

Owners of The River Farm Are Looking to Sell

The American Horticultural Society needs the funds;
the surrounding community needs the farm.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The American Horticultural Society is looking at the River Farm as a financial saving grace, and has announced plans to put it on the market. The plan is to save the American Horticultural Society as a botanical entity that supports plants, gardens, and green spaces on a sustainable planet. Money from the sales of the land, which overlooks the Potomac River, is needed to boost their finances, which have been more in jeopardy since the pandemic.

"Today we find ourselves at a critical crossroad. Financial challenges on a number of fronts, greatly magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, require us to carefully explore options for how the AHS mission can continue to live on for the next 100 years, and beyond," the AHS said. "To accomplish this, AHS would sell the 25-acre property and home to our headquarters, River Farm. Proceeds from the sale of River Farm coupled with other AHS assets would provide for the continuation of AHS as part of American Public Gardens Association by supporting an enhanced range of gardening and sustainability programs long into the future," they added.

This isn't a popular stance to many Mount Vernon residents or the elected officials that represent

them, but could be a harsh reality of the financial crisis that is facing many these days.

Local resident Deanna Jones walked through the fields at the River Farm and remembered her grandparents who bought a house nearby because of the surrounding nature. "The parkway and its beauty has always been a part of this community," Jones said. "This would be a real loss of a true treasure," she said.

Chris Shields was a resident near the farm as a child, and would like to see "something beneficial to agriculture," done with the property, if it must be sold, he said.

Senator Scott Surovell (D-36) had his wedding on the River Farm years ago, and is trying to come up with a plan to save it, he told his followers on his social media page. "I have reached out to numerous federal and local officials," Surovell wrote, "this is on our radar and we will do everything to preserve this property." He reached out to members of the Senate, Congress, local supervisors, and park officials on several levels. Nearby residents are alarmed too, and have contacted the senator's office.

"It's a big deal, there's a lot of energy to do something," Surovell said. The River Farm is a partner on Supervisor Dan Storck's (D-Mount Vernon) tourism task force, and he is working to preserve the history and beauty of the property, he said.

"Over the coming weeks, I will



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

Construction on this house began in 1790, and was once known as "Wellington."

be working with AHS, and other local, state and federal leaders to find solutions to ensure this property continues to be a community treasure," Storck said. Storck acknowledged some of the other tourism facilities in Mount Vernon were having financial struggles as well.

Social Media Chimes In

There were nearly 40 responses on Surovell's Facebook page, commenting on the issue.

"It 100% needs to remain as a historical location. Hopefully ei-

ther as public use or have Mt Vernon buy it back and return it to the estate," wrote Emily Bourke.

"I hope the County, State, or NPS can preserve it as open space for the community," added Suzann Gallagher.

"Could be great location for a brewery. Hope they make the right decision and sell to a top-tier brewer with the vision needed to make this a must visit," added Nathan Leamer.

There were other ideas too. "While this may seem insensitive to some, my opinion that may not

matter much, is that tax dollars should not be spent on any more preservation of land or memorials to slave owners. George Washington was a slave owner. I think we have enough of the founding fathers memorials and artifacts," wrote Mansimran Singh Kahlon.

Mount Vernon resident Jay Spiegel cited other instances where the county "wasted" tax dollars acquiring properties that didn't pay off, in his opinion, and then pointed out "the property at Fort Hunt and Morningside. Now it is

SEE OWNERS OF, PAGE 4



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Volunteers load a vehicle with backpacks filled with school supplies Aug. 31 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11. More than 1,100 backpacks were distributed to families in need across the county.

'The Need Continues'

Backpacks, school supplies
distributed to families in need.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Chief John Butler was among the volunteers at Penn Daw Fire Station 11 Aug. 31 to distribute more than 1,100 backpacks filled with school supplies for families in need throughout the county.

"It is always rewarding for the fire department to give and assist those in need," Butler said. "But it's especially critical during these

challenging times in a pandemic."

Unlike in previous years, children did not attend the distribution day and on-site volunteer help was scaled back.

"We did not use as many volunteers as in the past because of the pandemic," said Deputy Chief Willie Bailey, organizer of the annual event. "But we knew this was something that needed to be done. The schools and nonprofits that picked up from the event pulled up to the fire station and we placed

the items in their vehicles. This allowed us to keep individuals entering the fire station to a minimum and helped us with social distancing."

New backpacks were pre-filled with school supplies and loaded into vehicles that made deliveries to nonprofits and schools across the county as students entered their first week of classes. "With children starting classes virtually, we were hoping that we could add some type of normalcy to the start of the school year, i.e. new backpacks with school sup-

SEE THE NEED, PAGE 4

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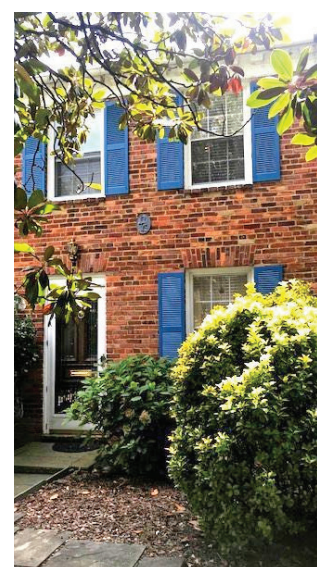
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The July fire on Dunbar Street.

Fire Investigators Seek Public's Help In Two Separate Fires At Same House

Fire investigators are asking for the public's help gathering information regarding a house fire that occurred on July 28, 2020, and another on Aug. 29, in the 2900 block of Dunbar Street in the Hybla Valley area of Fairfax County.

On Aug. 29, at approximately 7:46 a.m., units responded to the 2900 block of Dunbar Street for a reported house fire. Units arrived on the scene of a vacant one-story, single family home with light smoke showing from the roof area. Crews located a smoldering fire involving two mattresses and quickly extinguished it.

On July 28, at approximately 2:11 a.m., units re-

sponded to Dunbar Street for a fire in a vacant one-story, single family home. A neighbor observed fire coming from a window and called 9-1-1. The home sustained an estimated \$50,000 in damages.

Anyone with information regarding either incident is asked to contact Lieutenant Michael Adams with the Office of the Fire Marshal at (571) 221-1031 or Michael.adams2@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Additionally, anyone in the area who may have home security video footage from between 12 a.m. and 2:30 a.m. on July 28, and 5:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Aug. 29, is asked to contact Lieutenant Michael Adams.

Deer Management Archery Program Begins Saturday, Sept. 12



These signs are posted in archery program areas, at park entrances and trailheads in Fairfax County.

The Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program begins Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020 and runs through Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021.

Under the oversight of the Fairfax County Police Department, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Park Authority and NOVA Parks, the archery program is conducted in parks and other locations throughout Fairfax County.

The archery program began in FY 2010 and is part of an integrated Deer Management Program to reduce and stabilize the white-tailed deer population in Fairfax County in efforts to minimize safety and health hazards related to an overabundance of deer. Hazards include deer-vehicle collisions, potential spread of diseases, and environmental damage that can impact the ecosystem.

The program was approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2000 and is recognized as a safe and efficient method of deer population control by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Because of its proven track record of safety, archery is a preferred deer management method in Fairfax County. Fairfax County officials assert that archery is compatible with residential areas and community parks, allowing for deer population management in urban and suburban areas in close proximity to people

SEE DEER MANAGEMENT, PAGE 5



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

That night, the fires and emergency vehicles woke everyone up in the immediate area.

Mount Vernon Car Fires Are Alarming

Cars in a neighborhood off Sherwood Hall Lane were possible arsons.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

The residents of Mount Woodley Manor woke early Tuesday morning, Sept. 1 to the sounds of emergency vehicles putting out a fire that damaged several vehicles in the parking lot. It was the second car fire in

the Mount Vernon District within the last few weeks. The cause of the fire is suspicious in nature, but neither the police nor the fire department gave any details. One resident noted that it could have spread to other vehicles or houses had the area not been saturated with rain that the area has experienced this summer.



Several cars in the residential lot were damaged.

Owners of The River Farm Are Looking to Sell

FROM PAGE 1

an underused private park for the Villa May community,” Spiegel wrote. He cited potential right-of-way problems if a builder bought it, but concluded with “only time will tell.”

The solutions to solve the American Horticultural Society financial picture were few. Deanna Jones thought that the house on the property could be turned into a conference center.

Even the American Horticultural Society chimed in, hoping that future owners could be limited in their plans. “It is important to the AHS board that, should River Farm be sold, the buyer would be one who respects the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the conservation and historical value of the property,” their official statement read.

“Our goal is that the mission and name of the American Horticultural-



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

The land has seen many weddings and family outings through the years.

al Society lives on, long into the future.

The AHS Board of Directors will

have greater clarity about viable next steps in the coming weeks and months.”



Volunteers gather at Penn Daw Fire Station 11 Aug. 31 to distribute more than 1,100 backpacks filled with school supplies for families throughout the county.

‘The Need Continues’

FROM PAGE 1

plies,” Bailey said. “Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children and especially during this pandemic, the need continues for so many families.” Sponsors of the backpack distribution include: Apple Federal Credit Union; K12 Athletics Foundation; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax County; Local 2068; Fairfax Retired Firefighters Association; Nationwide Credit Corporation; Jack Taylor’s Alexandria Toyota; Promax Realtors; and Penn Daw Fire Station 11. “My thanks go out to all the organizations that partnered with us to give children school supplies and learning materials to begin their school year,” Butler added. “It’s a blessing to have so many local organizations and businesses supporting us this year.”

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Chief John Butler, left, and Technician Matthew Duckwitz participate in the distribution of backpacks and school supplies Aug. 31 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

FAIRFAX COUNTY CALENDAR

Sept 8 – 24 (Tues/Thurs)

Fitness Fun -- Youth Program at Hunters Woods Park, Reston. 4:30-5:30 p.m. This fall will be filled with virtual learning, so join in for some in-person exercise! Come play a variety of sports and games: all socially distanced and above all ..nonstop fun. We'll also discuss nutrition and the importance of stretching. Fitness Fun is coached by professional staff who are trained to encourage maximum participation, good sportsmanship, and above all, FUN! Ages 7-12. Fee: \$72/RA members; \$90/non-members.

DRIVE-THRU DRAMA

The Alden in McLean is bringing back its Drive-Thru Drama performances in September. The new show, “From the Ash Baxter Files: The Search for the Stolen Spyglass,” will be performed Friday through Sunday over three weekends on Sept. 11-13, Sept. 18-20 and Sept. 25-27. Show times are from 4-7 p.m. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for MCC tax district residents. A limited number of timed tickets are available and must be purchased in advance at www.aldentheatre.org. The Alden is a division of the McLean Community Center (MCC), located at 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean.

SEPT. 11 AND 25

Drive-In Experience. 6-9 p.m. At Old Centreville Crossing, 13810 Braddock Road, Centreville. Drive-In experience with limited social distant car spots. Experience one or both drive-in events featuring DJ and live music on Sept. 11 and a movie on Sept. 25. Cost is \$25.

Schedule Friday, Sept. 11, 6-9 p.m. - Concert

6 p.m. - Lot Opens

6:30 p.m. - DJ Ganzi (opening / pre show)

7:30 p.m. - David Tauler and DTMG Band

Schedule Friday, Sept. 25, 6-9 p.m. - Movie

6 p.m. - Lot opens

7 p.m. - Sunset/Movie Begins (Movie: Announced Soon)

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 weekend 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. Saturday, Sept. 12 -- “Mrs. Doubtfire”

Reserve your spot - space is limited. Reservation and movie details are located at

<https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/Events>

SUMMER CONCERTS

ON THE GREEN

The Celebrate Great Falls Foundation announces a schedule of

five Summer Concerts on the Green beginning August 30, 2020. Each concert will begin at 6 p.m. on the Village Centre green (in front of the gazebo). September 13 - The Oxymorons; September 20 - The Unfinished; September 27 - Wes Tucker and the Skilllets.

Celebrate Great Falls Foundation organizers are putting in place several new protocols to help ensure a safe, socially distant evening. After each concert, they will assess whether to proceed with the remaining concerts and implement any needed changes in our protocols. This will be announced on the Monday prior to each concert. The safety and wellness of our bands, volunteers and the Great Falls community is of paramount importance in all of our decisions.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 13

AND SEPT. 20

Music at Meadowlark Gardens. 3-4 p.m. 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Korean Bell Pavilion, Vienna. Presented by the Virginia Chamber Orchestra. The concert is free. Standard entrance fees for Meadowlark Gardens apply for the free concert. Fees are \$6, ages 18-54; \$3, ages 55 and over; and \$3, ages 6-17. Note: Masks are required. Attendees may bring lawn chairs, blankets, soft drinks and snacks. Free parking is available. Admission fees to the park are not refundable, in the event of inclement weather the VCO intends to schedule a rain date for the free concert. For concert tickets contact info@vco.events.com. Information about NOVA Meadowlark Botanical Gardens can be found at <https://www.novaparks.com/parks/meadowlark-botanical-gardens>

SEPT. 14-OCT. 31

An Eclectic Show. 8-9 p.m. At Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, Reston. An exhibition of oil paintings by local artist Loretta Scott of Reston – still life, landscapes, the strong colors and textures of old buildings in Europe and other countries. The exhibit also includes wild animal scenes representing Loretta's South African heritage. Visit the website: www.loretta-scott.com

SEPT 14-30 (MON/WED)

Fitness Fun -- Youth Program at Brown's Chapel Park, Reston. 4:30-5:30 p.m. This fall will be filled with virtual learning, so join in for some in-person exercise! Come play a variety of sports and games: all socially distanced and above all ..nonstop fun. We'll also discuss nutrition and the importance of stretching. Fitness Fun is coached by professional staff who are trained to encourage maximum participation, good sportsmanship, and above all, FUN! Ages 7-12. Fee: \$72/RA

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

Deer Management Archery Program Begins Saturday, Sept. 12

using the parks. Since Virginia began tracking hunting injuries in 1959, no bystanders have been injured by an archer hunting deer anywhere in the Commonwealth.

The Fairfax County Deer Management Program is conducted on approximately 100 properties county-wide. Last year, 868 deer were killed by hunters using archery in the county program. The archery program accounted for 88 percent of the total deer harvest in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program.

Fairfax County's Archery Program standards require that all archers meet state hunter licensing, education and safety requirements and must pass qualifications to demonstrate skill and marksmanship, in addition to carrying program identification. Archers are also required to have completed additional training through the International Bowhunter Education Program to participate in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program.

All archers must pass a criminal background check to be eligible for the program. Only hunters that have gone through this screening and selection process with the Fairfax County Police Department may hunt within the designated parks.

Parks remain open to the public during the archery program. Fluorescent orange signs are posted in parks where hunting is authorized. Hunters will use archery to kill deer from elevated tree stands only; hunting from the ground level is prohibited in county parks. Tree stands must not be located closer than 100 feet

from property lines or closer than 50 feet from established park trails. Archers are not allowed on private property without permission by the owner or tenant. Archers are approved to hunt at assigned sites Monday through Saturday during legal hunting hours, 30 minutes prior to sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset. No hunting is allowed on Sundays in county parks.

More information about the Fairfax County Deer Management Program can be found at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/deer-management-program>

Deer Management Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person public information meetings for the Deer Management Program have been cancelled as a safety measure. Below are links to a recorded webinar and other material.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/archery-public-information-meetings>

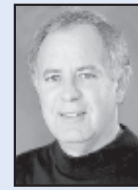
Fairfax County Deer Management Program Presentation (August 2020) [PDF]

Fairfax County Deer Management Program Narrated Webinar(August 2020) [Video]

Questions, concerns, or comments about the Deer Management Program, contact:

Dr. Katherine Edwards, Wildlife Management Specialist,, katherine.edwards@fairfaxcounty.gov

Sergeant Earit Powell, Animal Protection Police, earit.powell@fairfaxcounty.gov



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Special Session Looks at Nursing Homes, Reporting Outbreaks, Election Reform

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

As the third week of the General Assembly's Special Session draws to a close, several major legislative accomplishments are moving forward. The floor of our makeshift chamber in the Science Museum of Virginia was emptier than usual when Senator Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) contracted the novel coronavirus and was absent for a week. Thankfully, he returned this week, having recovered fully. The complexity of crafting legislation to address the dire health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as addressing urgent calls for racial justice and police reform, all while navigating a new location and virtual meetings, has led to some unusual occurrences. It is rare to have any member absent for an extended period of time during session, even rarer to have several missing, but as this protracted session is occurring in August and September—when legislators are usually working on our other jobs, many Senators have been absent for extended periods. Senator Amanda Chase (R-Chesterfield), who claims to have a medical condition that prevents her from wearing a mask, has been confined to a plexiglass box, akin to a hockey penalty box, to keep herself and others safe

from possible infection. Through the fog of these distractions, the Senate has remained focused and deliberate, passing a number of bills to adapt to COVID-19, ensure folks can stay safely at home during the pandemic, and enact equitable reform in our justice system.

Nursing homes have been hit especially hard during the pandemic, where close quarters causes infections to spread incredibly quickly through the most vulnerable populations. As the pandemic continues into the fall, the toll taken by isolation has increased, with many Virginians unable to visit their parents and grandparents for up to six months. The Senate passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia Beach), to require all certified nursing homes to remedy this situation by providing an opportunity for weekly visits to patients either virtually or in-person, provided special safety precautions are observed. We passed legislation to ensure transparency and accountability by requiring the Virginia Department of Health to report outbreaks of communicable diseases publicly on its website, and require school boards to post their coronavirus mitigation plans on their public websites. Key



Ebbin

election reforms have advanced from both chambers, expanding the ability to vote absentee and enacting safety measures to protect the health of voters and election officials.

In addition to these pressing reforms, we passed several bills

to protect frontline workers and healthcare professionals. Legislation to ensure frontline workers in healthcare, nursing homes, schools, and public safety have access to rapid diagnostic testing for COVID-19 passed unanimously. Bills to supply school employees and childcare providers with personal protective equipment (PPE) also advanced.

In addition to these public safety measures, the General Assembly has begun to reassess who is sent to prison and for how long they stay incarcerated.

America incarcerates more people per 100,000 than any first world nation by a long shot, and most of the people incarcerated are people of color; In Virginia, over 60% are Black or Latinx. That's why I was glad the Senate took much-needed steps to provide prosecutors with discretion over which transgressions they take to trial, and which ones they defer penalties on for extenuating circumstances. The

Senate also passed legislation to allow for the release of terminally ill patients from confinement, give the Attorney General oversight of patterns and practice investigations of local police departments, and to expunge criminal records for certain nonviolent offenders who have served their time and repaid their debt to society.

I had originally hoped for this Special Session to last for a few weeks, but due to a week-long delay by the House of Delegates while setting their rules, and the complex nature of some of the proposals before us, the end is still not in sight. Leadership has told us to plan on spending the next several Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in Richmond for floor sessions.

While most committee meetings are occurring in person during those days, some are also meeting virtually on Mondays or Tuesdays. SB5015, the special session budget bill, which offers a number of amendments to our state budget has yet to be taken up, and, as of writing, the House has only reported about ten bills for our review, with nearly 100 still yet to be acted upon in their chamber. We are in it for the long haul, but the final product will be worth the time spent.

It is my continued honor to serve the citizens of the 30th District.

Swing for Pink Tennis Fundraiser

The annual Swing for Pink tennis fundraiser will be held this year at Lee District Park on Saturday, Oct 3, 2-5PM on the outdoor courts at Lee District Recreation Center, 6601 Telegraph Rd. The rain date is Sunday, Oct 4.

The annual fundraiser benefits INOVA hospital. The new venue replaces the Mount Vernon Athletic Club which was sold and closed earlier this year.

Masks or face coverings must be worn at the social. Social Dis-

tancing Rules Apply. Masks can be removed for tennis and exercise while maintaining distance. (Please bring your chair as distant seating is limited)

Register: Round Robin (\$25); Social (free): Directions to regis-

ter by mail are also at this link.

<https://swingforpinkmtvac.wordpress.com/join-the-fight/register/>

Donate: <https://swingforpinkmtvac.wordpress.com/join-the-fight/donate/>

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.

NOW THRU SEPT. 14

Crafting Democracy: Fiber Arts and Activism. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House is hosting Crafting Democracy: Fiber Arts and Activism, a traveling exhibition from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), inside our Woodlawn historic house museum from now until Sept. 14. The show seeks to highlight examples of contemporary craft activism that have recently soared, placing them into

conversation with their historical precedents including, for instance, references to the women's Suffragist movement through banners and sashes. This exhibit demonstrates the ways in which craft is employed as a tool of expression that gives voice to people who seek an active role in democracy. Tickets available at the website: www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 15

UK Genealogy Research. 1-2:30 p.m. Zoom Meeting. Genealogist Shannon Combs-Bennett of the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society will speak about genealogical research on UK ancestors. Online access

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A Connection Newspaper



Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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Correction

The article titled Day is Done on page 1 of the Sept. 3 edition of the Mount Vernon Gazette erroneously identifies Nedra Darling as being affiliated with the Navajo Indian Nation. She is a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

Belle Haven Pizzeria & Custard Shack

Belle Haven Pizzeria & Custard Shack
1401 Belle Haven Road,
Alexandria, VA 22307
www.bellehavenpizzeria.com
HOURS OF OPERATION:
Sunday – Thursday 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday and Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Belle Haven Pizzeria & Custard Shack is a locally owned restaurant dedicated to using the freshest, local ingredients and providing outstanding service. The Haven features a chef-created menu with food sure to please all ages and tastes.

While pizza is a mainstay of the restaurant, there is also a selection of sandwiches and burgers including lamb and vegetarian options. The kids may eat pizza and adults can enjoy a steak, salmon, the catch of the day or homemade pasta.

The Haven's 1,000 square foot garden provides more than 60 percent of the salad mixes and the savory, smoked meats are smoked in house. The delicious sauces used on the menu are all made from scratch. The cheeses are preservative free. The staff is happy to accommodate any allergies or dietary preferences, such as gluten-free or vegetarian options.

Why do local customers return to The Haven? For starters, the food is delicious, then they appreciate the friendly service. With the large TVs it's a great place to watch your favorite game with friends.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the outdoor patio has been a popular place to eat. The patio provides distanced seating for 50 with the garden providing a natural backdrop. When the weather gets cold, heaters and temporary dividers keep the patio cozy.

At the Custard Shack you will find a variety of homemade frozen custards, sorbets and milkshakes along with some pet friendly frozen treats. The creamy vanilla and rich chocolate frozen custard is made in the shop daily. The flavor of the day can be found on the website, <https://www.custardshack.com/>



Belle Haven Pizzeria is open for dine-in, patio seating, or carry out. You can order online or call 703-765-5300 to place an order.



The outdoor patio provides socially distanced seating next to the garden. In cold weather the patio provides a cozy retreat.

The Haven dining room is open with tables spaced for distance. Customers may order online at <http://www.bellehavenpizzeria.com/> or call 703-765-5300 to place an order over the phone. Then, just drive to the restaurant, call them and they will bring the food to your car.

When you or your family are looking for a spot to sit and enjoy some amazing burgers, handmade pizzas, freshly picked salads, the best wings you can find, and customer service that will bring you back time and time again, 1401 Belle Haven Road is where you want to be.

The Haven is the "Restaurant of the Week" from Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce. Restaurants are an industry deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Support local restaurants and help retain the variety of wonderful eateries in our community.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOUNT VERNON-LEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Webinar on Richmond Highway Improvements

The Richmond Highway Improvements project will widen Richmond Highway from Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane. Since the beginning of the year significant events have changed the timeline for the project.

VDOT project manager Dan Reinhart and his team will update the Chamber on what is happening with this project. Register for this free webinar and receive the meeting link.

The Richmond Highway Improvements Project will make improvements along about three miles of Richmond Highway (Route 1) from Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane (Route 626). The improvements include: Widen Richmond Highway from four to six lanes; Add separate bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road; Reserve median width to accommodate Fairfax County's

future dedicated bus-only lanes.

Free Webinar, Thursday, Sept. 10, Noon - 12:45 pm

Register here: <https://cca.mountvernon-leechamber.org/EvtListing.aspx?dbid2=-VAMTVL&evtid=5100701&class=E>

For more information visit the project website http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/richmond_highway.asp

Upcoming Webinars

Thursday, Sept. 17, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, Roberta Tinch, CEO

Thursday, Sept. 24, The Dark Web and Your Business, Michael Drobnis, OptfinITy

Thursday, Oct. 1, George Washington's Mount Vernon, Matt Briney, VP of Media & Communication

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JOSEPH CRAIG ENGLISH



Swift River Cruiser, from www.dragonfliesnva.com.



Twelve-spotted Skimmer

PHOTOS BY KEVIN MUNROE

Expert Aerialists Brighten Our Waterways



Ruby Meadowhawk

The Dragonfly

Today I saw the dragonfly
Come from the wells where he did lie
An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.
He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.

— Alfred Lord Tennyson



Russet-tipped Clubtail

“Devil’s Darning Needles”

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

They flit, they zoom, they patrol, they shimmer in the sun. Some even mate in the air. Expert aerialists, dragonflies and damselflies whiz around usually over water, preying and becoming prey. Because they usually move quickly, they can be hard to identify, but not for retired physician, Ed Eder.

On Aug. 19, 2020, Eder spotted the Swift River cruiser dragonfly (*Macromia illinoiensis illinoiensis*) in Dyke Marsh, the first documented sighting of this species there. A two- to three-inch-winged insect, it has bright green eyes, a yellow stripe on its side and yellow spots along the length of its abdomen. Experts say that Swift River cruisers are probably the fastest dragonflies in North America, able to reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. Most dragonflies have a cruising speed of 10 miles per hour.

Since 2016, Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteer surveyors have identified 36 dragonfly and damselfly species in the preserve, including another first record in 2019, the blue-tipped dancer (*Argia tibialis*). Chris Hobson, a Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation zoologist, documented 16 species in Dyke Marsh in 2011. He saw 5,000 of one species in one day and 1,000 of another in a two-or-so-hour paddling trip.

Basics

Dragonflies and damselflies are typically found on and near rivers, wetlands, streams, ponds and lakes. April to November are the best months to see them in Northern Virginia.

Adults can be from half an inch to five inches long. Dragonflies and damselflies have two pairs of wings, two- to three-inch wingspans and three pairs of legs, among other characteristics. Dragonflies typically spread their wings to their sides and their eyes are not separated. Damselflies are smaller, they usually hold their wings together over their abdomen and their eyes are separated. Many dragonflies and damselflies have bright, lustrous hues and diaphanous wings. Their long, slender bodies have earned them the nickname, “devil’s darning needles.”

Dragonflies have vibrant colors and provocative names like Halloween pennant, prince baskettail, black saddlebags, common green darner, 12-spotted skimmer and russet-tipped clubtail.

Mating is a “contact sport,” says www.dragonfly-



Common Green Darner

website.com. Many mate in flight in a circular “wheel position” with the female arching in a circle to connect to the male genitalia. Some mate connected in what’s called “tandem linkage.”

“It’s the wild west out there,” Hobson chuckles, adding, “They are adaptable. The dragon hunter and blue dasher will breed in a truck bed if water is left long enough.” Females typically drop their eggs into the water or on aquatic plants so their larvae, known as nymphs, are aquatic.

They are “voracious predators,” Hobson observes and can eat hundreds of mosquitoes a day. “They’ll eat anything they can catch and chew. Some are cannibalistic. They eat their brethren,” he adds. Dragonflies catch and eat smaller insects with their strong jaws with sharp teeth.

Fall Migrants

Of North America’s 331 species, nine appear to migrate south in the fall, though biologists caution that much is unknown. Experts believe that some species, like the common green darner, fly south in the fall, lay eggs and then die. Their young fly back north in the spring so it takes two generations for a full round trip.

Delicate, brilliantly colored, masterful flyers with gauzy wings. Just watch. Don’t swat.

More info:

Dragonflies of Northern Virginia, <http://www.dragonfliesnva.com/> by Kevin Munroe

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

FAIRFAX COUNTY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 4

members; \$90/non-members.

RESTON CAMPS IN A BOX

Bring camp to your home with "Reston Camps in a Box"! Each box is different and includes a nature activity, arts & crafts, a science experiment, no bake cooking, a rainy day project, a family adventure, fitness fun and a link to connect virtually with camp staff during "Camp Connection". You may purchase multiple boxes at any time; however, distribution/availability dates are as follows. Contact kcaffrey@reston.org to purchase shirts.

Box 7 - Available on September 14

Box 8 - Available on October 12

Box 9 - Available on November 9

Box 10 - Available on December 14

Ages: Elementary Age Children

Fee: \$30 per box

If you live in Reston, they will deliver your box directly to your home at no charge. Cost of shipping charged for deliveries outside of Reston.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 18

Bats Class. 7-8 p.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Bats may have a scary reputation, but they make our evenings more pleasant by gobbling up lots of bugs, such as mosquitoes, that like to bother humans.

Walk the meadows and forest edges to see bats feeding on insects. Use a bat detector to hear echolocation. Learn about our native bats and their habits. Designed for participants age 7 to adult. The cost is \$10 per person. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult. Call 703-569-3464 or visit Lake Accotink Park

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Movie Night. 8:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull

Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Join them as they set up a large movie screen along the fence at the back of the Adult Lawn Area, with the grapevines just behind. Check in, find yourself a picnic table with a good view, and then take an hour to hang out and order dinner, dessert and plenty of wine before the film starts at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person (21+ Only).

A maximum of 200 tickets will be sold for this event. Email reservations@wineryatbullrun.com.

RESTON ACTIVITIES IN A BOX - 55+ EDITION

Bring activities to your home with "Activities in a Box -- 55+ Edition." Each box is different and includes a nature activity, a craft, a science experiment, no bake cooking, a rainy day project, a family adventure, fitness fun and a link to connect virtually for coffee or happy hour. You may purchase multiple boxes at any time; however, distribution/availability dates are as follows.

Box 1 - Delivered on Sept 21

Box 2 - Delivered on Oct. 19

Box 3 - Delivered on Nov. 16

Box 4 - Delivered on Dec. 7

Fee: \$30 per box

If you live in Reston, we will deliver your box directly to your home at no charge. Cost of shipping charged for deliveries outside of Reston. Contact Ashleigh@reston.org

SUNDAY/NOV. 22

Trout Fishing in America. 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, CenterStage, Reston. Cost is \$10 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston. This Grammy-nominated music act returns to Reston to entertain audiences of all ages. Part of the Professional Touring Artist Series. Visit the website www.restoncommunitycenter.com/ptas.

Thank you!

To our doctors, nurses, EMTs and all the heroes in the medical profession. Thank you to our frontline businesses working long hours stocking shelves, cashiering, bagging and cleaning. Thank you to our government officials and leaders who are making decisions to keep us safe. We appreciate all of you!



Here's how you can help support small businesses during the Covid-19 outbreak

GIVE THE GIFT OF BUSINESS

Buy a gift card to use at a later date and shop locally online when possible.



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Wondering what local businesses are open?

Visit MountVernonLeeChamber.org

LOCAL BUSINESS INFORMATION: mountvernonleechamber.org/business-resources-for-coronavirus/
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ENTERTAINMENT



Clockwise from top left: Steve and Nicky McDonnell; Producer Nick Friedlander; Stage Manager Brittany Huffman; and Director Joanna Henry.

LTA Presents “Love Letters”

**Stars real-life husband
and wife team of Steve
and Nicky McDonnell.**

By STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

After a few months of being shut down due to Covid-19, the Little Theatre of Alexandria is staging an in-person production of “Love Letters” from Sept. 11-27. Taking place over the span of 50 years, the play is a humorous and emotional look at the love letters exchanged between two childhood friends. This production is part of Little Theatre’s Fall series, “Small Theatre for Unusual Times.” Tickets are available for free. Written by A.R. Gurney, the show is produced by Nick Friedlander and executive produced by Russell Wyland.

According to Director Joanna Henry, “I wanted to direct this play because it’s clever, witty, and realistic. It’s different than other plays because the actors are reading the letters they wrote to each other over the years. The two characters are slowly revealed as their personalities emerge from the letters.”

She added: “Through these letters, both characters expose the pitfalls, expectations, and various pressures that they felt as they aged 50 years over the course of the play – pitfalls, expectations, and pressures that we all feel as we journey through life. It’s an intriguing character study, and I love delving into the characters of plays that I direct.”

She said this is an unusual play because of the actors reading the letters aloud to the audience. “We watch and hear the two characters grow up during the play through what is revealed in those letters. My hope is that the audience will observe the characters listening to and reacting to each other – and will understand them.”

Because the rehearsals were held on Zoom, Henry said it was challenging because she bases a lot of her directing on feeling the connections with the actors, as well as their chemistry with each other. “However, our two actors are married to each other in real life so I knew the chemistry was there, and it was nice to be able to have them in the same room, at the same table, for our Zoom rehearsals instead of in totally separate places miles apart,” she said.

As far as audience takeaways, she added: “I would

love for our audiences to leave the LTA theater feeling that, even with our differences, we can find compatibility, acceptance, and harmony. In this play, we see two very different people who grew up together, went their separate ways, and yet always reconnected.”

Nicky McDonnell, who plays the role of Melissa Gardner, says she’s actually many characters in one. “She transforms from a hopeful, creative, talented, funny young child to a ‘lascivious old broad’ as she puts it in ACT II,” she said. “...And yet for all her shortcomings Melissa sees the world for what it is -- no blinders which is why perhaps she is able to paint and draw her truth so well. She has a terrific sense of humor but also a boiling over grief which is hard to contain -- though she does.”

In real life, she and her husband have been together for 27 years and they have never worked together. “It took a new level of trust to sit down and do this play together,” she said. “Our performance experiences over the years have been separate and, in some ways, private. Also, reading the play per the playwright’s instructions was challenging -- no mugging, no crying -- just read. It’s hard to trust that the words, the story and the delivery are enough to entertain an audience. Just two mid-lifers reading at their desks for 80 minutes or so ... it’s tempting to try and do more to keep it moving at the proper clip.”

She said she hopes the audience walks away with a powerful reminder of relationship. “As we redefine our homes and our relationships during this Covid time, we realize more than ever how important our friends and family are in our lives. How much we need them. It’s a perfect time for letter writing to those we love and cherish. It’s a perfect time to connect -- no matter your means -- Zoom, phone calls, distanced get togethers, etc.”

Steve McDonnell, who plays the role of Andrew Makepeace Ladd III, said his character is a dedicated family man and a responsible rule-follower. “He lives by directions his father taught him -- to honor obligations to his family, his country and himself, in that order. He was taught that those born to privilege have special responsibilities and he lives his life following those guidelines.”

He continued: “Andy loves to write, especially letters to Melissa, the person he has loved his entire life but was never able to be with. He follows the path he was destined for and only veers from it in private, and only with Melissa. She is his lifelong friend and con-

SEE LOVE LETTERS, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT



King & Rye in Alexandrian Hotel.

Off the Menu: Restaurant News Notes

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

The shift from summer hasn't stopped progress: A Del Ray gelato shop nears its dawn, a Chinese restaurant in North Old Town makes a foray outside and a hotel restaurant gets a makeover in name and menu. Here's a taste of the latest restaurant news happening around the city.

King & Rye Opens in Alexandrian Hotel

Say goodbye to Jackson 20 and hello to King & Rye, the new restaurant located within the Alexandrian hotel in the heart of King Street. Executive Chef Peter McCall retains his spot at the helm from the old restaurant to the new, spinning up a menu focused on Southern fare and fine whiskey. Nosh on tomato toast – complete with Duke's mayonnaise – or devilled eggs, North Carolina rainbow trout or Shenandoah Valley chicken.

And have a taste of dozens of bourbons, ryes and American

whiskeys. Don't forget the cornbread! 480 King St.

Yunnan by Potomac Ventures Into the Great Outdoors

Yunnan by Potomac, a Chinese restaurant highlighting cuisine from the Yunnan province, has opened up its outdoor dining space along North Fairfax Street. Take a break from takeout or delivery and sit, socially distanced, in the fresh air to enjoy a real, live meal out. 814 N. Fairfax St.

Del Ray Boccatto's Opening Draws Nearer

The signs of life continue to multiply at Del Ray Boccatto on Mount Vernon Avenue. Signage is up, counters are ready and – as a sign of the times – sanitization stations are in place. It won't be long now to say hello to owner Cristian Velasco's new café, which will offer up gelato, coffee drinks, pastries and more. 2400 Mount Vernon Ave.

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.

LTA Presents "Love Letters"

FROM PAGE 10

fidant. But he never allows himself to divorce from his responsibilities long enough to accept her as his companion."

As far as audience takeaways, he added: "I hope the audience takes a hard look at their lives and remembers what it was that used to be important to them and how they may have never pursued it because of the responsibilities they accepted as they grew. Maybe they too have someone they have known forever and maybe they can

revisit the times they shared."

Because tickets are free, donations of any amount are welcome. Donations may be made through Eventbrite when you order your ticket, in cash at the performance you attend, by calling LTA, or online by clicking the donate button on the website at: <http://thelittletheatre.com/opportunities/#donations>. The theater is located at 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Call the box office at 703-683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.



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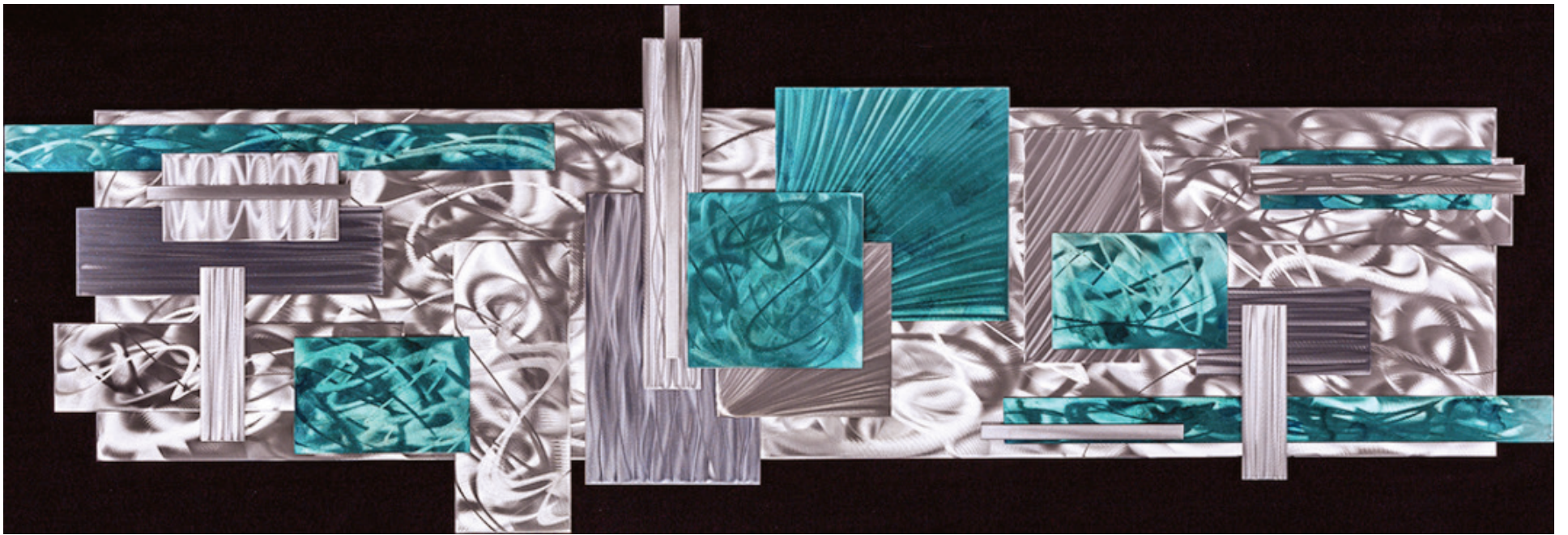
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Virginia sculptor Steven Lloyd has mastered metal work, creating striking wall art through fired aluminum, paint, stainless steel, copper and other alloys.



Handmade-in-the-USA jewelry, such as Annmarie Siegel's exquisite pendant made from vintage mechanical watch parts, will be available during the 18th Annual Old Town Alexandria art walk.



Alexandria Old Town Art Festival Sept. 12 - 13 will host local and national artists showcasing thousands of works in John Carlyle Square.

Art Festival Returns

The 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival, formerly the King Street Art Festival, will take place less than a mile from its previous location in John Carlyle Square.

Festival-goers should reserve a free time slot at ArtFestival.com.

Presented by Howard Alan Events, the Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival has strict health and safety guidelines for this

year's event, including mandatory mask-wearing, limited numbers of patrons each hour, and enforced social distancing rules.

Ranked by Sunshine Artists Magazine as one of the top art festivals in the nation, local and national artists will display their works in a show encompassing fine jewelry, exquisite works of art and handcrafted apparel and decor. Art enthusiasts discover spectacular paintings, life-sized sculptures,

jewelry, glasswork, photography, ceramics and more. All artists will be on site for the duration of the festival, allowing visitors to discover the inspiration behind each original piece.

Admission for patrons is free, and ample parking is available. Attendance will be limited each hour and those planning on attending are encouraged to reserve their times at the show by visiting www.artfestival.com.

To Go Details

WHAT: 18th Annual Alexandria Old Town Art Festival

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday Sept. 12-13, 10am to 5pm

WHERE: Old Town Alexandria in John Carlyle Square; 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

COST: Free and open to the public

WEBSITE: www.ArtFestival.com



Painter Lillian Delgado of Riverview uses thick oils along with a palette knife to create an impasto effect.



Bethesda, Md. painter Letitia Lee uses oils, acrylics, bold hues, strokes and lines on canvas to convey energetic movement like her vibrant "Harmonic Bursts."

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

information to be emailed to members and registered nonmembers. Email registration by Sept. 11 to contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. See <http://www.mvgenealogy.org>.

TUESDAY/SEPT. 22

Car Free Day will be celebrated locally on Tuesday, Sept. 22. Commuters are encouraged to telework, bike, walk/run, carpool/vanpool (Car-Lite), scooter, or use public transit. Take the pledge, even if you're already car free. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, residents taking the Car Free Day pledge are encouraged to review and follow the region's "Commute with Confidence" guidelines in a safe and healthy manner.

LCNV FALL CLASS REGISTRATION

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is hosting beginning-level adult English language classes from October to December. Due to the situation of COVID-19, classes for the fall semester will be held on virtual platforms only, which require students to have a computer, tablet, or smartphone and internet access to participate. Registration began Aug. 17, and runs through Friday, Sept. 18, with options to register via text message, phone calls, or in-person at certain locations and times. Classes offered this fall include: Beginning English Class: provides adult English language learners the fundamental skills to understand and communicate in English, helping them to better engage in the community and advance their

careers.

Family Learning Programs (FLP): provides English language instruction for parents or caregivers, so that they can better communicate with their children and support their education.

Classes are \$85.00 with books and assessment included. Registration is required for enrollment. Registration times and dates are available at LCNV's distance learning page (<https://lcnv.org/distance-learning-fall-session/lcnv-classes/>), or call 703-237-0866.

FLU SHOTS AT SAFEWAY

Local Safeway pharmacies will be giving flu shots starting Aug. 29 at 112 Eastern Division stores in the region. Flu vaccines can be administered on a "walk-in" basis and are offered on a daily basis. The flu shot is free with most insurance, so there is no co-payment unless required by the plan. Visit the website www.safeway.com/flu

FLU SHOTS AT GIANT FOOD

Flu shots are now available at all Giant Food store pharmacies for both adults and children. The vaccinations will be administered by Giant's pharmacists, require no appointment and are often covered in-full by most insurance plans. No appointment is needed and insurance companies, including Medicare, are billed directly, often at \$0 copays. Standard flu shots as well as the high dose flu vaccine for customers over the age of 64 are available. For more information, or to schedule an onsite flu clinic for your office, call 800-950-4678.

HOPE FOR THE WARRIORS SCHOLARSHIPS

Now through Sept. 30, applications are being accepted for the Spring 2021 semester for the Hope For The Warriors Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarship program. Since 2006, Hope For The Warriors has awarded Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarships twice a year. The program recognizes and rewards post-9/11 spouses and caregivers for their strength, fidelity and resolve despite adversity as they assume critical roles in the financial well-being of their families. Scholarships vary from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and applied toward higher education at an U.S. accredited university, college or trade school. To receive an application to apply for the Spring 2021 semester, visit hopeforthewarriors.org and apply for services.

AAAS STEM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The AAAS STEM Volunteers Program, stemvolunteers.org, needs scientists, engineers and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in school districts in the D.C. metro area during the 2020-21 school year. Due to the pandemic, it is anticipated that instruction will be virtual. We will work with our school district partners and volunteers to determine the best ways to support STEM teachers in a virtual environment. If you care about K-12 STEM education and have time to share your knowledge with students and teachers, send a note to donaldrea@aol.com with your home address.

Employment



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Cancer For Dummies: Me

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



As I was telling my long-time friend, Rita, over the phone on Saturday afternoon, as a cancer patient - and I know this is going to sound ridiculous, short-sighted and stupid, I am not always forthcoming and honest when it comes to sharing new symptoms with my doctors, particularly my oncologist. Aside from the obvious discomfort neglecting a new problem would cause, not telling my doctors everything, all the time prevents me from learning - for a brief moment anyway, exactly what either of my two types of cancer are doing to me. Out of sight, though not totally out of mind provides a certain salve for what ails me. A mixed up version of what I don't know can't hurt me - which of course, it most definitely can.

Still, after 11 and 1/2 years of walking this walk, I can't always get the message through my thick head. I'd rather rationalize and/or self-diagnose or attribute the miscellaneous maladies (aches and pains) to older age than I've ever been or due to the fact that I'm overweight and out of shape. And though my friend Frank might think that I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in, the problem is that cancer has its own agenda and doesn't listen to anybody. Moreover, in my experience anyway, it seems to be able to affect one's judgment.

But how else, other than in a roundabout way, does one deal with such weighty issues such as life and death? Granted, I can see how I'm working against my own best/self-interest here when I neglect to mention something now which could harm my future defense (a sort of British Miranda-type warning). Unfortunately, that's another facet of cancer's insidious toll: common sense. Your perceptions and all are altered as you look at your life/choices through this prism of cancer. If you're honest and upfront about your symptoms, it could hasten your death by confirming your progression. If you're not it could definitely hasten your demise. (Cancer symptoms generally don't just disappear.) Either way, you're in cancer's grip. Extricating oneself is difficult. Fending off the demons is a full-time job. I'm not exactly Linda Blair from "The Exorcist," but occasionally, I do feel as if I'm possessed and unable to right my own wrongs.

You would think that eventually, one would be able to think outside their own box and realize that self-medicating/self-diagnosing and/or presuming one's age is the explanation for all the ifs, and or buts, concerning one's symptoms/health is akin to taking a long walk off a very short pier. It may suffice for the present, but the future is hardly there for the taking, if it's there at all. Realizing that fact has been difficult for me to assimilate. Part of my survival strategy, if one were even to call it that, has been to try and avoid any rabbit holes of emotional despair. My thought has been that I'd rather deal with it later than deal with it now, and since it will be bad enough later, I'm not going to subject myself to it now. Ill-advised? Probably. Recipe for success? I doubt it. But that's how I've mostly rolled since my "terminal" diagnosis in late February, 2009.

Well, better late than never. As I finally wake up and smell the coffee - which I never drink (smell the bacon would be a better example), closing my eyes to an impending disaster is hardly the stuff of dreams (more like nightmares). I imagine the stuff of dreams is more about admitting and facing adversity with your head on straight instead of facing it with your head on crooked. Pretending/hoping a problem/symptom doesn't matter/likely to go away on its own is not how proper health and hygiene works, especially not cancer. It has a well-earned reputation and one's prognosis would be better served by being proactive rather than reactive. Cancer waits for no man - or woman. It's on its own schedule. Come hell or high water.

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

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HOME LIFE STYLE

Last Chance to See the ASPIRE HOUSE in McLean

Design showhouse closes on Sunday, Sept. 13.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKETT



PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13.

Designing a dream home can be likened to assembling a haute couture wardrobe. The right foundational pieces and accessories combine to create an aesthetic that is at once polished and nonchalant.

This weekend offers the last opportunity for the public to see and derive inspiration from such a space. The ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House closes this Sunday, Sept. 13. The 9,600-square-foot home, located in McLean, was curated by 28 hand-picked designers, architects and remodelers. Each of the home's 30 rooms is a showcase of thoughtfully designed vignettes.

The spaces, "represent the very best of the design community," said Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair. "[It celebrates] great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

A predilection for antique furnishings served as inspiration for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule. Using a French antique sculpture as the focal point, she gave the space a sense of intimacy by hanging framed antique drawings on the walls which she swathed in floral wallpaper. The floor is covered with an antique rug in jewel tones of deep reds and greens.

"I wanted the space to be a place that would catch the attention of visitors," said Asack, of Masseria Chic in McLean. "I wanted it to be a space where guests could have a private conversation."

When designing the gallery, Lenore Winters of Lenore Winters Studios in Bethesda used intricately detailed panel moldings as a natural frame for the art that would inhabit the space. "Our primary intent was to...showcase the artworks to be displayed, said Winters. "Having that element as our primary focus, the design was carefully edited to respect and enhance the visitors' experience of each individual artwork."

A theatre without traditional stadium-style seating is the image that Courtney McLeod of Right Meets Left Interior Design used as the concept for her creation of the home's cinema, an entertainment space where family and visitors alike would gather to watch movies.

McLeod imagined that the homeowners would be well-traveled, so the space should appear as though it had evolved over time. "We wanted the room to have a collected feel, filled with pieces from around the



PHOTO BY FEDERICA ASACK

A French antique sculpture was the focal point for Federica Asack's design of the home's powder room vestibule.

"Great design from a multitude of diverse voices and cultures."

—Mary Douglas Drysdale, design chair, ASPIRE HOUSE McLean Designer Show House

world," she said.

The walls and ceiling are painted in Rickwood Red by Sherwin Williams. "By using the same color on the wall and ceilings, we were able to camouflage the fact that the ceiling height changes, which felt awkward when we first saw it," said McLeod.

A leather ottoman in olive green sits in the center of the room, surrounded by seating in shades of

cream. "It's a big, multifunctional piece of furniture," said McLeod. "The ottoman is a perfect spot for a tray holding a glass or wine or snacks or put your feet up while you're watching a movie."

The show house is for sale, priced at \$6.75 million and is located at 952 Mackall Farms Lane, McLean, VA. It will be open through Sunday, Sept. 14th from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. with in-person tours every 15 minutes. The last admission is at 4 p.m. All visitors must wear masks. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$45 for military and \$45 for seniors and a group tour is a max of 12 people at a time (12 ticket holders). Proceeds will benefit the ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME Diversity in Design Scholarship Fund.

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