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Mount Vernon Gazette

WELLBEING
PAGE 10

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 6, 2018



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Supporting Veterans

John Atkins (right), director of American Legion Riders Chapter 10, presents Ed Moore, founder of Veterans Fishing Adventure, Inc. with a check for \$1,000 as “adventurers” Kade and Lynn Patterson look on. The boat, designed to ADA standards, specializes in providing veterans with physical limitations an opportunity, with their families, to participate in fishing and boating trips on the Potomac River and on the Occoquan River. Additionally, Legion Riders Chapter 10, part of Robert V. McMaugh Memorial American Legion Post 10, supports the American Legacy Scholarship Fund as well as provides family-oriented motorcycling activities with an emphasis on motorcycle safety programs. The group participates in “Rolling Thunder.”

Business Arises from Son’s Pain

Mount Vernon entrepreneur makes desserts a piece of cake for those with allergies.

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON
THE GAZETTE

There’s nothing like the simple joy that comes from digging into your favorite dessert – a piece of cool key lime pie on a summer evening or a gooey chocolate chip cookie just minutes out of the oven. For 12-year-old Mount Vernon resident Alex Catron, though, nothing about treats has ever been simple.

Alex, now a seventh grader at Sandburg Middle School, will always remember the acute gut pain he’d feel every time he ate so many of the most classic foods for youngsters.

“At school, I couldn’t have any of the food or treats they had at parties,” Alex said. “If I did eat them, I’d get a stabbing pain in my stomach. The best way I can describe how I felt is that it was like the sensation you get when you run and get that painful gas buildup in your stomach. And the feeling would last a long time after I finished eating. Even though no 8-year-old wants to eat vegetables while their friends

are eating things that taste so much better, I also knew how bad I would feel eating pizza, cupcakes or other things like that.”

It was perplexing for Alex’s mother, Laura Catron, who said that food sensitivities and intolerances were not on her radar in the beginning.

“Looking back on it, there were signs from when
SEE COOKING UP, PAGE 4



Laura Catron with son Alex.

Helping To Make Produce Affordable

BY CARLYN KRANKING
THE GAZETTE

Farmers Market Season

How long do the farmers markets remain open?

With a grant of \$50,000 over three years, the Fairfax County Farmers Markets will ensure SNAP (previously called food stamps) recipients can access fresh local produce. The farmers markets received this money because they partner with Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), which received \$1.8 million from the USDA through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI).

This money will make a difference for SNAP recipients in Fairfax County, allowing them better access to the produce at farmers markets.

“Most people on SNAP, because they’re so strapped for cash, they only buy processed foods because they’re very cheap, and healthy food is expensive,” Farmers Market Coordinator Chelsea Roseberry said. “We’re trying to bridge that gap so that little-income families don’t feel like this is inaccessible to them.”

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon
Open through Dec. 19
Wednesdays, 8 a.m. - Noon
2501 Sherwood Hall Lane

Kingstowne
Open through Oct. 26
Fridays, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

Lorton
Open through Nov. 18
Sundays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
8990 Lorton Station Boulevard

At participating farmers markets, the value of SNAP dollars is doubled by the Virginia Fresh Match nutrition incentive program – for example, if a person spends \$20 in SNAP benefits at a farmers market, they will receive \$20 more to spend on fruits and vegetables.

With the grant money, this dollar-matching program will provide up to \$100,000 in added revenue

SEE PRODUCE, PAGE 8



BY CARLYN KRANKING/THE GAZETTE

The \$50,000 USDA grant will help the Fairfax County Farmers Markets ensure that produce is affordable for SNAP recipients.

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Ann Nichols 703.624.9122
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Alexandria | \$750,000

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Kristen Jones 703.851.2556
www.alexandriabykj.com

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Alexandria \$1,695,000

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Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.oldtownalexandrialiving.com

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Alexandria \$660,000

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Josephine Erkiletian 703.862.6870
www.mceneaney.com

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Alexandria \$575,000

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Teen Sex Trafficking Hits Close to Home

How vulnerable teens are targeted.

BY WALLICIA GILL
AND BRAD SWANSON

*This article first appeared in The Blue View
www.blueview.org. It has been slightly edited.*



Kay Duffield



Teresa Hartnett

Local experts say that Northern Virginia is a teen sex trafficking hotspot, but most people know very little about this growing crime. A better understanding among the public will help to combat the problem, agree both police and victims advocates

MORE THAN 100 LOCAL VICTIMS A YEAR

According to law enforcement records compiled by the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, approximately 500 sex trafficking victims were “identified” – brought to the attention of law enforcement – in northern Virginia in the 4-year period from January 2013 to February 2017. That averages to about 125 sex trafficking victims identified in the area per year. Experts believe that only a small minority of trafficking victims are brought to light, but they don’t have good insight into what the fraction really is. The trend in identifying victims in the region is upward, and experts believe the practice is growing, but some part of the increase may also come from more awareness and better discovery. Of the approximately 140 sex trafficking victims identified in the year from January 2016 to February 2017, the latest data available, most were female, but a significant minority were not. Experts say boys and young men, especially from the LGBTQ community, are as vulnerable to trafficker recruiting as girls and young women – and less likely to come forward. The average age of sex trafficking victims in the USA is 12-to-15 years, but in this area the average appears to be somewhat higher, 15-18. Consequently, only about a third of

the total identified last year were technically juveniles, but the average age of the “adult” victims is not available. The ethnic backgrounds of sex trafficked women typically mirror that of the region, and this appears to be the case for this area as well. In broad socioeconomic terms, girls in poverty, dysfunctional families and neighborhoods with more crime appear more susceptible to becoming trafficking victims, although high income and stable family life are no barrier.

“Any victim I have personally met from Northern Virginia is upper income demographic,” said Teresa Hartnett, coordinator of the Trafficking Task Force, which brings together law enforcement agencies, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the fight against trafficking. Vulnerability is the key to understanding why girls and young women get trapped into sex trafficking, according to Kay Duffield, who serves both as co-chair of the Victims’ Services Committee of the Trafficking Task Force and executive director of the non-profit Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative. Girls are not kidnapped off the street and bound in chains. The typical pattern is for a girl who is lonely, unhappy, rebellious, adventurous, or some combination, to meet a trafficker, who poses as a friend and over time gains influence through empathy, attention and acceptance. The initial meetings typically happen online or in shopping malls or other public places. The trafficker is patient, waiting for the payoff from a successful recruitment. After winning a girl’s trust, a typical tactic is for the trafficker to break her will by rap-

ing her, or staging a gang rape, sometimes filming the episode for blackmail, according to Hartnett. Drugs are another method of control. Also common is threatening harm to family members if the victim comes forward. But some victims are ensnared by emotional dependence, or fear, without strong-arm tactics being necessary. Often the victim keeps up a show of normality – going to school, spending time with her family – while she is being subjected in her unsupervised time to involuntary sex. The average period of being trafficked, is difficult to determine. In some cases, after a few instances, the victim is deemed unsuitable, or the trafficker is caught, or moves on. But in other cases trafficking is a one-way journey and its victims are unable to return.

FORTY PERCENT OF VICTIMS RETURN TO TRAFFICKING

Of the approximately 500 northern Virginia victims identified by police in 2013-17, only about 300 were “recovered” – removed from the trade, reunited with families, or sent to live elsewhere. In other words, this data shows that 40 percent of those identified slipped back into sex trafficking.

The reasons differ in each case, but are often tied to the same factors that led to vulnerability in the first place. Being returned to live in a dysfunctional family and neighborhood doesn’t strengthen a girl’s will to resist the false affection and security of an experienced trafficker. The experience of being trafficked can destroy a young woman or teen’s self-esteem and dignity and skew her ability to function.

“Starting over is very hard,” said Hartnett. “It can get overwhelming, and some survivors lose hope. If they lose momentum going forward, they slip backwards into what’s familiar – and what they have come to think they deserve.” Trafficking victims who are able to recover often take many months or years of counseling and emotional support to regain their autonomy and self-confidence. Traffickers typically are not solo operators but rather are linked and have specialized functions, similar to street level drug distribution, according to Hartnett. Some are adept at recruiting, and then passing the victims to pimps who control one or two victims at a time. But not all trafficking is low-level. Networks operate across state lines moving victims both to take advantage of high demand in a different area and to isolate the victims from potential sources of help.

Gang-led trafficking varies in intensity across the country. In northern Virginia, gangs typically do not practice trafficking as an organized activity although some gang members traffick as individuals, says Duffield.

Not all trafficking is done by third parties. Family members, including drug-addicted parents, sometimes sell their own children to traffickers.

Recent Cases

♦ A Washington, D.C. man was sentenced on Aug. 17, 2018 to 18 years in prison for forcibly sex trafficking a minor.

According to court documents from Eastern District of Virginia, Justin Shayne Robinson, 27, lured the 16-year-old victim to a motel in northern Virginia. Once the minor victim arrived, Robinson directed sexualized photos to be taken of the her, and created and posted online advertisements for commercial sex acts with the minor. Robinson and his co-conspirator, Markus Jakeem Plummer, 27, of Woodbridge, then trafficked the minor over a period of roughly a week. Robinson and Plummer took all the proceeds of the minor’s commercial sex acts for their own benefit. Robinson and Plummer used force and surveillance to ensure that the minor continued to see clients and was unable to escape the motel. Robinson used violence to force the victim to continue working for him, including choking her and leaving medically documented bruising on her leg and neck. Co-Conspirator Markus Plummer is scheduled for sentencing on Sept. 28.

♦ On July 20, 2018, a Virginia man was sentenced to 186 months in prison and 10 years of supervised release for multiple crimes related to the prostitution and exploitation of a 15-year-old minor. Abdul Karim Bangura Jr. aka “AJ”, 22, of Triangle, Va. pleaded guilty in August 2017 to all counts of an indictment charging him with sex trafficking of a minor, conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of a minor, interstate transportation of a minor for the purposes of prostitution, and production of child pornography.

According to admissions made in connection with his plea in the Eastern District of Virginia, Bangura and his co-defendant Christian Hood conspired to recruit a 15-year-old girl to work as a prostitute and to advertise her prostitution services on Backpage.com. Bangura also transported the minor to hotels in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. for prostitution dates, and he took a portion of the money she made from commercial sex customers. Bangura also used a phone to record a video of himself having sex with the minor. In August 2017, a year ago, Hood was convicted at trial of sex trafficking and conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking of this same minor.

These unrelated cases were brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

GROWING PROBLEM IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

From anecdotal evidence, sex trafficking appears to be growing in the region, say experts. They point to two factors. First, the typical buyer of teenaged sex is married, male, with children, and money to spend. That’s a common profile in affluent northern Virginia. Forced sex is sold in a market, and responds to buying pressure like any other. “We need to do something on the demand side,” said Duffield. “Traffickers are going to create that product until demand is gone.”

The second factor explains why areas like Springfield, Dumfries and Tysons are trafficking hotspots: trafficking follows the highways. Traffickers, whether local or interstate, like mobility and the anonymity of travel nodes, as do buyers. Converging highways make for easy contact, fast access to motels, and quick exits. The tangle of major roads in northern Virginia draws in sex trafficking like a neon sign. If someone knows a victim of trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373 7888. If danger is imminent, call 911.

New Law To Keep Traffickers in Jail

On June 25, 2018, Gov. Ralph Northam signed human trafficking legislation that adds offenses related to human trafficking to the list of crimes for which bail can be denied, keeping traffickers in jail and better protecting trafficking victims. Locally, Kathleen Murphy (D-34) and Kathy Tran (D-42) were cosponsors.

“Human trafficking is a threat to public safety here in Virginia and across the United States,” said Northam. “This legislation will help us prevent these crimes by making it more difficult for human traffickers to post bail and leave jail to intimidate witnesses or continue their criminal activity.”

“Human trafficking is a dehumanizing crime that robs its victims of their dignity, their identity, and their freedom,” said Attorney General Mark Herring.

While prosecuting traffickers, local law enforcement found that traffickers would pay their own bail and bail out their victims continuing the cycle of abuse and trafficking. This legislation will keep traffickers in jail.

This legislation adds the following offenses that are attributable to human trafficking to the list of crimes for which there is a rebuttable presumption against admission to bail: Taking or detaining a person for the purposes of prostitution or unlawful sexual intercourse; receiving money from procuring or placing a person in a house of prostitution or forced labor; receiving money from the earnings of a prostitute, and commercial sex trafficking, where the alleged victim is a family or household member.

Cooking Up a Business

FROM PAGE 1

Alex was tiny,” Catron said. “He never liked bread or milk. Then, as he got older, he frequently had stomach pains. At the same time, stomach aches are common complaints for any child. Most tests he had at the doctor’s office consistently came back with normal results. Now I realize it was because medical professionals weren’t thinking outside of the box and looking for the right thing.”

Finally, four years ago, it was determined that his body couldn’t effectively process the proteins found in the “the eight major allergens,” which are gluten, dairy, eggs, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Yet, even with this mystery solved, Catron was faced with finding culinary solutions.

“We are an Air Force family and were at the time living in Norway, where food was very simple,” she said. “That meant there weren’t many, if any, ready-made food options at the grocery stores. I have always baked a lot, though. When I was a kid, we used to make mug cakes – these cakes that would fit into a coffee mug. When I’d make them for my own kids, the original recipe precluded Alex from eating them. One day, my oldest daughter said, ‘Figure out how to make one for Alex.’ So I did.”

She soldiered through countless kitchen experiments to ultimately craft a concoction, Buddy Cakes – small cakes without any of those eight major allergens. And, not only could Alex – nicknamed Buddy – eat his namesake cakes without pain, but he actually couldn’t resist them. The minicakes became so popular within the entire Catron circle that, in 2016, she launched her own business, Buddy’s Allergen Free.

Buddy’s Allergen Free offers single serving mixes that turn into ready-to-eat cakes after one minute in the microwave. The icing on the cake: Each mix also comes with a serving of frosting.

“My kids’ friends kept asking for them whenever they’d come over,” Catron said. “Also, whenever I met a mom who was struggling with a child who had food allergies, I would share my treats with them. Then, those moms would always follow up to ask for more. I realized how much I could help people, because, dealing with food

issues is such a different world.”

Varying flavors of Buddy Cake mixes can be purchased through the Buddy’s Allergen Free official website, which also features a host of allergen free recipes for one’s own making.

Food rules lives in ways most don’t realize, so life is far from a piece of cake when there are so many off-limits ingredients.

“We don’t realize how much of childhood involves food,” she said, “There are birthday parties, sleepovers, school treats, amusement parks, and grabbing ‘junk’ on road trips or in airports. Now, instead of feeling abnormal, Alex feels cool because his mom owns a business named after him. The cakes are so delicious and fun that his friends absolutely love them.”

Chances are, many people could benefit from having Buddy’s Cake mixes in their pantries.

“I did a lot of research and found out that American food producers genetically process so much out of wheat,” Catron said in reference to gluten intolerances. “What’s done to so much food in this country messes with a lot of people’s bodies. I can say with certainty that it affected Alex’s psyche, too. Now that I’m immersed in this, I know there just so many people with food issues.”

Buddy’s Allergen Free has bonded the Catron family of five and has simultaneously given meaning to Alex’s suffering.

“I just talked to my mom two days ago about this,” Alex said. “If I’d never had these problems, then we wouldn’t have this company, and none of this would be happening. It’s nice, because, I know there was a purpose: this awesome company. I love when my mom gets a lot of orders and it’s awesome to see how happy she is going to festivals and other events and selling these cakes all over.”

Business has begun to boom all around the country for this one-woman show both on and offline. Two Illinois grocery stores, for example, will soon stock Buddy Cake mixes.

“Sometimes I get four hours of sleep a night and I still love it,” she said. “It’s both so fun and so rewarding. I’m always trying to come up with new things. My own

SEE ALLERGIES, PAGE 8

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2018 NATIONAL PRESENTING SPONSOR

Edward Jones



Tom Greeson, board president, accepts the General Assembly Resolution presented to Neighborhood Health's Board of Directors by Del. Paul Krizek.

Honoring Neighborhood Health

State resolution cites organization's 20 years of service.

Del. Paul Krizek presented Neighborhood Health's board of directors with a resolution recognizing the organization for its 20 years of service in Northern Virginia.

Krizek was the primary sponsor on the resolution, which also had 21 co-sponsors from across the Commonwealth. It recognizes Neighborhood Health for providing access to high quality primary medical,

dental, and behavioral health care to low-income families in Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax County.

In presenting the resolution to Neighborhood Health's Board President Tom Greeson and Executive Director Dr. Basim Khan, Krizek expressed his appreciation to board members, staff, and volunteers for their work to advance health equity and expand

SEE HONORING, PAGE 16

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Alex/Wessynton \$639,000

3301 Wessynton Way
Beautiful home in Wessynton. Mt. Vernon's sought after contemporary community, just a stone's throw to Mt. Vernon Estate & George Washington Pkwy, & is adjacent to Little Hunting Creek. Large kitchen w/breakfast area & a separate

Dining Rm. Beautiful hdwd floors. FPL's in the Living Rm & Family Rm. Situated in a natural, wooded setting the home's bountiful windows bring outdoors inside. Enjoy the natural landscaping on your deck. 1 car garage. Community amenities include boat ramimming pool, tennis courts.

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Alex/Potomac Valley \$529,900

8807 Vernon View Drive
Lovely, 4BR, 2BA, 4 lvl Split on a lg, beautiful .3 acre lot w/a fenced bkdy. Freshly painted interior & beautiful refinished hdwds. Main lvl has a spacious & cozy Family rm w/gas FPL, 4th BR, & 2nd full bath. Upper level #1 offers an open kitchen plus Living & Dining Rm. Upper level #2 has full bath & 3BRs. The lower level has a lg partially finished Rec rm. Good price on a super lot.

SOLD



Alex/Stratford Landing \$564,900

2620 Culpeper Road
Lovely 4BR, 3.5BA home in Stratford Landing. 2 master suites (w/ their own baths) - one up, one down. Beautiful 1/3 acre lot: fenced backyard. Deck off of the kitchen. Cathedral ceiling in Living rm & Dining rm. New carpeting in lower level. Wood Shingle exterior w/ front columns. Family rm FPL with high-end wood stove insert. Fenced play area.

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Alex/Engleside \$1,300,000
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4.128 acres zones R-2 for sale. There are 2 lots: 4/0 acres w/house (Tax Map 1101 01 0043) and .128 acre vacant land (1101 01 0043A). House on Property sold "AS IS" and NO ACCESS given or allowed. Land Value only. Water, sewer, gas, electricity available. This land is adjacent to the houses on Halley Farm Ct. which were built in the 2010-2011 time frame



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OPINION

Labor Day 2018 *Virginia has a long way to go.*

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)

Labor Day this past Monday was a fitting reminder for us to work harder to not only honor working people in the United States and Virginia, but to strengthen our economy and supports for employees. Virginia has a long way to go.

Last week Oxfam America released a study that found that Virginia ranked #51 out of 51 as the best state to be an employee – yes, dead last. This included rankings of #48 in worker protections, #49 in the right to organize, and #51 in wage policies. This is troubling news.

Virginia has done nothing to raise the minimum wage since 2009, when Congress increased it to \$7.25 per hour or about \$15,000 per year without time off. In Northern Virginia,

anyone earning \$7.25 per hour has to be either supported by someone else or on government assistance.

Only 13 states, including Virginia, still adhere to the paltry \$7.25/hr federal minimum wage. This means 37 states have increased their minimum wage beyond the federal and Virginia rate.

Numerous studies have shown that raising the minimum wage does not adversely affect jobs. In fact, I have spoken to many constituents who actually commute to Washington, D.C., to earn \$14.20 per hour. If minimum wage in Virginia was higher, they would probably take jobs closer to home.

Some Virginia's leaders tout our state's "Best State to Do Business" rankings by CNBC, which rose to back to #4 in 2018 after declining during the McDonnell Administration. This year, we were beaten by Washington State, ranked #2 with a minimum wage at \$11.50, slated to rise to \$13.20 by 2020. We barely squeaked

by Minnesota and Colorado with minimum wages at \$10.20 and \$9.65. A higher minimum wage seems to be a very minor part of being a "best state to do business" in the eyes of CNBC.

Virginia's hostility to unions is also not good for working people. A recent Stanford University study found that children whose non-college educated fathers were union members earn 28 percent more over their lifetimes than children of non-union member fathers. Additionally, every 10 percent increase in union density correlates with a 4.5 percent increase in children's income and other studies have found that strong union membership in communities raises wages for all workers – even non-union workers. In other words, unions increase economic mobility and opportunity for everyone.

A recent Harvard University study found that between 1973 and 2007 the decline of labor unions explains up to one-third of the decline

SEE WORKING PEOPLE. PAGE 9

Non-Partisan Redistricting Needed

BY PAUL KRIZEK
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)

Last week I was down in Richmond for a special session on redistricting called by Governor Northam to finally fix the map that the Republican-controlled General Assembly drew in 2011 crafted to disadvantage

Democrats by concentrating large numbers of African-American voters into fewer districts thus diluting their strength in the surrounding, mostly Republican drawn, districts. Back in June, the

court opined that the current map in 11 specific districts in the Tidewater and Richmond regions was unconstitutional and directed the General Assembly to redraw the districts by the end of October. Judge Barbara Milano Kennan of the U.S District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia wrote of the 11 delegate districts "Overwhelming evidence in this case shows that, contrary to ... constitutional mandate, the state has sorted voters into districts based on the color of their skin." The Republicans appealed the court decision asking for a stay of the order and all map drawing progress was halted, until last week's session. The ses-

sion lasted one day and we could not come to an agreement but the clock is ticking. We are at an impasse. With no agreement in sight, in all likelihood it will be up to the court to draw a new map that could give the Democrats the majority in next year's elections.

This impasse is not for lack of trying to come up with a bipartisan map. Prior to the convening of the special session, Democratic leader Toscano sent letters to our Republican colleagues in July, and again in August, in the hopes of creating a bipartisan plan which has been met with little to no response. During last

SEE REDISTRICTING. PAGE 18

LETTER

Change Music Approach

To the Editor:

I am writing to you about a proposed change in the way band, orchestra, and choir rehearsals are done in Fairfax County Elementary schools.

Currently, students signed up for band, orchestra, or choir will be taken out of class to go to their rehearsal, usually one hour per week. This results in a relatively small amount of skill growth over the years spent at elementary school. However, in middle school, class time is increased to around 3 hours and 45 minutes per week. This results in a much higher growth rate compared to elementary school.

Therefore, I propose that students in elementary school who request to be in band, orchestra, or choir should have their general music class replaced with band, orchestra, or choir, resulting in more skilled musicians going into middle school. This would make Fairfax county much more of a musical district in Virginia.

Ryan Payne
Alexandria

The writer is a ninth grader at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.



Ready for Tag Day

This Saturday, Sept. 8, 200 West Potomac High School arts students will raise funds door-to-door. Teams from band, chorus, guitar, orchestra and theater will be handing out a "tag" inviting the community to this year's performances, and asking for donations to support WPHS's programs. If not home when they come by, donate by clicking on the "Tag Day Donation" button at www.wolverineband.com. All proceeds from Tag Day are split between the five groups. Above, from left, are Alexandra Shaul from orchestra, Ephraim Takyi from theater, Kent May from band, Elena Perkins from chorus, and Adriana De Lima from guitar.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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Allergies

FROM PAGE 4

kids and neighborhood kids are my taste testers, so, when I have six different kids with six different tastes saying, 'This is perfect,' then I know I've got a new flavor of cake or icing down. I already have another line of sweets in production that I hope to launch in 2020."

While her initial goal with this venture was to establish a sense of dietary normalcy for Alex, she now sets out to grow Buddy's Allergen Free as a vessel for boosting the morale of all the food-challenged families she can reach.

"I've always wanted to start my own business, but I never knew what exactly I could provide," Catron, a former attorney, said. "Now I frequently tell Alex, 'I'm sorry for all your suffering early on, but, maybe it was a blessing in disguise, because now I have this business that we can use it to help all these other people.' I know how hard it is to find foods like this that kids actually like."

Alex, whose favorite Buddy Cake flavor is the chocolate fudge, doesn't even think the blessing is disguised. Rather, he sees it as a very distinct silver lining.

"Now I have something that I look forward to eating," he said. "I can have these cakes, and friends love them, too, whether or not they have food intolerances like I do. This whole experience has convinced me that it's important to stay positive. If you have these intolerances, know it will get better. There is definitely something out there that can help you."

For more information on Buddy's Allergen Free, visit www.buddysaf.com.

Produce

FROM PAGE 1

to local farms as SNAP recipients purchase their products at markets. In this way, the local economy also benefits from the grant. "Small farms are dying out," said Assistant Market Manager Sue Wolinsky. "A lot of the land is being given over to development. So, anything we can do to support family farms is in the plus column."

BULLETIN BOARD

MONDAY/SEPT. 8

Office Hours. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck will host Saturday office hours. Email mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov.
 ♦ 9-11:30 a.m. at Lorton Library, 9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton.
 ♦ 12:30-3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon district office, 2511 Parkers Lane, Mount Vernon.

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Working People and Virginia

FROM PAGE 6

in male wage inequality in America. As we debate the economic dislocation and labor disruption around the United States, including areas like, such as Southside and Southwest Virginia, we should explore whether Virginia's ongoing imbalance in bargaining power plays a role.

Virginia's last place ranking as a state to be an employee was a function of over a dozen factors. Virginians have no right to accommodations for pregnant workers, no protections for workplace breastfeeding, no provisions for paid family or sick leave, no prohibitions on pay secrecy practices, no collective bargaining for teachers, police officers, firefighters and other public employees, and no provisions for project labor agreements to ensure fair wages on public contracts.

As a practicing attorney who receives many requests from people who feel they were wrongly fired, I rarely have good news for them. There is minimal recourse. Virginia's workers have few rights – especially compared to other states.

While having a competitive business environment is important for job growth, we also must have an economy that is fair. Today's Virginia economy is clearly out of balance with the United States if we come in at the bottom, number 51 out of 51.

If we want a Virginia that produces fair

wages, good jobs and economic opportunity for everyone, we have a long way to go.

A rising tide lifts all boats and providing basic protections and higher wages for all Virginians will help everyone, especially the working families of our state.

BULLETIN BOARD

MONDAY/SEPT. 8

Community Health Fair. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road. The Health Ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church is hosting a Community Health Fair with free health screenings, "Ask the Doctor/Dentist," Mental and Heart Health sessions, Zumba, children's activities, healthy snacks, free prizes, and more. All are welcome. Visit www.bethlehemofalexandria.org for more.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

George Washington Patriot Run Registration Now Open. The race course (5K or 10K), certified by USA Track & Field, takes runners up and down the scenic George Washington Memorial Parkway and traces Washington's footsteps through the historic grounds at Mount Vernon. Registration is \$50 until Sept. 2, then \$60. Visit mountvernon.org/patriotrun to register.

MVDDC Ice Cream Social. 2-4 p.m. at the home of Joseph Tompkins and family, 8146 Wellington Road. Sen. Tim Kaine and U.S. Rep. Don Beyer will kick off campaign season on Sunday, Sept. 9 at the 41st Annual Mount Vernon District Democratic Committee (MVDDC) Ice Cream Social. General admission is free, but donations are welcome and sponsorships are available. Visit www.mvdemocrats.com for more.



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WELLBEING

Aiming for Long-Term Fitness

Study shows physical declines can be detected as early as age 50.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

“I’ve been doing it since before I retired,” said Rich White, a former accountant who lives in Alexandria. “It’s easier to get up and get it out of the way so I don’t miss it. Both of my parents died prematurely of heart attacks. That’s when I decided to start running to get in shape. Eventually that turned into a habit of daily strength and aerobic exercise.”

White’s assumptions about preserving his physical health are underscored by a report from the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development at Duke University School of Medicine which found that physical decline begins when people are in their 50s, much earlier than people might notice or expect.

The study looked at 775 adults ranging in age from 30 to 90 to assess changes in fitness abilities like endurance, balance, speed and strength. Researchers found that exercise efforts must begin before the age of 50 in order to help halt the decline and maintain mobility and independence longer in life.

“Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don’t wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair,” said lead author Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D. in releasing the study.

By having participants stand on one leg for 60 seconds to measure balance and sit and rise from a chair for 30 seconds to measure lower body strength, researchers were able to detect a decline beginning in

Emma Warner, 72, meets her trainer at a Montgomery County Recreation Center gym twice a week. Together they perform a combination of exercises aimed at improving her strength, balance, endurance and flexibility.

“We stretch and do yoga poses, sometimes we speed walk outside and I also do exercises with two or three pound dumbbells,” she said. “But my mother is 98 and is in pretty good health, so I figure I have good genes. I just need to work on fitness to maintain.”

As people age, change and decline is inevitable, but the rate and severity can vary based on genetics and the level of activity in one’s lifestyle. Regular exercise can have a profound effect on the way in which one ages.

“People have their actual age, which they can’t do anything about, and their biological age,” said Martin.

“Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s.”

Fitness instructor Amy Traum has clients who run the age gamut from college students to retirees, but her overarching advice to getting in shape is similar. “Everyone needs a well-rounded exercise program that includes stretching, balance exercises, strength and cardio,” she said. “I always begin and end classes with stretching and I try to add strength and balance elements like a weighted deadlift.”

Those new or newly returning to exercise should start slowly and gradually, says Traum. “It sounds like common sense, but I can’t tell you the number of people who come to my classes with no experience and try to work way above their fitness level

“Our research reinforces a life-span approach to maintaining physical ability — don’t wait until you are 80 years old and cannot get out of a chair.”

— Katherine S. Hall, Ph.D.

“Someone could be 40 years old, live a very inactive lifestyle and not eat very well, which may cause them to be closer to 60 in terms of their biological age. And vice versa, someone who is 60 could be very active and eat a healthy diet and feel like they are much younger, perhaps a biological age closer to mid-40s.”

— Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology, George Mason University

one’s 50s. The findings show the need to understand and preserve muscle strength.

“Most tissues in the body respond to stress placed on them by becoming stronger or adapting to handle the stimulus you place on them,” said Joel Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Kinesiology at George Mason University. “If you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and stronger. If you don’t do any sort of physical activity to stimulate your muscles then they get smaller and become weaker. Use it or lose it.”

and either get injured or discouraged,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with starting out slow, sticking with it and making gradual progress. Also make it fun, like walk or jog with a friends or take a dance or Zumba classes.”

“Eating a healthy and nutritious diet is also important,” added Martin. “The antioxidants in foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can help to preserve and protect tissues from damage that occurs as part of the natural aging process.”

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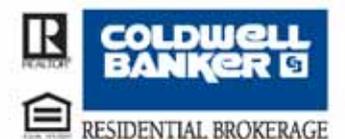


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ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

“Dredging The Lethe.” On view through Sept. 14 at The Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Free admission. Visit www.torpedofactory.org for more. Wrapped around the interior wall of a smokestack of the former munitions factory, Kara Hammond’s mural, “Dredging the Lethe,” uses recycled book-pages, collage, charcoal, gesso and ink to create large-scale drawings of Greek goddesses amid contemporary human events. Free admission. Visit www.torpedofactory.org for more.

“The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek” by Athol Fugard. Through Sept. 30 at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. “The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek” by Athol Fugard, directed by MetroStage Artistic Associate Thomas W. Jones II, will open the 2018-19 season at MetroStage. Visit www.metrostage.org.

Geometrics Kiln Club Show. Through Sept. 30, at Scope Gallery, 105 North Union St., Studio 19, Torpedo Factory, Alexandria. Earthy Encore Spotlights Shapeshifting in Clay. Monday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., open Thursday, Sept. 13 until 9 p.m. and Friday, Sept. 14 until 10 p.m. Call Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.scopegallery.org.

Photography Exhibition: Michael Borek. Through Oct. 14, gallery hours at Multiple Exposures Gallery, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. “Aimless Walk Reprise” presents 22 photographs taken by Michael Borek in his native Czech Republic. Over the last 10 years, Borek continued to return to photograph an old blue-collar neighborhood in Prague, where he grew up. Visit www.multipleexposuresgallery.com.

Art Exhibit: Makers in the Mansion. Through Oct. 22 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House Historic Site, 9000 Richmond Highway. Six installations of work by local African American makers hosted in an 1805 mansion owned by Nelly Parke Custis and Lawrence Lewis, once a prominent plantation home. Stories of a transformed African American community through the artisan eye. RSVP to Woodlawnevents@savingplaces.org.

WFUMC Farmers Market. Tuesdays through Oct. 23, 4-7 p.m. at Washington Farm United Methodist Church, 3921 Old Mill Road. Orchard Country Produce, from Gardners, Pa., will operate a Farmer’s Market from the west parking lot of WFUMC. They also operate from the St. Luke’s parking lot on Fort Hunt Road Saturdays. Call 703-780-4696 or visit www.washingtonfarmumc.org.

Mount Vernon Farmers Market. Wednesdays through Dec. 19, 8 a.m.-noon at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 6

Kayak Cleanups at Four Mile Run. 5-7:30 p.m. The event starts out at The Conservatory Center at Four Mile Run Park, 4109 Mt Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Parking details will be provided to those who RSVP. The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation will continue to deploy its fleet of kayaks to collect litter along the streambank of Four Mile Run this Fall, following the efforts over the summer 2018. Visit www.fourmilerun.org for more.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Wings, Wheels & Food Fest

Alexandria resident Heather Penney, center, a veteran F-16 pilot known for her role escorting Air Force One’s return to Washington following the 9/11 attacks, will be offering bi-plane rides at the Wings, Wheels & Food Fest, Sept. 15 from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at Maryland Airport 2W5, 3900 Livingston Road, Indian Head, Md. “Mango” Mike Anderson will be serving BBQ from Sweet Fire Donna’s Restaurant at the event, which is free and open to the public. Classic cars will be on display and plane rides, flying contests and live entertainment will be featured throughout the day. For more information call 301-283-6202.

First Thursday Del Ray. 6-9 p.m. Along Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. First Thursdays is a series of free outdoor street festivals along Mount Vernon Avenue. Every first Thursday of the month, the Del Ray Business Association features businesses along Mount Vernon Avenue, special events, food and music. Each month has a different theme with activities for children, live music and a festive atmosphere. Visit www.visitdelray.com for more.

THROUGH SEPT. 30

Diaper Drive. At Pilates ProWorks, 1103 Queen St., Alexandria. All of the diapers collected will be donated

to the Great D.C. Diaper Bank, an official partner of the National Diaper Bank Network. Pilates ProWorks’ diaper drive is a part of a larger brand-wide initiative, “Restore Your Core,” which emphasizes the importance of empowering mothers to practice self-care. Visit www.pilatesproworks.com.

SEPT. 6-OCT. 7

Exhibit: ‘Natural Reaction.’ Gallery hours at The Art League Gallery, 105 North Union St., Studio 21, Torpedo Factory, Alexandria. Sculptor and printmaker Brian Kirk courts chemical reactions to create ephemeral, phantom-like prints from rusting metal. A marriage of art and

science, Kirk’s rust prints bloom in hues of lush amber, ochre, and apricot. Born of rigid metal, from saw blades to steel wool, the prints that emerge are organic, almost cellular. Visit www.theartleague.org or 703-683-1780.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 7

Solo Painting Exhibition Opening Night. 5-8 p.m. at Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Featuring work by Barry Barnett Keith, a graduate of T.C. Williams and The University of Delaware Art School. Call 301-518-9093.

Opening Reception: “Eat, Drink, and Be Merry.” 7-9 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. A national ceramic show that celebrates dining and food with a regional art exhibit echoing these themes. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/event/eat-drink-be-merry.

SEPT. 7-30

Art Exhibit: “Eat, Drink, and Be Merry.” At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. A national ceramic show that celebrates dining and food with a regional art exhibit echoing these themes. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/event/eat-drink-be-merry.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 8

Craft and Family Fun Fair. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Road, Alexandria. Featuring handmade arts and crafts, live piano music, baked goods prepared by parishioners, and children’s games like plinko and a moon-bounce. Nancy Mason, oldest



One of this year’s tour homes, located between two Old Town alleys, is a 167-year-old carriage house that was restored in 2008.

Historic Homes Tour

A walking tour featuring some of the beautiful homes in Old Town Alexandria, proceeds will benefit Inova Alexandria Hospital. Sponsored by The Twig, Junior Auxiliary of the hospital. Saturday, Sept. 22 10 a.m.-3 p.m. \$40 in advance; \$45 tour day. On tour day, tickets may be purchased at the Alexandria Visitor Center, at The Twig Thrift Shop at 106 N. Columbus St. or at The Athenaeum at 201 Price St. Call 703-338-0691 or visit www.thetwig.org/Homes-Tour.

of nine children of Virginia statesman George Mason and portrayed by retired history teacher Janis Harless, will be in costume performing at 10:30 a.m. Visit www.saintlukeschurch.net.

Telling Their Story: Museum

Specialty Tours. 10 a.m. at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Tour the halls where Washington, Lafayette, Jefferson, Madison and Burr partied and made history. Consider the ideas debated in the rooms where it happened... for some, but not for all. \$12 per person. Visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

Chicken BBQ and Yard Sale. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King St. The United Methodist Men will hold a chicken BBQ and yard sale. A half-chicken meal with beans, cole slaw, roll and drink for \$10; pint of beans or cole slaw for \$2. All profits will support local community charities. Call the church office, 703-671-8557.

T&ES Open House. 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at 2900 Business Center Drive, Alexandria. The City’s Department of Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) Open House will provide an up-close, hands-on look at the work of the department that oversees City refuse collection, street cleaning, sewer maintenance, recycling, water quality, traffic engineering, and transit services. This free, family-friendly event will allow residents and businesses to learn about important City services and meet staff who help keep Alexandria mobile, clean, safe and eco-friendly. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/TEs for more.

Ceramics Workshop. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Clay Queen Pottery, 2303 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Ceramic artist Lisa York presents “Bowls and Plates with Nice Curves.” The demonstration explores curves and form, surface decorations, thrown and alteration techniques. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/event/bowls-and-plates

Celebrate Honey Bee Day. 10 a.m.-noon at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Where would we be without the honey bee? Celebrate this wondrous insect with the Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association. Meet a beekeeper, see inside a beehive, learn a bee dance, do a bee scavenger hunt, learn how bees are important to our food supply and get tips on how to help honey bees. Free. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

Chakra Balancing On and Off the Mat & Chakra Mudras. 2-4 p.m. at 532 Yoga, 532 North Washington St., Alexandria. Learn about Chakras and how to move inert energy. Cost: \$15 before Sept. 1, \$20 thereafter. Visit www.532yoga.com.

Visual Arts Workshop: Seeing Beauty. 2-4 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Photography instructor Tuan Pham helps you seek artistic beauty, sharpen your perception of the natural world and learn how to capture that new vision for your photography or other visual arts. Lessons teach insightful observation by masters in arts, science, and mysticism, combined with the presenter’s own experience in nature photography and mindfulness practice. Cost is \$34/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 431 3701 or call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

Fall Lawn Care. 2:30 p.m. at Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St., Alexandria. Fall is the ideal time to

ENTERTAINMENT

Diya Indian Cuisine Brings Flavor, Spice to Old Town

BY HOPE NELSON

If you're not pulled in by the small sign out front of the Crilley Warehouse at 218 North Lee St., you'll soon be summoned by the wafting aromas of curry and Indian spices, making their way down the stairs from the second floor. Indeed, the block has a new neighbor in town: Diya Indian Cuisine.

The restaurant space won't be a new address for many locals: The famed La Bergerie took up residence for many years until its closure in 2016. And after a yearlong process to get up and running, Diya has fired up the range once more – with a totally different cuisine.

And a varied cuisine, at that. One look at Diya's menu and – well, you'll probably need another look. The offerings are vast and varied, from all manner of meats to an extensive vegetarian section. And – to make your decision even more taxing – there's also the little matter of the buffet, which sits in a room to itself, extending from wall to wall with a smattering of Indian favorites.

From butter chicken to saag paneer, it's all there at the lunch buffet, accompanied by fluffy basmati rice and naan. The offerings switch out, but the balance of meat and vegetable items remains standard from day to day. As does the array of flavors on display. Mild, spicy or somewhere in between: It's all there, just waiting to be cooled off – or enhanced – with some creamy raita.

Back to the menu, there are plenty of dishes just waiting to be tasted.

"We are famous for the samosa chat. ... Samosa chat, when you mix it with the chickpeas, it gives it nice flavors. We put tamarind, yogurt, the mint chutney, and it gives a nice tangy flavor for us," said assistant manager Phurba Sherpa.

Another Diya specialty is its array of biryani offerings, rice dishes that are teeming with a plethora of meat or vegetable options.

"Every biryani is good. We can't make it mild, but we're still trying," Sherpa said, smiling.

Though Diya has been open since Aug. 9, its official grand opening celebration will take place later this month on Sept. 28 from 5 to 10 p.m. A special dinner version of the buffet will be offered up for \$6.99, as well as a wine tasting and happy hour drink specials.

If You Go

DIYA INDIAN CUISINE, 218 N. Lee St.

Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. daily.

Grand opening: Sept. 28, 5-10 p.m.

Try this: "Normally people like the pineapple butter chicken," said assistant manager Phurba Sherpa.

"We're preparing a lot of things" for the celebration, says General Manager Jose Delgado. Mayor Allison Silberberg will be on hand for the ribbon-cutting, and

then the party will get started.

"We're having a raffle going on – there's going to be a TV and a tablet and a surprise," Delgado said, chuckling, "I don't even know (what it is) because it's a surprise!"

Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

restore cool-season grass, the most common turf grass grown on lawns in our area. To register, visit mgnv.org.

Children's Latin Dance. 3 p.m. at Duncan Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. In honor of Hispanic Heritage, Martha E. Garcia is leading a Latin dance class for children 8-12. A zest for learning dance is all that's required. Space is limited, call 703-746-1783 to register.

Platinum Moments. 4-6:30 p.m. at Rachael M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. Alexandria's hometown barbershop chorus is celebrating its 70th anniversary by reprising memorable songs from past performances and by hosting world-class barbershop ensembles from Florida and Toronto, Canada. \$35. Visit www.harmonizers.org.

SEPT. 8-OCT. 21

Exhibition: 'Juxtaposed.' At Target Gallery at The Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. New exhibition explores the Art of Contradiction and investigates opposing or conflicting themes through art. The exhibition features 25 artworks by 12 artists from all over the country. Juxtaposed was juried by Megan Rook-Koepsel, a D.C.-based independent curator.



Factory Seconds Brass Trio

Brass of Peace will host members of the Cleveland Orchestra that make up The Factory Seconds Brass Trio — Jack Sutte, Trumpet; Jesse McCormick, Horn; and Richard Stout, Trombone. Each musician occupies the Second Chair position in their respective section within The Cleveland Orchestra, and all are faculty members as well as Ensemble in Residence at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory. Sunday, Sept. 9, 7 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, 6362 Lincoln Road, Alexandria. Visit www.brassofpeace.org.

KING STREET ART FESTIVAL

KING STREET IN OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA, VA

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
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ENTERTAINMENT

SUNDAY/SEPT. 9

George Washington Patriot Run. 8 a.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Admission: \$50 per runner if purchased prior to Sept. 3; \$60 per runner after Sept. 3; \$10 for spectator tickets at the finish line. A free Kids Run will be held near the finish line at Mount Vernon (registration required). All 10K and 5K runners will receive a T-shirt and a finisher medal. Call 703-780-2000 or visit www.MountVernon.org.

Apothecary Museum Geek Tours: American Sign Language. 11 a.m.-noon at The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105 S. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Learn about the muggle botanical science that inspired the potions and herbology of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, and make a magical sleeping potion. This tour will be conducted exclusively in American Sign Language. Admission \$15. Call 703-746-3852 or visit www.alexandriava.gov.

Outlandish Fashion Show and Tea. 2 p.m. at 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Do you love the Outlander books and/or the television show? Then stop by for tea and a special fashion show on the Magnolia Terrace. Members of the Appin Regiment, an 18th century Scottish Living History group, will model the fashions from the time period when Jamie, Claire and John Carlyle lived. \$45 per adult, \$25 per child (5-12), children under 5 are free. Tickets available online. Everyone in party must be registered. Visit www.novaparks.com/parks/carlyle-house-historic-park.

Factory Seconds Brass Trio. 7 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, 6362 Lincolnia Road, Alexandria. Brass of Peace will host members of the Cleveland Orchestra that make up The Factory Seconds Brass Trio — Jack Sutte, Trumpet; Jesse McCormick, Horn; and Richard Stout, Trombone. Each musician occupies the Second Chair position in their respective section within The Cleveland Orchestra, and all are faculty members as well as Ensemble in Residence at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory. Visit www.brassofpeace.org.

MONDAY/SEPT. 10

Partners in Art. 2-4 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mt Vernon Ave. Join a collegial group of artists to share goals and get feedback on artwork. Monthly meetings include discussions on exhibit opportunities, the creative process and the local art scene. Artist can bring 1-3 works — complete or in progress — for feedback. All skill levels and media welcome. Donations (\$1-3) appreciated. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/partners-in-art.

Ballroom Dance Classes. In Alexandria, call for location. Dance instructor Gary Stephens teaches Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing, Salsa, Merengue, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Samba. Discover techniques that will help you become a relaxed and confident social dancer in these small, personalized dance classes. Beginners and experienced dancers welcomed—no partner needed. \$30 per person; \$55 per couple. Visit www.artofballroomdance.com, email garystephans@me.com or call 703-505-5998.

SEPT. 10-OCT. 29

Exhibit: 'Autumn Gold.' Featuring Nina Tisara's intricate mosaic art at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, 310 King St., Alexandria. RSVP to ninat@ninatisara.com.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 11

Simpson Gardens Stroll. 11 a.m.-noon at Simpson Park Gardens, 420 E. Monroe St., by the YMCA, Alexandria. Extension Master Gardener volunteers will be in the Simpson Park demonstration gardens to answer questions and provide information on sustainable gardening. Early fall is one of the most colorful times at Simpson, which includes beds that feature waterwise gardening, scented plants, plants that attract pollinators, plants that prefer shade, and beds that illustrate the use of structure and texture in the garden. Come see the butterflies, birds, and other pollinators, and learn techniques for making your own gardens welcoming to wildlife. Free. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

Ethiopian Film Festival. 2 p.m. at The Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Celebrate Enkutatash, the Ethiopian New Year, by joining in a film screening of three films. Ethiopian coffee and bread will be served. Screening of the following Ethiopian films: "Lamb" (2015); "Night Shift" (2015); and "The Father" (2000). Visit alexlibraryva.org for more.

TUESDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 11-16

Book Sale. At Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St., Alexandria. Thousands of books, CDs, DVDs and more will be available for sale. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Beatley Central Library. Visit alexlibraryva.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 12

Secrets of Nancy Drew. 1 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Join Cathy Noonan from the Martha Washington Library and learn about the people who created and influenced the girl sleuth in the original volumes of the 1930's. Reservations required. Call 703-765-4573; TTY: 711.

"Saving Spaces" Book Release. 7 p.m. at Lloyd House, 220 North Washington St., Alexandria. Featuring author John Sprinkle's new book, *Saving Spaces: Historic Land Conservation in the United States*. The book provides an overview of historic preservation in America and uses case studies, such as Alexandria's Lloyd House, to show the struggles and successful strategies for conserving the country's historic buildings and landscapes. A book signing and reception will follow the lecture. \$12 per person and \$10 for OHA Museum members. Tickets at Alexandriava.gov/Shop.

Nunu Wako Presents: Overshadowed. 7 p.m. at Duncan Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. In a special screening for Enkutatash (Ethiopian New Year), local filmmaker Nunu Wako screens her documentary, "Overshadowed," about modern life in Ethiopia. Question and answer session to follow. Visit alexlibraryva.org for more.

How Native Plants Support Wildlife. 7:30 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Join the Friends of Dyke Marsh to hear Dr. Desiree Narango speak about her research on how residential landscapes influence biodiversity. The talk will focus on her research comparing how well native and nonnative trees provide food for insect-eating Carolina chickadees. She will share results from her work that can help you choose trees and shrubs that will support habitat for birds and other backyard wildlife. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/



Janis Harless portraying Nancy Mason, oldest of nine children of Virginia statesman George Mason, at the St. Luke's Episcopal Craft and Family Fun Fair on Saturday, Sept. 8.

Craft and Family Fun Fair

Featuring handmade arts and crafts, live piano music, baked goods prepared by parishioners, and children's games like plinko and a moon-bounce. Nancy Mason, oldest of nine children of Virginia statesman George Mason and portrayed by retired history teacher Janis Harless, will be in costume performing at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 8, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Road, Alexandria. Visit www.saintlukeschurch.net.

parks/historic-huntley.

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 12-16

Fall Book Sale. At Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St., Alexandria. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale. Wednesday, Sept. 12, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Thursday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Friday, Sept. 14, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 15, 10 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, 1-4:30 p.m. Cost is \$3 or less, unless marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books and audio-visual items. All genres. \$1 Day on Sunday, Sept. 16. Call 703-746-1702 or visit www.beatleyfriends.org.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 13

Young at Art Show Reception. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St., Old Town Alexandria. This annual exhibition, cosponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria and Goodwin House Foundation, is open to all metropolitan areas residents 55 and older. Artists must deliver their works of art to the Durant Center on Monday, Sept. 10, 10 a.m.-noon to be considered for the exhibition. The exhibition runs through Nov. 8. Visit www.alexandriava.gov or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

Opening Reception: 'Autumn Gold.' 5:30-7 p.m. at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, 310 King St., Alexandria. Featuring Nina Tisara's intricate mosaic art. RSVP: ninat@ninatisara.com.

Opening Reception: 'Natural Reaction.' 6:30-8 p.m. at The Art League Gallery, 105 North Union St., Studio 21, Torpedo Factory, Alexandria. Sculptor and printmaker Brian Kirk courts chemical reactions to create ephemeral, phantom-like prints from rusting metal. Visit www.theartleague.org or 703-683-1780.

Book Talk. 7-9 p.m. Gregory May's book, "Jefferson's Treasure: How Albert Gallatin Saved the New Nation from Debt," is more than a biography. Via the long life of Gallatin, May gives an insightful account of the major political, economic, and financial problems the young U.S. faced from the Washington administration through the Mexican War. RSVP to admin@nvfaa.org.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 14

After the Flood. 6-8 p.m. at Lloyd House, 220 North Washington St., Alexandria. A "Newgrass"/folk Americana string band with soaring harmonies. After the Flood members John Linn, Laura Ertabbakh, and Alys Willman started singing together at Saint Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. in 2010. In 2015, percussionist Zack Gleiberman brought in the rhythm, and cellist Maxfield Wollam-Fisher and bassist Matt Wharton joined in 2016. Visit www.fsgw.org.

Public Reception: 'Juxtaposed.' 7-10 p.m. at Target Gallery at The Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. New exhibition explores the Art of Contradiction and investigates opposing or conflicting

themes through art. The exhibition features 25 artworks by 12 artists from all over the country. Juxtaposed was juried by Megan Rook-Koepsel, a D.C.-based independent curator. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 15

Kayak Cleanups at Four Mile Run. 9 a.m.-noon. The event starts out at The Conservatory Center at Four Mile Run Park, 4109 Mt Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Parking details will be provided to those who RSVP. The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation will continue to deploy its fleet of kayaks to collect litter along the streambank of Four Mile Run this Fall, following the efforts over the summer 2018. Visit www.fourmilerun.org for more.

Firefighting History Walking Tour. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at 107 South Alfred St., Alexandria. Come to the Friendship Firehouse Museum and explore Alexandria's firefighting history on the "Blazing a Trail: Alexandria's Firefighting History" tour. Participants will learn about volunteer firefighting in early Alexandria, three devastating fires, and the five volunteer fire companies. Beginning at the historic Friendship Firehouse, the tour proceeds east on Prince Street, and returns via King Street. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$4 ages 10-17. Reservations are required. Purchase tickets at www.alexandriava.gov/shop or by calling 703-746-4994 or 703-746-3891.

Civil War Shelter Program at Fort Ward. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Can you tell a Sibley tent from a dog tent? How did Civil War soldiers stay warm in camp? This interpretive program will explore a variety of tents and shelter for Civil War soldiers. Reproductions of some major types of period tents will be set up and explained by Union Army interpreters, and Fort Ward's furnished Officers' Hut, a typical military structure in the Defenses of Washington, will be open to the public. Call 703-746-4848.

Catch a Critter. Noon-1:30 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Grab a net and work with a park scientist to see, touch, and study wetland creatures up close and personal. Use magnifying lenses to study their unique characteristics and find out what these little animals can tell us about their home. This rare opportunity to dip-net in the wetland is possible through the guidance of park naturalists. \$9 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Learn to Cha Cha. 3:30 p.m. at Duncan Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Martha E. Garcia will teach participants to Cha Cha. This event is great for beginners, and free to all. No partner necessary, but feel free to bring one. More lessons will follow as the library celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month in September and October. Visit alexlibraryva.org for more.

Alexandria Symphony 75th Anniversary. 4 p.m. at Virginia Theological Seminary, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria. The concert will feature ASO musicians, led by Maestro James Ross. Audiences will enjoy a mix of patriotic tunes, Broadway hits and light classical favorites. The one-hour format will suit families and novice symphony-goers with accessible music and an introductory performance by students from Sympatico, the ASO's before- and after-school music program at John Adams Elementary School. Lawn tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for

ENTERTAINMENT



Solo Painting Exhibition

Featuring work by Barry Barnett Keith, a graduate of T.C. Williams and The University of Delaware Art School. Opening reception, Friday, Sept. 7, 5-8 p.m. at Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Call 301-518-9093.

CALENDAR

youth (18 and under). Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885.

Country-Western Dance. Lessons, 6-7 p.m.; open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. Potluck Anniversary Dance, bring a dish to share. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

Cinema Del Ray Outdoor Movies. 7 p.m. at Mt. Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Free. Bring family, friends, neighbors and a blanket to watch these open-air movies including The Lion King, The Lego Batman Movie, Toy Story 3, Cars 3 and Coco at Cinema Del Ray, sponsored by The Jen Walker Team. Visit www.facebook.com/cinemadelray.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 15-16

Ice Cream Bowl Fundraiser. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. at the King Street Art Festival, Market Square, corner of King and N. Fairfax streets. Purchase one of more than 1,400 handmade bowls created by the artists of The Art League's Ceramics Department and enjoy a scoop of ice cream. Proceeds benefit The Art League's Ceramics department. Participants in the Ice Cream Bowl Fundraiser may enter a free drawing to win ceramic artwork and an Art League gift certificate. \$15 per bowl. Visit www.theartleague.org for more.

Crafts at Carlyle. 12-4 p.m. at Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Free to the public. To coincide with the King Street Art Festival, children will be able to create their own piece of art at Carlyle House to take home. Children will get the chance to paint their own version of a floorcloth, a popular 18th Century floor covering. Visit www.novaparks.com.

SATURDAY/SEPT 15-SUNDAY/SEPT 16

King Street Art Festival. Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-5

p.m. at King Street in Alexandria, from Washington Street to the waterfront. Free. The street is transformed into an outdoor art gallery with original fine artwork by more than 200 artists from around the country. Enjoy live music, and interactive art activities, as well as The Art League's Ice Cream Bowl Fund-raiser and the Torpedo Factory Art Center's Beer & Wine Torpedo Garden, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. both days. Visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/artfest or call 703-746-3301, or www.ArtFestival.com.

Mount Vernon Colonial Market & Fair. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Visit with colonial artisans who demonstrate and sell traditional wares such as baskets, wood carvings, tin and ironwork, leather-workings, weavings, furniture, and food. Watch 18th-century shows, including a puppet show, a fire-eating act and a balloon launch and listen to colonial music. Costumed interpreters will be demonstrating the 18th-century chocolate-making process using an authentic colonial recipe. Potomac River sightseeing cruises are available at half price. Included in general admission (\$20 adults; \$12 youth). Call 703-780-2000 or visit www.MountVernon.org.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 16

Constitution Day. 1 p.m. at Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. The George Washington Chapter, Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution, will be commemorating Constitution Day. The Rev. Tom Costa will be portraying Rev. Lee Massey, the colonial rector of Pohick Church, which was the parish church of George Washington and George Mason and is the final resting place of 15 Patriots of the American Revolution. Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution by 39 brave men on Sept. 17, 1787.

9/11 Heroes Run. 2 p.m. at Sandburg Middle School. Race to honor the military and first responders and remember those who died on 9/11 and in the wars since. Registration and sponsorship info for the event is on the Travis Manion Foundation

Site: www.travismanion.org/community-engagement/911-heroes-run/2018-alexandria-va/.

Opening Reception: Michael

Borek. 2-4 p.m. at Multiple Exposures Gallery, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. "Aimless Walk Reprise" presents 22 photographs taken by Michael Borek in his native Czech Republic. Over the last 10 years, Borek continued to return to photograph an old blue-collar neighborhood in Prague, where he grew up. Visit www.multipleexposuresgallery.com.

The Cabinet of Curiosities. 4-6 p.m. Opening Reception at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. The exhibition features works by specially-invited artists who have exhibited at the Athenaeum in the past, as well as works selected through an open call for submissions. This year's invitational asked artists to explore any aspect of Cabinets of Curiosities both literal and abstract. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

MONDAY/SEPT. 17

Virginia Room Genealogy. 7-8:30 p.m. at Martha Washington Public Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Laura Wickstead, Librarian of the Virginia Room, City of Fairfax Regional Library, will discuss the numerous genealogical resources of the Virginia Room. Jointly sponsored by Martha Washington Library and Mount Vernon Genealogical Society. Free, open to public. Visit www.mvgenealogy.org.

Ballroom Dance Classes. 7-9 p.m. In Alexandria, call for location. Dance instructor Gary Stephens teaches Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing, Salsa, Merengue, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Samba. Discover techniques that will help you become a relaxed and confident social dancer in these small, personalized dance classes. Beginners and experienced dancers welcomed, no partner needed. \$30 per person; \$55 per couple. Visit www.artofballroomdance.com or call 703-505-5998.

Learn to Salsa. 7:30 p.m. at Duncan Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Martha E. Garcia will teach participants to Salsa. Great for beginners, and free to all. No partner necessary, but feel free to bring one. Visit alexlibraryva.org.

Mount Vernon Travel 2018

Friends and Family Weekend Trips

Atlantic City Beach Trip

Saturday, September 29 • Cost: \$35 Per Person

Price includes: Round Trip Bus Transportation to Atlantic City Boardwalk and shopping. Bus departs from the Mount Vernon VA area at 8:00 AM and returns at 10:00 PM. Must be at least 21 years of age.

Lancaster Day Trip

Saturday November 17 • Cost: \$120 Per Person

Price Includes: Round Trip Bus Transportation to Lancaster PA., Kitchen Kettle Village Shopping Home for the Holidays Show at American Music Theatre at 3:00 PM, Dinner at Hershey Farm Restaurant. Bus Departs from the Mount Vernon VA area at 8:00 AM and returns at 10:00 PM

New York City Day Trip

Saturday December 8

Cost: \$165.00 Per Person (Includes Show Tickets) • Bus Only: \$75

Price includes: Round Trip Bus Transportation to New York City and Admission to the Radio City Christmas Spectacular show at 11:30 AM (Seating in the 3rd Mezzanine) Bus departs from the Mount Vernon VA area at 5:00 AM and returns at 10:00 PM.

Call now to reserve your seats!

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This powerful Pulitzer prize winning drama examines a family as it returns to Oklahoma to care for their afflicted, manipulative mother who reigns over the home as family secrets unfold. (Mature themes and language)

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NEWS

Honoring Neighborhood Health

FROM PAGE 5
 access to primary care for low-income and uninsured individuals in Northern Virginia. During his presentation, Krizek read the General Assembly resolution and highlighted the following clause: "Over its two decades in operation, Neighborhood Health has remained committed to the idea that all people deserve access to quality health care; its talented doctors, nurses, and staff members have improved the quality of life for countless residents of Northern Virginia."

Khan expressed his appreciation to Krizek and to other General Assembly members who supported the resolution: "For more than two decades, our driving focus at Neighborhood Health has been to expand access to primary care for low-income and uninsured Northern Virginians. Underpinning this work is our belief that everyone in our community — regardless of their income, background, or whether or not they have health insurance — should have access to health care."

Neighborhood Health's growth has spanned across all programs, including primary medical care as well as dental care, behavioral health, medication assistance, and HIV care. In the past 12 months, Neighborhood Health served more than 20,000 patients,

including more than 10,000 without health insurance, in 12 clinics across the City of Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County.

Khan added, "We are grateful to our state, county, and local public officials and to our supporters and community partners for supporting our mission. Our goal is to serve over 22,500 patients by 2019, a 60 percent increase from 2016. We look forward to the work that lies ahead."



Del. Paul Krizek with Dr. Basim Khan, executive director, and Board President Tom Greesonon on the occasion of receiving the General Assembly Resolution.

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PHOTO BY RICHARD MAPLE

West Potomac quarterback JT Mayo reaches the ball over the goal line for one of his three rushing touchdowns against Lake Braddock on Aug. 31.

Playing Well in Defeat

QB accounts for 4 touchdowns against Lake Braddock.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Down 15 points and facing fourth and goal from the 1-yard line, West Potomac quarterback JT Mayo received a reason to panic in the form of a shotgun snap sailing over his head.

But rather than lose his composure, the junior signal caller turned around, scooped up the ball, headed to his right and strolled into the end zone for a second quarter touchdown against Lake Braddock.

Mayo gave West Potomac fans a glimpse of his playmaking abilities during an otherwise rough weekend for the Wolverines, accounting for four touchdowns during a 50-28 loss to the Bruins in Burke.

The game between former Patriot District foes started on Friday, Aug. 31, but lightning suspended the contest with Lake Braddock leading by 36-21 with 4:11 remaining in the third quarter.

Play resumed the following morning, and the Bruins took control on the first play with an 18-yard touchdown pass from Billy Edwards to Ben Dizon on fourth and goal.

After opening the season with a win over Briar Woods, West Potomac stumbled against Lake Braddock, turning the ball over four times and allowing 50 points in a game for the first time since surrendering 53 to South County on Oct. 30, 2015, according to maxpreps.com.

"We've got to learn to make plays," West Potomac head coach Jeremiah Ross said. "We're a young team. ... We've got to learn from it."

Mayo was a bright spot for West Potomac. The first-year varsity starter passed for 255 yards and a touchdown and rushed for 129 yards and three more scores, including a 90-yard touchdown run that cut the Lake Braddock lead to 22-21 with 4:02 remaining in the second quarter.

"He's a stud," Ross said. "He's a competitor. He's

the heartbeat of our team. ... He's definitely a leader."

Mayo, part of a West Potomac offense that includes 11 new starters, experienced a few rough patches, as well, throwing a pair of interceptions and losing a fumble.

Ross hinted that standout Lake Braddock linebacker Josh Ahern, who is committed to the University of Virginia, might have had something to do with Mayo's struggles.

"He's still young, he's still learning," Ross said. "He missed a few throws. When it comes down to it, we've got to be better up front. We've got to protect him better; the guys know that. ... When you can't set your feet, it's a lot harder. When you've got a UVa commit basically spying you the whole time and he's [a] 6 foot 3, 6 foot 4, 215-pound dude that's trying to take your head off, I [wouldn't] really want to do that."

Mayo's family moved from Hawaii to Virginia prior to his sophomore year of high school. He was a member of the West Potomac junior varsity team in 2017.

His father, Neal Mayo, is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. Along with Hawaii and Virginia, Mayo has lived in Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, New York, Kansas and North Carolina.

"[As a] military child," Mayo said, "I'm used to moving." Mayo connected with Gabe Tose seven times for 89 yards against Lake Braddock. Justin Bassett caught four passes for 34 yards and a touchdown. Quaronde Bennett had four receptions for 43 yards.

Ross also praised the performance of junior lineman Keyshawn Suber.

"He makes tons of plays on defense, he's a dynamic kid on defense and a heck of a lineman with great feet," Ross said. "He's coming along. ... He's figuring it out and starting to become that kind of leader."

Next up for West Potomac is a trip to Vienna on Sept. 7 to take on Madison. Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.

"Lake Braddock, they had a good team," Mayo said. "We're definitely better than we showed today. We'll fix it up, come back next week and be ready for Madison."

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Poise Under Pressure – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I don't want to self-indulge too much, but given the potentially life-changing seriousness of my upcoming Sept. 26 CT scan, I'm having a little trouble getting myself started in the morning – and throughout the day also, if you must know the truth? (I realize you all have your own lives to lead so that last sentence-ending question was more rhetorical than actual.)

Nevertheless, if you're still reading, you're still interested so I'll try to string together some "insightful commentary and thoughtful humor," (an original characterization of my columns) to keep you on the page. Although, given the subject of this week's column, it might be hard to tiptoe through the tulips.

The difficulty I'm having is being unable to ignore, "totally," (my mother loved to mimic the generation that popularized that word) the reality of my situation.

Typically, I've been able to maintain a relative calm and detached disposition as I go from one cancer-related thing to another. None of the tasks I must perform or the responsibilities I've assimilated into a routine (24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, chemotherapy, quarterly CT scans, annual brain MRI, quarterly appointments with my oncologist, have changed who I like to think I am compared to who I was pre-cancer diagnosis, 2/27/09; despite having the weight of a "terminal" diagnosis/original "13 month to two year" prognosis on my shoulders/literally in my lungs.

To quote Popeye the Sailor Man: "I y'am who I y'am." (And I still don't like spinach, certainly not out of a can.)

And though I've done a pretty good job of flicking these flakes of pressure and anxiety off my shoulders like unwanted dandruff, the fact is – as with dandruff shampoo or any other personal hygiene product for that matter – unless one is diligent, vigilant and cognizant of its likely recurrence, nothing will change.

Unfortunately, cancer doesn't quite react that way. It will change and it can overwhelm even your best efforts and can cause harm not only internally but externally as well (emotionally). Fending off these emotional pressures is challenging and dare I say, presents as many problems as the growth and movement of one's tumors and the side effects of one's treatment does.

What makes my present situation feel different and a bit off-putting is that what has happened has happened after nearly five years of relative peace and quiet (I was never characterized as in "remission," by the way). It seems the possibility of having to go back, so to speak, and return to the scene of the crime – against my body/life expectancy; and moreover, having to restart the process, ratchets up the stress to previously unknown heights.

And part of me is wondering (worrying actually) if I'm up to the challenge again, emotionally and of course, physically as well; whether my body can sustain the damage its likely to experience if we have to reload.

I use the word 'reload' for a reason. Without invoking too many war metaphors, being diagnosed with cancer is like being drafted into the Army, except you have little training for the battles you're about to fight. And as much as fighting against cancer is a battle, it's more a war against attrition in which the bad guys (cancer) regularly defeat the good guys (people diagnosed with cancer). In general, the cancer experience is no picnic.

It reminds me of a long-ago M*A*S*H episode in which the doctors operated through a particularly difficult surgical session after which Henry (Lt. Col. Blake) and "Hawkeye" (Capt. Pierce) went outside the operating room/tent for some relief. "Hawkeye" clearly agitated over a patient he couldn't save; Henry tried to offer him some comfort with the following words: "There are certain rules about war. And rule number one is young men die. And rule number two is, doctors can't change rule number one."

What scares me about cancer is, it follows no rules and like war, leaves devastation in its wake. I just hope I'm not about to be another casualty.

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

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OPINION

Redistricting

FROM PAGE 6

week's special session, the Democratic caucus introduced a map that complied with all constitutional requirements. The potential map would affect 29 total districts. (It will not affect the 44th District.) Instead of working jointly on a potential new map, Republicans spent most of the day criticizing the Democratic map in the Privileges and Election Committee without introducing any map of their own. Their strategy seems to depend on delaying the redrawing in the hopes of the court's decision being reversed by the Supreme Court. However, just after the special session adjourned last Thursday, the district court denied the House Republicans' request for a stay of the June 26 court order, meaning a new map will have to be drawn in the near future. House Republicans also voted against a floor amendment requiring the house to meet again on Sept. 12 to address the issue and against a motion in committee to hold public hearings on Sept. 8 followed by another meeting on the 12th.

Then there is 2021. That will be the next year when we have elections in newly drawn state legislative districts, beyond what may happen next year, because every 10 years state legislatures redraw district lines based on data collected from the Federal census. The Constitution of Virginia gives the General Assembly great flexibility to define the boundaries for election districts, requiring only that "Every electoral district shall be composed of contiguous and compact territory and shall be so constituted as to give, as nearly as practicable, representation in proportion to the population of the district."

This rebalancing happens every 10 years to ensure communities have proper representation in accordance with population changes. The best practice should always be to update these districts without political bias, keeping communities of interest together, and in a way that ensures voters receive fair and just representation.

Gerrymandering is not a Republican or Democratic idea. The term dubiously honors Elbridge Gerry, who after the 1810 census arranged for an election district boundary in Massachusetts with an unusual shape that supposedly resembled a salamander, and hence the name, "gerrymander." Both parties have used the practice for their own advantage. This practice needs to stop. This is why the Democrats have introduced numerous proposals to take the power away from legislators and end gerrymandering. Since 2002, Democrats have introduced 87 bills to fight partisan gerrymandering while Republicans have only introduced three. I cosponsored legislation in 2016 and 2017 which would amend the Constitution to create nonpartisan redistricting commissions. All of these bills were defeated in the House. I remain steadfastly committed to creating non-partisan redistricting in Virginia. We saw what can happen last year when our two parties worked together for the betterment of Virginia with the expansion of Medicaid. We need that same attitude now to ensure a fair electoral process.

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