

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 14, 2022



PHOTO BY CLENDIA BOOTH

Fox kits nursing in the author's yard.

Living with Wildlife Page 4



MIKE CARLO, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Raccoon at a bird feeder.

Two Fatal Pedestrian Crashes On Richmond Highway

Woman Dies After Pedestrian Crash on Richmond Highway.

Detectives from the Fairfax Police Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred July 6 in the 5600 block of Richmond Highway in the Mount Vernon area. Officers responded at 10:20 p.m. for a pedestrian struck by an initially reported dark-colored, older-model SUV on Richmond Highway near Huntington Avenue. The pedestrian, Doris Anita McPhail, 56, of Alexandria, was taken to a nearby hospital with injuries considered life threatening. Ms. McPhail succumbed to her injuries the next morning.

Detectives determined the driver of a 2007 dark-green Toyota Camry was traveling southbound on Richmond Highway. Ms. McPhail was crossing Richmond Highway outside of a crosswalk in a dimly lit area when she was struck in the left lane of the roadway. The driver did not stop to assist or render aid.

As detectives were investigating the crash, the driver of the striking vehicle called 911 and notified dispatchers of their involvement in the crash. Detectives from our Crash Reconstruction will present details of the investigation to the Office of

the Commonwealth's Attorney for possible charges. Preliminarily, alcohol and speed do not appear to be factors in the crash.

Fatal Pedestrian Crash in Lorton

Detectives from Fairfax Police Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred at 1:28 a.m, Friday, July 8. The crash occurred on Richmond Highway over the ramp from northbound I-95 to northbound Richmond Highway. Preliminarily, detectives determined Keith Thomas, 24, was walking in the southbound travel lanes of Richmond Highway. The driver of a 2005 GMC Sierra was traveling southbound on Richmond Highway and struck Thomas in the roadway. While the driver of the GMC called for help, Thomas was subsequently struck by other vehicles. Rescue personnel responded and pronounced him deceased at the scene. Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors in the crash. The investigation remains active, and details of the investigation will be presented to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for review.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

This is the 12th pedestrian related fatality in the County to date in 2022. Year to date in 2021 there were seven pedestrian related fatalities.



Studying the Speed Limit On Richmond Highway

The Virginia Department of Transportation will hold a second virtual public information meeting Wednesday, July 20 on a study assessing the speed limit on about eight miles of Richmond Highway (Route 1) between Belvoir Road/Meade Road and I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway).

The purpose is to optimize safety and operations for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users. At the meeting, the study team will present additional analysis based on public feedback from the November public information meeting, as well as present study recommendations.

Richmond Highway (Route 1) averages about 55,000 vehicles a day within the study limits based on 2019 data, and the existing posted speed limit is 45 mph.

Get Involved

In lieu of an in-person meeting, VDOT invites residents and travelers to learn more, participate in the virtual meeting and give feedback in the following ways through

Monday, Aug. 1:

- ❖ Attend the Wednesday, July 20 online meeting. Register at virginiadot.org/Route1SpeedLimitStudy or to participate without registering in listen-only mode, call 877-309-2074 (use access code 325-898-631). The study team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation. In case an alternate date is needed, the meeting will be held Wednesday, Sept 21.

- ❖ Provide comments via the online survey or by email to meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov.

- ❖ Mail comments to Ms. Jessica Paris, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Meeting materials and the presentation will be available online at virginiadot.org/Route1SpeedLimitStudy, including the recorded presentation after the meeting. https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route_1_speed_limit_study.asp

The study's final report is scheduled to be completed this fall.

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#WeAreAlexandria



OPEN SUN 7/17, 1-4PM

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Belle Haven on the Green | \$799,000

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Donna Cramer 703.627.9578
www.DonnaCramer.com



The Preston | \$375,000

Beautifully maintained & spacious (774-SF), 1-bedroom, 1-bath condo, conveniently located! Open concept floorplan, granite, stainless appliances, garage parking, and fabulous balcony off the bedroom. Amenities include gym and rooftop deck! 181 E Reed Ave #206
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www.RealtorHeidiB.com



OPEN SUN 7/17, 2-4PM

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NEWS



Chief Kevin Davis speaks at the scene in McLean July 7 after a Fairfax County Police officer shot and killed Jasper Aaron Lynch, 26.



Chief Kevin Davis speaks at the scene at Springfield Town Center June 30 after Fairfax County Police officers shot and killed Christian Parker, 37 of Reston.

Two Fatal Shootings by Fairfax County Police

Supervisor Rodney Lusk will convene a virtual public safety town hall meeting on July 21 at 6 p.m. to address community concerns about multiple incidents of police use of force in the last few weeks.

Fairfax County Police officers shot and killed two men in separate incidents. A Reston man, Christian Parker, 37, was shot and killed in the parking lot of Springfield Town Center on June 30. Jasper Aaron Lynch, 26, was shot and killed in a McLean home on July 7.

“Over the past three weeks, there have been a series of high profile incidents involving the Fairfax County Police Department,” said Lusk in a statement released as he announced the date of the town meeting. “I share the concerns that I’ve heard from many in the community about both the nature of these incidents and the frequency at which they are occurring.”

Check @SupervisorLusk where registration information will be posted soon.

A third incident also raised concern when a video widely shared on social media showed two police officers pointing their guns at the person, a juvenile, recording them on a cell phone. Police were responding to a call at the IHOP on Route 50 in the Fairfax County area of Falls Church on Saturday, July 9, with reports that one individual displayed a handgun earlier in the evening.

Investigations are underway.

“I remain completely committed to providing the transparency required to ensure trust between our community and FCPD,” Lusk said. Lusk is chairman of the Board of Supervisors Public Safety Committee, and as such provides policy oversight for the police.

BOTH FATAL incidents were recorded on officers’ body cameras, and that footage will be released along with audio recordings “within 30 days or when it no longer jeopardizes the integrity of the investigation.”

Per department policy, the officers have been placed on restricted duty pending the outcome of an administrative investigation by the Internal Affairs Bureau.

An independent review will be conducted of the incidents by the Fairfax County Independent Police Auditor, Richard G. Schott. The Office of the Independent Police Auditor

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

was established by the Board of Supervisors on the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, in the wake of the police shooting death of John Geer of Springfield. The recommendations of the commission also led to the timeline for release of information.

IN McLEAN

According to police, at approximately 7:11 p.m. Thursday, July 7, officers responded to a home in the 6900 block of Arbor Lane in McLean, after a family friend of Jasper Aaron Lynch, 26, called with concerns for his safety. The family friend said Lynch was throwing objects inside the home and pacing.

A designated co-responder unit responded. This team included an officer assigned to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and a clinician from the Sharon Bulova Center for



Rodney Lusk

be a large decorative wooden tribal mask. The officers attempted to de-escalate the situation with verbal commands inside the foyer of the home.

Lynch threw the mask at an officer and began to swing the bottle in striking motion. Two officers attempted to utilize their Electronic Control Weapons. Lynch ran toward officers while swinging the bottle.

“We have crisis-intervention training, and it requires ongoing education. About 42 percent of our agency is trained in it. We’d like to have co-responder mobile-crisis units – a police officer and a mental-health professional in the same car ... It’s the wave of the future in public safety.”

— Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis speaking at a recent meeting of the Sully District Police Station’s Citizens Advisory Committee

Community Health. Lynch left the residence prior to the team’s arrival at 7:26 p.m. The team checked the home and remained in the area for an additional period of time to attempt to locate him, according to the report, but they didn’t find Lynch. The co-responder unit then went to the McLean District Station to speak with Lynch’s family by phone.

At 8:34 p.m., a second call for service was placed by a family friend. This time, three crisis intervention trained officers arrived at the home and spoke to a family member on the scene. The officers found Lynch inside holding a bottle and an object, believed to

One officer discharged his firearm, striking Lynch four times. Officers immediately rendered aid until fire and rescue personnel arrived. Lynch was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The officer who discharged his firearm has been identified as a ten-year veteran. The officer is assigned to the McLean District Station.

The name of the officer will be released within 10 days, unless there is a credible threat to the safety of the officer involved or if additional time is required to thoroughly complete the risk assessment process.

Mark your calendar for a virtual public safety town hall hosted by Supervisor Rodney Lusk on July 21 at 6 p.m. Check @SupervisorLusk where registration information will be posted soon.

A criminal investigation into the use of force is being conducted by FCPD Major Crimes Bureau.

Police report that all information provided in their release is based on preliminary investigative findings and may be subject to revision as the investigation progresses.

To view Chief Davis’ press conference from the scene, see https://youtu.be/n_s66dYFQLs

AT SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER

On June 30, officers found Christian Parker, 37, of Reston, in the Springfield Town Center parking lot. Parker was wanted for possession of a firearm by a felon, larceny of a firearm, brandishing a firearm and discharging a firearm within a home.

Parker was wanted after an incident on Sunday at his home in the 2000 block of Royal Fern Court in the Reston Police District. A family member reported Parker stole a firearm from the home and pointed the weapon at a relative. Parker then discharged the firearm inside the home.

The incident was reported more than 10 hours after it occurred. No one was injured at the time of the reckless discharge. Officers obtained warrants for Parker and notified the Fugitive Track and Apprehension Unit. Officers worked throughout the week to find Parker, eventually finding him in the Springfield parking lot.

Detectives coordinated with the Summer Crime Initiative team to help find Parker. This seasonal team of officers focuses on suppressing crime during the summer months.

Officers found Parker in a parking lot and positioned their vehicles in a manner to prevent Parker’s escape.

Parker entered his vehicle as officers approached. Three officers gave Parker several commands to show his hands. Preliminarily, it appeared Parker reached across the pas-

SEE FATAL, PAGE 9

WILDLIFE

Live in Harmony with Wildlife, for Our Benefit and Theirs

From skinks to skunks, many wildlife species thrive in suburbia.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE ALMANAC

In mid-June, a photograph of a black bear near Belle View Boulevard 10th and 11th Streets in New Alexandria popped up on the NextDoor social platform.

Last week, a juvenile black rat snake got stuck in Alyssa Pease's car door frame, perhaps the offspring of a larger one that suns on her front steps in Tauxemont. A bird built a nest and raised four young on a pedestal cat bed on the back porch of another Tauxemont home in June.

White-tail deer and red foxes regularly visit Williamsburg Manor resident Greg Crider. Snapping turtles dig nests and lay eggs in the River Towers condos' backyard.

Many Northern Virginians find that deer have munched their shrubs, hostas and pansies. These deer are the largest wild animal in Fairfax County and "thrive in human-altered landscapes," according to the county's Field Guide to Plants and Wildlife. Skunks too have adapted to varied habitats and with a highly developed sense of touch, can raid garbage cans, bird feeders and fish ponds.

Raccoons, largely active at night, have also adapted to many environments and in urban areas will eat garbage, bird seed and pet food.

There are many reports of foxes denning under decks or sheds, and trotting about the 'burbs.

Pease recently found an unfamiliar Birkenstock sandal in some leaves behind her house which she assumes was a fox at work. In the spring and early summer, foxes are known to take objects to their young as "chew toys," things like newspapers in plastic bags, bones and toys. Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources biologists say that the rise in coyote populations has likely pushed more foxes into urban and suburban areas because coyotes do not tolerate foxes.



White-tail deer photo taken by a wildlife camera in Northern Virginia.

From skinks to skunks, many wildlife species thrive in suburbia and other human-altered environments, but that does not mean that people and wildlife have to be in conflict.

"Treating every nonhuman living organism in the city like a nuisance – you're fighting an uphill battle," Seattle University professor Mark Jordan told the March 24, 2020, Washington Post. "It does not behoove you to try to eradicate all the animals in the city. You'll never win. You need to find better ways to coexist with them."

Free Ecological Services

To some people, some wildlife might be bothersome, but these animals provide ecological services, for free. A little brown bat

can eat up to 3,000 insects, including mosquitoes, in one night.

While snakes have often been villainized (think Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden and Medusa's hair), snakes "are an integral part of our natural environment ... and keep the insect and rodent populations in check," says a Fairfax County Park Authority brochure. Vultures clean up roadkill. Land flooded by beaver dams can become more fire resistant. Birds disperse seeds that provide food, plants, timber and recreation.

Insects are the "little things that run the world," the late Edmund O. Wilson, a biologist, explained. Their pollination services are critical to the reproduction of over 85 percent of the world's flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world's



Bear in Mount Vernon area posted on NextDoor.

From: Trudy_Roth@nps.gov, Volunteer and Youth Program Coordinator, George Washington Memorial Parkway

crop species, says the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Insects also spread seeds, aerate the soil, recycle nutrients and facilitate decomposition.

Living with Wildlife

All wildlife species need adequate food, water and shelter. As altered habitats and lack of predators force some wildlife out of their natural homes, some human-wildlife interaction is inevitable. Making changes

SEE WILDLIFE, PAGE 6



A "blond" squirrel in the Mount Vernon area.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



A chipmunk nibbling on a walnut.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

NEWS

Man Sentenced for Conspiracy To Distribute Meth on the Darknet

A Fairfax man was sentenced Tuesday, July 12 to 52 months for conspiring to distribute between 15 and 45 kilograms of pills containing methamphetamine via the darknet.

According to court documents, from about May 2019 through December 2019, Tyler Pham, 39, conspired to distribute peach tablets advertised as Adderall, but in fact containing methamphetamine, nationwide through the U.S. mail. Pham used the moniker "addy4cheap" on darknet markets, the Empire Market and Cryptonia. Between August 2019 and December 2019, law enforcement agents conducted 20 controlled purchases from "addy4cheap" on both markets for a total of 767 peach tablets received, weighing approximately 268 grams total.

On Dec. 9, 2019, search warrants were executed at Pham and his co-conspirators' residences, including the homes of Lien Kim Thi Phan, 37, Fairfax, and Hon Lam Luk, 35, Chantilly. In the home of Phan and Pham, agents found 95 peach tablets, and in Luk's Chantilly residence, investigators found over 6,000 peach tablets weighing approximately 2.2 kilograms, all of which resembled those advertised on "addy4cheap" and those received by law enforcement through controlled purchases.

As of Dec. 10, 2019, "addy4cheap" had completed 3,665 sales on the Empire Market and received 2,568 reviews. Based on these reviews, "addy4cheap" had received approximately \$482,572.10 in sales for an approximate 44,872 pills sold. As of Nov. 7, 2019, "addy4cheap" had fulfilled 140 transactions on Cryptonia.

Pham's six co-conspirators all previously entered guilty pleas in connection with the conspiracy and were sentenced to over

13 years in prison combined. Phan and Duong Nguyen, 29, of Springfield received a sentence of time served for their roles in the conspiracy. Son Nguyen, 36, of Annandale, was sentenced to 34 months in prison for his role in the conspiracy. Dat Nguyen, 37 of Alexandria, and Trieu Hoang, 39, of Springfield, were sentenced to 39 months in prison for their roles in the conspiracy and Luk received 46 months imprisonment for his conduct.

Detectives from Fairfax Police Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred at 1:28 a.m., Friday, July 8. The crash occurred on Richmond Highway over the ramp from northbound I-95 to northbound Richmond Highway. Preliminarily, detectives determined Keith Thomas, 24, was walking in the southbound travel lanes of Richmond Highway. The driver of a 2005 GMC Sierra was traveling southbound on Richmond Highway and struck Thomas in the roadway. While the driver of the GMC called for help, Thomas was subsequently struck by other vehicles. Rescue personnel responded and pronounced him deceased at the scene. Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors in the crash. The investigation remains active, and details of the investigation will be presented to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for review.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

This is the 12th pedestrian related fatality in the County to date in 2022.

Year to date, in 2021 there were 7 pedestrian related fatalities.

MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT STATION

POLICE REPORTS

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY: 6138 North Kings Highway (7-Eleven), 7/7/22, 11:53 p.m. Two men entered the store, implied they had a firearm and stole merchandise.

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY: 1500 Belle View Boulevard (Dunkin'), 7/7/22, 4:10 a.m. Two men forced entry into the business and stole property.

SHOOTING: 3600 block of Buckman Road, 7/3/22, 5:58 p.m. A 13-year-old boy displayed a firearm and shot a juvenile victim in the upper body. The victim was originally treated for injuries that were considered life threatening but was later upgraded to non-life threatening. On July 7th, the 13-year-old male was taken to the

Juvenile Detention Center and petitions were served on him for aggravated malicious wounding, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, and illegal possession of a firearm by a person under 18 years of age. Detectives do not believe this was a random act.


ROBBERY: 3400 block of Julep Drive, 7/3/22, 8:55 p.m. Two juvenile males approached the victim, implied they had weapons, and took property. No injuries were reported. This does not appear to be a random act.

ATTEMPTED ROBBERY: 8200 block of Russell Road, 7/4/22, 4:29 p.m. Two men approached the victim and attempted to take his property by force. The two men fled when they saw the police approaching. No injuries were reported.



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MountVernonLeeChamber.org



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
KING & QUEEN	10620	628	SPRING COTTAGE RD.	MATTAPONI RIVER	6/30/2022
KING & QUEEN	10595	602	WARES CHURCH RD.	DRAGON RUN	6/30/2022
KING WILLIAM	10671	629	ACQUINTON CHURCH R	ACQUINTON CREEK	6/30/2022
KING WILLIAM	10649	600	W. RIVER RD.	AYLETT CREEK	6/30/2022
LANCASTER	10683	3	MARY BALL RD.	BELLWOOD RUN	6/30/2022
GRAYSON	8690	58	WILSON HWY	BIG WILSON CREEK	6/29/2022
WASHINGTON	18877	58	JEB STUART HWY	STRAIGHT BRANCH	6/29/2022
KING GEORGE	10576	625	PRIM RD.	MATTOX CREEK	6/29/2022
ESSEX	6156	629	BATTERY RD.	MOUNT LANDING CREEK	6/28/2022
ESSEX	6163	684	HOWERTON RD.	WHITE MARSH CREEK	6/28/2022
CAMPBELL	4347	738	ENGLISH TAVERN RD.	TRIBUTARY FLAT CREEK	6/25/2022
WASHINGTON	18878	58	JEB STUART HWY	STRAIGHT BRANCH	6/22/2022
CAROLINE	4484	632	EDGEHILL ACADEMY R	MATTA RIVER	6/22/2022
ESSEX	6152	620	CHEATWOOD MILL RD.	HOSKINS CREEK	6/22/2022
CAROLINE	4359	1	JEFF. DAVIS HWY.	STEVENS MILL RUN	6/21/2022
CAROLINE	4409	301	NBL A.P. HILL BLVD	N FORK PEUMONSEND CREEK	6/21/2022
CAROLINE	4411	301	RICHMOND TPKE	POLECAT CREEK	6/21/2022
CAROLINE	4367	17	TIDEWATER TRAIL	GOLDENVALE CREEK	6/21/2022
ARLINGTON	110	1	JEFF DAVIS HWY.SBL	110; I-395NB & I-395 EXP	6/15/2022
PRINCE EDWARD	13930	612	SANDY RIVER RD.	LITTLE SANDY RIVER	6/11/2022
LEE	10734	58	BUSINESS RTE 58	BRANCH	6/6/2022
MIDDLESEX	12085	17	NBL GEO. WASH. PWY	DRAGON RUN	6/2/2022
KING GEORGE	10566	615	BERRY WARF RD.	DEEP CREEK	6/1/2022
MATHEWS	26970	609	BETHEL BEACH RD.	GARDEN CREEK CANAL	6/1/2022

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.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A black rat snake sunning in a tree.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Fox kits nursing in the author's yard.

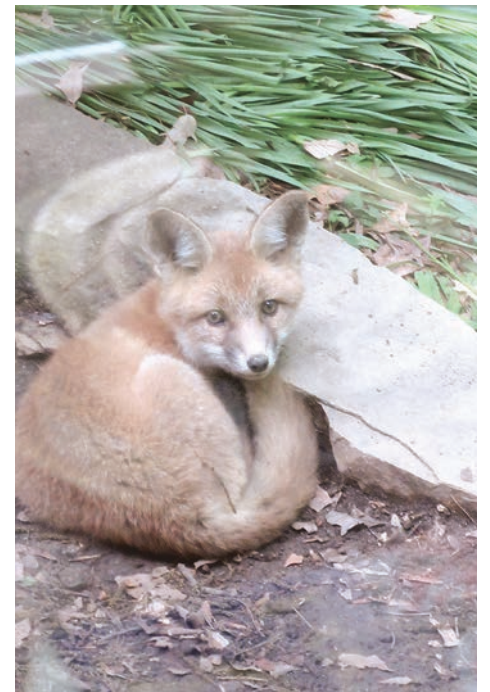


PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A fox kit resting near a wall in the author's yard.

Live in Harmony with Wildlife

FROM PAGE 4

in habitat, like destroying native trees and plants, fragmenting forests with houses, trails and roads can cause wildlife to move out of their traditional home territories.

"Habitat loss is the greatest single factor adversely affecting wildlife populations today," reports the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Over 900 wildlife species in the state are in decline.

Most wildlife species do not naturally prey on people or pets and are wary of humans. The Washington region is rich with wildlife, Smithsonian ecologist Bill McShea told the Washington Post in 2020, and most wildlife species stay hidden. Wildlife experts encourage people to try to peacefully live with wildlife, understand their behavior and understand when a problem is in fact a problem and when a problem is serious.

DWR Executive Director Ryan Brown advises, "Most human-wildlife interactions, of course, result in memorable experiences and are nothing but positive in nature. However, in any interactions in any setting, it's important that our first goal be to keep our wildlife wild. In all but the select cases where intervention is necessary, the best course of action is to simply enjoy the experience of observation with as little disturbance to them as possible.

"Wildlife contribute to the biological diversity of our ecosystems, spur recreational pursuits that benefit our economy and enhance our overall quality of life," explains Brown.

Animals are part of the web of life. Each species has a niche and behaviors unique to that species. Let them be wild, authorities say.



MIKE CARLO, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Raccoon at a bird feeder

A Few Do's and Don'ts

DO NOT

Feed wildlife. They will lose their natural fear of humans.

Leave pet food outside.

Approach an animal if it is acting aggressively or strangely. Contact local animal control officers.

Separate a mother from her young.

DO

Secure trash cans and keep trash inside until close to pickup time.

Screen your home's openings, like attics and window wells. Close garages and sheds at night.

Keep cats indoors. Outside, they are at risk of predation by coyotes and other wildlife. Cats kill birds and small animals. Do not support feral cat colonies.

Remove bird feeders if species such as bears are seen around them.

Clear fallen fruit from around trees.

Clean barbecue grills.

Seek medical advice if you have been scratched or bitten by an animal.

Plant native plants and strive for biodiversity.

RESOURCES

Wildlife Habitat, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/habitat/>

GetHelp with Wildlife, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/> and 855-571-9003.

Wildlife Rescue League, includes rehabilitators, <https://www.wildliferescueleague.org/>

Fairfax County, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/>; <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/specializedunits/animalprotectionpolice>



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Fox with the Mount Vernon Gazette.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Common five-lined skink. Blue tails fade as they mature.

News

Smart Growth America Shows Roads Are Dangerous by Design

Today, Smart Growth America released “Dangerous by Design” documenting the dangers faced by pedestrians on America’s roads. “The Coalition for Smarter Growth urges every official in the DC region, Maryland, and Virginia, to read this report and to make safety for pedestrians and bicyclists on our streets a top priority,” said Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

In the past week, two pedestrians were killed in Fairfax County, bringing the total number of pedestrians killed in 2022 to 12,

Officers responded at 10:20 p.m. July 6 for a pedestrian struck on Richmond Highway near Huntington Avenue in the Mount Vernon area. Doris Anita McPhail, 56, of Alexandria, was struck by an SUV. She died the next morning in the hospital.

Keith Thomas, 24, was killed in a crash that occurred at 1:28 a.m., Friday, July 8 on Richmond Highway over the ramp from northbound I-95 to northbound Richmond Highway.

According to the report, national statistics show:

- ❖ Pedestrian fatalities are up 62% since 2009, totalling 64,073 deaths.

- ❖ Pedestrian fatalities increased 4.7% in 2020 over 2019 and preliminary data shows 7485 deaths in 2021, a 40-year high.

- ❖ Arterial highways – think Route 1, Route 355, Route 50, Georgia Avenue, and Route 7 in the DC region – comprise 15% of all lane miles in the U.S. but 67% of pedestrian deaths.

- ❖ During the pandemic, as traffic congestion went down, more drivers drove faster and death rates went up.

- ❖ Places that were less friendly to walking before the pandemic had significantly higher increases in pedestrian fatalities during the pandemic compared to places that supported higher rates of walking pre-pandemic.

- ❖ People of color, particularly Native and Black Americans are more likely to die while walking.

- ❖ Lower income people and older people are more likely to die while walking.

“Despite better relative rankings than many parts of the U.S. the DC region is still seeing too many

deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians and cyclists, and like other parts of the country, our suburban arterial roads are particularly dangerous. That’s why Coalition for Smarter Growth has partnered with CASA in a campaign to make Route 7 in Baileys Crossroads safer, helping the Gum Springs community’s fight for a safer Route 1 in Fairfax, and working together with the Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets and Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling for safer streets across Northern Virginia,” said Sonya Breehey, CSG’s Northern Virginia Advocacy Manager.

“Similarly, we support Action Committee for Transit’s fight for safer streets in Montgomery County and are working for safer streets in Prince George’s, which have some of the highest rates of pedestrian injuries and deaths in the region,” said Jane Lyons, Coalition for Smarter Growth’s Maryland Advocacy Manager.

Areas in this region which have higher percentages of people of color and lower-income households, experience disproportionately more fatalities of pedestrians and crashes on arterials than the rest of the region, said Bill Pugh, Coalition for Smarter Growth Senior Policy Fellow.

“Unfortunately, VDOT and MDOT, and many local departments of transportation are not taking the sort of swift and concerted action necessary to make our streets safer. They continue to prioritize vehicle speed and movement over safety, and routinely push back on redesigning our streets – especially our very dangerous arterials to make them safer for people walking, biking, rolling, and using transit,” said Schwartz.

Sonya Breehey concluded, “SGA documents why design matters and we urge a transformation in how our state and local departments of transportation design our streets – using the design guidance from NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) instead of the car-dominant AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials). Funding should be shifted from highway and arterial expansion to redesigning our arterials and streets to make them safer for all users.”

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

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OPINION

The Dangers of Invasive Plants

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



This week, I received the honor of recognition by the Virginia League of Conservation Voters as a “Legislative Hero” for my record on environmental protection and climate action. I received a 100% score on their 2022 scorecard.

Perhaps one of my biggest recent pushes as an environmentalist Delegate is to raise awareness of, and curb, the proliferation of invasive plant species in Virginia. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of invasive species, perhaps you have had to battle with the notorious English Ivy in your own backyard or garden. Once introduced, this plant spreads heavily across all levels of vegetation and can quickly overwhelm and outcompete native plant species for resources. It can be costly and time-consuming to remove. Despite its aggressive and harmful nature, it is still sold and marketed as an ornamental plant across the United States, and even here in Virginia. And this is but one example.

During this past session, I introduced two bills, HB 311 and HB 314 directed at this problem. HB 311 would have encouraged state agencies to prioritize the use of native plants on state properties. This bill failed this session, but I plan to reintroduce it next year. HB 314 was signed into law, directing the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services to develop a brochure on the value of native plants and the danger of invasives and noxious weeds. Plant retailers will be able to distribute these informational brochures in their stores.

What else can we do to combat this problem? First, it is important to learn what an invasive plant species is, which ones have become endemic in our area, and how we can all work together to protect our native plant species.



English Ivy (Hedera helix) spreads heavily across all levels of vegetation and can quickly overwhelm and outcompete native plant species.

Invasive plants are species intentionally or accidentally introduced by human activity into a region where they did not evolve and cause harm to natural resources, economic activity, or humans. These species displace native plant species, reduce wildlife habitat and otherwise alter natural processes. They also impose serious costs on our economy: it is estimated that all invasive species (plants, animals, and diseases) cause \$120 billion in losses every year. Invasive plants typically exhibit the following characteristics:

- Rapid growth and maturity
- Prolific seed production
- Highly successful seed dispersal, germination, and colonization
- Rampant vegetative spread
- Ability to out-compete native species
- High cost to remove or control

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Natural Heritage currently identifies 90 invasive plant species that threaten (or potentially threaten) our natural areas, parks, and other protected lands here in Virginia.

Not all non-native plant species are harmful. In North America, since the time of European colonization, tens of thousands of plant species have been introduced to the continent. Introduced species often do not become established outside of cultivation, and when they do, some are in fact beneficial. In fact, some are vital parts of our economy, including wheat and soybeans. Remember, Virginia’s largest industry by far is agriculture. Of the tens of thousands of plants introduced to North America, here in Virginia, 606 species have been identified as naturalized (reproducing outside of cultivation). Of these, 90 species, or 15 percent of naturalized species (3 percent of the total Virginia flora), have been assessed as invasive in natural communities.

I encourage you to visit the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation website (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspinfo>) and learn more about invasive species present in our area, report and map sightings of invasive species you may encounter, and do your part by not purchasing and planting invasive species.

In addition, you can join groups such as the Friends of Dyke Marsh that host regular events targeting and removing invasive species. Their next events will be on July 16th and 30th, and August 13th and 27th from 9 am to 11 am. You can email info@fodm.org to sign up. On the legislative side, I intend to continue working with environmental stakeholders and my colleagues in the General Assembly to introduce and pass more legislation to promote awareness and target the spread of invasive species in Virginia, including legislation limiting sales and creating an advisory committee on noxious weeds in the Commonwealth.

For more resources on restraining invasive plants and why to plant native plants, see Plant Northern Virginia Natives at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>

Focused on Reducing Future Flooding

BY DAN STORCK
SUPERVISOR, MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT



The Belle Haven/New Alexandria area needs flood protection. Our climate is changing with increased super storms and higher tides in our future, all weather events that will cause more flooding and damage to our people, property and places. I have been a strong advocate for years, along with Congressman Beyer and our state representatives, for getting the federal, state and county support necessary to reduce the likelihood and impact of these future disasters.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (COE), in conjunction with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), have been studying flood mitiga-

tion options for the broader Potomac River area for many years. The COE and COG worked together for the past several years to identify mitigation options that meet federal criteria for cost/benefits. Work between those entities has been on-going, with a Potomac River DC area coastal study overview presented to County staff in September 2021. In March 2022, the COE next shared with the County and later with me a design outline that met the federal cost/benefit standard. At that time, they wanted our assistance in sharing it with the community.

While I do not support the design the COE presented at their June 14th and 16th meetings, I believe their continued engagement with our community is essential for ultimately identifying

a plan that would be supportable by the community, the COE, and the National Park Service. I will continue to work hard, along with Congressman Beyer and

state leaders, until we have such a plan and the funding to implement it.

SEE STORCK, PAGE 10

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A Connection Newspaper



News

Two Fatal Shootings by Fairfax County Police

FROM PAGE 4

senger seat and retrieved a firearm. At least one of the officers observed a firearm in Parker's hands and alerted other officers. The officers gave multiple commands to Parker to drop the firearm. Parker disregarded these repeated commands, and Police Officer First-Class Daniel Houtz and Officer Ryan Sheehan discharged their firearms. PFC Houtz is an eight-year veteran of the Franconia Police District Station and OFC Sheehan is a two-year veteran of the Mount Vernon Police District Station. Both officers were assigned to the Summer Crime Initiative Team.

A criminal investigation into the use of force is being conducted by the Major Crimes Bureau.

To view Chief Davis' press conference from the scene, see <https://youtu.be/1MaycMMYWO8>

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.

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 21), 18 farmers and local 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.

This year's vendors are:

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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

Layla's Lebanese Restaurant - Lebanese hummus, eggplant dip, garlic sauce and more

Linda Vista Farm - fruits and vegetables, specializing in Asian and Latin produce

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Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs

Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers

Salsa Las Glorias - fresh salsas, guacamole and chips

SEE HELPING, PAGE 10

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Back in the Cancer Business



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not that as an active cancer patient still undergoing treatment you're ever out, but occasionally, there are intervals where you are less in/have less frequent cancer-centric activities. And it's important to never let these intervals pass without elevating their importance. A break/brake in any cancer-related action is welcome relief and acknowledging its occurrence is paramount. When you're living in the cancer world, you must find ways to find the most positive element of your rather negative experience. And if the most positive element of that experience is that absolutely nothing happened/is happening, don't ever take it for granted. Take it for every advantage, rationalization, and accommodation possible. Any port in a storm is how many of us cancer patients roll, and the more often the roll, the better.

And for those of you who have unfortunately been effected/associated with cancer, you know the storm of chaos and disruption that its diagnosis causes. Talk about upheaval. Your orderly world goes topsy-turvy and everything you knew/understood before the diagnosis no longer applies. There's the pre-cancer you and the post-diagnosis you. In many cases, you're different people. It's as if your brain is rewired. Moreover, assimilating a cancer diagnosis into your regular routine is hardly for the weak of mind. Unless you find a way to incorporate cancer into your life and minimize its deleterious effects, especially emotionally, the sooner some of the more debilitating physical challenges can be relegated somehow.

It's not simply taking the good with bad – or vice-versa, it's taking it all in stride and being grateful for any morsel of good news/lack of cancer activities whereby you can try to forget you have cancer and live as normal and rewarding a life as your deficits allow. It's not exactly making lemonade, but you're definitely making something. And what's that something? Peace, that's what. Acceptance and comfort. Learning to live within your cancer confines (lab work, treatment/medication, side effects, scans, miscellaneous doctor's appointments, and a pre-occupation with your own mortality) and treat it like any other day – or interval of time. It may be your life, but it doesn't have to define you.

If you have minimal cancer stuff, celebrate it. If you have maximum cancer stuff – as I do in 10 days, give in to it. There's nothing to be done about it other than adhere to the schedule. Once you have cancer and are scheduled into the various ongoing/recurring appointments/responsibilities, unless you make light of it, the weight of it will crush you. Cancer is an equal opportunity villain. It goes after everybody everywhere with seemingly no rhyme or reason or sometimes, all the reasons (family history, environmental, smoking/second-hand smoke). It's not inevitable, but it is undesirable. Avoiding it altogether would be best. If only it were that simple.

Often cancer is in control even as your doctors are treating it/you. Finding a way to balance the ebb and flow, and to not take the lows too hard and try to keep an even keel when there is some good news (it's hardly a guarantee of future results, it may even be temporary; it's a tease almost) seems the only logical pursuit. What you can't control, you need to accommodate, and in that accommodation, you must find your level, a way to remain level-headed throughout your ordeal. (And cancer is nothing if not an ordeal.) Otherwise, you'll make an excruciatingly bad situation worse, if that's even possible. And believe me, it's possible, and there's no future in that.

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

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OPINION

Whether Liberal Constituencies Like It or Not ...

State Sen. Scott Surovell inveighs against recent Supreme Court decisions; his critique can best be summarized by a yard sign I recently saw, "Regulate Guns -- Not Women's Bodies."

Whether Northern Virginia's liberal constituencies like it or not, though, our founding documents' framers ignored Abigail Adams' exhortation to her husband John "to keep the interests of women in mind" www.politico.com/story/2018/03/31/this-day-in-politics-march-31-1776-491169. There was apparently insufficient support for such an initiative among the framers, all men, but they did accede to what would today be termed "gun-owners rights" in the Second Amendment, included in the Bill of Rights upon which several states conditioned their approval of the original constitution.

Sen. Surovell regards the current Supreme Court's "historical tradition" test as preposterous (e.g., relating to gun laws, he notes that in those days it took up to 10 seconds to put one bullet in a musket). What he fails to understand is that the Supreme Court has adopted this test because previous Supreme Courts had so abused the "substantive due process" test which the "historical tradition" test replaces (e.g., previous Supreme Courts

invented the "viability standard" nowhere to be found in the Constitution's text to create an abortion right). What ultimately brought down the "substantive due process" standard was using it to "push the envelope" of social change, rather than waiting for that social change to become so widely accepted that "substantive due process" could be employed judiciously by a unanimous court to bring the few straggler states into line a large majority of states had embraced the notion of a particular social change maturing into a right.

The Fourteenth Amendment, adopted after the American Civil War, made the rights in the U.S. Constitution binding upon the states. The Second Amendment is such a right. The U.S. Congress, not state legislatures or city councils, is entitled to define parameters for federal rights of the sort in the New York law which the Supreme Court struck down. When a state does attempt to set boundaries, the Supreme Court is prudent to set a high bar, such as the "historical tradition" test, for evaluating those state laws delimiting federal constitutional rights. It will be interesting to see how strictly the Supreme Court applies such criteria to the bipartisan gun restrictions the Congress recently enacted in response to the latest spate of mass shootings.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Storck

FROM PAGE 8

We were able to get the comment period for this design proposal extended through July 31. You can access the COE

plan at www.nab.usace.army.mil/DC_Coastal_Study and email comments to DC-Metro-CSR-Study@usace.army.mil.

Dan Storck is the Supervisor for the Mount Vernon District on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors\

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

Sharkawi Farm - herbs, spices, teas, plants and flowers
 Three Way Farms – vegetables, melons and herbs
 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.
 All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles. The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon market is one of 10 farmers markets run by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA); for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

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. To volunteer, contact donaledge@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.

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LUBE, OIL & FILTER SPECIAL

\$39.95

\$44.95 FOR SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE

INCLUDES: CHANGE OIL (UP TO 5 QTS.), INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA OIL FILTER, INSPECT & ADJUST ALL FLUID LEVELS AND COMPLIMENTARY MULTI-POINT INSPECTION WITH PRINT OUT.

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ALIGNMENT SPECIAL

\$89.95

4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT

INCLUDES: 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT, INSPECT SUSPENSION, BALL JOINTS, STRUTS & SHOCKS, TIRE CONDITION AND SET TIRE PRESSURE.

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BRAKE PAD SPECIAL

\$99.95

BRAKE PAD REPLACEMENT

INCLUDES: INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA FRONT BRAKE PADS, INSPECT FRONT & REAR ROTORS AND/OR DRUMS, CHECK TIRE CONDITION AND INSPECT ALL HARDWARE. TMC PADS ONLY. MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95

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