# Alount Pernon Gazette

Mount Vernon's Hometown Newspaper • A Connection Newspaper



Newly elected County leadership prepares to swear their oaths.

Photos by Susan Laume

## Fairfax County Inaugurates Leadership

he Government Center auditorium was packed with well-wishers as Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors, Constitutional Officers, and Soil and Water Conservation District Directors took their oaths of office on Dec. 16.

Speaking to those gathered, new Board Chairman, Jeffrey C. McKay, touted Fairfax County's top ranking in most statistical categories. He said those positions were "rooted in two fundamental beliefs that have made us successful: one, being a welcoming and accepting community that accepts everyone regardless of their backgrounds; and two, investing in people, by providing first rate services including outstanding public schools, parks, libraries, safe communities, and sophisticated wrap around services for all of our residents."

The Board consists of nine supervisory districts and the Chair at-large position. Judge Penney S. Azcarate, Fairfax Circuit Court, administered the oath to:

Supervisors: Walter L. Acorn, Hunter Mill; John W. Foust, Dranesville; Penelope A. Gross, Mason: Pat Herrity, Springfield; Rodney Lusk, Lee; Dalia A, Palchik, Providence; Kathy L. Smith, Sully: Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon; and James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock

Commonwealth's Attorney, Steve T. Descano

Sheriff, Stacey A. Kincaid

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Directors, Monica A. Billger, Chris E. Koerner, and Gerald Peters Jr.

McKay reflected he still embraces the motto sown on his high school shirt, "Advance always." He pledges that "we'll do just that. ... view every decision .....through an equity lens. Every community member in every corner of this County deserves an equal opportunity to succeed." He highlighted the areas of priority for the Board: affordable housing, combating climate change, transportation, public schools, and responsible budgeting. "Education has always been, and will always be our Board's number one priority."



Sheriff Stacey Kincaid swears her oath administered by Judge Penny Azcarate.



**Incoming Board Chairman Jeff McKay.** 

McKay acknowledged the mentorship and leadership of outgoing Chairman Sharon Bulova; who he described as his public service role model and close friend. And also the role model provided by his high school government teacher present in the audience. Opening the event, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, former Fairfax County Board Chairman, reminded the board members-elect, "Having the title is one thing, earning it is another. Successful local government is learning to satisfy the annoyed, without annoying the satisfied."

The elected officials took office on Jan. 1, 2020.

— Susan Laume

## School Time Allotted For Civic Engagement School Board allows excuse absence for activism.

By Mike Salmon The Gazette

uring the school year in 2018, there was a planned walkout to protest gun violence after the shooting in Parkland, Florida, and students from several schools in the Fairfax County Public Schools took part, although this was not part of the county curriculum. Starting Tuesday, Jan. 21, activities like this will be part of the curriculum, now that the school system recently enacted a "Student Civic Engagement Activity," option for students.

Lee High School sophomore Oranus Yaqubi did participate in the anti-gun rally when she was a middle school student at Key Middle School and gained some real-life experience from the event. "I like making a stand for what I believe in," she said.

Noshin Hassan is a 2018 alum from Lake Braddock that took part in the same walkout, and looked at it as "a great opportunity for us to voice our opinion," she said.

Lee junior Leah Kareem likes the new policy the school system adopted, and if it was part of the curriculum a few years ago, "I would have gone to the women's march," she said.

These kind of activities have a place in education. "Civic engagement is something that is emphasized in our government classes and the new regulation recognizes that our students are offered multiple opportunities to participate because of our location," said FCPS School Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders.

According to school spokesperson Lucy Caldwell, "students



SUMAIYA HAQUE/THE GAZETTE Student protesting is not new like these students in Mount Vernon for the anti-gun rally.

will have addressed ideas with their parent(s) and parents/ guardians. ... These conversations provide another opportunity for families to discuss issues that are of importance to them and the education of their children."

This will only stop some of the abuse, said West Springfield alumni Alex Cronin. "There's a lot of people that are interested in politics so they would use it, but there's others who would just use it as an excuse to get the day off," he said. Cronin did participate in some of the recent event discussions in class, but he noticed the teachers tried to stay clear of siding with one party or the other.

Whether it's a school shooting activity like Parkland, and an uproar against guns, or a pro-National Rifle Association rally, the reason for the absence has to be approved by the parents so this takes the judgment out of school hands.

"As there is a pre-arranged absence form that parents must submit, school administration will not apply a personal lens to the activity," Caldwell added.



January 9, 2020

Wellbeing

# **People Over Platform**

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Wendy & Dan P., Seller Client

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#### **Tracy Cares Deeply About Her Clients**

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Hilary G., Seller Client

## Wishing Everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!



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# News Opening the Floodgates

By Michael Lee Pope The Gazette

hen they were in the minor-ity, Democrats were mostly united in their views about everything from gun control and reproductive rights to the Equal Rights Amendment. Now that they've seized power, though, members of the newly minted majority are hearing from opposite sides on everything from gerrymandering and labor rights. That push and pull was evident during a legislative hearing of the Fairfax delegation, the largest in Virginia and home of the new speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader. The hearing was dominated by dozens of firearms enthusiasts sporting orange "guns save lives" stickers from the Virginia Citizens Defense League.

"It's important that our board be given the authority to keep guns out of our rec centers and government centers," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, the first to testify, drawing jeers from the heavily armed crowd.

McKay went through a number of gun control measures Democrats campaigned on last year: universal background checks and limitation on how many firearms an individual can purchase a month as well as a ban on assault weapons to include suppressors, bump stocks and highcapacity magazines. That prompted loud and extensive heckling from the crowd, who responded by yelling loudly that he was a "traitor" and a "communist." Later in the hearing, when gun advocates took the microphone, they warned of "a civil war" if Virginia took action to limit what they view as their Second Amendment rights.

"It's a lot like looking at modern art," said Vincent Dory, who described himself as a rank-and-file member of the Virginia Citizens Defense League. "Modern art and gun control are both extremely confusing to look at, extremely pretentious and extremely ridiculous."

### THE DEBATE OVER GERRYMANDER-

**ING** is one of the thorniest questions before lawmakers, an issue that divides Democrats as they prepare to take control for the first time in a generation. On one side of the debate is supporters of a group called Virginia 2021, which struck a compromise last year between Democrats and Republicans to craft a constitutional amendment that would take the power to draw legislative districts out of the hands of lawmakers and give it to a bipartisan commission. One volunteer with Virginia 2021 even broke into song, crooning to the tune of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

"All rest ye merry gentle folk, let nothing you dismay. Remember gerrymandering will let us get our way," sang www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay is heckled by heavily-armed firearms enthusiasts as he calls for the General Assembly to give local governments the ability to ban guns at government centers.



Photo by Michael Lee Pope/The The Gazette

SEIU Virginia 512 president David Broder asks lawmakers to raise the minimum wage, allowing collective bargaining for public employees and pass a homecare workers bill of rights.

Michael Martin. "And save us from all others hopes. They do not have a say. Oh, tidings of corruption and joy."

The proposed amendment passed last year, and because of the amendment process in Virginia it has to pass again this year and then go to voters. But now that Democrats have control of the General Assembly, they would be the ones drawing the maps. Many Democrats say they would be squandering their newfound power by yielding that power to a commission, especially because the maps would likely end up before the Republican-dominated Supreme Court of Virginia. Advocates of the amendment say that can be fixed by enabling legislation that would require a special master draw the districts. But many people associated with Indivisible groups in Northern Virginia are urging lawmakers to vote no on the amendment.

"If I could rid myself of the concerns that I have with respect to that amendment and some of the backdoor was this could work against Democrats, in particular, I would support it," said Luke Levasseur of McLean. "I cannot support it, and I believe that the amendment that we have is not a step forward. It's a step in the wrong direction, sideways, potentially off a cliff."

#### **LABOR ISSUES** have long been a

Northern Virginia Democrats wrestle with power now that they have it.

> sticking point in Richmond, where the Republican majority and their allies in the business world have resisted the agenda of labor leaders. Now things have changed, and labor unions across Virginia are pressing lawmakers on a lengthy list of agenda items. SEIU Virginia 512 president David Broder asked members of the Fairfax delegation to raise the minimum wage, allowing collective bargaining for public employees and pass a homecare workers bill of rights - slate of bills to make sure homecare workers under the state's Medicaid program get a living wage, benefits and health care.

"Many of us are working longer hours for less pay with fewer benefits than ever before with virtually no rights on the job."

— David Broder, president of SEIU Virginia 512

"Many of us are working longer hours for less pay with fewer benefits than ever before with virtually no rights on the job," said Broder. "Many of us have two or three jobs just to put together the income that one job used to provide, and so it's no surprise that under the previous Republican majorities OXFAM America ranked Virginia as the worst state for working people two years in a row."

Notably absent from the SEIU's list of priorities was repealing Virginia's infamous right-to-work law, a 1940s era restriction on employers from compelling employees to pay union dues. Broder says his organization has always been in favor of repealing the law, which he says hurts working families. But, he adds, it's not a priority because it wouldn't help as many people as raising the minimum wage or allowing collective bargaining for public employees. Representatives of the American Federation of Teachers and the Fairfax Education Association, however, both outlined repealing the right-to-work law as a top priority.

"They would be more appropriately named right-to fire-laws or right-to-work for less laws," said David Walrod of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. "By stripping employees of the right to collectively organize and have a collective voice, the power is returned to CEOs rather than employees."

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## COMMUNITY Shepherd's Center of South County

Are you 50+ years-old?

Unable to drive and live in our service area west of Richmond Highway in the Mount Vernon area?

Are you able to get from your front door to a car at your residence without the use of a wheelchair?

Volunteers from the Shepherd's Center of South County, SCSC, will pick you up, free of charge, and take you to your medical appointment, wait with you and return you to your home safe and sound.

The non-profit SCSC, launched in 2017, is one of six Shepherd's Centers in Northern Virginia. The vision is a community where all older adults receive the support they need to continue living independently, with lives of purpose and dignity. The South County focus is on free transportation to medical appointments.

Recently, Shepherd's Center of South County received a heartfelt thank you note from one of the clients of their program. Here's what Jake, a 90-year old disabled veteran, has to say in his own words:

"Three years ago, my doctor recommended that I stop driving my automobile because of my medical condition. You will never experience solitude like not being able to jump into your car and go somewhere, anywhere, just going out. That's what happened to me."

"Being housebound stirred me to seek outside transportation. Through SCSC, I've met friends like William, Mona, Mary and John, to name just a few. They are all volunteer drivers for the Shepherd's Center, and not a single one of these people has the name of an angel like Azrael, Muniah or Mihr, but, nonetheless, they are "my angels"."

"They provide the one thing that losing my driver's license took away from me —

mobility. When I have a doctor's appointment, I call the Shepherd's Center office to request a drive, advise which doctor I'll be seeing, and the time I would like a volunteer driver to pick me up. For the past several years, my life has been a whole lot better because of SCSC's transportation program and the fantastic volunteer drivers I jokingly call "my angels."

Jake shared this description of one of his recent drives:

"Today, Mary was my driver. We did our usual chit-chat and then I said, "Mary, if you don't mind my asking, why did you volunteer to become a driver?"

Mary looked at me kind of sideways and replied, "I had retired several months ago. Sitting at home I became, shall I say, listless. I wasn't contributing in any worthwhile way."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "Then Mary told me since she retired, she had all day to do her chores. At first Mary liked that idea, but soon she realized she was putting things off. Not because she didn't have time, but because she had too much time, and she wasn't going anywhere. She felt she should be helping other people."

After Sunday church service a representative from SCSC had addressed the crowd who stayed behind for coffee. As he explained the program, Mary realized being a driver for people could put meaning back in her life. As they say in the movies, "The Rest is History."

"Mary signed up as a volunteer and often drives twice a week. Her friends think what she does is wonderful. The relationship between drivers and passengers is strictly professional but Mary told me that she and one lady passenger, have become friends and have scheduled a date to visit a Japanese Tea Room. Congratulations, Mary, a brilliant move." ~Jake

Reiterating Jake's endorsement: If you are over 50 years of age and are no longer able to drive, the Shepherd's Center of South County may be the answer to your problem. Volunteers use their own vehicles to drive clients to their doctor, dentist, physical therapy or other medically related appointments and back home again. All drivers have passed police background checks, have valid driver's licenses and proof of insurance. This service is available free of charge to folks residing within our service area. Please call at least 5 business days before your appointment.

Thanks in large part to dedicated volun-



Jake and Mary

teers like Mary, Shepherd's Center of South County has been remarkably successful. More than 800 round trip drives have been made since 2017. However, there is a growing need in South Fairfax County for this service and unfortunately, Shepherd's Center of South County has been relying on its core group of about a dozen volunteers to fulfill requests. Won't you consider volunteering about two hours/week and make a world of difference in someone's life and possibly yours also? To register as a client or as a volunteer driver. call. 703-799-0505: or email scsc-transport@verizon.net. A volunteer recruiter is also available to speak or meet at your organization and provide further details of the program. They can be reached by calling (703) 715-7592 or emailing scfbvolrecruiter@aol.com

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## COMMUNITY

## **Christmas Eve Candle-lit** Silent Night

Nearly 200 people celebrated Christmas Eve together at St. **Aidan's Episcopal** Church. With the **Reverend John Baker.** 

Photos by Sylvain Richard









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flooring and wood burning fireplace, exterior freshly painted-new high efficiency double pane windows throughout -walk out basement-Carport--Walk to Mt. Vernon High School – minutes to Ft. Belvoir-commute along GW Pkwy to Old Town – Owner is Realtor.



## **Rex Reiley RE/MAX Allegiance** 703-768-7730 rex.reiley@rmxtalk.com



Alex/Mt. Zephyr Upper \$400s 8541 Mt. Zephyr Dr. Great price for this lovely two level solid all-brick home with garage on 1/3 acre in Mt. Vernon community. 3 Bedrooms, 2 Bethe. Browned of the bithether consistent Baths. Renovated eat-in kitchen, spacious and open, with sliding glass doors to private backyard. Charming front living room with ample windows, and wood

burning fireplace with white, colonial style mantel. Spacious lower level has finished family room w/ 2nd fireplace and a bonus workroom. Conveniently located near Ft. Belvoir (10 mins), GW Parkway and Potomac River, Old Town Alexandria, Pentagon, and D.C.



Vessynton Upper \$700s 3102 Cunningham Drive Alex/Wessynton Gorgeous, newly renovated 4 Bedroom, 3 BA contemporary home in sought after waterfront Wessynton community, 1 car garage, new deck, .34 acre lot. Large and spectacular new kitchen with all the bells and whistles. Beautiful new bathrooms. Separate dining room. Living room with fireplace. Large picture windows on

\$183,900

back wall overlook private wooded setting. Family Room w/nice wood paneled ceiling. Wessynton amenities include tennis courts, swimming pool, walking paths, and boat ramp on Little Hunting Creek which flows to the Potomac River. Located just a half mile from Mount Vernon Estate and the GW Parkway, it is a mere 10 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 20 mins to Old Town, and 30 mins to D.C.

Mt. Vernon/Pinewood Lawns \$183,9 8411 Orinda Ct. #270 Beautiful two bedroom 1 bath condo in lovely Pinewood Lawns with reserved parking in designated covered carport. 2nd floor unit with private deck. Meticulous and renovated unit. Stunning new kitchen with all new appliances, cabinetry, stone countertops and flooring. New wood laminate flooring. Spacious Dining and Living Rooms-Utility room with Washer and Dryer. 2 nice size bedrooms, one with a large walk-in closet. New HVAC (2019). This condo is a gem and is located

in the well maintained Pinewood Lawns neighborhood in the Mt. Vernon community. It is just a few minutes to Ft. Belvoir and offers convenient commuting north (bus, metro, car) to Pentagon, and Washington, DC etc.



Alex/Engleside \$1,300,000 8734 Lukens Lane 4.128 acres zones R-2 for sale. There are 2 lots: 4/0 acres w/ house (Tax Map 1101 01 0043) and .128 acre vacant land (1101 01 0043A). House on Property sold "AS IS" and NO ACCESS given or allowed. Land Value only. Water, sewer, gas, elec-tricity available. This land is

adjacent to the houses on Halley Farm Ct. which were built in the 2010-2011 time frame

Alex/Riverside Estates \$2800 8506 Wagon Wheel Road Beautifully remodeled 4BR, 3BA Split – Kitchen with granite, SS & ceramic tile floor opens to the living and dining rooms- hardwood floors on main level,

6 panel doors – replacement double pane windows-lower level with large family room and wood burning fireplace with large 3rd and 4th bedrooms and 3rd full bath- walkout to large fenced bkyd - deck overlooks bkyd- Carport-

Close to Ft. Belvoir-Walk to elementary, high school and Mt. Vernon Estate – Great commute along GW Pkwy to Old Town, - Owner is Realtor.

THE OWNER WATER

Alex

#### \$2,800 3704 Nalls Road

Totally updated 4BR, 3BA Split level on fenced .48 acre lot kitchen with new granite counters and new cortex flooring newly installed hardwood floors on main level, interior freshly painted, all 3 baths updated – family room LL with new cortex

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## PEOPLE

# End of an Era Doris Cassidy, Dove family retire from Farmers Market.

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

or 40 years, Doris Dove Cassidy has been a fixture at the Old Town Farmers Market, carrying on a Dove family tradition that dates back to the late 1800s. On Dec. 21, 2019, that tradition came to an end as Cassidy spent her last day selling flowers in Market Square.

"It feels good," said Cassidy, who added that she plans to spend more time quilting in her retirement.

Cassidy's brother, Lenny Dove, has been coming to the Market for 59 years, rising in the pre-dawn hours to make the 90-minute drive from the family farm in Spotsylvania to Market Square.

"A lot has changed here in 59 years," Dove said. "There are a lot more vendors but not as much of a selection as there used to be."

City Manager Mark Jinks was on hand to congratulate Cassidy on her retirement and Mark McHugh, aide to Mayor Justin Wilson, presented the family with a proclamation honoring their contributions to the Market. Joining in the family tradition have been Cassidy's daughter, Stacey Petit, and grandsons Robbie and

Charlie Petit. "We've made a lot of new friends over the years," added Dove, who noted that the family also provided the flowers for many local weddings.

Cassidy and Dove's great-grandfather, Will Kitson, began the family

tradition as a vendor in Market Square in the late 1800s, which was reflected in the city proclamation that read in part:

Whereas since the late 1800s to today, Dove family members and their forebears have managed this thriving business adja-



Doris Cassidy, center, poses with grandson Robbie Petit, right, and brother Lenny Dove on Dec. 21, 2019, her last day after selling flowers at the Old Town Farmers Market for 40 years.



Doris Cassidy, left, is congratulated by City Manager Mark Jinks Dec. 21 following her retirement after 40 years of selling flowers at the Old Town Farmers Market in Market Square. The family's participation as a vendor at the market dates to the late 1800s.

cent to City Hall's front doors on Saturday mornings, selling their locally grown blooms, yarrow, zinnias, peonies, Queen Anne's lace, and sunflowers ... the City of Alexandria takes this moment to honor the Dove family and their late

grandfather, Will Kitson, "We've made a lot whose farm established in the late 19th century supplied flowers to the first iteration of this business." Cassidy's regular cus-**Old Town Farmers Market** 

tomers stopped by to make a final purchase and to wish her well.

"For over 20 years, Doris and her family have brightened my Saturday mornings, not only with their beautiful flowers but more importantly with their friendly greetings and kind words," said longtime customer Cherie Carroll. "They will be surely be missed."



Doris Cassidy, left, gets a hug from Karen Fitzgerald on Dec. 21, Cassidy's last day of selling flowers for 40 years at the Old Town Farmers Market in Market Square.



Doris Cassidy on Dec. 21, 2019, her last day selling flowers at the Old **Town Farmers Market after 40** years as a vendor in Market Square.



## First Night celebrates 25 years

Crowds wait for fireworks to light up the sky over the Potomac River to usher in 2020 in the finale of the 25th anniversary celebration of First Night Alexandria.



of new friends

over the years."

vendor Lenny Dove

Doris Cassidy helps a customer at the Old Town Farmers Market on Dec. 21 in Market Square. Cassidy retired after 40 years of selling flowers at the market.

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## News

## Biking in Fairfax County Gets a New Face for Advocacy

Matt Roberts now behind the wheel for FABB

By Mike Salmon The Gazette

t was the combination of non-profit experience and the love of bicycle riding that landed Matt Roberts in the position of the new executive director for the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling. He hasn't owned a car for years, and previously worked at the Energy Storage Association, so this was a good fit for Roberts and the biking community in Northern Virginia.

Roberts was hired by the FABB Board of Directors in late October, and looks at it as "a great opportunity," he said. That attitude was reiterated by FABB President Sonya Breehey, who liked his experience. "We look forward to working with him to achieve FABB's vision of making bicycling safe and accessible for everyone in Fairfax County," she said in their blog.

Roberts grew up in Michigan, and lived in the Netherlands a few years ago where the use of bicycles and trains was a major part of the transportation picture. "I don't think I was in a car once the whole time I lived there," he said.

In the warmer months ahead, Roberts is looking to get more county residents involved with biking, whether it be commuting or getting to school. Bike to Work Day in May and Bike to School Day are on his agenda to get riders involved this coming year. "These are great opportunities," he said.

For children getting to school, there may be some more tweaking the current trails to make it safer. "Some of the biking facilities we've built is a little dicey for kids," he said.

It will take more than just the local governments to complete the bike trail and bike parking facilities in the county, and Roberts is looking at getting all parties working toward the same goal. "How do we get all these people participating in the dialogue?" he asked.

In the coming months, all eyes are on the arrival of Amazon to Arlington, and that includes Roberts. While he doesn't support more parking lot construction to handle the cars that Amazon will attract, he



#### **Matt Roberts**

did note the socially conscious aura that seems to surround Amazon. Does this equate to more biking and public transportation use? "On paper, they have very good intentions," he said.

Roberts is currently a resident of Washington, D.C. and used to bike about seven miles to work in Old Town, Alexandria. He now telecommutes, uses public transportation or uses a ride sharing service if he has to. He plans on moving to Fairfax County in the future.

## FABB's Outlook

In 2019, FABB celebrated several successes supporting their message in Fairfax County including the support of the Richmond Highway widening project, Merrifield Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning effort, the Seminary Road traffic calming plan, the Mount Vernon Trail safety improvements, and the Huntley Meadows Trail Plan, which was scrapped by the county for now. They still support it nonetheless.

In 2020, FABB has a full list to concentrate on, and that includes:

Leverage the new majority in the Virginia House and Senate to pass long laws to improve road safety and increase multi-modal investments;

> Support development of the County's Active

> Transportation Plan; Monitor ongoing progress of the 66 Parallel Trail;

> Continue advocating for safer biking as part of the Route 1 widening and Bus Rapid Transit project; Remain at the forefront of planning for the I-495 parallel trail and pedestrian/bicycle connections across a future American Legion Bridge expansion;

> Promote bicycling and tourism by co-sponsoring the 5th annual Tour de Mt Vernon on Oct. 3.



#### West Potomac High School Girls Basketball Youth Night! Friday, January 17th West Potomac Girls vs. Annandale at the Wolverdome Freshmen Game 4:30pm Junior Varsity Game 5:45pm Varsity Game 7:30pm

SAVE THE DATE!

Come early to watch warm-ups and cheer on your Lady Wolverines! Highlights include:

· Free throw shootout at halftime of the varsity game for all youth attendees. · Signed pictures by the West Potomac Girls Varsity Basketball Team after the game. • Raffle with winning team getting to practice and eat pizza with the varsity team. Other prizes and events at all three games...but you'll have to attend to see and win! · And, of course, exciting, fast-paced basketball!

Free admission (with a paying adult) to youth wearing a basketball shirt from any league (Fort Hunt, LMVSC, Mt Vernon, CYO, etc.)



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## Looking for a single family feel, carefree living & resort-like amenities?

PRICE REDUCED 25K TO \$874,000

This spacious & elegant Montebello condo offers it all! 2545 square feet, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms & 3 enclosed balconies with beautiful panoramic views. Gated community with 37 wooded acres, just 2 lights from Old Town!



**Open Sunday**, Jan 12, 1-4pm Mount Eagle Drive, Unit # 1517 & 1518 Or call for a private showing



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Photo by Mike Salmon/Connection

FABB Continues to support the Tour de Mount Vernon and other similar local rides.

# OPINION **Promises Kept**

By U.S. Rep. Gerald E. CONNOLLY (D-VA)

n 2018, Democrats reclaimed our majority in the House of Representatives with a promise to deliver on bold, progressive solutions to the most pressing issues we face as a nation. Now, one

year into the 116th Congress, that promise has been kept.

The House approved more than 400 pieces of legislation last year alone, more than 275 of which are bipartisan. Each of these bills is important and many are even life-changing, but there are several that are particularly worth highlighting.º

I cannot go anywhere in our community without hearing how access to healthcare is affecting people's lives. While the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion have increased access, Virginians are still struggling with skyrocketing prescription drug prices. That is why I am so proud the House passed the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, legislation that will lower prescription drug costs by increasing competition and would allow Medicare to renegotiate lower prices for more than 250 prescription drugs.

Conversations about our gun violence crisis are equally unavoidable. Like far too many communities across America, Northern Virginia is no stranger to the pain and loss wrought by mass shootings. I was Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors during the Virginia Tech massacre. I, like so many of our neighbors, will never forget the six young people we buried in the wake of that horrific day.

We need to pass gun control that makes our

## None of us came to Congress to impeach a president, but each of us took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

communities safer. That is why I was so proud the House passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act and the Enhanced Background Checks Act. These long overdue bills would close

dangerous loopholes and ensure that no American can purchase a gun without first clearing a federal background check. We are in the middle of a national crisis, and this legislation is the least we can do to address it.

We have also had important successes for our region - particularly for federal employees. Thanks to Democratic efforts, we finally secured 12 weeks of paid parental leave and a 3.1 percent pay raise for federal employees. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, I successfully led the fight to stop the Trump administration's disastrous proposal to abolish the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). We secured back pay for federal employees following the President's damaging 35-day shutdown, and I held a hearing on the need to provide equal protections for federal contract workers.

Of course, despite our achievements, the last several months of 2019 were not easy for the Congress or the country. None of us came to Congress to impeach a president, but each of us took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. That oath demanded we take action in the face of unprecedented wrongdoing by an out-of-control executive. To extort a foreign country to investigate your political opponent is an unconstitutional abuse of power. To solicit foreign interference in an American election is an unconstitutional abuse of power. And the delicate balance of power that underpins our democracy is threatened when a President disregards the Constitution by obstructing Congress to cover up these unconstitutional abuses of power.<sup>o</sup>

Impeachment is a uniquely serious issue, but it isn't the only issue. Through even the most difficult moments, our legislative work never stopped. Last month, the House voted on a bipartisan basis to replace NAFTA with the United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA). After months of tough negotiating, Democrats secured a deal that includes the strongest enforcement mechanisms of any U.S. trade agreement, as well as critical victories for workers, lower prescription drug costs, and much-needed environmental protections. We also adopted a bipartisan appropriations agreement to fully fund the government for fiscal year 2020.

These successes are a reminder of the incredible progress our country can make. But they also bring into focus the stark reality that the House of Representatives cannot make laws on its own. Leader McConnell has unilaterally blocked the Senate from debating and voting on 80 percent of the bills that we in the House have sent to his desk - most of them bipartisan, and all of them worthy of consideration. His failure of leadership, however, will not deter us from doing the business of the American people.<sup>00</sup>

As we say goodbye to 2019, you can rest assured that we will build upon the progress we've made and continue to hold the Trump administration accountable in the New Year.

## 2019 By the Numbers

BY PAT HERRITY Springfield District Supervisor

he past year was a great year here, and as a numbers guy, here are a few of the many highlights I would like to share with you:

In 2019, Fairfax County recycled

over 3 million pounds of clean glass with the new Purple Bin Program with plans in place to start true glass to glass recycling in 2020.

We started a pilot program with two nonprofit partners modeled after the "There's a Better Way" program to provide the dignity of work for people who are unemployed and between housing to clean up our streams.

Our police department collected over 4,694 pounds of unused prescription drugs in the fight to prevent and end opioid addiction, with many police stations participating in two Drug Take Back Davs.

♦ We had over 1,500 students engage with over 100 businesses to find their first job at our annual Fairfax County Teen Job and Opportunity Fairs.

♦ In the summer, over 2,500 people enjoyed the Free Concert in the Park Series at one of iam County & Lee Highway

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the state's premiere parks, Burke Lake Park, with shows by local artists and opening acts by local high school students.

Members of the West Springfield community celebrated the completed renovation of West Springfield High School with over 2,000 students benefiting from better lighting, improved

science classrooms, learning labs, and better gymnasium space.

The Board adopted the plan for the SHAPE the Future of Aging plan which will update the award winning 50+ Community Action Plan to address the challenges of growing older adult population that now makes up over 25% of the County including initiatives to address isolation, dementia and mobility.

✤ We are moving forward on over \$460M worth of transportation improvement projects in Springfield District, including:

Fairfax County Parkway Widening Project including a grade separated interchange at the Popes Head intersection,

Widening Route 29 between Union Mill Road & Buckleys Gate

♦ Widening Route 28 between Prince Will-

Widening Rolling Road between Old Keene Mill Road & Hunter Village Dr.

Eliminating the dangerous curve on Burke Road

Numerous bicycle and pedestrian projects ✤ I was honored to be reelected as Springfield District Supervisor and to be named Sun Gazette's Best Public Servant in Fairfax County for the third year in a row.

As we welcome in 2020, we have a lot to be proud of, a lot of challenges to address and a lot of work to be done to make Fairfax County a better place for all our residents. I look forward to working with you in the new year. Please don't hesitate to contact my office at 703-451-8873 or Springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov if I can be of service to you.

> Write The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Send to:

> > Letters to the Editor The Connection 1606 King St. Alexandria VA 22314

By email: editors@connectionnewspapers.com

## **Hlount Vernon Gazette**

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A Connection Newspaper







## News

## West Potomac High School Girls Basketball Youth Night!

Friday, Jan. 17 West Potomac Girls vs. Annandale at the Wolverdome

Freshmen Game 4:30pm Junior Varsity Game 5:45pm Varsity Game 7:30pm

Come early to watch warm-ups and cheer on your Lady Wolverines.

Youth wearing a basketball shirt from any league (Fort Hunt, LMVSC, Mt Vernon, CYO, etc.) get in free (with a paying adult)

Highlights include:

✤ Free throw shootout at half time of the varsity game for all youth attendees.

Signed pictures by the West Potomac Girls Varsity Basketball Team after the game.

Raffle with winning team getting to practice and eat pizza with the varsity team.

Other prizes and events at all three games...but you'll have to attend to see and win!

✤ And, of course, exciting, fastpaced basketball.

All are invited, girls and boys. Friday, Jan. 17

## Krizek Files to Make Absentee Voting Easier

Virginia House of Delegates member Paul Krizek (HD-44) has filed legislation to pre-pay postage for returning absentee ballots.

"For many citizens, emails and texts have replaced letters. Bills are paid online," Krizek said. "Fewer people, particularly young people, keep stamps in their desk drawer. So after they receive an absentee ballot, many need to make a special trip to buy stamps to return the ballot. Obtaining postage to return a mail-in ballot can be a barrier to voting for the homebound, elderly, those with limited access to transportation, and even to college students. This makes it difficult for them to cast their vote. Furthermore, casting your vote and exercising your civic duty should be completely free of charge. HB 220 will fix that problem.'

In the 2019 Virginia general election, 56,000 voters returned their absentee ballots by mail, among them approximately 650 voters in the 44th District. The proposal would use the U.S. Postal Service's Business Reply Mail so the Commonwealth would only pay for absentee ballots actually returned.

"Many students don't keep stamps around," observed Kiera Goddu, President of the University Democrats at the University of Virginia. "Pre-paid postage would be really helpful for students, particularly for those that do not have the transportation."

Virginia would join sixteen other states, plus certain military and federal agencies, that pre-pay return postage for absentee ballots.

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## **Royal Ridge** LUXURY TOWN HOMES 7880 Saint Dolores Drive, Lorton, VA From \$549,800 703-933-3626



Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dance Classes Begin Monday, January 13

FITNESS Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:15 -11:15 am

Lee Center 1108 Jefferson Street, 22314

Register online at alexandriava.gov > Recreation

**SORENSEN'S** For information,

Call: 202-657-1150

ACKI Email: JackisDC@gmail.com

JACKI SORENSEN'S FITNESS CLASSES





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# JACKI SORENSEN'S FITNESS CLASSES



## A safe, convenient way to dispose of unused medication.

#### DRUG TAKE-BACK BOXES

are located at all eight police stations in Fairfax County. Bring your unused medications any time, day or night, to your nearby station. There are some restrictions.



FREE drug-deactivation kits are available from the Health Department. Learn more at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/drug-disposal.



# Wellbeing Dry January?

The benefits of and strategies for taking a monthlong booze break.

> By Marilyn Campbell The Connection

fter a season filled with Champagne, Whiskey Sours, Gingerbread Martinis and other libations, some might need a break from booze. Dry January, a public health campaign that encourages giving up alcohol until the first of February can help with that effort. The health benefits of staying dry for a month range from thinner thighs to a fatter wallet.

"It's very common for people to come home after a stressful day and unwind with a glass of wine or two," said Alexandria-based substance abuse counselor Sarah Brewer, Ph.D. "But the reality is that while alcohol does seem to make you more relaxed at first, it can lead to anxiety or a depressed mood."

Weight loss can be a pleasant side effect of abstaining from an evening pour, says nutritionist Kathryn Armstrong, who sites a report by the National Institutes of Health that showed a strong link between weight gain and alcohol. "Basically, the cocktail or wine that you're drinking has empty calories," she said. "Also, many people tend to eat, especially junk food when they drink."

"Another benefit of being alcohol-free for a month is that people often find that they don't

stressful day," added Brewer. "Giving up alcohol for a month might give you an opportunity to find explore other relaxation methods like meditation or mental health professional."



Giving up alcohol during "Dry January" can have positive health benefits.

going for a walk or some other type of exercise."

For those who regularly attend happy hours with friends or have a glass of wine to relax, abstaining during one of the longest months of the year might seem unpleasant or unappealing, says Bethesdabased therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW. "You might to

"If you're used to having a drink or going to a happy hour at the same time every day, you can schedule something else during that time so you're mind isn't on alcohol." — Carol Barnaby, LCSW

find things to distract you," she said. "If you're used to having a drink or going to a happy hour at the same time every day, you can schedule something else during that time so you're mind isn't on alcohol. People who enjoy the taste of alcohol might try eating fruit or drinking a fruit flavored sparkling water."

Attempting to take a break from alcohol might unmask deeper issues, suggests Brewer.

"If you find that you can't stop drinking, it could mean that you have a problem with alcohol consumption," she said. "By not drinking you might find

need that glass of wine to relax and unwind from a that you've been using alcohol to help deal with other issues like depression, PTSD or anxiety. In those cases you should get help from a medical or

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## News

## Environmental Benefits And Lower Electric Costs

Fairfax County awards solar power purchase agreement contracts.

> By Mercia Hobson The Connection

fter Fairfax County's June 2019 release of a request for proposals for roof-mounted and canopy/carportmounted solar installations at 113 sites, and following its evaluation of the proposals and negotiations, County officials announced on Dec. 10 contracts with multiple solar power purchase agreement service providers.

The County awarded contracts to three teams of solar providers. They are Sigora Solar/Standard Solar, BrightSuite, a subsidiary of Dominion Energy, /Sun Tribe Solar, and Ipsun Solar/SunLight General Capital, according to county officials. The contracts allow for the installation of solar photovoltaic arrays at Fairfax County government, school and park sites, and provide the potential for both substantial cost avoidance and environmental benefits over time.

"Fairfax County is excited to take a major step toward a more sustainable energy future," said Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive. "Implementing on-site solar will hopefully lower our electricity costs as we support our Board of Supervisors adopted priorities. Fairfax County is striving to promote and encourage the use of renewable energy as we reduce our carbon footprint. We are committed to making choices around energy resources that benefit the residents of Fairfax County now and in the future," he said.

Kambiz Agazi is the director of the county office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. He said when the County asked fifteen solar companies, it included 113 potential sites as a sample to the companies showing the possible program magnitude. The County could increase the number of sites or reduce the number of sites he said, taking into consideration the impact of tree canopies, orientation, and such on solar gain for given sites.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines a solar power purchase agreement as: "A financial arrangement in which a third-party developer owns, operates, and maintains the photovoltaic (PV) system and a host customer agrees to site the system on its property and purchases the system's electric output from the solar services provider for a predetermined period."

**SOME OF THE KEY BENEFITS** to a host customer using the agreements are, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, there are no installation, management and maintenance costs; the solar power service provider is responsible. Also, the host cuswww.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Previously installed solar panels at Rachel Carson Middle School, Herndon. (Illustrative purposes only)

tomer avoids other traditional barriers to the installation of on-site solar systems such as complex design and permitting processes. A third benefit is that the contracts established by Fairfax County with the solar power purchase agreement vendors are rideable, said Agazi. This means neighboring jurisdictions - cities, towns, municipalities, and the like could also take advantage of the competitive rates and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. They would be guaranteed the same with solar photovoltaic arrays installed on their government buildings, town offices and such according to Agazi. A fourth benefit to the host customer is the contracts include favorable electricity rates that, in most cases, are fixed for the duration of the contracts. "They will be selling us electricity at power rate lower than incumbent electric Dominion Energy, Inc. and Dominion Virginia Energy." he said. Finally, the solar power purchase arrangements can be cash flow positive for the host customer from the day the system is commissioned. According to Fairfax County: "This initiative could potentially yield over \$60 million in electricity cost avoidance over the terms of the contracts." Agazi said the term length is 25 years.

"Over the contracts' terms, approximately 1.73 million megawatt-hours of clean, renewable energy could potentially be delivered to Fairfax County facilities – an amount roughly equivalent to the electricity used by 213,680 homes in a single year. In terms of greenhouse gas reductions, the contracts have the potential to avoid the emission of more than 1.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent or an amount comparable to the emissions of 260,155 passenger vehicles over the course of one year," according to County.

In return, the solar services provider or another party acquires valuable financial benefits, such as tax credits and income generated from the sale of electricity.

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand said, "Lower energy costs through solar power purchase agreements will enable FCPS to save millions of dollars while freeing up additional funds for classroom investments.



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## CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

## BROWNE ACADEMY

## More Student Art!

Because of omissions by the editor, (me) we will continue to run Student Art in January, and possibly beyond. This week, Browne Academy.

— Mary Kimm



Isabella Rowland, Penguin, Junior Kindergarten



Siannah Flores, Penguin, Junior Kindergarten

Student's name: Joel Crump

Hometown: Fairfax, VA

Teacher: Charlotte Salley

School: Browne Academy

Grade Level: 6th (age 11)

Narrative Paragraph

School Location: Alexandria, VA

At Mountain Campus, I faced my fear

by jumping off a high place. After lunch,

we all walked to the Leap of Faith. The

Leap of Faith is a big long pole with

hooks that you climb up but once you're

at the top you jump off and try to hit the

ball connected to some string. As I

waited to go on the Leap of Faith. I re-

membered all the people who went

before me and ended up staying at the

top for a very long time or just climbed

up and jumped off. I thought that it

wasn't that high until it was my turn. I

walked up very slowly and went over all

the safety rules with the counselor. I

went up the ladder like a pro but when

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Browne Academy, 6th Grade (age 11)



Laura Wright, Gaslight, Kindergarten



**Ricardo Guadalupe, Endangered Species** Panda, 6th Grade



Kira Younger, Color Wheel Eye, **Third Grade** 

it came to the large metal staples I got

jumped down and just finished it. The

other way I faced my fear was the

zipline. I wanted to go after others so I

could see what the zipline was like be-

fore I did it. I climbed up the ladder fast

so I wouldn't look down. Once I was up,

I looked down, which is the first thing

you should never do. It was my turn to

go and looked down again. I waited and

then I praved that I would go down

safely but what happened next was

amazing. I pushed my legs off and let

my hands go all the way down. The

wind going past me was thrilling. I felt

like a bird. Once I reached the end I

dropped the rope and climbed down the

ladder. I realized that some heights can

end up being lots of fun. I told myself I



Jonathan Brioché, Color Wheel Eye, **Third Grade** 



Abigail Brandon, Color Wheel Eye, **Third Grade** 

scared. I went up six of them until I decided that I couldn't do it any longer. I Student's name: Gabriel Swinton was so scared when I looked down and saw everyone just staring at me. I

Hometown: Alexandria, VA Teacher: Charlotte Salley School: Browne Academy School Location: Alexandria, VA Grade Level: 6th (age 12) Gabriel Swinton

The Descriptive Paragraph Florence, Italy is amazing because there is so much to do and see! It is very hot, but you can just feel a festive mood. You feel happy and free like you can do anything. You can smell the food as you pass all of the restaurants. Sometimes you smell smoke from smokers and vapers. You hear the chatter of all the talking people. You hear music and footsteps. You see lots of people crowding and walking on the streets. You occasionally hear cars and motorcycles

passing through. You also see artwork

inside and out of museums. You will taste delicious pizza, with amazing mozzarella cheese. There is the pasta, with flavorful marinara sauce. You taste creamy gelato and rich chocolatey molten lava cake. Yes, Florence is the dream, and I love it.

Student's name: Olivia Ross Hometown: Alexandria, VA Teacher: Charlotte Salley School: Browne Academy School Location: Alexandria, VA Grade Level: 6th (age 11) Olivia Ross **Expository Paragraph** 

How to organize your room step by step is pretty easy if you like organizing and keeping clean. First, you throw all of your stuff on the floor. Then, you go through all of your stuff and put it into piles. For example, you can make a "keep," "toss," and a "maybe" pile. If you

want to, you can color code. I believe color coding is not as organized as putting things in organized areas. Next, throw out or donate anything you do not want or need. Afterward, if you do not have any storage bins or an area where you can put things (where it can still be organized and not messy like in a closet), go to your local store and buy storage bins or material boxes for a desk if you have one. Next, put any stuffed animals or toys you have in a separate bin and put it somewhere like in the corner or under your bed in your room. Then, get a pencil box or material bucket for all of your stuff on your desk. Also, make your bed every day and clean your room if needed to stay organized. Lastly, show your parents the work you have done to your room and make them proud.

SEE WRITINGS, PAGE 13 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

would do that many times again.

Prince Owusu, Gaslight, Kindergarten



Marcus Owusu, Instrument Still Life, 6th grade



Joy Vargas, Gaslight, Kindergarten



**Gabriel Swinton**, Endangered

## CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

## BROWNE ACADEMY



Sachio Davis, Georgia O'Keefe's Lake George, 2nd Grade



Chris Marshall, Georgia O'Keefe's Lake George, 2nd Grade



Tristan Taylor, Georgia O'Keefe's Lake George, 2nd Grade



Devika Srikanth, Watercolor Collage, 5th grade



Kaitlyn Valentine, Alphabet Soup, First Grade

## BROWNE ACADEMY, 6TH GRADE (AGE 11)

From Page 12

Student's name: Abigail Taylor Hometown: Alexandria, VA Teacher: Charlotte Salley School: Browne Academy School Location: Alexandria, VA Grade Level: 6th (age 11) Abigail Taylor

Descriptive Paragraph

Bethany Beach is one of the best places I have ever been to in my life, which is why I visit it every year. While I am there, I hear the sounds of the waves crashing and my friends and family talking. I also hear the sounds of others shuffling and talking along the beach. I smell the salty ocean breeze and the scent of people brushing past me. I smell the sunscreen globbing on my www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Sam Kirtley, Winterscape,

2nd Grade

Lincoln Reese, Penguin, Junior Kindergarten

arms and legs. I feel happiness and security because it is like my second home since I visit so much. I feel like I am

having fun and being silly because we

play a lot of games while we are there. I also feel the sand beneath my toes and

the chilly water brushing up onto the

beach. I see all my family surrounding

me, the ocean, the sand, and many

people who live there. I taste the salti-

ness of the ocean splash into my mouth

while I am swimming in the ocean. I also

taste all the amazing food I can eat

down there. There are many astounding

aspects of it that you can never forget

once you have visited.

Student's name: Rania Beidas

Teacher: Charlotte Salley

Hometown: Alexandria, VA



Divyaa Srikanth, Tree of Life Story, 4th Grade

School: Browne Academy School Location: Alexandria, VA Grade Level: 6th (age 11)

Descriptive Paragraph Whenever it is a hot summer day I

love going down to my apartment's

pool. It is a big circular pool, with chairs

all around it. The pool has light blue

water and it is so pretty. When I am

there I see a beautiful bright sun and a

lifeguard using his phone. Whenever I

go into my pool it is always freezing cold

as soon as I go in. I quickly go underwa-

ter and my hair is very wet. I am

shivering. I swallow the water and taste

the water that has chlorine in it. Then I

think if it is healthy to drink it. I hear the

water splashing and kids screaming. I

smell absolutely nothing which I get

because you can't bring food in. I love



Maddox Schutter, Winterscape, 2nd Grade



Leela Kharkar, Winterscape, 2nd Grade



Ava McCarley, Tree of Life Story, 4th Grade

going to my pool on a hot summer day.

Student's name: James Younger Hometown: Bowie, MD Teacher: Charlotte Salley School: Browne Academy School Location: Alexandria, VA Grade Level: 6th (age 11) Expository Paragraph

This is how you make an omelet. First, you need two eggs, Pam spray, a pan, a plate and anything you would like to put on it after cooking. Things to make sure of before cooking: Make sure the pan is the right size, that the pan is not too hot or not hot enough, that the spatula is the right size for the pan, and that when you spray the Pam spray make sure you get it all over the pan so the egg does not stick to any part of the pan. Put the pan on the stove and turn on the stove and wait until it gets hot. When the pan gets hot spray the Pam spray all over the pan, and crack the eggs into the pan. When the eggs are ready to flip you can flip them to the other side and when the other side is done take them out of the pan and put them on the plate. Then move the pan off of the hot part of the stove. Do not put the hot pan on the counter or else it will burn the counter. After that, you can put anything on the egg like cheese, salt, pepper, any type of meat or vegetables and enjoy. When you are finished making the omelet you should eat it first, then you should put all the ingredients away, then wait until the pan gets cold, then clean the pan. Then relax on a full stomach!

Lilah Ross, Tree of Life

Story, 4th Grade

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# ENTERTAINMENT 4 Dates to Circle in January

#### By Hope Nelson

rom football to tea to whiskey to your choice of restaurant deals, January is shaping up to be as busy as ever when it comes to food and drink. Here are some of the month's best bets.

#### James Madison University Football Watch Party at Port City Brewing, Jan. 11

James Madison alum - and newcomers to the bandwagon - will convene at Port City Brewing Company to watch their team face off against North Dakota State in the FCS national championship

APPETITE game. The beer garden's big screen, as well as the other televisions across the brewery, will be tuned to the game in the hopes of leading the Dukes to victory. The Basic Burger food truck will pull up outside to keep fans fortified throughout the event. 3950 Wheeler Ave. Tasting room opens at 11 a.m.; kickoff at noon.

#### **Teas for Winter Health at Green** Spring Gardens, Jan. 12

What better way to warm up a cold winter day than with a spot of tea? The Friends of Green Spring Gardens are hosting a tea time of sorts, but one that packs a punch;

#### CALENDAR

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

#### ONGOING

**Creature Comforts Art Exhibit.** Now thru Jan. 26, 2020. At VCA Alexandria, 2660 Duke Street, Alexandria. The "Creature Comforts" art exhibit at VCA Alexandria through the Gallery Without Walls program features artwork of the animals in our lives by Del Ray Artisans members. Showcasing animals that lift and fill our hearts is a popular theme at VCA Alexandria and coincides with the winter holiday season in which creature comforts of all types are appreciated. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww

#### NOW THRU FEB. 2

"Hold On! Demitasse to Tumblers." At Scope Gallery at Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Studio 19, Alexandria. Your morning coffee will be all the more pleasurable in an artistic, individually crafted work from a local (DMV) artist. Choices include a cup depicting elements of the natural world by Shirley Gromen or a mug inspired by the color of the ocean by Klaudia Levin. Left-handed? Hiromi Minemura has designed a mug just for lefties, some accompanied with a saucer and spoon. Tea time in the afternoon? Use Elizabeth Greene's lidded tea mug to keep the tea from spilling on the way back to your desk. Sushi for carry-out? Accompany the meal with Ana Cavalanti's beautifully embossed set of saki bottle and saki cups. If espresso is your "cup of tea," you'll relish Scott



219 is one of 70 restaurants participating in Alexandria Restaurant Week, Jan 17-26.

the accompanying program will discuss the best blends to both stave off winter illnesses and bring some light into what can be a bit of a blue season for many. When you're done sampling and savoring, bring some tea home for another go-round. 4603 Green Spring Road. 1-3 p.m. \$36 for program and tea; \$15 for program only.

#### **Alexandria Winter Restaurant** Week, Jan. 17-26

Seventy of the city's eateries will offer up

special deals during a 10-day span in January, giving diners a veritable tour of Alexandria's best and brightest kitchens and some hidden gems, too. For \$35 per person for a three-course meal or a \$35 dinner for two, Restaurant Week highlights both old favorites and newcomers with its wide reach. From the West End to Del Ray to Old Town, no corner of the city is left untouched.

Whiskey Dinner at Live Oak Res-



#### JMU Watch Party.

#### taurant, Jan. 22

Dry January? Not hardly at Live Oak. A four-course meal teams up with KO Distilling's whiskey for a smooth, kicky dinner near the end of the month. Chef Justus Frank will helm the kitchen for the proceedings, which will include whiskey pairings throughout the night. 1603 Commonwealth Ave. 7-10 p.m. \$50.

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



The Kondo vs. Chaos exhibit runs Feb. 7 to March 1 at Del **Ray Artisans Gallery.** 

## Kondo vs. Chaos

Friday/Feb. 7, 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Opening reception for the "Kondo vs. Chaos" art exhibit (Feb. 7 - March 1) which explores ways artists visualize the world and their preference for order, disarray, or a balance of both. Meet the artists. Gallery hours are: Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays 12-9 p.m., and Sundays 12-6 p.m. The gallery is free, open to the public, and accessible. Visit www.delrayartisans.org/event/kondo-vs-chaos/

Kaye's handmade, 2 1/2-inch-tall cups with a subtle Shino glaze. And need just a little sip of something before bed? Roni Polisar's wood-fired 'Sip Cups' would be perfect. These are just a sampling of works available this month. So hoist a piece of art this new year while imbibing your favorite beverage. Visit www.scopegallery.org,

www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/ scope.

#### JAN. 7 TO FEB. 9

"Repetitions." At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Repeated patterns, repeated themes, repeated textures

and repeated colors all lead to interesting and exciting pieces. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Nonthemed work will also be exhibited. Visit the website: www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com

#### THURSDAY/JAN. 9

Mapping the Past. 1-3 p.m. At Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, Homeschoolers are invited to supplement their historical studies with a fun day of exploring, interpreting and making maps. Participants will have a chance to give orienteering a try. They will learn about different types of maps from around the world and take home a personalized map of their own life. For students age 7 to 13 years. Cost is \$14 per person. Call the park at 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/

historic-huntley. Girls Who Code. 5 - 6:45 p.m. At James M. Duncan Jr. Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Girls Who Code is on a mission to close the gender gap in technology and to change the image of what a programmer looks like and does. Bring your own laptop or feel free to use one at the library. It's never too late to join in and start coding.

Guerilla Gardening in Your Yard. 7-8:30 p.m. At Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. See your yard anew through fresh, guerilla gardening eyes. Learn how those difficult, abandoned, or underutilized parts of your yard can be transformed into successful garden spaces that provide natural beauty, healthy foods, and important support for pollinators and other beneficial insects. We'll show you best

practices, tools, and techniques to transform your yard's missed opportunities into attractive and productive gardens – by working with Mother Nature and not against her. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. Free. Advance registration requested at mgnv.org. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 10

Musician Rachel Eddy. 6-8 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Co-sponsored by the Office of Historic Alexandria and the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, this concert features old-time music with Rachel Eddy. Rachel was born and raised in rural West Virginia, where her musical family inspired her to play and sing as a little girl. She grew up listening to local fiddlers, going to old-time festivals, and attending square dances. Rachel now performs and teaches full-time on fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin and bass. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Historic

**"Tangerine" Art Exhibit Reception.** 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria."Tangerine" is a juried exhibit featuring art from local area artists and is guaranteed to bring warmth and brightness to January's wintry blahs. The "Tangerine" art exhibit runs Jan. 10-Feb. 2 at Del Ray Artisans. Gallery hours are: Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays 12-9 p.m., and Sundays 12-6 p.m. Free Admission Visit the website: http://www.delrayartisans.org/event/

tangerine/?instance id=1797 Deadline for High School MLK

See Calendar, Page 15 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

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## Entertainment

#### From Page 14

Essay Contest. An annual highschool essay contest with cash prizes is being sponsored by Ventures In Community (VIC) in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King with a submission deadline of midnight Friday, Jan. 10. This year's theme is a quote from Dr. King: "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." The contest is open to Mt Vernon area high school students ages 14 – 18. Cash prizes will be given of \$150 for 1st place, \$100 for 2nd place, and \$50 for 3rd place. Prize-winning authors will read their essays at the MLK Day celebration 3 p.m. Jan. 18, at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Rd., Alexandria. For more information and contest rules, see VenturesinCommunity.org. Essays should be sent to Pastor Abe Smith for more details. Abesmith5509@gmail.com.

#### SATURDAY/JAN. 11

- Saturday Morning Storytime. 11 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. At James M. Duncan Jr. Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Saturday mornings with stories and songs. Stories and songs on Saturday morning in the Children's Area with Katie, the Children's Librarian.
- Floral Design Workshop: Snowy Day Design. 1-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Certified floral designer Betty Ann Galway walks you through a floral design that will shake the winter blues and brighten your home. You will come away saying, "I can't believe I made this." \$39 per person (plus a \$30 supply fee)./Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ parks/parktakes (code F28.05EC) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.
- 28 Chairs. 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Featuring Robert Mealy, violin; and Leon Schelhase, harpsichord; Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord of J.S. Bach. Presented in partnership with 28 Chairs and is Part One of a twopart weekend presentation covering the Complete Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord of J.S. Bach. The second performance is sold out. Immediately following the one-hour concert, join in an hors d'oeuvres and wine reception and meet the performers.

#### SUNDAY, JAN. 12

- Tea Program: Teas for Winter Health. 1-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) A steaming cup of tea offers warmth, comfort and health benefits throughout cold and flu season. Discover the best teas and herbal infusions to boost immunity and cure the winter blues. Learn about their medicinal properties and discover new healthful brews to enjoy year-round. Taste one or two at the tea table and take home a sample./\$36 per person (program + tea); \$15 (program only). Reserve by calling 703-941-7987, TTY (703) 324-3988./
- ÓOur AlexandriaÓ Film. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Special free screening of a new documentary, "Our Alexandria,Ó by filmmaker Robin Hamilton, presented by the Alexandria Black History Museum. The film explores Alexandria Civil Rights through the lens of master dollhouse makers Sharon Frazier and Linwood Smith. Frazier and Smith, both Alexandria natives, have created dollhouses which offer a window into segregated Alexandria via their depiction of African American businesses and homes. Attention to detail, craftsmanship, and love of community are evident in each of

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



The Tangerine Art Exhibit will be held Jan. 10 to Feb. 2 at Del Ray Artisans.

## **Tangerine Art Exhibit**

Friday/Jan. 10, 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria."Tangerine" is a juried exhibit featuring art from local area artists and is guaranteed to bring warmth and brightness to January's wintry blahs. The "Tangerine" art exhibit runs Jan. 10-Feb. 2 at Del Ray Artisans. Gallery hours are: Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays 12-9 p.m., and Sundays 12-6 p.m. Free Admission. Visit the website: http://www.delrayartisans.org/event/tangerine/?instance\_id=1797

their buildings. Register by phone at 703-746-4356 or online at https://alexandriava.gov/shop.

#### MONDAY/JAN. 13

Zora Neale Hurston: "In the Thick of Things." 7 – 8 p.m. At James M. Duncan Jr. Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Sheila Arnold comes in character as Zora Neale Hurston to talk about the

famous author's life. Sheila Arnold is back by popular demand. Sheila is a performer, educator, and historical reenactor. In 2019, she became the first African American fellow at Mount Vernon, where she is currently doing research into the lives of the slaves and servants that lived there. In this biographical reenactment, you will learn about the Harlem Renaissance through the eyes of one who was "in the thick of things". She will also talk about her time collecting "old" stories from Negro communities and her brief time in the world of voodoo and intrigue. This author of Of Mules and Men and Their Eyes Were Watching God shares about "The New Negro" and his/her struggles of the early 20th century.

#### WEDNESDAY/JAN. 15

Intro to Therapeutic Chair Yoga. 4-5 p.m. At Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. New Year, New You! Yoga and fitness is for everyBODY. Start the New Year with an easy way to better fitness through stretching, breathing practices, balancing work, and meditation with Marsha D. Banks-Harold, Certified Yoga Therapist at PIES Fitness Yoga Studio. Sisters in Crime: The Story Within

You. 7- 8:30 p.m. At Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. If your New Year's Resolution was to finally write that novel and you want to know how to do it...or if you just want to know what makes writers tick, join us for this paped

us for this panel. MLK Festival. 7:30 p.m. At Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3850 Seminary Road, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in a community program. The program, "Dr. King's 2020 Vision: The Beloved Community — The Fierce Urgency of Now," will be presented by the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Planning Committee and will include welcome remarks by Mayor Justin Wilson; a keynote address by Dr. Spencer Crew, interim director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; and music by the Male Chorus of Alexandria's Russell Temple CME Church. This event is free and open to the public. Visit https://alexnetremote.alexandriava.gov/vpn/ index.html

#### THURSDAY/JAN. 16

Digital Meal Planning. 2 – 4 p.m. At James M. Duncan Jr. Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Organize and plan your weekly meals with digital tools. Examine free apps, websites and a digital calendar that can be used to store recipes and organize your meal plan. Please feel free to bring your SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 16



## DAILY FEATURES FOR EVERYONEL

## DAILY FEATURES FOR EVERYONE!

Monday - 1/2 Price Burger Night Tuesday - Kids 12 & under Eat Free with accompanying adult. 1 child per adult.

Wednesday - Roast Turkey Special

Thursday - Lasagna Night

Friday - Fish Fry

Saturday & Sunday - Full Brunch Buffet with Omelette Station

734 North St. Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314





## Special Connections Calendar 2020 Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursdays unless noted.

## JANUARY

1/15/2020	HomeLifeStyle
1/22/2020A+	Camps & Schools
1/29/2020	Senior Living

## FEBRUARY

2/5/2020	Wellbeing
- Natio	nal Children's Dental Health Month
2/5/2020	Valentine's Dining & Gifts
2/12/2020	HomeLifeStyle
2/19/2020	A+ Camps & Schools
2/26/2020	Senior Living /
Co	nnection Families - Pet Connection

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www.ConnectionNewspapers.com	Chantilly Connection	Mount Vernon Gazette	Venna/Dakton Connection

## ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 15 device to follow along. Nutrition Seminar: Eating Healthy On a Budget. 2 – 3 p.m. At Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. New Year, New You! Nutritionist Kristen McGill will share tips for meal planning and affordable recipes that will reduce food waste and improve your diet. If you think eating healthy is too expensive, then this presentation is for you. Learn how to stretch your dollars to provide nutritious and delicious meals all on a budget.

#### FRIDAY/JAN. 17

- West Potomac High School Girls Basketball Youth Night. 4:30 p.m. Freshmen Game; 5:45 p.m. JV Game; 7:30 p.m. Varsity Game. Youth wearing a basketball shirt from any league (Fort Hunt, LMVSC, Mt Vernon, CYO, etc.) get in free (with a paying adult). Highlights include: Free throw shootout at half time of the varsity game for all youth attendees; Signed pictures by the West Potomac Girls Varsity Basketball Team after the game; Raffle with winning team getting to practice and eat pizza with the varsity team; Other prizes and events at all three games...but you'll have to attend to see and win.
- Benefit Performance. 8 p.m. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. Tickets \$50/person. A fundraising performance of LTA's production of "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" to benefit the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association. which is raising funds to build a national memorial in Lorton to honor the millions of suffragists who fought

more than seven decades to win the vote for women. Visit www.suffragistmemorial.org.

#### JAN. 17-26

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week. To be held in neighborhoods throughout Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and Eisenhower, and the West End. For 10 days and two weekends, 70 restaurants in Alexandria, will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one. Some restaurants will also offer lunch menus at \$15 or \$22 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Brunch lovers can enjoy brunch menus for \$15 or \$22 per person at more than a dozen restaurants. New participants include Augie's Mussel House & Beer Garden, The Study at Morrison House, Rus Uz Alexandria and Mai Thai. Returning participants include Columbia Firehouse, Del Ray Café, Jackson 20, The Majestic, Sunday In Saigon, Theismann's Restaurant and Urbano 116. Restaurants with lunch offerings include Bastille Brasserie & Bar, Hummingbird, Mason Social, Tequila & Taco and Yunnan by Potomac Noodle House. Restaurants with brunch menus include Café 44. Clyde's at Mark Center, Sonoma Cellar and Vaso's Mediterranean Bistro. Guests will find a book of menus on

www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

#### SATURDAY/JAN. 18

**Movie Screening: "Gina's** Journey." 1 p.m. At Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. A showing of "Gina's Journey: The Search for William Grimes" (Documentary). It



Hold On! Demitasse to Tumbler at Scope Gallery at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria.

## Hold On! Demitasse to Tumbler

Dec. 30-Feb. 2, 2020. At Scope Gallery at Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Studio 19, Alexandria. Your morning coffee will be all the more pleasurable in an artistic, individually crafted work from a local (DMV) artist. Choices include a cup depicting elements of the natural world by Shirley Gromen or a mug inspired by the color of the ocean by Klaudia Levin. Left-handed? Hiromi Minemura has designed a mug just for lefties, some accompanied with a saucer and spoon. Tea time in the afternoon? Use Elizabeth Greene's lidded tea mug to keep the tea from spilling on the way back to your desk. Sushi for carry-out? Accompany the meal with Ana Cavalanti's beautifully embossed set of saki bottle and saki cups. If espresso is your "cup of tea," you'll relish Scott Kaye's handmade, 2 1/2-inch-tall cups with a subtle Shino glaze. And need just a little sip of something before bed? Roni Polisar's wood-fired 'Sip Cups' would be perfect. These are just a sampling of works available this month. So hoist a piece of art this new year while imbibing your favorite beverage. Visit www.scopegallery.org, www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.

follows the quest of one woman. Regina Mason, in tracing the steps of her ancestor, who traveled along the Underground Railroad to freedom and authored the first fugitive slave narrative in U.S. history. The film will be followed by a presentation from Regina Mason. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon AAUW. Contact Patsy Quick, Mt. Vernon AAUW President, at pnquick@cox.net. **Preparing for Retirement.** 3- 4 p.m.

At Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. This seminar will cover the most important financial considerations and strategies for those approaching retirement and current retirees. Jeramiah Burke will cover many topics including Social Security, retiree health insurance options, how to address rising healthcare costs, long term care, and more. Following the presentation, there will be a Q&A session for you to have any questions answered.

#### SUNDAY, JAN. 19

Winter Lecture: Fifty Years of Green Spring. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) As Green Spring turns 50, discover how this special place became a unique county resource. Green Spring historian Debbie Waugh discusses the fascinating lives of the last private owners, Michael and Belinda Straight, and their gift to the Park Authority in 1970. Enjoy a photo history of our first 50 years and look ahead to our next 50 years. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ parktakes (code 288.09DB) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.



✤ Mount Vernon Gazette ✤ January 9-15, 2020



## Centreville Man Is Charged With Mount Vernon Murder

F airfax County police have arrested Jeremiah Mouzon, 20, of Centreville, in connection with the Dec. 30 murder of an Alexandria man. Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau began investigating, early that morning, after receiving a report about two people who were shot in a residential neighborhood in Mount Vernon.

Officers responded to the 7900 block of Sausalito Place around 2:30 a.m. and found Kamren Quick, 18, of Alexandria, outside. Police say he was suffering from an apparent gunshot wound, and officers removed Quick to a safe area nearby for treatment by members of the Fire and Rescue Department. Afterward, he was taken to a local hospital with serious injuries that were later determined to not be lifethreatening.

However, inside a home, police discovered the body

of Jayden Quick, 20, of Alexandria, dead from an apparent gunshot wound. According to police, detectives do not believe this crime was a random act of violence; and after the incident, they worked extensively to identify the suspect. Once they did so and determined he was Mouzon, detectives from the Fugitive Unit began tracking his whereabouts.

Through their investigative leads, they received information that he was in Maryland. Detectives coordinated his arrest with the Prince George's County Police Department, and Mouzon was safely taken into custody by police there, pending his extradition back to Fairfax County. He was charged with second-degree murder, malicious shooting and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.



ASSIFIE

— Bonnie Hobbs

## Arrest After Shooting

n Alexandria man is facing charges following an overnight shooting in Lincolnia. Of ficers responded to 6244-C Little River Turnpike around 9:27 p.m. for the report of a shooting inside of the Viva Tequila Restaurant. Officers found an adult man inside of a bathroom with a gunshot wound to his abdomen. He was taken to a local hospital with injuries considered to be life threatening and remains in critical condition.

Suspect information was developed and officers found Edwin Lopez Rivas, 35, of Alexandria, near the scene. He was charged with aggravated malicious wounding and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Detectives are asking for anyone with information about this event to contact the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 4.

Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by visiting http:// www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org, or text-a-tip by texting "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES (274637). Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest.

Victim specialists from our Major Crimes Bureau's Victim Services Division have been assigned to ensure that the victim and his family are receiving appropriate resources and assistance.

#### Frederick A. Leedy, 96, died peacefully at home in Springfield, VA, on Jan. 5th. Formerly a 27-year resident of Alexandria and Mount Vernon, he is survived by his daughters, Ellen Gorman and Marjorie Green; four



survived by his daughters, Ellen Gorman and Marjorie Green; four granddaughters, Jillian Gorman Villalobos, Charlotte Gorman, Julia Green, and Catherine Green; and sons-in-law, Neil Weinstein and Bob Green. His wife, Janet Kerr Leedy, pre-deceased him. Born May 5, 1923, in Bellville, OH, he earned a bachelor's degree from Antioch College and a master's degree from the Russian Institute at Columbia University.

From January 1943-July 1946, he served as a radio/signal officer with the U.S. Army Air Corps. He subsequently served in the Army Reserve, retiring in 1981 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

In his first career, he spent 28 years as a statistician with the International Statistical Programs Center of the U.S. Census Bureau, retiring as Assistant Bureau Chief of Statistical Operations. After moving to Fredericksburg in 1980, he became a licensed real estate agent and, ultimately, broker and co-owner of Cooper-Leedy, REALTORS. He received the Fredericksburg Area Association of REALTORS' Hall of Fame award in 2001, with citations for his integrity, generous heart, and humanitarian work. Memorial service arrangements are not complete. Those wishing to honor his life

Memorial service arrangements are not complete. Those wishing to honor his life may make contributions to Loisann's Hope House, 902 Lafayette Blvd., Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

## Surovell and Hope Introduce Bill Prohibiting Conversion Therapy Practices Legislation would prohibit any health care provider from engaging in conversion therapy with a minor patient

en. Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax) and Del. Patrick Hope (D-Arlington) introduced legislation to prohibit any healthcare provider licensed by a regulatory board of the Department of Health Professions (DPOR) from engaging in conversion therapy involving minor children. Religious leaders who are not registered healthcare providers and adult patients would not be affected. The legislation codifies existing regulation which protects minors from providers who claim to be able to change a person's sexual identity or orientation. There is no evidence that shows conversion therapy works. Any conversion therapy efforts with a person under 18 years old would constitute unprofessional conduct and grounds for disciplinary action by the appropriate health regulatory board within the Department of Health Professions. Surovell and Hope both worked on this issue in past legislative sessions and successfully lobbied DPOR to regulate the practice last year. Surrovel was optimistic about the bill's prospects this year.

"Not only is this practice harmful to our youth developing their gender identity, but from a legal standpoint, conversion therapy is abusive given the mental health repercussions and has been associated with increased suicide risk. It is a fraudulent practice, found to be malpractice in some states, and this will www.ConnectionNewspapers.com protect our children from beliefs rooted in bigotry," Surovell said. "The General Assembly has a duty to permanently protect children from being targeted and hurt by these dangerous discredited practices. Failure to codify this could result in a reversal of these regulations by a future administration."

Hope carried the bill in the House of Delegates in past sessions. "So-called "conversion therapy" is not only ineffective it is a harmful and dangerous practice, especially when targeted at our children. It's based on the evil notion that being a homosexual is a sin or a disease that needs treatment. It's past time Virginia joined the medical professional societies of the world and outright banned this backwards practice. Virginia is a place of acceptance and inclusion and the General Assembly will take whatever steps necessary to protect our children from this destructive practice," Hope said. Equality Virginia Executive Director Vee Lamneck expressed support for the legislation. "Conversion therapy is a dangerous practice based on the false claim that being LGBTQ is mental illness. There is no evidence to support this nor does it hold any scientific merit," Lamneck said. "Virginia would be taking a positive step into the new decade by prohibiting this practice that only harms our youth for being who they are."



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## OMG

#### By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Are you sitting down? I wasn't when I got the call from my oncologist after hours this past Thursday. He was calling me with the results from the previous week's biopsy. He said he had "exciting news." He said the biopsy was not only "typed" (genetic mutation/biomarker) but, as he continued to bury the lead using medical jargon about the slide and stain, finally got around to it: I may not have (or have had, still to be discussed/possibly determined) nonsmall cell lung cancer, stage IV. Instead, I may have (always had) thyroid cancer, specifically, papillary thyroid cancer, referred to as "the friendly cancer," by my oncology nurse the following infusion when I shared with her these preliminary findings. 'Friendly' referring to one's survival/life expectancy after diagnosis.

Moving forward to begin/confirm this new working diagnosis, I had an ultrasound of my thyroid the next day and Friday the following week, Team Lourie will be meeting with an endocrinologist. She (I saw her picture on the wall outside her office) presumably will have had a discussion, or at the very least, received an email/referral from my oncologist citing chapter and a few verses about who I am, how I've been treated, what scan/results I've had and of course, the news of this most recent biopsy, explaining why he reached out. I really don't expect, given my oncologist's excitement, and the fact that he called me (only the second time in nearly 11 years) that the endocrinologist will be likewise informed and possibly even excited to share a similar diagnosis with a previously-characterized as "terminal" patient who (yours truly) might not be "terminal" after all. 'Might not' being the operative phrase I'm still having difficulty grasping.

Somehow, I have to slow my roll and pull back on the reins. We're still early days here. Right now, I don't know anything definitive, so I'm not quite ready to call this a "Festivus miracle." Though at present it all sounds fairly promising, it's not exactly cast in stone. and neither has a revised Thyroid-cancer-treatment plan been put in place. I'm still a lung cancer "diagnossee" and one still waiting for the other shoe to drop. Therefore, until I'm told otherwise, as of now, I'm scheduled for my bi-weekly opdivo immunotherapy infusion on Jan. 3, 2020.

Now, why all of this is worth writing about, prematurely as it is, is that oncologists, almost by definition, are typically not the bearer of "exciting news." Generally speaking, they are giving bad news and saying it very directly at that. As was said to me in late February 2009: "Why not take that vacation you've always dreamed of while you're still feeling good?" The implication being quite clear that it's likely to get worse from here. To receive a call like I did Thursday from my oncologist now implying that it might get better from here is completely out of the ordinary. Moreover, if he initiated such a communication, I should probably take him at his words and take him very seriously.

Right now, I am possibly elated to be over the moon. However, it's not as if I've been given a clean bill of health. Cleaner, yes, but one still with a significant balance. And until I look the endocrinologist in her stethoscope and hear some magic words, I am keeping my powder dry and not shouting off my mouth - too much.

Cancer is a funny business. There are twists and turns and unexpected results, much of it not controlled by the doctors. And though I may be on the precipice of being blessed with some amazing, life-altering news, this time for the unbelievably good, I am still a week, maybe even weeks away from knowing with any certainty. In the interim, however, I am certain of one thing. If this change in my status does occur and I'm given back my life expectancy, somehow, I will try and return the favor.

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



## News

## Become a Census Partner

he 2020 Census is fast approach ing and we need your help encouraging your neighbors to participate.

The Census only happens once every ten years and it's crucial that everyone is counted. It's estimated Northern Virginia loses \$1200 in potential annual funding for every resident who does not respond to the Census. That is money we could lose for education, healthcare, housing, infrastructure, roads and a host of other services that the government provides. Help us make sure everyone is counted. By becoming a Fairfax County Census Partner, your organization, business or faith community can make a real difference.

Help people across in our community by becoming a Fairfax County Census Partner! Data collected from the 2020 Census is used to plan and provide services and support for our community. By encouraging your community, customers, and network to participate in the 2020 Census you in turn are making a difference in our future.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/fairfaxcounty-census-partners

## WRAP Exceeds 80,000 Rides

Nearly 1,000 people in the Washingtonmetropolitan area used the free ride service, SoberRide, this New Year's (10 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2019 through 4 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2020) as opposed to possibly driving home drunk.

Cumulatively since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 80,047 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

WRAP's most recent holiday SoberRide offering concluded this past Wednesday morning, Jan. 1, after kicking-off and running nightly since Dec. 20, 2019 providing a total of 1,121 free safe rides to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking. The local anti-drunk driving service is offered as a way to keep local roads safe from potentially impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday. During the most recent 12 consecutive evening period, area residents celebrating with alcohol could download Lyft to their phones, then enter WRAP-provided codes in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home while supplies lasted.

Since partnering with Lyft, WRAP reports a nearly tripling of its annual SoberRide ridership (the charity also offers its free safe ride service on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, July 4th and Halloween) with 4,549 total riders in 2019 versus 1,655 in 2016 (the last year when the SoberRide program was serviced by participating local taxicab companies).

The most recent New Year's ridership of 921 users is the fourth highest for that holiday since SoberRide's inception.

More information can be found at www.SoberRide.com.



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# 71 Homes **SOLD** in 2019! \$57,224,673 in Sales Volume



## WHAT'S YOUR HOME WORTH?

Are you considering selling in 2020 or curious about current market conditions? Now is the time to contact us for a no obligation consultation.

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