



# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 23, 2020



## Celebrating MLK Day with Music and Essays

A speech by Dr. Eric Williams, Curator of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, surrounded by music from six outstanding choirs and readings of three prize-winning local student essays made for an inspiring tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King on Saturday, Jan. 18, at Bethlehem Baptist Church.

The annual event was organized by Ventures in Community, a coalition of about 60 faith communities and nonprofits that support a hypothermia center and network on issues related to poverty in the area. The program was organized by Rev. Abe Smith, Pastor of First AME Baptist Church.

Dr. Williams noted that for the first time in history, humans have become the agent of our own destruction and said "Brothers and sisters, we are all we have. Let's



### Lusk and essay winners:

Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk (second from left) congratulates the three student essay winners, Turner Bumbary (second place), Obinna Ekeagwu (first place), and Victoria Laffittie (third place).



**Obinna Ekeagwu**



**Turner Bumbary**



**Victoria Laffittie**

live our lives in peace, love, and justice."

A quote from Dr. King — "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way" — was the theme of a student essay contest for local high school students. The winner was Obinna Ekeagwu of Mount Vernon High School, who wrote "Rev. King calls on us to keep our eyes open for moments to spread mercy and grace. He does not expect us to walk a million

miles. He expects us to walk one. While that mile may seem insignificant to us, the effort can change somebody's life.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

SEE MLK DAY, PAGE 4



Combined choirs sing Battle Hymn of the Republic directed by Mark Zimmerman, Mt Vernon Unitarian Choir Director.



Bethlehem Baptist Church Choir.

## No Person Too Small

BY OBINNA EKEAGWU  
11TH GRADE AT MOUNT VERNON  
HIGH SCHOOL.

First Place Essay. MLK Essay Contest 2020, sponsored by Ventures in Community

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. changed America by inspiring the disenfranchised.

Many blacks did not believe they could overcome racism. Such pessimism inadvertently helped Jim Crow laws, because blacks feared that reforms would lead to violent

retaliation.

Dr. King, however, illustrated to ordinary citizens that they were not too small to create change. MLK challenges us to do good whenever we can, no matter the inconvenience. Even if the cause of a dilemma is out of our control, we can improve any situation.

Rev. King's faith energized his activist mindset. In one of his sermons, King tells congregants that for "religion to be real and genuine[, it] must not only be something that men talk about[, ] but something that men live about."

King recognizes that some things are outside of humans' control, as "God...guides the destiny of the universe." Yet, he calls on us to follow God's "inexorable moral law" in whatever way we can. Those who do not believe in a god are still asked to make the world a better place.

Rev. King laments that the goodwill of modern Christians is a "mere Sunday habit," rather than a 24/7 instinct. Indeed, doing good is difficult outside the church because, according to MLK, "man's quest for the divine is in-

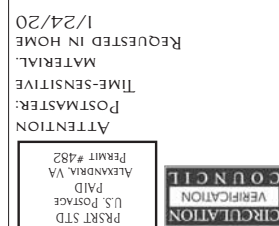
terrupted by the nagging movements of the demonic." However, King excuses neither immoral action nor moral inaction.

He argues that "we are forever attempting to find some scapegoat on which we cast responsibility for

our actions."

While King recognizes the consequences of negative circumstances on one's life, he believes that "[our] personal response is

SEE NO PERSON, PAGE 4





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# Closing All the Loopholes

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

**T**he days of unregulated high-interest lending may be coming to a close in Virginia. Now that Democrats have seized control of the General Assembly, members of the Legislative Black Caucus say cracking down on predatory lending is one of their top priorities for the 2020 session. Del. Lamont Bagby (D-74) and Sen. Mamie Locke (D-2) have introduced a legislative effort they're calling the Fair Lending Act. The bill would cap all loans at 36 percent and institute a maximum monthly fee of \$25.

"All of these lenders make the same loans in Colorado and Ohio and charge one third as much as they charge Virginians," said Jay Speer, executive director at the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "So it's pretty clear they charge the maximum they're allowed to charge and it has nothing at all to do with market forces."

The current state of Virginia law is a hodgepodge of different approaches for different loans. Some are regulated and capped at 264 percent. Others are totally unregulated, so nobody knows how many of them are being made or what the interest rates are. The Fair Lending Act would require all lenders get a Virginia license and register with the State Corporation Commission, which would track how many loans are made and many other details about the transactions. Advocates for reforming the system say the current system takes advantage of people who are already in a vulnerable financial situation.

"It's designed to bankrupt them," said

Mark Levine (D-45), who introduced a bill to regulate open-end lines of credit. "It's designed to take every single asset they own."

**HIGH-INTEREST LENDERS** have been under increasing scrutiny in recent years, and campaign-finance disclosures show these companies are spreading their money around to Democrats and Republicans in an effort to influence the General Assembly. During the last election cycle, the industry gave \$1 million in campaign contributions. Car-title lender LoanMax was the top contributor, giving \$250,000; online lender Enova gave \$176,000; open-end-line-of-credit lender Check Into Cash gave \$88,000.

"There's no question that when it comes to car-title lenders, that has been controversial," said Bob Denton, professor at Virginia Tech. "Republicans have protected that industry by and large."

Republicans are no longer in charge, and that has created a momentum for reforming an industry that many lawmakers believe preys on vulnerable people who are desperate for money and don't fully understand the consequences of getting caught in a debt trap. One of the key Republicans who helped thwart efforts was former Del. Tim Hugo (R-40), who was chairman of a subcommittee that often served as graveyard for reform efforts. He was one of the four Republican incumbents unseated last year, giving Democrats a majority in the House and shifting the balance of power.

specialists from our Major Crimes Bureau's Victim Services Division have been assigned to ensure that the victim is receiving appropriate resources and assistance. <sh>Fatal Pedestrian Crash in Mount Vernon

An adult man has died as a result of injuries from a crash that occurred around 9:45 p.m. on Jan. 16. The victim of the fatal pedestrian crash has been identified as 52-year-old Daniel Yeboah. Police do not have a current address at this time. Next of kin have been notified.

Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit have preliminarily determined that the man was crossing Richmond Highway near the intersection of Pohick Road. The driver of a 2019 Dodge Ram was traveling northbound on Richmond Highway and struck the man who was not in a crosswalk. The driver remained on the scene and is cooperating with detectives. Detectives determined the man was subsequently struck by the driver of a 2001 Pontiac Grand Am who was unaware of the initial incident but soon reported it to police and is cooperating with the investigation. The man died at the scene. Preliminarily, neither speed nor alcohol appear to be factors for either drivers. Detectives have not yet determined if alcohol was a factor for the pedestrian.

Anyone with information about this crash

## Democrats poised to impose new regulations on high-interest lenders.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE GAZETTE

**Campaign-finance records show that in the last election cycle, LoanMax gave \$150,000 to Republicans and \$100,000 to Democrats.**

"Far too often I'm riding into work or into session, and I hear the commercials on the radio knowing that there's somebody listening to that who desperately needs a loan to pay for their electrical bill, to pay a child care payment, pay a college loan," said Bagby, who is leading the reform effort in the House. "They are going to be calling that number that's on the radio or online to receive that loan not knowing what the rates are, and not understand what the fees are associated with that."

**ONE OF THE** key provisions in the Fair Lending Act is that it creates a cap on how much these companies can charge in interest and fees — no more than 50 percent. This is designed to prevent these companies from bilking consumers into forking

over significantly more money than they borrowed in the first place, a key feature of the industry that helped earn the title "predatory."

"We want to make sure that the borrowers have terms that make sense and are reasonable because they can't negotiate those terms," said Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2). "All they know is that they need the money, and they need it now."

Current rules allow for a wide variety of lending. Some are regulated and some are not. For example, payday loans and car-title loans are monitored by the State Corporation Commission. But open-end lines of credit and installment loans made online are not, leading to confusion about the scale of the industry and

what kind of interest rates they charge. That's why the Fair Lending Act requires all businesses making loans in Virginia get a license, which will allow state regulators to track their activity. Critics say this creates a new loophole.

"We have no statute to cover somebody offshore," said Terry Kilgore (R-1). "It's going to drive a lot of people to the internet and offshore lending."

Supporters of the bill say the legislation has a solution to that problem: the attorney general.

"All you do is complain to the attorney general, and you don't have to pay a single dime," said Levine. "Sorry Russian company. Sorry German company. You're getting none it back because under Virginia law, the loan is void."

offered and accepted. Damages as a result of the fire are approximately \$37,500.

is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

This is the 2nd pedestrian fatality in the county to date in 2020.

## Mount Vernon House Fire

On Thursday, Jan. 16 at approximately 4:24 p.m., units from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and the Alexandria Fire Department were dispatched for a reported house fire in the 2500 block of Byrd Lane in the Fair Haven area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on-scene of a two-story, single family home with smoke showing. Crews quickly located a fire that was primarily within the walls on the first floor. The fire was rapidly extinguished. No civilian or firefighter injuries were reported.

Five occupants were home at the time of the fire. The occupants were alerted to the fire due to an odor of smoke. Smoke alarms activated as the occupants were exiting the house.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the void space behind the wall of the utility closet. The fire was caused by an electrical short.

Eight occupants have been displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was

## FCPS Teacher Arrested for Indecent Liberties Against Child

A 57-year-old teacher is facing four felony charges of indecent liberties by a custodian for an inappropriate sexual relationship with a student at Justice High School. Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau Child Abuse Squad arrested Philip Spivey, of Falls Church, today. Detectives began their investigation after it was learned that Spivey was having unlawful sexual contact with a student. Spivey is also employed as a private music teacher. He is currently being held at the county's Adult Detention Center without bond.

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

Detectives are seeking anyone who has information or may have had inappropriate contact with Spivey to call our Major Crimes Bureau detectives at 703-246-7800, option 3.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

## Attempted Abduction in Belle Haven

Detectives from our Major Crimes Bureau are investigating an attempted abduction of a juvenile that occurred Jan. 21 between 4:15 and 5 p.m. in the 6600 block of Fort Hunt Road. A Belle View Elementary School student was walking on a sidewalk along Fort Hunt Road when a man approached from behind and picked the student up. The student fought the man off and the suspect ran from the area. The student returned to the school and notified administrators who immediately called police. The suspect was described as a white man in his 40s, approximately 5'11", medium build, with short brown hair. He had a trimmed grey beard and red bumps on his face. At the time of the incident, he was wearing a brown hooded jacket, loose blue jeans and boots. Detectives are asking community members in the area of Fort Hunt Road and Belle View Boulevard to review any home surveillance footage from Jan. 21 between 4 and 5 p.m. in case they may have captured an image of the suspect. Anyone who has information or has surveillance images they believe are helpful are asked to call our Major Crimes Bureau detectives at 703-246-7800, option 6. Victim



# MLK Day with Music and Essays

FROM PAGE 1

teaches us that none of us is too powerless to make a difference.”

The three top winners read their essays from the pulpit to enthusiastic applause.

Each received a cash prize. Second place went to Turner Bumbarly of Thomas Jefferson High School, and third place to Victoria Laffittie of Mt Vernon High School. The essays were ranked by four members of the Ventures in Community steering committee, who did not

know the author’s names. All students who submitted essays received a gift.

The Home School Chorus performed an inspirational piece that started with a young soloist singing about speaking out with one voice and added singers from the choir and the audience in sections changing the refrain to speaking out “with a million voices.”

The Mount Vernon Unitarian Church choir performed a complex original piece called “King for a

Day” that asked audience members what they would do if they could be Dr. King for one day.

The program ended as always with the combined choirs and audience singing the famous abolitionist song “Battle Hymn of the Republic” directed by Mark Zimmerman, choir director of Mt. Vernon Unitarian.

Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk gave standing ovations at several points and met briefly with the essay winners.



Mt Vernon Unitarian Church Choir.

## No Person Too Small

FROM PAGE 1  
the final determining factor in our lives.”

When we avoid the right decision, we must take ownership of our dereliction.

In King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail, he writes that “the ultimate tragedy...was not the brutality of the bad people, but the silence of the good people.” We all consider ourselves “good people,” so we should behave like so. When we encounter choices that juxta-

pose what is difficult with what is convenient, we must choose the difficult.

When we see the elderly struggling to carry something, we must offer to alleviate their burden.

When we see somebody at lunch sitting alone, we must offer them company.

When we see family members seized by addiction or sorrow, we must offer our support.

The blind eye we turn to suffering is replaced by the eye of the

devil; he is always looking for opportunities to spread misery and evil.

Rev. King calls on us to keep our eyes open for moments to spread mercy and grace.

He does not expect us to walk a million miles. He expects us to walk one. While that mile may seem insignificant to us, the effort can change somebody’s life.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. teaches us that none of us is too powerless to make a difference.



The Home School Chorus.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

**The Junior Achievement students at Carl Sandburg Middle School in Mount Vernon are learning the concepts of savings, income, budgeting, investing and the pros and cons of debit and credit.**

# The ABCs of Kids and Money

**Teaching children how to budget, save and manage finances.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n an age when paying one's mortgage can be done from a smartphone, money smarts is an important part of navigating life. From saving to buy the latest video game to learning how to budget an allowance, financial literacy is one of the most important lessons for children, say financial experts.

"It's very important to teach tweens and teens about money," said Steve Pilloff, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the School of Business at George Mason University. "For many kids, this is the first time they are making independent financial decisions, such as whether to save a birthday gift or spend it on a video game."

In fact, Patti Senft, Manager of Program Engagement at Junior Achievement of Greater Washington in Fairfax, Virginia says that one of her organization's goals is to teach financial literacy to children. "Junior Achievement has determined that teaching the concepts of savings, income, budgeting, investing and the pros and cons of debit and credit should begin with middle school students in 7th and 8th grade," she said.

"The knowledge that the students learn through the Junior Achievement gives students the skills they need to manage their expenses and budget wisely for a successful future," she said.

Helping children set financial goals, delay gratification, earn money and save it toward achieving those goals is one of the first steps that parents can take to teach smart money practices, said Pilloff. "The

habits, and even more critically, the decision-making process children develop early on will influence the way they approach financial matters throughout their lives," he said.

Students should be taught to make choices with the amount of money they have, suggests Senft. "It's important to teach children to distinguish between what you need versus what you want," she said. "It's important to teach children of all ages about money. It's never too soon to talk about the importance of savings."

"It's important because in any modern society, the one thing that people do almost every day is make money decisions, so knowing how to do it well is something that is going to be useful to every single one of us," added Laura Levine, president and CEO of the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. "Knowing how to manage money is something that all consumers need to do so it's important that we teach that to our kids."

In fact, learning to manage a budget is one of the basic skills that Levine encourages parents to teach.

"Years ago, finance was basic, but today there are so many options and financial decisions that have to be made," she said. "Money is more self-directed than ever before. Finances are more complicated than ever before, so we need skills to manage it."

When it comes to managing money, one of the best ways to teach is leading by example, says Levine. "Like with anything else, kids learn by what they see at home," she said. "Even parents who haven't made the best financial decisions in the past can resolve to do it now in the New Year."

While some parents might find starting a dialog daunting, it's vital that parents have those conversations with their children, said Levine.

"Talk to your kids about money," she said. "It's important to distinguish between talk and teach. Parents who don't know about money can freak out when they're asked to teach their children about money. Instead, talk to them and say, 'Let's learn about this together.'"



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## Why I Support Repeal of So-called 'Right-to-Work'

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK  
(MOUNT VERNON),  
VHDC LABOR LIAISON



Krizek

**A**s a nation, this week on January 20th, we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated so eloquently in 1961, "We must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work.' It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights."

When I first ran for Delegate to represent the community I grew up in here in Mount Vernon, in what is the 44th district, one of the first questions I was asked was my position on the fact that Virginia is a "right-to-work" state. I knew it was one of those slogans that Dr. King warned us about and that it was an anti-labor construct. But, I didn't know its racist beginnings or how it has exacerbated income inequality in our country.

Indeed, right-to-work is one of the most misunderstood phrases ever coined. Many people think "right-to-work" means "right to a

job." This is not the case at all. What "right-to-work" means is that employees cannot be compelled to pay union dues, but can still access the

benefits of union representation without paying for them. In other words, employees in unionized workplaces are banned from negotiating contracts which require all members who benefit from the collectively bargained agreement to contribute to the costs of union representation.

There are plenty of occupations, like in law, for example, where you are required to pay dues to be able to practice. This is not unusual. To be clear, right-to-work is really about limiting unionization and the power of working people. Many now call it the "right to work for less" which is closer to the truth.

In the 1930s, white supremacists

in the South worried that if unions brought working class whites and blacks together, Jim Crow-era laws would be upended. The right-to-work movement spread throughout the south reaching Virginia in 1947 where it was enacted under then Governor Bill Tuck. Governor Tuck hated unions and loathed racial integration. When in 1946 the Virginia IBEW workers threatened to strike for better wages, Tuck referred to the union's representatives as "evil leadership." In response to striking coal miners in 1948, Tuck called unions "a deplorable form of gangsterism that will not be tolerated in Virginia." He was also a signatory to the "Southern Manifesto" which opposed racial integration of public places; and later, when he was a Congressman he was vehemently against the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

Recent studies demonstrate the devastating impact of right-to-work laws on wages. A groundbreaking study from Princeton University argues one of the biggest factors in increasing

income inequality is the decline in union membership. Princeton was able to study the effects of union membership while controlling for variables such as education, skill, and race. What the study found is that on average over the last 80 years, union workers make around 15-20 percent more than non-union workers in the same field. Indeed, a 2018 analysis from the Economic Policy Institute found that the hourly wage of men in right-to-work states is \$18.25, compared with \$20.78 in non-right-to-work states, a difference of nearly 14 percent. The pattern of lower wages is even more pronounced for women and people of color. Right-to-work laws have a disproportionate impact on minorities because of their greater rates of work in unionized industries. Eliminating right-to-work in Virginia is a matter of economic and racial justice. We now have the opportunity to address this outdated and racist law that is out of step with the values of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Virginia. It's time to repeal it. I will be voting for HB 153.

## Virginia Legislature Moves Quickly on Equal Rights, Gun Violence Prevention

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

**T**he second week of the General Assembly Session put us at the center of American history. We moved several long-delayed, legislative priorities.

On Wednesday, both the Senate and the House passed resolutions to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to make Virginia the 38<sup>th</sup> and final state to ratify the Constitutional amendment. The Senate has passed the resolution at least six times in past years, but the House of Delegates has never approved it. Ratification will hopefully bring equal rights to 160 million women in America and attention will now shift to the U. S. Congress.

Congress can abolish or extend the 1982 ratification deadline they previously set. I was proud to carry this legislation every year since 2012 and even during years when few people were paying attention. Virginia is finally on the right side of history for the first time in about 150 years.

On Monday, the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which I serve, had its first meeting and we immediately addressed firearm violence prevention. We considered, modified and passed four bills,



three of which the full Senate passed later in the week and one of which was continued for final vote this Tuesday. The Senate passed legislation reinstating Virginia's one handgun per month law. This became law in 1993 and Virginia became the primary source for most guns confiscated from criminal activity in New York City. The legislature repealed it in 2012 after a sustained campaign by the National Rifle Association. Under the current bill, people who possess Virginia concealed weapons permits would be exempt from the law.

We also passed legislation requiring the seller of all firearms to undergo a criminal background check. Today, people making all purchases from federally-licensed firearm dealers must undergo these checks, but individuals who are unable to purchase or possess firearms, such as felons or people convicted of domestic assault can illegally purchase firearms by purchasing them from private individuals. The original legislation

also applied to firearms transfers with some exceptions, but several members of our caucus were concerned we would unintentionally criminalize some hunting activities so we removed that provision.

The Senate also approved my bill to give local governments more authority over firearms and combined it with four other bills. The final bill would allow local governments to prohibit firearms in public buildings, public parks and at locally-permitted events if restrictions are properly posted. This was a major priority for me after the violent events in Charlottesville and men carrying AR-15 rifles at the Alexandria Farmers Market "to educate the public about their Second Amendment rights." Virginia already authorizes localities to regulate firearms in some circumstances, so I did not see this as a major extension of existing law.

The Judiciary Committee passed so-called "red flag" legislation. The bill that the Senate will vote on on Thursday will allow a magistrate to enter an order requiring people to surrender their guns if it is shown that they are a threat to themselves or other persons because of their firearms. No order can be issued without a law

enforcement investigation and individuals must be given a chance to voluntarily surrender their weapons before law enforcement can involuntarily seize them. The law also provides for a second hearing for the person to contest the allegation after full discovery. I expect the Senate to pass this bill soon. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee passed my legislation prohibiting duck hunting blinds on Little Hunting Creek, Great Hunting Creek and Dogue Creek. My bill to create a Public Defender's Office in Prince William County passed out of committee unanimously.

The Senate Health and Education Committee approved my bill to prohibit providing "conversion therapy" to minors, along with my bill to eliminate the terms "husband" and "wife" from our divorce law to be replaced with the word "spouse."

I have posted my 2020 Constituent Survey online at <http://scottsurovell.org/2020-constituent-survey/>. Please complete it so I can hear from you about important issues this session, my legislation or anything else you would like to communicate.

You can also reach me at [scott@scottsurovell.org](mailto:scott@scottsurovell.org).

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## OPINION

# Year of the Woman

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK  
(D-MT VERNON DISTRICT)

**H**appy New Year and welcome to 2020! TEAM MVD (Mount Vernon District) and I are designating this year the "Year of the Woman." Here in the Mount Vernon District, we are celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote and the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment with the opening of the Lucy Burns Museum at the Workhouse Arts Center and the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial at Occoquan Regional Park. At the state level, the Virginia General Assembly appointed Del. Eileen Filler-Corn as the first female leader of the House of Delegates in 400 years and just became the 38<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). As a result, the Year of the Woman has started off strong! We Can Do It! - as Rosie the Riveter showed us.

Strong women throughout history have shown us the power of perseverance and we will explore and celebrate this throughout the year. The Lucy Burns Museum celebrating the suffragists and 100 years of prison history will open on Jan. 25, with the grand opening on May 9. In February, we will celebrate African American History month.

One of the seldom told stories of the women's suffragist movement is of the African American women also who picketed the White House. March will bring Women's History month and we will see how the US Congress will act on ratifying the ERA. Then, on Aug. 26, we will dedicate the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial. And, this is just a sampling of what the Year of the Woman will look like.

The Mount Vernon District is fortunate to be home to so much storied history and we look forward to celebrating it throughout the year. Across the country, this major milestone of our democracy will be celebrated by female-focused commemorations and many visitors will come to see these national recognitions happening right here in our backyard.

To learn more about all of this

SEE YEAR OF THE, PAGE 9

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**Supervisor  
Dan Storck**



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## ESSAYS

# Hate Cannot Drive Out Hate

TURNER BUMBARY

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Second Place Essay. MLK Essay Contest 2020, sponsored by Ventures in Community

"Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." These words, spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. during his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, helped give this country a glimmer of hope through the injustices of segregation, oppression, and racism.

His message advocates for people to take small actions of justice to rid their communities of hate.

I recently came to understand the meaning of Martin Luther King's words after the school shooting at Stoneman Douglass High School. Rather than fostering hate, our community rallied around one another with love. It felt like we had the support of Martin Luther King on our side, as we walked out of class to protest our nation's epidemic of gun violence and mass shootings. Our school walkout paralleled the civil rights marches Martin Luther King organized more than a half-century ago, showing his mission still resonates with some people today.

My greatest goal in life is to use my future positions of leadership and expertise to support other students in my community. For example, I am a student mentor for the LIFE Program, which is an organization that teaches students STEM through hands-on activities. Our program serves aspiring students at local Title I schools and hopes to strengthen the community by mitigating the education and achievement gaps.

Through my involvement in student government, peer mentorship programs, and educational policy I have already seen myself begin to implement small fragments of my goal. But with your support, I know we can give all students the opportunity they deserve.

Although MLK is no longer here, his message does not have to die. I urge YOU to become the change you wish to see in the world by reshaping your communities through compassion and love. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

In our lives, we constantly encounter prejudice and injustices, but we must have the courage to use our inner light and faith in the lord to drive out the darkness. As Dr. King said, "Even if we cannot do great things, we can do small things in a great way."

I encourage all of you to reach out to members of your community and to become the light that guides them. Our actions do not have to be large and grandiose, but rather a simple act of kindness can go a long way.

For example, if you were to help three people, and those three people each helped three more, by ten cycles you would have served more than 50,000 people.

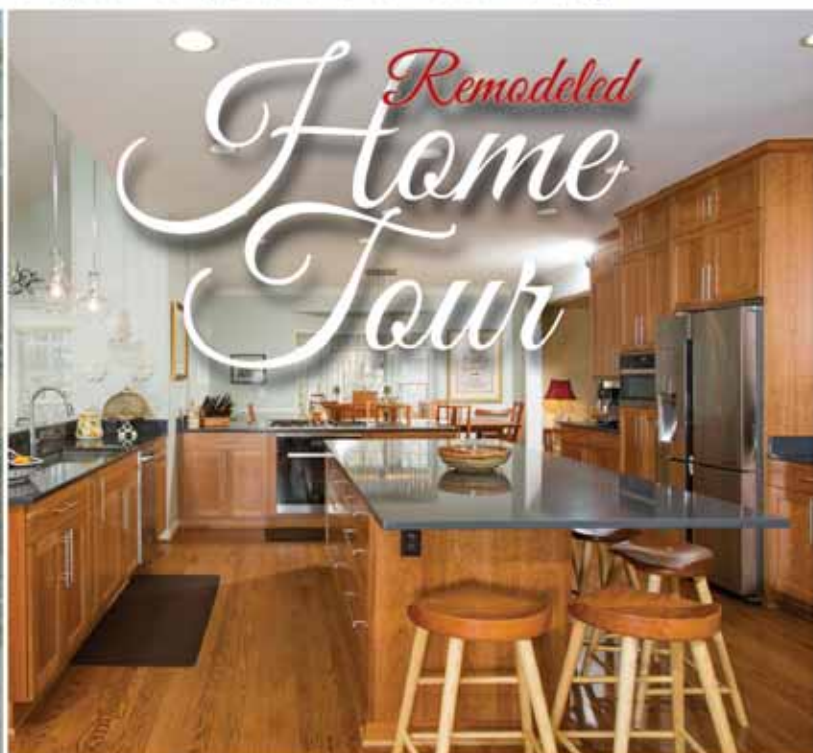
Although I am proud of all the progress Martin Luther King Jr. made, it is our duty to continue his mission and to fight against new issues that plague our country.

Please join me in my mission to create change and reshape our communities.

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## ESSAYS

# 'I Cannot Do Great Things, I Can Do Small Things in a Great Way'

BY VICTORIA LAFFITTIE  
MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL

Third Place Essay. MLK Essay Contest 2020, sponsored by Ventures in Community

As we all know, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has many great quotes, but the quote, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way," is one of his greatest.

In my research on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I was curious to find out what exactly motivated this particular quote. I learned that most, if not all, of Dr. King's quotes were related to the civil rights movement.

The goal of the civil rights movement was to achieve one great idea and that was equal rights for all. Also I learned that equality would not have been achieved without smaller individual contributions from prominent leaders and lesser known individuals.

During the Civil Rights era, black people were no longer slaves, but were still treated unfairly. This type of treatment mainly occurred in the southern states.

Inequality was often seen on signs and in different facilities. Often you would see "For Whites" or "For Colored" signs on things like water fountains, restrooms, or in segregated schools and restaurants.

I believe that Dr. King's passion and desire for change for equality is what sparked this great quote.

A prime example of a small thing was when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man. Rosa Parks may have felt that what she did was small, but it resulted in a great thing!

When I look at some of the things I have done such as volunteering at the church's food bank, bringing joy to the elderly at the nursing home, and providing tutoring to my peers, all seem small. But I have realized that although they may be small, I did them all in a great way.

To me this quote also means: Do not be discouraged if you don't accomplish your biggest goal at first. Start by doing small steps that can help lead you toward your major goal.

I know that I will eventually reach my goal step by step no matter how small the steps are, I will keep working toward it. Doing small things can go a long way.

Not many people have or will make a large impact on the world but if we all at least do what we can, no matter how small it is and it is a positive step it's a "small" step in the right direction.

I have learned more about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s tremendous contributions to our nation and how we all have benefited from his legacy.

We all should make the little or small things we do matter as much as the big things. With that said, I cannot imagine Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., doing small things, only great things!

## Year of the Woman

FROM PAGE 7

and our community, join me for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, from 7:45 a.m. – noon at Mount Vernon High School. Have your questions answered, learn about issues important to you, connect with County agencies and service providers and mingle with your neighbors. The highlight of the morning will be taking a "virtual flying tour" of the District and meeting your new County Board Chairman Jeff McKay. If you're

lucky, you may even meet a Suffragist while you are there. You should all be receiving our annual Advisor mailer in the coming days. I would love to hear if you receive it and your suggestions to make it better. Contact our office with your feedback at [mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-780-7518.

Welcome to the new decade! Bring it on 2020!


Lucy Burns Museum Opening Video: <https://youtu.be/smYSMv05NJ4>

# MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT


**Saturday, February 1, 2020**  
 7:45 a.m. – Exhibit Hall Open  
 9:30 a.m. Speakers, Q&As and Virtual Tour  
**Mount Vernon High School**  
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For more information, call the Mount Vernon District Office at 703-780-7518, TTY 711, visit the office at 2511 Parkers Lane, or send your questions/comments to [mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov).  
 To request reasonable ADA accommodations or language translation services, call the Mount Vernon District Office, 703-780-7518 or TTY 711 on or before 1/27/20.

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**Speakers:** Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, County Executive Bryan Hill, Mount Vernon District School Board Member and Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders, Economic Development Authority President & CEO Victor Hoskins, Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander Col. Michael Greenberg, Special Guest Congressman Gerry Connolly and other community leaders.



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# ENTERTAINMENT

## 3 Restaurants and Cafes Opening in the New Year

By HOPE NELSON

A new year naturally leads to new restaurants on the horizon, and Alexandria has new arrivals coming in droves. From a beloved regional Thai eatery to a new take on a former familiar restaurant to the city's first cat café, the first few months of 2020 look to be exciting indeed. Here are three openings to look forward to in the months to come.

### Sisters Thai, 530 First St.

The newest outpost of Sisters Thai, which currently calls two locations in the Mosaic District and Fairfax home, is taking shape at 530 First Street in North Old Town. Originally

slated to open by the end of January, Sisters is now eyeing a March opening. Sisters Thai is known for its cozy "living room" feel, making customers right at home among cute tables and enticing décor. Its food, too, is at once traditional and innovative Thai cuisine, complete with rich curries and plenty of takes on Thai street food as well.

### Mount Purrnon Cat Café and Wine Bar, 109 S. Alfred St.

Alexandria's first cat café continues its march toward a grand opening. The café, which will call 109 S. Alfred Street home, is awaiting its permit hearing; the hearing that was scheduled for January was canceled due to snow, so owners Kristin Cowan

and Adam Patterson must wait until February to have their day in the spotlight. This delay pushes Mount Purrnon's scheduled opening back to late March or early April, Patterson said. Once it's up and running, the café will serve food and drink – including wine – and will, as the concept implies, have adoptable cats in residence waiting for permanent homes.

### Hank & Mitzi's, 600 Montgomery St.

The former Hank's Pasta Bar is promising a new look and attitude when Hank & Mitzi's opens in the space at 600 Montgomery Street. Restaurateur Jamie Leeds will remain at the helm of the operation, while

executive chef Will Artley will take control of the kitchen. At first blush, the menu will remain solidly in the "regional Italian" camp, offering up pizzas, Italian cocktails and "rustic entrees," per the restaurant's social media. But the rooftop bar? That will be a new feature of the redesigned space, and by the looks of the construction hustle and bustle taking place around the restaurant as of late, the renovations throughout will be relatively extensive too. Currently, Hank & Mitzi's is pinpointing an "early 2020" reopening.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).

## CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

### ONGOING

**"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, 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. Visit [www.scopegallery.org](http://www.scopegallery.org), [www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope](http://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](http://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 January 2nd - April 19th, 2020; "Richard the Second" runs January 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 from the philosopher King Richard II, to the conqueror King Henry IV, to his rogue son, Prince Hal. With his father's deeds looming over him, Hal indulges in a reckless adolescence that tarnishes his reputation. But



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS/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).**

### "Frozen Jr."

Now thru Jan. 26, 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. 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. Visit the website: <https://acctonline.org/>

when the time comes to rule, Hal must take control of how history will remember him, unite his country, and become the legendary King Henry V. Tickets are \$35. Contact [boxoffice@bravespiritstheatre.com](mailto:boxoffice@bravespiritstheatre.com) or [www.bravespiritstheatre.com](http://www.bravespiritstheatre.com).

Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Mount Vernon Regional Historical Society presents: "The Demographic History of the Mount Vernon Area: 1940-2010." The U.S. Census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790 and this year they will participate in the 24th decennial census. Around 1940, the Mount Vernon area began to evolve from predominantly rural to suburban. Using color graphics, this presentation will reveal interesting information regarding the characteristics and origins of the people living in the community. They will show trends in population growth, labor force, housing status and educational levels over the last 70 years with specific details from 1940 on four communities in the Mt. Vernon area: Belle Haven, New Alexandria, Gum Springs and Springbank.

**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](http://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](http://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 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](mailto:msandridge@invent.org). Visit [invent.org/educators/camp-invention](http://invent.org/educators/camp-invention).

**Watercolor Workshop: Sketchbook Journal.** 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)



**The Alexandria All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns Feb. 7 – March 28.**

### Student Art Exhibit

Feb. 7 to March 28, At the Gallery at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. The Alexandria All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns Feb. 7 – March 28 for its fifth year. 2020's experience will feature over 90 Alexandria high school students representing six high schools including public, private, and independent spanning over 10 different mediums of art. Returning for 2020's collaborative event are students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams, St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, Commonwealth Academy, and The Howard Gardner School.

Artists Reception: Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2020. 7 – 9 p.m.

10 ♦ MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ JANUARY 23-29, 2020



# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10

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 unique and 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](http://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 and raise a glass to Scotland's favorite dish: the haggis! Delicious Scottish accompaniments will be served. \$45 per person. Register online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) (code A1A.B1F0) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

**NOW THRU JAN. 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



**The Yale Whiffenpoofs will perform on Friday, Feb. 7 at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.**

## Yale Wiffenpoofs Perform

Friday/Feb., 7:30 p.m. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. The Alexandria Harmonizers present the Yale Whiffenpoofs. The group, now with women, is the world's oldest collegiate cappella ensemble and celebrated for its excellence. The award-winning Harmonizer chorus, now in its 72nd year, will also perform. Cost is \$30. Visit the website: [www.harmonizers.org](http://www.harmonizers.org)

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](http://www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

**SUNDAY, JAN. 26**

**Winter Lecture: Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring Gardens.** 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. /

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

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# A Few Homicides and Some Music

## LTA Stages "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder".

BY STEVE HIBBARD  
THE GAZETTE

**T**he Little Theatre of Alexandria (LTA) is presenting "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" from now through Feb. 8, 2020. The story centers on a distant heir to a family fortune who sets out to speed up the line of succession by using a great deal of charm ... and a dash of murder. This Tony Award-winning musical comedy is a murderous romp filled with beautiful music, non-stop laughs and show-stopping performances. The show is based on the book and lyrics by Robert L. Freedman with music and lyrics by Steven Lutvak.

Director Frank D. Shutts II said when he first saw this production on Broadway in 2014, he knew this musical was the perfect fit for LTA and its audience. "It's fun, Gilbert-and-Sullivan-esque style, sophisticated wit, and who does it and how plot are types of shows our audiences like. 'A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder' offer all in one nice package!" said Shutts, who is now in his 30<sup>th</sup> year of directing for LTA.

He added: "This play is offered up for pure fun and enjoyment. I hope the audience appreciates its almost comedy of manners humor and story-telling: good people



**Drew Goins as Monty and Kristen Jepperson as Miss Shingle in LTA's production of "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder."**

behaving badly."

Producer Mary Beth Smith Toomey said: "I am producing 'A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder' because I fell in love with the show when I saw it at The Kennedy Center. The quick-paced comedy intrigued me as well as the premise. Also, working again with my fellow WATCH and LTA award-winning team of Frank D. Shutts II, Director; Christopher A. Tomasino, Music Director; and Stefan Sittig, Choreographer, is great! We have an outstanding cast and crew working on this complex show. I want the audience to laugh, enjoy the show and be entertained."

Katie Weigl plays the role of Sibella, one of the love interests for Monty (played by the charming Drew Goins). "Sibella is egocentric, superficial and vain, yet so blissfully unaware of her own faults that you can't bring yourself

to hate her. Her sense of entitlement and infallibility is ultimately her downfall. She's laughable, yet relatable on some level. I think that's true of all the characters in this show," she said.

She added: "I think speaking with a British accent has been more of a challenge than any of us anticipated! You'd be surprised how many ways you can pronounce the letter 'A'. We have a dialect coach who has been boundlessly patient with us."

Allison Meyer plays the role of Woman 1, which consists of many characters. "I play the Tour Guide, the Pub Owner's Wife, Mrs. Pebworth, Phoebe's Maid, a Newsboy, Mrs. Pebworth, Selina Chard, and many more," she said.

As far as audience takeaways, she added: "I hope audiences have a great time! This musical is witty, has beautiful music, and it really transports audiences to an unbe-



**Chuck Dluhy as Lord Adalbert D'Ysquith in LTA's production of "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder."**

lievable world. I hope they walk away with a smile and a tune in their heads!"

Jordan Peyer is playing Man 1, which consists of multiple roles including small-town farmer Tom Copley and mortician Dr. Pettibone. He said: "'Gentleman's Guide' has a large cast of characters played by a comparatively small number of actors, so the major challenge for me has been stepping into the shoes of each character both convincingly and in rapid succession."

Chuck Dluhy is playing nine different roles which are all members of the D'Ysquith family — an aristocratic clan in Edwardian England. "They include men, women, young and old such as an elderly inebriated clergyman, a muscular health nut, a closeted country squire, a benefactress 'of a certain age,' and a flamboyantly bad actress. This is not a spoiler

since the plot is revealed early in the play that all my characters will be murdered!" he said.

Kristen Jepperson is playing the role of Miss Shingle. "She is actually the one who brings to Monty the possibility that he could be Earl of Highhurst, if only there weren't eight other pesky relatives standing in his way. And there is a nice little twist at the end that I won't give away here, guess you'll have to come see it for yourself!"

Audrey Baker is in the ensemble and plays several characters throughout the show (mourner, maid, philanthropist, bridesmaid, and more!) "My largest role is Miss Evangeline Barley, a Florodora chorus girl who has a secret fling with Asquith D'Ysquith. She is a ditsy, giggly character who runs off to a remote location until her and Asquith D'Ysquith drown while ice skating on a frozen lake (that Monty cuts a hole in, killing them). The scene is quite fun — from the flirting, giggling, skating, to their dramatic death," she said.

She added: "In addition to having a good laugh and humming along to some catchy live theater/music, I hope the audience sees the wit and irony of the show. 'GGLAM' makes fun of the upper class in a way that makes you fall in love with a murderer — it takes the white male privilege to a whole new level." LTA is presenting "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" from now through Feb. 8, 2020. Show times are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$29-\$34. The venue is located at 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, VA. Visit the website: [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com).

## CALENDAR

### FROM PAGE 11

(Adults) Rachel "Bunny" Mellon was a gardener, artist and icon. She created countless gardens for famous friends and family, including the White House Rose Garden and the Potager du Roi at Versailles. But her most intimate garden is the half-acre, walled garden at her estate in Upperville, Virginia. Head gardener Judy Zatsick shares the joys and challenges of carrying on the spirit of Bunny Mellon at Oak Spring Garden Foundation. \$10 per person. Register online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) (code ODE.C7C0) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

**Swing Gadjó.** 6 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Enjoy the Swing Gadjó, a gypsy jazz band that plays Belgian/French gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt's world-famous tunes as well as pieces of the American Songbook. In either case, the music always swings and the melodies are haunting: you are welcome to hum along or get up and dance. Cost is \$20. Visit the website: [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org)

### MONDAY/JAN. 27

**Sheila Arnold: Fannie Lou Hamer.**

7- 8 p.m. At Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. Enjoy a special presentation of Fannie Lou Hamer: "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired," a character reenactment by Sheila Arnold Jones.

### Fill Your Cart with Food Fighters.

7:15 - 8:30 p.m. At Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Learn how to fill your cart and plan your menu to prevent Heart Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, and Cancer. Join in a lively discussion on disease fighting foods and ways to reduce sugar, fat, and salt in your daily diet. You'll leave this session with practical tips and strategies and have a chance to sample items you will want to incorporate into your menu.

### TUESDAY/JAN. 28

**Fidget Quilting.** 7 - 8:30 p.m. At Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. Earn about fidget quilts and activity mats and the benefits they offer Alzheimer's and dementia patients. They'll have examples and supplies for you to start working on one of

your own. Ages 16 and up.

### THURSDAY/JAN. 30

**Chamber Reception.** 6-9 p.m. At National Industries for the Blind, 3000 Potomac Avenue, Alexandria. Alexandria Chamber of Commerce 2020 Chairman's Reception presented by United States Senate Federal Credit Union. They'll be highlighting what's on the horizon for Alexandria as we enter the 2020s. The event will feature food, music, drinks and a live auction.

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

**Travel Tech.** 10:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. At Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Before you explore the world, see what website and travel apps are available to help you plan your next trip. In the class we will examine free apps and websites that can be used to plan your trip and offer assistance during your stay away. Please feel free to bring your device to follow along. Registration is preferred.

### SATURDAY, FEB. 1

**Used Book Sale.** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at

Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs, 50 cents for large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

### Storytime with Young Historians.

11 a.m. At The Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street, Alexandria. Bring your children to the Alexandria Black History Museum for cultural stories and creative craft activities that introduce history and promote diversity. The Museum Educator will be reading The Undeclared written by author Kwame Alexander and illustrated by Kadir Nelson. All ages are welcome, but most suitable for children 3-6 years old. Admission is \$3 per person. Tickets are available online at [alexandriava.gov/shop](http://alexandriava.gov/shop). Call 703-746-4356 or visit [alexandriava.gov/blackhistory](http://alexandriava.gov/blackhistory).

### Multi-Level Remodeled Home

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### Washington Gardener Seed

**Exchange.** 12:30-4:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Washington Gardener Magazine is co-hosting the 15th annual seed exchange at Green Spring Gardens with lectures, a face-to-face seed swap, and more. Bring your extra seeds to swap and leave with a bag full of seeds, new garden friends, and expert planting advice. Verified Friends of Green Spring members \$15 (code C1E.4043), other guests \$20 (code C1E.5B00). Register online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.



## Obituary

## Obituary



**Roger Lee Amole, Jr.**, of Alexandria, Virginia, passed away 80 years young on January 13, 2020 at INOVA Fairfax Hospital, after a courageous battle with pulmonary arterial hypertension. Roger was surrounded by his family who loved him deeply – his wife of 39 years, Debra Bray, and his children Ryan Amole, Carolyn Amole, and Devin Amole. Roger is also survived by his daughters-in-law Nina Ardalan (Ryan) and Alexandra Simpson (Carolyn), his sister Patricia Megale, brother-in-law Joseph Megale, and their four sons and families, as well as his brother-in-law Tim Bray, sister-in-law Kathy Bray, and their three children and families.

Born September 15, 1939 in Roanoke, Virginia, Roger is the son of Mary Dibrell Raleigh and Roger Lee Amole, Sr. He graduated from Jefferson High School in Roanoke, where he played football and baseball. Roger graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1964, where he was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, and went on to attend William and Mary Marshall-Wythe School of Law, graduating in 1968. Roger was a Captain in the United States Army from 1964-1966 and a member of the Army Reserves from 1967-1973.

Roger was a highly experienced and respected lawyer in Northern Virginia where he practiced law for over 50 years. After beginning his career as a prosecutor in Alexandria and rising to the position of Deputy Commonwealth Attorney, he then went into private practice in 1974 in Old Town Alexandria. Roger's private practice was primarily focused in personal injury litigation and estate planning. Roger was a skilled litigator and successfully tried many cases throughout Northern Virginia. He handled significant litigation in the areas of medical malpractice, wrongful death, defamation, business relations, and clergy sexual abuse. Roger was selected as a Virginia Super Lawyer in 2006 and 2007 and as a District of Columbia Super Lawyer in 2007 and 2008. He was a member of Outstanding Lawyers in America since 2002 and the Million Dollar Advocates Forum since 1997, and held an AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell. Roger is a former President of the Alexandria Bar Association and served as a member (former chairperson) of the Virginia State Bar Fourth District Committee on lawyer discipline. Roger loved his work because it afforded him the opportunity to work hard and help people in need.

In addition to sharing a loving marriage for nearly four decades, Roger has been in practice with his wife Debra at their firm, Amole & Bray PC for the past 20 years.

Roger was heavily involved in his church and in the community. He served pro bono as legal counsel for Aldersgate United Methodist Church, chaired the 'Not Too Far From Here' fund to support individuals in the community in need, and served on the board of the Virginia United Methodist Foundation and the Josephine Daniel Pell Foundation. A lover of music and art, he sang in Aldersgate's 'Men of Note' choir. For many years, Roger also coached his children's sports teams, including Gunston and Alexandria soccer and Fort Hunt baseball and basketball.

By far, Roger's proudest accomplishment was his family. He was a dedicated husband and father, and was adored by his wife and children. Roger instilled in his children the values of kindness, gratitude, compassion, respect, laughter, and hard work. A man of great integrity and faith, he counted his blessings every single day. He believed laughter was the key to everything in life – he was a wonderful storyteller and always self-deprecating.

Roger was an avid sportsman who enjoyed being outdoors and running, skiing, playing golf, going to the gym, and playing endless hours of sports with his children. A lover of the natural world and all animals, Roger was the sole caretaker of all the family dogs over the years – Sasha, Ditto, and Sparky, as well as Molly who survives him. We know he will be so happy to be reunited in heaven with Sasha and Ditto... Sparky, less so.

Always a true Southern gentleman and a genuinely kind and gentle man, Roger made everyone feel at ease in his presence. Roger will be deeply missed by all who knew him, but his legacy will live on in the good deeds and lives of those who loved him.

Services to celebrate his life will be officiated by Reverend Dennis Perry and held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Alexandria, Virginia on Friday, January 24th at 1 pm. Interment at Arlington National Cemetery will occur at a later date.

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## Treat One, Get Two.



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I'm sure you regular readers are waiting with bated breath for the confirmation of my updated health status. Unfortunately, for the moment anyway, we'll all have to wait a bit longer. Though the needle biopsy of my "Adam's Apple" tumor did indeed confirm thyroid cancer, stage 2, no such confirmation or clarification as to its origin was made, or whether it's been thyroid cancer that I've been living with all these years, instead of non small cell lung cancer, stage 4 or not. However, there is a path forward. Surgery to remove my thyroid gland, along with my "Adam's Apple" tumor, and possibly a lymph node is in the planning stage. As such, scheduled for next Friday is an appointment with a head and neck surgeon to determine my fitness for surgery. All we've been told so far is that the surgery is usually outpatient, arrive in the morning and leave that afternoon (maybe I'll bring along my dry cleaning). Apparently, this is the next step "on the road to find out" (Cat Stevens).

If I am indeed home that same evening, I've been told by my endocrinologist that the recovery period is approximately two weeks. At present I don't have any details of what "recovery" exactly means/entails. If all goes according to the pre-surgical-actually-discussing-the-procedure-with-the-surgeon conversation, a month or so after the procedure, I will revisit my endocrinologist to have radioisotopes administered somehow. Once inside my body, I will be scanned by a machine looking exclusively for thyroid cancer. This will confirm, if I understand the process correctly, whether the tumors in my lungs are thyroid or lung cancer.

In the interim, I am to continue with my immunotherapy ("I. O.") and with any other appointments, scans, etc. I recall something that my oncologist said about my lung cancer tumors during his "exciting" phone call. He said that my tumors never really acted the way he anticipated, as if they weren't non small cell lung cancer at all. And sure enough, some of them, as confirmed by the first of my recent two biopsies were thyroid cancer. As I've been joking, this is what my oncologist gets excited about as opposed to what yours truly would get excited about: a World Series Championship. And also, as he said, thyroid tumors are more treatable, with more choices and better outcomes - which is exciting for me.

OKAY. So I have thyroid cancer and it's more treatable. Wonderful news. But do I still have lung cancer? If so, where's the future in that? Is it somehow no longer a "terminal" disease because I've outlived my original "13 month to two year" prognosis? Will I now be treated for thyroid cancer only to die of lung cancer? Moreover, am I now going to get treated twice, in two medical suites, one for each cancer? Have these multiple biopsies simply determined that the doctors were actually right - both times and I'm just the unfortunate patient to be so wronged?

For 10 or so years, until last January, I was treated for lung cancer - with chemotherapy. However, this past January, the Adam's Apple tumor appeared and we switched to immunotherapy. The reason for the change: the lung cancer had spread, according to my oncologist. Now, a year later, the story/diagnosis has changed, thanks to my most recent biopsy. The tumor wasn't lung cancer that had spread, it was thyroid cancer that had spread. I didn't even know I had thyroid cancer. Now you're telling me it's spread? How lucky am I? Two cancers for the price of one. I guess this will make health insurance more affordable, sort of like buying in bulk at Costco.

The big question: did my lung cancer treatment inadvertently prevent my thyroid cancer from manifesting/metastasizing or did its non-diagnosis allow it to grow unimpeded and now present this quite unexpected/unanticipated complication? Explain though it may to my oncologist why I haven't succumbed to my original disease, it doesn't quite explain to me what the hell's been going on and why.

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

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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. 25

**Town Hall Meeting.** 1-3:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Community School, 2601 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. Sen. Adam Ebbin and Del. Mark Levine will host a Legislative Town Hall meeting. Join them to share your views and priorities for the 2020 legislative session. Contact e-mail: henry@adamebbin.com or call 804-212-6438.

### 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.
- ❖ 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.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Assistance League of Northern Virginia,** a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to first grade students during the school year. To learn more contact VP Membership Mary Gronlund at gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnlieb517@verizon.net.



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