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Mount Vernon Gazette

HomeLifeStyle

PAGE 11

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MARCH 14, 2019

Students Who Work for Peace Honored

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE GAZETTE

It's not easy to be the peace-maker. Sometimes it is really hard, especially when you make those around you, even friends, angry when you speak out and stand up for what is right. And sometimes it can be dangerous. But in all instances, being the peacemaker "requires courage and commitment," U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) told the crowd gathered at the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax on Sunday, March 9.

Connolly, along with a host of sponsors, elected officials and a cheering collection of family and friends, had come together to honor the 23 young recipients of the 2019 Student Fairfax Peace Awards at a ceremony led by Margaret Fisher of program-founder Herndon Friends Meeting.

In addition to garnering kudos from the congressman, state Del. Ken Plum (D-36), Fairfax County Supervisor Penny Gross (Mason District), Scott Brabrand, Fairfax County Public Schools superintendent, and Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon District representative and vice chair of the FCPS board also officially offered their congratulations and admiration for the young activists.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER
Diana Arguera is all smiles as a 2019 Peace Award winner. Immigrating to the U.S. from El Salvador in 2015, the senior at West Potomac High School learned English while taking her high school classes.

Ryan McElveen and Ilryong Moon, members-at-large of the FCPS board, and Tamara Denerak Kaufax, FCPS board Lee District representative were also on hand to show their support.

THE EVENT'S KEYNOTE SPEAKER was David Swanson, an author, activist, journalist, radio host and co-founder and direc-



Lauren Haymes (fourth from left) attends Quander Road School as a senior, where she is the president of Blossoming Beauties, a group that helps build self-confidence and self-esteem in young women.

tor of World Beyond War, a "global nonviolent movement to end war and establish a just and sustainable peace."

Swanson, a 1987 graduate of Herndon High School who identifies as a "world citizen," presented his argument of "no justification for war, ever," while admitting that his remarks could make his audiences uncomfortable, but asserted

that they were words that need to be said and a conversation that needs to happen.

The Fairfax Student Peace Awards started in 2006 as one school, Herndon High School, and one sponsor, the Herndon Friends Meeting, but has grown to 19 sponsors and is now offered to every public high school in Fairfax County, as well as two private schools.

The goal of the program is to encourage young people to think more about peace "both as a means and as an end" and to recognize their achievements when they turn those peace-making thoughts into actions in their schools, their communities, and even around the world.

The program is open to area

high school juniors and seniors. In October, each school is invited to choose either an individual or a group recipient with the guidelines that the students have worked "specifically for peace or to identify and resolve conflicts ... demonstrating commitment to peace by engaging in activities that strive to end conflict ... seeking to bridge language, ethnic, racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, or class differences ... and/or assist to resolve conflicts among students or members of the community who feel isolated or alienated."

THE WINNERS received certificates of achievement, a monetary

SEE PEACE AWARD, PAGE 18



Mount Vernon High School senior Burhan Ahmed (fourth from left) is no stranger to recognition. His efforts have already seen him selected as a Presidential Volunteer Service award winner — three times.

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Local Youth Has International Impact

Driven to better diagnose glaucoma in underdeveloped areas.

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON
THE GAZETTE

Avyuk Dixit will never forget seeing his uncle in New Delhi struggle with the effects of glaucoma, an eye disease that affects the optical nerve, and one of the leading causes of permanent blindness. Watching a loved one suffer in this way just didn't sit right with Dixit, a Mount Vernon resident who was only 15 years old at the time.

Even after returning to the States, Dixit couldn't shake thoughts of what glaucoma was doing to someone in his family.

"Between my freshman and sophomore year, I was visiting family in New Delhi, where I learned that my uncle, a teacher living there, had been diagnosed with glaucoma," said Dixit, a junior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST). "Visiting him, I saw how his declining vision hurt his ability to teach, to read fine-printed textbooks, and how it generally detracted from his livelihood. Seeing him suffer like that made me realize how privileged I was and pushed me to do something to help him and others who might have glaucoma."

Dixit buckled down to support his uncle beyond offering up thoughts and prayers. He channeled his technical skills — specifically, with coding and machine learning — toward something that could one day make a difference for people in India who face glaucoma.

"After my uncle was diagnosed with glaucoma, I realized how I could apply my skills with machine learning and computer science to healthcare," Dixit said, adding that machine learning is "the study of how algorithms and statistics can be used to effectively perform tasks without explicit instructions. It's the idea that a computer can learn relationships and find data that we might not have been able to see otherwise."

Not even old enough for a driver's license at the time, Dixit began working on a machine learning model to provide an efficient, affordable way for doctors around the world to diagnose glaucoma.

"The basic idea of the model is that there is an algorithm that looks at all the images and takes into account the markers that doctors have determined to be consistent with people who have glaucoma," said Dixit, who completed his model at the end of last summer. "We have the machine learn those markers. This novel approach made it easy for a non-linear Support Vector Machine to classify the pre-processed images ... ultimately diagnosing glaucoma with a top accuracy of 87 percent."

The more Dixit learned about glaucoma during his initial research, the more personal this solution became. Out of the 60 million people diagnosed with glaucoma worldwide, 12 million of them are — like Dixit's uncle — in India.

"Undiagnosed glaucoma is a more significant problem in India than it is here in the United States, where we have regular eye check ups that include intraocular pressure tests," he said. "In India, however — especially in more underdeveloped areas — many people don't have access to ophthalmic check-ups or the infrastructure to ask for help when they notice that their vision declining."

The longer it takes to diagnose glaucoma, the more likely it is that the disease will cause irreparable optical damage.

"Glaucoma is different from other eye diseases in that we don't know what causes it, so we don't have any sort of cure for it," Dixit said. "It worsens over time and can lead to irreversible blindness. Early detection is key to make sure that it doesn't get to the point that you can't mitigate its effects. Since early detection of glaucoma can save the disease from snowballing into blindness, I wanted to find a way to contribute to early detection."

Last year, Dixit linked up with Dr. Rengaraj Venkatesh, the chief medical officer at Aravind Eye Hospital in Pondicherry, India. And in the summer of 2018, Dixit's quest to halt glaucoma in its disastrous tracks came full circle, when he returned to India finish his project. It was there that Dixit reached the necessary conclusions for completing his machine learning model.

"Aravind Eye Hospital is a nonprofit organization, and a branch of the largest eye care provider in the world," Dixit said. "Dr. Venkatesh offered to bring me to India to pursue my work in creating a machine learning model to diagnose glaucoma based on fundus [back of the eye] images and integrate the model with the infrastructure at Aravind."

As enriching as this visit was for Dixit, it was invaluable for Aravind's team of doctors.

"We have been hearing about artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning for quite some time, so it was indeed great to have Avyuk in Pondicherry with us," Venkatesh said, "His commitment and focused work were amazing to see, so I invited him to talk to our residents about the basics of AI. They were surprised and impressed seeing his excellent presentation and they appreciated his work, especially coming from someone of such a young age."

For most of August, Dixit worked with the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Avyuk Dixit with Dr. Rengaraj Venkatesh, chief medical officer at Aravind Eye Hospital in Pondicherry, India.

Aravind Eye Hospital team in Pondicherry, India. He spent his days observing their work, attending professional conferences, and participating in their community outreach.

"I spent a large amount of my summer thinking about and working on my program," Dixit said. "I created the diagnostic program on my own, but I did receive help and guidance with improving my methodology. I also used about two weeks of my time in Pondicherry at Aravind developing my research alongside world class ophthalmologists and researchers to get my work to the next level."

One key weekend while in southern India, the young technology prodigy assisted the doctors at one of their eye camps, when Aravind eye doctors and medical staff set up mobile offices in villages to treat people who wouldn't otherwise be able to seek optical care.

"Students aren't typically involved with eye camps," Dixit said. "I was the only one there the week I went, and the main reason I attended was to get a feeling of how my model could be integrated as a screening tool with Aravind's system. I also really saw the importance of Aravind's work in helping the community become more aware of eye diseases such as glaucoma."

At this eye camp, Dixit saw firsthand just how important it was to complete his machine learning model.

"The diagnostic machines that doctors in the States use are effective, but expensive," Dixit said. "The best technologies are too expensive for developing countries, so most people at Aravind now diagnose on their own in eye camps. But there are only so many ophthalmologists and resources. Algorithms and machine learning models mean that we don't need actual people screening for glaucoma. Models like mine make the diagnostic processes more efficient, utilizing less resources."

When Dixit says "less resources," he means it. With his coding prowess, he created a diagnostic system that is essentially an application compatible with mobile devices.

"My model can run on anything that can process fundus photography," he said. "It could even be on a cell phone."

It's possible that one day Aravind will use regularly use Dixit's model at eye camps.

"I'm in regular touch with Dr. Venkatesh because we're still in the process of integrating my model with their processes," Dixit said. "We're working out details of how that will happen. It will hope-

fully soon be used at eye camps and vision centers in Pondicherry and surrounding area. In total, Aravind serves over a quarter of a million people in its eye camps yearly, and imagining my technology helping those people to such a large scale is humbling."

Venkatesh also looks forward to this day.

"We'll be working together for some time to make sure it's a really good model," Venkatesh said. "I believe different people across the globe are working on similar models, but this one will be very special to validate and work on."

Dixit's passion for and efforts toward saving the world don't end with glaucoma.

"This year for my school science fair, my friends and I worked on creating a violence detection model that utilized emotion detection, human pose estimation, and non-contact heart rate detection to spot instances of violent behaviors in public venues and cities," he said. "We recently just won at our school science fair in our category and are advancing to regionals."

In addition to handling a demanding course load at TJHSST, Dixit also runs his own machine learning business.

"I've been working with the folks at the

SEE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT, PAGE 17

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Local Talent on Global Stage

USA Special Olympic Team heads to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates for World Games 2019.

By Mercia Hobson
The Gazette

With many hugs, high-fives and applause, five of the seven Special Olympics Virginia athletes and a coach boarded a United flight out of Dulles International Airport on Wednesday, March 6. The athletes would be part of the 215-athletes in the Special Olympics USA delegation headed to World Games Abu Dhabi 2019. Opening Ceremony is March 14 followed by six days of competition for the reportedly 7,000 plus participating athletes from 190 delegations competing in World Games 2019. Closing Ceremony is Thursday, March 21. Of the five Virginia athletes who departed Dulles, four came from the Northern Virginia area and one from Fredericksburg.

❖ Dylan Joseph "Joey" Roney, 21, of Herndon, will compete on the world stage in swimming, the 100m freestyle, 4x100m freestyle relay and 200m freestyle. Roney currently swims with the Oakton Swim Club that practices alongside the Oakton High School swim team. "This is an incredible opportunity for Joey," said his grandfather, Chuck Roney, as team members met up at Dulles International Airport. "None of this would be possible without Special Olympics and the thousands of volunteers," he said. Although athlete Roney said he was excited, he confided, "I'm feeling a little nervous and scared because this is my first time."

❖ Victoria "Tori" Martin, 24, of Woodbridge, swam before she could walk. Through swimming, Martin reportedly found purpose, routine and stability according to Special Olympics. "In preparation for this event, she has worked out six days a week in addition to practicing with her coaches three times a week," said, Bob Martin, her grandfather. "She is the most dedicated athlete I have ever seen," he said. "I'm feeling nervous, anxious and pressured," athlete Martin said. She added that she couldn't wait to explore Abu Dhabi.

❖ Karen Dickerson, 33, of Springfield, will run the Half marathon, the 10,000m and the 4x100m relay at the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE

Local athletes, Dylan Joseph "Joey" Roney of Herndon and Jenny Mitchell of Alexandria, members of the Special Olympics Virginia team give each other support hugs as they prepare to depart from Dulles International Airport representing the United States at the Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019.

Athlete Dickerson has run 27 marathons across the globe. "I cannot say enough about Karen's determination and dedication," said her mother, Ernestine Dickerson. "It is amazing what she has accomplished not only through sports but in life." Athlete Dickerson provided guidance to her fellow Special Olympics Virginia athletes while waiting to leave Dulles. "You don't have to have a good or a bad competition or race. Just know you did the best you could. All athletes go through ups and downs. Don't put yourself down," she said.

❖ Jenny Mitchell, 39, of Alexandria, is a Special Olympics USA swimmer and one-time silver and two-

SEE ON GLOBAL STAGE, PAGE 9

Schedule

(USA- EST is 8 hours behind Abu Dhabi)
HERNDON-Dylan Joseph "Joey" Roney- Swimming
Sunday, March 17, 9 a.m., 200m freestyle
Tuesday, March 19, 3: p.m., 100m freestyle
Wednesday, March 20, 3:40 p.m., 4x100m freestyle relay
WOODBIDGE-Victoria Martin- Swimming
Saturday, March 16, 3:20 p.m., 100m individual medley
Wednesday, March 20, 3:40 p.m., 4x100m freestyle relay
Wednesday, March 20, 10:10 a.m., 100m breaststroke
Sunday, March 17, 9 a.m., 200m freestyle
SPRINGFIELD-Karen Dickerson- Athletics
Saturday, March 16, 6:30 a.m., Half marathon
Wednesday, March 20, 8 a.m. 10000 m run
Wednesday, March, 20, 4 p.m., 4x100m relay
ALEXANDRIA-Jennifer Mitchell- Open Water Swimming
Saturday, March 16, 10 a.m. 1500m Open Water Swimming
Tuesday, March 19, 9:20 a.m. 800m freestyle
FREDERICKSBURG- Grace Braxton- Golf
Sunday, March 17, 8:50 a.m., Level 5 - Individual Stroke Play



Athlete Jenny Mitchell of Alexandria and her father Terry, hold her support poster as she prepares to depart Washington International Airport en route to the Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019.



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Alex/Riverside Park Hessick \$670,000
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SOLD

Alex/Riverside Estates \$590,000
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OPINION

A+ Primer for Our Neighborhoods

County Community Emergency Response Guide strengthens community, builds local resiliency, and mitigates potential risks.

By JOHN C. COOK
BRADDOCK DISTRICT SUPERVISOR (R)



Our Fairfax County government is well prepared to deal with emergencies, both large and small, from large storms to disease outbreaks to criminal and even terrorist events. But our communities are not so prepared. In the first 72 hours after a major emergency event, governmental services may not be available. Power may be out, transportation blocked, medical services overwhelmed, and food, gas, and even money difficult to find.

In those first few days, communities would need to come together so neighbors can help each other. And even during those lesser emergency events which occur with some regularity — snowstorms, serious thunderstorms, and the like — neighbors need to help each other out.

That's why I am so thrilled that Fairfax County has published its first ever Community

Emergency Response Guide from the Office of Emergency Management. The publication of this document, and the plan behind it, fulfills a goal of mine that even predates my election to the board. When I served as president of the Kings Park Civic Association I recognized the great need for a citizen-focused emergency planning tool. As a supervisor I have pushed for this program for years. Now the Office of Emergency Management made this idea a reality. The end result is a comprehensive planning tool that will strengthen community, build local resiliency, and mitigate potential risks.

Community coordination is needed in making a successful community emergency plan. It requires citizens to take initiative, reach out to their peers, and work together to identify local risks and assets. The Community Emergency Response Guide breaks down emergency planning into easy-to-follow steps. These including defining your area, recruiting leaders, knowing your area, building an emergency response team, and planning your approach. Everything is laid out in this step-by-step guide,

including how to organize an emergency team, creating a family emergency kit, and adding disabled residents to a functional needs registry.

It even lists the most likely emergencies and explains how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from them. Users can also find information on local volunteer groups who can assist in these emergencies, such as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). By filling out the Community Emergency Response Guide will give you a never-before-seen view of your own neighborhood.

You can find the Community Emergency Response Guide online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg>. The Office of Emergency Management offers community workshops to those who would like extra help in creating their emergency response plan. The request form can be found on the Office of Emergency Management website.

I encourage all residents to work within their particular communities to create an emergency response program appropriate for your neighborhood. We are here to help.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Experience Matters

To the Editor:

In just three months, Democrats will have the opportunity to choose their candidate for chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Su-

pervisors. Though there are four good people running, there is one obvious and clear choice ready to lead this large and growingly diverse county and that is Supervisor Jeff McKay. As we have all learned, tested experience in the job and good judgement count. There is simply no other person in this race that can bring these attributes to the table, and no one we

could recommend more highly to be our next chairman.

Since 2007, Lee District has been fortunate to have Supervisor McKay as our representative on the Fairfax County Board. As two General Assembly delegates representing much of the Lee magisterial district, we have witnessed Supervisor McKay's work product up close. We know firsthand his unwavering commitment to all those who call Fairfax County home. This is why we were excited when Jeff announced his campaign for Chairman last December following the announcement of Chairman Bulova's retirement.

Sharon Bulova leaves a remarkable legacy, faithfully serving and leading Fairfax County as chairman through very tough economic circumstances since 2009. As Lee District Supervisor, Jeff worked side-by-side with Sharon through these challenging times and is well prepared to lead. As the only two delegates from Fairfax County who sit on the House Appropriations Committee, we have watched Jeff serve with distinction as chair of both the Board's Legislative and Budget committees.

We are home to more than 1.1 million residents. We must elect someone who has worked through tough land use planning and zoning cases, for example, as well as a myriad of complex issues facing the county.

Growing up in the Richmond Highway corridor, Jeff learned about the benefits of diversity and the importance of equity at an early age. As the co-author of the county's One Fairfax resolution, Jeff is committed to ensuring that all residents are given the same opportunity to succeed regardless of their race, color, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, income, or zip code. Jeff cares about everyone

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

With Appreciation

The Board of Supervisors honored Richard Bierce for his more than 30 years of service and dedication to Fairfax County as an Architecture Review Board (ARB) member. As a steward of county history, Bierce's accomplishments are comprehensive, according to Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck. One of his first ARB duties was to establish, preserve and protect 13 Historic Overlay Districts in the county. He has advocated for the protection and care of historic buildings, including the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse site, the Woodlawn and Arcadia partnership, and the Workhouse Arts Center. With almost 50 years as a historical architect and preservation consultant, he has worked on projects throughout Fairfax County, the state and nationwide.

Mount Vernon Gazette

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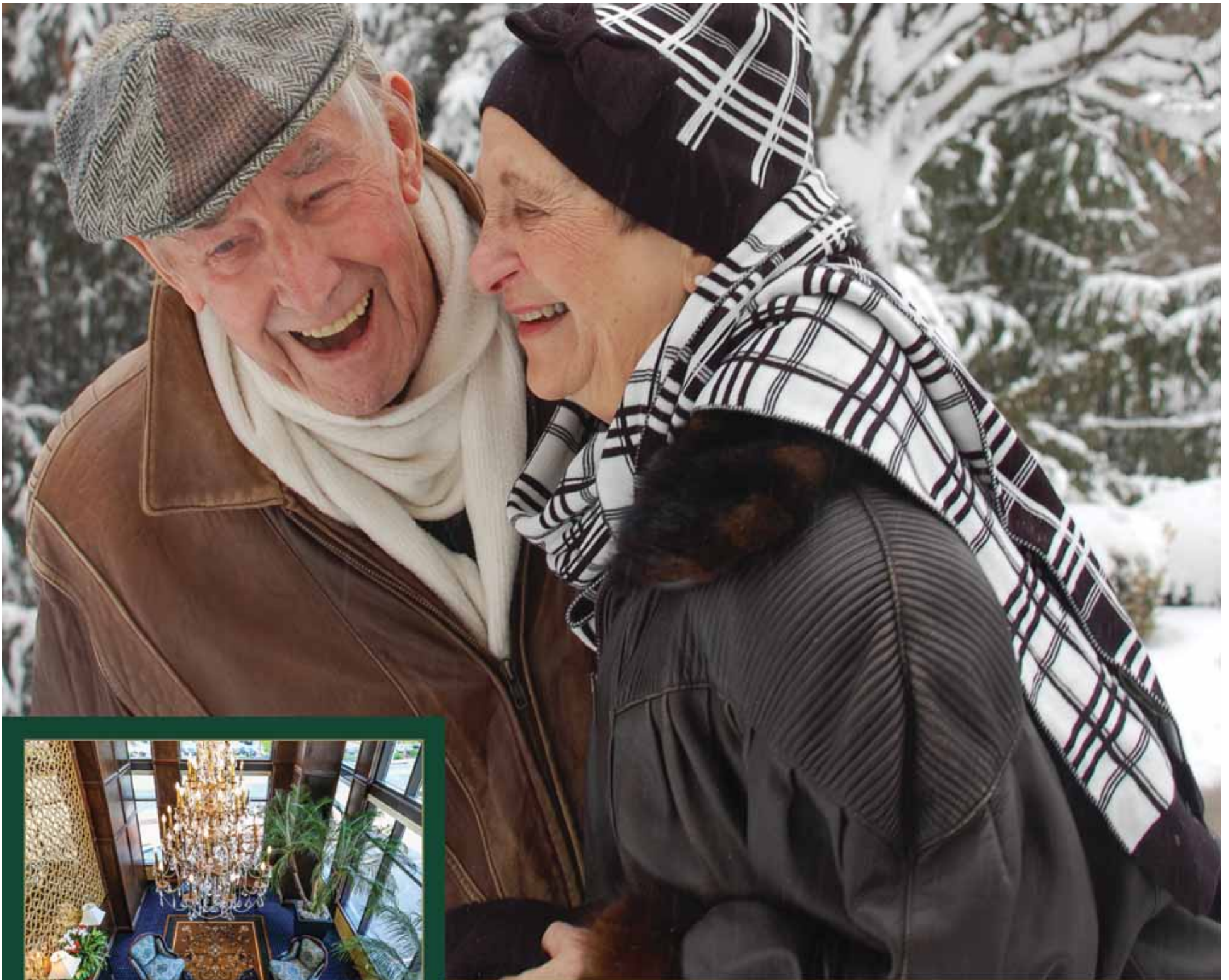
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- APR 14** Cherry Blossom Shop & Sip with
the Old Town Boutique District
- APR 19-21** 20th Annual Easter Egg Hunt
at Lee-Fendall House
- APR 27** 86th Annual Old Town Alexandria
Historic Homes & Garden Tour
- APR 28** 35th Annual Parkway Classic
10 Mile, 5K and Kid's Dash
- MAY 3** Art on the Rocks at the
Torpedo Factory
- MAY 17-19** Mount Vernon's Spring Wine
Festival & Sunset Tour

For more spring events and activities, check out:
VisitAlexandriaVA.com/Spring

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

in our community and his record proves it.

Whether it is the drafting of Embark for Richmond Highway, restoring the wetlands at Huntley Meadows Park, or protecting and expanding affordable housing, Jeff gets things done. The South County's new domestic violence shelter is another example of Supervisor McKay's commitment to serve our most vulnerable populations. So too is the all-accessible Special Harbor Spray Park, the treehouse and playground that can be enjoyed by children of all abilities.

It is rare that we have a candidate whose leadership, experience, and proven results make that candidate so ready to serve. We hope you will join us in support of Jeff McKay on June 11 in the Democratic Primary. A vote for Jeff McKay for chairman of the Board of Supervisors in Fairfax County is a solid vote for our future — a future that maintains our high quality of life, protects our environment, provides good jobs, protects our workers, promises excellent educational opportunities, and maintains our history and tradition of progress.

**Del. Mark Sickles (D-43)
And Del. Paul Krizek (D-44)**

Unfunded Demand Poorly Timed

To the Editor:

On March 8, Larysa Kautz, one of four candidates running for Lee District supervisor, challenged the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board to change the name of two buildings in Lee District.

Kautz demands the changes be implemented before she potentially enters office in 2020.

Please note changing the name of a Fairfax County school in 2017-2018 cost

\$428,000.

Though she requires quick action in meeting her demand costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, Kautz has no solution when asked how to fund it.

Responsible for an \$8.86 billion budget, service on Fairfax County Board of Supervisors requires thoughtful, deliberative leadership. Good government requires fact-based decision-making and community awareness.

Kautz issued her challenge three days after Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to advertise no possible increase in the real estate tax rate.

In making their unanimous decision to retain tax rates, Supervisors identified unmet needs to fund early childhood education, to equip police officers with body cameras, and to protect residents against stormwater.

We must not only recognize the direct costs, but with competing priorities and finite resources we must understand the opportunity costs. If we expend hundreds of thousands of dollars to change names on buildings, we will not, for example, have those resources to help children access early childhood education.

Lee District needs a representative who works best with others on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Unfunded demands with quick deadlines for expensive changes not matching community priorities does not portend well for these important relationships.

With decades of successful experience serving Fairfax County supporting a spectrum of community priorities from economic development, to affordable housing and human services, Rodney Lusk is the candidate most ready and qualified to serve as Lee District Supervisor. Vote June 11.

Will Radle
Franconia



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Community Partnership

Mount Vernon High freshmen returned to Sunrise Senior Center for the second time in the 2018-19 school year to create Valentine-themed crafts with residents. The students worked with the residents to create paper flower bouquets, wreaths made of hearts, and puppy Valentine cards. The afternoon was filled with laughter and stories from past Valentine's Days. Class of 2022 sponsors Erin Mahoney and Amanda Riemenschneider, along with freshman class administrator John Shaffer, accompanied the seven students and their parents.

Man Robbing Delivery Drivers

Detectives from the Mount Vernon District Police Station are asking for tips after several delivery drivers were robbed. Since Jan. 10, there have been nine robberies of delivery drivers in the area of Pembroke Village Drive and Buckman Road. The suspect orders food by phone to be delivered to a random address near the listed locations below:

- ❖ Jan. 13, 12:02 a.m., 8400 block of Richmond Highway
- ❖ Jan. 18, 4:30 p.m., Janna Lee Avenue/Tamarind Street
- ❖ Jan. 19, 9:55 p.m., 4300 block of

Pembroke Village Drive

- ❖ Jan. 22, 9 p.m., 4300 block of Pembroke Village Drive
- ❖ Jan. 25, 7:31 p.m., 4300 block of Pembroke Village Drive
- ❖ Feb. 20, 8:22 p.m., 3400 block of Holly Hill Road
- ❖ Feb. 25, 11:08 p.m., 4200 block of Buckman Road
- ❖ March 2, 10:08 p.m., 4200 block of Buckman Road
- ❖ March 4, 11:03 p.m., 4300 block of Pembroke Village Drive

The suspect has been described as a black man, age varying between 20

and 30 years old. Witnesses have described him as being 5'8" to 6' tall and medium build. In the robberies, he has worn dark clothing, with a mask covering his face. A handgun has been displayed during the robberies. Most of the robberies have occurred between 7 p.m. and midnight.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers electronically by visiting www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text-a-tip by texting "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES(274637) or by calling 1-866-411-TIPS(8477), or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

CRIME REPORT

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

BURGLARY: 8400 block of Cherry Valley Lane, March 8, 6:39 p.m. Homeowners found their basement window broken and personal items missing from the home.

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY: 5824 Richmond Highway (Boost Mobile), March 9, 7:30 a.m. A man with a gun entered Boost Mobile taking money and merchandise before running away. The man is described as black, in his 20s, 5'10" to 6'2", skinny, wearing a dark jacket over a hooded sweatshirt, dark jeans and boots.

ROBBERY: 6138 North Kings Highway (7-Eleven), March 7, 6:15 a.m. A man entered the 7-Eleven with a handgun and demanded money, taking an unknown amount and run-

ning away. He was black, 5'7", approximately 160 pounds, wearing a mask, dark colored coat and light colored pants.

ROBBERY: 4300 block of Pembroke Village Drive, March 4, 11:05 p.m. A delivery driver was delivering food in the area when he was approached by a man who displayed a handgun and demanded money. The man took his personal belongings as well as the food then ran away. The man is described as black, 18-25 years old, 5'10"-6'0", with a slim build, wearing dark clothing, gloves and a mask.

ATTEMPTED ROBBERY/ASSAULT: 2800 Block of Fairhaven Avenue, March 4, 5:41 p.m. A man was followed into his apartment building by another man. The suspect demanded money from the man and assaulted him before driving away in a gray

car. The man was described as black, with a thin build.

MARCH 11 LARCENIES

- 7700 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business
- 7900 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business
- 8600 block of Richmond Highway, merchandise from business

MARCH 8 LARCENIES

- 6600 block of Richmond Highway, credit cards and bag from location
- 7700 block of Richmond Highway, bag from location
- 9100 block of Richmond Highway, cell phone from residence

On Global Stage

FROM PAGE 5

times bronze medalist at Special Olympics World Games in Shanghai and a participant in Special Olympics World Aquatics Invitational in Puerto Rico. Athlete Mitchell will compete in 1600m open water swimming and 800m freestyle at the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi. "She has been training hard for this," said her father, Terry Mitchell. "She is the first Special Olympian athlete to swim across the Potomac from Jones Point to National Harbor," he said. "I'm ready to go," said Jenny Mitchell.

❖ Grace Anne Braxton, 43 of Fredericksburg, Va., is looking for a top spot on the Special Olympics podium in Abu Dhabi as she was the top-rated female Special Olympics golfer in the world 2007 and 2001 according to Special Olympics. "Special Olympics has helped me become an active person in my community. I help out as a volunteer with Basketball Championships and as a volunteer with new local golfers," Grace Anne Braxton wrote in her Special Olympics profile. "I'm expecting a new adventure," she said at Dulles International Airport.

The Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation created Special Olympics. Special Olympics Team USA is authorized and accredited by Special Olympics, Inc. for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Keep up-to-date on all of the information about the Special Olympics World Games with televised schedule and results by visiting, www.abudhabi2019.org.



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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Perspective from Space

Col. Alvin Drew shared his experiences as a NASA astronaut to Browne Academy's entire student body — from preschool through 8th grade — on Feb. 22. He showed video footage from his trips, answered questions, and posed for photos with the students. Drew logged 612 hours in space — on Space Shuttle missions STS-118 and STS-133 — including almost 13 hours accumulated time on two spacewalks. Between his two shuttle flights, he was NASA director of operations at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Russia. Drew currently serves as the NASA liaison to the U.S. Department of Defense.

New Directors at UCM

The UCM Board of Directors recently elected James Turner and Nathaniel Wilson as directors. These appointments expand UCM's Board to its capacity of 18 directors:

James "Jamie" Turner is a life-long resident of the Mount Vernon area. He is an attorney practicing in Alexandria for 35 years, dealing with real estate matters, zoning matters, elder law, and estate planning. He began his legal career as a Magistrate with the Supreme Court of Virginia and then served as Special Magistrate with Fairfax County. He and his wife Beverly have been active with UCM for more than 25 years and attend Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, where Jamie has served as a Deacon and Trustee. He serves on UCM's Fi-

nance Committee.

Nathaniel "Nate" Wilson retired from the US Air Force as a Deputy Base Commander and continues to serve as Chairman Emeritus of the Quantico/Belvoir Regional Business Alliance. He has served as Vice President, President, and Chairman of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce. He is now an adjunct professor at Central Texas College and Webster University. He also serves on the ministerial staff at Fort Belvoir Chapel. He is a member of UCM's Governance Committee.

Meet them at UCM's 50th Anniversary Give From The Heart Gala on May 3. For more information about the Gala and UCM's year-long anniversary celebration, contact the UCM Giving Office at 571-255-8977.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [Connection Newspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

SATURDAY/MARCH 16

Boating Safety Classes. 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Washington Farm United Methodist Church, 3921 Old Mill Road. Prepare for boating season by taking one of the Boating Safety classes offered by U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 25-08. Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia have varying requirements for boaters before they may legally operate certain motorized vessels on their respective waterways. Register with Jeff Burt at jdburt@verizon.net or 703-307-6482.

First-Time Home Buyer Class.

10 a.m.-4 p.m. At South County Government Building, 8350 Richmond Hwy., Room 220, Alexandria. Free. Learn about the entire home buying process from start to finish, including: personal finances, credit scoring, choosing the right home, qualifying and applying for a loan. Visit the website: <https://soco.financialemPOWERmentcenters.org>.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Mulch Order Deadline. The MVHS Class of 2019 Parent Council is sponsoring the MVHS Annual Spring Mulch Sale. Deliveries will take place on April 5 and 6. All profits from the sale will help pay for the Class of 2019 Senior Celebration in June. Pick-up orders of less than 10 bags in the Mount Vernon High School parking lot. Orders of 10 bags or more will be delivered free to curb or garage in selected zip codes. Order online at tinyurl.com/y23uwp8.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 22-23
Spring Children's Consignment

Sale. Friday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-noon at Cameron United Methodist Church, 3130 Franconia Road. Many items are half price on Saturday. To become a seller, email CUMC.CCS@gmail.com. Visit sites.google.com/site/cameronchurchccs/ for more.

TUESDAY/MARCH 26

Public Hearing. 6:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mt Vernon Road. The VDOT Richmond Highway Corridor Improvements team will hold a Design Public Hearing. The project team continues to finalize project design features for the proposed improvements coming to Richmond Highway. This meeting is an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to learn about updates to the proposed design, review design plans, discuss questions with project staff and submit comments. Visit www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/richmond_highway.asp for more.

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Pet-Friendly Decor

Pet-owning designers offer advice on practical design choices that don't sacrifice style.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

For pet owners, creating a home décor that's both aesthetically appealing and pet-friendly can be a delicate balance. From muddy paw prints on an heirloom area rug to a velvet sofa covered in cat hair, three local designers — all of whom own pets — share their best advice for addressing animal dilemmas and styling a chic interior that accommodates both man and his best friend.

"There are so many ways that pets enhance our quality of life in the same way that a serene, well-designed home might be a sanctuary for relaxation after a long day," said Karen McBride of Inspired Spaces. "The good news is that you really don't have to choose one or the other. The key is to make sure everything is durable and easily cleaned."

Flooring that can withstand paws with claws top the list of considerations for McBride. "Hardwood floors are beautiful, but they're easily scratched and dinged," she said. "Stone or ceramic tile flooring are ideal for pets owners. You can wipe up puddles and mop up muddy paw prints easily. Hardwood requires immediate cleaning because they absorb liquids and odor."

Rugs with patterns that can hide pet stains are what designer Rochelle Clark uses in



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEST EGG

the Fairfax home that she shares with her two Italian Greyhounds, Lola and Fiona. "My dogs are not housebroken, so I have to use indoor-outdoor rugs made of polypropylene because I can just hose them down when they get dirty, which is often," she said. "Rugs made from sisal are also good choices if you have pets. I encourage my pet-owning clients to purchase inexpensive rugs because if you have dogs or cats, rug stains are inevitable. It's just a waste of money to invest in a high-end rug if you

have pets. There are so many ways that they can be ruined and there are plenty of rugs that don't cost a lot, but have a high-end look to them."

When choosing fabrics for furniture or throw pillows, pet owners should steer clear of textures like velvet or chenille, which can be magnets for pet hair, advises designer and corgi owner, Tami Evers of The Simply Elegant Home. "You also want to avoid silk and other delicate fabrics that could tear easily," she said. "There are so many op-

Pet owners should look for stain-resistant and durable upholstery fabrics when creating a stylish and animal-friendly interior.

tions now for durable, stain resistant upholstery fabric that's as elegant and tasteful as its more traditional counterparts. Believe it or not, I finished a project for a client who had two giant labradoodles, and her living room furniture is entirely of Sunbrella fabric."

Other durable and easy to clean options that Evers recommends include leather and Crypton. "The only issue with leather is that it will scratch easily if you have pets with sharp nails, but some people think scratched leather has character," she said. "Crypton can withstand almost anything. If you have a dog or cat that barfs a lot or has lots of accidents, Crypton is the way to go. It's stain-proof, tear-proof and comes in a wide range of patterns and colors."

Built-in eating spaces and pet beds for her two Bichon Frises are ways that personal home organizer Becca Anderson of The Organized Life streamlines her pet spaces to maintain her home's aesthetic.

"Pet owners love their animals, but no one wants their home to look and smell like it's been overrun with animals," she said. "I advised one of my clients to add a custom, built-in litter box space to her laundry room for her three cats."

She even invested in a self-cleaning litter box, and those two features were transformative."

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ENTERTAINMENT

Bishop Ireton To Open ‘Curtains’

With a cast of 30, show is parody of 1950s “whodunit” theater mystery.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

With a cast of 30 students, Bishop Ireton High School is presenting the musical, “Curtains,” from March 22-30. The show is a parody of 1950s “whodunit” theater mysteries, where a lone detective, Lt. Frank Cioffi, investigates a series of murders that take place behind the scenes of a fictional cowboy musical, “Robbin’ Hood.”

The cast of “Robbin’ Hood” is forced to stay inside the theater while Boston Police Detective Cioffi unravels the mystery, getting involved with the show and falling in love with ingénue Niki Harris in the process. The show opens in 1959 when Boston’s Colonial Theatre is host to the opening night performance of “Robbin’ Hood.”

When the leading lady mysteriously dies on stage during the curtain call, the entire cast and crew become suspects. Enter Cioffi, who happens to be a musical theater fan. The plot goes back and forth between trying to solve the mystery and rehearsing for “Robbin’ Hood” with a new leading lady.

According to Joanna Henry, director of Theatre Arts at Bishop Ireton, who directs and produces all the main-stage shows and oversees the theater activities: “It’s ridiculous fun. It’s like an homage to the old murder mysteries and its [John] Kander and [Fred] Ebb, the lyricist and composers; they did ‘Chicago’ and ‘Cabaret.’ So, the music and lyrics are fabulous.”

She continued: “One of the biggest challenges we had to face was not being able to rehearse because of the weather. We had eight rehearsals cancelled because of snow days so the students have worked hard to make up for lost rehearsal time. The music is not easy and it’s a fairly big dance show, so there are a lot of dances.”

A highlight of the show is Dr. Randy Eyles, 67, the retired chair of Bishop Ireton’s Fine Arts Department for 15 years, who has returned to play in the pit. For 23 years, he also played percussion in the U.S. Air Force Band.

“I’m excited to play in the pit for ‘Curtains’ because playing percussion for a musical is challenging. I’ve been having fun practicing to prepare and it’s going to be great to be around the B.I. community to be part of the show. It’s exciting for me to work on pieces of music and to perform, and playing percussion in a pit in a show is particularly challenging to play so many different instruments with just one player.”

He added: “There’s probably 20 instruments all together, the trick is to organize



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD

Choreographer Reyna Osborne leads Bishop Ireton dance students in rehearsal for “Curtains.”



PHOTO BY STEVE HIBBARD

Dr. Randy Eyles, the retired chair of Bishop Ireton’s Fine Arts Department for 15 years, has returned to play percussion in the pit.

them in such a way that you can get to them in time and be able to play them.”

As the Fine Arts chair, he was the Bishop Ireton band director for the Symphonic Wind Ensemble. Over the years, they expanded the music department, offering guitar, jazz ensemble, and choir classes. He also taught the jazz band and guitar classes as well as AP music theory.

Joey Pagnella, 18, of Alexandria is playing the role of Darrell Grady, a theater critic from the Boston Globe. “I’m a shady individual and my job is to review ‘Robin Hood,’ the production within the production, and



PHOTO BY GABY GARCIA

Bishop Ireton students in rehearsal for “Curtains.”

I’m writing a pretty pivotal review for the show,” he said.

Pagnella, who plays basketball and football for Bishop Ireton, said this is his first time being in a play. “So, I’ve had to learn how to keep my voice up and memorize the lines. It’s a big transition and I’m having a lot of fun. I get to meet a lot of people that I don’t usually see throughout the day and it’s been a positive experience.”

Olivia Hays, 18, of Alexandria is playing the role of Jessica Cranshaw who dies in the beginning; she’s also a member of the ensemble. “She is someone who thinks too highly of herself. She’s used to being treated like she’s a big star, but she doesn’t have the talent to back any of it up and she really makes the show horrible for a lot of people. She can’t sing at all, and can’t really act. Someone decides to take her out so that another person can take on her role and make it a better show,” she said.

Reyna Osborne, 17, of Alexandria is the show’s choreographer and costumer. “We had to do our research of different dances they would have done back then. Like Gene

Kelly and Fred Astaire, and we had to listen to the music, because there are so many different genres, we had to be flexible — there’s some ballet and jazz,” she said.

Molly Gaffney, 18, of Alexandria plays Rosie Driscoll in the ensemble. “I did get the freedom to come up with her background, which is a perk of being in the ensemble. I like to consider myself as the jealous one who’s overly emotional. There’s a couple of curve balls in the show so I try to overdramatize things and maybe be a little jealous which has made it more fun for me.”

As far as audience takeaways, she said: “I hope they know how much fun we had putting it all together and how collaborative our group is. From what I’ve been exposed to, there’s been nothing but support and helpfulness.”

Bishop Ireton High School is presenting “Curtains” from March 22-30. Show times are March 22 and 23 at 7:30 p.m.; March 24 at 2 p.m.; and March 29 and 30 at 7:30 p.m. The venue is located at 201 Cambridge Road. Visit www.bishopireton.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

“Beep Beep” at Arts on the Horizon. Through March 23, at the Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Arts on the Horizon, an interactive theatre for children ages 0-6, will present “Beep Beep,” written and directed by Solas Nua Artistic Director and frequent AOTH collaborator, Rex Daugherty. It was created specifically for an audience of children ages 2-5 and their families. Show times are March 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, at 10:30 a.m.; and March 9, 16, 23, at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$10 for children and adults at www.artsonthehorizon.org or at the door.

Beginner Square Dance Lessons. Through March 27, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St. Keep up with New Year’s resolutions and enjoy both mental and physical exercise with Square Dance Lessons. \$30 for each four-week session. Open to couples, singles and groups. Email boomerangs@wascaclubs.com or call 571-210-5480.

“Daddy Long Legs.” Through March 30, at the Ainslie Arts Center, 3900 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. The play tells the story of Jerusha Abbott, her mysterious young benefactor and the affection that grows between them by way of handwritten letters. John Caird’s Drama Desk Award-winning book for this stage musical combines the love story derived from the 1912 novel by Jean Webster with contemporary

music and lyrics by Paul Gordon. Monumental Theatre Company will be partnering with the English Department at Episcopal High School in Alexandria to give students a “behind-the-scenes” look at “Daddy Long Legs.” Tickets can be purchased online at www.monumentaltheatre.org/daddy-long-legs.html.

Art Exhibition: High School Students. Through March 30, at The Gallery at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. The Alexandria All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns for its fourth year. This year’s experience features more than 90 Alexandria high school students representing six high schools including public, private, and independent. Returning for 2019’s collaborative event are students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School, Commonwealth Academy, and The Howard Gardner School. Visit www.ourconvergence.org.

Art Exhibit: For The Artist. Through March 31, at Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. The “For The Artist” exhibit features artworks that Del Ray Artisans members have always dreamed of creating. The diversity of expression and creativity in this exhibit is inspiring to artists and art appreciators alike. Two and three-dimensional works, paintings, mixed media, and photography are on exhibit. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits for more.

Still Life Alive. Through April 2, 9-5 p.m. at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Patricia Uchello One Woman Art Show,

Civil War Authors Series

In Mosby’s Raids in Civil War Northern Virginia, William Connery chronicles the successes of Commander John Mosby. Also known as the Gray Ghost, he is celebrated most for his raids that captured Union General Edwin Stoughton in Fairfax and Colonel Daniel French Dulany in Rose Hill. By 1864, he was a feared partisan guerrilla in the North and a nightmare for Union troops protecting Washington City. After the war, his support for presidential candidate Ulysses S. Grant forced Mosby to leave his native Virginia for Hong Kong as a U.S. consul. A mentor to young George S. Patton, Mosby’s military legacy extended to World War II. Thursday, March 14, 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. \$15 per lecture or attend all three events for \$15. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.



William Connery

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 for more.

Good Luck Charms. Through April 14, at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, 105 N. Union Street, Studio 29, Alexandria. A very special found object, a four leaf clover, a rainbow, a wishbone, a charm on a bracelet - these objects all serve as inspiration to gallery members when creating pieces for this show. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work may also be exhibited. Visit www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com.

Kathryn Coneway Exhibit. Through May 31, at Huntley Meadows Visitor’s Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Coneway’s mixed-media art combines collage and photographic transfers, and it expresses her observations of nature.

She uses mulberry paper to create a ground of color and texture. A reception will be held Sunday, March 10 from 2-4 p.m. Students from Kathryn Coneway’s winter class at Huntley Meadows will also display work. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Community Dance. 7:30-9:30 p.m. every third Friday at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Live music. \$4. Call 703-765-4573.

Life Drawing. Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions for anyone to develop life-drawing skills further. Drop-in for the session and bring supplies to draw or paint live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Del Ray Artisans is located at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org for a schedule.

The Harmony Heritage Singers

(Mount Vernon Chapter of Barbershop Harmony Society), a daytime, a cappella, Chorus, rehearses on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, monthly, at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Newcomers welcome for fun or to book for a performance. visit www.HHSingers.org, or call Bruce at 703-352-5271.

THURSDAY/MARCH 14

The Athenaeum’s Civil War Authors Series: William Connery. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. In Mosby’s Raids in Civil War Northern Virginia, William Connery chronicles the successes of Commander John Mosby. Also known as the Gray Ghost, he is celebrated most for his raids that captured Union General Edwin Stoughton in Fairfax and Colonel Daniel French Dulany in Rose Hill. \$15 per lecture or attend all three events for \$30. NVFAA Members can attend all three events for \$15. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

FRIDAY/MARCH 15

A Spiritual Journey. 7:30 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. Westminster Presbyterian Church Choir and Dr. Eileen Gunther present a concert and program exploring the history of the American Spiritual. Free. Call 703-549-4766, ext. 112 or visit www.wpc-alex.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 16

Archaeology Symposium. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709



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Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Symposium – Exposing A Buried History: The Archaeology of Slave Life. In commemoration of the 400th anniversary of forced migration of the first enslaved Africans to Virginia’s shores, the program sheds light on the history of people enslaved in Virginia from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Archaeologists and speakers from some of Virginia’s historic sites share what they have learned through archaeological investigation. David Shonyo, staff archaeologist at Gunston Hall, will lead the morning with an exploration of Gunston Hall’s recent discovery of quarters likely assigned to enslaved workers for the house. Advance tickets are available until 5 p.m. on March 15 and may be purchased online at www.gunstonhall.org, and over the phone at 703-550-9220. Tickets will be available at the door the day of the symposium and are \$55 full price (\$45 for members of Gunston Hall and Friends of Fairfax County Archaeology). Visit the website: www.gunstonhall.org.

Starting Cool Weather Edibles.

9:30-11 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Edible gardener and horticulturalist Nancy Olney introduces you some interesting and tasty cool season plants to grow in your spring vegetable garden. Work with Olney to start some seeds in take-home containers to start planting an edible garden this spring. \$22/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 1FA.5BAB or call 703-642-5173.

Watercolor Workshop: Wonky Watercolors.

9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Embrace imperfection as you experiment with watercolor techniques and textures. Instructor Marni Maree demonstrates drawing and painting techniques using only a few colors. Try your hand at these demonstrated techniques and enhance your skill set and appreciation of what you can do with this medium. Supply list emailed at registration. Cost is \$93/person. To register, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ and use code FB7.8985 or call 703-642-5173.

The Century of Immigration: 1820-1934.

10 a.m.-noon at Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. The film chronicles the period when 40 million immigrants entered the U.S., making immigration a major and defining aspect of American life. Open and free to all members of the community, but pre-registration is requested through Alexandriava.gov/Shop.

Puppet Shows.

10 and 11:30 a.m. At The Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron Street, Alexandria. Featuring Joe Pipik’s Backpack Puppets 5 Senses Dinosaur Show. Tickets are \$6 per person. To purchase your ticket, visit www.alexandriava.gov/Arts and click on Durant Arts Center. For further information about the National Capital Puppetry Guild, contact Jeff Bragg at 703.424.5553 or email puppettimes@gmail.com.

Locals’ Alley Saturdays.

12:30-2:30 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 S. Union St. at King Street. Meet the makers of local goods, featuring: Van Napier Farms Hams and Jelly tastings. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

Family Fun-Go Native!

1:30-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Discover the importance of native plants to the survival of Virginia’s animals. Learn what makes a plant

‘Rebellion in the Heartland’

Pipeline Playwrights holds third reading March 18 at MetroStage.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

Pipeline Playwrights will hold its next reading in its third reading series of world premieres: “Rebellion in the Heartland” by Patricia Connelly, on Monday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage in Alexandria.

In this drama, directed by Catherine Tripp, a young lawyer is forced to question her beliefs and finds in the end she must decide whether to continue with what she knows will be the biggest case of her career or whether to walk away, turning her back on her clients, family and religion.

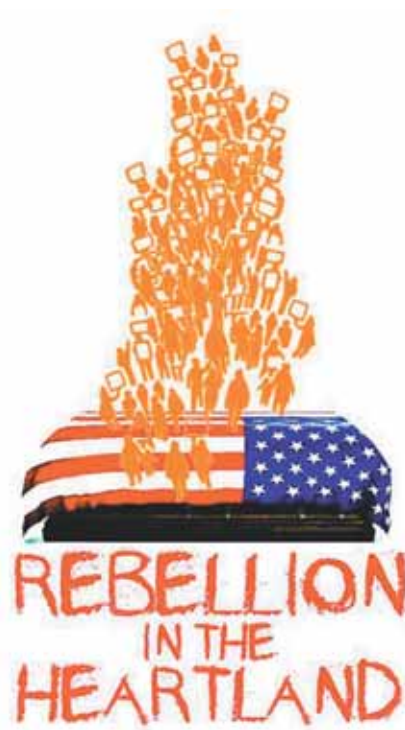
According to Connelly: “Rebellion in the Heartland’ begins with a protest by a church group at a military funeral, led by one of its devoted members, Janet, who is also a lawyer for the church and daughter of one of its leaders. The church members believe that America is doomed for condoning gay rights, gay marriage, and transgender rights. The members also believe that America has replaced religion with patriotism and that Americans idolize the military, the flag and other patriotic symbols, rather than God. Their beliefs come from their own rigorous interpretation of the Bible.”

She continued: “After picketing at one military funeral with signs that say things like ‘God Hates Fags’ and ‘Thank God for Dead Soldiers,’ the mother of the dead soldier sues the church and its leader for intentional infliction of emotional distress. Janet is asked to represent her father and the church. The play focuses on Janet, an experienced and skilled trial lawyer, who begins to show cracks in her faith and questions the church’s extreme tactics after she comes face to face with the mother of the slain soldier.”

She said her main challenge was how to get beyond her own bias against a group that would picket and display hate-filled signs at military funerals and funerals of gay men and women. “The Southern Poverty Law Center in fact views the Westboro Church as a hate group. In order to write about people with similar beliefs, albeit fictional characters, I wanted to understand the individuals who participate in groups with such extreme views and understand what would motivate them to use the tactics they use so that I could find a way to create sympathetic complex human characters in these circumstances,” she said.

“In order for the play to work, Janet needs to be a fully realized person, strong in her beliefs at the outset, with her struggle fully developed. It’s been a challenge understanding various Biblical passages that extremist groups use to justify extreme actions and beliefs,” she said.

Connelly said she first was inspired to write the play when she heard an interview with one of the lawyers in the Supreme Court case of Snyder v. Phelps involving the Westboro Church of Kansas that pickets at military funerals. “I began to think about how attorneys are sometimes called upon



GRAPHIC BY CRYSTAL ADAWAY

A reading of “Rebellion in the Heartland” will be presented Monday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage in Alexandria.

to represent clients whose conduct and beliefs differ from their own, yet they still find a way to vigorously represent those clients,” she said.

She continued: “With the Westboro Church Supreme Court case, the lawyers were not only members of the church, but they were children of the founder. I wondered what would have happened if those lawyers had personal misgivings or doubts about their faith or their tactics and, if so, what they would have done and how their actions would affect their family relationships and relationships within the church community.”

She said she hopes the play causes people to consider the personal issues for Janet — both as a lawyer and family member of the founder of the church — and what she risks when she questions both family and religion. “I also hope audiences begin to understand how difficult it is to balance and protect First Amendment rights when espoused by extremist groups that choose to exercise them in a manner that most people find shocking,” she said.

The reading will feature cast members: Crystal Adaway, Elizabeth Bruce, Pooja Chawla, Kevin Dykstra, Natasha-Lee Loyola, Angela Kay Pirko and Christian Sullivan.

Pipeline Playwrights is a group of women playwrights based in Northern Virginia, working together to support, present, and promote each other’s work with the goal of moving their play into the theater pipeline. Playwrights Jean Koppen, Ann Timmons, Crystal Adaway and Patricia Connelly each will be presenting a reading of a full-length play in the 2019 spring reading series at MetroStage in Alexandria. MetroStage is located at 1201 North Royal Street, Alexandria. For more information, visit www.thelmatheatre/PipelinePlaywrights.com.html.

invasive and why it should be removed. Instructors will be from the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) and Green Spring Gardens. \$8/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code D2C.E32F or call 703-642-5173.

Family Fun-Sensational Seeds.

3-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Thinking about your spring garden? Come explore the world of seeds. Plant some seeds to grow at home. Transplant them outside in your garden in spring. Children must be accompanied by an adult registered in the program. \$8/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code E8F.A210 or call 703-642-5173.

Upcycled Clothing: Embroidered Embellishment.

3:30 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Embroidering clothing adds beauty, uniqueness, and gives it an extended life. Please join Scilla + Luna for an afternoon learning to free-hand embroider – bring a piece to work on. All skill levels welcome. Scilla + Luna is a DC - based online mother-daughter duo who design and sell original fiber arts. Ticket required, includes show admission. Visit

www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

Country-Western Dance.

At Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance. Lessons, 6-7 p.m. Open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. 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. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

SSA Annual Gala.

6-10 p.m. At Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria. Dinner, dancing, a silent auction and more. This year’s gala will pay tribute to individuals who have helped make Alexandria a caring and compassionate community for everyone, and will continue its history of honoring a family who has passed down a tradition of community service. This year’s honorees are: U.S. Rep. Don Beyer and his daughter Stephanie Beyer Kirby; Lynnwood Campbell and Jen Walker. McEneaney Associates, Inc. Realtors is the presenting sponsor. The evening will feature live music by Bruthers Plus One and wine Bingo presented by UnWined. A silent auction will feature travel getaways, sporting tickets, and restaurant packages. For tickets, go to www.seniorservicesalex.org or call Cassie Chesson, SSA’s development director, at 703-836-4414, ext. 114.

Best Bib and Tucker Zelda Ball.

7-11 p.m. At Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Honoring the Year of the Women’s Right to Vote. The Gadsby’s Tavern Museum Society’s annual fundraising ball will feature live music and entertainment by Doc Scantin’s Palmettos. Chou Chou will be the DJ for late night disco. Tickets: all evening \$150 per person; disco tickets \$75 per person. Visit www.gadsbystavernmuseum.us or call 703-615-1659.

Cedar Knoll Party.

7-11 p.m. At 9030 Lucia Lane, Alexandria. Wear green to Cedar Knoll when it’s time to party with your friends from The Old Town Boutique District and The Scout Guide Alexandria. Set to a backdrop of entertaining tunes from Justin Trawick and the Common Good, the Guinness and Irish Whiskey will flow and the Irish-inspired food will delight. Admission includes heavy hors d’oeuvres served throughout the

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ENTERTAINMENT

night and two drink tickets worth a cocktail or wine apiece. Tickets are \$44 each and includes all taxes, fees and service charges.

Reservations@cedarknollva.com

The Valleys Wild. 7:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. Alexandria Choral Society presents The Valleys Wild, a nature-centric concert. Following the reception, ACS will hold its annual gala reception and silent auction fundraiser. \$20/ adults, \$15/senior/student/military, 13 and under free. Visit www.alexandriachoralsociety.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 17

Modern-Day Mapping. 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Explore today's navigation tools at the "Interpreting Maps-Finding the Path" program. Discover what participants can learn from a map, and see how GPS and other electronic maps are being used and changing the way we interpret the world. This program is designed for participants age 9-adult. \$9 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Community Ceili Dance. 3-5:30 p.m. at Del Ray Methodist Church, 100 E. Windsor Ave. Celebrate on St. Patrick's Day. Come and learn Irish social dancing with the Irish Breakfast Band. All ages welcome; no experience necessary. Live music and lots of fun. Free. Visit www.irishbreakfastband.com.

Painting and Creating Texture through Freeform Embroidery. 3:30 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. A workshop covering various stitching techniques focused on creating graceful textures and strokes for those interested in using embroidery in a painterly and unconventional way. All skill levels welcome. Brielle DuFlon spent her first 18 years living in Guatemala, which left in her a deep appreciation for handwoven textiles and embroidery. All supplies included. Ticket required, includes show admission. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 19

Writing Family History. 1-3 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. "Tell Your Ancestor's Story by Writing, Documenting, and Sharing." Genealogist Angela Packer McGhie will speak about writing biographical sketches of your ancestors. Free, open to public. Presented by the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society. Visit www.mvgenalogy.org.

Music and Conversation. 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage, 1201 N Royal St. # D, Alexandria. Join three ASO musicians for an evening of music and conversation. Enjoy a variety of solos from the classical tradition by Claudia Chudacoff (violin), Matt Harding (trumpet), and Dean Woods (bassoon) with accompanist Elizabeth Brown. Harding and Woods are sponsored through the Adopt a Chair program. Stay after to mingle with the musicians for a wine and dessert reception to be held in the lobby following the concert. \$35/ Adult; \$5/Youth. Visit www.alexsym.org.

TUESDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 19-24

Spring Book Sale. At Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St., Alexandria. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Spring Book Sale. Members' preview on Tuesday, March 19, 4 p.m.-8:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, March 20, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.,



Phil Hutinet

Confluence: Two Rivers One City

Phil Hutinet, guest speaker and publisher, will highlight some prominent visual artists from the anthology and why their contributions are significant to the DMV art community and contemporary art today. Audience members will have the opportunity to participate in Q & A during and afterwards. Thursday, March 21, 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

Thursday, March 21, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Friday, March 22, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, March 24, 1-4:30 p.m. Cost is \$3 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books and media items. All genres. Discount Day on Sunday, March 24. Call 703-746-1702; or visit www.beatleyfriends.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Scandinavian Hardangersom - As Soothing as an Old Folk Song. 4 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Hardangersom (or Hardangersaum), is Norwegian for 'embroidery from Hardanger', and refers to the style of needlework that many of us know as Hardanger embroidery. Lucy Lyons Willis is a needlework designer/teacher specializing in Hardangersom. She will share her secrets to making the perfect pieces, answer questions, and even provide small kits to get participant started. RSVP required, free w/show admission. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

Confluence: Two Rivers One City. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Phil Hutinet, guest speaker and publisher, will highlight some prominent visual artists from the anthology and why their contributions are significant to the DMV art community and contemporary art today. Audience members will have the opportunity to participate in Q&A. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Get Ready for Spring. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Spring garden maintenance in Northern Virginia begins in winter and is a terrific way to shake the winter blahs. It's time to prune, transplant, fertilize, mulch and prevent weeds. Extension Master Gardeners give tips for selecting plants and starting seedlings. \$10/ person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code B58.6FDE or call 703-642-5173.

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chinquapin Park Rec Center and

Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring Mount Vernon Community 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. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation for more.

Art on the Vine. 7-10 p.m. at The Art League Gallery in the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Sommelier Tony Acampora creates a multifaceted tasting experience featuring 10 estate grown wines chosen in concert with artworks from The Art League's faculty artists at Art on the Vine. In addition to eight tastings and a full pour of one's choice, tickets come with a souvenir wine glass, a light buffet, and the opportunity to purchase bottles as well as a one-night-only discount of 10% on all gallery artwork and a 20% discount of artwork from The Art League's permanent collection. Ticket sales, art sales, and a portion of the wine sales all raise money to benefit The Art League and its programs. \$45-\$55 (must be 21+). Visit www.eventbrite.com/e/art-on-the-vine-2019-tickets-52719992918 for tickets.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 22-24

"Curtains." Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. in Garwood Whaley Auditorium at Bishop Ireton. Bishop Ireton Theater Arts presents the musical comedy whodunit "Curtains." \$10 adults, \$8 students, \$8 seniors. Visit www.bishopireton.org/tickets.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

The Mixed Border. 10-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Join horticulturalist Karen Rexrode in a discussion on creating beautiful mixed shrub and perennial borders. Learn techniques that designers use to make glorious plant combinations and ideas for keeping them maintained and interesting through the seasons. \$18/person. Code Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code F45.0C7C or call 703-642-5173.

Civil War Women's Day. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Road. In recognition of Women's History Month, civilian reenactors will interpret the clothing, skills and contributions of women during the Civil War period. On-going displays and activities feature soldiers aid societies and relief efforts; women's roles on the home front, in camp and on the battlefield; and women in the workforce. Children can make a lady's fan or a patriotic ribbon cockade. Call 703-746-4848.

Made in Virginia Goodies. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 S. Union St. at King Street. Sampling of made in Virginia products, featuring: Gunther's Gourmet Salsa tasting. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

19 – The Musical. 1-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) 19 is a musical about women winning the right to vote – the 19th amendment. Celebrate Women's History Month with the dramatic story of suffragist Alice Paul and her fellow crusaders. The cast of the Alexandria-based theater company Through the 4th Wall brings her stirring story to life through modern song, spoken word, and dance. \$45 (program + tea); \$18 (program only). Programs are by reservation only. Call 703-941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988.

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ENTERTAINMENT

St. Patrick's Day Dinner. 6-8 p.m. at Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. The community is invited to a traditional St Patrick's Day Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner in the Parish Hall Common Room at Historic Pohick Church. This is a fund-raising event to support the many Christian outreach programs sponsored by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew Men's Group of Pohick Episcopal Church. The cost is \$15 for adults, \$40 for a family, and children 12 and under are free. Call 703-339-6572 or www.pohick.org.

Discover Romance in the Meadows. 7 p.m. at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria. Love is in the air – and on the ground – at Huntley Meadows Park as male woodcocks perform their amazing courtship dance. Try to spot these feathered romantics on an “Evening Woodcock Walk.” Listen for the call of the male woodcock and hopefully see his elaborate courtship dance and flight. Prime courtship time is early evening, so bring a flashlight along. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

SUNDAY/MARCH 24

Ides of Bark. 1-4 p.m. At Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria. This family and pet friendly Dog Festival features an agility course, Police K-9 Unit demonstrations, dog park play time and a vendor area. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/ides-bark-dog-festival.

Floral Design Workshop: Spring Flower Basket. 2-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (16-Adult) Making flower arrangements in handle baskets can be challenging. Floral designer Chuck Mason helps participants expand their skill set by showing how to design an arrangement in and around the basket handle for a beautiful spring floral piece. Later, reuse the basket to practice. Register for program and \$30 supply fee. Program cost is \$39/ person. To register, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes and use code E14.F107 or call 703-642-5173.

Introduction to Palestinian Embroidery. 3:30 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Wafa Ghnaim, author of *Tatreez & Tea: Embroidery and Storytelling in the Palestinian Diaspora*, will teach participants how to embroider traditional Palestinian motifs. Palestinian tatreez embroidery is a centuries-old folk art, traditionally passed from mother to daughter over a cup of tea. Students will learn traditional embroidery techniques used by Palestinian women for centuries. All supplies are included. Ticket required, includes show admission. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

MONDAY/MARCH 25

Yoga for Gardeners I. 9:30-10:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) This class features a gentle introduction to the Vinyasa method which helps participants increase the strength, flexibility and endurance necessary for gardening. Class held indoors. \$125 for 11 sessions. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code E14.F107 or call 703-642-5173.

Civic Activism - Women Leading the Way. 6:30 p.m. reception, 7:30 p.m. program at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Focused on women's leadership, the event will



Artwork by Kathryn Coneway created with mulberry paper collage and photo transfer. Winter skies and the forms of bare branches are a favorite theme in Coneway's work.

Huntley Meadows Park Art Exhibit

Slip into a gauzy world of collage and photography at Huntley Meadows Park. The park will host the work of Alexandria-based artist Kathryn Coneway through May 31, in the Norma Hoffman Visitor Center. A reception is planned for Sunday, March 10, 2-4 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park Visitors Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2019/psa057 for more.

feature keynote speaker Del. Eileen Filler-Corn and a panel of elected officials and community leaders. Learn more about the Commission for Women and see their 2018 Report of the Status of Women in Alexandria. Tickets: \$45 advance sales/\$50 at the door. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum.

Del Ray: The Forgotten Town of Potomac. 7:15 p.m. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Part of the Agenda:Alexandria program, which falls on the fourth Monday of the month, begin at 7:15 p.m. Programs are \$5 each or free with \$35 membership, payable on-line at www.AgendaAlexandria.org/sign-up page or at the door by check or credit. All are invited to a pre-program dinner if desired. Dinner is 6:45-7:15 p.m., prices starting at \$32 with reservations by the Friday prior to the program. Visit www.Agenda:Alexandria.com.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27

English Precious Metal Embroidery – “The Gold Standard.” 4 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Join award-winning precious-metal embroiderer, instructor at the Smithsonian Associates and the Folger, Deborah Merrick-Wilson, for a dynamic talk on the history and influence of this

embroidery discipline on the politics and global economic system of medieval through Elizabethan England. The talk will include stunning display examples and a mini-demonstration of several techniques. RSVP required, free w/ show admission. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

Lecture-Alexandria Historical Society. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at The Lyceum: Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington St. Thinking Big: Lessons from the Washington Metro – put Metro frustrations in context as Zachary M. Schrag, history professor from George Mason University, shares insights into the history and future of the Washington Metro system. Free-members of AHS, \$5 non members. Email franwbromberg@gmail.com or visit alexandriahistorical.org/events for more.

THURSDAY/MARCH 28

Archaeology After Dark: “Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery.” 6:30 p.m. at The Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St. Char McCargo Bah presents her new book, Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery: A Legacy of Freedom and recounts the stories of men and women who poured into Alexandria to obtain protection at the beginning of the Civil War, as well as the search for their descendants. Retired City

Archaeologist, Fran Bromberg, will complement the discussion by highlighting the archaeological investigations at the cemetery. A book signing will follow. \$12/person; \$10 FOAA/OHA members. Visit www.foaa.info/events.

FRIDAY/MARCH 29

The March150 Art Party. 7-10 p.m. at The Target Gallery, Torpedo Factory. The March150 Art Party, presented by the Factory Society, is the closing reception for Target Gallery's March150 Special Exhibition and Art Sale. All remaining artwork is priced at \$100. Tickets are \$25 in advance/\$30 at the door. Visit www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-march150-art-party-tickets-56460314320 for tickets.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 29-30

“Curtains.” Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m. in Garwood Whaley Auditorium at Bishop Ireton. Bishop Ireton Theater Arts presents the musical comedy whodunit “Curtains.” \$10 adults, \$8 students, \$8 seniors. Visit www.bishopireton.org/tickets.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

Multiply Your Plants. 9:30-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Multiply plants through the simple, money-saving

techniques of stem cuttings and plant division. Horticulturalist Peggy Riccio will walk participants through this hands-on workshop where they will learn to propagate house and garden plants. Take the starter plants home to grow or share with a friend. \$22/ person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 586.37E6 or call 703-642-5173.

NoVaTEEN Book Festival. 9:30 a.m. at Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. The NoVaTEEN Book Festival is back with a day full of panels, games, and signings with over 30 bestselling and emerging Young Adult authors. Learn more on the official festival website. The event is free and open to the public; tickets and a full schedule at novateenbookfestival.com.

Documentary Film and Discussion Series.

10 a.m.-noon at Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. The Office of Historic Alexandria will host a six-week program series called “Becoming American: A Documentary Film and Discussion Series on Our Immigration Experience.” This series is a six-week public program featuring documentary film screenings and scholar-led discussions designed to encourage an informed discussion of immigration issues against the backdrop of our immigration history. The series is open and free to all members of the community, but pre-registration is requested through Alexandriava.gov/Shop.

Made in Virginia Goodies. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 S. Union St. at King Street. Sampling of made in Virginia products, featuring: Byrd Mill Baking Mix tasting. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

The Marital Misadventures of Henry VIII. 1-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Divorced, beheaded, died, beheaded, divorced, survived. Smithsonian scholar and popular speaker Carol Ann Lloyd Stanger traces Henry VIII's wild matrimonial journey to secure the succession. Afterwards, solve riddles of the king's many queens at a mystery afternoon tea, where clues are hidden in plain sight! \$45 (program + tea); \$22 (program only). Programs are by reservation only. Call 703-941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988.

Chili Cookoff. 1 p.m. at Hopsfrog Grille, 6030 Burke Commons Road, Burke. Hopsfrog Grille's annual Chili Cookoff benefiting the Fort Belvoir Fisher House (www.fisherhouse.org) features chili tasting and raffle. Contestant pre-registration by March 17; \$10 per chili entry. Chili tasters: \$10 and a vote for best chili. Call 703-239-9324 for more.

Introduction to Punch Needle Embroidery Workshop.

3:30 p.m. at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Join “The Comptoir” herself for this super fun punch needle embroidery workshop. Learn the basics of the tool and technique as well as the ins and outs of selecting the best fabric and yarns for a beautiful piece every time. Create a design with guidance. All supplies included. Ticket required, includes show admission. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

GenOUT Ensemble. 5 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Fort Hunt Road. GenOUT is a youth ensemble of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C. It operates under the two-fold mission to give LGBTQ+ and allied youth a voice, and to connect that voice to the community. Featuring music from their Spring Tour to Nashville. Free-will offering collected. Visit www.saintlukeschurch.net/events or call 703-765-4342.

Having International Impact

FROM PAGE 3

Mount Vernon Estate to use analytics to find a relationship between weather and daily tourism numbers,” Dixit said. “I also have my own small business, Linkpedia, through which I’m hoping to help apply machine learning to help other people solve their problems.”

Not even a high school graduate and Dixit has already made his mark on more than one continent.

“Avyuk has pushed many boundaries and already has made strides toward making our world a better place for all,” said Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck. “It is achievements like these that will help solve the challenges we face as a society.”

As for Dixit’s uncle, and his challenges with glaucoma?

“We’ve talked at every stage of getting this model up and running,” Dixit said. “I’m always in touch with him. He’s doing a lot better. He was diagnosed in time and started getting treatment. He’s been able to continue pursuing a successful career in teaching.”



Avyuk Dixit during a trip to India.

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Talk About Wishful Thinking



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Every morning, at the very least, I look into the bathroom mirror to brush my teeth and shave my stubble. And there, right below my Adam's apple, in plain site, is the tumor we're attempting to stabilize, and in a perfect scenario: shrink.

As I've said many times before during my 10 years of treatment: "I can live with 'stable,'" and/or "Stable is my new favorite word." But the only way I find out if my lung cancer tumors are stable/have shrunk/grown is when my oncologist tells me/I read the radiologist's report.

During this quarterly interval between scans, I'm like Sergeant Schultz from "Hogan's Heroes": "I see nothing." The tumors in my lungs are "like weeds," (meaning they're everywhere), said my oncologist at the initial Team Lourie meeting in response to one of my wife, Dina's, questions about whether surgery was an option; "no" was that answer. But obviously, I can't see them and what feelings I've experienced in my mediastinum have likely been scar tissue forming (according to my oncologist) and not indicative of too much too often.

So, I've learned to not overreact to any discomfort I might experience. It might mean something or it might mean nothing. I've been to both places already.

However, the "Adam's apple" tumor is front and center. When I brush my teeth, I see it. When I shave I have to nearly shave over it. It's impossible to miss. It's not exactly a goiter but it's more than a lump.

It's not painful, but it's completely opposite to the tumors in my lungs; they're out of sight and because of that, occasionally out of mind. The "Adam's apple" tumor is totally in sight and because of that, is always on my mind. It's how I start my day and how I finish my evening. And in the hours between, I'm touching my throat to feel what I can feel and hope what I can hope. The effect is I'm reinforcing a negative every time I touch the tumor.

If I can't see the tumor (like the ones in my lungs), and I can't touch the tumors (like I can the "Adam's apple" tumor), I can delude myself more easily into not thinking/remembering I even have cancer; and more importantly, not thinking that I'm "terminal" as my oncologist characterized me all those years ago when he gave me a "13 month to two year" prognosis – on Feb. 27, 2009. Then I can pretend to live life as if the Sword of Damocles is not hanging over my head.

But, being able to touch the very thing that might be shortening my life makes it more real than it's ever been. And it's that reality that is making Kenny a very dull boy (no comments from the peanut gallery, please?).

I'll know something definitive on March 18, five days after my March 13 CT scan, the first scan I will have had since I began the immunotherapy. That's when we'll have our usual post-scan appointment with my oncologist to learn results and discuss alternatives, if necessary.

Surgery, as we've inquired about previously is out of the question. Therefore, we'll either continue to do what we've been doing, or start doing something we've never done before (you have to keep the cancer guessing).

On my most recent appointment, when asked by yours truly, my oncologist said we have lots of non-surgical options should change be warranted. (There was a time in the past when I asked my oncologist a similar question and he was not nearly so encouraging. In fact, he was downright discouraging when he told me that the drug he was giving me at the time was the last drug he had for me.) Having been dangling previously at a near end, I'm sure you can appreciate how a patient knowing there are other choices available should a drug fail to stop the growth, is very reassuring.

Nevertheless, facing off with this tumor every day and being able to touch it morning, noon and night, presents a real problem: how do I avoid thinking I have cancer?

It's always been my goal to try and assimilate the facts and hope not to be overwhelmed by the feelings. But how do I think it's nothing when it's obviously something?

I mean, it wouldn't be there if it was just minding its own business, would it?

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

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News

Peace Award

FROM PAGE 1

gift and an additional \$100 to be donated to any nonprofit organization of the student's choice that operates in a spirit that is in keeping with the Peace Awards and this year, an autographed copy of the book, "Sweet Fruits From The Bitter Tree" by Mark Andreas, stories of "creative and compassionate ways out of conflict."

HOW LOCAL RECIPIENTS WORK FOR PEACE

Three local students from Alexandria were honored as recipients of the 2019 Peace Awards.

Diana Argueta is a senior at West Potomac High School who only came to this country in 2015 as an immigrant from El Salvador and learned English while navigating her high school classes.

She is a founding member and current president of the Hispanic Leadership Club, whose mission is to spread awareness of Hispanic cultures, empower Hispanic students to become leaders in their school and community, and to create events that bring diverse communities together.

She recruited volunteers to tutor local elementary school students in Spanish and to read to and mentor children who have just moved to the U.S. She led volunteers for a national day of service with Rebuilding Together, helping to assemble over 20 students to paint a kitchen for a shelter in Alexandria. She also organized food drives for hurricane victims and assists other students to understand requirements for graduation.

Lauren Haymes, senior at Quander Road School, is the president of Blossoming Beauties, an organization dedicated to helping girls grow into well-rounded and confident young women as they work together on school and community projects. The members engage in team-building activities that encourages them to recognize their commonalities, rather than their differences.

Mount Vernon High School Senior Burhan Ahmed has already been a three-time Presidential Volunteer Service Award winner, before adding the 2019 Fairfax Student Peace Awards honor to his achievements.

Having immigrated to the U.S. when just 3-years-old, Burhan feels fortunate to be here and feels that peace in the world is achieved by being grateful and willing to sacrifice for the greater good.

He is one of the leaders of Stony Brook Junior Volunteers, which helps children from low-income families in the Stony Brook neighborhood. For the past three years, Burhan has run the athletics program and participated in creek and community park clean-ups, food drives, and toy collections. He feels it's important to show children the joy of volunteering and says, "Peace and community go hand in hand." Burhan has logged more than 400 hours of volunteer work.

Read more about the Peace Awards and the recipients at www.fairfax.studentpeaceawards.org.

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2207 Lakeshire Dr.

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9112 Volunteer Dr

Williamsburg Colonial! | \$655,000

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9402 Mt. Vernon Circle \$875,000

Unique property in highly desired Mt. Vernon on The Potomac Neighborhood! Classic 3 level Colonial in prime location just steps from neighborhood private marina. Features inc: Open Floor plan, large room sizes, family room off nicely updated Kitchen with stone fireplace, hardwood floors, elegant trim detail, and true oversize two car garage. Community includes private waterfront grassy area, 2 tennis courts with hitting wall, fire pit, bathrooms, and docks/boat slips (for additional fee)

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4021 Colonial Ave \$1,130,000

Incredible brand new build in desirable Mount Vernon area. Almost 5,000 square feet on a flat level half acre lot. 5 Bedrooms and 4.5 Baths with long list of builder selections that set this home apart from your average build. Rare opportunity for a brand new build in Mount Vernon!

CONTRACT!



8826 Black Alder Dr \$665,000

Incredible value for Classic Colonial style on established street adjacent to Mount Vernon Country Club. Many features including: 3 finished levels, 5 Bedrooms including main level master, 3.5 baths, open kitchen to fam room, 2 fireplaces, oversize 2 car garage. Extensive list of recent updates including: Kitchen, roof, master bath, wood floors, powder room, basement bath, interior paint, garage doors, and the list goes on. Turn key opportunity!

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8902 Beauchamp Dr. \$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!

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8314 Wagon Wheel Dr \$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!

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