

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 14, 2023

'Freedom Is Not Free'

Youngkin honors local Vietnam heroes Davis and McDaniel.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin, center, stands with Navy Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel (ret) and Army Col. Paris Davis (ret) at the dedication of the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke. Davis and McDaniel, both Alexandria residents, are highly decorated Vietnam War veterans.



Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin, center, is joined by Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel, Col. Paris Davis, Commissioner for Virginia Department of Veterans Services Daniel Gade and other dignitaries in preparing to cut the ribbon on the renamed Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel, left, and Col. Paris Davis stand beneath the new sign in their honor at the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Gov. Glenn Youngkin addresses the crowd at the renaming of the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



The Virginia Military Institute Honor Guard presents the colors at the Dec. 12 Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center renaming ceremony in Roanoke.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Two of Alexandria's most decorated Vietnam veterans — Navy Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel and Medal of Honor recipient Army Col. Paris Davis — were honored by Gov. Glenn Youngkin as the Virginia Veterans Care Center was renamed the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.

"Hero is a word that is often-times overused but today is a word that is wholly inadequate to describe the men that this beautiful facility going forward will be

named," Youngkin said in addressing the crowd. "Today we honor two incredible souls who across war and conflict defined victory with their unwavering courage."

Youngkin and other state and local officials, including Mount Vernon resident and Commissioner of Virginia Department of Veterans Services Daniel Gade, were on hand to cut the ribbon officially renaming the center that was first opened in 1992.

"Virginia's veterans landed on D-Day, they fought in the trenches of Korea, the jungles and camps of Vietnam and the sands of Iraq," said Gade, a disabled veteran of the war in Iraq. "Today we are

gathered to honor two very special Virginia veterans. I feel a special kinship with them as soldiers wounded in battle share a fellowship of suffering that the uninitiated cannot comprehend."

Gade shared the heroic stories of Medal of Honor recipient Davis and Vietnam War POW McDaniel, his voice breaking as he recalled their gallantry in combat.

"If one hero wasn't enough, today we honor two," Gade said. "My admiration for Eugene 'Red' McDaniel goes back to when a 12-year-old me read, read again and reread his book Scars and Stripes. Those stories stuck with SEE YOUNKING HONORS, PAGE 8



Daniel Gade, Commissioner for Virginia Department of Veterans Services and a resident of the Mount Vernon area, speaks at the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.

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Animal Protection Police or Animal Control Civilians?

County considers controversial change.

In 2016, Fairfax County reclassified its personnel who enforce animal laws to “Animal Protection Police Officers.” In recent months, county officials have proposed elimination of that police position, in favor of using civilian animal shelter employees in the enforcement role. Under the proposal, the title Animal Control Officer would return to use. The reorganization would move management of the unit from the police department to the animal sheltering department.

Animal Control Officers would have the power to continue to enforce State laws for companion animals under Code Chapter 65, and related animal ordinances. However, as civilians, they would be without the full powers of law enforcement police officers. The change is sought by the county’s animal sheltering and police departments; and is opposed by the employee union newly representing Fairfax County’s police officers, the Southern States Police Benevolent Association (SSPBA).

The county clarifies that no current Animal Protection Police Officers would be without a job. Instead, if approved, incumbents could be offered a move to another police unit, or may accept an Animal Control Officer position, without loss of salary.

Conformity with Neighboring Jurisdictions

Animal shelter director Reasa Currier says the change would “bring Fairfax County into conformity with neighboring jurisdictions,” who organize sheltering service and animal control under the same management.

Why is this approach better? “Having a consolidated approach to animal care and control and having both functions under one leadership optimizes resources and also allows an agency to expand service delivery,” said Currier. “There’s the connection with the shelter services when you’re working on one mission; to make sure that our residents are con-



Director Reasa Currier.

nected with all of the services of the shelter.” Currier worked under the consolidated model while at the Humane Rescue Alliance in Washington D.C., before coming to Fairfax County.

Fairfax County now separates the management of the two units. While the two units work together in the same buildings, they report to separate department heads. Both departments report to the Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold.

While jurisdictions across the Commonwealth and the country take various approaches to providing animal services, Currier believes “our industry is moving in this direction [consolidation]. So we want to make sure that we’re adapting with the times.”

Still in the proposal stage at this writing, it’s not clear what new programs might be available at low or no cost, or from mobile units. Currier indicates “we are looking at programs and services that are offered by our neighboring jurisdictions through their Animal Control Officers.” She points to one area where Alexandria outperforms Fairfax County. Alexandria animal control officers are able to return 47 percent of stray animals to their owners in the field, without the need to take the animal to the shelter, compared to Fairfax’s 30 percent field return rate. She estimates that the 17 percent difference equates to a \$30,000 savings in shelter stay costs for strays until claimed by their owners. Alexandria equips their ACO vehicles with microchip scanners while FC APPO vehicles are not now so equipped.

Union Sees Police Role in Diversion efforts

The county stakeholders all



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Change proposal is not a reflection on the work of the Animal Protection Police unit which has received multiple commendations, including APPOs McClemore, Anker, and Lugo recognition by Virginia Federation of Humane Societies in December 2021 for saving canine Quincy from cruelty

seem to agree that pets, pet owners, and the community benefit by the availability, and resident knowledge of, certain county animal care and welfare services. The shelter’s wish, to take needed low cost services to owners who may not be able to get to the shelters, to low-income pet owner’s communities; means more animals would receive needed care. However, county management and the police union disagree on the best means to provide those services.

SSPBA argues that APPOs are trained in the field of animal care and welfare, as well as animal laws; and on diversion first programs; for example, related to mental illness or addiction. And that they are able to deliver shelter developed programs. Vice-President of the local union, Siobhan Chase, explains that APPOs now engage in community policing initiatives and events which helps build partnerships between law enforcement and citizen communities. She sees an opportunity for the shelter and police departments to work together, in a manner similar to how the Police Department now works with the Communi-

ty Services Board and the Public School system. Chase has worked in the county’s shelter operations and is now an APPO.

Future Focus: Enforcement or Humane Service?

At the time the Animal Protection Police unit was established in 2016, the Police Department then explained, “The public may not notice a big change, as the uniforms, badges, patches and vehicles will look the same, with the exception of the words “Animal Protection” replacing “Animal Control” on their badges. But for the officers, the expanded role facilitates their ability to investigate and prosecute for animal neglect and abuse cases and better serve Fairfax County residents. We look forward to welcoming our more highly specialized Animal Protection Police Officers and providing a higher level of service to our community.”

The parties disagree on whether

changing back to Animal Control Officers would be a minor change to citizen service. The 2015 legislative change, which drove the 2016 police unit creation, limited the powers of quasi police positions known as ‘Conservators of the Peace’. The police union says that now, as civilians, the proposed ACOs would not attend police academy training, carry firearms, respond using lights or sirens, execute criminal and search warrants, or obtain orders under the “Red Flag” law or emergency protective orders. Those duties are exclusively permitted to trained and sworn law enforcement officers. Deputy chief of police operations Bob Blakely counters that changing times allow the unit’s operating model to change to one using “predictive service options”. He says the unit’s organizational focus should “change from enforcement to proactive humane services.”

Blakely says while Animal Protection Police Officers “responded to over 17,000 calls for service in 2022 for ill, injured, or stray animals, only three cases required search warrants, two felony ar-

SEE ANIMAL PROTECTION, PAGE 9

Closing Rental Housing Gaps For County's Most Vulnerable Adults

Dedicated housing vouchers announced for an additional 50 individuals in Reston and Herndon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Part of an ongoing series.

The Connection speaks with Sylisa Lambert-Woodward, CEO of Pathway Homes, discussing the nonprofit organization's Housing First Model program, vouchers and what is on the horizon for residents in North Fairfax County.

Housing is a human right. So states the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sylisa Lambert-Woodward is CEO of Pathway Homes, Fairfax-based nonprofit organization that reaches out to some of the county's most vulnerable adult residents. The organization serves adults experiencing homelessness or who are unhoused and with severe mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders, such as substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and physical disorders. "The mental health conditions manifest in a way that impacts their ability to function," Lambert-Woodward said.

These county residents confront financial inequalities. Pathway serves people whose income level is 30 percent to 0 percent of the area average median income. An AMI of less than 30 percent is considered extremely low-income. Racial inequities are documented in the Fairfax County 2022 Point-in-Time Count, which found 1,191 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Fifty percent of those experiencing homelessness identified as Black or African American, even though only 10 percent of Fairfax County's general population identifies as Black or African American. The Point-in-Time count of people experiencing homelessness is required by the U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development at least every other year for any Continuum of Care (CoC) program, like that of Pathway, designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.

On Nov. 22, Lambert-Woodard said that homelessness is distressing in and of itself. There are trust difficulties to address. One of Pathways' most significant markers of success is ensuring that the individual's choice of where they reside and what community they call home is emphasized. The ability of their clients to succeed and remain independent and active in the community is dependent on it, and it improves significantly when the individual is empowered.

Attempting to navigate Fairfax County's array of rental assistance services programs can be challenging for many people, but more so if the person is living with persistent severe mental illness and co-occurring disorders as well as health conditions. A prevalent characteristic among the individuals served by Pathway is that their mental health condition significantly impairs their functional capacity, necessitating supplementary levels of support or assistance, such as with medication management, to be independent. Support services are critical to Pathway's services.

In the absence of an informed advocate or case manager, such as those at Pathway who collaborate with the willing person, the journey to housing can be mentally exhausting and anxiety-provoking. Even more so if the burden of eviction proceedings is underway in their current rental or if the person is unhoused or unsheltered.

Lambert-Woodward reports that the majority of Pathway's clients are either unemployed or rely on a minimum fixed income of 15 to 10 percent AMI, or \$700 to \$800 per month in disability benefits.

"Unfortunately, in Fairfax County, there is a mismatch between the price and availability of modest rental housing and the wages of residents with extremely low income, at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), Lambert-Woodward said. "So these individuals are just simply not going to be able to afford the cost of any type of housing unit in the county without subsidy or a form of voucher."

"Pathway Homes is the largest recipient of

HUD Continuum of Care dollars in the region and provides subsidies to individuals so that they can live in the community," Lambert-Woodward said. Pathway has over 508 subsidies that specifically subsidize income so that individuals pay only 30 percent of their fixed income, or if they are not earning anything, they pay 0 percent, and the subsidy pays 100 percent.

Pathway Homes, Inc. provides its clientele with supportive services and individual units of stable, affordable housing located throughout the county. Pathway had expanded to a network of 427 owned, leased, or managed properties by the end of FY2022. Pathway Homes reports that it owns or leases over 500 homes in Northern Virginia as of 2023.

According to Lambert-Woodward, Pathway has observed that rents in Fairfax County have increased by \$300 or more per month since lease renewals a few months ago. This has prompted Lambert-Woodward to express concern to keep serving their clients. In order to defray the expenses, Pathways either conducts fundraising or relocates individuals who are unable to renew their leases, thereby forcing them to uproot and transition to another location.

"The rent increases are phasing individuals out of their category and out of certain leasing markets even with the leasing subsidies because the subsidies are not keeping up with the increasing FMR, fair market rates," Lambert-Woodward said.

For Pathway, it is a significant concern that 'affordable' rental housing remains affordable and does not soar in cost, making it no longer available by being inconsistent with the subsidies the organization receives.

On a positive note, though, Pathways is expanding its boundary. According to Lambert-Woodward, Pathway received a contract to not only provide Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services but they are also going to be providing supportive housing through dedicated vouchers for an additional 50 individuals in North Fairfax County, meaning Reston and Herndon. Lambert-Woodward is talking about 1-bedroom rental units, which are the preferred housing option for individuals who come to Pathway from a homeless situation or an unhoused state with serious mental illness.

Pathway is committed to its Housing First Program, meaning there are no conditions that have to be met before the person moves in, according to Lambert-Woodward. Using this model, Pathway maintains a housing retention rate of at least 89 percent with clients who have traditionally been viewed as treatment-resistant and "not ready for housing."

Housing services at Pathway Homes spans a continuum of care from highly intensive to highly independent. Most housing options have subsidies available to make housing affordable to anyone within the community. The organization also provides supportive services to others, allowing them to retain their own housing.

This Sunday, Dec. 10, celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1948. The Declaration set out, for the first time, a set of fundamental human rights, among them housing, to be universally protected.

Article 25 of the Declaration provides, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including ... housing."

Stable, supportive housing is merely the first step towards reintegrating into their community, rebuilding family relationships, reconnecting with their faith fellowships, and experiencing an improvement in overall physical health and psychological well-being.

After receiving housing first, every client is matched with a support team (Assertive Community Treatment Team, Veterans Housing First Team and/or Permanent Supportive Housing Team) comprised of psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, certified addictions counselors, employment specialists, and peer health specialists. The team works together to provide comprehensive community-based treatment and support services around the clock, with a focus on integrating both health and social well-being into the recovery plan.

These vital interventions are designed to empower client choice and support successful independent living.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

MT. VERNON FARMERS MARKET IS NOW OPEN

A mix of new and familiar vendors will be selling local, farm-fresh produce – including strawber-

ries and asparagus – and more at the McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. From 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday (through December 20), 21 farmers and local food producers will sell fresh vegetables and fruits; meats; Chesapeake Bay seafood; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; milk, cheese and eggs; herbs and plants; and more. The market is located at the Sherwood Hall Regional Library,

2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. This year's vendors are: Arnest Seafood – crab cakes, scallops, shrimp, rockfish, oysters and more
The Big Brine – Fermented foods, pickles and pickled vegetables
The Fermented Pig- charcuterie and gourmet bacons
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Great Harvest Bread - breads and pastries

Honeycomb Heroes – Honey and beeswax-based products
House of Empanadas – variety of empanadas
King Mushrooms – variety of locally grown mushrooms
Layla's Lebanese Restaurant – Lebanese hummus, eggplant dip, garlic sauce and more
Linda Vista Farm - fruits and vegetables, specializing in Asian and Latin produce

Misty Meadow Farm Creamery - milk, ice cream, cheese and eggs
Ochoa Produce - vegetables, herbs and flowers
Pasta Ilgatto – Fresh, handcrafted pasta and sauces
PorkStork – Forest-raised heritage pork products, including bacon and sausages

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

NEWS

Rep. Don Beyer Meets with Small Business Owners

Small Business Saturday reminders to shop small year round.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

In the spirit of Small Business Saturday, Rep. Don Beyer (VA-08) sponsored a round-table discussion with local business owners to discuss challenges that face these small business owners across the Northern Virginia area. Topics they covered included the economy, credit card fees, labor challenges and tax complexities.

Beyer picked now for the event because the holiday season is busy and counted on by some as the make or break time.

For Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, pies are a big part of the meals and Heather Sheire from "Livin' the Pie Life," of Arlington was in on the discussion. This year, chocolate is big for the pie menu, said Sheire, pie master there. "This is our busy season," she said, "Congressman Beyer is always willing to listen," she added.

The chocolate mousse pie is a big seller, followed by the apple and pecan. For the pie store, people are always whipping out the



Rep Beyer and the small business owners.

plastic when it comes time to pay and this has a fee for the business which hurts when the profit margin is smaller. "Three percent of our gross goes to credit card fees," Sheire said.


Credit card fees were something on her radar but there were other

concerns also.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Saturday is recognized in all 50 states as a way to encourage consumers to support local businesses by "shopping small." Shopping small does equate to about \$184 billion

spent that day, the chamber said. It started in 2011 to encourage shoppers to shop locally and to increase awareness of the value of locally owned small businesses and the impact of locally owned small businesses on the economy of the United States.

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Christmas Plea: Affordable Housing for All

BY KEARY KINCANNON

As the holiday season descends upon us, our hearts are naturally drawn to tales of compassion, kindness, and the spirit of giving. It is during this festive time that we reflect on the age-old story of Mary and Joseph, seeking refuge on that fateful night in Bethlehem, only to find no room in the inn. The echoes of that desperate search for shelter resonate eerily close to home in Fairfax County, where the pressing need for affordable housing has become an urgent call to action.

According to Fairfax County School Board Member Karen Corbett-Sanders, there are currently 1,000 homeless children enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. These are young souls facing the harsh reality of not having a place to call home, a situation that is not unlike the plight of Mary and Joseph all those centuries ago. What will their Christmas be like in the shelters, motels, and homeless encampments where they lay their heads at night for sleep?

Michael is a young man navigating the harsh reality of finding himself homeless and on the streets of Fairfax County. He finds solace and sustenance at Rising Hope Mission Church where he comes for lunch every day and seeks assistance in securing a place to live. He is energetic and resourceful, working two jobs in the retail service industry. He is not unlike many in our community who work hard (often more than full time) yet cannot afford a place to rent. According to the County's Rental Housing Summary, the average rent for a one-bed-



room apartment is \$1,755 a month, requiring an hourly wage of \$33.75. Michael is fortunate to make half that salary. His story is a testament to the struggles faced by many in our community who can find "no room in the inn" of Fairfax's affordable housing supply.

While the County has made some recent progress with the opening of 700 new units of affordable housing at North Hill (Mount Vernon), Ovation at Arrowbrook (Dranesville), and Oakwood (Franconia), and the 500 units in the pipeline at Dominion Square West (Hunter Mill), the magnitude of the need is staggering. The Board of Supervisors has set a commendable goal of establishing 10,000 new units of affordable housing by 2034. However, the harsh reality is that as many as 31,000 units are needed immediately to address the current needs of our community members like Michael and the children in our public schools.

This holiday season, we must open our hearts to the urgent need for affordable housing throughout Fairfax County. It is our moral duty to urge the County Board of Supervisors and our legislators in Richmond to take decisive action on three crucial fronts:

Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing: The demand for affordable housing is overwhelming, and we must respond with an increased supply. It is essential to accelerate the development of new, affordable housing units to provide refuge for those in need.

Increase Funding for Affordable Housing: A dedicated commitment to funding is crucial for the success of any affordable housing initiative.

By significantly increasing funding, especially through a robust housing trust fund, we can ensure that the financial resources are in place to support those in need. Fairfax County needs to increase its commitment to affordable housing to two cents on every real estate tax dollar. And the General Assembly in Richmond needs to add \$150 million to the Virginia Housing Trust Fund as recommended by the Virginia Housing Alliance.

Preserve Existing Units of Affordable Housing: As we strive to build new housing units, we must also prioritize the preservation of existing affordable housing. This entails preventing the displacement of vulnerable communities and maintaining the affordability of current housing stock.

This holiday season, let us not only exchange gifts and gather with loved ones but also extend our compassion to those less fortunate. By advocating for increased affordable housing, we can embody the true spirit of Christmas and ensure that everyone in Fairfax County has a warm and secure place to call home. As we gather around our festive tables, may our hearts be moved to create a brighter future for all our neighbors in need.

Rev. Kincannon is the Founding Pastor and Pastor Emeritus of Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church on the Route One Corridor. He has served on the Fairfax County Governing Board to Prevent and End Homelessness and currently serves on the County's Affordable Housing Advisory Council and the Steering Committee of Ventures in Community – an interfaith coalition in Mount Vernon. This article reflects his views and not necessarily the positions of the committees on which he serves.

Inside Scoop: Drafting Bills for the 2024 Session

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

As I write this column, the 2024 General Assembly session begins in just four short weeks! With the legislative session beginning the second week of January, the holiday season is always the busiest time of the year for our legislative offices, as we must work around our own work schedules and family celebrations to finish drafting the bills that we plan to introduce during the legislative session.

The 2024 session will be a "long session" of 60 days, kicking off on Jan. 10. While we House members are not under a bill limit imposed by our leadership, the Senators may only introduce a maximum of 21 bills this year. I plan to adhere to a similar number to ensure that



each bill gets equal effort. Even with a bill limit for both chambers in the last session, members still introduced over 2000 pieces of legislation! As it is an even year, the General Assembly will also consider the Governor's bi-

ennium budget, which he will introduce on December 20th at the Annual Joint Money Committee Meeting.

This session will be very exciting, as there will be more incoming freshmen in the 2024 General Assembly class than ever before. This freshman class is younger and more diverse too. You can visit here to learn more about the freshman class. In addition, my own seniority within the House of Delegates has increased from 48 out of 100 last session to 32! As these newest members have only

just gained access to the bill drafting system, more senior members like me have drafted additional bills over the past few months that we think would be good for a freshman to carry that we can transfer over for introduction. <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/>

I always prioritize legislative efforts brought to me by my constituents, and those that will be heard in the committees on which I serve. So, as I am finalizing

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Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy.

Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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A Connection Newspaper



FORT WARD



Reenactor John Favors with traditional Christmas desserts at the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Adrian Swart with a decorated Virginia cedar tree at the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.



Reenactor Matthew Devor, seated, is surrounded by fellow cannoneers of the 1st Connecticut Light during the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.

Christmas In Camp

Fort Ward program highlights Civil War traditions.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

The popular Civil War Christmas in Camp program returned to Fort Ward Museum Dec. 9, featuring reenactors in winter camp settings and period Christmas decorations.

The program highlights how Christmas was observed during the Civil War with interactive and living history displays throughout the camp.

“The best way to learn about history is to live it,” said John Favors, a reenactor cannoneer of the 1st Connecticut Light. “This is a living history unit and since Christmas was a special time during the war we are trying to show what it was like here at the fort.”

A Civil War-era Union Santa Claus, based on an 1863 cover of Harper’s Weekly by artist Thomas Nast, was on hand to greet visitors, who were able to tour the reconstructed Officers’ Hut and visit with soldiers in camp.

“We are here to pay homage to the men and the women who served here defending the nation’s capital during the Civil War,” said Matthew Devor, who portrayed a Sergeant of the Peace of the 1st Connecticut Light. “We are just enjoying our Christmas here in camp.”

Reenactors interpreted army life in winter camps that were decorated for the season, and celebrated by opening Christmas boxes from home, singing carols of the period around the campfire, and preparing holiday meals.

Fort Ward is the best preserved of the Union forts in the extensive system known as the Defenses of Washington. The Museum offers exhibits and public programs throughout the year.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard>
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

“The best way to learn about history is to live it.”

— Civil War reenactor John Favors



Visitors enter the headquarters of Santa Claus during the Civil War Christmas in Camp Dec. 9 at Fort Ward Museum.



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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ❖ DECEMBER 14-20, 2023 ❖ 7

Youngkin Honors Local Vietnam Heroes Davis and McDaniel

FROM PAGE 1

me and have inspired me for nearly 40 years. And in my own darkest hour, when I was maimed and broken in war, I turned to your inspiration.

I prayed with the same fervency to the same great God. I was able to bear up under unspeakable pain because you'd done it before me. Men like you and Col. Davis inspired me then and you inspire me now and it is our honor to name this care center after you."

Youngkin read the Medal of Honor citation for Davis, saying "Heroes like Col. Paris D. Davis remind us that it takes just one to stand, one to lead through service, one whose deeds inspire many."

Said Davis in his remarks, "The name of the veterans center is not about me. It is about the commitment we have shared to support our veterans. This center is a testament to the value we hold dear, the love that we have for America and those who serve to protect our country and who have dedicated their lives to the principle of duty and honor."

In addition to the ribbon cutting, the ceremony featured the presentation of plaques to Davis and McDaniel.

"I am humbled and honored at such a high level for this building to be named after me," McDaniel said. "If I had known 50 years ago when I ejected into the jungles of North Vietnam that God was going to use my story in these ways it would have been a much easier ride.

Thank you Governor Youngkin and Commissioner Gade, a man who has given much more than I for his country."

Operated by the Virginia Department of Veteran Services, the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center has 224 beds and provides



Gov. Glenn Youngkin, right, congratulates Col. Paris Davis at the renaming ceremony of the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel gives an interview after the renaming of the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Regan Davis Hopper with her father Col. Paris Davis Dec. 12 in Roanoke.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISSMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Col. Paris Davis gives media interviews following the renaming of the Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel poses for a photo with members of the VMI Honor Guard Dec. 12 in Roanoke.

on-site laboratory work, X-rays, physical therapy, podiatry care and many other health care services. It is located next door to the Salem Veterans Affairs Medical Center. "Colonel Davis, Captain McDaniel

thank you for loving our country," Youngkin said. "Thank you for demonstrating what selfless ser-

vice means. And thank you again for reminding all of us that freedom is not free."



Commissioner Daniel Gade, center, poses with fellow Alexandria residents Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel and Col. Paris Davis Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Col. Paris Davis poses for a photo with staff at the newly renamed Davis and McDaniel Veterans Care Center Dec. 12 in Roanoke.



Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel with members of his family Dec. 12 in Roanoke.

Animal Protection Police or Animal Control Civilians?

FROM PAGE 3

rests, and there were zero custodial arrests.”

He suggests the data indicates sworn officers may not be needed, or when needed, a sworn officer would accompany them, as is the case now.

Will Residents Have Input?

There are questions from residents about the proposal. Why eliminate Animal Protection Police Officers? What about the loss of experience? What about execution of search warrants and seizures in cruelty cases? Who responds to wildlife calls? Why haven't tax-paying residents been given the opportunity to comment?"

Helen Allen, of Reston, writing to the Connection Editor, commented, "To date, there has been no information made available to the public as to who will replace APP and what services they will provide. The public has had no input nor have the APP officers." (See Reston Connection, Sept 27-Oct 3, pg 9). Allen appreciates the police for their role in helping her rescued dogs.

A community member who ran afoul of the law, still has high praise for having police involvement in animal cases. Sharing that she has a mental illness, Amy E, said years ago she found she couldn't manage her three cats. She praises the officer who came to her house, "with an attitude of support; 'not you're a terrible pet mom'." After a few years of missing her cats, she got mice, a guinea pig, and bird, but admits she wasn't caring well for them. When she called the police for help, she was charged with animal cruelty and later convicted, given one year probation and restricted from owning pets for two years. Still she praises the police, saying, "I could have been jailed, but they took me to a hospital and then I had medical improvement." She shared, "Police are better in dealing with the mentally ill. Police don't want to lock all up and throw away the key. I needed the help." She admits she also



Animal shelter is a place for comfort as employees and volunteers Carter, McClammy, and Fabry hold beagles rescued from life as test subjects in August 2022.

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

“Having a consolidated approach to animal care and control and having both functions under one leadership optimizes resources and also allows an agency to expand service delivery.”

— Reasa Currier, animal shelter director

needed the 'wake up call' the arrest and conviction provided. "The time I couldn't own animals was the most miserable time in my life. I never again want to lose my right to own animals." Amy now has two cats, for whom she says she would "go to the ends of the earth".

Will the Proposal Save Money?

For many other residents concerned about county tax increases, controlling the costs of county services, including animal ser-

vices, is a priority. Approval of the proposal could come down to economics. While county spokespeople have not claimed any expected position reductions, they do point to significant savings in the difference in salary, benefits, and training costs between the two position categories. Starting salary for a police officer in the county is \$65,747; currently with a addition of a \$15,000 signing bonus. Blakely estimates that the six months of police academy training costs about \$100,000 per officer, plus the cost of three months of field training.

The FY 2023 County Advertised Budget included about \$4.5 million for 39 positions for the Animal Protection Police unit. It is expected that under the proposal the police unit's positions and equipment assets would transfer to Sheltering, as needed. Animal Control Officers typically earn lower salaries than police officers; averaging from \$53,357 to \$67,120 across the Commonwealth. D.C.'s Humane Rescue Alliance is currently advertising its ACO position at \$22 per hour. The State mandated training for ACO's is two weeks. Budget for the Department of Animal Sheltering included about \$3.2 million for 36 positions in the FY-22 Advertised Budget. The Shelter's draft organization, which has not yet been reviewed and approved, contains new specialized positions, for example for behavioral and training specialists, with approximately 101 full-time positions, including the wildlife unit, also transferring under the plan.

County representatives first discussed the proposal with the Animal Services Advisory Commission at their regular meeting on November 9. The union is expected to speak to the Commission at its Dec. 7 meeting. SSP-BA representatives president Steven Monahan and vice-president Siobhan Chase spoke to the Board of Supervisors during the public comment period on Dec. 5.

Shelter Director Currier indicates the county is still analyzing costs in preparation for presenting the proposal to the Board of Supervisors Safety and Security Committee, scheduled on Jan. 30.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Salsa Las Glorias - fresh salsas, guacamole and chips
 Sharkawi Farm - herbs, spices, teas, plants and flowers
 Three Way Farms - vegetables, melons and herbs
 Traveling Shepherd Coffee Co. - variety of freshly roasted coffee
 Twin Springs Orchard - fruits, vegetables, cheese and more
 Valentine's Bakery & Meats - meats and baked goods
 WeGrow - Microgreens.
 All of the items sold at the market are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within a radius of 125 miles. The McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon market is one of 10 farmers markets run by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA); for more information, visit [\[county.gov/parks/farmersmarkets\]\(http://county.gov/parks/farmersmarkets\).](http://www.fairfax-</p>
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FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED

Interested in becoming a foster parent? There is always a need for caring foster parents looking to open their homes to foster youth. Get in touch to learn more. Visit fcsvanow@gmail.com or www.FCSVA.org. Or call 703-817-9890.

LOOKING FOR SOFTBALL PLAYERS

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit the web site [www.](http://www.goldengirls.org)

goldengirls.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

STEM VOLUNTEERS. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day

training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at www.senior-scientist.org. To volunteer, contact donaledge@aol.com.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org. United Community (formerly UCM), 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, seeks volunteers for Food Pantry assistance, Early Learning Center

teacher aides, basic needs counselors, youth tutors and mentors, office administration/data entry, and community outreach. Flexible hours and schedules. Opportunities for all ages to serve, including community service hours. More info at ucmagency.org/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@ucmagency.org. 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.

Minimalist Holiday Décor, a la Frank Lloyd Wright

The Pope-Leighey House.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

A three-car, Lionel model electric train with a red caboose buzzes around a 28-inch-diameter track under the six-foot Christmas tree decorated with gleaming vintage glass ornaments. Bing Crosby croons “Silver Bells” from a 33, long-playing record spinning on a turquoise, 1950s replica record player.

For the first time ever, the Pope-Leighey House at Woodlawn, a house designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, is featuring mid-20th-century holiday decorations like those of the historic home’s former owners.

In keeping with the house’s style, the holiday décor is uncluttered and simple, by many standards, today’s and Victorian era, for example. No plastic Santas or glittery snowflakes. No bulging mistletoe balls with shiny trailing ribbons. The tree in the living room, standing where former residents, the Leigheys, put it has about 30 glass ornaments, most of them round, tennis-ball size. The children’s bedroom is brightened with colorful, handmade construction paper chains stretched out just below the ceiling. Outside, period lights line the carport and overhang.

In the office, from a 1950s-1960s, sparkly silver tinsel tree, topped with a red bow, dangle more glass ornaments.

“It is a Space Age tree,” explains Shawn Halifax, Woodlawn’s Executive Director, and some celebrants in its day put a color wheel under it to reflect the glass ornaments.

The minimal decorations are consistent with Wright’s design, a practical, minimalist house. Wright thought that “Americans had too much clutter,” said Amanda Roper, Senior Manager of Public Programs and Interpretation. The house has little storage space so the owners could not store large accumulations.

Roper explained that because curators had few records and no photographs of the former residents’ decorations, the staff researched popular trends of the 1950s and 1960s. She gleaned some facts from the residents’ descendants. The second owners were Robert and Marjorie Leighey. A grandson of Marjorie’s niece remembered the Lionel train under the tree. Another descendant identified the tree’s location.

The original owners of the

To Visit

Visit <http://www.woodlawn-popeleighey.org>. Holiday tours, Fridays and Saturday evenings, until December 16. Reservations recommended.

house, Lauren and Charlotte Pope, decorated with greenery, probably pine and holly branches from their Falls Church, 1.3-acre, woodsy lot, the house’s original location. They lived there between 1942 and 1949 and bought their son a train.

“It feels like a home,” said Roper. “Many people can relate to it. People can explore the time period and its aesthetic.” Comparing it to other historic sites or traditional house museums that are often heavily decorated for the holidays, “It can be nostalgic for some people,” she said. “It’s something different.”

The House’s History

The Pope-Leighey house is one of the famed architect’s Usonian houses, designed to be affordable, middle-class housing. Lauren Pope could not afford a typical Wright home, going then for around \$650,000 in today’s dollars. Pope, a journalist, asked Wright to design a house for \$5,500, equivalent to \$86,000 today. It ended up costing \$7,000, including the furniture and Wright’s fee.

The house, at 1,200 square feet, has two bedrooms and one bath on one floor. It’s made of bricks, wood, concrete and glass with no drywall, paint or plaster. “The entire house is a study in horizontality, with its flat, cantilevered roof, horizontal board-and-batten walls and built-in bookcases with no vertical support beams,” wrote Lauren Walsler in a 2017 Preservation Magazine article.

Much of the interior is made of natural, honey-colored, cypress wooden planks. Wright did not want the interior to be a series of boxy rectangles. The central living-dining area is an open-floor plan, a combined library and living room with a table for meals or games. Clearstory windows make rooms feel bigger. The kitchen is intended for use by one person.

Wright integrated furniture into the home’s design, to make it blend in and not dominate a space. He designed the beds to be low and without box springs. The doorknobs are unusually high, a



A vintage tree ornament.



The silver tinsel tree in the study.



A 1950s telephone.

form of childproofing, again, the practical touch.

Wright sought to “build with nature rather than against it,” he said, so he included floor-to-ceiling windows leading to an outdoor patio connecting the inside to nature. To enhance affordability, Wright’s design has no gutters, basement, garage or attic.

Robert and Marjorie Leighey lived in the house from 1947 to 1983. The living room was smack in the path of a planned expansion of Interstate 66, so Mrs. Leighey gave the property to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to save it. The Trust moved it to Woodlawn in 1964 and granted her life-time tenancy. She lived there until her death in 1983. Because of the unstable clay soil, Woodlawn’s managers moved it 30 feet uphill in 1995-1996.

“Every home should be as unique as the people living in it,” Wright maintained.



Shawn Halifax, Amanda Roper and Elizabeth Reese, Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey staffers.



The children’s bedroom has construction paper chains.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

NEWS

Franconia Shooting, Woodbridge Man Dead

Detectives from FCPS Major Crimes Bureau are investigating a shooting that left a Woodbridge man dead.

Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 1:47 p.m., officers responded to reports of a shooting in the 5300 block of Harbor Court Drive in Franconia. After an extensive search of the area, no victims or suspects were located at the scene. Prior to police arrival, witnesses described hearing a gunshot, and observed a suspect fleeing the area of a black Dodge Charger, with a gun in hand.

Around 2:30 p.m. officers were notified by Prince William County Police that a black Dodge Charger had arrived at a local hospital with a victim suffering from a gunshot

wound. Bryant Anthony Gillis, 23, of Woodbridge was pronounced deceased at the hospital.

Detectives determined a friend who was with Gillis at the time of shooting drove him to the hospital. They continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the shooting. Preliminarily, the shooting does not appear to be a random act.

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

OPINION

Krizek

FROM PAGE 6

my legislative agenda, I want to give you an inside scoop on some of the bills I have in drafting that I may introduce. Remember that not every bill that I draft will be introduced, much less get the Governor's signature and become law.

Brought forward by a constituent, I plan to reintroduce my bill from last year to create a partial retirement income tax exemption for Foreign Service Officers (FSO). I was also tasked by the Virginia State Police to introduce a similar effort for their retired officers.

I plan to reintroduce a bill requested by my constituents living in the historic Tauxemont neighborhood to address the impending groundwater well shutdown that the community is currently facing.

Two of my bills include extending the sunset (or expiration date) on commissions I have established. You may remember my bill from 2022 which created a Tribal Code Commission, which will update Virginia's Code to reflect federal recognition of Virginia Tribes. This bill will extend the commission for an additional two years to complete its work. Last year, Senator Reeves and I passed a resolution creating a joint subcommittee to explore establishing a Virginia Gaming Commission, which would oversee all forms of legal gam-

ing in the Commonwealth. The subcommittee required sitting members of the General Laws Committees in both chambers, and with so many retirements this election year, the subcommittee has only just had its first two meetings.

Senator Reeves and I are working on several pieces of legislation to further our reforms of charitable gaming and problem gambling treatment and support here in the Commonwealth.

Over the past several sessions, I have worked extensively with tenant groups and affordable housing stakeholders to support residents of manufactured home parks across the Commonwealth. We are currently workshopping two bills to reform the sale process of parks and boost tenant rights and protections. Manufactured housing parks are one of the best forms of naturally occurring affordable housing. I am proud to have five parks located here in my district along Route 1, and we must do everything we can to support these communities.

This week I am attending an excellent conference on imagining a Virginia without invasive plant species in Charlottesville. In next week's column, I will share my environmental bills which will include efforts to combat invasive plants in the Commonwealth.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/ RTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	11/14/2023
MONTGOMERY	28886	314	DUCK PON DR/ RTE 314	STROUBLES CREEK	11/9/2023
PATRICK	13342	677	WILLIS GAP RD/ RTE 677	EAST FORK JOHNSON CREEK	10/27/2023

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.



First Night Alexandria takes place on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023 in Old Town Alexandria.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

NOW THRU JAN. 7

National Treasures | Leanne Fink. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. National Treasures is a collection of oil and cold wax paintings by Leanne Fink that pays homage to the grandeur of America's National Parks. Inspired by the beauty of the natural world, Leanne is known for her visually dynamic landscapes. The Athenaeum Gallery is open Thursday to Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

DEC. 15-17

Del Ray Artisans 28th Annual Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Free admission. First three weekends in December (Dec. 1-3, Dec. 8-10, Dec. 15-17), plus bonus market days Dec. 22 & 23. Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Hours for Friday, December 22 are 3-9 p.m. Details: delrayartisans.org/holiday-market

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

"Breakfast with Santa" will take place every weekend in December, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in three locations in Alexandria: Joe Theismann's Restaurant, Mia's Italian Kitchen, Ada's on the River. Tickets range from \$0-\$65 and include a hearty and festive breakfast feast that will delight your taste buds. Children will receive take-

home treats to continue the holiday spirit at home, while adults can indulge in some celebratory Prosecco.

Tickets can be purchased here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/breakfast-with-santa-in-old-town-alexandria-by-arp-1039279>

DEC. 16-17

"Holiday with a Twist." Featuring the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Center, Alexandria; Sunday, Dec. 17 at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria. Celebrate the Season "Holiday with a Twist" featuring Joshua Banbury, Baritone and Chris Ullman, whistler. Adults: \$20-89; Students \$15; Youth \$5.

DEC. 16-17

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. December 16, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, Alexandria. December 17, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria. With James Ross, conductor; Joshua Banbury, baritone. Enjoy this celebration of the season with traditional fare mixed with jazz baritone Joshua Banbury and Alexandria resident and world whistling champion Chris Ullman.

SUNDAY/DEC. 17

Sunday Funday. 3 p.m. At Ainslie Arts Center at Episcopal High School, Black Box Theatre, 3900 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. Sunday Funday will feature a cast of local musical theater talent and singing drag queens, a three-piece band music directed by Marika Countouris, as well as bottomless drinks. Sunday Funday will be hosted by local drag queen and frequent Monumental collaborator Tiara Missou, also known as David Singleton. Individual tickets are \$30. Artist under 35 tickets are available for \$15 (patrons must show I.D. at the door). A table for four guests can be purchased for \$140. Table tickets include preferred seating and either a bottle of wine or champagne. Patrons may pay \$20 for bottomless specialty drinks or \$25 at the door. Tickets are available online at <https://www.monumentaltheatre.org/>.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. In locations around Old Town Alexandria. First Night Alexandria, known as the largest family-friendly and affordable New Year's Eve festival of music and more event in the region, returns with its day into night of celebration showcasing performing arts throughout Old Town. The annual event (in its 29th year) will feature a variety of activities, activations, dance parties, live music and more. The festivities kick off at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at midnight as thousands welcome in the New Year.

A tradition that started in 1994, First Night Alexandria has become a staple in the region to bring in the New Year as an affordable event filled with a lineup of entertainment and activities. Proceeds from the event supports Alexandria's middle and high school students' activities with a musical background in choir, orchestra, and band.

New this Year:

Twilight Fireworks - This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m. on Alexandria's waterfront geared to families who want to enjoy the show with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront.

Fun Hunt - Add adventure, exploration, and education to the last day of the year! After 5 years, the Fun Hunt returns with new ways to enjoy an afternoon in Old Town Alexandria. Ticketed guests have the opportunity to turn a day of Fun and entertainment into potential prize winnings. The adventure concludes at the Block Party at Market Square just prior to the Twilight Fireworks.

Daytime Block Party - Join us at Market Square from 4 - 6 p.m. for a time of music, a "Cool Happy New Year" demonstration and special fun just prior to the new Twilight fireworks display.

For more information visit www.firstnightalexandria.org

JAN. 5-27

"Visions of Resilience: Art for Climate Justice" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans,

2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, in partnership with the Changing Planet Justice Foundation, raises awareness about climate change and its impact on marginalized communities. By conveying issues through the universal language of image, we encourage action towards a just, climate-friendly future. Reception: Friday, January 5, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (closed January 28). DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/FEB. 3

Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Maestro. 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria. When the orchestra is ready to begin their concert and suddenly discover the Maestro is nowhere to be found they begin to panic. Thankfully the world's greatest detective is available and agrees to take the case. All the musicians are suspects and thus Sherlock Holmes must investigate each of the instrument families to deduce who is behind the mystery. With Enrico Lopez-Yanez, Guest Conductor.

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.

DECEMBER

Wed. 13: Jon McLaughlin w/ Bobbie Lee Stamper & Leo Sawikin - 2023 Holiday Tour \$29.50
Thu. 14: Carbon Leaf \$45.00
Fri. 15: Carbon Leaf \$45.00 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 16: Pieces of a Dream \$49.50
Sun. 17: Luther Re-Lives: Holiday Concert featuring William "Smooth" Wardlaw \$49.50
Wed. 20: A John Waters Christmas \$59.50
Fri. 22: Tarsha Fitzgerald Presents "The Voices" Christmas Show \$35.00
Sat. 23: A Very MAYSA Christmas \$69.50
Fri. 29: Hank Williams Tribute featuring Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Daryl Davis, Jake Blount, Robin & Linda Williams, Patrick McAvinue, Alex Lacquement \$35.00
Sat. 30: Bela Dona Band \$39.50
Sun. 31: The New Year's Eve with The Seldom Scene & The Porch Delights - 7:30pm- \$49.50

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Wildlife in Bronze Glow at Nepenthe Gallery

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

More Information

www.nepenthegallery.com
www.turnersculpture.com/
www.vims.edu

Otters are secretive and elusive, but “Sexy Otter” is reclining in a seductive, odalisque pose front and center at the Nepenthe Gallery.

The otter is a cast bronze sculpture that, along with five others, attracted around 50 admiring fans on Dec. 7 to the gallery’s weekly wine and cheese reception.

Nepenthe is featuring sculptures by David Turner, who with his father, William, has created over 500 limited edition bronzes and over 175 public commissions now in over 130 places across the country. One of their wild geese sculptures stands in Limerick, Ireland, and they shipped an alligator to the Swiss Alps. Their pieces range from mice to dolphins, from bison to bears. The pieces at Nepenthe are priced from \$480 to \$8,600.

The show also includes a great blue heron, a blue crab, a scallop, a stalking fox and “Fussy Duckling.” The Turners, who have a foundry, gallery and studio in Onley on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, have specialized in wildlife sculptures since 1983. The pair captures “the beauty and motion of wildlife in bronze,” says their website.

“Art and marine life are our passion,” Nepenthe Gallery co-owner Carrie Garland told the attendees. On the Turners’ pieces, “They are special,” she said.

Special Guest

The evening’s special guest was Dr. Derek Aday, Dean and Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) at the College of William and Mary. Citing “global environmental change,” he said, “We are at a critical period for coastal communities,” adding, “We are your solutions partner.”

VIMS, based in Gloucester, Virginia, conducts research on ocean and estuarine science, educates scientists and provides scientific advice to policy makers, industry and the public. Chartered in 1940, VIMS is one of the largest marine research and education centers in the country. Their 500 employees research topics like shellfish aquaculture, water quality, habitat restoration, sea level rise and coastal resilience. VIMS returns “\$4 for every \$1 the state invests in VIMS,” Aday

maintained.

VIMS provides scientific advice to local wetlands boards, including Fairfax County’s, when the boards consider permit applications for certain land-disturbing activities and construction near tidal water bodies.

Nepenthe Gallery

Carrie and Jim Garland, high school sweethearts, opened the Nepenthe Gallery in 2022 in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center at 7918 Fort Hunt Road. Nepenthe in Greek means “a place of no sorrow.” The gallery offers a range of paintings, sculptures, drawings and photography from many genres, including works by master photographer Renee C. Gage. Jim oversees the gallery’s frame shop.

The Turners

The Turners use what’s called a “lost wax process of bronze casting.” This requires multiple steps involving a clay model, a rubber and plaster mold, hot wax, a ceramic mold and bronze ingots melted at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

In Washington, D.C., their public commissions include a flying bald eagle at the National Zoo; a bald eagle and two eaglets at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall; and a heron pair at Hamilton’s Restaurant.

Others include “Whitetail Bucks” (life size), at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville; “School of Lookdown Fish” at the Virginia Aquarium, Virginia Beach; “Dolphin Fountain,” (life size) Mystic, Connecticut; “Black Bear Family,” Philadelphia Zoo; “Baby Giraffe,” Detroit Zoo, Michigan; and “Dance of the Dolphins,” Ocean City, Maryland.

Alexandria resident Stetson Tinkham, a former VIMS Board member, went to the reception to “keep up with VIMS,” he said. Melissa Narins attended “to support our community, enjoy art and learn about VIMS,” she said. “Nepenthe is a great addition to our community and here we can see beautiful art.”

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Sexy Otter, by David Turner.



Blue Crab, by William Turner.



Great blue heron, by David Turner.



Derek Aday and Susan Maples from VIMS.



An enthusiastic, art-loving crowd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that a fireworks display will take place as part of a public evening event, Christmas Illuminations at George Washington’s Mount Vernon on the following dates:

Friday, December 15 between 8:00 p.m. and 8:30pm
(10 minutes)

Saturday, December 16 between 8:00 p.m. and 8:30pm
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Legals Legals

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR THE SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE PROPOSED DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (DIA) HEADQUARTERS (HQ) ANNEX CONNECTOR ROADS FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA

The U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir hereby gives Notice of the Availability (NOA) for the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for the proposed construction of the connector roads for the DIA HQ Annex within the vicinity of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) complex on Fort Belvoir's North Area, Fairfax County, Virginia. The purpose of this project is to add a traffic circle to GEOINT Drive to facilitate the flow of traffic to the existing National Geospatial Intelligence Agency headquarters (NGA) and the new DIA facility. The EA for the DIA Annex was finalized October 2021.

The Supplemental EA has been prepared in accordance with the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), (Public Law 91-190, 42 USC 43214347 January 1, 1970), amendments, and the Army's Implementing Regulations (32 CFR Part 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*). The SEA is available to view in printed form at the Lorton Branch, Kingstowne Branch, and Sherwood Regional Branch of the Fairfax County Public Library system, or to view/download electronically at <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>. Click the "Programs and Documents" tab, then "National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program." Information about the SEA and links to download the various documents are provided under the "Open for Public/Agency Review & Comment" heading.

The final 2021 EA for the DIA HQ Annex can be found to view/download electronically at <https://home.army.mil/belvoir/index.php/about/Garrison/directorate-public-works/environmental-division>. Click the "Programs and Documents" tab, then "National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program." Information about the Final 2021 EA and links to download the various documents are provided under the "Final NEPA Documents" heading.

Comments or questions on the SEA and Draft FNSI may be directed in writing to: Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works, Building 1442, 9430 Jackson Loop, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060, or by email to: DIA_Annex_SEA@usace.army.mil. Comments must be received no later than 30 days after publication of this NOA.

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NEWS

Shocking! Fish Moved to Herrity Pond

A Department of Public Works and Environmental Services crew working on the Difficult Run Tributary at Government Center Stream and Pond Restoration project, using an electro-fishing boat, safely, stunned the fish and eels living there and temporarily relocated them ahead of dredging the pond. Electroshocking has taken place before in the County, but usually with a hand-held device, not a boat. The fish were taken a short distance away and placed in the Herrity Pond.

As a cornerstone of Fairfax County's environmental initiatives aimed at enhancing local waterways and supporting diverse ecosystems, the Difficult Run project exemplifies the County's dedication to preserving natural habitats and promoting environmental health. It's a balancing act between urban development and nature conservation.

A freshwater ecologist on the team explains that electro-shocking is a "sophisticated and humane technique" that allows for efficient, safe fish relocation, benefiting species like bluegill and American eels. In all, three eels, 49 bluegill and 145 golden shiners were relocated.

The successful transfer of these aquatic residents to Herrity Pond signifies not only the protection of these species during the restoration project, but also the enrichment of the pond's biodiversity.

This fish relocation project is more than a conservation effort.

Fairfax County residents are encouraged to participate in the final phase of the project, where they can witness the restocking of the amenity ponds. The restocking date will be announced once it is scheduled.

CALENDAR

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connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar



A map of the proposed entertainment district in Potomac Yard.

Let the Games Begin

Monumental move: Caps, Wizards heading to Potomac Yard.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin was joined by officials from the City of Alexandria, Monumental Sports & Entertainment, and JBG SMITH as he announced the framework of an agreement for a public-private partnership to create a \$2 billion Entertainment District in Potomac Yard that will include new homes for the NHL's Washington Capitals and the Washington Wizards of the NBA.

"Alexandria's ability to attract this ambitious project is a direct result of the success of previous investments made in Potomac Yard and across our city," said Mayor Justin Wilson. "Our City Manager Jim Parajon led a talented team, working hand-in-hand with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, to bring us this opportunity. A project this special will help the City realize our collective strategy and the vibrant vision for this neighborhood and for our city as a whole."

In addition to a new arena for the Capitals and Wizards, the new district will be home to the business headquarters of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, an expanded esports facility, a performing arts venue and new retail, restaurant and conference spaces. Assuming the proposal receives the necessary approvals, ground could break on construction in 2025 and the teams would move to Virginia in 2028.

According to the city's press release, the project is expected to catalyze economic growth, generating 30,000 jobs and an economic impact of \$12 billion over the next several decades. This includes millions of dollars over the project term to create affordable housing, offer rental and home-ownership assistance, and to invest in transportation improvements and education.

"This exciting new project is the result of decades of thoughtful long-term strategic planning and a clear vision for growth across Alexandria," said Alexandria Economic Development Partnership President



A rendering of the planned entertainment district in Potomac Yard.

and CEO Stephanie Landrum. "From the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus to the new Potomac Yard-VT Metro Station, Alexandria has created the ideal environment and location for this exciting project."

The project will be adjacent to the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in the Alexandria portion of National Landing. It will expand Monumental's presence in Northern Virginia, where the company already has its Capitals' practice facility in Arlington, and support more than 650 jobs, 221 events a year, and 180 global partners and sponsors.

"The proposed Monumental Campus represents a transformative step forward for our fans, our company, and the entire DMV region," said Monumental Sports & Entertainment CEO Ted Leonsis. "I have always believed there is a higher calling in sports — to unify our community, build a lasting legacy over multiple generations, and lift all our neighbors towards a shared sense of prosperity. Today, we deepen that commitment as we enter a phase of rapid expansion in service to our fans, employees, and partners."

The \$2 billion investment will be supported through bonds issued by the proposed Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority, as well as contributions from MSE. The bonds will be repaid through annual rent paid by MSE, incremental taxes generated by the facility, parking fees, and district naming rights. Monumental and the City of Alexandria will also contribute \$56 million

each toward the construction of the performing arts venue. No existing taxes will be used to support the project, and there are no proposed tax increases for local residents.

The development would total approximately 9 million square feet with the arena to be constructed on a currently unoccupied 12-acre site between the Metro entrance and the first phase of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus.

The site is owned by JBG SMITH and its joint venture partner and will be sold to a proposed Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority.

JBG SMITH serves as the master developer of approximately 55 acres surrounding the project with a total potential development of approximately 8.1 million square feet, of which JBG SMITH owns approximately 1.5 million square feet.

In 2018, Amazon selected National Landing for its second headquarters after conducting an extensive North American search. In June of this year, Amazon unveiled its 2.1 million square foot headquarters and has hired more than 8,000 employees to date in the region.

Alexandria will begin a community engagement process, including a series of community meetings and workshops, which will kick off in early 2024. Additional project information will be shared over the coming weeks, and interested residents can visit MonumentalALX.com to sign up to receive updates.

Ho Hum



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The totally wrong attitude to have, if even for a second. What I am specifically referring to is my reaction the result of my PET scan from Nov. 27, that I wrote about a few columns ago. The column entitled "Uncertainty" was "much ado about something" since it was written before the results of a potentially life-changing scan was known. Well, the results came electronically as they always do. Initially, the patient receives the actual report from the radiologist (written in medical jargon) that is also sent to the doctor. Typically, I'll receive the report before my oncologist has even had a chance to read and review it meaning I'm left to my own non-medical devices to try and interpret its meaning. Subsequently, I will receive an email from my oncologist deciphering the report and breaking it down into language I can understand. That language, fortunately said the following: "Scan looked good." And with that three-word summary, I can once again breathe normally and return my seat to its upright position and live a semi normal life, that is until the next medical hurdle which in the cancer world comes around regularly. Nevertheless, I never look gift oncologist in the stethoscope so I will rejoice until that next hurdle. But to the extent, one takes amazingly good news like I received today with a grain of salt - because I've received mostly good news over these last nearly 15 years since I was diagnosed, is a colossal error in judgment. No doubt you're familiar with the expression "any port in a storm?" Cancer is not just 'a storm,' it's category five hurricane with tornadoes on the side.

Still, after so many years of treatment/scans, et cetera based on my original stage IV non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis, with its "13 month to two years" prognosis - given in late Feb. 2009 at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, I have learned to take nothing for granted and to cherish each and any bit of good health news with a shaker full of salt. However, in an attempt to minimize any anxiety waiting for results and furthermore to try and think positively and powerfully to affect those results, one can hope/anticipate even, that the results will be the kind the patient can live with, pun intended. But until one reads those few words or hears those words over the phone or receives them in person from your oncologist, it's impossible to go about your business as per usual. It's sort of a mental road block. Oh sure, you can compartmentalize that anxiety, but such life-affecting news can only be delayed for so long. Eventually, and much sooner than later - if you know what's good for you, you have to face your demons and access your email/call your doctor. Ignoring your cancer-related news/lab work/scan result only buys you so much time. There is no future pretending that the results don't matter somehow. They matter. Your life's at stake. You can take your time, but not too much of it.

This column's title has more to do with the patient's reaction after the fact, the fact being that your "scan looked good." Thankfully. Because cancer is one of the scariest words. It means trouble with a capital "T." Just because one has had a reasonably - and unexpectedly good run, as I have doesn't mean for a second that health circumstances can't change (I didn't say won't. I'm no fool). One can never lose sight of their medical roots, so to speak. I received a "terminal" diagnosis at age 54 and a half - not three months after my widowed mother died had at age 86, that I would probably not live to age 57. Not having thought about my own death too much, instead having been focused on my parent's deteriorating health, I kind of thought I'd live to at least the ages that they did, 87 and 86, respectively. Hearing my prognosis was disappointing to say the least. To say the most it was surreal, which is a word/description often associated with incredible/unbelievable/out-of-the-blue news like being told you're going to die in the next two years. Then, when you don't die in those two years, and lo and behold, you're still being cancer-treated/scanned nearly 15 years later, it occasionally becomes easy (certainly wishful thinking) to begin to take it all in stride, as if its normal/no big deal. This column is meant to remind me that the absolute last thing my recurring scans are is normal/no big deal. Every day I'm alive, especially given my medical history is a 'big deal.' And the biggest deals are the days when I receive encouraging/stable scan results which enable me to extend my warranty (euphemistically speaking) and remain in the game a little bit longer. And when I go through this identical experience next June (awaiting the results from my next scheduled PET scan) or next week when I have my first renal ultrasound, I must be mindful of how lucky I've been and how grateful I should be, always. Taking any of it for granted is the last thing I should be taking.

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



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