



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

Smoke could be seen from as far away as Kingstowne.

Fire Engulfs Groveton Construction Site; Cause Remains Under Investigation

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

On Saturday, Feb. 8, at approximately 9:40 a.m., Fairfax County Fire and Rescue responded to reports of a building fire in the 2800 block of Poag Street in the Groveton area of Fairfax County. Units arrived on scene within three minutes and reported an advanced fire from the top floor of a five-story building that was under construction.

The building sat in a block with numerous other buildings under construction. As is common with buildings under construction, there was no sprinkler system in place. This combined with extremely windy weather conditions made fighting the fire difficult. Crews worked diligently to extinguish the fire in the buildings under construction while also working to prevent it from spreading to nearby occupied residential buildings. The fire went to four alarms drawing units from City of Alexandria Fire Department, Arlington County Fire Department, Prince George's County Fire and Emergency Services Department, and Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services.

Two firefighters suffered minor injuries and were transported and evaluated at local hospitals. Both have been released. One civilian suffered minor injuries and was transported and evaluated at a local hospital.

The fire spread to five buildings and 14 townhouses that were under construction. All these properties are considered a total loss. The fire damaged an additional 14 townhouses, four single-family homes, five apartment buildings, a commercial building, and 28 vehicles.

Fire investigators determined that a worker at the construction site noticed a fire in a trash chute. The worker called 911 and attempted to extinguish the

fire. The attempts were unsuccessful and the worker evacuated the property.

Dominion Power turned off the power to the immediate area. The Red Cross, Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management, and complex management assisted those residents that were displaced.

Units remained on scene hitting hot spots and continuing extinguishing efforts.

The property and content values for all the buildings and vehicles involved has not yet been determined. The origin and cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Embark

The fire was in a key area of Fairfax County's Embark project, which is "an initiative 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," according to Fairfax County. The fire was right in the center of the section called the "Penn Daw Community Business Center," on the Embark map, and about one mile from the Huntington Metro Station on the Yellow Line.

The housing projects that burned were one of the first parts of Embark to be built so far.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D) is heavily involved with Embark, and looked at the fire as something that has significant short-term impact on the redevelopment of the Penn Daw area but not a deal breaker. "The County is committed to getting this project back on track as quickly as possible and is assigning a senior team to work with the developers to make this happen," Storck said.

In the days following the fire, access to North Kings Highway was limited, and parts were closed due to fire recovery efforts.

Pedestrian Safety is a Focus Of Supervisor's Efforts

Recent increase in pedestrian fatalities raises concerns.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Pedestrian fatalities in Northern Virginia have increased in recent years and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently approved funding to implement safety measures that they are hoping will reduce this trend and make county streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists all over the county.

On Feb. 11, a man was struck by a car and killed as he was crossing Richmond Highway near the intersection of Giles Run Road around 1:13 a.m.

The driver of a 2012 Hyundai Elantra was traveling northbound on Richmond Highway in the rain and struck the man who was not in a crosswalk, Fairfax County Police said.

The driver remained on the scene and is cooperating with detectives.

Preliminarily, alcohol does not appear to be a factor for the driver and speed is still under investigation.

Detectives have not yet determined if alcohol was a factor for the pedestrian.

In January, there were two fatalities on Richmond Highway that involved pedestrians. On Jan. 9, a 51-year-old woman was hit near the intersection of South Kings Highway, and another fatality occurred at 9:45 p.m. on Jan. 1 when 52-year-old Daniel Yeboah was crossing Richmond Highway near the intersection of Pohick Road

when he was hit and killed. In December, a pedestrian was hit and killed in McLean; two people killed in August, and another man hit and killed on Commerce Street in Springfield, according to police.

In all total, there were 16 pedestrian fatalities in 2019, and 16 in 2018, so at the January 28 Board of Supervisors meeting, the board reviewed the county effort to make Fairfax County roads safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Board Matter was co-sponsored by Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn, chair of the Board's Transportation Committee, and Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk, chair of the Board's Public Safety Committee.

One thing Alcorn and Lusk are asking for is a review of The ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan, which is an effort by Fairfax County to review plans for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Countywide Trails Plan was originally adopted in 1976, last updated in 2018.

In mid-December 2019, FCDOT officials looked at the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan and came up with several key project goals such as

- ❖ Reconcile the Bicycle Master Plan, Countywide Trails Plan and regional connectivity in Area Plans

- ❖ Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions

- ❖ Identify and address missing links in the network and improve access to activity centers, schools, parks and transit

- ❖ Bring the planned regional bicycle and trails network recommendations up to current standards

- ❖ Reinforce Active Transportation as a key element to Placemaking.

2/14/20
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NEWS



The back room at The Virginia Florist in Belle View gets packed right before the holiday.



The Valentine's Day orders are kept in a special box to keep them organized.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

Roses Are Red, Violets Are Blue Local flower shop knows the routine on Valentine's Day.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

As Valentine's Day approaches, the designers, sales people and cashiers at The Virginia Florist in Belle View know the routine all too well. It's one of the biggest sales days of the year for florists, and "people make a line at the door," said Ledis Reyes, a floral designer that's been at the Belle View shop for the past 15 years.

Owner Kevin Green said the red roses are the big seller, and they sell about 200-300 dozen red roses each year. "Never seen so many roses," he said.

The backroom at The Virginia Florist in Belle View gets so full of flowers on Valentine's Day, they

can't even see from one side to another. They pull out an extra table, and hire extra help for this one day. This year, with the low unemployment numbers, they have had trouble bringing on the extra hands.

Even delivery driver Greg Harvilla knows the chaotic nature of the holiday. "It's pretty much non-stop for 12 hours," he said. "Insanity but fun," he admitted.

According to the Society of American Florists, Valentine's Day is the number one holiday for florists and for floral purchases, and second to Christmas/Chanukah in dollars spent. Of the purchases on that day, 28 percent of American adults (37 percent of men, 19 percent of women) purchased flowers or plants as gifts for Valentine's Day. In 2019, 69 percent of all flowers bought on Valentine's Day are red roses. They estimate that more than 250 million roses are produced for Valentine's Day.

This year, Valentine's Day is a



Ledis Reyes with the rose bouquet ready for Valentine's Day.

Friday so they are recommending getting the bouquet a few days ahead. Sometimes the fresh dozen roses on the desk at work is a must, they say. "Everybody wants it at work so they can show it off," said Anne Allen, the sales representative at The Virginia Florist.

There are some things that don't change from year to year.

The line at the door on Valentine's Day, or the boyfriend or husband stopping by on the way home from work remains an annual thing.

There's also a dual purchase

they sometimes see at The Virginia Florist.

"We even have orders going to the wife and the girlfriend, they always pay cash," she said Keiko Cox, a florist there for five years. That one got a few giggles from the flower room.



Anne Allen with a dozen roses ready to send.

The Virginia Florist

1632 Belleview Blvd
(Belle View Shopping Center)
703-765-3355

Seasons of Change Edwards assists with life's difficult decisions.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE GAZETTE

Barbara Sumner sits at a conference table at Sunrise assisted living at Mount Vernon. She has come to explore the best living arrangement for her partner of 47 years who has been experiencing gradual worsening of dementia for the last 10 years.

"It is difficult; we did so many things together. Monica is a very sweet person." Sumner adds they love animals and had a pet sitting business that they

started when Monica got out of the military.

Robin Williams, associate director of sales at Sunrise at Mount Vernon says, "I don't know if you noticed our collie out front. And we welcome pet visits."

But Sumner started experiencing health problems of her own, which piled on top of each other, and was trying to figure out what was happening to her. In the meantime, Monica's condition worsened, and Sumner knew she knew she would need more assistance than their current caregivers, friends and neighbors were pro-

viding. Now she is grappling with how to make the best decision.

Williams says they are in the discovery phase today, where Sunrise assesses the level of Monica's needs, her activities of daily living. What is the most important thing to the family in finding the right community? What is most worrisome? They want to assess the level of cognitive impairment and ability to verbalize. Sumner says, "Monica is verbal but better leave it up to her. If you ask her too many complicated questions, she will dismiss you by just getting up and leaving."

Williams says, "We want to replicate her home routine here, what is best for her." Sumner says, "Monica used to play pickle ball until it got so competitive. She is so good at puzzles." Sumner wonders if they have ping pong at Sunrise.

Sumner says she found Sunrise through Robin Edwards, CSA, CarePatrol of N. Virginia, a company that assists seniors with life decisions. Edwards has arranged today's tour and says she goes where she is needed whether it is assisting with a hospital discharge plan, meet

SEE SEASONS OF CHANGE, PAGE 5

Budget Update

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

This week on Feb. 11th, we finally reached cross-over. The days on the House Floor were very long as we voted on the many bills being reported out of committees before the deadline. On Monday, we gaveled in at 10 am and we were in session late into the evening. Of the 27 bills I filed, I have 17 crossing over to the Senate and four that were incorporated into more senior members' bills. It is far too long a list to present here but the number of bills heading to the Senate that will push us towards a more egalitarian, safe, and just Commonwealth are legion. Some examples include HB 798 to eliminate predatory lending, HB 9 requiring that you report your lost or stolen firearm, and HB 145 and HB 386 protecting transgender student rights and banning conversion therapy, respectively — all bills that never had a chance to pass in prior years.

As the Public Safety and Transportation Subcommittee chair on the busy House Appropriations Committee, I will soon be turning my attention to the Governor's 2020-2022 budget and the many budget amendments that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have filed to fund their legislative endeavors, and on behalf of state agencies and organizations to fund important projects across the Commonwealth.

The Governor's budget already includes many important and historic provisions that I support and plan to defend. Significantly, a \$1.2 billion investment is being proposed to put into public education, with \$145.1 million going towards a 3 percent pay increase for teachers. Teachers are our most valuable asset for preparing the next generation of Vir-



Del. Krizek

ginians to be productive and prosperous. The Commonwealth has lagged behind the national average for far too long on compensating these vital public servants. I will continue to fight to raise teacher pay to keep our talented and hard working educators in the Commonwealth.

This year, I filed nine of my own budget amendments. I will highlight just a few of them here. I requested funding in the budget for six new wage inspector employees in the Department of Labor and Industry. The Department is essential to combatting nonpayment of wages. A worker who has not been paid her wages files a complaint with DOLI, which is then investigated. But, right now that investigation may take years because the wage enforcement division is woefully understaffed with only three investigators to handle thousands of inquiries and complaints. In previous years there have been as many as 22 wage investigators. Without an increase in staff, workers who are victims of wage theft are deprived of a speedy and efficient remedy. My hope is that this staffing increase will help us more effectively enforce our wage payment laws.

I put in a budget amendment of \$556,136 for FY2021 and FY2022 to restore funding for the Virginia Wing of the Civil Air Patrol's full training schedules for public safety personnel, and to fund two field search and rescue officers who are currently funded using non-general fund grants. The Civil Air Patrol has approximately 2,000 members across the Commonwealth and performs vital search and rescue missions as well as disaster relief.

I requested \$3,000,000 for the Department of Human Resource Management to establish a Public Employee Relations Board to administer collective bargaining for public employees at the state and local levels. With the passage of Delegate Guzman's HB 582, which I was proud to copatron, teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other public service workers will have the right to negotiate wages, benefits, and working conditions.

I requested \$7.5 million for the Virginia Department of Health to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing a Children's Health Insurance Program Health Services Initiative to expand the services provided by Virginia's three contracted poison control centers. The poison control centers provide 24-hour expert assistance by telephone and online to assist in the event of accidental and intentional exposure to poisonous chemicals, venoms, vapors or medications. In 2015, the Virginia Poison Control center staff handled 30,000 calls from the public and healthcare providers. A big reason that this is critical is that 50 percent of exposures involve children ages one to six.

You can view all of my budget amendments here: <https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/mbramendment/2020/1/H281>.

Finally, flying under the radar and media coverage is a landmark transportation bill, HB 1414, carried by Speaker Filler-Corn. This bill adopts numerous and significant structural changes to transportation funding. It will increase the gas tax from 16 cents to 28 cents per gallon over the next three years. The gas tax increase is expected to yield around \$1 billion to ensure that there is sustainable transportation funding to fix our aging roads and bridges and expand passenger and commuter rail service throughout Virginia. The bill also establishes the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. The authority would be tasked to promote, sustain, and expand the State's passenger and commuter rail service as well as to increase ridership. In the not too distant future, when rail travel is as ubiquitous in Virginia as it is in much of Europe, we will look back at this General Assembly as the catalyst for expanded economical, safe, and quicker travel by rail throughout much of our region.

It is always an honor to serve you in Richmond. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at DelPKrizek@House.Virginia.Gov throughout this legislative session with questions, concerns, or legislative opinions.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Mt. Vernon Town Hall Meeting. 12-2 p.m. At 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Hosted by Scott Surovell and Paul Krizek.

FREE TAX PREPARATION

The City of Alexandria is offering free tax preparation to qualifying residents. Taxpayers are eligible if their income is below approximately \$35,000 for individuals and \$55,000 for families. Expert volunteers from Community Tax Aid, Inc. will ensure that taxpayers apply for all applicable credits and deductions — especially the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, which people often don't

realize they are eligible to receive. Sessions will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon, and Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., from now through April 11, at the Department of Community and Human Services (2525 Mount Vernon Ave.). Persons seeking tax preparation assistance will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis, and electronic filing will be provided. Spanish-speaking volunteers will be available. The following documentation is required: a social security card for each family member; photo ID for the taxpayer (and spouse, if filing jointly); W-2 forms and other source of income records; receipts or records for expenses such as child care and education; and, if possible, a copy of last year's tax return.

SUMMER CAMP

Registration for 2020 Summer Camps offered by the City of Alexandria's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will begin at 9 a.m. on Feb. 12 for City residents and

Feb. 14 for nonresidents. Registration will be available online, or in-person at the Lee Center (1108 Jefferson St.).

The 2020 Summer of Smiles Summer Camp Guide is available online, and free printed brochures will be available in all City of Alexandria recreation centers and library branches beginning February 5. The guide contains more than 75 camp options available to youth ages 2 to 17, including sports; creative arts; computers; nature; performing arts; cooking; excursions; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); Camp Adventure; and Out of School Time and classic camps. Campers can get the most out of summer by participating in a different camp each week. Camps are listed by week and age group to make summer planning easy. Extended care options are available for most camps, including Before Care from 7 to 9 a.m. and After Care from 4 to 6 p.m. Structured activities include arts and crafts, movies and games. Space is still available and registration is currently being

accepted for Winter programs taking place through March and Spring Break Camps taking place April 6-10. To register for summer camps and other recreation activities, classes and programs, visit alexandriava.gov/Recreation or contact the Registration and Reservation Office at 703-746-5414.

POETRY CONTEST

The City of Alexandria and the Alexandria Transit Company are collaborating for the 2020 DASHing Words in Motion poetry contest. Applications are open to emerging and established writers and poets ages 16 years or older who live, work, or study in Alexandria. Winning poems will be displayed on DASH buses and trolleys during National Poetry Month in April 2020. The deadline for online submissions is Monday, February 17, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Visit alexandriava.gov/Arts for the

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A Connection Newspaper





Barbara Sumner discusses memory care at Sunrise assisted living at Mount Vernon with Robin Williams (center), associate director of sales, and Robin Edwards, CSA, CarePatrol of N. Virginia.

Seasons of Change

FROM PAGE 3

ing with families, or finding the appropriate resources in the community.

Edwards explains, “Families know they can trust me because I come from the heart in all I say and do, in my business and my personal life.”

Edwards wheels Sumner down the hall as they head to check out a studio room. Williams explains the room has space for a bed, chair, dresser and nightstand with a small fridge inside the door. She says the rooms are designed to be small because 25-50 percent is left as common space to encourage residents to stay active. Robin says some families feel more comfortable with a nanny cam, which allows them to keep close track of the resident from an outside location.

Robin hands Sumner a February calendar filled with a list of daily activities including social hour, balloon volleyball, word games, bread baking, craft time and performances. Sumner says Monica might participate in some activities but it would depend on how you introduce them to her. “She used to bake but I can’t see that now.” The most popular activity is singing. “They just love to singand bingo.”

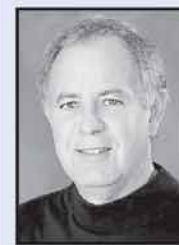
They pass by the dining room where lunch is being served. “Issa, who oversees the residents’ care in

the dementia unit, comes out with a smile. She says the residents get several meal choices. Today sandwiches seem to be popular. Sumner comments Monica probably couldn’t choose her meal and asks if she could help with the decisions.

Williams points out Sunrise adapts to individual needs. She says they try to promote independence. They use Fiestaware, which is brightly colored and sometimes mugs with two handles, multi-size spoons as well as serving a lot of finger food. Sumner says that is very interesting and observes “Monica’s use of utensils and eating habits have changed” but speculates that the spoon “would probably be too strange and unfamiliar for Monica.”

Bill stops by to explain his role as life enrichment manager. He says he tries to form relationships with all of the 24 residents in memory care and 107 in assisted living. This means a one-on-one interaction with each of them 1-2 times a week. “I check to make sure everyone is ok and, if not, to work out the problem.”

Sumner heads back to the conference room to ask more questions, a process that is difficult for her. And another challenge. “You know, I’m 77 and I’m hoping to get out of this wheelchair and back out on the basketball court soon.”



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OPEN SUNDAY 1-4



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OPEN SUNDAY 1-4



Alex/Mt. Zephyr \$489,900
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OPEN SUNDAY 1-4



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There's still time to give
the gift of style.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

Boxes of chocolates and bouquets of flowers are ideas that might come to the minds of those who are still on the hunt for the perfect gift to give on Cupid's Day. Though we celebrate St. Valentine in just two days, home décor aficionados come to the rescue with a few chic gift ideas for the home design enthusiasts in your life.

"Whether you love to cook or you just love to eat take-out, a pop of color on the countertop will bring a smile to your face every time you walk into your kitchen," said Anne Walker of Anne Walker Design. "For a gift that will bring joy for years to come, surprise your significant other with a bright red Kitchen Aid Stand Mixer and a set of red silicone spatulas for Valentine's Day. Such a joy to use and a delight for the eye."

A set of Swedish towels can be a game changer for those who are environmentally conscious and obsessively clean, says Courtney Thomas of the Picket Fence a home décor and gift boutique in Burke, Virginia. "You can use Swedish towels to clean anything you'd clean with a paper towel," she said. "But they're reusable and you can throw them in the dishwasher when they get dirty."

Eco-friendly and made entirely of biodegradable cellulose or a combination of wood pulp and renewable cotton, Swedish towels can be used for household cleaning projects that range from spills on a counter tops to water spots on a mirror.

For a gift that does double design duty, a candle in a reusable vessel is an option that Thomas suggests. "We have some candles that come in a pottery container and once the candle is gone, you can still use the pottery," she said. "It's like a two-for-one. Pottery is food safe and can go in the oven and dishwasher if you want to make a dip or something in them."

For those who decide to give flowers on Valentine's Day, add a vase for displaying those buds, suggests Walker. "Instead of spending more than \$100 on roses for your sweetheart, spend under \$100 on [an] unbelievably gorgeous cocoon Vase by Danish design house, Holmegaard," she said. "Fill it with a beautiful selection of fresh flowers [and] instead of having



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATINA POLISHED LIVING

Textiles in vibrant colors like these throw pillows, can brighten the day of your Valentine.

the roses for a few days, your beloved will have this gorgeous, stylish vase for a lifetime."

Those who want to give a gift that offers a luxurious night's sleep should consider a silk pillow case, says Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished in Alexandria. "They're a wonderful gift because they're good for your hair," she said. "And silk stays cool which might be good for those who get hot at night."

There's nothing more classic than a silver picture frame adorning one's side table or book case, suggests Mertins. "When we are designing a living room, we often walk into someone's house and see photos of their loved ones displayed in a hodgepodge of frames like wooden frames and ceramic frames. Giving silver frames allows photos of your family or children to be displayed tastefully in classic silver frames"

Bursts of color in the form of textiles can brighten them home of one's valentine, advises Mertins. "Tablecloths, runners and napkins in silk, velvet and cotton by Ardmore Design make a beautiful table setting," she said. "There are some wonderful, washable throws in all different colors that make great gifts. People love because their pretty and washable."



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ENTERTAINMENT

New Zero-Waste Grocer Coming to King Street

BY HOPE NELSON

Along the vibrant 900 block of King Street, a transformation is occurring in one of the vacant shops. And with it, an old adage is proving true: What once was old is new again. Such is the case for Mason & Greens, the region's first zero-waste dry-goods shop, slated to open this spring.

"We always knew we wanted to open a business that would help the community and help the environment," said Justin Marino, who owns the shop with his wife, Anna. Parents of two and Old Town residents themselves, Marino said his family took a long look at the waste they were generating from week to week and decided they had to change their ways.

At first, it started hyper-locally, in their home, but as the Marinos began to inven-

tory the waste in their own household, they found themselves needing supplies to support their new lifestyle. That's when the trouble began.

"We noticed that there wasn't anyone around here selling these things" to support a lower-waste life, Marino said. In Europe, he added, traditional dry-goods shops are everywhere, but even in this country's most metropolitan areas, the Marinos came up empty.

"We really wanted to do it for us and for the whole Washington DC area," he said. And thus, Mason & Greens was born. "We're the first zero-waste shop in the whole DC area."

Though small in footprint – the 1880s rowhouse at 913 King Street has about 1,100 square feet in total – the new store will pack a punch. From foods such as pasta, flour, beans and cereals to soaps and lotions, from safety razors to laundry detergents to

children's toys to candles and garden seeds, Mason & Greens is aiming to fill a gap in the region's market with its plastic-free, zero-waste, cash-free existence.

"We have found that since we've been going through this process, boy, there are a lot of people who are interested," Marino said, gesturing to the popularity of Alexandria's weekly home-composting program as an example of residents' environmentally friendly mindset.

"These people care enough, and that gave us hope that what we were doing is in the right place," he said.

What's in a name? The concept of Mason & Greens lent itself to the perfect shop name, with each word having significance.

"The first part of the name, Mason, was derived from the old Mason jars," Marino said. "The second part of the name is Greens, so, of course it's supporting the produce that we will have in the store."

IF YOU GO

Mason & Greens, 913 King St.

Opening: Early spring

Try this: A reusable double baguette bag. "It is made of organic cotton and has a nice strap so it can be carried over the shoulder," says co-owner Justin Marino.

And Marino hopes that the changes sparked from Mason & Greens will extend to customers' daily lives.

"I guess the real answer is to waste less. It's important that we do this for our community, that we all think about wasting just a little bit less. Even if it's just cutting out one paper towel a week (at first)," he said. "These are the things that we can do. We can all do this. We can change how we do stuff, and strangely enough, it's not hard."

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

"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.

Life Drawing Sessions. Now thru Dec. 9. 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

Tell Me a Story Art Exhibit. March 6-29. Opening reception Friday, March 6 from 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Have you ever looked at a piece of art and your imagination immediately starts to wander? Narrative art tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. A picture is worth a thousand words; Tell Me a Story will take you on an imaginative journey. Gallery hours are: Thursdays



Outfitting the Men of Fort Ward will take place Feb. 22 at Fort Ward Museum in Alexandria.

Outfitting the Men of Fort Ward

Saturday/Feb. 22, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Museum interpreters in Union uniform will present on-going talks about the clothing, military accessories and equipment typical of the Federal units who were stationed at Fort Ward throughout the Civil War. Hands-on reproduction items, intricately detailed model soldiers, and original objects on exhibit will be featured. For more information, call Fort Ward Museum at 703-746-4848, or visit www.fortward.org.

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/exhibits.

Student Art Exhibit. Now thru 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 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.

THURSDAY/FEB. 13

How to Build Inexpensive Grow Lights. 7 - 8:30 p.m. At the Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Give your plants a healthy start with grow lights to ensure your seedlings get great light indoors, even when it's freezing outside. Grow unusual and hard-to-find varieties of vegetables not offered at local garden centers, or farm nutritious microgreens indoors. Learn the pros and cons of light systems and options for creating your own. Instructions and material lists provided are to help you jumpstart your garden. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. Free. Advance registration requested at mgnv.org. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgaralex@gmail.com.

FEB. 13 TO MARCH 15

Architecture in Fiber. At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory,



Celebrate the birthday of George Washington on Monday, Feb. 17 in Mount Vernon.

George Washington's 288th Birthday

Monday/Feb. 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, Southern end of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Free admission. All day: Experience the Revolutionary War in 4-D with Mount Vernon's new re-vamped theater and step into Washington's shoes in the new interactive "Be Washington" theater.

10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.: Presidential wreath-laying ceremony at Washington's Tomb. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Tour the Washington Library during its annual open house.

10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.: "Official Observance of Washington's Birthday" on the east lawn.

11:15 a.m.: A tactical and musical demonstration by the Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps and the Commander-in-Chief's Guard on the Bowling Green.

1 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Musical demonstration by the Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps. 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.: Meet re-enactors from Washington's world as they share personal stories about the first president.

3 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.: Wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb.

Studio 29, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Here, in Alexandria, we are surrounded by beautiful and exciting buildings, bridges, parks, and monuments. Both our local and worldwide architecture serve as inspiration for the pieces in this show. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work will also be exhibited. Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily and weekends, and 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

FRIDAY/FEB. 14

My Queer Valentine Reception. 7-10 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art

Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. My Queer Valentine explores love and relationships through non-heteronormative and non-binary artists' perspectives. The themes and subjects of artwork in this exhibition explore relationships through the artists' view on love. To celebrate this exhibition, Target Gallery will be hosting a special reception and event in partnership with local LGBTQ+ organizations on Valentine's Day. The juror for this exhibition was Andy Johnson, independent curator and gallery director of Gallery 102 at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design. SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8
and George Washington University. The exhibition runs from Saturday, January 25 thru Sunday, March 8, 2020.

FEB. 14-15

Edison High Presents One-Acts.

Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.; Feb. 15 at 2 p.m.
At Thomas Edison High School, Franconia Road, Alexandria. The annual student-directed one act play festival returns to the auditorium of Thomas A. Edison High School. Each performance features five plays with a variety of actors and themes. Tickets: \$5 general admission - available online or at the door.

SATURDAY, FEB. 15

Eco-Savvy Symposium: Four

Season Garden. 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria./ (Adults) Discover ways to expand the beauty in your garden at the 16th annual EcoSavvy Symposium: The Four Season Garden—Sensational Ornamentals and Edibles All Year Long. Author and garden columnist Marianne Willburn and Smithsonian Gardens Horticulture Collections Manager Cindy Brown share insights into selecting plants for all-season color, architectural interest, and extended harvests from your edible garden. \$58 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes (code 986.13C6) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SOUPer Saturday. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At The Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The 26th annual SOUPer Saturday is a collaboration of ceramic artists at the Torpedo Factory, Kiln Club, and the Ceramic Guild to benefit United Community (community-based, non-profit organization that offers comprehensive programs to families in Alexandria. Hundreds of ceramic works of art for \$20, and purchasers get a voucher for a cup of soup from the Chart House. Email: slallypottery@gmail.com

Sweet As Sin: The Unwrapped Story How Candy Became America's Favorite Pleasure. 2 p.m. At Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. A lecture examining the African American role in American candy making. Space is limited. Registration required.

The Real Story of Uncle Tom's Cabin. 2 p.m. At Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen Street, Alexandria. Presented by the National Park Service. Learn about Josiah Henson, the real inspiration for the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin. This free program is presented by a park ranger from the NPS Civil War Defenses Division.

Wilderness Survival. 2 to 4 p.m. At Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Learn basic wilderness survival skills, cook a meal over a campfire or study the art of fire-building in outdoor programs in county parks. In this program, learn how to build a fire, read a compass and set up a tent for shelter. Cost is \$9 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Performance: Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 East Campus Drive. Featuring the String Serenade with James Ross, Music Director; Berta Rojas, guitarist. They will perform Mozart: Serenade No. 6 "Serenata Notturna;" Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Guitar Concerto in D Major; Andante Moderato from String Quartet in G Major (arr. by James Ross); and Schubert: Symphony No. 5. Cost is \$20-\$85 adults, \$5 youth,



Boating Safety Classes will begin Saturday, Feb. 22 in Alexandria.

Boating Safety Classes

Saturday/Feb. 22, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Washington Farm United Methodist Church, 3921 Old Mill Road, Alexandria. The one-day class will be taught by experienced Flotilla 25-08 (Mount Vernon) instructors with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Future classes are March 21, April 18, May 16, June 20, and July 18. To enroll in a class contact Ted Caliga at johnbielli2@gmail.com. Newcomers and experienced boaters alike are also encouraged to explore the Coast Guard Auxiliary's "Welcome to the Recreational Boating Safety Outreach Web Site" (<http://wow.uscgaux.info>) to obtain free boating safety tools and materials.

\$10 students. Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885.

SUNDAY/FEB. 16

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 Vola's Dockside Grill. Free No reservations required. Offered by the Office of Historic Alexandria. Contact 703-599-4010 or suej020924@gmail.com.

Walking with Washington Tour.

2:15 – 4:15 p.m. At Christ Church portico entrance, 118 N. Washington St., Alexandria. Led by an old-line Virginian with family stories about Washington, our 18c. action hero, this tour in his chosen hometown focuses on his character and values, and significant people and events in his life and American history where they occurred. Stops at Christ Church, "Light-Horse" Harry Lee house, Gadsby's Tavern, Duvall Tavern, Wise's Tavern, Bank of Alexandria, Carlyle House and Market Square. Reservations not required. Free. Recommended for ages 10 and above. Contact: WalkingwithWashington@hotmail.com

Performance: Alexandria

Symphony Orchestra. 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Featuring the String Serenade with James Ross, Music Director; Berta Rojas, guitarist. They will perform Mozart: Serenade No. 6 "Serenata Notturna;" Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Guitar Concerto in D Major; Andante Moderato from String Quartet in G Major (arr. by James Ross); and Schubert: Symphony No. 5. Cost is \$20-\$85 adults, \$5 youth, \$10 students. Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885.

Human Condition Reception. 4-6 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Exhibition runs Feb. 13 - March 22. Human Condition asks artists to capture what is it that makes a person. From the classic nude, to abstract and impressionist treatments, to pieces that touch on the basic concept of

humanity—a wide variety of interpretations will be included.

Opening Reception. 4-6 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Human Condition — Exploring the Body as Subject Exhibition, which runs Feb. 13-March 22. This group exhibition will be a visual exploration of the human condition, asking artists to capture what is it that makes a person. From the classic nude, to abstract and impressionist treatments, to pieces that touch on the basic concept of humanity — a wide variety of interpretations will be included.

2020 MV Dems Mardi Gras. 6 to 9:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. The Mount Vernon District Democratic Committee (MVDDC) is excited to host its 12th annual Mardi Gras & Straw Poll. Cast your vote in NOVA's first Straw Poll of 2020 and stay for dancing, music, food, and libations. Choose your next President on Presidents' Day Weekend. They will also have a silent auction including items such as a private lunch and tour of the Capitol with Master of Ceremonies, Rep. Don Beyer. Tickets are \$55 each until Feb. 14 and \$65 each at the door – limited quantity.

The Art League Patron's Show Fundraiser. 6 p.m. to midnight. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. Part fundraiser, part block party, and lots of fun, The Art League's 52nd Patron's Show Fundraiser gives participants the opportunity to purchase original art for a bargain price. Whether you are a seasoned collector or an art newbie, you won't want to miss this opportunity to acquire quality art while supporting a great non-profit organization and a community of artists. Cost: \$225 individual; \$330 couples. Visit the website: <https://www.theartleague.org/event/the-52nd-patrons-show-fundraiser/>

MONDAY/FEB. 17

Breakfast & Meeting of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association. 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The Westin Alexandria Old Town, Alexandria. Meet special guests and enjoy a hearty breakfast with members of this historic association at this annual tradition. Be there for the first appearance of the day of General and Lady Washington and a talk by a renowned special guest. Tickets are \$40. Visit www.FriendshipFireCo.org or call 703-829-6640.



PHOTO BY KEVIN DOOLEY

John McCrary conducts the Blessed Sacrament Festival Choir and Orchestra.

Blessed Sacrament Festival

Friday/Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. At Blessed Sacrament Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Blessed Sacrament Festival Choir and Orchestra will perform Beethoven's stirring Mass in C and Mozart's cantata, Davide Penitente. Soloists are members of the Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera. Reception at intermission. Free-will offering at the door. For more information, contact parish music director John McCrary, Call 703-998-6100 ext. 103.



The Tell Me a Story Art Exhibit runs from March 6-29 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.

Tell Me a Story

March 6-29, Opening reception Friday, March 6 from 7-9 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Have you ever looked at a piece of art and your imagination immediately starts to wander? Narrative art tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. A picture is worth a thousand words; Tell Me a Story will take you on an imaginative journey. Gallery hours are: Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays 12-9pm, and Sundays 12-6pm. The gallery is free, open to the public, and accessible. For more information, please visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits or contact the curator Lesley Hall (lesley.ruthless@gmail.com) or Director of Curating Brittany Gabel (Curating@DelRayArtisans.org).

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Obituary

Obituary

Sandi Poole 1942-2020



February 3, 2020 after a two year battle with metastatic breast cancer. Sandi was born in Long Beach, CA, in 1942. Her military family was stationed in many locations throughout the US and included one posting in Newfoundland. As a teenager, while living in Kansas, she attended a boarding school founded by Ursuline sisters, and when she graduated she chose to join the order herself. She taught school, but after four years she decided to leave the convent and returned to her family. Soon after, she met an Air Force officer, James C. Poole, Jr., and they married in 1964. The marriage produced her three children, whom she thought of as the "jewels in her crown." While living in Iowa, Sandi completed her college education, graduating with honors from Iowa State in 1970. Her husband was stationed in the DC area in 1979, and they moved to Alexandria, VA, where she began her career as a realtor. Sandi built a sterling reputation as an agent for several real estate firms, consistently honored as among the top in her company and many times the number one agent. The marriage ended in 1984, and she later married her husband of 32 years, Blaise deFranceaux. Working together, they built upon her business, now known as the Poole/Braun Real Estate Team, until they retired in 2009. Sandi and Blaise traveled extensively, with trips to Turkey, Russia, India, Nepal, several countries in Africa and southeast Asia, and national parks in the US. In 2015, they began building a new home in Asheville, NC, and moved there in late 2016. They embraced their new home and city with great enthusiasm, enjoying the hikes, great food, and cultural activities the area provides. She is survived by her husband Blaise, her three children: James Poole of Clayton, NC, Jeffrey Poole (Betty) of Metairie, LA, and Jennifer Sobocinski (Dave) of Johns Creek, GA, and five grandchildren: Carter and Mason Poole, Dylan, Dawson, and Declan Sobocinski. Sandi is remembered as someone who's vivacity brought joy and love to all who knew her. By any measure, it was a life well lived. Anyone wishing to do so may make a donation to JDRF (jdrf.org/donate) or Pigsaw Legal Services (pigsawlegal.org/#donate).

Announcements

Announcements



Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
THROUGH MARCH 20, 2020

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004 to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964. The program is open to new eligible applicants for the 2020-2021 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

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or contact Lily Jones, Division of

Legislative Services, at (804) 698-1888.

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SEEKING NOMINATIONS

The Alexandria Commission for Women (CFW) seeks nominations of women, men and youth who have made a significant impact on women and girls in Alexandria.

Winners will be honored at the Commission's 38th Annual Salute to Women Awards: The Future is Female event on March 23, 2020 at 6 p.m. at The Lyceum: Alexandria's History Museum (201 S. Washington St., Alexandria). Proceeds support the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program and other programs benefitting women and girls in the city of Alexandria.

Award categories include:

- ❖ The Susan Lowell Butler Lifetime Achievement Award
- ❖ The Marguerite Payez Leadership Award
- ❖ Youth Community Services Award
- ❖ The Marian Van Landingham Legislation and Public Policy Award
- ❖ The Volia Lawson Award
- ❖ Donna Bergheim Cultural Affairs Award

The Salute to Women Awards began in the 1980s to recognize the efforts and achievements of women who have made important and enduring contributions to the Alexandria community. All nominations must be submitted to the Department of Community and Human Services on Monday, Feb. 17, 2020. Late submissions will not be accepted, and the deadline will not be extended. Contact Maribel Ramos at CommissionforWomen@alexandriava.gov.

"FOREST" CONCEPT SELECTED

The School Board has voted to move forward with the "Forest" concept for the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School building, citing its alignment with the community's desire to have a strong connection between the school and nature. The chosen concept — unanimously approved by the Board on Thursday evening — fulfills a desire heard throughout the design process for a building and site that convey a community feel with plenty of open space for children to play both inside and outside school hours. The community also wanted a school that capitalized on the wooded area to the back of the school and brought the sense of nature into the building.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program (DVP) and Sexual Assault Center (SAC) make a positive impact for those in need and increase awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault in our community by becoming a volunteer. Volunteers benefit from the unique experience of interacting personally with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. There are opportunities in DVP for special events volunteers, court advocates and shelter supervisors. Call 703-746-4911 or visit alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence. To become a SAC volunteer, which includes opportunities for Volunteer Hotline Advocates, call Lydia at 703-746-3127 or visit alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence.

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnneb517@verizon.net.

United Community (formerly UCM), with main office located at 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, seeks volunteers for Food Pantry assistance, Early Learning Center teacher aides, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office administration/data entry, and community outreach. Flexible hours and schedules. Opportunities for all ages to serve, including community service hours. More info at ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@ucmagency.org.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403- 5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Line Dance Instructor needed for the Gum Springs Senior Program once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Volunteer Solutions, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711.

Volunteer Fairfax makes it easy for individuals and families, youth and seniors, corporate groups and civic clubs to volunteer. Fulfill hours, give back, or pay it forward through a variety service options. Visit www.volunteerfairfax.org or call 703-246-3460.

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.seniorscientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaledrea@aol.com.

Fairfax County's Community Services Board is seeking volunteer office assistants. Volunteers are needed to assist CSB staff with greeting guests, making reminder phone calls, data entry, filing, shredding, stocking shelves, and other duties as needed. Hours are flexible, but would be during normal business hours. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm for more.

Yoga Teachers are needed. Help improve a person's well-being by teaching yoga classes to adults who are staying in a residential facility. The day/time is flexible, but would be during the week. Prior yoga instruction is required. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm for more.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax County needs **volunteers to drive older adults** to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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All Gowned Up



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

All Gowned UpAnd somewhere to go, or so I thought. I had checked in at the front desk. I was given a number, and almost immediately, it was called. I said good-bye to Team Lourie and was led back to a staging area (beds, curtains, doctors, nurses) where I was told I would see them both before surgery. There I was given a gown, no-slip socks and a hair net to change into, and instructed to place all my clothes (underwear, too) into two plastic bags and then told to pull back the privacy curtain and lie back on the bed.

Within a few minutes a female nurse, part of a very attentive and conscientious staff, began to attend me. She started an I.V. in my left forearm, wrapped a blood pressure cuff around my right bicep and then stuck half-a-dozen or so EKG contacts over the front me and down my legs to monitor my heart. In addition, the typical other vitals: oxygen, pulse and temperature were taken. At that point, it appeared that I had passed muster. My surgeon stopped by for a brief visit and all was progressing normally. Until that is when the anesthesiologist came by for what I thought was the final step. It was the final step alright. She said that "due to an abundance of caution," she was uncomfortable proceeding with the surgery. She explained that the facility (not a hospital) where I was to undergo the surgery, was not fully equipped to respond to certain potential complications which might occur which involved a breathing tube, a ventilator and the weakness of my lungs, so she sent me packing (unpacking actually). Disappointed, as you might imagine, we all left the facility and waited for further instructions.

By the end of the day, arrangements had been made to reschedule my surgery at a local hospital on Wednesday, a mere two day delay. I could live with that. At home, I resumed my post-shower, pre-surgery, infection-preventing scrub as I had for the previously scheduled surgery. This time surgery was scheduled for 1:30 pm instead of the 10:50 am it had been on Monday. Still, if all went well, I could be released that same day, under someone else's recognition of course, given the late hour, but likely recuperating at home in my own bed.

On Wednesday, I arrived at the hospital two hours before surgery as directed and began the now familiar process. Once again I was prepped and ready. This time there were no slip-ups. Around 2:15 I was wheeled into the operating room and introduced to the staff on hand. I was asked my name, date of birth and the reason for surgery that day. Answering correctly, the next step involved an oxygen mask coming down over my nose and mouth and being asked to breathe normally, which I did, and the rest, as they say, is history.

It turned out that the anesthesiologist was right to be cautious. My four-hour outpatient surgery turned into a seven-hour admission-to-the-hospital major surgery with complications. Due to my "Adam's Apple" tumor being embedded into/under my collarbone, a thoracic surgeon was brought into consult about possibly cracking open my chest to get at the remaining cancer. Fortunately, a decision was made not to do so and I was wheeled back to recovery and eventually to my room for the night where at 12:35 am, while lying in my bed, my eyes opened and I saw my wife, Dina and close friend, Rita, who had stayed into the wee hours in an amazing show of support.

The next day, after an uncomfortable night in my hospital bed, I was discharged, four hours after the process began. (As you may or may not know, getting discharged from the hospital is hardly a straight line from your hospital room to your curbside pick up.) I was given instructions, prescriptions and follow-up appointments. My thyroid gland, parathyroid, "Adam's Apple" tumor and a few lymph nodes stayed behind. Can't say that I miss any of them. Still, my body may miss them so I'll likely have some post-op work to do at home. Nevertheless, progress has been made for which I'm grateful.

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



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