of Huntley Meadows Park which is wetlands park but does not have soccer fields or a playground which are needed in this community of Mount Vernon.

Planning for this redevelopment project was initially launched in 2015 and tweaked along the way until officials came up with a final draft. This project was included in FCPA 2020 Bond project list and in late 2021, funding was made available for concept design. Construction started in summer 2024.

Turtles galore at Huntley Meadows wetland park that borders Mount Vernon Woods Park.



PHOTO BY KRAMER HILTON/HUNTLEY MEADOWS PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

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

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 or visit 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, 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 donaldrea@aol.com. ALIVE! offers numerous programs 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. 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 or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org. Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO,

which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@spaceofherown.org

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

Huntley, Now an Underground Railroad Site



Huntley Villa was built in 1825.



PHOTOS BY CHERYL-ANN REPETTI AND GINA SANDO

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

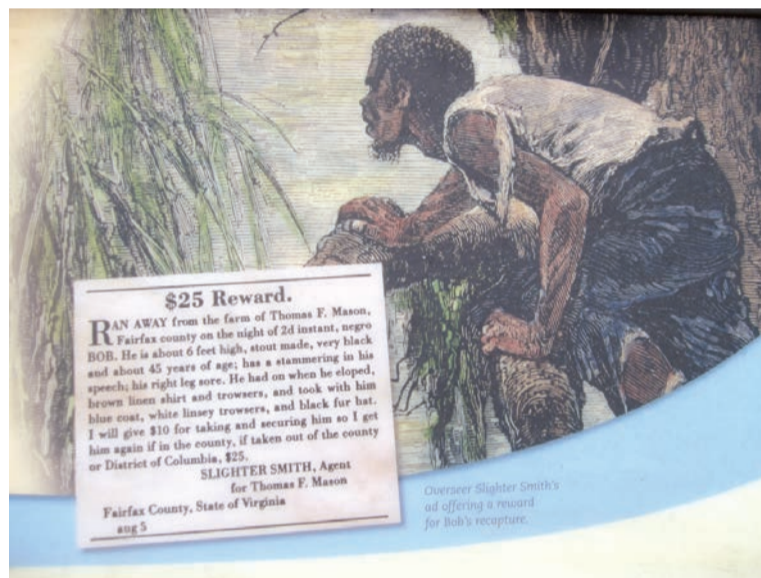
Bob, age 45, an enslaved man, was six feet tall and “stout.” He stammered when he spoke, his right leg was sore and he took a second set of clothes, a blue coat and black fur hat when he ran away from Huntley in 1828. Slighter Smith, Huntley’s overseer, put this description in an Alexandria Phoenix Gazette advertisement seeking Bob’s return. Smith offered \$10 if Bob was captured within Fairfax County, \$25 “if taken out of the county or District of Columbia.”

Bob’s story, and Sandy and Sam Humphrey’s escapes from Thomson Mason’s plantation in southeastern Fairfax County, now part of Huntley Meadows Park, earned Historic Huntley an official designation in early March as a site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, a National Park Service program that honors and preserves the history of resistance to enslavement at 800 places in the country.

The Underground Railroad was neither underground nor a railroad. The term refers to enslaved African Americans’ efforts to gain their freedom by fleeing slavery from the late 18th century through the Civil War. After enactment of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which required that all escaped enslaved people be returned to their owners, it was a deliberate, organized movement involving people of all races and genders.

The Runaways’ Story

Thomson Mason, grandson of George Mason IV, enslaved Bob, Sam and Sandy at Huntley, a coun-



A wayside at Historic Huntley with the newspaper ad offering a reward for Bob who ran away.

try retreat and plantation. The Masons lived in Alexandria and Thomson was a city councilman and mayor.

Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) officials say that Bob’s ultimate fate is unknown from available records. He may have been caught or may have chosen to return.

Captured freedom seekers typically faced severe punishment. Bob is not on the only list of people enslaved by the Masons, an 1859 list. He could have successfully escaped, could have died before 1859 or could have been sold away.

Sandy and Sam escaped Huntley and Sam and Sandy each paid Joseph Farrell to forge passes or “freedom papers” in 1837. Farrell was a freed man living in a free Black community in Alexandria.

Cheryl Repetti, FCPA’s Special Projects Historian, emailed, “There was a law that required them to

register with the local court and the court issued them ‘free papers,’ an official document that certified that they were free and not enslaved. Essentially in Virginia, every Black person was assumed to be a slave and therefore could be suspected of being an escaped slave.”

Alexandria, six miles north of Huntley, was then part of the District of Columbia and with free African-American communities and some literate African Americans. Farrell was born into slavery, freed by his enslaver and was a respected teacher and preacher. He could read and write.

“They were pretty convincing forgeries,” Repetti said. “They are back-dated a number of years and contain an alias and a description of each man as well as details about the court in Prince William at the time the pass was supposedly issued.”

Farrell forged a Prince William



PHOTOS BY GLENDA C. BOOTH

The north or main entrance to Huntley where people arrived in carriages, wagons or on horseback in the 1800s.

court seal.

Farrell was arrested and sentenced to seven years for the forgeries. Sandy and Sam were returned to Huntley and slavery.

Joseph Farrell was perhaps a conductor on the underground railroad. Marylander Harriet Tubman, one of the most famous conductors, said, “I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can’t say — I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.”

Sully and Riverbend

Two other FCPA sites already have underground railroad designation, the Sully Historic Site added in 2003 and Riverbend Park in 2011.

Sully was the plantation of an uncle of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, Richard Bland Lee, from 1794 to 1811. The Lees enslaved up to 40 African Americans at Sul-

ly. FCPA historians have documented four escapes from there.

Hugh Conn operated a ferry at today’s Riverbend Park. In 1817 Ellick, an African-American worker enslaved by the Conns, ran away. Ellick was jailed for theft and ran away again.

The underground network has locations recognized in 40 states, Washington, D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada.

The Network to Freedom currently contains over 800 locations nationwide with a verifiable connection to the Underground Railroad, according to the website. These locations include sites, facilities and programs, most of which can be visited.

Information

Fairfax County Park Authority, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks
National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/ntf-listings.htm>
www.connectionnewspapers.com



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Around 45 people attended the March 3 meeting.

Major Stream Project Planned in Mount Vernon

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Fairfax County has revived plans to restore two miles of Paul Spring Branch and the north fork of Little Hunting Creek, the longest county stream restoration project ever, 45 locals learned at a March 3 briefing by county officials at the Sherwood Regional Library. The project stretches 12,000 linear feet between Mason Hill Drive and Collingwood Road, much of it bordering the Hollin Hall Village community.

The streams are in the Little Hunting Creek watershed, one of the most developed watersheds in the county with 75 to 80 percent of the land developed.

"There're a lot of impervious surfaces which makes the force of water very intense," project manager Justin Pistore explained.

Plans are in "pre-concept design phase stage," said Jason Widstrom, an ecologist in the county's Public Works Stormwater Planning Division.

Emma Mosier, a Wetlands Studies and Solutions contractor, said, "There are a lot of options."

The Problem

"The goal is to return the stream channel to dynamic equilibrium and improve the ecological processes of the riparian corridor within the constraints of a developed landscape," Pistore said.

This includes improving water quality, stabilizing the stream bed and banks to curb erosion, strengthening stream connectivity to the floodplain, improving habitat and ecological processes and protecting infrastructure.

On cleaner water, Pistore showed a chart of potential pollution reductions for phosphorus and nitrogen, reductions required by several laws and permits that presenters said are driving the project.

Jason Ruck, an ecologist, described preparatory activities including a tree survey and benthic macroinvertebrate and water quality sampling at 21 sites. He showed

a table with a 100-point scale giving the stream a grade of 21.2 for benthic macroinvertebrates from 2008 to 2025. Ruck called the scores "very poor most of the time."

Restoration Plans

The county will incorporate "natural channel design," using the existing footprint "to the greatest extent possible." Natural channel design, Pistore later emailed, "applies the principles of fluvial geomorphology and the mirroring of stream dimensions in stable conditions to restore degraded streams to sustainable conditions with floodplain connectivity and restored ecological function."

Historically, many jurisdictions, including Fairfax County, have built structures to send water off-site, downstream quickly.

Around one-third of the area "needs realignment," Pistore said, which means moving the channel "only where necessary to protect infrastructure and to achieve the

SEE MAJOR STREAM, PAGE 9

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

2026

THURSDAY, APRIL 9
PRESENTED BY

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LUBELEY & WALSH



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HERE



Mount Vernon Springfield
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Join us at Economic Outlook 2026, where experts from key industries will delve into the significant developments of 2025 and provide insights into the economic course for the current year.

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Small Business and the 2026 General Assembly

BY HOLLY HICKS DOUGHERTY
PRESIDENT & CEO, MOUNT VERNON
SPRINGFIELD CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

What does success for small businesses look like in the 2026 session of the General Assembly?

This was the question posed by the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce as we met with our elected representatives and their staff members in Richmond during the past month.

Several pieces of legislation have now passed the General Assembly and are awaiting action by the Governor that would have a substantial negative impact on Virginia's business climate, leading us to believe that impacts on small businesses were not a main consideration during the session.

Collectively, the legislation, as

passed, would impose substantial new costs and legal uncertainty on Virginia employers of all sizes and across all industries. Here are a few of these bills that will dramatically alter the business climate in Virginia.

Paid Family and Medical Leave Program: House Bill 1207 / Senate Bill 2

This legislation establishes a mandatory statewide paid family and medical leave program, similar to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This program is funded by a new payroll deduction.

Employer Liability and Wage Enforcement: House Bill 238

This bill expands employer liability related to wage violations and provides unprecedented expansion of whistleblower protec-

tions while increasing the risk of litigation. It introduces additional complexity in managing employment practices.

Paid Sick Leave Requirements: House Bill 5 / Senate Bill 199

This legislation would require private employers to provide paid sick leave. While the goal of supporting employees is widely recognized, concerns remain about implementation, costs, and operational impacts.

Class Action Lawsuits in Virginia Courts: House Bill 449 / Senate Bill 229

This legislation would allow class action lawsuits to be filed in Virginia state courts for the first time.

As written, it introduces a significant shift in the legal landscape and may increase businesses' liti-

gation exposure.

Minimum Wage Increase: House Bill 1 / Senate Bill 1

These bills codify the state's hourly minimum wage of \$12.77, which went into effect Jan. 1, and increase it to \$13.75 on Jan. 1, 2027, and finally to \$15 at the start of 2028. The bill then indexes the minimum wage to inflation.

As the Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy pointed out, "... these aren't just 'wage and benefit' bills; they represent a coordinated, multi-layered surcharge on the act of hiring. When you combine a \$15 minimum wage with a new sick leave mandate and a paid family and medical leave tax, you are pricing growth out of reach for many smaller firms, and reducing employment for low productivity, entry-level employees."

What to Expect at Next Week's Economic Outlook 2026

BY DAVID GRIFFIN
MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

There's no shortage of questions right now about where the economy is headed and what it means for local businesses. Economic Outlook 2026 on Thursday, April 9 at Belle Haven Country Club is designed to help answer some of those questions.

Each year, this program offers a chance to step back from day-to-day operations and look more closely at the broader factors shaping the business environment. From public policy to workforce trends to regional growth patterns, the goal is not just to forecast, but to better understand how these forces connect to the realities businesses are facing.

This year's speakers reflect that balance of research, policy, and practical experience. Dr. Terry Clower of George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis will return to share insights on regional economic trends and long-term shifts. Supervisor Rodney Lusk will provide a local government perspective, while Holly Wade of the NFIB Research Center will speak to small business conditions. Joseph Mengedoth, Regional Economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, will offer additional context on economic indicators.

Together, these perspectives help frame a more complete picture of where the region stands and what

may influence the year ahead.

Last year's discussion underscored how quickly conditions can change. National policy decisions, the global market reactions, and shifts in federal spending created an environment marked by uncertainty. At the same time, speakers pointed to the strength of the Northern Virginia economy, including a highly skilled workforce, a concentration of key industries, and continued investment across the region.

There is still a strong foundation in this region, but businesses are also dealing with ongoing challenges. Housing costs, finding and keeping employees, and growing economic pressures all play a role

in day-to-day decisions, from hiring to expansion.

Programs like the Economic Outlook provide a space to hear how these topics are evolving and how others in the business community are thinking about them.

Belle Haven Country Club offers a setting where conversations can continue beyond the program. With a mix of industries represented, the event creates opportunities to connect, share ideas, and build relationships that last beyond the morning.

The Chamber would like to thank Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley & Walsh PC for presenting this year's program, as well as other businesses for their support as event

sponsors. Their involvement helps make events like this possible and supports ongoing efforts to provide members with relevant programming.

For those looking to better understand the economic environment and how it may influence the year ahead, Economic Outlook 2026 offers a practical starting point. It is an opportunity to listen, ask questions, and leave with a clearer sense of how broader trends connect to everyday business decisions.

Registration is open at www.mountvernon.springfield.com/events. Members and non-members are welcome to attend and be part of the conversation.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK 2026

WALSH COLUCCI LUBELEY & WALSH PC

Dr. Terry Clower
Center for Regional Analysis
George Mason University

Rodney Lusk
Franconia District Supervisor
Fairfax County
Board of Supervisors

Holly Wade
George Washington University
NFIB Research Center

Joseph Mengedoth
Regional Economist
Federal Reserve Bank
of Richmond

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A Connection Newspaper



Virginia's Amazing Vultures

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Many cartoonists delight in demonizing vultures as messy, bothersome, ugly nuisances, but vultures are beautiful, social, curious birds, Heather Shank-Givens told a 70-person, overflow crowd on March 8, 2026, at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center.

Shank-Givens described the characteristics, behavior and geographic distribution of the two species common in Virginia: the turkey vulture and the black vulture. Of the world's 23 species, 12 are classified as endangered or critically endangered. Virginia's two species have stable populations.

Turkey vultures have a red head and brownish-black plumage, with silvery gray flight feathers on the undersides of their wings. Black vultures are all black and have a gray wrinkled head and white wing tips.

Turkey and black vultures have several commonalities. They soar on thermals, congregate and are obligate scavengers, which means their diet consists primarily of consuming carrion or dead organic matter. Turkey vultures have a keen sense of smell and sight.

Turkey vultures have a slightly raised "V" shape when flying. Black vultures fly "very flat," Shank-Givens said. "They flap more." Both species are monogamous and are ground nesters. Breeding season in Northern Virginia is now underway. The life span of both is 10 to 20 years and over 40 years in captivity.

Vultures like to gather in communal roosts on tall trees and structures like towers and houses.

Nature's Cleanup Crew

Vultures thrive near human habitation, on roadkill, garbage and people-built structures. "We create the perfect habitat for vultures," Shank-Givens said. "They have everything they need in Virginia."

Vultures have features, called adaptations, that enable them to scavenge more effectively than most other birds. They have bald faces and featherless heads and necks so it's easier to feed if they stick their head into a carcass than if they had feathered heads and necks.

They have sharp, hooked beaks and grooved tongues. They have a crop in the throat to temporarily store food.

Vultures provide important ecological services because as nature's premiere scavengers they can consume and remove carcasses from the environment.

By eating dead animals, they can also remove diseases like anthrax and cholera.

The "really special thing" is their stomach, Shank-Givens said. Their gastrointestinal tract is highly acidic, 100 times more acidic than humans so they can take in pathogens, like botulism and destroy them.

If it were not for the important role that vultures play, animals that die, including those killed by cars, would remain where they died for weeks until they either decompose or are removed. Vultures make our world a much cleaner and healthier place, she said.

Vultures are known to peck on shingles, rubber or window caulking. "They are curious birds," Shank-Givens said.

Threats to Vultures

The Wildlife Center of Virginia

where Shank-Givens volunteers treats from 50 to 60 injured vultures every year, some by vehicle collisions and many from lead shotgun pellet poisoning, with lead pellets left in carcasses that the vultures consume.

Shank-Givens told the story of her former vulture ambassador she named Vega and showed X-rays of pellets throughout the bird's body, many removed by surgery, but one unremovable and lodged in her brain.

Some vultures are directly poisoned, for example, if farmers want to control livestock predators. Vultures can also be electrocuted on power lines or collide with airplanes.

Vultures are protected by several laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which makes it illegal to kill or destroy migratory birds or their parts, nests or eggs without a permit.

Dusty, the Black Vulture Ambassador

Shank-Givens brought her non-releasable, ambassador vulture, Dusty. She believes that someone collected some eggs in the woods thinking they were turkey eggs, but when the eggs hatched, two baby vultures emerged. The babies imprinted on a person quickly and could not survive in the wild.

"I think they are all beautiful," Shank-Givens says.

Shank-Givens is a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator and educator who holds federal and state permits for a non-releasable vulture.

The meeting was hosted by the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, Northern Virginia Bird Club and the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance.



PHOTOS BY DEBORAH HAMMER

Dusty the vulture with handler Heather Shank-Givens.



Dusty gives attendees a look at her impressive wingspan.

Information

Basics, www.allaboutbirds.org

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black_Vulture/overview

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey_Vulture/overview

Living with Vultures, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs-managing-vulture-damage.pdf>

Not Asking for a 'Better' Casino Bill; NO Casino Bill

BY LYNNE MULSTON

Acasino doesn't belong in Fairfax County — and the only right answer now that SB 756 is on the Governor's desk is a full veto of the casino bill.



Lynne Mulston

Pro-casino advocates claim it will bring tax revenue, jobs, and tourism, but the facts tell a different story.

They say:

❖ "It will bring in tax revenue for schools and public services."

Casino revenue is routinely overstated. After accounting for the costs of added law enforcement, addiction treatment, traffic management, and the loss of tax revenue

from nearby businesses, the fiscal "benefit" collapses.

Moreover, the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis found that states that earmark gaming revenues for education experienced no overall increase in education expenditures. There's no version of this deal that makes financial sense for Fairfax taxpayers.

❖ "It will create jobs for local residents."

Most casino jobs are lower-wage, high-turnover, and shift-based. The local restaurants, retailers, and service providers that would lose business employ far more Fairfax residents today — in stronger, community-based positions.

❖ "We can negotiate better community benefit agreements."

No agreement can erase the harms to our roads, families and local economy. And the longer the threat of a casino looms, the damage to future mixed use development increases, as property owners shelve projects that would be negatively impacted by a nearby gaming operation. Negotiations cannot delay the damage and legitimize the idea. The right move is a quick clean veto — not another rewrite.

❖ "There's clearly a demand for this."

Demand for gambling isn't the same as public benefit. Fairfax residents didn't elect their leaders to chase every revenue stream; they expect decisions that preserve a community built for families and businesses.

❖ "It will boost tourism and put Fairfax

on the map."

While casinos may work in some locations, they don't in others. We need to build on Fairfax County's strengths and not copy the playbooks of other jurisdictions. Fairfax County is already recognized as one of the most prosperous and dynamic counties in the nation.

Given other nearby attractions, Fairfax County will never be a tourist gaming destination. Casino-driven tourism doesn't build sustainable growth or enhance our reputation — it undermines both.

The bottom line:

We are not asking for a "better" casino bill. We are asking for no casino bill. There is no version of this proposal that serves Fairfax County's long-term interests.



The Stone Bridge Resistance group had several “art builds,” sessions to paint the heads.

Stone Bridge Puppets Capture Attention

FROM PAGE 1

Her husband, Frank Zulino added, “It’s necessary to protect our democracy, which I never thought I’d have to say.”

Local Methodist minister Kerry Kincannon echoed these sentiments. “I don’t want to live in an autocracy,” he said. “I want to live in a democracy. Our faith calls us to be inclusive of all and to respect the integrity of every life.”

Earlier that day, a throng of thousands marched across the Memorial Bridge past the Lincoln Memorial and on to the Washington Monument, starting at the site of Trump’s proposed 250-foot triumphal arch, which would be larger than Paris, France’s 164-foot-tall Arc de Triomphe.

Saturday’s demonstrations in all 50 states exceeded June’s number of 2,100 events and October’s 2,700.

The protesters denounced the U.S. war in Iran, policies leading to rising

gas prices, immigration crackdowns and authoritarian-like governance.

Gregory Henschel remarked, “It is my duty as a citizen to join with neighbors to express my deep disappointment with the Trump administration.”

An “Art Build” for the Big Day

Mount Vernon-area resident Marcos Smyth, a retired goldsmith, created the unique papier maché heads, measuring about two feet in diameter, by squeezing together wads of newspaper, paper bags and white glue and then sculpting and painting them into human likenesses. The group covered cardboard toilet paper rolls with duct tape layers to hold the poles that support the heads. The self-named Stone Bridge Resistance organizers held “art builds” in Finn’s driveway to paint caricatures of key Trump administration officials. The caricatures have



Puppet version of Karoline Leavitt, White House press secretary.

gotten national attention in media outlets like USA Today.

Finn says that their weekly Thursday 5 p.m. protests on the bridge will continue indefinitely and that they welcome all.

Information: www.nokings.org; Stone Bridge Resistance on Facebook.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/ MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Locals had creative signs and costumes.



Likeness of FBI Director Kash Patel in the making.



Marcos Smyth, a retired goldsmith, created the puppet heads.



Yuri Hunter painted Stephen Miller’s likeness. Miller is Deputy Chief of Staff for the president.

Major Stream Project Planned in Mount Vernon

FROM PAGE 5

most sustainable restoration potential.” They hope to preserve as many trees as possible, but will remove trees at risk of falling into the channel and avoid disturbances to private property.

Asked how many trees would be cut down, Pistore clarified by email, “The number of trees to be removed will be provided in the subsequent design submittals. The current pre-concept design submittal provides a tree survey and inventory of all trees over 12-inch diameter and design options for channel alignments.”

Construction will require building ten entrances to the site and an “access path” for vehicles and equipment. “It will look a little rough at first,” Pistore said, but after three years, vegetation should return. The county will plant 100 native overstory trees, 200 native understory trees, 1,089 native shrubs per acre in the areas of disturbance and a native seed mixture.

The draft plan includes settlement areas at outfalls to slow runoff and Newbury riffle structures, which Pistore said are, “grade-control structures composed of a large boulder core weir with reinforced bed material ramps, which are installed within incised channels to create areas of fast-moving water and re-establish channel bed elevations that provide for floodplain connecti-



Emma Mosier works for the project’s contractor, Wetlands Studies and Solutions.

ty, erosion reduction, habitat establishment and water quality improvements.”

Locals Comment

Leo Milanowski, president of the Hollin Hall Village Citizens Association commented, “The Hollin Hall Village neighborhood is very happy the planned restoration of the Paul Spring Branch is moving forward. The restoration is a big step in reducing environmental impacts of stormwater runoff on our waterways and also provides an opportunity to make the surrounding Paul Spring Park



Justin Pistore presented the draft plans at the community meeting.

something the entire community can use and enjoy.

“As a part of the restoration, our neighborhood is encouraging a partnership between the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and the Park Authority to work with the community to incorporate low-cost, park-like amenities in the plan and final product.”

Larry Zaragoza, chair of the county’s Environmental Quality Advisory Council and the Mount Vernon Council of Citizen Association’s Environment and Recreation Com-

mittee, emphasized the benefits of stream restoration. “First, it is the most cost-effective way to reduce pollutant loads required by agreements to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Second, stream restoration helps return water flow to natural conditions so that the streams and surrounding wetlands provide a healthy environment that supports life. Third, by restoring water flow to natural conditions, sediments settle out in the areas surrounding streams during high water flow events, which reduces sediments that flow to the Potomac.”

Schedule, Funding

Planners will host future meetings and hope to complete the next design by May 2026, a 100 percent design by spring 2028 and start construction in 2028, contingent on funding. Widstrom said that \$4 million is currently available and designs will cost around \$1 million.

Attendees asked about the budget, access and impacts on local property owners.

County officials invite comments to justin.pistore@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-5685, TTY 711.

Information

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/plans-projects/paul-spring-branch-sherwood-hall-stream-restoration>

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The Power of a Referendum

'We are Fairfax,' chanted union members at a rally for the Tysons Entertainment District.



Fairfax County workers from 15 organized labor unions under the umbrella of the We Are Fairfax Coalition rallied Wednesday, March 25 at the site of the proposed Tysons entertainment district. The coalition, which also includes non-union community partners, represents tens of thousands of members regionally. Gathering at the proposed site, currently a vacant lot at 8546 Leesburg Pike, workers voiced support for Senate Bill 756, calling the project "one of the most significant economic development and affordability opportunities before working families in a generation."

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County is in the middle of a "do more with less" budget cycle for 2027. The county entered the budget process facing a projected \$131.5 million budget gap, cutting 107 county positions. Despite holding the tax rate steady, rising home values mean the owner of the average county home will pay more in property taxes in 2027. The county is struggling to close this gap, which represents the amount needed to maintain operations and fund its public schools.

"The Board of Supervisors is quick to point out the issues with revenue streams ... without offering an alternative," Emily VanDerhoff, president of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, said at a rally at the site of the proposed Tysons Entertainment District on March 25. "Now, labor is presenting an alternative to raise revenues and support Fairfax's working families and schools."

The We Are Fairfax Coalition organized the rally at a vacant lot adjacent to the Spring Hill Metro station. Approximately 60 union workers gathered at 8546 Leesburg Pike, the site of a former auto dealership, to urge Gov. Abigail Spanberger to sign Senate Bill 756 by the April 13 deadline.

On March 14, Senate Bill 756, introduced by Sen. Scott Surovell, passed both the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates. SB 756 is "enabling legislation" that aims to give Fairfax County the legal authority to hold a referendum previously prohibited by state law. If signed by the governor, the project still faces hurdles. Nov. 3, 2026, the General Election, is the earliest possible date for a referendum vote. For the question to appear on the 2026 ballot, the County Board of Supervisors would likely need to petition the Fairfax County Circuit Court by mid-August 2026.

Against a backdrop of the Silver Line Metro trains passing overhead on the rails, rally speakers said the entertainment district project is essential to creating the high-wage, unionized jobs residents need to afford to live in the county. Supporters at the rally said the proposed Tysons district would be "transformative," creating roughly 2,000 union construction jobs and 3,000 permanent hospitality and service jobs.

"Being a union member means having top pay, best-in-class training, employer-paid benefits, retirement and safe working conditions, things every worker should have the right to," said Maria Zoraya Silva, a union electrician and Burke resident.

Hanan Ahmed, a resident of



The Metro Silver Line tracks soar above the street near the Spring Hill station in Tysons on March 25. Hanan Ahmed of UNITE HERE Local 25 says a proposed entertainment district at the site could provide the stable, unionized jobs and comprehensive benefits that local residents need to live in Fairfax County. The union represents thousands of hospitality and service workers across the Washington metropolitan area.



Emily VanDerhoff, president of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers, speaks on March 25 in support of the proposed Tysons entertainment district. VanDerhoff said the project would support "quality union jobs for our private sector siblings" and generate tax revenue to help the county "fully fund our excellent schools and public services while providing needed tax relief to homeowners." She urged Gov. Abigail Spanberger to sign Senate Bill 756, which would allow a local voter referendum on the project. She expressed hope that Governor Spanberger will sign the bill and give the people of Fairfax County a chance to decide if this project is right for the community.



Nelson Aguilar, a 25-year Fairfax County resident and union carpenter, speaks on March 25 at the site of a proposed Tysons entertainment district. Aguilar, representing the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, said the project offers a "unique opportunity to train the next generation of carpenters and show them the path to the middle class." He joined a coalition of 15 labor unions at the vacant lot at 8546 Leesburg Pike to advocate for the passage of Senate Bill 756.

Fairfax County and union worker, said she wants SB 756 signed by the governor and a referendum authorized. To Ahmed, SB 756 is not the "Fairfax Casino bill"; it is "We Are Fairfax — Let Us Vote." Ahmed supports the entertainment development as a way to create more jobs in the community, sharing her experience working in both non-union and union hotels.

"Fairfax County [is an] incred-

ibly expensive place to live. My people commute more than one hour into D.C. because the wages in Fairfax don't match the living," Ahmed said. Before working at the Marriott Marquis, Ahmed worked at a non-union hotel where she said management cut hours. "They work me like a horse. I quit after 10 days because it was [a] terrible working environment."

Ahmed and all other speakers



The "We Are Fairfax" Coalition Union members hold a "We Are Fairfax" banner at a rally on March 25, at the site of a proposed Tysons entertainment district. The coalition, an umbrella organization comprising 15 labor unions and non-union community partners, was formed to advocate for the redevelopment of the vacant lot at 8546 Leesburg Pike. Supporters say the project will create thousands of unionized jobs and provide a new tax revenue stream for Fairfax County public services.

never said the word "casino" in their remarks, but instead referenced the bill's number or that the construction would be "an entertainment district."

While SB 756 does not explicitly name the Tysons site, its specific language effectively limits the location of a casino to the Spring Hill Metro property now controlled by Comstock Holding Companies,

SEE THE POER OF, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Power of a Referendum

FROM PAGE 10

and possibly one other site. This would be part of a “coordinated mixed-use” development of at least 1.5 million square feet located within a quarter-mile of a Silver Line station outside the Beltway. A pivot shifted from a pre-pandemic plan (2019), for “The View,” a 3-million-square-foot development originally proposed by Clemente Development that featured the iconic tower, planned at 600 feet, an office-heavy space, luxury condos, and a “Rockefeller Center of Tysons” civic plaza.

Christopher Clemente, CEO of Comstock, is the son of C. Daniel Clemente, who founded Clemente Development; the two firms have shifted the focus from the father’s skyscraper vision to the son’s entertainment district, anchored by a casino with a 6,000-seat concert venue. Supporters say this shift is necessary to diversify the tax base following changes in the commercial office market after COVID.

As homeowners face an average 3.99% property tax increase due to rising assessments, some lawmakers, county voters and members of organizations believe Senate Bill 756 offers a potential fiscal solution. An independent market analysis commissioned by JLARC projects annual gaming revenue between \$418 and \$618 million. Proponents say the revenue would support county schools and county services through a 30-70% state-heavy split of tax revenue. The county’s portion would be earmarked for Fairfax County Public Schools, while a portion of the state’s share is earmarked for the Virginia School Construction Fund to help fix aging school buildings across the state.

The cost of living in Fairfax County is roughly 42% higher than the national average and 36% higher than the Virginia average. Blue-collar hospitality and service workers at non-union jobs in Fairfax County often work two or three jobs without access to health insurance.

Nelson Aguilar, a 25-year Fairfax County resident, said, “The union gives us a voice on the job and protects our rights ... We have a unique opportunity to train the next generation of carpenters and show them the path to the middle class.”

VanDerhoff noted that each year the union advocates for full funding for schools, yet the Board of Supervisors continues to underfund the school budget. She said the FCFT Executive Board voted to support the entertainment district to help fully fund schools and

ease the tax burden on homeowners. “We’re hopeful that Governor Spanberger will sign this bill into law and give the people of Fairfax County a chance to decide if this project is right for our community,” VanDerhoff said.

Ella Whitaker, a campaign researcher for UNITE HERE Local 25 and a spokesperson for the We Are Fairfax Coalition, concluded the rally.

“It is so moving to hear from these powerful union leaders from across the coalition. As a resident of Fairfax, I am inspired by the opportunity the county has to approve this project that would transform Fairfax for thousands of families,” Whitaker said.

Unions backing the proposal include: The Amalgamated Transit Union; Elevator Contractors Local 10; LiUNA; IBEW Local 26; Painters District Council 51; the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers; the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association; Operating Engineers Locals 77 and 99; the building and construction trades; IATSE; SMART Local 100; the Carpenters union; 32BJ SEIU; and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Supporters say this new money, roughly 90% of it, would come from repatriated dollars currently being spent at casinos in Maryland and West Virginia. As the county faces a “structural deficit,” proponents frame the entertainment district as a way to generate non-residential revenue to take the pressure off homeowners’ property tax bills.

What Might Voters’ Ballots Say?

While the March 25 rally signs focused on an “entertainment district” and the “right to vote,” Virginia law requires specific language on the ballot itself. Following the 2022 Richmond Circuit Court order that finalized the wording for that city’s referendum, any Fairfax County ballot must mirror that directness.

As part of the passage of SB 756, the Virginia General Assembly amended Virginia Code § 58.1-4123 to include counties.

However, the mandatory phrasing remains unchanged. Under Subsection D, the question must be printed as follows:

“Shall casino gaming be permitted at a casino gaming establishment in Fairfax County at 8546 Leesburg Pike as may be approved by the Virginia Lottery Board?”

Yes

No



SCREENSHOT GOOGLE MAPS

The former Exclusive Automotive Group dealership lot at 8546 Leesburg Pike sits vacant near the Spring Hill Metro station on March 25. The 8-acre site is currently the focus of a legislative push for a new entertainment district and casino. Labor groups say the redevelopment would transform the idle property into a significant regional economic driver.



COMSTOCK COS.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2019 approved “The View at Tysons,” a 3 million-square-foot development by Clemente Development Co. The six-building complex was slated to feature the region’s tallest building — a 600-foot tower — alongside 1.4 million square feet of office space and 1.14 million square feet of residential space. The plan later became financially unfeasible due to the post-pandemic collapse of the office market.



COMSTOCK COS.

A 2026 rendering of the proposed Tysons entertainment complex by Comstock Holding Companies shows a reimagined district anchored by a luxury hotel and casino tower. The site plan, designed to meet a new state-mandated minimum of 1.5 million square feet of mixed-use space, includes a domed performing arts venue, a central outdoor plaza, and direct integration with the Spring Hill Metro station. The project’s future now rests with Gov. Abigail Spanberger, who has until early April to sign, veto, or amend the enabling legislation.

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:

- ❖ 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.



The Historic Garden Week Old Town Alexandria House and Garden Walking Tour takes place Saturday, April 18, 2026 in Alexandria.

❖ 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 APRIL 19

Ambiguity Exhibition by Photographer Alan Sisen. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. In this new body of work, Sisen explores the "moment when perception pauses"—a fleeting second when the eye recognizes a form, but the mind cannot yet define it. Through reflection, repetition, and abstraction, his images of familiar places unsettle orientation, disrupt our sense of space, and blur the line between what is seen, what is felt, and what is understood.

NOW THRU APRIL 19

What Will Persist: Elizabeth Coffey and Sally Veach exhibition. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist's Reception on Sunday, March 22 from 4-6 p.m. Elizabeth Coffey and Sally Veach use layered processes and historically charged materials to examine how meaning accumulates on surfaces. Pattern, fabric, and atmosphere function as both structure and metaphor, allowing traces of earlier marks and histories to remain visible. Veach builds palimpsestic landscapes informed by romantic painting traditions and archival botanical designs. Coffey paints women on lace curtains and expanded textile supports, pairing figuration with language. Seen together, their works present painting as a porous form—one that resists containment and remains open to what persists beneath the surface.

City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

From glow parties and jazz on the waterfront to family picnics and fireworks on the Potomac, there is something happening in every corner of our city. Grab your calendar. You are going to want to mark a few dates.

- ❖ Events are free unless otherwise stated.
- Armstrong Spring Tech Refresh Saturday, April 11, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | Leonard Armstrong Recreation Center
- Clear out unwanted electronics for free and learn about important digital safety topics affecting today's youth. Declutter and learn something new all in one stop.
- Le Brunch en Bleu Saturday, April 25 | 12-4 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center
- Bring blankets, tables, chairs, food, and friends for a relaxed afternoon gathering in Alexandria's West End. All are welcome for connection and community.

RecFest Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Patrick Henry Recreation Center

A celebration of everything RPCA offers. Enjoy demos, meet instructors, explore summer camps, arts, sports, nature programs, and even register on site. It is your one stop shop for fun.

Asian American Pacific Islander Month Celebration Saturday, May 30, 3-7 p.m. | Patrick Henry Recreation Center

Celebrate culture, history, and community through food, live performances, art, youth activities, and storytelling in this vibrant family-friendly event.

48th Annual ALX Jazz Fest Friday, June 12, 12-6 p.m.; Saturday, June 13, 12-9 p.m.; Sunday, June 14, 12-6 p.m. | Waterfront Park

ALX Jazz Fest celebrates its 48th annual event as part of the Sails on the Potomac series honoring the USA's 250th anniversary, featuring three days of music: Americana Roots (Friday), American Jazz and Poetry (Saturday), and Future Sounds of America (Sunday).

Juneteenth Block Party Friday, June 19, 4-7 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Come and celebrate the people, contributions, traditions and culture of Black Americans who have helped build and shape America. Enjoy food, live music, dance presentations, and recreation programming in celebration of this national holiday.

Alexandria and USA Birthday Celebration Sunday, July 12 | Oronoco Bay Park Celebrate Alexandria's 277th birthday and the USA's 250th with live music, food, and a fireworks finale over the Potomac River at 9:30 p.m. A can't-miss summer night.

Kids and Teens Nerf the Turf \$19, Ages 7-12 Fridays, April 17 & June 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Patrick Henry Elementary School Build teamwork and sportsmanship in this instructor-led foam dart showdown. Bring your gear; we'll provide the ammo.

Dodgeball Fanatics \$19, Ages 7-12 Fridays, April 24 & May 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Patrick Henry Elementary School Duck, dip, dive, and dodge in a safe and structured environment designed for skill building and fun.

Animals in the Park Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. | Windmill Hill Park

Meet RPCA staff and some of the wildlife from the Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center.

K Pop Hunters Glow Party \$5, Ages 6-10

Saturday, April 25, 1-3 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Dance to your favorite movie hits, create arts and crafts, and glow under colorful lights with friends.

Alexandria Spring Invitational Cheer Competition Price varies, Saturday, April 25, 2 p.m. | Alexandria City High School

Watch talented cheer squads bring the energy, spirit, and skill to the mat. From high-flying stunts to powerful routines, this exciting competition is packed with teamwork and Alexandria pride.

Mother's Day Spa \$15, Ages 5 & up Saturday, May 2, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | Mount Vernon Recreation Center

Moms and daughters can enjoy facials, manicures, food, and quality time together for a memorable Mother's Day celebration.

Parents Night Out \$25, Ages 5-12

Fridays, May 8 & June 12, 6:30-8:45 p.m. | Mount Vernon Recreation Center

Enjoy an evening out while your kids enjoy games and activities in a safe and energetic setting.

Charles Houston Kiddie Cabaret \$6, Ages 1-5 Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Dress up, dance to kiddie favorites, enjoy lunch, and celebrate in style with a parent or guardian.

For Adults Charles Houston Line Dance Social Ages 18+

Tuesdays, April 14 & May 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Enjoy an evening of toe-tapping fun. No experience needed. Just bring your enthusiasm.

Live on Top of The Hill Concert Series Ages 18+

Fridays, June 27 & July 25, 12-3 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center

Relax with live folk, cover, and mariachi music in a welcoming community setting.

Top of The Hill Adult Social Ages 18+

Friday, July 31, 6:30-9 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center

Connect, unwind, enjoy games and themed nights, and meet new friends in this casual summer gathering.

Explore full details and register at alexandriava.gov/RPCA/Events.

APRIL 3 TO JUNE 12

More Moments of Art at River Farm. At 7931 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

ENTERTAINMENT

East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Nepenthe Gallery is pleased to partner with Bob Murray and The von Brahler Ltd. Gallery to present a collaborative exhibit, "More Moments of Art at River Farm," at the American Horticultural Society's River Farm. The exhibit will include a collection of approximately 30 to 40 artworks from a variety of Nepenthe artists as well as artists represented by Bob Murray. The exhibit will open with a reception (light refreshments served) on Sunday, April 6th from 2 to 5pm and close with a reception (light refreshments served) on Thursday, June 5th from 5 to 7:30pm. The receptions will take place in the Manor House at River Farm, where the exhibit will be housed.

APRIL 3-25

The "Fast and Fabulous" art exhibit will impress and delight visitors of driving age and those dreaming of getting behind the wheel. Whether Fords, Ferraris, or flying cars, these interpretations of cars and other fast/fabulous forms of transportation can't be missed. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Opening Reception: Friday, April 3, from 7-9 p.m. Hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

EASTER DINING – APRIL 4-5

❖ Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at Joe Theismann's Restaurant

Saturday, April 4 at 8AM + Sunday, April 5 at 8AM

This Easter weekend, families are invited back for the popular Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at Theismann's Restaurant & Bar. Guests can enjoy two festive mornings filled with family-friendly fun, including opportunities for children to meet and take photos with the Easter Bunny, participate in an Easter egg hunt, and create their own Easter basket.

The family-style breakfast includes a beverage and a mimosa and is priced at \$64.82 for adults. For children ages 2 and older, the experience is \$36.39, which includes breakfast, a beverage, and a photo with the Easter Bunny. Adults may also enhance their celebration with bottomless mimosas, Prosecco, or Bellinis for an additional \$22.20.

Phone: 703.739.0777

Address: 1800 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, VA.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/breakfast-with-the-easter-bunny-at-theismanns-restaurant-tickets-1982907822676?aff=oddtcreator>

Palette 22 – Bottomless Brunch

At Palette 22, Sundays are all about an endlessly creative bottomless brunch experience. For \$32.22 per person, guests can enjoy unlimited selections from the menu, including favorites like French Toast Sticks, P22 Cheeseburger Sliders, brick oven pizzas, and Shrimp + Grits. The experience also features a chef-attended taco and waffle bar, plus dessert to finish on a sweet note. To sip alongside brunch, guests can add Bellinis, Mimosas, or a Create-Your-Own Bloody Mary for just \$4.22 each. <https://arlington.palette22.com/>

Address: 4053 Campbell Ave., Arlington, VA 22206

Ada's on the River

Celebrate Easter Sunday with a refined brunch at Ada's on the River, featuring elegant seasonal dishes alongside its waterfront setting. Highlights include the South African Lobster Benedict, made with butter-poached lobster, poached eggs, crème fraîche, smoked tomatoes, and potato pavé, and a decadent Croque Madame layered with shaved prosciutto cotto, brioche, and a rich pecorino and gruyère béchamel. End on a sweet note with a slice of Carrot Cake topped with cream cheese mousse, candied pecans, and pineapple jam. <https://adasontheriver.com/>

Address: 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria, VA 22314 BARCA Pier & Wine Bar

For a lively waterfront Easter celebration, BARCA Pier & Wine Bar will offer Mediterranean-inspired brunch specials on Easter Sunday perfect for sharing. Guests can start with a bright Herbed Yogurt Dip served with warm pita and pickled vegetables, enjoy a savory Jamón



More Moments of Art at River Farm runs April 3 to June 12, 2026 in Alexandria.

Ibérico Benedict with a Portuguese muffin and mojo rojo, or indulge in the Grilled Lamb & Artichoke Kebab, featuring marinated lamb loin with herbs and garlic yogurt. <https://barcaalx.com/>

Address: 2 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria, VA 22314

Mia's Italian Kitchen - Bottomless Brunch & New Hours

Brunch at Mia's Italian Kitchen in Alexandria just got even better with new weekend hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Guests can indulge in Mia's signature Bottomless Brunch for \$32 per person, featuring unlimited selections from the brunch menu for an endlessly satisfying Italian-style feast. Highlights include the Italian Scramble with pepperoni, roasted peppers, mushrooms, caramelized onions, basil, and rustic garlic toast, Brick Oven Pan Pizza, and house-made pastas like Nonna's Sunday Gravy with rigatoni, sweet Italian sausage, meatballs, braciolo, and chicken thighs in slow-simmered tomato sauce. To sip alongside brunch, guests can enjoy specialty cocktails including Mia's Bloody Mary, Mia's Rossini, Lavender Bellini, and Venus Punch. <https://alexandria-va.miasitalian.com/>

Address: 100 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 The Royal

At The Royal, Easter Sunday brunch brings bold, comforting flavors with dishes like the Pot Roast Hash, made with braised beef, sunny eggs, crispy home fries, caramelized onions, feta, and roasted garlic aioli. Another standout is the Vampiro Burrito, packed with house-made chicken chorizo, scrambled eggs, refried beans, crispy cheeses, salsa verde, and cilantro for a hearty holiday bite. <https://royalrestaurantva.com/>

Address: 730 North Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Vola's Dockside Grill

Celebrate Easter Sunday by the waterfront at Vola's Dockside Grill with indulgent brunch and seafood favorites. The Pecan-Crusted French Toast features brioche topped with Bavarian cream, fresh berries, and spiced syrup, while the Lobster & Crab Cannelloni delivers a rich combination of Maine lobster, lump crab, spinach, and Gruyère in a sherry cream sauce. <https://voladockside.com/>

Address: 101 North Union Street, Old Town Waterfront, Alexandria, VA 22314

SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

Pop-Up Satellite Services for Circuit Court. Fairfax Circuit Court is pleased to announce the launch of pop-up Satellite Circuit Court Services at the Gerry Hyland Government Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Starting April 14, 2026, services will be available on the second Tuesday of every month, from 9 a.m. to noon. This initiative provides select court services to residents in the southern portion of Fairfax County, increasing access and convenience.

Services Offered Include:
Marriage License Issuance



Enjoy Breakfast with the Easter Bunny at Alexandria restaurants April 4-5, 2026.

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This program represents a pivotal step in the Fairfax Circuit Court's ongoing efforts to enhance community engagement and service delivery. As the largest trial court in Virginia, the Fairfax Circuit Court (19th Judicial Circuit) remains dedicated to providing resources that meet the needs of Fairfax County and Fairfax City residents. For more information about Fairfax Circuit Court and its services, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit>.

SATURDAY/APRIL 4

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. Open every day, various hours. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

APRIL 10-11

2026 Spring Garden Market at River Farm.

The American Horticultural Society (AHS), the national nonprofit promoting the beauty and benefits of plants, is excited to announce Christin Geall as the special guest speaker at the 2026 Spring Garden Market at River Farm. The popular garden market will take place April 10-11, 2026 at River Farm, AHS' headquarters in Alexandria, VA.

A writer and floral designer whose work explores the rich intersections of design, nature, culture, and horticulture, Christin brings a thoughtful and creative lens to the world of flowers. Her new book, *Flora Culture: How Flowers Shape Our World*, explores our love of flowers and our relationships with plants, gardens, and design. Christin will share her expertise during two sessions at our 2026 Spring Garden Market:

Creating a Cutting Garden | Friday, April 10, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Developing Floral Arrangements | Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Featuring native plants, herbs, seeds, original art, gardening tools, and specialty finds, the much-anticipated Spring Garden Market at River Farm kicks off the gardening season in Northern Virginia. Attendees can browse the garden marketplace, seek advice from horticultural experts, enjoy delicious food, and tour River Farm's beautiful gardens and manor house. With more than 2,000 attendees, this signature spring event is one of the largest fundraisers for River Farm, a historic and horticultural treasure.

SUNDAY/APRIL 12

Del Ray Dog Fest. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At the

George Washington Middle School Parking Lot, Alexandria. Hosted by the Del Ray Business Association, the Del Ray Dog Fest, this dog-centered, outdoor day (rain or shine) promises to be packed with tail-wagging fun, to benefit the Alexandria Police Foundation's Caring for K9s Program.

SATURDAY/APRIL 18

Family Skate and Dance Night. Embrace the spring season with a night out all ages will enjoy at an upcoming Family Skate and Dance Night. Gather the crew, whether it's family or friends, and head out to Franconia Rec Center as its gym transforms for the night into a skate rink. Bring your own skates or your dancing shoes to get moving to music by a guest DJ. Upcoming events set the stage to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the spring season (enchanted forest theme) and the third anniversary Family Skate and Dance Night. Tickets cost \$10 for everyone—purchase online now for these upcoming events:

Saturday, April 18, 6-9 p.m., Family Skate and Dance Night: Enchanted Forest

Saturday, May 16, 5-9 p.m., Family Skate and Dance Night: Third Anniversary

All ages and abilities are invited to join in and build confidence on wheels at this community event. Food, snacks and drinks are available for purchase (outside food is prohibited). Franconia Rec Center is located at 6601 Telegraph Road in Alexandria. For more information, visit the Franconia Rec Center website or call 703-922-9841.

SATURDAY/APRIL 18

Historic Garden Week Old Town Alexandria

House and Garden Walking Tour. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All properties are located in Old Town Alexandria. Tours benefit the restoration of historic gardens and landmarks in Virginia. The event is hosted by the Hunting Creek Garden Club and the Garden Club of Alexandria. Co-chairs are Betsy Regnell and Maureen Bates. Tickets are on sale for \$55 per person. If tickets are purchased the day of the tour, they are \$65. If purchasing tickets on the day of the tour, visit the Alexandria Visitors Center, at 221 King St. Tour tickets are not sold at the homes on the tour. A full-priced ticket is required for all tour attendees. Children under five are free when accompanied by a paying adult. Complimentary light refreshments will be available at St. Paul's Episcopal Church from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The church will also be open for touring. Specialty boutique vendors will be featured at the Marketplace at the Athenaeum, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. 201 Prince St. Bartlett Tree Experts will have an educational table and free tree saplings while they last from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visit VaGardenWeek.org for a complete listing of tours, suggested itineraries, maps and to purchase tickets. What's on the tour: 312 Queen St.: The house sits on a lot with a

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ❖ APRIL 2-15, 2026 ❖ 13



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NEWS

Teen Charged in Fatal Hit & Run

Detectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit (CRU) have charged a 16-year-old with Manslaughter, Felony Hit and Run, and Receiving Stolen Property in connection to a fatal pedestrian crash involving a stolen vehicle in Hybla Valley on March 10, 2024.

Through their investigation, detectives determined the teen was driving the stolen vehicle involved in the crash. The stolen 2015 Hyundai Sonata was driving at a high rate of speed when it side-swiped an occupied vehicle near Tamarind Street, then continued before crashing into a dumpster on Janna Lee Avenue. The driver of the stolen vehicle fled the scene.

Officers located a pedestrian, James Johnson, 63, of Hybla Valley, who had been struck during the incident. He was transported to a hospital, where he later died.

The juvenile has been charged with Manslaughter, Felony Hit and Run, and Receiving Stolen Property and remains at the Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, 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 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.

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alex-

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rich and layered history dating back to the Colonial era. First sold in 1750 to Jonathan Roe with the condition that a structure be built within two years, the property was transferred in 1752 to William Ramsay, an original trustee and the first mayor of Alexandria, who would serve for 36 years. Ramsay's tenure saw multiple informal transfers of the property, including one that same year to his brother-in-law, Daniel McCarty. A copy of the original deed and indenture from this transaction, notably witnessed by a 20-year-old George Washington—then recently appointed surveyor of Culpeper County—is proudly displayed in the home's main room. The original document, believed to still be in the possession of Ramsay's descendants, bears one of Washington's earliest known signatures. Construction of the current dwelling, excluding the later rear kitchen addition, began around 1796–1797 and was completed in 1798 under the ownership of Isabella Shaw and her husband, John Elton, a local carpenter. Over the centuries, the house has remained closely tied to American history. During World War II, Fleet Admiral William "Bull" Halsey owned the home, and his tenant, George Kennan, would later serve as U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. More recently, the property was owned by Don Beyer, a former U.S. ambassador to Switzerland and current member of Congress, and his wife Megan, until it was purchased by current owner in 2012. Owner: Miguel Estrada

115 Prince St.: Situated on Alexandria's iconic Captain's Row, this elegant townhome combines timeless charm from colonial times, maritime history, and garden beauty. Built in 1783 and surveyed by a young George Washington in 1784, it originally served as a haven for sailors, offering food, lodging, supplies, and a well-used tavern that is now the dining room. After a fire in 1827, the lot sold for just \$100. The current brick house was constructed in 1853 by an Italian ship captain and his Irish wife. From rare documents, we know the history of each owner and have copies of every deed. There are even documented ghost stories. Pine floors, crown moldings, and five fireplaces showcase its enduring character. A detached kitchen once stood in the garden to prevent fires, and the parking space was once a chicken coop. A grand living room, added in 1938, remains largely unchanged. The garden provides a peaceful retreat with blooming camellias, azaleas, star jasmine, roses, and boxwoods. Cheryl Amyx, owner

209 S. Fairfax St.: The exact age of the house is unknown, but John Kempf is believed to have lived here as early as 1787. Before 1811, it housed a tannery and a coach-building shop. In 1833, a prominent Alexandrian, John Green, purchased it. He operated a furniture factory across the street, now the Green Steam condominiums. It remained in his family until the 1890s, when it was divided into 207 and 209 and handed down to Green's two children. His daughter, Frannie Lee Kemper, received 209. Over the years, many additions were made, such as the dining room and kitchen, after the Civil War. The family room was added a century later, with a second floor built in the early 2000s. In the 1960s, Henry Fowler, Treasury Secretary during the Johnson administration, bought and renovated the home. American Home magazine published an article about it in 1964. The current owners purchased the property in 2015. They excavated the basement to create a wine cellar inspired by Mount Vernon's and added a downstairs bedroom and family room. During construction, they discovered miles of secure telephone lines within the walls, which allowed Secretary Fowler to have direct access to the White House in the 1960s. Adria Villar and Amir Tayrani, owners

511 Prince St.: This historic residence dates to May 7, 1763, when George Washington bought about two acres of land in Alexandria. He built a house for himself on Cameron Street. The remaining land was at the corner of Pitt and Prince Streets, stretching west to what is now 511 Prince Street. Washing-

ton constructed two rental houses, and the vacant lots were leased to a builder who, in 1793, built the houses from 503 to 511 Prince Street. After Washington died in 1799, the properties were transferred to Martha Washington. By 1855, William McVeigh, a well-known Alexandria architect and builder, expanded the house. A small hallway room, called a hyphen, between the living and dining rooms, connects the original house to the new addition. By the early 1900s, the house had been converted into a five-unit apartment building; however, by mid-century, it had reverted to a single-family home. Its four finished floors include three bedrooms, a library, a den, an office, and a family room. Initially heated by wood, it contains ten working fireplaces. The current owner has enjoyed this beautiful home since 2001. Dave Cleary, owner

317 S. St. Asaph St.: The origins of this property date back to a land grant from King Charles II to Sir Richard Berkeley, the then-Governor of Virginia, dated May 2, 1669. It wasn't until around 1750-70 that a simple "flounder" house was built, consisting of a fireplace room with a bedroom above. Flounders were popular at the time, characterized by a high, windowless back and a steeply sloping roof. It is believed that these relatively inexpensive structures were built to meet the requirement of construction within two years of ownership and included a windowless wall to reduce the then-existing "glass tax." In 1820, the front of the house was constructed, which still features the original staircase. By 1860, a bay window had been added to the façade. The kitchen was originally located in the old smokehouse but was later connected to the main structure. A new kitchen was added in 1980. The garden was designed to bloom sequentially throughout the growing season. The decorative millstone in the garden was brought from Hanover County, Virginia, in the early 20th century. This property was opened for Historic Garden Week in 1944. Ruthie Birch, owner

TUESDAY/APRIL 21
MV Genealogical Presentation. 1-3 p.m. Zoom. Address: 7701 Stone Wheat Court, Alexandria. Jennifer Hollik, will discuss how genealogical records, history, and lived experience, can help us understand our more difficult ancestors. You'll leave with a better understanding of how generational trauma shapes families. Hollik is a genealogical and military researcher who has authored more than 20 books. The Zoom link will be on the website shortly before the event. Go to <https://mvgenealogy.org/index.php>.

SUNDAY/APRIL 26
PNC Alexandria Half Marathon. The PNC Alexandria Half is Northern Virginia's marquee spring running event, coming up on Sunday, April 26. Runners can enjoy 13.1 miles through the heart of Old Town and out and back on the beautiful George Washington Parkway or choose the 5K and exclusively experience the charm of Old Town. A post-race party follows. The half-marathon and 5K both kick off Sunday, April 26 at 7 a.m. at 301 King St. in Old Town Alexandria, finishing up at N. Union and Oronoco streets in Old Town. The Kids Docs Dash begins at 10:30 a.m. at Union and King streets and finishes up at

BULLETIN BOARD

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andria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving.

Oronoco Bay Park at 100 Madison St. Water stops and aid stations will be located along the routes.

THURSDAY/APRIL 30
April Coffee & Connections. 8:30-9:30 a.m. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. Join the Professional Women's Network for its second gathering of the year, where you'll have the opportunity to network with some of the region's most accomplished professionals—women and men alike.

This quarter, they're excited to welcome Eleanore Tapscoff, President of The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Eleanore will share the story of her unique dual career—serving as a nonprofit professional by day while thriving as an award-winning actor, producer, and director in the DC area's vibrant community theatre scene.

SATURDAY/MAY 2
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. Open every day, various hours. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

THE BIRCHMERE
At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

APRIL
Fri. 3: Newmyer Flyer Presents DREAM DISCS: A Tribute to VAN MORRISON'S "Moondance" & BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S "The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle", performed in their entirety! \$39.50
Sat. 4: Demola The Violinist Live! \$55.00
Wed. 8: LUNA w/ Jeffrey Lewis \$45.00
Fri. 10: Who's Bad \$39.50 (Rescheduled from 1/24/26) SOLD OUT!
Sat. 11: SGGL (Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lille) \$39.50
Sun. 12: Mike Doughty (of Soul Coughing) – Solo Tour 2026 \$35.00
Tue. 14: Toast – The Best of Bread \$50.00
Fri. 17: Kindred The Family Soul \$75.00
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Mon. 27: Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore – Almost Acoustic Duo \$45.00
Wed. 29: Alan Doyle with special guest Bandits On The Run \$49.50

Impractically Speaking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Due to the closure of my local Truist Bank branch - and its equally accessible ATM, I have been living a non-cash existence. Though I have a supermarket nearby which enables me to get cash back when using my debit card (and by overpaying the supermarket's tab), the damage you might say, has already been done - in my head anyway. To even get to the cash, I have to use a debit card so I'm not exactly avoiding the problem as much as I'm contributing to it. And though I couldn't pay with the debit card unless I had a sufficient balance to the tethered account, nonetheless I feel as if I'm taking from one account to pay for another. It feels almost like churning. Except in this instance, I'm spending my own money, but it's not money that's actually in hand. Rather it's plastic in the wallet. And though it ultimately serves the same purpose/master, it feels - to me, as if I'm taking from Peter to pay Paul - and I'm neither Peter nor Paul. In short, I feel constrained and careless in the same transaction, if that makes any sense?

Underlying the previous paragraph's sentiment; having cash in actual hand/wallet represents - to me anyway, a kind of affordability/success that I don't feel when paying with plastic. Paying with plastic seems like bad planning. Moreover, not having enough cash represents a kind of failure to communicate (not between Paul Newman's character Luke Jackson and Strother Martin, his overseer on a prison farm, from the classic "Cool Hand Luke") but between you and your bank. As if you don't know how to manage - or you don't have enough, money. Either way, you're not going to influence people or make any friends (an ode to Dale Carnegie). Pulling out a credit card to pay your way doesn't carry the same weight/affect as fanning out however many \$100 bills are necessary to pay what's due. Cash seems more impressive/responsible somehow.

I understand that the evolution (or is that a revolution) of our economy from brick and mortar to online and not in person generally prevents the use of cash. These days, cash is no longer king. It's maybe a prince. And if one is not going to become a pauper when always using credit cards, it requires strict adherence to a recurring reconciliation of what's going where and who pays what, when. And that may require a "particular set of skills" or Liam Neeson to manage the incoming and this ongoing outgoing. Or the money will simply be taken with minimal understanding.

I am aware, and it's certainly a choice - but hardly a consideration, that I can debit from non-Truist automatic teller machines. However, I hate the fees associated with those withdrawals almost as much as I hate drivers who back into parking spaces - but that's a whole 'nother column which was published in this space months ago, so I won't bore you on the topic any more than I already have. But I don't see my debit card as a primary payor of stuff as I figure the money in the checking is there for other bill-related reasons. Its use is not supposed to abuse the privilege, so to speak, of having money not yet budgeted. I want to go forward with my money, not backwards and debiting often feels "bassackwards."

I imagine much of this rambling doesn't make any sense - or cents either, and that's exactly my point. Money doesn't grow on plastic any more than it grows on trees. I have to think about how I'm spending if I want to grow rich (sort of Napoleon Hill).

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



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1600 Lafayette Dr | \$1,565,000



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