

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 8, 2022

## Family Roots Fuel Fermentation

**Woodlawn Press  
Winery entrepreneurs  
do it all on site.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

A sense of family is one of the driving forces behind the Woodlawn Press Winery in Mount Vernon. From the hand-written recipe that was found in a 1950s wine barrel to the grape press from the 1920s, tradition is a part of the success, according to owners Bonnie and Andrew Rosado.

"We were opening a barrel and found this recipe," said Bonnie Rosado. The handwritten recipe for a certain red wine they make is in a frame by the door and is labeled, "A Copy of Joseph Evangelista's Red Wine Recipe."

Now they produce about 2500 gallons of wine a year and have about 20 varieties to choose from. Their most popular wine is their signature red called the Bourbon Barrel Aged Malbec. "We've got something for everybody," said Andrew Rosado. They started with four sweet wines, two reds and two whites.



Bonnie and Andrew Rosado with a family grape press from the 1920s.

**Woodlawn Press Winery**  
[www.wpwinery.com](http://www.wpwinery.com)  
8733 Cooper Rd, Alexandria  
(703) 828-7120

Everything is done on the premises too. In the backroom, there are stainless steel vats and oak barrels, a couple of corking presses and the materials to make the labels. "We do everything manually," said Andrew Rosa-



Bonnie Rosado next to the handwritten recipe they found in an old wine barrel.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

do. He is there just about every day making wine. Bonnie Rosado only has limited hours during the week because she has a full-time job with the government.

The family got into wine making in the 1920s when relatives started making wine and a grandmother went to jail briefly for a licensing violation, which they joke about now. They have a cousin that makes wine up in Pennsylvania and a sister that has a micro

winery in Virginia Beach.

"We share ideas," said Bonnie Rosado. "We talk about wine flavors all the time."

Three years ago, the Rosado's opened the Woodlawn location, but there were some laws in place that made it a bumpy road for the couple. They contacted Virginia Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36th) and he enacted a law that helped the winery get going. At that

SEE FAMILY ROOTS, PAGE 4

## Fairfax County Park Authority Changes, Additions

**Changes to  
enhance the  
gold standard.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

The Fairfax County Park Authority is going through a few changes recently, beginning with the retirement of Judy Pederson, the public information officer for the past 20 years.

"I was proud to be the spokesperson," said Pederson, who has visited nearly 90 percent of the 420 parks in Fairfax County. "Every day is different," she added.

Ben Boxer, a county employee for the past 17 years, will

move into the role along with newcomer Susan Kalish, the new director in the FCPA office of marketing and communications. Boxer lives in Herndon and his home park that he grew up visiting is Frying Pan Park. Boxer now has five children who enjoy that park too.

Boxer's children are all involved in the scouting program, which seems to go hand in hand with the activities at the parks, he said. "When you are a scout, the world is your classroom," he said.

Kalish has worked in the park system in Arlington and Fairfax City, but is a resident of Fairfax County so she's glad to be working in the Fairfax County Park Authority. "I've always been a park person," Kalish said.

Pederson has been in front of

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 4



ARTIST RENDERING

When completed, Mount Vernon Rec Center will nearly double in size.

## Mount Vernon Recreation Center Renovations Already Impacting Users

**Furniture removal irks some; big changes on their way.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

Around Thanksgiving this year, officials at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center at 2017 Belle View Boulevard started clearing the lobby area for the upcoming renovation that is officially starting in January 2023. For long-time rec center user Jim

Gearing, this move was not needed and it causes some stress to those that use that lobby area to socialize and wind down after a workout.

"Two upholstered chairs and an upholstered sofa have been taken from the lobby and moved to the Audrey Moore center," he said. "We have more than a few elderly patrons and companions who used to sit in the upholstered furniture

while waiting.

"Now they get to sit on hard plastic chairs," he added.

The title to his emails was, "We're the Park Authority. We don't care. We don't have to."

Gearing knows about the \$67.2 million project, officially called the "Mt. Vernon Rec Center Renovation and Fitness Addition."

SEE MOUNT VERNON, PAGE 4



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Looks like candy, right? Not so fast.

FCPD

## Definitely Not Candy

Monday morning, Fairfax County police officers were called to 8727 Cooper Road, in the Mount Vernon District for a burglary report. Detectives from the Criminal Investigation Division and Organized Crime and Intelligence Bureau responded and discovered large quantities of marijuana, mushrooms and various THC products packaged for resale. The owner of the shop, Charan Preet Singh, 31, of Haymarket, was arrested and charged with two counts of possession with intent to distribute.

## Fatal Shooting in Hybla Valley on Monday Night

Neighbors found victim on the sidewalk on Audubon Avenue.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

On Monday night, Jordan Summers, 26, of Lorton, was shot and killed in the 7900 block of Audubon Avenue in the Hybla Valley section of Mount Vernon.

A neighbor found the victim lying on the sidewalk and called police around 8:02 p.m., the Fairfax County

Police Department said. Officers arrived and discovered Summers with trauma to the upper body, FCPD said. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel declared the man deceased at the scene.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner conducted an autopsy the following day to determine cause and manner of death. Preliminary investigation revealed community members heard what sounded like gunshots prior to 8 p.m. Detectives continue to conduct interviews, collect video surveillance and process evidence recovered from the scene.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

Fairfax County Police public information officer provides the initial information from the shooting scene in Mount Vernon on Monday night.

## Murder Suspect Leads to a Police Chase in Mount Vernon

Arrest was made in the Eisenhower Valley off Picket Street.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

On the morning of Sunday, Oct. 2, Fairfax County Police were called around 7 a.m. to the 5800 block of St Gregorys Lane in Mount Vernon for a report of gunshots, police said. While officers were re-

sponding, Brandon Wims, 31, of Maryland was dropped off at Mount Vernon Hospital. He was had gunshot wounds to the upper body and was later transported to Fairfax Hospital.

Wims was pronounced deceased shortly after arriving at the hospital.

Detectives determined Kyjuan Omar Braxton Trott-McLean saw Wims in the

backseat of a vehicle on St Gregorys Lane. Trott-McLean exited a silver Nissan Sentra with Maryland registration and shot Wims multiple times, according to police.

Detectives obtained warrants for Trott-McLean for second degree murder, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, felon in possession of a firearm and felon in possession of ammunition.

On Wednesday night, Nov. 30, officers located an unoccupied vehicle they believed Trott-McLean was using in the 8600 block of Forest Place in Mount Vernon. Detectives from the Fugitive Track and Apprehension

Unit responded to conduct a surveillance operation on the vehicle.

Shortly after noon on Thursday, Trott-McLean was seen returning to the vehicle under surveillance in another vehicle. Detectives approached, and he attempted to flee in the vehicle that he arrived in. Detectives prevented his escape by making contact with his vehicle and rendering it inoperable. Trott-McLean was taken to a nearby hospital

to be evaluated. He was then taken to the Adult Detention Center and held without bond.



# Fairfax County Park Authority Changes, Additions

FROM PAGE 1

notable events, many ribbon cuttings, plus more urgent events like the rabid coyote in Accotink, or an incident at one of the park centers where there was a fatal stabbing. She's got her sights on a family residence in Solomons Island where she will retire. The FCPA will welcome her as a volunteer if she is in the area.

"I have a boat I haven't been on for two years," she said.

Boxer is an alumnus of Oakton High School and was working with the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services for years

**Judy Pederson, center, with communications director Susan Kalish and new PIO Ben Boxer.**



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

in their communication's department so he is familiar with county procedures. He's seen a couple of other opportunities come open but jumped at the park possibility.

"I love the outdoors," he said.

## FCPA Reorganization

The Fairfax County Park Authority will now have four brand managers covering the golf courses, corporate messaging, resource management and park services which includes the recreation centers.

Jai Cole, Executive Director of the Fairfax County Park Authority, is made it her mission to visit all 420 parks her first year. "Finished

that on public lands day last year," she said. Cole was at the changing of the guard meeting with Pederson and Boxer.

Everyone at the park authority looks at the budget and the passage of bonds for funding, but much of the funding for operations comes from admission fees and rentals from park users. Sliding scales enable the lower income residents to also enjoy the park system. Cole noted that the quality of the parks needs to remain consistent throughout the county, and equity in accessibility of parks is a priority. The park authority also has invested in translations, so signs and web material is available in several different languages. The park authority also hired a new videographer.

# Mount Vernon Recreation Center Renovations Already Impacting Users

FROM PAGE 1

He knows it's starting in January, and has made arrangements for his own program to continue at a nearby county facility. But couldn't they have waited before taking the upholstered furniture out?

Gearing said he got no response at first, which may have been due to the Thanksgiving holiday, but in December the responses started trickling in. "We understand the frustration with losing this valued amenity," said Judy Pederson, FCPA public information officer. "When we made the difficult decision to close the facility through construction, we wanted to keep the center open until the last possible moment before construction begins," she added.

Gearing will be there at the last possible minute too. He plans on working out on Dec. 31, he said.

Another response came from Jai Cole, Executive Director of the Fairfax County Park Authority. "I understand your frustration at losing this valued amenity. When we made the difficult decision to close the facility through construction, we wanted to keep the center open until the last possible moment before construction begins. Unfortunately, that decision necessitated some staging and movement this month to make the site ready for construction next month. Staff attempted to minimize any inconvenience to users through this transition by replacing furniture removed to allow areas to function similarly. For the remainder of the month, we will limit removal of furniture to what absolutely needs



PHOTO BY MARY PADEN

**Furniture "lifted" from Mount Vernon Rec Center, now at Audrey Moore.**

to be removed by Dec. 31 to ensure that users may enjoy the last month the facility is available with as little interruption as possible," Cole said.

## Renovations Include

In January, the operation will kick into full gear. The renovation includes an addition of a 35,000 square foot fitness center and multi-purpose areas, and the addition of a 31,000 square foot NHL ice rink, team rooms and indoor track, Fairfax County information said.

To add these features, the whole facility will be closed from early 2023 until early 2025. Rec center officials offer a list of alternate locations so current users can still maintain their programs, it just might not be as convenient.

A public meeting was held in May 2022 to discuss the plans; that presentation is available on the county website. The rec center was built in 1979, and the pool added in 1983, so it's been part of the Mount Vernon community for over 40 years.

To mitigate the impact on existing rec center users, current memberships will be accepted at all nine county Rec Centers, the hours at George Washington Rec Center will be expanded during closure, and prorated refunds will be available. For the aquatic programs for example, George Washington Rec Center & Lee District Rec Center will expand learn-to-swim offerings and make other changes.

For more information or to submit a question, go to: [HTTPS://WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV/PARKS/PLANNING-DEVELOPMENT/DEVELOPMENT/MOUNT PARKMAIL@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/development/mount-parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov)

# Family Roots Fuel Fermentation

FROM PAGE 1

time, there was a law in place that said their wine needed to use only fruits grown in Virginia.

Surovell noted that the limited space in the Mount Vernon corridor is not conducive to a big winery, but the Rosado's took advantage of the micro-winery technology.

Virginia has over 230 craft breweries, 45 craft distilleries and 300 wineries, Surovell noted. "These local businesses help to keep local dollars in our local community and help define the culture of our area," Surovell said.

## Wine Pairing

Their location in a small strip mall off Richmond Highway wasn't ideal, but the rental price was right. Since then, they've become acquainted with "Momo Poke," next door, a Hawaiian restaurant run by another husband-and-wife pair.

"We're always doing something with them," said Bonnie Rosado. It started out with Momo Poke delivering food to the wine tasting room and now the Rosado's are helping them get a alcohol license so the wine can be served next door as well.

Around town, the wine from Woodlawn Press Winery is now served in Del Ray Pizza and



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CAZETTE

**The labels and corking is all done in the back room.**

River-Sea Chocolate in Chantilly. They've also had their wine at festivals in Fredericksburg, the Occoquan Arts Festival and an event at River Farm in Mount Vernon.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck supports local businesses and picked the winery as a partner last summer at the Mount Vernon Nights Summer Concert series. "We are always happy to welcome new, local businesses to our area, but even more so when they are owned and operated by local residents," he said.

Woodlawn Press Winery is in the 'Made in Fairfax' gift guide too. Browse the guide at <https://www.fxva.com/blog/post/made-in-fairfax-holiday-gift-guide/>



## OPINION

# Mount Vernon is Bustling with Excitement And Holiday Cheer

By DAN STORCK  
MOUNT VERNON  
DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

As we go into the holiday season and wrap up 2022, I am reminded of the many things I am grateful for – family, friends, health, community, and so much more. I am also very grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Mount Vernon District Supervisor. Our office is your resource for everything local, from trash collection to transportation, new housing to senior services, and much more. To meet Team MVD and learn more about what our office has to offer you, we welcome you to join us for our Annual Holiday Open House this Thursday, Dec. 8 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center. We will have refreshments and light snacks.

I am also thankful to the many new businesses that have opened in our area in 2022! We have held ribbon cuttings for Amazon Fresh and Popeyes in Lorton, Della J's Delectables and several other new restaurants along the Richmond Highway corridor, and just last week, Ourisman Kia of Alexandria located in Woodlawn. We will also be celebrating the opening of Panera in Lorton (Lorton Market Street) in the coming weeks. We welcome all of these new business owners and encourage you to vis-

it and support our local businesses. In fact, the holiday season is a wonderful time to shop local, give local and celebrate your special occasions locally. Our small businesses certainly appreciate you! To help with ideas and suggestions, Visit Fairfax has produced a Made In Fairfax Holiday Gift Guide <https://www.fxva.com/blog/post/made-in-fairfax-holiday-gift-guide/> and a holiday to-do list with 31 Days of Holiday Happiness <https://www.fxva.com/holiday-happiness/>.

Additionally, the County has compiled a 2022 Holiday Giving Guide <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2022-holiday-giving-guide> of local non-profits you can support during the holiday season, and all year long.

In this time of giving, I hope you will consider giving not just your time, talents and treasures, but most importantly your kindness. At a time when there is much political and social divide, media strife and economic challenges, we can all use an extra smile, a kind word, a small compliment or a big hug. If we each take a little extra time this season to share the warmth, I know it will make a difference.

As the year winds down, Team MVD is hard at work planning our First Day Hike for Jan. 1, 2023. More details to follow soon. Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a joyous New Year.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATING IN TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department will be participating in the Annual National Capital Region Fire and EMS Departments' 2022 Toys for Tots Campaign. The intent of the campaign is to "bring holiday joy and deliver a message of hope to children." Stations will accept donations now through Sunday, December 11, 2022.

Collection boxes will be placed outside the front door of each fire and rescue station every morning. Residents will be able to drop off toys until 8 p.m., each evening. Please help us to help those less

fortunate this holiday season. Thanks to the generosity of those who live and work in Fairfax County, FCFRD was able to provide the Marines with approximately 25,000 toys last year!

Children who are served by this campaign include toddlers and youths through age 17. The campaign will only accept new, unwrapped toys. Toys used as weapons or considered to be weapons (i.e., toy guns or knives of any kind) will not be accepted. Checks or money orders for donations must be made payable to TOYS FOR TOTS.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will accept donations through Sunday, December 11, 2022. Toys will not be accepted after this date.

### ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

So many of our Military families today find themselves in finan-

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## Mount Vernon Gazette

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# ‘An Excellent Table’

Mount Vernon Displays the Washingtons’ holiday dishes.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

A white marzipan hedgehog does not likely top the list of holiday meal planners today, but for George and Martha Washington it was front and center. On display until Jan. 9, the hedgehog is one of several holiday delicacies visitors can see as interpreters describe how George and Martha Washington entertained at Mount Vernon Estate during the Christmas season.

The dining room table in the “New Room,” the grand salon on the mansion’s north end, is laden with sumptuous, dessert delicacies and French porcelain dishes. The hedgehog cake with currant eyes is an eye-catching confection of almond paste, eggs, cream, sugar and butter molded into the animal’s oblong shape and punctuated with slivered blanched almonds representing bristles.

Another attention-getter is the glass dessert pyramid, a London import, holding glasses full of brightly colored jellies. Cooks made this 18th century “jello” using gelatin from calves’ feet and fish, and added nutmeg, mace, sugar and fruit flavors. For colors, they made red with cochineal (tiny bugs), green with spinach juice and yellow from saffron.

The 12th night or great cake was likely made with 40 eggs, four pounds of butter and sugar, five pounds of flour and fruit and baked for two hours, then doused with wine and brandy, according to a recipe written by Martha’s granddaughter. Molded sugar swans sit atop the cake today. The baker always put a dried bean inside the cake and the lucky diner who got the bean was declared king or queen for the day.

The Washingtons’ plum pudding was not today’s custard-like pudding, but a dark brown cake, the predecessor of today’s fruit cake. Cooks wrapped the cake mixture in a cloth and steamed it for five hours. Also on exhibit are almond cookies, brownie-like almond cakes and cookie-size mince cakes.

Heads up, bird lovers. The kitchen’s holiday centerpiece is the Christmas pie made with five deboned birds – a pigeon, partridge, chicken and goose stuffed inside a turkey, all encased in a crust called a “coffin.” George liked to add bits of squirrel. Martha used Hannah Glasse’s cookbook which recommended five hours baking time in a brick oven.

The plantation’s enslaved people raised 200 hogs which yielded 400 hams a year that they smoked and cured in the smokehouse near the kitchen. The Washingtons ate ham every day of the year with one exception, the day the dog, Vulcan, snatched a ham from the kitchen. They enjoyed many different vegetables and fruits from their gardens and oysters from the Potomac River.

Procuring many of the ingredients for these dishes would seem arduous by today’s standards. Fortunately, Washington kept meticulous records and many visitors com-

mented on the meals. George placed orders with various English merchants for things like almonds, refined sugar and exotic spices. Mount Vernon guides snicker and say that when George married Martha, the former bachelor stopped ordering pickles from abroad, that his “shopping list” changed significantly.

## Varied Beverages

Diners imbibed cider, peach and apple brandy and ale, produced on the plantation. They sipped wine from France and Germany. George was fond of Portuguese Madeira.

George bought up to 50 pounds of chocolate bricks each year. Hot chocolate was a favorite holiday treat, made with ground cocoa, spices, hot water and a little sugar, then frothed. Year-round they enjoyed cherry bounce, a mixture of sour cherry juice, brandy, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and sugar.

## Powered by Enslaved People

Of course, the festive holidays and non-stop hospitality were possible because on the five farms, 317 enslaved people labored in bondage, 88 at the Mansion House Farm in 1799. Cooks like Doll and Hercules typically rose at 4 a.m. and finished at 8 p.m. when they cleaned up the kitchen.

Enslaved people received a daily ration of about four cups of cornmeal and five to eight ounces of fish. After the fall hog slaughter, they got the less desirable cuts, like the pigs’ feet, jowls and ribs. Some could supplement their food by having their own gardens, raising chickens and hunting wild game.

The enslaved people who did not work in the mansion got four days off for Christmas and celebrated with games and family time, says Annette Ahrens, Senior Interpreter. “Archeological evidence suggests they may have brewed persimmon beer for the holidays. Also, archeological evidence suggests a mix of Christian, Muslim and traditional African practices among the enslaved people,” she offers.

The Washingtons celebrated the Christian 12 Days of Christmas, which involved feasts, fox hunts and other festivities. The twelfth night doubled as a wedding anniversary fete since the pair married on Jan. 6, 1759. Because they had a steady flow of visitors, George once called his home “a well-resorted tavern.”

An English visitor in 1777, Nicholas Cresswell, was impressed. “He keeps an excellent table,” Cresswell wrote.

**The kitchen hearth where enslaved cooks prepared meals over a fire.**

**Holiday Scenarios in the New Room**

PHOTO COURTESY  
MOUNT VERNON  
LADIES’ ASSOCIATION



Holiday table in the New Room: Twelfth Night cake topped with molded sugar swans.



The hedgehog cake.



Corn meal from Washington’s grist mill on sale at the Mount Vernon gift shop.

PHOTOS BY  
GLENDA BOOTH



The dessert pyramid with jellies.



In the visitor center, Kayleigh Seng and other interpreters show how people prepared chocolate for cooking, using a mano and a metate made of volcanic rock.



The great cake.



The Christmas pie.



Imported sugar came wrapped in paper and cone shaped.



They cured 200 hams and bacon a year in the smokehouse.



Martha Washington kept her spice caddy in her bedroom closet.

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Stop in between 11:00am and 2:00pm to sign up for your Silver Service Card from Senior Services of Alexandria that offers discounts to Alexandria Seniors 60 and over at many participating restaurants and retail businesses. Find the list at [seniorservicesalex.org](http://seniorservicesalex.org).

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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022

## DEC 1-23

"Snow Maiden." At Syntetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell St, Arlington. In a frozen forest, a lonely boy builds a girl from snow. When she mysteriously comes to life, mischief, laughter, and enchantment abound. But what will happen when the ice begins to melt? Told through dazzling movement, dance, and acrobatics, Snow Maiden is a magical tale of hope, friendship and the transformative power of dreams. Based on the beloved folktale Snegurochka, Snow Maiden is a holiday treat for friends and fans of all ages.

## DEC. 1-31

Home for the Holidays Art Show. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Works by local artists on display the entire month of December. Visit [www.artsherndon.org](http://www.artsherndon.org). Call 703-956-6590.

## DEC. 2-17

The PARC at Tysons Holiday Market. Fridays and Saturdays. Celebrate the holiday season with local makers, crafters, and artisans from the Fairfax County area! Visit the holiday market at The PARC at Tysons on the first three Fridays and Saturdays of December for a pop-up shop of local artisans and small businesses offering holiday-inspired goods. The PARC will be transformed into a festive indoors and outdoors winter village, featuring a local holiday market and (free!) snowtastic activities for the whole family to enjoy! Food and beverages can be purchased onsite from local businesses as well.

## DEC. 2-11

Traveling Players presents "Commedia Christmas Carol." Tickets are now available for "Commedia Christmas Carol," which runs Fridays-Sundays, Dec. 2- Dec. 11 at Traveling

Players Studio in Tysons Corner Center. Performed by Traveling Players middle and high school students, the play is a new imagining of Dickens' classic ghost story, a perfect holiday treat for the whole family. Visit <https://www.traveling-players.org/performances/>

## DEC. 2-18

Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 27th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2023 wall calendars to support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 2-4, Dec 9-11, Dec 16-18). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: [delrayartisans.org/holiday-market](http://delrayartisans.org/holiday-market)

## DEC. 2-11

Fairfax City Holiday Market. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Fairfax City Downtown Holiday Market will be open the first two weekends of December on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Shop at the market of craft vendors as you enjoy Old Town Square in the heart of Historic Downtown Fairfax covered in holiday lights. The festival will include live holiday music, hot drinks, heated tents and gourmet treats, and more!

## HOLIDAYS AT THE GRANGE

Saturday/Dec. 10. 3 p.m. Holiday Afternoon Tea.  
Sunday/Dec. 11. 4:30 p.m. Amadeus Presents Sounds of the Season. Visit the website: [www.gfgrange.org](http://www.gfgrange.org).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Wintermarkt. 12-7 p.m. Bringing the



PHOTO BY BRIAN KNAPP PHOTOGRAPHY

## A Christmas Carol

The Puppet Seller (Adiya Koram), Tiny Tim (Oliver Lankin), the Pie Seller (Pat Mahoney), Charlotte (Eleni Ruiz), and the Book Seller (Andrea Spitz) conspire to commit some light mischief in the spirit of Christmas in Ken Ludwig's "Tiny Tim's Christmas Carol," playing now through Dec. 17 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Tickets available at [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com)

Old World charm of Christmas in Europe to Herndon. Family-focused events, entertainment, and items for all members of the household. Downtown Herndon, 777 Lynn Street, Herndon. Visit [Herndon-wintermarkt.com](http://Herndon-wintermarkt.com) or call 571-323-5300.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Christmas Around the World. 4-8 p.m. At Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale. "Christmas Around the World," celebrating Jesus' birth features concerts, costumed reenactors, live animals, biblical stories. Tickets at [www.parkwood.org/registration](http://www.parkwood.org/registration) beginning Nov. 28. Free parking. Visit the website: [www.parkwood.org](http://www.parkwood.org)

## SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Cheer. 7:30 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington.

Presented by the National Chamber Ensemble. This program brings the finest classical masterpieces and traditional holiday favorites together for a fun and memorable evening for the entire family. Festivities begin with a "Sleigh Ride" - Leroy Anderson's classic and "Chanukkah Festival". Soprano Nancy Peery Marriott (soprano), a long-time NCE favorite, will perform seasonal favorites and lead a Carol Sing-along that will have the entire audience joining in the spirit of the holidays. Tickets: <https://www.nationalchamberensemble.org/tickets.htm>

## SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Christmas Carol Sing-Along. 3-5 p.m. Historic Pleasant Grove is holding its annual Christmas Carol Sing, followed by cookies and hot cider, at our quaint historic site. Free community event at 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Visit [www.historicpleasantgrove.org](http://www.historicpleasantgrove.org)

[HistoricPleasantGrove.org](http://HistoricPleasantGrove.org).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 10

Christmas Calamity Improv. 7-9:30 p.m. Come ring the bells! Improv with a seasonal twist! At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit [artsherndon.org](http://artsherndon.org). Tickets \$15. Call 703-956-6590.

## DEC. 10-11

"The Nutcracker." 4 p.m. At Centreville High School, Centreville. Presented by the Mia Saunders School of Ballet. Tickets available at the door or online for Saturday and Sunday shows for \$10 for children under 5 and \$12 for ages 6 & up. Proceeds benefit CVHS Drama Scholarships and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. More info at [MiaSaundersBallet.com](http://MiaSaundersBallet.com).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 11

Toys for Tots Concert. 6 p.m. At Vienne. SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR, PAGE 10



The Mia Saunders School of Ballet presents "The Nutcracker" on Dec. 10-11 at Centreville High School.



The Traveling Players presents "Commedia Christmas Carol" now thru Dec. 11 in Tysons Corner.



# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022

FROM PAGE 8

na Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. The Vienna Community Band is partnering with the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to celebrate 75 years of giving! There's no charge for admission. They ask you to bring a new unwrapped toy to the concert. All collected toys are distributed to children in Fairfax County. Visit <https://www.viennacommunity-band.org/>

## DEC. 10-18

"The Perfect Christmas List." At Richard J. Ernst Theater, NOVA Annandale Campus. Encore Theatrical Arts Project (ETAP) presents a glamorous and dazzling holiday musical that features 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, stunning costumes, and 20 musical numbers. Show dates: Saturday, December 10th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 11th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m.; Friday, December 16th at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 17th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 18th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m. Visit [www.encore-tap.org](http://www.encore-tap.org)

## SUNDAY/DEC. 11

Celtic Holiday Concert. 4-5 p.m. At St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Join in this annual concert by Karen Ashbrook and Friends. The popular duo (Karen Ashbrook & Paul Oorts) will be joined by cellist Sophie Chang featuring carols and music from Belgium, France, England and Germany. Paul Oorts, Belgian multi-instrumentalist, will share delightful childhood Flemish traditions of the season. The shimmering strings of the hammered dulcimer, harp guitar, cello, and the reeds of the accordion, ring in the holiday time of year! Funds collected from this concert will be split

between ECHO and the FACETS Hot Meals program. Website: [www.standrews.net](http://www.standrews.net)

## SUNDAY/DEC. 11

Brunch with Santa. At The Watermark Hotel, 1825 Capital One Drive South in Tysons Corner. Enjoy a bountiful and delicious brunch buffet with the season's most popular celebrity, Santa. Guests are invited to enjoy a jolly brunch including signature favorites like scrambled eggs, bacon, breakfast potatoes, sausage, and other delightful bites. During brunch, guests are invited to share their holiday wishes with Santa, take a photo with him, and enjoy the hotel's festive holiday decor. Seatings are available at 11:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 1:15 p.m., and 1:45 p.m. and pricing is \$49 for Adults, \$29 for children age 6-12. Children age 5 and under are complimentary.

## TUESDAY/DEC. 13

Holiday Concert Series. 8 p.m. Presented by Encore Creativity for older Adults. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria. Encore's local choral ensembles - Encore Chorales, Encore ROCKS and Sentimental Journey Singers - will perform crowd-pleasing holiday songs with live musical accompaniment in a variety of venues in Virginia. Visit the website: [encorecreativity.org/events/category/performance](http://encorecreativity.org/events/category/performance)

## THURSDAY/DEC. 15

When Christmas Hurts. 7-8 p.m. At St. John's Lutheran Church, 5952 Franconia Road, Alexandria. This is a service designed for all who may be experiencing this holiday season with hurt, grief, or sadness. All are welcome to attend in-person or virtually on Facebook Live. Visit the website: [www.sjlc.com](http://www.sjlc.com)

## FRIDAY/DEC. 16

Appalachian Bluegrass Christmas.

7-9:30 p.m. Music and readings with Shoestring Theatre, Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit [artsherndon.org](http://artsherndon.org). Tickets \$10. Call 703-956-6590.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Open for the Arts - Holiday Open House. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Children's activities with A Thousand Stories, Herndon Books Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit [artsherndon.org](http://artsherndon.org). Call 703-956-6590.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Wreaths Across America. Noon. Volunteer wreath laying ceremony honoring veterans. At Chestnut

Grove Cemetery, 831 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Visit [herndonwomansclub.org](http://herndonwomansclub.org). Call 703-435-3480

## DEC. 17-18

"The Nutcracker." 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Presented by Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet. The FSO production of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker is unique in the Washington, D.C. region to feature live, musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Home for the Holidays with the Treble

Clefs. 5-7 p.m. Join the Treble Clefs and Friends. Includes refreshments and a special visitor. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit [artsherndon.org](http://artsherndon.org) or call 703-956-6590.

## SATURDAY/DEC. 31

New Year's Eve Golf Tournament. 10 a.m. Shotgun start. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. Entry deadline December 26. At Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon. Cost is \$80 per player. Call 703-471-5769 or visit [herndongolf.com](http://herndongolf.com).

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## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

cial crisis, now more than ever. This will be especially true during this Holiday Season. To give back, Able Forces Foundation (AFF) is once again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Warrior Family Christmas program. As in years past, Able Forces Foundation will adopt families from each of the five Military Service branches. All adopted families are identified by military Advocates on military bases or military Recovery programs in the Washington, DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF. Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have:

- A Christmas Tree
- Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8)
- Stocking Stuffers
- the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child

100% of all donations go directly to support this program. There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go

to: [www.ableforces.org/adopt](http://www.ableforces.org/adopt) to make a contribution.

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. [www.volunteerallexandria.org](http://www.volunteerallexandria.org)

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/ALIVE>

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10



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## BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 9

Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsOfAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfAMHC@gmail.com).

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil ([Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov)) at 703-324-4547.

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to [cancer.org/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

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

Arts and Crafts Festival. Volunteers are needed on June 10 to help with the event including: greet and check-in vendors, children's area, clean up and tear down and beer tent. Shifts are available between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Visit [www.volunteerallexandria.org/](http://www.volunteerallexandria.org/) for more.



# CALENDAR



**Take a Holiday Candlelight Tour of Mount Vernon Estate Dec. 9, 10 and 18.**

## NOW THRU DEC. 29

**An Eye for Nature Exhibition.** At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Nina Tisara and Steven Halperson have teamed up for an exhibition of Tisara's mosaic art and Halperson's fine art photography. The exhibit may be seen from 10 a.m. to noon, Mondays and Tuesdays and 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursdays except for Thanksgiving. To schedule other hours contact [ninat@nina-tisara.com](mailto:ninat@nina-tisara.com).

## NOW THRU JAN. 8, 2023

**The Botanical Gourmet.** Presented by the Botanical Arts Society of the National Capital Region. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. For eons, animals ranging from massive leaf-eating dinosaurs to minuscule nectar sipping insects have been attuned to the healthful benefits of a plant-based diet. For their part, plants have enlisted the help of animals by attracting them with visual and other cues for purposes of reproduction. These interactions, while necessary, are purely transactional. They lack the aesthetic spirit. That's where botanical artists step in. Botanical art is neither scientific illustration nor decorative floral composition, but an engaging combination of the two. Like blue jays or cabbage moths, botanical artists are drawn to shiny red berries and bright yellow flowers, but unlike other creatures, they have the means to depict their attraction. The works in this exhibit focus specifically on plants that have health-giving nutritional properties for people.

## DEC. 2-18

**Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market.** At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Offers unique hand-made fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2023 wall calendars to support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Market is Dec. 9-11, Dec. 16-18. Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: [delrayartisans.org/holiday-market](http://delrayartisans.org/holiday-market)

## DEC. 9, 10, 18

**Holiday Candlelight Tour.** At Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Experience the holidays like George and Martha Washington. Meet Mrs. Washington and 18th-century Mount Vernon residents during a 45-minute candlelit estate tour, see the themed Christmas trees, and shop for holiday gifts.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 11

**Washington Philharmonic.** 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Featuring Anna Binneweg, conductor; Michael Stephen Brown, piano Beethoven: Coriolan Overture, Op. 62 Michael Stephen Brown: Concerto for Piano and Strings Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

## MONDAY/DEC. 12

**Have you ever experienced Aurora Borealis?** Start [www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

off the season with this magical ultra violet art class with resident artist Mirela. Pop on by on Monday, Dec. 12 for a colorful evening of painting with resident artist Mirela. Reservations are required and seating is limited. Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/palette-22-art-sip-winter-aurora-borealis-tickets-462632455127?aff=Dec22Email>

## DEC. 16 AND 17

**Christmas Illuminations.** At Historic Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Celebrate the holidays with friends and family during an enchanted evening that includes illuminations, fireworks on the Potomac, Christmas carolers, 18th-century wares and crafts, Aladdin the Camel, and season's greetings by General Washington.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 16

**West Potomac High School Lady Wolverine Youth Night.** West Potomac girls basketball swings into action on Friday, Dec. 16 at its Wolverdome gym. Play between West Potomac and South County will include three games:

Freshmen Game - 4:30 p.m.

Junior Varsity Game - 5:45 p.m.

Varsity Game - 7:30 p.m.

All youth enter free (with a paying adult) and can enjoy games and prizes at half time of every game. Plus, there will be an autograph session after the varsity game.

## THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).

## DECEMBER

Thu. 8: An Acoustic Christmas with Over The Rhine \$45.00

Fri. 9: Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio \$29.50

Sat. 10: Pieces of A Dream \$45.00

Sun. 11: Karla Bonoff & Livingston Taylor "Home for the Holidays" \$45.00

Mon. 12: Samantha Fish w/ The Jesse Dayton Band \$45.00 SOLD OUT!

Tue. 13: Storm Large: Holiday Ordeal \$59.50

Thu. 15: Carbon Leaf \$45.00

Fri. 16: Carbon Leaf \$45.00 SOLD OUT!

Sat. 17: Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes \$49.50

Sun. 18: LUTHER RE-LIVES Holiday Concert featuring William "Smooth" Wardlaw \$45.00

Tue. 20: Samara Joy "A Joyful Holiday" \$39.50 SOLD OUT!

Wed. 21: A John Waters Christmas \$59.50

Thu. 22: MAYSA - A Very MAYSA Christmas! \$69.50

Fri. 23: Charles Esten w/ N'est Pas \$59.50

Thu. 29: Bela Dona Band \$35.00

Fri. 30: 25th Annual HANK WILLIAMS Tribute with Robin & Linda Williams, Daryl Davis, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Patrick McAvinue, & Alex Lacquement \$35.00

Sat. 31: New Years Eve with The Seldom Scene, Eastman String Band, & Wicked Sycamore -8pm- \$49.50

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**Mount Vernon Gazette**  
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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

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.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>

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# "IN THE GRASP"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Recent emails have prompted this column.) "In the grasp" is a football expression most often associated with quarterbacks being "sacked," (a defensive player having a secure hold of the quarterback). This basically means that the play is over/"the play is dead." It could also characterize an online scam. (I should know.) It occurs when you are speaking with someone at the end of an 800 number who is asking for remote control of your computer to install, upgrade, download, upload, and/or fix whatever computer problem precipitated this call. You're asking/need help and consequently, you might be putting yourself at risk.

I experienced this circumstance one time and it nearly cost me \$3,000. I responded to an online solicitation that seemed to offer a reward/payout for something. It seemed harmless enough, so I made the call. Given how our consuming patterns have evolved with the internet, responding to emails from mostly familiar brands and buying some of what they're selling, "cyber-Monday" comes to mind, is how much of our consuming is done these days. And of course, you pay with a credit card to complete the transaction. However, sometimes the solicitations/sites are not what they purport to be. It's difficult to discern, occasionally, whether "it's live or if its Memorex." Sometimes, it's hard to tell fact from fiction/ to know what's real or what's not (dangerous). (Beginning in the 70s, Memorex advertised Ella Fitzgerald "scatting" into a microphone, live, and showing a glass breaking from her sound. Then they played their recording from the performance and again the wine glass shattered. And then the voice-over asked: "Is it live or Memorex?"

I think this is what happened to me when "I was in the grasp" after multiple hours on the phone. My innocent inquiry into the "real" offer lead me down more than just a garden path. Instead, it led very nearly to my bank - to pay the piper. It all started innocently enough (so I thought) with me giving control of my computer to this voice on the other end of the phone to process the purchase/payment due me. The payment was made to my bank, and I was told to go online and check my account. When I looked, I noticed a \$3,000 (not \$30) deposit. They made a mistake or so it seemed. Still on the phone with this far-away person, he admitted they made a mistake and to receive my real reward, I needed to repay them the \$3,000. I suggested that they simply retrieve the money the same way they deposited it. He said they couldn't do that - for whatever reason, and that I needed to repay them, this time said with a bit more urgency. I began to sense that I was being manipulated and slowed my roll accordingly.

Unfortunately, they sped up their roll and said if I didn't repay them, blah, blah, blah. I didn't agree and then their grip/manipulation got tighter. Having control of my computer, he deleted all my icons. I couldn't quite figure out what they were doing. Then when I asked for the icons to be returned, the scam took a nastier turn. He said, he was going to "lock" my computer unless I repaid the \$3,000. Being into the second hour of this negotiation, I began to get nervous - and flustered, realizing that unless I paid this ransom, my computer and all its memories would be gone, and since my computer is my business (and I have minimal computer skills/knowledge), I acquiesced and asked how what I should do to resolve this matter. He said I need to go to my bank and get a certified check (payable to whom I don't remember) and then go to a local Western Union office near me home and wire them the money. Now I officially realized that I was in trouble/at risk of losing this \$3,000. With no alternatives, so far as I knew (which wasn't very far), I went outside and got into my car and started driving to my bank, while still on the cell phone with this "solicitor." About halfway there, I decided I didn't want to be a victim and so I told the man I was not going to pay him. He got mad and said he "was going to lock my computer," (I determined that the \$3,000 payment would be more harmful to me than the computer lock). I turned the car around and returned home to find out if I had suffered any consequences for not paying. Sure enough, when I got home, I tried to turn on the computer, but I found it impossible to do so. Apparently, this man was indeed a man of his word, as far as locking my computer is concerned anyway. Now, whenever I receive emails from unfamiliar sites, they remain unseen. I learned my lesson, very nearly the hard way (unlocking the computer simply required a trip to Best Buy, computer in hand and to pay a fee for unlocking services rendered). I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer but thankfully I'm not the dullest, either.

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





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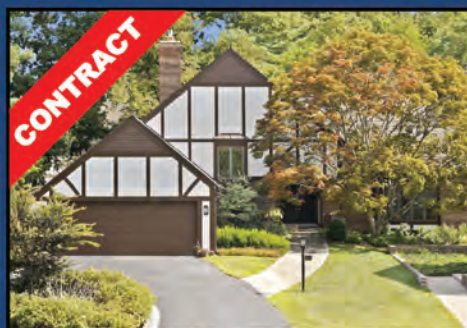
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