

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 16, 2026

Preserving Hollin Hills House by House

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The key to it all is the consensus of the community," architect John Burns told members of the Hollin Hills community at an April 12 "reveal party" to unveil two new plaques for homes in the historic community. "Consensus is our underlying strength," he added.

Opening the Friends of Hollin Hills event at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Barbara Bogue, president, said the gathering "acknowledges our shared love of Hollin Hills."

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Interior listed the community on the National Register of Historic Places as did the state on the Virginia Landmarks Register. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved the Hollin Hills Historic Overlay District in 2022. At that time, Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck insisted on consensus, Burns said.

Jeff Vandersall, who headed the plaque design committee, explained that the design reflects the mid-century modern homes' "sleek, unadorned, clean lines and simplicity." They chose "white metals" fabricated in brushed stainless steel with etched graphics and lettering using the Neutraface font, rejecting traditional heavy brass or bronze plaques with cast letters.

The design "is reflective of the mid-century modern aesthetic expressed in the work of Charles Goodman," a flyer offers. Goodman was the chief architect of the Hollin Hills houses, choosing open-plan layouts, walls of glass and other innovations.

Sunday's attendees applauded the plaques and made purchases. Homeowners can order one that has a home's address or one without.

Barbara Wade bartended for the 50 attendees. She moved to Hollin Hills in 1950 at age two, left and came back in 1978.

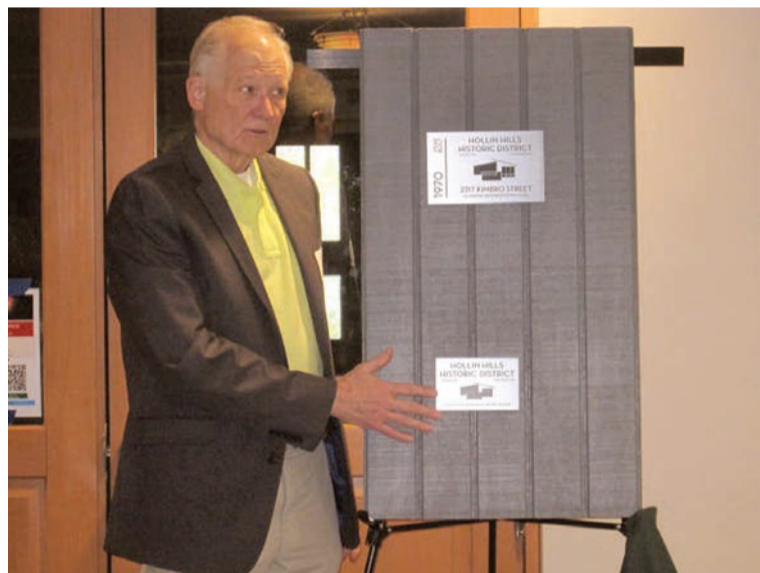
Mike McGill, who came from California to work for the late U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, moved from Capitol Hill because the architecture "is reminiscent of California," he said.

Origins

The land was "heavily wooded and enigmatic," wrote Goodman. "It was the kind of land homebuilders avoided," he said, accord-



Jeff Vandersall and Barbara Bogue unveiled the two plaques.



Jeff Vandersall headed the design committee and explained the philosophy behind the design.

ing to Hollin Hills, Community of Vision, published in 2000.

In the mid-1940s developer Robert Davenport partnered with Goodman, who was likely influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, to pioneer a unique community. By 1971, they had built around 450 houses on 326 acres and named it Hollin Hills, for the 18th century plantation house, "Hollin Hall," now owned by MVUC.

Instead of bulldozing the land, building a street grid of right angles and erecting "cookie cutter" houses, the style of that era, the two entrepreneurs worked with the land to respect its natural topography, drainage, slopes and trees. Wright had said, "Let your home appear to grow easily from its site and shape it to sympathize with the surroundings if nature is manifest there, and if not, try and be as quiet, substantial and organic

as she would have been if she had the chance."

The Houses

Among the features that contributed to the historic listings are architecture, community planning and development. The nomination form noted, "Hollin Hills and the collaborative partnership of Goodman and Davenport received national acclaim and international attention as the first planned subdivision to combine novel land planning, modern house and landscape designs and a merchandising plan that required the lots and house designs to be sold separately."

Today there are 463 houses, winding roads, no hard curbs, gutters or sidewalks. Community parks follow streams.

The houses are set back from the streets on irregularly-shaped, one-third to one-half-an-acre lots and



John Burns chronicled the community's efforts to get a federal and state historic designation.



The two plaques available to Hollin Hills homeowners.



Mike McGill, an "architecture buff," liked the plaques and bought one for his home.

sited at angles. Generally, one-level houses are on flat or low-slope lots and two-level houses on steeper lots. "Shaping the structure to fit the site, rather than reshaping and forcing the site to fit the structure, is a defining feature of Hollin Hills," explains the federal listing. Landscape architects Lou Bernard Voight, Eric Paepcke and Dan Kiley designed many of the properties' landscapes to accent the land's natural features.

Peter Martz grew up in Hollin Hills, left for college and returned. "It's a great place to grow up and

a great place to get older. It helps keep you young," he said.

Information

Community Association of Hollin Hills, www.hollin-hills.org

Friends of Hollin Hills, www.FriendsofHollinHills.org

National Register of Historic Places, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/029-5471-Hollin_Hills_HD_2013_NRHP_Final.pdf

Virginia Historic Landmarks Listing, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/029-5471/>

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MCENEARNEY



Jefferson Park 305 Mansion Drive

\$2,995,000 | This magnificent Southern Colonial sits on a rare half-acre lot, blending 1940s craftsmanship with modern luxury. The residence features four finished levels, including a gourmet kitchen, a main-level primary suite (one of two), and a walk-out lower level with a pool table and third fireplace. The estate boasts refined details in a private "garden-lawn" sanctuary.

Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



OPEN SAT 4/18, 12-2PM & SUN 4/19, 1-3PM



SE Quadrant 513 Franklin Street

\$1,795,000 | This rare detached Colonial in Old Town offers 3 en-suite bedrooms, a spacious fenced front yard, and off-street parking. Short walk to restaurants, shops, and the waterfront.

Mary Taylor & Pat Tierney : 703.785.5619
MaryTaylorRealtor.com

OPEN SAT 4/18 & SUN 4/19, 1-3PM



River Bend Estates 9025 Charles Augustine Drive

\$1,595,000 | The perfect blend of curated design and modern convenience awaits in this custom home sited prominently on a landscaped half-acre lot backing to protected parkland.

Susan Dickerson : 703.380.0153
corcoranmce.com

COMING SOON



Fort Hunt 8203 Mack Street

\$1,495,000 | Elegant 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath home on a quiet cul-de-sac, 4,500 SF featuring an open kitchen/family room and a fabulous sunroom addition. Fenced, flat yard with a large deck.

Rebecca McCullough : 571.384.0941
RebeccaMcCullough.com

OPEN SUN 4/19, 2-4PM



Belle Haven 6032 Grove Drive

\$1,030,000 | Tucked away on a quiet cul-de-sac, discover this charming home with three bedrooms and three and one half baths in premier Belle Haven!

Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com

OPEN SUN 4/19, 2-4PM



Old Town 813 Wolfe Street

\$850,000 | Discover the charm of this beautifully maintained colonial townhouse. A perfect blend of comfort and style with 2 spacious bedrooms, 1.5 baths, and off-street parking.

Julian Burke : 703.867.4219
JulianBurke.com

OPEN SUN 4/19, 2-4PM



White Oaks 7200 Popkins Farm Road

\$848,000 | This exquisite 2-level brick home, nestled on a quiet cul-de-sac, is situated on a sprawling half-acre lot. Features 4 beds, 3 full baths, an expansive deck, and a fully fenced yard.

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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE



Virginia Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Mt. Vernon) helped muscle some of the 40 shopping carts out of Little Hunting Creek. To say that wayward shopping carts are a pet peeve of Surovell's is a bit of an understatement.



Volunteers and Friends Of Little Hunting Creek removed all kinds of trash from the stream on April 11, an annual cleanup.

Little Hunting Creek Cleanup Removes Shopping Carts, 60 Bags of Trash

On April 11, Virginia Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Mt. Vernon) and Delegate Paul Krizek (D-Mt. Vernon) hosted their annual Little Hunting Creek cleanup in partnership with Friends of Little Hunting Creek. The cleanup took place in the Hybla Valley area at the Janna Lee Avenue Bridge, Grackle Court, and at the Mount Vernon Shopping Plaza.

Over 45 volunteers, including staff from the office of Supervisor Rodney Lusk, turned out to collect an estimated 60 bags of trash and remove nearly 40 abandoned Costco and Home Depot shopping carts from the stream. Volunteers collected large quantities of plastic bags, plastic water bottles, styrofoam containers and beverage cans, as well as:

- ❖ 40 shopping carts - Mostly Costco, and a dozen from Home Depot, Aldi, Shoppers Food Warehouse and Walmart.

- ❖ A tire
- ❖ A scooter
- ❖ A television
- ❖ A rubber costume mask
- ❖ A wheelbarrow
- ❖ A cooler
- ❖ Several large lengths of plastic duct hosing
- ❖ A garden hose

Once named "Fairfax County's Trashiest Stream" in 2007 by Fairfax County Government, Little Hunting Creek still suffers from dumping which clogs up



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

One supersized tire, 60 bags of trash, 40 shopping carts and more were pulled out of Little Hunting Creek.

the stream and obstructs the natural flow of water. Shopping carts are frequently abandoned in and around the creek, and this year saw more of that than the past few years.

"It is deeply disappointing to see that many of the stores surround-

ing the creek, including Home Depot and Costco, continue to fail at their responsibility to put measures in place to prevent people from removing shopping carts into neighborhoods," said Surovell.

Since 2011, Surovell and volunteers have removed approximately

300 shopping carts from the creek, as well as 275 tires. These annual cleanups of the creek are only possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of local community volunteers, including students from South County High School who

joined us this year.

Surovell specifically thanks Walmart for the shopping cart control system they installed which has resulted in their carts largely no longer appearing in the stream. Other retailers have refused and now their carts appear every year.

Botanical Bounty Abounded



AHS provided carts for shoppers to carry their purchases at their annual spring garden market at River Farm.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The sunny, 70-degree day brought out fervent “plantophiles” like Hollin Hall resident Dorothy Keogh. “I come every year to buy Juliet tomatoes and pineapple sage,” she said. “The sage is good for hummingbirds.” Another Mount Vernon resident, Ingrid Reid, always goes to buy native plants.

By Saturday’s close, the American Horticultural Society’s (AHS) two-day, annual, spring garden market at their River Farm headquarters in Mount Vernon had attracted around 2,500 eager shoppers.

Kory Holzle at “Peony’s Envy”

ket. He’s been coming for 20 years “because of the great customers,” he said. “We love to help people get their gardens started.”

Holly Hammond brought vegetables from her Scottsville, Virginia, Whisper Hill Farm. She starts around 200 different organic herbs and vegetables, like peppers, cucumbers and onions, in February.

Eager shoppers perused tables loaded with green like tomatoes, peppers, thyme, dill, nasturtiums, bearded irises, ferns, columbine, flowering quince, arrowwood viburnum, tree saplings and more. Jill Bernier who grew up near River Farm, looked for lettuce and peppers to grow in planters at her townhouse.

It was the first year at the market for Rosa Flores, from Benton, Pennsylvania, who gave visitors honey samples, with enticing names like vanilla bean, peppermint whipped and fermented garlic honey. “You can actually taste the garlic. It’s good for colds,” she boasted.

Randy Wilson, a local and owner of Nature by Design, counseled customers on deer-resistant plants. He’s at the Sunday Four Mile Run Farmers Market and delivers plants to anyone with an Alexandria postal address. A 25-year veteran of the AHS market, Wilson specializes in native plants. Why? “We wouldn’t have any food without native plants,” he said. “I love the wildlife that comes with the plants more than the plants,” as bees buzzed around his plants.

Greg’s Art and Garden Iron tent was crammed with metal and iron art hauled all the way from Covington, Kentucky. Shoppers nabbed



Forty vendors engaged plant enthusiasts for two days at the American Horticultural Society’s annual two-day spring garden market at River Farm.



Two varieties of aromatic basil lured shoppers.



Christina Foy’s kokedama intrigued many shoppers.



Mount Vernon resident Avery Oerth makes and sells positive affirmation buttons.

cheerfully offered peony therapy, coaching customers, amused by the sign, on how to plant them. His team grows over 700 varieties on their Bernardsville, New Jersey, farm. Why peonies? “Because they are classic, hardy and will outlive all of us,” he said, adding, “They remind me of Grandma.”

Dave O’Neill with Radical Roots Farm in Keezletown, Virginia, starts his herb and vegetable seeds in January to be ready for this mar-



Christina Foy’s “air plants” are Spanish moss hanging from sea urchin shells.



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Botanical Bounty Abounded

FROM PAGE 4

butterflies, dragonflies and plant stands that sparkled in the sun.

Christina Foy's Plants and What Knot tent from Chantilly had a steady stream of garden-goers intrigued by her products. A botanical artist and market "newbie," she sold kokedama, Japanese moss balls, living wall art featuring tropical plants and "air plant jellyfish," made of Spanish moss dangling from sea urchin shells. She sculpts the moss balls with soil and sphagnum moss and holds them together with fishing line.

Sam Little founded 580 Pottery in Ashland, Virginia, and peddled his handmade self-watering goblet planters that have a wicking rope and water basin that keep plants like African violets and orchids hydrated.

Mara Bonner from Falls Church retailed botanical silk and cotton scarves which she makes by rolling actual leaves in a dye blanket and steams them for 90 minutes.

A Roaming Stone pair, billed as a Northern Virginia mobile tool sharpening outfit, sharpened knives and garden tools on site. "We'll come to your home," said



Mara Bonner makes scarves with plant designs.



Tim Little sells self-watering goblets for plants.



Two gentlemen from Roaming Stone sharpened knives and gardening tools at AHS annual spring garden market at River Farm.

Tim Toma.

Mount Vernon-area resident Avery Oerth sold "positive affirmation buttons" that he makes, with words like "bloom" and "Kindness lives here."

"A traditional job was not a good

fit for him," his mother said.

Ana's Twist sold empanadas and refreshing sorbets. The aromas from the Rocklands Real Barbeque food truck generated a steady line for barbeque, potato salad, baked beans and macaroni and cheese.

Even the carryout boxes were plant based, made of plant fiber that "turns into soil in 90 days," the lids claim.

This year's market sponsors were Bartlett Tree Experts, Burke and Herbert Bank, the Northern

Virginia Conservation Trust, Wegman's, Hartley Botanic and Party Potty.

The 25-acre River Farm was the northernmost of George Washington's five farms and has been AHS's national headquarters since 1973.

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YES OR NO?



Ads bombard voters' mailboxes, doorsteps, and media, urging turn-out for the Special Election on Redistricting. The consequences could have national implications.



Political organizer Elizabeth Ferrara of Alexandria provides voting information at a pick-up point in Lorton for door-knocking campaigns to get out the YES vote.

Redistricting Vote Looms

Last call -
April 21

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

In the special election, voters must cast their vote by April 21st. Many report confusion and conflicting political messaging and advertisements. The question: "Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow the General Assembly to temporarily adopt new congressional districts to restore fairness in the upcoming elections, while ensuring Virginia's standard redistricting process resumes for all future redistricting after the 2040 census?"

At present, Virginia's eleven congressional districts are drawn once every ten years by the Vir-

ginia Redistricting Commission, a legislative body made up of eight legislators, and eight citizens, with an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. Virginia's congressional districts were last redrawn in 2021 and would next be redrawn in 2031. However, this year the General Assembly approved a new proposed district map which would take effect only if the constitutional amendment is approved by voters.

Voting Yes

A "yes" vote would allow the General Assembly to redraw Virginia's congressional districts before the next ten-year cycle, since other states have done so. The proposed re-drawn district map would be used in the 2026 midterm Congressional elections. Then the responsibility of drawing the con-

gressional districts in 2031 would return to the Virginia Redistricting Commission.

Who Is Urging "Yes" Votes?

Democrats Governor Abigail Spanberger and former President Barack Obama are appearing in TV ads and other messaging urging the need to counter the GOP-led redistricting in other states. The information campaign is well funded, including by Virginians for Fair Elections, and several other democratic political and social action pacts, with approximately \$21 million donated.

Voting No

A "no" vote would leave the authority to draw congressional districts with the Virginia Redistricting Commission process at once a decade and Virginia's current districts would remain in place

until possible readjustment in 2031, based on 2030 census data. In its first and only use following the 2020 census, the Commission failed to pass a plan, so the state supreme court justices took over, in accordance with the statute.

Who is urging "no" votes? Republicans former Governor Glen Youngkin and former Attorney General Jason Miyares, along with the Virginians for Fair Maps, a political action group directed by former Republican Congressional Representative Eric Cantor. Cantor served from 2001 until his resignation in 2014 and has donated \$250,000 to the Redistricting vote campaign.

Also, an information campaign by a former Virginia state GOP delegate, used an image and July 2020 statement of former President Obama critical of gerryman-

dering. The use of Obama's image suggests he is opposed to the redistricting, when in fact he supports it, leading to confusion for some voters. The ads drew criticism from the NAACP.

Other endorsements typically fall along party lines.

How many have voted so far?

Fairfax County's Office of Elections reported that as of April 9, of the county's 812,705 registered voters, 78,971 had cast early and absentee votes. That represents a turnout of 9.7 percent. The report suggests that mail-in voting continues to be popular with a fairly even split of 53 percent of early ballots returned by mail, versus 47 percent by early in-person voting.

Early voting ends April 18. Special Election voting day, the last day to vote, is April 21.

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 that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm or contact the Volunteer

Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org. 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/Farmer'sMarketVolunteersNeeded. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian brian@alive-inc.org. SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

NEWS

New Fire Station and Supportive Housing Project Advances

Public hearing planned in April.

By Mike Salmon
Mount Vernon Gazette

After years of examination and funding preparation, plans for the new Penn Daw Fire Station and supportive housing moved along after it went through the planning commission's public hearing in late March. The next step is a public hearing at the Fairfax County Board of Supervisor's meeting on April 14.

The planning commission voted 12-0 to approve the plans with proffers and a waiver of the minimum district size. The county would build Penn Daw Emergency and Supportive Housing facility to replace the existing Eleanor U. Kennedy Shelter that is located south of Fort Belvoir. This follows the county formula to co-locate county facilities.

The Kennedy Shelter may continue to operate as a community shelter or another public facility use after the Penn Daw Emergen-

NEXT:
Board of Supervisors will address this issue April 14
Fairfax County Government Center
12055 Government Center Parkway

cy and Supportive Housing facility becomes operational in order to address ongoing service needs. The specific long-term use of the Kennedy Shelter site has not yet been determined, it said on the county document.

This idea was the subject of a meeting in June 2021 where two sides of the issue showed up to examine the details. The supporters were vocal and decked out in colorful outfits to drive home their point. They called themselves the Kennedy Shelter Allies, though few lived in the immediate area. Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) organized this meeting and listened to both sides. Fairfax County paid \$3 million for this 3.5-acre piece of land on Beacon Hill Road, and it's big enough for all three county amenities, the county said.

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Back in 2021, one of the Kennedy Shelter Allies showed up in force to support the county effort for a fire station and housing.
www.connectionnewspapers.com



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
SCOTT	16861	696N	MCMURRY HOLLOW ROAD	BRANCH	3/31/2026
FRANKLIN	8031	1605	WHSRNG CK ROAD 1605	MAGGODEE CREEK	3/19/2026
FRANKLIN	7914	703	AYERS ROAD 703	POPLAR CAMP CREEK	3/18/2026
TAZEWELL	18583	631E	INDIAN CREEK ROAD	INDIAN CREEK #2	3/5/2026
BLAND	2950	42N	WEST BLUEGRASS TRAIL	SPRING BRANCH	3/3/2026

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

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

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

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

Update: Potomac River Sewage Spill

Long-term impacts questioned.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

The Potomac Interceptor's January 19 rupture near the I-495/Clara Barton Parkway interchange which discharged at least 243 million gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac River was a "temporary insult," Michael Rolband, Director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), told a March 19 gathering at Alexandria's Lee Center.

"We believe the water is safe for contact," he asserted, but "not recommended for swimming." As the sewage flows down the river, "It gets diluted," he offered and state tests show "no significant impacts to fisheries and recreational activities."

The tests at that time showed E. coli bacteria levels "significantly below all the thresholds," Rolband said, meaning they are below the Environmental Protection Agency's level for unsafe swimming.

He emphasized, however, that people should cook any fish from the Potomac and "wash your hands."

"This is an urban river," Rolband cautioned, with dog and cat excrement and other factors contributing to pollution.

Some untreated sewage ends up in area water bodies normally, Rolband said. "While it's disgusting, it actually happens every time there's a significant rain. There'll always be some, but the river is getting much cleaner," recalling that in the 1970s he could not swim through river's the algae mats.

He commended Alexandria and the District of Columbia for infrastructure projects underway to address their combined sewer overflow systems which send sewage into the river during significant rainfalls. Alexandria's project should be finished this summer; D.C.'s, by 2030.

Matthew Brown, DC Water's Chief Operating Officer, said that the pipe, which carries 60 million gallons of raw sewage daily 54 miles, from Dulles Airport to the Blue Plains Treatment plant in southeast Washington, serves half a million people. His agency avoided two billion gallons of overflow, Brown said and workers hauled off 2,341 tons of debris, equal to 1,300 cars and "pulled out enough



Betsy Nicholas, Potomac Riverkeeper President, shared concerns about the long-term remediation plan.



Dean Naujoks called the spill and his group's response "a wild ride."

rags and wipes to fill a swimming pool."

Flow resumed on March 14 and most recreation advisories have been lifted. DEQ is continuing normal water sampling at Northern Virginia sites like Hunting Creek, Little Hunting Creek, Dogue Creek, Pohick Creek and the Occoquan River.

Local fishing guide Rob Snowhite is hopeful for the spring season. He emailed, "I was hesitant at first and thought the entire year would be a washout. However, the spill was contained and I think we are good to go. I have been selling a lot of shad flies through my ETSY shop so I know local anglers are not discouraged by the spill."

Longer Term

Beyond immediate effects, other impacts like future algae blooms and contaminated sediments concern some people.

George Mason University scientists, in collaboration with the Potomac Riverkeeper, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and the Potomac Rivers Fisheries Commission, are studying some long-term spill impacts.

Dr. Cindy Smith at GMU's Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center, said, "We are documenting how water conditions, aquatic life and the river's food web change in real time." From the Woodrow Wilson Bridge south to Piney Point, they are measuring water turbidity, fecal coliforms, cyanobacteria, cyanotoxins, phytoplankton, fish diversity and heavy metals, for example. Others are doing studies upstream. GMU's data "may be collected over multiple years," Smith emailed.

Remediation Plan Questioned

At the March 19 meeting, Amanda Zander, the DC Water's remediation manager, reported that the agency will clean up debris, plant plants and trees, remove materials down to the clay layer and rehabilitate the topsoil, among other steps.



Evan Quinter with the Riverkeepers helped conduct tests.



At the March 19 meeting, Alexandria Mayor Aliya Gaskins said, "There are so many questions that remain."

da Zander, the DC Water's remediation manager, reported that the agency will clean up debris, plant plants and trees, remove materials down to the clay layer and rehabilitate the topsoil, among other steps.

Betsy Nicholas, Potomac Riverkeeper Network President, called the restoration plan "disappointing" at a March 11 gathering at Alexandria's Lost Boy Cider. At that time, there had been "zero public engagement," she charged and said that the plan only focused on the immediate spill area and not long-term impacts. "We need a comprehensive plan," she said.

In a March 27 report, the Riverkeepers called the plan "insufficient to restore impacted communities and the health of the Potomac River."

A 1960s Pipe

What caused the collapse? "The pipe just got old," Rolband said, adding, "It's a collective problem of our society." The American Society of Civil Engineers' 2025 report card gave the nation's wastewater infrastructure a D+ grade and stormwater a D. Nicholas concurred: "It's a wake-up call on the infrastructure issues we as a society have been ignoring too long."

The federal government built the pipe in the 1960s. Washington-area U.S. representatives, led by Virginia Congressman Don Beyer, are seeking federal funds to modernize the interceptor and the area's aging water infrastructure.

David Gadis, DC Water's head, closed the March 19 meeting saying, "It's been a very tough 57

days. This was an old pipe. We are doing everything we can to make sure it does not happen again."

Opening the meeting, Alexandria Mayor Aliya Gaskins expressed hope that "we can get answers." Many answers are pending.

Information

DC Water, <https://www.dcwater.com/about-dc-water/media/potomac-interceptor-collapse>

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/news-info/shortcuts/topics-of-interest/potomac-interceptor-collapse>

Virginia Department of Health, www.vdh.virginia.gov

Potomac Riverkeeper Network, <https://potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Northern Virginians Bring Home Awards

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Article 11 of Virginia's constitution is a "point of pride" and "our overarching mission," David Bulova, the state's Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources told attendees at the annual, March 24-25 Environment Virginia conference in Lexington, Virginia. That article reads, in part, "it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth." Bulova is a former Northern Virginia member of the House of Delegates.

He and other top state officials outlined the natural resources priorities of the Spanberger administration. Bulova called for policies "grounded in good science" and "breaking down silos," explaining that "most issues do not fall neatly into one secretariat." For example, the Virginia Department of Transportation manages roads and uses deicing salts which impact natural resources.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Director Michael Rollband said he is "scared about" a forthcoming U.S.

Supreme Court decision, Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency, that could eliminate federal protections for certain wetlands. He also stressed the need for regional, multi-jurisdictional water supply plans. Later, Brian Campbell with the state's water office warned that groundwater levels in eastern Virginia are projected to decline in the next five to ten years.

Nikki Rovner, head of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, called for more funding to address state parks' maintenance backlogs and the natural heritage program's outdated data.

NOVA Groups Honored

Four Northern Virginia organizations received a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award.

Reducing Textile Waste

Herndon-based Sewing Lab received a bronze award for its work teaching people how to sew, repair and upcycle fabrics. Over 85 percent of clothing, over 100 pounds per person in the U.S., goes in the trash, according to helpsy.com.

In the last year, Sewing Lab stopped the
SEE NORTHERN VIRGINIANS, PAGE 15



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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ APRIL 16-29, 2026 ♦ 9

Cinder Bed Bikeway Opposition Hasn't Gone Away

Protesters used a recent county event to show their opposition.



The Friends of Accotink Creek posted signs on their website for anyone going to the ribbon cutting to protest.

BY MIKE SALMON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

At the Franconia District Headquarters ribbon cutting last week, there were a few people attending that were opposed to a proposed bike trail nearby that has been a controversy over the last few years.

County officials on one side are picturing a trail from the Springfield-Franconia Metro station that links to other trails in the Newton Road area and eventually to Fort Belvoir, a major employment center in this part of Fairfax County. On the other side, there are people looking at the impact on this heavily wooded area that's highlighted by Long Branch creek and home to an abundance of native

plants and old growth trees.

Philip Lakusa of the Friends of Accotink Creek has been following the plans for this path for a few years and doesn't like the environmental impact, particularly trees coming down and pathway lighting going up. There are options that don't impact this stream valley, he says. Lakusa pointed out that the surrounding neighborhoods, which ironically would be bypassed by the Bikeway, are rich in existing and potential alternate routes that make use of existing paved lighted infrastructure at much lower environmental and financial cost.

At a public information meeting on May 10, 2021, a public presentation said the bikeway was funded by a federal grant to FCDOT for a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the Franconia/



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/CONNECTION

Bikeway opponents made their presence known at the Franconia Government Center ribbon cutting on Saturday, April 11.

Springfield Metro station to Fort Belvoir. On foot, Belvoir is still a few miles away. Plans show that the proposed path goes south from the station through a thick forest down the hill from Beulah Street and connects with Cinder Bed Road. Plans include lights and bridges over Long Branch Stream. The completion date in that presentation is May 2024 which didn't happen, and the price is list-

ed at \$14,750. It is unclear what the new estimate is.

The "Friends" made a video showing alternate routes and reasons to seek alternatives. "Cinder Bed Road in the project area has the capacity to become a "Complete Street" without sacrificing the riparian buffer," it states on the video. A Complete Street is a transportation industry term for streets "designed and operated to prior-

itize safety, comfort, and access for all to all destinations," county information said. These complete streets are intended to move people and goods while minimizing environmental impact and community disruption.

Lakusa said the new completion date is some time around 2028 so this wooded stream valley has some time, and the advocates also have some time to express their opposition.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

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 Alexandria 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. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email DAAS@alexandriava.gov. FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to

cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.

- ❖ Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.
 - ❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road.
- Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us for more.
- Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasecondsaturday.com for more.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/tes.

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+ robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com.

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit www.computercore.org/contribute.

Senior and Job Programs. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Queen of Apostles Church, 4650 Taney Avenue, Alexandria. St. Martin de Porres Center offers senior and job placement programming Monday through Friday at the parish. Email Kathryn Toohey, ktoohey@ccda.net.

Be Heard at the City's Monthly Public Hearings. A schedule of the meetings can be found at www.alexandriava.gov. Voice opinions, speak about something on the docket or just speak about something you are concerned about. Sign up in advance to speak through the city's website. Anyone is welcome at any of the public hearings.

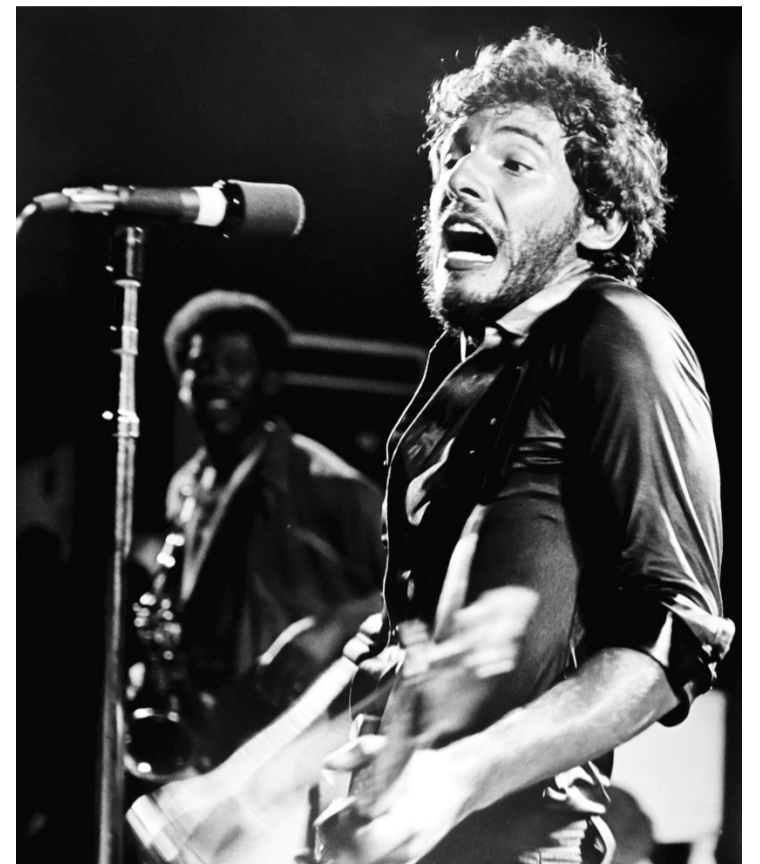
Noted Bruce Springsteen Photos Headline Upcoming Art Show in Mount Vernon

Brother of late photographer is on a mission to fulfill a wish.

PHOTOS BY PHIL CECCOLA



This one is 'Bruce at Main Point.'



A live shot in concert.

By MIKE SALMON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

When Bruce Springsteen released "The River," album in 1980 it was as though he planted a rock star flag on the moon. Although it wasn't his first album, it was a big seller and it gave the blue-jeans-and-tee-shirt look a foothold in the music world. Fast forward 46 years and the Springsteen early days look is back in "Greetings From Alexandria, Va.," a special exhibition at the Nepenthe Gallery in Mount Vernon celebrating the enduring legacy of Bruce Springsteen.

On Friday, May 8 through Sunday, May 10, this local Art Gallery will be all "boss," displaying "a celebration of Bruce Springsteen's legacy" by the late Phil Ceccola, featuring fine art photography, rare posters, and autographed memorabilia.

The art display is timed to coincide with Springsteen's highly anticipated Washington, D.C. concert at Nationals Park.

Ceccola documented pivotal moments in Springsteen's rise, beginning with his earliest performances at The Main Point in the Philadelphia area in 1973. The collection



Against a wall graffiti picture.

includes rare and intimate images from Springsteen's "bearded years" and mid-1970s era — capturing the raw energy and evolution of a young artist on the verge of superstardom.

Ceccola's link with Springsteen goes deeper. In addition to photography, he also wrote a book in 2002 about Bruce Springsteen highlighting his "blue collar hero," genre in the "Born to Run," days.

Although Phil Ceccola died of brain cancer in 2003, his brother,

Russ Ceccola made it his mission to track down this collection of unseen photographs for this exhibition. Notably, one of Phil Ceccola's images was chosen by Springsteen for the cover of his "Tracks" album. Russ Ceccola will be part of the show on Friday and Saturday at Nepenthe, offering fans insights and stories behind these historic photographs.

The shot with the mismatched shoes was taken in Phil Ceccola's Bridgeport apartment where



Bruce with Jackson Browne and David Lindley.

Springsteen and the band stayed the night before a concert. This was around 1974. Somewhere in this time warp, a flood destroyed many of Ceccola's pictures, and the ones that were saved did not have a time stamp so brother Russ Ceccola, put on his detective hat to research it, fulfilling the wishes of his brother.

In addition to Ceccola's work, the exhibition will feature pictures by other renowned Springsteen photographers, including

Alex Lowy's iconic photograph of Springsteen performing in front of Philadelphia City Hall.

Nepenthe Gallery has had a few artists through the years that dipped their brushes in the 1970s pop art.

A few years ago, the late cartoon animator Ron Campbell's cartoons of The Beatles and Scooby Doo were displayed, and before that, a Norman Rockwell exhibit by Saturday Evening Post critic David Apatoff.

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

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.

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.
- 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,



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

- 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 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

ENTERTAINMENT

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

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
Certified Copies of Court Records
Free Notary Services
Civil Filings into Existing Cases

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 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. Speciality 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 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,



The Nepenthe Gallery presents an exhibition on Bruce Springsteen, "Greetings from Alexandria, VA" on May 8-10, 2026.

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. Washington 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

SATURDAY/APRIL 18

Marketplace @ the Athenaeum. 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Stop by the Athenaeum as part of a great day of touring wonderful gardens and homes during the Historic Garden Week's Old Town Alexandria Tour. The Hunting Creek Garden Club has curated a fabulous selection of vendors who will display their wares among the beautiful art in the gallery.

TUESDAY/APRIL 21

The Chamber ALX's Networking Breakfast. 8:30-10 a.m. At Westin Alexandria Old Town, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. The Chamber ALX's Networking Breakfast with the Arlington Chamber of Commerce. Exchange business cards, share your elevator pitch, and expand your network with our friends in Northern Virginia.

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>.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 22

Alexandria Historical Society 2026 History Awards Ceremony. 7 p.m. At the Lyceum in Alexandria. This year's program will feature keynote speaker Dr. Peter Henriques, Professor Emeritus of History at George Mason University, and will honor recipients of the T. Michael Miller Alexandria History Award, the AHS Special Merit Award, and the Alexandria High School History Awards.

THURSDAY/APRIL 23

Poem in Your Pocket. 7 - 8 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Cristi Donoso, Poet Laureate, City of Alexandria will lead the "Poem in Your Pocket Celebration." Ms. Donoso will be joined by the 2025 Dashing Words in Motion poets, who will have their poems displayed inside the DASH buses and trolleys in April. Limited seating will be available, so reservations are encouraged. If you wish to read a poem, or to make a reservation email poet@alexandriava.gov. If you wish to read at the event, please email: poet@alexandriava.gov

SATURDAY/APRIL 25

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria. Featuring James Ross, conductor; Alexander Kerr, violin; Missy Mazzoli: Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres); Max Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1; Jean Sibelius: Symphony No. 2

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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FROM PAGE 13

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 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 Eleanor Tapscott, President of The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Eleanor 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.

FRIDAY/MAY 1

Northern Virginia Community Orchestra - European and American Masters. 7:30 p.m. At Thomas Edison High School Auditorium, 5801 Franconia Road, Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Community Orchestra presents its annual Spring Concert, European and American Masters. The orchestra will perform works by Vivaldi, Rachmaninoff, Holst, and Brahms, as well as Morton Gould's American Salute, and Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah. The concert is free and open to the public. Good-will donations are graciously accepted.

FRIDAY/MAY 1

The Thirteen. 7:30 p.m. At Trinity United Methodist Church, 2911 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Following its comprehensive review of Monteverdi's sacred music over five programs and two recordings hailed as "shimmering in loveliness" (MusicWeb International), The Thirteen begins an exploration of his secular music. They start with Monteverdi's madrigal form, pairing

it with near-contemporary works of the Renaissance-Baroque transition by Carlo Gesualdo and Barbara Strozzi. They present these works in conversation with secular song by contemporary composers, including Eric Whitacre, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Morton Lauridsen, and more.

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.

MAY 8-10

Nepenthe Gallery Presents Bruce Springsteen Exhibition. At 7918 Fort Hunt Rd. in Alexandria. The exhibit, "Greetings From Alexandria, VA," celebrates the enduring legacy of Bruce Springsteen. Timed to coincide with Springsteen's Washington, D.C. concert at Nationals Park, this three-day event offers fans a rare opportunity to experience and acquire historic images and memorabilia honoring one of rock's most iconic performers. Admission is free, and all photographs and memorabilia on display will be available for purchase.

Exhibition Hours:

Friday: 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Saturday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

THURSDAY/MAY 14

2026 City Council Breakfast. 8-10 a.m. At Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King Street, Alexandria. The Chamber ALX presents the 2026 City Council Breakfast. An inside look at Alexandria's future as City Council members unpack the newly adopted City budget, highlight key investments and share updates on major initiatives already underway. Legislators confirmed: Mayor Alyia Gaskins, Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, Councilman Canek Aguirre, Councilman John Chapman, Councilman Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi, and Councilwoman Jacinta Greene.

SUNDAY/MAY 17

Old Town Festival of Speed & Style. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. In Old Town Alexandria on the 400-600 blocks of King Street, and the 100 blocks of North and South St. Asaph Street and

North and South Pitt Street. One of the East Coast's most stylish and celebrated car events, Old Town Festival of Speed & Style presented by Burke & Herbert Bank, returns to Alexandria for its seventh year. The Festival offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity for the public to see rare and exotic sports and supercars stopped in their tracks for up-close viewing and observing.

Schedule:

7:05 am Sponsor Canopy Set-up
8:00 am Vehicle Arrival and Placement
8:45 am Car Judging Begins
10:00 am Opening Ceremony – Event Producer and Emcee, National anthem
10:10 am Live Music | TBD
12:00 pm Style Celebration
12:45 pm Awards Ceremony and Trophy Presentation
1:10 pm Live Music F | TBD
3:15 pm Cars Depart/Sponsor Canopy Tear-down
4:00 pm Streets Reopen

SUNDAY/MAY 31

Arts & Crafts Fair. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Tavern Square in Old Town Alexandria, 415 King Street. Presented by Volunteer Alexandria and Made in ALX. Discover a curated selection of jewelry, pottery, soaps, home décor, and unique gifts while supporting local artists at this free event. This family-friendly gathering invites you to shop local and explore beautiful crafts in the heart of Old Town Alexandria at Tavern Square.

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. 17: Kindred The Family Soul \$75.00
Sat. 18: Kindred The Family Soul \$75.00 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 19: Los Lobos w/ Los Hermanos Alacranes \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Mon. 20: Los Lobos w/ Los Hermanos Alacranes \$69.50
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Sun. 26: 10,000 Maniacs 45th Anniversary \$59.50
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

You Really Want My Opinion?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I am so over it, under it and/or around it and any other unflattering way you can characterize it; 'it' being asked my opinion regarding the customer service I've just received. Spare me. Nowadays, one can't make an inquiry/purchase/service - via the phone or even in person without being asked for a verbal response or barcode scan (post office comes to mind) or touching tones on your phone, all relating to the exchange with the person/process you've just endured before you can be properly excused. That is if you're being polite.

The cost of doing business/making an inquiry is as much about getting feedback from the paying customer as it is about selling the customer a product or a service, et cetera. Occurring on the figurative backs of former customers who were "always right," now those customers have an opinion, good, bad or indifferent that payees want to know about - and their rightness is now being compared to other payors to determine who is actually right. And as you might imagine, the customer is much less right than he/she ever was. As Major Frank Burns sort of said on a long-ago M*A*S*H episode: You can't swing a dead rat without hitting a North Korean, so does it follow that you can't buy or inquire about anything without your opinion being solicited. Usually, you can politely back out of the exchange, but it doesn't totally minimize the occurrence. And at least for me, the request for my opinion leaves a mental mark - almost akin to when I see a driver backing into a parking space. Even if I say no, or look away, the damage is done. I can't unwring the bell as it were.

Moreover, I can't imagine my two-cents worth, even when added onto all the other opinions ever adds up to a dollar's worth of value. And though I understand that customer opinion/feedback is part of the engine that keeps the world turning; nevertheless, the current outreach is too much of a bad thing. I am asked my opinion of whatever the previous experience was so often, and in so many ways often beginning with: "How can I give you excellent customer service?" and ending with an "On a scale of 1 - 5, how would you rate your experience?" or a reasonable facsimile thereof, and on and on and on, I've pretty nearly exceeded my threshold. As my late mother read back to me, while living in Florida her favorite bumper sticker of full-time Floridians: "Welcome to Florida. Now go home." It's simply too much, even of a good thing. It's exactly how I feel about the octopus-type outreach of all these opinion solicitors. And yes, it's okay/I understand that this conversation will be recorded - for training purposes.

Quite frankly, that last bit about training is the only thing that helps me endure this never-ending need for my opinion. I can't help laughing and pitying the poor person who has to listen to all these customer-service phone calls. That has to be torture, a type of torture I would wish on my worst enemy. Listening to callers/reading customer surveys only to occasionally find a kernel of relevance mixed in with all that pabulum. How many hours must staff be subjected to the general public before management takes pity on them and rotates in another poor sap?

Unfortunately, opinions are the lifeblood of any entity that wants to remain in business. The general public must be considered, generally. Running a business, providing a service, et cetera, presumably has a specific purpose. And unless there's a match between customer server and customer servee, the only purpose served is losing money quickly. You want my opinion? No, you don't. I don't know anything relevant to your endeavor. I only know what I want and what I want can't possibly suite your inquiries. After all, I'm just one of millions not lost at sea but drowning, nonetheless. Stop asking me what I think. Ask me what I know. It will be a much shorter conversation. And that suits me just fine.

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

Northern Virginians Bring Home Awards

FROM PAGE 9

throwaway of 5,000 pounds of textiles by using or repurposing 7,500 garments. "We believe anyone can sew a brighter future by simply picking up a needle and thread and trying something new," says their website, www.sewing-lab.com/.

Accessible Launches

The Four Mile Run Conservancy landed a gold award for installing kayak and canoe launch facilities at Four Mile Run to make the creek more accessible to people with disabilities. The project includes a 775-square foot floating dock with a roller-entry launch and wheelchair transfer platform, a 30-foot gangway and 187 linear feet of elevated boardwalk. These changes enable a wheelchair transfer to a kayak or a canoe.

"Even though Alexandria and the D.C.

metro area have great waters for kayaking, until now there haven't been any facilities to support paddlers with disabilities or limited mobility," said Kurt Moser, the Conservancy's President and Executive Director.

Four Mile Run forms the border between Arlington County and Alexandria. The Conservancy will hold a grand opening for the new facility on May 9 at 3700 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria. Visit <https://www.fourmilerun.org/>.

Cutting Emissions and Costs

A silver award went to the Fairfax County Park Authority for the McLean-area Spring Hill Recreation Center retrofits which reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 38 percent compared to 2019. The project includes rooftop solar, geothermal heat pumps, specialized HVAC units for indoor pools, lighting upgrades and other measures. In its first year,

the project reduced electricity consumption by 42 percent and saved \$105,000.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter/spring-hill>.

Giving Books a Second Life

The Fairfax County Public Library system received an honorable mention for its book reuse and recycling project which sends withdrawn materials to ThriftBooks which resells or recycles them into paper pulp. In less than a year, the county collected over 110,000 books, with 90,000 books recycled and 20,000 books reused.

The Environment Virginia Symposium draws industry, government, academic and nonprofit representatives to Lexington's Virginia Military Institute campus every year to examine state environmental policies.



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3104 Little Creek Ln | \$906,000



9498 Lynnhall Pl | \$1,664,000



9410 Ferry Landing Ct | \$1,300,000



2203 Pennsylvania Blvd | \$2,200,000



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

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