

# Over 50 Years of Iconic Music Venue

Birchmere tell-all book by local writers published in November.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

For a band to play at the Birchmere in Alexandria, it was like almost making it to the big-time concert world of stadiums and arenas. Since opening in the mid 1960s, the Birchmere has been a launching ground for many musicians, showcasing songs and sounds that make it an important place to start a musicians tour. The festoon out front featured iconic musicians like Pete Seger, Arlo Guthrie, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles and Joan Baez to name a few.

An entertainment venue like that can't go through 55 years of concerts without a few stories to tell, and those stories are the meat behind the newly released book "All the Roads Lead to the Birchmere, America's Legendary Music Hall," that hit the shelves in early November. Authors Gary Oelze and Stephen Moore dipped into their memory banks, and the memory banks of many others that have been on stage there to come up with this 472-page documentary on paper.

"Many moments stand out as markers that built the reputation of this durable music venue," Oelze wrote. Oelze lives in the Del Ray part of Alexandria, while Moore lives in Bethesda.

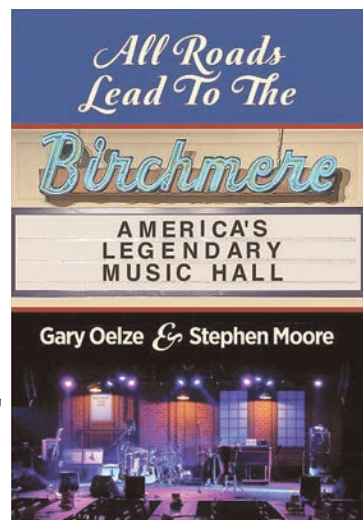


Authors Gary Oelze, left, and Stephen Moore.

"We interviewed about 120 musicians, they viewed it as an intimate listening room," Moore said. The sound is different in a small place like this, and Moore found that some of the musicians prefer being close to the audience. "Here they can really see the people, they love that," Moore said.

"Intimate," is a place with about 500 seats and an artistic neon sign that looks out to Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray. The current venue is the third place the Birchmere has been over the years. They were at another location in Del Ray, and a spot in Shirlington before that. It's tough to survive with prime real estate like that on only concert revenue, so the food and drinks they serve are part of their financial picture.

People are there to see the shows though and hear the music of Vince Gill from the Pure Prairie League, and the Eagles, Richie Havens of Woodstock fame, Herb Alpert and Mary Chapin Carpenter to name a few. "Many of the musicians see the Birchmere as their first stop on tours," Moore said.



Famed music venue is in an area that used to be known as Arlandria.

Over the years, there are tales of musical discovery, but also tales of time and place.

For example, one of the stories involved the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart who arrived late, and the Dead Heads were camped out all over the place around the Birchmere. The place was filled and it "almost exploded," said Moore.

Another story involved Ray Charles, a blind musician who took a time out unknowingly in one of the technician's rooms.

In 1991, Woody Harrelson of the television series "Cheers," hammered out a country set with his band "Three Cool Cats." Movie producer John Waters does a Christmas Show every December that's more comedy and commentary than music. Waters is coming again this year on December 15.

The book has 33 chapters on acts throughout the years, and thumbnail pictures of the musicians and the early days. Some are recognized at first sight, and some are not, at least not to the music fans of today's Top 40. The book took two years to write and the cover was produced by Stilson Greene, an artist in Leesburg. An afterward was written by newsman Bob Schieffer, who had his own country band at one point.

The book is available on BookLocker.

# Chamber Honors Citizen of the Year

George Ksenics, is being recognized as the Chamber Citizen of the Year 2021 by Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce. George is a Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Andrews Federal Credit Union. Since becoming involved with the Chamber 15 years ago, Ksenics has served in a variety of leadership roles within the organization.

"When you are a Chamber member, you are a steward of the community," Ksenics said. "You can see the whole thing coming together and know that communities are successful because of involvement."

"People who do their daily job and then are willing to do their part to make the community a better place to live, worship, and do business make successful communities," said Ksenics.

Ksenics served as chairman of the chamber in 2016, was on the Board of Directors 2011-14 and then was elected to vice-president, president and chairman. He now serves on the Mount Vernon Lee Education Partnership Board of Directors and helps direct the Chamber's charitable foundation.



George Ksenics, Chamber Citizen of the Year 2021, Andrews FCU.

"While everything we do at the Chamber is a team effort," said Holly Dougherty, Chamber President, "George has been a major force in explaining to businesses the value of our scholarship program and leading the fundraising to make it successful."

Ksenics has been a chair of the golf committee for more than 15 years and has been instrumental in raising funds for the scholarship program. Under George's leadership, the scholarship fund has grown and now more than \$250,000 has been awarded to local high school seniors to help further their education.



Kevin McNulty, Chamber Rising Star 2021, Cox Communications.

"George is always optimistic and willing to put in the extra effort even when no one else knows what he is doing," Dougherty said.

Receiving THE BEST Distinguished Business of 2021 awards were Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, for their response to the pandemic; Supporting Strategies of Northern Virginia; VH Sign Co.; the Army Retirement Residence Foundation – Potomac; and the National Museum of the United States Army.

Kevin McNulty, Cox Communications was also awarded the 2021 "Rising Star" award for his contributions as chair of the legislative affairs committee.

Award recipients will be recognized at a special "Holiday Happy Hour" on Wednesday, December 8, at the Courtyard by Marriott in Springfield.

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#WeAreAlexandria



### Beverley Hills | \$1,250,000

This circa 1940 charmer is quite deceiving...the 2-story addition includes fabulous living space, a gourmet kitchen, and spa-like primary bedroom suite. Walk-out lower level with bedroom, full bath, and second family room. Deck off kitchen plus patio. 311 Kentucky Ave.  
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[www.BettyMallon.com](http://www.BettyMallon.com)



OPEN SUN 12/12, 2-4PM

### Belle Haven on the Green | \$789,000

One of a kind! Striking renovation of townhouse at Belle Haven on the Green. COMPLETE update and open floor plan with three bedrooms suites, garage/ GYM. Three levels of perfect! Can settle quickly. 1787 Duffield Lane  
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[www.JanetPriceHomes.com](http://www.JanetPriceHomes.com)



### Alnor Heights | \$699,000

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### Fair Haven | \$599,000

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OPEN SAT 12/11, 1-3PM

### Old Town | \$459,900

2-bedroom, 1-bath condo with views of the Masonic Temple. Spacious & open floor plan features a balcony, stainless steel appliances, washer/dryer. Conveniently located walking distance to restaurants & shops plus Metro across the street! 505 E Braddock Rd #303  
**Jen Walker 703.675.1566**  
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### Mount Vernon Valley | \$425,000

This home has beautiful flowers that bloom throughout spring and summer, a great fenced-in yard, and resides in a quiet neighborhood. With 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a wonderful ranch-style home and hardwood floors, this home is made for easy living. 8203 Glyn Street  
**Jillian Keck Hogan 703.951.7655**  
[www.JillianKeckHogan.com](http://www.JillianKeckHogan.com)



### Rivergate \$1,599,999

This superior 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath brick townhome is just steps to Rivergate Park. 4 levels with two-car garage, bonus room and personal sauna on the top floor, plus an oversized patio with gas-line hookup for outdoor entertaining. 814 Rivergate Place

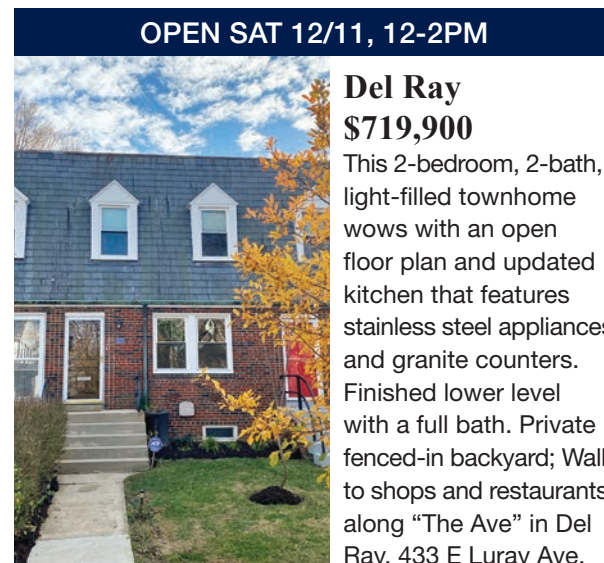
**Kristen Jones 703.851.2556**  
[www.KristenJones.com](http://www.KristenJones.com)



### Old Town \$1,590,000

This elegant 4-bedroom, 3-bath home is filled with light and historic character. Original circa 1840 details include hardwood floors, doors and hardware, 2 staircases, and 3 fireplaces. Stunning parlor, handsome dining room, fabulous chef's kitchen, and brick patio. 202 N Royal Street

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[www.BabsBeckwith.com](http://www.BabsBeckwith.com)



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### Del Ray \$719,900

This 2-bedroom, 2-bath, light-filled townhome wows with an open floor plan and updated kitchen that features stainless steel appliances and granite counters. Finished lower level with a full bath. Private fenced-in backyard; Walk to shops and restaurants along "The Ave" in Del Ray. 433 E Luray Ave.

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# Red Flags, Confiscated Guns

Police across Virginia use new law to disarm people courts determine could be dangerous.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Since Virginia's new red-flag law was signed by the Gov. Ralph Northam last year, according to data from the Virginia State Police, law enforcement officials across Virginia have issued 170 emergency substantial risk orders to temporarily confiscate firearms from people courts have determined could be dangerous. That includes 32 in Fairfax County, six in Arlington and five in Alexandria. Police officers and sheriffs deputies have also used the law in so-called "Second Amendment sanctuaries," including 13 risk orders in Virginia Beach and seven in Hanover County.

"These risk orders have been used across the commonwealth, in urban cities and rural counties," said Lori Haas, Virginia state director for the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. "If a person is at risk of harm to self or others, it would be prudent for family members and loved ones and law enforcement to temporarily separate him or her from his firearm so that until the crisis passes, the person is not at risk of injury or death to him or herself or others."

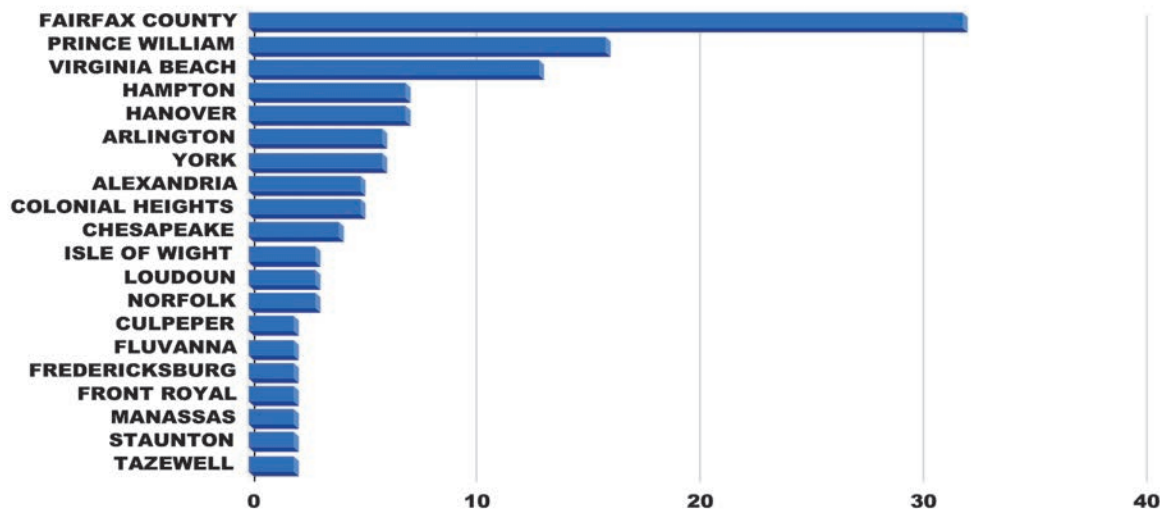
Since Republicans swept all three stateside offices and seized control of the House of Delegates last month, gun enthusiasts have been plotting to unravel many of the gun-violence prevention measures Democrats instituted over the last two years. One of their top priorities is getting rid of the red-flag law, which narrowly passed the state Senate in 2020 with a vote of 20 to 20. Democratic Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax voted to break the tie to send the bill to the governor. Now that a Republican will be in that seat, the only way to stop the law from being overturned may be for Senate Democrats to prevent it from getting to the floor.

"Red flag laws leave the person in crisis alone," said Philip Van Cleve, president of the Virginia Citizens Defense League. "They can still kill themselves. They do nothing except take his guns away."

According to the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia had 1,036 gun deaths in 2018. About two-thirds were suicides, and one-third were homicides.

**WHEN DEMOCRATS** seized control of the General Assembly last year, one of their top priorities was

## Emergency Substantial Risk Orders



July 2020 to August 2021 data from the Virginia State Police

Fairfax County has made use of the new red flag laws more than any other county in Virginia, and also has the highest population.

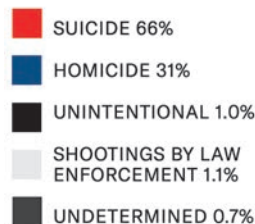
implementing new gun-violence prevention measures. Although they failed to adopt an assault weapons ban, they were able to require background checks and ban guns from local parks and government buildings.

One of the signature gun bills was the red flag law, which allows citizens to alert authorities when a friend or family member may be in danger of posing a danger to themselves or others. That sets the stage for a judge to conduct a hearing where law-enforcement officials or prosecutors make the case that firearms should be temporarily confiscated.

"I'm pleased to see that it's being used, and I'm pleased to see it's being used all around the state," said Del. Rip Sullivan (D-48), who introduced the House version of the bill. "As it becomes more well known both to the public and to law enforcement, I wouldn't be surprised if it gets used more."

One of the sticking points with the process is that the individual in question is not present in the initial court hearing. The judge makes the ruling to confiscate the guns in an "ex parte" hearing where the accused has no opportunity to present a defense. After the judge orders the emergency risk order, law enforcement officials

## GUN DEATHS BY INTENT IN VIRGINIA



serve the document and confiscate any known firearms for 14 days. Then the court holds a second hearing where the accused gets to mount a defense. At that point the judge can extend the order for 180 days or return the weapons. Gun-rights groups say the process is a violation of individual liberties, although supporters of gun-violence prevention say similar measures are taken when people have concerns over mental health or custody of children.

"There are other places in the code that type of process is done as a first step, and then you address it later," said Sen. George Barker (D-39), who introduced the Senate version of the bill. "They get an opportunity to contest it in court. So they do have a right to deal with it fairly quickly."

**NINETEEN STATES** and the District of Columbia have enacted some form of emergency risk orders, which are also known as gun-violence restraining orders and extreme risk-protection or-

ders. Connecticut was the first state to enact a red flag law back in 1999 following a mass shooting at the Connecticut Lottery headquarters in 1998 when a disgruntled accountant killed four of his supervisors and then shot himself. The shooter has previously attempted suicide and was being treated for depression.

"Potential changes to the law could streamline the gun-removal process and make it easier for police to take preventive action when appropriate," wrote Duke University professor Jeffrey Swanson in a study of the Connecticut law. "One such change, which was suggested by an expert respondent interviewed for this study, would be to allow police to remove guns immediately with probable cause."

The tension between risk to safety and jeopardy of civil liberties was a sticking point for lawmakers in Virginia when they were debating the bill last year. Republicans argued that violating liberties in the name of protecting safety was a slippery slope, and that the same logic might be used to strip other rights. Many Republicans openly doubted that the legislation would accomplish anything.

"What purpose does it serve to serve an order on him telling him to turn over his firearms?" asked Sen.

Richard Stuart (R-28). "Couldn't he create havoc with a myriad of other things, and if this person is mentally disturbed shouldn't we deal with that first?"

When the bill was debated in the state Senate, Republicans tried unsuccessfully to amend the bill restricting it to people who might do harm to themselves, not others.

"The research has shown that people who intend to kill themselves with a firearm are hindered when the firearm is removed and suicide is much less likely to occur," said Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25). "In the states where this legislation has passed that's what the studies show."

**NOW THAT THE** law has been in effect for more than a year, the contours of its effectiveness are coming into view. Some activists who pushed for the law say the numbers from the Virginia State Police show the law isn't being used enough. Considering the scope of the problem, they say, law-enforcement officers should be receiving more tips from citizens who are concerned that someone they know might be on the verge of committing the next mass shooting.

"Of the million people in Fairfax County, 32 is not a lot," said Paul Friedman, founder and executive director of the advocacy group Safer Country. "If the average citizen is paying attention to their neighbors and identifying people who are under enormous stress and have guns, we can prevent a lot more potential problems."

That's why Friedman is currently working with Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk on a public awareness campaign to let people know about the new law and the role they can play in stopping future gun violence.

The Board of Supervisors approved the campaign last summer, and since that time a working group has adopted the slogan "prevent a gun tragedy, speak up." Friedman is hoping that Lusk will work with the other supervisors to include funding for the campaign in the next budget, potentially hiring a staffer to oversee the campaign and extend its reach.

"Right now, awareness is low," said Lusk in a written statement after the board approved the initiative last summer. "I hope this effort helps the new law better achieve its intended goal of having guns in responsible hands."





The breakwater, viewed from the water. Note dead ash trees in the distance, killed by the invasive emerald ash borer.



The completed breakwater with a view of National Harbor's ferris wheel on the Maryland side of the Potomac River.



A surveyor on the shoreline helped guide the crane.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

# Stabilizing Dyke Marsh, Another Step Forward

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**T**he National Park Service's multi-year effort to stabilize and restore Dyke Marsh advanced another step when on Nov. 4, the agency awarded a contract for phase two of the project to Coastal Design and Construction, Inc., a Gloucester, Virginia-based marine construction firm.

Coastal Design built the 1,500-foot breakwater, phase one, that extends into the river near Morningside Drive and a rock sill just north of the breakwater in 2019 and 2020. In phase two, the company will construct another 1,720 feet of rock sill, north of the current sill. Park Service officials say that construction will ensue between July 2022 and January 2023. To protect migratory anadromous fish, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's permit bars any work in the water between Feb. 15 and June 30.

Dyke Marsh is a freshwater, tidal wetland on the Virginia side of the Potomac River, a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway of the National Park Service. Parts of it are 2,200 years old. It is home to at least 36 species of fish, 16 reptiles, 14 amphibians, 34 mammals, over 200 bird species and many invertebrates. "Dyke Marsh is a magnificent little oasis," said the late U.S. Senator John Warner who lived nearby.

In 1959, Congress added the wetland complex to the national park system, "so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount," states Public Law 86-41.



A marsh wren in Dyke Marsh, once abundant there.

## Loss of Marsh, Loss of Wildlife

Historically, Dyke Marsh supported the only known nesting population of marsh wrens (*Cistothorus palustris*) in the upper Potomac tidal zone. Halle described them in the marsh in 1947: "All over the marshes we heard them, singing in a steady chorus, each song a gurgling chatter, brief but repeated with hardly time for breath between. When it became light enough, we saw the singing wrens as far as the eye could reach over the marshes. ... The dots were bobbing up and down everywhere, like a natural effervescence given off by the marsh." In 1950, surveyors counted 87 singing males. In 2012, they found two nests. "Only one female-occupied nest has been reported since 2014 and the prospects for marsh wren recovery at Dyke Marsh currently seem bleak," wrote Larry Cartwright, leader of the annual breeding bird survey this year.

PHOTO BY ED EDER

### Gone by 2035

The U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) 2010 and 2013 studies concluded that the marsh was once 650 acres in size but had shrunk to 60 acres and was losing 1.5 to two acres a year, at an accelerating rate.

"This freshwater tidal marsh has shifted from a semi-stable net depositional environment (1864-1937) into a strongly erosional one. ... The marsh has been deconstructed over the past 70 years by a combination of manmade and natural causes. ... By 1976, the marsh had entered a net destructive phase, where it remains at present," USGS concluded in 2010.

In a 2013 update, USGS reported, "We ultimately conclude that Dyke Marsh pres-

ently is in its late stages of failure as a freshwater tidal marsh system. ... In the absence of human efforts to restore the equilibrium between marsh and tide, and equilibrium to the other natural forces acting on this wetland, Dyke Marsh likely will continue to accelerate its degradation, erosion and fragmentation until it is gone. This likely will occur prior to 2035 AD."

USGS experts attributed the destabilization of the wetland to extensive dredging from 1940 to 1972, when Smoot Sand and Gravel, hauled away 270 acres. The first thing the dredgers removed was a promontory that extended out into the river, a protective "thumb" that buffered storm waves and winds coming up the river. The breakwater

is designed to replicate the former promontory, a priority recommended by USGS. The breakwater would "redirect erosive flows in the marsh, particularly during strong storms and would re-establish hydrologic conditions that would encourage sediment accretion," says the NPS restoration plan.

NPS analyses have cited other changes detrimental to the marsh, including building the parkway, Woodrow Wilson Bridge and the Belle Haven Golf Course; urbanization and stream channelization. Sediment from Hunting Creek that once settled in Dyke Marsh is now deposited mostly north of the marsh at the creek's confluence with the Potomac River, where mudflats and emergent

SEE STABILIZING DYKE MARSH, PAGE 14



Two bald eagles observed the construction from one of the barges.



A crane scooped up rocks from a barge to build the breakwater.



In building the breakwater, cranes lowered rock "mattresses" down to the river bed to support the breakwater's riprap.





# HOLIDAYS



Over at Highs and Lows on Richmond Highway, the all-steel Pepsi cooler (\$249) screams “retro,” and prices are negotiable in this collectibles store.



It's only natural for a local coffee shop named Common Grounds to sell a top-grade travel mug with a wooden handle (\$28) that barista “Ronnie” displays.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON\GAZETTE

## No Online Shopping This Year? No Worries, the Shelves Are Stocked

### Mount Vernon Gift Guide.

BY MIKE SALMON  
GAZETTE PACKET

**G**ifts and giving are all part of the holiday season so it's important to shop around, whether that's online or in-person. If you are planning on going out, pick the right time, know your price range and bring a mask – never know where they are required or not.

This year, one of the holiday staples – Toys R Us – is no longer open, so the Hollin Hall Variety Store in Mount Vernon stocked up. “Since Toys R Us is closed, there's not many toy stores to go to,” said Doug Bentley over at The Variety Store.

It's hard to predict what they are buying, so a little of this and that always works. “Everything across the board,” said Bentley.



Everything is local at Highs and Lows on Richmond Highway, including this painting by JuJu Kreations called “Gold Leaf Angel,” marked down to \$155.



Need to be wearing a special sock to sink the 8-Ball? Here they are, the Fuzzy's Socks (\$4.99) at The Hollin Hall Variety Store in Mount Vernon.



It may be time to put away the flip flops, but not the Sloggers (\$33.99). Waterproof and all, these slip-on shoes are adorned with a special chicken pattern at the Village Hardware Store in the Hollin Hall Variety Store in Mount Vernon.



Skateboarding never seems to go out of style, and here at Vans in Springfield Town Center they sell and assemble skateboards, so mixing and matching is not too much to ask. Vans has Bones wheels, Kryptoniks and DJK, like the one here (\$99.99).



We're all stuffed up on mashed potatoes, so how about a gun to shoot potato pellets? Get one at The Hollin Hall Variety Store in Mount Vernon (\$8.99).

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Vienna/Acadia Condo \$382,500  
**9480 Virginia Center Blvd. Unit 120**

Beautiful 2BR, 2BA Condo located in South Vienna. Good Sized Bedrooms each with their own walk-in closet and bath. Kitchen is open to the eating area and family room & has beautiful corian countertops. Attractive laminated flooring through the kitchen, family room and hallways. Don't miss the office station and the lovely balcony off the family room. 2 convenient garage spaces below are reserved for this unit. Tremendous community amenities highlighted by a wonderful swimming pool, gym, recreational room and office room. Finally, a perfect location with quick and easy access to Rt. 66, 495 and Rt. 50. If you want to leave your car behind, a quick 2 block walk will put you at the Vienna Metro Station. This wonderful property can be yours to enjoy!!



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Alex/Wellington Estates \$650,000  
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# The Most Important Thing We Do

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN"  
PLUM



Last week I attended the Virginia Education Summit 2021 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk. I could hardly recognize the location where I attended undergraduate school in the early 1960s when it was the Norfolk College of William and Mary. Unfortunately I could recognize many of the topics on the agenda for they were the same topics discussed during my 30-year career in public education that ended with my retirement from Fairfax County Public Schools in 1996.

The Summit was designed to educate legislators on current education issues, but it was not organized by the Virginia education establishment. It was organized by the Hunt Institute, a non-profit institute named for former four-term North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt who has been described as America's first education governor. Governor Hunt was known for saying, "Education can't be just another thing we do. It's the most important thing we do!"

The Summit was held at a critical time in the Commonwealth's history. The last two years have seen amazing advances in early childhood

education that a whole body of research has shown to be critical to an individual's future success in schooling and in life. Presently fewer than half of Virginia's three and four year olds attend preschool. Under legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor the multiple programs related to preschool education have been brought together creating a unified public-private early childhood system that needs continuing financing and monitoring in order to ensure that all children have access to programs and services.

Not surprisingly a major theme permeating the Summit was the impact of COVID on our schools. The increased stress of teaching in an often changing environment that included virtual learning has resulted in many retirements and in increased difficulty recruiting teachers to teacher-training programs and to employment as teachers. There are about 106,000 teachers in Virginia whose average pay is 34th lowest in the country. There is a serious need to recruit more men and more persons of color into teaching positions.

Every school system faces the challenge of dealing with learning losses among children

as a result of interruptions in their schooling from the pandemic. I was so impressed with the teachers and school administrators at the Summit and their stories of heroic efforts to continue to deliver schooling to their students during a time of unprecedented challenges. They deserve our commendation and support as we move forward with schooling that has been changed in many ways during the pandemic. Some of those changes are worthy of continuation.

Virginia has made progress in the last several years in reducing excessive testing that limits time for instruction and provides little useful information. We can measure how our schools are doing without the large number of high stakes tests that have been given in the past. A study of our educational system for children with special needs has been shown to have major deficiencies that are now being addressed.

We are about to move to a new administration of state government. The rhetoric I hear about cutting taxes indicates that a sizable chunk would come from education and that charter schools would divert public monies to private schools. These issues cause me a great deal of concern as does the call to strip libraries of books. The new administration and legislators need to heed Governor Hunt's admonition that education is the most important thing we do.

# Red Flag Laws to Save Lives

BY PAUL A. FRIEDMAN, JD

Tuesday, Dec. 14 is the 9th anniversary of the Newtown shooting that took the lives of 20 first-graders and six educators. Just days ago, on Nov. 30, another school mass shooting cost the lives of four more young people. Sadly, there have been so many mass shootings in recent years that we can barely keep one tragedy straight from another.

Thankfully, in 2020, Virginia passed laws to try to stop the flow of blood. Virginia became the 19th state to pass a law that gives every one of us a chance to help reduce gun violence. It's a terrific law supported by many in law enforcement across the state but won't be fully effective unless we all know how to use it – and right now very few people even know it's on the books. That's why Fairfax County is launching a new campaign to alert people that it exists so they can use it to save their own lives and others.

Initiated by and contributed to by the Alexandria-based gun violence prevention non-profit, Safer Country, the County's campaign aims to draw attention to

the state's new "Red Flag" law. Its slogan is "Prevent A Gun Tragedy - Speak Up!" Details may be found at the campaign's website, [fairfax-county.gov/topics/red-flag](http://fairfax-county.gov/topics/red-flag)

The law empowers the police to disarm a person for up to two weeks if a judge believes there is an imminent danger that person will use their guns to harm themselves or others. In one high-profile case, Richard Sherman, a star football player for the Seattle Seahawks and now the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, repeatedly threatened to kill himself. Sherman's family asked for help under a Red Flag law in Washington state and the local police were able to take possession of four handguns and a semi-automatic rifle, defusing the immediate danger. Sherman has since received mental health counseling and resumed his football career without harming anybody.

There's no way to know for certain that Sherman would have carried out his threats, but we know that the Red Flag law made it much less likely. However, had he lived in one of the 31 states that lack such laws it would have been a lot harder for families and public safety officials to keep Sherman

and his family safe.

In most states, there are few options for public safety officials or family to act in advance, even when there are clear signs that somebody is on the verge of using a gun to do harm. That's why this law is so valuable. In the words of Fred Guttenberg, whose daughter Jaime

died in the infamous mass shooting on February 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida: "If Red Flag laws had existed then, my daughter would be alive today." The confessed Parkland shooter had spoken in advance that he had thoughts about using his rifle to kill.

## 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.

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A Connection Newspaper





# Love on the Docks

## Holiday boat parade lights up the waterfront.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**housands of spectators gathered along the Alexandria waterfront Dec. 4 as the 21st annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights made its return with more than 50 boats lighting up the Potomac River.

Sponsored by Amazon, the mile-long parade was led by Alexandria's fireboat Relief and Washington, D.C.'s fireboat John H. Glenn, and closed with the Ever Vigilant Fire Boat 57 from the Prince George's County Volunteer Marine Fire and Rescue Station 57.

Best of Alexandria Show sponsored by Myron Mixon's Pitmaster BBQ was awarded to Santé and Captain Daniel Ricks who presented "COEXIST" in white lights and more than 40 colorful trees. Best Powerboat went to Kairos and Captain Tipper Williams Bradford for "Santa & His Cast of Characters" featuring lights, Santa and a cheerful crew in costumes. Best Sailboat was awarded to Dark Star and Captain Doug Savage for "The



Decorated boats line the Potomac River Dec. 4 in the 21st annual Holiday Boat Parade of Lights.

Island of Misfit Toys," featuring twinkling lights and costumed toy characters including the bird-that-swims positioned halfway up the sailboat's mast.

2021 Winners: Best of Alexandria Show sponsored by Myron Mixon's Pitmaster BBQ: Santé, Captain Daniel Ricks, "COEXIST"; Best Powerboat: Kairos, Captain Tipper Williams Bradford, "Santa & His Cast of Characters"; Best Sailboat: Dark Star, Captain Doug Savage, "The Island of Misfit Toys"; Thinking Outside the Christmas Box: Tuesday, Captain Joseph Landa, "Oompa Lumpa"; Most Holiday Cheer: Party of Five, Captain Alan Trombley, "Spooky Christmas"; Best Spirit of America: Aggie, Captain Tamara Collum, "NEW YEAR'S EVE COUNTDOWN PARTY"; Most Spirited Crew: D'Entanglement, Captain Dayon Harrison, "D'Entangled Christmas Wonderland"; Best Theme: Surprise, Captain Sarah Ollila, "X-mas Files"; Hardest Soul: Miss Behavin, Captain Kirt Barbee, "Gilligan Island"; Best Try: Knot Tide Down Captains Peter Furness & Rita Martin, "Jurassic Christmas."

PHOTO BY EVAN MICHIO/VISIT ALEXANDRIA

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Megan A. McLaughlin (Braddock)



Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee)



Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield)



Karl Frisch (Providence)

# Challenged Books, Ballooning Waitlists For Mental Health, ADA Playgrounds

What you might have missed at the Dec. 2 School Board meeting.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

School Board Member Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) thanked the members of the Challenged Book Committee at the Fairfax County School Board regular meeting held on Thursday, Dec. 2, for their recent review and decision to reinstate the books in question, “Gender Queer: A Memoir” by Maia Kobabe and “Lawn Boy” by Johnathan Evison. The books were temporarily removed from FCPS high school libraries following a challenge in September.

Kaufax said teachers, parents, administrators and students comprised the committee, and she, too, read both books in question.

“These books were not obscene, and there is absolutely no pedophilia in either of these books. As an educational system, it is our duty to provide materials for children to better understand their identities, as well as those of their classmates,” Kaufax said. She added that having access to books reflective of their own lives helps mitigate the real risks of bullying, social isolation, and suicide that LGBTQIA+ students are known to face.

Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield District) said if someone believed that certain books were not appropriate for their child, that was probably a conversation for the person to have with their child. Cohen said she would not dream of parenting someone else’s child and could only share how she parents her own children. According to Cohen, in her home, they believe that our schools are responsible for making sure all children know they are okay. “That they are normal. That they are, as Psalm 139 says, “wonderfully made.”

Then Cohen read a passage by journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson from his 2020 book, “All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto.”

“So as heavy as these subjects may be, it is necessary that not only are they told, but also read by teens who have to navigate many of these same experiences in their own lives. ... I released the deepest and darkest things about my past in the hopes that some-



Fairfax County School Board meets on Dec. 2, 2021.

one might see a reflection of themselves in the words and know that they are not alone. And that they, too, can grow and thrive.”

Cohen said she was glad for all children to get an opportunity to see themselves in the work that the Fairfax County librarians do and in the over 3 million books the county has in its libraries.

Karl Frisch (Providence) said he was grateful to the students who came to the school board meetings hoping that adults would hear them and that their courage was inspiring. Frisch said that he never dreamed of speaking up for LGBTQ inclusion at school as a teenager. “I couldn’t even tell my friends I was gay,” Frisch said. “I was worried, if I acknowledged my truth, I would lose the love of my friends and my family.” He told how when the conversation about LGBTQIA+ first started, he told the board he would never back down.

Fritsch said he got over 1,000 emails, voicemails, letters, and social media comments in the days after, labeling him a pervert and worse. He told of threats of violence against him and his partner and how there were days he didn’t want to touch his phone or look at his inbox.

When non-LGBTQ young people become aware of the diverse and complicated lives of LGBTQ people as a result of the history they study or the novels they read, they do not become LGBTQ. “LGBTQ is not contagious, but being more acceptable to different

people certainly can be,” said Fritsch. “That scares some people, which is precisely why this work must continue. It is for everyone.”

## More Resources for Mental Health

Megan O. McLaughlin (Braddock) provided an update as the board representative to the Fairfax County Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT) during School Board member committee reports. SCYPT serves as the policy team for a broader, community-wide approach to ensure the success and well-being of children and youth in Fairfax County.

According to McLaughlin, one of the topics covered was a request for financial assistance for mental health upgrades and training additional therapists in Fairfax County to shorten the waitlist for families needing help. McLaughlin said that the committee recommended acceptance, but the Board of Supervisors must eventually approve it.

The second section of the mental health discussion dealt with hospitalizations. “We’ve got some really heartbreaking data about it even here in Fairfax County, the number of students who are requiring hospitalization for mental health needs,” McLaughlin said.

Explaining because there were not enough beds at any given time, McLaughlin said, “We had 17 students and their families waiting with an average of seven days in order

to get a bed.”

She added that SCYPT was trying to get additional funding for multidisciplinary services. That would be an alternative to having students in the hospital emergency rooms.

## 15 Contracts

At the Fairfax County School Board regular meeting held on Thursday, Dec. 2, the board awarded 15 contracts. Four contracts will provide hands-on installations every student at four elementary schools will enjoy for years to come. The Major Maintenance Fund will provide ADA-compliant playground installations at four elementary schools: Fairfax Villa-\$339,396; Floris-\$365,370; Oak Hill-\$362,105; and Vienna-\$314,897. While not as much fun but surely appreciated, major maintenance will also fund a chiller repair at Centre Ridge Elementary School for \$577,954.

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II Fund under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 provides funding for automated temperature controls at two elementary schools, Bush-\$587,600 and Spring Hill-\$821,530; and for a rooftop unit replacement at Forte Support Center in Springfield-\$791,000.

Two elementary schools received roof replacement projects, Westbriar-\$159,324 and Fairfax Villa-\$304,972 through the Infrastructure Replacement Fund.

The board approved synthetic turf field replacement projects at two high schools. One is at Langley for \$871,055, funded by Fairfax County Public Schools, and the other is at South Lakes for \$960,000 funded by Fairfax County Public Schools and Fairfax County Park Authority.

Finally, the board awarded the contract for Kahua Software and professional services with a projected initial software cost of \$165,000 annually for a three-year term and a \$40,000 approximate startup cost for professional consulting services to implement the software and train staff on Kahua Software License and Professional Services. Kahua will assist the Office of Design and Construction to govern and streamline document management.





PHOTO BY GREG POWERS

Interior designer Tracy Morris uses a gray tweed wallcovering in the dining room of her McLean home to create a sophisticated atmosphere.



IMAGE BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

Designer Annie Elliott covers the floor of her office with an Oriental rug, which offers a variety of options for pairing with colors in other parts of the room.

## Inside the Home of an Interior Designer

Local tastemakers offer a glimpse of their personal style.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET

Interior designers spend their days helping clients create beautiful aesthetics without compromising functionality. Whether deciding to paint a living room azure or cerulean or top a counter with Soapstone or quartzite, the job of a tastemaker requires creativity and ingenuity. Now, a few local designers allow cameras into their own home for a glimpse of their personal style.

Those who enter the Bethesda home of designer John Wagner of Designs by Wagner, learn quickly that nothing about it will be subtle. An oversized pink ottoman sits in the center of the room. A plush sofa in a soft beige is positioned in front of a wall that is dotted with more than a dozen family photos, each hung with soft-pink velvet ribbons.

"I'm a maximalist through and through," Wagner said. "I help my clients create spaces that reflect their taste. You should feel comfortable in your home. It should be a haven from the outside and it should make you proud. For me that means vibrant colors and plush fabrics."

A variety of colors, textures and patterns can be found throughout the home of designer Annie Elliott of Annie Elliott Design. "A house filled with shades of gray just doesn't make me happy," she said. "I also like mixing antiques with modern pieces. In my dining room, for example, we have a 19th-century English sideboard and Oriental rug paired with leather chairs...and a glass chandelier from the '80s. The mix takes the edge off of whatever formality people might associate with classic pieces."

A powder room is a space where Elliott suggests that one might experiment. "I believe that every powder room should be wallpapered," she said. "I have Cole & Son's Cabaret in mine, and I encourage my clients to be as daring as possible in their own powder rooms."

An Oriental rug aficionado, Elliott often recommends this accessory to her clients. "They can be



IMAGE BY JENN VERRIER AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

When designing her dining room, Annie Elliott paired a 19th-century English sideboard with an Oriental rug with leather chairs and a circa 1980s glass chandelier.



IMAGE BY ANGIE SECKINGER AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

Annie Elliott says that Oriental rugs can be paired with traditional or contemporary furniture.

paired with traditional or contemporary furniture, they give you lots of colors to play with, and they're brilliant for hiding dirt, red wine spills, and dog fur," she said.

Tracy Morris of Tracy Morris Design describes the style of her McLean home as "timeless with an edge." She creates the look using textured wallpaper in her dining room. "It creates a great base for the rest of the room," she said. "We used...a gray tweed with gold accents. This allowed the room to be enveloped in sophistication.

**"I'm a maximalist through and through."**  
— John Wagner of Designs by Wagner

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### Children's & Teens' Connection 2021



During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

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Campagna Center president and CEO Tammy Mann.



Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and his wife Alex on the reviewing stand with Jeanne Warner and Grand Marshal Sen. Mark Warner.



Alexandria Acting Chief of Police Don Hayes, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Fire Chief Corey Smedley enjoy the parade with Lawhorne's granddaughter Harper.



Parade Grand Marshal Sen. Mark Warner, right, waves to the crowd as he walks alongside Jeanne Warner, widow of former Sen. John Warner.

# Plaid Tidings

## Scottish Walk returns to celebrate 50th anniversary.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he sound of bagpipes returned to the streets of Old Town as the annual Scottish Walk Parade returned to celebrate its 50th anniversary Dec. 4 following last year's pandemic-induced hiatus.

The parade and related Scottish Walk Weekend events benefit the Campagna Center, which has been serving children and families in the city for 75 years.

"We are so delighted to see so much of Alexandria out this morning to celebrate the 50th year of the Scottish Walk Weekend," said Campagna Center President and CEO Tammy Mann.

Pipes and drums from the East coast joined Scottish clans, reen-

actment groups, Scottie dogs and classic cars. U.S. Sen. Mark Warner served as Grand Marshal and walked in the parade alongside Jeanne Warner, widow of former U.S. Sen. John Warner.

"This parade has always been a highlight of the wintertime and I certainly missed it when it was gone," said Tish Dalton as she viewed the parade along King Street. "It's great that everybody is back out today."

Serving as the unofficial start of the holiday season, the Scottish Walk Weekend celebrates the Scottish heritage of Old Town Alexandria while benefiting Campagna Center programs that serve more than 2,000 children and families daily across the city.

Said Campagna Center board chair Janice Abraham, "We're excited SEE SCOTTISH WALK, ON PAGE 11



Scottish Pipes and Drums.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



The Randall family.



Scottish Country Dancers.



Bob Montague drives his 1921 Lincoln with At Home Alexandria.



The Ballyshaners.



ACPS Superintendent Gregory Hutchings.

"This parade has always been a highlight of the wintertime and I certainly missed it when it was gone."

— Parade watcher  
Tish Dalton



Celebrating the Scottish Walk.



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Clan MacLeod.



Saint Andrew's Society of Philadelphia.



The Rotary Club of Alexandria.



A kilt-clad stormtrooper.



A period-clad parade participant.

## Scottish Walk Returns To Celebrate 50th Anniversary

FROM PAGE 10

viewed the parade along King Street. "It's great that everybody is back out today."

Serving as the unofficial start of the holiday season, the Scottish Walk Weekend celebrates the Scottish heritage of Old Town Alexandria while

benefiting Campagna Center programs that serve more than 2,000 children and families daily across the city.

Said Campagna Center board chair Janice Abraham, "We're excited and thrilled to be part of the city and this glorious start of this season."

[www.campagnacenter.org](http://www.campagnacenter.org)

Let us know about an upcoming event  
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PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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# HOLIDAY CALENDAR

## NOW THRU JAN. 2

**Ice & Lights: The Winter Village** at Cameron Run, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Open nightly 5 to 10 p.m.; January 8 to February 27, 2022 (ice skating only), open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring an ice rink, multiple new holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, a retail area, food, music and more. Admission: \$9 for general admission to Village; \$22 for village admission and skating; beginning January 8, \$14 for ice skating; free ages 2 and under. Visit [novaparks.com/events/ice-lights](http://novaparks.com/events/ice-lights)

## SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

**Waterfront Art Market.** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Torpedo Factory Art Center's waterfront entrance, 1 Cameron St., Alexandria. Visit the Waterfront entrance at Torpedo Factory Art Center to discover new artwork from a rotating lineup of the Art Center's studio artists. Find paintings and photographs to jewelry and wearables, then step inside to browse the three floors of the Art Center for even more original art for purchase. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org)

## NOW THRU DEC. 31

**Jingle Journey.** At various locations in the Del Ray neighborhood, Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. With your little ones, go a magical scavenger hunt through Del Ray and piece together the Jingle Journey story. This event is free but requires online registration. Visit <https://www.artsonthehorizon.org/jingle-journey.html>.

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Saturdays and Sundays in December. 8-10 a.m. Invite friends and family to celebrate the holidays with Alexandria Restaurant Partners' Breakfast with Santa. Enjoy a festive breakfast menu, Prosecco Bellinis (for adults), takeaway treats for the kids, and a family photo with Santa Claus. (Saturday 12/11; Sunday 12/12; Saturday, 12/18; Sunday, 12/19; and Friday, 12/14) and Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24th at the locations below:  
Ada's on the River (\$55 adults/\$35 children)  
Phone: 703-638-1400  
Mia's Italian Kitchen (\$49 adults/\$29 children)  
Phone: 703-997-5300  
Theismann's Restaurant (\$45 adults/\$25 children)  
Phone: 703-739-0777

## DEC. 9, 21

**Museum Shopping Evenings** at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House Museum Shop, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Enjoy shopping small and local. Stop by the Carlyle House Museum Shop for wonderful holiday gifts. An assortment of Virginia made items, ornaments, soaps, and more are available for purchase. Visit [novaparks.com](http://novaparks.com).

## DEC. 10, 11, 19

**Mount Vernon by Candlelight.** At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Take a candlelit guided tour and learn about holiday traditions in 18th-century Virginia. Visit with Mrs. Washington and other 18th-century residents of Mount Vernon in a 45-minute candlelit tour of the Mount Vernon



© Ruth Judson / Nov 2019

estate, followed by a reception. Hear stories of Christmases past from costumed character actors portraying Washington's family, friends, and enslaved or hired staff. Admission: \$36 for adults (ages 12 and up); \$28 for youth (ages 6-11); for members, \$26 for adults; \$18 for youth. Visit the website: [mountvernon.org/candlelight](http://mountvernon.org/candlelight)

## DEC. 3-18

"A Christmas Carol." At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. The Little Theatre of Alexandria rings in the holiday season with a return of the classic by Charles Dickens. Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable, bitter old miser, travels with ghostly guides through Christmas past, present and future to find the true meaning of the holidays. Visit the website: [thelittletheatre.com](http://thelittletheatre.com)

## DEC. 10 TO 12, 17 TO 19

**Del Ray Artisans' Fine Art & Fine Craft Holiday Market.** At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Fridays, 6 to 9 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Featuring unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass and much more from different artisans each weekend. Plus, purchase 2022 wall calendars, cookbooks and tote bags to support Del Ray Artisans. Visit the website: [delrayartisans.org](http://delrayartisans.org)

## DEC. 11, 18

**Candlelight Tours** at Lee-Fendall House. On the half hour from 5:30 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Celebrate the holiday season with evening candlelight tours of the Lee-Fendall House decked out in Victorian splendor. The antique toy exhibit will also be on view. Space is limited to 10 people at a time, and advance reservations are required. Visit the website: [leefendallhouse.org](http://leefendallhouse.org)

## DEC. 12

**Holiday Kissing Ball Workshops.** 2 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Learn the history behind using greenery to decorate homes for the holidays,

then craft your own boxwood kissing ball using fresh cuttings from the Lee-Fendall garden. Note that these workshops will be held outdoors, so please dress appropriately. Admission: \$25 per person (advance registration required). Visit the website: [leefendallhouse.org](http://leefendallhouse.org)

## DEC. 12, 19

**Old Town North Holiday Markets.** 1 to 3:30 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal St., Alexandria. In addition to Old Town North's weekly Thursday Farmers Market, the Old Town North Community Partnership will be hosting three holiday markets at Montgomery Park. Explore the festive, European-style markets for hand-crafted gift items and specialty food items. Visit the website: [www.oldtownnorth.org](http://www.oldtownnorth.org)

## FRIDAY/DEC. 10

**Alexandria's Holiday Concert.** 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Del Ray United Methodist Church, 100 E. Windsor Ave., Alexandria. Celebrate the season together again at the always popular – and free – Alexandria Holiday Concert. Conductor Mike Evans and the hometown Alexandria Citizens Band will play your holiday favorites, and ask you to sing along for a few of the pieces. Dress in your holiday sweaters and Santa hats. Free tickets available at: <https://alexandriaholidayconcert.eventbrite.com>

## DEC. 10-11

**Colonial Holiday Nights** at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Experience the holiday season with Carlyle House focusing on how the Carlyles and their enslaved workers observed the holidays during the 18th century. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. All participants including those under the age of 5 must be registered. Visit [novaparks.com](http://novaparks.com)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**Del Ray Vintage & Flea Market.** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At the Parking lot of 1900 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.



Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon will be held Dec. 17-18 in Mount Vernon.

Don't miss the holiday edition of this monthly outdoor vintage and flea market in the heart of Alexandria's bustling Del Ray neighborhood. Find 50+ vendors offering vintage, antique, thrift and artisan goods at two open-air lots, with free appraisals plus bakery and coffee booths. Visit the website: [delrayvintageflea.com](http://delrayvintageflea.com)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**A Victorian Christmas.** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Experience the wonder of the season by visiting the Lee-Fendall House for a family-friendly Victorian Christmas. Enjoy traditional décor, music, seasonal crafts, a visit with Santa, a toy exhibit and more. Visit the website: [leefendallhouse.org](http://leefendallhouse.org)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**Christmas Market and Holiday Craft Show.** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At John Carlyle Square Park, 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. John Carlyle Square Park will dress up for the holidays and host more than 80 artisans and crafters, independent consultants and other local small businesses. Check off your shopping list with everything from unique handmade jewelry to organic bath and body products to home décor, holiday ornaments and much more. Visit the website: [thecarlylecommunity.com](http://thecarlylecommunity.com)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**Civil War Christmas in Camp.** 12 to 4 p.m. At Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria. Get in the holiday spirit with a patriotic Union Santa Claus, reenactors in winter camps celebrating the season, period decorations, soldier-led fort tours and kids' crafting activities. Visit the website: [alexandriava.gov/fortward](http://alexandriava.gov/fortward)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**6th Annual Del Ray Candy Cane Bar Crawl.** 1 to 6 p.m. At various locations along Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Take a break from the bustle of holiday preparations and enjoy specialty drinks and delights at Del Ray restaurants during a neighborhood bar crawl to benefit

Neighborhood Health. Enjoy holiday costume contests for individuals and groups, raffle prizes and live music. Trolley transportation will be provided along the avenue. Visit the website: [visitdelray.com](http://visitdelray.com)

## DEC. 11, 12, 18, 19

**Tall Ship Providence Christmas Story Time.** At 12 p.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Tall ship Providence, 1 Cameron St., Alexandria. Come aboard the tall ship Providence for a special Christmas story time. This year's tale will be "The Christmas Ship," the true story of the schooner Rouse Simmons, the ship that for years supplied Christmas trees to the people of Chicago by making a dangerous winter crossing of Lake Michigan. This story is sure to delight young sailors ages 5 to 12. Check in at the Gazebo on the G-H Pier next to Founder's Park. Visit the website: [tallshipprovidence.org](http://tallshipprovidence.org)

## DEC. 17 AND 19

**Holiday Concerts.** Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, and Sunday, Dec. 19 at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial. Under the direction of Music Director James Ross, the program will include excerpts from Handel's Messiah and familiar holiday carols and melodies. For Friday's performance, dancers from BalletNova take the stage with selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker interspersed with music from Ellington's Nutcracker Suite. All children attending will be provided with sleigh bells for a surprise audience participation activity. Visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org) or call (703) 548-0885.

## DEC. 17-18

**Civil War Christmas** at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Discover how Christmas was celebrated when the Green family lived at Carlyle House and the Mansion House Hotel was being used as a Civil War hospital. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. Visit the website: [novaparks.com](http://novaparks.com)



# BULLETIN BOARD

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

## NOW THRU DEC. 10

**Jingle Bell Kids Toy Drive Collection.** At Quander Road School, 6400 Quander Road, Alexandria. Personal Development Class Service-Learning Project Holiday Toy Drive for Kids in Nearby Shelters; "Gifting Community Kids for the Holidays. Ages: Toddlers -14 years old. Types of Items to Donate: Board/Card Games, Puzzles, Art supplies, Coloring/Activity books, Various Books, Stuffed animals, Dolls and Toy Cars/Trucks.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 11

**Fairfax Children's Business Fair.** 9 a.m.-12 p.m. At Aldersgate Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Hosted by Fort Hunt Community Business Association. Observe the opportunity for children to launch their very own start-up business. Kids develop a brand, create a product or service, build a marketing strategy, and then open for customers at this one-day marketplace. They will host 15 booths at the 1st annual event.

## WALKING GROUP

**Let's Walk! Let's Walk!** is a community walking initiative whose goal is to achieve and maintain optimal health through walking. The members consist of women who are retired or work from home and want to connect with others who share common interests, life experiences

and fitness goals. The group meets at 2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at a central location on Fort Hunt Road and walks for approximately 1 hour weather permitting. Contact information: 703-780-1145 or email; [ecen-glish@cox.net](mailto:ecen-glish@cox.net).

## ONGOING

**Local, farm-fresh produce** – including strawberries and asparagus –and more will be featured at the now-opened McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through Dec. 22), 16 local farmers and food producers will sell fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more. The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** EBT cards can be used. As a bonus, the market will match up to \$20 per market visit in SNAP dollars for fruits and vegetables.

This year's vendors are:

**Arnest Seafood** – crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more  
**Grace's Pastries** – cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch  
**Great Harvest Bread** – breads and pastries  
**Honey Brook Farms** – meats and vegetables raised with no chemicals, gluten-free baked goods  
**House of Empanadas** – variety of

empanadas  
**King Mushrooms** – variety of locally grown mushrooms  
**Locust Grove Farm** – vegetables and herbs  
**Misty Meadow Farm Creamery** – milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs  
**No. 1 Sons** – pickles, kimchi, sauerkraut and kombucha teas  
**Ochoa Produce** – vegetables, herbs and flowers  
**Traveling Shepherd Coffee Co.** – variety of freshly roasted coffee  
**Twin Springs Orchard** – fruits, vegetables, cheese and more  
**Valentine's Bakery & Meats** – meats and baked goods.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

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## Stabilizing Dyke Marsh, Another Step Forward

FROM PAGE 5

wetlands are developing, NPS concluded.

### Why Restore?

The 2016 NPS plan explains, “This project is needed to protect the existing wetlands from erosion, non-native invasive plants, loss of habitat and altered hydrologic regimes and to restore wetlands and ecosystem functions and other ecological processes. These actions would improve flood protection, sediment and toxicant retention, protect and create additional wildlife habitat and add recreational, scientific and educational value.”

A one-acre wetland can store about three acre-feet of water or one million gallons, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The project is largely funded by a \$24.9

million “Hurricane Sandy” grant. On Oct. 24, 2013, then U.S. Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell announced the grant at Dyke Marsh. Jewell said, “What we witnessed during Hurricane Sandy was that our public lands and other natural areas are often the best defense against Mother Nature. By stabilizing marshes and beaches, restoring wetlands and improving the resiliency of coastal areas, we not only create opportunities for people to connect with nature and support jobs through increased outdoor recreation, but we can also provide an effective buffer that protects local communities from powerful storm surges and devastating floods when a storm like Sandy hits.”

### Congressional Support

The late Congressman John Dingell (D-MI), a supporter of the 1959 authorizing leg-

islation, called for restoration, saying, “We expect that the Secretary will provide for the deposition of the silt and waste from the dredging operations in such a way as to encourage the restoration of the marsh at the earliest possible moment ... to rebuild the area by siltation and in all other necessary and proper ways.” In 1974, Congress authorized the Corps of Engineers to assist NPS in restoring Dyke Marsh. The House of Representatives reaffirmed its support in 2009 and the U.S. Senate in 2010.

In his 1947 book, *Spring in Washington*, naturalist Louis Halle touted Dyke Marsh as “the nearest thing to primeval wilderness in the immediate vicinity of the city.” Hopefully, restoration will make it moreso.

*Glenda Booth is president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh.*

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

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

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

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

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

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

Yoga Teachers are needed. Help improve a per-

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

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

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

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

The Gum Springs Senior Program in Alexandria is looking for a Line Dance Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Kingstowne Center for Active Adults in Alexandria needs Instructors for the following classes: Country-Western Line Dance, Hula Hoop and African Style Dance. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Hollin Hall Senior Center in Alexandria needs instructors for the following classes: Basic Woodworking, Italian and Ballroom Dance. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center in Alexandria needs front desk volunteers and patient Card Players. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

The Advisory Board of the Joe and Fredona Gartlan Center for mental health is looking for volunteers. The board meets the second Tuesday of the month from 9-11 a.m. at Gartlan Center 8119 Holland Road.

Mount Vernon At Home is a community Village, providing support, services, and community to seniors in the area. Volunteers are needed

for a variety of services, with transportation to medical appointments are greatest need. They can also use help with in-home handyman work and handling IT problems. If you are interested in volunteering, contact us at info@mountvernonathome.org or call 703-303-4060.

Volunteer Advocates for Nursing Home & Assisted Living Residents needed throughout Northern Virginia. Contact the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/, or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-5861, TTY 711.

Hollin Hall Senior Center is looking for a DJ ballroom and dance instructor. The Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road.

The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center is looking for social companions for participants on Fridays from 3-5 p.m. and front desk volunteers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m.-noon and 3:30-4:30 p.m. Located at 8350 Richmond Highway. For these and other volunteer opportunities call 703-324-5406 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

Peer Facilitated Mental Health Support Group 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursdays at the Gartlan Behavioral Health Center, 8119 Holland Road. Facilitated by trained peers with lived-experience dealing with mental health challenges. 571-414-9072 sharonmartinbsa@yahoo.com

Family Support Group. 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at Gartlan Center, 8119 Holland Road. Opportunity for discussion, information and support for families with members experiencing symptoms of mental illness. Professionally facilitated. Program varies, may include guest speakers, movies. Pre-registration is appreciated, but not required. Free. For more information contact Nga Nguyen at 703-799-2726, TTY 711.

Telephone Support Group. 7-8 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. For family caregivers of older adults. Discuss “Keeping Organized as a Caregiver: What Works?” Share experiences, gain support and get information without having to travel. Free. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices.





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**SOLD**

1707 Hollindale Dr  
\$1,200,000



**SOLD**

1216 Morningside Ln  
\$1,150,000



**SOLD**

4029 Laurel Rd  
\$649,000



**SOLD**

8402 Wagon Wheel Rd  
\$649,000



**SOLD**

9320 Fairfax St  
\$850,000



**SOLD**

4739 Neptune Dr  
\$950,000



**SOLD**

9435 Mount Vernon Circle  
\$1,195,000

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