

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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AUGUST 10, 2023

Running Strong

Powwow showcases Native American culture.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Hundreds gathered to participate and observe the 2nd Annual Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow held Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.

The colorful extravaganza served to showcase Native American culture through a day-long series of events and activities including intertribal dancers, drum groups, community resources, popup vendors, and information on Native American customs.

“Today is a time for us to celebrate as a collective community of native people,” said Kyle Swann, a member of the Piscataway Conoy tribe and one of the event coordinators. “It is very hard for us to have the space to do something like this. We live in an area where native culture is not prevalent so today is a chance to come together, bring traditions into the modern world and celebrate the future we are building together. Our goal is to continue to be seen, continue to be heard and continue to be considered.”

Running Strong for American Indian Youth is an Alexandria-based nonprofit that traces its beginnings to U.S. Olympic champion Billy Mills, who was born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota. A member of the Oglala Sioux tribe, Mills won a gold medal in the 10,000-meters at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a victory considered one of the greatest Olympic upsets.

Mills co-founded the organization with Eugene Krizek with the aim to help Native American people fulfill their basic needs – food, water, and shelter – while also helping their communities gain self-sufficiency and self-esteem.

“Billy and Eugene joined efforts to address needs on the Pine Ridge reservation, specifi-



Contestants perform a traditional dance during the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow competition Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.

cally to help the Lakota people,” Swann said. “Billy’s dream was to continue to expand and now we are a national nonprofit with programs throughout the whole country.”

Eugene Krizek, father of Del. Paul Krizek of Mount Vernon, died in 2021.

The DC area Powwow brought together Native Americans to have a community space to connect with and celebrate cultures together.

“This Powwow is how we are celebrating coming together,” said Kerry Reed of the Cherokee tribe in North Carolina. “We are no longer fighting among each other because we are different tribes. This Powwow is how we come together.”

Tribes were represented from across the region and as far away as Michigan.

“Today is about creating space for our native brothers and sisters on the East Coast,” said Running Strong program assistant Macey Michaelson. “Today gives everyone a place to gather and celebrate the culture through traditional dances and other customs.”

Waterfront Park is part of the land and river system of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers surrounding the U.S. Capital. The area is home to the Piscataway, Pamunkey, Nantego, Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Monacan, and Powhatan Tribes.

www.indianyouth.org



Children prepare for the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow Tiny Tots competition Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Mason Richardson prepares to compete in the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow men’s dance category Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.



Dancers await the results of the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow dance competition Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.



The Day family of the Ottawa Chippewa community of Peshawbestown, Michigan, enjoy the Running Strong for American Indian Youth Powwow Aug. 6 at Waterfront Park.



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Audrey Davis of the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project, left, joins homeowner Walter Steimel in unveiling a temporary plaque Aug. 8 at 401 N. St. Asaph Street. A permanent plaque will commemorate the site of the former city jail where a mob dragged 16-year-old Benjamin Thomas out of his cell to be lynched a few blocks away.



Sheriff Sean Casey speaks at the site of the former city jail on the anniversary of the Aug. 8, 1899, lynching of 16-year-old Benjamin Thomas.



Worshipful Grand Historian McArthur Myers, 31st Masonic District, leads the procession on Aug. 8 from the site of the old city jail to the site where Benjamin Thomas was lynched at the corner of King and Fairfax streets.

‘Steeped in Racial Oppression’

Ceremony unveils marker in honor of lynching victim Benjamin Thomas.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Hundreds gathered on North St. Asaph Street Aug. 8 to participate in the unveiling of a marker commemorating the site of the former city jail where 16-year-old Benjamin Thomas was dragged from a cell to be lynched at the corner of King and Fairfax streets 124 years ago.

It happened around midnight, Aug. 8, 1899, when a mob of 2,000 white Alexandrians attacked the city jail. With a rope around his neck, Thomas was dragged to the intersection known as Leadbeater Corner opposite Market Square. Along the way, he was pelted with stones and pieces of iron, stabbed and shot several times before being hanged from a lamppost.

“This site is steeped in racial oppression,” said Beulah Baptist Church Rev. Professor Quadricos B. Driskell. “We are gathered to remember that on this date 124 years ago a 16-year-old black Alexandrian named Benjamin Thomas was pulled from this building by a white lynch mob and dragged a half mile across cobblestone streets to his death. Please take a moment to reflect and dare I even say to pray on this.”

Two years earlier, on April 23, 1897, another African American teenager, Joseph McCoy, was

lynched at the corner of Cameron and Lee streets after being pulled from his cell at the police station. A historic marker has been dedicated at that site.

The markers are part of the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project, which is working with the Equal Justice Initiative based in Montgomery, Ala.

Joining Driskell in the remembrance ceremony for Thomas were descendants of the Thomas family, Gretchen Bulova and Audrey Davis of the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project, Alexandria City High School student Mahmoud Abu, who read a narrative of the event, Shiloh Baptist Church Rev. Dr. Taft Quincey Heatley, and Alexandria Sheriff Sean Casey.

“Law enforcement’s history of racial oppression must be acknowledged, particularly by those of us who serve in the profession,” Casey said. “We cannot change the past but we hope by acknowledging our failures we might begin to encourage healing and build trust.”

A temporary marker was unveiled at the site of the former city jail prior to a procession through Old Town to the site of Thomas’ lynching at the corner of King and Fairfax streets. A permanent marker is expected to be installed in the coming weeks.

“When I purchased this home in 1999, I knew it had been the jail



An attendee wipes away tears listening to the story of the lynching of 16-year-old Benjamin Thomas in 1899.



Alexandria City High School student Mahmoud Abu narrates the story of the 1899 lynching of Benjamin Thomas during the remembrance ceremony Aug. 8 at the site of the old city jail on N. St. Asaph Street.

and as a lawyer I was intrigued by its past use,” said current homeowner Walter Steimel. “What I did not know was this more tragic history of this building. I appreciate the work that was done to uncover this history to commemorate and honor the memories of Joseph McCoy and especially on this date, Benjamin Thomas.”

Steimel has provided an easement to allow for the permanent placement of a marker at the site at the corner of the lot.

“It is a privilege to be able to support the establishment of a permanent marker to provide education year-round,” Steimel said.

“A permanent plaque serves to remind us of the injustices of our past and educate those who cannot be here on this annual event.”

Research by the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project committee showed that in both Alexandria lynchings, the white authorities were deliberately complicit in their refusal to name and bring to justice members of the white mob. In the case of Thomas, the officers defending the jail were not prepared to protect the prisoner. Instead, city officials and law enforcement officers obstructed and punished members of the Black community who were will-

ing to stand up to white violence.

“As we have acknowledged and apologized for our predecessors’ role in failing to protect Benjamin Thomas, we also deeply regret that law enforcement officers abused their power, violated the public trust and put white supremacy first – above the law and above public safety,” Sheriff Casey said. “That added to the legacy of racial oppression that continues to impact our community and our country today.”

To learn more about Benjamin Thomas and the events of Aug. 8, 1899, visit the In Memoriam page at Alexandriava.gov/Historic.

ELECTIONS

Divided Government in an Off-Off Year

Democrats want to take the House; Republicans want to take the Senate.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Will Virginia continue to be the only state in the South that protects abortion rights? Will books be banned from the classroom? Will the historic surplus be used to help people in need or provide tax cuts to corporations?

These questions — and many more — will be answered at the ballot box this year because all 140 seats in the General Assembly are up for grabs. Democrats are hoping to maintain control of the Senate and possibly take control of the House. Republicans, on the other hand, are hoping to maintain control of the House and take control of the Senate. Recent polling suggests voters might actually like the checks and balances of divided government.

“I think there’s a sense that people want one house to check the other,” said former Gov. Doug Wilder, who now leads the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. “They don’t want total control in both Houses.”

The Wilder Center recently released results of polling that was conducted last month, and it had some shocking results about the upcoming election for the General Assembly. Perhaps the most perplexing number out of the recent poll from from a question about which party should control the House of Delegates. Unsurprisingly, 92 percent of Republicans say they want Republicans to control the House. But only 80 percent of Democrats say they want Democrats to control the House — and 10 percent of Democrats say they would prefer Republicans maintain control of the House.

“I’m dumbfounded, and I haven’t been able to wrap my arms around it,” said Wilder. “It’s confusing to me, but it’s what the people think.”

The poll included a similar question about the Senate, although the results there were more conventional: 94 percent of Republicans say they want Republicans to control the Senate, and 88 percent of Democrats say they want Democrats to control the Senate. George Mason University professor Jennifer Victor suggests the survey results about the House of Delegates might suggest that voters are hap-



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET

All 140 seats in the General Assembly are on the ballot this year, 100 in the House and 40 in the Senate.

py with the current state of divided government.

“When you have 10 percent of the out party saying that they are OK with the status quo or the other party controlling a legislative chamber, that says something to me about some preference for the status quo,” said Victor. “It could also be a renewed interest among some voters for ticket splitting, which is where a voter will vote for one party in one office but then

in Virginia to really demonstrate leadership — to bring people together on a topic that has been really divisive,” said Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently on CNN. “I think that where common sense brings us together is around a 15-week bill that protects like when a child can feel pain.”

Polling on this issue is nuanced. A recent poll from Christopher Newport University showed 67 percent of respondents say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. But the same poll also showed 51 percent support for a 15-week ban. Republicans are hoping they can leverage the relative popularity of a 15-week ban to portray

Democrats as extremists on the issue, attacking Virginia Beach Democratic candidate Michael Feggans as supporting “elective abortion for any reason ... until the moment of birth.” Feggans says that’s not true.

“It’s misleading. It’s false. It’s offensive, and it’s dangerous,” said Feggans. “It’s just not how medical care works. And not only is it misleading and dangerous, it lacks compassion for families who have to make serious and difficult decisions with their providers.”

The Republican in the race is incumbent Del. Karen Greenhalgh, whose campaign biography includes a stint as a volunteer

counselor at a crisis pregnancy center. Like most of the other Republican candidates on the ballot this year, she’s following the governor’s lead and supporting a 15 week ban. Feggans, on the other hand, supports the current Virginia law, which protects abortion rights through the second trimester and requires three doctors to sign off on abortions in the third trimester.

“There are few things more risky in politics than choosing to talk about an issue that is a loser for your side,” said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor at the University of Mary Washington. “Polls have consistently shown that Democrats have the advantage on the abortion question, and that advantage has gotten bigger in the wake of the decision by the Supreme Court to reverse Roe versus Wade.”

LABOR ISSUES are also in the spotlight, especially now that local governments across Virginia are in the process of unionizing. Democrats are divided about the wisdom of campaigning on the issue of overturning Virginia’s so-called Right to Work Law, which limits the power of unions by preventing employers from requiring employees join a union as a condition of employment. Republicans are challenging Democrats who have been on the record in favor of repealing the 1947 law.

“It’s smart politics,” said former Republican Delegate David Ramadan, now a professor at George Mason University’s Schar School of Government. “The minute that you label that candidate as someone who supports overturning the Right to Work, the money is going to stop going to that candidate and possibly it will start going to the opponent.”

One issue where Republicans are hoping to gain some traction is the issue of parents rights. After former Governor Terry McAuliffe said parents shouldn’t be telling schools what they should teach during a 2021 debate in Alexandria, then-candidate Glenn Youngkin was able to turn parents rights into a winning message on the campaign trail. Now Republicans are hoping the issue will resonate again this year.

“If you go to the main campaign website of any Republican running in a marginal district, you’ll see something about empowering parents,” said J. Miles Coleman, associate editor at Sabato’s Crystal Ball at the University of Virginia Center for Politics. “So it’s still an issue that Republicans think they can run on.”

“I think there’s a sense that people want one house to check the other. They don’t want total control in both Houses.”

— Former Gov. Doug Wilder

another party in another office.”

PERHAPS NO ISSUE will dominate the landscape of Virginia politics as much as abortion rights. Ever since the Supreme Court struck down Roe versus Wade last summer, Democrats have been working overtime to make sure voters know what’s at stake in Election 2023. Virginia is currently the only state in the South that protects abortion rights. But Republicans are campaigning on a platform of banning abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

“This is a really important moment, and there’s a chance for us

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.

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All Fired Up

Friendship Firehouse Celebrates 249 years.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Friendship Firehouse Festival celebrated the 249th anniversary of the founding of the city's first fire company Aug. 5 at the historic Friendship Firehouse Museum on South Alfred Street.

Now in its 27th year, the festival is sponsored by the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association and Historic Alexandria. Crowds enjoyed sunny skies as attendees learned about the city's historic firefighting apparatus and checked out modern firefighting equipment on display.

"Today is about remembering the friendship and volunteers who have served the city over the years," said Jim McClellan, board president of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association and sponsor of the festival. "We are also remembering our current fire department and police department and all public servants who keep our city safe."

Established in 1774, the Friendship Fire Company was the first fire company in Alexandria. Today the Friendship Firehouse, built in 1855, is a museum open to the public.

The Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association (FVFEA) is a philanthropic organization focusing on fire-fighting history and fire safety. It remains active in community events, including the annual Festival, and supports historic preservation of the building and its collection.

"It's a beautiful day, the weather is cooperating," McClellan said. "Lots of people are here enjoying the food, the vendors, the burning house demonstration, climbing on the fire truck – what's not to like?"

www.alexandriava.gov/FriendshipFirehouse



A firefighter helps demonstrate how to use a fire hose on a makeshift burning house at the Friendship Firehouse Festival Aug. 5 in Old Town.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Jack Anderson, 4, shows off his fire helmet at the Aug. 5 Friendship Firehouse Festival.



Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association board members Lynette Garrett, Jim McClellan and Sue Jean Cho at the Friendship Firehouse Festival Aug. 5.

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Fireflies, the Twinkling Critters of the Night

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

Warm summer night skies often sparkle as fireflies flash and twinkle across the firmament. Called lightning bugs by many people, fireflies, are actually winged beetles. They have an organ in their abdomen that lights up, a process called bioluminescence. There are over 2,000 firefly species in the world, 170 in North America.

Why do they flash their light? According to Marc Branham in a Scientific American article, they may be signaling that they are unpalatable to predators and some are sending mating signals. He wrote, "Several studies have shown that female fireflies choose mates depending upon specific male flash pattern characteristics. Higher male flash rates, as well as increased flash intensity, have been shown to be more attractive to females in two different firefly species."

In another article, Branham wrote, "each species of bioluminescent adult firefly has its own flash fingerprint. Males fly through the air and search for females with a species-specific light display. Some flash only once. Some emit 'flash trains' of up to nine carefully timed pulses. Others fly in specific aerial patterns, briefly dipping before sharply ascending and forming a 'J' of light. A few even shake their abdomens from side to side and appear to be twinkling."

Virginia's state arboretum, Blandy Experimental Farm in Boyce, near Winchester, has one of the largest concentrations of fireflies in the state, a natural summer light show of hundreds of thousands of points of light as the insects flicker through the fields and forests. "This is firefly heaven. I've never seen anything like it," noted Dr. Kyle J. Haynes, a University of Virginia insect population ecologist.

In Trouble

Like many of the world's insects, fireflies are in serious decline. Experts offer multiple reasons, including pesticides, habitat loss and degradation and light pollution.

Before the mid-1800s, most people and wildlife lived under night skies lit only by the moon and the stars. A 2016 global satellite study titled the New World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness found that "more than 80 percent of the world population lives under light polluted night skies. ... In the Unit-



PHOTO BY MATTHEW SHEPHERD/XERCES SOCIETY

Light pollution, loss of habitat and insecticide use are among the reasons fireflies are in decline. Here, part of the night sky is dark enough to show some stars, the rest is skyglow from suburbs. The foreground is brightly lit by LED street lights that are bright enough to cast shadows.

ed States and Europe, 99 percent of residents live under light polluted skies," wrote Jessica Snyder Sachs in the summer 2023 National Wildlife magazine.

Xerces Society studies conclude that human-made light interferes with fireflies' behavior. Conservation biologist Richard Joyce cited light from streetlights, homes, buildings, cars and parking lots as harming fireflies in a spring 2023 article. He credits research by entomologist Avalon Owens and wrote, "The negative effects include disruptions to navigation, circadian rhythms and recognition of visual cues; increase vulnerability to predation; and desensitized vision."

Native Plants and Dead Leaves

On attracting fireflies to your

yard, Plant NoVa Natives head Margaret Fisher wrote recently for the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, "The first step in creating usable habitat is to plant (and preserve) native plants and trees and to remove invasive non-native plants.

This is because most plant-eating insects can only eat the plants with which they evolved. Fireflies don't eat plants, though, so how does this apply? The answer lies in the food web concept.

Predatory insects such as fireflies, dragonflies, ladybeetles and others eat the critters that eat the native plants."

A critical way to help fireflies is to leave dead leaves in place because many firefly larvae burrow in the ground and under leaves in the winter. In fact, fireflies spend most of their lives as larvae. Many

insects overwinter as eggs, caterpillars, chrysalides or adults in the leaves. Leaves provide cover and a layer of protection. Leaves also "protect and nourish the soil. Perennials poke right up between them in the spring," Fisher wrote.

Lights Out

Because birds and other flying wildlife can collide with lit buildings, several organizations are working to minimize outdoor lighting.

Over two dozen cities have adopted night light reduction policies, including New York City which in 2022 started requiring all city-owned and leased buildings to turn off outdoor lights between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the spring and fall bird migration, reported Sachs. The Vienna town council is considering a proposed ordinance



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER/
PLANTNOVANATIVES.ORG

Common Eastern Firefly at Dyke Marsh



STEVE LAYTHROP FLICKR

Fireflies glow in a garden.



TERRY PRIEST
FLICKR

Common Eastern Firefly, *Photinus pyralis*. There are 170 species of firefly in North America.

to reduce some night lighting.

The National Audubon Society offers four tips: Turn off unnecessary outdoor lights at night; use outdoor motion sensors and timers; keep indoor lighting indoors; and down shield outdoor lights so they don't illuminate areas where they aren't needed.

Advocates also urge people to avoid using pesticides and insecticides, like mosquito sprays. They can kill all the insects the spray reaches, including beneficial pollinators, like butterflies and bees, and insects you love to see, like fireflies.

A scientific coalition called the Firefly Atlas is working to better understand and conserve North America's fireflies and invite observations from the public. The mid-Atlantic is a target region. Visit www.fireflyatlas.org.

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People at Work

Sit in a Comfortable Chair—You Can't Put These Books Down.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

It is late morning, and author Jeffery James Higgins has nearly finished a pot of strong espresso. “Black, only black.” It has been a good day. He has written around 2,000 words today on the first book in his new trilogy, “Relic: The Queen’s Tomb.”

This trilogy is a story told from two points of view: a female reporter in 2023 and a male scholar in 48 BC with the narrative switching back and forth. It is an action-adventure thriller with an archaeological theme.

Higgins juggles books in all stages of production with some finished and awaiting publication, others seeking a home and some just a glimmer in his imagination.

In a previous life Higgins was deeply immersed in the world of terrorism as a supervisory special agent who fought terrorists across five continents. In 2006, he identified a narco-terrorism case, arguing with the CIA

who failed to see the connection. He says the connection seems obvious now. Higgins says he helped investigate the world’s largest drug trafficking ring with 19.7 percent of the world’s heroin. He says he wrestled a suicide bomber in Kabul to capture the detonator before the terrorist could target a nearby crowded bus.

“Unseen,” the first fiction book he wrote, was recently published— a thriller with a subplot involving a Jihadist conspiracy to take over America. “Evil was everywhere. It arrived with a smile, an extended hand, a sultry look.”

“Unseen” is fiction but based on a real life conspiracy. The reader constantly wonders, “where does fiction leave off and reality begin?”

Higgins says, “Everything in the book is documented, and it is grounded in reality.” The book has a sobering message but Higgins believes sometimes it is easier to reach people this way; “a lot of time people learn through fiction.”

Higgins says there can be a two-year lag from signing a book deal to publication. And it can be difficult to predict what will be interesting that far ahead and make decisions. Higgins says “Unseen” was intended to be a series. But he says there isn’t a market for terrorism books right now.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE GAZETTE

Jeffrey James Higgins explores the twists and turns of the plot for his latest idea for an action-adventure thriller.

“Unseen” led right into “Furious” which is a gripping and suspenseful tale of a woman’s survival on a large yacht sailing the Indian Ocean as she faces her fear of water and the terror of unexpected events. Then at some point Higgins will go back to finishing “The Resort,” a psychological suspense thriller which was halted in the middle. But Higgins explains he only works on one book at a time.

“Forever Gone” is already finished and in production with Black Rose Writing with a launch date expected in February, 2024. Special Agent Adam Locke is a DEA agent, an occupation which he loves, but when his girlfriend is diagnosed with cancer he quits and joins his brother’s start-up artificial in-

telligence company. It is run by an eccentric billionaire on Cuttyhunk Island, a tiny community near Cape Cod. While artificial intelligence has the potential to extend life, philosophical issues arise over unintended consequences of the innovation— all woven in with a murder plot.

Higgins says some days he struggles to produce his target of 2,000 words but “if you want to write, just get down and write.”

“I think people are looking for entertainment. I can see a resurgence of fantasy or maybe Westerns.” He says people want a fast paced book and tries to keep his chapters 5-10 pages with lots of cliffhangers. He explains that a bookstore keeps a book on the

SEE PEOPLE AT WORK, PAGE 9

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JULY 25-SEPT. 17

Captured: Plants and Places. 1-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Step into the world of plants across the region and in still life at a season-spanning photography exhibit July 25 to Sept. 17 at Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center. The lyrical collection "Captured: Plants and Places" features botanical imagery drawn from the Washington area to Maine, including studio photos, intimate outdoor vignettes and landscape scenes. The photographers' varying visions and styles in color and black-and-white invite viewers to explore the wonder of wild and horticultural lands. An opening reception with the artists is July 30 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Atrium at Green Springs Gardens Horticultural Center.

JULY 27 TO SEPT. 3

Obscure: Tinam Valk Exhibit. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Reception on Sunday, Aug. 13 from 4-6 p.m. Tinam Valk's work explores the ambiguity of subjects such as oceans, rivers, landscapes, sometimes a combination of land and water, and figures or animals depicted within a land and water environment. Photographs, ranging from 60 to 100 years old in combination with sketches and memory and made-up environments, serve as a source for much of this work.

AUG. 4-26

The "Treasures of the DMV" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that celebrates the wonders of DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Come see famous and overlooked regional gems from the perspective of local artists. Opening Reception: Friday, August 4, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed on August 27). DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/AUG. 12

Afternoon Chamber Concert. 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Long-time collaborators Anna Matijasic Hennessy and Mary-Victoria Voutsas will team up for a concert of Bartok, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and more to create a program of American meets Bohemian folk.



Take a tour aboard the Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center in Alexandria's Waterfront Park.

Wednesdays Through Saturdays

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

SATURDAY/AUG. 19

School Supply Giveaway. At two locations: Charles Houston Rec Center, 901 Wythe Street, 10-12 p.m.; and William Ramsey Elementary School, 5700 Sanger Ave., 1-3 p.m. Hilco Redevelopment Partners in partnership with Firefighters & Friends and Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority will host a School Supply Giveaway. Volunteers will be giving away a total of 700-800 backpacks with school supplies for ARHA families.

THURSDAY/AUG. 24

Book Discussion and Signing. 7 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. First-Ever Book Discussion and Signing with Four Finalist Authors for the Prestigious George Washington Literary Prize. The authors will discuss their important new books related to the founding of America. The event is free; attendees can submit questions and have their books signed. The 2023 George Washington Prize finalists are: Mary Sarah Bilder, *Female Genius: Eliza Harriot and George Washington at the Dawn of the Constitution*. Fred Kaplan, *His Masterly Pen: A Biography of Jefferson the Writer*. Stacy Schiff, *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*

five weeks but that is just the beginning. He has to put in different twists. He has to make sure it has the right pacing. "I have to set up the characters and make sure you can tell who is talking by establishing their personalities. Hopefully I'm better at it now than I was when I wrote 'Unseen' in 2018." Then there is the editing process and his beta readers critiques.

Sometimes he gets his ideas walking down King Street where one observation leads by stream of consciousness to a realization about how quickly the veneer of civilization peels off and people revert to their hierarchy of needs. The idea for another book is born.

Higgins wrote "Shaking" in 2019-20, and the book won the Claymore Award at Killer Nashville in 2022. He has signed the publishing contract, and currently the manuscript is being edited with an expected launch date of late 2024 or early 2025. "Shaking" is a

Maurizio Valsania, *First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity*

TUESDAYS, AUGUST 15, 22, 29

Simpson Park Demonstration Garden: Tuesdays@10. 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. When Mother Nature can't do it all...Simpson gardeners step in to offer a helping hand. Free. Contact mgnv.org for more information.

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria

AUGUST

11 Collaboration featuring Lori Williams (Jazz)
18 Crack The Sky (Rock)
25 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)

FRANCONIA NIGHTS CONCERTS

Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.

AUGUST

9 Alexandria Harmonizers (Chorus)
16 The Nighthawks (Blues)

murder mystery based in Harvard, Massachusetts — a place where he grew up which has "more apples than people."

He says Harvard is beautiful but can be super creepy, the same place but different depending on circumstances. He says he was outside a motel at the now abandoned Harvard Observatory researching the book and he saw a child's ball and rocking horse sitting outside. "It was creepy, but then I found that Stephen King had just been there filming his latest movie."

The protagonist is a reporter with bipolar disorder who returns to her hometown to take a coveted job as a reporter. But her brother becomes a suspect in a gruesome murder and she must identify the killer to save her brother, as well as her job and her new life.

Higgins says he and his wife, who owns

23 Dave Kline Band (World Jazz Fusion)

OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA
WATERFRONT MUSIC SERIES

Free Concerts. Wednesdays from 4-7 p.m. At Old Town Alexandria waterfront. Join in the Waterfront Wednesday Music Series featuring a range of music genres by local musicians. Bring a chair or simply stop by to enjoy some beautiful waterside beats. Free. Weather permitting.

August 9 - Sol Roots
August 16 - Delta Spur

SUNDAY SOUNDS ON
THE PROMENADE

Free Concerts. 11:30-1:30 p.m. At 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Yellow Door Music Concert Series presents a musical lineup of artists on select Sundays.

Aug. 27 - Trifilio Tango Music
On Aug. 27, in honor of National Dog Day that weekend, Robinson Landing encourages individuals to bring their dog out for a yappy social for play and fun for your furry ones. The full event schedule of Robinson Landing programming is located at www.Robinson-Landing.com/WaterfrontEvents.

THURSDAY/AUG. 24

River Farm Anniversary Picnic. 6-8 p.m. At River Farm, Alexandria. Celebrating 50 years of American Horticultural Society at River Farm; featuring Soulfire. Free and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to pack a blanket and picnic basket with food and beverage favorites, find a comfortable spot on River Farm's lawn, and relax and enjoy the music, stunning gardens, and spectacular views overlooking the Potomac River.

THE BIRCHMERE

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

AUGUST

Thu. 10: Asleep At The Wheel w/ Michelle Lordi \$39.50
Fri. 11: Jon B. \$69.50
Sat. 12: 1964: The Tribute \$45.00
Sun. 13: An Evening with Bebel Gilberto \$49.50
Tue. 15: Calxico "Feast Of Wire 20th Anniversary Tour" w/ Brian Lopez \$39.50
Wed. 16: Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with The Guilty Ones w/ Dead Rock West \$45.00
Thu. 17: Ziggy Alberts "Rewind Tour" w/ Kim Churchill \$35.00
Fri. 18: Kandace Springs \$39.50
Sat. 19: Chante' Moore \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Mon. 21: WAR \$79.50
Wed. 23: Steve Earle: Alone Again Tour - Solo & Acoustic w/ Danny Burns \$65.00
Fri. 25: Al Stewart with The Empty Pockets \$49.50 (Resched from 3/16/23)

Elaine's, have the vision to partner good food with good books. So Higgins stands in the second floor Library Room at Elaine's Restaurant on Queen Street, a room which is dedicated to highlighting the work of authors. The bookshelf is filled floor to ceiling with spy thrillers and murder mysteries. "It's a free space to serve as a home to authors," he says. There are a number of author events scheduled in the near future. And they are planning Noir at the Bar to begin in September where they will feature 5-8 minute readings.

In the afternoons Higgins works on organizing the events at Elaine's, his own public appearances and on the business side of writing.

Does he miss the days of chasing terrorists across five continents? "You can always find adrenaline somewhere. What I miss is protecting people."

People At Work

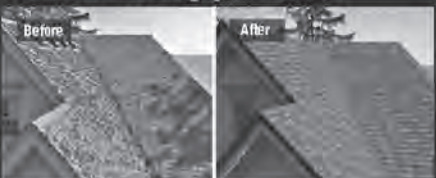
FROM PAGE 8

shelves for several months, and if it doesn't sell well enough it's gone.

Writing a book is a process. "You start with a high concept idea and ask 'what if' and come up with an alternative explanation. I'm a big outliner." He explains there is a structure to storytelling which has a long history before the printed word was available and stories were used to communicate. He breaks the story into three acts with 15 story beads—moments like the call to actions, decision points.

Higgins writes the draft of a book in about www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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Obituary



**Khosrow Matini, M.D.,
F.A.C.S.**
July 23, 2023

Dr. Matini was born in Tehran, Iran. He graduated from the University of Meshed School of Medicine. He immigrated to the United States and completed his medical training. In 1979, Dr. Matini started his private practice in Mount Vernon, Virginia. During his tenure at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital (IMVH), he served as the Chairman of the Department of Surgery, Chief of the Department of Plastic Surgery, and President of the Medical Staff. In the early 2000s, he spearheaded the effort to prevent the closure of IMVH. Dr. Matini retired in 2012 after 33 years of solo practice and an illustrious career.

He will be missed by the multitude of patients he cared deeply for and whose lives he changed, by his many friends, and most of all by his family. The family will be holding a private memorial to celebrate his life. In lieu of flowers, please donate to your charity of choice in Dr. Matini's name.

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CALENDAR

		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31		

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PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/CAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Celebrates Women

Gayle Converse, kneeling center, poses for a photo with supporters prior to starting a 133-mile walk to Richmond to bring awareness to women's rights. Converse began her walk at the Kate Waller Barrett Branch library with plans to arrive at the Virginia Women's Memorial in Richmond by Aug. 26 – Women's Equality Day. www.alexandriacelebrateswomen.com



PHOTO BY MARK ALLEN

Round Two

Residents on N. Pitt Street saw trees come down amid the high winds and tornado watch issued for the region Aug. 7. Several cars and homes suffered damage less than 10 days following the violent thunderstorms that moved through the area July 30, leaving more than 17,000 Alexandrians without power due to wind gusts as high as 80 miles per hour downing trees and power lines across the city.

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POTOMAC ALMANAC CENTRE VIEW

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 ominous clouds of 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.

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Not a Fan of Humidity



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, through no fault of our own, we have been without central air-conditioning on our first floor, non-sleeping space. While we were out of town on vacation, we suffered an unexpected property loss to our home caused by a particularly bad, typical Washington DC summer rain event on Fri., July 14. Since we were on a cruise out to sea, we had no cell service, so it wasn't until we arrived back in port on Sun. July 16 that Dina retrieved a text message from Robert, one of our many super-friendly/helpful neighbors. The message simply texted: "Call me." Which we promptly did once we got settled in the car heading south from New York on I95.

Dina calls Robert, who was also collecting our mail while we were gone. Robert picks up immediately. Dina asks, "What's up? I just got your text." To which Robert responds: "Not horrible. But a tree has hit your house. We had a bad storm here Fri. night. I went inside and checked on the cats (being cared for by another neighbor); they're fine." The tree that fell, not the one you might have expected (he tries to explain which one), crashed onto the back of the house. It broke a window, and it looks like you suffered some water damage inside your house too. I just wanted to let you know before you came home and saw it for yourself."

Dina stammered a "What!" and a "Thank you" before she ended the call. Since she was on the speaker through the car, I heard the entire conversation. After which, we looked at each other and said something like "Yikes!" Over the next four hours or so until we got home, our attitude went from let's wait and see (me) to know what are we going to do (Dina)? Call the insurance company, that much I know.

Being that this would be my first real experience making a home-insurance-policy claim, I proceeded with extreme caution. What little I know of this process came from my years attending continuing education classes required to maintain my Life and Health Insurance License. And what I learned/retained, other than the Property and Casualty (home, car, et. cetera) world is excruciatingly complicated, is that the claim process, communications, timeline and so forth is fraught with misinterpretation, disagreement, and disappointment. To that end, I figured I needed to file a claim as soon as possible, especially since the event had occurred almost two days prior.

Even though it was early afternoon on Sunday, I surmised that since P&C claims don't just happen during the week, I called the company expecting to talk with an actual person. Sure enough, I was able to connect with a claim's specialist. I filled the claim and listened as the process going forward was explained to me. It all sounded reasonable and so we continued our drive home secure in the knowledge that we had fulfilled our initial filing-a-claim responsibilities.

After silence on Mon., on Tues. I called the 800 claims number for a status. Needless to say, the hole in my roof – which I couldn't see since the tree limbs and all were draped across it, was not getting any smaller, and its existence was making me nervous since I was told that there was rain in the forecast for later that day. Moreover, the downstairs central air conditioner was dead as the water from the storm had seeped through the roof into its electrical circuit and tripped the breaker thereby shorting out the circuit and burning out the motor of the air conditioning unit for the downstairs (where we live, mostly) as well as the light switch in the den. (When I saw we had no power, I immediately checked the fuse box and sure enough, a breaker had been tripped. When I flicked it back on, the air handler for the downstairs air conditioner restarted but only for a second and then stopped, never to restart again. Additionally, the den chandelier never came back on as its light switch was on the same circuit and thus was compromised as well.)

The following week has produced record-shattering heat and humidity. It has hardly been the ideal weather conditions to have had two-thirds of your house unair-conditioned. To add insult to perspiration, though we were able on Tuesday to get a water mitigation team to attend to our interior and sop up the moisture still in our house – and check for mold, and then on Wednesday (July 19) have a tree service contracted to remove the tree from atop our house, it wasn't until Sat. July 22 in the morning, nearly a week later, that we actually had an adjuster finally come by the house to "adjust" our claim. As Paul Harvey never said: Now you know the beginning of the story. Good fortnight! (To be continued next week.)

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

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Del Ray | \$2,275,000

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Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Old Town | \$2,015,000

This totally renovated historic home blends the best of yesterday with today's conveniences. Features include a gorgeous gourmet kitchen with 9-ft island, sumptuous baths, custom millwork, cabinetry & lighting, spacious patio and much more. 427 S Fairfax Street
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Malvern Hill | \$1,349,000

This sophisticated 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath home features a large living room, formal dining room, remodeled kitchen and a cozy family room with one of the 3 wood-burning fireplaces. The lower level includes a rec room office, and additional storage. 500 Canterbury Lane
Lauren Bishop 202.361.5079
www.LaurenBishopHomes.com



OPEN SUN 8/13, 2-4PM

Milway Meadows | \$997,500

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Robin Arnold 703.966.5457
www.robinarnoldsells.com



Stratford on the Potomac | \$899,000

This meticulous 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath home in 22308 has been lovingly cared for and it shows! Exquisite curb appeal with mature trees and plantings – a serene, natural paradise. Delightful deck with awning and patio off the living room. 2105 Wakefield Street
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OPEN SUN 8/13, 12-2PM

Old Town | \$724,900

Stunning 2-bedroom, 2-bath, 2-level condo. Features 2 entrances (including a private entrance with patio), wood floors, soaring ceilings, built-ins, and tons of upgrades. 1 garage parking space and storage. 520 John Carlyle Street #116
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www.WendySantantonio.com



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