

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 31, 2023



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



## Last of the Mount Vernon Nights

Deanna Bogart and her band wowed the crowd on Aug. 25 at Grist Mill Park, the last Mount Vernon Nights concert of the season, sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Her soulful blues tunes and rousing keyboard artistry inspired the crowd, drawing some couples to the “dance floor.”



The new truck is clean and ready to go out on trash day.



Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck has been behind environmental solutions.



One of two special plug-in stations.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

## Fairfax County Plugs in First Electric Trash Truck

**New truck is quiet and spews no diesel fumes.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

When the sun peeks out on trash pick-up day during the week, a noisy diesel engine, squeaky brakes and compactor in action are an unwelcome alarm clock in some neighborhoods. This may be coming to an end with the all-electric trash truck that was recently launched by Fairfax County. It's the first truck of a new fleet the county is buying and will be in action soon.

“We’re trying to pilot this to demonstrate that it works,” said Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay. “This is an investment in our

environment,” he added.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) has been behind protecting the environment throughout his time as supervisor and was one of the officials at the ribbon cutting that launched the new truck. He noted the way it aligns with the Fairfax Green Initiative that was launched in 2019. “We put together some aggressive goals,” he said.

One of those goals was for the county buildings to be at zero waste by 2040 and the county to be carbon neutral by 2050. “We’re on track,” Storck said.

McKay and Storck were at the launching event with Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive; Chris Herrington, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services; and John Morrill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. They cut the “green” ribbon and then did the ceremonial “plugging in” of the

truck too. The county facility along Cinder Bed Road in Newington has the only two trash truck charging stations, located just outside the garage.

According to Fairfax County, the truck costs nearly \$350,000, funded by the department’s Solid Waste Management Program and a grant from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

### Talking Trash

Americans throw out 4.9 pounds of trash per person every day which equals 1,800 pounds per year. According to the EPA, the largest percentage of trash is paper followed by food, plastics and yard waste.

Currently, trash trucks use about 6,000 gallons of diesel fuel each year, spewing smoke out the exhaust pipe.

But the trash must be picked up somehow. The new trucks will save all that fuel and exhaust,



Can't have an electric vehicle without a set of wires.

which will be easier on the county employees that work with those trucks too.

Not everyone in Fairfax County will see or barely hear the new

truck though. Most communities have a private trash service and only about 10 percent of the households in the county have official Fairfax County trash service.

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## Stratford on the Potomac | \$885,000

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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## Sequoyah | \$265,000

This inviting residence features an open floor plan that seamlessly connects the living and dining room areas to the upgraded, bright kitchen. Both full and half baths have been tastefully updated, along with new flooring & lighting throughout the home. 3902 Mariposa Pl #C  
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## Hunting Creek Club | \$209,900

Beautiful views of the Potomac River abound in this spacious and light-filled 850-SF, 1-bedroom unit on the 10th floor with a balcony. This community offers a pool, picnic area, tennis court, a 24-hr front desk, & is just 5 blocks from Metro. 2059 Huntington Ave #1003  
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## Fairfax County's Independent Police Auditor

Use of force policy, recommendations to FCPD, executive director vacancy on the Police Civilian Review Panel.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

The Connection interviewed Richard Schott, Fairfax County's Independent Police Auditor, on Friday, Aug. 11. The timing coincided with the Fairfax County Police Department's response to recommendations from the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Police Executive Reform Forum (PERF), and the Police Reform Matrix Group.

**Connection: Let's discuss the elephant in the room. Steven Richardson, the Police Civilian Review Panel's first executive director, resigned on Aug. 1. What considerations may be taken so the panel can continue along its path without him?**

**Schott:** I won't dodge the question, but I'll deflect. The deputy county executive and county officials told me the plan is to re-advertise the position. I don't think our current structure will change. The Board of Supervisors will simply fill that position. In the interim, the review panel retains a management analyst (a paid county staff person) who, together with me and my staff, provides the necessary support to the panel.

**Q: The University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice released its Final Report, June 2021, "Investigation of Fairfax County Police Department Use of Force," with 29 recommendations for the police department in three categories. PERF, the Police Executive Review Forum, presented its "April 2023 Review of Issues Surrounding Recent Police-Shooting Incidents," with 15 recommendations, and you presented the Fairfax County Independent Police Auditor 2022 Annual Report with recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on June 13.**

Many of the recommendations are language changes. Those may seem insignificant to some. Explain whether language matters in the FCPD's General Order on Use of Force and provide an example.

**Schott:** What appear to be subtle language changes on the surface can have a big impact on the results. There has been a legal standard since 1989, given to us by the Supreme Court, of "objective reasonableness." Many individuals and groups nationwide would like the legal standard changed, but they can't make the Supreme Court change something. They are asking individual departments, on their initiative, to change the objective reasonableness language to "necessary and proportional." Yes, that may seem like semantics, but that could be a big policy and training change.

For example, the use of force may have



Richard Schott.

been objectively reasonable but unnecessary. Now, I'm going to contradict myself because if it is a policy, and we'll take the Fairfax County Police Department and see if they change their policy to include necessary and proportional force. My recommendation is: first, tell me when force is necessary. Changing one word isn't enough. You must now define what is necessary and in what way.

**Q: Next steps?**

**Schott:** The change requires defining the new term. What exactly does necessary mean? The Department of Justice's use of deadly force policy describes when deadly force may be necessary.

**Q: Should FCPD use the DOJ force policy?**

**Schott:** Those words are unique in DOJ's policy only on the use of deadly force. That's also important to distinguish. When to use non-deadly force may be harder to define. That includes tasers and electronic control weapons.

**Q: What are the University of Texas's most critical recommendations, the most viable changes to the use of force that could save a life in Fairfax County or prevent severe injury?**

**Schott:** That's a big ask. I'm not sure if I can do that, to be honest.

**Q: Is it changes in training, data, or language?**

**Schott:** I would probably lean on the language, but I may not agree with some of their suggestions. I provided the Board of Supervisors with my input on UTSA's recommendations, which is public. UTSA only disagrees with one. I disagreed with three CAC decisions. When they said, they wanted to incorporate the minimum [use of force]. I doubt there's a minimum. I don't know that there is such a thing as a minimum. Not to be cavalier, but the minimum amount of force in any situation is not to use any. That's the minimum, but that's unrealistic, in my estimation.

### About the Fairfax County Independent Police Auditor:

The Office of the Independent Police Auditor reviews police investigations involving use of force and serves as an independent intake venue for complaints against the Fairfax County Police Department. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policeauditor/>

Richard Schott, Fairfax County's first Independent Police Auditor, along with the Police Civilian Review Panel are intended to provide an "accessible, safe, impartial and responsive intake venue for Fairfax County Police Department and staff complaints."

Schott came to Fairfax County after a 27-year FBI career as a special agent working with local law enforcement officers, and for the past 16 years has provided training to members of state and local law enforcement agencies, including legal issues associated with police officers' use of force and deadly force. He has extensive experience with Color of Law violations, including reviewing police reports and citizen complaints, recommending to U.S. Department of Justice attorneys whether or not to proceed with investigations and conducting the ensuing investigations. Schott was also an instructor at the FBI Academy in Quantico.

The Police Civilian Review panel is made up of non-paid members and an executive director, a recently created paid position appointed by the Board of Supervisors, Steve Richardson, the first executive director of the Police Civilian Review Panel, recently resigned. More on the Civilian Review Panel, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police-civilianreviewpanel/>

After their study and recommendations, UTSA presented them to the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Lusk, who chairs the Safety and Security Committee, convened the Community Advisory Committee, the CAC, to provide input on UTSA's recommendations, a kind of check and balance to how our community felt about UTSA. I independently commented on UTSA's and the CAC's feedback and overwhelmingly agreed with both groups' recommendations. I had just a small number of items I disagreed with.

**Q: PERF's report was a quick turnaround. Chief Davis requested it in February and received it in April 2023; UTSA recommendations have been available for two years. How many have been implemented, meaning the chief says to his officers, You know, this has been changed?**

**Schott:** I don't want to speak for the department, but shortly after UTSA presented its findings to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021, the police department made the claim that the department had implemented about 80 percent of UTSA's recommendations. ...

I don't think it's in writing yet, but it is my understanding, and I would be shocked if this didn't happen.

At the upcoming Oct. 3 Safety and Security Committee meeting, the police department is scheduled to present to the Board of Supervisors their responses to the Reform Matrix Group's Action Plan recommendations, as well as my understanding of PERF's 15 recommendations, a very manageable number. ...

One of the matrix's recommendations was simply for the PD to reexamine UTSA's recommendations. Some of these are again in play through incorporation. After this October meeting, we may have a more definitive number of UTSA recommendations the PD has implemented.

**Q: Officer training appears to be key. Which traits of a model chief would significantly change an officer's use of force? What must a chief**

**get across to their officers?**

**Schott:** Speaking generally, if a department has problems with the use of force, a new chief has to emphasize a culture change. I don't like the saying, but 'culture eats policy for lunch.'

Integrating, emphasizing, and meaning de-escalation, ICAT, and crisis intervention training — don't just check the box. Emphasize those tactics before resorting to force or anything else. You must emphasize it in training and recurring training. And recognize good examples of using those techniques in isolation or crisis intervention. Emphasize and acknowledge department-wide those aspects of policing or working in your department. I am almost positive the Fairfax County Police Department is doing that.

**Q: Given your anticipated 2023 calendar list of activities (and responsibilities), how are you doing as the police auditor?**

**Schott:** I was doing better before the resignation of Steven Richardson. I have been devoting a lot of my time to panel issues. It does pull me away from my primary mission as the auditor, which is to get over to the Internal Affairs Bureau more regularly and review their investigations into the use of force incidents. I do that as frequently as I can, but I wish other obligations wouldn't keep me from doing it more frequently.

**Q: What do you think about when you're not working, like walking your dog or waking up?**

**Schott:** That's a tough one and a good question. I try to escape from work. It's not easy. When I proverbially clock out for the day to try to leave work aside, guess what? What concerns me is getting that notification during the night or early morning that the county has had a fatal shooting involving an officer. Nobody wants to see it—the community, the police department, and I don't want to see it. But in a 1.1 million-population county with 1,300 sworn officers, you're going to have some critical situations.

# HOBBY



This Union soldier by club member Greg Paspatis is a U.S. Marine Corps figure that would have fought in the First Battle of Bull Run in Manassas.



These soldiers were created by club member Jose Martinez depicting life at Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War.



A special ops soldier in Afghanistan.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

## Historical Lessons Via Toy Soldier Hobbyist

Upcoming show in Springfield includes intricate painting and military themes.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

### NCMSS 62nd Annual Washington Show

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 9 A.M.-5 P.M.  
Springfield Hilton  
6550 Loisdale Road  
Springfield, VA 22150

In late September the ballrooms of Springfield Hilton will be full of Army artists and enthusiasts putting on the 62nd annual National Capital Model Soldier Society show consisting of exhibitions, modeling demonstrations, military displays and hobby vendors gathering in honor of 240 years of Army history.

"It's an event to honor history through art," said Burt K. Thompson, a Mount Vernon resident, Club President and Show Chairman. Thompson has been at the helm of this event for the past few years and appreciates the enthusiasm that oozes out of the event.

"They're very passionate for what they do," he said, referring to the participants who focus on the particular activities of the U.S. Army, a certain time period, uniforms, vehicles or the art techniques used to create the dioramas and models. Some of the exhibits are non-military too.

"It's really fun," Thompson said.

During the year the Nation Capital Model Soldier Society meets every month at Edison High School in Franconia.

It's not something a person just goes out and does though. Thompson was born right

after the Nation Capital Model Soldier Society was formed in the early 1960s and he started in the army in 1984, retiring as a Brigadier General 21 years later. Somewhere in his life he came across the work of Shepherd Paine, the father of box dioramas. This is where Thompson learned the craft. Thompson worked on painting and modeling Army life and has a model of a helicopter crash he said was amongst his best.

#### Museum Efforts

Thompson splits his time between the club and his fundraising efforts at the U.S. Army Museum in Fort Belvoir where he is the President of the Army Historical Foundation, which is a 5013C fundraising arm for the museum. He runs the gift store and café too, which raise funds for the museum too.

In early summer they celebrated a success at the museum when \$5 million was raised for the opening of the Warrior's Field and

**National Capital Model Soldier Society**  
**62<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL SHOW**  
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Event flyer.

Plaza out in front of the museum. On June 10, the U.S. Army birthday festival was celebrated in the plaza.

The combination of U.S. Army history and

building on that history was on Thompson's wish list all along. Now it has come true.

"My dream job was to be an Army historian," he said.

OPINION

# Virginia's Budget Breakthrough: Tax Relief and Educational Investments

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



Don't get too excited, but the General Assembly House and Senate conferees have just dropped a budget bombshell that's sure to have Virginians buzzing. Brace yourselves for a mix of tax relief and a bold investment in education — it's a long overdue deal that promises to reshape the Commonwealth's financial landscape.

Let's take a quick look into what we know right now, as not all of the budget details are out yet. However, I did learn that my budget amendments for the WISH Center in Hybla Valley and the Gum Springs Museum are included. Significantly, we will have a one-time tax rebate hitting our wallets with \$200 for individuals and \$400 for families. But that's not all, the standard deduction is getting a makeover too, up to \$8,500 for individuals and \$17,000 for those filing jointly.

Good news! The state sales tax holiday is making a triumphant return. Remember the days of savings on those back-to-school spending sprees? They're about to make a revival.

And the age requirement for the military retiree subtraction? Gone! Now, if only we could do the same for foreign service retirees. That is next year's bill.

Now, let's shift the spotlight to education. The educational sector is getting a much-deserved boost. Significantly, educational investments will take precedence in the final amended budget. The plan is to provide additional support

and financial aid to colleges and universities, ensuring access regardless of family income. Despite these investments, fiscal responsibility remains a priority, maintaining Virginia's strong financial position and AAA bond rating.

Getting to this point wasn't a walk in the park. Picture a tug-of-war between the House and Senate conferees, and a clash of ideas between the Democratic Conferees with the Governor and the Republicans. While the Governor pushed for long-term corporate tax cuts, my camp championed individual one-time tax breaks and a hardy investment in state services, especially education.

While Governor Glenn Youngkin's nod to the compromise might be temporary, his eyes are set on the long game. You'd better believe that

he's got his sights on future legislative sessions (and his national ambitions) — especially if the Republicans win in November — aiming for those big corporate tax cuts he's been dreaming of.

But, let's not get lost in the political whirlwind. This budget, this success story, is all about teamwork. It's about smart financial management, budget restraint, and policies that make sense. Indeed, as we venture into Fiscal Year 2024, Virginia is cautiously optimistic about revenue. The recession clouds loom, but the silver lining? Labor's thriving, the Biden economic recovery is transformative, and people are moving into Virginia. It looks like we're ready to weather the storm. Responsible financial management, spending restraint, and pragmatic policies contribute to the Commonwealth's commendable and healthy fiscal position.

So there you have it: Virginia's new amendments to the biennium budget will put tax relief and education on the frontlines. It's a financial facelift that shows our commitment to smart spending while boosting the engines of education. As Virginia propels forward, let's remember — it's the harmony of all these moving parts that truly paints the picture of success. And ... the General Assembly still needs to vote on it in a Special Session next week.

## Mount Vernon Gazette

www.MountVernonGazette.com

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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

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

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PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Monarch butterfly garden sign and milkweed at the Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon.



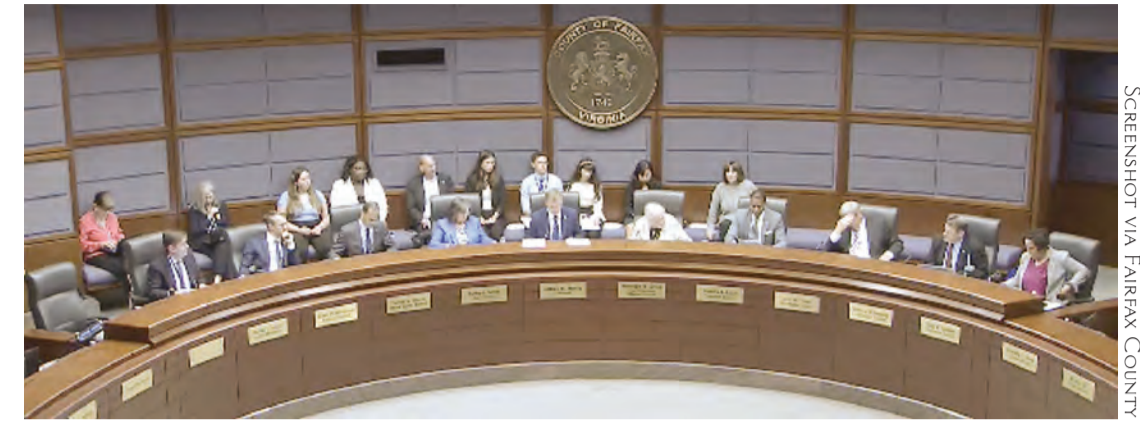
PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Monarch butterfly caterpillar on a milkweed leaf on Aug. 26 at the Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Larry Meade, president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club, led the August 26 butterfly walk.



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, July 25, 2023.

## Cash from County's Carryover Funds \$100K may be coming for each district's unfunded capital improvement projects.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

**O**n Sept. 26, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and vote on the FY 2023 Carryover Budget package. In his July 24, Memo on Transmitting the County's 2023 Carryover Review with Appropriate Resolutions, County Executive Bryan J. Hill reported the county ended the fiscal year with a balance of \$203.14 million. County staff recommended how to spend \$200.9 million, leaving the Board of Supervisors to decide how to allocate \$2.24 million for one-time expenses.

As part of the review of carryover funds for FY 2023, Hill's memo recommended funds for "investments in board priorities," such as \$2.58 million for the expansion of youth mental health services \$8.05 million in investments for the continued support of environmental and energy strategies by the county \$30 million for enhancements to library collections \$230,000 for the continuation of the Illegal Sign Removal Program

Funding totaling \$1 million, equally divided at \$100,000 between each of the nine district offices and the chairman's office, to address small-scale capital projects.

The \$1 million is intended to support "modest yet impactful (unfunded) capital improvement projects at a low cost," according to an Aug. 23 email from Supervisor John W. Foust, representing McLean, Great Falls, Tysons, and portions of Herndon.

The funding source is familiar, and in other years, organizations such as local associations have requested funding for

**Who can apply for this and other funding may surprise you.**

specific projects in the districts they represent. The Great Falls Citizens Association Board of Directors is asking its members for suggestions "to compete for surplus funds for the Dranesville District."

Upgrades to existing streetlights, installation of new streetlights based on safety concerns and resident requests, construction of missing trail segments and walkways, and repairs to pedestrian bridges were typical projects utilizing this funding source in the past. This funding is often essential for connecting neighborhoods, activity centers, revitalization centers and schools, and it supports the county's One Fairfax commitment by providing resources to address gaps and promote equitable access for all, according to Hill's FY2023 carryover review.

Who else can request county carryover funding, what other funding sources are there, and who can make the requests may come as a surprise.

A spokesperson for Fairfax County confirmed in an email dated Aug. 25 that "other jurisdictions and organizations are not precluded from requesting capital project funds," including the Town of Herndon, the Town of Vienna, and the City of Fairfax could propose capital improvement projects for funding.

However, the county spokesperson noted that the towns and the city have their respective capital improvement programs to fund their jurisdictional capital project priorities.

As for support for nonprofits and for-profit businesses, the county has a Contributory Fund, which was established in 2001, so those groups can apply for funding from the total budget surplus if their projects ben-

efit community members. The Contributory Fund provides annual appropriations to nonprofit organizations to promote community health and welfare. The non-profit's submission of an annual report updating its financial status and service delivery is a prerequisite for receiving funding. Requests are due annually in the fall for consideration in the following fiscal year.

New contributory agencies or changes to existing contributions outside of the annual budget process are typically requested through a member of the Board of Supervisors. County contributions are generally limited to non-profit organizations.

"County contributions are generally limited to non-profit organizations; however economic development initiatives by for-profit entities could be considered for funding through the County's Economic Opportunity Reserve," said the county spokesperson. Typically, members of the Board of Supervisors initiate these nominations, he said.

The carryover balance for FY 2023 is primarily the result of higher-than-anticipated property tax receipts, other local taxes, and revenue from the federal government's use of money and property. In addition, county agency disbursements were lower than anticipated due to continued tight expenditure management and prolonged vacancy rates, according to the Carryover Budget Package for Fiscal Year 2023 (Management and Budget).

Visit these sites to learn more about carryover funding opportunities. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2023-carryover-budget-package>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/sites/budget/files/assets/documents/fy2023-carryover/fy%202023%20carryover%20package.pdf>

# Butterflies Bring Cheer at Summer's End

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**T**he numbers of butterflies may be down this year, noted Larry Meade as he led an Aug. 26 butterfly and dragonfly walk for 18 enthusiasts in Dyke Marsh. Nevertheless, the group delighted in finding 12 species, from the summer azure with a one-or-so-inch wingspan to a spicebush butterfly with a 3.5-to-4.5-inch wingspan.

He attributed the lower numbers to several possible factors, including a "cool start" last spring and an ongoing drought resulting in fewer blossoms. Butterflies "eat" or actually nectar on flowers and prefer certain plants. While a few, like the mourning cloak, might emerge from winter hibernation on a warm early spring day, most are active in Northern Virginia from April to October. Butterflies develop through a process called "metamorphosis" and go through several stages called "instars" which take time. "They need warm weather," Meade explained, adding, "Insects are solar powered. They like the sun."

"Butterflies are day-flying moths," he said, and both insects are in the order Lepidop-

tera. Both insects have four wings with distinctive markings and their larvae are caterpillars. Unlike moths, butterflies have a club or bulb on their antennae and in general are more colorful than most moths.

On Saturday, summer azures seemed abundant, fluttering around seemingly erratically. On a leaf or on the ground, they could be mistaken for a little splotch of white bird poop. Zabulon skippers prefer forest edges, said Meade. They were darting around and displaying an orange wing patch. Mating pearl crescents elicited oohs and awws.

The swallowtails, viewed as large butterflies in North America, wowed the walkers. The male eastern tiger swallowtail is yellow with black stripes. There are two morphs of females, one yellow and one black. The tiger swallowtails were nectaring on bear's foot plants.

Swallowtails have tail-like extensions on each hindwing, hence their name. A black male spicebush swallowtail provided some drama, its bluish, hind-wing bands glowing in the sun.

The group also spotted Needham's skimmers and common whitetail dragonflies. The whitetail has a striking white body and dis-

tinctive dark bands on its otherwise translucent wings. "Dragonflies cannot walk. They fly or perch," Meade observed.

"Once you start watching dragonflies, you can't help but notice how amazing they are. They fly at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour, zip forward and backward, pivot in a flash and hover with ease," wrote Jill U. Adams, in an Audubon magazine article.

In 2022, Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteers documented 31 butterfly species and 22 dragonfly and damselfly species in the preserve.

### Migrating Monarchs

While the Saturday group saw no monarch butterflies, Meade predicted that people will see some migrating through the region soon.

These bright orange and black butterflies, which weigh one-fifth the weight of a penny, migrate through Northern Virginia in September and October en route to central Mexico's mountains. Some will fly 2,000 miles from Canada to reach their winter sites. Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed leaves.

Locals have spotted a few monarchs and their caterpillars recently. On Saturday, a



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Pamela Krist, master gardener, plants native plants to support native insects, here monarch caterpillars on common milkweed.

monarch caterpillar was under a common milkweed leaf at the Hollin Hall Senior Center's monarch waystation, clear evidence



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Silvery checkerspot butterfly



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Mating pearl crescent butterflies.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

The whitetail dragonfly has a snow white body and distinctive dark wing patches.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Like many butterflies, tiny summer azures get minerals from the soil.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Tiger swallowtail butterfly on bear's foot in the Dyke Marsh native plant area.

# FESTIVAL

## Fort Belvoir's 25th Annual Oktoberfest

Sept. 28 - Oct. 1, 2023

Fort Belvoir's Family and MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) hosts the 25th annual Oktoberfest. Located at Fremont Field on Fort Belvoir, Oktoberfest is a four-day festival that highlights authentic German cuisine, beverages, music, and dancing, plus carnival rides and more. Volksmarch 5K/10K Walk and much more. This is a fun-filled event geared toward the whole family

Event is open to all (100% ID Check) with free

entry to Fremont Field.

Once a year, US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir welcomes the general public to celebrate Oktoberfest. The general public with a State Drivers' License and their Dependents can enter and enjoy this four-day festival celebrating all things German. Children 12 and younger need to be accompanied by an adult at all times.

<https://belvoir.armymwr.com/programs/oktoberfest>

## Here Comes the Burke Centre Festival

Sept. 9 & 10, 2023. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. & Sun: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Wine & Beer Garden Hours: 12-5 p.m. Both Days

Extended Wine & Beer Garden Saturday only, 5-10 p.m. Last call @9 p.m..\*Must be ages 21 & up to purchase and/or consume alcohol. Photo ID required.\*

Saturday, 9/9/23 Opening Ceremony at 9:30 AM:

Features a brief Flag-Raising led by the Burke VFW Post 5412 & Scout Troop 1345 with Special Guest Dignitaries and a Quilts of Valor Awards Ceremony

Bloodmobile on site both days

<https://burkecentre.com/>

Featuring

- ❖ Huge Arts & Crafts Show
- ❖ Balloon Tying/Animals
- ❖ Face Painting
- ❖ Fairfax County Police, Fire & Rescue Vehicles & Displays
- ❖ Emergency Preparedness
- ❖ Scout's Monkey Bridge
- ❖ Live Performances
- ❖ Roving Characters
- ❖ Clown, Puppets & Magic Shows
- ❖ Festival Foods
- ❖ Bloodmobile on site
- ❖ Amusement Rides: Inflatables, Mechanical & Pony Rides
- ❖ Nursing Mom's Private Tent
- ❖ Basketball Toss
- ❖ Midway-style Games

❖ Community Outreach Booths featuring giveaways & drawings

❖ After-hours Wine & Beer Garden\* with live music

❖ and much more!

Free Shuttle Bus Service along Burke Centre Pkwy (click here)

Parking also available at all 5 Burke Center Conservancy community centers.

Saturday, Sept. 9 - Shuttle Bus Hours: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 10 - Shuttle Bus Hours: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Shuttle Bus Stops

A) Fairview Elementary School (5815 Ox Rd) - Bus stop @ Rt. 123 & Burke Centre Pkwy)

B) Oaks Community Center (5708 Oak Leather Dr) - Bus stop @ Oak Leather Dr & Burke Centre Pkwy

C) Landings Community Center (6001 Cove Landing Rd) - Bus stop @ Cove Landing Rd & Burke Centre Pkwy

D) Burke Centre Conservancy Festival Grounds (6060 Burke Centre Pkwy)

E) Ponds Community Center (9837 Burke Pond Lane) - Bus stop @ Burke Pond Ln & Burke Centre Parkway

F) Burke School (9645 Burke Lake Rd) - Bus stop @ Burke Lake Rd & Burke Centre Pkwy

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## ALEXANDRIA COLONIAL TOURS' GHOST & GRAVEYARD TOUR

Wednesdays through Sundays in September at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Nightly in October at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria.

Walk your way through the charming streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost and Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Visit alexcolonialtours.com.

## 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://tallship-providence.org/>

## 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

**Obscura: 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.

## SEPT. 1-30

**The "Farther Afield" Exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.



The Perspectives Exhibit will take place Sept. 2-30, 2023 at the Van Landingham Gallery in the Torpedo Factory, Alexandria.

Ray Artisans gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Featuring art by local artists that takes the viewer on a journey, whether that is someplace an hour away from Alexandria or halfway across the world. Opening Reception: Friday, September 1, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 1). Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](https://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## SEPT. 2-30

**Perspectives 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 Perspectives, a juried membership show featuring artworks that showcase the talent and creativity of the TFAA. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, jewelry, works on paper, sculpture, and more. The following artists are featured in the main exhibit: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Helen Power, Karen Waltermire, Nancy Ramsey, Ann Barbieri, Tara Barr, and Lynn Chadwick.

## TUESDAYS/SEPT. 5, 12, 19, 26,

**Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens,** Tuesdays @ 10. 10 - 11:30 a.m., Simpson Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Meet and talk with Extension Master Gardeners in the Simpson Demonstration Gardens to learn about lawn alternatives suitable for our climate and your growing conditions. Free.

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**Memorial Benefit Concert.** 2 p.m. At Aldersgate United Methodist

Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Benefitting United Community and in memory of Phil Bolin, come to a Memorial Benefit Concert/Recital. Join in this enchanting performance honoring the memory of Phil Bolin featuring mezzo-soprano, Caroline Nielson, and pianist, Eddie Rothmel. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. All ticket purchases are non-refundable and will be donated to support United Community. Visit [unitedcommunity.org/concerts](https://unitedcommunity.org/concerts).

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**Virginia Arts & Music Festival.** 12 to 8:30 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria.

### Festival Program

12-2:30 p.m. — Magic of Color and Shape Visual arts exhibition opening with a complimentary reception. Featured artists: Karen Tyler, Tatyana Shramko, Iryna Smitchkova, Sermin Ciddi, Marcos Teixeira, Sarah Havah Theebaum, Dawn Shuler, Bugra Karaagac and a special tribute to Mirella Monti Belshé, who passed away this June.

3-4:30 p.m. — Poetical Insights: All the senses of the heart and mind Poetry and poetical story reading, featuring poems by Wayne David Hubbard, Sola Owonibi, Joseph Jablosnki aka 'The Walking Mall Poet', Margot Gotzmann (Sarah Havah Theebaum) and others, as well as poems and stories by Sufi masters.

4:30-5:15 p.m. — Lunch break — complimentary light lunch offered by organizers

5:30-6:30 p.m. — Exploring the Musical Journey: Towards the known and the unknown horizons — Lynne Mackey — pianist — classical music concert Looking both forward and back, the concert



The "Farther Afield" Exhibit takes place Sept. 1-30, 2023 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.

contains an eclectic mix of styles and music. Composers range from Charles Griffes, Henry Cowell and Sergei Rachmaninoff, to Tan Dun, Alexina Louie and Ann Silsbee, exploring the nature of known and unknown horizons.

7-8:30 p.m. — Documenting Beauty and Mystery: Oriental and western architecture and art in movie excerpts and comments — movie tasting  
Visit the website [www.arts-and-hearts.org](https://www.arts-and-hearts.org)

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**Used Book Sale:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

## SUNDAY/SEPT. 10

**8th Annual George Washington Patriot 5K and 10-Miler Race.** 10-Mile race starts at 7:15 a.m. 5K race starts at 7:30 a.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Race in-person or virtually, and cross the finish line with George Washington's Mansion in view. The Finish Festival will offer each runner music, food and beverage concessions, and a complimentary beer. All participants will receive a commemorative George Washington Patriot Run T-shirt and a finisher medal engraved with George Washington's bust. Awards will be presented to first place overall, by age division, and for the military/first responder categories. Visit <https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/george-washington-patriot-run/>

## SEPT. 16-17

**Colonial Market and Fair.** At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate.

Step back in time for food and wares by colonial artisans, theatrical entertainment, live music, and demonstrations - all included in the regular price of admission.

## THURSDAY/SEPT. 21

**Taste of Old Town North.** 4-8 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Head to Montgomery Park for a celebration of greater Old Town North featuring local businesses including restaurants like Julia's on the Potomac, Hank's Oyster Bar, St. Elmo's and Yunnan by Potomac Noodle House. Plus, enjoy music from New Breed Soul Consortium, formerly Three Man Soul Machine, and Sally and the Mander. Rain date is September 28. Visit [Oldtownnorth.org](https://Oldtownnorth.org).

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

**81st Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Admission: \$45/person. The Twig, The Junior Auxiliary of Inova Alexandria Hospital, proudly announces the 81st Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour to be held on Saturday, September 23. New this year, a digital tour book guiding participants through the homes will be accessible to ticket holders via their mobile device. Hard copies of the tour book are available for purchase, in advance, for \$5 each. Please note that this event sold out last year, so early ticket purchase is recommended. Visit [thetwig.org/homes-tour](https://thetwig.org/homes-tour).

## THE BIRCHMERE

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

## AUGUST

Thu. 31: Black Violin – The Black Violin Experience \$90.50

## SEPTEMBER

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10



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**CALENDAR**

FROM PAGE 9

- Fri. 1: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00
- Sat. 2: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00
- Thu. 7: CLANNAD \$79.50 SOLD OUT!
- Fri. 8: Brett Dennen "Fool In Paradise Acoustic Tour" w/ Mon Rovia \$39.50
- Sat. 9: 4th Annual DANNY GATTON Birthday Tribute \$45.00
- Sun. 10: The High Kings \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
- Mon. 11: Beth Orton w/ Ben Sloan \$35.00
- Tue. 12: Ondara: The Rebirth Tour w/ Katacombs \$29.50
- Wed. 13: Jonathan Coulton and Paul & Storm \$39.50
- Thu. 14: James McMurtry w/ BettySoo \$39.50
- Fri. 15: The Jayhawks w/ Freedy Johnston \$49.50 SOLD OUT!
- Sat. 16: Tommy Emmanuel, CGP with Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
- Sun. 17: Tommy Emmanuel, CGP with Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams \$59.50
- Mon. 18: Patty Griffin w/ Scott Miller \$65.00 SOLD OUT!
- Tue. 19: Joshua Radin w/ Maddie Poppe \$45.00
- Wed. 20: Robert Earl Keen (Solo) \$65.00 SOLD OUT!
- Thu. 21: Robert Earl Keen (Solo) \$65.00 SOLD OUT!
- Fri. 22: Patton Oswalt: Effervescent \$65.00 SOLAd OUT!
- Sat. 23: 40 Fingers \$35.00
- Sun. 24: Therapy Gecko Live! Lyle The Therapy Gecko \$29.50
- Thu. 28: Yachtley Crew \$35.00
- Fri. 29: The Whispers \$95.00
- Sat. 30: The Whispers \$95.00

**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.

**GIRLS ON THE RUN REGISTRATION OPEN**

Registration for the fall 2023 season of Girls on the Run is open! Registration will close on Friday, Sept. 15 at 11:59 p.m. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is an out-of-school program designed to help young girls build key life skills through dynamic lessons. Teams are led by trained volunteer coaches who lead by positive example and have a passion for helping others be the best version of themselves. Teams typically meet twice a week for 75-90 minutes and are led by volunteer coaches. The 10-week season will begin the week of September 11th and conclude at the celebratory 5K events the weekend of November 18-19. Each practice has a corresponding lesson from the Girls on the Run research-based curriculum, which focuses on building social, emotional, and physical skills while encouraging healthy habits for life. While many teams meet at schools, GOTR NOVA also offers community teams based out of neighborhoods, community centers, and parks. If a team is not offered at your school, make sure to check out GOTR NOVA's interactive map to find a team near you! Girls on the Run programming is specifically designed for elementary school girls starting in grade 3 while Heart & Sole programming is created for middle school girls.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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# Co-Responder Program Shows Promise

Fairfax County police and the Community Service Board's co-responder program continues its expansion, enabling teams to provide direct mental health treatment to individuals in crisis.

The co-responder program partners one police officer assigned to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) with a CSB Crisis Intervention Specialist. The pair ride in a patrol cruiser together and respond to behavioral health calls for service throughout the county. These calls could be linked to mental health issues, substance usage, developmental disabilities, or other concerns, FCPD said.

There are currently three teams of co-responders, with a fourth team to be added this fall. The teams are deployed every day, operating between noon and midnight based on peak volume of calls for service related to mental health. The co-responder units respond to calls for service received by dispatch.

The original July 2020 proposal for mental health teams to respond to appropriate 911 calls cited programs in other parts of the country, for example in Eugene, Oregon. The city implemented "a strategic triage initiative that dispatches unarmed medics and mental health workers to 911 calls that do not contain elements of extreme violence or criminal activity. These crisis intervention workers are able to alert law enforcement in instances where they require additional support, however out of roughly 24,000 calls dispatched in 2019 only approximately 150 required additional intervention from law enforcement."

The board matter from Supervisors Rodney Lusk and Walter Alcorn mentioned that only 40 percent of FCPD officers had received Crisis Intervention Training. They continued: "Jurisdictions in California, Arizona and New Jersey have instituted similar models to great effect, and I believe that the time has come for Fairfax County to evaluate the feasibility of following their example."

The motion, which passed, called for a review of the 9-1-1 dispatch and response system "to enhance our Diversion First strategies by implementing systems for the deployment of trained unarmed medical, human services, and mental health professionals in instances where mental and behavioral health are the principal reason for

the call."

Chief Kevin Davis of FCPD objected to the idea of CSB crisis case workers going out without police, citing safety concerns, and the co-responder program emerged.

Still training FCPD officers in Crisis Intervention training and Integrating Communications Assessment and Tactics (ICAT) has lagged.

In its April 2023 Fairfax review of FCPD police shooting incidents, the Police Executive Research Forum identified that in 2022, the Fairfax department recognized the need to train its officers on how to defuse critical incidents through the implementation of the PERF-developed program ICAT, but did not implement the program in 2022.

The department says it expects all officers to be trained in ICAT by the end of September.

The goal of the co-responder program is to increase timely, on-scene assessment and de-escalation of behavioral health crises, FCPD said in a release. The co-responder program could assist in diverting community members from arrest and incarceration.

To date, 838 officers of approximately 1,400 have completed Integrating Communications Assessment and Tactics (ICAT) training with the remainder of the Department to finish in September, according to police

The co-responder program also aligns with the Marcus Alert, the Virginia law that requires 9-1-1, crisis call centers, law enforcement and behavioral health agencies to work together to improve responses to individuals experiencing behavioral health crises, according to FCPD.

One example of the program working as designed:

On June 6, officers responded to a parking garage in the 2600 block of Park Tower Drive in Vienna for a man who was sitting on the edge of the top deck. Officers engaged the man in conversation and determined he was considering taking his own life. An officer trained in crisis intervention spoke with the man, building a rapport and pleading with the man to step off the ledge. A co-responder unit responded to assist with the conversation. Together, the officer and clinician successfully convinced the man to step off the ledge. The man received further treatment.

reduce their single occupancy trips on Sept. 22 by choosing an alternative travel option such as public transit, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, scootering, walking, or simply teleworking. Each registrant will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win great prizes from this year's sponsors.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

## BULLETIN BOARD BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10  
Visit [www.gotnoma.org](http://www.gotnoma.org).

## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAR FREE DAY 2023

World Car Free Day 2023 will be held Friday, Sept. 22 in the metropolitan Washington region, and registration is now open. This annual event organized by COG's Commuter Connections program encourages residents, commuters, and students to choose a greener way to travel by going car free or car lite on Friday, Sept. 22. By taking the free online pledge at [carfreemetrod.cog.org](http://carfreemetrod.cog.org), participants contribute to reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, improve their health, and qualify for great prizes. Interested residents can simply take the pledge to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Our Daily Diversion, Unfortunately



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I imagine you regular readers have noticed that this column has veered away of late from cancer-centric subjects. I wish I could say it was because they rang the bell (a world-wide acknowledgment that a patient has successfully completed their chemotherapy regimen) at the Infusion Center, but "Alas, poor Yurick ... Unfortunately, I did not hear any bells.

What I did hear was how understanding and concerned and willing to help everybody at my homeowner's insurance company's claims department were, everyone except the actual claims adjuster. And that omission is particularly important because it seems – from what little I know/have observed, he releases the money that satisfies (I can dream, can't I?) my claim and ultimately, he's the one who will determine my future fate: whether it's miserable or rewarding. I just hope his finger is not too fickle.

To this hopefully fairly and reasonably compensated end, I have been preoccupied. Not in the way that prevents me from living my life in any sort of normal/ functioning way. Hardly. More that it is a recurring subject of disappointment and bewilderment that something we had absolutely nothing to do with/contributed to in any way, a tree crashing into and onto our house thereby poking a hole in the roof (yes, where the water comes in) is the cause of this consternation. It was that water that shorted out one central air-conditioning unit rendering it useless, seeped into the chandelier in the den and then soaked the 6 x 9 Oriental-type rug on the floor, its pad, and the wood floor underneath, a wood floor dated back probably 100 years. The other damage – aside from now needing an entire roof replaced, was a broken window from where a limb from the tree that fell hit a window and shattered it and finally, damaging the other central air-conditioning unit. Which, due to the force of the tree hitting it, was nearly knocked off its cement pedestal. In addition, all its connecting wires to the house were nearly pulled away from the house. The total repair/replacement cost we estimated for all damages at maybe \$60,000. However, the insurance company estimated our damage differently. So different in fact that not only are we not in the same universe, but we also don't even speak the same language.

Consequently, no repairs/replacement have commenced unless we commit to pay the miscellaneous contractors ourselves and hope we're reimbursed at 100% or so when the process finally inches forward. And since we can't afford, literally or figuratively, to assume any possible financial discrepancy, we are currently in "no man's land," stuck between a repair/replacement that's needed and one which has received money/commitment from the insurance company insufficient to do the job at hand/return our house to its pre-July 14th status.

And while Rome burns, so to speak, "Belly Acres," as I named our designated-as-historic (according to the Office of Historic Preservation for Montgomery, County, Md.), "log house" – as its described, its occupants (me, Dina, four cats and one dog) are forced to twiddle our collective thumbs and/or pant non-stop. Given the financial constraints of our reality, all we can do is wait for the powers-that-be to come to their senses and allocate appropriate funds to make us whole again (no pun intended). I would guess all homeowners with similar policies would expect to be covered completely. We don't want more than we deserve. We just want what contractors are telling us we need. Call me naive but I was thinking the \$212.25 I pay monthly – and have paid since May '92, would provide some reassurance that if a tree hit the fan, the fan would be replaced/ fixed. And until there's a resolution/agreement here, "Belly Acres" and the Louries are going nowhere slowly. Consequently, this subject is the last thing we think about/discuss at dinner and likewise the first thing we mention at breakfast as well.

You bet we're talking about it. At the expense of everything else. Cancer? I can't be bothered. I need a new roof/downspouts/gutters, two central air-conditioners, a chandelier, a rug, its pad, a replacement pane of glass, and refinish the wood floor in two rooms. I need to finish all this stuff so I can get my life back to normal, for a cancer survivor, anyway. I can't have all these issues dragging me down. Cancer is enough of a challenge. I don't need another one. That would be piling on.

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



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