

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JUNE 4, 2026

Police Invite the Public's Help Solving Cold Cases



Fairfax County police car in front of the Mount Vernon Government Center, home to the Mount Vernon Police Station.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH
Fairfax County Police Department's insignia.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

In 1993, some landscapers came across a human skull and some bones, an assemblage that police came to call the "bone lady." The skull had signs of a stab wound. Using DNA evidence and working with several laboratories across the country, the Fairfax County Police eventually found a niece of the victim, a woman, in Georgia who said her aunt "went missing years ago." They then found the victim's daughter who said her mother lived in Fairfax County at one time and "ran with a rough crowd." The police never identified the killer.

This was one "cold case" that Detectives Melissa Wallace and John Long recounted

on May 20, 2026 to the Mount Vernon Community Advisory Committee, a group that meets regularly and dialogues with local police officers.

A cold case is a criminal investigation that goes unsolved in a kind of limbo awaiting new evidence or tips.

The second case:

Robin Lawrence, age 37, was home alone in the West Springfield area with her two-year-old daughter in 1994. Her husband was away and when he could not reach her by phone for three days, called the police. They found her home's window screens removed and Robin stabbed 49 times.

A key piece of evidence on the scene was a bloody washcloth. Tests determined that the



Undated photo from FCPD Cold Case webpage.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/servicesah/cold-case>

blood was not Robin's, her daughter's or her husband's. The police checked the FBI database and found no match. In 2020, working with a genealogist, they identified a "person of interest." Eventually they knocked on the door of 51-year-old Stephan Smerk of Niskayuna, New York, who gave them a DNA sample that matched the DNA on the washcloth. He confessed to the murder in 1994. The police department's website, in a Sept. 11,

2023, post, says, "After nearly 29 years of questions about a homicide that occurred in the West Springfield District, Fairfax County Police Department detectives are finally able to bring answers to the victim's family."

Smerk said that at the time of the 1994 murder, he was in the Army at Fort Myer in Arlington, was "hearing voices" and arbitrarily picked a house for the crime.

SEE POLICE INVITE, PAGE 7

New Bench Honors Conservationist

Paul Siegel and wife Betsy Martin co-founded Friends of Little Hunting Creek.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

On a sultry 95-degree afternoon, May 19, in the shade of a large white oak tree with ospreys nesting and calling along Little Hunting Creek, the Friends of Little Hunting Creek cut a red ribbon on a new teak bench to honor the late Paul Siegel, a co-founder of the Friends of Little Hunting Creek, a Northern Virginia conservation organization. Siegel died on Sept. 3, 2025. May 19 was Siegel's birthday.

Siegel and his wife Betsy Martin co-founded the friends' group in 2003, and partnered with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust to preserve some waterfront land along the creek, a tributary of the Potomac River.

Noting that Siegel frequently walked to the site, across from 8726 Stockton Parkway, Martin said, "So it's fitting that we dedicate this memorial bench for future walkers, who need a spot to rest.

"When you take a walk and sit on the bench and look out on the water and over at the bald eagle's nest across the creek, think

of Paul and feel grateful. Paul loved the creek and wanted to preserve the view and the habitat for people and for creatures."

Martin told the 30-person group that Siegel organized a campaign to raise funds to buy the land when it faced a development threat. The county denied building permits, so the property owners donated the half-acre to the NVCT.

NVCT's Alyssa Hemler, Land Stewardship Specialist, called Siegel a "role model" who did not hesitate to get his hands dirty and a partner who shared his wheelbarrow and homemade pizza.

On saving the property, Matt Gerhart, NVCT's Conservation Director, observed that the land is in a floodplain and a Chesapeake Bay resource protection area, that NVCT's goal is to "preserve open space and restore a riparian corridor along Little Hunting Creek."

Since 2006, in cleanups, the Friends of Little Hunting Creek have removed 4,333 bags of trash, 320 tires, 206 shopping carts and thousands of pounds of bulk trash from

SEE NEW BENCH HONORS, PAGE 9



The attendees gathered around the new bench honoring Paul Siegel.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

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Sultana

Tall Ships Coming to Alexandria Waterfront

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

“They are coming by water,” is one translation of the name Potomac, an indigenous Algonquin word. In June, three stunning tall ships will come by water to join the Providence, already docked on Alexandria’s waterfront.

The June 12-14 weekend will feature a stunning spectacle of sails and visitors can explore the historic Kalmar Nyckel, Sultana, Gazela-Barkentine and the Providence.

The ships are part of Sail250, a maritime celebration of the country’s 250th anniversary, a gathering of over 60 tall ships and military ships and 10,000 sailors from 20 countries sailing from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Norfolk, Virginia, and on to Boston, Massachusetts, with stops along the way.

Planners chose Alexandria because of its role in the nation’s founding, the town where George Washington, Revolutionary War general and the country’s first president had a townhouse and conducted business; and owned a riverside plantation nine miles south. Alexandria was where Washington and George Mason helped write the Fairfax Resolves rejecting British authority over the colonies.

Visitors can explore all four ships:

- ❖ The Kalmar Nyckel, a Dutch pinnace, 93 feet long, a reproduction of a colonial vessel and a Swedish warship, today a floating classroom for teaching maritime history. In 1638, Swedish colonists arrived in the Kalmar Nyckel to to-



Gazela-Barkentine



Providence



PHOTO BY HANK MOSELEY

A crew and students climbing aloft on the schooner Virginia.

day’s Delaware.

- ❖ The 52-foot-long Sultana, a reproduction of a Royal Navy schooner that brought thousands of British troops to Boston to quell rebellious colonists in 1768.

- ❖ The Gazela-Barkentine, 140 feet long, was built in Portugal in 1883 and fished off Newfoundland, Canada, until 1969. Since the 1970s, this education vessel has been docked in Philadelphia.



PHOTO BY HANK MOSELEY

The crew of Pride of Baltimore II adjusting the sails’ angle.

- ❖ Alexandria’s “hometown ship,” the Providence, a sloop, is a 61-foot reproduction of one of the first ships in the Continental Navy, also a merchant ship, whaler and privateer.

Life on a Tall Ship

The original ships were powered by wind, when there was wind, and human brawn. Seamen nav-

SEE TALL SHIPS COMING, PAGE 6



Washington's straight rye whiskey is clear in color because it is not aged in wooden barrels.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH
One of Washington's aged rye whiskeys.



For one ticket, visitors can sample half-ounce pours of three whiskeys every Saturday in June and September.

Enjoy a 'Spirited' 250th U.S. Anniversary

By 1799, the last year of his life, George Washington produced 11,000 gallons, making him the country's largest whiskey producer.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The father of our country and 18th century Northern Virginia farmer not only enjoyed a shot of whiskey now and then, he made it.

Every Saturday, in June and September, Mount Vernon's visitors can sample three, one-of-a-kind whiskeys that George Washington produced, libations that use his recipes and methods. And to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding, Mount Vernon will soon release three new whiskeys to sip and savor.

Titillating Tastings

For one ticket, visitors can sample half-ounce pours of three whiskeys. Docents start with a clear, 86-proof, straight rye whiskey, dubbed "the official state spirit of the Com-



The wooden hopper holds corn in the grist mill.



Millers produce finely-ground corn meal at today's grist mill at Mount Vernon Estate.



A wooden waterwheel that powers the gristmill at Mount Vernon Estate.

monwealth of Virginia," which consists of 60 percent rye, 35 percent corn and five percent malted barley.

Do not mistake this clear liquid for gin. Docents recommend that you sip slowly be-

cause it has a stinging kick. The whiskey is clear because it is not aged in a barrel which turns it brownish over time.

Next comes a straight rye whiskey with an amber or tawny hue because it is aged

in wooden barrels for two-to-four years. The barrels and the stills' wood fire smoke contribute to its flavor which some say is

SEE ENJOY A 'SPIRITED', PAGE 5



George Washington's restored distillery is on the site of the original one at Mount Vernon Estate.



George Washington's Gristmill, a reconstruction of the original mill.



Water traveled from the millpond in the millrace to the distillery and gristmill at Mount Vernon Estate.

NEWS

Enjoy a 'Spirited' 250th U.S. Anniversary

FROM PAGE 4

"sweet" and "spicy."

The third offering is another of Washington's straight ryes, a premium whiskey, which is aged four-to-eight years in charred oak barrels. Some tippers describe it as "smooth."

Celebratory Whiskies

Coming in the next few months are some new spirits made there:

❖ In June, Washington's Generals collectors' series limited release premium rye. This honors General Henry Knox and Dorchester Heights, key leaders and moments in the Revolutionary War.

❖ On July 4, a limited-edition, George Washington's Spirit of '76 single barrel, cask strength bourbon, a first-ever run of bourbon produced by the distillery. Promoters say it has hints of vanilla, plum and brown sugar.

❖ In September, George Washington's wheated bourbon whiskey which Mount Vernon promoters say, "mirrors the balanced leadership of the General himself."

Tutorials on Distilling and Milling

Visitors can also learn about 18th-century whiskey-making and mill operations at the distillery and Grist Mill, both reproductions of the original buildings. Washington built a distillery next to his gristmill on his Dogue Run Farm in 1797. It operated until 1808 and the building burned in 1814. Today's reconstruction, which opened in 2007, is made with period materials.

The gristmill, built in 1770-1771 along Dogue Run, could produce 5,000 to 8,000 pounds of flour and cornmeal a day. For water power, Washington's workers built a mill pond near today's U.S. Coast Guard office on Telegraph Road and built a millrace to carry water and turn the mill's waterwheel.

Washington had over 300 enslaved people who grew the grains, built the buildings and helped operate the mill and distillery, making this entrepreneur's whiskey-production one of his most lucrative enterprises. By



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Distillers make whiskey in copper stills at Mount Vernon Estate.

1799, the last year of his life, Washington produced 11,000 gallons, making him the country's largest whiskey producer.

Today, millers describe the milling process and grind the grains in the gristmill. Guests can watch the wooden "technology" moving and the finely-ground corn meal dropping into the hopper. In the distillery, workers set the mash in fermentation vats and operate wood-fired copper pot stills, as Washington workers did.

For shoppers, the whiskies come in 375-milliliter bottles ranging from \$98 to \$225. One \$60 admission ticket covers the tasting, general admission, guided gristmill and distillery tours and a take-home, Glencairn, tulip-shaped shot glass.

Semi-quincentennial

This year, for the 250th anniversary of American independence, called the Semi-quincentennial, Mount Vernon has a hands-on Revolutionary War encampment called "Patriots Path" where visitors can interact with interpreters in period dress and learn how soldiers lived and prepared meals from Army rations.

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Rats were common on ships like the Providence.

To See the Tall Ships

Alexandria's weekend festival, June 12-14, will feature ship tours daily from 12 noon to 6 p.m., music, family activities, art and more.

Tourism officials strongly recommend buying timed ship tour tickets in advance for each ship. They cannot guarantee entrance for walkups. Visit <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/sails-on-the-potomac-ship-tours>.

Sail250, ports and schedule, www.sail250.org/

The Providence, living history tours every Saturday, <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Will Downing portrays Captain John Paul Jones on the Providence, anchored on the Alexandria waterfront.

Tall Ships Coming to Alexandria Waterfront

FROM PAGE 3

igated with sextants, compasses and the stars overhead and turned their vessels with a wooden tiller connected to a rudder.

Their crews' quarters down below were dank, dark and home to rats and rotting leftovers from slaughtered animals. Sailors slept on hammocks inches apart. Water, rum and dried fish were stored there in wooden barrels.

Today's crew members use both traditional and modern sailing techniques. "The physics and prin-

ciples of how a sail works are the same throughout history, cultures and the materials used to construct those vessels," said Hank Moseley, Director of Maritime Operations, Sail250 Virginia. "While some of the ships participating in Sail250 Virginia are re-creations of historic sailing vessels from the 17th or 18th century, the vast majority of them were built since the early 20th century and are designed from keel up as modern ships, albeit with historic sailing rigs. Those rigs require more crew

to work the sails and rigging than modern vessels and have limits on how they sail compared to a modern yacht or America's Cup boat."

Today's tall ships have modern equipment, like life rafts, radar, depth sounders and 21st-century communications technology. Some sailors also have traditional navigation skills like deduced reckoning and celestial navigation. "These methods have been in use for centuries and are still relevant today," Moseley said.

Kalmar Nyckel's Captain Sharon

Dounce said in an interview, "If a sailor from the 1600s came on board, he would know what to do, like how to use mechanical advantage to move a 3,200-pound wooden rudder."

The Providence

The original Providence was one of two first ships in the Continental Navy and Revolutionary War hero Captain John Paul Jones's first command. Jones is known as the father of the U.S. Navy. In the Revolutionary War, the Providence seized over 40 ships and escaped a

British blockade.

The ship came to Alexandria in 2019 and docked at the John Warner Maritime Heritage Center, 1A Prince Street.

On tours, today's land lubbers can learn all about rigging, lines, sails, spars, guns, masts and more and venture back to the glories of the nation's maritime history.

As Kalmar Nyckel's Captain Sharon Dounce put it, "You'll learn what it was like to live in the 17th century and see history off the TV and in your hands."



The crew's cooking stove "down below" on the tall ship Providence.



A tall ship Providence crew member demonstrates how 18th century crew members lit a gun on the ship.

Police Invite the Public's Help Solving Cold Cases

FROM PAGE 1

The victim scratched him on the face and he wiped his face with a washcloth. He told police that he was then a "serial killer," but shortly after that murder, he met the woman who became his wife and did not kill any more people. When arrested, "He was so cold," Detective Wallace remarked.

Examples of cold cases for the Fairfax County Police are unsolved homicides, equivocal deaths, unsolved sex offenses, out-of-jurisdiction assistance for sex/homicides, in-custody deaths and officer-involved shootings.

Cases Stay Open

Police consider many unsolved cases to be cold cases after two years, but for the Fairfax County police, the cases remain open for possible investigation indefinitely. In other words, for this police force, there is no set time to close a case. Their oldest unsolved homicide is from 1961.

The county's cold case unit has four

detectives and one second lieutenant. Currently, 115 cases are unresolved and assigned to the cold case squad.

Mount Vernon Police and Crimes

The Mount Vernon Police Station, at 2511 Parkers Lane, covers 26 square miles. The station has 109 people, including 84 sworn officers, five auxiliary officers and 20 civilians. The civilian group consists of aides, crossing guards, administrative staff and volunteers.

Online department statistics for 2026 so far report 4,180 crimes against persons countywide. The Mount Vernon police district had 618, the second highest of all police districts in the county. For crimes against property, there were 8,462 in the county and 1,690 in Mount Vernon, the highest of all police districts. The 26-square-mile Mount Vernon Police District extends from the Alexandria city border south to Fort Belvoir and stretches west to include Huntley Meadows Park.

Opening the meeting, Captain Ali Sepheri said, "Crime is down in Mount Vernon in every category." (He did not specify the time period and we could not get clarification after the meeting.) "The root cause, the biggest issue is people not locking their cars," he said.

Sepheri urged people to always report suspected crimes. "We work 24/7 and on holidays to make sure a crime is not committed," he commented. On calling the police, "It's never a waste of time," he said.

If you have any information about an unsolved case, call 703-246-7511 or email FCPDCold-Case@fairfaxcounty.gov

Information

Fairfax County Police: District Stations, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/>;

Cold Case Squad, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/service-sah/cold-case>.

Community Advisory Committees, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/community-advisory-committee>



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Solar Shines on the Lorton Landfill

These 12,000 solar panels will provide 5% of all electricity used in county facilities.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Under a bright morning sun, celebrants gathered at the I-95/Lorton landfill on May 28 to cut a green ribbon on the first solar array in Virginia built on a closed landfill, 12,000 solar panels stretching across 37 grassy acres.

After over a week of rain, the breezy, sunny day at 75 degrees prompted Congressman James Walkinshaw to dub the sun “symbolic” of the event. “The progress of our clean energy journey continues,” he told the gathering. “The project will pay dividends for decades to come.”

Saying, “You are all standing on old trash,” the county’s project manager Eric Forbes explained that this landfill section stopped taking household wastes and closed in 1995 and the solar project started in 2015 with a feasibility study. The energy produced will go to Dominion Energy and be credited back to the county, bringing at least \$12 million in county savings over 30 years, officials predict.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck credited the late Board of Supervisors Chairman and Congressman Gerry Connolly, Storck’s predecessor the late Gerry Hyland, state legislators and the South County Federation for their environmental vision. He said that the county has a goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 for all county operations and 2050 for the entire community. “Harnessing energy from the sun is a smart use of public land,” Storck said.

Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchik quipped, “I only come to Lorton when there’s something really cool,” applauding the staffers, advocates and elected officials for this “incredible project,” adding, “We want more of this.”

John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination, said the project, the fourteenth solar project on county facilities, will produce five percent of all electricity used in county facilities, excluding the schools. “There are more solar projects in the pipeline,” he reported.

The landfill project will generate enough electricity equivalent to powering around 1,000 homes a year and will reduce an estimated 136,000 metric tons of carbon emissions.

The project required approval of the Virginia General Assembly and former Delegate Mark Keam said it took three years to pass the



Congressman James Walkinshaw helped make the project a reality as the Braddock district member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Providence District Supervisor Dalia Palchik sees it as “an incredible project.”



Officials had large “gold” scissors to cut a green ribbon: Left to right, Supervisor Dalia Palchik, U.S. Rep. James Walkinshaw, Supervisor Dan Storck, Will Davis, the landfill’s manager.



Congressman James Walkinshaw, Supervisor Dan Storck and landfill manager Will Davis gladly cut the ribbon.



Supervisor Dan Storck inspected one of the solar panels to learn how it works.



Mike Fahey with Madison Energy Infrastructure built the solar installations on the closed portion of the landfill.

bill which he carried. “This is an example of the way government is supposed to function,” he said, “Identify a problem, come together and find a solution. The lesson is that local, state and federal governments can work together.”

Susan Stillman with the Sierra Club said she lobbied legislators in Richmond to support the bill. “This is setting an example for the rest of the state,” she contended.

“Every cell of every panel produces electricity,” Mike Fahey explained. Fahey is with Madison Energy Infrastructure (MEI), the county’s partner, which has built 155 projects in 28 states. He predicts the panels will have a 30- to 40-year useful life and in 20 years will produce even more energy because of expected advances in the technology and battery storage.

Managers will plant a native

plant meadow seed mix under the panels, Forbes said. Today there’s a mix of tall fescue and other plants around and under the panels.

Local advocates trumpeted the project. “The wheels of government turn slowly,” said Scott Peterson, “but Fairfax County is a leader in efforts to address the climate crisis and we’re very proud of the progress they have made.” Peterson chairs the Board of Directors

of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.

As cabbage white butterflies flitted about, red-winged blackbirds glided by, crows called overhead and tall fescue grasses swayed in the breeze, attendees were reminded of nature’s resiliency, even amid 12 acres of high tech solar installations on a garbage dump and a steady stream of dump trucks rumbling in depositing life’s detritus.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Betsy Martin, Paul Siegel's wife, gave a tribute to her late husband.



A plaque on the bench quotes Henry David Thoreau, "In wildness is the preservation of the world."

New Bench Honors Conservationist

FROM PAGE 1
the creek.

Several subdivisions border the creek, including Stratford Landing on the north side and Wessynton on the south side.

Statistician, Breadmaker

In his professional career, Siegel worked at the U.S. Census Bureau from 1980 to 2004. Prior to that, he was an associate professor of sociology and demography at the University of Michigan. After retir-

ing, he became a master naturalist and "a superb bread maker," according to his obituary. He made pizza in an outdoor, wood-fired oven that he built. He played Renaissance instruments.

At the event, as friends mingled and ate a commemorative cake and pizza, across the creek, high above the thick green mats of wetland vegetation glistening in the sun, a bald eagle pair were raising two eaglets, a welcome sign of nature's renewal.

Information and Events

The Friends will host a free bus tour of the Little Hunting Creek watershed on June 27 to examine the impact of the 2006 Little Hunting Creek Watershed Plan.

To register and learn more, visit <https://friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/>.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust will honor conservation champions on June 4 at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Vienna. Visit www.nvct.org



The Rotary Club of Mount Vernon, VA Amber Marchand Makes A Difference



From left to right: Sterling Marchand; Amber Marchand; Helen Walutes; and Charles Court. Sterling is husband. Amber is recipient, Helen MVRC member and Charles, Chairman of the Difference award committee.

On Wednesday, May 20, Mount Vernon Rotary awarded the 2026 "You Make A Difference Award" to Amber Marchand, a community partner of Woodley Hills Elementary School and the organizer of the Be the Good Project.

The award includes a certificate of recognition and a \$1,000 grant to the Be the Good Project which sponsored Mrs. Marchand's nomination.

The Be the Good Project makes a difference as a grassroots non-profit organization which connects local volunteers with safe and easy ways to help feed their neighbors. Volunteers donate sandwiches, care packages, and food to stock local food pantries. Mrs. Marchand connects the food resources with local schools, community centers, and other organizations for distribution in the Mount Vernon area.

Mount Vernon Rotary gives an annual "You Make A Difference" award to a community leader who continues to make contributions to the Mount Vernon community. Previous winners include individuals and organizations who support community food drives and educational initiatives.

More information about Rotary, an international service club, is available on its website: Rotary.org

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Governor's 'Common Ground' Veto Pen Strikes Down Some Progressive Policies

From cannabis to collective bargaining, legislators must wait another year.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D) issued a wave of vetoes on progressive priorities that had been sent back to her desk without the amendments she requested from the senators and delegates. A Democratic majority did not guarantee the governor's signature. Of the 31 bills vetoed by Spanberger, 29 were introduced by Democrats and 2 by Republicans. Because the General Assembly is controlled by Democrats, the majority of legislation reaching her desk came from Democrats. The governor signed 972 bills into law.

On Jan. 19, when Spanberger delivered her first address to a joint session of the legislature, her primary theme was encouraging lawmakers to find "common ground." In her official inaugural address on Jan. 17, the governor stated: "Our leaders and our fellow Virginians should join in common cause, find common ground, and pursue common purpose — this is the concept at the heart of what it means to be a Commonwealth."

Spanberger vetoed a total of 31 bills after the first General Assembly session of her term, reported Virginia Public Access Project, VPAP.org. "This includes eight bills that were vetoed directly after the session, as well as additional bills vetoed when the Governor's proposed amendments were rejected by the General Assembly during reconvened session."

Policy Vetoes: Cannabis, Healthcare, and Education

Del. Paul Krizek's (D-Mount Vernon) retail cannabis marketplace bill, HB 642 / SB 542, triggered a veto after lawmakers rejected executive amendments to delay the rollout and cap proposed stores. "The Governor's veto ignores the reality that cannabis is already being sold everyday across Virginia. The only question is whether we as leaders will finally ensure those sales occur within a legal, regulated market or continue turning a blind eye to a booming illicit market while pretending to be outraged by its existence," Senator Aird and Del. Krizek posted in a joint release.

Del. Karrie Delaney's (D-Fairfax) Prescription Drug Affordability Board bill, HB 483 / SB 271, also drew an executive veto. "They are expensive undertakings that other states have either repealed or are considering repealing due to costs and ineffectiveness," Spanberger wrote. "I offered amendments to the General Assembly that would have directed the Prescription Drug Affordability Advisory Panel to study a reference-based pricing system before the state spends millions of dollars on implementation."

Gov. Abigail Spanberger vetoed a high-

er education governance bill (SB 494/HB 1385), introduced by Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim (D-Fairfax) and Del. Lily Franklin (D-Montgomery), citing administrative concerns. The move drew quick backlash from university advocates. Criticizing the veto and the governor's failed amendments, the editorial board of The Cavalier Daily wrote that "it is no longer evident that Spanberger is aligned with these sentiments," signaling a "posture shift from the direct and decisive leader once recognized, to a hesitant and passive leader."

Legal Standards and Public Safety

The governor vetoed a mental health affirmative defense bill, HB 246 / SB 335, introduced by Del. Vivian Watts (D-Fairfax) and Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-Fairfax). It sought to allow a judge or jury to find a defendant guilty of a lesser misdemeanor instead of an enhanced class 6 felony if a mental health disorder contributed to an assault on law enforcement. "This bill would effectively create a new legal standard applicable to just one criminal charge for a specific group of people, risking increased confusion and inconsistencies in the Commonwealth's legal system," the governor's veto explanation stated.

Spanberger also blocked SB 351 and HB 650, which would have restricted federal immigration enforcement officers from making administrative arrests in sensitive public spaces. "Communicating that immigrant families are protected from immigration action in places they are not by virtue of federal law would put families at risk," the governor wrote, adding that her Executive Order 16 already directs state agencies to develop immigration protocols.

Workplace, Welfare, and Labor Shift

A workplace protection provision adding menopause as a protected health class, HB 1173 / SB 258 by Del. Kathy Tran (D-Fairfax) and Sen. Stella Pekarsky (D-Fairfax), faced a veto over structural regulatory concerns. Tran and Pekarsky responded: "These bills would have strengthened protections against discrimination and ensure employees could seek reasonable accommodations without fear of retaliation." They added, "We remain committed to advancing policies that reflect the needs of workers."

Del. Delaney's child welfare interview-recording bill, HB 1222, was vetoed after the legislature rejected the executive's amendments. "I offered amendments which would ensure the ability to record all interviews, while also providing discretion within social services when such a recording is unnecessary or not to the benefit of the child," Span-



SCREENSHOT VIA X

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger signs the Employee Child Care Assistance Program bill, HB 18/SB 3, during the Virginia General Assembly session, in Richmond, Va. The law, which takes effect July 1, 2026, was part of a session where Spanberger signed 972 bills into law and vetoed 31.

SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

Virginia Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, D-Fairfax, released a statement on May 20 regarding Gov. Abigail Spanberger's veto of SB 351. The bill aimed to prohibit federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents from making warrantless civil arrests in protected areas such as courthouses, schools, and hospitals. Salim, who opposed the veto, stated, "I know the fear of being separated from our families due to the Trump administration's lawlessness."



SCREENSHOT VIA INSTAGRAM

Virginia state Sen. Jennifer Boysko, D-Fairfax, speaks on March 26 in support of legislation to address pay inequity. Boysko spoke in favor of her bill, SB 215, and Del. Michelle Maldonado's HB 636, which would prohibit employers from asking job applicants for their salary history and require salary ranges in job postings. Gov. Spanberger signed the legislation.



berger said, noting her amendments were disregarded.

A fracture emerged over legislation expanding public-sector collective bargaining rights, SB 378 / HB 1263, which was vetoed after lawmakers rejected executive amendments that would have delayed implementation and altered local government provi-

sions.

"Shame. Gov. Abigail Spanberger today betrayed half a million of Virginia's public service workers by going back on her campaign promise to support collective bargaining rights for the people who keep our Commonwealth and communities running every

SEE GOVERNOR'S, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Keeping a Closer Watch On the Potomac this Summer

BY STATE SENATOR
SCOTT A. SUROVELL

The Potomac River is the front yard of my district, the 34th- and the lifeblood of the Washington region. The river's shoreline stretches roughly 50 miles Alexandria south through the Mount Vernon area, Fort Belvoir, Mason Neck, Pohick Bay, Occoquan, Leesylvania and on to the Chesapeake Bay. For 220,000 Virginians, the river is where we kayak, fish, sail, paddle, swim and walk. It is also a working waterway and the source of much of our region's drinking water. When something goes wrong on the Potomac, our community feels it immediately.

Earlier this year, something did go wrong. The collapse of the Potomac Interceptor sewer line upstream sent over 240 million gallons of raw sewage into the river. The University of Maryland's School of Public Health described it as one of the largest sewage spills in history. Shortly after, American Rivers ranked the Potomac as the most endangered river in America. Closer to home, we saw a fish kill in Pohick Bay. State agencies told us water quality readings were within recreational standards and attributed the dead shad to spawning stress, but residents and environmental scientists I trust kept asking a fair question: how confident can we really be in the river's health? [Is that what you mean?] and for how long?

Experts say that when sewage is deposited in large quantities, it does not simply wash away. Significant volumes can settle into river sediment and lie dormant for months, only to be churned back into the water column by storms, tides or boat traffic later in the season. That can pull dissolved

oxygen down and put aquatic life under renewed stress long after the initial spill is out of the headlines. From Memorial Day through Labor Day is exactly when our families are back on the river and exactly when we need eyes on the water.



Scott A. Surovell

Asking State Officials to Act

On April 27, I wrote to Michael Rolband, the Director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), with four straightforward requests. First, commit to regular, frequent water quality sampling throughout the summer at sufficient sites along the Virginia portion of the Potomac and its tributaries, including Pohick Bay. Second, confirm that DEQ has the funding and staff to respond quickly to any new fish kill or algae bloom. Third, post results publicly on a schedule that serves typical weekend river users, by Friday morning, before families decide whether to launch a boat or access the river. And fourth, coordinate with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and, where appropriate, the Maryland Department of the Environment, so the public is not left guessing which agency to call or which dataset to trust.

On May 4, Director Rolband responded and I am pleased to report that he agreed to all four requests. Beginning in mid-May, DEQ will supplement its routine monitoring with weekly bacteria sampling at nine stations in the tidal Potomac, running from the southern edge of the District of Columbia down to Potomac Creek. Pohick Bay is on the list. Sampling will target Mondays so that lab results are back from the state laboratory on Thursday and posted to the public DEQ

website by Friday morning. DEQ has confirmed it has the resources to mobilize its Pollution Response Program if another fish kill or algae bloom occurs, and it has committed to coordinate with VDH and Maryland counterparts.

Ten weekly sampling events are planned at each station, carrying us through the heart of the recreation season.

This is real progress, and I want to thank Director Rolband, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources David Bulova and the career scientists at DEQ for taking these concerns seriously and responding promptly. I also want to thank the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, Supervisor Dan Storck and the Prince William County Board of Supervisors for their continued partnership on these issues, and the constituents who flooded my office with calls and emails after the spill. None of this happens without you.

A few honest caveats. Bacteria sampling tells us about ambient conditions on the day the sample was pulled. It is not a real-time swimming forecast and it cannot pinpoint the exact source of any contamination it detects. Local conditions on the river change quickly with storms and tides. As DEQ correctly notes, recreating in any natural waterway carries some inherent risk, and families should continue to consult the Virginia Department of Health's "Swim Healthy" guidance, avoid the water for at least 48 hours after heavy rain and steer clear of any visible discharge, foam or unusual discoloration.

Aging Infrastructure, Report Problems

The longer-term lesson is one

we cannot afford to forget. The Potomac Interceptor failure was not a freak event. It was a predictable consequence of aging regional infrastructure that has been quietly carrying 60 million gallons of wastewater for 54 miles a day for decades.

The Washington metropolitan area for generations has built on top of pipes, treatment plant and stormwater systems that we rarely think about until they break. When they fail, we pay the bill in dead fish, closed beaches, lost confidence in the water and millions of dollars in cleanup. Federal, state and local partners need a serious, sustained capital plan for bolstering our infrastructure, and Virginia needs to keep pulling its share of that load through the budget process. I will continue to push on that front in Richmond.

Here is what I ask of you. Bookmark the DEQ Potomac Interceptor page and check it before you head out to the river. If you see a fish kill, an algae bloom or anything unusual on the water, report it to DEQ's Pollution Response Program first. My staff and I are glad to help connect you. And if you have ideas about how we can do better, I want to hear them.

The Potomac belongs to all of us. Keeping our natural resources healthy, the resources on which we all depend, and keeping the public honestly informed is one of the most basic responsibilities we owe each other.

I am grateful DEQ has stepped up this summer, and I will be watching alongside all of you to make sure that DEQ officials keep the commitments they made in that May 4 letter to me.

Majority Leader & State Senator
34th District of Virginia

Governor's 'Common Ground' Veto

FROM PAGE 10

day," the Virginia Public Sector Labor Coalition said via an AFT press release. The coalition added that Virginia workers received a "crystal-clear message that they are no better off than they were under a Republican governor."

Class-Action and the Budget Standoff

Del. Marcus Simon's (D-Fairfax) consumer class-action framework

bill, HB 449 / SB 229, drew a veto. On April 19, the Virginia Poverty Law Center said, "HB 449 and SB 229 allow class action lawsuits in Virginia courts — we would then join every other state in the U.S. except Mississippi." Spanberger noted: "I offered amendments to ensure that when Virginia adopts its first-ever class action procedure, we do so in a tailored and judicious way — building on longstanding federal precedent while

providing regional circuit courts an opportunity to develop expertise."

State attention now turns to the 2026–2028 biennial budget (HB 30 / SB 30). Because the regular session adjourned without an agreement, lawmakers are operating within a special session framework. The General Assembly must pass a budget before the fiscal year begins on July 1 to prevent a state government shutdown. The House

of Delegates reconvenes its special session on June 18 and the Senate on June 22, with a dispute over data center tax exemptions looming.

Senate lawmakers want to eliminate the industry's \$1.6 billion sales tax exemption, House representatives want to tie the tax breaks to green energy, and Spanberger wants to protect existing business incentives to maintain economic stability.

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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.

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 fire-

The LIVE at the Lyceum: Luke Ratcliffe Piano Concert is Sunday, June 21, 2026 at The Lyceum in Alexandria.

- works 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.
- 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.

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. For more information, contact Maggie Crane, Host Family Coordinator, at 617-645-5860 or email her at maggiecrane19@gmail.com.

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

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.

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

FRIDAY/JUNE 5

Wooden Hulls & Rag-Tag Fleets: From the Continental to the U.S. Navy. 7 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join in a combined Alexandria Historical Society and Athenaeum salute to the upcoming Sails on the Potomac when they host a panel of experts discussing an overview of the early days of the US Navy and its predecessor, the Continental Navy. The free, family-friendly Friday night prelude to Sails on the Potomac will include:
Dr. Tom Sheppard, author of Commanding Petty Despots who will discuss the creation of the Continental Navy, its officer corps, and the accomplishments & struggles of the American Revolutionary war at sea.
Mr. Chris Martin from the Ships, Stations and Squadrons Histories Branch of the Naval History & Heritage Command, who will describe what some of the early Navy ships were like. Information on Alexandria's own Tall Ship Providence, a reproduction of the first Continental Navy ship, and the following week's Sails on the Potomac, part of Sail 250.

ENTERTAINMENT

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 (MVDAAC), 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.

SUNDAY/JUNE 7

LIVE at the Lyceum: Piano & Friends Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Piano & Friends features Soprano Elizabeth

Kluegel, Crystal Lee on flute, Laurel Kuxhaus on oboe, Brittany Pemberton on clarinet, Walter Wynn on bassoon, Eric Moore on horn, Erin Ryan on violin, Kenneth Law on cello, and John Suntherland Earle on piano. Program includes Summer Hours by Kenji Bunch, Lieder aus Jucunde, Op. 23 by Clara Schumann, and Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 67 by Dimitry Shostakovich.

SUNDAY/JUNE 7

Artist Talk with Marc Sirinsky. 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Walks in the Woods. Artist Statement: When I hit a mental and physical breaking point at my last corporate job, the Civil War battlefield near my home is where I retreated to contemplate my future – both immediate and long-term. In the following weeks and months, I found some solace in forested, natural environments and began documenting those "Walks in the Woods" through a series of instant prints. The resulting images reveal a desperation for peace; where shadows and darkness combine with the beauty of the landscape to narrate a period filled with complex emotions and challenges.

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

LIVE at the Lyceum: Alexandria Baroque Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S Washington St, Alexandria. Join Alexandria Baroque in an authentic baroque era experience with Michael De Sapio on baroque violin and John



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

Armato on baroque lute. Program includes Sonata in G Major for lute with violin by Bernhard Joachim Hagen, Sonata in D Minor for lute with obbligato violin by Friedrich Wilhelm Rust, and Suite in A Major for lute and obbligato violin by J.S. Bach.

SUNDAY/JUNE 21

LIVE at the Lyceum: Luke Ratcliffe Piano Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S Washington St, Alexandria. Witness Luke Ratcliffe perform two classic Romantic composers live! Program includes Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Fantasy in F Minor, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Berceuse in D-flat Major, and Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major by Frederic Chopin, as well as Piano Sonata in F Minor by Robert Schumann.

SUNDAY/JUNE 28

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.

JUNE

Wed. 3: HAPPY TOGETHER TOUR 2026 Featuring The Association, The Troggs, Chicago lead singer 1985-2016 Jason Scheff, Gary Puckett, The Fortunes, Ron Dante from The Archies and The Turtles, The Vogues and The Cowsills \$109.50

Thu. 4: Pete Yorn Solo Acoustic \$55.00 SOLD OUT!

Sat. 6: The Smithereens with guest vocalist Marshall Crenshaw \$45.00

Sun. 7: Our House: The Music Of Crosby, Stills,

Nash & Young, Performed By Steve Postell, Jeff Pevar, Kipp Lennon, Teresa James With Words & Images By Henry Diltz \$55.00
 Mon. 8: Cowboy Junkies – Celebrating 40 Years & Beyond \$65.00
 Wed. 10: Cowboy Junkies – Celebrating 40 Years & Beyond \$65.00
 Thu. 11: Jazz Funk Soul feat. Everette Harp, Jeff Lorber, Paul Jackson, Jr. \$49.50
 Fri. 12: A.J. Ghent & His Singing Guitar \$45.00 SOLD OUT!
 Sat. 13: Tell Me Lies – The Fleetwood Mac Experience \$35.00
 Sun. 14: Junior Brown \$39.50
 Thu. 18: Big Bad Voodoo Daddy \$65.00
 Fri. 19: Stacey Kent \$45.00
 Sat. 20: Ohio Players \$79.50
 Sun. 21: Tarsha Fitzgerald Presents VOICES OF MOTOWN Father's Day Celebration! \$45.00
 Wed. 24: Amy Grant w/ Braden Hull \$95.00
 Thu. 25: Stella Cole \$39.50
 Fri. 26: Vincent Ingala \$39.50
 Sat. 27: LEZ ZEPPELIN: The Song Remains The Same - 50th Anniversary Celebration \$39.50
 Sun. 28: ÁSGEIR \$29.50

Coming Soon at Woodlawn: Friends Gather Here: A Legacy of Two Communities at Woodlawn

Open June 27, 2026 – Dec. 30, 2026

A vital look at the ongoing American journey toward liberty and equality for all.

Friends Gather Here shares the stories of Quaker families from Pennsylvania and New Jersey who came to Woodlawn to build an antislavery community grounded in equality and nonviolence. They modeled these values through innovative farming and free labor, working alongside paid laborers to demonstrate an alternative to slavery in

Virginia. There, they settled among a small free Black community already living nearby. This exhibition explores the parallel lives, shared aspirations, and evolving relationships between the Woodlawn Quakers and their free Black neighbors.

"The Friends Gather Here exhibition highlights the courage, conviction, and complexity of two communities whose lives became intertwined at Woodlawn. Their stories challenge us to consider what community can mean today," said Executive Director Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar.

As part of the Virginia 250th commemoration, Friends Gather Here offers a vital look at the ongoing American journey toward liberty and equality for all. By exploring the

lives of Woodlawn's Quaker and free Black communities, this exhibition invites us to reflect on their quiet revolution and examine our nation's foundational ideals as we mark America's 250th anniversary.

WHEN: Opening Saturday, June 27, 2026, Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House are open Thursday-Monday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Free with suggested donation

WHERE: Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, Virginia 22309.

WHY: Woodlawn is a historic 126-acre plantation that was originally part of George Washington's Mount Vernon. The main Federal-style mansion was designed by the ar-

chitect of the U.S. Capitol, Dr. William Thornton. It is believed that enslaved people completed construction of Woodlawn by 1805 for Lawrence Lewis, and his wife, Eleanor "Nelly" Custis Lewis, Washington's nephew and step-granddaughter.

In 1846, the Lewis' son sold the property to Northern Quakers who subdivided it into small farms lots for free Black and other antislavery families to purchase.

For additional information please visit: www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org Facebook:www.facebook.com/woodlawnandpopeleigheyhouse; Instagram: www.instagram.com/woodlawnandpopeleighey

Employment

Small political advertising firm located in Old Town needs part-time help through the November election. 10 - 20 hours a week. Work is done in the office. Some clerical. Some light accounting. Please email interest to mediamav@aol.com.

Employment

Assistant Professor of Accounting – Prep/deliver lectures to undergrad students on accting topics, initiate/facilitate/moderate class discussions, administer/grade exams. Req'd PhD in accting + 12mo exp w/ knwldge & use of SAS & STATA & demnstratd research interest in financial statement comparability & risk disclosure. Resume by mail to University of Mary Washington, ATTN: Beth Williams, Exec Director of Human Resources, 1301 College Ave, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

Employment

Software Developer – Develop/create/modify computer app software. Analyze user needs & develop software solutions. Design software for client use to optimize operational efficiency. Req'd Bach of Comp Sci, IT or IS, + 2yrs experience in software development. Will accept a Bach functional equivalent based on combination of education, training or exp. Exp must include knowledge & use of at least 6: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Web Services, AWS, SQL, .Net, API, Tableau, MongoDB, JQuery or Git. Must be willing to travel to various sites throughout the US. Send resume by mail to: Mehar Solutions Corp., 107 E Holly Avenue, Suite 13, Sterling, VA 20164.

NEWS



VDOT

The project made pedestrian crossing improvements to Fort Hunt Road; Rollins Drive is now right-in, right-out only.

Fort Hunt Road and Rollins-Westgrove Intersection Improvements in Groveton Complete

Improvements aimed at improving pedestrian and driver safety and operations at the Fort Hunt Road (Route 629) and Rollins Drive/Westgrove Boulevard intersection have been completed, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The project:

- ❖ Added Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and

a pedestrian refuge island to the southern end of the intersection.

- ❖ Realigned the Fort Hunt Road and Rollins Drive high-visibility crosswalks.

- ❖ Upgraded curb ramps to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

- ❖ Constructed a channelizing concrete island on the Rollins Drive side of the intersection, thus

making Rollins Drive right-in right-out only.

- ❖ Installed new pavement markings and signs.

- ❖ Made drainage improvements.

The \$500,000 Fort Hunt Road and Rollins Drive/Westgrove Boulevard improvements project was financed with state and local funding.

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

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/drive.

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

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors

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

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

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the 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

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Past issues of **THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS** back to 2008 are available at <http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

SENIOR LIVING

Sundae School MVAH hosts Ice Cream Social.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Warm weather provided the perfect backdrop for the annual Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social held May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Hosted by Mount Vernon at Home, an organization dedicated to helping older adults age independently and remain active in their community, the ice cream social drew members, volunteers and local residents. Tables were filled with an array of ice cream flavors and toppings, from classic vanilla and chocolate to fresh fruit and sprinkles, inviting guests to build their perfect sundaes.

Mount Vernon At Home is part of the Village network, serving local residents aged 55 and over who are choosing to remain in their homes and communities as they age. The Village to Village Network consists of over 300 villages across the country like Mount Vernon At Home.

Founded in 2007, Mount Vernon At Home now has 140 members plus 30 volunteers and offers a full array of activities and services. For more information on services offered or how to volunteer, visit www.mountvernonathome.org.



Carol Comlish, left, enjoys an ice cream sundae at the Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social event May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



Mount Vernon At Home raffle winners Catherine Wagner, Funeral Choices manager and event sponsor Jim Zalewski, Arlyne Goodweather and MVAH board member Steve Csontos at the ice cream social May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Brink Seward, Barbara Mann and Nancy Seward enjoy popcorn at the Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social event May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 14

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

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.

"Are You Talking to Me?"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though there were no television and no gun, I still felt what Robert Di Niro felt when he shot out the television in the 1976 film "Taxi Driver," when my wife Dina said to me earlier today: "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues left in the closet (our back-up area)?"

Now she couldn't have been talking to me (or rather needn't have been) because, after nearly 48 years of marital bliss, if she knows anything about me, my needs, my habits and especially my nose, if tissues are not the absolute last thing she need remind me about, it's certainly in the top five. Aside from inheriting whatever my late father had, which caused him to carry a handkerchief with him at all times, I've had years of infusion chemotherapy (there are pills now, depending). And if infused chemotherapy does anything, a side effect is thinning out the membranes in your nose (which often results in nose bleeds which can be so severe in some patients, treatments have to be stopped). Or if you're lucky, you don't experience nose bleeds, you experience a runny nose that's impossible to catch. As a direct result, I have boxes of tissues in nearly every room in the house and in both of our cars. Aside from needing to know where the closest bathroom is when we travel, I'm carrying tissues with me as well. I am forever finding balled up tissues in all of my pants' pockets where one would typically find coins and such. In fact, I might say, if coerced, that tissues (my need for them, actually) is the bane of my existence. I don't leave the house without knowing/preparing my tissue/runny nose options.

To that end, I know every minute of every day exactly what my in-house tissue inventory is. Now I'm not counting the numbers of individual tissues I have remaining and calculating how longer before I'll need to replenish the stock. However, I am fully aware of how many boxes I have in reserve. And if I should have any doubt or need for assurance; I only need to open the closet door in our mudroom; that's where we keep our supply of paper products. For Dina to ask/tell me - out of the goodness of her heart, our tissue situation is almost grounds for divorce. To ask/tell me that question/comment after nearly 50 years of cohabitating, is to completely fail at the presumptive/familiarity with your husband's basic needs. I mean really! "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues in the closet?" Well intended, unselfish, considerate, but nonetheless exhibiting a level of cluelessness about your husband that I didn't think was possible. I am either blowing my nose or needing a tissue to do so or buying them at the supermarket. I'm a "tissueoholic." And Dina is my sponsor, so to speak.

It's not exactly the elephant in the room, but if you were in a room with an elephant, you'd know it. And Dina has been with me in many rooms - and cars, public conveyances, et cetera, for nearly half a century now when I've been blowing my nose, during which oddly enough I've been told that I sound like an elephant when they "trumpet."

And finally, to add insult to injury, I do all the shopping, review all the circulars, click all the appropriate digital coupons - with a particular interest in tissues, among other paper products. As such, that there's simply no way I wouldn't know or hadn't planned their purchase (so I would never run out) way before Dina might notice their dwindling supply or ever feel the need to say to me what she said to me earlier that day. "Are you talking to me?"

"Are you kidding?"

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



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SOLD!
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SOLD!
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SOLD!
 8306 Crown Court Rd | \$1,175,000



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