

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 1, 2021

Pastor at Rising Hope To Retire

Accomplishments aplenty for Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon retiring after positively impacting many.



Cherry Blossom day, Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon with wife Judy Borsher.



On a trip down to Richmond, gathering with Del. Paul Krizek (D-44).

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

At the Rising Hope Mission Church, Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon has been a moving force since the beginning when it was run out of the trunk of his car 26 years ago. Now at age 72, Kincannon is retiring but not without leaving behind a legacy in the Mount Vernon community where he has helped many get back on their feet.

The church is devoted to serving the needy of the Route 1 Corridor according to Kincannon, the founding pastor. Thousands of people a year are aided by Rising Hope's food pantry, soup kitchen, clothing closet, hypothermia shelter, recovery programs, job search and emergency resources.

"We are a place where people that don't fit in, fit in," Kincannon said. "I'm enthusiastic about what we've done," he added, but retiring is part of the grand plan too. He has reached retirement age, and "it's time," he said.

In addition to the trunk of Kincannon's car, Rising Hope UMC has been in seven different buildings before finally being able to purchase the building where they are

located now. The church relies on donations almost entirely, and the residents and businesses along the Hybla Valley-Mount Vernon corridor have been generous.

Rising Hope is "unconditionally welcoming to people," Kincannon said, and he's visited homeless camps and knocked on doors to let people know where they can turn when they need help. "If we were not there, we would be missed," he said.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) worked with Keary often, and appreciated the way he was always fighting for and sharing God's love with the diverse community in that area. "He strongly believes we should all do more to support everyone," Storck said. Storck will miss his day-to-day interactions at Rising Hope. "However, I am equally certain he will remain a driving force in our community," Storck said.

Giving Back

Many of the people that were helped through Rising Hope came back to volunteer there, dishing out food or soup to others so they can get back on their feet. There are as many stories as there are people that come through the doors, and



Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon at the pulpit of Rising Hope United Methodist Church.



At the capitol in Richmond with Sen. Scott Surrovell (D-36).

Kincannon gets involved with most of them.

"Here at Rising Hope," Kincannon told the Mount Vernon Gazette in 2012, "we reach out to people who are struggling with all kinds of addictions, all kinds of issues, their lives broken in many different ways. What we are about is empowering people to live life to the fullest, to experience the abundant life that Jesus Christ came to bring."

He remembers a woman named Karen who was a crack addict, and she ended up in prison, but once she was released she found a job and started living in a motel near Rising Hope. She started volunteering at the church and they found out she used to run karaoke nights years before, so they got her to maintain the sound system in the church. Then she landed a job

SEE PASTOR, ON PAGE 10



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Neighborhood Health vaccination clinics are helping bring an end to the pandemic, especially in communities hardest hit.

Neighborhood Health Increasing Vaccine Equity

When Amanda Hirsch looks out at the vaccine clinic running very smoothly, a sense of satisfaction comes over her – a feeling that Neighborhood Health's efforts are helping to bring an end to the pandemic, especially within the communities hardest hit by it. Hirsch works for Neighborhood Health, serving the City of Alexandria, and Arlington and Fairfax counties. Since the start of the pandemic, the health center has been on the front lines providing health care to their low-income, mostly uninsured, and ethnically and racially diverse patients.

While the pace of Virginia COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been picking up in recent weeks, racial and ethnic disparities persist. According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Black and Latino individuals have been vaccinated at the rate of approximately 11,000 per 100,000 people compared to 17,000 per 100,000 to White individuals.

Neighborhood Health has provided more than 15,000 vaccines with 85% going to people of color. It has set up seven community-based vaccine clinic sites located in churches, community centers, and other venues. These are located in target areas such as the Richmond Highway corridor in Mount Vernon, in Arlandria/Chirilagua, and in Bailey's Crossroads. Or-



Neighborhood Health COVID-19 Vaccine Site.

ganizations that have provided space include the Alfred Street Baptist Church, Virginia Theological Seminary, Knights of Columbus, and the Macedonia Baptist Church.

In addition to vaccinating their own patients and their household members, Neighborhood Health -- following Virginia Department of Health guidelines -- is working to target the underserved more broadly. It is working with almost 100 community organizations, including non-profits, faith organizations, and local agencies to vaccinate their clients. Staff from community organizations conduct individualized outreach through phone, text, or email to sign their clients up for the vaccine.

Neighborhood Health scheduled
SEE NEIGHBORHOOD, ON PAGE 8

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Village Hardware Built Community and Solid Reputation

Long time owner is retiring but new owner vows to keep it the same.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Since 1979, Larry Gray, owner of the Village Hardware in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center, has been the go-to guy for area home projects in that part of Mount Vernon. He recently announced his retirement, and will take off with his wife Janet to their planned retirement in Florida.

"I will truly miss it," said Gray. "I met my wife here, selling her and her mom a lawn mower," Gray added.

For years, Gray has been making sure the hardware store stocked the right tools and supplies for the job, and the packed aisles and shelves are testament to his efforts. Area residents know he put this in the forefront of the business plan, and are hoping for more of the same from the new owners.

"You can't sell off empty shelves, I always listen to customers," he said.

In 2018 they were named the number one hardware store in Virginia, and in 2020, "my figures were off the charts," Gray said, possibly attributing that to people working on projects when they were home under quarantine.



Many home projects around Fort Hunt were saved by the Village Hardware.

Gerald A. Connell was a frequent shopper at the store and remembered a time when he brought in a part, looking for a replacement, but they helped him fix the part instead at no charge. "It was a golden place that stocked stuff that you could not buy at Lowes or Home Depot," Connell said.

Jim Seeley was a fan of the store as well, and respected the fact that

Gray became such a fixture in the neighborhood. "Over the years Larry made important business decisions that put his store on firm ground with a strong reputation in the Hollin Hall/Waynewood communities where he was always a willing sponsor of little league teams and local non-profits," Seeley said.

"I have a tremendous customer base," added Gray.

From behind the register, Kaylin Monnot is getting a crash course in home building, gardening and tools as she runs the register for the store. "It's hard to keep certain items in store," she said.

Monnot was hired by Gray over the winter, but with spring coming in fast, she is getting used to it. She lives around the corner so

she sees a lot of familiar faces. She likes the fact that the new owners are not planning to overhaul the

store. "They're going to try to keep it the same, as much as possible," she said.

The new owners, WEA Inc. out of New England can see the existing formula works, so they are not going to change much, except for the relationship the store has had with "True Value."

New manager Troy Richard has 30 years of experience with WEA so he knows hardware. "I want to keep that small town feel," he said. Richard calls WEA, Inc. "a true independent, like [Larry Gray] was."

The formula that is so popular begins with 12,000 SKU's which is the buzzword for item numbers that the computer uses to ID products. "We don't want to limit ourselves to one company, we'll keep as many of his vendors as we can," Richard said.

One thing they will change is the methods used in marketing and outreach. "We do a lot of stuff online," he said.



New manager Troy Richard will not be reinventing the wheel when it comes to the store's mission.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Troy Richard and front register clerk Kaylin Monnot look at the item list when an order comes in.



The downstairs of Village Hardware is full of barbecue items.

Krizek Endorses Sen. Jennifer McClellan for Governor

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

Spring has finally sprung, and that means that the 2021 campaign season is now in full swing! Last week, I announced that I am running for my 4th term in the House of Delegates to continue representing my lifelong home of Mount Vernon down in Richmond. While I do not have a primary this upcoming June 8, Virginia voters will have important decisions to make at the ballot box regarding candidates for the three statewide offices: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. As the start of early voting is swiftly approaching (indeed, early voting begins on April 23 by mail), many constituents have asked for my thoughts on the candidates, so I want to share my choice for our next Governor.

Sen. Jennifer McClellan has my strong endorsement to be the next Governor of Virginia. No one is more prepared to lead our Commonwealth into the future.

I have followed Jennifer's career in public service for decades, from our time serving together during our youth in the Virginia Young Democrats to working as colleagues in the General Assembly.

Throughout the years, I have marveled at her drive, her determination, and strong advocacy for the values Virginians care about, from quality education for all, combating racial inequity, access to reproductive health, criminal justice reform, and safeguarding worker rights.

Sen. McClellan's legislative



prowess has demonstrated her ability to meet the moment and pass critical legislation for the benefit of all Virginians. In just the last two years, she has led the fight and passed nearly four dozen pieces of legislation. I will highlight just a few for you. These are all law now and I am proud to have supported her efforts and voted for each of these important bills.

Equal Rights:

Equal Rights Amendment (SJ 1) – Made Virginia the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Removing Segregation Laws (SB 722) – Repealed several laws passed from 1901 to 1960 that implemented and enforced racial segregation and discrimination.

Workers Rights:

Domestic Workers Rights (SB 804) – Makes Virginia the first state in the South to extend workplace protections to domestic service workers, removing Jim Crow-era exceptions that prevented domestic workers from receiving the same minimum wage as other Virginia workers. The bill also begins the process of expanding oth-

er worker protections to domestic service workers.

The Pregnant Worker Fairness Act (SB 712) – Makes Virginia the 28th state to pass stronger protections for pregnant workers by requiring employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees and mothers of infants.

Clean Energy:

The Virginia Clean Economy Act (SB 851) – Comprehensive energy bill that transitions Virginia to a 100% clean energy grid by 2045, while saving customers money, creating thousands of jobs in the clean energy economy, and addressing the impacts of climate change.

The Solar Freedom Act (SB 710) – Democratizes solar energy, removing barriers on local governments, residents, and businesses to install solar for their own use. The bill will open up a major marketplace for distributed solar energy in Virginia, and support clean energy job creation.

Health Care:

State-Based Health Exchange (SB 732) – Created The Virginia Health Benefit Exchange under the Affordable Care Act to improve access, lower premiums and improve the efficiency of health care for Virginians. McClellan first introduced a state-based exchange as a delegate in 2012.

Criminal Justice Reform:

Ending Mandatory Minimums for License Suspensions (SB 711) – Eliminated the mandatory minimum SEE KRIZEK ENDORSES, PAGE 9

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Surprising: Women of Color Getting Short End of the Stick

I am writing in response to the article titled Opinion: Commentary, "Pandemic Shows Workers Need a Voice in Fairfax County," published in your newspaper on March 20, 2021.

While reading the article, the disparity that was mentioned took me by surprise. Employees were encountering the same issue of not having their inputs and concerns be heard, but women of color were getting the short end of the stick compared to someone such as Norm Hall. Due to the traits someone was born with (i.e., gender), they may or may not have certain

privileges associated with it. Supplying privileges based on traits that employees do not have control over can perpetuate a racial divide among coworkers. To combat this, the county needs to give rights and privileges to every one of its employees, regardless of certain traits.

Fairfax County needs to create a space for their employees' input and concerns. The lack of involvement that employees, such as Mr. Hall, felt concerning their work could leave damaging long-term effects. Due to the complete disregard for their concerns and input, workers may feel like they cannot pour themselves into their job; workers have no say in what they are constructing.

The lack of control and involvement regarding their work could cause disengagement and disconnect from employees. If the coun-

ty were to give their employees a voice and a seat at the table for their inputs and concerns, employee engagement would change drastically. Employees will feel more in control, connected, and engaged in their work because they now know that they had a say in what they do at work. Creating

space for employees will strengthen engagement, and it would be a good step in building a stronger Fairfax County.

Mercy Anane,
sophomore,
James Madison University
Alexandria

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A Connection Newspaper



BUSINESS

Incentivizing Vaccination among Employees

Toolkit for essential workers encourages vaccination in the workplace.

BY HOLLY DOUGHERTY
PRESIDENT
MOUNT VERNON
LEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Holly Dougherty

The Virginia Department of Health just released an Essential Workers Toolkit for employers that includes materials that can easily be customized to encourage vaccination in the workplace.

This toolkit provides an introductory letter template for employees, FAQs, a slide deck that can be used for company meetings, and newsletter content. It is compliant for employees with disabilities and has been translated into several languages.

The toolkit can be downloaded at <https://sites.google.com/view/covidcommshub>

"This is an important pivot point as we move into Phase 2," said Dr. Danny Avula, Director of the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts, speaking on a webinar for employers.

Avula said the Virginia Department of Health is trying to determine how much vaccine Virginia will receive and is confident that Virginia will be ahead of the May 1 deadline of making the vaccine available to all, or Phase 2.

Based on the supply of vaccine from the Federal government, it is likely that Fairfax County will reach Phase 1c by mid-April and move into Phase 2 before May 1. As more vaccine becomes available, employers need to consider workplace policies on receiving the shot.

Doug Taylor, employment law attorney at Bean, Kinney & Korman in Arlington, commented "that federal EEO laws do not necessarily prevent vaccine mandates; the EEOC's advice for all but the highest-risk workplaces is that ADA-covered employers should consider simply encouraging employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine, rather than requiring them to take it."

According to Taylor, "employers who are looking to mandate vaccines should be aware that an employee may be entitled to an exemption based on an ADA disability or sincerely-held religious belief, practice, or

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH #VaccinateVA

Toolkit for essential workers encourages vaccination.

observance based on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Many businesses are trying to incentivize rather than require employees to be immunized. That may include paid time off for the appointment or to recover from any symptoms. Some businesses are providing a gift card with proof of immunization.

Whatever your business decides to do there are many resources available to help support your plan. If you need more information, please feel free to reach out to the Chamber.

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.

TUESDAY/APRIL 20

Arriving in America. 1-3 p.m. Via Zoom. The Mount Vernon Genealogical Society presents Genealogist Sharon Hodges discussing Arriving in America in the Early 19th Century. Nonmembers are welcome to attend one event each year free of charge. Register no later than April 12 at <https://mvgenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=111>. Visit www.mvgenealogy.org and link to the Events Page for more information on this and other upcoming events.

FARMERS MARKET

VENDORS STILL DELIVERING

The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Market won't reopen until April 21, but in the meantime some of the market's vendors are taking orders online and delivering them to the Sherwood Hall Library parking lot on Wednesdays. Note that you must order in advance and that not all the vendors deliver every week. The vendors making deliveries are: Arnest Seafood - crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more; Honey Brook Farms - meats and vegetables raised with no chemicals, gluten-free baked goods; Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese, eggs and meats; Twin Springs Orchard - fruits, vegetables, cheese and more; Valentine's Bakery & Meats - meats and baked goods.

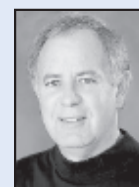
The Fairfax County Park Authority, which operates the Mt. Vernon Farmers Market, has no connection to the deliveries. The market, with a full array of vendors, will resume

on April 21 and take place every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library through December 22.

CHAMBER BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications are now available for business scholarships provided by Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce. At least one scholarship of \$2,000 will be awarded to a senior pursuing further education in business from each of the high schools in Lee and Mount Vernon Districts. Students may apply online at <https://mountvernonleechamber.org/business-scholarship-application/> or call 703-360-6925 to request an application. The application deadline is Friday April 30. Those interested in applying for the scholarship should visit the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8



Rex Reiley
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COMING SOON



Alex/Mt. Vernon Manor \$560s
8804 Falkstone Lane

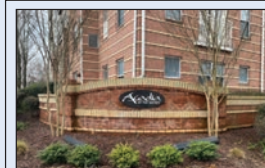
Great Opportunity for a young family to invest in this lovely 4BR, 2.5BA Colonial in a wonderful neighborhood and to add their own taste and design to the kitchen and baths. The interior and exterior have been freshly painted, and the hwd floors have been refinished and look great. The yard is large, fenced in the back to allow little ones and a dog or two to romp. Both the front and rear have been overseeded and should start coming to life in a couple of weeks. Similar model, but with a 2-car garage and totally remodeled, recently sold for \$721,250. Great location - to the South: Ft. Belvoir, 5 minutes - to the North: Old Town Alexandria, 15 minutes, National Airport, 27 minutes, Pentagon and D.C. - 30-35 minutes. Tough to find a home and good-sized lot in this area <\$600,000.

UNDER CONTRACT



Alex/Riverside Estates \$749,900
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Gorgeous, newly renovated three level colonial with garage in sought after Mt. Vernon community. 4 bedrooms 2 1/2 baths. Newly screened in back porch and new deck. Spectacular kitchen opened up to dining room with high-end stainless steel Samsung appliances including "smart" refrigerator, quartz counters and tiled backsplash. Nicely updated bathrooms. Two fireplaces, both with new liners. New windows, new roof, new perimeter french drain, new 200-amp electrical panel. Refinished hardwood floors. This popular model also has a family room on the main level (in addition to the kitchen, dining and living rooms). Workshop room off of garage. Attractive shed. The work has been done for you - just move in and enjoy this beautiful home and its wonderful location.



Vienna/Acadia Condo \$404,900
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Heirs of River Farm

A detailed look at the history of River Farm as its future remains uncertain.

BY TAMMY MANNARINO
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

On Oct. 15, 1785, George Washington's favorite nephew married Martha Washington's favorite niece. George Augustine Washington was the son of George Washington's youngest Brother Charles, the founder of Charlestown, West Virginia. He was a Major in the Virginia Line during the American Revolution, serving first as a member of George Washington's personal guard and later as an aide to General Lafayette.

Frances Bassett, known as Fanny, was the daughter of Martha's sister Anna Maria Dandridge, who passed away in 1777 when Fanny was only 10 years old. Martha had an almost maternal relationship toward Fanny, who came to live permanently at Mount Vernon in the mid-1780s. It appears that Martha wrote more letters to Fanny than to anyone else in her lifetime. Washington wrote in his diary on the couple's wedding day, "After the candles were lighted George Auge. Washington and Frances Bassett were married by Mr. Grayson." Grayson was the Reverend at Pohick Church.

The young couple continued to live at Mount Vernon with George Augustine (often referred to as "the Major") working as the farm manager. Around the couple's one-year anniversary, Washington wrote George Augustine a letter revealing his intent, upon his death, to give them 2,000-3,000 acres of his River Farm property. He provided assurances that he expected to die without issue. Therefore, the couple could feel comfortable building on the land whenever it suited them — an offer they later acted upon. In the meantime, Washington's need for their presence would only increase as he took leadership of the new nation. Washington appointed the Major as power of attorney when he left for New York in the Spring of 1789 to

serve as the first President. Fanny served as hostess in Martha's stead, entertaining many visitors to Mount Vernon. During this period, they had three children: George Fayette, Charles Augustine and Anna Maria.

Mindful that "having so many children about the house" might be disagreeable to his uncle, George Augustine began construction on his new house situated on River Farm. Sadly, his health was failing and as 1792 reached its end, it was clear he would not survive much longer. The Major attempted to improve his situation through rest and travel. He tasked Anthony Whiting, now the farm manager at Mount Vernon to supervise construction of the home. Whiting and George Washington discussed in their frequent correspondence how best to proceed regarding the house given the Major's grave illness. Washington woefully advised, "I think you had better not (until further orders) procure any more scantling; especially such as must be cut to waste." Sadly, Washington's fears were realized, and George Augustine passed away on February 5, 1793 in Philadelphia. Fanny Washington requested a pause in the building of their home for the time being.

Within months, tragedy would strike another member of the Washington household. In July, yellow fever took Mary "Polly" Lear. She left behind her son Benjamin and her husband, Tobias Lear, who had been employed for 6 years as Washington's secretary and tutor to Martha's children. As the President served his second term, Fanny and Tobias, who had always been fond of each other's families, grew closer. They wed in August 1795. As a wedding present, George and Martha Washington gave them a life interest in 360 acres on River Farm. The Lears and their respective children lived in the house that had been started by George Augustine. They called their home Walnut Tree Farm.

Sadly, the marriage lasted only 7 months. Fanny died of tuberculosis on March 25, 1796. A bereft Lear wrote to Washington with the bad news, "The Partner of my life is no more!" Tobias rejoined the household at Mount Vernon and was famously present at George Washington's deathbed in December 1799. As promised, George Washington remembered George Augustine and Fanny's

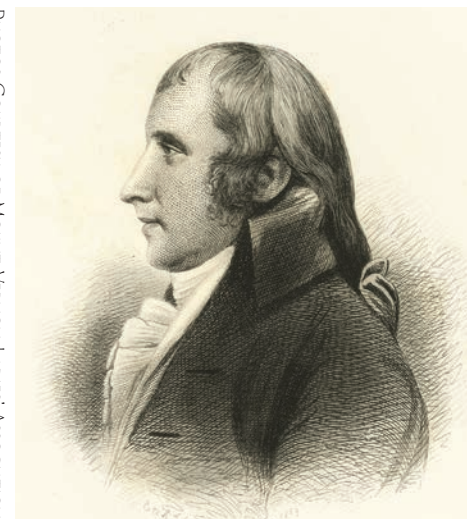


COURTESY OF THE STUNTZ FAMILY AND THE FCPL'S VIRGINIA ROOM

Wellington, photographed by J. Harry Shannon, 1908.



Fanny Bassett Washington, oil on canvas, Robert Edge Pine, 1785 [W-1488]



Tobias Lear, engraved by Henry Bryan Hall, 1869 [RP-41/Print-3209]

family in his will. He bequeathed his River Farm estate to their sons (Tobias Lear's step-sons), George Fayette Washington and Charles Augustine Washington.

Washington explained in his will, "In consideration of the consanguinity between them and my wife, being as nearly related to her as to myself, as on account of the affection I had for, and the obligation I was under to, their father when living, who from his youth had attached himself to my person, and followed my fortunes through the vicissitudes of the late Revolution — afterwards devoting his time to the Superintendence of my private concerns for many years, whilst

my public employments rendered it impracticable for me to do it myself."

George Fayette Washington outlived his siblings. He married and had 3 children. They lived for some time on the Walnut Tree Farm property, eventually passing it to their son, Charles Augustine. As early as 1815, George Fayette was using a new name for the property, one that has lasted more than a century: Wellington.

Tammy Mannarino is a local historian in Fairfax County, Virginia, founder and author of BackyardMountVernon.com a website devoted to capturing the stories of people and events in Mount Vernon area history.

Old Town Alexandria Historic Garden Tour, Saturday, April 17, 2021

On Saturday, April 17, 2021, Old Town Alexandria will welcome visitors to enjoy a walking tour of beautifully decorated exteriors and gardens as part of Historic Garden Week in Virginia. This self-guided tour, envisioned as "A Springtime Stroll: Doorways of Our Past and Future," features historic sites and homes nestled along the tree-lined streets of the Historic District of Old Town.

This easy walking tour offers exterior views of more than a dozen homes with notable history and is anchored by four historical properties: the Lee-Fendall



House garden, the Ramsay House garden, the Athenaeum garden and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Along the route, homes will be adorned with blue-ribbon worthy wreaths,

planters and window boxes created by members of the Garden Club of Alexandria and the Hunting Creek Garden Club.

On April 17, ticket holders will have exclusive access to the Lee-Fendall House garden, where experts will be on hand to discuss native and medicinal plants and which will be the site of a special plant sale for ticket holders.

Ticket holders also will have access to the garden at the Athenaeum, which will be decorated for an afternoon luncheon.

The week of April 17-24, ticket holders will have free admission to the grounds of

Mount Vernon and discounted pricing for reserving interior tours of the Mount Vernon estate. Gunston Hall also is offering ticket holders discounted pricing to tour the Gunston Hall mansion, grounds and museum for the week of April 17-24.

Tickets must be purchased in advance for \$25 at VAGardenWeek.org. Tickets are timed for morning entry (10 a.m.) and afternoon entry (1 p.m.). A limited number of tickets will be sold for each entry time. Ticket sales end on April 16 or when the tour reaches capacity.

www.vagardenweek.org

Green Summer

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria delegation works with the governor to legalize marijuana on July 1.

Marijuana possession arrest and conviction rates are higher for Black Virginians

Alexandria is about to become the capital of marijuana in Virginia. The city's legislative delegation is at the center of an effort poised to legalize weed this summer, years ahead of an agreement that was struck behind closed doors at the end of the General Assembly session in February.

This week, Gov. Ralph Northam issued amendments to legislation introduced by House Majority Leader Charniele Herring (D-46) of Alexandria and state Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30) that would have legalized marijuana on New Years Day 2024. After receiving tremendous pressure from an unprecedented lobbying campaign, the governor changed his position and amended the legislation to legalize pot on July 1 of this year.

"It really is an extraordinary victory," said Jenn Michelle Pedini, executive director of Virginia NORML. "We're really thrilled to see that Governor Northam agrees with NORML and with Virginians that legalization ought to take effect on July first of this year."

When the General Assembly session began, the governor called for the date of legalization to be tied to the date commercial sales could begin. Northam originally wanted the Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority to regulate marijuana when sales begin in 2023. But lawmakers rejected that idea and instead created the Cannabis Control

Authority, which pushed the start of commercial sales back to 2024. Senators wanted to separate the date of legalization from the date of commercial sales, but they were outnumbered during the closed-door conference committee discussions.

"Thankfully people have evolved and come to the Senate position, which we're happy to see," said Ebbin. "I think you're going to see a bipartisan recognition that the prohibition on cannabis has failed and if we're going to legalize it we might as well just get that done and eliminate all penalties for possessing a small amount of marijuana."

During the conference committee negotiations, which happened in secret and were not open to the public, senators pressed for a re-enactment clause that would

force lawmakers to reconsider the legislation again next year. House members didn't like the reenactment clause, but they ended up agreeing to it if the Senate agreed to delay legalization until 2024 to allow for time to stand up the Cannabis Control Authority. Now the governor's amendments are forging a new compromise, moving up the date of legalization while also allowing people to grow marijuana plants in their home as of July 1.

"If you're going to legalize simple possession, you also have to have a legal way to obtain it," said Herring. "Unfortunately, the Senate put a reenactment clause on the regulatory part of the bill so there was no way for us to speed up the process so we could have retail."

NOW LAWMAKERS will be considering a new compromise, one crafted by the governor and his staff behind closed doors at the Executive Mansion. The version lawmakers will be voting on when they reconvene on April 7 would legalize possession of marijuana this summer while also allowing for people to grow marijuana

plants at home. That solves the problem of legalizing a product that was unavailable through legal channels. Meanwhile, lawmakers will still need to reenact all the language standing up the new Cannabis Control Authority, a massive undertaking that includes social-equity licenses and vertical integration allowing companies to grow a product it also sells.

"Our commonwealth is committed to legalizing marijuana in an equitable way," said Northam in a written statement after issuing his amendments. "Virginia will become the 15th state to legalize marijuana, and these changes will ensure we do it with a focus on public safety, public health and social justice."

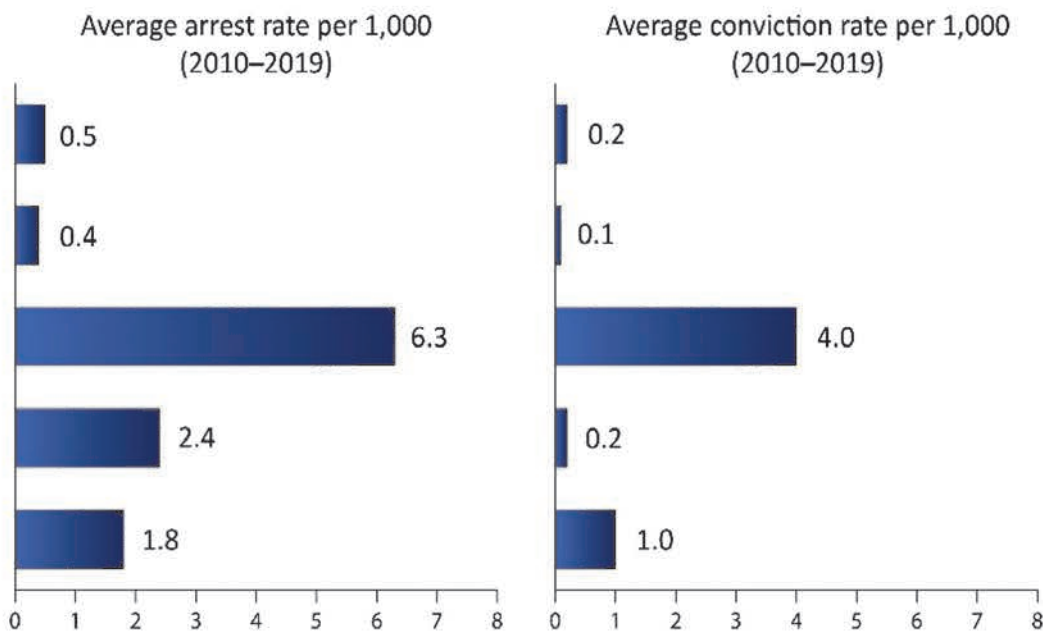
Now members of the General Assembly will have the final say. During their April 7 session, they'll get an up or down vote on the amendments. Either they approve them or reject them, and they won't have an opportunity to make amendments or disrupt the careful second nego-

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SOURCE: JLARC staff analysis using arrest data from the Virginia State Police and conviction data from the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Supreme Court.



Charniele Herring



Adam Ebbin

amendments with overwhelming support, although the margins are a little tighter in the Senate. At least one Democratic senator has already announced his opposition.

"People smoke marijuana to get high," said Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), who says he remains opposed to creating a new legal industry for marijuana. "The purpose of smoking it is to create an altered mental state, and once you legalize it people will be able to use it pretty much any time they want."

Other Senate Democrats disagree, even some of the more conservative members that might have otherwise raised objections. Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25) said he would have preferred the final version of the bill to have a statewide referendum, allowing voters to weigh in on whether they want to move forward with legalizing marijuana. But even though the amended version of the legislation does not have a referendum, he says he'll support legalizing marijuana this summer.

"I expect it to pass," said Deeds. "The thing that cost us the bipartisan majority and cost us one Democratic vote is when we took

the referendum out. The referendum is still out, so it's going to be a close vote."

THE WILD CARD in the Senate is Sen. Joe Morrissey (D-16). He's pressing senators to withhold their votes legalizing marijuana until the governor agrees to call a special session on eliminating mandatory minimum sentences. Lawmakers were close to an agreement on eliminating mandatory minimums, but the effort fell apart at the last minute. Advocates for criminal justice reform say the failure to take action on mandatory minimums was a major setback, and now Morrissey wants to use the vote on marijuana as leverage to force a special session of mandatory minimums.

"I have the greatest opportunity to get it done when I couple them together," said Morrissey. "We're talking about a \$25 fine for marijuana versus mandatory minimums that cause people to go to prison for decades and destroy not just the defendant's life but generations."

The governor's press release includes quotes from two Republicans, Sen. Jill Vogel (R-27) and Sen. Richard Stuart (R-28). Some viewed that as an indication that the governor has already lined up all the votes he needs in the Senate.

But Morrissey says he's hoping to persuade his colleagues that the vote on marijuana is an opportunity to force consideration of a major criminal-justice reform.

"We'll see if they've got the votes," said Morrissey.

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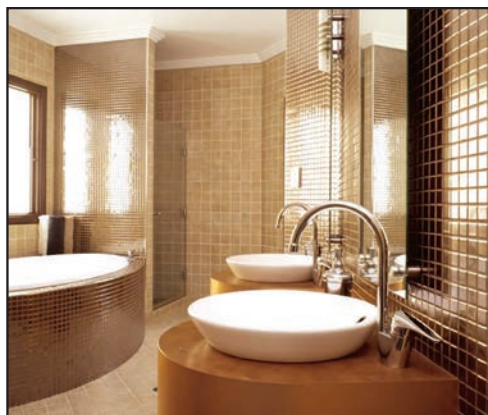
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News



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

COVID-19 Vaccine partnership leaders pose with Neighborhood Health Vaccine Sign at Macedonia Baptist Church in Arlington. Left to Right: Rev. Craig Harcum from the church; Neighborhood Health staff Martha Welman, M.D., Basim Khan, M.D., Cynthia Sturdevant, Mary Hill, Amanda Hirsch, and Jessica McKee; and Lamont West, Trustee of the Macedonia Baptist Church.

Neighborhood Health Increasing Vaccine Equity

FROM PAGE 1

ulers follow up to get the client an appointment time at a convenient location, usually within a week of the initial referral. Some of the larger nonprofits and local government agencies are given a certain number of appointment slots at Neighborhood Health vaccine clinics that they can fill with their clients so that a scheduling call from Neighborhood Health is not needed.

Dr Basim Khan, Neighborhood Health's Executive Director, talks about the heroic efforts throughout the community to get people in need vaccinated. "We are excited that faith-organizations, nonprofits and local government agency partners are conducting outreach and connecting their clients to us -- people who currently qualify under the VDH guidelines but who might have difficulty accessing the vaccines due to technology, literacy, language, or other barriers." So, in addition to its own qualifying patients, Neighborhood Health is able to reach underserved communities more broadly by partnering with African American churches, Latino and Asian American organizations and nonprofits in food assistance, legal and affordable housing, tenant rights and social services, and more. Neighborhood

Health's own bilingual outreach team is going directly to local small businesses such as ethnic grocery stores and restaurants to help schedule their staff for vaccines. The enthusiasm is palpable.

Dr Martha Welman, Neighborhood Health's Medical Director says that when vaccines first became available, the big goal was to offer 2,000 vaccinations per week. "But now, with our recent access to additional vaccine supply directly from the federal government, we anticipate administering up to 5,000 per week by early April. It is such a rewarding feeling to know we are meeting the needs of the community."

Most people arriving at the vaccine sites are excited, if a little nervous. But the overwhelming emotion seems to be gratitude. Hopkins House, a local nonprofit that offers early childhood education and career development programs has referred multiple qualifying clients and staff for vaccination. J. Glenn Hopkins, President and CEO, says that one of their referrals who got vaccinated "is extremely grateful. She tells me it has relieved a great deal of personal stress, given the burden of her other health issues. She asked that I thank you 'from the bottom of my heart.'"

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

website and review the application requirements.

COVID UPDATES

Quick Facts for Older Adults about COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments
Vaccine eligibility is occurring in phases per the CDC and Virgin-

ia Department of Health. More information about vaccine rollout in Fairfax can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19.

As more vaccine becomes available, there will be more options where to access it. In the future, you will likely be able to access vaccine via

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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Krizek Endorses Sen. Jennifer McClellan

FROM PAGE 4

mum 10-day jail term for a third or subsequent conviction of driving on a suspended license, returning discretion to judges on such cases. Nearly half of suspended license cases in Virginia were due to non-payment of court fees, according to the Legal Aid Justice Center.

Statute of Limitations for Sexual Offenses (SB 724) – Increased the statute of limitations for prosecuting child misdemeanor sexual offenses from when the survivor turns 19 to when they turn 23.

Affordable Housing:

Public Housing Demolition Notice (SB 708) – Requires public housing authorities to send notice of their plans to demolish, sell, or otherwise dispose of a housing project to every resident at least 12 months in advance.

Tenants Bill of Rights (SB 707) – Requires all landlords to provide new tenants with a written explanation of their right to request repairs. The bill empowers tenants to take action when their landlord allows property to fall into disrepair or become unsafe – and it lays out clear responsibilities of tenants to report such conditions.

Education:

Disorderly Conduct (SB 3) – Eliminates the vague Class 1 misdemeanor “disorderly conduct” charge for student behavior deemed disruptive at a school or school-sponsored event. The frequent use of “disorderly conduct” charges for school incidents led to an increase in the number of students in the school-to-prison pipeline, and increased racial disparities in Virginia’s education system. McClellan first introduced disorderly conduct legislation as a Delegate in 2016.

Disciplinary Discretion (SB 729) – Returns discretion to school administrators over whether to report behavior that constitutes a misdemeanor to law enforcement or handle through the disciplinary process. McClellan has worked on this legislation for more than 7 years, since she was in the House of Delegates.

Sen. McClellan is a tireless fighter for her constituents, and always willing to put in the work, which is how I know that she will do the same for all Virginians as our Commonwealth’s next Governor.

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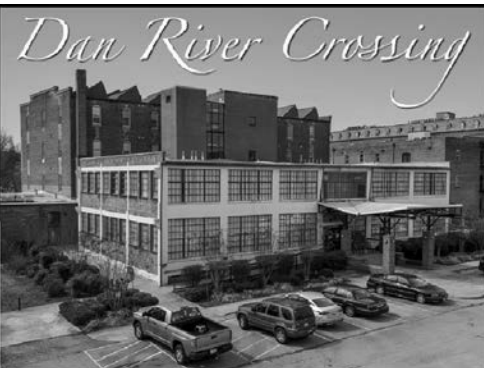
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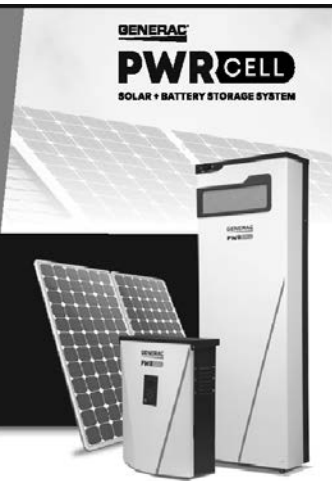
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Good News Travels Slowly



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sure enough, the email from my oncologist didn't arrive in my inbox before we left for the weekend away on Friday. It wasn't ideal, but as a long time cancer patient, I've learned to make the best of a bad/potentially bad situation. As it turned out, the time away was invigorating, and there was very little mention of the elephant in the room: Kenny's cancer. Friends can be good like that. Once we got home on Sunday, after a two-hour wait at Six Flags to get my second covid-19 shot, I was rewarded. The email from the radiologist had arrived and the news was good, or so it seemed.

What it is that I typically receive is an automated release of the radiologist's report which is likewise forwarded to my oncologist. Granted, I can only understand half of the words, and those are generally the prepositions; much of the report is written by a doctor for a doctor, not for the doctor's patient. Nevertheless, the process is what it is. It's rare anymore that one receives a call from their doctor with scan-type results. Usually, my oncologist amends this first email with a simplified interpretation of the report: "scan looks good," as a hopeful example. So far, and this is Tuesday afternoon after the Wednesday scan, I've not yet received an amended report, the one where the oncologist offers his summary/opinion. We do have a follow-up video appointment with him on Thursday so perhaps he's saving himself/his comments until that meeting. Perhaps not. Regardless, I should have heard something more definitive by now. Presuming I can figure out the true meaning of the radiologist's report is a bit presumptuous. As a cancer patient, I don't want to have to figure anything out. I want to be told. I shouldn't have to live with any unnecessary uncertainty. I have more than enough uncertainty already. And in case anybody can't guess: uncertainty does not improve my quality of life, one that's already fragile. A "terminal" diagnosis will do that and tends to put a patient ill at ease, morning, noon and night. That's what I call a "post-diagnosis existing condition."

That reaction/disappointment being expressed, from what few words and meanings I could grasp from the report: "no new lesions," no significant change, "stable disease," I can say with all the limited knowledge at my disposal, that I'm probably OKAY. In fact, I would say that my warranty has been extended for another three months, until we wash, rinse and repeat in another three months, per the cycle I've mostly been on since 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

However, I'd be foolish to fuss too much because if my interpretation of the radiologist's report is correct, I really can't complain about good news. I mean, what goes around, comes around, and I'm not about to tempt fate and ruffle karma's feathers. These reports, which typically are the first and surest indication that the patient is in trouble - or not, are a lifeline as patients cling to. A good/stable disease report is sort of like a "life preserver" until you actually talk with the oncologist and get a more official interpretation. Of course, to receive good news earlier would be a lot better. But when the news is good, as this report was, anytime you receive it: "it's all good," as so many say.

Naturally, I'd rather hear it directly from the oncologist. Moreover, given that not all the words written in this report are familiar/known to me, especially in the context in which they're written ("medicalese"); obviously, I'd rather hear the assessment of the scan from the oncologist in person/so to speak, and not leave anything to chance - or misinterpretation by yours truly. In spite of these irregularities, which I can't do anything about (I've tried), my modus has been to roll with the punches and take the good, bad and ugly in stride. So I'm not mad. I'm glad. Life goes on. Thank God!

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

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News



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Rising Hope congregation.

Pastor at Rising Hope To Retire

FROM PAGE 1

at a recycling corporation, and was up for a management position before the recycling company was taken over by another company, and they got word that Karen had been arrested in the past, and wouldn't keep her employed. She showed interest in the trucking industry, so Rising Hope put her through a trucking school, and she became a big rig driver. "Now she owns her own rig and is doing very, very well," said Kincannon. "That's

just one story of many," he said.

Kincannon's last day is June 30, but he will stay in the area where he's made his home. His successor is Pastor Cameron Wilds, a 33-year-old that has been in training for the last few weeks.

The deeper mission at Rising Hope is about the spiritual self, and Kincannon feels they've done a good job getting people in touch with that.

"We're really about accepting," he said.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 8

your doctor, a health clinic or pharmacy. It takes two doses. Follow the directions of your vaccine provider to schedule your second dose.

One caregiver can attend a vaccine appointment with their loved one.

Vaccine-eligible people can register for appointments online or over the phone (no need to do both).

Online: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19. Click on "Vaccination" at the top of the page and you will see registration information. After your registration is accepted, a scheduling link will be sent to you as vaccine becomes available. Call: 703-324-7404 to register for a vaccine via phone.

Vaccine Appointment Tips

After you receive your first vaccine, you should take a picture of your vaccination card that you will receive. That way you won't have to worry about misplacing it.

Wear a mask to the appointment.

Download and use v-Safe, an app that helps you report any reactions you are having to the vaccine. Learn more: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html

ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) is hosting beginning-level adult English language classes from February to May. Due to the continued situation of COVID-19, classes for the spring semester will be held on virtual platforms only, which require students to have a computer, tablet, or smartphone and internet access to participate. Registration runs through February 5, with options to register via text message, phone calls, or in-person at certain locations and times.

Classes offered this spring 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 with books and assessment included. Registration is required for enroll-

ment. Please understand that no children are allowed at in-person registrations. If possible, please bring your interpreter for the process. Strict social distancing precautions will be enforced. Face masks will be provided. Registration times and dates are available at LCNV's distance learning page (<https://lcnv.org/distance-learning-session/lcnv-classes/>), or call 703-237-0866.

DRIVERS NEEDED TO HELP SENIORS

Mount Vernon At Home is a nonprofit organization serving senior citizens in the Mount Vernon and Alexandria areas of Fairfax County. They are in critical need for volunteers to assist members with driving to medical appointments and grocery shopping. Mount Vernon At Home will supply you with necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and can provide a donation receipt for your mileage. Volunteers can sign up for driving assignments through the online system which makes it easy to see and accept assignments. Give what time you can, there is no minimum or maximum number of hours. If you have some time to give to the community and can spare several hours a month, visit info@mountvernonathome.org, or call 703-303-4060.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

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BATTERY CHECK-UP	\$44.95 FOR SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE	4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT	BRAKE PAD REPLACEMENT	SPECIAL	
INCLUDES: CHECK COLD CRANKING AMPS AND VISUAL INSPECTION OF BATTERY CONDITION. INCLUDES BATTERY CONDITION PRINT OUT.	INCLUDES: CHANGE OIL (UP TO 5 QTS.), INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA OIL FILTER, INSPECT & ADJUST ALL FLUID LEVELS AND COMPLIMENTARY MULTI-POINT INSPECTION WITH PRINT OUT.	INCLUDES: 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT, INSPECT SUSPENSION, BALL JOINTS, STRUTS & SHOCKS, TIRE CONDITION AND SET TIRE PRESSURE.	INCLUDES: INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA FRONT BRAKE PADS, INSPECT FRONT & REAR ROTORS AND/OR DRUMS, CHECK TIRE CONDITION AND INSPECT ALL HARDWARE. TMC PADS ONLY. MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95	MAINTAIN PEACE OF MIND BY EXTENDING YOUR TOYOTACARE COMPLEMENTARY MAINTENANCE PLAN TO 4 YEARS/45,000 MILES!	\$10 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$50-\$99 \$15 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$100-\$199 \$20 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$200-\$499 \$50 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$500+
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