

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 14, 2022

River Farm Hosts Alexandria's Spring Garden Market

American Horticultural Society event heralds growing season

BY EDEN BROWN
THE GAZETTE

Despite the long lines to get in and the muddy parking lot and fields, the River Farm Spring Garden Fair was as popular as always, drawing visitors from Rockville as well as those who live right across the parkway. Most of those who came said, "I wouldn't miss it. Been coming for many years." And all of them said they were relieved that River Farm would remain the refuge it has been for residents.

SEE RIVER FARM, PAGE 6

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN
THE GAZETTE



River Farm and its wide open spaces were almost lost to residents when developers threatened to turn the historic property into luxury houses. Many came to the event just to support the River Farm as a piece of history worth preserving.



Marie Carlson, age 4, who lives near the farm, helped her mother pick out plants for the garden and enjoyed meeting a poodle named Strawberry while she was enjoying the sunshine and festive atmosphere.

Economic Outlook for Mount Vernon Emerges from Covid Dip

Job market stronger, housing is still pricey; graphs dip for the pandemic.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

All the economic outlook graphs presented at the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce meeting all had one thing in common: there was a big dip in 2020 and then an uptick, reflecting the impact of the pandemic on this area's economic picture.

Last year was good and 2022 is "starting off strong, but some sectors do continue to struggle," said regional economist Joe Mengedoth. Throw in the gas price spike, the war in Ukraine and the possibility of another covid wave and there is some uncertainty. That's how economic forecasting is. "The recent uptick is pretty encouraging," Mengedoth added.

Mengedoth was part of a panel with others from the financial and employment sector in this area and Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk. Each had a focus and together they provided a picture of the near future for people and business leaders in Mount Vernon. Inflation is up but there are many employment vacancies too, so the overall picture was positive.

"Leisure and hospitality" is a big industry along Richmond Highway and into Mount Vernon, and Dr. Keith Waters, senior research associate at the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University, said that "things have come back." He listed a few zip codes as part of the picture, and the

zip code of Fort Hunt, 22308, is in the center of a strong housing market. Zip codes 22307 and 22309 have more condominiums and townhouses so are not doing as well. "The corridor is bouncing back similar to the rest of Fairfax County," he said.

Supervisor Lusk felt that employment training is a big factor in bringing up salaries along Richmond Highway and he's spearheading that with a project he calls the "Wish Center." In May 2020, the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority purchased the 5.3-acre Mount Vernon Tennis Club site in the Hybla Valley area for the center.

This included a 50,000 square-foot indoor tennis facility that served as a private health and racquet club for more than 45 years. Fairfax County invested funding to transform this center into the Innovations Workforce Center that is needed for the communities in the Buckman Road area.

According to Lusk, it will be ready to open this summer and be staffed by the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services.

Lusk noted the average salary in this part of Alexandria is lower compared to the rest of Fairfax County and looks at the Innovations Workforce Center to gain skills that will improve the lives of many in that area of Lee District. "We have an obligation and responsibility to help these individuals," he said. Lusk is aiming to bring the average salary to \$50,000 in the Hybla Valley area.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk highlights the Workforce Development Center.



Dana S. Fallon highlights the NVCC's NOVA Workforce program.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

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After construction is finished, there will be increased pedestrian access.



Looking south, there are signs that this area needs road improvements that Embark may provide.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Fixing Intersection Is First Step in the Penn Daw Area

Revitalization, BRT and upscale apartments are part of the picture.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

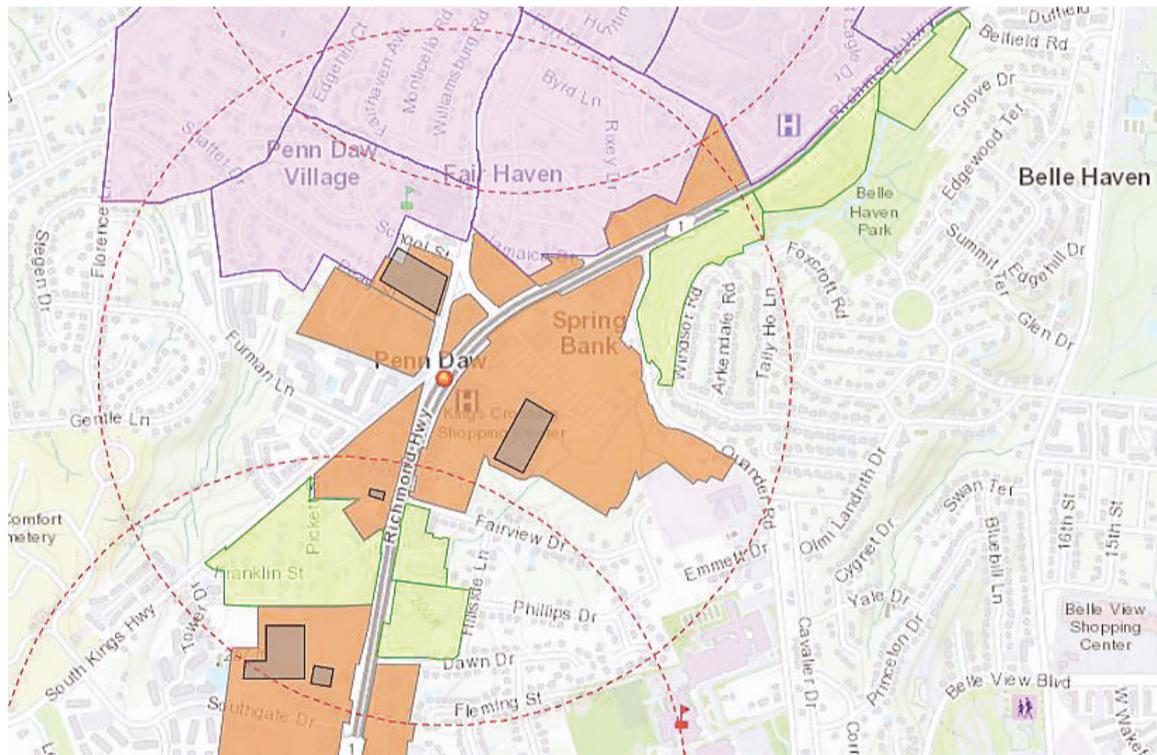
In the Penn Daw area of Mount Vernon, South Kings Highway seems to glance off Richmond Highway, creating an odd intersection where northbound cars have a right and quick left turn and southbound cars have a wide U-turn of sorts.

Officials are in the process of fixing it though, and this is part of a bigger project called “South Alex,” centered around a housing development that suffered a major setback when a fire swept through the development in February 2020.

On the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan document, it describes this intersection as “a significant activity center for retailers and other businesses,” due to its location near Metro. “However, the intersection of Richmond Highway and North Kings Highway presents challenges for visibility and accessibility, and hinders pedestrian activity,” it says.

The South Alex project is moving forward though and it consists of 400 Class-A apartments and 44,000 square feet of retail space with an Aldi store and another “national specialty grocer,” the website said. A “Class-A,” apartment can be described as properties that represent the highest quality buildings in their market and area. They are generally newer properties built within the last 15 years

In this artist rendering, the final product looks nothing like the present situation.



with top amenities, high-income earning tenants and low vacancy rates. Class A buildings are well-located in the market and are typically professionally managed.

In the Conceptual Plan, the vision is a transformation of the crossroads area into a high intensity Transit Oriented Development node and a transportation gateway. According to Fairfax County Department of Transportation, “these improvements are moving North/South Kings Highway into its ultimate planned alignment per the Comprehensive Plan.”

Embarking on Embark
According to the Embark Richmond Highway plan, a bus rapid transit station is planned near that intersection and the BRT is planned to connect to the Huntington Metrorail station via North Kings Highway. The intersection of Kings Highway and Richmond Highway is being redesigned to improve safety and access, the comprehensive plan language reads. This redesign is aimed at making the area more pedestrian friendly with a series of plazas, and mixed-use developments in both the western and eastern land units of the CBC using crosswalks and other high-quality pedestrian facilities, it said. The community is also within commuting distance from several employment hubs including Old Town Alexandria, The Pentagon, Amazon HQ2, Fort Belvoir, Tysons Corner, Joint Base Andrews, and Downtown D.C.

Currently there are more traffic cones than anything at this intersection so there will be more commuting pain before there’s any relief.

Season Kicks Off at the Custard Shack

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

It's the first week in April with the temperatures hovering around fifty degrees, but somehow people are still standing in line at the Custard Shack in Belle Haven to get an icy treat. Starting April 1 the Custard Shack is open seven days a week, and although the line doesn't go down the street like it does in the summer, the orders for shakes and cones keep the staff busy.

"People will eat ice cream regardless, it's never too cold," said Eliana Zelay, 18.

She works there all year around but it's only open on weekends in the colder months. "The only difference is the lines aren't as long," she said. They even tried a hot chocolate flavored custard this winter, and it was a hit, said manager Emily Dorn. "Really a popular flavor," she said.

The Custard Shack is part of the Belle Haven Pizzeria and both are a mainstay in the surrounding community. They are located on Belle



Greer Jones, left, Natalie Coats and Eliana Zelay are now dishing out custard seven days a week.

Haven Road across from the country club and surrounded by a residential area so the two commercial businesses stick out. They've been there for years, and residents still flock to this location in the warmer months, even the bicyclists off the Mount Vernon Trail stop by from time to time.

Dog walkers too, so they have a specialty "puppy pop," made in store with Peanut Butter, Carrots, Bananas, Honey, Water and "Lots of Love," they say.

The shack first opened in 2015 and is primarily staffed by high school students. In the beginning, officials at the pizzeria wanted to offer dessert, so after considering several options, frozen custard stood out. "We decided that Frozen Custard was creamy, rich and over all tastier than all of the other frozen desserts. Since then, we have created delicious flavors all over the board from fruity pebbles to pumpkin pie to churros con leche," their information said. Cookies and cream is a big seller.

Emily Dorn, the manager, is

carrying on a family tradition at the Custard Shack. Her older sister was the manager when it opened in 2015 and now Emily took over after graduating from West Potomac High School a couple of years ago.

The tie dye uniform reflects the attitude and atmosphere around the shack.

There are smiles all around. "We've kind of always done tie dyes" added Natalie Coats, 17. So many people have asked about the tee shirts that they are trying to get some made so they can sell them. "We're working on it," said Dorn.

In the winter, they are only open on the weekends, but from April to after Labor Day, it's seven days a week. Zelay has been with them a year and doesn't mind dishing out a cone when it's below freezing outside. "It's always warm in here," she said.

If you go...

The Custard Shack
1401 Belle Haven Rd.
Alexandria

drpcustardshack@gmail.com

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Hooray for Books! Mystery Book Weekend

Hooray for Books! in Old Town will sponsor Mystery Book Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, April 23 and 24, with local authors discussing their mystery, thrillers, and suspense novels on both days at the beloved bookstore located at 1555 King Street.

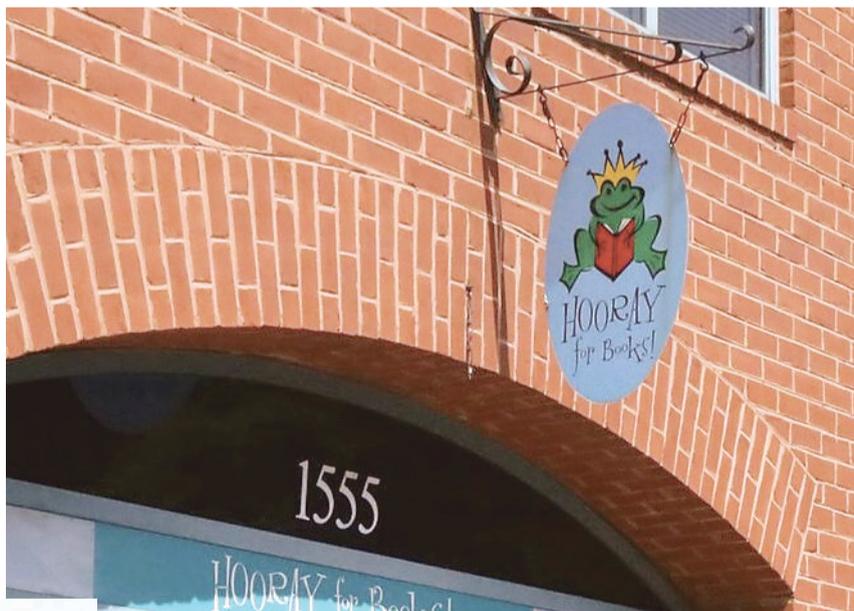
"It's time to visit a bookstore and stock up on summer reading," said Ellen Klein, owner and operator of Hooray for Books! since its opening in 2008.

"Mysteries are one of the most popular genres for readers of all ages and I'm thrilled to have these wonderful authors at the store," said Klein.

On Saturday, from 1 to 3 p.m., Mount Vernon author John Adam Wasowicz will sign copies of his popular four-book Old Town mystery series featuring



John A. Wasowicz is one of five local authors who will participate in Mystery Weekend! at Hooray for Books! in Old Town on the weekend of April 23-24.



Alexandria's beloved bookstore Hooray for Books! with its classic logo at 1555 King Street in the heart of Old Town.

'Daingerfield Island' and 'Slaters Lane.' He will also discuss the forthcoming 'Gadsby's Corner,' due out this summer.

On Sunday, from 3 to 4 p.m., authors Lane Stone, M.A. Monnin, Connie Berry, and Tina deBellegarde will discuss their mysteries.

The theme of their panel is 'Amateur Sleuths and the World of Art and Artifacts.'

BULLETIN BOARD

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

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

The 4th Annual Environment Expo. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. At Fort Hunt Park, Alexandria. This free family friendly festival drew more than 400 attendees last year and focuses on having fun while learning more about our environment and supporting our natural world. The day features loads of activities and exhibitors sharing information about climate action, environmental challenges we face and solutions we can participate in to make Fairfax County a healthier, more sustainable place. Attendees will be treated to workshops, live music, live reptile and owl demonstrations, nature walks, giveaways, solar cooking and robot demonstrations, and more. Our partnership with the National Parks Service brings the Junior Ranger Program and history tours of the Battery Mount Vernon, among other popular programs. New this year we will feature live music by Billy B, the Natural Science Song and Dance Guy to get kids and parents up and dancing!

APRIL 20 AND MAY 1

Farmers Markets return to Mount Vernon and Lorton this month. The McCutcheon/Mount Vernon Market at Sherwood Hall Library opens on April 20 and runs Wednesday's from 8 a.m. – noon until December 21. The Lorton Market opens Sunday, May 1 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. in the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) parking lot in Lorton Station, through November 20. Buying local, fresh meats, cheeses, produce, plants and other assorted goodies is a great way to help not only local businesses, but our environment, as well!

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Sen. Mark Warner will host his annual Academy Day on Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This is a virtual event that will be hosted on Accelevents. The event will offer students, their parents or guardians, SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14



SCREENSHOT

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, often called the best high school in the country.

Coalition for TJ Files Emergency Request to Vacate the 4th Circuit Stay

New admissions process struck down by court, but right now still in use for current applicants.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On April 8, Pacific Legal Foundation, counsel for Coalition for TJ, filed an emergency request in the Supreme Court of the United States in the case Coalition for TJ v. Fairfax County School Board. According to the coalition's lawsuit, the admissions process is designed to reduce the number of Asian American students admitted to TJ, violating their constitutional rights. The

case is to vacate the March 31 stay pending an appeal by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (No. 22-1280) by U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton.

Coalition for TJ v. Fairfax County School Board challenged the new admissions plan (2020) for students applying to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ).

"The Fourth Circuit's decision to allow TJ's discriminatory process to continue will cause signif-

icant harm to the students who are going through the admissions process for the next school year," said Pacific Legal Foundation attorney Glenn Rope in a statement on April 8. "The district court decision found a clear constitutional violation, and we hope that the Supreme Court will agree that this stay should be vacated, and the discriminatory process halted while the case proceeds."

TJ is an elite magnet school.

SEE COALITION FOR, PAGE 12

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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ❖ APRIL 14-20, 2022 ❖ 5

Return to the River

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

There are many wonderful and interesting places to visit throughout Virginia. Just 40 miles southeast of Fredericksburg, is one of those places, and where a historic and exciting event took place just last week.

Threatened by development today and by Captain John Smith and his men in 1608, the Rappahannock Indians—the descendants of the Indigenous people who repelled and traded with him—have returned to their ancestral river homeland with the acquisition of a 465-acre property on the north sides of the Rappahannock river known as Fones Cliffs. That property will be restored to its original name of Pissacoack, one of many Rappahannock towns that Captain Smith mapped out in his voyage over 400 years ago. It is an important and historic acquisition that was facilitated by a partnership led by the Tribe, and between the Chesapeake Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the generous philanthropy of the Angle Family and Walmart's Acres for America program. It enables the tribe's stewardship of some of the most pristine wetlands and river locations on the east coast to view bald eagles—and in the hundreds!

Indeed, I saw two of those gorgeous eagles when I visited the area. I was honored to be a guest of the Rappahannock Tribe as it celebrated this momentous occasion and commitment to the conservation and preservation of this sacred land, water, and habitat, with a "Return to the River Celebration" and program that included a local drum group, an inspirational welcome by Chief Anne Richardson,



Rappahannock Tribal Council members and partners.

speeches from many of the parties to the conservation effort, and the formal announcement of the return of Fones Cliffs to the tribe by the Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo).

Without the extensive partnership and purchase of the site, Fones Cliffs may well have ended up as a high-end residential community which would have forever altered the ecosystem and land that would still be recognized by Captain Smith and the Rappahannock Indians of 400 plus years ago. Now, the tribe has plans to open to the public the opportunity to visit the land, and for its own tribal members, especially the youth, to immerse themselves in tribal culture and traditions: canoeing, hiking, and camping in

this wilderness. This wonderful site's preservation is exciting and historic not just for environmental reasons but because it is a recognition of the Rappahannock Tribe's sovereignty as a newly federally

recognized tribe (in 2018) and its resilience as a people who can look back 11,000 years as they return to the river.

To learn more, visit the website rappahannocktribe.org.

River Farm Hosts Alexandria's Spring Garden Market

FROM PAGE 1



Several farms came to the event, like this one near Warrenton.

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE GAZETTE

Let Us Know Your View

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

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A Connection Newspaper





Rare waterfront opportunity in Old Town

2 WOLFE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 | \$ 3,995,000
3 BEDS | 3 FULL BATHS, 2 HALF BATHS | 4,685 SQ FT

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‘Detrashing’ the Potomac



PHOTO BY NED STONE

Trash accumulated in Dyke Marsh along the Potomac River.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

St. Stephens high school student Charlie Desun- tets lugged a dingy, water-logged pillow off the Potomac River shoreline on Saturday. Volkmar Heratsch crawled around on his hands and knees, collecting tiny crumbles of poly-

styrene or Styrofoam. Kathleen Fleming, a Hollin Hills resident, was surprised by the proliferation of plastic bottle caps and cigarette butts she found.

On April 9, in two hours, 20 volunteers collected 13 bags of trash in Dyke Marsh and along the Belle Haven Park shoreline, from remnants of plastic straws to chunks of coolers.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Carolyn Bednarek and Carolyn Gamble, members of the Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors, staffed a check-in table.



National Park Service volunteer coordinator Trudy Roth checked in volunteers at Belle Haven Park.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

The Swanson family came from Washington, D. C. to help.

Littering Is Illegal

Section 33.1-346 of the Code of Virginia makes littering or dumping trash a Class 1 misdemeanor, punishable by up to 12 months in jail* and/or a fine of up to \$2,500.

Section 10.1-1143 of the Forestry Code makes it unlawful to throw “any lighted smoking material” from a vehicle. This is a Class 2 misdemeanor violation, punishable by up to 6 months in jail* and/or a fine of up to \$1,000.

❖ With either the Class 1 or Class 2 offense, community service can take the place of jail time.

From www.cleanfairfax.org

Find a Cleanup to Join

To find a cleanup, visit <https://www.fergusonfoundation.org/get-involved/upcoming-community-events/>.

balls, toys, car parts, fishing gear, barrels, even a sofa and refrigerator.

GWMP Superintendent Charles Cuvelier lauded the efforts: “Volunteers are key to keeping the park beautiful. Last year, 3,240 volunteers contributed over 18,000 hours of their time valued at more than \$500,000. They are essential when it comes to trail maintenance, invasive plant removal and litter cleanup,” he said.

Sources and Solutions

Where does all the trash come from? Jen Cole, Executive Director of the Clean Fairfax Council offers this explanation: “What we find is a perfect storm of broken systems: not enough trash containers for residential or commercial properties, poorly managed solid waste at both of those, a disposable society that thinks single use is some-

how cleaner or more hygienic than washing and reusing something and a sheer lack of political will to make meaningful change that would not just protect the environment but protect our health from the harmful chemicals in polystyrene and microplastics.”

Fees on single-use plastic bags are now in place in five Northern Virginia jurisdictions: Fairfax, Arlington and Loudoun counties and cities of Alexandria and Falls Church. Bills to require monetary deposits on plastic and aluminum beverage containers have not garnered sufficient support for approval in the Virginia General Assembly for years. Some advocates support what’s called “extended producer responsibility,” a concept under which producers of items like batteries, plastic packaging



PHOTOS BY CLEENDA BOOTH

Four students from St. Stephens and St. Agnes School volunteered.

‘Detrashing’ the Potomac

FROM PAGE 5

and fast food containers bear financial and/or physical responsibility for the treatment or disposal of products past the consumer stage of a product’s life cycle.

Belle Haven resident Marilou Livingood helped in Dyke Marsh.

“I want to reduce plastics in the river and increase stewardship of this important resource, one of the last remaining wetlands in the D.C. area,” she said, hauling a bag.

Looking at the bigger picture, Superintendent Cuvelier commented, “This work is important for the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Since the park was created to help protect the Potomac River, we receive much of the trash that washes downstream from adjacent communities. If we catch it and clean it up in the park, it stays out of the Bay. Effective stormwater management, household recycling and motorists not littering all contribute to a healthier ecosystem.”

To find a cleanup, visit <https://www.fergusonfoundation.org/get-involved/upcoming-community-events/>.



Charlie Desuntels found a soggy pillow along with other trash. He volunteered with three fellow St. Stephens students.



Sign announcing cleanup at Dyke Marsh and group gathering to start.



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MetroStage at the Lyceum

Roz White, Yvette Spears return in cabaret series.

MetroStage artists will return to the stage in a Spring Cabaret series to be held at the Lyceum on South Washington Street.

“While the new theatre is under construction, this cabaret series allows us to showcase great artists who appear on our stage in this cabaret setting” said MetroStage Producing Artistic Director Carolyn Griffin.

April 19 at 7:30 pm

Roz White will perform with Steve Washington in *Songbirds & Troubadours: A Toast to the Legends*, featuring the music of Billy Eckstine, Shirley Horn, Nat King Cole, Nancy Wilson and many more. All tickets \$25. www.eventbrite.com/e/a-cabaret-with-roz-white-and-steve-washington-tickets-310800963047

May 17 at 7:30 pm

Yvette Spears will bring New Orleans to Alexandria with her cabaret entitled *My Creole Love Call*, a spirited musical featuring the music of Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington. All tickets \$25. www.eventbrite.com/e/a-metrostage-cabaret-with-yvette-spears-tickets-312069086037

William Knowles is the music director/pianist for both cabarets and will be accompanied by Mark Saltman, bass; Greg Holloway, drum; and David Cole, guitar. www.metrostage.org



MetroStage favorites Roz White and Yvette Spears will headline a cabaret series at the Lyceum April 19 and May 17.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

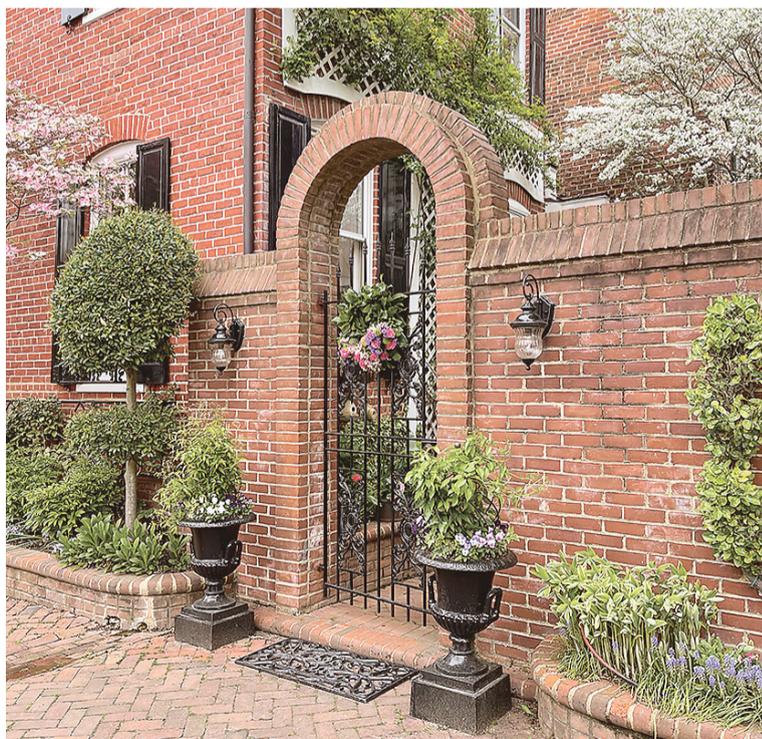
CALENDAR

NOW THRU MAY 5

Solo Art Exhibition. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Art & Framing, 694 N. St. Asaph St., Alexandria. Art & Framing will be home to the exhibition “Works from Nature’s Jewel Tones: Paintings by Kathleen Gallery. The show features 20 of Gallery’s works. The jewel tones found in nature have been the main inspiration for these paintings--Kathleen Gallery.

NOW THRU APRIL 17

Forces Fleeting. At The Athenaeum Gallery, Alexandria. Opening Reception, Sunday, March 13, 4 — 6 p.m. Artist Talk, Saturday, April 9 at 2 p.m. Forces Fleeting is a mixed-media exhibition of new works by artists Nikki Brugnoli and Anne C. Smith, in the first joint installation by the two longtime friends and collaborators. In very different ways, both women explore the transformative power of landscape, with Brugnoli’s gestural screenprint drawings on mylar and wood panels and Smith’s dark pencil drawings on stained linen.



Old Town Alexandria’s annual Historic Garden Week tour takes place Saturday, April 23 in Alexandria.

NOW THRU APRIL 30

Second Life Exhibit. 6 p.m. Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday; 9 p.m. Friday. At Del Ray Artisans gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. The “Second Life” exhibit features art made with recycled materials. Workshops and events are also scheduled throughout the month. Details: delrayartisans.org/calendar/#event=second-life

NOW THRU JUNE 5

“SeeWorthy” Exhibit. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Studio #9, Alexandria. View ship construction through the eyes of maritime archaeologists in SeeWorthy, a new exhibit from Alexandria Archaeology highlighting the technology used to digitally reconstruct historic vessels. Recent development along the waterfront has led to significant discoveries by archaeologists, including the remains of four historic ships. These remnants have been laser scanned to create models showing what they would have looked like in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

NOW THRU MAY 1

Cherry Blossom Exhibition. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. Art lovers are encouraged to stop by the Torpedo Factory Art Center throughout April to view floral art displayed on all three floors. Participating artists will display their most colorful spring and cherry-blossom-inspired works in their studios from Saturday, April 2 until Sunday, May 1. Torpedo Factory Art Center is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Masks are required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status. Visit torpedofactory.org.

NOW THRU JUNE 12

MVUC Greenhouse Plant Sale. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Weekends only. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. The Annual Spring Plant Sale at the MVUC Greenhouse opens April 2 and 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., weekends only. They have a variety of vegeta-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

bles and flowers for sale again this year. Lots of regular and heirloom tomatoes and not-too-hot peppers (more than 20 different varieties) as well as some of your favorite perennials, annuals, and herbs. Visit the lovely, old greenhouse and buy some new plants for your spring garden.

THURSDAY/APRIL 14

From A to Z: Arias to Zarzuela. 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Judy Yannini, soprano, Emily Baltzer, piano co-presented with IN Series an artist fast on the rise, Mexican soprano Judy Yannini makes her Secret Garden debut in an incandescent program of selections from vibrant zarzuelas and beloved operas, presented in partnership with IN Series. Visit www.classicalmovements.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

MVT50 Anniversary Celebration. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Daingerfield Island, 1 Marina Drive, Alexandria. Mount Vernon Trail 50th Anniversary Celebration
Please join the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail in celebrating five decades of natural beauty, community partnership, and stewardship of one of the Washington area's great public resources. Visit the website: <https://mountvernontrail.org/mvt50/>

SATURDAY/APRIL 16

Friendship Firehouse Open. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the Friendship Firehouse Museum, Alexandria. Admission is \$2, free for Alexandria residents. While supplies last, younger visitors will receive a free fire hat and a take-away bag of fun activities.

APRIL 16-17

Easter Egg Hunt. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Find Easter eggs hidden in the Lee-Fendall garden during the popular annual egg hunt. Sessions also include crafts, games and a visit from the Easter Bunny. Attendance is limited, and reservations must be made in advance; face masks are recommended. Bring your own basket. Sessions offered on the hour through 3 p.m., beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday and 12 p.m. on Sunday. Admission: \$15 for participating children ages 2 to 12; \$5 for accompanying adults; free for infants under 2. Visit leefendallhouse.org

APRIL 16 TO MAY 28 (SATURDAYS)

Washington Whiskey Tasting. 2-5 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. At this outdoor event, sample George Washington's whiskey and other distilled spirits made at Washington's Distillery.
Enjoy a rare opportunity to taste Mount Vernon's one-of-a-kind distilled spirits. Sample 3 distilled spirits, made using 18th-century distilling methods and techniques. Hear from Mount Vernon's Historic Trades team about the history of distilling spirits, and tour George Washington's Distillery. This event is held at George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill which is located

2.7 miles from the main estate entrance. Guests may arrive directly at the facility and free parking is available on-site.

APRIL 16-17

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny. 8:30-10:30 a.m. At Theismann's Restaurant, 1800 Diagonal Road, Alexandria. Hop on over to Theismann's and give your family a magical morning in the charm of Old Town Alexandria with Breakfast with the Easter Bunny. Taking place on Saturday, April 16 and Sunday, April 17 from 8:30AM-10:30AM, children get to meet the Easter Bunny and capture the moment with a photo. The event also includes an Easter Egg Hunt & Make Your Own Easter Basket for the children to enjoy. Breakfast menu includes Breakfast Pastry & Bagel Basket, Deviled Easter Eggs, Yogurt Parfait, French Toast and more! Beverage offerings include Classic Mimosas, Bellinis or Prosecco for adults.

TUESDAY/APRIL 19

Your Family Timeline. 1-3 p.m. Via Zoom. At 7701 Stone Wheat Court, Alexandria. Learn how to create a timeline to advance your family search from renowned professional genealogist, author, and teacher, Sharon Hodges. Hodges will present at the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society's April 19 meeting. Visit the website: <https://mvgenealogy.org/eventListings.php?nm=20#er534> Register via email at contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. Visit <https://mvgenealogy.org/eventListings.php?nm=20#er534>.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Beatrice Farrand's Legacy at Green Spring Gardens. 4-5 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. In honor of the 80th anniversary of the installation of Beatrice Farrand's garden at Green Spring Gardens, join landscape historian and author Judith Tankard as she talks about the incredible garden designs of America's first female landscape architect Beatrice Farrand. Call 703-642-5173.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Outdoor Bluegrass Concert. 5-6 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. The father-son team Ken & Brad Kolodner crosses the boundaries of Old-Time, Bluegrass and American Roots music in a transfixing, elegant program played in sophisticated arrangements for banjo, hammered dulcimer and fiddle featuring distinctive songs, traditional pieces and original music. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

FRIDAY/APRIL 22

Garden Talk - Deer-Resistant Gardens. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Has your garden become a smorgasbord for deer? While fencing and repellents are the tactics most often used, another good way to combat deer is to focus on plant selection. Learn from Extension Master Gardener docents about the many wonderful annuals, perennials and shrubs that deer don't find appetizing. \$10 per person. Code GCA.NGFA. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
SCOTT	16685	619	BIG STONY CREEK ROAD	BRANCH	3/30/2022
BLAND	3048	604	WALKERS CREEK ROAD	BIG WALKER CREEK #3	3/28/2022
WASHINGTON	19036	616	WALNUT GROVE ROAD	NORDYKE CREEK	3/28/2022
SMYTH	17394	16	B.F. BUCHANAN HIGHWAY	WHITE OAK BRANCH	3/23/2022
WASHINGTON	18891	58	GATE CITY HIGHWAY	BRANCH	3/23/2022
CRAIG	5503	615	CRAIGS CREEK ROAD	MILL CREEK	3/11/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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Request for Early Input

Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action and Alternatives for the Distribution Center at Fort Belvoir, Virginia

All Interested Parties: The U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Belvoir, Virginia is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the construction and operation of a distribution center at the Fort Belvoir North Area (FBNA) in Springfield, Virginia, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code Section 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations that implement NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and 32 CFR Part 651, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions. An EA is used as a planning document to assess environmental impacts, evaluate their significance, develop alternatives and mitigation measures, and allow for agency and public participation (32 CFR 651.20).

The EA is being prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the **Proposed Action** to build and operate a distribution center at FBNA. The project will modernize logistical operations and address safety, security, and operational concerns specific to the warehouse and its administrative functions. The project is needed to support the delivery and receipt of materials within and across the Washington Metropolitan Area, requiring a site within the National Capital Region to achieve distribution efficiencies.

The **Proposed Action** involves the construction and operation of an approximately 525,000 square foot warehouse and administrative building with associated parking and covered storage at FBNA for approximately 600 personnel. The hours of operation will typically be between 6am and 4pm. The proposed site location is in a forested area surrounded by industrial land use, keeping the same type of activity that already exists within the FBNA fence line.

The EA will also consider a **No Action Alternative**, which would involve no construction and no distribution center. Although the **No Action Alternative** would not meet the purpose and need for the action, CEQ requires the analysis of the **No Action Alternative**, as it also provides a benchmark for enabling decision-makers to compare the magnitude of environmental effects of the **Proposed Action**.

In accordance with 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Army invites you to provide early input on the **Proposed Action** to be considered in our analysis of each alternative in the forthcoming EA. This notice is being distributed to organizations that may have an interest in the project. Information on the **Proposed Action** can be found on the project website at <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/FBNA/>. Comments on the **Proposed Action** can be submitted through the project website or via email to FBNA@usace.army.mil.

Additionally, once the draft EA is completed, agencies and the public will have an opportunity to review and provide comments during a 30-day public review period, which will be announced in a notice published in local newspapers, the project website shown above, and the Fort Belvoir website at <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>. Printed copies of the draft EA will be available in the local libraries: Fort Belvoir Library, Lorton Library, Kingstowne Library, Sherwood Regional Library, and Richard Byrd Library.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Early input will be accepted for a period of 15 days, beginning on the date of this notice. Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please contact the Fort Belvoir Directorate of Public Works-Environmental Division (DPW-ED) via phone at (703) 806-3193 or (703) 806-0020, during normal working business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

NEWS

Coalition for TJ Files Emergency Request to Vacate the 4th Circuit Stay

FROM PAGE 5

As the Virginia Governor School for Science and Technology in Northern Virginia, the Virginia Department of Education supports the school. Fairfax County School Board administers the program and TJ serves other school districts, including Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William counties, and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. TJ has been named among the best high schools in the country.

On March 31, 2022, a three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, under the direction of federal Judge Toby Heytens and concurred by Judge Robert King, voted 2-1 to grant a stay pending an appeal to the Fairfax County School Board (the School Board) and Scott Brabrand, in his official capacity as Superintendent of the Fairfax County School Board, against Coalition for TJ. Judge Allison Jones Rushing, the panel's third judge, voted to deny the March 31 motion.

The 4th Circuit order on March 31 did not overturn the U.S. district court's decision by Judge Claude Hilton Feb. 25, 2022 disallowing the new admissions policies. But the order was put on hold while considering the school board's appeal.

The School Board may continue to use the challenged admissions plan for students applying to TJ, according to the March 31 judgment.

Coalition for TJ issued a statement following the 4th Circuit judges' 2-1 decision, stating that "Judge Toby Heytens and Judge Robert Bruce King of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals have made a grave error in allowing Fairfax County Public Schools to continue its illegal admissions process that discriminates against Asian American students applying to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. If the judges' decision stands, we would see Fairfax County Public Schools usher in a second class of students to America's No. 1 public high school through an unconstitutional race-based admissions process."

Judge Heytens filed a concurring opinion for the March 31 vote, writing in part, "I believe the public interest favors a stay given the timing and logistical constraints inherent in repealing the current admissions policy and implementing a new one so close

to the end of the current admissions cycle. Thousands of students and their families will be thrown into disarray for the next several months if the district court's order is not stayed."

On Oct. 25, 2021, applications for the TJ Class of 2026 opened with applications due by Dec. 15, 2021. Students should receive notification of their admission status this month, April 2022, according to FCPS.

In her dissenting opinion, Judge Rushing stated, "Everyone — even temporarily frustrated applicants and their families — ultimately benefits from a public-school admissions process not tainted by unconstitutional discrimination."

According to Judge Heytens, undisputed data presented to the district court demonstrate that a higher percentage of Asian American students were admitted than applied, even under the current plan. He wrote in his opinion, "Taking all this into account, it seems the more prudent course is to allow the current admissions cycle to proceed according to settled expectations and require a change, if any, beginning with the next class."

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology admissions have been questioned for decades because of the demographics of the student body which included only a tiny percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

For example, in 2015, Fairfax County Public Schools said 8 percent of applicants and 1.2 percent of those admitted qualify for free and reduced meals. Of all students in Fairfax County, by comparison, more than 28 percent received free and reduced meals at the time.

Numbers of Black and Latino students were also very low. The admitted class of 2019 was 2.4 percent Hispanic, 1.6 percent Black.

In 2003, nearly 20 years ago, the Fairfax County School Board established a Blue Ribbon panel of experts to study the disparities and make recommendations. But revamped admissions policies made little change in the disparities.

It wasn't until qualitative changes in the admissions process in 2020 that change was reflected in the makeup of TJ's student body, with students entering in 2021 for the class of 2025. Black

students increased from 1.23 percent (2020-21) to 7.09 percent. Hispanic students increased from 3.29 percent (2020-21) to 11.27 percent. The number of economically disadvantaged students [those eligible to receive reduced-price or free meals at school] increased from slightly greater than 0.5 percent (0.62 in 2020-21) to 25.09 percent.

Every middle school in the Fairfax County Public School division was represented at TJ as seats in the Class of 2025 were allocated for the top 1.5 percent of applicants from every middle school's eighth-grade student population. Students from historically underrepresented middle schools increased to 30.73 percent versus 5.56 percent (2020-21).

The Coalition for TJ filed a federal lawsuit against the School Board with the help of the Pacific Legal Foundation, claiming that the School Board's changes were specifically designed to reduce the percentage of Asian American students who enroll at TJ, to equalize the school per Fairfax County's racial demographics.

The New York Times reported that the Pacific Legal Foundation is behind multiple lawsuits that challenge elite public high schools changing their admissions policies to diversify their student body. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/us/school-admissions-affirmative-action.html?smid=url-share>

In February, a federal judge struck down the new admissions policy. But late in March, the U.S. Court of Appeals issued a stay, allowing the current applications, already in process for the class of 2026, to move forward under the invalidated admissions process.

The Coalition for TJ filed on April 8, 2022 an emergency request with the U.S. Supreme Court to vacate the Fourth Circuit's stay (March 31, 2022).

According to Pacific Legal Foundation, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the coalition's emergency request in the coming weeks.

Even if the Supreme Court does not vacate the stay, the Fourth Circuit or Supreme Court could ultimately agree with the district court judge that TJ's revised admissions policy is unlawful, says Pacific Legal in its online statement. Pacific Legal Foundation adds that it expects a Fourth Circuit decision on the school board's appeal around the end of the year.

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Going, Going, I Wish They Were Gone

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



All those Charmin and Cottonelle television commercials for “the go”/“down there care.” As my late mother used to say about so many nauseating subjects: “It’s enough already.” I realize toilet paper is a staple, especially during a pandemic, but is it necessary that there are so many television advertisements? They’re appearing so often that I’ve even seen these competing companies/products advertise during the same commercial break. Not exactly back-to-back, but very nearly so. Talk about overkill. If these brands aren’t careful, they’re going to kill the goose that laid ply at their doorstep.

I mean, how much prodding/encouragement do I need every day to assist me with my toilet paper decisions? Not nearly as much as I’m getting, that’s for sure. How many more times must I see that adolescent bear wiggle his butt? And how many more times must I hear about treating “the skin that I don’t see as well as I treat the skin that I do see?” No more, please? I have enough visuals of forearms being wiped to last me a lifetime. I know that toilet paper sales are a huge business with endless repeat customer buys, but I’ve reached my point of no return. As in there’s no more return on their advertising investment in my household. We have been saturated with toilet paper problems/solutions so much so that if I never see another television commercial, funny or not, it will be soon enough for me.

Besides, I’m a grown man. I know what works for me – and what doesn’t. And that awareness most definitely includes toilet paper and all its features and benefits – and innuendos. I may be stubborn or a creature of consumer habit – or merely protective of my privacy, but all this recurring toilet paper market penetration/saturation is becoming too much to bear. I’m not a prude in the least, but I do feel as if there are certain subjects/descriptions which are off limits – or rather should be. However, the recent spate of toilet paper verbal and visual manipulation has crossed the line I never thought needed to be drawn because it was clear to everybody that it already existed. Apparently, the rules of advertising aren’t aware of these lines.

I understand that market share and profit are crucial to a commercial ventures/success/viability. But to invoke a famous question from the 1954 McCarthy hearings: “Where’s your decency?” Gone. That’s where if the frequency and substance of these toilet paper advertisements are allowed to continue. Enough is enough, which for Scott brands is 1000 sheets. For me however, it’s really none of anybody’s business what I do in the privacy of my own bathroom. Whether I use an off-brand, single, double, or triple ply or paper infused with aloe. I’m happy to be left to my own devices. I’ll figure it out and the less the advertisers have to do with it, the better.

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

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NEWS

Purple for Military Kids Day

April 20 Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes all military-connected children in April during the Month of the Military Child. This yearly tradition is part of a national celebration to recognize military children for their resilience, strength, and sacrifices.

April 20, 2022 is designated as Purple Up! For Military Kids Day. FCPS has over 13,500 military-connected youth as part of its student body. These children enrich the school community with their wide-ranging life experiences.

Show support for military children, Purple Up! on April 20. Wear purple as a visible way to show appreciation for military-connected youth. Why purple? Purple symbolizes all branches of the military as a combination of Army green, Marine red, along with Coast Guard, Air Force, Space Force and Navy blue.

Resources for Military Families

More information on supports for Military families: https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/resources-military-families?utm_campaign+=&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_source=govdelivery

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) offers a welcoming and engaging environment for families, educators and community members. The PRC provides access to information and resources to support the success of all students, including those with learning challenges, special needs and disabilities. Military families may be interested in the Military Connected Families padlet, as well as the lending library, webinars and other resources. Contact the PRC for more information

Call 703-204-3941
Email prc@fcps.edu

Limited Opportunity to See Washington DC Temple

For the first time in nearly 50 years, the Washington DC Temple will be open for public tours. This is a rare opportunity to come inside this holy building. Visitors will discover how the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints view the Temple as sacred, as a sanctuary from the tumultuous world, and as a place to become more like our Savior.

Visitors will experience the beautiful architecture, art, and a feeling of peace, purpose and hope. Three quarters of a million people visited the original open house in 1974. During that Special Preview Week, the Temple was visited by the First Family, the US Vice President, White House staff, most of the members of US Congress and Supreme Court, Cabinet officers and thousands of state and local government officials, judiciary, international officials and clergy. During the weeks that followed, hundreds of

thousands of people from the general public went through the Temple. Soon, for a limited time, people will have the same opportunity. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are expected to visit this iconic location during this open house.

People of all ages, faiths, and no faith are welcome to come inside the Temple between April 28 through June 11, 2022, Mondays-Saturdays (no Sundays) 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Entrance is free and does not require a ticket to enter. A free timed parking ticket (one per vehicle) is needed to park a car. If coming by Metro to the Forest Glen Station, a free shuttle ticket is needed from the station to the Temple. Groups should make special reservations. For information and tickets: www.dctemple.org

After June 11 the Open House will conclude and the Temple will again be closed to the general public.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

and school counselors a comprehensive overview of the United States service academies and their admission processes.

Attendees will have the opportunity to join breakout sessions with representatives from the United States service academies for presentations and an interactive question and answer period. On the main stage, you will hear from representatives from the Virginia congressional delegation about the application procedures for congressional nominations to the academies as well as speakers from the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board, the University of Virginia ROTC programs, the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, the Virginia Military Institute, and the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership at Mary Baldwin University. There will also be time to speak in more detail with many of these representatives at their virtual resource

tables.

Information on the nomination process for the service academies is available on the Senator’s website at www.warner.senate.gov. You may email academy_noms@warner.senate.gov with any questions.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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.



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MODEL# 1852. MSRP \$21,520. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 39 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

**NEW 2022 TOYOTA
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LEASES STARTING FROM...

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MON-FRI 6A-7P & SAT 7A-5P**

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SPECIAL
FREE**

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INCLUDES: CHECK COLD CRANKING
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**LUBE, OIL &
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\$39.95**

\$44.95 FOR SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE
INCLUDES: CHANGE OIL (UP TO 5 QTS.), INSTALL
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INCLUDES: 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT,
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INCLUDES: INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA FRONT BRAKE PADS,
INSPECT FRONT & REAR ROTORS AND/OR DRUMS, CHECK
TIRE CONDITION AND INSPECT ALL HARDWARE. TCMC
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**THE MORE YOU SPEND,
THE MORE YOU SAVE!**

\$10 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$50-\$99
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\$20 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$200-\$499
\$50 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$500+

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