

New Richmond Highway Designs Include Bus Rapid Transit System

Dedicated lanes will run down the center of Richmond Highway.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

As part of Richmond Highway's complete makeover that's coming to fruition, a bus rapid transit system is being looked at for a needed transit option for the residents in the Mount Vernon District. This BRT system is going to run down the middle of the highway with modern, articulated buses that will operate on a transit signal priority, to provide a viable method of transportation between the community business centers that line the corridor.

Features will include wider crosswalks, paths on the sides and a user-friendly approach which "will be an uplift to the highway," said Robin Geiger, the head of communications at the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. The BRT will be built in two sections and the plan includes nine stations between the Huntington Metro Station and Fort Belvoir.

The Collard Street and Popkins Lane intersections will need to be modified and realigned into one intersection.

For the station at Fordson Road, designers are considering "split station platforms," which feature a longer station between two side roads, and the bus lanes will leave the highway in Penn Daw and follow North Kings Highway to the Huntington Station.

"This will set the stage for future development,"



The BRT corridor is planned between Fort Belvoir and the Huntington Metro Station.

Geiger said.

That future development could include an extension of Metro's Yellow Line, which would take the place of the BRT system, running down the middle of the highway, similar to the way the Orange Line runs down the middle of I-66 in the western part of the county.

The first step towards making this BRT project a reality is the widening of Richmond Highway 2.9 miles from Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane.

This is a \$372 million Virginia Department of Transportation project that will widen Richmond Highway from four to six lanes, add separate bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road, and "reserve median width to accommodate Fairfax County's future dedicated bus-only lanes," according to VDOT's website. Construction on these additional lanes is scheduled to last three years beginning in 2023.

Element of Embark

According to VDOT, the Route 1 Multimodal Alternatives Analysis in 2015 identified improvements needed to best meet the needs of both the community and corridor travelers.

Key recommendations included a Bus Rapid

SEE NEW RICHMOND, PAGE 3



Katlyn Weiser speaks at a press conference in Richmond in favor of a bill designed to crack down on egregious practices of student loan servicing companies.

Predatory Student Lenders

Northern Virginia lawmakers hope to crack down on student-loan servicing companies.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE GAZETTE

As a high school student, Katlyn Weiser dreamed of attending George Mason University. She wanted to have a career in public service, being in the room where it happens on Capitol Hill. But instead she found herself under a mountain of debt, struggling to keep up with meeting minimum payments and ultimately being forced to make a difficult decision about her future. She says she'll never forget the day when an agent from loan-servicing company Navient told her that she should probably drop out of school to pay off her student debt.

"I cried," says Weiser. "I cried a lot because I had come so far. I had become the first person in my family to go to college, one of the first people in my high school to go to college, and it was sad to hear that because I had come so far."

Weiser did not listen. She didn't drop out, and she's now a senior at George Mason University. She says she has determined that she can't afford a career in public service, so she plans on being a lobbyist instead. She's one of the student borrowers state Sen. Janet Howell (D-32) wants to help with

a bill she calls the Borrowers Bill of Rights. It would use the power of the State Corporation Commission to crack down on what she calls the egregious practices of student loan servicing companies.

"We can regulate these student loan servicers to ensure we're protecting our borrowers from shady practices, and believe me there are shady practices," says Howell. "Every other type of debt is regulated in Virginia except student loans debt. This lack of regulation is egregious given one million borrowers are collectively carrying more than \$41 billion worth of student debt."

Democrats have wanted to crack down on student-loan servicing companies for years, but the Republican-led House of Delegates has blocked the effort. Del. Marcus Simon (D-53) has introduced legislation to have the State Corporation Commission regulate student-loan servicing companies for years only to be blocked by the GOP majority over and over. Even when Howell was able to get similar legislation through the Senate, Simon found that the Republican-led House was not interested.

"It's interesting that a number of delegates who have been sympathetic to this issue have been

SEE PREDATORY, PAGE 4

According to a presentation that Fairfax County held in September, the key elements of BRT systems often include:

- ❖ Service plans and frequencies that prioritize reliable, frequent, efficient service
- ❖ Dedicated lanes and traffic signal priority - information technology systems
- ❖ Rail-style stations with features that enhance rider comfort and convenience
- ❖ High-quality buses, unique graphics and name

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New Lucy Burns Museum Highlights The Suffragists and Area History

Workhouse Arts Center now houses a museum that explores two phases of the Lorton Reformatory experience.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

A majority of the 72 Suffragists at the Occoquan Workhouse in 1917 were officially jailed for “obstructing sidewalks,” read the historic log book of prisoners at the new Lucy Burns Museum that opened at the Workhouse Arts Center on Saturday, Jan. 25. This minor offense was enforced though, and it led to a turning point in the Women’s suffrage movement to secure voting rights for all women in the United States.

Lucy Burns was just one of the prisoners in Lorton, but “she was really the ringleader here,” said Ava Spece, the president and CEO of the Workhouse.

In the front room, there is an oversized statue of Burns, and Spece said it was intentionally made that way because “we want these sculptures to depict them as ‘larger than life,’” Spece said.

The 10,000 square foot museum features 4,000-plus square feet of exhibit space dedicated to the 91



In one cell, force-feeding is demonstrated with mannequins.

years of history at the District of Columbia’s Lorton Correctional Complex in addition to the suffrage story.

On the prison side, there are displays of inmate artwork, weapons and “shanks” the inmates made, photos of prison life, and a full-sized crucifix the inmates made out of dental plaster. The “face is patterned of an inmate that was on death row,” said Allen Mackie, a docent who assisted in creating the museum. The inmates practiced religion and art as a venue of self-expression – this was the one thing they could do while housed in such extreme surroundings. There were murals, drawings, a match-stick house and music that was played by the inmates with instruments.

On the suffragist side, there is a voting display with cards that encourages all the attendees to vote in local elections, and they have directions on how to register as well. “It behooves us to follow

Museum Now Open

The Lucy Burns Museum officially opened to the public Jan. 25, with a grand opening celebration scheduled for May 9, 2020. The Workhouse Arts Center is located at 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, 703-584-2900

their lead,” said Laura McKie of the suffragists. McKie is a volunteer director who is also a docent.

There is a photo op area where museum visitors can put on a sash like the sashes worn by the suffragists and take a selfie in front of an old picture. There’s also a list of the countries in the world and the date that women got the right to vote. The first country to allow women to vote was New Zealand in 1893, and for the United States, it was 1920. Saudi Arabia was 2015 and the only country that still doesn’t allow women to vote is the Republic of Sudan, according to the list.

When the Workhouse opened a few years ago, there was a smaller museum in another one of the



Ava Spece is the president and CEO of the Workhouse Arts Center.

buildings but any relics and exhibits from that museum were incorporated into the new museum on the other side of the main yard. “We really upgraded and used top of the line exhibitors,” said Spece.

The Workhouse is one of the only places that highlights and provides history education related to its former identity as a prison which housed suffragists and civil rights protesters, launched the musical and broadcast careers of

Chuck Brown and Petey Greene, and presented prison concerts with Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington to name a few.

Visiting the two sides of the museum is free, but there is another part which goes down a former cell block hall, showing the living conditions and the force-feeding procedure that was used on some of the suffragists. To visit that part of the museum, they are asking a \$5 donation.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

New Richmond Highway Designs

FROM PAGE 1

Transit system constructed in three phases: long-term; a three-mile extension of the Metro Yellow Line to Hybla Valley; and short-term, widening Route 1 with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

This is part of the Embark Richmond Highway initiative that is focused on creating a multimodal future for Richmond Highway Corridor where residents, workers and visitors can walk, bike or drive to the places they want to go. One component is to assess and refine the recommendations of the Route 1 Multimodal Alternatives Analysis from Huntington to Accotink Village, Fort Belvoir. This includes looking at the land use density and mix for the areas within a

one-half mile radius of proposed stations, corridor wide transportation systems, urban design, public facilities, and other elements supportive of Bus Rapid Transit, the Embark literature states.

Construction on Section I is scheduled to begin in 2023 and be completed in early 2027, while construction on Section II will span from 2025-2029. Phase III will extend the BRT to Prince William County but that’s in the future and a schedule has not yet been determined.

There is another public information meeting planned for March 2020. To sign up for the email list, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/richmond-hwy-brt/>

Mount Vernon Town Meeting Features Virtual Tour

On Saturday, Feb. 1, meet 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. The highlight of the morning will be taking a “virtual tour” of the District with your “pilot” Supervisor Storck.

Speakers: New Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, County Executive Bryan Hill, Mount Vernon District School Board Member and Board Chair Karen Corbett Sanders, County Economic Development Authority President & CEO Victor Hoskins, Fort Belvoir Garrison

Commander Col. Michael Greenburg, Special Guest Congressman Gerry Connolly and other community leaders.

Join us for a special tribute to “The Year of the Woman” complete with Suffragist reenactors in celebration of the opening of the Lucy Burns Museum and the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial this year.

7:45 - 9:30 am - Community Open House
9:30 - 12 noon - Presentations, Q & A, Virtual Tour

Mount Vernon Town Meeting
Mount Vernon HS
8515 Old Mt Vernon Road
Alexandria, VA, 22309
Saturday, Feb. 1
7:45 am - noon

Report from Richmond

BY SCOTT SUROVELL

First, Monday brought a large firearms rights protest to Capitol Square. Over 20,000 Virginians protested on and off Capitol Grounds. Several arrests were made before the protest due to anarchists discussing shooting during the protests. Most counter protesters stayed away to avoid creating conflict.

I met with about 30 firearms rights supporters including a handful of my constituents in my office. We discussed several bills including our “red flag” bill which was the largest focus. While we agreed to disagree about many matters, we had a very civil discussion and I appreciated their input.

On Tuesday, the Senate passed Senator George Barker’s “red flag” bill that I helped to negotiate. This bill was probably the most controversial of the four firearm violence prevention bills that was passed, but it is the bill that is mostly likely to prevent mass shootings.

Some of my environmental bills have also started to move. The Senate Agriculture Committee passed my legislation to prohibiting hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” in the



Potomac Aquifer which is effective all of Virginia east of Interstate 95. The Potomac Aquifer is the drinking water source for four million Virginians and four years ago, a company purchased 85,000 acres of leases to extract natural gas on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. The bill died on a tie vote two years ago. I am hopeful that it will pass this year.

Also, my bill to prohibit homeowner and condo associations from prohibiting owners from installing electric vehicle chargers passed. I also passed legislation that would require realtors to advise home buyers of the availability of home energy audits when purchasing a home. This means that buyers will be given a possible home energy audit addendum similar to a home inspection addendum. This will encourage parties to make repairs to a home to save energy before it is sold. Wasted energy is America’s cheapest new energy source.

My legislation to prohibit driving a moving vehicle with a phone in your hand passed the Senate Transportation Committee on a 12-3 vote. It will be in the floor this week for a final vote in the Senate. I am optimistic that it will finally pass this year. The full Senate also passed my legislation to clarify that vehicles cannot use bike lanes to pass other vehicles and to enhance penalties for drivers who seriously injure pedestrians and cyclists while dis-

tracted or careless. Car collisions and deaths continue to rise after a 50-year decline. This is further reinforced by the three pedestrian deaths we saw on U.S.1 in just the first three weeks of the year.

My legislation to prohibit the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries from leasing duck blinds on Little Hunting Creek, Dogue Creek and Great Hunting Creek passed the full Senate. There is no reason people should be hunting birds with shotguns so close to homes.

We passed legislation to expand early voting with no excuse to a full 45-days before the election. I am hopeful that this will significantly expand voter turnout. We will be hearing further voting reforms next week.

On Monday this week, I am looking forward to a visit from the eight area high school students who are part of the Puller Institute. My legislation to restrict predatory lending will be heard. We will also be debating minimum wage, new labor protections, marijuana decriminalization and major energy reform legislation.

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

Scott Surovell
State Senator
36th District of Virginia
General Assembly of Virginia

Fair Share Fees Threaten Right to Work Laws

BY HOLLY DOUGHERTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MOUNT VERNON LEE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Virginia’s Right-to-Work laws have produced fairness for employees and economic growth for communities. Now, two bills introduced in the Virginia General Assembly threaten Virginia’s long tradition of Right-to-Work.

House Bill 153 would completely repeal Right-to-Work laws and Senate Bill 426 requires “Fair Share Fees” making Right-to-Work laws meaningless.

Senate Bill 426 “Fair Share Fees” would authorize an employer to require as a condition of employment any employee who is not a member of a labor union or labor organization and is a member of a collective bargaining unit to pay up to 60 percent of the union dues.

Forcing employees to either pay fees or join the union as a requirement of employment essentially removes the intent of Right-to-Work laws. It would have the same impact on choice and economic development as an outright repeal of the law.

Job growth is stronger in Right-to-Work states. A January 4th

Washington Post article reported that in the first 10 months of 2019, Northern Virginia gained 19,500 jobs compared to just 200 jobs in suburban non-Right to Work Maryland.

Right-to-Work is good for both employers and employees. A study conducted by NERA Economic Consulting from 2010 to 2016 found that wages in Right-to-Work states grew 36 percent while non-Right-to-Work states only saw wages grow 26 percent.

There is broad public support for Right-to-Work laws. Twenty-seven states have Right-to-Work laws and a 2014 Gallup poll found that

71 percent of voters would vote for Right-to-Work Laws.

Senate Bill 426 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor. Senator Adam Ebbin and Senator Scott Surovell are members of this committee. Senator Dick Saslaw is chair of the committee and sponsor of this bill.

Right-to-Work laws are part of the pro-business environment in Virginia that supports business growth and development. We encourage businesses and individuals to contact their elected representatives and urge them to maintain Virginia’s Right-to-Work laws.

Predatory Student Lenders

FROM PAGE 1

thetic but didn’t think this was the right solution voted for the bill in committee this year,” said Simon. “So I think we’re on a glider path here, although there are a few people who continue to believe that we shouldn’t be helping out students for whatever reason.”

This year, Democrats are in control of the General Assembly. That’s opened the floodgates for a number of issues, and cracking down on student-loan servicing companies is one of them. Howell’s bill cracking down on student loan servicing companies

passed a Senate committee with a unanimous vote. And Simon has a similar bill that’s already passed the House with an 84 to 15 vote.

“When student-loan servicers engage in deceptive and predatory practices, borrowers can face insurmountable barriers to financial security,” says Anna Scholl, executive director of Progress Virginia.

The bill requires student loan servicing companies get a license to operate in Virginia from the State Corporation Commission, which would crack down on egregious practices like misrepresenting the amount of money due, recklessly

applying loan payments to outstanding balances and failing to report payment history to consumer credit bureaus. Violators would be hit with a \$2,500 fee.

“This bill is not about free college,” said Seth Frotman, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection Center. “This bill is about making sure borrowers in the Commonwealth who took on debt to chase the American dream aren’t ripped off in the process.”

All of the egregious practices outlined in the bill are already illegal. But borrowers would have to hire a lawyer and file a federal lawsuit to

take action, which is not a workable solution for people who are already under a mountain of debt. Instead, this bill makes these actions a violation of state law and empowers the State Corporation Commission to go after bad actors. That way borrowers who feel they’ve been wronged could file a complaint with the Bureau of Financial Regulation.

“Why are Virginia borrowers having to resort to lawsuits for their consumer protections?” asked Del. Cia Price (D-95). “It is past time for student loan borrowers in Virginia — like me — to have common-sense protections.”

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Jean Card
Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Worker
Contributing Writer
aworker@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

Julie Ferrill
Real Estate, 703-927-1364
jferrill@connectionnewspapers.com

Helen Walutes
Display Advertising, 703-778-9410
hwalutes@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Art/Design:
Laurence Poong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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SENIOR LIVING

Tax Season, Tax Scams

The most common tricks and have to avoid them.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Tax season and tax scams often go hand-in-hand. Scammers will try to steal tax documents, money and even a person's identity and seniors are often their prime target.

"Con artists will target anyone, but older adults are targeted at higher rates because criminals go where the money is, and older adults have the majority of wealth because of their years of hard work and savings," said Amy Nofziger, Director of Fraud Victim Support at the AARP. "Plus, older adults have not grown up with the technology of today, which has grown so fast."

"Older Adults are often targets because they are going through life transitions and scammers can be very convincing," added Rachel Coates, Director of the Arlington County Agency on Aging. "Awareness is critical."

While numerous scams abound, there are some that are currently more prevalent than others. "The complaints we hear...is the IRS phone scam," said Stacy Northrop of the Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs. "This is where the caller will state that a warrant of arrest has been issued for the victim."

"The crook will claim that the recipient in trouble for not paying enough in taxes or not filing properly," added Eric Friedman, Director of the Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection. "Crooks instill a sense of fear and urgency, then they'll trick the consumer into wiring money or paying over the phone with a prepaid gift card. Consumers make quick decisions that they wouldn't make if there wasn't a sense of urgency."

Some of the features commonly thought to be safeguards may not be so, says Friedman. "You cannot trust Caller ID to tell you who's really on the other end of the phone," he said. "Caller ID is of no value because crooks can say anything over the phone. They can have IRS as the name that appears to make it look official."

Telephone calls and emails are two warning signs of a scam.

"This is not how the government actually operates,"

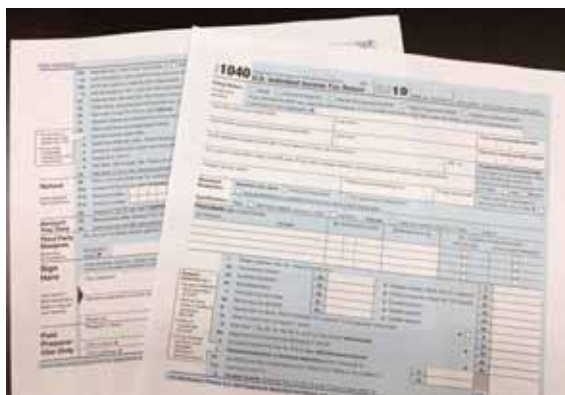


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Know the warning signs to avoid scams this tax season.

For Help and More Information

- ❖ AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork. AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline and our trained fraud specialists can help walk you through it: 877-908-3360.
- ❖ Free Help at Montgomery County Libraries: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/Resources/Files/taxaideflyer.pdf>
- ❖ Tax ID Theft Awareness Week: <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/tax-identity-theft-awareness-week-2020/>
- ❖ Arlington Adult Protective Services 703-228-1700
- ❖ Fairfax County Silver Shield Anti-Scam Campaign <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-county-silver-shield-anti-scam-campaign>

said Nofziger of AARP. "You would always first receive a letter from the IRS, and they would never threaten you with arrest or use foul language. If you receive this type of call, hang up the phone."

Fraudulent emails and websites can be created to look as though they are from a government agency. "Many older adults are unaware that criminals are lurking on what we consider innocent websites or apps, like 'Words with Friends,' Instagram or other social media platforms," said Nofziger. "This is why education and warning people about the red flags is crucial."

Identify theft is also prevalent during tax season, says Friedman of Montgomery County. "Crooks will steal someone's social security number and file [taxes] really early, like in January or February, before the consumer files their return," he said. "When the consumer really does file, the IRS rejects it. When the problem is reported, the IRS will have to investigate which takes months to resolve, which is not good if you're getting a refund."

Scammers seek to obtain money from a victim often in the form of wire transfers or cash, says Nofziger. "It's important to know the red flags of scams," she said. "Even though the scam tactics might vary, the criminals' demands never change. They want money or personal information. So if anyone calls, mails, emails or texts you asking for money, that is a red flag. If they ask you for personal information such as your Medicare number, Social Security number or financial information, it's a huge red flag."



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FOR RENT

Alex \$2,800
3704 Nalls Road
Totally updated 4BR, 3BA Split level on fenced .48 acre lot - kitchen with new granite counters and new cortex flooring - newly installed hardwood floors on main level, interior freshly painted, all 3 baths updated - family room LL with new cortex flooring and wood burning fireplace, exterior freshly painted-new high efficiency double pane windows throughout -walk out basement-Carport-Walk to Mt. Vernon High School - minutes to Ft. Belvoir-commute along GW Pkwy to Old Town - Owner is Realtor.



UNDER CONTRACT

Alex/Engleside \$1,300,000
8734 Lukens Lane
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8:00 am to 9:30 am
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ENTERTAINMENT

4 Dates to Circle in February

BY HOPE NELSON

Start the month with ice cream and see it through to an Oktoberfest-style anniversary celebration, with plenty of stop-offs in between. What's cooking in Alexandria this February? Read on to find out.

Ice Cream for Breakfast Day at Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, Feb. 1

APPETITE Why not kick the month off in the most decadent way possible? From 8 a.m. to noon on the first day of the month – happily a Saturday, at that – Jeni's will be scooping up the shop's new skillet cinnamon roll ice cream. Need a little more kick with your cream? Try a

coffee float, which is just what it sounds like – a scoop of ice cream tucked into a mug of coffee. (Pro tip: Get there early to snag a souvenir mug.) All the profits from the four-hour event will go to DoSomething.org. 102 S. Patrick St. 8 a.m.-noon.

Colossal IX Release Party at Port City Brewing, Feb. 1

Port City Brewing is celebrating its ninth anniversary, and what better way to ring in a new year but with the newest version of its Colossal series. This year's model is a Weizenbock style, bringing a full-bodied, wheat-based beer to the table. If you've missed some of the Colossal brews from years past, several varieties will be on offer with limited supply. Count on live music and

a variety of food trucks to keep things lively all day. And can't make it to the Saturday event? Port City will kick off its weekend celebration with some Friday festivities, as well. 3950 Wheeler Ave. Noon-11 p.m.

Chocolate and Cheese Class at Cheesetique, Feb. 10

Just in time for Valentine's Day, Cheesetique will help you step up your A-game. Cheesetique owner Jill Erber and chocolatier Robert Kingsbury team up to walk you through an evening of decadence. Learn about how to make chocolate, how to pair said chocolate with both wine and cheese and, naturally, get ready to taste the samplings. An abundance of chocolate, plus half a dozen cheeses and two wines, will be available for taste-testing – all in the

name of education, of course. 2411 Mount Vernon Ave. 7-8:30 p.m. \$55.

Village Brauhaus One-Year Anniversary Party, Feb. 22

Forget Oktoberfest – the German-style restaurant in Old Town is having a celebration for another reason this February. Village Brauhaus turns a year old this month, and the pub is having a party to toast the occasion. Food specials – and beer specials, naturally – will be on offer all day, and Johnny Koenig and his band will bring in live music from 3 to 7 p.m. 710 King St. 11:30 a.m.-2 a.m.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and 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

"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 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 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 or www.bravespiritstheatre.com.

NOW THRU DEC. 9

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 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

FEB. 29

Winter Pruning for Woody Plants.



The house of Alexandria town founder Col. John Carlyle, who is turning 300.

Happy 300th Birthday John Carlyle 8

Saturday/Feb., 12-4 p.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, Alexandria. Help wish a happy 300th birthday to Alexandria town founder, Col. John Carlyle. Festivities will include 18th-century dancing, live music, and a birthday treat! Admission is free, but donations are welcome.

10 - 11:30 a.m. At American Horticultural Society River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Winter is the best time to prune many trees and shrubs. Come for hands-on training on the how, when, and why to prune hedges, multi-stem shrubs, small trees, and large branches. The results will be healthier and fuller growth, better flowers and fruit, and attractive landscaping. Bring your own tools, and remember to dress for the weather! Entire class is held outdoors. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. Free. Advance registration required by Feb. 26, at mgnv.org. Space is limited and we cannot accept walk-ins. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

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/JAN. 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.

JAN.31 TO FEB. 1

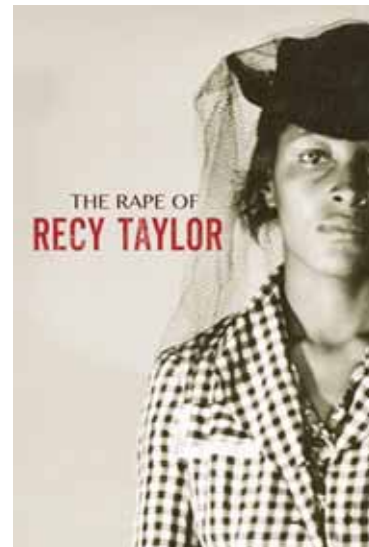
Tasting Room Colossal IX Release Party. Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, 12-10 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, 12-11 p.m. At Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria. To toast to nine years of brewing, Port City Brewing Company will release COLOSSAL IX, a German-Style Weizenbock and host a two-day Release and Anniversary Party.

SATURDAY, FEB. 1

Shoreline Trash Cleanup. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Belle Haven Park, South Parking Lot, GW Memorial Parkway,

The Rape of Recy Taylor

Saturday/Feb. 8, 11 a.m. at Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum, Alexandria. The Alexandria Black History Museum will be hosting a screening of the award-winning documentary film *The Rape of Recy Taylor* followed by a discussion and audience Q&A at Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum. Cost is \$10, reservations required at alexandriava.gov/shop. Recy Taylor, a 24-year-old Black mother and sharecropper, was gang raped by six white boys in 1944 Alabama. Sexual violence like this happened commonly in the Jim Crow South and few women spoke up in fear for their lives. Not Recy Taylor: She bravely identified her rapists. The NAACP sent its rape investigator Rosa Parks to Alabama, who rallied support and triggered an unprecedented outcry for justice. Visit: therapeofrecytaylor.com.



The film, *The Rape of Recy Taylor* will be shown on Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum.

Alexandria (22307). Join the Friends of Dyke Marsh for a Potomac River shoreline cleanup. Wear warm clothes, sturdy shoes and bring water. Probably not good for children under age 8. No pets, please. Call Glenda Booth at 703-765-5233 or visit the website www.fodm.org.
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. Call 703-746-4356 or visit alexandriava.gov/blackhistory.

Multi-Level Remodeled Home Tour. 12-4 p.m. At 6837 Corder Lane, Lorton. Learn how your neighbors are modifying their homes for a better quality of life. Bring family and friends together in a way that fits your lifestyle. Create open, private, and specialized spaces for all to visit comfortably. Presented by Sun Design, an Architectural Design-Build firm. Call 703-425-5588 or visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

Hose Carriage Send-Off. 12:30-2 p.m. At Friendship Firehouse Museum, 107 S. Alfred Street, Alexandria. The Friendship Fire Company purchased an ornate hose reel carriage in 1858. Now, thanks to the support of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, community donors, and its win as the No. 1 Virginia Endangered Artifact of 2019, Historic Alexandria is sending the hose carriage off for much-needed conservation. Come and wish the hose carriage Bon Voyage. Visit www.friendshipfirehouse.net; or

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 6

contact the museum by calling 703-746-3891.

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 or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

Hot Cocoa Wetland Night Hike. 5-6:30 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Sip hot cocoa and join a naturalist for a winter wetland tour after dark. Look for signs and listen for sounds of beavers, owls, deer and other nocturnal winter animals. Cost is \$9 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Country-Western Dance. 7-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance with lessons, 6-7 p.m. and open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org for more.



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.

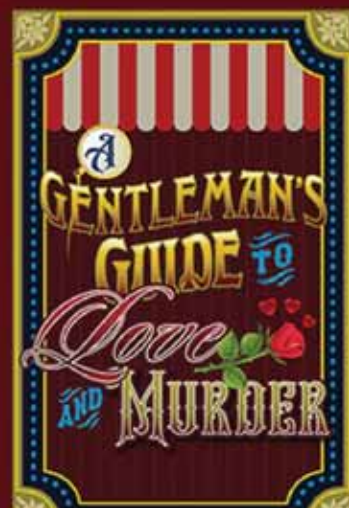
Artists Reception: Friday, February 21st 2020. 7 – 9 p.m.

FHLL Field of Dreams Gala. 7 p.m. At Mount Vernon Country Club, 5111 Old Mill Road, Alexandria. Join Fort Hunt Little League at the Field of Dreams Fundraiser and Gala. Proceeds will benefit FHLL fields and training programs. Cost is \$100.

Visit the website: forhuntslittleleague.org


SUNDAY, FEB. 2
Winter Lecture: Building a Piet

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8



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ENTERTAINMENT



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 a 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

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 7

Oudolf Meadow. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Join horticulturist Gregg Tepper as he shares the engaging tale of building a Piet Oudolf designed Meadow Garden. With every great project and large planting there is a story, and Gregg shares the background, the details and all the behind-the-scenes magic that made this garden a reality. \$10 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code D7A.7D99) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

The President's Own Marine Band. 2 p.m. At Schlesinger Concert Hall at NOVA, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. The U.S. Marine Band presents "Traditions." For 222 years, the U.S. Marine Band has brought the finest music to the American people, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the President of the United States. As the nation's oldest continually active professional musical organization, "The President's Own" has become an important symbol of our country's living history. In honor of that storied heritage, this traditional program offers Sousa marches, stunning overtures, virtuosic solos, and two of the most important works composed for band: Percy Grainger's Lincolnshire Posy and Gustav Holst's First Suite in E-flat.

George Washington's Alexandria Tour. 2-3:30 p.m. At 101 N. Union Street, Alexandria. Explore historic Old Town Alexandria as George Washington knew it. This 90-minute guided walking tour will explore sites associated with Washington and his closest colleagues, including John Fitzgerald's warehouse, Captain's Row, Gentry Row, the Apothecary shop, Ramsay House, Market Square, the Carlyle House, Wise's Tavern, Duvall Tavern, Gadsby's Tavern, and Washington's townhouse. The tour begins behind the Torpedo Factory's south entrance, in front of Vol's Dockside Grill. Free. No reservations required. Offered by the Office of Historic Alexandria. Contact 703-

599-4010 or suej020924@gmail.com.

TUESDAY/FEB. 4

Seeds: Selecting and Starting. 7 – 8:30 p.m. At Barrett Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Jumpstart your vegetable garden. Get the scoop on seed selection – hybrid vs. heirloom, which seeds to start indoors and what's required to get them growing. Learn how to make your own starter pots, create simple lighting systems, and practice winter sowing by starting seeds outdoors in milk-jug greenhouses. Germination is complex, but seed starting is reassuringly simple. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. Free. Advance registration requested at mgny.org. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 6

Decluttering Workshop. 1-3 p.m. At Charles Beatley Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. At Home in Alexandria is sponsoring a Decluttering and Downsizing Workshop featuring experts who will guide you on getting started or getting help in this process. Pre-registration is required. Free. Visit the website www.athomeinalexandria.org

FRIDAY/FEB. 7

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

FEB. 7 TO MARCH 28

Student Art Exhibit. 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 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, Feb. 21 from 7 – 9 p.m.

SATURDAY/FEB. 8

Alexandria Boutique Warehouse Sale. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Westin Alexandria Old Town, Alexandria. Deemed in the region as the "Super Bowl of Shopping Event," the winter deals event will take place at the Westin Hotel located in the Carlyle District of Old Town Alexandria. The fun, yet casual, free to enter event will include a variety of new boutiques and retailers not only located in Alexandria, but throughout the Metro region. Deal seekers will find the very best from Alexandria's and the regions finest retailers and indie brands with various brands of clothing, shoes, jewelry, home furnishings and more up to 80% off retail prices.

Speaker Joan Mullholland. 10:30 a.m. At Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Joan Mullholland, American Civil Rights activist and a Freedom Rider, with video documentary. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon AAUW. Contact Patsy Quick, Mt. Vernon AAUW President, at pnquick@cox.net.

Art Show Reception. 1-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Dawn Flores, mixed media (at the Horticulture Center) and Katherine Ko, oil paintings (at the Historic House). Horticulture Center Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sunday noon-4:30 p.m. Historic House Hours: Wednesday-Sunday noon-4:30 p.m. Free admission. The art show runs 02/04 through 03/29.

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OPINION

MVCC Concerns

To the Editor:

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) may become known also as the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Association (MVCCA). So how will Mount Vernon residents distinguish its citizen's role from that of a business role?

LETTER It may not matter what the MVCCA acronym stands for because the roles may now be viewed as interchangeable.

The MVCCA co-chairs recently established a Special Committee for nonprofits, businesses and individuals who are precluded from being members because they do not represent a civic, condominium or homeowners association. The creation of this Special Committee appears to be a direct request from Belle Haven Country Club seeking assistance from the MVCCA to voice its concerns about "blocking the box" at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Fort Hunt Road on its behalf. The co-chair went on to state that the justification for the special committee is because Belle Haven Country Club complained about members not being able to access



HOLLY DOUGHERTY/MOUNT VERNON LEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce welcomed new members Glory Days Grill, Amanda Donohue Photography and InTouch Wellness at their monthly Business Breakfast held at Glory Days Grill. From left to right: Stanley Koussis, Chamber Chairman; Jeff Newman, Glory Days Grill; Gary Cohen, Glory Days Grill; Amanda Skinner, Amanda Donohue Photography; Dr. Kudirat Proctor, InTouch Wellness; and Mark Murray, Chamber President.

the Club for meals and if members do not support the Club, it may close. The co-chair further stated that should Belle Haven Country Club close, a developer could propose a plan the community may not want or like.

To further bolster justification for the special committee, the co-

chair stated that he/she sought assistance from a Mount Vernon Police Officer who stated that he could stand at the intersection with a sign but would not do so for fear of being hit by a vehicle. This statement led to the impression that the intersection is too

SEE LETTER, PAGE 10

Announcements

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Announcements

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Announcements

Legals

ABC LICENSE

6027 Richmond INC trading as Taj of India, 6027 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22303. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on Premises and Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Mia Shahjahan. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

AT&T proposes to replace an existing 20' wood utility pole with a new 30' wood utility pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 34.3' at 7434 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, VA (20200050). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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Can You Spell Thyroidectomy? (Or Ice Cream?)

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



I couldn't before, Mr. Rogers, but now I can. And I even know what it means, which 10 days ago, in my neighborhood, I wouldn't have had a clue. Now, not only do I have a clue, I have a date for surgery: Jan. 27. Moreover, in addition to a date (and I don't mean my wife, Dina), I have a time and a place, a list of pre-surgical dos and don'ts, and a few items to buy: a post-surgical healing ointment and a special scrub to help minimize the risk of infection. And of course, I've been advised to wear loose-fitting clothing, perhaps a button down cardigan will do. If all goes well, I'll be home in my jammies around supper time when my recovery begins. Details of which are still a bit sketchy. I suppose I'll have to 'recover' to find out.

Let me amend that last sentence: I'll be on a soft-food diet for five days. What might not jump at you is that I don't eat many soft foods (M&Ms melting in one's mouth instead of their hands likely doesn't count). More significantly and quite out of my ordinary, my wife, Dina will be managing and controlling my menu. So far that menu includes eggs, pudding, apple sauce; all good but her last two items: spinach and kale, not good at all. I imagine I'll survive the surgery, but given how rarely Dina and have shared meals together over the years, I may not survive the recovery. And though her heart and head might be in the right place, I'm afraid my knife and fork won't be. During the best of times, I'm challenging to feed. After my surgery, I'm likely going to be at my worst. Although I certainly don't look it, food has always been the bane of my existence.

But at that post-surgical point, aren't I entitled? I mean, when I was a little boy and had my tonsils removed, I remember being given ice cream to eat - in bed. That had never happened before - or since, quite frankly. Soft foods. What's softer than ice cream? Why should I be deprived? I have two types of cancer. Yet so far, I don't see ice cream on the list. Maybe Dina's waiting for confirmation from the surgeon that cold foods are just as soft as hot. If true, I think I'm going to need that in ALL CAPS to convince my wife to give in to my indulgences. After all, one's thyroid gland isn't extracted every day so shouldn't I scream (perhaps whisper would be advisable) for ice cream? Wouldn't it soothe the savage beast that I might be after surgery? Presumably there will be some pain or discomfort and/or side effects from prescription medications I'm obliged to take so why not humor me; I like to laugh.

Except there's really nothing funny about surgery, other than the old joke: it's minor surgery when it's someone else, when it's me, it's major. So even though I've been told on relatively good authority that a thyroidectomy is not exactly major surgery, it's still me that's being anesthetized and operated on for four hours. And though I'd rather it would be somebody else, I don't see how that would help remove my thyroid gland which apparently has spread cancer to my neck and a lymph node. I guess if it has to come out, it might as well come out of me. And then we can get on to the business of learning whether I have one cancer or two and perhaps get an updated assessment of my life expectancy. If I had my druthers, I'd just as soon have only one cancer. Two is too much.

That being said/vented, right now, I just want to wake up after surgery and get home. And when I get there, either that night or for breakfast the next day, there better be a pint or two of ice cream with my name on it. I think it's only fair, don't you?

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

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LETTER

FROM PAGE 9

dangerous, which is doubtful since the Mount Vernon Police have issued tickets in the past at that intersection. Why would the co-chairs view the Mount Vernon Police as part of the problem and unresponsive to a legitimate citizen concern? Is such a co-chair view a way to justify the establishment of this special committee since the membership has no vote on the co-chairs action to establish a special committee?

Belle Haven Country Club is a member of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they should reach out to the Chamber to initiate an action item and/or establish a special committee under its umbrella. It should also be noted that Belle Haven Country Club already has a liaison to the MVCCA.

In the meantime, at least one of its member associations is not obtaining such support. Hopefully, that may change with the "calling out" of blocking the box at Sherwood Hall Lane and Parker's Lane and Sherwood Hall Land and Fordson Road. Vehicles are also compromising the safety of pedestrians and vehicles who have the right of way along Sherwood Hall Lane exiting Holland Road and vehicles traveling SW on Fordson Road turning left onto Sherwood Hall Lane. Then there's the ad hoc "extra" lane created at Sherwood Hall Lane and Fordson Road and Fordson Road and Richmond Highway.

Finally, the head-on left turn lanes at Sherwood Hall Lane and Fordson Road, along with a pedestrian island placed on the wrong corner, continues to fall on deaf ears by local elected officials. However, they got into the fray of the four-way stop signs at Parker's Lane and Hinson Farm Road but refuse to act on providing a simple left turn arrow on the existing traffic light at Sherwood Hall Lane and Fordson Road.

It has not gone unnoticed by Gum Springs that a proffered condition for the INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital Expansion Plan states in part that INOVA "shall coordinate a meeting to review the traffic impact study dated April 8, 2011 with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Transportation, the Mount Vernon Supervisor, New Gum Springs Civic Association and other nearby surrounding residential communities."

In terms of the funds proffered for transportation impacts, a proffered condition states in part that "the Mount Vernon District Supervisor, in consultation with New Gum Springs Civic Association, FCDOT, VDOT, and other nearby surrounding residential communities shall determine what appropriate, or alternate, transportation mitigation measures the Applicant's monetary contribution should be directed to within the geographic area which was the focus of the Applicant's April 8, 2011 traffic impact study."

No such meetings have occurred and there has/is increased traffic. How are the transportation proffered monies being used? So, where is the MVCCA while its member associations encounter these traffic issues?

Queenie Cox
President,

New Gum Springs Civic Association

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