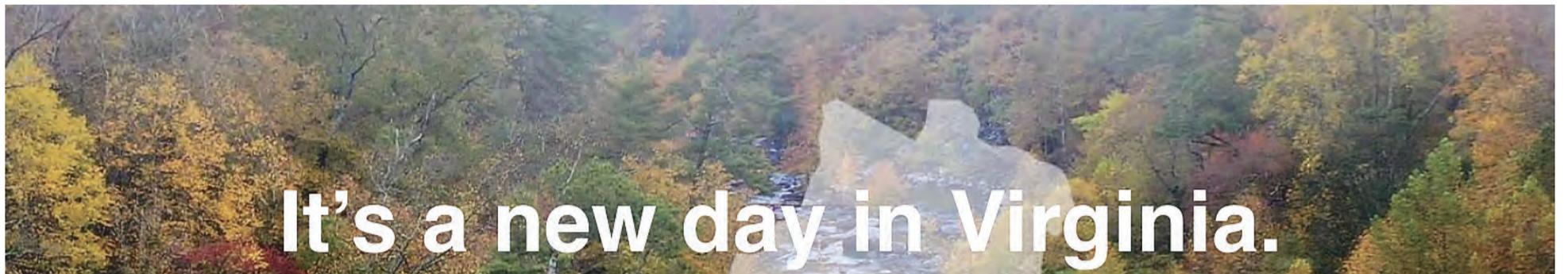


Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 9, 2023



SCREENSHOT VIA REPUBLICAN PARTY OF VIRGINIA

The banner image of the Republican Party of Virginia

Virginia Dems: Blue Wall in Both Houses

One Republican Supervisor-elect, zero Republican-endorsed school board member-elects.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The morning after the Nov. 7 general election in Virginia, the Republican Party of Virginia had yet to update the tagline on its website. It read: "It's a new day in Virginia." The statement is accurate — not how the GOP probably meant it, but for most voters who cast their ballots yesterday.

Virginia Democrats emerged victorious in Tuesday's elections, marking a significant shift in the state political landscape just two years after the Commonwealth took a right turn in the 2021 general election. In 2021, Republican Glenn Youngkin secured the governorship and the House of Delegates, propelling his conservative vision for Virginia. Because Democrats still controlled the Senate, much of Youngkin's agenda hit a roadblock.

Now Democrats maintained control of the Senate and took a majority of seats in the House of Delegates. They will have even greater power over Youngkin's policy agenda, but will have to work with him to advance their own.

Mark J. Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government



Mark J. Rozell, dean of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University.

at George Mason University, said the issue of abortion rights was key to the most competitive races that the Democrats won, and delivered partisan majorities in both houses.

"The Republicans were hoping that issues such as crime and safety and the economy, where the GOP has advantages, would be foremost in the minds of voters. But ultimately, abortion rights drove the Democratic turnout and helped swing voters to elect Democrats," Rozell said. "The issue was paramount for many voters in this election cycle."

While the governor tried to stake



SCREENSHOT VIA INSTAGRAM

Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria): "Let's send a message to the nation that Democrats will stand up for the environment, protect reproductive freedom, and defend democracy and equality for all."

a middle ground on the issue with his 15-week ban proposal, according to Rozell, the problem was that voters likely believed that Re-



PHOTO BY JESSICA WALLACH

Karl Frisch, vice chair of the Fairfax County School Board cast his ballot on Tuesday, Nov. 7.

publican majorities in both houses would pass either an outright ban or a more severe restriction than the governor's proposal. "And, giv-

en that Virginia is the only southern state in the post-Dobbs environment not to have enacted an abor-

SEE VIRGINIA DEMS. PAGE 3

Fairfax County Investing in Electric School Buses

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Diesel school buses will be gone by 2035.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County is taking more steps into the electric vehicle world with a fleet of electric

school buses to join the mix, taking another step away from the internal combustion engine.

Fairfax County Public Schools started with eight electric buses in 2019, which are already operational, and help transport more than 141,000 eligible bus riders to and from school each day, FCPS said. By 2035, FCPS hopes to have an all-electric fleet.

On the "Battle of the Buses," promotional video on the Fairfax

County website, the quiet electric buses are called "the strong silent type."

According to the county, FCPS was chosen to receive the buses in a competitive process after applying for a grant from Dominion Energy in fall 2019. Dominion Energy covers the difference in cost so

SEE SCHOOL BUSES. PAGE 14

The EV1580 quietly picks up students in Newington.



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OPEN SUN 11/12, 1-4 PM



Alexandria/Fort Hunt | \$3,200,000

Show Stopper Luxury! This 7,000 square foot main house has an attached 3,300 square foot guesthouse, situated on over a 1-acre walled and private lot, which adds incredible flexibility for family and visiting friends. It is the essence of luxury, privacy, elegance, and comfort. There are eight bedrooms and baths in total, gourmet kitchens with entertaining spaces, a media room, a pool, and outdoor living areas. There is parking for over a dozen vehicles in the brick paver drive. What an entertainer's paradise. The owner has offered that Seller Held Financing is available for those interested in that option as part of their purchase. This one-of-a-kind property is one you do not want to miss. 1500 Collingwood Road

Chris Robinson 703.898.9023
www.robinsonbriggs.com

OPEN SAT 11/4 & SUN 11/5, 1-3 PM



Arlington | \$2,750,000

Gorgeous 6-bedroom, 5.5-bath, 6,000-SF Craftsman home! Large lot (.6 acres). Gourmet kitchen boasts six-burner range and island. Private yard with deck. Primary suite with gas fireplace, sitting room, and en-suite bath. Finished lower level. 3651 N Harrison St

Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com

OPEN SUN 11/12, 2-4 PM



DC/Kalorama | \$1,885,000

Meticulously maintained row house right off Rock Creek Park. 2 large bedrooms upstairs & 3 full baths. The lower level could be used as a rental or au pair suite. Beautiful patio and garden oasis, plus a rare detached 2-car garage. 2021 Allen Place NW

Miriam Miller 703.598.6619
www.MM-RealEstate.com

OPEN SUN 11/12, 1-3 PM



Villamay | \$1,400,000

In the desirable neighborhood of Villamay, enjoy lush, mature landscaping and a "perch" bench, perfect for sunrise views & watching fireworks over the Potomac River. Not a surface is untouched in this meticulously maintained & sophisticated home. 7406 Park Terrace Dr

Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com

OPEN SUN 11/12, 2-4 PM



Belle Haven | \$999,000

Improved Value – be in for the holidays! Sellers may settle quickly! This expansive home is dazzling with its white kitchen and gleaming hardwood floors. With a rare true 6 bedrooms, 3 full baths, 3 fireplaces, & a garage – there is room for everyone & everything! 2330 Windsor Road

Janet Catterson Price 703.622.5984
www.JanetPriceHomes.com

OPEN SUN 11/12, 12-2 PM



Burke | \$550,000

This 3 level, 3 bedroom, 2 full & 2 half bath townhome has recently received a flurry of updates including a brand new deck, fully renovated baths on the upper level, brand new carpet on the upper level, fresh paint throughout & fresh landscaping. 9944 Whitewater Dr

Jillian Hogan Homes 703.951.7655
www.JillianHoganHomes.com



Alexandria/College Park | \$1,075,000

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Gordon Wood 703.447.6138
www.GordonWoodRealtor.com

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10 E Washington St, Middleburg, VA 20118 | Equal Housing Opportunity



Virginia Dems: Blue Wall in Both Houses

FROM PAGE 1

tion restriction or banned abortion, this is the issue for this election. It powered Democratic turnout and benefited the Democrats with swing voters.” Rozell said.

Before the polls opened yesterday morning, Youngkin reposted @GovernorVA, “Democracy is not a spectator sport.” By late evening, most registered voters cast their ballots for the Democratic candidates running for Virginia’s General Assembly seats.

“Governor Youngkin and Virginia Republicans did everything they could to take total control of state government, but the people of the Commonwealth rejected them,” said Susan Swecker, chair of the Democratic Party of Virginia. “Even with tens of millions spent and after every attempt to suppress the vote ... the blue brick wall in Virginia stands.”

The Virginia House unofficially turned from red to blue very late on Election Day, when Democrats took the House majority with Michael Feggans’ win for District 97, flipping the House to 51 Democrats to 45 Republicans, with four seats undecided.

In the Senate, Democrats won by a narrow margin, 21 Democrats to 18 Republicans, with one undecided. The double setback denied Youngkin the critical advantage he sought to attain.

Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria) said last night that despite breaking spending records, “Governor Youngkin was just served the biggest political rejection by voters of any Virginia governor in over three decades. Virginians sent Youngkin a message loud and clearly: Virginians don’t want the government banning books and interfering with their personal freedoms – whether it’s their reproductive rights, the right to breathe clean air, the safety of our communities from gun violence, or the sanctity of our democracy.”

Youngkin’s stand on those issues mattered to many, as Ebbin said, as did respect for trans students in public schools, and Virginia remaining in the Regional Greenhouse Initiative (RGGI).

In December 2022, with Youngkin’s nod, the State Air Pollution Control Board voted to begin

Unofficial Election Results Nov. 7, 2023

Virginia Senate

Democrats Hold the Majority with 21 of 40 Seats.

Unofficial Results Reported by Virginia Public Access Project
<https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/20231107/senate/>

Connection Newspapers Coverage Area

Candidate	Votes	Percent
<i>* Incumbent</i>		
SD 33 (Prince William/Fairfax)		
Jennifer Carroll Foy (D)	33,551	62.35%
Mike Van Meter (R)	20,097	37.35%
SD 34 (Fairfax County)		
Scott Surovell* (D)	36,072	69.28%
Mark Springman (R)	15,853	
SD 35 (Springfield/Annandale)		
Dave Marsden* (D)	37,339	67.06%
Mark Vafiades (R)	18,159	32.61%
SD 36 (Fairfax County)		
Stella Pekarsky (D)	34,964	60.27%
Julie Perry (R)	22,843	39.38%
SD 37 (Fairfax County/Falls Church)		
Saddam Azlan Salim (D)	38,728	68.14%
Ken Reid (R)	17,879	31.46%
SD 38 (McLean/Great Falls/Reston)		
Jennifer Boysko* (D)	44,978	67.92%
Matthew Lang (R)	21,059	31.80%
SD 39 (Alexandria/Arlington)		
Adam Ebbin* (D)	39,139	78.35%
Sophia Moshasha (R)	10,816	21.65%
SD 40 (Arlington County)		
Barbara Favola* (D)	46,127	80.68%
David Henshaw (R)	10,872	19.02%

withdrawing Virginia from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative “despite overwhelming support for the program from Virginian voters. The public comment period leading up to the vote resulted in over 90 percent of comments vehemently opposing a repeal of RGGI,” according to the Virginia Conservation Network.

Board of Supervisors and School Board

The Board of Supervisors will get two new members. Voters in the Dranesville District elected Jimmy Bierman to replace retiring John Foust. Mason District voters

elected Andres F. Jimenez to replace retiring Penny Gross.

The party makeup remains the same, with Pat Herrity (Springfield) the sole Republican on the Board. “To all those who came together and supported our campaign, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, thank you for making this election about results, not politics,” Herrity said. “The Springfield District was only 38 percent Republican in 2021 when Glenn Youngkin took the governorship, but we ran on our long list of accomplishments and service to our residents, and we ran

SEE LOCAL ELECTIONS, PAGE 4

Unofficial Election Results

Virginia House of Delegates

Democrats Take the Majority with 51 of 100 Seats.

Unofficial Results Reported by Virginia Public Access Project
<https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/20231107/house/>

Connection Newspapers Coverage Area

Candidate	Votes	Percent
<i>* Incumbent</i>		
HD 1 (Arlington County)		
Patrick Hope* (D)	23,584	95.46%
HD 2 (Arlington County)		
Adele McClure (D)	16,542	95.24%
HD 3 (Arlington/Alexandria)		
Alfonso Lopez* (D)	16,837	81.45%
Mike Webb (I)	3,582	17.33%
HD 4 (Alexandria/Fairfax County)		
Charniele Herring* (D)	10,368	93.09%
HD 5 (Alexandria)		
Elizabeth Bennett-Parker* (D)	21,622	91.27%
HD 6 (McLean/Great Falls)		
Rip Sullivan* (D)	18,951	61.27%
Kristin Hoffman (R)	11,904	38.49%
HD 7 (Western Fairfax)		
Karen Keys-Gamarra (D)	21,549	72.85%
Luellan Maskeny (R)	7,945	26.86%
HD 8 (Western Fairfax)		
Irene Shin* (D)	14,059	67.12%
Max Fisher (R)	6,814	32.53%
HD 9 (Fairfax County)		
Karrie Delaney* (D)	13,547	60.51%
Nhan Huynh (R)	8,782	39.23%
HD 10 (Fairfax County)		
Dan Helmer* (D)	14,790	58.87%
James Thomas (R)	10,262	40.84%
HD 11 (Fairfax City/County)		
David Bulova* (D)	14,993	69.99%
Almira Mohammed (R)	6,361	29.69%
HD 12 (Tysons/Vienna)		
Holly Seibold* (D)	17,441	92.18%
HD 13 (Falls Church/Fairfax)		
Marcus Simon* (D)	15,985	78.19%
Dave Crance (L)	4,199	20.54%
HD 14 (Annandale)		
Vivian Watts* (D)	13,147	68.90%
Curtis Wells (R)	5,881	30.82%
HD 15 (Fairfax County)		
Laura Jane Cohen (D)	18,430	61.24%
Marcus Evans (R)	11,589	38.51%
HD 16 (Fairfax County)		
Paul Krizek* (D)	16,225	90.45%
HD 17 (Fairfax County)		
Mark Sickles* (D)	16,873	91.99%
HD 18 (Springfield/Lorton)		
Kathy Tran* (D)	15,105	64.85%
Ed McGovern (R)	8,104	34.79%

Unofficial Local Election Results for Fairfax County

* Incumbent

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Chairman-Board of Supervisors		
Jeffrey C. McKay	195,903	67.05%
Arthur G. Purves	94,703	32.42%
Write-In	1,550	0.53%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Clerk of Court		
<i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Christopher J. Falcon	185,341	62.37%
Gerarda Marie Culipher	110,330	37.13%
Write-In	1,478	0.50%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Commonwealth's Attorney		
<i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Steve T. Descano	217,927	77.05%
Write-In	64,922	22.95%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Sheriff		
<i>Fairfax County and Fairfax</i>		
Stacey Ann Kincaid	217,596	76.66%
Jerry L. McMillian	31,343	11.04%
Christopher F. DeCarlo	29,222	10.29%
Write-In	5,690	2.00%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board At Large		
Top 3 Finishers		
Ryan L. McElveen	160,516	19.72%
Ilryong Moon	158,211	19.43%
Robert K. "Kyle" McDaniel	155,690	19.12%
Saundra T. Davis	94,909	11.66%
Maureen T. Brody	87,522	10.75%
Cassandra R. Aucoin	85,935	10.56%
Linda A. Pellegri	25,986	3.19%
Ahmed Mahdi Hussein	22,442	2.76%
Peter C. Gabor	20,027	2.46%
Write-In	2,889	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Braddock)		
James R. Walkinshaw	24,441	76.94%
Carey Chet Campbell	6,339	19.96%
Write-In	986	3.10%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Dranesville)		
James N. "Jimmy" Bierman, Jr.	22,231	60.62%
Puneet Ahluwalia	14,275	38.92%
Write-In	169	0.46%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Franconia)		
Rodney L. Lusk	17,264	62.65%
Paul F. Beran	6,902	25.05%
Mark T. Welch	3,214	11.66%
Write-In	176	0.64%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Hunter Mill)		
Walter L. Alcorn	28,181	70.04%
Indira S. Massey	11,910	29.60%
Write-In	142	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Mason)		
Andres F. Jimenez	16,457	72.02%
Terry W. Modglin	5,902	25.83%
Write-In	492	2.15%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Mount Vernon)		
Daniel G. "Dan" Storck	18,905	61.58%
Richard T. Hayden	8,174	26.62%
Christopher T. Morgan	3,443	11.21%
Write-In	180	0.59%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Providence)		
Dalia A. Palchik	19,488	68.27%
Brian R. Murphy	8,891	31.15%
Write-In	166	0.58%

Unofficial Results Reported by Virginia Public Access Project
<https://www.vpap.org/electionresults/20231107/local/fairfax-county-va/>

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Springfield)		
Patrick S. "Pat" Herrity	21,787	54.43%
Albert Vega	16,934	42.31%
Corazon Sandoval Foley	1,194	2.98%
Write-In	111	0.28%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Board of Supervisors (Sully)		
Kathy L. Smith	20,238	59.47%
Keith S. Elliott	13,643	40.09%
Write-In	152	0.45%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Braddock)		
Rachna Sizemore Heizer	20,580	59.97%
Priscilla M. DeStefano	13,562	39.52%
Write-In	173	0.50%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Dranesville)		
Robyn A. Lady	22,554	61.65%
Paul M. Bartkowski	13,899	38.00%
Write-In	128	0.35%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Franconia)		
Marcia C. St. John-Cunning	16,938	61.33%
Kevin R. Pinkney	9,220	33.38%
Write-In	1,460	5.29%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Hunter Mill)		
Melanie K. Meren	28,809	72.03%
Harry R. Jackson	10,963	27.41%
Write-In	223	0.56%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Mason)		
Ricardy J. Anderson	15,184	63.36%
Kristin F. Ball	8,624	35.99%
Write-In	156	0.65%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Mount Vernon)		
Mateo Dunne	18,150	59.99%
Stori M. Zimmerman	11,890	39.30%
Write-In	215	0.71%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Providence)		
Karl V. Frisch	18,905	66.42%
Anthony A. "Tony" Sabio	9,387	32.98%
Write-In	172	0.60%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Springfield)		
Sandy B. Anderson	20,477	52.51%
Debra A. Tisler	16,226	41.61%
Peter J. Bixby-Eberhardt	2,129	5.46%
Write-In	161	0.41%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
School Board (Sully)		
Seema Dixit	18,451	54.54%
Cynthia L. Walsh	15,230	45.02%
Write-In	150	0.44%

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Soil and Water Conservation Director		
Northern Virginia District		
Top 3 Finishers		
Chris E. Koerner	160,209	21.09%
Rhonda J. Bitterli	155,507	20.47%
Dana H. Barakat	153,175	20.16%
Debra O. Maddrell	93,499	12.31%
Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn	88,442	11.64%
Mary E. Strayhorne	82,439	10.85%
Edward W. Monroe, Jr.	23,704	3.12%
Write-In	2,801	0.37%

Local Elections

FROM PAGE 3

on bringing balance and common sense to the Board, which is what the residents wanted. We have a lot of challenges in front of us, starting with why more residents have been leaving our county than coming to our county and why our residents are getting reduced services when taxes have increased 50 percent in the last ten years."

As for the 12-member Fairfax County School Board, it will remain entirely Democratic following last night's election.

"These results show people are fed up with the political attacks targeting our world-class public schools and teachers," said Vice Chair Karl Frisch at the Fairfax County Democrats election night party in Tysons. Frisch won by more than 30 points. With his re-election secured, Frisch will become School Board Chair on January 1, 2024.

"Fairfax County residents have made it clear: they want safe and inclusive schools with exceptional educators and equitable access to the opportunities every student needs to succeed. I am grateful to have earned voters' trust for another term and eager to advance these priorities with my new colleagues," Frisch said.

Voters re-elected four members: Frisch in Providence, Rachna Sizemore Heizer in Braddock, Melanie Meren in Hunter Mill, and Ricardy Anderson in Mason. Two former school board members return as at-large members, Ryan McElveen and Ilryong Moon. Six others, Robyn Lady in Dranesville, Marcia St. John-Cunning in Franconia, Mateo Dunne in Mount Vernon, Sandy Anderson in Springfield, Seema Dixit in Sully, and Kyle McDaniel at-large, are new to the School Board.

The new board remains diverse, like the community it serves, with one Black member, one Hispanic member, two Indian American members, one Korean American member, three LGBTQ+ members, and three immigrant members. Additionally, women are the board's majority, with seven members.

In 2019, Frisch became the first openly LGBTQ+ person elected to local office in Fairfax County. He is currently one of only three such school board members in Virginia. With their victories today, Lady will be Fairfax County's first openly lesbian elected official, and McDaniel will be the first LGBTQ+ person elected countywide.

NEWS



PHOTO BY EMILY WILD

Nora, Wild, 16 and a sophomore at West Potomac High School, wanted to make an impact on Election Day at several polling locations in her Fort Hunt neighborhood. She made a poster and stood outside of Hollin Hall Senior Center, Wayewood Elementary, and Hollin Meadows Elementary voting locations, demonstrating and sharing her political opinions. Reproductive freedom was cited as a key reason for change in control of the Virginia House of Delegates as a result of the Election.

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Thank You Mount Vernon District Voters

Thank you to everyone who overwhelmingly turned out to vote and for again giving me the opportunity to continue to serve as your Mount Vernon District Supervisor for another four years. It has been truly an honor and a privilege representing you and I enjoyed meeting with so many of you throughout the campaign. After my eighth election and almost twenty years of public service to you, I remain highly energized and engaged to address the District's many opportunities and challenges. Thank you again.

There is an African proverb that still rings very true for me, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." That



is a crucial part of how I view governance. Working with you every day and building great teams is essential for addressing and accomplishing much of what we have been able to do and even more essential for our future.

In recognition of this, thank you to our election officers, the many volunteers and young pages, all campaign workers, and voters who came out early or on election day to exercise our most fundamental right to vote. We live in a beautiful, growing, vibrant community and I look forward to collaborating with each of you as we strive to reach our full potential.

Respectfully yours
in public service,
Dan Storck

Salmon & Eschenburg Win 2nd Documentary Award

At the Nov. 4 Fairfax County history conference, five hours of inspiring presentations told part of the story of the county's rich mix of 1.2 million people.

"Fairfax County recently became a majority minority community," Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay reported, calling it "a tapestry that celebrates all nations." Other speakers included

former Congressman Tom Davis and former NPR reporter Tom Gjelten. The history commission also gave out several awards, including the Stuntz-Mayo Award.

Part of the history in Fairfax County started with the families that moved in through the years, settling on farms throughout the county. When family members died, it was common in earlier years to bury the dead in little fam-

ily cemeteries on the property, and most of them are still there, scattered around the county.

Local documentary producers Mike Salmon and Ean Eschenburg highlighted that practice in a documentary, interviewing relatives and historians with knowledge of the cemeteries. Their documentary, "Family Cemeteries in Fairfax County," won the Stuntz-Mayo Award from the history commission.

This was the second award the two producers won in this category. Last year, the pair won this documentary award for their production on the history of Kingstowne.

Mike Salmon is also journalist and web content producer for the Mount Vernon Gazette and Connection Newspapers.

See the graveyard documentary here:

<https://vimeo.com/684378431>

Mount Vernon District Recognizes Residents for Character

Fairfax County Stephen A. McLaughlin Champions of Character Awards.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

In the Mount Vernon District, being civil and a good sportsman during the game earned four people the Champion of Character award this year, exemplifying qualities on the playing field that went above and beyond what's needed to keep things civil on the sidelines.

This year's awards went to:

- ❖ Rhys Smith, female Soccer player at the Lee Mt. Vernon Sports Club

- ❖ Graham Swoope, male lacrosse player at Fort Hunt Youth Lacrosse

- ❖ Soccer Coach Kevin Jeffrey at the Lee Mt. Vernon Sports Club

- ❖ Tina Hopkins, outstanding Soccer Parent at the Gunston Soccer League

"These athletes and parents demonstrated good sportsmanship and character through sports," said Lula Bauer, the chairwoman of the Fairfax County Athletic Council.



The awardees and officials in the limelight at the Fairfax County Government Center

It wasn't like they were following a rule book either, noted Bauer. "Their most endearing quality was how they demonstrated through the year with no one looking," she said.

Chairman Jeff McKay was on hand at the awards ceremony last month along with some county supervisors, including Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck (D). Behaving well when the game is on the line and emotions are heated is something they'll take to another

level, said McKay. "It's indicative of how we're going to act throughout

SEE CHAMPION OF, PAGE 14

Want to nominate someone from the youth sporting community?

Program details and nomination forms are available online at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/athletics/champions-of-character

Attach a narrative of one page or less and submit to:

Champions of Character Awards
12011 Government Center Parkway
10th Floor, Athletic Services
Fairfax, VA 22035
Fax: 703-324-5546

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A Connection Newspaper





Shauna Toussaint and her mother cut the ribbon to open the new Pivotal Memory Care and Residential Assisted Living Home on Hibbling Avenue in Springfield.

2023 Is A Year for New Business

BY: DAVID GRIFFIN
MOUNT VERNON SPRINGFIELD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

From martial arts studios to swim schools and home fixtures, 2023 has seen many new businesses open in the Mount Vernon and Springfield areas.

Next week, True REST Float Spa Alexandria will open in Belle View Shopping Center, making it the 13th grand opening this year for the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

In October, MyDojo Martial Arts opened their doors at Springfield Town Center. They offer a comprehensive range of martial arts programs designed to promote fitness, self-defense skills, and personal growth for individuals of all ages and skill levels.

Also opening in October was Pivotal Senior Services' new state-of-the-art Memory Care and Residential Assisted Living Home on Hibbling Avenue. With backgrounds in nursing, real estate, and financial planning, the staff at Pivotal is familiar with the problems seniors experience in these areas and are more than prepared to help solve them.

Adding to the excitement for Pivotal Senior Services grand opening was the announcement that their CEO, Shauna Toussaint, was nominated for an award at the www.connectionnewspapers.com

Residential Assisted Living National Convention 2023.

In September, the long-awaited and fan favorite Crumbl Cookies opened in Kingstowne Center. One of the reasons Crumbl is so popular is their rotating menu with cookies inspired by popular flavors, foods, desserts of all kinds - from pies to cakes to candies and more. They also offer catering options.

Big Blue Swim School, an Olympic sized indoor pool offering a variety of swimming lessons for children and babies, opened their doors in August. Swimmers can progress from learning how to be safe in the water to learning different strokes and building their skills to become proficient, strong swimmers at Big Blue Swim School.

On Nov. 29, Hampton Inn & Suites Mount Vernon will have a Grand Re-opening to showcase their recent renovation.

Capital Chicken, 7698 B Richmond Highway, is finalizing arrangements for their own grand opening since moving from Mount Vernon Plaza. Check out the colorful mural on the building and get ready for more delicious chicken and sides.

In December, Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services will have a grand opening to celebrate their new office space on Backlick Road.

SEE NEW BUSINESS, PAGE 10

TURKEY TROT

5K



CAN the Bird

Thanksgiving Day
November 23, 2023
Race Starts 8:00 a.m.
Walmart, 5885 Kingstowne Boulevard

www.mountvernon.springfield.com/can-the-bird-5k/




SCAN TO REGISTER

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20-49 years / 50+ years master runners
Doggie Duo and Stroller Run




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HISTORY CONFERENCE

Blessed with Diversity

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

Five sequined-clad Bolivian dancers, San Simon Sucre, were an attention-grabbing, glittery climax for the Nov. 4 Fairfax County history conference, following five hours of inspiring presentations on the county's rich mix of 1.2 million people.

"Fairfax County recently became a majority minority community," Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay reported, calling it "a tapestry that celebrates all nations."

"Immigrants are who America is," concurred Lynne Garvey-Hodge, History Commission chair. "We must hold hands and do the best we can to care for and support one another."

Citing current "chaos in the Middle East," McKay said he issued a statement because, "We have families directly affected. Even on the international stage, there is so much diversity here, someone in the Fairfax County community is affected."

The conference, the third in a four-part series and titled "We Are Fairfax County," focused on Muslim, Asian and Latino residents. Across the county's 407 square miles, 57 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home, county statistics show. Fairfax City Mayor Catherine Read welcomed attendees.

Facing Some Challenges

Abrar Omeish, at-large county school board member, whose family came from Libya, urged all to "see beyond the tropes of bias." While her family has enjoyed the "blessings of this community," she has experienced "a lot of beautiful moments and difficult moments." The Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attack on the United States and some public statements have fed anti-immigrant sentiments. She seeks to "debunk misconceptions," especially associated with people who practice the Islamic faith. "We must see kinship in one another and have a sense of belonging in a community that saw us as people and enabled us to thrive," she said.

Keynote Tom Gjelten, author of "A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story," credited a 1965 immigration reform law with making "America the diverse country it is today." That law eliminated "blatantly discriminatory and racist quotas" that favored white European immigrants. In his 2015 book, he traces the Omeish and Keam families' journeys. As late as 1970, fewer than four percent of people in Fairfax County were born outside the U.S.; today it's about 33 percent, he said. "Few places in the United States reflect the changes in population like Fairfax County."

While Gjelten still believes the 1965 law made America's promise more of a reality, he now thinks he overstated that promise in 2015. With "voices suggesting it was wrong to open America's doors," he said. "What I thought was a settled debate turned out to be very much alive," citing a proposed ban on immigrants from some Muslim countries and Islamophobic and anti-Semitic public comments.



Erik Martinez said at first he felt "tiny," translated by Pablo Nunez



Catherine Read, Ean Eschenburg and Jeff McKay. Eschenburg and Mike Salmon received an award for their video on the county's small family cemeteries. "Family Cemeteries in Fairfax County,"



Catherine Read, Robert Beach and Jeff McKay. The commission gave Bob Beach an award for designing the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial at Lorton.

"Diversity leads to more tolerance," Gjelten said. "The more people are exposed to people from different backgrounds, the more their hostility decreases."

Former Congressman and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Tom Davis described countering opposition to mosques. "Societies don't last if groups feel

excluded. You don't have to demonize people." Applauding the ethnic mix of students in George Mason University and the public schools, Davis said, "We have a diverse community with a lot of talent. If you tap it, it's there. The county provides great promise, but challenges. Our society today is increasingly polarized and it's increasingly important that we talk to each other."

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Annual Fairfax County history conference inspires with a growing "tapestry that celebrates all nations."



Attendees heard multiple presentations over five hours.



Lynne Garvey-Hodge and Abrar Omeish.



Author and former National Public Radio reporter Tom Gjelten

Daniel Altman, co-founder of NOVA Resettling Afghan Families Together (RAFT), reviewed Afghanistan's history starting with Alexander the Great and described the 2021 U.S. withdrawal that airlifted over 70,000 Afghans out in two weeks. Over 74,000 visa applications for Afghan people who supported the U.S. government are still pending, a "disgrace," he asserted; the documents are moving at a "glacial pace." Over 7,600 Af-

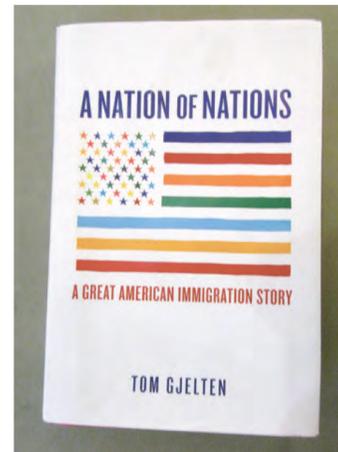
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The San Simon Sucre dancers, Bolivian-Americans, put on a vigorous performance



Delegate Kathy Tran and Tom Davis



Tom Gjelten's book "A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story."

ghan refugees have resettled in Virginia, including over 1,000 in Fairfax County and they are still arriving, he noted. RAFT has furnished 300 homes and offers support like job searches.

Immigrants' Journeys

Virginia Del. Kathy Tran recounted how

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when she was two her family fled Vietnam and rebuilt their life. "The values of hope, opportunity and freedom are very American values that hold us together. We must build a stronger Fairfax regardless of where people are from, to achieve their own American dream," she said.

Former Del. Mark Keam, the first Asian-American elected to the Virginia legislature, whose family immigrated from Korea, said, "My success is because this country gave me opportunities very few places in the world would." He contended that Fairfax County is uniquely welcoming, partly because of the county's official "One Fairfax" policy and the federal government's draw. People come to the Washington area from all around the world which has "created a sense of synergy that does not exist in many places in the United States." Fairfax County is "willing to accept us and be part of Virginia's change, part of the system. History is not looking backwards. It's about looking forward and making history. We have to focus on the future and make sure we're teaching folks what can be."

Through translator Pablo Nunez, Erik Martinez told the group that he "felt tiny, really tiny in this new culture," when he came from Guatemala. He praised the Centreville Immigration Forum which helped

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Tables had flags of many nations.

him find a job. "My life is really great at this moment," he said.

Claudia Alvarez, a single mother also from Guatemala, said she too "was lost" until she found Centreville Immigration Forum, which helped her find work and English classes.

Lynette Sappe-Watkins, Executive Director of the non-profit Falls Church Culmore Clinic, told attendees that most of their patients are uninsured, come from other countries and two-thirds have chronic illnesses. The many languages and traditions they bring to the clinic "all add color and depth, a beautiful illustration of what America's supposed to be," she said.

Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw told the conference-goers, "Fairfax

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Stuff the Bus, Virtually

Help feed Fairfax County families in need without leaving the house. The Fairfax County Stuff the Bus campaign has gone virtual. From Nov. 1-30, 2023, individuals and community groups can make monetary donations directly to local non-profit organizations that provide food assistance in Fairfax County.

This is the 12th year that Fairfax County Government has partnered with local non-profits. In previous years, the campaign has centered around people placing physical donations of shelf-stable foods directly inside FasTran buses parked outside grocery stores or libraries – literally stuffing the bus with goods. While that will still be offered for the Winter 2024 Stuff the Bus campaign, the virtual food drive will help prepare Fairfax County's non-profit food access partners for the busy holiday season.

Information on the community partners and the virtual drive is available at Stuff the Bus Virtual Food Drive. <https://volunteerfairfax.org/home/stuff-the-bus-virtual-food-drive/>

The campaign coincides with Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week in Fairfax County. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors designated Nov.11-18, 2023 (the week before Thanksgiving), as Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week to raise awareness about the pressing issues of hunger and homelessness in Fairfax County.

The Capital Area Food Bank's 2023 Hunger Report reveals multiple factors that have driven food insecurity to remain at staggeringly high levels. Inequitable economic recovery from the pandemic, inflation, and the end of many federal benefit programs make it difficult for families to put food on the table. According to the Capital Area Food Bank Survey, it's estimated that 24% of Fairfax County residents are food insecure.

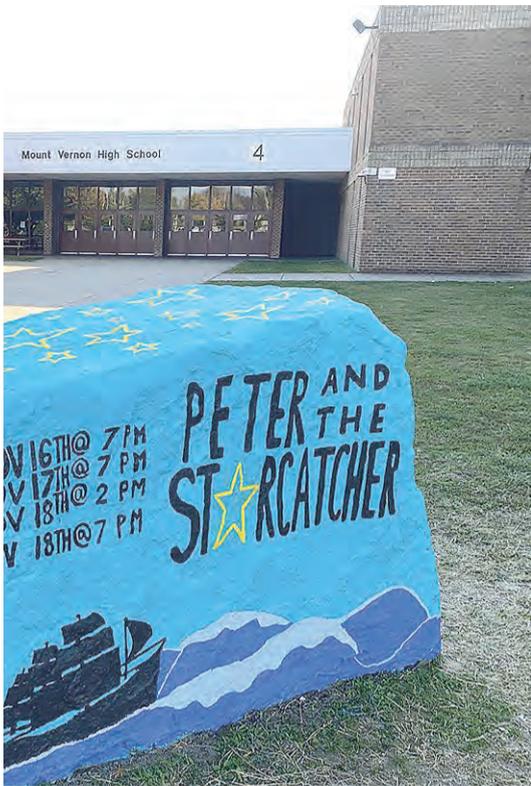
The virtual Stuff the Bus campaign runs through Nov. 30. The in-person Stuff the Bus campaign returns to grocery stores and community locations in Jan. 2024. For more information, visit Stuff the Bus.

County is a welcoming place because we realize the ideals of our nation. Somebody like me, whose family has been here since the 18th century, has no more voice than someone who immigrated here from Guatemala yesterday. We are all equally Americans, Virginians and Fairfaxians."

"My own life has been enriched by so many immigrants," echoed Springfield history buff Judy Baldwin.

Chairman McKay encouraged the audience to heed his history teacher-mother's advice, "We must learn from our past and strive to do better."

MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ NOVEMBER 9-15, 2023 ♦ 9



‘Peter and the Starcatcher’ at Mount Vernon High Nov. 16-18

BY GABRIELLE CONVERY
MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS OF 2025

The theatre students of Mount Vernon High School are working hard to put on the play “Peter and the Starcatcher,” written by Rick Elice with music by Wayne Barker, where we get to see how the great Peter Pan became who he is now.

Peter and the Starcatcher is a story that follows a group of orphan boys, Prentis (Ace Naylor), Ted (El Wendy), and a boy who is a bit different (JJ Dunn). The orphans get

shipped off to work for a tropical king on The Neverland ship and they run into Molly Aster, a starcatcher apprentice (Kennedi Johnson) who thinks she should be on an amazing ship called The Wasp with her father. Molly and the boys find a ... FLYING CAT!? Molly explains how the cat was covered in starstuff which gives the cat the ability to fly and she tells the boys she needs to destroy the chest because starstuff is very dangerous. The group has to fight their way through Black Stache, a pirate with a luscious handlebar mustache who is feared by all, and his not so bright right handed man Smee (Micheal Hodges and Natalie

Stankiewicz). The group of orphans and Molly have to survive a tropical king (Yariel Calo) and his mollusk army, more pirates, and the British seamen that all want the chest of starstuff.

Our Technical Theatre students and crew have been working hard to bring the show to life from the set to the lighting and sound. Our crew heads have been working on designs since the summer, before the start of the school year. They have been building, painting, sewing, putting together light cues, and more. All to make the show come to life and seem like we are really traveling on The Neverland with Peter.

None of this play would have been possible without amazing directors Mrs. Shaw and Ms. Charlow and our vocal director Ms. Huber. They have helped not only the cast get ready to put this amazing show on but also the tech crew. From singing to blocking to painting they have given everyone guidance and help throughout this whole production.

Peter and the Starcatcher will be at Mount Vernon High School’s Andrew Lee Pauley Theater (aka the Little Theatre, door 4) on Nov. 16-17 at 7 pm, a matinee show on Nov. 18 at 2 pm, and a final evening performance on Nov. 18 at 7 pm. Tickets can be purchased online at mvhstheatrearts.com

2023 Is A Year for New Business

FROM PAGE 7

These new businesses provide new opportunities and options for residents. By shopping locally, consumers keep their money circulating within their neighborhood, which leads to the creation of jobs and the support of regional economies.



DeShay Moore, chief instructor at MyDojo in Springfield Town Center, receives his Chamber membership plaque from Michael Drobnis, chamber board of directors and Optfinitly.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk (center) welcomes Crumbl Cookies to Kings-towne with owner Joel Frary (left) and Jeff Pennington, chamber member and Samson Properties.

County's Hypothermia Prevention Program Opens Dec. 1

2023 homelessness statistics show 10 percent increase in people experiencing homelessness at the Point in Time count.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE



Some individuals experiencing homelessness choose not to go to shelters, and some nights before and after the program is available are very cold.

Consistently cold weather will be on its way soon, with nighttime temperatures dipping into the low 30s and the 20s. Since 2005, the county's Hypothermia Prevention Program has prevented death and serious injuries among Fairfax County's most vulnerable residents since 2005 by ensuring that no one must sleep outside during the winter months.

According to Danien Johnson with the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program is an integral part of the county's effort to prevent and end homelessness. The program incorporates the collaborative work of area contracted providers, faith communi-

ties, civic organizations, businesses and individual volunteers.

"The protocols for hypothermia season are consistent across the county. During the hypothermia season, due to the added vulnerabilities presented by extremely low temperatures, persons experiencing homelessness can access services through overflow in the emergency shelters," Johnson said.

The 2023-24 Hypothermia Prevention Program in Fairfax County runs from Dec. 1, 2023, until March 31, 2024. There are sites around the county including in the following communities: Richmond Highway/Alex-

andria area; Reston/Herndon; Falls Church/Alexandria area; and Fairfax and Centreville.

Last year, the program served an average of 215 guests per night, according to the program's website. Any adult in need of immediate shelter can receive warm shelter, food and other supportive services to help connect guests to a variety of basic needs such as clothing, employment, housing, and more.

Johnson added that, as space is limited for overflow, sometimes contracted partner agencies must work more collaboratively. "For example, if an individual accesses over-

flow in the Centreville area but space is unavailable, the provider will contact partners in other regions to determine the availability of space and help the client with transportation to the respective shelter."

Not all individuals who are experiencing homelessness choose to access shelters, nor do they have access to warm, safe accommodations through friends, family, and other programs and services.

Fairfax County conducted its 2023 Point-In-Time Count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on the night of Jan. 25, 2023. Results reported 1,310 total persons experiencing homelessness, a 10 percent increase from 2022, including 767 households, 847 adults, and 460 children.

A look at December 2022 temperatures in Fairfax reported for the first week in December 2022, Dec. 1 low of 28; Dec. 2 low of 21; Dec. 3 low of 45; Dec. 4 low of 27.

Getting Family Help

Adults with children (ages 0-17) should contact Coordinated Services Planning at 703-222-0880 (TTY 711), Monday - Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for referrals to family-oriented support and services. If you need assistance after hours, contact or visit one of the county's family shelters - locations and contact information are available.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/Fairfax-Hypothermia-Program>.

Affordable Housing to Accept Waitlist Applications from Older Adults Nov. 13-19, 2023

Older adults interested in applying to affordable housing waitlists will have the opportunity Nov. 13-19, 2023 for select properties in the county.

- ❖ The Fallstead: One-bedroom apartments for older adults (ages 62+) located at 1609 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101

- ❖ One University Senior (The Belmont): One-bedroom apartments for older adults (ages 62+) to be located at 4518 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. This property is currently under construction.

How to Apply: Interested individuals can apply via Rent Café, which is an online housing application portal. The link for applications will go live at 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 13, 2023 on the Fairfax County Housing and Community Development website, and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023.

Instructions for using Rent Café can be found here <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hous->

[ing/sites/housing/files/assets/documents/pbv/rent_cafe_guide_november_2023.pdf](#). Individuals who need assistance can call 703-246-5100 or come to the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) office at 3700 Pender Drive in Fairfax, VA.

Applicants will be randomly placed on a waiting list for these properties. All applications received have an equal opportunity to be selected. Once a unit becomes available, the waiting list applicants will be contacted, screened, and determined eligible based on income level, household size, and the size of the rental unit. Households cannot currently be receiving other federal rental housing assistance to qualify.

Federal Housing Funds Make a Local Impact in Fairfax

This affordable housing opportunity is made available through the "Project Based Voucher" program which provides rental assistance to eligi-

SEE AFFORDABLE, PAGE 14

A GAYLORD HOTELS ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE

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GAYLORD NATIONAL

Heeey was a misfit, so was Rudolph. They were two of a kind, so these new friends set off to see what they could find.

GALA



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine was named a SPARC hero for his commitment to young adults with severe and multiple disabilities by championing SPARC's funding request to open three SPARC centers, two on Fairfax County's Rt. 1 corridor and one in Leesburg, Va.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

From left: Adam Toobin, James Dyke, master of ceremonies, and State Senator Richard L. Saslaw, who received SPARC's Lifetime Achievement Award for his 48 years of public service including thwarting an attempt to kill Medicaid Expansion, thus providing over 400,000 Virginians with health insurance coverage.

SPARC's Inaugural Gratitude Gala

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine and State Sen. Richard L. Saslaw honored.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

On a stunningly beautiful fall evening, SPARC participants arrived at their gala. Dressed in creative cocktail attire, they graced the red carpet leading into the grand ballroom of the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott. It was a dream come true for the young adults.

SPARC is the acronym for Specially Adapted Resources Clubs. It is a nonprofit organization that provides vital day programs for adult participants with severe and multiple disabilities, and the evening of Saturday, Nov. 4, was their 2023 Gratitude Gala. The young adults planned the event themselves because they believed in the mission of SPARC, "Nothing about us without us," and they had two goals for the gala.

"The event was created by our participants as an answer to the question, 'What can SPARC do to help you live the life of your dreams?' Overwhelmingly, they wanted a sparkling event, pun intended, at which they could showcase their talents, make new friends, socialize, laugh, have fun, and dance however they fancied," said Ellen Dyke, SPARC's board chair.

Another goal of the reception-style gala emerged: everyone deserves a chance to attend SPARC. The gala raised funds for SPARC's cost-effective program, which assists young adults who have outgrown the K-12 system's special education support and are ineligible for other community-based programs that help people with severe disabilities.

SPARC's public-private partnership with Fairfax County is an alternative to the Medicaid model. It provides a choice for many adults with severe disabilities who do not fit



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE

From left, Debi Alexander, executive director of SPARC, joins Joanne Adams and Dave Adams, members of the SPARC Board of Directors, to acknowledge SPARC partners at the 2023 Gratitude Gala.

into traditional day support programs funded by Medicaid.

The reason SPARC participants called their event the "Gratitude Gala," Dyke said, was that they wanted to express their gratitude to all of the attendees, sponsors, elected officials, and others who helped them realize not only their dream for the evening but also their concern for others and their willingness to give of their time, energy, financial resources, and, above all, their humanity.

Mark Ingrao, interim CEO and president of the Dulles Regional Chamber and chair of the Reston Hospital board of directors,

served as auctioneer for the evening's live auction while the silent auction continued in the hallway. Items in the silent auction included original wheelchair action art by SPARC participants. Jonah, one of the artists, said, "Everyone at SPARC can paint. Green represents the season, spring, when leaves begin to emerge." From choosing the bright paint colors, applying them with a paint roller extension pole, to using the tires of their wheelchairs to paint instead of brushes, the artists created original patterns across the painting papers that provided a canvaslike surface with no buckling. A completed work, matted and framed above shows the artist's



MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE

Katherine Montgomery of Herndon, secretary of the SPARC board of directors, and Carla Claire of Arlington

wheelchair tracks and was one of many sold during the silent auction.

From the roast beef carving station to the crispy chicken sliders, black-eyed pea hummus with vegetable crudites, and the dessert display of miniature cupcakes, chocolate truffles, and petit fours, SPARC participants planned every aspect of the gala. Award-winning chefs at the hotel prepared all of those dishes and more. The hotel's wait staff came forward as volunteers to support the fundraiser, serving the guests and thereby helping to cover the organization's costs. Guests noticed the event venue's all-around inclusive layout — wheelchair accessibility, stage ramp, and deliberate lack of high-top tables.

As master of ceremonies and emcee, Jim Dyke oversaw the proceedings. "You have given your time, energy, and wherewithal to celebrate some of the most important, courageous, but often forgotten people in our community and, at the same time, make their dreams come true," Dyke said.

SEE GALA, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

**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, Alexan-
dria. 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/>

**OCT. 10 TO NOV. 19
"Reflection Unknown" Photography
Exhibit by Fred Zafran.** At Multiple Expo-
sures Gallery, Alexandria. Opening Reception:
Sunday, October 22, 2023, 2 - 4 p.m. Fred
Zafran has long been interested in photog-
raphy as a distinctive means of storytelling.
His work examines the artistic possibilities
of photographs that combine the poetic with
a representational view of the world. The
resulting photo essays which Zafran calls "po-
etic narrative," are post-documentary in that
the stories are open ended, subjective, rich in
symbolism and metaphor, and encourage con-
sideration and interpretation by the viewer.

**OCT. 19 TO NOV. 26
Fleeting Moments | Street Photography.**
At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Fleeting
Moments features photographs that capture
candid moments, revelatory interpretations,
and brilliant reflections of the mundane —
work commonly referred to as "street photog-
raphy." In 1943 the New York Times referred
to the street photography of Helen Levitt,
as, "fleeting moments of surpassing lyricism,
mystery and quiet drama." Those qualities
are the hallmark of the works selected for this
show.

**NOV. 3-26
The Housemates exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans
Gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria.
Exhibit showcases art from Del Ray Artisans
members celebrating the beings we live with.
Housemates may have fur, feathers, fins,
scales, or be human. Opening Reception: Fri-
day, November 3, 7-9 p.m.. Open Thursdays
12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays &
Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on Thanksgiving
Day). Plus bring in donations for cat and dog
rescue groups. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/
event/housemates](http://DelRayArtisans.org/event/housemates)

**WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8
"60 BEEUTIFUL YEARS."** 10 a.m. Social
Hour, 11 a.m. Fashion Show, 12:15 Luncheon.
Fashion Show, Luncheon, Silent Auction and
Raffle featuring Sara Campbell. At Mount
Vernon Country Club, 5111 Old Mill Road,
Alexandria. Cost: \$60.00. Founded in 1963,
the Yacht Haven Garden Club works to fur-
ther education in horticulture, floral design,
and conservation among its members and
surrounding communities. For details and res-
ervations, contact: YHGC.2023@gmail.com

**SATURDAY/NOV 18
61st Holiday Shop.** 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. At
Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill
Lane, Alexandria. Artisan vendors of many
styles and mediums plus baked and canned
goods, jewelry, household collectibles, lunch,
and quilt raffle. Come and enjoy a day of
shopping. Visit www.mvuc.org.

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.

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Thu. 9: Chris Isaak: It's Almost Christmas Tour
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Fri. 10: Sheila E. \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
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"Peter and the Starcatcher" can be seen at Mount Vernon High School on Nov. 16-18, 2023.

"Peter and the Starcatcher."

Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. Presented by Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. The show tells the story of Peter Pan's origin story; appropriate for all ages. Tickets are \$10 General Admission, \$8 senior/military, \$7 students, and \$5 for children 5 and under. Tickets are available online, mvhstheatrearts.com.



The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants" Nov. 16-18, 2023.

"The Descendants."

Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. At Hayfield Middle School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants." The show is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are available online, www.hayfielddrama.com, and at the door and cost \$10 each.

Sat. 11: Charles Esten \$59.50
Sun. 12: Jonathan Butler \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
Mon. 13: Jeff "Skunk" Baxter \$45.00
Tue. 14: Keiko Matsui \$45.00
Thu. 16: Rufus Wainwright \$69.50
Fri. 17: Paula Poundstone \$59.50

Sat. 18: Paula Poundstone \$59.50
Sun. 19: Marc Roberge (of O.A.R.) with Stephen
Kellogg \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Fri. 24: The Seldom Scene & Dry Branch Fire
Squad \$45.00
Sat. 25: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston



Veteran's Day Activities will take place at the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Fort Belvoir, on Nov. 10-12, 2023.

Veterans Day Activities

At the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Fort Belvoir. The National Museum of the United States Army is offering a fitting way to honor Veterans Day with a weekend full of events November 10 - 12, and the ongoing special exhibit paying tribute to military working dogs. The special tributes to those who served our nation are all included with the Museum's free admission. Highlights include:

Family fun activities include a craft activity of writing greeting cards to veterans, a history scavenger hunt, and the Museum's Tiny Troops Story Time (Tiny Troops is best suited for children ages 3-6 years old).

History Demonstrations that explore a Soldier's life on and off the battlefield and take a closer look at uniforms and equipment.

Veterans Resources featuring representatives sharing information about resources available to veterans and their families.

Volunteer Showcase, where Museum volunteers share their personal artifacts and stories from their military service.

Documentary Screening of PBS's documentary "American Veteran." The four-part series will run continuously; visitors can drop in at any time to watch. View the trailer.

Free, timed-entry tickets are preferred and available through the Museum's website at theNMUSA.org.

\$59.50
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Announcements

Concerts at St. Luke's will present Quintango, the 2023 Best Latin Artist-Group, on Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria 22308 703-765-4342. \$25 for adults, \$10 for students. Dancing in the aisles will be encouraged! free parking.

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NEWS

School Buses

FROM PAGE 1

that school districts pay no more for electric buses than they would for diesel models. The required charging infrastructure has been installed and is maintained by Dominion at the Stonecroft Transportation Center located in Chantilly.

FCPS applied for and received another grant from the Department of Environmental Quality for an additional 10 electric buses and received them in the summer 2022. Last summer, the county also launched a fleet of electric trash trucks as part of the all-electric effort.

In the big picture, the transportation sector accounts for nearly one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency said that to address the growing climate crisis and to meet the goal of net-zero GHG emissions economy-wide, "we must eliminate nearly all greenhouse gas emissions from the sector by 2050 and implement a holistic strategy to achieve a future mobility system that is clean, safe, secure, accessible, affordable, and equitable, and provides sustainable transportation options for people and goods."

EPA's Clean School Bus Program provides \$5 billion over five years to replace existing school buses with zero-emission and low-emission models.

Affordable Housing

FROM PAGE 11

ble households to live in specific rental units. Through a contract with the owner of the unit, the FCRHA pays a portion of the monthly rent, while the household pays their portion of the monthly rent based upon 30% to 35% of adjusted gross income. The rental assistance is attached to the specific unit and remains at the property, even if the family moves. The FCRHA uses subsidies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Project Based Voucher program.

Champions of Character Awards

FROM PAGE 6

our lives," he said.

The award was renamed after Stephen A. McLaughlin, a former Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County Athletic Council. This program was instituted by the Fairfax County Athletic Council to support the tradition of amateur athletics in cultivating teamwork, leadership, good sportsmanship and community service, the county said. It was first awarded in 2001.

GALA

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE



Bailey Brandt of Springfield and Mikea Jackson

FROM PAGE 12

Dyke named the sponsors, including the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, Dominion Energy, Google, Tullman Family Office, Washington Gas, and The Washington Group Special Care Planning Team. Dyke told how Sen. Janet D. Howell (D-Fairfax) received the first SPARC Hero Award this past June and set a high standard for other recipients. According to Dyke, Howell's leadership resulted in the 2023-2024 Virginia state budget including, for the first time, an annual \$250,000 line item for SPARC, positioning it to become a pilot program for Virginia.

"SPARC has changed the long-term care blueprint for young adults with severe disabilities by providing a safe, caring environment where they learn and have fun together," said Rose Mario Risley, chair of Fairfax Area Long-Term Care Coordinating Council. "The SPARC model is designed to provide access to community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination."

SPARC has five clubhouse locations: Fairfax, McLean, Reston, Vienna, and Arlington.

Katherine Montgomery, a SPARC participant and secretary of the SPARC board, took to the stage, joining Dyke, as did U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, Sen. Richard L. Saslaw, Adam Toobin, Ellen Dyke, and Mark Ingrao auctioneer. Montgomery handed Kaine the award and said, "Thank you, Senator Kaine, for being a champion."

Montgomery commended Kaine for realizing the vital roles that family caregivers and direct care providers play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. She expressed her gratitude to him for his bill, the Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act, which directs the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Administration on Community Living (ACL), to develop a national care center for the direct care workforce and family caregivers. It affects not just SPARC members but also individuals with disabilities and chronic medical conditions.

The SPARC Hero Award is given to a person who has tirelessly worked to fill the huge hole in our social safety net that ignores and neglects far too many citizens and who works to remove barriers when others have declined to act. "It's very difficult to find direct care professionals because of the lack of compensation and the ability to provide a living wage," Montgomery said.

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Supervisor John W. Foust (Dranesville) holds his auction number as he joins Hazem Eldarwish of Falls Church and Josephie Nwalipenja.



Front left, Patrick and Jennifer Callahan of Fairfax join Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield) and Madalyn Godfrey, Springfield District staff.

SPARC honored Saslaw with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Jim Dyke said that for this award, SPARC honors those talented, committed, and visionary individuals who have dedicated their careers and devoted their time and energy to improving the lives of others.

"Individuals who have had a major positive imprint on our community and whose actions and accomplishments have been transformative. If you put those guidelines into Google, no doubt up will pop Senator Dick Saslaw," said Dyke.

Toobin presented Saslaw with the award and told Saslaw what his support meant to him and his friends. It meant that when he had COVID, he could join his SPARC friends from home on his computer and was still able to participate in the activities.

Shawn Flaherty, a board member at large and communications chair, reported that as of Monday, Nov. 6, SPARC had raised \$152,000 during the gala.

SPARC offers day programs five days a week. Programs include a curriculum based on daily living activities like continued education, skill building, exercise, outings, cooking, music, art, lectures, discussion groups, and more. The annual cost for each participant is \$9,000, compared to an average of \$39,000 per year in publicly funded costs for a program through Medicaid.

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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 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 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.

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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Bucket List-less



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As you regular readers have no doubt read in a previous column (or 500) I have cancer. I was first diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV in late February 2009. When I didn't die within my "13 month to two years" prognosis, my oncologist was surprised; nevertheless, he didn't pursue any medical explanation. He just characterized me as his "third miracle" and my treatment continued relatively unabated. It wasn't for another seven years or so that my diagnosis changed to papillary thyroid cancer. Whether my oncologist made an error in my original diagnosis or was slow to change/update my diagnosis, we'll never know as my original tissue sample/slide has been lost (I won't say conveniently). Moreover, the statute of limitations has expired so any incentive to research/investigate was lost in the figurative rubble. No real worries though. I have learned to live with it (live being the operative word) and besides, my life would have changed little since the damage was long since done, and likely would have stressed me out more.

But I must confess, living with incurable cancer is all it's cracked up to be. Meaning it's not exactly a picnic. If you've read any my last umpteen columns on the matter, cancer does more than just invade your body, it affects you emotionally, almost subconsciously, as it re-wires your brain, sort of. And there's not a thing you can do about it. What you value, what you can tolerate, what motivates you; anything you want to say or do is filtered through this imaginary prism called cancer. And what goes in doesn't always come out as you expected, or have heard yourself saying, or seen yourself doing, or had expressed an interest in saying or doing like you had for the entirety of your previous life. This the new you, like it or not.

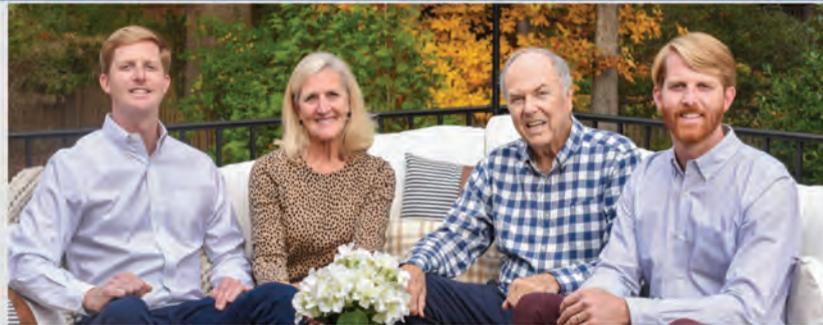
It is in this context that us cancer (or any other terminal-type situation) survivors are regularly asked what we want to do with the rest of our lives - or a reasonable facsimile thereof. Specifically, this awkward conversation inevitably veers into whether we have a "bucket list:" a list of sorts of the things you want to do before you die, places you want to visit, people you want to see, et cetera; and maybe even the songs you want to hear: "Live Like You're Dying" by Tim McGraw comes to mind.

When the opportunity (more like misfortune) presents itself at your ground-zero-type meeting with an oncologist when you hear the words "You have cancer" for the first time, you are changed forever, and not just physically, but every which way - and some you never imagined as well. Invariably, what is asked and/or what you think about your new reality as a "terminal" cancer patient, your answer is the framework of the all-too-familiar bucket list: the things/choices/places you want to do/say/go; presuming/understanding that you no longer have as much time as you thought you did - before this appointment. There's no future "woeing" is me, there's only the present and accepting/assimilating your new circumstances into your routine. Fighting it is one thing, but embracing it is quite another. Unfortunately, the odds/statistics are against you, but so what? Cancer may be the big dog, but if I want to get on the porch, I'm going to do so. Because even though cancer and all its insidious ways likely has other plans for you, plans you probably need to agree and proceed to, as we say in the sales world, standing pat ain't gonna cut it anymore. And cancer is as big a hurdle as there is. All you can do is learn to roll with the punches and put one foot in front of the other. And more often than not, my bullet-list answer surprises.

I want to live life like I'm living, not live like I'm anticipating dying. I don't want to fill up this hypothetical bucket, I want to empty it. Furthermore, I'd rather enjoy and appreciate what I have - and had, not think about what I don't have/didn't do.

After hearing what I heard - out of the blue no less, at that initial meeting with the oncologist, about my abbreviated life expectancy; to say it knocks you for a loop is to minimize loops everywhere. This 'loop' is more like the roller coaster from hell. Up and down and all-around is just the beginning. And one ride is more than enough. But you're going to be on this ride for the rest of your life so hunker down and buckle up. Eventually, at least I did, you get it sorted in some way which enables you to live life forward. I felt that if I was doing something on my so-called "bucket list," the reason for doing that thing was because I was dying and I wanted to do it before I died. To me, that would be reinforcing a negative. That's not how I want to decide that whatever it is I'm doing. I want to decide based on the merits/intrinsic value of the thing. To me, the 'bucket list' concept is too negative. I want to do things because I want to do them, not because I have too not because of some theoretical list of do-or-die experiences/accomplishments. Reinforcing a negative didn't/doesn't feel like a very positive thing to do. And here I am, nearly 15 years post-diagnosis.

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



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