

# Alexandria Gazette Packet

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MAY 21, 2026

## Marks Sworn in to City Council

City led by first female majority council.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Sandy Marks was officially sworn in May 12 as Alexandria's newest City Council member, a moment that marked both a personal milestone and a historic turning point for the city's leadership.

The ceremony took place at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center, where a packed audience of residents, local officials and supporters gathered to witness Marks take the oath of office. Clerk of the Circuit Court Greg Parks administered the oath after the official results of the April 21 special election were read aloud.

Marks, a Democrat and former chair of the Alexandria Democratic Committee, won that special election with approximately 53

percent of the vote, defeating two independent candidates. She fills the council seat vacated earlier this year by Kirk McPike, who left to serve in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Her swearing-in carries historic significance: for the first time in Alexandria's centuries-long history, the seven-member City Council now has a female majority. Marks joins Mayor Alyia Gaskins, Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, and Councilwoman Jacinta Greene to form that majority.

Mayor Gaskins highlighted the importance of the moment during the ceremony, describing the new council composition as something "many thought was never possible" in the city's 276-year history.

In her remarks following the oath, Marks reflected on the legacy of women in Alexandria's government and the significance of building on their work. She noted that only a small number of women had previously served on the

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Clerk of the Circuit Court Greg Parks administers the City Council oath of office to Sandy Marks May 12 at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.



Councilwoman Sandy Marks addresses the crowd following her swearing in May 12 at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

## Council Votes 4-3 to Remove Braddock Road Parking

Controversial decision comes after 10-hour public meeting.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

After more than 10 hours of public testimony and debate, the Alexandria City Council voted 4-3 to move forward with a controversial plan that will remove most on-street parking along a stretch of Braddock Road to make way for new bicycle lanes and safety improvements.

The May 16 vote upheld a February decision by the city's Traffic and Parking Board, rejecting an appeal from residents and local institutions who sought to preserve parking along the corridor.

The project will significantly reshape a roughly 0.8-mile section of Braddock Road between North West Street and Russell Road. Under the approved plan, most on-street parking along this stretch will be eliminated, with limited exceptions, in order to install protected bike lanes and reconfigure

traffic flow.

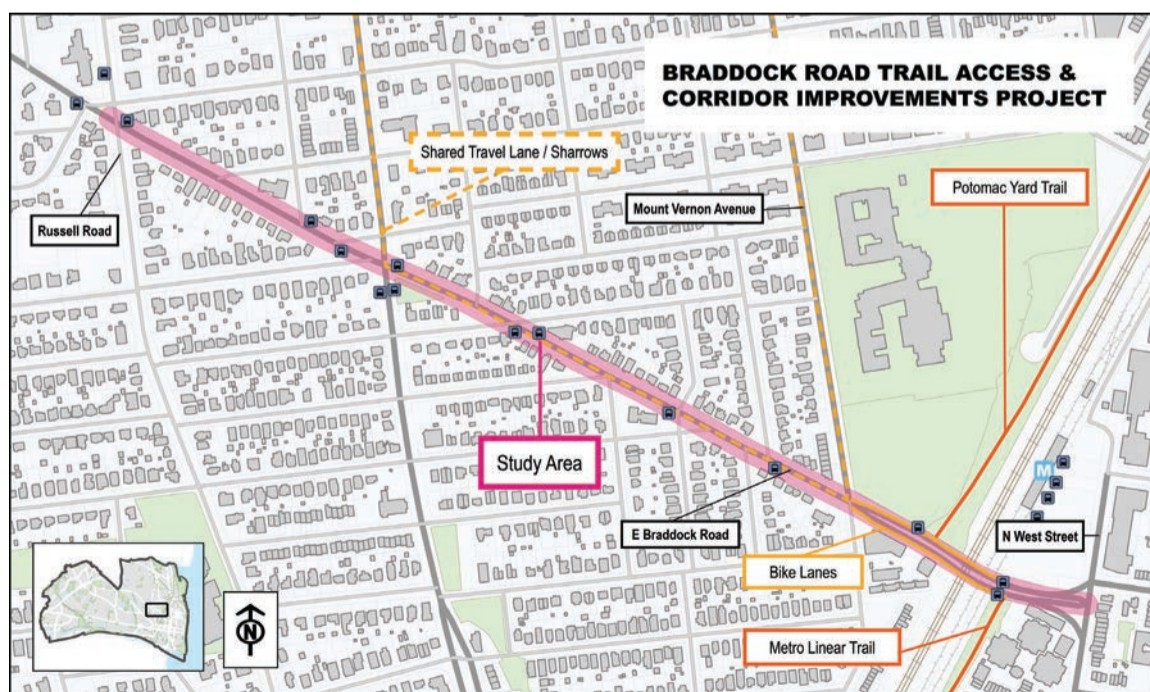
The decision came at the end of one of the most closely watched and emotionally charged hearings in recent city history. More than 100 residents and stakeholders spoke during the marathon session, reflecting deep divisions within the community.

Mayor Alyia Gaskins, Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, and Council Members Canek Aguirre and Sandy Marks voted in favor of the redesign, while Council Members John Chapman, Jacinta Greene, and Abdel Elnoubi opposed it.

The council's decision means the project will move into its next phase of detailed design, with construction expected in the coming years.

Key elements of the Braddock Road Corridor Improvements Project include: Installation of protected bicycle lanes along much of the

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GRAPHIC/CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The controversial Braddock Road Trail Access and Corridor Improvements project is intended to enhance safety and accessibility for all roadway users along Braddock Road between Russell Road and North West Street.

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## NEWS



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Police Chief Tarrick McGuire, third from left, stands with his staff at the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Fallen Officers Memorial May 7 at Waterfront Park. Pictured are: Capt. Greg Simon, Asst. Chief Tina Laguna, Chief McGuire, Capt. Dennis Andreas, Asst. Chief Mike May, Asst. Chief Jason North and Capt. Tara Delio May.

## Remembering the Fallen

### Ceremony honors fallen officers at Waterfront Park.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

A wreath laying ceremony was held in Waterfront Park May 7 as part of Alexandria's observance of National Police Week 2026. The ceremony is dedicated to remembering local law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Held at the Fallen Officers Memorial at Waterfront Park, members of the Alexandria Police Department, Sheriff's Office, and the Alexandria Retired Police, Fire and Sheriff Association gathered alongside community members.

During the ceremony, a wreath is placed at the memorial as a tribute to Alexandria's fallen officers. The observance serves as a moment of reflection and remembrance, recognizing the impact of their service and sacrifice.

The Waterfront ceremony was one of several events held throughout Alexandria Police Week, which included additional wreath-laying ceremonies and memorial services across the city.

### SENIOR LAW DAY 2026

## 'Confidence and Clarity as You Age'

BY MARYANNE BEATTY  
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

The 15th annual Senior Law Day will be held on Saturday, June 6, from 9am-Noon. Registration will begin at 8:30 am at First Baptist Church, 2932 King Street. This event is co-sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association. This year's theme is Confidence and Clarity as You Age, and the goal of the morning is to provide crucial information for older adults and caregivers.

There will be panel discussions covering the following topics: Scams that target seniors and how to avoid them; What to do if you have been a victim of a scam; Public benefits that are available for older adults; and Legal documents necessary to have in place as you age. Panelists include representatives

### Senior Law Day 2026

#### "Confidence and Clarity as You Age"

Register Now,  
events@seniorservicesalex.org  
Saturday, June 6, 8:30 am – 12 Noon  
First Baptist Church, 2932 King Street,  
Alexandria, VA

from the Alexandria Police Department; John Marshall Bank; Legal Services of Northern Virginia; the Department of Community & Human Services; Matz, Blancato and Associates; and local legal experts. There will also be information available from a wide variety of local businesses about resources available for seniors and their caregivers.

This is a free event, but we ask that you register by emailing events@seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

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# Two Dead In Officer-Involved Shooting

Man shot woman, barricaded himself in Canterbury Square apartment.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Two people are dead following an early morning police shooting incident May 18 at an apartment complex in Alexandria's West End, authorities said.

According to the Alexandria Police Department, officers were dispatched at approximately 4:05 a.m. to the 2700 block of Canterbury Square after receiving a report that a woman had been shot inside an apartment.

When officers arrived, they encountered multiple individuals at the residence and were able to safely remove several family members from the apartment. Police said an adult male suspect had barricaded himself inside a room where they believed the injured woman was located.

Officers issued repeated ver-

bal commands for the suspect to comply and exit the room, but he refused, according to Police Chief Tarrick McGuire.

Authorities said the situation escalated when the suspect emerged and charged at officers. In response, two officers discharged their service weapons, striking the man.

Police immediately rendered aid to both the suspect and the female victim, but both individuals were pronounced dead at the scene. Investigators said the woman had suffered multiple gunshot wounds prior to officers' arrival.

Officials believe the incident stemmed from a domestic situation involving family members, although the exact relationship between the suspect and the victim has not yet been confirmed.

The identities of the deceased have not been released pending



PHOTO/YOUTUBE SCREEN GRAB

Alexandria Police Chief Tarrick McGuire speaks at a press conference May 18 at APD headquarters on the officer shooting incident that left two dead in the city's West End.

notification of next of kin. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the official cause and manner of death.

The two officers involved in the shooting, who combined have more than seven years of experience, have been placed on admin-

istrative leave, which is standard procedure in police shooting incidents.

The incident is now under investigation by the Northern Virginia Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), which handles cases involving use of force by law enforcement. In addition, the Alexandria Police Department's Office of Professional Responsibility will conduct an internal administrative review.

Police say the shooting appears to have been isolated to the apartment and there is no ongoing threat to the public.

Officials emphasized that the investigation remains active and that details could change as more information becomes available.

McGuire said the officers were wearing body cameras and that the footage would be released "within a reasonable time period."

# City Led by First Female Majority Council

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council and described her swearing-in as part of a broader milestone for representation and leadership in the city.

"It is my honor and distinct privilege being the 17th Alexandria City Council woman sworn into office," Marks said. "When women lead, government works."

Marks also struck a forward-looking tone, emphasizing service, inclusivity and resilience. She pointed to the challenges facing local communities and pledged to approach them with collaboration and a focus on meeting residents' needs.

The swearing-in ceremony was held just before a City Council legislative meeting, signaling the immediate transition from campaign to governance. Marks is expected to participate in upcoming council decisions and policy discussions as she begins her term.

Her term will run through Dec. 31, 2027, completing the remainder of McPike's term.

Marks, a longtime Alexandria resident and parent in the city's public school system, brings a background in political organizing and community advocacy to the role. During her campaign, she emphasized priorities such as education funding, housing affordability and community engagement.

Marks now takes her seat on the dais joining a council that reflects a new chapter in Alexandria's civic history, saying "We must and we will take leaps forward."



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

City Councilwoman Sandy Marks with sons Cooper Zissman and Emmett Zissman.



Mayor Alyia Gaskins, left, congratulates Councilwoman Sandy Marks at the swearing in ceremony for Marks May 12 at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

## Governor's Cannabis Veto

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK  
(D-MOUNT VERNON)



Krizek

Earlier this week, Governor Abigail Spanberger vetoed legislation that would have finally established a regulated adult-use cannabis marketplace in Virginia. As one of the bill's Chief Patrons, I believe this was the wrong decision, and Virginians will feel the consequences.

House Bill 642 and its companion Senate Bill 542, which I carried alongside Senator Lashrecse Aird of Henrico, were the product of years of serious policy work. The legislation emerged from extensive deliberation through the Joint Commission to Oversee the Transition of the Commonwealth into a Cannabis Retail Market — a body created for exactly this purpose and

on which I served as Chair — and reflected input from the stakeholders who will be most affected by, and responsible for, any retail system we build. We took lessons learned from states across the nation who have already implemented these markets and crafted a system that would work best for Virginia's unique needs. That work now sits on the shelf for the third year.

Virginia legalized adult cannabis possession in 2021. At the time, we did so with a clear-eyed recognition that the War on Drugs had

caused disproportionate harm to Black families and communities across this Commonwealth. Legalization was an acknowledgment of that failure and a commitment to do better. But without a regulated retail market, that commitment remains incomplete. Cannabis is being sold every day across Virginia: just not in any store that we license, regulate, or tax. These products carry no safety standards. There is no age verification. No consumer protections. The illicit market is thriving, and we are the ones allowing it to thrive by failing to provide a legal alternative.

I want to be direct: this veto does not reduce cannabis use in Virginia. It simply ensures that use continues to happen in the shadows, beyond the reach of any oversight. Those profiting from the

illegal market should feel relieved today. Everyone else should feel frustrated. Continued inaction is itself a choice; one with real costs to public safety, to racial equity, and to the communities we represent across the Commonwealth.

My colleagues in the General Assembly gave Virginia an opportunity to lead on this issue, but instead the Governor's veto prolongs this uncertainty.

I remain committed to establishing a safe, transparent cannabis market that protects consumers, keeps products away from children, and honors our promise to end racially discriminatory marijuana policing in this Commonwealth. I hope that we will find a path that moves Virginia forward in the next legislative session.

Virginia has waited long enough.

## HopeLink Named among 50 Best Nonprofits to Work For

### NonProfit Times list cites training as a factor in success.

HopeLink Behavioral Health was named for the 15th time to The NonProfit Times national list of 50 Best Nonprofits to Work For. HopeLink, a regional nonprofit with national reach that helps individuals who live with serious behavioral health issues or that are in crisis, ranked number 49 among the nation's top employers with its focus on training cited as a reason.

"As mental health needs have grown so has HopeLink. Our employees are fundamental to our ability to serve our clients," said Joseph Getch, CEO, HopeLink. "We invest in our talented em-

ployee base, ensuring they have the training and benefits to do and be their best.

"Being able to attract and retain a great team helps us achieve our mission to save and change lives," Getch said.

Until two years ago, HopeLink was ranked among medium sized employers. With its growth, the nonprofit is now compared to the largest sized employers. HopeLink has 350 employees that work at its Oakton headquarters and throughout the nation. HopeLink offers a work environment that encourages teamwork, professional growth and work-life balance. It's a culture where employees enjoy coming to work, are accountable and can excel in the services they provide. The organization provides supported resources and training for continued learning and growth, a competitive industry-related salary, and an excellent benefits program.

The NonProfit Times created this nationwide survey and awards program to honor the best employers in the nonprofit sector. The evaluation included a survey of each nominated organization's workplace policies, practices, philosophy, systems and demographics. The evaluation included a much more heavily weighted anonymous employee survey to measure the employee experience.

Results were analyzed and categorized according to eight core focus areas: leadership and planning; corporate culture and communications; role satisfaction; work environment; relationship with supervisor; training, development, and resources; pay and benefits; and overall engagement. Organizations that made the list scored near 92% across all categories.

HopeLink is a leading nonprofit helping those living with

diverse behavioral health issues and anyone who faces life crises achieve independence, self-sufficiency, and safety. HopeLink provides the people it serves with skill training and support to help them recover and rebuild their lives through a range of services including Psychosocial Rehabilitation Day Program Services, Mental Health Outpatient Therapy, Mental Health Skills-Building, TIP, Children and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Navigation, Individual Supported Employment, Peer Support Services, Coordinated Specialty Care, and other services.

HopeLink is a 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Center and Regional Crisis Call Center answering calls, texts, and chats from across Virginia and the nation. For 24/7 support from HopeLink, call 988. For 24/7 chat support, visit 988lifeline.org/chat. www.hopelinkbh.org

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or email to [calendar@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:calendar@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partner-

ship Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE> Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members

to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org). Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental

health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com). STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer

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PHOTO BY ALLISON SILBERBERG

USMA 1959 classmates of Capt. Humbert "Rocky" Versace salute after presenting a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray on Memorial Day 2025.

# Memorial Day

## Local events to honor the fallen.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**lexandria will mark Memorial Day 2026 with a series of ceremonies and community events honoring the service members who gave their lives in defense of the United States.

Originally known as "Decoration Day," Memorial Day is dedicated to honoring military personnel who died in service, whether in combat, from injuries or as the result of wartime conditions.

In Alexandria, local organizations, veterans' groups, and residents come together each year to ensure that these sacrifices are not forgotten.

"[Memorial Day is] a reminder that there are certain ties that bind us together as Americans, regardless of our differences," said former President Barack Obama when he joined hundreds of local volunteers at Alexandria National Cemetery in 2024.

The weekend events begin Saturday, May 23, at 9:30 a.m. with a community effort at Alexandria National Cemetery. The public is invited to participate in the ritual of American Flags-in-the-Ground, Flowers on the Graves. Led by VFW Post 609, scouts, cadets, Daughters of the American Revolution and local church groups will position American Flags and flowers from Memorial Day Flowers Foundation, on all 4,229 veterans' graves at the Alexandria National Cemetery, 1450 Wilkes Street. Contact Jerry Krueger for more information. [jerrykrueg@aol.com](mailto:jerrykrueg@aol.com)

On Memorial Day morning, commemorative activities continue at the cemetery. Join Travis Manion Foundation members as they position specially designed wooden commemorative coins on 100 veterans' graves. Contact

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

Post 609 comrade Tejas Patel for more information. [tejas.patel.vfw@gmail.com](mailto:tejas.patel.vfw@gmail.com)

Later in the morning, an official ceremony hosted by American Legion Post 24 at 11a.m. will be held at the cemetery's rotunda, featuring wreath presentations and a gathering for attendees.

At the same time, the city will also host a major public ceremony at Rocky Versace Plaza, honoring 68 Alexandrians who lost their lives during the Vietnam War. At 11 a.m. the Friends of Rocky Versace will host the City's Memorial Day Ceremony. Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Contact COL (ret.) Kevin Rue, for more information. [Forv59@gmail.com](mailto:Forv59@gmail.com) or 703-931-3721.

The Alexandria observances are part of a larger regional commemoration across the Washington, D.C. area. Major national ceremonies and tributes are expected to draw millions of visitors to some of the most significant Memorial Day commemorations in the country. Highlights will include the solemn wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, the National Memorial Day Concert on the Capitol lawn, the National Memorial Day Parade, and the Rolling to Remember motorcycle ride (formerly Rolling Thunder).

Interest in these events is driven higher by the approaching semiquincentennial – the celebration of our country's 250th birthday.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars joins a thankful nation in proudly honoring our nation's active duty, Guard and Reserve soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen, guardians, and Coast Guardsmen who are defending freedom both here at home and around the globe," said VFW Post 609 Commander Jerry Krueger. "Together, these events offer residents and visitors an opportunity to reflect, remember and pay tribute to the men and women whose sacrifices continue to shape the nation's history."



PHOTO BY DEBBIE GRAY

Former President Barack Obama places a flag at the grave of a fallen service member at Alexandria National Cemetery on Memorial Day 2024.



PHOTO BY JOSEPH MATTERA/VFW POST 609

U.S. Flags adorn the graves of more than 4,000 fallen veterans at Alexandria National Cemetery on Memorial Day 2024.



Refugee women wait a turn to receive their graduation certificate.



Dr. Janine Howard, lead pastor at Fairlington United Methodist Church (left) and Ms. Forozan Mirwais, instructor of Alexandria sewing classes for refugee women

# Refugee Women Graduate with New Skill

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

The brightly dressed refugee women sat at a long table waiting for their graduation ceremony, many of them wearing intricate dresses they had made themselves. The chatter of their animated conversations filled the far corners of the room. This class of 15 women had just completed 16 weeks of sewing instruction led by Forozan Mirwais.

“When I came here from Afghanistan,” Mirwais said. “I didn’t know what to do. I was lonely and spent time weeping. Then I went back to Afghanistan a couple of times, and I said ‘I can do this. I want to do something for the community.’ So she started a class to teach other refugee women how to sew.

The idea was to give the women skills that they could use to start a business in their homes doing alterations or sewing other garments. By the time the class had concluded, they had learned to make a number of items for women and children including purses, scarves, aprons, dresses, pants and tote bags.

“Sewing gives me joy, and I hope it brings joy and helps new arrivals start their own business.” Mirwais says the classes also provide fellowship and friendship on a weekly basis in what can be a stressful transition. Mirwais had learned to sew back in Afghanistan when she was fourteen.

Each woman walked to the



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

**Each graduate of the sewing class receives a new sewing machine on graduation.**

front of the room accompanied by enthusiastic clapping from their friends and classmates. Dr. Janine Howard, lead pastor at Fairlington United Methodist Church where the classes had been held, welcomed the refugee women as “our new neighbors.” The translation seemed to take a lot longer than the original welcome but brought nods and smiles to the faces of the women.

The women received a graduation certificate from Melanie Gray, Outreach Director at Christ Church

in Alexandria, and moved down the line of handshakes to the final pièce de resistance, a brand new sewing machine.

A buffet table arranged in the back of Fellowship Hall was crowded with rice, samosa, spicy chicken and dumplings all prepared by the women to share with their new group of friends and sewing companions.

For more information or to place an order send an email to [MirwaisForozan@gmail.com](mailto:MirwaisForozan@gmail.com) or text 202-460-4635.

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A buffet prepared and donated by the women in the graduation class.

# NEWS

## 2026 Alexandria and Mount Vernon Cappies Nominations

**W**inners will be announced at the 2026 Cappies Gala will be held at DAR Constitution Hall on Sunday, June 7 at 7 p.m.

Find the winners at <https://www.cappiesnca.com/nominations-awards>

### Returning Critic (11th Grade)

Erin Allen, Bishop Ireton High School nominated

### Costumes

CW Johnston, Nancy McDougal, Keira Shearon, and the BITA Costuming Team, Jane Austen's Emma, Bishop Ireton High School, nominated

### Creativity

Augie Russo, Director, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Stage Crew

Mia "Star" Halsey, Cooper Zissman, Samara Belinsky, and the Anastasia Crew, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Ensemble in a Musical

Sasha Guerra, Jane Austen's Emma, Bishop Ireton High School, nominated

### Featured Actor in a Female Role in a Musical

Hannah Moline, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Featured Actor in a Male Role in a Musical

Ailinn Colarulli, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Dancer in a Female Role

Georgia Anderson, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Vocalist in a Female Role

Page Vogel, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School

Juliet Pascoe, Once Upon A Mattress, Mount Vernon High School, nominated

### Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Play

Anderson Wexler, A Midsummer Night's Dream, St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, nominated

### Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Musical

Adrian Lawlor, Anastasia: the Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

### Song

Stay, I Pray You, Anastasia: The Musical, Alexandria City High School, nominated

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## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
CUMBERLAND	5734	613	SPORTS LAKE ROAD	RANDOLPH CREEK	4/30/2026
CHARLOTTE	4963	693	TERRELL ROAD	BRANCH OF TURNIP CREEK	4/28/2026
PRINCE EDWARD	13995	666N	DOUGLAS CHURCH ROAD	BUFFALO CREEK	4/28/2026
WYTHE	19731	663N	BISHOP THOMAS LANE	PINE RUN	4/23/2026
APPOMATTOX	1582	602	MT. PLEASANT ROAD	CABIN BRANCH	4/15/2026
AMHERST	1441	622E	STAPLETON ROAD	CHRISTIAN MILL CREEK	4/11/2026
CARROLL	4609	100	SYLVATUS HWY/101	ROCK CREEK	4/3/2026

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](http://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](mailto:haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov) or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

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

# Gov. Spanberger Vetoes Collective Bargaining Bill

Unions say the veto violated campaign promises

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

A legislative push for labor rights in Virginia ended Thursday, May 14, when Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) vetoed collective bargaining bill HB 1263, which aimed “to establish a system for public sector collective bargaining.” Unions said the veto violated campaign promises.

HB 1263, sponsored by Del. Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) with an identical bill, SB 378, by Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax), would have extended bargaining rights to over 500,000 Virginia public employees — including firefighters, teachers and state and local workers — seeking wages, benefits, and working conditions by overturning bans on collective bargaining.

In April, Spanberger proposed a Governor’s Substitute to delay collective bargain-

SEE UNIONS SAY, PAGE 9



PHOTO VIA X  
Virginia gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger speaks at a union rally in Henrico County on April 8, 2025, about the positive impact of labor unions on her family.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SEIU

Members of SEIU Virginia 512 rally outside the Fairfax County Government Center on May 6, 2026, to urge Gov. Abigail Spanberger to sign House Bill 1263.

With the veto, the 2021 law remains the status quo, leaving collective bargaining optional for individual municipalities to adopt via local ordinance.

# Spanberger Signs 25-Bill Package

Fairfax lawmakers drive key reforms on data center costs, gun safety, and healthcare caps.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed 25 bills into law on May 13. While the broader package includes legislation from across the commonwealth, members of the Fairfax County legislative delegation heavily influenced the outcome. Local representatives spearheaded six landmark bills in the package, advancing measures to adjust regional public safety policies, utility infrastructure costs, health insurance coverage standards and more.

### Three ‘Kitchen-Table’ Bills

These laws alter regulations governing household expenses, healthcare cost structures and insurance standards for families across Northern Virginia.

The \$35 Insulin Cap (HB 1214), patroned by Del. Karrie Delaney, D-Chantilly, concerns health insurance cost-sharing payments for insulin and diabetes equipment and supplies. “As the mother of a T1D child, I am all too familiar with just how costly equipment like CGMs or insulin pumps can be. I’m proud of this legislation, passed unanimously, that will bring real change to Virginians’ lives,” Delaney said.

“We are taking action to bring down healthcare costs,” Spanberger said.

❖ Data Center Cost Protection (HB 1191), patroned by Del. Irene Shin, D-Herndon, requires high-energy-use facilities to undergo local reviews to protect residential utility



PHOTO SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

Del. Karrie Delaney, third from left, applauds as Gov. Abigail Spanberger signs HB 1214 to lower healthcare costs by capping the price of insulin, supplies and equipment used to manage diabetes at \$35 a month, May 13, 2026. Delaney is the chief patron.

customers from infrastructure cost shifts.

❖ Essential Health Benefits Expansion (HB 328), patroned by Del. Rip Sullivan, D-McLean, directs the state’s Bureau of Insurance to select a new benchmark plan, expanding required baseline coverage to include treatments such as hearing aids, infertility treatments and doula care. “HB 328 will ensure those who need health coverage for things

like fertility treatment, doula care, hearing aids, donor breast milk, and more will have it,” Sullivan said. “It’s a major step in ensuring health care in the Commonwealth covers what Virginians need affordably.”

### Three ‘Public Safety and Justice’ Bills

These state statutes outline adjustments

to Virginia’s criminal code and firearm regulations led by Fairfax County representatives.

❖ The Assault Weapons and Magazine Ban (HB 217 and SB 749), patroned by Del. Dan Helmer, D-Clifton and Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, D-Vienna, prohibits the future sale, manufacture, importation or transfer of defined semi-automatic assault firearms and restricts ammunition magazines holding more than 15 rounds. Salim said, “When I ran for State Senate against an incumbent who voted against prior versions of an assault weapons ban, the people who believed in this vision stood with me to make the impossible possible.”

❖ Weapons Ban in Healthcare Facilities (HB 229), co-sponsored by Del. Laura Jane Cohen, D-Springfield, and Del. Holly Seibold, D-Vienna, restricts firearms in hospitals and psychiatric facilities to reduce workplace security incidents.

❖ Marijuana Conviction Resentencing (HB 26 and SB 62), co-sponsored by Shin and Salim, establishes a court hearing process to review sentences for marijuana offenses legalized or decriminalized under the 2021 updates.

Gov. Spanberger said, “For decades, marijuana enforcement disproportionately impacted minority communities and communities of color, contributing to inequities in the criminal justice system that Virginia must no longer ignore.”

The full list of signed bills is available here: <https://lis.virginia.gov/>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Campaigns Suspended After U.S. Supreme Court Order

Local former 7th district contenders re-evaluate next steps.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Following the 18-word U.S. Supreme Court's May 15 order denying an emergency request to stay in *Scott v. McDougle*, Virginia's congressional boundaries reverted to 2021 Virginia court-ordered maps.

The U.S. Supreme Court gave no explanation, nor did justices dissent, and the docket did not disclose the vote. The order left in place a Virginia state supreme court ruling that reversed a lower circuit court decision and invalidated a temporary congressional redistricting map approved by 51.69% of voters in the April 21 special election, upending as many as 12 campaigns in the invalidated "new" 7th Congressional District.

There was outrage at both supreme courts invalidating an election.

Gov. Abigail Spanberger posted, "What do we do with our outrage? We WIN in November. Volunteer, donate, vote, WIN."

Virginia Senate Republican Leader Ryan McDougle said, "The Supreme Court of the United States has affirmed what we always knew: you cannot violate the

Constitution to change the Constitution."

Whether it's a stunning betrayal or procedural sanctity depends entirely on which side of the 2021 map one is standing on.

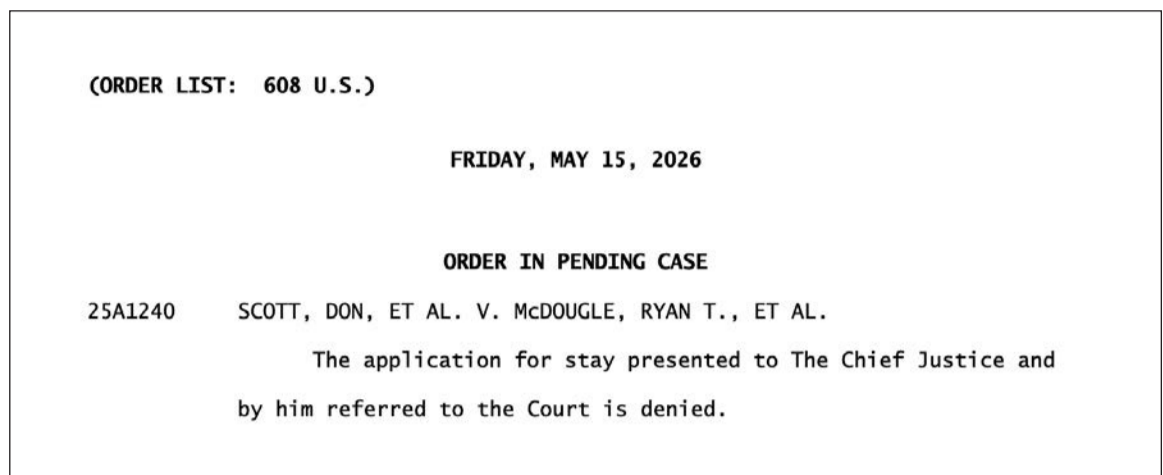
If Virginia wants to change its maps or its court, it will have to win the 2027 state elections and restart the amendment clock.

But it will be too late to counter out-of-turn redistricting in GOP states trying to stem possible GOP losses in November's election for U.S. House.

Northern Virginia candidates quickly shifted focus to their home districts. U.S. Rep. Suhas Subramanyam, continuing his reelection campaign in western Fairfax County, stated the court "decided to let the partisan Virginia Supreme Court overturn the will of millions of Virginia voters."

Del. Dan Helmer returned to his 2027 state delegate campaign in Centreville, noting that while the decision ended his congressional bid, "one court ruling won't change that."

State Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim remains in office through 2027, representing Fairfax and Falls Church, posting, "The movement



SCREENSHOT SUPREMECOURT.GOV

The U.S. Supreme Court order issued Friday, May 15, denies an emergency request by Virginia Democrats to use a new, Democratic-leaning congressional map for the 2026 elections. The 18-word order denies an emergency application for a stay in the case *Scott, Don, et al. v. McDougle, Ryan T., et al.* (Docket 25A1240). The application, filed by House Speaker Don Scott, Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell, Senate President Pro Tempore Louise Lucas, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, requested the high court to pause lower court proceedings.

we built does not end here."

Other regional Democratic contenders suspended their campaigns with online statements. Former Virginia first lady Dorothy McAuliffe stated she would "keep working for my neighbors."

Del. Adele McClure called the moment "beyond disappointing. ... it is dangerous," urging supporters

to protect democracy.

Former federal prosecutor J.P. Cooney noted, "While my congressional campaign is ending, our movement to take on corruption and lawlessness is just beginning." Alexandria national security expert Olivia Troye affirmed her commitment to "standing up to Trump's and MAGA extremism."

Conversely, the map reversal altered the race for four Republican contenders running outside Northern Virginia: State Sen. Tara Durant, John Gray, Douglas Ollivant, and Waverly Washington, all also ended their campaigns.

Fairfax County GOP posted, "Democrats tried to change the rules illegally. Spent millions."

## Unions Say the Veto Violated Campaign Promises

FROM PAGE 8

ing for local employees without an agreement until 2030. The General Assembly rejected the delay on April 22, returning the version unaltered.

In her veto statement, Spanberger said: "While preserving the enrolled bill's focus on allowing public employees to achieve collective bargaining, my amendments would have also provided flexibility for public employers. ... However, the General Assembly rejected these amendments."

Labor leaders pointed to her April 8, 2025, messaging that she would "look forward to working with members of our General Assembly to make sure more Virginians can negotiate for the benefits and fair treatment that they earn."

Union heads said that the promise was broken. "Collective bargaining is not a privilege – it is a right," leaders from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) said in a statement. "Governor Spanberger met with our members, stated her support, and

made a promise. Today, she broke it."

IAFF General President Edward Kelly stated: "This veto is a step against every worker who put their faith in Abigail Spanberger to deliver," Kelly said. "Firefighters keep their word every day on the job. The Governor did not do the same." (Read the statement via the IAFF News Portal).

Teamsters General President Sean M. O'Brien added: "Gov. Spanberger's actions in Virginia are a reminder that unions must

demand more of elected officials," O'Brien said. (Read the press release at the Teamsters Official Website.)

At a May 6 Fairfax rally, LaNoral Thomas, president of SEIU Virginia 512, said: "Making Virginia affordable means making sure the public servants who keep this state running can [afford to] live here."

Fairfax County Supervisor Dalia Palchick (D-Providence) said: "We know that when unions are active, our economy is stable." She said

that without labor protections, workers are vulnerable.

Thomas noted the bans were rooted in the 1970s: "When collective bargaining was banned in Virginia over 45 years ago, it was banned because a group of Black women at UVA stated that they wanted the right to collectively bargain," Thomas said.

With the veto, the 2021 law remains the status quo, leaving collective bargaining optional for individual municipalities to adopt via local ordinance.

## Sun Season Is Here and So Is Melanoma

Melanoma Monday was May 4 followed by National Safe Sun Week starting Monday, May 18.

BY MIKE SALMON  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Each spring when May rolls around, everyone is ready to stretch out on the lounge chair by the pool but that has its drawbacks in the form of sun cancer, so early in the month is "Mela-

noma Monday" to raise awareness.

Melanoma is the most invasive skin cancer and can be fatal. It can start as an innocent looking mole or just normal skin with little signs that can become life threatening in just six weeks.

To kick off the sunny season, Med-Star Health is actively spreading the

word about Melanoma Monday, and recommends seeing a dermatologist every year for a skin check.

Sunscreen, hats and shirts are the best protection they said.

The whole month of May has been dubbed "skin cancer awareness month," and the American Academy of Dermatology Association notes that every day, about 9,500 people in the United States are diagnosed with skin cancer. But there are precautions to take, and that includes protecting skin from the sun and avoiding tanning beds. When using sun screen lotion, go

for 30 SPF or higher, they said.

Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer but if caught early, melanoma is highly treatable, AAD said.

They point out the ABCDE's of skin cancer which hones down the self-examinations to pinpoint causes and places that skin cancer might be. "Early detection is the key," said Darrell Rigel, MD. The doctor who invented the ABCDE's of melanoma:

A for "asymmetry," meaning one half of the spot is unlike the other half.

B is for "border," where the spot has an irregular border.

C is for "color," the spot has varying colors.

D is for "diameter" of the spot which is usually greater than six mm, or the size of a pencil eraser.

E is for "evolving," and this is when the spot changes in size, shape or color.

Treating Melanoma starts with a self-exam, and this includes a full-length mirror and hand mirror to check all the spots. Following it up with a dermatologist visit is always a good idea.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARVIN HURLEY

Surrounded by family, Marvin and Maria Hurley built a legacy that extends through children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren.



Newly married in Rome on March 2, 1957, following their wedding at the Basilica of Saint John at the Latin Gate.

## A Century in Motion

At 100, Marvin Hurley still listens for the beat of the world — late into the night.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET

Long after midnight, when the building around him has settled into silence, Marvin Hurley is still awake. He leans back in his chair, the glow from his iPad lights his face as sports scores refresh, old films flicker, and music drifts softly through the room. He taps his foot almost imperceptibly — responding to the rhythm, an old habit, a quiet pulse that has carried him through a century.

It would have surprised the boy he once was in Indianapolis, where eyesight problems made ordinary childhood play difficult and set him slightly apart from other children his age.

No one could have predicted that he would one day cross oceans, learn multiple languages, work for the U.S. government abroad, or live long enough to welcome a great-grandchild into the world.

And yet here he is.

At 100, he does not describe slowing down. He describes continuing, just in a quieter room.

He lives alone in a condominium that has been in his family for decades. There is no staff, no structured programming, only neighbors who help when needed and a routine he has shaped himself.

Most days unfold slowly, filled with small rituals and the familiar comfort of his favorite chair, iPad still in hand.

"I watch sports. I follow the

news. I listen to music. That keeps me going."

Music has threaded through every stage of his life. It began in Indianapolis in the late 1930s, when he heard big bands perform live. One concert with his mother changed everything: Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, and the sound of drums.

"That was it for me."

From then on, music became both compass and destination.

In the restless years of the WWII era, he and four of his college bud-

dies piled into a mechanically risky Model A Ford at the start of a summer break one year. They rolled out of Indiana heading to California, traveling along Route 66.

But miles into their trip, their car sputtered out, throwing their plans off course.

Two of the boys hitchhiked onward, while Hurley and two others pieced together the rest of the journey by whatever means they could find, most memorably, hopping a

SEE A CENTURY. PAGE 12



During later years, Marvin Hurley and his wife, Maria, continued the shared love of travel that shaped much of their life together, exploring historic sites in Turkey.



At 100, Marvin Hurley remains independent, reflective, and grateful, still guided by faith, music, family and the rhythm that has carried him through a century.



Marvin Hurley's children. From left: Michelle Davis, Robert Hurley, Paul Hurley and Maureen Simpson.

## IN THE KITCHEN

# Take A Trip to Italy Just a Couple of Minutes Away



Chef Darren Norris, Hank's Pasta Bar in Alexandria.

## Hank's Pasta Bar reimagined inside Hank's Oyster Bar.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**C**hef Darren Norris puts three skillets side by side on the stove at Hank's Pasta Bar. A huge vat of pasta water sits on the back burner ready for ladling into the emulsions for the pasta dishes cooking on the burners.

Norris has started linguine Cacio e Pepe with chicken which he says has been one of the favorites in the week since the restaurant has had a soft opening. He has started rigatoni bolognese on the far burner. "Normally I do several pastas at one time."

In the first skillet he is heating olive oil and adds about 4 ounces of cubed chicken breast that has been marinated 24 hours in freshly chopped rosemary and minced garlic. He sautés the chicken several minutes, adding a little water and turning the pieces over to keep them from sticking to the pan.

"I don't use non-stick pans. They aren't good for the food or for people either."

In the middle skillet he starts the emulsion for the cacio e pepe with about 1-1/2 Tablespoons of olive oil. He adds fresh Tellicherry pepper. "I always grind it fresh and put the heat on high to get the pepper to bloom."

Norris adds a ladle of pasta water to get the emulsion going and then tosses in about 6 ounces of Mancini pasta. Norris says the pasta is about 70 percent precooked "so it is very useful for what we do here." He explains the pastas from Mancini are single estate pastas made from the grain on the land where they are produced a little east of Tuscany. We tasted about 20 different kinds before we chose this one. It is delicious."

Norris moves back and forth from skillet to skillet as he scoops bolognese, which he has already prepared, from a large vat into



Sautéing marinated chicken breast.



High heat for Tellicherry pepper.



Adding pasta water to the emulsion.



Tossing fettuccini with chicken.



Rigatoni Bolognese.

a third skillet and turns the heat to medium. The bolognese has been made from a trio of finely ground veal, beef and pork sautéed with a combination of tomato paste and San Marzano DOP imported tomatoes of protected origin, and soffritto (chopped celery, onion and carrots) which has been sautéed in fat from rendered pancetta. Then some added pasta water.

"I add both chianti and Pinot Grigio to the sauce. Then instead of cooking the pasta in water, I cook the rigatoni in the bolognese sauce to add the flavor of the sauce to the



Linguine Cacio e Pepe.



Burrata with slow fermented tomatoes.

SEE TAKE A TRIP, PAGE 12

# Council Votes 4-3 to Remove Braddock Road Parking

FROM PAGE 1

corridor; Reduction of travel lanes in some sections to calm traffic; New pedestrian safety features, including shorter crossings and improved crosswalks; and a commercial loading zone to support nearby businesses.

City officials say the changes are intended to improve safety for all users, including drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

In addition, the council approved several modifications to address community concerns. These include preserving a small number of parking spaces near Good Shep-

herd Lutheran Church and exploring additional crosswalks and accessibility improvements.

The removal of parking emerged as the central point of debate throughout the process.

Opponents argued that eliminating parking would create hardship for residents, particularly those without driveways, and for churches and local organizations that rely on street parking for congregants and visitors.

Some residents also expressed concerns about traffic congestion and access for de-

liveries and services if parking spaces are removed.

Supporters, however, emphasized the need for safer streets, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. Advocates pointed to prior city data and feedback suggesting many residents view the corridor as unsafe for biking and walking.

Transportation officials have said the redesign will help connect existing trail networks and create a safer route to the Braddock Road Metro station and nearby schools.

With the vote finalized, city staff will continue refining the project design before

construction begins. Officials have indicated implementation could take place later in the decade.

While the decision settles the immediate question of parking removal, it leaves lingering tensions among residents over how best to balance transportation needs, safety and neighborhood impacts.

The Braddock Road project stands as one of the most contested transportation changes in Alexandria in recent years, reshaping not only a key corridor but also the broader conversation about mobility and community priorities in the city.

# Take A Trip to Italy Just a Couple of Minutes Away

FROM PAGE 11

pasta.”

He adds a few pats of butter to the bolognese. “It gives the dish a better mouth feel with a rich flavor profile. Finally I sprinkle on a little bit of Kosher salt.” He tosses in a generous handful of Parmesan and sprinkles an additional portion on the finished dish.

Norris turns back to the fettuccini which has been cooked in the emulsion and adds the chicken cubes, tossing in a handful of Pecorino Romano and tossing until it gets creamy.

Norris plates the pasta in a large white bowl, adds a sprinkle of additional cheese and a hint of parsley.

He turns to the burrata with slow fermented tomatoes. Norris has fermented local San Marzano tomatoes in 2 percent sea salt in a vacuum sealed bag at room temperature for 48 hours. “See how they glisten, and it brings out the flavor.”

He puts the resulting tomato juice into an extractor and filters the liquid through cheesecloth, then reducing it to make a tomato glacé. Norris perches an imported Artigiana buffalo milk “with super creamy texture” on top of the tomatoes, squirts a bit of tomato glace around the edge and adds a drizzle of Sicilian pistachio pesto with a taste of DeCarlo olive oil.

Norris has come to Hank’s Pasta Bar from

Shibuya Eatery, his Japanese restaurant in Chevy Chase, which he says was pretty much on auto pilot, and he was ready to do something else. “I’ve been friends with the owner for over 20 years. She came into my restaurant to eat lunch and I told her I was looking for something to do. Now here I am.”

He dates his interest in food back to when he was a teenager traveling the circuit through Europe and around the US with his father who was a professional tennis player. “He was a great food and wine connoisseur. I didn’t intend to be a chef but I got a job in an Italian restaurant when I was studying to be an architect and discovered I liked cooking more.”

Norris moved to DC in 2005 where he was Executive Chef for Ridgewells. Then he opened up Kusshi in 2010 and was chosen as Best New Restaurant of the Year by the Washingtonian and as a James Beard quarter finalist for Best New Restaurant.

Hank’s Pasta Bar is a re-creation of a similar restaurant which closed down during Covid. But the concept of a sit down pasta bar inside the already existing Hank’s Oyster Bar is a new one. The restaurant features signature dishes as well as build your own pasta choices, with options to dine in, carry out or take and bake and delivery. It is located at 600 Montgomery Street. The grand opening was scheduled for May 15.

# A Century in Motion

FROM PAGE 10

steam locomotive that was heading west. The destination was Los Angeles, but for Hurley, the deeper pursuit was always music.

The boys spent nights sleeping wherever shelter could be found. Hurley worked at Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica to support himself during this trip.

“I would get off work and go listen to the big bands ... I was just into the music.”

Hurley describes it as one of the greatest adventures of his life.

At the end of that magical summer, he returned to the midwest to complete his education including bachelor’s degree from Butler University and master’s from Indiana University.

He served in the U.S. Army before beginning a career that took him first into high-school Spanish classrooms, and later into international education, overseeing foreign student admissions at Indiana Uni-

versity.

His path widened again when he went to Madrid, where he enrolled in a Spanish-for-foreign-students program at the University of Madrid. There he met Maria Sandiford, a young woman from Rome who was also in the program. They fell in love, and before long he left the coursework to take a job. He needed to earn money, he says simply, because he wanted to marry her.

They were wed in Rome on March 2, 1957, at the Basilica of Saint John at the Latin Gate, beginning a partnership that spanned more than six decades.

Through the Agency for International Development (USAID), he later served tours in Peru and Egypt, along with time in Syria, building a life defined not only by music and movement, but by language, service, and a widening view of the world.

Maria, the more gregarious of the two, died in September 2020 after more than six-

ty years of marriage. After her death, something shifted.

“My wife was always the outgoing one ... After she passed, I had to learn to do it myself.”

He began greeting neighbors, thanking service workers, and speaking with the people he encountered on daily walks — including the garbage collectors he passes regularly. A small adjustment, but one that reflects a larger truth: adaptation has always been part of his survival.

When asked what explains his longevity, he does not offer a philosophy or platitudes. Instead, he returns to habits that sound almost ordinary. He never smoked. He did not drink heavily. He stayed in motion.

“I always walked a lot. ... I never really stopped moving.”

He remains connected to St. Agnes Catholic Church, attending Sunday Mass.

He and Maria had five children, though one died in infancy. Today, he has eight

grandchildren and a newly arrived great-grandchild — born the same year he turned 100. He mentions it with quiet pride, as if acknowledging the generosity of time.

The stories from his life — cross-country journeys on Route 66, being in Los Angeles during the announcement of Japan’s surrender in World War II, and decades of travel and work across continents- sound almost too improbable to belong to one life. But he does not describe them as exceptional. He presents them as lived experiences.

What remains most visible now is not the scale of his past, but the simplicity of his present: music in the room, sports on the screen, news unfolding in real time, and a man still tapping his foot to a beat that has followed him across 100 years.

“I’ve always believed I’m one of the luckiest guys on the face of the earth,” he says, borrowing Lou Gehrig’s famous words. “I’ve been very blessed by the Good Lord.”

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551- 2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distri-

butions, 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](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto: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/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional

mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403- 5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org). Farmer’s Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer’s Markets, email Brian Morreale, [brianmorreale@gmail.com](mailto:brianmorreale@gmail.com)

# 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.

## 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](http://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.
- ❖ July 11: Take part in the City of Alexandria's



**"The Drowsy Chaperone" is playing now through June 6, 2026 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.**

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. 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 Friday, 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.

### Parents Night Out

\$25, Ages 5-12 Friday, 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.

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](http://alexandriava.gov/RPCA/Events).

## Alexandria Aces Seek Local Hosts

**The Alexandria Aces collegiate summer baseball team,** the reigning heart of Alexandria's summer sports scene, is officially seeking local families to host student-athletes for the upcoming 2026 season. Celebrating 18 years of premier competition in the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League (CRSCLB), the organization is looking for residents to provide housing for players from May 30 through July 25. Requirements for hosting are simple: families provide a private bedroom and access to laundry facilities. In return, families receive all-access season tickets for their household and an invitation to the team's annual Host Family Appreciation Night at Frank Mann Field. How to Apply: Interested families can find full program details and application forms by visiting the "Host Families" section at [alexandriaaces.org](http://alexandriaaces.org). For more information, contact Maggie Crane, Host Family Coordinator, at 617-645-5860 or email her at [maggi-crane19@gmail.com](mailto:maggi-crane19@gmail.com).

## MAY 1-23

**The Alexandria City High School Titan Student Art Exhibition.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience student creativity firsthand. Gallery hours: Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## MAY 5 TO JUNE 28

**"Catching the Light" 2026 Art Exhibition and Sale.** At Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Artists Reception - Sunday, May 17 from 1-3 p.m. Potomac Valley Watercolorists presents "Catching the Light," the 2026 edition of their annual nature-focused Art Exhibition and Sale. Green Spring Gardens "Art in The Garden Program" sponsored by the Friends of Green Spring invites visitors to enjoy this local, creative event. This annual fine art show spotlights many of our region's most highly-skilled and well-known water media artists,

and features more than 100 original framed works on display and available for purchase. Visit [www.potomacvalleywatercolorists.org](http://www.potomacvalleywatercolorists.org)

## NOW THROUGH JUNE 6

**"The Drowsy Chaperone."** At The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Winner of five Tony Awards, The Drowsy Chaperone is a playful tribute to the Golden Age musical — and one of Broadway's purely fun shows. The story unfolds when a man alone in his apartment puts on his favorite cast recording, and the 1928 musical magically comes to life around him: two lovers on the eve of their wedding, a bumbling best man, gangsters posing as pastry chefs, and one hilarious intoxicated chaperone. Director Kristin McGregor brings a warm eye to all the madcap delight, finding in the show's humor something genuinely moving — a reminder of why we turn to art in the first place, and why joy is always worth seeking.

## THURSDAY/MAY 21

**Community Champions Honors. 8-10 a.m.** At Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. The Chamber ALX is proud to announce the public safety honorees for our Community Champions Honors.

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 27

**Shipwreck on the Potomac. 7 p.m.** At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. The Alexandria Historical Society will host author Karen E. Stone for a lecture on her book, Shipwreck on the Potomac: Disaster in Pursuit of Lincoln's Killer. Stepping away from Revolutionary War topics this month, the Alexandria Historical Society will present a compelling program on a little-remembered Civil War-era tragedy tied to the aftermath of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

## 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.

## JUNE 5-28

**The "USA at 250" art exhibit** celebrates our country's 250th birthday and captures the spirit of our nation, its past, present, and future, with artworks that highlight the splendor of our landscapes, people and history. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Opening Reception: Friday, June 5, 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](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## SATURDAY/JUNE 6

**Summer Palooza. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** At Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. This free, family-friendly event will include live music by local band Highway Legends, free food, a petting zoo with animals from Frying Pan Park, exhibitors with information about dogs and animals, the environment, County resources, local small businesses and much more. There will be a kids zone with arts activities by the MVD Arts Advisory Council (MVD AAC), bounce houses, lawn games and touch-a-truck opportunities.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 6

**First Saturday Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. 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.

**Legals**

**Legals**

**Legals**



**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
FIRST HALF 2026 REAL ESTATE TAX,  
REFUSE FEE, AND STORMWATER UTILITY FEE  
ARE DUE JUNE 15, 2026**

The first half 2026 Real Estate tax, Refuse fee and Stormwater Utility fee must be paid by Monday, June 15, 2026, to avoid late payment penalty and interest.

Pay by credit card or eCheck on the City's website at [alexandriava.gov/Payments](http://alexandriava.gov/Payments). Real estate tax payments can also be mailed to City of Alexandria, PO Box 34750, Alexandria, VA 22334-0750.

Pay in person at the West End Finance Office, 4850 Mark Center Drive, Suite 2011, between 8AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. A blue & silver drop box located in Old Town, outside of the lobby doors to 100 North Pitt Street is also available 24 hours a day. Payments must be in the drop box by midnight on June 15, 2026, to be considered on time.

General Real Estate tax information is available on the City's website at [alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax](http://alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax). Detailed assessment, tax balance and payment information is available at [realestate.alexandriava.gov](http://realestate.alexandriava.gov).

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email [payments@alexandriava.gov](mailto:payments@alexandriava.gov). For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email [realestate@alexandriava.gov](mailto:realestate@alexandriava.gov). For questions on refuse fees or stormwater utility fees, please call Alex311 at 703.746.4311 or submit questions online at [alexandriava.gov/Alex311](http://alexandriava.gov/Alex311).

For information on the City's Real Estate Tax Relief Programs for elderly, disabled, and military-disabled residents, please contact the Revenue Division by email [taxrelief@alexandriava.gov](mailto:taxrelief@alexandriava.gov) or by phone 703.746.4800.

City Hall and Market Square are being renovated. Sign up for eNews updates at [alexandriava.gov/eNews](http://alexandriava.gov/eNews) and choose the "City Hall Renovation" topic. Find out more about department moves at [alexandriava.gov/CityHall](http://alexandriava.gov/CityHall).

**Public Notice**

**Annie B. Rose House**  
Waiting List  
The waiting list for Annie B. Rose House will open for new applications on June 1, 2026.

Applications must be submitted online through our online application portal located on our website [www.anniebrosehouse.com](http://www.anniebrosehouse.com)



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[connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar)

**NEWS**

**American Horticultural Society's Starlit Garden Gala**

**Celebrate horticultural leadership and honor community support for River Farm.**

The American Horticultural Society, the national nonprofit promoting the beauty and benefits of plants, will host its annual Gala at River Farm, its headquarters in Alexandria, Va., on Saturday, June 6, 2026. This year's theme, Starlit Garden Gala, was inspired by River Farm's beautiful new outdoor event space, featuring a stunning clear top with views of the starlit sky. The Gala will take place in River Farm's elegant gardens overlooking the Potomac River. Learn more about the AHS Gala, including ticket pricing, at [ahsgardening.org/gala](http://ahsgardening.org/gala).

Long-time Alexandria residents Roger and Mary Bowers, the 2026 AHS Gala Co-Chairs, said, "We believe places like River Farm matter deeply, both here in our community and in communities across the country, highlighting the unique ability of gardens to connect people with nature and with one another. We look forward to celebrating with friends and supporters at this memorable evening under the stars."

The 2026 AHS Gala Committee features a dynamic group of horticultural leaders, community champions, and supporters who share a commitment to advancing AHS' mission. Committee members include Skipp Calvert, Amy Golden, Jane Jozoff, Gayle Palmer, and Stephanie Parkes. Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann and James McGrath, AHS Board members, serve as Creative Advisors.

During the Gala, AHS will honor Dr. John Dole, winner of AHS' 2026 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award. In addition, Tim Conlon, Laura Dowling, and Holly Shimizu will be honored with AHS' 2026 Meritorious Award for their visionary leadership in saving River Farm in 2021.

AHS recently announced the completion of a conservation easement on River Farm, ensuring that the historic 25-acre property will remain permanently protected for nature lovers, gardeners, horticulturists, and families across the region.

Gala guests will hear from special guest Jennifer Jewell, Execu-

tive Director/Founder/Host of the award-winning public radio program and podcast Cultivating Place, whose work focuses on gardeners as keystone species for people and places. Guests will also enjoy live music by Little Big Band, delicious food from Occasions Caterers, and beautiful flowers by celebrated floral designer Holly Chapple, whose work was featured in The Bachelorette star Hannah Brown's wedding.

AHS' annual Gala brings together garden enthusiasts, local community members, and horticultural leaders to support AHS' mission and inspire a culture of gardening across America. Proceeds from the Gala directly support the stewardship of River Farm and AHS programs, which foster growth, learning, and community.

Individual Gala tickets are available at [ahsgardening.org/gala](http://ahsgardening.org/gala).

For questions about the AHS Gala, contact Johanna Tschbull, AHS Communications Manager, [jtschbull@ahsgardening.org](mailto:jtschbull@ahsgardening.org).

**About the American Horticultural Society**

Founded in 1922, the American Horticultural Society (AHS) is one of the most respected and longstanding nonprofit gardening organizations in North America. Celebrating the diverse and unique American gardening experience, AHS' membership includes gardeners, plant enthusiasts, and horticultural professionals, as well as regional and national horticultural organizations.

Through educational programs, awards, and publications, AHS inspires a culture of gardening and horticultural practices that creates and sustains healthy, beautiful communities and a livable planet. AHS is headquartered at River Farm, a 25-acre site in Alexandria, Virginia that was once a part of George Washington's original farmland. Learn more at [ahsgardening.org](http://ahsgardening.org).

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A monarch butterfly on a swamp milkweed plant.



A monarch butterfly caterpillar.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

## Having a Ball, Almost Literally



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A few weekends ago, I had the opportunity of a lifetime (I exaggerate), when my wife Dina went away for the for a few days and I was left unsupervised. Not that I can't fend for myself, it's more so with Dina away, that's all, other the dog and four cats, I had to tend for. (If we had a fenced-in yard, I wouldn't have had to fend for the dog, but as of now, that's wishful thinking. As it happens now daily, I'm up early and out late - with three additional outings/"walkings" in-between making for four total, between me getting up and me going down.

Though I am referring to the weekend, it's primarily Saturday during the day/early evening that I'll be writing about. Since the Red Sox were not televised where I could watch, the Bruins had been eliminated from the Stanley Cup playoffs the night before, and the Celtics weren't on television until 8 pm, I had some time to fill you might say. So, with remote in hand and my rear end on the couch - and no one's preference to consider, I turned on the television and began "flipping the cable" as my late brother Richard used to call it and see if I could find anything worth watching. Boy did I! And not the usual fare either. As it was found, most of it was programming reminiscent of my formative years growing up in Newton Centre, Ma and sport if you could call it that, that I had never seen on television. The first bit of familiarity was of a dodge ball match/tournament. It wasn't exactly six grade, as adults were competing, but it could have been. There were sides, mostly men but each side included a woman, a line in the center of the gym keeping them apart and balls flying from side to side, some caught and others wayward while still others hitting their opponents with boinks heard all over leading to immediate disqualification. I loved playing dodgeball, but until this afternoon, I had never seen it on television. Watching it brought back memories of my occasional misspent youth.

Soon I became bored watching the competition and "flipped the cable." I couldn't believe what sport I came upon next: kickball. Just like I played on the playground at Bowen Elementary School in the mid 1960s. Men, women on a baseball diamond with a pitcher rolling the ball to the opponent in the former "batter's box" which I now call the "kicker's" box. Other than the swerve the pitcher put on the ball as he rolled toward the kicker, it was just like I used to play 60 odd years ago. But I never saw adults playing kickball on television before. Just like I had never seen dodgeball on television before. After watching the kickball game for a few minutes, I likewise grew bored and "flipped the cable."

I couldn't believe what I happened onto next. Yet another sport, if you even call it, that I spent countless hours playing, mostly in my backyard against Freddie Klashman, our downstairs neighbor, and son of the family who owned the two-family house I grew up in on Athelstane Road.

Whiffle Ball: Can you believe it? In succession. It's as if the television was programming me down memory lane. Taking advantage of my eyes/feelings being the only ones to consider. None of this would have interested Dina, well, certainly not back-to-back-back like I had just "happened-anced." It was surreal almost. One memory after another, and all are great memories - for me anyway.

The next few "flips" were not as productive. I saw more conventional sports: women's college softball, women's beach volleyball, some men's and women's professional basketball, some PGA golf, (no LPGA women's golf however), a bit of Ping Pong, some NHL playoffs but no bowling.

After watching all these sports, I still had not had my fill as I was waiting to watch the Celtics later that night. Unfortunately, the Celtics lost and were eliminated from the NBA playoffs, a totally non-fitting end to what otherwise had been an amazing day.

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

PHOTOS BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

# Keeping Nature's Puzzle Pieces Together

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

Nature is like a puzzle, with all the pieces interconnected, Alfonso Abugattas told an 80-member audience on May 13 in a Zoom program sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh. "We are part of the puzzle too and what we do has consequences," he said. Abugattas is the Natural Resources Manager for Arlington County Parks and founder of the Capital Naturalist blog.

He quoted environmental advocate John Muir who said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

## Nature's Interdependence

Abugattas began by describing how certain plants require fungi to survive. Yellow lady slippers, a type of orchid, have a relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. The root tissues of the fungi and plant have a symbiotic association and grow together. "They rely on each other," he said.

Host plants are also examples of co-dependence in nature. A host plant is a specific plant that an insect or its larvae eat, live on or lay eggs on, a plant with which the insect evolved. Monarch butterflies are one of the most familiar examples, Abugattas said. The monarch's caterpillars feed on milkweed as do the caterpillars of 12 other insects, like the milkweed tussock moth.

Mistletoe is a hemiparasite, he said. It does not depend totally on a host plant but needs some interaction with its host plant. "Mistletoe anchors on a tree, takes what it needs from the tree and is still green so it can photosynthesize," he said.

Carolina chickadee nestlings are very dependent on caterpillars for food. "They have to have protein. They cannot survive on bird feeders," he said. He cited the work of entomologists Dr. Doug Tallamy and Desiree Narango which confirmed that a clutch of chickadee young eats about 350 to 570 caterpillars per day, depending on the number of chicks. If 70 percent of native biomass is non-native, they won't survive, they'll lay fewer eggs, fewer young will fledge and they will weigh less, he said.

In the mid-Atlantic, 18 species of bats eat insects as their main food source. "Their favorite is moths, so they too need caterpillars," he said.

Abugattas sang the praises of "the mighty oak." He explained, "If it went extinct, over



Lichen is an organism made up of two other species, algae and fungi.



A Yellow lady slipper orchid requires certain mycorrhizal fungi to be present or they cannot survive.

600 species would disappear because they rely solely on oak trees," including over 40 mammals, 60 birds and 557 caterpillars.

Continuing the theme of interconnectedness, he said that 75 percent of flowering plants rely on animal pollinators to move pollen, including 70 percent of agricultural crops. "Bees are built for being pollinators," he said, and they need their host plants.

Asters host 112 Lepidoptera species, butterflies and moths, like the pearl checkerspot, and eight bee species. Goldenrods host 115 Lepidoptera species.

People may think negatively of galls, but they are "edible homes," he said. Galls, like the "witch hat" galls created by aphids on witch hazel leaves, host critters like mites.

## How to Garden Better

Typical Northern Virginia gardens are dominated by non-native plants like bamboo, forsythia, nandina and zelkova trees which few caterpillars feed on. "Ginkgos support zip," he said. "Nothing."

Native plants are key, he emphasized, and people do not need a large space to support natives, like goldenrods.

Returning to nature's puzzle, he said, "We don't want to lose the pieces," reminding attendees of conservationist Aldo Leopold's admonition, "To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering. ... We are part of the puzzle too. What we do has consequences," Abugattas challenged.

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## Fords Landing 28 Alexander Street

\$2,739,000 | Truly a chef's kitchen, this renovated 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath townhome showcases professional-grade appliances and a quartz waterfall island and backsplash with sophisticated style.

**Babs Beckwith** : 703.627.5421  
OldTownAlexandriaLiving.com



## Collingwood Manor 8203 Mack Street

\$1,495,000 | Situated on a quiet cul-de-sac, this beautifully maintained home offers the perfect blend of comfort, functionality, and charm just minutes from the Potomac River.

**Rebecca McCullough** : 571.384.0941  
RebeccaMcCullough.com



## Old Town 635 Slaters Lane #301

\$1,100,000 | Beautiful, spacious condo at Towngate North with water views. 2 beds, 2 full baths, 3 garage spaces, conditioned storage, and all new construction in 2023. Fantastic location!

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OPEN SAT 5/23 & SUN 5/24, 2-4PM



## Huntington Forest 6208 Gentle Lane

\$929,000 | Handsome colonial boasts renovated main floor with custom kitchen, hardwood floors, updated baths, and new windows. Flagstone patio is perfect for coffee or entertaining.

**Angie Stiens** : 703.721.8539  
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OPEN SUN 5/24, 2-4PM



## Yacht Haven Estates 4409 Ferry Landing Road

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## Townes at Cameron Parke 103 Meadows Lane

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COMING SOON | OPEN 5/30 & 5/31



## Park Fairfax 3304 Gunston Road

\$400,000 | Centrally located this two-level, all-brick townhome features 2 bedrooms, gleaming hardwood floors, fresh paint, granite counters, upgraded bath, and stacked washer/dryer.

**Janet Catterson Price** : 703.622.5984  
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## Belle View Condos 6513 Potomac Avenue A-1

\$335,000 | Beautifully updated 2-bedroom, 1-bath PORCH unit. Stunning parquet flooring, renovated kitchen, updated bath, & extra storage. Community pool & low condo fee (\$461/mo).

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## River Towers 6641 Wakefield Drive #415

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