

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 6, 2022

Discussion Opens for Mount Vernon Woods Park Redevelopment



Comment period ends Oct. 10.

By MIKE SALMON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Plans for the Mount Vernon Woods Park include a full-sized soccer field, a skate park, basketball court and playground, providing needed recreational facilities to this area near the Sequoya community in Mount Vernon.

These plans were examined at a meeting on Sept. 8 by Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) FCPA executive director Jai Cole, spokesperson Judy Pederson, park engineers and residents to open a comment

Plans for Mount Vernon Woods Park.

period before moving on to development. This park borders a forested portion of Huntley Meadows Park which is wetlands park but does not have soccer fields or a playground which are needed in this community of Mount Vernon.

"Amenities are going to be great for older and younger residents," Lusk said. There aren't many soccer fields nearby so this field is a needed feature, and the skate park "is one feature that's unique and different," Lusk said. Other features include a new playground, new picnic shelter, fitness area, multi-sport court, onsite parking, large grass open play field and skate park. Security lighting was requested by some.

Jai Cole, the park authority executive director, was in the process of visiting all 420 parks in the Fairfax County Park Authority as part of her new position, and was enthusiastic about the plan. "We're very excited about this project," she said.

This plan was initially launched in 2015 and tweaked along the way until officials came up with a final draft. This project was included in FCPA 2020 Bond project list and in late 2021, funding was made available for concept design. The comment period ends on Oct. 10 before moving on to development.

Construction is scheduled to start in summer 2024.

Comments will be accepted until Oct. 10, and can be sent via email to 71518@publicinput.com

Artist rendering of the redeveloped Mount Vernon Woods Park.



Updating BRT Station Names

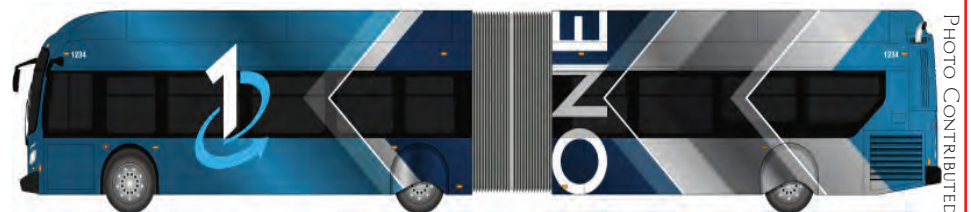
The community spoke out and officials listened.

In response to community ideas about better ways to reflect station location and community character, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation is revisiting station names for three of the nine BRT stations. Attendees are invited to share

ideas about what they think the station names should be. The three stations are:

❖ Station #2 at N Kings Hwy / S Kings Hwy.; Current proposed name "Penn Daw"

❖ Station #5 at Boswell Ave / Fordson Rd.; Current proposed name "Hybla Valley"



Richmond Highway BRT is "The One."

❖ Station #6 at Sherwood Hall Ln.; Current proposed name "Gum Springs"

An open house to submit the name ideas will be held Oct. 12, from 6:30 - 8

p.m., Hybla Valley Community Center, 7950 Audubon Ave., Alexandria.

Drop in anytime - there will not be a presentation.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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OPEN 10/8,12-2 & 10/9, 1-3



Del Ray | \$1,550,000

4-bedroom, 3.5-bath craftsman home! Front porch leads into living room and separate dining room. Bright, open kitchen overlooks large family room with built-ins. Flat, private backyard. Primary bedroom with 2 walk-in closets. 100 E Oxford Ave

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OPEN TH 10/6, 5-7 & SUN 10/9, 2-4



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\$1,725,000

5-bedroom, 5-bath beauty! Home boasts updated gourmet kitchen, 3 fireplaces, and main level bedroom and bathroom.

Upstairs primary bedroom has a gas fireplace and walk-in closet. Manicured, fully fenced yard with stone patio. 814 Chalfonte Drive

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JenWalker.com

OPEN SUN 10/9, 2-4



Shutters Hill

\$850,000

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fenced backyard, off-street parking - 2 spaces. No HOA! Walk-Score 89, 51 Transit Score, 89 Bikeable Score! 3350 Commonwealth Avenue

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OPEN SUN 10/9, 1-4



Old Town

\$549,000

This 2-story townhouse with 1 bedroom and a den/office is perfect for someone who needs a small in-town space! No HOA! Living room

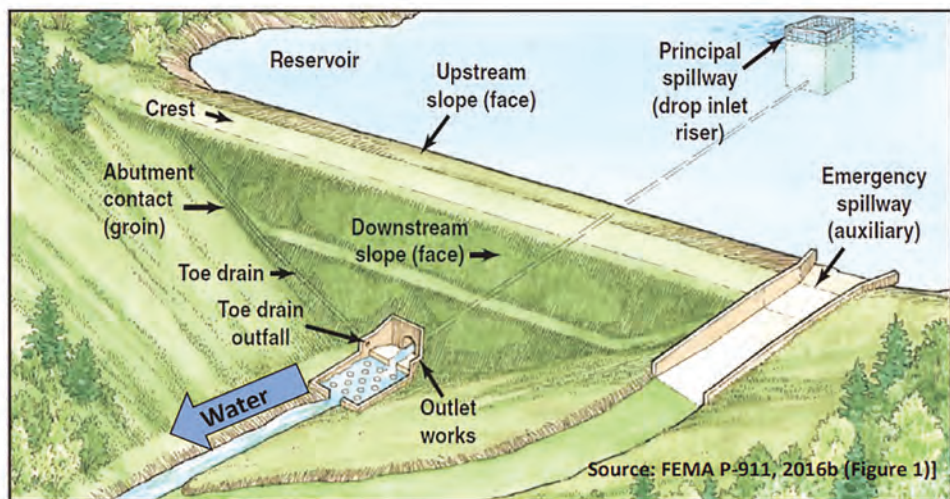
with fireplace, kitchen and laundry on 1st floor. Bedroom, den/office and bath on 2nd floor. 124 S Fayette Street

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DAM DRAWINGS CONTRIBUTED

A typical dam

Dam Awareness Rises in Hurricane Season

Dams in Fairfax County are under the regulator's magnifying glass.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

With the rainy season moving in, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation recently began to look at area dams, reviewing certification and the rules surrounding dams in an effort to thwart any mishaps that could result in fatalities.

According to the DCR, Virginia has more than 3,000 dams and 2,600 are regulated by the DCR. There are 79 dams in Fairfax County, and most are owned by the county or the park authority. Some privately owned dams include the Crosspointe Lake Dam, owned by Crosspointe Swim and Racquet; the Kingstowne Lake Dam owned by the Kingstowne Community Association and the Lake Audubon Dam owned by the Reston Association. The Daddy Long Lake dam is owned by Richard L. Beizer, according to the "List of Regulated Dams in Fairfax County as of 9/30/2022."

In the south county area, dams at Lake Accotink, Burke Lake and Lake Royal are part of this effort.

Wendy Howard-Cooper, DCR's director of dam safety and floodplain management, is aware of the dams in Northern Virginia but they are performing as they should. "At this time DCR is not aware of any elevated risks for dam failure due to the projected rainfall in the Northern Virginia area from hurricane Ian. DCR encourages all citizens to know their risk when living, working or recreating around dams," she said.

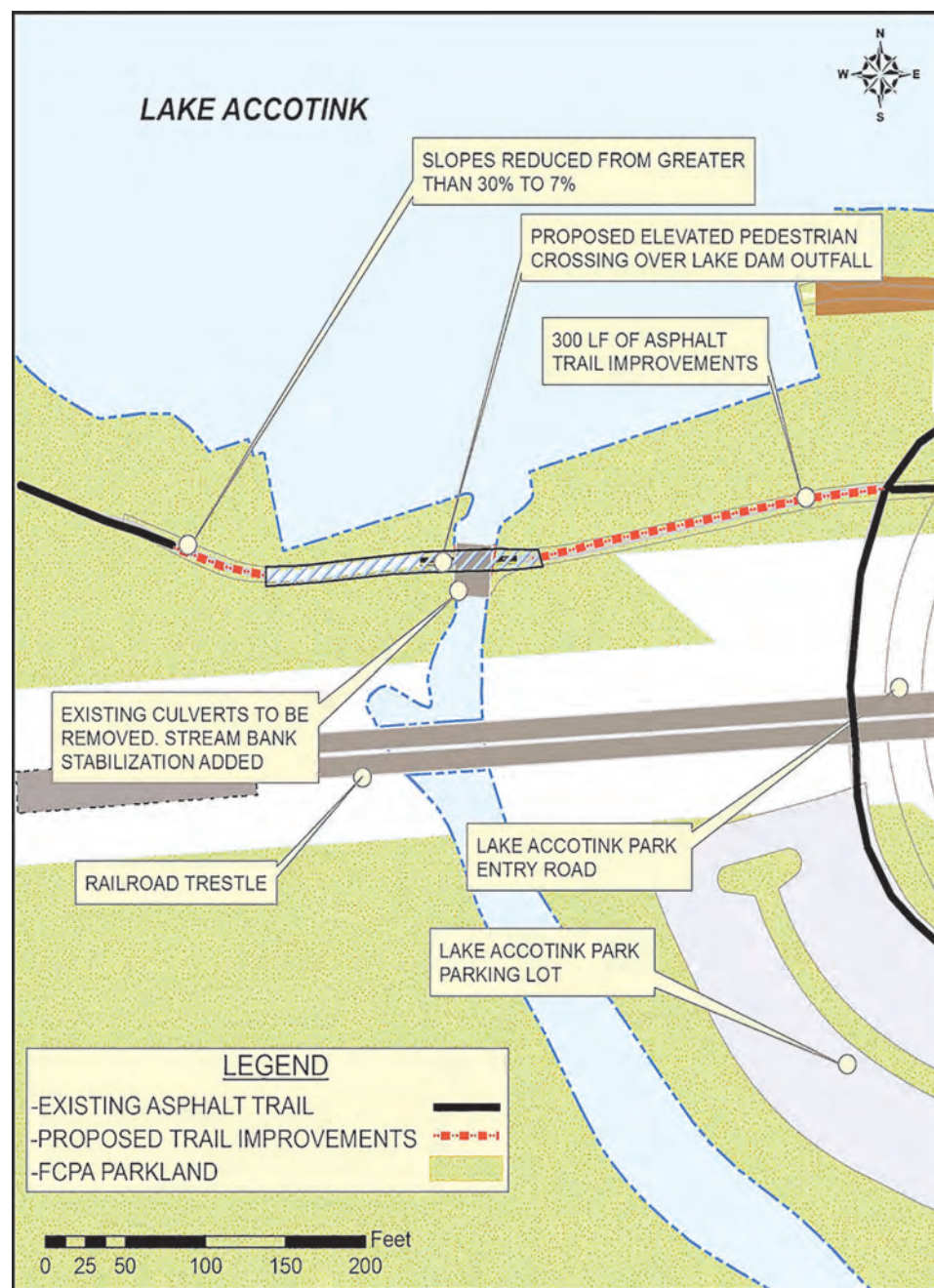
At Lake Accotink, a \$3 million project is underway just beyond the dam spillway called the "Lake Accotink Dam Stream Crossing Project," aimed at improving things for the trail users while also improving runoff due to excessive rainfall. The

project involves creating approximately 300 feet of asphalt trail improvements and 325 feet on an elevated concrete pedestrian crossing over the dam outfall. Past storms have damaged that area requiring a total reconstruction of the trail twice in the last five years. This project will resolve these issues, enhancing safety and accessibility for park users, the Fairfax County Park Authority said.

In September 2005, the dam at Lake Royal in Burke was showing signs of stress, so Fairfax County laid out a reconstruction project. The dam was 35 years old at that time, and due for an evaluation. The actual dam was structurally sound, but the spillway was in question. A plan to modify the spillway alignment and extend it further downstream, away from the townhouses and toward Rabbit Branch, a stream in the area, was successful. This was all done on park authority land and reinforced with a vegetation planting plan to shore up the land.

Burke Lake is a significantly larger body of water than Accotink or Lake Royal, and the dam is larger as well. In 2012, officials came up with a plan to increase Burke Lake Dam's spillway capacity, remediate seepage concerns, and repair the tower structure in order to obtain a Virginia DCR Dam Safety Regular Operation permit. The existing auxiliary spillway is less than required as specified in the January 2011 Froehling & Robertson (F&R) report entitled "Report of Inundation Study – Burke Lake Dam," the report said.

This dam was inspected in 1984, and since then, the height has decreased, the spillway decreased and the pool of water



The plan at Lake Accotink in Springfield.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

Before the county dam project at Lake Accotink, the spillway presented a challenge to hikers and bikers on the trail around the lake.

decreased. According to the engineering report, dated 25 May, 2012, the upstream embankment had been eroded due to wave action. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries regraded the upstream embankment and placed riprap along it to pre-

vent further erosion. The auxiliary spillway was eroded by frequent flows and a small seep was present in the spillway. VDGIF formed a low flow channel to prevent further erosion and the seep was routed into the new channel, the report said.

Newington Road and Cinder Bed Road Traffic Signal

Fairfax County

Find out about plans to install a new traffic signal at the intersection of Newington Road and Cinder Bed Road to improve safety and operations. Plans also include pedestrian improvements. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion is being prepared under an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration.

Review project information at www.virginiadot.org/NewingtonRoadandCinderBedRoad or at VDOT's District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2397 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied, VDOT is willing to hold a public hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Mr. Craig Schneider, Virginia Department of Transportation, at the above address on or prior to **November 4, 2022**. If upon receiving public comments it is deemed necessary to hold a public hearing, notice of date, time and place of the hearing will be posted.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: 0877-029-501, P101, R201, C501
UPC: 120053
Federal Project: STP-5B01 (246)

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<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

NEWS

Child Seat Safety Check At Gum Springs Center

Transurban, the operator of the 495, 95 and 395 Express Lanes, Safe Kids Fairfax County and State Farm Agent Kenya Z. Knight will hold a free child passenger seat safety check on Thursday, Oct. 6, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Gum Springs Community Center, located at 8100 Fordson Road in Alexandria in the 95 Express Lanes corridor.

The event will expand the reach of free child passenger seat inspections, typically offered by first responders.

Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians at the event will:

- ❖ Inspect – and if necessary, adjust – car and booster seats already installed in vehicles;
- ❖ Ensure settings and positioning are appropriate for the child passenger who rides in the seat;
- ❖ Provide assistance to finalize the installation of new seats;
- ❖ Educate parents and caregivers on proper seat usage throughout age groups.

Transurban also will donate resources for the checkup event that will help to keep the youngest residents in Fairfax County safe.

“Working together to improve road safety strengthens the communities we serve, which is core to Transurban’s mission,” said Amanda Baxter of Transurban.

Research from Transurban finds that 74% of people in the Greater Washington Area are driving with self-installed car seats or boosters, critical child safety products that haven’t been placed or inspected by a certified technician. This is especially concerning since 46% of car and booster seats are used incorrectly, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Parents and caregivers interested in attending should register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MVHS1022>.

The Gum Springs Community Center is located at 8100 Fordson Road in Alexandria, Thursday, Oct. 6, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

With the fall storm season, some recommend getting flood insurance.

Storm Flooding Is Not Only A Risk for Coastal Areas

Homeowners everywhere eye flood insurance; measures to protect inland boats also recommended.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

As Hurricane Ian pushed up the coast after dumping massive rainfall everywhere in Florida, concerns remained about the aftermath, inland flooding and with it, flood insurance. Fairfax County has recommended flood insurance for some time now, and even has a push on the website.

Courtney Arroyo from the county emergency management program hosted a webinar on the county website to highlight concerns about flooding. She was

joined by Bill Bradfield of FEMA. One point they both highlighted is that most home insurance policies do not cover flooding. “Everyone lives in a flood zone,” Bradfield said.

The webinar also explained the National Flood Insurance Program has a new Risk Rating 2.0 system, which impacts the insurance rates. Flood risk is looked at as well as each individual property’s geographic location and building characteristics. The new Risk Rating 2.0 took effect for new policy holders on Oct. 1, 2021, and impacted existing policy holders on April 1, 2022.

FEMA said it’s a new pricing methodology, Risk Rating 2.0, leverages industry best practices and cutting-edge technology to enable FEMA to deliver rates that are actuarially sound, equitable, easier to understand and better reflect a property’s flood risk.

This was never more apparent than a flood in 2011 where homeowners in the Huntington area of Alexandria suffered damage from the rising waters on Cameron Run. Leo Funes lives between Huntington Avenue and the creek, and he’s had water in the basement before so he bought flood insurance. “In

SEE STORM FLOODING, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS BRIEFS

Free Women's Self-Defense Classes

Registration is open for the Fairfax County Police Department's free, self-defense classes for women only. Classes will be held Oct. 11, 13, 18 and 20, and participants must attend all four nights.

Crime-prevention and personal-safety information will be presented, followed by hands-on, self-defense practice. Register at <https://bit.ly/3E4yzj8>. If the registration is full, continue checking the link for cancellations. Space is limited and there's no wait list. (Participants ages 13-17 are welcome, but a registered parent/guardian must accompany them).

Police Department Hosts K9 Krawl

The Fairfax County Police Department's Victim Services Division is holding its 15th annual 5K K9 Krawl on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 8:30-11 a.m., outside 12099 Government Center Parkway (Public Safety Headquarters) in Fair Oaks. Register at <http://bit.ly/k9krawl22>.

Check-in is at 8:30 a.m.; the walk starts at 9 a.m. Activities include a police K9 unit demonstration, a raffle, deejay, facepainting, dog-costume contest, pet portraits and resource tables. Animal shelter dogs will also be

available for adoption. The goal of this free event is to increase awareness of the link between domestic violence and animal cruelty.

Fire Stations to Hold Open Houses

In celebration of Fire Prevention Week, all Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will host open houses on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. In Fairfax City, stop by Station 3 on University Drive and Station 33 on Fairfax Boulevard to meet local firefighters and paramedics, join in children's activities, learn about fire safety, and see the fire trucks and ambulances.

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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 RUNS UNTIL DEC. 21

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 sea-

food; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more.

This year's vendors are:

Arnest Seafood - crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more
The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacons

Grace's Pastries - cakes, pastries and breads, with a Caribbean touch
Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries

Honey Brook Farms - meats and vegetables raised with no chemicals, gluten-free baked goods

House of Empanadas - variety of empanadas

King Mushrooms - variety of locally

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

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

Memis - gluten-free paellas, quiches and more

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

Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers

Salsa Las Glorias - fresh salsas, guacamole and chips

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 (FPCA); for more information, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

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For the Love of a Tree

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

It is hard to imagine living anywhere else as beautiful as here in Virginia. One of the reasons it is so gorgeous is that we have many and varied native trees, especially our big deciduous trees with all the leaves. Indeed, soon the tree leaves will turn bright reds, burnt orange, and mellow yellows, to name a few fun fall colors. Many of us will be drawn to the forests for hikes and nature walks, and possibly a visit to Skyline Drive for the fall foliage. We have 41 pristine state parks filled with birds, turtles, foxes, and all manner of interesting wildlife. Here in our region, we have Huntley Meadows, the biggest and best Fairfax County park, and many smaller parks throughout our community. To top it off we have the picturesque Potomac River and the federal George Washington Memorial Parkway and bike path that runs along it from Mount Vernon to Old Town. Yet, it is our trees that really capture our imagination and do so much to protect our environment. It is these majestic, slow-growing, oldest living organisms on Earth, that bring us untold benefits that we must protect. It

really is up to us as individuals to do our part to save our trees. This is a good week to start as it is the best time to plant young saplings, especially after all the rain we have had recently. Last week was Native Trees Week here in the Commonwealth and there are many ways to celebrate native trees and many online resources available to help us.

It is no coincidence that you may be viewing numerous advertisements for garden sales. This cool weather really makes it an ideal time for planting. The native ones are the best as they are easier to grow, require less water, and are a breeding habitat and food source for all manner of birds and animals. And, if you are looking for particular trees you can contact garden centers to order them and have them delivered to you. I use Campbell & Ferrara Nurseries, located locally on Richmond Highway across the street from the Gerry Hyland Government Center. They have a good selection of native plants and will do as much of the work as you need, from designing your garden to the plantings



Krizek

themselves.

There is also a native tree campaign happening here in our region to educate residents about the importance of native trees and how you can support this effort. There is no shortage of ways you can get involved and you can learn more at their website at plantnovatrees.org.

Planting trees is just one way in which to promote native trees. There are many of our neighbors who are tree rescuers volunteering in our parks to remove invasive plants – some that literally strangle our trees, like English ivy, which really should be banned. You can join groups like I have, including the Friends of Dyke Marsh, during their weekly efforts to control the invasive weeds threatening our trees.

You can help them on any of these upcoming dates: Oct. 8 and 22, Nov. 5 and 19, and Dec. 3 and 17 at 10 a.m. at the Haul Road Trail entrance bulletin board and bench. Wear long sleeves and sturdy shoes to avoid poison ivy and insects. They will provide the rest. You can sign up by sending an email to

info@fodm.org and put “Invasive Plants” in the subject line. You will quickly become an expert at identifying the invasives. Arguably, it is even more important to do this than it is to plant young saplings, as a mature tree is far more beneficial to our health in its carbon sequestration, stormwater capture, and the shade it provides us.

Finally, nothing is more heart-breaking than to see perfectly healthy, mature trees being cut down for new construction or because a homeowner is worried about it falling on the house. It is far better to keep those trees as it adds value to the property and future owners will be glad for the shade they provide and the impact that has on reducing their air conditioning costs in the summer as it keeps the house cooler. An arborist can tell you if your tree is at risk of falling and options for mitigation.

Finally, look out for my upcoming town meeting to discuss saving our tree canopy and what may be happening to our oak trees, sometime in the near future with Sen. Scott Surovell. We hope to see you there and work together to care for our trees as they have been caring for us, the planet, and its inhabitants for millions of years.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Virginia DoE Proposal Harms Students, Families and Educators

The changes proposed by Governor Youngkin to Model Policies on Transgender students are damaging to students, families, teachers, businesses and public education.

Transgender and Gender-Expansive students, since the Sept. 16 release date, are already missing school

for fear of mistreatment. Reports of suicidal thinking and active self-harm are proliferating. Families are wondering if Virginia will remain a safe place in which to raise their children. Many have expressed that Virginia is telling them that they and their children are suddenly unwelcome here.

Beyond transgender students, LGBTQIA+ people are impacted, and all marginalized folk know that there is a target on them too.

In the first few months of 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed and the Governor signed a law, Senate Bill 161/House Bill 145 which created VA Code § 22.1-

23.3.

Treatment of transgender students to ensure that transgender students were supported “in accordance with evidence-based best practices.” In response, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) reached out to LGBTQIA+ supportive organizations and mental health care professionals to create the 2021 “Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools” (2021 Model Policies). These model policies focused on the evidence-based practices required by the law.

On Sept. 16, 2022, the Virginia Department of Education released new guidelines, “2022 Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity and Respect for all Students and Parents in Virginia’s Public Schools.” These policies are not evidence-based or based on best practices. In addition they seem to have had no input from transgender, gender-expansive, non-binary, or gender non-conforming individuals or support organizations. Exclusion of the people impacted by the pol-

icies ensures the policies will not meet the needs of those impacted.

In these 2022 Model Policies, “all” doesn’t really mean “all.”

These new policies do not meet the wording of the law, and certainly not the intent.

The Youngkin VDOE seems to be targeting trans and non-binary youth specifically to prevent them from being comfortable in school.

The 2022 policies:

- ❖ Specifically exclude sexual orientation and gender identity from the “discrimination, harassment, and bullying” policy

- ❖ Require parental permission for a student to speak to a school counselor in any way about their gender

- ❖ Require unreasonable documentation

SEE HELPING, PAGE 13

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name.

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A Connection Newspaper



'Purlie Victorious'

Aldersgate Church Community Theater stages Ossie Davis satire.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Ossie Davis was a trailblazer as an African American actor and director. Along with his wife, Ruby Dee, he was also known for his outspoken activism in the Civil Rights movement. But few remember Davis as an author and playwright.

The author of several books, Davis's best-known play, "Purlie Victorious," was initially staged in 1961 and is playing now at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

Set in the African American community of southern Georgia, the play follows protagonist Purlie Victorious Judson who is still resentful of a beating received 20 years earlier from Ol' Cap'n Cotichpee, the owner of the cotton plantation where the play takes place.

"Purlie Victorious" is playing now through Oct. 16 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

Purlie, played by Jason Ellis, has become a pastor and returns with a scheme to take over a barn where church services were once held. Davis, who grew up in southern Georgia, uses satire to tackle racism.

"I love this satirical play that does not hold back from laughing at the stereotypes it so dramatically depicts," said director Eleanor Tapscott. "This play is about integrity through deception, and it is supercharged with ideas that un-



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS

"Purlie Victorious" is playing now through Oct. 16 at Aldersgate Church Community Theatre. Pictured from left to right: Matt Lore (deputy sheriff), Bill Barnes (Charlee Cotichpee), Camille Jackson (Idella Landry), Jason Ellis ((Purlie Victorious Judson), Crystal Arful-Addoh (Missy Jackson), and Ira Coats Jr. (Gitlow Judson). www.acctonline.org

fortunately are as relevant in 2022 as they were 61 years ago."

Charles Dragonette and Marg Soroos are co-producers, with Soroos saying, "As a theater we are trying to expand our audience and give our patrons good theater with a message."

The Aldersgate Church Community Theater cast includes Steve Rosenthal as Ol' Cap'n Cotichpee, Bill Barnes as Charlie Cotichpee, and Camille Jackson as Idella Landry, the longtime cook and housekeeper for the Cotichpee home.

"Idella has been a devoted and loving caretaker to Charlie, son of the plantation owner, since the death of Charlie's mother," Jackson said. "She is Charlie's protector and confidant and supports his integrationist ideas but practices discretion in voicing them. She recognizes her value but knows her place."

Ira F. Coats Jr. is Gitlow Judson, Purlie's younger brother, and Matthew Lore is the Barney Fife-like

bumbling deputy of Cotichpee County.

Aja Goode plays Luttiebel, who has caught the eye of Purlie.

"While this is a satirical and funny show, there is a lot within this show that talks about the historical challenges that Black folks faced that are still relevant today," Goode said. "This play is offering a funny alternative to having serious dialogues around race, history and identity but I hope that people who come to see this show will continue these conversations in their respective spaces."

Added Jackson, "My hope is that audiences will leave well entertained, that they will have been amused by the absurdity of segregation and racism. I hope that they will also be provoked to consider its damaging effects, on individuals and on society."

"Purlie Victorious" is playing now through Oct. 16 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road. Tickets are available at www.acctonline.org.

Virginia Williams

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Documenting Butterflies

Volunteers fanned out across Northern Virginia to survey butterflies, part of the North American Butterfly Association's nationwide count.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

One team started in Belle Haven Park along the Potomac River shoreline.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Some surveyors gathered for pizza at The Haven to tally their numbers.

BY GLENDA BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The silvery checkerspot butterfly has a row of black and white spots on the edges of its hind wings. The eastern comma butterfly has a small silvery-white comma-like mark on the underside of its hind wings. Such are the fine distinctions or unique field marks that help citizen scientists identify individual butterfly species.

On Sept. 17, 28 volunteers fanned out across Northern Virginia to survey butterflies, part of the North American Butterfly Association's nationwide count and sponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia. Teams identified 35 species and 798 individual butterflies. Last year, surveyors saw 34 species. People have confirmed over 100 species in Northern Virginia, according to the survey's leader, Larry Meade. Their presence and numbers vary by season.

There are around 120 species in the U.S. mid-Atlantic.

The teams surveyed at the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Mount Vernon Estate, River Farm, the Jackson M. Abbott Wetland Refuge at Fort Belvoir, Huntley Meadows Park, Green Spring Gardens, the Winkler Preserve, Mason District Park, Glencarlyn Park, Bluemont Park, Four Mile Run and Fort C.F. Smith.

"It was optimal butterfly weather," said Meade. "It was sunny and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Larry Meade organized and led the butterfly survey.

and be active. If it gets into the 90s, it's too hot. They like sun." Butterflies spread their wings and absorb the sun's heat, say experts.

September is a good month to observe butterflies, not just because of usually temperate weather and because some butterfly species are migrating through. The best-known migrant is probably the monarch, a four-inch butterfly that has orange wings with black veins and white edges. Through several generations, they make a two-way migration. In the fall, they fly from the central and eastern U.S. to central Mexico to overwinter. In the spring, they mate, leave Mexico for the U.S. and the next generation continues north. Their yellow-, white- and black-striped caterpillar feeds exclusively on milkweed

warm with a light breeze, but not really hot," he explained. "The low 80s are perfect. It's warm enough for them to get energy from the sun

leaves.

Meade was heartened to see the ocola skipper at River Farm, a butterfly with dull yellowish-brown wings, a 1 1/4-to-1 3/4-inch wingspan and a forewing much longer than its hindwing. Ocolas migrate to and through Northern Virginia from the south in the fall.

At Mount Vernon Estate, Meade's team spotted an American lady and a painted lady.

Swallowtails, striking two- to four-inch butterflies with forked hindwings, are always show-stoppers. The zebra swallowtail has black and white striped wings, hence the name. The eastern tiger swallowtail has bold yellow wings with black stripes. Males are yellow,

low, but females can be yellow or black.

Meade sees surveying not just as data collection, but a gateway to becoming engaged in nature.

Jessie Strother, retired Fairfax County urban forester, spent her Saturday counting butterflies because she said, "Identifying butterfly species and their numbers is one measure of the diversity and health of our increasingly compromised environment in Northern Virginia. Environmental protection and con-

servation need to be front and center of much of what we do today."

Master naturalist Judy Gallagher from Woodbridge also sees butterflies as indicators of the health of the environment. She co-authored "Butterflies of the Mid-Atlantic" with Bob Blakney.

Butterflies and moths are in the order Lepidoptera, a Greek word that means "scaly wings." Butterflies are active during the day

and have a knob or club on their antennae. Most moths fly at night and have thicker antennae that are sometimes feathery. Butterflies tend to be colorful and moths more drab brown or beige.

Meade is a dedicated conservationist and naturalist who lives in Merrifield and is president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club.

Helping Butterflies

Butterflies usually like natu-

ral vegetation and most adult butterflies feed by nectaring at flowers. "Butterfly diversity is usually correlated with the complexity of the landscape," observes Jeffrey Glassberg in Butterflies through Binoculars. He calls manicured lawns, "biological deserts." Some butterfly species spend the winter in fallen leaves as eggs, caterpillars, pupae or adults so many butterfly enthusiasts recommend leaving the leaves.

Some gardeners are creating butterfly gardens, which can be from a window box to a multi-acre field.

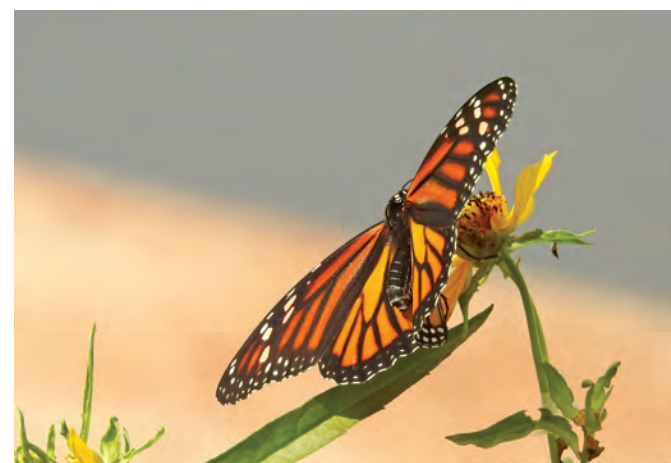
The key is planting plants appropriate for butterflies, host plants for laying eggs and plants for caterpillars to feed on.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail



Ocola Skipper



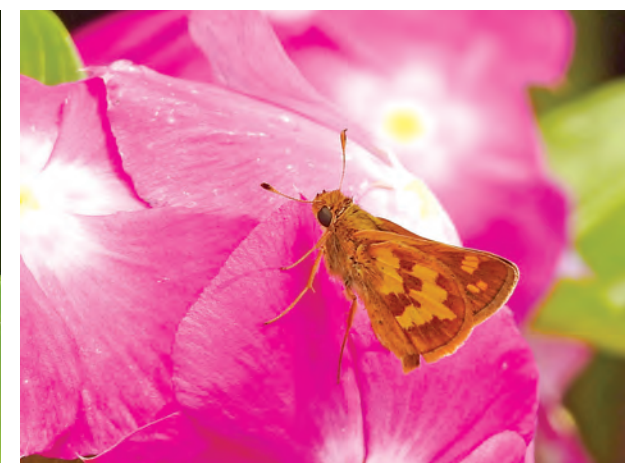
Monarch Butterfly



American Lady Butterfly



Silvery Checkerspot



Peck's Skipper



Zebra Swallowtail

BUTTERFLIES PHOTOS BY LARRY MEADE



Jai Cole, executive director of Fairfax County Park Authority



William G. (Bill) Bouie, Chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and Hunter Mill representative



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va)

Director Completes Visits to 420 County Parks

Volunteers 'give back together' during National Public Land Day 2022.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE

To know a park, you must visit it. On Sept. 24, Jai Cole met her goal of visiting all 420 county parks in her first year after being appointed executive director of the Fairfax County Park Authority in the fall of 2021. Cole completed her list and checked off the final park, number 420, Lake Fairfax in Reston, coinciding with National Public Lands Day. It is the nation's largest single-day volunteer event for public lands.



Jai Cole's children, Hannah Lalik, 6, and Joseph Lalik, 9, check out their mom's Park Tour poster depicting selfies and photos of others at some of the 420 parks she visited during her first year as Executive Director of Fairfax County Park Authority. Hannah and Joseph especially liked the cartoon of Mom, saying it looked just like her.

Standing at the park, her back to the lake and families fishing from the dock, Cole said that she spent her childhood in Reston. Its green and blue spaces, as well as those of Lake Fairfax, served as her playground. Part of her job for the past year had been to revert to her childhood self. From the fall of 2021 to the fall of 2022, Cole traipsed through the Park Authority's forests, lakes, wetlands, ponds, meadows, and streams. She gained first-hand knowledge of their assets, characteristics, and needs.

"I am a finisher, so if I start something, I finish it." She had asked herself how she could fight for something important to so many people if she didn't know about it. Cole described how she gained knowledge from staff, volunteers, and visitors.

"I think the main thing [of visiting all the parks] was seeing the reactions of people when they talk about a need for their park. I know my head is nodding because I have seen it, or we are already working on fixing that thing," Cole said.

Sitting in an office differs from visiting and seeing people using facilities, Cole said. She described parkgoers having fun getting healthy, children having fun with athletics, and others having fun being contemplative while walking through the forest.

"Sometimes in this business, we forget that we are in the business of fun. That is what we do," Cole said.

William G. "Bill" Bouie, Chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and Hunter Mill District representative, welcomed everyone to Lake Fairfax Park. "One of the crown jewels of the Park Authority where you can fish, walk, play, do all sorts



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ GAZETTE

From left, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, Franconia District Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, and Bill Bouie, chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and Hunter Mill representative

Surprise announcement- full-size, in-line skating facility to open in Reston, the Caps and Washington Nationals

of things. The bottom line is it provides a multi-day experience of camping, skate park, classes, camps, everything."

Bouie paused before making an announcement. "We will be opening a full-size, in-line skating facility up on the upper field in partnership with the Washington Capitals and the National Hockey League," he said.

Bouie explained that since its inception in 1994, National Public Lands Day has traditionally been the single most significant day

of volunteerism in the nation. It promotes environmental stewardship and encourages the use of open space for education, recreation, and other benefits.

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly said that Fairfax County has the right proportion of open and recreational space for people to live, work, and play. "We are creating an environmentally sensitive and vibrant community for all,"

SEE 420 COUNTY PARKS, PAGE 14
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Storm Flooding Is Not Only A Risk for Coastal Areas

FROM PAGE 4

2006 there was a lot of flooding, 2011 too but now that there is a retaining wall, it doesn't seem that bad," he said.

Boats Impacted

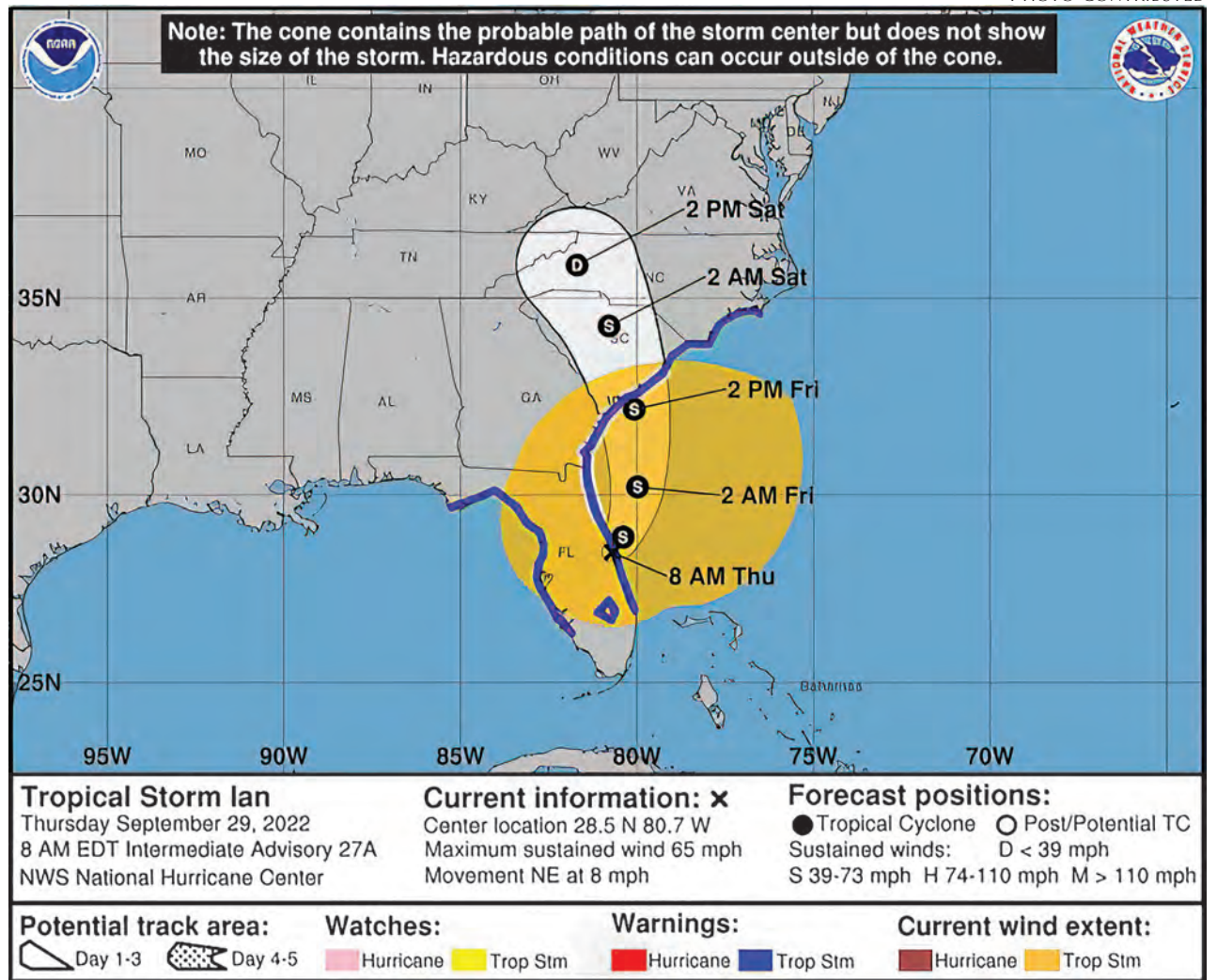
Houses aren't the only worries. According to Boat US, a flood storm like Ian can damage boats on inland waters too. If a boat is moored to a stationary dock and the water level suddenly rises, the boat can get swamped and sink.

"Hurricane preparation is no longer an issue just for coastal boaters," said BoatUS vice president of Public Affairs Scott Croft. "2011's Hurricane Irene showed us that storms can damage boats on freshwater lakes and rivers, or when stored in backyards, far from the coast."

The coastal boats are still in harm's way though, and this was seen in Fort Myers right after Ian went through, destroying docks and pushing boats right up to the boathouse and beyond, some landing on top of houses.

Scott Croft, Vice President Public Affairs at the Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) noted that most recreational boat insurance policies are purchased on or shortly after purchase of the boat but waiting for a weather crisis is not a good move. He noted that many boat insurance companies temporarily stop sales of new policies in areas along the storm's predicted storm path.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



In late September, forecasters were cautioning Northern Virginians but precipitation was less than it could have been.

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Fridays and Saturdays in October from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m. Walk your way through the streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost & Graveyard Tour. During this tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria. Visit alexcolonialtours.com

NOW THRU OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition. At the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. For those who can't get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds, a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer. The title of the show is "A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach.

OCT. 2-31

Bold and Fierce. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Bold and Fierce, a new juried membership show featuring artworks by Diana Papazian, Joyce Zipperer, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Jennifer Brewer Stone, Rebecca McNeely, Mary Beth Griffin, Melanie Kehoss and Helen Power. Artists showcase works that are Bold—brave, flashy, brightly-colored and high-contrast—and/or Fierce—wild, savage, eager, severe or intense.

THURSDAY/OCT. 6

Minglin' Mutt. 5:30-8 p.m. At Barkhaus, 529 E. Howell Ave., Alexandria. Bring your wingup and meet your potential match at our first ever singles night! Breaking the ice can be difficult so let your dog do the work for you. Join them for some fun mingling at our exclusive singles event.

THURSDAY/OCT. 6

CPS Safety Check. 2-6 p.m. 8100 Fordson Road, Alexandria. Transurban, the operator of the 495, 95 and 395 Express Lanes, Safe Kids Fairfax County and State Farm Agent Kenya Z. Knight are hosting a free Child Passenger Seat (CPS) safety check at the Gum Springs Community Center in the 95 Express Lanes corridor.

OCT. 6-NOV. 13

Woodcuts Exhibit. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Featuring works by Joan Mayfield and Ruth Trevarrow. Woodcuts is a mixed-media exhibition that focuses on different types of wood, how we view it, and its transformative properties as part of nature. Mayfield and Trevarrow came up with the concept for the show because they saw a lot of affinity for their

individual work as a commonality in their practices. Artist Reception, Sunday, October 16, 4-6 p.m.; Artist Talk, Sunday, November 13, 2 p.m.

THURSDAY/OCT. 6

Authors and Appetizers. 6:30 p.m. KaNikki Jakarta, Inaugural Athenaeum Poet In Residence, presents Authors and Appetizers, an event that welcomes readers, writers, authors, and those who love the arts. This event will feature authors Miko Reed Collins and Maureen Mayes. It will be followed by a mini panel discussion, and an audience Q&A.

OCT. 7-29

"Return to Eating, Drinking, and Merriment" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The exhibit celebrates the return of food, drink, and the rituals and places associated with dining in a hybrid show combining a National Ceramic Show (juried by nationally recognized potter Jeremy Wallace) and a Regional Art Exhibit. Opening Reception: Friday, October 7, 7-9 p.m. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

OCT. 7-9

Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour. 6 - 9 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Admission: Friday: \$49 for members, \$59 for general public; Saturday: \$53 for members, \$63 for general public; Sunday: \$43 for members; \$53 for general public. Call 703-780-2000. Visit mountvernon.org

OCT. 7, 14, 21, 28

Death Comes to Carlyle House. 6 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N Fairfax St., Alexandria. Carlyle House presents an exhibit on mourning practices in the 18th-century through the experiences of the Carlyle household, mourning the death of town founder, John Carlyle, in September 1780. Reservations are required as space is limited.

SATURDAY/OCT. 8

Hidden History in Quilts. 1-2:30 p.m. At Green Springs Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Explore the hidden history revealed in quilts inspired by Native American and Indigenous culture and lifeways in the "Special Program: Hidden History in Quilts." History Outside the Box historian and storyteller T. Carter will display a selection of beautiful star quilts that tell stories passed down through oral tradition. The cost is \$25 per person. Call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/OCT. 8

Second Saturday Art Walk October 2022. 6 - 9 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Visit the Workhouse Monthly Featured Artists. All campus studio buildings will be open from and the artists there will be thrilled to chat about their works and processes. <https://www.workhousearts.org/>

FRIDAY/OCT. 14

Late Shift: Masquerade at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 7 to 10 p.m. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Put on your favorite fall colors, sip your pumpkin-spice latte and enjoy the cooler weather during this fall masquerade. Costumes are



PHOTO BY KEVIN WENSING

The Great Pumpkin Patch

The 29th annual Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch opened Oct. 2 after receiving two 18-wheeler truckloads of pumpkins sustainably grown on a Navajo Reservation near Farmington, NM. Volunteers, including students from Episcopal and Bishop Ireton high schools and scouts from Scout Troop 131, helped unload the pumpkins, which are sold to support local charities. Located at 3606 Seminary Road, the Pumpkin Patch is open seven days a week through Oct. 31. Admission is free. www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org



The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, Oct. 11 through Monday, Oct. 17.

Fall Book Sale

The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, Oct. 11 through Monday, Oct. 17. Members' Preview on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 3 PM-7:30 PM (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, Oct. 12, 10 AM-7:30 PM; Thursday, Oct. 13, 10 AM-7:30 PM; Friday, Oct. 14, 10 AM-4:30 PM; Saturday, Oct. 15, 10 AM-4:30 PM; Sunday, Oct. 16, Half Price Day, 1 PM-4:30 PM; Monday, Oct. 17, \$10 Bag Sale, 10 AM-2:30 PM. \$4 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books, and media. All genres. Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA; info: 703-746-1702; www.beatleyfriends.org.

optional but highly encouraged. Best dressed attendees will win a special prize. Featuring DJ sets with all your favorite October and Halloween-themed music.

SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Discovering Alexandria Architecture

Walking Tour. 10 a.m. At Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N Fairfax St., Alexandria. Alexandria has grown from a small town in the 18th century to a bustling small city in the 21st century. Discover Alexandria by looking at Architecture styles that adorn the city

streets and make it one of the best places to live and work. Reservations are required as space is limited. Visitors are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes for this 1.5 hour guided tour. The tour is held rain or shine unless there is severe weather.

OPINION

Virginia DoE Proposal Harms Students, Families and Educators

FROM PAGE 6

mentation for changing a student's name and gender in school records

❖ Require teachers to misgender students due to an inability to change school records

❖ Completely ignore nonbinary students, and that some states allow a nonbinary gender marker on birth certificates

❖ Prevent teachers and counselors from doing their jobs and being trustworthy adults for students

❖ Address athletics, which the law specifically excludes and which the current (2021) Model Policies, in accordance with the law, do not address. The law has not changed, so the inclusion of athletics in the 2022 proposal is puzzling.

The new policies exclude transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students and ensure an unsafe environment for transgender, gender-expansive, non-binary, and gender non-conforming teachers, administrators, staff, and parents. With all of the discussion in these policies of parental rights, the rights of the parents of students most affected are ignored entirely.

The 2022 Model Policies are inconsistent with section 1.A and section 2 of Senate Bill 161 and the identical House Bill 145 passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor of Virginia on March 4, 2020. No new legislation has been passed, and the VDOE is not empowered to rewrite state law.

We the undersigned organizations insist that the VDOE withdraw the 2022 Model Policies. We enjoin school boards to retain or enact policies that are consistent with the 2021 Model Policies.

FCPS Pride, Inc.
Fairfax County
Federation of Teachers
FCPS Asian Educators
Hispanic Educators
Association of Fairfax
GLSEN NoVA
4 Public Education
Jewish Community Relations
Council of Greater Washington
Anti-Defamation League,
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Cancer, Then and Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When my brother was emergency-admitted to the hospital on July 16th, it was just a few days removed from my most recent every-three-months cancer scans. For the following two months or so, until his status was no longer day to day but rather marginally less urgent, I hadn't really focused/ thought too much about my own cancer-affected mortality. It was sort of on the back burner, for a change. And given my brother's tenuous grip on life for a while, it seemed bad form/ totally inappropriate to expend any mental energy on myself considering that he was in such distress (not breathing on his own, connected to a ventilator, 24-7 dialysis, just to name a few of the many life-sustaining medical marvels he was dependent on while in SICU). It was a sort of "all hands to the pump" kind of effort, to quote the Brits. And as the doctors and staff provided my brother round-the-clock care, the least I could do was harness whatever positive vibe I could muster in his direction.

Slowly, but surely, my brother began to rally. Over the course of the last month, he was disconnected from all life-sustaining machinery, taken off all medication and eventually transferred out of SICU into a regular hospital room. There his care was much less intense and where he began to really recuperate, enough so that a few weeks after his initial transfer there he received the penultimate transfer: to the adjacent rehab hospital with an eye toward the ultimate goal: release and back home. He was getting better every day and as he improved, we improved; in our mood and in our expectations for him. His semi-return to normal enabled me, subconsciously almost, to reconsider my own mortality once again. Not that that's anything new. It's quite old in fact, over 13 and half years old, ever since I was originally diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in Feb. 2009. But for the last two months, it's been hardly a blip on my internal radar. My attention had been elsewhere.

And I must admit, in a weird kind of way, it was almost a relief to have something else to worry about for a change other than my own mortality. To clarify, it's not as if I forgot that I had cancer, but I was able to not think about all the time, if you know what I mean? I was thinking of my brother, not me. It felt unselfish which for a cancer patient is sometimes a challenging emotion to control. I remember the first bit of unsolicited advice I received from a friend (and fellow cancer patient) after she learned about my diagnosis: "Kenny" she said, "it's all about you now." Words to live by, for sure. Because a cancer diagnosis changes you in every way imaginable and in that aren't so imaginable. It's your life now – full time. As such, it's easy to lose oneself in all the demands and anxiety that characterize a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment/aftercare. Sometimes, it's helpful to have a diversion of sorts; to get your mind off your own troubles and try to help another cope. In that way, my brother's hospitalization and subsequent months' long recovery has been instructive. It turns out that even though I have cancer, it doesn't prevent me from doing the right thing on someone else's behalf. For almost six weeks, along with my sister-in-law, Vanessa, we visited my brother in the hospital every day, splitting shifts, so to speak. It wasn't about me. It was about my brother. It felt good to be there.

This week, if all goes according to plan, my brother will finally be home, after almost 10 weeks in the hospital. And with his return home (which itself will present any number of challenges for both Richard and his wife, Vanessa), my own health once again becomes top of mind. He has been in the hospital so long that low and behold, it's time for my quarterly scans already. The party, such as it was, is officially over. With my scans return all the usual mortality fears and questions. One of these days, I'm going to receive the wrong result. After all, when my diagnosis was changed to thyroid cancer three years ago, the medication I was prescribed (the best available at the time) had an effective time of three years or so. We're past that. Now that my brother is out of the hospital – or about to be, I'm back to thinking about me and my cancer and wondering if trouble is lurking.

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

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NEWS

PHOTOS BY DON SWEENEY FCPA



Jana Joshi and Rashida Joshi of McLean

420 County Parks

FROM PAGE 10

he said. Connolly reminded everyone that the county would soon celebrate 10 percent of its land-mass being Park Authority land.

"That reflects the values of a community that cares about creating open space opportunities and recreational opportunities for all of its residents." "That is very consistent with the One Fairfax that the Board of Supervisors has adopted," Connolly said.

Jeffrey C. McKay said, like many families in the county, he would benefit from visiting at least four county parks before the end of the day. That would be for his children's soccer games and his usual mental health break on Saturday afternoons, a quiet walk through Huntley Meadows Park.

McKay said that the Park Authority was founded in 1950 with 15 acres, two employees, and a contribution of \$250 to support the park. "Today, we invested over \$80 million directly into the Fairfax County Park Authority. And when you add some of the other fees and other funds that come into the parks, you are talking about a \$100 million enterprise to run Fairfax County Public Parks," McKay said. The Board of Supervisors is constantly expanding park space, improving facilities, and ensuring that all residents have affordable and, in most cases, free access to the parks, he said.

McKay addressed the urgent climate crisis, saying it requires the board to act. "We have put in place with our Board of Supervisors a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050." Public open space, green space, preserving and protect-



Molly Norris of Vienna



Sayouba Nikiema of West Africa, currently living in Reston, volunteers with Sayyida Rahym of Reston.

ing elements of the environment are critical in that effort. "Parks play an essential role in achieving that in Fairfax County."

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