

Packing Up Nuclear Reactor at Fort Belvoir

Five-year project coming to dismantle and dispose of this lesser known feature of the base.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Overlooking the shore of Gunston Cove in Fort Belvoir is the SM-1, a nuclear power plant that provided power to the base from April 1957 to March 1973, now being removed. This lesser known feature on Fort Belvoir has sat dormant for years in a fenced off area but is now in the final stages to be totally removed from the site, and the land allowed to return back to the original forested shoreline that it once was.

Christina Nahi lives just outside Fort Belvoir with her children and was a little alarmed when she got word of the plans to remove the facility through a neighborhood chat website. "I live really close and didn't know about it," she said, Nahi was amongst a handful of people that showed up Jan. 8 at the Army's presentation in the South County Center, known as the Gerry Hyland Government Center, on to find out more about this project. "I'm surprised it never came up," Nahi said.

The US Army Corps of Engineers

(USACE), Baltimore District proposes to fully decommission and dismantle the SM-1, known to the Army as the "Deactivated Stationary Medium Power Model 1 Reactor Facility," on Fort Belvoir to a standard that allows for release of the site for unrestricted use, according to an official statement. Under the proposed action, US Army Corps of Engineers would implement an Army Reactor Office-approved Decommissioning Plan to safely remove, transport, and dispose of remaining structures, equipment, and media from the Deactivated SM-1 site; validate that site conditions meet applicable cleanup standards; restore the site to a vegetated condition; and return the site to Fort Belvoir for future use. Through analysis and evaluation of the proposed action's potential



US ARMY PHOTO

A 1950s photo from the early days of the SM-1 nuclear reactor that provided power to Fort Belvoir from April 1957 to March 1973.

environmental impacts, US Army Corps of Engineers concludes that there would be no significant adverse impacts on the physical, cultural, and natural environment.

According to Brenda Barber, the Corps of Engineer's project man-



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

A mix of project staff and residents attended the meeting about removing Fort Belvoir's SM-1, a nuclear power plant that provided power to the base from April 1957 to March 1973.

ager for the move, "no one was ever in danger."

The plant was deactivated and placed into safe storage in 1973. In the 1973-74 time frame, "the dismantlement and decommissioning involved the removal of a majority of the radioactivity from the site, including the removal of the nuclear fuel and control rods," their information stated. There is still some residual radioactivity contained inside some portions of the facility. The majority of the remaining radioactivity is activated metals and components of the reactor system which is secured within the walls of the facility's containment vessel.

REACTOR ROAD TRIP

The USACE is expecting to award the project in the summer of 2020, start the process in 2021 and complete the removal in 2025.

There is a truck route planned through Fort Belvoir to haul the materials out, and the officials have mapped out a route that leads past seven houses and out of the base to Richmond Highway.

From there, it will go to an "appropriate permitted facility," in the western United States said Hans Honerlah, one of the USACE project officials.

"The pressure vessel will come out as one unit," he said. There will be 1,150 truck trips, coming and going throughout the project, and "we'll go out Tulley Gate," Honerlah said.

The SM-1 at Fort Belvoir is one of the three deactivated reactors, along with the SM-1A at Fort Greely in Alaska and the MH-1A that was aboard the STURGIS barge which is currently in the late stages of decommissioning in Galveston, Texas.

These documents are available online for review and USACE is accepting comments from the public through January 31. Comments can be submitted via e-mail to cenab-cc@usace.army.mil or by written mail to:

Brenda Barber, PE.
USACE Project Manager
c/o AECOM
4840 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060



US ARMY PHOTO

This area where the nuclear reactor is located at Fort Belvoir will eventually go back to its natural state.

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NEWS

Change in the Landscape

401st VA General Assembly reconvenes with a tsunami of filed legislation.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

When the Virginia General Assembly reconvened for the 60-day 2020 Session, the week opened with a series of firsts. The first time since 1993, Democrats took the reins with a trifecta: In the 2019 election, they garnered decisive majorities in the House of Delegates and state Senate, with a Democratic governor.

Women rose to power in numbers and leadership positions. Gov. Ralph Northam announced the new 'Virginia 2020 Plan', and with it said, "The landscape has changed."

For the first time in a long time, Republicans could not stop the Democrats from advancing landmark legislation such as the Equal Rights Amendment, gun policies and climate control measures. Democratic legislators, many from the Fairfax County delegation filed bills and resolutions, rallying in support of the 2020 Plan.

TUESDAY, JAN. 7 - With Speaker-designee Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41), incoming Senate Majority Leader, Richard L. Saslaw (D-35), incoming House Majority Leader Charniele Herring (D-46), and incoming Senate Caucus Chair Mamie Locke (D-2) standing by, Northam talked about his 'Virginia 2020 Plan.' "It's more forward-looking," he said.

The 11-Point Plan includes: pass the ERA; restore women's reproductive rights; ban discrimination in housing and employment; raise the minimum wage; make voting easier with no-excuse early voting and make Election Day a state holiday; reform criminal justice by ceasing suspending driver's licenses for unpaid fines; advance common-sense gun safety measures, universal background checks, "Red Flag" laws, restore one gun a month limits; fight climate change; protect natural resources; increase education funding including free community college for low- and middle-income and people going into high-demand fields with in-state tuition for DREAMers; and expand transit and broadband.

Incoming Senate Majority Leader Saslaw (D-35) said they were going to be sure that Virginia became a better place to work and do business.

Speaker-designee Filler-Corn added: "We intend to protect Virginia's greatest assets."

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8 - The Virginia General Assembly officially reconvened. Outside the capitol building, demonstrators aired their concerns — ERA, gun reform, climate change, and more.

Inside, shortly after 1 p.m., applause welcomed Del. Filler-Corn as she entered the House floor before being sworn in as House Speaker by Virginia Supreme Court Chief Justice Donald W. Lemons. House Speaker Filler-Corn became the first woman and first Jewish person to hold the office.

"This session brings many firsts. We will have the first women of color to lead committees and have a historically diverse group of committee chairs and vice-chairs. And these leaders are Members of the most diverse House of Delegates in Virginia history. This House is not only diverse in terms of race or



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lawmakers elected Eileen Filler-Corn as the 56th Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and the first woman to hold the role in the 401-year history of the body. "We were the country's first legislature, and I strongly believe that Virginia can lead — by showing the country the rewards that collaboration can bring," Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn said in her address.

gender. The Members of this House represent a wide range of experience, thought, orientation, religion and backgrounds... The people demanded we act on many areas where Virginia has lagged behind. This House will pass the Equal Rights Amendment. And we will address discrimination in our laws. We will take common sense measures to prevent gun violence and keep Virginians safe. And, we will address the threat that climate change poses to our entire Commonwealth, especially our coastal communities."

Del. David Bulova (D-37), later said, "I couldn't be more proud of my colleague Eileen Filler-Corn, who my wife and I have called friend for more than 20 years."

That evening, Gov. Northam, 73rd Governor of Virginia, delivered the annual State of the Commonwealth address. He highlighted accomplishments and shared his vision to continue building a "stronger, fairer, and more equitable Virginia," he said.

Afterward, Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35) tweeted, "This evening, @GovernorVA delivered a resounding message that the state of our Commonwealth is strong! VA is a better place to live and work for so many people. I look forward to the progress the Senate can deliver working with Gov. Northam over the coming months."

Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia Del. Mark Herring tweeted, "I'll be pushing to Decriminalize marijuana Resolve past convictions Move toward legal adult use Pass the ERA Pass common-sense gun safety laws Address the rise in white supremacist violence Stop predatory lending Let's go."

FRIDAY, JAN. 10 - By early morning, the Virginia Legislative Information System posted 2,574 bills and resolutions filed by delegates and senators for the 2020 Session.

ASSEMBLY - WEEK ONE

Highlights of Some of the Bills Proposed

PHOTOS VIA VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49)

introduced *HB 260 Firearms; transfer, criminal history record check delay*. The bill increases from the end of the next business day to within five business days the time in which State Police must advise a dealer if its records indicate that a firearms buyer or transferee is prohibited from possessing or transporting a firearm and the time after which a dealer may complete the sale or transfer without a response from the State Police.



Del. Ken Plum (D-36) -

According to Del. Plum the most significant pieces of legislation filed involve background checks for gun purchasers, expanding hate crimes to include LGBTQ+ people; raising the minimum wage; setting up nonpartisan, independent redistricting process and expanding environmental protections. He said the most meaningful happenings were the "wonderful diversity in the membership of House; selection of first woman speaker; and adoption of "her" rather than "his" as the pronouns in the rules of the House."



Del. Marcus Simon (D-53)

introduced *HB 255 Charges and convictions, certain; expungement*. The bill allows a person to petition for expungement of convictions and deferred disposition dismissals for marijuana possession, underage alcohol possession, and using a false ID to obtain alcohol when the offense occurred prior to the person's twenty-first birthday; all court costs, fines, and restitution have been paid; and five years have elapsed since the date of completion of all terms of sentencing and probation.



Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36)

introduced *SB 436 Establishment of the Virginia Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearms List; penalty*. The bill creates the Virginia Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearms List (the List) that prohibits the possession, transportation and sale of firearms to any person who voluntarily registers himself to be enrolled into the List.



Del. Richard "Rip" Sullivan (D-48), Caucus Chair introduced

HB 461 Renewable energy property; tax credit established. The bill establishes, beginning in taxable year 2020, a tax credit for renewable energy property placed in service.





SAVE THE DATE!

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

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.)

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO BY HOWARD SORROS/THE GAZETTE

The cast of ACCT's production of Disney's "Frozen Jr." (from left to right): Bill Barnes (Hans), Mary Margaret Bargery (Anna), Patricia Villarroel Navaez (Elsa), Andrew Tankersley (Sven), Bret Medley (Kristoff), and Jack St. Pierre (Olaf).

Aldersgate Stages Disney's 'Frozen Jr.'

Story of true love and acceptance between Princesses Anna and Elsa.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
 THE GAZETTE

Aldersgate Church Community Theater (ACCT) is presenting Disney's "Frozen Jr." from Jan. 17-26, 2020. A story of true love and acceptance between sisters, the show expands upon the emotional relationship and journey between Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood. With a cast of beloved characters and loaded with magic, adventure, and plenty of humor, "Frozen Jr." is sure to thaw even the coldest heart.

Director Shelagh Roberts said she was immediately captivated by the characters, songs, plot and the overall look of the movie when it was released in 2013. "I remember sitting in the movie theater with my kids as it unfolded thinking, 'Wow, this is really something special.' Who didn't fall in love with Olaf, Sven, Elsa, Anna and Kristoff when they saw the film?" she said.

She added: "We were actively tracking the MTI (Musical Theater International) website and waiting for the junior version to be released. Once the new versions are released for licensing, it's a mad scramble to mount one of the early productions in your area. We felt certain that the families in our area would welcome the opportunity to see the musical adaptation of the film without heading to NYC to do so. And we couldn't wait to recreate the characters of 'Frozen' and bring them to life on our stage."

She continued: "In terms of theme, the film connected so well with audiences because the most important depiction of love turns out to be familial love; specifically, sisterly love, rather than romantic love. The twist on the 'act of true love' that can save Elsa and Anna is not Prince Hans' kiss; it's Anna's sacrifice to save her sister's life by putting herself in harm's way," she said.

Producer Jen Saunders added: "I truly love watching young children learn and enjoy the process of creating a musical. The 'Frozen' movies are so popular and we knew the kids would love being able to tell this magical story to an enthusiastic audience."

She added: "I also love that this is a true community theater. We rely on the time and talents of parent and community volunteers. It's amazing to watch so many people, committed to the arts, come together to create this wonderful production."

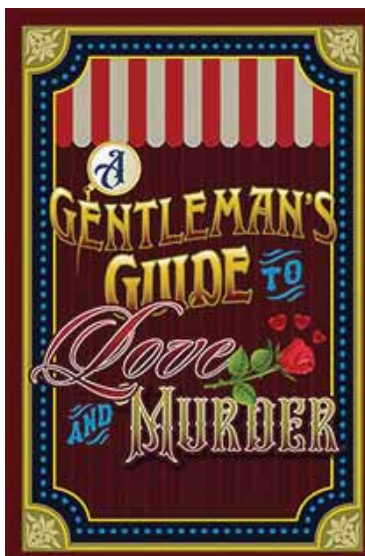
Mary Margaret Bargery is playing the role of Anna who exudes warmth and openness. "Her inexperience with the world makes her both exceedingly optimistic and somewhat naive. However, her emotional vulnerability and constant positivity breed a strength that bring out the best in others and stubbornly fights for what's right," she said.

She added: "Honestly, in working on this show I was most intimidated by playing such a well-known, iconic role. Character-wise and vocally I feel there is a lot to live up to. The storyline is lovely, and the music is so inspiring, and I simply long to do them justice."

Patricia Villarroel is playing the role of Elsa. "Elsa was born with magical powers that overwhelm her when she becomes afraid and harm others if not handled carefully. She was scared of hurting someone, especially her sister, Anna. As Elsa grows older, she became more distant and lonely before eventually learning to take control of, and become confident in, her powers."

Bill Barnes is playing the role of Hans who he says is a sad and terrifying look into the effects of sibling abuse. "It was difficult to find the emotional motivation of someone who doesn't seem to feel any emotion," he said. "I hope that kids come away from it feeling like they should be kind to their siblings."

ACCT is presenting "Disney's Frozen Jr." from Jan. 17-26, 2020. Tickets: \$15 for general; \$12/group. Show times are Friday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 at 2 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 19 at 2 p.m.; Monday, Jan. 20 at 2 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 25 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 26 at 2 p.m. ACCT is located at 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Visit the website: <https://acctonline.org/>



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HOME LIFE STYLE

A Classic Blue sofa is complemented by other shades of blue in this living room designed by Keira St. Claire



PHOTO BY JOHN COLE

Beautiful, Bold, Soothing: Classic Blue

Dependable, stable and calming are the characteristic of the Color of the Year for 2020.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Dependable, stable and calming are the characteristic of the Color of the Year for 2020. For the past 21 years, Pantone Color Institute has announced a “Color of the Year,” which the self-proclaimed authority on color says will be on trend during the year ahead. Local designers share how the color can be used in a home’s interior.

“Classic Blue is a beautiful and bold, yet soothing color reminiscent of the evening sky and the deep blue ocean,” said Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build in Bethesda, Maryland. “Soft, rich and versatile, this color has the potential to inject creative confidence into your interiors.”

From an accent wall in a child’s bedroom, throw pillows or a kitchen backsplash to a home’s front door, mailbox or shutters, Allie Mann, designer and senior interiors specialist at Case Design/Remodeling suggests a variety of ways to use classic blue. “Perhaps as a ceiling color to draw your eye up or add interest,” she said. “As a powder room wall color or vanity, this bold color will work well in the tiniest of spaces including the back of a bookcase or built-in, a reading nook, a laundry room or mudroom or as cubbies.”

Whether bold or subtle, St. Claire said the design options are plentiful. “Opt to incorporate this color in your home with decorative accents like throw blankets, pillows, rugs, and artwork and even kitchenware to add a pop of color without feeling over-saturated,” she said. “Repurpose old pieces [or furniture]. A fresh blue lacquered coat of paint would magically transform an old chair or dresser into a unique statement piece.”

For the courageous homeowner, St. Claire suggests a bolder approach. “Paint your walls or refinish your kitchen or bathroom cabinets in blue or upholster a large piece of furniture like a sofa or armchair in



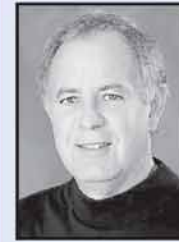
PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

For this Arlington, Virginia breakfast room, designer Allie Mann incorporated Pantone’s color of the year by using Classic Blue fabric on the chairs, window seat cushion and pillows.

blue,” she said. “Introduce other complementary colors like olive greens, golds or magenta to really offset the color and make a statement. Classic blue doesn’t have to be the only pop of color.”

Adding the color gradually is what Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Alexandria, Virginia suggests. “Infuse it into your home and fashion design in bits and pieces,” added “Maybe you paint an accent wall classic blue and let that be the focus. The color blue is kind to many colors and therefore easy to use in a room as an accent color. You can also mix varying shades of blue.”

“Classic blue is just that, it’s classic and timeless and can be weaved into many design schemes,” said Mann. “Do not be afraid of color.”



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UNDER CONTRACT

Mt. Vernon/Pinewood Lawns \$183,900
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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 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.



NEW LISTING OPEN SUNDAY 1-4

Alex/Wessington \$764,900
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UNDER CONTRACT

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, electricity available. This land is adjacent to the houses on Halley Farm Ct. which were built in the 2010-2011 time frame.



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Alex/Riverside Estates \$2800
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Alex \$2,800
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OPINION

VIEWPOINTS

Legislators Reflect on the First Days of the 2020 Session

—MERCIA HOBSON

PHOTOS VIA VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33): My top priority is recovering the local funding for our regional transportation.

Today (*Monday - Jan. 13), I cast my first votes on the Senate Judiciary Committee and was able to vote for four life-saving bills to prevent gun violence: universal background checks, giving municipalities local control about allowing firearms in government buildings, a red flag law and restricting gun purchases to one gun a month. Last week I cast my first vote on the Senate Privilege and Elections Committee to make Virginia the 38th state to Ratify the ERA.



Del. Ibraheem Samirah (D-86)- introduced *HB 152 Middle housing allowed on lots zoned for single-family use*. “Middle housing is defined as two-family residential units, including duplexes, townhouses, cottages, and any similar structure. Such structures shall not require a special use permit or be subjected to any other local requirements beyond those imposed upon other authorized residential uses.” Samirah said, “Across the country, there is a shortage of affordable units that is putting a squeeze on working families and contributing to rises in rents for existing units...I will certainly get pushback for this”



Del. Mark Keam (D-35) *HB 572 Distributed renewable energy; promotes the establishment thereof*. Del. Keam said, “This bill would free up the solar market, not only for local governments... but also for residents, businesses, schools, institutions and non-profits that want to install solar for their own use... (It would) remove the rule that limits customers to installing only as big an array as would have served their needs in the past year ... Today, residential customers are penalized with so-called “standby charges” if they install more than 10 kilowatts of solar (enough for a larger home, or a modest home with electric vehicles) ... Many Virginians do not have access to solar at all, especially if they live in rental apartments or condominiums, because the building owners are not allowed to install solar panels and sell the output to tenants. My bill would make this legal.”



Del. David Bulova (D-37) introduced HB 1012 Early childhood care and education; establishment of system, licensure. “A child’s earliest experiences - and particularly those in the critical years between birth and age five - have lifelong impacts on their likelihood of success. However, according to statistics from the Virginia Department of Education, 40 percent of students entering kindergarten lack the key literacy, math and social emotional skills that predict success. Further, only 25 percent of Virginia’s early childhood programs that receive public funding participate in the state’s voluntary quality measurement system. I am pleased to be carrying House Bill 1012 on behalf of the Governor, which directs the Board of Education to consolidate and simplify Virginia’s early childhood education programs and create a uniform quality rating system for programs that accept public funding. This will improve quality, foster continuous improvement, and help parents better understand their options. As the parent of three children, this is very important to me. I have personally witnessed the difference that a quality pre-school program has made on my children.”



ASSEMBLY - WEEK ONE

Highlights of Some of the Bills Proposed

—MERCIA HOBSON

PHOTOS VIA VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Del. Mark Sickles (D-43) introduced *HB 901 Health insurance; payment to out-of-network providers*. The bill provides that when a covered person receives covered emergency services from an out-of-network health care provider or receives out-of-network services at an in-network facility, the covered person is not required to pay the out-of-network provider any amount other than the applicable cost-sharing requirement.



Sen. Janet Howell (D-32), Chair Senate Finance and Appropriations, introduced *SB 581 Minors; allowing access to firearms, Class 6 felony* which provides that any person who recklessly leaves a loaded, unsecured firearm in such a manner as to endanger the life or limb of any person under the age of 18 is guilty of a Class 6 felony.



Sen. J. Chapman Peterson (D-34) introduced *SB 26 Plastic bags; tax in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* which imposes a five-cent per bag tax on plastic bags provided to customers by certain retailers in localities located wholly within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and directs revenues to be used to support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan.



Del. Paul Krizek (D-44) introduced *HB 15 Public school buses seat belts*. The bill requires the Board of Education to make regulations to require each new public school bus purchased for the transportation of students to be equipped with a seat belt consisting of a lap belt and shoulder strap or harness in every seat. He also introduced *HB 16 Safety belt system; all occupants of motor vehicles to utilize*.



Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, civility, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

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

By email: editors@connectionnewspapers.com
On Line: www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter

Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

@MtVernonGazette

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A Connection Newspaper





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Norma Stratton 703.966.0756 & Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264
ALEXANDRIA / Bashford Lane Cluster \$ 675,000

Charming 3 level townhouse is a great home for entertaining, featuring: an open floor plan, hardwoods and 3BR / 2.55BA. Wood-burning fireplace in living room opens to private fenced patio. Master en-suite with 2 generous closets. Finished LL offers rec room, bonus room and laundry. Reserved parking in front of gate.

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Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264
ALEXANDRIA / New Alexandria \$ 769,000

Completely Renovated - Stunning - Sun-drenched Home nestled on a lovely cul-de-sac. An exquisite crisp white kitchen, stainless appliances, granite and subway tile backsplash with French doors to relaxing backyard. 1st floor bedroom, bath and office. 2nd level huge master, laundry, hall bath + 2 bedrooms.



Gary Ansely 202.288.7046
SPRINGFIELD / Presidential Hills \$ 945,000

A great home & more! Entertaining is easy with high-end gourmet kitchen and a LL theater with surround sound, wine bar & rec room. 5BR / 4.5BA including huge master en-suite. Covered porch, deck, brick patio, large gazebo, fire pit. Viking grill perfect for alfresco dining. Evergreens offer year round privacy.



Martha Deal 703.622.6797
ALEXANDRIA / Sherwood Forest \$ 599,000

Move-in ready lovely 2-level home on quiet cul-de-sac with garage. Hardwoods, wood-burning fireplace, family room with sliding glass doors to patio / large fenced backyard. Freshly painted, new kitchen appliances, 4BR / 2.5BA. Separate laundry. LOCATION - EZ to Ft. Belvoir, Pentagon, National Landing.



Brad Kintz 703.629.0103
ALEXANDRIA / Grist Mill Woods \$ 919,900

Awesome 6BR / 4.5BA, 6,000+ sq ft Colonial with 3-car garage! Gourmet kitchen has new SS appliances, island; opens to breakfast room & 2-story great room with gas fireplace. Gorgeous hardwoods, Plantation shutters, upgraded trim. Freshly painted & move-in ready. Huge master suite w/sitting rm. NO HOA!

2019 REAL Trends 500 Website Rankings

A leading source of statistical analysis for the residential real estate industry; using criteria in 5 categories:

1. Mobile Experience 2. Video 3. Community Pages 4. Property Detail Pages 5. Design

Company sites scoring highest in all 5 areas were ranked best in overall category.

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- * Local Market Data
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CHILDREN'S GAZETTE

St. Louis Catholic School

TEACHER, MS. SARAH BALOUGH



Joseph Lentini, Grade: 8th



Luke Alexander, Grade: 1st



Emily Crabtre, Grade: 8th



Caroline Rutherford, Grade: 4th



Frances Miller, Grade: 6th



Patrick Forsyth, Grade: 5th



Amiyah Mathes, Grade: 1st



Morgan Swetz, Grade: 8th



Cassidy Fielder, Grade: 6th



Mackenzie Lodewick, Grade: 8th



Raisa Ntumba, Grade: 8th



Halle Jors, Grade: 2nd



Canon Kurth, Grade: 6th



Morgan Robinson, Grade: 7th



David Portillo, Grade: 4th

CHILDREN'S GAZETTE



Hannah Suwandhi,
Grade: 2nd



Sophia Pensoneau,
Grade: 2nd



AnnaMaria Pineda,
Grade: 2nd



Justine Olson, Grade: 6th



Catherine Walton,
Grade: 3rd



Kathryn Dunn, Grade: 6th



Cruz Benitez, Grade:
Kindergarten



Jacob Cheney, Grade:
Kindergarten



Erin Mahady, Grade:
Kindergarten



Bernadette Gorman,
Grade: 3rd



Abigail Graf,
Grade: 1st



Landon Kim, Grade: 1st

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For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 18 - 25, 2020

SUNDAY JANUARY 19, 2020 AT 8 P.M.

Donations of shelf-stable food will be collected for local pantry.



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SMITHSONIAN ASSOCIATES

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The Science of Sleep

with WebMD's John Whyte

In collaboration with WebMD

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

6:45 p.m.

S. Dillon Ripley Center

1100 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington, DC 20560

Metro: Smithsonian (Mall exit)

A good night's sleep might be a dream for some but how sleep impacts our health is a reality. Hear Dr. John Whyte, WebMD's chief medical officer, answer questions like, can too little sleep -- or too much -- sleep might be a sign of a serious health condition such as diabetes, cancer, thyroid conditions or heart disease?

Do melatonin supplements help? Can you benefit from a new pillow? How much sleep do you need and, what your sleep pattern might reveal about your health.



Dr. Whyte answers these questions and more, and shares a sleep quiz to help you determine if you're getting quality sleep.

Tickets: \$30 Member / \$45 Non-Member

<https://smithsonianassociates.org/ticketing/tickets>

Nonmembers can use Promo code "SLEEP30" to receive the member rate (\$30)



**For more information please call
202-633-3030**

ENTERTAINMENT

6 Eateries to Try for Winter Restaurant Week

BY HOPE NELSON

Alexandria's annual Winter Restaurant Week always comes at a great time – nearly a month after the holiday season, but before the year picks up speed again. This year, Restaurant Week runs from Jan. 17-26, and dozens of restaurants around the city are participating with lunch and dinner specials to showcase their cuisine. What better way to usher in some warmth in the middle of a chilly season? Here are some of the year's best bets.

Hops n Shine, 3410 Mount Vernon Ave.

Think prix-fixe menus are just for upscale, high-brow establishments? Think again. Hops n Shine, an eminently accessible pub smack-dab between Del Ray and Arlandria, has a tasting menu that features all the restaurant's greatest hits, from totchos to jumbo wings, to a variety soups and salads, to a choice of four different grilled cheeses,

finishing up with a dessert (hint: Choose the s'mores kit that you can then heat up over the firepit on the patio). A more pared-down version is offered at lunch for \$15; brunch deals bring breakfast's best to your table for the same price.

Kisso, 300 King St.

Old Town newcomer Kisso has a \$35-per-person dinner offering a variety of deluxe sushi combinations; seaweed salad, spring rolls or edamame to start; and a choice of green tea or vanilla ice cream to finish out the meal.

Sushi, sashimi or special rolls can be yours as a main course, so settle into the stylish dining room for a night of enjoyable Japanese cuisine.

Michael's Little Italy, 305 S. Washington St.

Washington Street's La Trattoria has a new name – and a new Restaurant Week menu to go alongside. The \$35-per-person prix fixe starts off with a choice of mussels or a Caesar or caprese salad, then rolls on

to chicken parmesan, pappardelle Bolognese or artichoke and lemon risotto for a main course. Finish off with a cannoli or a torrone semifreddo for dessert, lift a glass of wine, and toast to a taste of Italy right here in Old Town.

Rus Uz, 210 Swamp Fox Road

The Russian-Uzbek stalwart adjacent to the AMC Hoffman theater has put its own spin on Restaurant Week proceedings, offering diners a \$22-per-person lunch special or a \$35 dinner. Both lunch and dinner find hungry guests with traditional main courses from both countries – think dolma, manti and pelmeni (steamed dumplings), or Uzbekistan's national dish, plov – as well as a sweet treat for last, the options of which include Russian honey cake and sour cherry cake. Dinner offers diners a choice of starter, as well, including pirozhki (think Polish perogies) and blini.

Spice Kraft, 2607 Mount Vernon Ave.

Del Ray's newest Indian spot is opening

its doors for Restaurant Week as well, offering a \$35 dinner for two. To start, select any appetizer off the restaurant's regular menu. Then move on to a choice of entrees ranging from aloo gobi to chicken tikka masala to paneer nawabi, and finish the meal with a selection of three desserts. Naan and rice will, of course, make their necessary appearance alongside the main course.

Sunday in Saigon, 682 N. St. Asaph St.

When it comes to offering a wide array of Vietnamese delicacies, Sunday in Saigon doesn't disappoint.

Their Restaurant Week specials are available at lunch or dinner; lunch nets guests a two-course meal for \$15, and dinner a three-course feast for \$35 apiece. Expect the lunchtime offerings to vary from dinner's selections, and anticipate the offerings ranging from steak to mackerel to tofu and back again.

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

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Creature Comforts Art Exhibit.

Now thru Jan. 26. 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



Regina Mason, Author

Movie Screening: "Gina's Journey."

Saturday/Jan. 18, 1:30-4:30 p.m. At Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. A showing of "Gina's Journey: The Search for William Grimes" (Documentary). It 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.

and coincides with the winter holiday season in which creature comforts of all types are appreciated. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits/gww

"Hold On! Demitasse to Tumblers."

Now thru Feb. 2. 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. Visit www.scopegallery.org, www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope.

"Repetitions."

Now thru Feb. 9. 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. Non-themed work will also be exhibited. Visit the website: www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com

"The King's Shadow."

Now thru April 19. 8 p.m. At The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. In this season, Shakespeare's Histories: "The King's Shadow" runs Jan. 2 - April 19th, 2020; "Richard the Second" runs Jan. 2 - April 18, 2020; "Henry the Fourth, Part 1" runs January 30 - April 18, 2020; "Henry the Fourth, Part 2" runs February 13 - April 19, 2020; and "Henry the Fifth" runs March 12 - April 19, 2020. These plays follow the troubled passing of the English crown. Tickets are \$35. Contact boxoffice@bravespiritstheatre.com or www.bravespiritstheatre.com

JAN. 15 TO DEC. 9, 2020

Life Drawing Sessions. At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Looking for a chance to hone your figure drawing skills? Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions for just this



Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week will be held Jan. 17-26 throughout Alexandria.

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week

Jan. 17-26, 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.

purpose. Just drop in for the session and bring your supplies to draw or paint the live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/life-drawing

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. Bring your device.

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. 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.

Benefit Performance. 8 p.m. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. Tickets \$50/person. A fundraising performance of "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" to benefit the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association, 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

"Frozen Jr." At Aldersgate Church Community Theater (ACCT), 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. A story of true love and acceptance between sisters, the show expands upon the emotional relationship and journey between Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood. Show times are Friday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18 at 2 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 19 at 2 p.m.; Monday, Jan. 20 at 2 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 25 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10

Sunday, Jan. 26 at 2 p.m. Visit the website:
<https://acconline.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. See previous page. www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 18

Movie Screening: "Gina's Journey." 1:30-4:30 p.m. At Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. A showing of "Gina's Journey: The Search for William Grimes" (Documentary). It follows the quest of one woman, Regina Mason, in tracing the steps of her ancestor, who traveled along the Underground Railroad to freedom. 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. Jeremiah 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.

MLK Celebration. 3 p.m. At Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road, Alexandria. This annual event features some of the area's best choirs and the reading of three prize-winning student essays on the importance of Dr. King's quote, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." All choirs and the audience join in a rousing finale of the Battle Hymn of the Republic at the end.

SUNDAY, JAN. 19

Meal-Packing Event. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Episcopal High School, 1200 North Quaker Lane, Alexandria. In putting to action Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of service, Islamic Relief USA, a nonprofit humanitarian and

advocacy organization, will hold a large meal-packing event. More than 300 volunteers will pack some 100,000 meals that will be distributed domestically to various shelters and food banks. The meals consist of red lentil jambalaya that is popular among the local communities served by IRUSA.

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 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.

"The Seasons." 2 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria. Featuring The President's Own Marine Chamber Orchestra. Concerts are free, no tickets required unless otherwise noted. Visit www.marineband.marines.mil.

MONDAY/JAN. 20

MLK Day of Service. Starts at 10 a.m. See next page. www.VolunteerAlexandria.org

TUESDAY/JAN. 21

Get Fit at Your Library. 1- 2 p.m. At Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Learn basic line dance steps while you workout to music. This is a class great for beginners. Bring a friend or come alone. Please wear comfortable shoes and clothing.

Alien Registration Files. 1-3 p.m. At Mount Vernon Genealogical Society, Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Genealogist Carol Kostakos Petranek, Co-Director of the Washington, D.C. Family History Center, will speak about the genealogical value of records submitted by immigrants under the Alien Registration Act of 1940. Free, open to public. Visit the website: www.mvgenalogy.org

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Questions? E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

Mount Vernon Gazette

A safe, convenient way to dispose of unused medication.



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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.

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

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Fairfax County, Va.,
 February 2019



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CALENDAR

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 11

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Winter Recital. 7:30 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Join Alexandria Symphony Orchestra musicians Paul Bagley (viola), Amy Horn (horn), Sophia Kim Cook (piano), and Maestro James Ross (horn) for an evening of music and conversation. Enjoy a variety of chamber music along with a post-concert reception with refreshments. This recital is presented as part of the Adopt a Chair program. Tickets: \$35 Adult; \$5 Youth. Visit www.alexsym.org, or call 703-548-0885.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 22

Resources for Transition to High School. 5:30-7:45 p.m. At T.C. Williams High School, Minnie Howard Campus, 3801 W Braddock Rd., Alexandria. Are you wondering about high school life? Not sure what steps to take to be college-ready? Join the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria and other middle school families for "Transition to High School Planning Night." Come learn about classes to take in 9th grade, steps to take now in order to be college-ready, and how to access college-planning resources at T.C. Williams. Session 1: 5:30-6:30 p.m., English presentation-auditorium; Session 2: 5:40-6:40 p.m., Spanish presentation-media center; and Session 3: 6:45-7:45 p.m., English presentation-auditorium. Free pizza, interpretation and childcare will be provided with registration: <https://conta.cc/36pBwHg>. Contact Melissa Harrington or Darien Waters, College Advisers with the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria at college@acps.k12.va.us or darien.waters@acps.k12.va.us or

call 703-824-6730.

THURSDAY/JAN. 23

Civil War at Carlyle House. 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Through images, letters, and diaries, Andrea Tracey, Executive Director of the Carlyle House, explores the histories of the nurses, doctors, stewards, soldiers and Alexandria residents who found themselves at the Carlyle House property and the Mansion House Hotel in what was known as the Mansion House Hospital during the Civil War. Discover how both the Carlyle House and the Hotel buildings were utilized during this tumultuous time in Alexandria and the nation's history. Tickets \$15 or \$10 Athenaeum Members, Friends of Fort Ward, or Friends of Carlyle House. Visit the website: nvfaa.org

FRIDAY/JAN. 24

Garden Talk: Easy Houseplants to Grow. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) No need to wait for spring to get your hands back in the soil. You can enjoy beautiful flowering and foliage plants right now, inside your home. Extension master gardeners provide you with all the know-how you will need to be successful. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code F36.A05D) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Innovation Day Workshop. 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. At USPTO's Madison Building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria. The National Inventors Hall of Fame and the United States Patent and Trademark Office invite



The Northern Virginia Community College will host its MLK Day of Service on Monday, Jan. 20.

MLK Day of Service

Monday/Jan. 20, Starts at 10 a.m. The Northern Virginia Community College, in partnership with Volunteer Alexandria, is hosting its' 11th annual MLK Day. There will be learning and service opportunities available for over 300 volunteers benefiting students, Alexandria residents, and the homeless population in the community. It's a "day on, not a day off". All volunteers will participate in one service project and one learning opportunity. Volunteers will be assigned according to their indicated preferences, but due to room size, they cannot guarantee volunteers will have their top choice. Service opportunities that are listed as Family Projects are intended for children aged 6+ to volunteer with their parent and/or guardian. Visit the website <http://www.VolunteerAlexandria.org>

local teachers and school district officials to attend an "Innovation Day" professional development workshop focused on inquiry-based learning and invention education. Highlights designed to raise awareness of the importance of early exposure to innovation education and invention, include hands-on sessions where attendees explore NIH's Camp Invention pedagogy first hand, gaining access to instructional strategies that promote an innovative and creativity-based classroom. To register for this free workshop, email Mike Sandridge at msandridge@invent.org. Visit invent.org/educators/camp-invention.

Watercolor Workshop:

Sketchbook Journal. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Learn to bind your own sketchbook or journal using watercolor paper and other papers. Prepare and decorate pages with collages, paints, stamps and stencils. Each book will be a reflection of you. \$94 per person (plus a supply fee of \$15 payable to instructor that includes everything you will need for this class)./Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code C65.8564) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

Tasting Program: Burns Night

Scotch Tasting. 4-6 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (21-Adult) Celebrate Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, with a special Scotch whisky tasting. Learn about Scotland's water of life and enjoy samples from each Scotch-producing region. Discover Burns Night supper traditions. Delicious Scottish accompaniments will be served./\$45 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code A1A.B1F0) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

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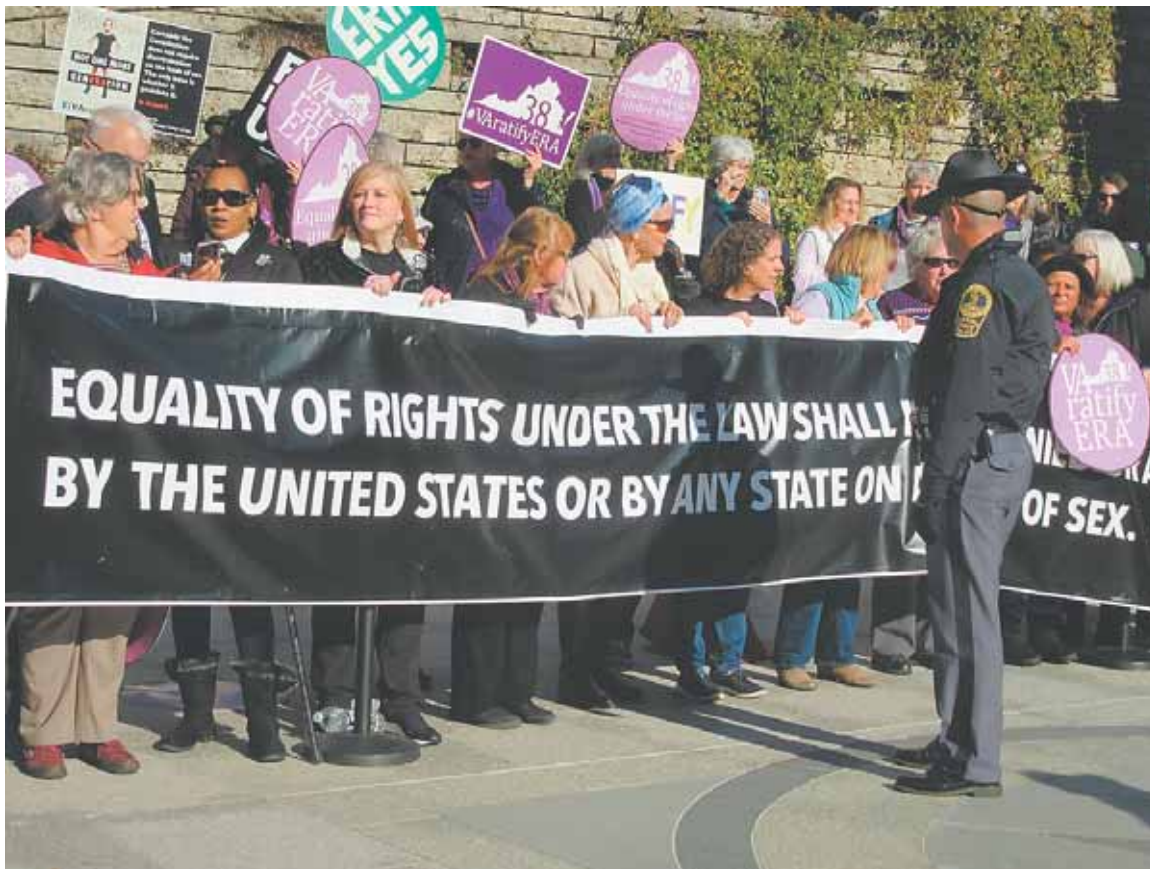


PHOTO BY CLYDEA C. BOOTH

Advocating for Equal Rights

On Jan. 9, 2020, advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution rallied in Richmond at the entrance to the state capitol as legislators entered to convene on the first day of the 2020 session. Many observers believe that the General Assembly will pass it this year, which would make Virginia the 38th and last state needed for ratification.

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-Werner Heisenberg

Still Waiting for "Canswers"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I half expected, with my oncologist out on vacation this week, he and the endocrinologist didn't speak. As a result, after sitting in the examining chair, the first question the doctor asks is "So you have thyroid cancer?" I snickered and said something like "Hopefully," before I began to elaborate. Though she had access to my medical records, I can't say she was prepped and ready for our appointment. As she listened to my story, I could see she was simultaneously trying to review my medical history on her computer. In fact, as I hemmed and hawed in response to some of her medical questions, I kept saying/pointing to her computer for her to get the proper answer.

Nevertheless, eventually we were able to move forward in the determination of exactly what kind of cancer I have: thyroid cancer or lung cancer - or both (it's possible, she said). To that end-result, the doctor performed a biopsy on my "Adam's Apple" tumor, as I call it. The biopsy I had two weeks prior was from a lymph node. The results from which caused my oncologist to call me with his "exciting news." Apparently, those results were not enough for the endocrinologist (who had never seen me before) to make a definitive judgment, so in her office, that day, this second biopsy was performed. Fine with me since a second biopsy from a different tumor is absolutely moving the ball forward, as if it is so often said these days; I just hope it leads to a touchdown instead of another possible fumble.

For the last nearly 11 years, I've been diagnosed with non small cell lung cancer, stage IV. Now after two biopsies, not so much. Right now, the assessment of my cancer status is somewhere between a definite maybe and a confirmed I don't know.

Will I now know - in another week's time (when the results of this most recent biopsy are confirmed) whether my non small cell lung cancer is actually thyroid cancer or will there be additional biopsies, additional diagnostic scans, injections of isotopes, etc., to make a once-and-for-all confirmation of what the heck is going on (or has been going on) in my body? If so, it's been a long time coming. I first went to the Emergency Room Jan. 1, 2009 so it's sort of an anniversary of sorts as I write this column. I'd just as soon we get it right this time, if in fact it was ever wrong.

I have a few questions, some of which were answered by the endocrinologist. Yes, I can have two types of cancer. Could my lung cancer have changed to become thyroid cancer? No. And the underlying curiosity/question: During this cancer life that I have lived, I have been told - and seen multiple times on discharge-type paperwork I've received that I have "metastatic cancer" meaning that the cancer has moved. Moreover, when one considers the staging aspect, my cancer was stage IV. Stage IV means, among "relevancies," (like inoperable) that the cancer has moved from its "primary" location. I remember asking my oncologist where did my lung cancer come from (I'm a lifelong non-smoker with no cancer history in my immediate family). His answer, if I recall correctly, and I may not due to "chemo brain," a confirmed side effect of chemotherapy) was that he didn't know, and if I further recall correctly, he wasn't particularly interested in finding out and accordingly no additional tests were ordered. Perhaps we misunderstand the need to know now or misunderstood the answers we were given then (Feb., 2009). But as of this past Friday, Team Lourie is sort of wondering as was the endocrinologist.

As of this moment, our focus is on hearing back from the endocrinologist. Until then, we'll try to move forward. What's done is done and we'll hear back when we hear back. I have what I have (and have had what I've had) and right now, all we can do is wait.

That being said, we are having a little difficulty restraining ourselves. We can't get past the fact that my oncologist called us in the first place, and in the last place, if he wasn't so sure, why call us and get our collective hope sky high? Why go out on such a presumptive limb? In spite of that call, somehow, we have to internalize and compartmentalize and try to synthesize fact from fiction. So far, it's proving extremely difficult.

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

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BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

SATURDAY/JAN. 18

Legislative Town Hall - Mount Vernon. 9-11 a.m. At Walt Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Hosted by Sen. Adam Ebbin, Democrat, Senate District 30. For details, contact Henry Watkins, 703-646-0591 or henry@adamebbin.com.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Winter Community Police Academy. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Alexandria Police Department Headquarters at 3600 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria. Get to know the Alexandria Police Department (APD) in an abbreviated half-day session. This academy allows residents and community members to learn about various aspects of the Police Department during the summer months. Topics will include patrol operations, use of force policies, the K9 Unit, Special Operations Team, crime scene investigation and criminal investigations. This free class is limited to 45 participants per session. Visit the Community Police Academy online or e-mail the Volunteer Office at mary.bruno@alexandriava.gov. The deadline for registration is Jan. 17, 2020.

SATURDAY/JAN. 25

Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The City of Alexandria encourages residents to safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications, including those prescribed by veterinarians, during National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. During the event, the Alexandria Police Department, Alexandria Sheriff's Office, and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) will staff the following drop-off sites:

- ❖ First Baptist Church (2932 King St.);
- ❖ Police Department (3600 Wheeler Ave.);
- ❖ Fire Station 210 (5255 Eisenhower Ave.);
- ❖ The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray (2204 Mt. Vernon Ave.).

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

The City of Alexandria invites the public to celebrate National Mentoring Month in January. Join the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership in raising awareness about the benefits of mentoring programs and the positive effects of mentoring Alexandria's young residents. The Partnership represents a variety of programs that strive to provide exceptional support to youth and young adults in the Alexandria community. There are four ways to celebrate:

- ❖ Attend an Open House on Jan. 29, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Lyceum (201 S. Washington St.). Attendees can engage with representatives from mentoring programs, hear personal reflections from mentors and mentees, and learn about how to become a mentor.

This event is free, but attendees are asked to register online.

- ❖ Mentors and mentees are encouraged to participate in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Jan. 20, and elevate the spirit of service through volunteerism. Post a photo of service work in action using the hashtag #MLKDayALX and be entered in a drawing for a gift card to an Alexandria restaurant.
- ❖ Participate in "Thank Your Mentor Day" on Jan. 30, a day for mentees to show gratitude for their mentors on social media. Post a mentor/mentee photo using the hashtag #ThankYourMentorDayALX and be entered in a drawing for a gift card to an Alexandria restaurant.

Visit alexandriava.gov/Mentoring or call 703-746-4478.

SATURDAY/FEB. 1

Mt. Vernon District Town Meeting. 7:45 a.m. to noon. At Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Mount Vernon. Engage in your community in 2020. Times: 7:45-9:30 a.m. - Exhibit Hall Open; 9:30 a.m. to noon - Program: Speakers, Audience Q&As and Virtual Tour. Meet your Supervisor Dan Storck and many county, state and federal leaders. Have your questions answered, learn about issues important to you, connect with county agencies and service providers and mingle with your neighbors.

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