

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 13, 2022

Workforce Innovation Hub Opens in Hybla Valley

Job training designed to thrive at a living wage.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday, Oct. 8, Rodney L. Lusk (D), the supervisor for the Franconia District on the Fairfax County Board, spoke to about 50 people in a large room at the new Hybla Valley Community Center in Mount Vernon, Va. area, along with Larysa Kautz, president of Melwood; Brad Halsey, chief executive officer and co-founder of Building Momentum; and community leaders. They were there at the Grand Opening of the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub, or W.I.S.H. Center. Lusk has 33 years of experience in county government.

"Today, and I really want to emphasize this," Lusk said. "Today is the best day I've had in those thirty years."

Lusk informed those in attendance that the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub within the neighborhood's multi-service



Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk (D-Franconia)

center was designed to meet the community's needs. It was a space created exclusively for them and would alter their lives. However, today's grand opening was just the beginning. Everyone in the room was responsible for ensuring that the space fulfilled the community's expectations.

Many of those who visited the W.I.S.H. Center are underemployed residents living along the Route 1 Corridor who work multiple retail and service sector jobs to make ends meet. The Corridor hasn't kept up with the area's fast growth, and few industries that create well-paying jobs are ex-

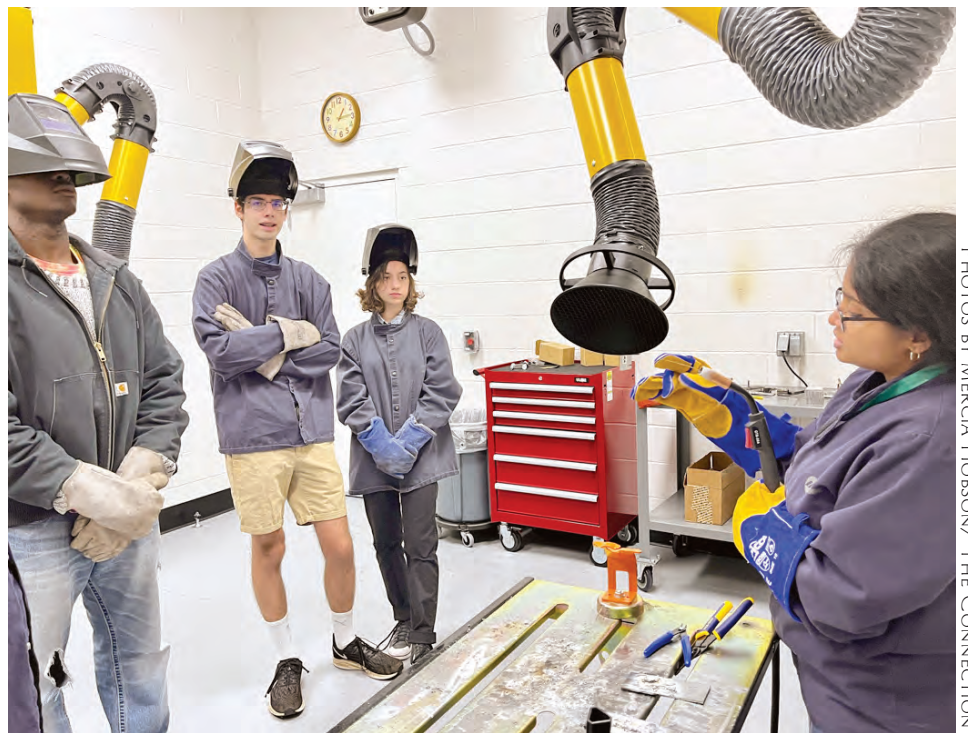
panding there.

As stated in a February 2020 board matter introduced by Lusk, the W.I.S.H. Center is a catalyst, bringing in the first outside investment required to break the cycle of slow business growth and limited employment opportunities for Route 1 residents. The center

is a space built specifically for the underemployed along the Corridor, a space, Lusk said, that would "transform the lives of folks in this community."

Beginning on Oct. 17, the W.I.S.H. Center will fulfill its promise to assist teens and adults in

SEE JOB TRAINING, PAGE 3



Akshta Suresh of Building Momentum leads a welding workshop at the Grand Opening of the W.I.S.H. Center at the Hybla Valley Community Center, Alexandria.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION



Plan a new career at the W.I.S.H. Center.

As community leaders hold the ends of the ribbon, (from center left) Larysa Kautz, president and chief executive officer of Melwood, Fairfax County Board Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk (D-Franconia), and Brad Halsey, chief executive officer and co-founder of Building Momentum, cut it, marking the opening of the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub in Hybla Valley.



From left, Fairfax County Board Supervisors Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon), Rodney L. Lusk (D-Franconia), and Walter L. Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill).

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Job Training Designed to Thrive at a Living Wage

FROM PAGE 1

achieving their employment goals. “We are bringing the employers. We are bringing the services. We are bringing the training. We are bringing the skills. And you’re doing it here where you can walk, you can bike, and have all these opportunities right at your back door,” said Kautz, president and chief executive officer of Melwood. “This is really what it’s meant when you say to create a public-private partnership,” Kautz said. “The benefit of the community and the value of this space is that it is in the community.”

Melwood partnered with Building Momentum, Lusk and the county to make the center a reality. The initiative is a first-of-its-kind, world-class center for technological and workforce development excellence. Melwood put information about how to sign up for training at the W.I.S.H. Center on its Facebook page on Oct. 8.

The first offering is training for professional development. This course meets for six weeks, two hours per day, four days per week. The program enhances interviewing, resume writing, and workplace advocacy skills, among other skills. The MC3 Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training is coming soon. It is an approved 120-hour training program that leads to paid apprenticeships with local unions and businesses.

“One of the biggest things we do,” said Kautz, “is we look at the barriers that exist to employment and do our best to knock them down and to connect people to services, to connect them to skills, to connect them to employers. ... To truly help people get to that dignity and paycheck and not a \$10 an hour paycheck, not a \$15 an hour paycheck, but a \$20 an hour paycheck.”

That is the minimum hourly pay, and as skills and experience grow, so would the hourly wage, according to Lusk.

The Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association was among the exhibitors at the event. The association encompasses Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Yonis Bonilla is an association organizer for the union that represents plumbers, steamfitters, sprinkler fitters, pipe welders, and HVAC service technicians, all journeymen in the industry seeking to join a local union. According to the provided brochure, there is power in union numbers, leading to fair wages for workers. Association apprentices learn through paid

classroom and on-the-job training for five years. At some point, the apprentices can choose the path to follow, to be trained as a journeyman, that would be making, the brochure states \$47.98 an hour plus benefits.

A community member and leader who formerly resided in Maryland spoke of coming to Fairfax County in search of a better life and more opportunities, fulfilling a long-held desire. Soon she realized she had relocated to an area frequently overlooked for resources and opportunities and was merely surviving. “As I began understanding and working in the community, I went from surviving to thriving because I’ve connected to community members and a lot of the partners in this community,” she said. She urged others to enroll in the training at the W.I.S.H. Center, whether to advance their careers or to learn how to repair household items because they could not afford skilled laborers.

JC attended the grand opening. He initially started with Building Momentum in Alexandria. It is a problem-solving company that offers various services, such as training and an education curriculum that covers soldering, welding, electronics, 3D printing, and other skills.

JC received a phone call informing him there was a job the following day. JC said he had no idea what it was but would be paid \$20 per hour. “I ended up making soil probes for wineries around the world. I’m wiring, soldering, and epoxying. I never did that; I learned that there,” JC said. Later, they presented him with another employment opportunity at the



Visitors to the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub stop by the vendor tables to learn about job training programs and opportunities for employment.



JC and his daughter, Jazelani, 7, at the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub opening.

W.I.S.H. Center and a formal offer letter. JC said he would tell others, “This is for real. It is legitimate. They are not going to lead you on into a dream.”

Alongside JC stood one of his daughters, Jazelani, seven years old. “I have five daughters and two sons,” JC said. As he paused to consider the question of the ultimate difference the W.I.S.H. Center made in his life and could make in the lives of others in the community, he glanced at Jazelani.

“This is somewhere you can seek progress and go somewhere in your life,” JC said. “And you can plan for not working for the rest of your life.”



Visitors to the W.I.S.H. Center stop by the vendor tables to learn about job training programs and opportunities for employment.



Visitors to the Grand Opening of the W.I.S.H. Center enjoy the food trucks, moon bounce, face-painting, and a balloon artist.



Teens and adults living near the Hybla Valley Community Center and others along the Route 1 Corridor can walk and bike to the Workforce Innovation Skills Hub for job training.

Challenges for County's Special Education Students

Special Education PTA president and FCPS respond.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Disparities for special education students in Fairfax County Public Schools, cited in the 210-page FCPS Special Education Comprehensive Program Review: Year 2 Final Report by American Institutes for Research, did not surprise Amanda Campbell. She is the president of the Fairfax County Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA).

Campbell highlighted that the final review mirrored SEPTA's findings to the division. "It was very validating to see it backed by data," Campbell said.

The report was the second of two annual deliverables by American Institutes for Research, which the division contracted in October 2020 to conduct an independent, third-party review of its special education program.

American Institutes for Research presented its Year 1 interim report and presentation document at a session in September 2021, followed by its 2022 Final Report <https://bit.ly/3m3JQpv>. The report's scope did not include special education programs during COVID-19.

The division's four original goals for its special education program to AIR's two-year comprehensive review were: one, design, structure, and processes; two, human capital; three, evidence-based practices; and four, communication. "Restraint and seclusion would be specifically OUTSIDE OF SCOPE for the purposes of this review," according to the division's RFP 2000003084 Special Education Comprehensive Review.

"We are very appreciative of the work that has been done in compiling this report," said Dr. Michelle Boyd, assistant superintendent of Special Services at FCPS. "Our staff has worked closely with students and families, which is reflected in the report's mention of positive feedback from parents on the quality of FCPS instructional staff."

Campbell addressed what she considered the top four important findings of the lengthy review.

❖ First, "Fidelity of implementation is a point that we (SEPTA) have been raising since being chartered in April 2017," Campbell said. She referenced a research question in the final report, "To what extent do schools implement special education services with fidelity?"

Fidelity of the implementation of special education intervention programs is minimal and inconsistent across programs, according to the independent report. And special education services are implemented inconsistently across the district.

Campbell said that programs and best



Amanda Campbell, president of the SEPTA

PHOTO VIA SEPTA.ORG



Dr. Michell Boyd, assistant superintendent of Special Services FCPS

PHOTO BY FCPS



Occupational therapists work to address a student's ability to access and participate in school activities.

FCPS.EDU/ACADEMICS

practices for students with disabilities had been identified. However, teachers and support staff who interact with students face difficulty implementing programs effectively. A poorly implemented program can fail students just as easily as a poorly designed one. AIR's finding was important to Campbell. "If the programs are not implemented with the same evidence-based science, then the outcomes are not going to be the same," she said.

"That time aspect is a critical part of fidelity," said Campbell. The time the program requires is not always what the students receive, according to Campbell. She described scheduling around multiple services as a giant jigsaw puzzle. "It is critical that we get kids the time they need in these programs for them to succeed," Campbell said. To implement a practice or program "with fidelity," teachers should understand how to im-

plement evidence-based practices centered on five elements: adherence, exposure/duration (time), delivery quality, program specificity, and student engagement.

❖ Second was Campbell's concern was that the division's special education services are inconsistently implemented across its five regions and schools (1k.2.). It is "very individualized and dependent on where you live in the county and what school," Campbell said — leading to a question of equity.

The Fairfax County Public Schools division is the eleventh largest in the United States. It serves a diverse population of about 178,635 students from Pre-K through 12. In all, 14.9 percent of the total student population are students with disabilities; 31.7 percent are economically disadvantaged; and 19 percent are English language learners. Approximately 198 schools and

centers are dispersed across five distinct regions within the district, covering 391 square miles.

❖ Campbell's third concern: Students with disabilities disproportionately receive in- and out-of-school suspensions compared with peers without disabilities (1a.3.). SEPTA and the division have discussed this since 2019. The differences are dramatic.

❖ Campbell's fourth concern was how little parent input was evident in IEPs. "Results from the IEP sample review show minimal documentation of parent input on IEP documents. Nearly 38 percent of the IEPs in our sample did not include any written evidence of parent input within the IEP itself," cited the review (1f.4). AIR reviewed a randomly selected, representative sample of 300 IEPs.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability."

According to Campbell, parents should be equal partners in the IEP process. "When you have a statistic showing so little parent input, it encapsulates the concerns that families have noted. Their input is not included. That is one of the incredibly validating findings of this report," Campbell said.

Boyd, the assistant superintendent of Special Services, said the division knows "there is work to be done to improve outcomes for students with disabilities." Boyd named areas such as "multi-tiered systems of support, inclusive practices, transitions, communication with stakeholders, and exploring ways to address special education teacher workload."

Among other findings related to students with disabilities, as reported by AIR, FCPS does not meet Virginia state targets for the percentage of time students with disabilities are included in the general education setting (1e.1.). Access to evidence-based practices for students with disabilities varies. Special education students in some racial-ethnic groups are at a higher risk of being suspended or expelled for greater than ten days than their special education peers in all other racial groups (1a.3.).

The final review of AIR included 54 findings and 19 recommendations for changes to the division's policies, processes, and practices. AIR will engage in three months of pro bono strategic planning with the division's Department of Special Services to support them in the next steps. "We look forward to working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive special education enhancement plan," said Boyd. www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OPINION

Why You Should Vote for Don Beyer

BY DELEGATE
PAUL KRIZEK



Krizek

What you want in your Congressman is someone who cares about you and the country, is a leader on the Hill and in the community, is knowledgeable, and is open to innovative ideas. We are fortunate to have all of that and more in our Congressman, Don Beyer. As your Delegate, I want to give you the rationale for my support of Congressman Beyer by detailing just a few of the most influential accomplishments that Don has made while serving in the US Congress and to ask you to re-elect him in the upcoming November 8th election.

In the House of Representatives these past eight years, Beyer has led every major climate change effort. He authored seven distinct pieces of the recent Inflation Reduction Act, including tax credits for electric commercial trucks and vans, and the first-ever tax credit for taking existing carbon out of the atmosphere. Don founded the Congressional Fusion Caucus, and he has been leading bipartisan efforts to bring fusion energy to humankind in the next ten years, rather than the next thirty. Fusion energy is clean energy from seawater with no radioactive waste, what Don calls "the Holy Grail for cooling our planet".

Don chairs the Space committee. As a result, we recently successfully smashed a rocket into a small asteroid moon named Dimorphos to learn how to change the course of any future asteroid heading for impact with Earth. It is important to avoid what happened to the dinosaurs 66 million years ago when

an asteroid slammed into Mexico's Yucatan! Hopes of going back to the Moon with Artemis were set back by the arrival of Hurricane Ian, but the launch date is on schedule for November. This will be our first trip to the Moon and back in 50 years!

Lastly, in terms of leadership positions, Don chairs the Joint Economic Committee, working to overcome persistent inequities in wealth and income.

The Don Beyer we all know relishes every opportunity to help his constituents here in the 8th district. A few examples include the successful legislation he and Republican Congressman Rob Wittman sponsored to allow the new railroad Long Bridge over the Potomac. Don also secured an earmark to complete road striping on the Parkway and sewer grate replacements. Don's office was also proud to host the recent forum that I attended on improving safety at the Belle Haven and Belle View intersections. He expects to hear something from the Parkway by month's end outlining the plan to rework the intersection.

Another issue that many of us are concerned about is the awful noise in the sky from low-flying jets and helicopters. Due to Don's efforts this summer, Congress rolled out the first-ever online site to report helicopter noise, so that we can identify the abusers. In a meeting with the FAA's regional director this year, he expressed his strong support for a pending proposal that would move the planes further down the river before making their turns. He is awaiting the FAA's response to the proposal.

SEE WHY YOU, PAGE 10

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Our Very Necessary Insects

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

People spend more time trying to kill insects than trying to save them, University of Delaware entomologist Douglas Tallamy told a Zoom gathering of 300 on Sept. 25. Think about all those pest eradication products on hardware shelves, trucks spraying grassy lawns and bug zappers, also aptly called electric insect killers.

Many people want to eliminate insects, he lamented, but his key message was, life as we know it depends on insects. Without insects, food webs would collapse, plants would not get pollinated, animals would disappear, insect decomposers would vanish and people would be left with bacteria and fungi, he explained.

Tallamy quoted the late Dr. E.O. Wilson, an ant expert, who wrote, "Insects are the little things that run the world," but Tallamy stressed, though critical to life, insects are in serious decline.

A 2019 study published in Biological Conservation concluded that more than 40 percent of the world's insect species face possible extinction, a phenomenon the media has called the "insect apocalypse." A study published in Science in 2020 found that one-quarter of land-dwelling insects have disappeared in the past 30 years. One million species face extinction in the next 20 years and most will be insects, said Tallamy, citing a United Nations report.

"The creatures that keep us alive are disappearing," he warned.

Many birds depend on insects for food. Birds that winter in Costa Rica and migrate north lose 35

How to Find Native Plants

www.audubon.org/native-plants
www.plantnovanatives.org
https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/

percent of their body weight when they cross the Gulf of Mexico. When they land, they must replace that weight by eating insects. Resident birds too need insects, especially caterpillars to feed their young. A chickadee, for example, needs 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to raise two young or one caterpillar every three minutes. But many bird species too are declining in numbers and at least 432 species birds in North America are threatened with extinction, a 2016 analysis found.

He showed a photo of a church surrounded by a treeless lawn and noted the irony that people were inside worshipping God's creation, but with few to no native plants, destroying it outside.

Losing Critical Plants

A major cause of these declines is that people have altered and disturbed natural habitat by replac-



University of Delaware entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy, the Sept. 25 speaker. (Photo of a photo from book jacket, by Paul Reeves Photography)

sphinx needs Virginia creeper; the Zebra swallowtail butterfly needs pawpaw trees; the evening primrose moth, evening primrose; and the emerald moth, smooth sumac. "Plant choice matters," Tallamy emphasized.

Oak trees are champion "key-stone species," the most productive plant, Tallamy contends. In his home state of Pennsylvania, 511 species of moths and butterflies rely on oaks, far more than other trees. Oaks support 557 species of caterpillars in the mid-Atlantic. Non-native trees like ginkgos, Callery and Bradford pear and plants like barberry and amur honeysuckle do not support na-

tive insects.

Other Causes

Insects are also adversely affected by climate change, herbicides, pesticides and light pollution. Building and street lights can increase predation on insects and cause incineration, collisions, dehydration and disruption of circa-



Two of Dr. Doug Tallamy's books.

dian rhythms and mating, Tallamy said.

What You Can Do

East of the Mississippi, 85.6 percent of land is privately owned so saving insects requires broad-based action, Tallamy challenged. We must "live in harmony with the natural world sustainably," he urged, instead of "declaring war on nature."

He offered some suggestions:

- ❖ Cut lawns in half, create beds around trees, add trees and leave the fall leaves for overwintering insects.

- ❖ Plant native plants and remove invasive plants.

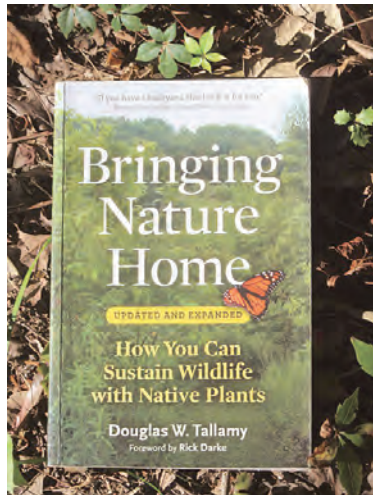
- ❖ Reduce light pollution by using motion-sensitive lights and yellow light bulbs outside.

- ❖ Avoid mosquito spraying, even if companies claim their products are "natural." These products kill all insects, not just mosquitoes. Use a mosquito dunk or a fan instead.

- ❖ Minimize insecticides and pesticides.

- ❖ Don't use bug zappers. They kill 99 percent of insects.

Tallamy concluded, "Insects are the currency in our ecological bank account. The insect decline is a



global problem with a grassroots solution. We created the problem and we can solve it."

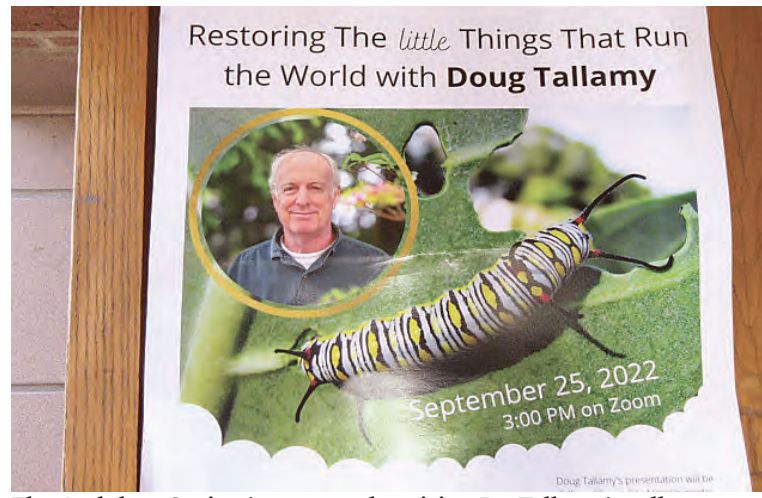
Tallamy is the author of Bringing Nature Home, Nature's Best Hope and The Nature of Oaks and formed Homegrown National Parks (www.homegrownnationalparks.org) to encourage private property owners to restore habitat and ecological networks with native plantings.

Libby Lyons applauded the talk "because his approach is straightforward and promises significant impact. His message is particularly powerful because he enables folks to see how each of us can make a positive difference for conservation right in our own backyards." Lyons is president of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV). ASNV has free "ambassadors" that will advise property owners. Visit https://www.audubonva.org/audubon-at-home.

The meeting was sponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Plant NoVaNatives, the Prince William Conservation Alliance and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.

You can watch Tallamy's talk at https://vimeo.com/753632644.

Advice: cut lawns in half, plant native plants and trees, remove invasive plants, minimize use of pesticides, reduce light pollution.



The Audubon Society's poster advertising Dr. Tallamy's talk.



Milkweed bugs feed on seeds, leaves and stems of milkweed plants.



A monarch caterpillar on milkweed at the Hollin Hall Senior Center, September 2022.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

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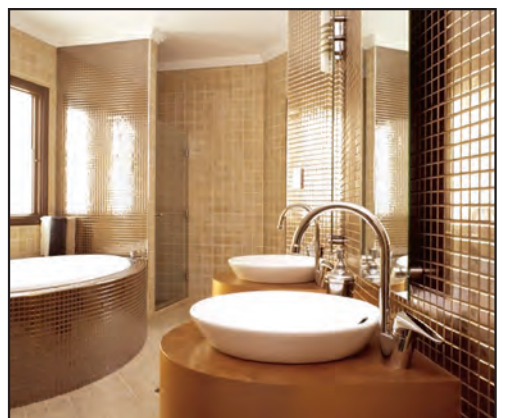
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A black swallowtail butterfly on a cardinal flower.



A differential grasshopper.



A bumblebee on a milkweed flower.

ENTERTAINMENT

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.

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.

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. 11-17

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



Paws in the Park will take place at Oronoco Bay Park in Alexandria on Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022.

Paws in the Park

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison Street, Alexandria. Formerly known as Alexandria Love Your Pet Day, Paws in the Park brings together shopping, music, dining and, of course, adorable adoptable animals. And best of all, all proceeds benefit animals across your community through the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA). Enjoy dozens of vendors; dining from Port City Brewing Company and Big Cheese; entertainment from Uno Dos Tres Andres and Bill Cabrera and Company; and meet animals from a variety of regional rescues. Visit PawsintheParkVA.com.



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

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.

OCT. 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.

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 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.

SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Old Town North "Chalk Walk." 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal St., Alexandria. The Old Town North Alliance will be sponsoring the first annual "Chalk Walk" through multiple sites in Old Town North. Artists will be positioned throughout the neighborhood and will create works of art either on flat plaza surfaces or on building walls. Walk attendees are invited to see the artists in action or visit finished works. Beverages including beer and food trucks will be available at Canal Center Plaza. The event also features a dedicated Kid Creation area.

SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Craft. Brew.: Coffeehouse Edition! at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Admission: \$15 includes one beverage and
SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS IN ALEXANDRIA

NIGHTLY IN OCTOBER

Alexandria Colonial Tours' Ghost & Graveyard Tour. Fridays and Saturdays in October from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m. 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. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost & Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge.

OCTOBER THRU DECEMBER

Nightly Spirits. Thursdays through Sundays from 7:30 to 10 p.m.; 8:30 to 11 p.m. Admission: 21 and

over at \$25 plus tax. Tours meet at The Alexandrian, 480 King Street, Alexandria. Sip a local beverage and listen to the secret and spooky lore of Alexandria's haunted past. Hear tales of the ghosts that wander the streets of Alexandria and haunt local establishments. These tours are for individuals ages 21 and over. Haunted private tours are also available for all ages.

OCTOBER 14, 21 AND 28

Death Comes to Carlyle House. 6 to 8 p.m. Admission: \$12 per person. 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 those who occupied the Carlyle household, mourning the death of Alexandria's

co-founder, John Carlyle, in September 1780. Reservations are required as space is limited.

OCT. 15 TO NOV. 5

The Little Theatre of Alexandria Presents "Design for Murder." Wednesdays through Sundays at 8 p.m. Admission: \$21 to 24 per person. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Murder, romance and comedy are the three best ingredients for a fun, suspense-filled evening of theatre. This fast-moving, highly tense whodunit treats the audience to a remote mansion, a sleazy blackmailer, a trench coat-clad detective and even a dark and stormy night. A once-wealthy mother and son struggle to keep up appearances at the old mansion, but when a maid is murdered, everyone becomes a suspect.



Alexandria Colonial Tours' Ghost & Graveyard Tours take place nightly in October in Alexandria.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

all crafting materials. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Enjoy a morning of caffeinated crafting! Sip a delicious coffee from local spot Misha's Coffeehouse and Roaster while making a decoupage apothecary jar to take home. "Craft. Brew." takes place at The Art League Gallery, located inside the Torpedo Factory Art Center.

OCT. 15-23

Old Town OysterFest. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Various restaurants in Old Town Alexandria. Throughout the week, restaurants, bars and boutiques will feature oyster and Guinness pairings. There will be a shucking contest among restaurants. The event is sponsored by Daniel O'Connell's Irish Pub and Restaurant and Guinness.

SATURDAY/OCT. 15

Made in Ethiopia DMV Trade Fair. 12 to 9 p.m. Durant Art Center, 1605 Cameron St. Alexandria. Nova Connections presents "Made in Ethiopia DMV 2022 Trade Fair," a multi-sector trade fair that features Ethiopia's most recent products and services as well as rich Ethiopian traditional music.

SUNDAY/OCT. 16

Arcadia's Fall Fun-Tacular. 1-4 p.m. At Woodlawn Plantation and Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria. Pack up the family and join Arcadia at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House for an afternoon of fun! Stop by for free self-guided family tours of Woodlawn. In addition, they'll also be welcoming the Fairfax County Children's Business Fair as young entrepreneurs share products they have designed and made themselves for purchase. Entrance for this event is free and most games are included!

SUNDAY/OCT. 16

Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic. 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial, Alexandria. Featuring Erin Freeman, conductor | Meredith Riley, violin and Britton Riley, cello Joel Thompson: Act of Resistance Daron Hagen: Symphony No. 6 'Moviola' - *world premiere* based on Orson Welles 1938 silent film comedy Too Much Johnson Brahms: Double Concerto in A minor, Op. 102

TUESDAY/OCT. 18

Military Bounty Lands. 1-3 p.m. Via Zoom. At Hollin Hall Senior Center in Alexandria. Rebecca Whitman Koford will discuss what genealogists can learn from military bounty land documentation dating from the Revolutionary War to the Mexican War. Koford serves as executive director of the Board for Certification of Genealogists and director of the Genealogical Institute on Federal Records (Gen-Fed). Register by emailing contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. Find out more about MVGS at www.mvgenealogy.org.

THURSDAY/OCT. 20

Old Town Art Walk. 5-8 p.m. At various locations in Old Town Alexandria. Enjoy a self-guided tour of Old Town Alexandria and explore the fine art and studio crafts found in art galleries and boutique shops on the third Thursday of each month.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

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Time is Telling



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After nearly three months of 24-7 focus on my brother's struggle to survive the effects of sepsis (and septic shock), the immediate, imminent danger seems to have passed. Passed into a daily grind of occupational, physical and speech therapies, all of which are monitored six to eight hours a day by a care giver who lends her assistance as well to assisting my brother with his activities of daily living. All of which are improving due to his commitment to get better. No doubt my brother has come a long way since his admission to SICU in mid-July and has progressed further and faster than those original doctors anticipated. Nonetheless, the path ahead is fraught with obstacles (not literally, although there are three sets of stairs inside his house and even two smaller ones outside just to get in).

My challenges are all too familiar to you regular readers: 13 years-plus living with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. Originally characterized as "terminal," changed approximately three years ago to simply "incurable" after my diagnosis changed to papillary thyroid cancer, supposedly the "friendly cancer" because of its curability. For my situation, not so much, however. I'll spare you the details, most of which I've relayed in previous columns anyway. Not that I ever expected a health guarantee but given my parent's long lives (both lived into their mid to late 80s), I kind of figured that I'd live into my 80s as well. That being presumed; it turns out the facts are somewhat different. Initially, in Feb. '09, I was "prognosed" for "13 months to two years." After my re-diagnosis three years ago, I was given a new lease on life, sort of, until a procedure to rid the thyroid cancer from my body was unsuccessful and so I received an amended timeline/prognosis: the prescription medication that I have been taking daily since Sept. '19 is effective for three years-ish. I'm now into the "ish" time.

But this is my obstacle, as it has been going on nearly 14 years. Nothing new, but it sure gets old, slowly. A cancer diagnosis upsets every thought/plan you had concerning your "road to find out," to quote Cat Stevens, concerning your future (heck, your present, too). And not that I didn't share this feeling with my brother, quite the opposite in fact. Other than my wife, Dina, he was my go-to resource. But now, given his own health challenges and his own cancer diagnosis to boot, we've sort of become equal partners. Not in crime, but in the methodology of surviving. Now, we're on the same team, if you get my meaning: both having been diagnosed with cancer. And it's this shared burden that binds us together more than we ever imagined. (When you've had two healthy parents who lived well into their 80s, you don't anticipate having your own health problems at younger ages than ever afflicted them. It's a presumption, sure, but doctors will often learn a great deal about your prospects by asking about your immediate family history: mother, father, siblings.)

Even though my brother is five years older than me, I never imagined him dying before me. As an older, big brother, I looked up to him. He took care of me. He couldn't possibly die before I do. This feeling became even more prevalent after I was diagnosed with lung cancer. Now I had a perfectly good explanation/understanding of why I was going to predecease him. Not that I was happy about it. Hardly. It just seemed the normal order of things, in my chronological life, anyway. Yet, after his recent health struggles and near-death experience (sepsis is very often a killer and extremely difficult to overcome), I'm forced to consider that my brother might die before my time, despite my issues. And this awareness/revelation has weakened me. Seeing him fight for his life every day in SICU as I did for nearly six weeks was a life-changing experience, especially as a younger brother who looked up to and was somewhat dependent on that older brother.

Now that he's home recuperating and rehabilitating as vigorously as he can, he is – to me, anyway, establishing his bona fides. He is not letting his recent health struggles/challenges negatively affect him at all. He has accepted his deficits and is working every day to overcome them. And even though he can't walk without the assistance of a walker, his goal is to do so. Though he may not be able "to leap tall buildings in a single bound" (or even walk up a few steps) he is my superhero and I'm proud to share all our burdens together. And due to his tireless efforts to get better, once again, I don't feel as if he's going to predecease me; and in an odd way, that's extremely comforting to me.

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

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Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

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OPINION

Why You Should Vote for Don Beyer

FROM PAGE 5

Additionally, Don sponsored the legislation that gave states and counties the ability to deal with predatory towing companies. And, in the last two years, he has secured 25 earmarks for everything from storm sewer flood control in Alexandria, to a behavioral crisis mobile unit in Arlington, to electric school buses in Falls Church. But, his most meaningful work is completing over 13,000 constituent service cases – everything from emergency passports, to finding hospital beds, to securing more than \$10 million dollars in refunds from the IRS and other federal agencies, to securing the release of Americans held in an Egyptian prison, to nominating 233 awesome Northern Virginia young women and men to West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs.

I understand that Don's office's casework is at an all-time high with constituents, including many in Mount Vernon, who need help navigating federal agencies. He would be the first to tell you to reach out to his office for help with the IRS, Social Security,

passports, and the Postal Service.

There is so much more your vote for Don means. With Don and the Democrats in power, this has been the most productive Congress since the 1960s. The largest infrastructure act in a generation. The Chips and Science Act will invest \$52 billion in the semiconductor industry and double our nation's investment in basic research. The Inflation Reduction Act is actually the largest environmental bill in human history. The American Rescue Plan proved to us that we can lift most American children out of poverty with the Child Tax Credit. The real net worth of the bottom income half of American families has risen 60% in the last 20 months, to almost \$68,000.

As most know, Don has cheerfully dedicated most of his adult life to public service – putting people over politics, leading his colleagues with innovative thinking and a love of science and technology. Most importantly, Don Beyer works hard for us. I hope you will join me in supporting Don Beyer's re-election to Congress.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

May to October. The stroll is a great activity after an early dinner, or before enjoying a meal at one of Old Town Alexandria's restaurants. The Old Town Art Walk is presented by the Old Town Business Association.

OCT. 21-22

Vietnam War Symposium. At the National Museum of the United States Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. This event will take place from 1-4 p.m. on Friday, October 21 and from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday, October 22. Join historians, veterans and educators for this two-day symposium which will look back at the Vietnam War era and the Soldier experience. Visit the website: <https://tickets.thenmusa.org/Info.aspx?EventID=62>

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:

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

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