

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 20, 2018



From Amazon to Shutdown

Kaine and Warner comment on the topics of the day at Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce roundtable.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE GAZETTE

I've been wrong before, so who knows? But I don't think we will see a government shutdown over this budget and the border wall."

That was U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine's opinion at a roundtable discussion with his colleague U.S. Sen. Mark Warner. The event was hosted by the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, held at the Arlington campus of George Mason University, and moderated by NBC4 News Northern Virginia Bureau Chief, Julie Carey.

The question of a possible government shutdown with its disproportionate effect on Northern Vir-



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER

U.S. Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine and NBC4 News Virginia Bureau Chief Julie Carey trade questions and answers at a discussion hosted by the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

ginia was one that the audience of area businesses, nonprofits and local government representatives were anxious to hear.

"There are two bipartisan options on the table for the President to choose from," added Kaine, and if neither is to his liking, Kaine said

that Congress could still move forward and "kick the can" with one or more Continuing Resolutions. "We can write the checks two months at a time."

Warner agrees, while noting the situation is somewhat better than it has been during past similar circumstances.

"There are seven appropriation bills ready for signing," he said. "Seventy-five percent of the needs are already funded through the regular rules of order."

Border security is the last piece, with the president threatening the shutdown if Congress doesn't provide him with the \$5 billion he's asking to build the border wall. "We're still waiting for that check from Mexico [that Trump keeps promising]," Warner joked.

Warner is not opposed to spending on border security. He just doesn't see the value in massive spending on a wall or fence that would also require maintenance and manning. Spending on drones and other proven technologies would garner his support, "and would be more effective and cost a lot less now and in the future."

The same applies when it comes to defense spending, which the senators say that the President wants to increase. "Virginia would certainly benefit from more de-

fense spending," said Kaine, but he doesn't think it's really a good idea or the right answer.

WARNER WORRIES that this administration is going all in "to buy the best of 20th century stuff" instead of focusing on what's needed to fight the "real battles of today."

Both men see that fight as cyber wars and attacks of misinformation — "taking place daily" declared Warner — and the surpassing of the United States in technology and trade by China, Russia and others. None of these "real, modern threats" will be won by the addition of another battleship or even more troops.

Calling the government's lack of preparedness and outdated networks and devices "stupid on steroids," Warner gave examples of continuing purchases of devices without even the most basic of safeguards. "We are literally adding to our own vulnerability."

Warner will be pushing for a cohesive "cyber strategy" going forward and thinks that Virginia could become the Cyber Capital, since no one else has yet laid claim to that title and role.

WHAT ABOUT the addition of Amazon in the senator's own backyard?

"It's a game-changer for the region," in Warner's view, praising Gov. Ralph Northam and the many others who worked on the deal to make it possible. Warner also sees the Amazon addition as another building block to the growth of a local economy that he says has continued to experience "real weakness" and a "level of vulnerability" post-sequestration. He also hopes that Amazon and the support services that will follow in its wake will help stem the decline of millennials in the region.

Risking what he said might be considered a "little bit of heresy" to say with an Arlington crowd, Warner has his fingers crossed, and will do what he can to encourage some "down-state" job benefits from those support services.

Kaine noted that the Amazon move, while fairly well accepted throughout the Commonwealth, received a resounding 90 percent approval rating from Virginians in the Appalachians.

"They see the connection with our shared successes."

Both Kaine and Warner agree that the arrival of Amazon poses challenges, but provides the best opportunity to add impetus to working on two of the region's biggest problems: affordable housing and workforce development.

Kaine sees Amazon's choice of Virginia as one of their new headquarters as an affirmation of the workforce quality that the state can offer, but warns that it is critical to work toward producing that workforce, rather than allowing local companies to merely "cannibalize each others' best workers."

Work has already begun to up
SEE FROM AMAZON, PAGE 10



Fairfax County Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) meets with U.S. Sen. Mark Warner after the discussion. McKay says he agrees that the Amazon deal was an affirmation of Virginia and its workforce. The supervisor also said he and the board were willing to participate in any way necessary to continue the press for affordable housing and to invest in workforce development.

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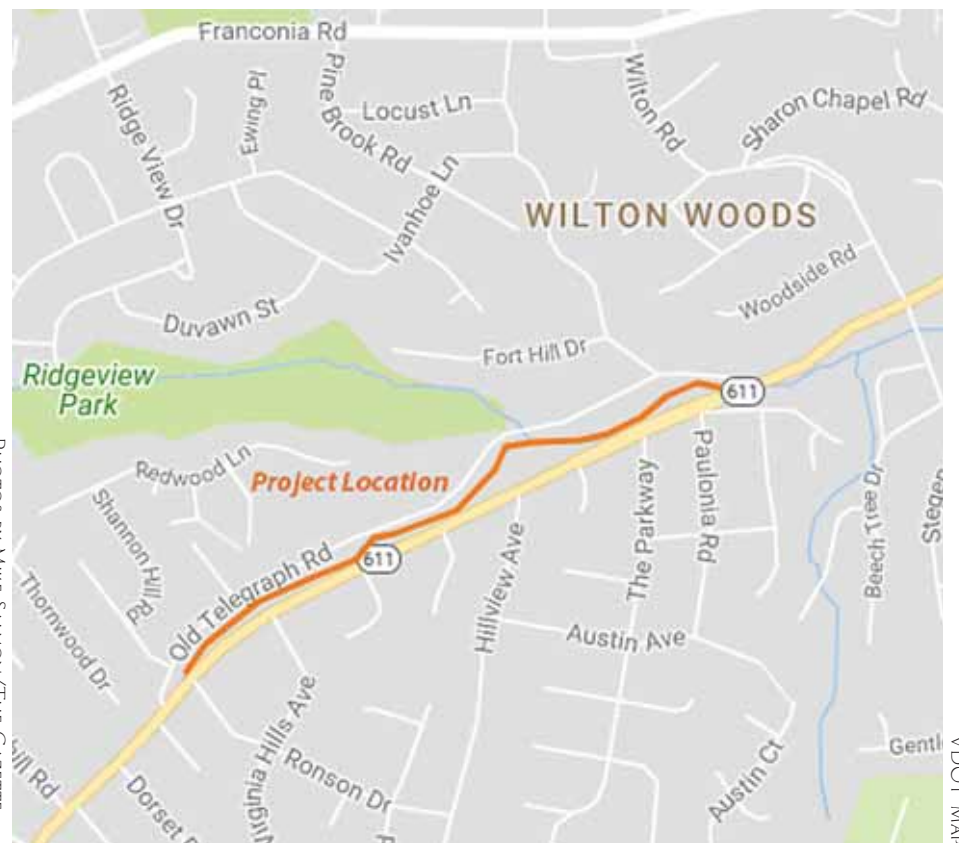
During the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to our communities and to our clients. From our family to yours, we hope your holidays are filled with warmth and cheer.

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A portion of Old Telegraph Road was washed out at Pike's Branch in Alexandria.



Pike Run is near the Virginia Hills-Wilton Woods area.

Plan for Stream Restoration Includes Cutting Down Trees

Pike's Branch in Alexandria is under VDOT's microscope.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The rainfall and natural stream erosion processes took their toll on a section of Old Telegraph Road recently, causing some of the pavement to collapse so the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) went into action, reinforcing the stream and rebuilding Old Telegraph Road in Wilton Woods.

This prompted engineers to take a closer look at this section of road beside Pikes Branch, a stream that is sandwiched between Telegraph Road and Old Telegraph Road, and now the "Pike's Branch Stream Restoration," project is taking shape.

"A long-term project is currently in design
SEE PIKE'S BRANCH, PAGE 4



Trees have been marked in the stream bed. VDOT plans to "re-store" about a mile along Pikes Branch, sandwiched between Telegraph Road and Old Telegraph Road to prevent more erosion.



Joe Parfitt, a VDOT engineer from Richmond, hands out the plans for Pikes Branch on the walk-through.

Working To Improve Traffic Flow at Lorton Intersection

A "network problem" that includes traffic to I-95.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck has the intersection at Lorton Road and Silverbrook Road in the crosshairs for some design changes to improve the flow of traffic.

At the Lorton Road-Silverbrook Road Intersection Improvements meeting on Dec. 12, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation highlighted four options and gathered input for a future project. "For this community around here, it is a big deal," he said. "As it's gotten busier, the turn lanes have gotten more crowded," Storck said.

At the meeting, Dale Johnson, a South County Federation member, has seen the results of back-ups that occur at the intersection. When a car gets in the thru-lane, it cuts over to turn on Silverbrook at the last

minute, posing a safety hazard.

"That's the road rage issue," Johnson said.

According to the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, "the study identifies intersection improvements that enhance the intersection operations and increase capacity, specifically through Silverbrook Road's southbound left-turn movement and Lorton Road's westbound right-turn movement. In addition, the goal of the study is to address any safety or operational deficiencies found through the existing conditions analysis, and address any other modes of transportation needs," the project description read.

The idea to look at this intersection was first brought up in 2012 when the county looked at the traffic on Lorton Road. "This kind of opened the door for this study," said Ryan Knight, a FCDOT traffic engineer. The options include adding a turn lane from

SEE FOCUSING ON, PAGE 4



Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck (D) discusses the plan with a resident.

Focusing on Lorton, Silverbrook Roads

FROM PAGE 3

Lorton Road to Silverbrook Road, overlapping the signal pattern, adding a median island with a freeflow lane, and implementing dual right turn lanes.

Through analysis and traffic counts, Alternative 4 seemed to get the best score. This alternative is currently priced at \$1.2 million and would involve dual turn lanes from Lorton Road to Silverbrook, and three left turn lanes from Silverbrook Road to Lorton Road, which goes to I-95.

The “no build” option was also part of the study. “If we don’t do anything, the intersection will be an LOS F,” said Knight. LOS is Level of Service and F is the lowest grade.

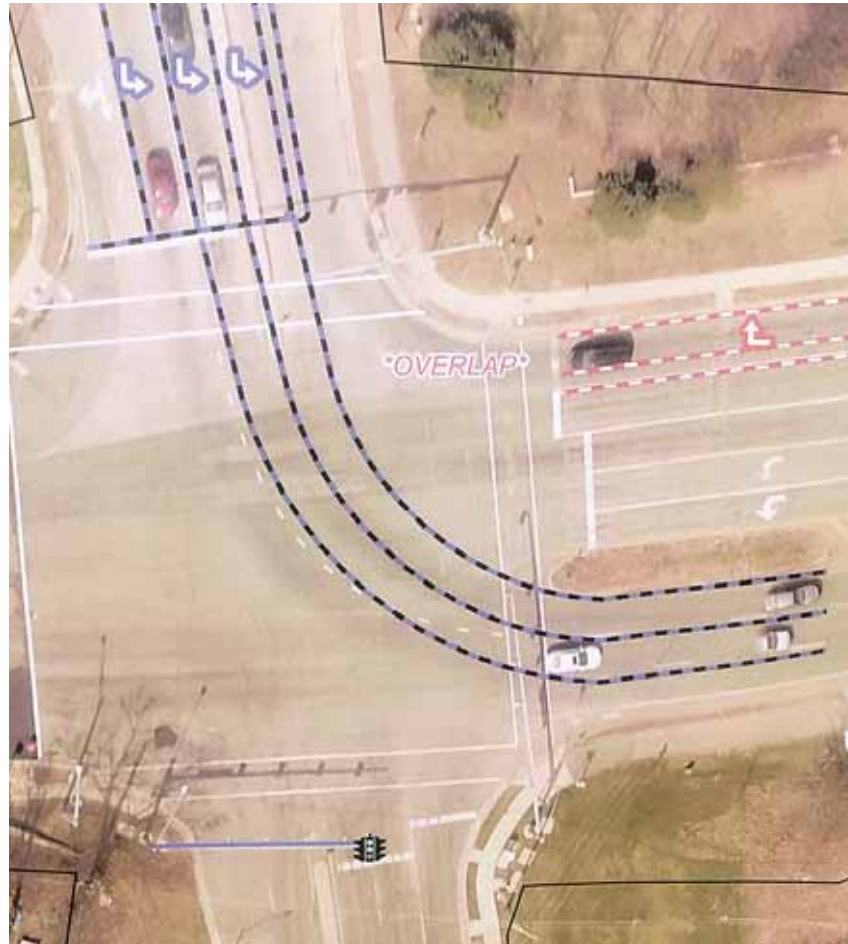
Although the increased traffic through this intersection can’t be attributed to a new development or apartment complex, one of the attendees said it was due to the cut-through traffic using Lorton Road to Route 123 going to Prince William County.

Knight was looking at the bigger picture. “We’re trying to fix a problem that’s a network problem,” he said.

“This is all before Amazon,” one audience member joked.

The study will be done in 2019, but beyond that, there is no funding or start date in place. “We don’t have that at this point,” said Knight.

The deadline for comments on this project is Jan. 9, 2019.



Alternative 4 shows turn lanes increased on both roads.

Pike’s Branch

FROM PAGE 3

to restore about 5,500 linear feet of Pikes Branch and tributaries between Telegraph Road and Old Telegraph Road,” read the VDOT description on its website.

Engineers gathered with residents and elected officials for a site visit on Dec. 12 to discuss project specifics and point out elements of the plan. The group, which amounted to about 50 people, walked along Old Telegraph Road, while VDOT engineer Joe Parfitt, from the VDOT Central Office, pointed out features and answered questions.

To the residents of Wilton Woods, the trees and bushes were a big concern because they provide a buffer between the houses and busy Telegraph Road. “It’s a huge problem for us,” said Samantha Mulvaney, a resident whose house fronts the stream. “It’s really coverage that we’re losing, sound barrier we’re losing,” she said. Deer that lived along the stream are now gathering in her yard.

VDOT put in yellow tape to mark the approximate clearing boundary, which will include some of the trees. They have also included a replanting diagram so some of the vegetation will be replaced but will not be as robust until it has regrown over time. Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) was among the walkers at the meeting. He’s heard from some of his constituents. “This is a big concern,” he said, but noting that it must be done to stop further erosion. “We’re going to save as much as possible,” he said.

The VDOT Central Office is leading the project and the VDOT Northern Virginia office is providing support.

Construction is expected to start in spring 2019 and be completed in late 2020.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE



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Members of Shiloh Church of God in Christ pose with some of the toys collected during the Toys for Tots drive.

Bringing Happiness to Children

Local church provides over 1,000 toys to families in need.

Shiloh Church of God in Christ is making sure area families in need can experience the joy of opening presents under their own trees. Church members traveled 100 miles to Charlottesville, Va., to collect more than 1,000 toys donated through the United States Marine Corps Reserves' annual Toys for Tots initiative.

"We've been doing this for about four years now and the response is just tremendous," said Shiloh Church of God in Christ, Pastor Floyd C. Hawkins. "We started with about 50 families and have now served over 250 in Alexandria alone."

The volunteer effort has made its biggest impact on area families, many of whom have fallen on hard times. "I've been between jobs this year and the year before, and the members of Shiloh really came through," said Marsha Jackson-Lites, a grandmother of three. "I put the toys under the tree the night before and wake up to my grandkids shouting about all the gifts they've gotten. It warms my heart to see them light up like that. There's no way I could've done that without the toys from the church."

First Lady Linda R. Hawkins, acting director of the missions department, said the number of those needing assistance has grown in recent years. "We've always seen a steady increase in requests, but this year we've seen a jump in the number of families requesting assistance. We are just blessed that so far we have been able to help them all."

Husband and wife duo LaVaughn and Crystal Lawrence, both church members and parents of three, traveled to Charlottesville with LaVaughn Lawrence's brother Romarr after a long day's work



Ten-year-old church volunteer Stephon Fortune-Lawrence stands next to some of the donated toys collected during the Shiloh Church of God in Christ toy drive.

to load the toys into their vehicles.

"The drive was long but I'm happy to do it for the kids," LaVaughn Lawrence said.

"I love kids, and to be able to help other parents who might not be able to provide for their kids is priceless to me," said Crystal Lawrence.

Felisha Bailey, the church's hospitality coordinator, arranged for the pick up with longtime Toys for Tots distributor Angie Jefferson. "We've been collecting toys from Angie for a few years now. She separates toys by the ages of the children on our needy families list making it easier for our hospitality team to provide a memorable Christmas for each individual child."

"As long as there are requests from families, we will be doing our best to fill them," said Pastor Hawkins, who recently celebrated his 30th pastoral anniversary at the Shiloh Church of God in Christ. "I served this great country in the Air Force for four years and will continue to serve those in my community for as long as I am able."

Shiloh Church of God in Christ is a non-profit religious organization affiliated with the international six million member strong Church of God in Christ, Inc. Visit scogicva.org.



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8734 Lukens Lane
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

Merry Christmas

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

The pages of the Connection Newspapers (including the Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Potomac Almanac and the Centre View) have been full of holiday spirit, beginning before Thanksgiving. Group and individual efforts to help the needy, holiday parades, Santa arriving by boat, Santa arriving by horse-drawn carriage, Santa arriving by tractor-pulled hayride, Santa arriving at the Malls, tree lightings, Menorah lightings, stories of giving, secular celebrations, religious celebrations. Shopping locally. Giving locally.

Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, with the promise of redemption.

It is also about embracing the teachings of Jesus: to love thy neighbor as thyself; to help the needy; to feed the hungry and clothe the poor; to care for those who are sick; to invite and welcome strangers; to treat others as you would have them treat you.

Matthew 7:12:

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 25:35-40:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or

thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

SO LET US SHARE the verse relating the birth of Jesus from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David.) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds

said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

— MARY KIMM

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Editor's Note About The Rest of 2018

This is our last regular edition of 2018. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish our annual Children's Issue, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. You'll be able to find this online at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> Scroll down to Children's.

Our next regular edition will publish Jan. 2-3, 2019, with deadline for content and advertising of Dec. 28 (late ads accepted).

In the meantime you can email the editors at editors@connectionnewspapers.com. You can reach sales/marketing/advertising at sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

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Small Advances Against Predatory Lending

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)



Predatory lending — imposing abusive terms and high interest rates on borrowers regardless of ability to pay — is a nagging problem in Virginia, the 36th Senate District and especially in the U.S. 1 Corridor. I will introduce legislation in January to end to these abusive practices.

There are many kinds of high-interest or predatory loans. First, payday loans are loans that are secured against a consumer's paycheck. In 2009, the Virginia General Assembly enacted restrictions on payday loans which caused the practice to scale back to about six locations in and around the 36th District.

In 2010-11, some of the same companies went back to Richmond and persuaded the legislature to authorize car title loans. Today, in Northern Virginia car title loans are offered by companies like Title Max, Loan Max, Advance America, Cash Point or Fast Auto Loans. These companies are allowed to make loans at interest rates between 15-22 percent per month or up to an annual percentage rate (APR) of 267 percent. Several locations have shut down. The number of locations has gone from 21 to 12 around the 36th District.

In 1918, Virginia created a separate license for consumer finance loans to allow small, low-interest loans, largely in the Hampton Roads area. Historically, these loans were not problematic, but around 2014, the car title loan industry discovered this license, which had no rate interest cap and began co-locating consumer finance companies with car title storefronts and making loans at over 300 percent interest rates. In 2016, I introduced legislation

to prohibit this practice. A Senate committee killed my bill, but only after the car title industry promised to cease this practice. It appears that they have.

More recently, other companies are abusing two new loopholes. First, Virginia law authorizes lenders to use open-end credit lines with no interest rate caps. Historically, this was not a problem, but payday lending companies have begun to use these open-end credit lines to make high interest loans to the same vulnerable consumers. You can go online today and Google “quick cash Virginia” and get a line of credit between \$100-\$3,500 with no credit check at a 299 percent interest rate with a 15 percent “transaction fee” annualizing to an APR of over 500 percent.

However, even more egregious is the practice of internet lending. Sensing pending regulation at the federal level, many companies began entering into contracts with Native

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OPINION

Investing in Public Education

BY PAUL KRIZEK
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)

As a Commonwealth, one of the most important investments we can make is in the education and safety of our children. I was thrilled to see Governor Northam's plan to invest 268 million new dollars in K-12 education. These dollars will be spent giving our teachers a much deserved five percent pay raise effective July 1, 2019, supplementing our At-Risk Add-On Program which targets economically disadvantaged schools, and boosting the state's per pupil allocation, a flexible funding pool local school divisions can use to supplement general aid. In addition to much needed funding increases there will be numerous pieces of legislation to consider during the legislative session. Today, I am excited to discuss two education bills I will be introducing in the General Assembly three weeks from now.

The first bill is an idea I came up with while serving on the House Select Committee on School Safety. This committee and my subcommittee each met four times since last session to discuss ways we can make our schools safer. Speaker Cox released a list of 24 final recommendations, including my recommendation that Election Day should be a school holiday. The reasoning behind this idea is simple, it makes schools safer for our children. On Election Day, thousands of people are allowed access to schools to cast their ballots. Yet, on normal school days, individuals must buzz in to be granted entrance to the school and have a stated purpose to be there. These extra precautions work to ensure that no unauthorized, potentially dangerous individuals can enter a school. It would be impossible for school officials to fully vet each voter entering a school on Election Day while not causing a huge slowdown in lines that could dissuade people from voting. So, the easy solution is to make Election Day a school holiday to make sure our children are not put at any additional risk. I am very hopeful we will be able to pass this important piece of legislation.

The second education bill I plan to introduce is to create a five year pilot "Grow Your Own Teacher"

program. The basic purpose of this program is to increase the number of diverse, homegrown teachers and to incentivize them to teach in low income schools that often face teacher shortages. My bill would create a pilot program that would provide scholarships to students from low income high schools to attend a four year institution. Then, within three years of graduation, scholarship recipients will teach at a high needs school within the same school division from which they graduated high school, for no less than four years. Similar programs across the country have greatly helped to increase teacher diversity with these homegrown educators. As Virginia works to attract and retain excellent educators necessary to meet growing demand, it must also work to address the lack of diversity in our teaching workforce. According to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, minority enrollment in teacher preparation programs has fallen dramatically over the last decade. In 2010-2011, 50 percent of students enrolled in Virginia's teacher preparation programs were minorities, but in 2016-2017 that number had fallen to 33 percent. Currently, only 21 percent of the state's teachers are minorities. Conversely, 49 percent of Virginia's student population was non-white in 2016-2017 up from 39 percent in the 2003-2004. It would be good to have more faculty that are homegrown role models that are representative of our student body. Indeed, the Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline states there are numerous pieces of research indicating "... that a racially representative mix of teachers and administrators can have a strong positive effect on educational outcomes for minority students." These bills are two common sense solutions that will provide for a safer and more nurturing environment for our students. Together, with the new funding proposed by the Governor, they will further our goal to make Virginia a nationwide leader in K-12 education by prioritizing the safety of our children, promoting an elite and diverse workforce, and investing in our schools.



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From Amazon to Shutdown

FROM PAGE 1

date and re-write the “Higher Education Act” and Virginia is the chair of that taskforce. Kaine says there is plenty that can be done at the federal level to encourage employers to “treat their employees like the assets they say they are” with tax incentives, changes to accounting rules, re-do’s of laws that hinder continuing education, and more emphasis on all forms of education, not just four-year college schooling.

On the subject of affordable housing, both men have ideas that they will support.

Kaine believes that Congress can assist by expanding the Low-income Housing Tax Credit. “It’s already a good program” and is a good place to start, rather than trying to “recreate the wheel,” but admits that to date, it’s been a tough sell.

Warner called for a regional housing authority to tackle the issue. The state already has a housing development division and will soon have millions to develop housing initiatives as part of the Amazon deal, but to deal with the problem locally requires local thinking and collaboration in his view.

QUESTIONS ABOUT METRO, transportation and infrastructure were also on the table.

Working together, Virginia, Maryland and the District helped the rail service gain its first dedicated revenue stream this year, but

the additional federal \$150 million per year is not guaranteed year over year. Kaine and Warner are hopeful, with a Democrat-controlled House to be seated in January, but it’s still but something to count on, “but if we can get the \$150 million again, we’ll take the money and run,” said Warner.

The two senators lamented the fact that the anticipated “Infrastructure Bill” is nowhere in sight, with Warner going to so far as to label the Trump Plan “a scam extraordinaire, a shell game ... stealing money from the highways departments and projects” and leaving them unable to repair the country’s crumbling infrastructure. With a “builder President in the White House,” Warner thought that infrastructure work would have been easy for both sides of the aisle and all levels of the government to connect, but sees nothing of consequence taking place. And the last question that Carey posed to the senators? After the mid-term elections, would they now categorize Virginia as a “Blue State?”

Warner wouldn’t say specifically, but he does think that the Northern Virginia delegation to the General Assembly being all Democrats will be a benefit.

Kaine still sees Virginia as “battleground trending Blue,” but if the GOP “keeps putting up cultural warriors and ideologues as their candidates, if that’s the match up — we’re Blue!”



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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Local Playwright Returns with 'Kings'

Studio Theatre presents play about lobbyists and politicians.

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON

You can take the woman out of Washington, but you can't take the Washington out of her. Consider Sarah Burgess, a playwright who hails from Alexandria. In her now-showing play, "Kings," she demonstrates the staying power of this area's pervasive influence. She wrote the script to explore what goes on between lobbyists and politicians.

The comedic plot of "Kings" unfolds around brand new Congresswoman Sydney Millsap as she navigates Washington's terrain — specifically, her dealings with two persistent lobbyists trying to lure her in different political directions with promises of money and power. After a successful opening night on Dec. 12, "Kings" is currently playing at Washington D.C.'s Studio Theatre through Jan. 6, 2019.

"I had been fascinated with the mechanics of political fundraising," the now New York-based Burgess said. "I was interested in a certain reality of how much work politicians and candidates have to do to raise money, especially when they aren't wealthy. I wanted to address how tough, and unpleasant at times, it all can be."

The bureaucracy was a backdrop to Burgess's childhood. With retired United States Navy commanders as parent, she has a keen understanding of the government and its subculture.

"I grew up mostly in the '90s, and my mom and dad worked at the Pentagon for a good portion of that time," Burgess said. "I had a real interest in institutions and I really believed that they worked to a certain degree. They felt very solid to me then. I also loved hearing day-to-day chronicles of people's jobs, especially what went for my mom at the Pentagon: the office jokes and the annoying habits of co-workers. It struck me that all those normal things were happening in this iconic building."

Burgess doesn't just see the government and its processes as fodder for her plays, either. Her interest in the institution is by and large non-partisan, and "Kings" follows suit.

"It's about the system itself," she said.

"Representatives from both parties have voted both ways on these tax and fundraising issues. I did a lot of reading and other research on the topic. After I finished the first draft, I found people who worked in this field. I've found that people who aren't in the entertainment business love to read the scripts and tell me where I got things wrong. It's great. I always want to get it right. So, that's the sort of practice I'll do for everything I write."

"Kings" is Burgess's second play to hit major stages, with its February 2018 world-wide debut at New York City's Public Theater.

"I'm pleased by the reception so far," she said. "I know that, depending on where a theatre is, there are going to be different views that people bring. 'Kings' is a comedy about a part of DC, so I have no idea how it will land here. I'm interested to see how it does."

The whole DC production process has been somewhat of a homecoming for her, and she herself is looking forward to this version of the show.

"It's my second play, but it's the first one I'm coming back home for," she said. "This

is a whole different cast and crew than that of the New York production. That's usually the way it goes because it's the individual different theaters that buy rights to the play. I had a great time with the whole cast in New York and I learned a lot from them. I have no training in theater, though, so every production is different. And, being with the

whole DC group rehearsing has been really exciting, too."

Burgess has also made a few trips back to Washington to assist with casting.

"Studio is an amazing theater for playwrights and for directors, so although this is not the first production of the play, Sarah was still involved in our process," Director Marti Lyons said. "We collaborated together on casting, on the production, and on a few developments of the script. She has been a fantastic creative partner along with our dramaturg, Lauren Halvorsen, and our phenomenal cast and design team."

The decision to direct "Kings" was a no-brainer for Lyons.

"I found the text invigorating, funny, and



PHOTO BY TEDDY WOLFE

Elliott Bales, Nehassaiu deGannes, Laura C. Harris, and Kelly McCrann in "Kings."

unsettling," she said. "I liked that the story centered on female characters and follows a series of events as they affect each other's lives. Ultimately, though, the play points to something larger. It engages many questions; one of those questions is, 'Is change possible?' It's one of the many questions I find so resonant and immediate in the piece."

Lyons added that working with a Washingtonian about a Washington-based play was really something special.

"This is my first time working with Sarah Burgess and it has been a pleasure," Lyons said. "It was exciting. I am a Chicagoan who works in DC frequently and loves it here, so I had an outside perspective to share. But several of our cast members, designers and, of course, Sarah, are from DC or have lived here for a long time. It's a nice balance of insider knowledge and outsider observation. Sarah did a lot of research and made many of her own connections in the crafting of the play. Sarah is a brilliant, thorough, very funny writer and she's also a great collaborator."

As thorough as Burgess is, she is not an artist who has been honing her craft forever. While you hear about painters who have been brushing strokes since they could hold a paintbrush, or poets who have been rhyming since they found their voice, this playwright took a little longer to find this passion.

"I suppose I was kind of late to it," Burgess said. "I actually didn't participate in theater programs as a kid at Fairfax County Public Schools. After graduating from West Potomac High School, I went to NYU for its undergraduate film program. It was there that I fell into a group of actor friends, which finally got me acquainted with theater. Then I did a semester abroad in London, where I took a theater class. That's when I started writing plays."

NYU opened Burgess up to a world quite unlike Washington D.C., and she embraced it fully.

"Being at NYU, I got comfortable living in New York," she said. "There is a risk in studying film as opposed to something that

will tie you to a more traditional career. But, a lot of my peers went on to work in the entertainment industry in a number of different ways. It normalized that trajectory in a way. It set me up to get access to the theater community, too. I remember my dad saying, 'Pursue the best job, whatever you want — even if it feels ambitious.'"

Before her first play "Dry Powder" made it to a prominent Off-Broadway stage, Burgess tutored to earn enough money to pay her bills. This left her with evenings to focus on her script work.

"I spent my days tutoring math, going to different high schools around New York," she said. "It was mainly Algebra and basic Geometry. I earned enough so that I could write at night. It put me on the path to get me where I wanted."

It was in 2016 that Burgess first realized one-in-a-million type of success with her play, "Dry Powder." This Wall Street drama also ran at Public Theater and starred some household names, including Claire Danes and John Krasinski.

Still, Burgess remains humble.

"I definitely don't feel 'big time,'" she said. "I haven't had that feeling yet. I always want my writing to be better, especially because these two plays have been my first experiences with big production. Everything about 'Dry Powder' was so surreal, but the actors were so nice and really focused on the play. It was really, really great to see it all come together."

Even after "Kings" finishes its Washington D.C. run, there is more to come from Burgess. Not only does she have a third play that will soon see production, but she also has a number of budding goals and ideas.

"I love musicals and I've sort of talked about one day writing one," she said. "At the end of the day, though, my main ambition is to write a good play. Every time is different, and you just start from nothing. It's exciting to think about because you never know what idea is going to stick."

For information on Studio Theater's production of "Kings," visit www.studiotheatre.org/plays/play-detail/2018-2019-Kings.

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY C. STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Albert Coia, Brian O'Connor, Sherri L. Edelen, Katherine Riddle and Jimmy Mavrikes in MetroStage's production of "Christmas at the Old Bull & Bush."

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

Ring in the New Year

MONDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. 2 p.m.-midnight. This annual New Year's Eve music festival and more takes over Old Town Alexandria with more than 150 performances at 25 warm indoor venues. Come enjoy the Earth Wind & Fire Tribute Band, Bill Kirchen & Too Much Fun Band, Vaughan Ambrose Trio, Magician Mike Rose, R&R DJs and many more entertainers while dancing into the New Year with DJ Ray Casiano. The afternoon's 10th Annual First Night Alexandria Fun Hunt is a fun way to explore Old Town and take a chance on winning great prizes.

- ❖ Afternoon activities: 2-5 p.m. including the 10th Annual First Night Alexandria Fun Hunt
 - ❖ Kids Karnival: 6-9 p.m., families with children 12 years old and younger can enjoy the "Kids Karnival" at Charles Houston (Old Town), William Ramsay (West End) and Mount Vernon (Del Ray) Recreation Centers. There will be face painting, balloons, special hosts in costumes along with carnival-styled games, dancing and fun.
 - ❖ Performances: 7 p.m.-midnight at warm indoor venues throughout Alexandria.
 - ❖ Dancing: 10 p.m. Join the crowd dancing on King Street near the waterfront.
 - ❖ Midnight fireworks: Potomac River at the foot of King Street.
- This family-friendly and fun-filled day culminates with First Night fireworks finale over the Potomac River at midnight. Admission: \$30 Dec. 1-30, 2018; \$35 Dec. 31, 2018. Call 703-746-3299 or visit www.FirstNightAlexandria.com.

more about National Trust Sites, visit savingplaces.org/historic-sites.

Sparkle and Glow: Holiday Show.

Through Jan. 6 at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, located in Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Free admission. The Gallery shines with holiday spirit – unique gifts to give, lovely pieces to wear, and enchanting and decorative works for the home. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work may also be exhibited. Visit www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com.

Art Exhibit – Re:Vision. Through Jan. 6, gallery hours at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. In Re:Vision, Elizabeth Casqueiro reflects on the emotional content of immigration and what it means to push forward with a new life while remaining pulled by the old. Using as springboard two sets of images that represent these

conflicting dynamics, namely retro comic books and lifestyle ads, she investigates the power of visionary myth to propel and restrain, the relinquishing of the precious as a condition to move forward, and the struggle to reconcile who we are, how we are perceived, and who we want to become. Visit www.nfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

Art Exhibit: re-Cog'-ni'-zing / dc.

Through Jan. 6 at The Torpedo Factory Art Center (Studio 21), 105 North Union St., Alexandria. From unique vantage points and unexpected perspectives, painter and architect Milton Shinberg invites viewers to rediscover Washington in watercolor, through his limber brushstroke and clear, glassy palette. Shinberg captures fragments of Washington in luminous watercolor, lingering on details that captivate the mind of an architect and beguile the hand of an artist. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

4 Restaurants to Visit For Christmas Dinner

BY HOPE NELSON

Maybe you've gotten caught up in the holiday spirit and haven't concocted a Christmas menu yet. Or maybe your holiday plans have made a drastic U-turn and now you've got many more (or fewer) guests for dinner than you anticipated. Or maybe you just want to take the pressure off at home for a few hours. No matter the reason, these restaurants have you covered for Christmas dinner.

The Majestic, 911 King St.

Known for its family-style Sunday dinners, the Majestic is opening its doors for Christmas Day with a prix-fixe affair. Start with corn muffins and a relish tray, then move on to soup (butternut squash), salad (Caesar) or dip (Muhammara, hot pepper). Feast on prime rib, turkey breast, salmon or pasta for a main course, and tie everything up neatly with a choice of coconut cake, bread pudding or crème brûlée. Noon-8 p.m. \$65 for adults; \$25 for children 10 and under. Reservations recommended.

Virtue Feed and Grain, 106 S. Union St.

At the other end of King Street from the Majestic, nestled across the street from the river, Virtue Feed and Grain is offering up its own spin on seasonal fare. Its three-course prix-fixe menu offers wintry favorites like baked mac and cheese and pomegranate-orange salad to start, followed by a half-dozen entrée options ranging from braised lamb shank to grilled wild boar chops. Dessert runs the gamut from

peanut butter ice box pie to pumpkin cheesecake with a stopoff at a poached pear. Noon-8 p.m. \$49 for adults; \$25 for children 12 and under. Reservations recommended.

Sonoma Cellar, 207 King St.

The popular wine bar and café is offering a respite from home cooking with a five-course menu. Start with a soup or salad, then be surprised by the chef's choice of an amuse bouche; then move on to a main course featuring the likes of a baked ham, rib-eye roast, or vegetable fettuccine. Cleanse your palate with a cheese course and top it all off with dessert. And since Sonoma Cellar is a wine bar, after all, expect a wide range of vino choices, all at 30 percent off regular prices. 4-10 p.m. \$60. Reservations required.

Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap, 401 E. Braddock Road

Not in the mood for all the hullabaloo of a prix-fixe menu? Lena's has you covered. Alongside their typical offerings, the pizza and pasta purveyor is offering up a handful of Christmas specials, including lobster fra diavolo — lobster with pasta and a spicy tomato sauce — chicken alla puttanesca and a wood-roasted Tuscan half chicken. Tired of the typical holiday pies? Take a bite out of the restaurant's Italian velvet cake: Chocolate cake with Italian buttercream, sugared cranberries, rosemary syrup and cranberry sauce. 1-8 p.m. Reservations recommended.

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

CALENDAR

683-1780.

Art Exhibit: Bringing Words to Life.

Through Jan. 27 at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, 2660 Duke St., Alexandria. The exhibit is a part of Del Ray Artisans' Gallery Without Walls program in partnership with VCA Alexandria. The show pairs a line from an artist's favorite song, poem, book, or speech with the artist's visual interpretation of that quote. Patrons may view the artwork at VCA Alexandria during regular business hours and at the discretion of hospital staff. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww.

Still Life Alive. Through April 2, 2019, 9-5 p.m. at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Patricia Uchello One Woman Art Show, featuring 100 original oil paintings of flowers, fruit, landscapes and seascapes. Uchello's work has been collected by IBM, the International Monetary Fund and more. Email pmuchello@aol.com or visit www.patriciauchello.com.

Revolutionary War Medals.

Through March 2020 at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway, Mt. Vernon. Now on view in Mount Vernon's Donald W. Reynolds Education Center is an exhibition featuring 30 rare medals from the American Revolution and the early republic. War and Peace in Miniature: Medals from the American Numismatic Society is an unparalleled collection that highlights the remarkable heroes and events from the Revolutionary War and the new nation's diplomatic endeavors. Visit mountvernon.org/

warandpeace.

Pick-Up Hockey.

Ongoing, Wednesdays and Fridays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ice Skating, 2017 Belle View Blvd. Play hockey with other hockey buffs, hitting slap shots and learning puck handling skills that the pros use. Players must have full equipment. 16 and older. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mtvernon/ or call 703-768-3224.

Alexandria Cars and Coffee invites car enthusiasts to meet for coffee at Hollin Hall Shopping Center in front of Roseina's, 1307 Shenandoah Road. Owners of classic cars, hot rods, exotic cars, motorcycles and more meet to share car stories and drink coffee. Group meets the first Sunday of every month. 8:30-11 a.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 22

Photos with Santa. 12 p.m.-3 p.m. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King St., Alexandria. Hooray for Books! and Visit Alexandria will present photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Advance reservation is required. To reserve a 10-minute slot for a child to meet with Santa, make any size donation to the bookstore's special Santa account, which will be used to provide books, toys and games for the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program's Holiday Party. Visit www.Hooray4Books.com.

MONDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. At Alexandria's waterfront from the Alexandria City Marina and

Waterfront Park, Alexandria. Gather along historic Alexandria's Potomac River waterfront for Waterskiing Santa and his merry crew. The prime viewing area is the Alexandria City Marina and Waterfront Park. Come early to see the pre-show (on jet skis) and stay afterwards to meet Santa, Mrs. Claus and their crew by the Christmas Tree. Visit VisitAlexandriaVA.com/holidays.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 26

Holiday Concert. 6-7:30 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, D.C. Featuring local Encore Chorale groups from Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Reston. Encore Creativity for Older Adults, the nation's largest choral program for singers 55+, will present the combined talents of more than 250 Encore Chorales and Encore ROCKS singers in concert. Free, the public is invited and no tickets are required. Call 301-261-5747 or visit www.encorecreativity.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 29

Hot Cocoa Wetland Night Hike. 4:30-6 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Sip hot cocoa and join a naturalist on a search for nocturnal animals. Look for signs and listen for sounds of beavers, owls, deer and other winter animals that are on the move at nighttime. \$9 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/

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HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

huntley-meadows.

SUNDAY/DEC. 30

Walking with Washington Tour. 2-4 p.m. at Alexandria Visitor Center (Ramsay House), 221 King St., Alexandria. Free. Explore important sites associated with George Washington in his hometown of Alexandria. This guided walking tour of historic Old Towne covers significant people and events in Washington's life and in American history, with stops at Ramsay House, Market Square, the Carlyle House, Wise's Tavern/ Duvall House, Gadsby's Tavern, Washington's townhouse, The Lord Fairfax House, "Light-Horse" Harry Lee's house and Christ Church. Call 703-379-7460 or visit www.washingtonbirthday.com.

MONDAY/DEC. 31

Ship Biscuit Ornament Making. 2-5 p.m. At Alexandria Archaeology Museum, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., #327, Alexandria. An almost completely intact ship's biscuit from the 18th century was found last year in Alexandria. To commemorate the discovery, visitors are invited to make their own ship's biscuit. Each biscuit will be stamped with the year and then baked at home to track its preservation. No registration required. While supplies last. Visit www.AlexandriaArchaeology.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 2

First Hike Fairfax 2019. Visit any Fairfax County Park Authority trail on Jan. 1, 2019. Take lots of photos. Pick a favorite photo to enter into the Fairfax County Park Authority's First Hike Photo Contest by Jan. 2. The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers. Limit one photo entry per person. Visit the First Hike Fairfax at fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/first-hike.

FRIDAY/JAN. 4

Opening Reception: "Faces." 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The "Faces" art exhibit at Del Ray Artisans features portraits that show the life a person has lived, joy a person emanates, wisdom gained through years of living, and focuses on the soul of the person. View the exhibit from Jan. 4-27, 2019. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/event/faces.

SATURDAY/JAN. 5

Paint the World in Pastels. 10 a.m.-noon. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Cost \$35. Local artist Teresa Brunson

will demonstrate many ways to paint with pastels and give you a solid knowledge of the medium and its expressive use. Learn painting techniques, mark-making and layering, and pick up other tips to enhance your pastel work. All supplies will be provided. Stretch your creative muscles and create something beautiful. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Story Time for Little Historians. 11 a.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St., Alexandria. Enjoy cultural stories and creative craft activities that introduce world history and folklore. Afterwards, explore the museum exhibits to learn about local Black history. All ages welcome, but most suitable for children 4 and older. Admission is \$3 per person. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 703-746-4356.

Twilight Boardwalk. 4:30-6:30 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Join in on a chill winter evening to encounter the beauty of Huntley Meadows Park as it transitions from day into night. Watch and listen for beaver, owls, and other nocturnal residents along the forested paths to the wetland, and experience the sunset over the boardwalk. \$9. Call 703-768-2525 or visit online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/.

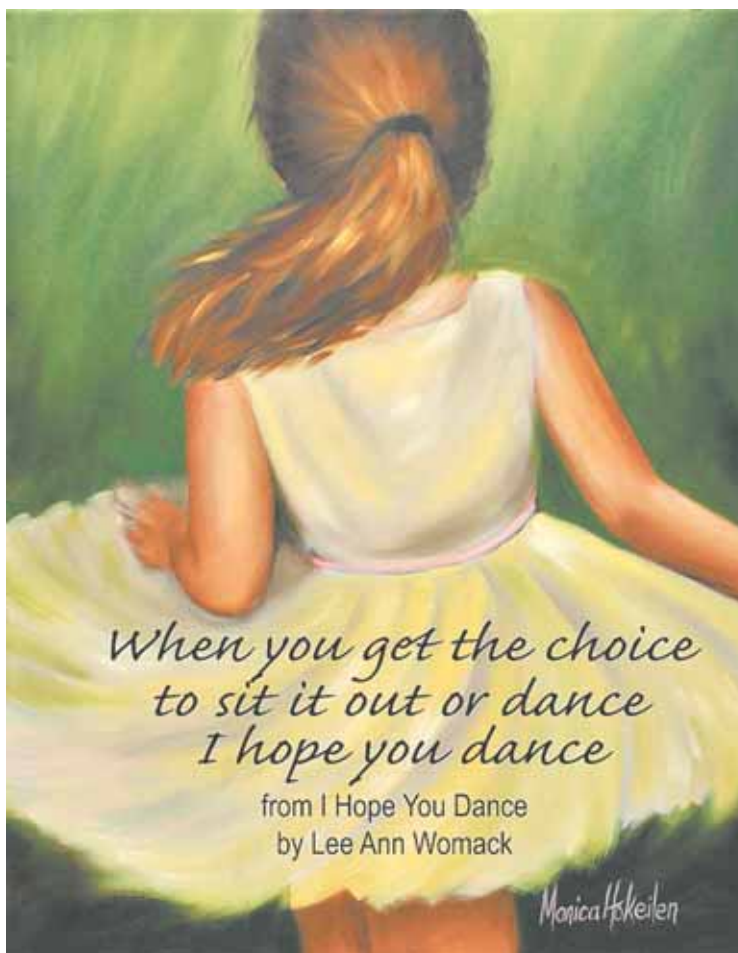
Fairfax County RECenter Swim Classes Start. The Fairfax County Park Authority offers youth swim instruction for babies to teens at nine RECenters throughout the county. Adults join their children in the pool in the early years. Kids go solo and advance through different instruction levels as they get older. For more information about the Park Authority's swim programs, call 703-222-4664 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter/swimming.

MONDAY/JAN. 7

Yoga for Gardeners. 9:30-10:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Spend some time this winter getting ready for a spring and summer of gardening. The class meets weekly from 9:30-10:30 a.m. for eight sessions, beginning Jan. 7, 2019. The cost of the series is \$93. This yoga class features a gentle introduction to the Vinyasa method. It's designed to help participants increase the strength, flexibility and endurance necessary for gardening. Call 703-642-5173 or visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

TUESDAY/JAN. 8

Guest Speaker Author. 12 p.m.-1:30



"I Hope You Dance" by Monica Hokeilen.

Art Exhibit: Bringing Words to Life

The exhibit is a part of Del Ray Artisans' Gallery Without Walls (GWW) program in partnership with VCA Alexandria. The show pairs a line from an artist's favorite song, poem, book, or speech with the artist's visual interpretation of that quote. This exhibit will display the artwork and quoted lines together at the VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital. Patrons may view the artwork through Jan. 27 at VCA Alexandria during regular business hours and at the discretion of hospital staff at VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital, 2660 Duke St., Alexandria. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww.

p.m. At Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Author Mark Maloy will be the guest speaker presenting and signing his new book, Victory or Death. The event is hosted by the Rotary Club of Alexandria. Visit rotaryclubofalexandria.net.

THURSDAY/JAN. 10

Grand Opening: GetFitStudio. 5-7:30 p.m. At 227 S. Washington St., #120, Alexandria. Come for food, drinks, gift bags and giveaways. GetFitStudio is a boutique fitness studio offering personal training and small group training sessions. Visit

www.getfitstudiova.com.

FRIDAY/JAN. 11

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinguapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry.

ASO Presents: Bach, Brandenburgers & Brews. 7-10 p.m. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church,

228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Members of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, led by Music Director James Ross, present this special evening of Brandenburg Concertos in the intimate setting of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Hear the ASO's rendition of concertos No. 2, 4 and 5 with principals from the ASO featured as soloists. Reception in Norton Hall with the musicians and German food and beer. Tickets: \$40/adults; \$5/youth. Visit www.alexsym.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 13

Gardening Lecture. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. The Harry Allen Winter Lecture Series at Green Spring Gardens provides a wealth of information for when the weather starts to warm. The lecture costs \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

TUESDAY/JAN. 15

Federal Government Claims. 1-3 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society, Claire Prechtel-Klusens, former Senior Archivist for the National Archives, will speak about researching Federal Government claims to gather genealogical information. Free, open to public. Visit www.hollinhallseniorcenter.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 20

What's Buggin' You? 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Bring your bug questions and stories for entomologist Nate Erwin who will present a colorful slide show about insects and their associated plants. Find out how to attract butterflies and fireflies or put a name to that curious bug in the garden last year. Cost is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring.

FRIDAY/JAN. 25

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinguapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring James K. Polk and William Ramsay Schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation.

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known



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Asking questions in class is advice that David S. Torain II, Ph.D., professor of mathematics and statistics at Montgomery College would offer new students.

Advice from Professors

Sharing things they wish they could tell their prospective students.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Many high school seniors will spend their holiday break working on college applications or making visits to perspective university campuses. As the excitement builds over the new collegiate experience that lies ahead, local professors offer advice on the things they wish they could share with new college students.

Avoid seeing college as simply a means to end or a pathway to a career and instead take advantage of the multitude of learning experiences available to students.

From football games and art exhibitions to student debates and faculty recitals, there are opportunities gain a vast amount of knowledge in four years.

Use that time to discover one's interests, says Vincent Intondi, Ph.D., professor of history at Montgomery College. "Do not come to college simply for financial gain," he said. "Study what you are most passionate about. Study what you love. The jobs will be there."

In an effort to encourage students to move outside of their comfort zone, Linda Gulyn suggests that they, "Learn, have new experiences, but do well academically," she said. "Socialize and engage in activities across your major or regular crowd."

"Read and always do your homework," said David S. Torain II, Ph.D., professor of mathematics and statistics at Montgomery College.

"If you read slowly, don't sweat it, just read," he said. "If you get bored, break your reading in to short sessions, but come back to it. If you can't make sense of it all, make sense of as much of it as you can, then talk to a classmate and ask a question in class."

Use college as an opportunity to build skills that will be necessary after college, says Jerome Short, Ph. D. "Students should choose courses and experiences to build their oral and written communication skills to better express themselves persuasively and concisely," he said.

Practice self-care and recognize stress and anxiety that a new college experience might bring. When those feelings arise, avoid negative coping mechanisms and instead focus on those which are healthy, advises Short.

"College is a time to dramatically grow your brain," he said. "Scientific research shows that exercise grows brain cells, learning connects cells, and sleep consolidates memories in cells. Do plenty of each of them every day."

For some professors, one of the best parts of their job is getting

to know and share knowledge with their students even on subjects that are not related to the course, says Joanne Bagshaw, PhD, professor of psychology at Montgomery College.

"Get to know your professors, and make sure they get to know you," she said. "Visit your professors during office hours and use the time to ask questions about the course and even chat about topics interesting to you."

"Do not come to college simply for financial gain. Study what you are most passionate about. Study what you love."

— Vincent Intondi, Ph.D., professor of history, Montgomery College.

"College is a time to dramatically grow your brain. Scientific research shows that exercise grows brain cells, learning connects cells, and sleep consolidates memories in cells. Do plenty of each of them every day."

— Jerome Short, Ph. D.



PHOTO BY JON ROETMAN/THE GAZETTE

West Potomac's Jack Fricka scored eight points against South County on Dec. 14.

WP Falls to Defending Champion

Mackey injures ankle in overtime loss to South County.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE GAZETTE

Friday night started as an opportunity for the undefeated West Potomac boys' basketball team to further prove its potency as the Wolverines traveled to Lorton to take on defending state champion South County.

The evening ended with a blown 13-point lead, an overtime loss and a bag of ice on the right ankle of West Potomac's best player.

There was, however, a silver lining — even if the Wolverines had to fight through frustration to see it.

After losing a 13-point lead, West Potomac forced overtime with an Ethan Payne 3-pointer late in regulation. But with standout guard Daryl Mackey, Jr. on the bench after suffering an ankle injury, the Wolverines managed just one point in the extra period and fell to South County, 61-59.

The Wolverines entered the game down two starters — point guard Bradley Harden was injured and forward Shannon Harrigan, per VHSL rule, was forced to sit out after receiving two technical fouls in West Potomac's previous game. Despite not being at full strength, the Wolverines jumped out to a 9-0 lead — thanks to seven straight points from Jonas Munson — and led 43-30 midway through the third quarter after a Mackey bucket.

South County then chipped away at the lead, thanks primarily to the play of Donovan Myles and Andre Speight. The Stallions eventually took the lead late in the fourth quarter before winning in overtime.

"The kids fought really hard," head coach David Houston III said. "We wanted to win the game with the guys that we had. We thought we could win the game with the guys we had, with the effort they put forth. ... I think we had a lot of guys get a chance to

play that are ... back-up guys in this playoff-type atmosphere, and you can't really ask for anything better than that for them to have an opportunity to make some plays."

Mackey suffered a right ankle injury in the second half, when he landed awkwardly near the baseline.

"It felt weird," Mackey said, "because I had to click it back in to place." Mackey continued to play, but Houston took him out of the game late in the fourth quarter. Mackey finished with a game-high 20 points, despite not playing in the overtime period.

"I just saw [Mackey] and he didn't look like it was getting better and I didn't want to get it worse this early in the year," Houston said. "... We've got months to go. We wanted to win the game, he could have helped us win the game but his health is a little more important than that."

After the game, Houston and his players were disappointed they didn't come out with the win, but the Wolverines put forth a performance to build on.

"We're mad about it," junior Jack Fricka said. "We're hungry. We know we're a hard team (to beat) regardless of who is playing and who is not. We have kind of embraced the next-man-up mentality on this team. ... We'll take it as a learning experience and move on."

Munson finished with 15 points for West Potomac. The 7-foot Central Arkansas signee showed off his versatility, throwing down a dunk and knocking down a 3-pointer.

Payne scored nine points for the Wolverines, knocking down a trio of 3-pointers, and Fricka added eight.

West Potomac won't play again until a Dec. 27 holiday tournament contest in Charlottesville, giving Mackey's ankle some time to heal. The Wolverines will enter the tournament with a 5-1 record.

"I think we're good, [South County is] good," Houston said. "They were at home, they did what they were supposed to do against a wounded team. We'll see them probably somewhere in February."

It wasn't all bad news for the Wolverines. After the game, Houston informed Mackey that the senior guard received an offer from Delaware State — his first college offer.

"It feels great," Mackey said.

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Stepping Back From the Precipice

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Not so bad, even though it's been nearly 10 years on the cancer trail – and two columns, recently, courting my imminent demise.

The appointment with the otolaryngologist to assess the presumptive damage/my decline was instead wonderfully uplifting: “nothing worrisome in the throat.” What symptoms I was experiencing (basically seasonal-type cold and flu to go along with a scratchy and extremely hoarse voice) had nothing to do with cancer and more so to do with the time of the year.

Meaning I wasn't going to die as a result; just sneeze, cough and so forth like everyone else, which as I've been told, repeatedly, I'm not.

Cancer patients might not have the benefit of doubt or delay like the rest of you. Time may not be of the essence, but one never knows. Cancer cells sort of have a mind/process of their own.

It's not so much a lesson learned as it has been a lesson reminded.

My oncologist has frequently advised me that should a new symptom appear and persist for two to three weeks, I should email him and alert him to my status/situation. I might have been a week or so late this time, but fortunately not too many dollars short.

My oncologist responded immediately as did my primary care physician. Each doctor making arrangements for me within a matter of hours: a face-to-face appointment with my internal medicine doctor – which led to the referral for the otolaryngologist (who called to schedule an appointment before I even got a chance to); and a referral as well by my oncologist for a CT scan of my neck.

Having now been examined and results interpreted, I am glad to report that as scared as I have been for the past two columns, my symptoms were not indicative of my lung cancer progressing. Rather it was more indicative of a cancer patient being stupid and stubborn.

Not wanting to ever believe that my life hangs in the balance and could be severely endangered by my neglect, I tend to go about my health-related business as I would guess the rest of you who are healthy and not cancer-diagnosed: I wait out the symptoms and try not to go negative.

As has been said recently – to me, nothing could be less appropriate given my stage IV, lung cancer. Being negative might actually save my life.

The reality is: I am compromised and subject to risks and complications many of you are not. My immune system has likely been weakened by this most recent every-three-week infusion interval recommended to shrink a relatively new tumor – and in so treating, hopefully will not have allowed any existing cancer cells to trigger and mutate and cause even more trouble.

After all, cancer is likely in control here and giving them an inch, so to speak, has never been part of our plan.

Even though my cancer had already metastasized in 2009, its movement seems to have been confined to my lungs and amazingly has remained there ever since. Still, if I've finally learned anything with this most recent scare, it is that I can't turn a blind eye or a deaf ear, metaphorically writing, to common sense or doctor's orders.

I'm not supposed to wait for the ambulance, if you know what I mean? I'm supposed to be smarter than that and act like my life matters: making arrangements much sooner rather than way later. Denying, pretending and hoping that new symptoms are benign because many other people experience them is, for a cancer patient, as foolish as it gets.

The last, and I mean the absolute last thing a cancer patient should think is that they are like everybody else. They are not. We are not. I am not.

You get it, Kenny?

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

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OPINION

Predatory Lending

FROM PAGE 6

American tribes to provide loans to consumers over the internet, not from storefronts. The loans have what is called “choice of law” clauses providing they are covered by tribal law and arbitration provisions allowing for dispute resolution under tribal law and under the supervision of the chief of the tribe. Interest rates exceed 400 percent and have been documented over 1,000 percent. These laws are sometimes dubbed “Rent a Tribe” loans.

I will again introduce legislation to apply minimal consumer protections to open-end credit arrangements, the protections previously required for car title loans. Among other things, this would require companies to obtain a license from the Commonwealth, prohibit automatic account debiting, restrict debt collection practices, and simultaneously carrying multiple loans. My bill last year did not even contain a rate cap, yet it was killed. This year, Senate Minority Leader Dick Saslaw is sponsoring this bill with me and I am hopeful it will fare better.

In addition, I will introduce legislation placing a 36 percent interest rate cap on consumer finance loans. This legislation was supported by the companies who have historically been providing consumer finance loans. Last year, it passed the Senate 37-2 but died in the House of Delegates. The House proposed to open up the consumer finance license to internet lenders and basically legitimize the 400 percent internet lending practices using Native American tribes.

I have now been battling these practices for nearly eight years after these lenders exploded on U.S. 1 and I will not stop. Lending money to people who are confused by complicated terms and slick sales tactics, people who have little ability to repay them is coercive, immoral and wrong.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator. Please email me at scott@scotturovell.org if you have any feedback.

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Mount Vernon District Police Station.

TRAFFIC STOP/NARCOTICS: 3800 block of Havenwood Place, Dec. 12, 10 p.m. Officers stopped a car for a traffic violation. The driver, 40-year-old man from Alexandria, was arrested for possession with the intent to distribute cocaine. A search warrant was later served at his home resulting in the seizure of additional narcotics.

BURGLARY: 8100 block of Bluebonnet Drive, Nov. 28 to Dec. 10. The homeowner reported someone gained entry into the home and took personal property.

DEC. 14 LARCENIES
 6000 block of Park Place, wallet from vehicle
 6100 block of Richmond Highway, personal items from hotel room

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2600 block of Arlington Drive, items from storage unit

DEC. 13 LARCENIES
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NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF
WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/18

BRAKE SPECIAL

\$79⁹⁵

Includes: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads,
inspect front & rear rotors & drums, check tire
condition and inspect all hardware. Pads only.

MACHINE ROTORS ADDITIONAL

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY COUPON
MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA
TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/18

**SIGHT LINE
WIPER BLADES**

\$10 OFF

Sight Line only.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY COUPON
MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA
TOYOTA PARTS CENTER ONLY. GOOD THRU 12/31/18

VARIABLE DISCOUNT

\$15.00 OFF when you spend \$100.00 - \$199.99

\$30.00 OFF when you spend \$200.00 - \$299.99

\$45.00 OFF when you spend \$300.00 - \$399.99

\$50.00 OFF when you spend \$400.00 or more

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED
AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/18

FREE

BATTERY CHECK-UP

Check cold cranking amps and visual inspection of
battery condition. Includes battery condition print out.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME
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TRUESTART™ BATTERIES

**SPECIAL
OFFER**

\$99⁹⁵

INCLUDES BATTERY INSTALLATION

Includes: 84 month warranty, 24 month free replacement,
24 month free roadside assistance.
Does not apply to hybrid batteries.

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OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/18

ALIGNMENT SPECIAL

\$69⁹⁵

Your car's alignment suffers, and can
cause uneven tire wear and steering problems.
INCLUDES: Inspect suspension, ball joints, struts
& shocks, tire condition and set tire pressure.

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TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 12/31/18



ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

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Check your windshield. Does your sticker say **12/18, 1/19,**
or **2/19**? If so, your VA Safety Inspection is now due

VIRGINIA STATE INSPECTION

FREE

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CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT **703-684-0710** OR SCHEDULE ONLINE AT **ALEXANDRIATOYOTA.COM**



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71 Homes SOLD in 2018 so far!

Now is the time to call Chris & Peggy White!

*Leading the Area in Real Estate. **SOLD!!!***

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HAPPY

Holidays

Considering selling in 2019?

Now is the time to call!

Thank you for another record breaking year of 71 Homes Sold!



JUST LISTED!

COMING SOON!



8314 Wagon Wheel Dr

Private Dock! | \$665,000

3 level Colonial situated on serene elevated lot overlooking natural wonderland. Private dock for your canoe, kayak, or small motor boat! Home has huge potential & features: 4/5 Bedrooms, large room sizes, hardwood floors, fully finished lower level w/ outside entrance, sunroom overlooking creek. Won't find another one like it!



8902 Beauchamp Dr.

Mid-century flair! | \$550,000

Expanded and updated contemporary on gorgeous half acre lot near Mt. Vernon Estate. Fabulous features include: bright open floor plan, glass window wall, gorgeous hardwood floors on two levels, and oversize two car garage. Large deck overlooks private grounds. Freshly painted interior makes this one move in ready!



9112 Volunteer Dr

Westgate Colonial! | \$655,000

Exceptionally property! Spacious Colonial in the Williamsburg tradition featuring premier setting on large level lot in the desirable Westgate community near Mt Vernon Estate. Features include: large room sizes, 2 fireplaces in family and living room, hardwood floors, two car garage, & incredible sunroom overlooking rear grounds.

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