

Chamber Renews Army Community Covenant

A group of community leaders met with Colonel Michael Greenberg, Commander, US Army Fort Belvoir, to renew the Army Community Covenant on Wednesday, July 29, at Mount Vernon Country Club.

"Today marks the tenth renewal of the Chamber's Community Covenant with Fort Belvoir. We are fortunate to have Fort Belvoir as part of our community and honored to renew this agreement," said Stanley Koussis, Mount Vernon Lee Chamber Chairman.

The Army Community Covenant is designed to foster and sustain effective community partnerships with the Army to improve the quality of life for Soldiers and their families. Mount Vernon Lee Chamber has maintained a Covenant with Fort Belvoir for the past ten years.

Col. Greenberg reviewed the place Fort Belvoir has in the community and cited the opening of the new National Museum of the



Front Row, Tanya Bradsher, chief of staff to Congressman Don Beyer; Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Lee District; Col. Michael Greenberg, Fort Belvoir; Supervisor Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District; Stanley Koussis, chairman, Mount Vernon Lee Chamber. Back Row: Alison Ross Tompkins, The Fairfax; Dan Rinzel, Redmon, Peyton & Braswell LLP; Katherine Ward, Mount Vernon Council of Citizen Associations; Peter Sitnik, SITCO Inc.; Cindy Hurrle, Mount Vernon Country Club; Casey Whitmarsh, South Fairfax Chamber; Mark Murray, Fort Belvoir Swim Team; Joel Bernstein, ECCA Payroll; Holly Dougherty, Mount Vernon Lee Chamber.

US Army that will bring more people to use Fort Belvoir and the local community.

"Fort Belvoir has a \$14 billion shared economic impact on the region," said Col. Greenberg, who has worked extensively to forge local and regional partnerships with the Installation.

"The economic threads that run

from Fort Belvoir, down the historic Richmond Highway Corridor, and branch out across our county — drive business, innovation and commercial development," said Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

"This covenant represents the robust health of all aspects of our relationship," said Lusk. "I'm so incredibly hopeful and optimis-

tic for what is on the horizon for the Mount Vernon Lee area, and I know that Fort Belvoir is one of the key constants that will make so much of that progress possible."

Due to Covid-19 restrictions only a small group gathered to sign the Covenant.

"This small group represents only a fraction of those who sup-

port the service members and their families at Fort Belvoir," said Koussis.

The national anthem was sung by local baritone Jim Carmalt with Alison Ross Tompkins of The Fairfax Retirement Community leading the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Restore Our Parks Act Could Create 10,340 Jobs

The president signed the Great American Outdoors Act into law this week, a bill championed by U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA). The bipartisan legislation includes Warner's Restore Our Parks Act, which would help tackle the \$1.1 billion in deferred maintenance at Virginia's parks and could create up to 10,340 jobs in the Commonwealth alone. The legislation overwhelmingly passed in the House of Representatives earlier this week and was approved by the Senate in June.

"As the economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to financially strain communities across the country, this new law will help create tens of thousands of jobs and make a positive economic impact for gateway communities that depend on our national parks," said Warner. "Now that this bill is the law of the land, Virginia's historical sites will finally start receiving crucial repairs that have been postponed for years. I want to thank my colleagues for joining me in my years-long effort to create jobs and



Sen. Mark Warner visited Dyke Marsh in June to talk about bipartisan support for the Great American Outdoors Act.

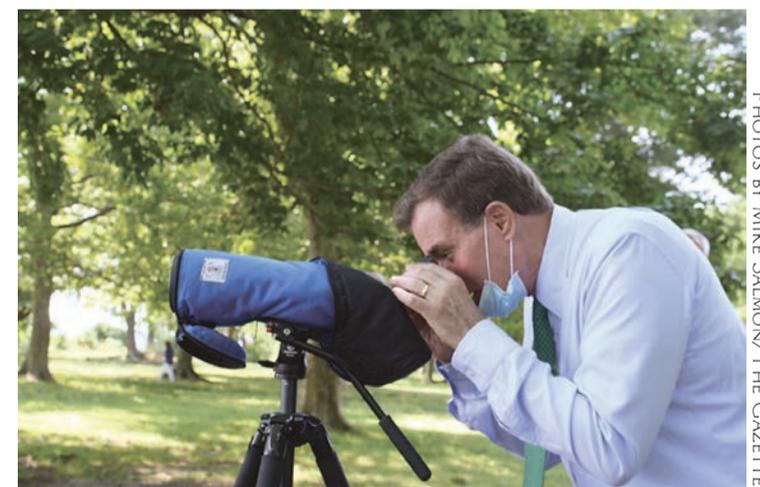
make sure our nation's historical treasures are around for years to come."

Today's bill signing comes nearly three years after Sen. Warner's initial effort to provide relief to national parks in Virginia, where the maintenance backlog currently sits at \$1.1 billion dollars.

In June, the National Park Service released a report that estimated that an average of 40,300 direct jobs and 100,100 direct and indirect jobs would be supported na-

tionally by the Restore Our Parks Act if passed as part of the Great American Outdoors Act. In Virginia, it is estimated that 10,340 jobs would be created or supported as a result of Sen. Warner's push to address the national parks backlog.

In addition, a recent NPS study highlighted the financial impact national parks sites have on Virginia's economy. Last year, 22.8 million individuals from around the world visited national parks in Virginia, spending \$1.2 billion.



Sen. Mark Warner checks out an osprey off the shores of Belle Haven Park, visiting to talk about bipartisan support for the Great American Outdoors Act.

Additionally, national parks in Virginia helped support 17,300 jobs and contributed over \$1.7 billion to the Commonwealth's economy. Because of the economic impact national parks have on communities across the country, more than 800 organizations have pledged their support for the Great American Outdoors Act.

Sen. Warner's effort to address the maintenance backlog began in March 2017, when he worked with Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) to intro-

duce the National Park Legacy Act.

In March 2018, after extensive negotiations among Sens. Warner, Portman, Alexander, and King, the bipartisan group introduced the Restore Our Parks Act, a bipartisan consensus proposal endorsed by the Trump Administration, to invest in overdue maintenance needs at NPS sites. The bill would reduce the maintenance backlog. SEE RESTORE OUR, PAGE 14

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Noel Kaupinen 703.200.1165
Chris Hayes 703.944.7737



VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 8/8, 1PM

Monticello Park | \$969,000

Open floor plan includes a large family room addition with high ceiling, contemporary kitchen, hardwood floors, wood-burning fireplace, and screened-in porch. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths. The outdoor space is fantastic. 3004 Russell Rd. Facebook Live @ThePeeleGroup

Kim Peele & Hope Peele 703.244.5852
www.ThePeeleGroup.biz



Liberty Row | \$1,100,000

Highly coveted, rarely available. 1,767-SF condo. 2 bedrooms, 2 baths. Superb floor plan! Easy, one-level living in private, quiet setting. Quality built, attractive architectural details and built-ins, cozy gas fireplace, French doors to balcony and TWO garage spaces.

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VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 8/8, 12PM

Timber Branch Park | \$1,049,000

Lovely home features a spacious living room with wood-burning fireplace, formal dining room, year-round sitting porch, and updated kitchen. Lower level with family room, wet bar, cedar closet & large laundry area. 719 Fontaine St. Facebook Live @ThePeeleGroup

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Old Town | \$709,000

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www.GenevieveMoorhouse.com



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\$1,995,000**

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Babs Beckwith 703.627.5421
www.BabsBeckwith.com



OPEN SUN 8/9, 2-4PM

**Old Town
\$895,000**

Cute Victorian overlooking Lee Street Park with seasonal river views! Living room with wood-burning fireplace, separate dining room, kitchen with adjacent atrium; den in the back with exposed brick wall, full bath with a skylight. 2 bedrooms + den/3rd BR upstairs. Brick patio in rear. 603 S Lee St.

Paul Anderson 703.408.0676
www.paulvanderson.com



OPEN SUN 8/9, 1-4PM

**Parkfairfax
\$340,000**

Beautifully redesigned 1 bedroom with spacious open living area with windows on 3 sides. Stunning new kitchen, gleaming wood floors throughout, newly renovated bathroom, large bedroom, utility closet with washer and dryer, floored attic for extra storage. 3410 Martha Custis Drive

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Twenty-six graduates earning various degrees including Associate, Bachelor's and Master's were honored.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF INOVA MOUNT VERNON HOSPITAL

Linda Owusu, left, joins Ruth Sajous, Jennifer Lybarger, and Amanda Whetzel receiving advanced nursing degrees this year and celebrated their achievements at a hospital ceremony in their honor.

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Celebrates Academic Achievements of their Team Members

Formal ceremonies were nixed by the pandemic, but that didn't hide the smiles.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

On Monday, Aug. 3, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital celebrated the academic achievements of team members who were unable to 'walk' this year due to COVID-19. Twenty-six graduates earning various degrees from Associate, Bachelor's and Master's were honored. Hospital staff members watched the event via zoom, and cheered on their colleagues as each graduate's name was individually recognized.

"I am so proud of our Inova Mount Vernon team members, who persevered and achieved advanced degrees within their specific field despite this unprecedented time. I wanted to honor their accomplishments, especially since many were unable to celebrate with their schools and classmates. Pursuing higher learning and personal goals while balancing work and family life is no small feat. It demonstrates the dedication and talented teams of nurses, technicians, therapists and staff we are privileged to have here at Inova Mount Vernon," said Roberta Tinch, MHA, FACHE, Hospital President and Administrator of Inova Musculoskeletal. "This celebration reflects Inova's commitment to support all team member's



Hospital Administration Team, from left, Tammy Barnes, Vice President of Finance, IMVH; J. Stephen Jones, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of Inova Health System; Roberta Tinch, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital President and Administrator of the Inova Musculoskeletal; Tyler Winks, Senior Director of Hospital Operations, IMVH; Alquieta Brown, PhD, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, IMVH.

President and Administrator of Inova Musculoskeletal. "This celebration reflects Inova's commitment to support all team member's

desire to continuously grow and improve."

The hospital in Mount Vernon does not have a nursing school on its own, so each one of the graduates completed their schooling at various locations, and applied to the hospital with diploma in hand. Because these universities were unable to host graduation, hospital leadership decided to host a ceremony for employees who graduated this year allowing them to 'walk' in their cap and gown.

Graduates are as follows:

Florence Afriyie, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Chamberlain University
Lucy Aisedu, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Chamberlain University
Mariella Cardenas, Physical Therapist Assistant
Kristin Dipini, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, University of Texas
Derdenemandakh Dorjrenchin, Master of Science in Nursing, Nursing Practitioner
Nikki Falcone, Master of Science in Psychology, University of Phoenix
Kathleen Flannery, Master of Science in Nursing, Grand Canyon University
Kisha Gaskins, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Grand Canyon University
Lamesha Glover, Master of Science in Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, Chamberlain University
Mackenzie Hamilton, Nurse Practitioner, George Washington

University
Kara Johnson, Master of Science in Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, South University
Savannah Johnson, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Chamberlain University
Yong-Gi Kim, Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Ranjeeta Lama, Associate Degree in Nursing
Nonye Mbonuwu, Psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner, Grand Canyon University
Elizabeth Onyijekwe, Psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner, Walden University
Linda Owusu, Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner, Drexel University
Juliette Pritchett, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Chamberlain University
Jackie Quiroz, Bachelor of Art in Medical Imaging Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Cardina Ross, Master of Science in Nursing, Grand Canyon University
Kristine Rowell, Master Science in Nursing, Nurse Practitioner
Moriah Sedlak, Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Stefanie Tolosa, Bachelor of Art in Medical Imaging Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Monica Vockel, Master of Public Health, Master of Science in Nursing, Grand Canyon University
Amanda Whetzel, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Old Dominion University
Nilda Wiman, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Grand Canyon University



Electrical Event Cause Of Fort Hunt House Fire

Saturday, Aug. 1, at approximately 11:25 a.m., units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the City of Alexandria Fire Department were dispatched for a reported house fire in the 2100 block of Rampart Drive in the Fort Hunt area of Fairfax County. Units arrived on the scene of a

two-story, single-family home with fire showing from the garage and extending to the attic. Crews were also confronted with a running fuel fire, from a ruptured fuel oil tank in the garage, that involved the driveway, front yard, and a portion of the street. Firefighters quickly brought the fire under control. One unit rapidly contained

the fuel spill utilizing diking and damming procedures. One civilian sustained several dog bite injuries while assisting with the evacuation of a dog. There were no reported firefighter injuries. One occupant was home at the time of the fire. The fire was discovered when a swimming pool

service technician arrived for service and found smoke and fire coming from the attached garage. He alerted the occupant to the fire and assisted with the evacuation of her and a dog. Smoke alarms were present but did not sound due to the location of the fire. Fire Investigators determined

that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the garage. The cause of the fire was an electrical event involving household wiring in the attic space above the garage. Two occupants were displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was offered and declined. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$112,000.

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¹Based on national market share, as of 2019. Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract and a contract with the State Medicaid Program. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare. Y0066_191120_105130_M CST29038_H7464-001-000

WELLBEING

Back-to-School Vaccinations Required, Even with Distance Learning

Free vaccine clinics are designed to help ensure that all children are vaccinated.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE GAZETTE

While there's a cloud of uncertainty over what the back-to school season will look like this year, one thing is certain: children still need to be vaccinated. Pandemic-induced online learning might lead some parents to believe that vaccinations are not mandatory, however, the form in which academics are offered this school year won't alter immunization requirements.

"It is important for parents to know that school required immunizations are mandatory ... even if students attend school virtually in the fall," said Shauna Severo, Director of Health Services with the Fairfax County Health Department.

"Vaccinations are required by the Department of Education, a requirement that applies to all school systems in the state, not just Arlington," added Cara O'Donnell, Acting Public Information Officer, Public Health Division, Arlington Department of Human Services. "This vaccinating is critical to preventing outbreaks of common vaccine-preventable illnesses when schools eventually reopen. We are offering appointments for kids who require catch up vaccinations to be in compliance with ... vaccination requirements for school entry."

This requirement also applies to students in the State of Maryland. "At a time when our healthcare system is already overwhelmed with COVID19, it is important that we avoid outbreaks of preventable deadly diseases," said Cindy Edwards, Senior Administrator for Communicable Disease and Epidemiology. "That is why we encourage Montgomery County families to reach out to your doctor and make a plan for staying up to date with recommended vaccines."

Concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, however, have discouraged some parents from seeking vaccines for their children. "We are offering these community based vaccination clinics and Tdap (tetanus (T), diphtheria (D), and pertussis) clinics in our offices because we've seen a decrease in the number of vaccination appointments this year," said Tina Dale, Communications Specialist, Fairfax County Health Department.

As in years past, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax and Montgomery counties are offering free vaccines to families who could not afford them, but this year, appointments are required and counties are taking necessary precautions to ease the minds of parents who fear exposure to COVID. "To minimize exposure risk, the health department will adhere to strict safety protocols, including limiting the number of appointments per site, requiring the wearing of face coverings, and ensuring appropriate social distancing measures are in place," said Dale.

Pediatricians reported a 30-76 percent decrease in administering routine childhood immunizations earlier this spring, in part because well-child visits were being conducted virtually. To avoid compounding the coronavirus pandemic, the CDC emphasized the importance of routine immunizations, a cornerstone of public health.

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COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Even though the start of the school year will mean distance learning at home this year, children are still required to be vaccinated to enroll.

Clinics Offering Free Vaccines

Immunization Records and Appointments are Required

ARLINGTON COUNTY

Arlington County Immunization Clinic
2100 Washington Blvd., 2nd floor (Sequoia Plaza)
For more information or to make an appointment: 703-228-1200

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Dennis Avenue Health Center Immunization Clinic
For more information and to schedule an appointment:
240-777-1050

FAIRFAX COUNTY

- ❖ Aug. 8, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Rd., Springfield
 - ❖ Aug. 15, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., St. Anthony Catholic, 3305 Glen Carlyn Rd., Bailey's Crossroads
 - ❖ Aug. 17, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., London Towne Elementary, 6100 Stone Rd. Centreville
 - ❖ Aug. 20, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., Annandale District Office, 7611 Little River Tnpk, #400E, Annandale
 - ❖ Aug. 29, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Mt. Vernon District Office, 8350 Richmond Hwy, #233, Alexandria
 - ❖ Sept. 3, 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., First Baptist Church of Springfield, 7300 Gary St., Springfield
 - ❖ Sept. 5, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Location to be Determined
- For more information and to schedule an appointment:
703-246-6010

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

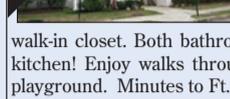
Immunization Services
4480 King Street, Second Floor
For more information or to make an appointment: 703-746-4888

It's important to prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases like pertussis (also known as whooping cough), meningitis, rotavirus, measles, and others. Reach out to your pediatrician to find out what accommodations they are making, whether your children are up to date on their vaccinations, and to schedule their inoculations. Remember, vaccines are critical to protecting the health and welfare of our children and our community. We don't want to precipitate a second public health crisis.



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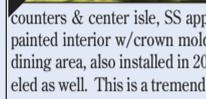
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Alex/Olde Mill Condominiums \$249,000
5704 Shadwell Court #95

Cozy 2 bedroom 2 bath condo, 3 miles from Fort Belvoir. 25 minutes to DC on GW Parkway. Top level unit with cathedral ceiling, wood burning fireplace, attic storage, and private balcony overlooking woodlands. Master bedroom has large walk-in closet. Both bathrooms have been recently updated. Separate laundry room off kitchen! Enjoy walks through Jackson Abbott Wetland Refuge, with tennis courts and playground. Minutes to Ft. Belvoir (S).

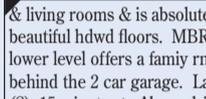
NEW LISTING
OPEN SUNDAY 1-4



Alex/Mt. Vernon Grove \$659,900
4207 Robertson Blvd.

Welcome to this large beautiful 2 story split situated on an expansive, flat, .34 acre lot w/a fenced bkyd, & 1 car side entry garage. A major renovation in 2015 to include: new roof, kitchen opened up to living & dining rooms w/granite counters & center isle, SS appliances, cherry cabinets & oak floors to match the rest of the refinished hdwds, painted interior w/crown molding, 6 panel doors throughout. A/C replaced in 2019. Large 19x12 deck off the dining area, also installed in 2015. 2 wood burning FPLS inspected & improved as necessary. All 3 baths remodeled as well. This is a tremendous buy & ideally situated in Mt. Vernon. 5 mins to Ft. Belvoir (S), 17-18 mins to S. Alexandria (N), 27 mins to National Airport (N) & 28-30 mins to the Pentagon (N). Nothing like it on the market!!

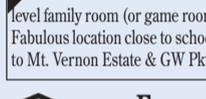
COMING SOON



Alex/Riverside Estates Upper \$600's
8503 Cherry Valley

Riverside Estates' largest split foyer model (Concord) w/2 car garage & lots of updates, i.e., roof 2001, HVAC 2012, baths 2009, furnace 2001, updated double pane windows 2019. Kitchen was opened to the dining & living rooms & is absolutely stunning: granite & quartz counters, large island w/seating capacity & beautiful hdwd floors. MBR & MBA share a lovely gas FPL to add charm to the master suite. A large lower level offers a family rm which also has a gas FPL, a 4th BR & 3rd full bath. Plenty of storage behind the 2 car garage. Large lovely fenced bkyd, perfect for entertaining. 7 minutes to Ft. Belvoir (S), 15 minutes to Alexandria, (N), 25 mins to National Airport (N) and 33 mins to the Pentagon (N).

SOLD



Alex/Riverside Estates \$590,000
3105 Battersea Lane

Delightful 4BR, 3BA home in sought after Riverside Estates -1 car garage. Corner lot w/lovely landscaping. Bump out addition (family rm) on main level beyond the kitchen & dining room. Covered deck/porch off back. Large lower level family room (or game room) w/fireplace. Beautifully refinished hdwd floors, newly painted interior & exterior. Fabulous location close to schools, transportation, Fairfax Co Rec center which includes indoor pool. A mile & a half to Mt. Vernon Estate & GW Pkway for beautiful commute along the Potomac River. 10 mins to Ft. Belvoir.



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Paid Sick Leave

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

The safest way to avoid COVID-19 right now is to stay apart, especially if we are sick, even just a little sick. It's difficult to do, unfortunately. We need to work and we all enjoy each other's company — humans are social animals — and there are a myriad of ways in which we get together: in schools, shops, our houses of worship, gyms, and at work. Yet all of these and more are unsafe viral transmission opportunities. We must socially distance ourselves from each other while this virus is still able to infect us. One important tool most employers use to stem that transmission is to provide paid sick leave to their workers, keeping them isolated at home from fellow employees while sick. Unfortunately, there are still some employers who don't offer this protection.

While we had many important laws coming out of the legislative session this year, without a doubt one of my biggest disappointments

was the setback experienced in passing the legislation providing for paid sick days for Virginia's workers. Now, as we face the COVID-19 pandemic and look ahead to getting back to work, the need for guaranteed paid sick leave for all workers has become even more acute. The reality is that 1.2 million workers in Virginia have no paid sick time or any paid time off, which equals approximately 32% of Virginia's workforce as of June of this year.

As we return to Richmond in two short weeks for a unique special session of the General Assembly, providing paid sick leave for Virginia's workers is a dire need, and is at the forefront of our priorities. Too many Virginia workers have been faced with the incredibly difficult decision to sacrifice the time needed to recover from illnesses, visit their doctors, and also care for their sick children or family members, in order to continue go-



Krizek

ing to work so that they can make ends meet. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this sacrifice has exacerbated the public health crisis, as sick people must continue coming to work because they get no paid time off (or worse, possibly lose their jobs by staying home) and thus continue to risk spreading the virus throughout our community.

The current proposal, a bill to be introduced in the House by Del. Elizabeth Guzman and in the Senate by Sen. Barbara Favola, will require all employers of any size to provide at least 40 hours of paid sick time for all of its full-time employees. 40 hours is the average national standard in most states, although some states' requirements are more generous. Workers would accrue the leave at a rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked, which is again, the national standard. This bill would only cover full-time public and private sector workers

as defined by using the IRS definition of those who work 32 hrs or more. In a pandemic like the one we are facing today, all employers would also be required to provide 10 days (80 hours) of paid time off for exposure to COVID-19, which will allow time to quarantine with pay and not lose your job because you did the right thing and isolated yourself.

The requirements of this bill would go into effect on Jan. 1, 2021 (the Virginia Constitution states that "all laws enacted at a special session... shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month following the month of adjournment of the special session"). One thing that this pandemic has made clear is that there are employees that are in dire need of the ability to stay home when sick, and the much-needed change in this law with the expansion of at least a week of paid time off will be a welcome protection for workers even when the pandemic is over. Indeed, there is never a good time to work while sick.

The Path to Marijuana Legalization

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

The prohibition of marijuana in America has clearly failed. After six hard years of building support, educating colleagues, and workshopping legislation, I was able to pass SB2, my bill to eliminate the criminal penalty for personal possession of up to an ounce of marijuana and downgrade the offense to a \$25 pre-payable fine processed much like a traffic ticket. House Majority Leader Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria) passed companion legislation. Our bills were a critical step to reform our criminal justice system and lay the groundwork for the equitable legalization of cannabis.

According to a July 2019 Gallup poll, 12% of adult Americans regularly consume marijuana. Eleven states have fully legalized responsible use by adults. However, until SB2 went into effect on July 1, 26,000 Virginians were being arrested for possessing marijuana every year. They were punished with devastating, life-long consequences for a victimless and arbitrary crime. Arrests for marijuana possession can hurt job prospects and negatively impact student financial aid, access to housing, and even child custody decisions. This issue was exacerbated by the harsh

reality that Black and Brown Virginians are 340% more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white Virginians, even though white and Black Virginians use marijuana at the same rate -- according to a study by the ACLU.

Black Arlingtonians were eight times more likely than white Arlingtonians to be arrested for marijuana possession. When arrested, penalties were more harshly enforced against Black and Brown Virginians. Marijuana decriminalization was a moral and economic imperative during the 2020 legislative session, both because of the cost to minority communities and the ballooning cost of enforcement on our state's budget (we had been spending over \$100 million a year on enforcement). With this important step taken care of, it is now time to move towards equitable legalization.

Decriminalization builds a short-term safety net to remove the overly-punitive enforcement of possession of marijuana, but long-term equitable reform requires bringing the benefits of legalization to the communities disparately impacted by the war on drugs. Based on the study of the eleven states and the District of Columbia which have



Adam Ebbin

already legalized adult-use, the sale of marijuana through a regulated marketplace can both net millions in state revenue and create strong small, minority-owned businesses throughout the state. Washington,

a state similar in size to Virginia, netted nearly \$400 million in tax revenues from legal marijuana in 2019. In Illinois, which recently legalized, a large portion of the tax revenue is allotted to grants to reduce gun violence and poverty and provide social services. A state-regulated retail market ensures product testing and labeling, minimizes the illicit marketplace which contributes to violence in our communities, and reduces youth access to cannabis.

COVID-19 has undercut funds for key state services and hit minority communities disproportionately hard. Creating equitable marijuana reform can be an important tool in our policymaking toolbox to address these issues.

According to a Gallup Poll, 66% of Americans support the legalization of marijuana. In Virginia, those supporters consist of a broad and diverse coalition that I was glad to work with to pass decriminalization in this year's legislative session and look forward to

working with to pass legalization in 2021. This list includes Attorney General Mark Herring, Sen. Jennifer McClellan (D-Richmond), Del. Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria), Del. Steve Heretick (D-Portsmouth), and Virginia NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws).

The Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) is expediting a study on the potential implementation of legalization due to be received in November. This dovetails with an executive workgroup that will be composed of members of the Governor's cabinet to provide guidance on the best regulatory model for cannabis in Virginia so that when we introduce legislation in January, it is ready for primetime. While we are anxious to introduce this legislation, real leadership requires making the right choices for the long-term benefit of every Virginian. Equitable reform demands appropriate safety regulations, support for disparately-impacted communities, and a structure for taxation. Legal cannabis should support Virginia's small businesses, not simply pad the pockets of massive corporations. Small, Women-owned, and Minority-owned (SWaM) businesses can play a critical role in the en-

SEE THE PATH, PAGE 14

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A Connection Newspaper





PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

Do you have a parking pass dangling from your rearview mirror? What about rosary beads or a graduation tassel? Police officers can use that as a pretext to pull you over and ask to search your car.

Dangling Liberty

Lawmakers to consider putting pretextual stops in the rearview mirror.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

It was shortly after 2 p.m. on a clear chilly spring day several years ago in Southside Virginia when an officer with the Waverly Police Department noticed something dangling from the rearview mirror of a green sedan on Route 460. The white officer decided the dangling object, 3" by 5" parking pass for nearby Fort Lee, was a pretext to pull over the vehicle carrying two African American men. The officer ended up searching the vehicle, finding drugs and arresting both the men — all because a parking pass for Fort Lee was dangling from the rearview mirror.

"There was no evidence ever presented that it was obstructing his view," said Paul Roskin, a Hopewell-based attorney who represented one of the two Black men in the car that day. "And when he had the chance to see if it was obstructing his view, he didn't even check to see if it was obstructing his view."

Roskin tried to suppress the evidence obtained in the traffic stop, arguing that it was an unconstitutional infringement of his client's Fourth Amendment rights. If the police officer was legitimately concerned about the parking pass obstructing the view of the driver, Roskin argued, he would have checked to see if it was blocking the line of sight. But the officer's own testimony proved that he did not do that. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court of Virginia, where justices issued a six-to-five decision in favor of the police.

"Why did they stop this vehicle as opposed to the others?" asks Roskin. "They don't have to say honestly that they thought there was something special about this particular hanging object that made them want to stop it as opposed to the hundred others that you might see everyday on the road."

PRETEXTUAL STOPS have raised concerns about racial profiling for years, and advocates have called on lawmakers to crack

down on police officers pulling over vehicles for tinted windows or loud exhaust. Now that members of the General Assembly are returning to Richmond, they'll be considering several measures aimed at cracking down on pretextual stops like the one in Waverly.

Del. Mark Levine (D-45) is considering a bill that would prohibit officers from stopping vehicles for anything other than a moving violation.

"There's a long history of police stopping someone for driving while Black or driving while Black in the wrong neighborhood or driving a car that doesn't look like it belongs there," said Levine, who is chairman of the Public Safety Subcommittee. "They use these pretexts to ask for a search, and sometimes these things can lead to very deadly outcomes."

House members are still taking testimony in advance of the session, although senators are taking a different approach. They're already knee-deep in drafting legislation. Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) says two bills are in the works on pretextual stops. One would prohibit officers from searching someone based on the odor of marijuana, the pretextual stop that has attracted the most attention in recent years.

The bill would also prevent officers from pulling over vehicles based on things like tinted windows, loud exhaust or objects dangling from the rearview mirror. A separate bill would allow the attorney general to force consent decrees for localities that engage in racially biased policing.

"If you have a department that's engaging in lots of pretextual stops, it'll play out in the data. That's racially biased policing," said Surovell, who is spearheading the Senate's effort on criminal justice reform for the special session. "If they seem to be stopping black people a lot for not using their turn signal but not any white people for it, that's what you need a consent decree for."

SEE DANGLING LIBERTY, PAGE 11

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Restoring Ecological Function to County Properties

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

On a recent 90-plus-degree sunny day, the narrow-leaf mountain mint outside Supervisor Dan Storck's window at the Mount Vernon Government Center was literally buzzing. At least 50 bees and a striking common buckeye butterfly were nectaring on the white blossoms.

"These plants are usually covered with native bees some of which are so tiny you might not notice them," said Cathy Ledec, Mount Vernonte and county Tree Commission Chair, adding, "This is a fantastic bloomer and the bees and butterflies love it."

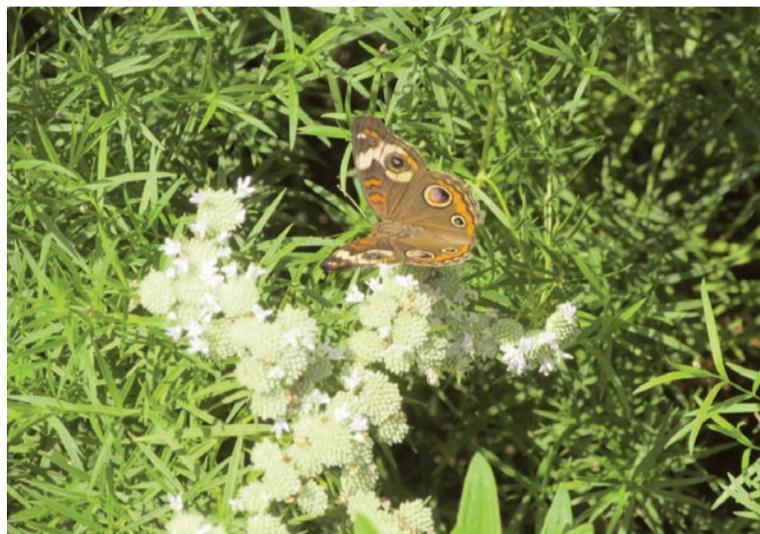
The plant is part of a makeover on the building's grounds, a project Ledec headed in 2019, to use natural landscaping and install native plants instead of turf grass and non-native ornamental plants typically found outside public buildings.

More county properties could be transformed under a policy adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. On June 9, on a vote of 8 to 0, the Board amended the county's comprehensive plan to apply natural landscaping approaches to county properties. Natural landscaping largely minimizes lawns and uses native plants to restore natural ecological functions like retaining stormwater, cleaning the air and controlling sediment and erosion. Native plants support the native insects and other wildlife with which they co-evolved.

Supervisor Storck, who initiated the amendment in 2018, said, "Natural landscaping practices and materials help to protect and enhance existing natural resources, including soil and water quality, mitigate climate change, improve and preserve air quality and contribute to resource conservation. The Mount Vernon Governmental Center is one example of the use of natural landscaping to improve County properties."

Calling it a "holistic approach," Chairman Jeff McKay agreed: "Each site has a role to play in the creation of a healthy environment for both people and wildlife. Both the aesthetic and ecological functions of landscaping throughout built and natural environments should be considered. By prioritizing native plants, healthy soils, improving biodiversity and minimizing the disturbance of natural habitats at our County facilities, we are working to ensure a resilient and healthier environment."

At a May 14 Planning Commis-



The mountain mint plant and common buckeye butterfly at the Mount Vernon Government Center.



Volunteers installed native plants at the Mount Vernon Government Center as part of a natural landscaping project.

sion hearing and the June 9 Board hearing, supporters urged officials to adopt natural landscaping as formal policy in the comprehensive plan, the official guide to land use decision-making. Eight speakers argued that natural landscaping can reduce pollution and noise from mowers, reduce heat around buildings and paved areas and save money long-term once plants are established.

Stratford Landing resident Elizabeth Martin stressed that being out in nature "significantly decreases anxiety, depression, anger, con-

fusion and fatigue. Natural landscaping supports the wellbeing of county employees. Members of the public who walk through wooded areas and natural landscapes on their way to meetings will arrive less angry, anxious, depressed, confused and fatigued than they do now."

Margaret Fisher of the Plant NOVA Natives campaign cited the decline in undisturbed land in the county, and offered, "It is a delight to know that Fairfax County will be leading this movement, demonstrating how beautiful and practi-



Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) helping with the natural landscaping project at the Mount Vernon Government Center.

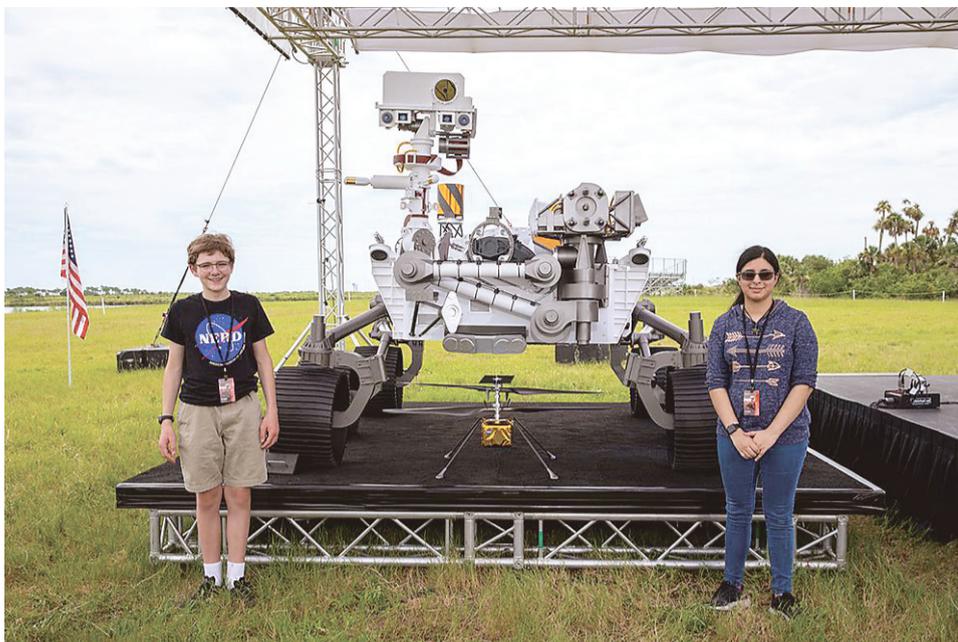
cal it is to create an environment where humans and non-humans can thrive together in our shared ecosystem."

No opponents spoke at either hearing.

The county has used this approach at several Mount Vernon sites, including West Potomac High School, Martha Washington Library and Gilbert McCutcheon Park. The Mount Vernon Government Center project included the county's Facilities Management Division, Fairfax Master Natural-

ists, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia's Audubon-At-Home program, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and Earth Sangha.

Calling for more local action, University of Delaware entomologist Douglas Tallamy argues that national parks and conservation preserves in isolated patches cannot alone curtail species losses or restore ecological health. With this policy implemented, Fairfax County can be a leader and example, say proponents.



PHOTOS BY ERIN MATHER

Students Alex Mather, at left, and Vaneza Rupani, stand near the countdown clock at the News Center at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on July 28, 2020. Mather named the Perseverance rover, and Rupani named the Ingenuity helicopter.

Lake Braddock Seventh Grader Makes a Giant Step for Mankind

Alexander Mather wins the contest to name Mars rover and witnesses the lift off.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

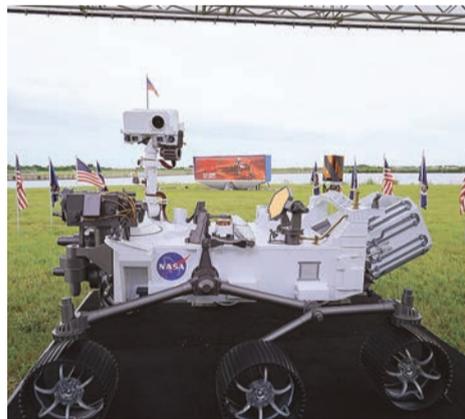
Standing on the viewing balcony with NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine, NASA scientist Dr. Lori Glaze, engineers, and his sister Kyra, Burke seventh grader Alexander Mather was in his element. He recently named the Mars rover "Perseverance," and won a NASA contest to earn his place on the deck at Cape Canaveral.

It took perseverance for the NASA team to send a rocket to Mars, and more perseverance for Alexander to win a competition to name the Mars rover that's packed onto the NASA rocket, so it was an all-around fantastic experience that he will never forget.

"These were American heroes," he was out there with. "Perseverance just kind of came to me, it was best for the mission, that's why I chose it," Alexander said. Perseverance has a human quality, and that played heavily on his choice.

The name contest began last August. Nearly 4,700 volunteer judges consisting of educators, professionals and space enthusiasts from around the country, reviewed submissions to help narrow the pool down to 155 semifinalists. Once that group was whittled down to nine finalists, the public had five days to weigh in on their favorites, logging more than 770,000 votes online, with the results submitted to NASA for consideration. The nine finalists also talked with a panel of experts, including Dr. Glaze; NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins; rover driver Nick Wiltsie at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California; and Clara Ma, who, as a sixth-grade student in 2009, named Curiosity.

The experience has had a huge impact on Alex, said his mother Erin Mather, who was on the trip to the launch pad in Florida. "Our



The actual rover "Perseverance."

favorite part was definitely the launch, the NASA folks seemed calm and confident but we couldn't help but feel nervous," she said.

Vaneza Rupani, a junior at Tuscaloosa County High School in Northport, Ala., also named NASA's Mars Helicopter traveling to Mars with Perseverance through the same contest. Her name for the helicopter was "Ingenuity," and she was also on the balcony watching the launching.

According to NASA, perseverance is expected to land on Mars on Feb. 18, 2021. The rover will search for habitable conditions in the ancient past and signs of past microbial life on Mars. It will be the first mission to get samples of the planet and bring them back to Earth. The launch date was originally planned for July 17, but they pushed it back a few days, so the landing date could change by a few days.

Classroom Launchpad

As with others his age, Alexander has many other interests in addition to space travels. He's into robotics also, and explained the link to the term "Arduino," which is an

SEE LAKE BRADDOCK, PAGE 10

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Another **Mount Vernon Gazette** Community Partnership

Lake Braddock

FROM PAGE 9

“open-source electronic prototyping platform enabling users to create interactive electronic objects,” their company information stated. Alex credits his parents for sending him to space camp for his eleventh birthday, and his father David said that the camp was a big influence. “He wants to go to Mars. He’s always been interested in science and space,” David Mather said.

In early March when the votes had been tallied up, the officials at Lake Braddock got word of Alex’s winning entry and gathered everyone in the auditorium for the announcement. The surprise announcement was aired live from NASA in California. Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for the science mission directorate at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C., says, “Curiosity is always a part of exploration, but the flip side of curiosity is perseverance. Perseverance and curiosity are what exploration is all about.” So it was Alex’s entry along with his essay, which he read aloud, that won the main prize.

In the essay, Alex talked about the achievements of the human race. “The human race will always persevere into the future,” the essay said. Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand addressed Alex and the students at Lake Braddock. “This school is planting the seed in you. This school will have a lasting presence in space,” Brabrand said.

Contest Entry

Alex’s mother originally saw the contest come across the NASA.gov feed and asked Alex if he’d be interested. “Once I saw the article announcing the contest, I was so excited that not doing it was not an option,” Alex said. Sister Kyra, a Sangster Elementary School student, looked up to him. “I’m really proud of my brother. He did an amazing thing,” she said. Alex went to Sangster also.

Alex’s goals are to get his high school diploma, go to college and major in engineering or space engineering, and then work at NASA. He’s shown interest over the summer with model rockets and programming.

“We hope this has a lasting impact,” Erin Mather said.

The naming contest partnership is part of a Space Act Agreement in educational and public outreach efforts between NASA; Battelle of Columbus, Ohio; and Future Engineers. Amazon Web Services is a prize provider for the Mars 2020 naming contest.

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Dangling Liberty

FROM PAGE 7

REPUBLICANS ACCUSE Democrats of hypocrisy, pointing to several new pretextual stops they've added in recent years. For example, police officers can now pull over vehicles if the driver is talking on a cell phone or if a passenger in the car is not wearing a seat belt. They can also pull over a vehicle if a child is not in a car seat. These are some examples of recent additions to the code Democrats supported for so-called primary offenses, actions that can now serve as a primary reason for an officer to pull over a vehicle.

"When I got to the General Assembly in 2003, there were people on the Democratic side of the aisle who were concerned about giving police pretexts to stop people," said Sen. Mark Obenshain (R-26). "Sometime along the way, those concerns evaporated and were consumed by a desire to change people's behavior."

During the discussion about cell phone use, for example, Obenshain said making it a primary offense would lead to police officers being able to pull over any driver on the suspicion that they might have been touching a cell phone. He lost that argument. And now that the criminal-justice reform effort is shining a new spotlight on the issue, he says lawmakers should take a look at all the other pretextual stops and be consistent about

the issue.

"All of a sudden these defend-the-police activists in the General Assembly have decided that we need to crack down on pretextual stops by police," said Obenshain, who is a member of the Senate committee that will be considering criminal-justice reforms during the special session. "If you're concerned about pretextual stops, you ought to be concerned about it across the board, not just in limited circumstances."

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM has emerged as a political flashpoint after the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was murdered in Minneapolis by white police officers. That event touched off nationwide protests calling for reforms like better training for police officers and use-of-force standards. But Justice Forward Virginia points out that police officers in Minneapolis had escalation training, implicit bias training, use-of-force standards and three civilian review boards. Minnesota requires more than twice as many training hours as Virginia, an indication that training might not be an easy solution to the problem.

"If we're really going to solve this problem, we need to get at it at its root," said Haywood, executive director of Justice Forward Virginia. "You don't solve racism in

policing by asking police officers to be less racist, and you don't solve excessive force by asking them to be gentler when they take somebody into custody."

Instead of focusing on new training requirements or new use-of-force standards, Haywood says, lawmakers need to focus on laws that enable police officers to focus on the laws that enable racist policing. The best way to do that is to reduce pretextual policing, which he says often serves as a cover story for officers to act on their implicit bias. That way police officers can stop Black people simply for having rosary beads dangling from their rearview mirror or a license plate tag light that's not working.

"I've been pulled over plenty of times. No police officer has ever asked to search my car," said Haywood, who is white. "I don't think white people think about this enough, just how damaging that can be to one's psyche and how damaging that can be to the trust between the police department and the community they're supposed to be serving."

POLICE OFFICERS have hundreds of reasons they can use as a pretext for pulling over Black people, everything from a high-mount brake light that's not working to a Washington football team license plate frame that partially obscures a license plate. The way Virginia law works right now, of-

ficers don't need to be certain that a violation of the law is happening. All they need is essentially a hunch that a parking tag from Fort Lee might be obstructing a driver's view of the road.

"The reason they're pulling cars over at 11 o'clock at night is not because they're worried about signaling," said Andrew Elders, a deputy public defender for Fairfax County. "It's because it's part of their drug-enforcement strategy."

Elders remembers a case back in 2006, when he represented a man who was pulled over because he had an object dangling from his rearview mirror. The officer found drugs in the car, and the man was charged with possession of marijuana. When the case got to court, the police officer could not remember anything about the dangling object that served as the pretext to the traffic stop — nothing about what it was or how big it was or where it was.

Elders tried to suppress the evidence gathered in the stop, but the judge allowed the case to move forward anyway.

"Nobody in my neighborhood gets pulled over for that stuff, and that's what this is all about," said Elders. "It's not about the thing. It's about stopping the person in the car and wanting to ask them some questions because you think they are the kind of person who might be committing a crime."

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POTOMAC ALMANAC

Thai Signature Wants to Leave Its Mark on King Street

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Nestled in the heart of King Street, there's a new Thai flavor coming to town. Thai Signature has opened its doors at 722 King Street, formerly the longtime home of Geranio Ristorante, and it's aiming to bring some of Thailand's best street food to American palates. It's the cuisine that reminds owner Golf Wiwattanachaisaeng of home.

"Because I'm from the countryside of my country -- not in the city -- I like to eat street food, food from the countryside," Wiwattanachaisaeng said.

And he wants to win Alexandri-

ans over with it as well.

Some of the highlights of Thai Signature's menu include the Crying Tiger, a traditional Northeast dish featuring grilled sirloin steak with basil and red onions served alongside a papaya salad and sticky rice. Or, Wiwattanachaisaeng says, try the E-Saan Chicken, a grilled marinated chicken dish also served with a papaya salad and sticky rice with spicy tamarind sauce and sweet chili sauce.

"The middle of Thailand, they like to eat a little bit sweet, so I recommend the Khao Moo Dang," Wiwattanachaisaeng said. "It's like a steamed rice with marinated pork with our spices and herbs. We marinate and we grill and we serve with a gravy, rare pork, and moo

IF YOU GO

Thai Signature, 722 King St.
Hours: 11:30-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11:30-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.
Try this: "For the appetizer, you must try the Thai chicken wing, pork stick, fried pork or fried chicken," says owner Golf Wiwattanachaisaeng.

dang sauce."

And for Thai-food fans looking for something a bit more familiar, Wiwattanachaisaeng assures diners he's there for them.

"You can see some dishes different from the other restaurants, but I also have standard dishes also, like pad Thai, drunken noodles," Wiwattanachaisaeng said.

And he says the curries are standouts, as well.

"I love the curry; we have very good curry, green curry and Panang curry are very good," he said.

pickup. Or dine in, either in the restaurant or outdoors, with all the distancing and safety requirements in effect.

After Thai Signature's soft opening, Wiwattanachaisaeng says the feedback has been largely positive. "We're getting better and better," he said.

And, he says, he's happy to finally have opened the restaurant's doors in Alexandria.

"I love Old Town -- not really city, and not really country," he said. "... I love this area."

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.

Alexandria Symphony Reimagines 2020-2021 Season

ASO postpones main series to Fall 2021.

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO) has postponed concerts originally scheduled for the 2020-2021 main subscription series.

"ASO Music Director Jim Ross put together a thrilling package of programs for this coming season," said ASO Executive Director George Hanson. "It breaks our hearts not to be able to present them as planned due to the current health crisis. To preserve the integrity of Jim's vision, we have moved the entire season's programming, virtually intact, into the 2021-2022 season."

For the current 2020-2021 season ASO

will continue to present live music in outdoor venues around Alexandria with small ensembles and limited, socially-distanced audiences. If conditions permit, indoor venues might be incorporated in Spring 2021.

This summer the symphony convened a task force consisting of Trustees, musicians, staff and community members to consider the feasibility of presenting the main subscription series, which was planned and announced prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The task force recommended the postponement to protect the health and safety of its patrons, musicians, staff and volunteers.

"The global pandemic has sadly forced

many arts organizations to cancel or postpone performances," said ASO Board President Melynda Wilcox. "We look forward to presenting this exciting series when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, ASO remains active, bringing live music to the community in creative new ways."

The plans for ASO's 2020-2021 season, now slated for 2021-2022, involve collaborations with arts groups including the Alexandria Choral Society, Alexandria Film Festival, BalletNOVA, and the National Symphony Orchestra horn section.

"Our 2021-2022 season will be bursting with energy—full of masterworks, collabo-

rations, and imaginative presentations," says Maestro James Ross. "By next fall we expect to be able to move indoors with the large-scale programs we had planned. It will truly be a meaningful and unforgettable season, one that will inspire people to re-gather."

In the fall, our ASO Sympatico program will continue to serve students at John Adams Elementary and Patrick Henry K-8 school through online sessions modeled after those that were provided this spring when school buildings were closed.

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Schedule

Thursday, Aug. 6 -- Willow Hill (Country), 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Aug. 7 -- The Jakob's Ferry Stragglers, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 8 -- Ordinary Elephant, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Aug. 13 -- John McCutcheon, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Aug. 14 -- Alice Howe with Freebo, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Aug. 21 -- Lee District Nights: Frank Solivan, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Aug. 23 -- Starlight Cinema:

Oshima Brothers, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 27 -- The End of America, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 27 -- Mount Vernon Nights: Los Texmaniacs, 7:30 p.m.

AUG. 17-21

Summer Virtual Camp. 9 - 10 a.m. Virtual presentation. At 1605 Cameron Street, Alexandria. Art That Takes You Places. Ages 10 - 12. You may be staying close to home this summer, but while you are in this class you will be whisked away -- make some art that takes you places. Virtual camp fees are \$75 per screen for each week with an additional \$10 fee if you wish to purchase a material kit. Email: info@upcyclecerc.org. To register, visit www.upcyclecerc.org/camps. Zoom link will be sent the day before the camp starts to access the virtual classes.

AUG. 25 -- ACT ONE

"Saltwater Farm" by Ann Timmons. 7:15- 9 p.m. Presented by Pipeline Playwrights in association with MetroStage, a two-part reading of the complete script-in-progress. Aug. 25: Act One and Sept. 1: Act

Two. As an old Maine family's wealth is disappearing, siblings face hard choices while confronting their own past in a changing world. Can't make both nights? Watch live when you can, then catch up on YouTube. Link of YouTube will be posted on Pipeline Playwrights' website (www.pipelineplaywrights.org) when available. Register at <https://forms.gle/4ptA5Y2BtUGX5u519>

Online Coding Classes for Kids

CodeWizardsHQ is offering online after school coding classes for kids and summer coding classes for kids with a structured curriculum that is comprehensive, developmental, challenging, and fun. Students get to code a project in every class. Expect the most fun and effective live, teacher-led coding classes for kids with support, including live office hours and 24/7 access to their proprietary coding platform. Their teachers take a students-first approach to teaching Python, Java, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript that guarantees students will reach their potential. New summer classes are starting on August 3. Visit www.CodeWizardsHQ.com.

THE BIRCHMERE REOPENS

The Birchmere in Alexandria is reopening with limited capacity. During the public health emergency, there will be a \$25 food and beverage minimum and a \$5 Covid fee. There will be no bar service and no gathering in the stage or bar areas. Customers will be escorted to their seats, and those without reserved seats will be seated by staff to ensure social distancing.

Schedule of Shows:

Friday, Aug. 7 -- The Ron Holloway Band
Saturday, Aug. 8 -- Motown & More: The Legacy Lives
Friday, Aug. 14 -- Eli Cook Band
Friday, Aug. 21 -- Michael Clem (of Eddie From Ohio) and Rusty Speidel (of SGGL)
The venue is located at 3701 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Visit the Birchmere's website: <http://www.birchmere.com/>

TYSONS CORNER

DRIVE-IN MOVIES

Tyson's Corner Center is hosting Drive-In Movie Nights, in partnership with the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center, on the second week-

end of each month. Located along Fashion Blvd. between Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's, will open for parking, be sure to bring your ticket. Show starts at 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 14 -- "Aladdin"
Saturday, Sept. 12 -- "Mrs. Doubtfire"
Reserve your spot - space is limited. Reservation and movie details are located at <https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/Events>

DRIVE-IN MOVIES

South Riding Town Center in Chantilly will host a free Summer Drive-In Movie Series each Tuesday evening now through August 18. Attendance is limited to South Riding residents and advanced registration is required. Spectators must remain in their car during the movie but may roll down their windows. South Riding Inn and Dominos will be available for delivery to vehicles and other food options are available for takeout. No alcohol. Registration is available on the events page at www.southriding.net. The movie begins at sunset and lineup for the summer is as follows:

Aug. 11 -- "Aladdin"
Aug. 18 -- "The Lego Movie"

Workhouse Arts Center and School of Rock Bring Entertainment to Weekly Community Market

The Workhouse Arts Center and School of Rock Alexandria and Vienna have partnered to bring live music to the weekly Workhouse Community Market. Held every Saturday through August, the market is carefully created for safe, social-distancing shopping and community engagement.

"The idea behind the Community Market was to create a small, mini-festival type of community gathering, where safety and social distancing can be adhered to," said Elena Romanova, Workhouse Director of Development.

"Offering the community music performed by School of Rock kids from Fairfax County, literally brings music to people's ears, which translates to joy and fun, filling a gap in community activities," she said.

"School of Rock House Bands provide the community with engaging live music entertainment at local venues and community events.

Our students not only have a blast performing at these events, they develop confidence, problem-solving and teamwork skills that cross over into other areas of their lives. These family friendly performances

are meant to inspire the community through the joy of music," said Steve McKay, owner of School of Rock Alexandria.

School of Rock School of Rock House Bands will be performing Saturdays in August, Noon-1 p.m., weather permitting.

The Workhouse Community Market helps support Virginia artisans, crafters and food makers by providing a place to sell their wares – from handmade jewelry, clothing, gifts, and bath/beauty products to delicious treats and exotic spices. Workhouse resident artists are also participating.

Additionally, at Noon, campus art galleries, exhibit spaces, and the Lucy Burns Museum are open to the public.

The Workhouse Arts Center offers unique experiences year-round as well. With the Workhouse Drive-In Movies continuing through the summer, in-person and virtual art classes, exhibits, and events, there is something for everyone. Visit www.workhousearts.org to learn more about activities and upcoming classes and events.

Park Authority to Honor Six Volunteers

The Fairfax County Park Authority will honor six individuals and groups with 2020 Elly Doyle Park Service Special Recognition Awards at a virtual volunteer celebration in November.

The Elly Doyle Park Service Special Recognition Awards given to individuals or groups for outstanding volunteer service will go to:

- ❖ Birds and Bees Engineers (BBE)/Paul Slebodnik – At no cost to the county, the BBE team of volunteers has invested hundreds of hours over the past six years to install and maintain homes for bluebirds and purple martins at county parks. Led by Paul Slebodnik, this group has monitored the bluebird houses at Twin Lakes Golf Course, Burke Lake Park, Oak Marr RECenter and the Upper Occoquan Service Authority. It has worked to educate and install purple martin colonies throughout Fairfax County, including Twin Lakes. And last year, Slebodnik and his wife Alex-

is established a partnership with Twin Lakes management to start a honey bee yard on the course. The team has bolstered the bird population and helped the survival of important pollinators.

- ❖ Jane Gamble -- Jane Gamble is an amateur photographer who provides professional-quality photos to the Park Authority's Public Information Office and Resource Management Division for use in the agency's communications. Her specialty is park wildlife, and her photos frequently appear in the Park Authority's social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), the ResOURces newsletter, and other agency publications to promote stewardship and highlight the wealth of natural resources in the county. Her photographs have significantly increased traffic and engagement on these social media platforms.

- ❖ Sara Holtz – Sara Holtz is the Site Leader at Difficult Run Stream Valley Park in Oakton for the In-

vasive Management Area (IMA) Program. She works to remove nonnative invasive plants from the park, leads workdays for volunteer groups, and acts as an advisor for Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Hornaday conservation awards, and Eagle Scouts, educating young volunteers on the importance of habitat restoration, inspiring neighbors to help remove invasives and assisting fellow site leaders with their IMA sites.

- ❖ Jean Ann Lenney -- Jean Ann Lenney has been a front desk volunteer at Riverbend Park's Visitor Center for two years, working regularly, even through the holidays. She manages the sales at the gift shop, answers phone calls, provides visitors with guidance and support, and often takes on additional tasks while on duty. She provides excellent customer service to visitors and outstanding support to park staff.

- ❖ Elarbi Taouil – Elarbi Taouil SEE PARK AUTHORITY, PAGE 14

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

Safeguarding My Future



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Whether or not I'm certain about my attitude toward being a dual cancer threat (non small cell lung and papillary thyroid, cancer), only my subconscious knows for sure. This was recently made clear to when I provided my supermarket shopping preferences to my wife, Dina, who for reasons she takes very seriously: my health, won't let me go into stores to buy anything. Ergo, my list. And I may add, there is much adieu about those preferences. It's like a negotiation. Though not exactly partisan, the debates rage on and I'm lucky, if I see more than a handful of requests honored from my list. In effect, Dina is my gatekeeper (you'll note I didn't say jailor).

There are some requests which are rarely obstructed: health and fitness, fruits and vegetables, meat and potatoes and any other non-desert/snack-type item. I'm not going to bore you readers by saying how long it's been since I've had a Hostess cupcake or an Entenmann's cake or a TastyKake anything; I wouldn't want you to feel sorry for me. In spite of this food censorship, I'm hardly wasting away. Though I've lost some weight, mostly due to my low iodine diet a few months back (as part of my thyroid cancer treatment), it was weight I could certainly afford to lose.

Now that I've lost it, Dina doesn't want me to gain it all back. Which I can understand and appreciate. Overweight often leads to any number of problems: hypertension, diabetes and even heart disease, to name a few possible complications. Still, I have my food requirements (OKAY, needs) and unless I get them, Kenny will become even more of a dull boy than he already is. So far, Dina is not budging. I wouldn't quite say she's the immovable object, but she definitely remains an obstacle to my caloric happiness.

And the 'caloric happiness' to which I refer are basically Kenny's four food groups: cake, cookies, candy and ice cream, which also explains my presumptive epitaph: "He never met a carbohydrate he didn't eat." But when the conversation moves to other less controversial items, the conversation is much less problematic and maybe even indicative of who I am, what I've become and how I assess my future prospects (life expectancy).

When one receives a cancer diagnosis, your brain gets rewired (figuratively speaking) and your choices become sort of a window to your soul. Things you want/ don't want become tells of what's being debated in your brain. Initially, after hearing your cancer diagnosis, it's unnatural almost to want what you used to want. It feels trivial. Your frame of reference - and context, narrow and shorten. When the future you anticipated is snatched away, it's not only time which is taken. Hopes, dreams and normalcy are snatched away as well. And sometimes, without even realizing it, a request is made which inadvertently illuminates the route to the light at the end of the tunnel.

That moment occurred for me during last week's supermarket list discussion. Aside from the usual stuff that likely would need to be re-ordered, I ordered something new, without it being considered in the context of cancer (basically an abbreviated timeline). I asked Dina to order me an eight-pack of soap bars, an amount of soap that would probably last a few months, at a minimum. A 'minimum' which you don't necessarily anticipate. Not that a cancer diagnosis automatically shortens your life, but generally speaking, it is bad for business, if you know what I mean? A business which, apparently, I'm now willing to invest in. Maybe time is on my side after all.

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

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NEWS

Restore Our Parks Act Could Create 10,340 Jobs

FROM PAGE 1

log by establishing the "National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund." In February 2019, Sen. Warner reintroduced the Restore Our Parks Act and, the bill was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in November. In March 2020, following the President's announcement that he would back the bipartisan Restore Our Parks Act as well as full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Sen. Warner, along with Sens. Cory Gardner (R-CO), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Steve Daines (R-MT), Portman, King, Alexander, and Richard Burr (R-NC) introduced the Great American Outdoors

Act, which would provide \$9.5 billion over five years to the National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Education to address the deferred maintenance backlog at these agencies. The legislation would also provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which provides states and local communities with technical assistance, recognition, and funding to help preserve and protect public lands. Virginia has received approximately \$368.5 million in LWCF funding over the past four decades to help protect dozens of national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, trails and more.

The Path to Marijuana Legalization

FROM PAGE 6

tire supply chain including farming, processing, and brick and mortar sales.

The prohibition of marijuana has failed and the consequence of this failure has been felt overwhelmingly by Virginians of color, but it has not ended.

It will only end when it is replaced by a regulated adult-use market that emphasizes

equity--making whole those who have been burdened most by making sure they have a seat at the table and share in the profits. I am looking forward to doing the hard work needed to get this right.

Adam Ebbin represents the 30th Senatorial District comprised of parts of Arlington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon and Lee Districts of Fairfax County.

Park Authority to Honor Six Volunteers

FROM PAGE 13

has worked with the Cub Run Park Volunteer Team since 2017, participating in periodic cleanup events and using his gift for photography to inspire residents to care about the park. He has volunteered to lead photography expeditions into the park to teach camera and photography basics, and the Park Foundation has used his photographs in social media posts, annual reports and fundraising appeals that attracted monetary support.

❖ Tony Lee Williams - Tony Lee Williams has been a volunteer martial arts instructor at Mount Vernon RECenter for more than eight years, providing safe, comfortable, and effective learning experiences for his students. He brings a positive attitude, flexibility and dedication to his role, whether

teaching a class for one or 10 students. He arrives early to ready his classroom space and is willing to stay late to talk with his students, developing a warm rapport.

The Elly Doyle Park Service Awards were established by the Park Authority in 1988 in recognition of former Park Authority Board Chairman and member Ellamae Doyle's years of outstanding service toward the preservation of parkland and establishment of natural and recreational areas for the benefit of Fairfax County residents. The purpose of the award is to publicly recognize a volunteer or group of volunteers for outstanding volunteer service contributions to Fairfax County parks.

For more information, contact the Public Information Office at 703-324-8662 or at parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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.

MOUNT VERNON LEE CHAMBER BLOOD DRIVE

Registration is now available for a blood drive on Tuesday, August 11, 2-7 p.m., at Mount Vernon Plaza, 7686 Richmond Highway. Due to Covid-19, many community blood drives have been cancelled and there are critical shortages. All blood types are needed. Due to physical distancing requirements, only 40 slots are available for donations. Sign up today at <https://bit.ly/MVLChamber08112020>. This blood drive is sponsored by the businesses belonging to Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce.

NOW THRU AUG. 9

Cincinnati to Severance. Thursdays and Sundays 1-1:30 p.m. At Fort Hunt Park, Picnic Area E, 8999 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. An interpre-

tive talk on the history of the park and how combat veterans of the First and Second World Wars transformed the American way of life at home. Interested visitors should RSVP using the contact

email address (daniel_blier@nps.gov) or phone [(202) 439-7325] so that the Ranger may facilitate social distancing for attendees.

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.

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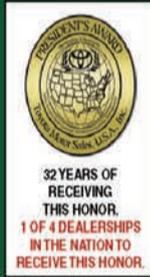
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JUST LISTED!

Over the past 3 months, four clients of ours switched agents and trusted us through the buying and selling process. During these unique times, the agent you choose matters more than ever. Here are two examples of their experiences!

★★★★★ Highly likely to recommend

The White Family Group is THE DREAM TEAM! They know the Alexandria area better than anyone, and switching realtors to them was the best decision I made in my buying process. They found me an off-market home in Mt. Vernon that checked all my boxes, and more, for a fantastic price. I was a nervous first time home buyer, but they made the entire process painless! They always made themselves available to me and stopped at nothing to find me a home. I will be using them again in the future and would recommend them to anyone who is looking to find their dream home in the Alexandria area!!

★★★★★ Highly likely to recommend

While I had seen Chris Whites name and his listings in our neighborhood for years as well as his number of successful sales, I initially chose another agent to list my house. So we listed our house and I then found a wonderful house. Ironically, Chris was the listing agent for the house we wanted to buy. He was wonderful to work with on that end and even guided my buying agent through the hoops so as to complete the sale. While we're happily the owners of a new home, my old house had not sold even though it had been on the market for 3 months. I wondered why he kept selling houses and my house was just sitting on the market, fairly priced... My husband and I called Chris and his team and immediately hired them. Within 8 days we had a ratified contract! Chris is simply the best there is in real estate. His contacts and wonderful relationships with other realtors, contractors, and the community make him stand out. His knowledge of the area, his marketing, his plan to sell your house or to help you buy a house will not fail. He will make a what could be a stressful situation seem effortless. He will handle all the details; you will feel cared for and reassured that he and his team will make the buying or selling of your home a success story. There is a reason he is a top realtor in the country. I would never recommend any one else when it comes to real estate!

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