

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 12, 2023

## Mount Vernon Sees a Lot in 2022

A few noteworthy events are a sample of the community growth.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

There were many changes and additions in Mount Vernon over the past year. Here's a quick look at a few items of interest.

### Speed Study

Early in 2022, traffic engineers from the Virginia Department of Transportation and

Fairfax County did a speed limit study on Richmond Highway as a precursor to future development and transportation improvements for this busy thoroughfare in Mount Vernon.

There were numerous pedestrian accidents in this stretch of road.

This \$200,000 study is assessing the 45 MPH speed limit on about eight miles of Richmond Highway between Belvoir Road/Meade Road and the Beltway to improve safety for all users, VDOT said.



From left, Rep. Don Beyer (D-8th), Arlington Board member Katie Cristol, Judd Isbell, Sup. Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon), Superintendent Charles Cuvelier and Alexandria council member Sarah Bagley take in the moment.

### MV Trail Turns 50

It was 1971 when Ellen Pickering and Barbara Lynch thought up the idea for the Mount Vernon Bike Trail along the Potomac River, and their efforts were highlighted at the 50th anniversary celebration on Saturday, April 16. Judd Isbell, the president of the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail repeated

their mantra: 'We were just two women that said 'why don't we' and we did.' In April, there was a big gathering along the trail to mark the anniversary. A few months following this, a new bridge opened along the trail near Fort Hunt Park, improving the ride for many.

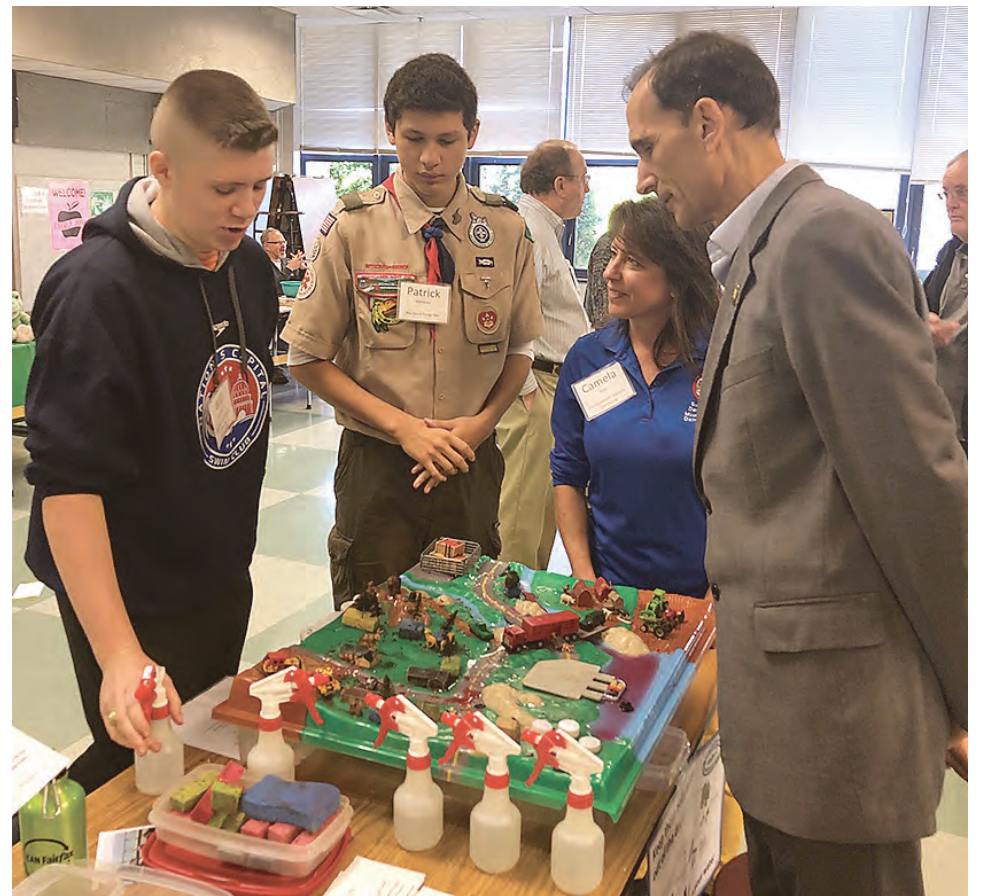


The pig is in his cage for at least 10 days.

### Bike To Work Day

Bicyclists came out in mid-May to celebrate another Bike to Work Day, hitting the well-mapped trail system throughout Mount Vernon to get to work. There were several "pit stops," set up along the route where coffee and morning snacks were handed out to

those who signed up. The whole biking to work concept is being hailed in recent years as a way to fight traffic, but it's also a facet of the Embark Richmond Highway plan that Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) and others have supported.



Supervisor Storck discusses an exhibit with local scouts at a past environmental expo in Mount Vernon.

### County Climate Study

Last winter a Climate Projections Report was released by Fairfax County, and the look ahead to the extreme heat, heavy precipitation and inland flooding was part of a potentially bleak future. Rising sea levels would impact the parts of the county right along the Potomac River, and the Mount Vernon

District might be the first to experience this.

According to the report, there could be a water level rise by 2050, and by 2085, the higher scenario suggests that most days of the summer will reach temperatures at or above 90 degrees.

SEE MOUNT VERNON SEES, PAGE 5

## 2 Young People Die In Fairfax Station Crash

Two juveniles died, and one teen was seriously injured in a single-vehicle crash that occurred last night in Fairfax Station.

At 9:26 p.m. dispatchers received an emergency crash notification in the 7400 block of Lee Chapel Road. Officers searched the area and found a 2019 Lexus IS350 off of the road. Fire and rescue personnel extricated one victim, who was taken to a nearby hospital with injuries considered life-threatening. Two other occupants of the Lexus were declared deceased at the scene.

Preliminarily, detectives determined

the driver was traveling north on Lee Chapel Road. As the sedan crested a hill, the driver lost control, left the roadway and the vehicle came to rest on its roof. Preliminarily, detectives believe speed was a factor in the crash. Alcohol was not a factor in the crash.

Per Virginia Code 19.2-11.2, police departments are prohibited from providing information about juvenile victims unless parental consent is provided. The code prohibits Virginia law enforcement agencies from directly or indirectly identifying deceased juvenile victims of a crime.



# People Over Platform

A SAMPLING OF TESTIMONIALS FROM MY 2022 BUYERS & SELLERS



"Tracy strikes an excellent balance between listening to what her clients want and offering her honest, experienced opinion. It was a pleasure working with her the whole way! She took the time we needed to hone in on the right neighborhood for us in Alexandria." – Drew C.



"From day one Tracy seemed to understand our goals for the property. She connected us to local resources and when our Plan A didn't pan out for selling our home, she provided a Plan B and set us up with everything we needed to execute. The staging service she provided as well did a fantastic job. The home had never looked better. Could not have been more pleased. Really, truly exceptional service." – Greg C.



"Couldn't have asked for a better experience. Knowledgeable and responsive, Tracy sets the standard for real estate professionals! Even in a challenging market, she helped us get the home we wanted quickly and within our price point. Definitely recommended!" – Kaitlin & Jake K.



"Tracy was extremely helpful, knowledgeable, patient, and provided localized information to help us purchase a home. She took the time to learn about our needs, preferences, and goals as we searched. She has an incredible network of professionals to help along the process from financial support to home repair professionals. You get more than an agent with Tracy Dunn, you get an instant community and a deeper understanding of your new neighborhood." – Maggie & Matt R.



"Tracy is the absolute best. She has a gift for getting to know her clients and works hard for their best interest. She goes above and beyond to make sure every step of the home buying process is perfect and she is an excellent communicator. She has our highest recommendation!" – Cameron & Ross C.



"Tracy is easily the most knowledgeable/skilled, proactive and responsive real estate agent I have worked with in over 40 years of my experience with purchasing and selling of properties! She actively researched and pursued listings on the market, including those that were coming up in the near future, to meet our specific needs and desires. Tracy didn't try to sell us on a house that wasn't the right one for us. She stays one step ahead of every facet of the buying process. Tracy is a TRUE PROFESSIONAL, having an exuberant personality and knows endless contacts to make the home buying process enjoyable and extremely efficient!" – Denny & Sue M.



"Patient and trustworthy advisor who knows about things before they happen. Unmatched insight into the local market. Would trust her for any real estate transactions. Takes the time to understand what you want and need and navigates you through the market to find the perfect fit. For selling, she offers outstanding strategies and guidance." – Liam & Amy A.



"Tracy was the perfect project manager for my condo sale. She came highly recommended and answered my first, and every, call. Right away I knew I reached the right person. With her team including Jeff and Saul, she made it feel easy for me to close within about 35 days from reaching out." – Lee L.



"Tracy was an absolute pleasure to work with as our real estate agent! She was very energetic and enthusiastic about helping us as home buyers. Tracy is a master on all things Fort Hunt (22308), she helped us throughout the home buying process from house hunting to closing (explaining all of the steps in between to ensure we stayed on track for closing), and she was responsive and easy to communicate with. I will be recommending her to anyone who needs a real estate agent in the area." – Gary & Andrea K.



"We first met Tracy after having a negative experience with our previous realtor. From the first phone call with Tracy we knew she was going to be the perfect realtor for us. With such a volatile market, and us being forced to buy sight unseen, she eased all concerns and worked tirelessly. She never made us feel as if we were a bother and explained each step as we went through the process. What stood out to us was the genuine care and work ethic. Always willing to view houses for us, extremely responsive to all of our many questions, and overall a kind hearted person. If not for Tracy we would not have found our dream home!" – Jen & Joe M.



"If you want to live in Waynewood, you want Tracy!! She grew up here, and has a huge heart for this community, and all of the amazing people and things it has to offer. She took the time to get to know us, helped us be able to clarify what was important to us, and then jumped through every single hoop to help us get it!! She's fast!! She thinks ten steps ahead, and knows her stuff in ways that will amaze you-plus, she has a huge heart, and will love you and treat you as family!! She continues to help and support us through our renovation, with her amazing connections. And to top it off, we know we have a friend for life." – Jamie & Laramie B.

## Wishing Everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

My deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to all my clients for trusting me to serve you in a job I love and helping me reach over \$22 million in sales in 2022. If you are considering a move this year, call me to discuss your options.



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# NEWS

## System in Crisis

Lawmakers to consider sweeping effort to transform behavioral health care.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

When Natasha McKenna was taken into custody by Alexandria Police in January 2015, the city's approach to handling people in the midst of a mental-health crisis was put to the test. Alexandria failed the test. Instead of receiving the services she needed to start a path to recovery, she was taken to INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital, and she eventually ended up in the Fairfax County jail, where she died after sheriff's deputies hit her with a Taser multiple times. Instead of celebrating her 45th birthday this week, her death eight years ago is yet another example of a broken system that repeatedly fails people in crisis.

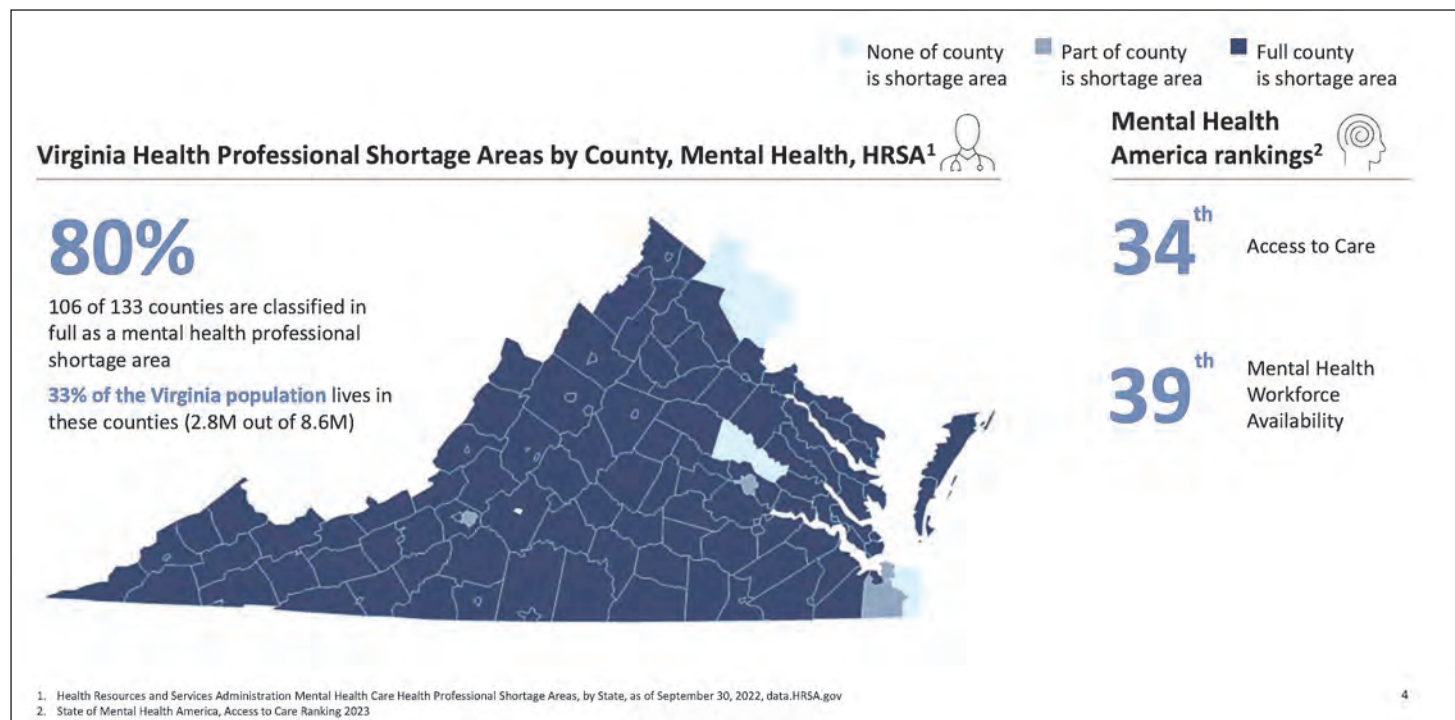
"I used to think that with mental health, you could move a few deck chairs around and add a few dollars to solve the problem," said state Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-25), whose son tragically died during a mental-health crisis in 2013. "What I've come to realize is the bigger issue is that over the long haul we've chronically underfunded mental health to such an extent that it's going to require a massive influx of dollars."

The crisis is not new, although the newly available \$3.6 billion surplus is creating a new opportunity to do something about it. Last month, Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin outlined a series of steps he wants to take with members of the General Assembly to transform Virginia's behavioral health system. The \$230 million proposal includes everything from mobile crisis teams and crisis receiving centers to expanding mental health education in public schools and expanding tele-health services. In a speech outlining his proposal, he said this may end up being one of the most important issues he faces during his time as governor.

**ONE OF THE MOST** significant challenges to confronting the crisis is knowing which crisis to confront. When people talk about problems with mental health, sometimes what they are actually talking about is a developmental disability or substance-use disorder. Experts who work in this field stress that those are different issues and mixing them together is counterproductive. For example, one of the action items for the governor is creating mobile crisis units. Advocates who work in this field stress that Virginia needs separate mobile crisis units for people with developmental disabilities.

"Mental illness is something that you can cure or treat but developmental or intel-

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### Right Help, Right Now Proposal

- ❖ \$58 million to increase the number of crisis receiving centers and crisis stabilization units
- ❖ \$57 million for 500 additional Medicaid Waiver Priority 1 waitlist slots
- ❖ \$20 million to fund more than 30 new mobile crisis teams
- ❖ \$20 million for partnerships with hospitals for alternatives to emergency departments for crisis
- ❖ \$15 million to expand the elementary, middle and high school-based mental health program to dozens of new communities
- ❖ \$15 million in opioid abatement initiatives including a campaign to reduce fentanyl poisoning among youth
- ❖ \$9 million to expand tele-behavioral health services in public schools and on college campuses
- ❖ \$9 million for transportation and in-hospital monitoring by law enforcement and other personnel
- ❖ \$8 million for Serious Mental Illness housing, creating 100 new placements for SMI patients with extraordinary barriers to discharge

lectual disabilities are something that you are born with and that you can't cure. And they're not treated the same," said Brian Kelmar, who founded a nonprofit known as Legal Reform for the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled. "Just because you understand mental illness doesn't mean you also have an expertise on autism or other developmental disabilities."

Similarly, people who suffer from substance-use disorder are an entirely separate category that requires a different set of training and resources. For many years, people have conflated substance-use disorder with mental health crisis in a way that drains the system of resources where they are needed. That's why lawmakers in southwest Virginia are trying to transform Catawba Hospital into a facility that also includes a state-of-the-art facility for treating substance-use disorders and helping people with recovery. The idea is that the facility could be replicated in other parts of Virginia after it proves the concept in Roanoke.

"Half of our mental health beds in the western part of Virginia are currently occupied with those suffering from substance use disorder," said Del. Sam Rasoul (D-11), who is leading the charge to add a substance-use disorder facility in Roanoke. "Just imagine if we were able to effectively treat folks the right way how many of our mental health beds could be freed up."

**THE CRISIS-FIRST APPROACH** outlined by the governor aims to make sure people who are most in need of help get it when it's most critical. To accomplish this, he wants to set a goal of making sure same-day care is available for people in a mental-health crisis. To achieve this objective, Youngkin wants to double the number of mobile crisis units and increase the number of crisis receiving center slots by 50 percent and boost short-term crisis beds by more than 25 percent. The entry point of the new approach is the 988 Crisis Hotline, giving people an easy-to-remember phone number they can call when

crisis services are needed immediately.

"This plan will improve crisis care by expanding capacity for those in immediate need while also helping Virginians before they reach the crisis point," said Del. Rob Bell (R-58), chairman of the influential Courts of Justice Committee. "I'm hopeful that we can make a real difference for those who are most in need."

Another key part of the reform effort is easing the burden on law-enforcement officers, who are often at the front lines of responding to calls for help. The average law-enforcement officer in Virginia spends 51 hours on a temporary detention order while the person in crisis waits for help. The solution to this, he says, is to spend more money on law-enforcement personnel who are dedicated to this issue. In addition, he wants to make sure alternative custody sites are available as well as transportation to get there and in-hospital monitoring for when these people arrive.

Police encounters with people experiencing a mental health crisis sometimes don't end well. In July, Jasper Aaron Lynch, 26, of McLean, was shot and killed by Fairfax County Police during a mental health crisis. Even though a behavioral health specialist responded with police initially, the team couldn't locate Lynch. Police responded to a second call later but the behavioral health counselor was no longer available, offering an example of the critical need for the right resources at the right time.

"This is a massive undertaking of the entire behavioral health system and continuum of care," said Secretary of Health and Human Resources John Littell. "Typically, mental health efforts in the Commonwealth only last one year and target a single area of the problem. We have a multi-year plan that takes on every facet of the system. This is the first time Virginia is doing this."



## HISTORY

# Horses and Cows Were Common around Mount Vernon

The Gazette was delivered on horseback at one point.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

When a thief stole Tim Chester's bike back in 1980, he hopped on his Chestnut horse named Whiskey, and continued his paper route, delivering the Alexandria Gazette to the 35 homes in Hybla Valley on horseback. It was 42 years ago and riding a horse around that part of Mount Vernon wasn't the norm, but simpler times and fewer cars on the road made it possible.

"Sold my minibike and bought Whiskey," he said. "Horses are more of a luxury these days," he added.

Years ago, the Alexandria Gazette was a daily newspaper, and it was delivered up and down Richmond Highway. There were a few farms, stables and cows grazing in fields that are now communities. Popkins Farm was located where the Mount Vernon Hospital is these days and it had dairy cows in the 1950s and 1960s. Along Pole Road and Jeff Todd Way, cows grazed along Dogue Creek in an area that is now apartments.

Another farm off Riverside Road boarded local horses, and Chester had a friend that kept her horse there and rode in Fort Hunt Park. "She rode her horse English," Chester said, referring to a style of saddle and the way it was used. There was also Tamarack Farm in Mount Vernon that had lessons and boarding, one person said.

Chester said there were some rules, but those with horses were grandfathered in, so they could still take them on the local roads and trails in Mount Vernon.

Chester was a graduate of Fort Hunt High School in 1979 and ended up buying a 1967 Camaro after the horse. He took riding lessons at the Woodlawn Stable while in school, and is now getting ready to retire from UPS where he has been a delivery driver for years.

"It was something back then," he said.



This is Melody Blake Eastridge in the mid-sixties on a pony ride at Bucknell Manor. A pony attendant would walk the pony around the neighborhood and took photographs for purchase, she said.



Others took part in the pony rides at Bucknell Manor, such as Terri Anderson Miller, pictured here.



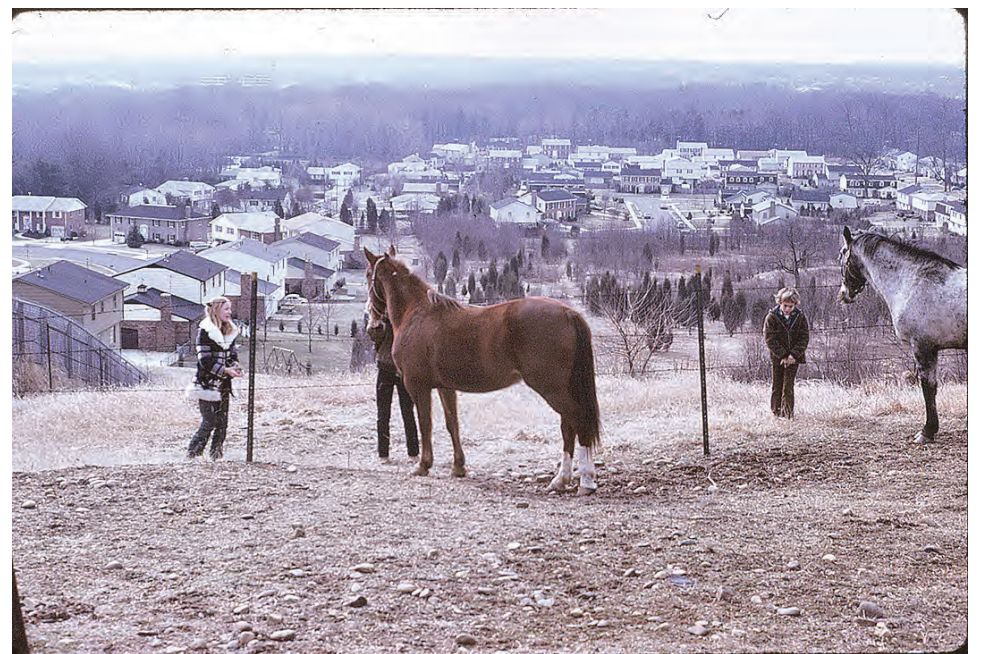
HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

Mount Vernon Resident Superintendent Charles C. Wall on horseback on the Mansion circle at Mount Vernon in February, 1962.

### Horse History

Others remembered other aspects of the horse days around Mount Vernon. In some neighborhoods, people didn't like the horse manure that was left around, said Missy Smith, who remembered that they even put up "no horseback riding" signs in a nearby park. "They only lasted there a couple of weeks," she said.

Jim Neitzey's father was a carpenter at the Mount Vernon estate for years, and Neitzey recalled the amount of horseback riding that went on at the plantation. The



Popkins Farm overlooked housing and the construction of the Mount Vernon Hospital in the distance.

director was a man known as "Mr. Wall," Neitzey said, and sometimes President John F. Kennedy would come down and ride, he said.

Charles Cecil Wall was resident director of Mount Vernon for 39 years, from 1937 until 1976.

Current resident George Collier mucked the stalls at Briary Farm in the mid 1970s when Walt Whitman Middle School was Stephen Foster Middle School. Briary Farm was near the current hospital.

Woodlawn Stables were a big part of everyone's horse memories. Riding lessons and boarding were the norm at Woodlawn until around 2014, when the highway widening project pushed through and the stables were relocated. Owners Cindy Mitchell and her mother Joan moved the horses about 60 miles out to Claddagh Farm in Jeffersonton, Virginia, and that was the last of the commercial stables in Mount Vernon.

There is still a stable at Fort Hunt Park for the park police.

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Training goes on inside the welding classroom.

## WISH Center Opens

In another step to improve the lives of many that live in and around the Audubon Estates in Mount Vernon, officials opened WISH Center in October that will act as a catalyst for job skills training to improve the incomes in this part of Hybla Valley. WISH stands for the Workforce Innovation Skills Hub and it offers training in tech industries that pay better than retail and service-based jobs that many in the Richmond Highway area are employed in.

## Pedestrian Deaths

Over the past year, the Richmond Highway area has been dangerous to pedestrians and a couple of people have been killed crossing this busy road. Authorities have taken note of these fatalities, providing funding to improve lighting and sidewalks in some of these areas to improve safety. Fairfax County saw a record high number of pedestrians killed by drivers in 2022.

# Mount Vernon Sees a Lot in 2022



Bicyclists gear up for the Tour de Mount Vernon.

## Tour de Mount Vernon

The Tour de Mount Vernon brings cyclists on a fun ride through the southern and central portions of the Mount Vernon District including a scenic route through Fort Belvoir. The route consisted of paved roads, paved trails and

had several challenging sections. Ride monitors and Fairfax County Police helped with directions and kept everyone safe. This year, there was a 19-mile route and a 38-mile route for the real cyclists.

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## Budgeting Is a Careful Balancing Act

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

In December, Gov. Glenn Youngkin proposed amendments to the state's two-year budget. While he did include some laudable proposals, he also continued to promote some unacceptable strategies.

Virginia's revenue picture continues to be very positive, but many of our advisors have indicated that our revenue gains could be ephemeral. First, inflation continues to be up and when things cost more, people spend more and employers give raises to keep up with inflation. Since Virginia's General Fund is largely funded by sales and income taxes, our revenues are up compared to some past years.

### Support Teachers and Police Officers

The Governor proposed another \$50 million for his "lab school" experiment, an approach that is actually another attempt to divert funds away from our public schools. He also proposed teacher retention bonuses. I believe these funds should be structured as raises that permanently increase teacher pay instead of one-time raises for one year only.

My caucus will try to focus more

funding on secondary and post-secondary education, as they try to address the pandemic's adverse impacts and expand educational opportunities for all students. Unfortunately, we have not adequately funded raises for teachers, police or other public employees to keep up with inflation or private sector salary rates. The state government currently has a record-high 17 percent staff vacancy rate, in part because of non-competitive salaries and the Governor's directive prohibiting any of the state's 106,000 employees from working from home without the personal approval of his chief of staff. Law enforcement staff across the Commonwealth continue to have 10-20 percent vacancy rates. We must pay our public employees better or we will continue to see attrition which erodes services that taxpayers expect.

Most disturbing is the Governor's proposed expenditure of \$50,000 to apparently cover costs associated with some type of new abortion ban. Longstanding Virginia law requires all new felonies or bills that expand existing



Surovell

felonious conduct to be contingent upon appropriating \$50,000 for new prisoner costs and it appears the Governor included this in his budget in anticipation of new abortion restrictions. No legislation restricting women's healthcare decision-making will pass the Virginia Senate. A ban is unacceptable.

### No to Corporate Tax Cuts

The Governor proposed \$1 billion in new tax cuts by putting corporate tax rate at 5 percent, a rate that is lower than the 5.75 percent rate paid by individuals. Unlike individuals, most businesses already benefit from deductions, depreciation and other policies that lower the actual amount they pay in taxes. In addition, our economic advisors have cautioned us against making significant changes to how we fund the state government because some predict a likely recession in the next year. I will fight unsound tax cuts for corporations.

### More for Mental Health

The Governor did propose \$230 million of major new spending on behavioral or mental health. The

Senate Democratic Caucus proposed a similar measure last session, but it was sacrificed due to the Governor's demand for \$2 billion in tax cuts. I am sure we can find common ground on this important priority as the shortage of mental health services continues to be a crisis. He also proposed \$100 million for Richmond's massive raw sewage problem, a worthwhile proposal that I support. The city needs state help to end this pollution.

Last year's sales tax cut also created a \$700 million hole in our six-year plan for transportation projects that we need to fill.

State budgeting should also recognize potential impacts of the Federal Reserve's actions. Home sales are declining - which fund grantors' taxes - and the economy could begin to slow down as interest rates reduce borrowing and consumer spending. We must prepare and not set ourselves up for shortfalls by baking long-term tax cuts into our budget.

The legislature will convene on Jan. 11 in Richmond. In the coming weeks, I will report on proposals that I will carry this session. Please share your views and suggestions with me at [scott@scottsuovell.org](mailto:scott@scottsuovell.org)

## Continuing To Push on Crucial, Progressive Priorities

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN  
MEMBER, 30TH SENATE DISTRICT

The General Assembly gavelled into the 2023 legislative session on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at noon. We began the session just one day after three special elections occurred across Virginia. In the House, the partisan makeup remains unchanged at 52 Republicans and 48 Democrats, with Delegate-elect Holly Seibold (D-Fairfax) replacing former Delegate Mark Keam, who resigned from his seat to join the Biden Administration, and Delegate-elect Ellen Hamilton Campbell (R-Rockbridge) succeeding her late husband, former Delegate Ronnie Campbell, who sadly passed away from cancer in December.

In a hotly contested race to replace former senator, now Congresswoman Jen Kiggans in Virginia Beach, Democrat Aaron Rouse defeated Republican candidate Kevin Adams. I look forward to welcoming Senator-Elect Rouse to Richmond this week, where his swearing in will expand our Democratic majority to 22-18.

With this split legislature and a Republican executive branch, I expect the session will play out much like the 2022 session - in which compromise on non-partisan issues created some incremental progress, and tie-breaking votes moved forward portions of the Governor's agenda, creating unnecessary and deleterious backslides.

My legislative agenda contains a number of pragmatic, nonpartisan proposals to benefit the 30th District, including battling inland flooding, regulating intentionally loud modified car mufflers, protecting the privacy of our genetic data information, and protecting election officials from harassment and intimidation. But I will also continue to push on crucial, progressive priorities including the regulation marijuana sales, gun violence prevention, and LGBT marriage equality. For these proposals to become law this year, it will require political courage from members of the legislature to vote



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their conscience.

Nevertheless, I am hopeful that over the next 46 days, my colleagues and I will make significant progress for Virginians. We expect to hear up to 2,000 pieces of legislation and will amend the second year of our biennial budget. The Governor laid out his priorities in early December and provided the Money Committees with a starting point. I feel strongly that the Governor's proposals fall short in many areas, continuing to prioritize tax gimmicks over funding of core services like public education. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make meaningful investments in the needs of the Commonwealth as a whole, rather than reducing taxes for major corporations and the wealthiest Virginians.

I also expect that my Democratic Senate colleagues and I will have our work cut out for us defending the progress Virginia has made over the last several years. Already we have seen bills filed to restrict

reproductive rights, siphon public dollars to private schools, and discriminate against transgender students. I look forward to working with my colleagues, and using my new chairmanship over the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee to both move forward the operation and efficiency of Virginia government, and to defeat any antiquated, backwards proposals and defend our shared priorities and rights.

It is my continued honor to serve the 30th District.

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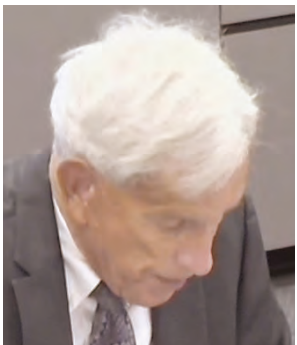
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Senate Majority Leader Richard L. Saslaw (D-District 35) chairs the public hearing.



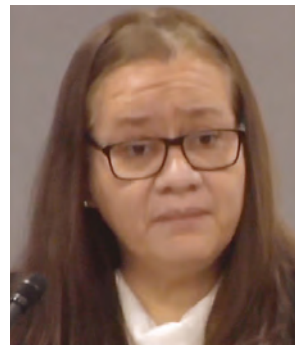
Jeffrey C. McKay, chairman of the the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



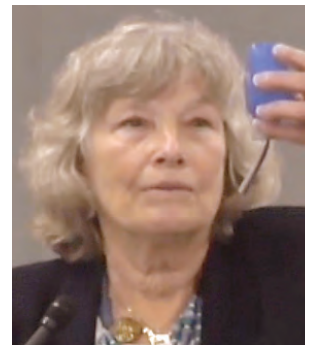
Rachna Sizemore Heizer, chair of the Fairfax County School Board



Michelle Jefferson of Springfield and chair of the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board



Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso, a Falls Church resident and member of CAAB



Susan Laume of Springfield represents the VA Dog Army.



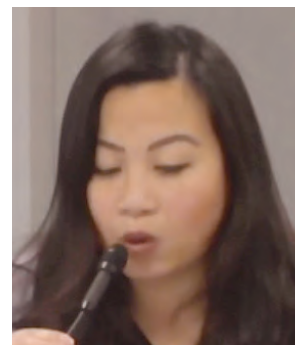
Paul Berry of Reston



Arthur Purves, FXCO Tax-payers Alliance



David Broder, SEIU Virginia 512



Natalia Nguyen-Woodruff of Fairfax, union member of SEIU Virginia 512



Jennifer Tidd, Neuro-divergent Liberation Coalition

# Fairfax Delegation Hears Residents' Concerns

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Funding for serious mental health issues, affordable and low-income housing, gun measures, \$1 million in funding dedicated to English language learning that is disappearing, and the tragic pedestrian deaths of students making their way to and from Fairfax County Public Schools are just some the concerns brought forward by county individuals and groups to the Fairfax County Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly recently. They highlight and represent the need for action at the Commonwealth level to support making communities safer, healthier, and more economically secure with equitable education for all families and individuals who call Fairfax County home.

The 2023 regular Legislative Session of the Virginia General Assembly begins on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023 in Richmond. On Saturday, Jan. 7, nearly 45 Fairfax County residents testified at a public hearing before the county's delegation to the General Assembly, held at the County Government Center.

Senate Majority Leader Richard L. Saslaw (D-35) chaired the public hearing. "This is the first time in three years that we've held an in-person meeting of this type, ...and quite frankly, it's good to be back here again," Saslaw said. He introduced guest speakers Jeffrey



The Fairfax Delegation to the General Assembly

C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Rachna Sizemore Heizer, chair of the Fairfax County School Board.

## Highlights of Testimony to the Fairfax County

Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly

Chairman McKay focused on three issues. The first was Gov. Youngkin's proposed 1 percent retention bonus for teachers. The proposal would provide state funding of approximately \$4.3 million

in FY 2024 while requiring \$15.5 million in local Fairfax County funding.

"This can be extremely confusing to our public when raises require approximately 82 percent local funding and only provide 18 percent state funding," McKay said.

Behavioral health funding is critically important, McKay said. "The state's behavioral health system has been unable to provide sufficient support to meet its own

mandated requirements," he said.

Third, McKay wants to restore the total amount of the county's lost \$102 million to help fund Metro. "Right now, we're at \$63.5 million," he said.

Chair of the Fairfax County School Board, Sizemore Heizer, urged the delegation to strengthen information sharing so FCPS students are safe, particularly related to school employees arrested for child endangerment or sex-related

crimes. She highlighted the need for additional resources focused on youth and adolescent mental health and substance abuse, community and inpatient programs, and improvements in the workforce pipeline for mental health professionals.

"This is a critical need for our students; please help us," Sizemore Heizer said.

In light of the recent tragic deaths of FCPS students walking to SEE FAIRFAX DELEGATION, PAGE 14



# Bald Eagles Delight on New Year's Day Walk

By GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The bald eagles did not disappoint. Over 70 people joined Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck's annual New Year's Day walk in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve and spotted four bald eagles with white heads and tails gleaming in the sun.

"Oh wow!" one woman exclaimed, when she got an up-close view using a spotting scope provided by Dixie Sommers, Vice President of the Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM). "It's a common bird here," Sommers told the group.

Sommers also helped attendees zoom in on red-bellied woodpeckers, one of several woodpecker species in Northern Virginia. These birds have a slight reddish wash on their breasts, hence the name, but a more visible bright red "cap" and a striking black-and-white, barred back. "A red-bellied woodpecker can stick out its tongue nearly two inches past the end of its beak," according to Cornell University's All about Birds. The group saw many woodpecker holes in dead tree snags. Woodpeckers excavate holes searching for insect larvae, bugs and sap.

Two noisy, fluttering flocks of fish crows made their presence known. Fish crows are omnivores that often live near water. They are slightly smaller than the ubiquitous American crow and avid bird watchers say that they can only definitively distinguish fish crows from American crows by the fish crow's high nasal call.

It was an unseasonable, 50-degree day and the trail was bustling with visitors. Two men were headed to the boardwalk with fishing gear in hopes of snagging catfish and snakeheads.

"What a glorious, sun-filled day for our 2023 annual First Hike!" Storck commented afterward. "A huge thank you to the Friends of



Randy Strouffert © 2021

Bald eagle face to face.

Dyke Marsh for hosting us to ring in the new year in nature. The beautiful nature preserve, excellent plant and bird talks, multiple close-up eagle views and many conversations made it one of the best ever. I especially appreciated hearing from many that it was their first visit to the preserve and how much you enjoyed our shared experience."

## Cattails on Display

Botanist Elizabeth Wells discussed plants, like the narrow-leaf cattails that have hotdog-shaped flowers that get fuzzy in winter. The narrow-leaf cattails in Dyke Marsh differ from the cattail species in the Huntley Meadows Park nontidal wetland, she explained. Huntley Meadows cattails have wider leaves and grow in quieter water. Dyke Marsh has three-foot tides twice a day that narrow-leaf cattails can tolerate. "Cattails are a sign of an environment in transition, for they are a key plant in changing wet areas into dry land," wrote Donald W. Stokes in "A

Guide to Nature in Winter." After all, a wetland is wet land.

Cattail flowerheads can have up to 125,000 seeds per head, Stokes estimated. "All through winter these flowerheads continue to break apart, looking like the stuffing from leaks in old chairs, while wind and water carry the seeds to new muddy areas of the shoreline. In winter the fluff is used by mice to insulate their homes and in spring it will be used by birds in the lining of their nests." These flowers have hairs that help the plant disperse seeds with the wind, Wells explained, one of the several ways plants disperse seeds.

Wells also pointed out tiny spicebush and red maple tree buds, noting that maples are "one of the earliest trees to flower" in the spring. Plume-like goldenrod seedheads swayed in the breeze. Next to the boardwalk, she examined the red stems of swamp dogwoods.

Jim Gearing described FODM's efforts to control invasive plants like English ivy and porcelain berry. One area formerly blanketed by invasive clematis vines that over-



PHOTO BY RANDY STROUFFERT

Jim Gearing explained that many invasive vines stay green long past native plants.



FODMer Deborah Hammer explained the chronolog station where visitors can photograph changes in the marsh over time.

whelmed native plants now has native plants like horseweed. He noted that poison ivy is a native plant, with berries that birds love, and in winter, has a brown, hairy vine. He contrasted the vine with the scaly bark of native grape vines looping down from tree limbs.

## The Bald Eagles' Comeback

In recent years, Dyke Marsh has had three active bald eagle nests and three adult eagle pairs raised young, usually two per pair. In January, people often see eagles refurbishing their nests with sticks. "By the end of January, the female will have probably laid two eggs," Ed Eder, former FODM president told the group. Come spring, people will line the trail to watch parents bring fish to their hungry young.

Bald eagle adults can weigh from 10 to 14 pounds and have an eight-foot wingspan. Pairs mate for life and usually return to their previous year's nest. Nests can reach five-to-six feet in diameter and be two-to-four feet tall. Females incubate two to three eggs for five to six weeks.

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Supervisor Dan Storck directed everyone's attention to one of Dyke Marsh's three active bald eagle nests. Dr. Elizabeth Wells (blue jacket) discussed plants and their characteristics.

Between May and July, the chicks fledge. Bald eagles swoop down and grasp their prey in their talons. They eat mostly fish, but also gulls, small mammals, snakes and waterfowl.

Bald eagles are a conservation success story. Once in danger of extinction, they have rebounded from only 417 known nesting pairs in 1963 to around 71,467 nesting pairs in 2021 in the contiguous U.S. DDT and other pesticide compounds that moved up the food chain caused eggshell thinning so severe that the shells broke and chicks failed to hatch. In 1967, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

listed the bald eagle as endangered and in 1972 Congress banned DDT. Eagle numbers rose and in 2007, FWS announced the bird's recovery and removed it from the endangered species list, but other laws still protect eagles.

Remaining threats include habitat loss from waterfront property development, lead bullets or fragments from feeding on animals and collisions with vehicles, wind turbines and power lines. A dead bald eagle was found at Fort Hunt Park recently.

Lorton-area resident Chris Ambrose went to Dyke Marsh for the first time on Jan. 1. "I came to ex-

perience the site, but also to see all the great work that the Friends of Dyke Marsh are doing to preserve it," he said. "It is truly impressive work. I hope more people will take the time to help preserve and restore this gem of a habitat."

## Bird Walks

Friends of Dyke Marsh, [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org); Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, [www.audubonva.org](http://www.audubonva.org); Northern Virginia Bird Club, [www.nvabc.org](http://www.nvabc.org); Friends of Mason Neck State Park, [www.masonneckstateparkfriends.org](http://www.masonneckstateparkfriends.org).



Bald eagle perched on its nest in Dyke Marsh.

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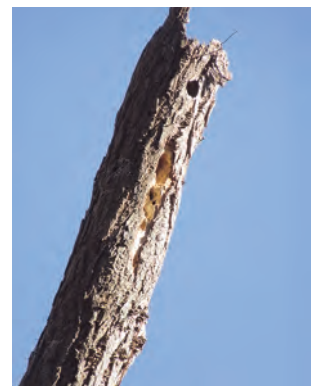


A marsh view. Much of the wetland vegetation like spatterdock and pickerelweed are dormant in winter.



Narrow-leaf cattails flourish in Dyke Marsh.

MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ JANUARY 12-18, 2023 ♦ 9



Woodpeckers excavate holes in trees in search of food, creating cavities that other birds use for nesting.



Visitors can observe trees' bark like the exfoliating, scaly bark of the sycamore, which other birds use for nesting.



The invasive emerald ash borer insect creates tunnels under a tree's bark which eventually kills the tree. Dyke Marsh is losing 1,000 ash trees.



The honey locust tree impressed walkers with its imposing thorns, from two-to-six inches long.



# GLASS RECYCLING

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



The public has supported glass recycling, county officials maintain.



A new purple bin arrives at the Mount Vernon Government Center.

## Giving Glass Bottles and Jars a New Life

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**T**hat wine bottle you toss into Fairfax County's purple recycling bin will likely get a new life and maybe several, thanks to the county's glass recycling system. As Fairfax County Board Chairman Jeff McKay puts it, "Your next bottle of juice could be Fairfax County vintage glass!"

The county has 18 purple collection bins in every magisterial district, where since 2019, people have shoved glass bottles and jars through the bins' windows day and night for recycling at the I-95 landfill complex. Alexandria and Loudoun County also take glass there. Fairfax County processed 7,240 tons of glass in 2021.

Before installing the purple bins, which county officials dub the "Purple Can Club," Fairfax County collected most glass containers in what officials call a "single stream system" from curbside, individual blue bins. But most glass went to landfills, because glass in the waste stream could create problems, including damaging equipment and contaminating other recyclables, says McKay. Some jars and bottles went to a materials recovery facility where they were separated from other materials, ground up and used as landfill cover.

Today, glass containers deposited in purple bins take one of two paths. On the first path, haulers take the bottles in the purple bins to the I-95 landfill, dump them into a bunker and tractor trailer trucks from a Pennsylvania company called CAP Glass take them to their glass beneficiation plant to remove labels, separate them by color, remove plastics and metals and break them down into small pieces called "cullets." CAP Glass sells the cullets to a glass manufacturing company, Owens-Illinois. Furnaces at Owens-Illinois's two Virginia plants in Danville and Toano then melt the glass and the company makes new bottles. "Glass bottles and jars are 100 percent recyclable and can be recycled endlessly without any loss in purity or quality," reports the CAP Glass website.

The other track is a "trip" through "Big Blue," an Andela Products glass-crushing machine that pulverizes glass, pulls out any metals with magnets and spews out sand-



Signs on the purple bins promote glass recycling and give guidance.

like glass and glass pea "gravel." Big Blue is the only glass crusher in Northern Virginia, say county officials. The glass "sand" is used as construction material, for example, as bedding material under pipes and fill material around pipes instead of the traditional crushed stone. "The glass aggregates processed by Big Blue are safe enough to walk on barefoot," says Eric Forbes, Deputy Director of solid waste management.

Glass put in regular trash cans is burned at the Lorton Covanta Waste-to-Energy Plant with all the other non-recyclables.

"The Purple Can Club is a system to collect glass separately and allows us to truly recycle glass, keeping it out of landfills, where it was lost forever," says Forbes. "We recycled 100 percent of the glass collected in the Purple Can Club, which is 98 percent pure glass thanks to our residents who participate in the program."

### Why Recycle Glass?

"There are remarkable environmental benefits including reducing the volume in our landfills and lowering carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases," explains McKay. "There are also economic benefits as the County has to purchase fewer construction materials when it uses recycled glass. Glass-to-glass recycling even supports hundreds of jobs in the state. This is a true win for everyone and I hope all residents of Fairfax County and the region continue to support

and participate in the Purple Can Club."

Tom Blackburn of McLean puts glass containers in the purple bins because, he says, "Recycling is good for the environment. It cuts down on waste in landfills and it reduces the amount of raw material needed to manufacture new bottles."

"Recycled glass can be substituted for up to 95 percent of raw materials," maintains the Glass Packaging Institute. Recycled container glass uses include tile, filtration, sandblasting, concrete pavement and parking lots, says GPI.

Ann Allman, a Mount Vernon-Collingwood resident, offers, "I take my bottles to the purple bin because they'll be recycled into something useful and to keep them out of landfills."

Reston resident Joanne Bauer likes to recycle. "Initially, I worried that taking glass to the recycling bins and putting items in one at a time would be onerous. That turned out not to be true. Now it's just another task on the chore list and one I am happy to do for the environment," she says.

Some may even find it fun, suggests McKay. "We regularly encourage residents to join the 'Purple Can Club' and bring their bottles, jars and other household glass for easy disposal. It's actually kind of fun, sending the bottles through and hearing a very satisfying crash and break at the bottom."

Some bins fill up twice a week. Unscientific observations suggest that wine bottles

### Glass Recycling Tips

- ❖ Rinse out glass containers to remove any food or beverage residue.
  - ❖ Check all the purple bins' windows. The bin at one window may make the bin appear to be full when it is not.
  - ❖ Do not put dishes, windows or other glass materials in the purple bins.
  - ❖ Do not leave things behind like boxes, bags or other trash. That may be illegal dumping.
  - ❖ If you observe broken glass at the bins, contact trashmail@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5230 to request a cleanup.
  - ❖ To determine how best to dispose of items, visit the county's waste wizard at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/residential-materials>.
- More Information: Fairfax County Glass Management, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/glass>
- The glass container recycling loop, <https://www.gpi.org/glass-recycling-facts>

top the list of glass container types left in the bins, says Forbes. "If you look at the piles of bottles at loading sites, it looks like there are a lot of parties going on," he joked. "Glass recycling has been well received because people care about the environment. People want to do good."

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# ‘Legally Blonde Jr. the Musical’

Aldersgate youth cast shines in award-winning musical.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
THE GAZETTE

**T**he story of Harvard’s beloved blonde comes to life with an energetic and talented youth cast as “Legally Blonde Jr. the Musical” opens Jan. 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

Based on the award-winning Broadway musical and the popular movie, “Legally Blonde Jr. the Musical,” follows the transformation of Elle Woods, who has been dumped by her boyfriend for not being “serious” enough. Elle takes matters into her own hands, charming her way into law school, befriendng classmate, Emmett, and spunky hairdresser, Paulette.

“As our community continues to bounce back from Covid, ACCT wants to bring high energy and visually exciting productions that remind people to have fun and celebrate life,” said director Shelagh Roberts. “Particularly for our youth production that features actors ages 12-18, ‘Legally Blonde, Jr.’ is a great show for a super dynamic and mature cast.”

The cast includes Molly Johnson as Elle Woods, Ben Kline as Emmett, and Maggie Campione as Paulette.

“Elle Woods is a strong, bubbly, bright sorority girl with a big heart,” said Johnson in preparing for the role. “Many people see her as your typical dumb blonde who cares too much about material things but she is entirely the opposite. She knows who she is, the rest of the world however does not, and only sees her as a pretty face.”

Julia St. Pierre and Maureen Allen are co-producers of the book by Heather Hach with music and lyrics by Laurence O’Keefe and Neil Benjamin.

“One of the great things about ACCT’s junior productions is that many of our cast members return each year, so we get to watch them grow up on stage,” said producer Maureen Allen. “Legally Blonde Jr. was an appealing show for the age group of our core group of actors and drew in some talented new additions to our group.”



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROS

“Legally Blonde Jr. the Musical” opens Jan. 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater. Cast members include (l-r) Regan Peabody, Lauren Allen, James Campiano, Annalise Grindstaff, Lily Hall, Kaitlyn Cox, Molly Johnson, Allie Swetz, Angela Gray, and Gracie Bennett.

**“One of the most important themes in Legally Blonde is not judging a book by its cover.”**

— ACCT cast member Lauren Allen

Legally Blonde the Musical premiered on Broadway in 2007 based on the movie of 2001 that starred Reese Witherspoon and Luke Wilson. The story follows the transformation of Elle Woods as she tackles stereotypes, snobbery and scandal in pursuit of her dreams. In the process she finds that looks and books are not mutually exclusive.

“One of the most important themes in Legally Blonde is not judging a book by its cover, which rings particularly true in this production, because it is performed entirely

by student actors,” said cast member Lauren Allen. “I hope the audiences see that even though we may be young, we are talented far beyond our years and can put on a fabulous show.”

Added Campione, “I hope that audiences take away that you should never judge someone based on their outward appearance, but rather on their character and how they treat others.”

Heather Gifford is Music Director with choreography by Michelle Koros.

“Our cast has a really unique and infectious energy and they are really strong working together as an ensemble,” Roberts said. “The choreography is such a perfect accompaniment to the music and plays a huge part in propelling the action and storytelling. The joy and enthusiasm of this cast will absolutely resonate with audiences, I have no doubt.”

Legally Blonde Jr. the Musical opens Jan. 13 and runs for two weekends at Wesley Hall of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road in Alexandria, with a special matinee performance on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Evening performances are Jan. 13, 20, and 21 at 7:30 p.m. with matinees at 2 p.m. For tickets or more information visit [www.acctonline.org](http://www.acctonline.org).

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# Alexandria Restaurant Week

Jan. 20-29, 2023

View the Menu Flip-Book

<https://www.flipsnack.com/BCB58CCC5A8/2023-alexandria-winter-restaurant-week-menu-book/full-view.html> and explore participating restaurants at [AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com](http://AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

For 10 days and two week-ends, nearly 80 restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$25, \$35 or \$45 per person prix fixe dinner during Alexandria Restaurant Week, Jan. 20-29, 2023. Special menus are available in-person at all participating restaurants with a pricing structure reflecting Alexandria's spectrum of offerings from fast casual to fine dining. The online menu book makes it easy to browse delicious selections from special menus to satisfy every craving.

Explore what first-time Restaurant Week participants have to offer, from the elevated yet inviting atmosphere of recently opened 1799 Prime Steak & Seafood to the Mediterranean-infused flavors at Vaso's Kitchen, alongside Indian-Chinese fare at Indochien's Cameron Station location and new King Street outpost. Plus, warm up on heated patios at Augie's Mussel House, Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap and more.

Alexandria Restaurant Week showcases local chefs in neighborhoods throughout the city, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and Eisenhower, and the West End.

## Alexandria Restaurant Week Menu Highlights:

❖ Find a new favorite when you visit Old Town's recently opened 1799 Prime Steak & Seafood, offering a \$35-for-one menu with entrees including savory shrimp and grits and luscious seafood linguine.

❖ Head to recently reopened Vermilion for a \$45-for-one menu featuring elevated items including brussels sprouts with honey and chili vinaigrette, risotto with black truffle and wine-poached pear strudel.



Yunnan by Potomac Noodle House



Sweet Fire Donna's

❖ Barkhaus, located between Del Ray and Potomac Yard, offers a \$25 per person menu that includes the option to add a homemade doggie treat like a "fruit barkfait."

❖ At Delia's in Carlyle, linger over a \$45 per person menu including Prince Edward Island mussels, seafood arrabiatta and veal parmigiana.

❖ In Del Ray, warm up from the inside out at Elo's Italian, with a \$35-for-one menu featuring crowd-pleasers such as garlic focaccia bread, spaghetti pomodoro and bombolini to top it off.

❖ Northside 10 boasts the perfect \$35 dinner to savor while watching a big game at the Arlington neighborhood favorite, with options including mac and cheese fritters and mustard barbecued salmon.

❖ In the West End, Shooter McGee's \$35 dinner menu offers hearty entrees including cider pork chops, shrimp Florentine pasta and bistro steak, alongside tempting apps and dessert.



King and Rye

## CALENDAR

### JAN. 2-29

New Horizons Exhibit. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Landingham Gallery presents New Horizons, a juried membership show, featuring artworks that emphasize new beginnings, adventure, and exploration. Participating artists include Diana Papazian, Joyce Zipperer, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Veronica Barker-Barzel, Hernan Murno, Abol Bahadori, and Karine Sapondjian. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, and multimedia works. To check out the TFAA website, visit <https://www.torpedofactoryartists.com>

### JAN.6-28

"Putting A Face To A Name" Art Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. A clever showcase where

local artists reimagine fictional characters from books, movies, plays, poetry, television, and more. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on January 29). Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

### JAN. 12-FEB. 5

"In and Between." At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Reception: Sunday, January 15, 4 - 6 p.m. Artist Talk: Sunday, February 5, 2 p.m. In and Between is an all-sculpture show, featuring floor and wall-mounted art as well as site-specific installations that take advantage of the gallery's unique light-filled space. Eight artists were invited to explore the concept of a threshold. In architecture, thresholds can connect spaces in deliberate and inventive ways, but they are often mere afterthoughts resolved by things like a simple door. Featuring: Lynda Andrews-Barry, Jacqui Crocetta, Pierre Davis,

Zofie King, Kirsty Little, Sarah Stefana Smith, Ira Tattelman, and Gloria Chapa Vasquez.

### FRIDAY/JAN. 13

Garden Talk - Winning Plants for Containers. 1:30-2:30 p.m. (Adults) Whether it's flower pots, hanging baskets or window boxes, container gardens are beautiful, easy and rewarding for winter gardening. Learn how to create a dazzling display of perennials and annuals with eye-catching colors. Join Extension Master Gardener docents to gain information for your container. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code D0C.4P00.

### SUNDAY/JAN. 15

Virtual Winter Lecture - Backyard Pollinator Oasis. 1:30-2:30 p.m. (Adults) Are you dreaming of next year's garden? Would you like to create an environment that hosts

pollinators and wildlife while creating less work for you? Join pollinator expert Heather Andrews in this virtual discussion on how to create a sustainable organic oasis that will invite in an army of good bugs to reduce pest pressure and improve your veggie and fruit yield. A Zoom link will be emailed prior to the program. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code H3T.564R.

### TUESDAY/JAN. 17

Ford Evening Book Talk and Launch. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Ford Evening Book Talk and Launch, American Inheritance: Liberty and Slavery in the Birth of a Nation. This powerful history reveals how the twin strands of liberty and slavery were joined in the nation's founding.





## Rock Art Show – Artworks by Ron Campbell at Nepenthe Gallery

**N**epenthe Gallery will host “Rock Art Show” featuring artworks by the late cartoon animator, Ron Campbell. These works are based on such popular Saturday morning cartoon series as The Beatles, Scooby Doo, Smurfs, Jetsons, Flintstones, Winnie the Pooh, and more. Opening night for this exhibit will take place on Thursday, Jan. 19 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Nepenthe’s weekly ART+WINE+CHEESE event.

Ron Campbell animated people’s childhoods for more than three generations. Beginning in 1958 in his native Australia with cartoons like Popeye, Beetle Bailey and Krazy Kat, his career went on to span the golden age of Saturday morning cartoons. After retiring from a 50-year career, he created dozens of paintings based on the animated cartoons he helped bring to the screen. With emphasis on The Beatles and Yellow Submarine, his cartoon pop art has been featured in galleries worldwide.

Ron Campbell’s animation paintings will be on display and available for purchase at this special “pop-up exhibit” at Nepenthe for three days only, Thursday, Jan. 19 through Saturday, Jan. 21.

ART+WINE+CHEESE every Thursday at Nepenthe Gallery from 6-7:30 pm  
Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, VA 22308  
Nepenthegallery.com

### CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

Hear from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, historian, and professor, Edward J. Larson, followed by a book signing.

#### TUESDAY/JAN. 17

The Next Genealogists. 1-3 p.m. At 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Zoom Meeting. English Genealogist and Social Historian, Dr. Janet Few, will discuss the importance of encouraging the next generation of genealogists. Free. Register for this free Zoom event at <https://mvgenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=111> or email a registration request to [contact-us@mvgenealogy.org](mailto:contact-us@mvgenealogy.org). Find out more about this and other society events at <https://mvgenealogy.org/event-listings.php?nm=20-Er571>.

#### JAN. 19-21

Animator Ron Campbell’s Artwork. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Artworks based on the Beatles Yellow Submarine and the Beatles Saturday morning TV cartoon series are the focus of a special pop-up art show and sale featuring the works of the late animator Ron Campbell on the anniversary of his passing. The Beatles along with Scooby Doo, Smurfs, Rugrats, Jetsons, Flintstones, and much more are among the artwork on display and all based on the 50-year career of the late Ron Campbell. Thursday, Jan. 19 – 5 – 6 p.m. (Preview Reception)



Alexandria Restaurant Week will take place Jan. 20-29, 2023 in Alexandria.

## Alexandria Restaurant Week

For 10 days and two weekends, more than 70 restaurants in Alexandria, will offer a \$25, \$35 or \$45 prix fixe dinner for one during Alexandria Restaurant Week. Special menus will be available for in-person dining at participating restaurants, many with heated outdoor dining options. Showcases the inventiveness of local chefs in neighborhoods throughout the city, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and Eisenhower, and the West End. Guests can browse a list of participating restaurants on [AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com](http://AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**STEM VOLUNTEERS.** The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may

involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at [www.seniorscientist.org](http://www.seniorscientist.org). To volunteer, contact [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League’s programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members

to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org). United Community (formerly UCM), 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, seeks volunteers for Food Pantry assistance, Early Learning Center teacher aides, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office administration/data entry, and community outreach. Flexible hours and schedules. Opportunities for all ages to serve, including community service hours. More info at [ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities](http://ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities) or email [volunteer@ucmagency.org](mailto:volunteer@ucmagency.org).

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

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).

Line Dance Instructor needed for the Gum Springs Senior Program once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Volunteer Solutions, call 703-324-5406, TTY

Thursday, Jan. 19 - 6 – 7:30 p.m. (Art & Wine & Cheese)  
Friday, Jan. 20 – 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, Jan. 21 – 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Learn more at [www.BeatlesCartoonArtShow.com](http://www.BeatlesCartoonArtShow.com).

#### 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).

#### JANUARY

Fri. 13: Newmyer Flyer Presents Dream Discs: A Tribute to Van Morrison’s “Moondance” and Bruce Springsteen’s “The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle” performed in their entirety. \$35.00  
Sat. 14: Last Train Home \$29.50  
Sun. 15: Kenny Lattimore \$59.50  
Fri. 20: TEX RUBINOWITZ & THE BAD BOYS Reunion Show featuring Tex Rubinowitz, Eddie Angel, Ratso, Johnny Castle, Scotty Flowers with special guest Martha Hull \$35.00  
Sat. 21: Who’s Bad: The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50  
Sun. 22: Glenn Jones with special guest Alyson Williams \$55.00  
Thu. 26: Jerry Lee Lewis Tribute featuring Jason D. Williams \$45.00  
Fri. 27: Raheem DeV Vaughn \$85.00  
Sat. 28: Tarsha Fitzgerald Prod. Presents: DEVOTION: A Tribute to Earth, Wind, & Fire \$35.00  
Sun. 29: Norman Brown \$59.50

711.

Volunteer Fairfax makes it easy for individuals and families, youth and seniors, corporate groups and civic clubs to volunteer. Fulfill hours, give back, or pay it forward through a variety service options. Visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org) or call 703-246-3460.

Fairfax County’s Community Services Board is seeking volunteer office assistants. Volunteers are needed to assist CSB staff with greeting guests, making reminder phone calls, data entry, filing, shredding, stocking shelves, and other duties as needed. Hours are flexible, but would be during normal business hours. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm) for more.

Yoga Teachers are needed. Help

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15



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## News

FROM PAGE 5

and from school, Sizemore Heizer urged the delegation to grant localities and school boards greater flexibility in setting schools' safety limits for pedestrian safety.

Sizemore Heizer voiced concern about amendments to the Virginia Education Account Program. The current proposal, House Bill 1508, by patrons Davis, Durant, Fowler, Greenhalgh, and La Rock, allows parents to set up a savings account funded with state funds "intended for the child's education for any qualified expense that best meet the child's needs," according to Virginia's Legislative System.

FCPS has a policy against using public money for non-public education, Sizemore Heizer said. "We must do all we can and partner together to protect public education. It is the bedrock of our society, and it is how people improve their lives," she said.

Dr. George Cody of Alexandria supported House Bill 1383, prohibiting the non-therapeutic declawing of cats. "Declawing involves amputating the last part of a cat's front toes. For example, a comparison is if you involuntarily had the last joint of your fingers cut off against your will," Cody said.

Paul Berry of Reston, who formerly served in the office of Governor Northam, is an educator and a Mexican American who grew up in a dual-language household. Berry worked with English language learners and special needs students, he said. "They're still struggling to catch up and recover at the same rate as their classmates. Unfortunately, \$1 million in ARPA funding that was dedicated to English language learners is disappearing this year," Berry said. "Governor Youngkin ... is currently supporting further reductions in public school funding," Berry added. He requested assistance from the Fairfax delegation. "I ask that you continue to advocate for these measures and call out any attempts to harm our environment or our education system," Berry said.

Michelle Jefferson of Springfield and chair of the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, or CAAB, said that Virginia's TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) remains at or below 32 percent of the Federal Poverty Level for all family households. "CAAB supports the Board of Supervisors' position on the continued increase in the TANF reimbursement rate," Jefferson said.

Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso, a SEE FAIRFAX DELEGATION, PAGE 15  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



# Fairfax Delegation Hears Residents' Concerns

Falls Church resident and member of CAAB, testified about the difficulties that many community members, particularly those earning less than \$25,000 per year, face when looking for quality, affordable childcare in the county. "The average cost of full-time childcare for a preschooler ranges from \$16,000 to \$22,000 per year," Alfonso said. CAAB supports the Board of Supervisors' position that the Commonwealth should support state childcare funding for economically disadvantaged families participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the family initiative for education and work.

According to Alfonso, supporting a waiver from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) that would allow Fairfax County to permanently increase program income eligibility above the current 250 percent of the federal poverty level for the state subsidy would help address challenges experienced due to the high costs of childcare and a high cost of living in Northern Virginia.

**Susan Laume** of Springfield represented the VA Dog Army. She asked the delegation to support a water bill sponsored by Delegate Kaye Kory (D-38) for dogs and cats that would ban the use of small mammal drip bottles as their water source. According to research, dogs push their tongues into bodies of water, causing a spoon effect with the tongue curling backward and scooping up water. Cats use the tip of their tongue to touch the water's surface, drawing up a column and then biting down on it to drink. The current code requires that water be provided to suit the species. Dogs and cats cannot drink from mammal water bottles in their species-appropriate manner.

**Arthur Purves** of Vienna, president of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, urged the delegation to ban public employee union contributions to supervisor election campaigns or require supervisors to disclose public employee campaign contributions they receive when they vote on raises.

**David Broder**, president of SEIU Virginia 512 and a resident of Vienna, requested that the delegation prioritize working people in the state budget. He advocated funding 10 percent raises and 10 paid sick days for homecare workers; ending the waiver waiting list; providing respite care for families;

and funding essential local government services — "all while protecting the progress we have made on voting rights, equity, and criminal justice reform."

**Natalia Nguyen-Woodruff** of Fairfax, union member of SEIU Virginia 512 serving as the Fairfax County Chapter vice president, spoke in support of funding quality public services and good union jobs for all Virginians "to advance economic, racial and Immigrant justice in our county." She and her colleagues have worked on the front lines and provided essential health care, childcare, transportation, sanitation, mental health services, and more.

"Despite doing essential work, too many hard-working Virginia families are struggling. The high cost of living, low wages ... anti-worker rights, and more have created a crisis for working people ... Virginia health-care workers, who are my union siblings, are still denied the right to collectively bargain. That's why we must continue to take bold action to support working families, create good union jobs and strengthen our economy," Nguyen-Woodruff said.

**Marissa Brown** of Vienna pushed for a campaign to help people with developmental disabilities get jobs. She noted that Virginia needs to drop the "antiquated and denigrating term handicap" throughout the Virginia Code.

**Jennifer Tidd** of Reston, representing the Neurodivergent Liberation Coalition, argued against House Bill 1461. It requires the Virginia Department of Education to establish a uniform discipline system for disruptive behavior. Tidd said it is legal in Virginia to remove children from the classroom and put them in seclusion cells. She told the delegation that her autistic son had been removed a documented 745 times and locked in a seclusion cell. He would later come home with self-inflicted lacerations and concussions. "Children like him need to be heard, not discarded. Please kill HB 1461 because if you don't, you will cause unbelievable damage to too many children like my son," she said.

Other issues, including climate, housing, solar energy, and more were presented to the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

improve a person's well-being by teaching yoga classes to adults who are staying in a residential facility. The day/time is flexible, but would be during the week. Prior yoga instruction is required. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm) for more. The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers

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of a frail older adult a break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or [Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.



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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.

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The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk.

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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.

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## Loss for Words



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I never wanted to write this column. Although for much of the summer, the idea of my brother pre-deceasing me was as real as it could get: 15 days in S.I.C.U. being tended to round the clock after he was admitted with sepsis; still, every day that he survived gave us hope. And then actually he began to get better and after 10 weeks was transferred to the adjacent rehabilitation hospital to assist in his recovery from the septic shock. And likewise, he made progress there. So much so that they scheduled the Colo-rectal surgery for the following week. Which occurred without too much fuss or complication. After continued improvement, he was finally released. The sepsis seemed to be in the rear-view mirror as Richard continued to make progress at home. He was driving, shopping at Costco, eating foods he hadn't enjoyed for almost two years (thinking he was exacerbating his IBS by doing so, which as it turned out, he didn't have). We even had a surprise birthday dinner for Richard in his home on Fri., Oct. 28. When the dining room table was set, Vanessa (his wife) called upstairs for Richard to come down and have dinner. He got on the inclinator and then smoothly reached the bottom of the stairwell, where he saw the three of us (Vanessa, Dina and I) all sitting at the table waiting for his arrival. When the inclinator stopped at the bottom of the staircase, Richard looked over on our direction. He broke out in a big smile, and graciously thanked Vanessa for her efforts in arranging the dinner and our participation in it. It was by all accounts, Richard's recovery notwithstanding (and it was mostly mobility issues at this point), a completely normal occasion. As it so happened, though I spoke to him daily in the following weeks; this date, his birthday, Oct. 28, was the last time I saw him I saw him alive. My brother Richard died at his home in the early morning hours on Dec. 3.

He had recently started an every-three-week chemotherapy infusion to knock out the few remaining cancer cells which a fancy DNA-driven blood test indicated were present. I understand, as a cancer patient, the need, instinct almost, to do all you can to rid yourself of the cancer. But on balance, he was not in any kind of distress. In fact, he was thriving, almost. His oncologist suggested a three-month infusion to eradicate any remaining cancer cells. It all seemed routine, so Richard began the protocol. Immediately, experienced problems. He was exhausted, weak, not eating and rarely getting out of his bed. He was so tired, he could barely speak on the phone. The last conversation we had, after he picked up the phone, he said, "KB, I'm too tired to speak. I'll call you tomorrow." Those were my brother's last words to me. A day and a half later, Vanessa called me at 8:15 in the morning, after having found Richard on the floor at the foot of his bed in his dressing room where he had been sleeping to low-impact Vanessa, crying: "KB, he's gone. He was alive at 4 am when I visited, and I just went to check on him. I have to call you back; the police are here."

It was not a shock, but it was a surprise. We all thought, his many doctors included, that he had survived the sepsis and was on track to a reasonably normal recovery. A recovery where he's likely to have deficits/challenges, but nothing insurmountable.

His passing is a real problem for me. Not that I actually made the calls every day, but had I, he would have been the first call I made in the morning and the last call I made at night. We were as close as two brothers could get. And even though he was almost five years older than me, we maintained an extremely healthy relationship (sports, politics, sense of humor, The Three Stooges) for the entirety of his life. Moreover, once I was diagnosed with "terminal cancer" in 2009, he became my champion, attending any medical appointments I had with my oncologist and/or endocrinologist and always being available to talk. Once I received this diagnosis, I figured I would predecease him. And now, for him to die before me, it throws my whole system of checks and balances out of whack. It will be much harder for me to "stay between the navigational beacons" to invoke an Alan Jackson song, stay on course, and fight my own cancer battles. I will not descend into the abyss or anything, but I am much worse off not having my brother alive. He was always in my corner, always reachable. Not anymore. That's the end of an era – for me. My go-to is gone. Next week: more of the same.

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





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