

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 8, 2026

Once Enemies, Now Enduring Friends

The Duke of Edinburgh Visits Mount Vernon.

By GLENDA BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

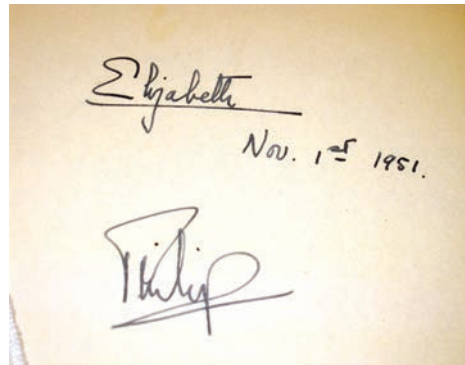
From 1775 to 1783, rebellious American colonists waged a war against their oppressors, the British monarchy, but on Oct. 1, 2026 at Mount Vernon Estate, it was friendly bonhomie all around.

Mount Vernon hosted British royalty, His Royal Highness Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, and celebrated their close connections at the historic home of General George Washington, who led the colonial upstarts to victory over the British tyrants in the American Revolutionary War.

Prince Edward, 62, is the youngest brother of King Charles III and the youngest offspring of the late Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, sixteenth line to the throne. He visited Mount Vernon in 2001, then as the Earl of Essex. In Mount Vernon's presidential library, the Duke studied his parents' signatures in a guest book penned in 1951 and 1991.

Generations of the royal family have visited Mount Vernon, including King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939; Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in 1951 and 1991; and King Charles III, then Prince of Wales with Princess Anne in 1970; and Charles again in 2015 with Camilla, then Duchess of Cornwall.

"As we commemorate America's 250th anniversary, this visit offered an opportunity to reflect on how our nations moved from Revolutionary War adversaries to trusted allies, as well as the history and friendship at the heart of the special relationship between the United States and Britain," said Douglas



The Duke's parents, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip signed the Mount Vernon guest book in 1951 and 1991.

Bradburn, Mount Vernon's Chief Executive Officer.

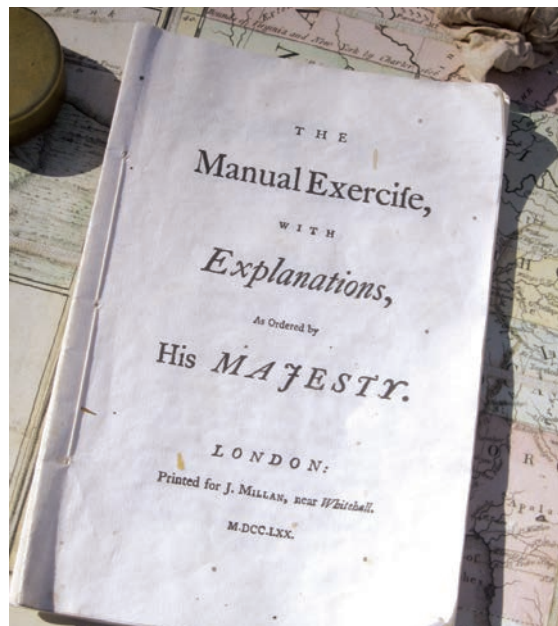
All things Washington

The public tour started in the Education Center where Bradburn reviewed Washing-

SEE ONCE ENEMIES, PAGE 14



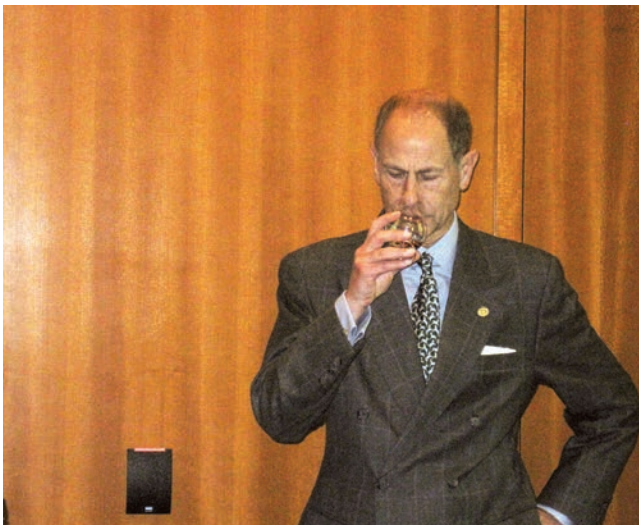
Mount Vernon head Doug Bradburn; British Ambassador to the U.S. Sir Christian Turner; Mount Vernon Regent Ann Petri; and the Duke of Edinburgh paid their respects at the Washingtons' tomb.



Washington used this British military manual to prepare his troops.



The Duke greeted men re-enacting Revolutionary War soldiers in a military encampment.



The Duke took a whiff of George Washington's whiskey before taking a sip.



Dr. Lindsay Chervinsky, Executive Director of the George Washington Presidential Library, described a British-made map of New York from the Revolutionary War era.



Mount Vernon Regent Ann Petri, the Duke of Edinburgh and John Danielson, Chairman of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, admiring the Potomac River.

corcoran

MCENEARNEY



Old Town
112 Quay Street

\$2,875,000 | Beautifully renovated 4 level townhouse just half a block to waterfront. 4 beds, 3.5 baths, grand living room, separate dining area, chef's kitchen and family room. Landscaped English garden and garage parking.
Annette Hinaman : 571.216.4411
AnnetteHinaman.com



Old Town
321 N Columbus Street

\$2,325,000 | Stunning 4 level townhouse with 4 bedrooms, 3 full & 2 half baths, 3,300+ SF, inspired by 1850s Cast Iron architecture with Geothermal HVAC, LEED Silver rating, and a 2 car garage in heart of Old Town.
Alex Irmer : 703.403.2465
Martine Irmer : 703.346.7283



Stratford Landing
2203 Pennsylvania Boulevard

\$2,200,000 | Designed for gathering, the open-concept main living spaces of this custom-built home flow effortlessly. 5 bedrooms, 4 full + 2 half baths, and a climate controlled indoor sport court.
Miriam Miller : 703.598.6619
MM-RealEstate.com



COMING SOON

Belle Haven
2109 Foresthill Road

\$1,995,000 | Located in prime Belle Haven, this classic Colonial is updated throughout and shimmering! 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths on 4 finished levels (with a sauna) on beautiful Foresthill Road!
Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



OPEN 10/10 & 10/11, 2-4PM

Hollin Hall Village
8115 Yorktown Drive

\$1,425,000 | Striking 5 bedroom home in Wayneswood School District. Just steps to Mt. Vernon Park, this three level home is warm and inviting with an open floor plan, 4.5 baths, and a 2 car garage!
Janet Caterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



Thomas Shelton Estate
601 S Saint Asaph Street

\$1,169,000 | Located in the sought-after SE Quadrant, the historic "Grape House" beautifully blends its 19th-century character with thoughtful modern updates. Prive fenced patio with firepit and access to Gibbon Street.
Tracy Dunn : 571.212.3658
TracyBDunn.com



OPEN SUN 10/11, 1-3PM

Belle Haven Terrace
6418 Cygnet Drive

\$990,000 | Classic 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath brick Colonial in Alexandria. Exceptional outdoor space with deck, pergola and swing, and oven. Recent upgrades include a new roof, HVAC, and tankless hot water heater.
Frances Backus : 703.395.1971
BackusPremierHomes.com



West Springfield
8403 Greeley Boulevard

\$925,000 | 3-level, 4 bedroom, 2 full & 2 half bath, single family home in a quiet, interactive suburb in West Springfield. Multiple interior/ exterior updates and amazing proximity to parks and local schools.
Jillian Hogan Homes : 703.951.7655
JillianHoganHomes.com



OPEN SUN 10/11, 2-4PM

Kingstowne
7438 Gadsby Square

\$665,000 | Wonderful townhouse with 3 bedrooms, 2 full & 2 half baths on 3 finished levels. Bright kitchen flows into a spacious dining and living area with hardwood floors and access to the inviting back deck.
Mason Montague Bavin : 703.338.6007
MasonBavin.com



OPEN 10/10 & 10/11, 2-4PM

Parkfairfax
3118 Wellington Road

\$468,900 | Beautiful end-unit townhome-style condo spanning 2 bright and airy levels. Main level showcases newly refinished parquet floors, a custom wall cabinet in the dining room, and French doors to the private patio.
Sheryl Lambson : 703.217.7012
SherylHomeSales.com



OPEN SUN 10/11, 2-4PM

Olde Mill
8616 Shadwell Drive #72

\$310,000 | Handsome 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo with a wood-burning fireplace, vinyl plank flooring, light-filled primary suite with walk-in closet and private bath, floored attic storage, balcony, and assigned parking space.
Donna Cramer : 703.627.9578
DonnaCramer.com



Belle View Condo
6626 E Wakefield Drive #A1

\$235,000 | It's all in the details; the crown & chair rail moldings, built-in storage & wall niche combined with the newer luxury vinyl plank flooring, and Quartz counters, make this 1-bedroom condo a real charmer.
Heidi Burkhardt : 703.217.6009
RealtorHeidiB.com

live who you are

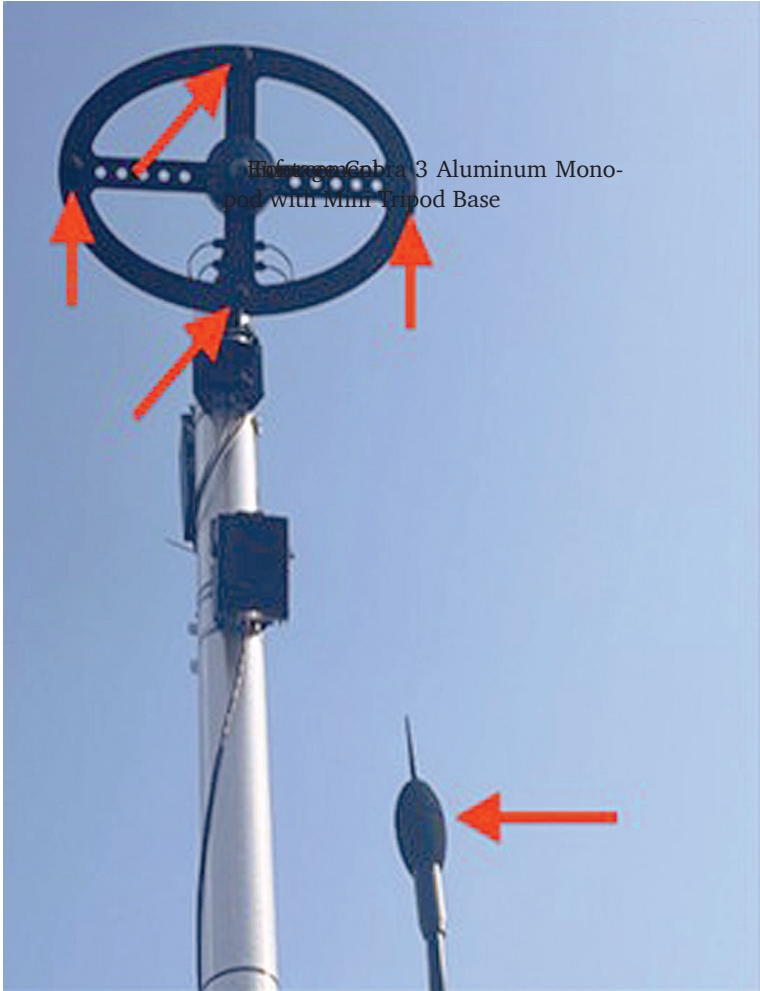
Proudly Serving Virginia, Washington, DC, Maryland, and West Virginia

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

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

Loud Mufflers Meet Loud Enforcement

Pilot enforcement includes technology and possibly more.



Four-Point Halo Microphone determines depth and space clearly identifying the noise location.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

Around Fairfax County, there are an increasing number of loud car mufflers that wake even the soundest sleepers. Officials recently addressed this quality-of-life issue with legislation combatting exhaust noise. Technology has a role in this effort with the “Four-Point Halo Microphone” that has a video element so the traffic tickets can be handled electronically, like they are with school zone enforcement, running red lights and speeding.

“Fairfax County 2026 Legislative Program,” adopted Dec 9, 2025 named Mount Vernon and Tysons as the two areas the county has picked for its 90-day pilot program to test the technology. This will start with a 30-Day warning period and a 60-Day enforcement period. According to Fairfax County, the two locations for the cameras will be Westpark Drive and Jones

Branch Drive in Tysons, and Richmond Highway and Lockheed Boulevard in Hybla Valley.

This initiative is referenced in the County’s 2026 Legislative Program, which states:

“Initiate legislation to establish a pilot program to use acoustic devices to enforce current vehicle exhaust noise regulations.”

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) supports the muffler noise effort and posted information on social media where some of his followers responded.

“About time! All you hear is these things all day and all night,” said a comment attributed to Joe Sayers on social media.

“Always amused when ‘less government’ people support Nanny state initiatives. A new law to not enforce except when targeting certain citizens,” said a social media comment attributed to Eric Dobson-Dobson.”

Others on social media want the noisy mufflers to be part of the inspection process, while others

Special microphone paired with video is part of the program.

Levels of Noise in Decibels (dB)		
PAINFUL & DANGEROUS		
Dangerous; use hearing protection or avoid	140	• Fireworks • Gun shots • Custom car stereos (at full volume)
	130	• Jackhammers • Ambulances
UNCOMFORTABLE		
Dangerous; use hearing protection	120	• Jet planes (during take off)
VERY LOUD		
Dangerous; use hearing protection	110	• Concerts (any genre of music) • Car horns • Sporting events
	100	• Snowmobiles • Ear buds/mobile devices (at full volume)
	90	• Lawnmowers • Power tools
Over 85 dB for extended periods can cause permanent hearing loss. NIOSH* recommends wearing hearing protection whenever noise levels exceed 85 dB, regardless of how long the sound lasts.		
LOUD		
	80	• Alarm clocks
	70	• Traffic • Vacuums
MODERATE		
	60	• Normal conversation • Dishwashers
	50	• Moderate rainfall
SOFT		
	40	• Quiet library
	30	• Whisper
FAINT		
	20	• Leaves rustling

Noise chart

looked at the funding and the “big brother” aspect of surveillance. Others compared it to the noise from data centers.

Herrity commented on the state government efforts. “Since the General Assembly passed HB 632 in 2022, obnoxiously loud mufflers have become an increasing threat to the quality of life in Virginia,” he wrote.

The loud mufflers have been the center of attention all over the country, and have been addressed by audiologists. “Continued exposure to noise levels of 85 decibels overtime, which is equivalent to heavy city traffic, or an extremely noisy restaurant, can cause damage to your hearing,” said Shelby Platia, Audiologist at the Shelley and Steven Einhorn Audiology Center in New York City.

The level of 85 decibels is below the county rule. The county noise abatement levels are defined as “Ex-

haust system violation” means the operation of a passenger car or a commercial motor vehicle that has an exhaust system that emits noise in excess of 95 A-weighted decibels (dBA), county information said in the Fairfax County Police Department Noise Abatement Pilot Program Update, dated Sept. 22, 2026.

On the market, there are several types of mufflers that increase the sound as one of the selling features. One brand, the “Dynomax Race Bullet,” is a big seller, “only slightly quieter than” no muffler,



PHOTOS BY FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
The street sign indicates the area where the microphones are in use.

and “some users note they are almost too loud for daily street driving,” according to reviews.

“These are known to be loud, too loud,” said one installer on YouTube. Others are the Flowmaster Outlaw and Carven TR. “Megaphone,” is a popular brand of exhaust tips.

Drawing the Line on Police Surveillance

Commercial loophole creates de facto surveillance web.

By Mercia Hobson
The Gazette

In a move against expanding surveillance, the Fairfax County School Board voted unanimously Sept. 24 to ban automated license plate readers on school grounds ahead of an Oct. 20 Board of Supervisors meeting on police technology.

Meanwhile, unregulated commercial networks — which make up a far larger portion of the broader tracking ecosystem — operate across private properties nationwide. Because Virginia Code § 2.2-5517 governs only state and local law enforcement, commercial properties, shopping malls, parking garages, HOAs, and repossession companies deploy license plate readers with virtually no statutory boundaries.

Introduced by Fairfax County Public Schools Vice Chairman Kyle McDaniel (At-Large), the approved

Police Implementation and Evolving State Standards

The school division's action comes four years after FCPD authorized Automated License Plate Reader technology under General Order 424 and Virginia Code § 2.2-5517. Led by Chief Kevin Davis, the department adopted the technology without a formal vote or supervisor budget approval.

Police briefed the board's Safety and Security Committee in summer 2022 before launching a multi-vendor pilot, including Flock Safety, Axon, and Motorola, in November 2022.

Statewide standards for law enforcement license plate reader use took effect July 1, 2025. According to a January 2026 report by the Virginia State Crime Commission, "Based on the responses to the Crime Commission's 2025 Law Enforcement ALPR Use Survey, some Virginia law enforcement agencies are not using ALPR in accordance with the new statute."

FCPD data shows that between Nov. 1, 2022, and Sept. 4, 2026, ALPR technology supported 1,594 cases, resulting in 912 arrests and 2,633 charges (1,741 felonies and 892 misdemeanors). It also aided in recovering 555 stolen vehicles



SCREEN GRAB VIA FCPS VIDEO
Kyle McDaniel, Fairfax County Public Schools Board member.



SCREEN GRAB VIA LINKEDIN
Chris Kaiser, ACLU of Virginia.



SCREEN GRAB VIA FCPD
Chief Kevin Davis, FCPD.

Flock cameras operated by HOAs, apartments, and businesses outnumber official FCPD units (84) by four to five times — roughly 335 to 420 cameras. Nationwide, Flock's network exceeds 120,000 cameras sharing data across state lines without warrants. Advocates say local networks could feed location data to federal agencies like ICE, deterring immigrant families from schools, healthcare or public services.

The ACLU of Virginia leads legal advocacy statewide. "Continuous surveillance of all Virginians threatens our most fundamental freedoms," Chris Kaiser, ACLU-VA policy director, told The Connection. "Predatory tech companies are harvesting our data to train their AI models and networking it globally in the cloud — making our data vulnerable

not just to leaks, but to the Trump Administration and its allies in the states who are using these networks to target immigrants, journalists, people seeking lawful reproductive healthcare, and political opponents. This technology has no place in Virginia and should be banned statewide."

"The expanded use of ALPR technology in our communities represents a dangerous escalation of mass surveillance," said Niki Zimmerman, president of the Fairfax County NAACP, in a statement. "Once these camera networks are established and integrated with third-party software, the harm to our civil liberties will be nearly impossible to roll back."

DeFlock Fairfax, a grassroots privacy coalition mapping ALPR locations, endorsed the Fairfax County School Board's ban.

Regional Reckoning Over Mass Surveillance

While county supervisors paused new police Flock installations Sept. 15 pending review with police presenting evaluations



SCREEN GRAB FCPD FACEBOOK VIDEO

Flock Safety Automated License Plate Reader camera mounted on a pole, paired with its solar panel.

Oct. 20, statutory oversight ends at government borders. Statewide, Virginia Code § 2.2-5517 governs only law enforcement agencies, leaving private entities entirely outside its reach.

The state's primary consumer privacy law, the Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act, contains key exemptions that leave commercial license plate reader networks unmonitored. Because the statute exempts publicly observable information and grants broad latitude for property security, commercial operators, parking garages, homeowners associations, and repossession companies can use license plate readers to collect, retain and share license plate data without state oversight.

Regionally and nationally, local elected bodies are taking firmer action, sometimes overriding the objections of law enforcement. Neighboring Arlington County, Va., voted to eliminate its leased Flock program despite Police Chief Andy Penn framing the board's removal order as a major setback

for local investigative work. The town board of Nantucket, Massachusetts, voted to dismantle its camera network following public outcry, even though Chief of Police Jody Kasper defended their investigative value up to the final vote.

Commercial ALPRs: The Regulatory Gap

Federal measures like the Fourth Amendment Is Not For Sale Act target only government data purchases, leaving private surveillance unregulated nationwide. In Virginia, state law (§ 2.2-5517) regulates only police ALPRs, while the Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act exempts public plate scans under security exceptions. Commercial operators, HOAs, repossession firms and others face no data deletion deadlines, allowing them to retain location histories indefinitely and sell aggregated tracking databases to insurers, lenders, data brokers and others. No bills are pending in the General Assembly's 2027 session to regulate private ALPR networks.

"Continuous surveillance of all Virginians threatens our most fundamental freedoms."

— Chris Kaiser, ACLU-VA policy director

motion prohibits the procurement, installation, or operation of surveillance plate readers, including Flock Safety cameras, on school division property. Board members framed the measure as necessary to safeguard civil liberties and address constituent privacy concerns.

"We are not the police department; we are an educational institution," McDaniel said, emphasizing that FCPS resources must focus on its students. "Our job, our mission, our focus, our budget dollars are about making sure 177,000 kids get the best education possible."

Brian Lambert, FCPS Chief Safety and Security Officer, noted that while traditional security cameras monitor facilities in real time, ALPR technology uses software algorithms to capture, search, and retain vehicle metadata — including plate numbers, make, model, color and distinguishing features.

Standard school security cameras remain active for routine facility monitoring. The ban also exempts speed enforcement and school bus stop-arm cameras.

valued at over \$9.2 million, 66 firearms, 158 narcotics seizures, and locating 57 missing persons. FCPD reports operating 84 stationary Flock readers.

Davis and peer executives in the Major Cities Chiefs Association embrace ALPR systems to solve auto thefts and violent crimes. On Sept. 11, 2026, the MCCA wrote congressional judiciary leaders advocating for continued, responsible ALPR use.

On Sept. 14, a coalition of 13 national law enforcement groups, including MCCA, published "Joint Law Enforcement Principles for Responsible Use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Technology" to "prevent misuse without preventing legitimate use." The release shifts the debate toward standardized internal regulations rather than hardware bans.

Private Networks and Community Pushback

Community pushback has grown as cameras expand onto private property. In Fairfax County, private

Board OKs New 24/7 Ballot Drop Boxes

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Voters will soon be able to drop off completed ballots 24 hours every day of the week at two county buildings that are open 24/7. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Sept. 15 approved \$45,000 to install ballot boxes and signs at the Mount Vernon and North County Governmental Centers at the initiative of Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck.

Early voting for the Nov. 3 election started on Sept. 18. Virginians will elect a U.S. Senator and 11 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and vote on three proposed state constitutional amendments. Fairfax County residents will also vote on two bond referendums.

The voting box funds approved by the Board will also pay for security cameras and other security features. "In line with Virginia Department of Elections standards, they are designed specifically as ballot drop boxes and will be under video surveillance 24 hours a day," emailed Sean T. Stewart, Communications Division Chief of the Fairfax County Office of

Elections.

In the Mount Vernon Governmental Center at 2511 Parkers Lane, the box will be located inside near the Supervisor's office's front door and next to the police station's front desk.

At the North County Governmental Center at 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, the box will be in the lobby.

The county's Office of Elections' target installation date is sometime in October. According to Stewart, his office "is moving quickly to finalize procurement, source additional necessary equipment and coordinate installation with the appropriate county agencies."

Supervisor Storck said, "I am pleased to see my initiative to provide 24/7 ballot drop boxes throughout early voting at the Mount Vernon and North County Governmental Centers approved."

"Every election cycle, our office hears from hundreds of residents looking for a convenient and secure way to return their ballots outside of the normal early voting hours and days. This will give voters another option that works with their schedules. I often work late or on weekends, so when you stop by, give me a wave. My

office is the one with all the plants."

A 24/7 ballot box is also available at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fairfax, up to 7 p.m. on Nov. 3. Voters can also use drop boxes at early voting sites when voting is taking place and on Election Day from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. at their polling place.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "Voter fraud related to ballots sent by mail or placed in drop boxes is extremely rare — so rare that multiple analyses have shown that it is more likely that someone will be struck by lightning than commit mail ballot fraud."

"While practices vary by state, among the most common is monitoring drop boxes by video surveillance or with bipartisan teams of election workers to ensure that votes are not stolen or tampered with. Another widely used method is ensuring that bipartisan teams are present when mail ballots are handled, including when they are processed and counted."

For voting information, including all Fairfax County early voting locations, dates and times, visit

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/early-voting>.



AMERICAN SECURITY CABINETS

On Sept. 15, the board approved \$45,000 to install ballot boxes, signs and security systems at the Mount Vernon and North County governmental centers.

Where Comfort & Family Values Meet!

\$74 (Reg \$84)

Don't Forget Your
Safety & Maintenance
INSPECTION
Per System

0%
APR FOR
60 MONTHS*

with equal payments.
Minimum purchase of \$7,500.

CARRIER REBATES
UP TO **\$2,200.00†**

TRUSTED EXPERTS
FACTORY AUTHORIZED DEALER
Carrier

SCAN CODE FOR MORE INFO

SALES | SERVICE | INSTALLATION

- 24 Hour Emergency Service
- Free Estimate on System Replacement
- Senior & Military Discounts
- 100% Satisfaction Guarantee
- Planned Maintenance Agreements
- FREE Second Opinion on System Failure
- We Service All Brands
- Up Front Pricing

2025
BEST OF PRINCE WILLIAM

Call Today! 703-491-2771 | www.brennansHVAC.com | info@brennanshvac.com

†System rebates ranging from \$0 to \$2,200.00 depending on equipment purchased. Rebates subject to change. Expires 11/20/2026. *With approved credit on qualified equipment. Call Brennan's for complete details.

Pumpkins, Pies and Prayers Power the Pohick Country Fair

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Reverend Daniel Cenci judged the apple pie baking contest at the Pohick Country Fair on Oct. 3.



Judy Schmid sold homemade apple butter at the Pohick Country Fair on Oct. 3.



Caden Ritchie displayed his collection of military items.

Reverend Daniel Cenci prayed for the rain to stop.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

It was a dreary, drippy morning on Oct. 3 at Pohick Episcopal Church's 80th annual country fair and Reverend Daniel Cenci prayed for the rain to stop. During the midday organ recital, it did. A testament to the power of prayer?

Several hundred came and went in high spirits despite the gray skies, to paint pumpkins, buy crafts and baked goods, jump in the bounce house, pet alpacas and play the 1700s Shut-the-Box game. Reverend Cenci helped judge parishioners' apple pies. Two alpacas, named Gracie and Cecelia probably prayed for a treat.

Affirming the power of food to fuel the

body and spirit, many chomped down the homemade eats of the Brotherhood of St. Andrews, the church's Bible study group, who cooked 15 pork butts for barbecue. Some menu items had religious overtones, like St. Peter's onion rings and holy hamburgers. No one could explain what made the burgers holy.

Church members displayed the church's 50 years of apple-butter-making talents. Two weeks ago, a team hauled out their four copper kettles to produce 900 jars of apple butter. They started by sterilizing the jars on Friday, cutting up apples on Saturday and slowly cooking them over an open fire on Saturday and Sunday, Judy Schmid said. One eight-ounce jar sold for \$7 and a case of 12 for \$75.

The Pohick Pickers invoked music's power to lift spirits with tunes like the Tennessee Waltz and Jolene, in honor of the late Dolly Parton.

Fire power boomed out from the turkey

SEE PUMPKINS, PIES AND, PAGE 7



The turkey shoot is a 75-year-old tradition at the fair.



The Rev. Thomas Costa portrayed Rev. Lee Massey, the second colonial parson at Pohick.



Pumpkin painting was popular at the Pohick Country Fair on Oct. 3.



Gracie, an alpaca, greeted fans at the Pohick Country Fair on Oct. 3.

Beltway Crash Kills Alexandria Man, 24

Virginia State Police is investigating a fatal single vehicle crash that occurred Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026, at 4:40 a.m. on Interstate 495 westbound at the 170-mile-marker in Fairfax County.

A 2025 Toyota Rav4 was travelling southbound (the correct direction of travel) on Interstate 495 when the

vehicle hydroplaned and struck a traffic attenuator.

The driver, Abraham Wrobeh, 24, of Alexandria, Va., suffered serious injuries and was transported to an area hospital. Wrobeh succumbed to those injuries a few hours later. Wrobeh was wearing a seatbelt.

The crash remains under investigation.

16-Year-Old Charged Following Shooting in Hybla Valley

Detectives from FCPD Major Crimes Bureau have charged a 16-year-old teenager in connection with a non-fatal shooting that occurred Tuesday afternoon.

On Sept. 29, at 4:30 p.m., officers responded to the 7700 block of Richmond Highway in Hybla Valley for a shooting. They located an adult male suffering from a gunshot wound to his lower body. A second adult male was located

nearby with a gunshot wound to his upper body. Both victims were transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau responded to assume the investigation.

Preliminarily, detectives determined that the victims and the suspect were known to each other and were involved in a verbal argument when the shooting occurred. Through their investigation, detec-

tives identified a 16-year-old male as the shooter.

On Oct. 1, the 16-year-old male turned himself in at the Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center. He was charged with Willfully Discharging a Firearm in a Public Place Causing Injury and held at the detention center.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call our Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2.

Pumpkins, Pies and Prayers Power the Pohick Country Fair

FROM PAGE 6

shoot down the hill, a tradition which Jim Hodges said is at least 75 years old. He took over from his late father, Grant, who ran it for 50 years. Hodges, wearing earplugs, would shout out, "Range is hot," and aiming a 12-gauge shotgun, a participant would shoot across the field at an X on a six-by-eight-inch cardboard rectangle. The winner was the one to get a pellet hole closest to the X.

A hundred years ago people would tie down a turkey and when the bird stuck his head up, shoot at it, Hodges said. Pohick's contest gave away frozen turkeys at one time. Today's winners get gift cards. Participants pay \$3 a shot or two shots for \$5, a church fund raiser.

The power of the organ soothed the soul at a noon concert when the minister of music, Ronald Butts

Boehmer, played Handel's Organ Concerto in G minor, Opus 4. Tour guide John Egan said that the 782-pipe Noack organ was built in 1968 and restored in 1974. Rev. Cenci invited donations for further restoration.

History Too

The power of the people resonated from the Virginia 250 Mobile Museum, where Patrick Henry delivered his famous 1775 "give me liberty or give me death" speech against the British tyrants via a hologram.

The Georgian-style Pohick Church built in 1774 has survived as an example of the power of history. Historic figures like George Washington and George Mason worshipped there. On Sept. 26, officials dedicated a new sign at the church honoring Mason's contri-

butions, including supervising the church's construction after the initial contractor, Daniel French, died in 1771.

In the Civil War, Egan said, Union troops looted the church, tore out the pulpit and all the pews and used the church as a horse stable. He pointed out one original picket that was eventually returned. A picket is a vertical support for a railing or fence.

Susan Schultz, a member for ten years, ferried guests around in a golf cart and exulted, "It's a wonderful church."

At the concert, Rev. Cenci again turned to the power of prayer, asking for "justice and peace" for our country and for God to "save us from violence, pride and disunity and to fill our hearts with thankfulness."

Information: www.pohick.org

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that there will be an 8-minute firework display taking place as part of a private evening event at George Washington's Mount Vernon on

**Saturday, October 17,
between 6:50 - 7:20pm.**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption..

To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via email, please write to events@mountvernon.org

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT ★ VERNON

Sign up for

**FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION
to all of our papers**



www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

Easing Your Transition
from Hospital to Home.



NeuroGen
Stroke Recovery



American Heart Association
Certified Care™
Skilled Nursing Facility
Stroke Rehabilitation



Alexandria
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

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



**Become a chamber member today
and get ALL of the benefits!**

- Membership decal and plaque for your business
- Exclusive access to Chamber committees and marketing activities
- Free admission to networking events
- Access to key information on public policy issues affecting your business
- Enhance your SEO with an online business directory profile
- Business listing in the popular annual Community Guide
- Receive and provide Member-2-Member discounts
- Your news promoted on the Chamber website, emails, and social media
- Promote your events in the online community calendar

www.mountvernonspringfield.com/member-benefits/



Voters Reminded of Vote Early Option



Signs in Braddock message the connection between voting and basic needs.



PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRFAX INDIVISIBLE

Activists take to the sidewalks to remind voters of early voting.

sees it, “November 3 is the one chance Fairfax voters get this year to push back.”

On their website, Fairfax Democrats, support incumbent candidates Mark Warner, Don Beyer, Suhas Subramanyam, and James Walkinshaw’s reelections. Fairfax Democrats also urge passing the three Virginia constitutional amendments on the ballot. The site also emphasizes holding or gaining more seats in the federal Congress, to seek a change in the Republican majorities there.

On Sept. 19, the first Saturday of the early voting period, local grassroots groups were making an effort to assure all, regardless of party leanings, were aware that early voting had begun and emphasized the importance of voting. On a Braddock District corner sidewalk members of Fairfax and Falls Church Indivisible groups, and others were out with voting reminder signs.

Says participant Pam Wagner-Cox, of Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church (AUUC), “We wanted a non-partisan mes-

sage that would connect your vote to tangible things that are important and resonate with many members of our community. Few would argue with the need to vote to help lower the price of gas or food. Our messages were designed to be concise with a positive expectation. We had a reason for everyone to vote.”

As of Oct. 2, the Office of Elections reported that 42,829, 5.22 percent, of registered county voters had cast a ballot either by mail or early in person. In the last comparable election, in November 2024, a presidential election year, 72.14 percent of Fairfax County registered voters cast a ballot. In 2024, and again this year so far, early voting by mail and early in-person voting are used in similar numbers, with a slight edge to voting by mail.

Early in-person voting continues through Oct 31, 5 p.m.

Election Day is Nov. 3; polls are open from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. If you are in line by 7 p.m. you will be able to vote.

Parties and grassroots groups urge voting in mid-term election.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE GAZETTE

On Sept. 18, as Virginia began its first day of early in-person voting for the Nov. 3, mid-term elections, local organizations and major parties were engaged in pre-election activities.

The Fairfax GOP was anticipating its “The 250 Freedom Gala”, a sold-out Saturday night fund raiser at the Tysons Hilton. The event featured recognized party names as speakers, including Scott Bessent, Glenn Youngkin, Jason Miyares and others.

The Fairfax Democrats, through their website, offered a multitude of political action events, both local and across the state, as well as virtual events, to appeal to those interested in getting involved beyond casting their vote.

Both parties’ web sites offer guides for voters and links to county voting tools. The Democrat voting info page, fairfaxvotes.org, provides links to register to vote, or to check your registration and voting place. It recommends early voting but explains the voting options. An interesting page feature allows voters to check wait times at each voting location.

The Republican voting info page, fairfax-gop.org/voter-info, provides a link to Fairfax County’s BallotTrax to “track the status of

your mail-in-ballot, from printed to accepted.” Both sites offer similar options with party slanted recommendations on candidates.

In recent years, Democrats, state-wide, have increased their presence in State and local government. As the Fairfax GOP points out on their website: “Democrats hold every statewide office in Richmond: Gov. Abigail Spanberger, Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi, and Attorney General Jay Jones. They control both chambers of the General Assembly. In Fairfax, they hold nine of the ten seats on the Board of Supervisors, and all three of our congressional seats.” As the Fairfax GOP



Pam Schmoll holds two reasons to vote, with Tom and Lisa Hayes.



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Three Virginia Constitutional amendments are on the ballot in November

Virginians Will Vote on 3 Constitutional Amendments

‘Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to remove the ban on same-sex marriage?’

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Second of a series of three articles focusing on each of the 3 proposed amendments on the ballot.

Three amendments to the Virginia Constitution will be on the ballot Nov. 3 including: 1) protection of women’s reproductive rights; 2) removing the ban on same sex marriage; and 3) automatic restoration of voting rights for convicted felons as well as updating provisions on voting by persons found to be mentally incompetent.

A Constitutional amendment follows a rigorous process in Virginia before it can be put before the voters. The proposed language must be passed in the General Assembly. Then after an intervening election, the exact language must be passed by the General Assembly again. Finally the language goes before the voters.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment Question 2

THE 2nd proposed Constitutional amendment reads:

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to (i) remove the ban on same-sex marriage; (ii) affirm that two adults may marry regardless of sex, gender, or race; and (iii) require all legally valid marriages to be treated equally under the law?

Former State Senator Adam Ebbin, the patron of proposed Constitutional amendment #2 says, “We wanted to remove the language from the Virginia Constitution that prohibits same sex couples from getting married and to make Virginia consistent with the law of the land.”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Adam Ebbin

Ebbin says in an effort to boost turnout for the conservative vote in 2006, a provision was put on the ballot in Virginia that restricted marriage to one man and one woman. Ebbin says for 20 years there have been efforts to repeal it.

In 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court overrode the provision in the Virginia constitution in the Obergefell v. Hodges decision when they ruled that the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution required states to recognize lawfully licensed marriages between two people of

the same sex and invalidated all remaining state-level constitutional and statutory bans. It required every U.S. state and territory to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples and recognize lawful marriages performed in other jurisdictions.

This was a 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court, and Ebbin says in the current political climate it is possible the decision could be overturned. If this were to happen, the law would revert to the 2006 provision in the Virginia constitution prohibiting same-sex marriage. This is another reason it is important to change the Virginia Constitution, he explains.

But in addition he says the Virginia Constitution should be understandable. Currently the Virginia Constitution says one thing and the law of the land as stated by the U.S. Supreme Court says another.

“This is not a vote on whether same sex people can get married but supports equal rights for adults under the government. It’s time that the Virginia Bill of Rights have status after many years and that our neighbors are our neighbors.

“We’re in kind of a weird place that there is a provision but it is inoperable. The Virginia law should reflect the law of the land with no hidden backdoor obstacles.

“I think this will pass but we have to work the votes to know.”

A whole new vision of care.

Belmont Bay
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

Care, anew.

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

www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION

Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette

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

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

Target the right audience.

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

Hard-Won Freedom Comes at Last for Justin Wolfe

After a quarter-century in prison, he's finally released.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE GAZETTE

Terri Steinberg doesn't need any presents for the upcoming holidays. She got everything she wanted last week, when – after more than a quarter century in prison – her son, Justin Wolfe, was finally released.

Convicted of murder-for-hire in 2002, he continually maintained his innocence. But police and prosecutors in Prince William County were doggedly focused on incarcerating him and making sure he received a death sentence. They led the shooter – the only person who could save him – to say Wolfe hired him for the job. (See companion story)

But the truth finally came to light and, after 25 years of fighting to free him – including a slew of legal filings, court motions and hearings, trials, and the help of countless attorneys and even the Innocence Project – Wolfe came home last Monday night, Sept. 28. He'd been transferred from prison to the Manassas jail, where his mom and uncle eagerly waited to greet him and whisk him away.

Earlier that afternoon, Steinberg shared her feelings about Justin's impending re-

lease. "In 2002, this court sentenced my son to die for murder-for-hire, a crime he did not commit," she said. "Today, after a 25-year battle for his life, my son finally gets to come home. What happened to Danny was tragic; the Petrole family lost a son. There was never any doubt that Owen Barber killed Danny."

But, said Steinberg, when former Prince William County Commonwealth's Attorney Paul Ebert, now deceased, "manipulated evidence and witnesses in order to secure a death sentence for Justin, he only compounded the pain and suffering of all involved. It was an unnecessary, cruel and unusual punishment and, according to Judge [Raymond] Jackson from the Federal District Court, it was 'abhorrent to the judicial process.'"

Regarding her son's plea to two lesser charges, which enabled him to be sentenced to time served and leave prison at last, Steinberg said it came after he served 25 years, 4 months and 28 days, including over 5,000 days of solitary confinement." And



Justin Wolfe today at age 45.

while it wasn't exactly what his family had hoped for, she said it "does allow for Justin to maintain his innocence, finally be free and our family to begin to heal."

She then thanked everyone who "stood by us all these years, especially our amazing legal team – Marvin Miller who has been with us since 2002, Meghan Shapiro, Scott Abeles, Gene Rossi, the law firm of Carlton Fields, the law firm of King and Spaulding, the UVA Innocence Project, Katie Swanson, Bob Lessemun, and so many others without whom my son would not be alive today."

Steinberg also expressed appreciation for her "Journey of Hope family and friends who carried me when I could not stand." This organization works to end the death penalty and calls for more constructive and effective responses to violent crime.

Meanwhile, friends and family shared their joy about Wolfe's release on social media. Abraham Bonowitz, founder of Death Penalty Action – another group working toward abolishing the death penalty – was one of many

who wrote on Steinberg's Facebook page.

"I am deliriously happy for my friend Terri Steinberg, who has been fighting for freedom for her son Justin since he was railroaded to Virginia's death row 25 years ago," he wrote. "Terri sets the example for a mother's love for her child. [She's been] unyielding in her advocacy [for him]."

"These past several months have been a brutal roller coaster of final negotiations and undue delays. And Sept. 28, Justin walked into his mother's arms and into freedom. It should not be this hard to get justice."

Chenoa Young, who met Wolfe through her work in prison ministry, summed up her feelings that evening by writing, "Tonight, Justin came home. Home to his loved ones. Home to his friends. Home to the people who never stopped believing in him."

Since then, Wolfe has been enjoying his mom's home-cooked meals and all the hugs she'd stored up for him while they were separated for so very long. He's also reconnected with many other family members and has even obtained a brand-new driver's license.

As for Steinberg, she said she and Justin's stepdad, siblings, nieces, nephews and other relatives will do their best to "try to recover from the past 25 difficult years. It is now time for our family to heal."

A Tale of Drugs, Money and Prosecutorial Misdeeds

The saga of Justin Wolfe, Owen Barber and Danny Petrole.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE GAZETTE

When 21-year-old, Centreville High grad Danny Petrole was slain in his car in front of his Bristow townhouse, March 15, 2001, the tragedy unearthed a major drug ring operating in the Centreville/Chantilly area.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars changed hands regularly, and a dozen young drug dealers in Fairfax and Prince William counties became rich. Among them, said authorities, were Centreville's Justin Wolfe, almost 20, Petrole and the man later convicted of killing him, Owen Barber IV, 21, of Centreville.

After Petrole arrived home that night, Barber fired 10 shots from a 9 mm Smith & Wesson through Petrole's passenger-side window, with all but one bullet striking him. Driving away, Barber tossed the gun into a nearby intersection and fled, but police investigation soon led to both his and Wolfe's arrests.

Petrole attended NOVA and delivered flowers part-time. But when police searched his belongings, they discovered \$965 in his wallet and \$17,460 in his car's trunk. In his townhouse were guns, \$120,366 in cash and nearly half a million dollars worth of ecstasy and marijuana.

Barber and Wolfe were 1998 Chantilly High grads; Petrole graduated in '98 from Centreville. During Barber's and Wolfe's trials in Prince William County Circuit Court, much of the testimony came from young, self-admitted drug dealers and users in the local area.

Both Barber and Petrole sold marijuana, including to Wolfe, to sell to others. Initially facing the death penalty for killing Petrole, Barber said he didn't know Petrole but killed him because Wolfe hired him to do so. In return for his testimony, Barber's charge was reduced from capital to first-degree murder.

In January 2002, Wolfe, then 21, was convicted of capital murder and later sentenced to death, plus 33 years in prison – 30 for drug distribution and three for a firearm being used in Petrole's killing. In August 2002, Barber received 38 years in prison.

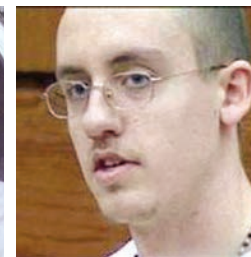
Wolfe always maintained his innocence, and Barber was the only one directly linking Wolfe to the murder. But during a November 2010 evidentiary hearing in Federal Court in Norfolk, Barber recanted his earlier testimony against Wolfe. Furthermore, U.S. District



Justin Wolfe, then 21, in court.



Danny Petrole, the victim.



Owen Barber, the shooter.

Court Judge Raymond Jackson heard evidence not presented in 2002.

In his July 2011 decision to overturn Wolfe's convictions and sentences, Jackson wrote that the commonwealth "failed to disclose evidence indicating Barber had a relationship with Petrole" prior to his death. This disclosure, he wrote – plus statements from a confidential informant that "Barber owed Petrole money [and] Petrole had a hit out on Barber" – could have impeached Barber's testimony.

In August 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, in Richmond upheld that court's ruling that Wolfe's due-process rights had been violated and his convictions and sentences should be vacated.

On Aug. 16, 2012, Judge Robert B. King wrote his opinion was based on "a written police report reflecting that – before Barber ever asserted that Wolfe hired him to murder Petrole – Prince William County Det. [Samson] Newsome advised Barber he could avoid the death penalty by implicating

Wolfe."

King therefore concluded "Barber had a motive to misrepresent the facts regarding Petrole's death" and that any evidence of Wolfe's alleged drug-dealing was "inevitably tainted by the prosecutorial misconduct in this case."

Yet the pattern continued. Again coerced before Wolfe's 2016 retrial, Barber pleaded the Fifth. Frustrated, on March 19, 2016, Wolfe took a deal and wrote a letter pleading guilty to first-degree murder, use of a firearm in [that] felony and conspiracy to distribute marijuana. That July, he was sentenced to 41 years in prison. But his friends and relatives said he only wrote that letter so he'd someday be released from prison.

Then in 2023, Barber wrote a statement saying Wolfe had nothing to do with Petrole's murder. Barber said he testified against Wolfe because police told him "it was either do this or die." So he concocted the murder-for-hire story because "it was what prosecutors [Paul Ebert and Richard

Conway] wanted to hear." In his affidavit, Barber said Wolfe "did not deserve to die for something he did not do." The Fourth Circuit ruled it "new evidence because it rendered Barber available" to testify to Wolfe's innocence.

Still, Wolfe remained behind bars, ultimately spending more than 25 years in prison – 13 of them on death row. On July 7, 2025, Judge King and fellow Fourth Circuit Judges, Stephanie Thacker and Nicole Berner, ordered Wolfe to receive a new hearing based on his claims of innocence.

Writing their opinion, Thacker said this case involved conduct by Virginia that "we and lower courts have recognized as 'abhorrent to the judicial process.' Twenty-four years ago, the Commonwealth decided [Wolfe] was a guilty man. From that moment, [it's] done everything in its power to ensure [he] dies in prison."

But he remained incarcerated until last Monday, Sept. 28, when he was allowed to plead guilty to conspiracy to distribute marijuana and no contest to solicitation of robbery. In return, all his past charges were dropped, his resulting convictions were vacated and he was sentenced to time served (28 years, with three suspended).

Afterward, Petrole's family members issued a statement hoping this court decision gives them closure and that people will remember Danny's life instead of the circumstances of his death.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Coming to Terms with Addiction

Photographer Lloyd Wolf's behind-the-scenes views of Lorton Reformatory inmates in a treatment program.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

“People can heal and transcend their worst moments,” said Lloyd Wolf at an Oct. 3 reception for an exhibit of some of his documentary photographs. These photos depict behind-the-scenes views of Lorton Reformatory inmates in a substance abuse rehabilitation and treatment program at the prison from 1989 and 1991.

The exhibit, titled “Transformations, Documenting the Pilot Substance Abuse Program at Lorton Reformatory, 1989–1991,” will be on view until Nov. 7.

“People can heal and transcend their worst moments.”

— Lloyd Wolf

minimal privacy.

At the reception, Arralean Ellis, Fairfax City resident, who worked at the reformatory, later called the Lorton Correctional Complex, from 1973 to 2002, shared some memories. Among other duties, she had to wake up the inmates to start cooking breakfast in the kitchen, for example. One regular task was to walk down the cells passageways and count the prisoners. One day her count

came up one short. It turns out that an inmate became intimate with a prison official's wife who gave her husband's uniform to the prisoner and he walked right out the gate, Ellis recounted.

The Photos

Wolf's photographs capture the personal essence of each man, up close looks into their eyes and perhaps their psyches. Photos also include moments upbeat like a “town meeting” when they are sitting in a circle and their jubilant release from prison.

“Wolf's empathetic lens captured the raw human stories of recovery, vulnerability and resilience among incarcerated individuals striving for personal change within the penal system,” noted the Workhouse press release.

An Arlington resident, he has had many documentary projects. That includes The March of the Living, about 3,000 Jewish teenagers on a pilgrimage to Holocaust sites in Poland, followed by a visit to Israel. Another project is about African-American women and their jewelry.

“I take pictures because they help make sense of this world we're in,” Wolf says on his website, <https://lloydwolf.com/>.

The exhibit is in the McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, open Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon to 5 p.m.

The Reformatory

The former 3,500-acre Lorton Reformatory in southeastern Fairfax County had a school, brick kiln, farm and cultivated fields. It reflected the early 1900s Progressive-era reform movement that promoted a wholesome and uplifting environment to train prisoners for employment upon their release.

That approach endured into the 1990s. Discussing the men in his photos, “They weren't behind bars,” Wolf said.

The period was the height of cocaine use in Washington, D.C., a time known as the “crack wars,” he said. Crack was a significant driver of crimes by young men in their 20s and 30s. Wolf said he connected with one at Lorton who was “a career bank robber, caught twice.” Another killed his mother's boyfriend in a drug-fueled rage.

Wolf went to the reformatory weekly with Jon Cohen, then editor of Washington's City Paper. “You get connected,” Wolf said. The pair documented 36 men who voluntarily opted into a substance abuse recovery program created by Dr. Jasper Ormond that involved education and therapy, including music therapy by jazz harpist Jeffmajors Graham. “It was an Afro-centric program,” Wolf said, “to give them a sense of culture and pride.”

Cohen led memoir writing workshops urging “raw honesty” to help them to come to terms with challenges like drugs, violence and race. We were “building on what was already there,” Cohen wrote, “exploiting each man's unique genius.” We learned that “they can transcend their worst moments,” said Wolf.

A critical requirement was that their families had to undertake counseling in hopes that when released, the men would not go home to a toxic environment, Wolf said.

The confinement at Lorton was not as strict as that in many prisons. The men lived in a dormitory-like setting and each had a bunk and desk. They had gang showers, www.connectionnewspapers.com



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Lloyd Wolf, photographer, and Arralean Ellis, a former employee at the Lorton Reformatory.

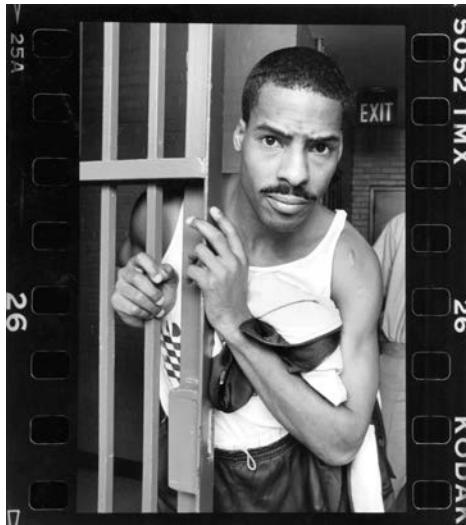


PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Visitors viewed the photos at an Oct. 3 Workhouse reception.



An inmate and a marriage proposal.



Some of Wolf's photographs.



PHOTOS BY LLOYD WOLF

Fall's Botanical Bounty on Display at River Farm

Behind-the-scenes tour with lead horticulturalist at the national headquarters of the American Horticultural Society.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

It was the last day of September, a perfect, balmy, fall day, but far from summer's last gasp at the 25-acre River Farm on a "behind-the-scenes" tour with Tammy Burke, lead horticulturalist there, the national headquarters of the American Horticultural Society on the Potomac River in Mount Vernon.

Thirty plant lovers learned that the gardens "are always evolving," Burke said. Of all the plants on the property around 70 percent are native and 30 percent non-native. "I believe in letting nature do its thing," she said. She shuns chemicals. "We only hand weed."

In designing the varied gardens, Burke strives to have some color from February to November. "I usually use three colors. More than that is chaotic." She hopes to emphasize purples in 2027.

The group started by admiring the massive Osage orange tree, over 200 years old and one of the largest in the United States.

Other standouts included delicate crocuses springing from the ground. "Ants distribute their seeds," Burke said, so they pop up here and there. Orange zinnias and purple fall asters were luring pollinators, like cabbage white butterflies. Goldenrod blossoms were bumble bee magnets.

The celosia spicatas with purple spear-like tips were attention getters, squiggling and twisting into the sun. Even the basketball-size, blackish leaves of the Alocasia gleamed. The magnolia trees' bright red seed pods popped out amid the leaves' greenery like Christmas decorations. Guests sniffed a salvia that smelled like apples and blue magic basil.

Some of the boxwoods planted in the 1920s by the Malcolm Matheson family, owners of the property from 1919 to 1971, are struggling, due to their age, Burke said, and she may have to redo those areas. From 1919 to 1968, the Mathesons designed and built the gardens, brick walls and other structures.

A Storied History

The land, which George Washington bought in 1760, was the northernmost of his five farms, but he "never slept here," and mostly grew hemp, Jane Morrison, a docent told the group.

Today, the gardens support thousands of plants. Burke does not know a specific number. River Farm also has woodlands, a meadow, a children's garden and an active bald eagle nest. Burke has seen coyotes, foxes, deer and other wildlife on the property and volunteers manage bluebird boxes.



River Farm has this champion Osage orange tree, over 200 years old.

As prime, waterfront real estate, River Farm has survived several threats including overtures from the Soviet Embassy in 1971 to convert it into a dacha. When the AHS Board announced it might be sold in 2020, opposition erupted and locals and elected officials launched a campaign to save the property and retain public access. In May 2026, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust announced a conservation easement which among other provisions prevents subdividing the property, protects the forests and shoreline and provides public access.

The property is a popular site for wed-

dings, birthdays, concerts and other events.

Thanks to the Virginia General Assembly providing funds, AHS has installed new walkways and is now building restrooms, all compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Founded in 1922, AHS is a member-based, national, nonprofit organization of over 24,000 gardeners, plant enthusiasts, horticultural professionals and partner organizations. AHS welcomes volunteers to weed, mulch, plant plants, deadhead plants and help with other tasks starting in the spring.

To learn more, visit www.ahsgardening.org.



Cat's whiskers plant, aptly named.



Squiggly celosia spicatas have slender, cylindrical flower spikes that can resemble purple spears.



A common buckeye butterfly on salvia.



The blackish leaves of the Alocasia glistened in the sun.



A cotton plant.



Bumblebees love the fall asters.

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.

NOW THRU NOV. 1

Plein Air Sketches. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist's reception Sunday, Sept. 27 from 4 to 6 p.m. Featuring works by Anne Alden, Ann Meagher Cook, Carol Cowie, Katie Flack, Abigail Muncy, Christine Raymond, Margaret Stewart, Ann Tannous.

NEPENTHE GALLERY EVENTS

Location: Nepenthe Gallery, 7928 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria.
October 8th: EVE STOCKTON: New Collection of Breathtaking Woodcut Prints;
October 15th: SUNNY GOODE and PRESLEY GOODE: Mother-Daughter DUO;
October 22nd: Tours with Bill: Art and History Featuring BILL SHUTE;
October 29th: Grand Re-Opening.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9, 2026

3rd Annual Rock The Ave: Twilight Edition
Where: Carlyle Crossing Plaza
2455 Mandeville Ln Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Eventbrite Link:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1999286186804?aff=oddtcreator>
Carlyle Crossing and the Eisenhower Partnership will present the 3rd Annual Rock The Ave: Twilight Edition on Friday, Oct. 9, from 5-8 p.m. at Carlyle Crossing Plaza.
Free and family-friendly, Rock The Ave will feature live music, local food and businesses, makers and artisans, kid-friendly entertainment, interactive activities, community organizations and more.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Experience Live Music at River Farm on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026.

For more information, visit <https://www.carlylecrossingva.com/>

THURSDAY/OCT. 15

Live Music at River Farm. 5:30 p.m. At River Farm's AHS Headquarters, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Fall colors, live music, cider, and golden-hour magic await at River Farm. The American Horticultural Society is hosting Harvest Harmonies, a family-friendly outdoor concert. Enjoy an evening of music as Lynne & Mary with Friends perform an eclectic mix of timeless classics and contemporary favorites. Attendees can bring a folding chair or blanket, pack a picnic (or pre-order a picnic box), then relax with family and friends while soaking up the sunset and stunning river views. Free admission. Picnic boxes available for purchase in advance from local favorite The Cut Butchery (order by noon on 10/11/26)

THURSDAY/OCT. 15

Chamber ALX October Networking Breakfast. 8:30 to 10 a.m. At Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel. The Chamber ALX October Networking Breakfast with the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, presented by M&T Bank. Exchange business cards, share your elevator pitch, and expand your network with our friends in Northern Virginia.

SUNDAY/OCT. 18

Pearls of Sound Concert. 4 p.m. At St. John's Lutheran Church, 5952 Franconia Road, in Alexandria. It's a program full of meaning, memory, and celebration - and it's free to attend!

THURSDAY/OCT. 22

The Chamber ALX Young Leaders Network After Hours. 5:30 to 7 p.m. At The Commodore Old Town, Alexandria. Join them for drinks, bites, and a room full of Alexandria's young business leaders ready to mix, mingle, and make some new connections. Don't miss our final Young Leaders After Hours of the year.

SATURDAY/OCT. 24

Both Sides Tour. 8:15 a.m. Meets at Franconia Museum, located in the new Governmental Center, 7130 Silver Lake Boulevard, Suite 103, Alexandria. Park in the garage and go to the first floor. The museum will be touring the sites and locations of the famous Black Horse Troop (Company H, Fourth Virginia Cavalry), that was formed in Warrenton, Virginia (where the town changed hands 67 times). During First Manassas the Black Horse troopers rode black horses and wore black boots, and hats. The tour will be visiting New Baltimore, Cub Run Bridge, the Warren Green Hotel, in Warrenton, General William H.F. Payne's house, Warrenton Cemetery, Waterloo Bridge and Corporal Robert E. McCormick's grave (Don Hakenson's great-great grandfather). If you are interested in attending, send a check for \$130 made out to Don Hakenson, 4708 Lillian Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310. Don Hakenson's cell phone is 703-785-5294.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 28

The Chamber ALX 2026 Best in Business Awards. 6-9 p.m. At Westin Alexandria Old



Town, Alexandria. Celebrate excellence in business with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce at the signature awards event! They will honor Jen Walker as the 2026 Business Leader of the Year and recognize standout companies across a range of competitive categories. It's their very own version of the Oscars—complete with a red carpet and inspiring stories that showcase the innovation, resilience, and success of Alexandria's business community.

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

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.

FRIDAY/OCT. 9

3rd Annual Rock The Ave: Twilight Edition. 5-8 p.m. At 2455 Mandeville Lane, Carlyle Crossing Plaza, Alexandria. Carlyle Crossing and the Eisenhower Partnership will host the 3rd Annual Rock The Ave: Twilight Edition, a free, family-friendly community event celebrating Alexandria's growing Eisenhower Corridor. The evening will feature live music from DMV-based Walkaways and Late Night Superstars, along with local food and businesses, makers and artisans, kid-friendly entertainment, interactive activities, and more.

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN PHILHARMONIC PRESENTS

ITS 55 SEASON:

ILLUMINATE THE SPIRIT

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic (WashMetPhil) is proud to announce its 2026|2027 Season: Illuminate the Spirit. As WashMetPhil celebrates 55 years of serving our community through music, we are expanding our season to FIVE fantastic concerts, with guest artists including violinist Robert McDuffie, the Alexandria Choral Society, cellist Laura Metcalf, guitarist Rupert Boyd, pianist Ieva Jokubavičiūtė, and a side-by-side performance with the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. All performances will be held at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia, except one concert on May 23, 2027 which will be at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Saturday, December 12 | 7 p.m. | George Washington Masonic National Memorial
Anna Binneweg, Conductor; Alexandria Choral Society | Kathryn Harsha, Artistic Director. Celebrate the holiday season with WashMetPhil and Alexandria Choral Society in Festival of Light. This program opens with the lovely Helios Overture, Op. 17 by Carl Nielsen, followed by the energetic Starburst by

Jessie Montgomery, the distinctly American Appalachian Spring Suite by Aaron Copland, and Fantasia
on Christmas Carols by Ralph Vaughan Williams, bringing a little twist to Christmas carols you love and know, and ending the program with the beautiful Illuminare by Elaine Hagenberg.

RITUAL & RENEWAL

Sunday, February 7 | 3 p.m. | George Washington Masonic National Memorial
Anna Binneweg, Conductor. Join WashMetPhil on a musical journey with Ritual & Renewal. This program opens with the progressive Montgomery Variations by Margaret Bonds, followed by the touching Lyric for Strings by George Walker and The Firebird Suite by Igor Stravinsky, ending with the one and only Boléro by Maurice Ravel.

LANDSCAPES OF THE SPIRIT

Sunday, March 21 | 3 p.m. | George Washington Masonic National Memorial
Anna Binneweg, Conductor | Laura Metcalf, cello & Rupert Boyd, guitar
Join us in reflection with Landscapes of the Spirit, featuring Laura Metcalf on cello and Rupert Boyd on guitar. This program opens with the Peruvian Apu: A Tone Poem for Orchestra by Gabriela Lena Frank, followed by the loving Anahata: Unbroken Heart for Cello and Guitar by Claire Assad, and ending with the beautiful Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68, "Pastoral" by Ludwig van Beethoven

POWER & POSSIBILITY

a Side-By-Side Concert with Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra
Sunday, May 23 | 3 p.m. | Schlesinger Concert Hall
Anna Binneweg, Conductor | Ieva Jokubavičiūtė, piano
Join us for the season finale Power & Possibility, a Side-By-Side Concert with the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, featuring Ieva Jokubavičiūtė on piano. This program begins with The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Op. 34 by Benjamin Britten, followed by Piano Concerto by Grażyna Bacewicz, inspired by Polish folklore, and ends with the Finnish Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43 by Jean Sibelius.

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.

OCTOBER

Wed. 7: John Hiatt w/ Rachel Ann Morgan & Jonathan Sloane \$89.50
Thu. 8: Lalah Hathaway \$99.50
Fri. 9: Lalah Hathaway \$99.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 10: RAVEN'S NIGHT \$35.00
Mon. 12: Aoife O'Donovan: Solo Acoustic w/ The Sweater Set \$45.00
Thu. 15: Keiko Matsui \$55.00
Fri. 16: Gerald Albright \$59.50
Sat. 17: The Whispers - 60th Anniversary! \$95.00
Sun. 18: Daryl Davis Presents: A Tribute to Chuck Berry featuring The Nighthawks \$39.50
Tue. 20: Five For Fighting with String Quartet, with Lace & Lee \$49.50

CLASSIFIED

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

Reach Over 1 Million Readers With This Ad!

No other media offers the audience of loyal, local, repeat readers you'll reach through community newspapers! We can target your message, statewide or regional.

Let Commonwealth Media Solutions do all the work for you at a discounted cost.

Reach
Virginia

Contact Kelly McCauley
(804) 521-7580

Commonwealth
Media Solutions

WHAT
BROKE



WHAT
THEY CLAIMED



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

STAMP OUT
FRAUD
VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
INSURANCE FRAUD PROGRAM

Past issues of

THE
CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

back to 2008
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

Find us on Facebook
and become a fan!

[www.Facebook.com/
connectionnewspapers](http://www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers)

THE
CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online
The Connection to Your Community
www.connectionnewspapers.com

NEWS

Once Enemies, Now Enduring Friends

FROM PAGE 1

ton as a surveyor, farmer, Army war general and first U.S. president. He lauded Washington's humility in resigning his military commission after the war, return to private life and refusal to be a king.

The estate's connections with Great Britain linger still. At the 1775 Revolutionary War Continental Army re-enacted encampment, two lines of canvas tents where six enlisted men slept crammed into each tent, interpreters displayed a British manual of military exercises of Washington's day. Initially, with a ragtag army, Washington based his leadership and strategy on his experience in the British army during the French and Indian War, Lucy Dale, an interpreter, said. Also, "It's good to know what your enemy is thinking," she added.

The entourage did not sample a Continental soldier's food staple, a rock hard biscuit called "hard bread," "ash cake" or "worm castle." This combination of flour and water was cooked over the fire for five to eight hours to eliminate all moisture and then for eating, soaked or stuffed into one's cheek to soften it up, Dale said.

The Duke discussed weaponry with a soldier-reenactor named Daniel, but eschewed the nearby laundry activities with docents washing clothes in an iron kettle over a fire.

But Silas Harbow, an enthusiastic young visitor, delighted in wringing out a wet garment. "No one gets excited about laundry, but you just did," a docent enthused. "You just did a historical re-enactment."



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH/MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Silas Harlow, visiting the Army camp, helped with the soldiers' laundry as all the royal hoopla commenced.

Bradburn pointed out another British connection in the Washington library, an 18th century, British-made map of New York island, displayed in the Brits' military headquarters there during the war. And to grins all around Bradburn quipped, "Somehow the U.S. Capitol caught fire in 1814." During the War of 1812, British troops burned the capitol building down to a shell with torches and gunpowder paste.

At the Washingtons' tomb, Bradburn noted that at age 19 the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert, who later become King Edward VII, laid a wreath in 1860. Prince Edward laid a flowery wreath and Bradburn again touted the two countries' "great relationship" and "shared values." Bradburn mentioned, but they did not visit, the

nearby burial ground of the African Americans that the Washingtons enslaved on the plantation.

A Royal Toast

The public part of the visit ended with whiskies produced today in Mount Vernon's reconstructed distillery using George Washington's recipes. "In 1799, Washington had the largest distillery in the U.S.," Bradburn said, largely making rye whiskey. This year, the distillery produced a special bourbon for the country's 250th anniversary.

"It's really good," Bradburn bragged.

The entourage did not partake of high tea, but the Duke sniffed a shot of Washington's whiskey and took a quick, royal sip, an act of "soft power," Bradburn said.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at Connection-Newspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or email to calendar@connectionnewspapers.com

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexan-

dria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.

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.

NEWS

Local Officials Rally Turnout for Fairfax County Public Hearing on \$67 Billion Dominion-NextEra Merger

Discovery Dispute Carries Over to SCC Proceedings.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

As regulators at the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) weigh a proposed \$67 billion merger between Dominion Energy Virginia and Florida-based NextEra Energy, Inc., Northern Virginia local officials and state lawmakers are rallying turnout for an upcoming public hearing in Fairfax County.

At the same time, a discovery dispute carried over to SCC proceedings.

The regional Virginia State Corporation Commission in-person public witness hearing is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center Board Auditorium. State Del. Rozia A. Henson Jr. (D-19th) posted on Bluesky that Friday's Fairfax session is "the only in-person opportunity in Northern Virginia." for community members to testify directly to regulators.

Sully District Supervisor Kathy Smith posted on Facebook Oct. 3 urging ratepayer participation: "The Virginia State Corporation Commission will hold a local public hearing in Fairfax to receive comments on the proposed merger between Dominion Energy Inc. and NextEra Energy Inc. Members of the public are invited to attend and offer comments on the proposed transaction and its potential effect on Dominion's Virginia customers."

In a Sept. 28 joint release announcing local government intervention in the proceeding, Arlington County Board Chair Matt de Ferranti and Alexandria Mayor Aliya Gaskins emphasized that formal local participation is critical to ensure state regulators address Northern Virginia's ratepayer and affordability concerns.

If approved, the transaction would combine NextEra — already the world's largest utility company — with Dominion Energy, Virginia's dominant electric provider serving 2.7 million customers. To complete the deal, NextEra must obtain approval from the SCC, as required under the state's Utility Transfers Act, to ensure new management will not harm Virginia consumers or jeopardize reliable service at fair rates.

Discovery Dispute Carries Over to SCC Proceedings

As regional in-person public feedback on the proposed merger begins, a legal dispute over alleged internal corporate secrecy has carried over into the Commonwealth's regulatory proceedings (Case No. PUR-2026-00112).

Clean Virginia, an energy watchdog group acting as an intervenor, requested that regulators force NextEra Energy to release a corporate re-



SCREEN GRAB VIA MAPQUEST

The Virginia State Corporation Commission building is located at 1300 E. Main St. in Richmond, Va.

cord known as the "Robo Memorandum." While attorneys representing NextEra and Dominion argued the out-of-state document did not concern Virginia utility service, Shelby Green, research and communications manager at the Energy and Policy Institute, noted in an Oct. 2 communication to The Connection that the SCC Hearing Examiner ruled (Page 25) earlier that day in favor of Clean Virginia, ordering NextEra and Dominion to turn over the document:

"Accordingly, I find the requested information is discoverable in the instant case, although the Commission will ultimately decide the admissibility of any information offered into the record as evidence," the Hearing Examiner wrote.

In his reasoning, the examiner shared that he found Clean Virginia's request for the Robo Memo to be "reasonably calculated to lead to evidence that could verify or impeach the Petition's representations." He added that the memo and other requested materials reveal "governance issues of how the NextEra Board addresses allegations of potential criminality that it has determined warrant investigation."

According to Green, the Robo Memorandum allegedly demonstrates how NextEra's primary utility subsidiary, Florida Power & Light Co. (FPL), channeled corporate resources to a network of nonprofits that funded "ghost candidates" to undermine state legislative campaigns of candidates deemed unfavorable by FPL. Green added that one nonprofit, Grow United, allegedly extended a "phony job offer" to a city council member to facilitate NextEra's potential acquisition of the Jacksonville Electric Authority.

Named after former CEO James Robo, the "Robo Memorandum" details NextEra Energy and FPL's alleged 2018-2020 misconduct in Florida, including election interference, bribery, and pay-to-play media. Filings reveal millions in "dark money" used for ghost-candidate schemes, fake job offers, and targeted media influence. NextEra and FPL have denied wrongdoing.

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

Twitter @MtVernonGazette

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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

NEWS DEPARTMENT: gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
miksalm6922@gmail.com

Glenda Booth
Contributing Writers

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

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

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

Classified & Employment Advertising 703-778-9431

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

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

Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper



Don't "Boss" Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We do a lot of fast/medium-food take out, and not just Chinese either. In fact, since Covid, the food business has become very accommodating to take out/pick up requests. Moreover, as many of you regular eaters know, there are also services that will deliver to you all sorts of food. And in so receiving, recipients can minimize their interactions with food serving/delivering public. No parking and walking to the establishment, no standing and waiting in line once you're inside, and no mixing with the hoi polloi; just sitting and waiting from the comfort and convenience of your home. But for those of us who are resistant to the advantages of food delivery, interactions with the general public and the fast/medium-food staff await - or shall I say: persists.

I've written recently of my feelings about being called "sir" by the same general public I'm referring to here: the restaurant/fast/medium-food establishments. And as you regular readers know, yours truly (as opposed to my wife) will almost exclusively be the one going to pick up and pay for the food, thereby interacting with a store employee. hardly an awkward/unfamiliar exchange, especially given the post-Covid world where food delivery/pick up is almost di regur and people's eating routine has changed where now fewer meals are prepared at home and more are brought in ready to eat. It's become more acceptable, preferred almost, as a work-around to the miscellaneous toxins in the air that we all breathe. In fact, all these years later, I still see people wearing masks, sometimes even in their cars.

Now that I've established the context, let me finally address the particular situation that has led to this column being written: the employees greeting and thanking me after I order, receive and then pay. "Sir" in this interaction, I can tolerate. However, when an employee calls me "Boss;" that I don't tolerate nearly as well. "Sir" connotes respect, sort of. I don't like it, but it doesn't feel as if the employee is subliminally seething with contempt of our generational divide. It's not merely disrespectful, it's downright rude and snarky almost. I'm not the employees' boss so don't pretend to treat me as one. I'm your customer, not your supervisor. I place the order. You deliver the order. Though I'm not on the same side of the register as you, we are, in effect, two sides of the same request. We're practically equal. I'm not your boss. I'm happy being your customer. Let's not conflate your providing me a service with your working for me. If anything, we're working together. Calling me "Boss" raises my stature and presumes a relationship we've never actually consummated.

I don't want - or quite frankly deserve, any special dispensation, either in how my meal is prepared and/or how said meal is handed to me and what is said to me during that handoff. All I require is courtesy and gratitude. Anything more is unnecessary and likely not in your job description.

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



CHRIS WHITE
FAMILY REAL ESTATE
OF LONG & FOSTER



95 Homes SOLD in 2026 so far!



7609 Midday Ln | \$1,049,000



9404 Forest Haven Dr | \$1,495,000



3723 Riverwood Rd | \$1,319,999



8629 Curtis Ave | \$750,000



4217 Scotland Rd | \$999,000



602 S Wakefield St | \$1,999,000



2008 Mason Hill Dr | \$1,050,000



9344 Mount Vernon Cir | \$975,000



4200 Pickering Pl | \$890,000



9020 Beatty Dr | \$1,825,000



9305 Reef Ct | \$1,199,000



4008 Robertson Blvd | \$920,000



9400 Ludgate Dr | \$1,375,000



8704 Greystone Pl | \$759,000



8010 Candlewood Dr | \$749,000



4429 Neptune Dr | \$999,500



9502 Ferry Hall Ct | \$1,575,000



6404 Potomac Ave | \$887,000

LONG & FOSTER REAL ESTATE | **Forbes** GLOBAL PROPERTIES

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

703.283.9028

www.chrisandpeggywhite.com
chris.white@LNF.com

BEST OF WASHINGTONIAN
TOP PRODUCING AGENT 2015-2025

