

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JANUARY 18, 2024

## The English Enemy Is Here

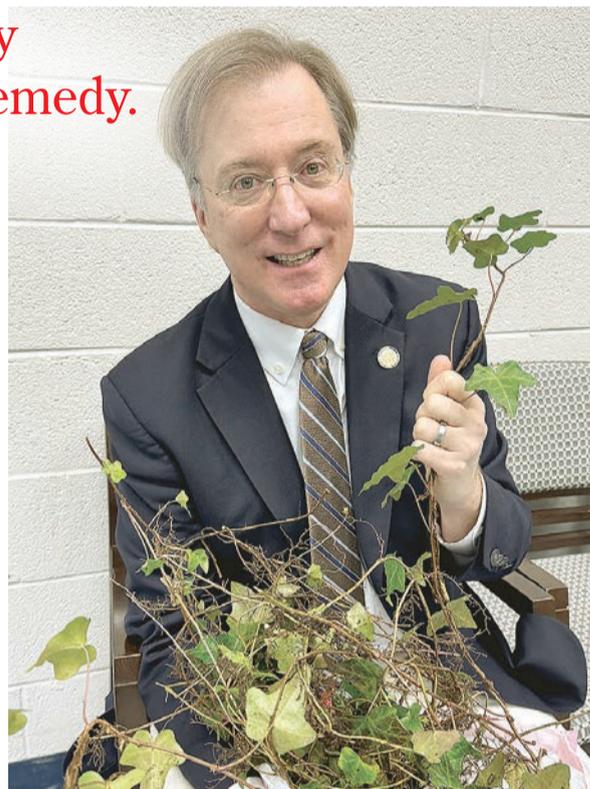
Delegate warns of ivy invasion, proposes remedy.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

American colonist Paul Revere famously warned, “the British are coming,” as British forces advanced before the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775. Our local modern day patriot, Del. Paul Krizek, is warning “the English Ivy is here.”

In this year’s session of the Virginia General Assembly which convened last week, he warns of the insidious attacker of native trees and other plants, arguably as worthy of warnings than the very visible red-coated British troops. Krizek’s bill, House Bill 1167, would allow localities to establish ordinances to prohibit the sale of English Ivy and its hybrids or cultivars, from sale within its jurisdiction and to establish penalties, with limits, for violations.

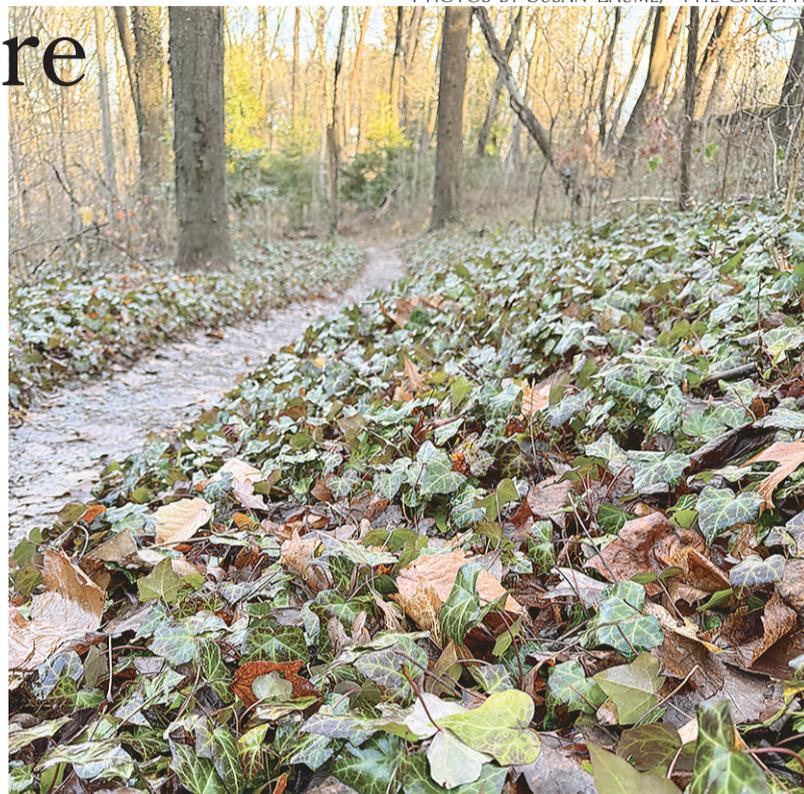
Krizek, in his ninth year in the General Assembly, says a constituent alerted him to how pervasive the invasive woody vine, *Hedera helix*, has become in the area. Originally from England, it is believed to have been introduced to Northern America about 1727 by European colonists. It was appreciated for its evergreen foliage and ground cover habit. Its Latin name, meaning ‘coiling vine’ describes part of its ability to overcome other plants. Its dense growth habit and ability to climb for sun allows it to out compete other vegetation on the ground, and can kill even a mature



Del. Paul Krizek is warning that English Ivy planting should be discontinued to protect our native environment and is providing the means for localities to establish local sales ban ordinances for the plant and its cultivars

tree by climbing into the canopy denying nutrients to the tree.

The ivy is invasive, easily escaping the confines of individual gardens and spreading with the help of birds and other seed carriers of its small toxic black berries. Dense areas of ivy are known to attract and harbor rats,



English Ivy’s rapid growth and quickly blanket understory areas, out competing native plants.

which use the plants for cover; and for mosquitos and spider mites which are drawn to the water held by the leaves and vines.

Homeowners might be drawn to use ivy in landscaping given the respected look of the hall-towered walls of ‘Ivy League’ colleges. Colleges in the league were named for Boston Ivy, which is not a true ivy. Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*), a deciduous, not evergreen, vine, which attaches to surfaces with tendrils tipped with sticky disks. The plant is able to glue itself to the structure

without damaging the building surface.

In contrast, English Ivy uses aerial roots to attach itself and can penetrate cracks and joints in building brick or wood walls, and bark, causing structural damage. A steep price to pay for a year-round green ground cover.

As a result many local gardeners have put English Ivy first on their list to remove and replace in their gardens.

For information about attractive native plant alternatives for English Ivy and other non-native plants, see [www.plantnovatives.org](http://www.plantnovatives.org)

## Bus and Pedestrian Improvements Coming to Mount Vernon

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

There’s always something going on with Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon.

Adjacent localities are renaming Jefferson Davis Highway, because Jefferson Davis was president of the Confederate States of America throughout its existence during the American Civil War (1861–65), supporting continuation of slavery. The road has been named Richmond Highway in Fairfax County for years.

A large section of the road in Mount Vernon, between Jeff Todd Way and Sherwood Hall Lane to the north is being widened with expanded transit and bicycling options.

Intersection improvements are part of these efforts and there are two planned at



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

Bus stop improvements will help all the bus lines on Richmond Highway.

### Community Update on Richmond Highway

**BRT RESCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 31, 2024**

The Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Community Update meeting has been rescheduled from Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023 to Jan. 31, 2024, due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts. This meeting will include an open house and presentation followed by a question and answer session. Officials will cover projects that have been completed, a summary of decisions and milestones, and the next steps for the Richmond Highway BRT known as “The ONE.”

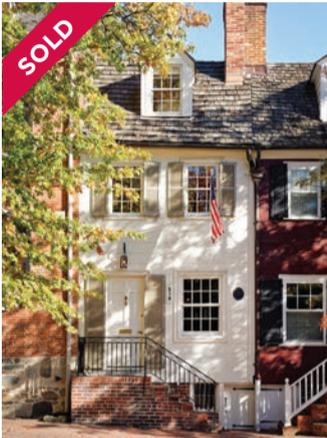
**When:** Open House Jan. 31, 2024 - 6:30-9 p.m., Presentation 7 p.m.

**Where:** Bryant High School (2709 Popkins Lane) - Auditorium

**Topic:** Recap of project decisions and milestones, and overview of next steps

SEE BUS IMPROVEMENTS, PAGE 7

# BABS BECKWITH SELLS OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA



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## Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail Keep Rolling

Kind words shared online fuel their efforts.

By MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

Throughout the years along the Mount Vernon Trail, the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail put in hours of back-breaking work, pulling weeds, flattening root humps and clearing sight lines for thousands of bicyclists that use the trail every year. They don't get paid in dollars but their positivity goes a long way.

One of the group put a lot of the comments they've gotten on "paper," to share with like minds.

"As an all volunteer nonprofit one of the ways we get 'paid' is through the kind words people share online. This past year we have kept a spreadsheet of all the positive comments we received. Here is a collection of some of our favorites," the Friends said on their website.

"Remember, words are powerful! Spread positivity online," they said on the site.

### Friends Get Noticed

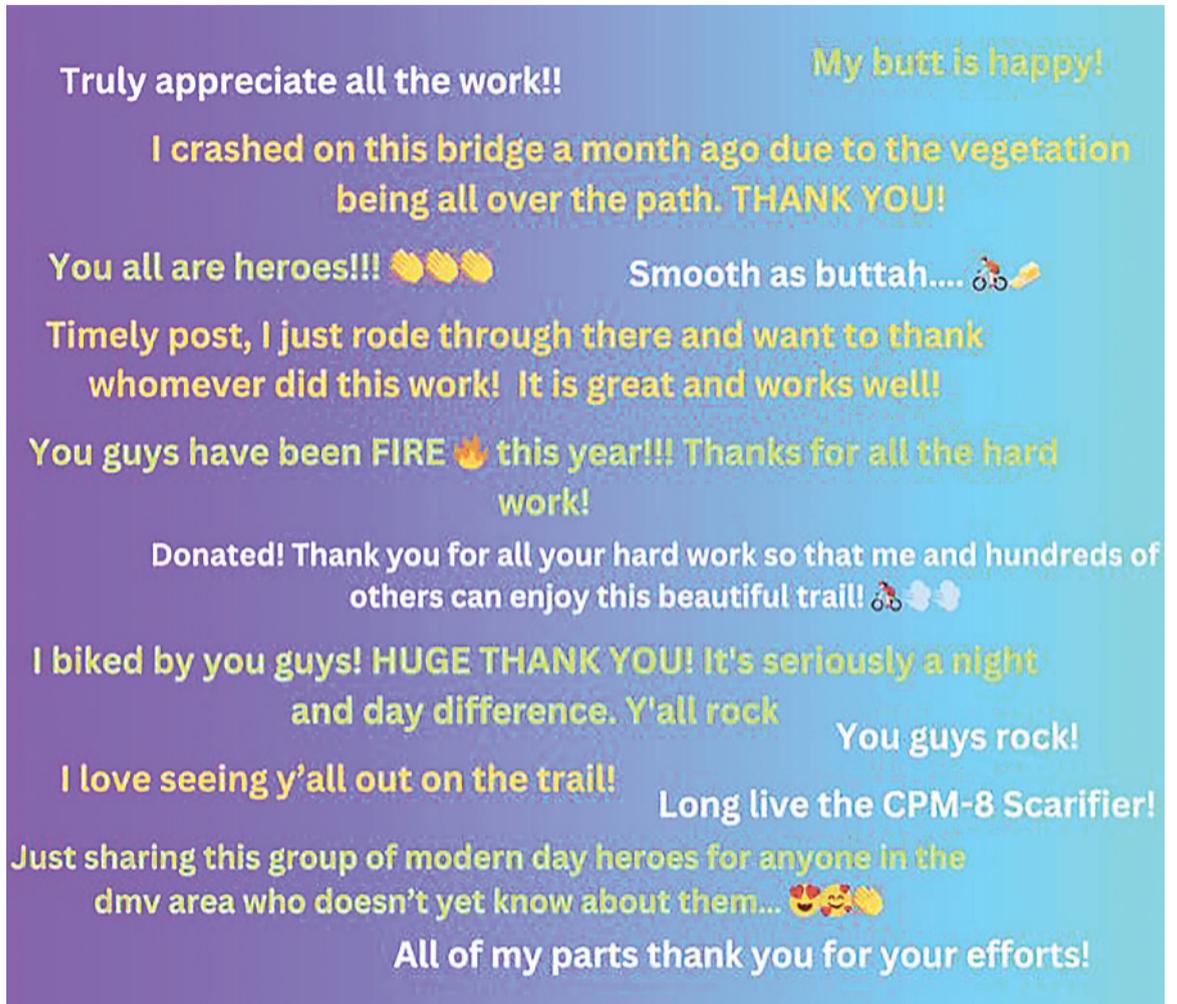
2023 was a good year for the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail.

The group won the 2023 Ellen Pickering Environmental Excellence Award; they saw an increase in volunteers; partnered with the Rosslyn Business Improvement District and made 844 trail improvements. Doing all this stuff takes a little more than shoving a few hand shovels in the backpack and riding down to the spot though, so they incorporated the "Vern the Tern GSD and Carla Cargo bike trailer." It's like the 18-wheeler of the bike world. Tern is a brand of electric bikes and GSD stands for "Get Stuff Done."

"The GSD will haul shopping, cargo, two toddlers in rear child-seats, two bigger children, six conventional panniers or a mixture of these things," the website says. Also it will pull a trailer.

All of the Friends materials are purchased with contributions. To contribute, go to <https://mount-vernontail.org/>

Surely passing a bike (Tern GSD) on the path that's towing "Carla Cargo bike trailer," is going to turn many heads because this is something new to the bike world in Mount Vernon. Sometimes a backpack just won't cut it anymore. This bike trailer apparatus is straight out of Europe where bike commuting and errand-running is more prevalent. To start off with, the Tern bikes have a back "deck," for hauling stuff that can be folded out in a "doublewide," configuration for groceries, tools and more.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

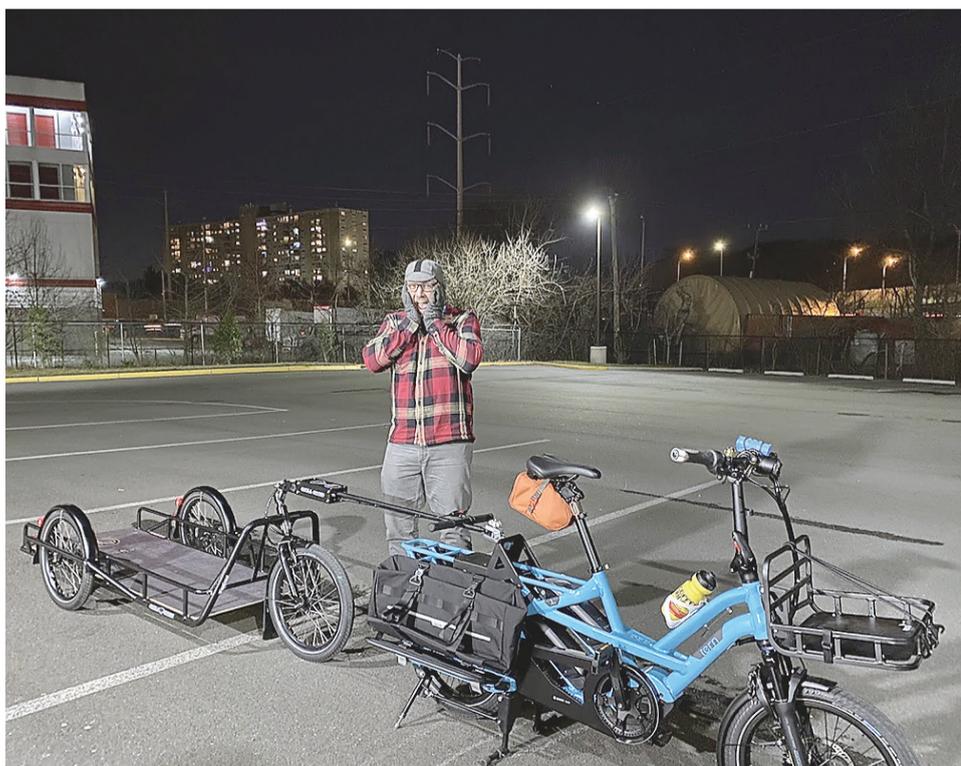
### Words of encouragement for the Friends group.

Then add the trailer, like one of the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail has and the possibilities for "cargo-carrying solutions," increase. In Alexandria, Tern bikes and equip-

ment are available at Conte's Bike Shop on the corner of King and Henry Streets.

"Most people get these to carry, or be prepared to carry, more than what

your average backpack will support comfortably while cycling," said Conte manager Raven Vickers. Apparently that is the case with the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail trailer.



One of the trail volunteers is heading out with "Vern the Tern GSD and Carla Cargo bike trailer," which is the "18-wheeler," of the bike world.



For the efforts on Martin Luther King Day of Service, the bike trailer was needed big time.

## Reporting From Richmond

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

**H**ello from cold and icy Richmond! I hope you all are staying safe and warm back in the district, and I have enjoyed seeing all of the photos of the beautiful snowfall in Mount Vernon.

As I write this column this morning, I have already chaired my first meeting of the Campaign Finance subcommittee of Privileges & Elections bright and early at 7 a.m., and I presented my first bill of the session in a 7:30 a.m. Agriculture subcommittee meeting which passed unanimously. This bill directs the Department of Energy to produce a report that quantifies the potential benefits of using solar energy for residential, commercial, and government building rooftops, parking lots, and brownfields across the Commonwealth. Having reliable and current data on Virginia will help us to understand solar's full potential. Its next stop will be the full committee.

Indeed, this week is one of the busiest of the legislative session, as we work with constituents, stakeholders, state agency staff, and our fellow legislators to finalize and perfect bill language ahead of the "non-pre-filed" bill introduction deadline this upcoming Friday. House members can introduce a maximum of five non-pre-filed bills. Our earlier deadline last Wednesday was for "pre-filed" bills of which House members had no limit. We also had a critical budget amendment deadline last Friday, when General Assembly members must submit all of their requests for funding amendments to Governor Youngkin's proposed budget. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I had dozens of requests brought to me on diverse matters impacting the Commonwealth.

As I mentioned in my newsletter last week, I am honored to have the opportunity to once again serve



Krizek

in the majority in the House of Delegates, and to continue our work on issues that are not just important to my constituents but to all Virginians, including empowering workers, protecting voting rights, public safety, public education funding, affordable housing, protecting our mobile home park residents, funding for transportation including METRO, non-discrimination protections, preserving the environment, and so much more.

As a member of the majority party, I now have many more responsibilities, just as the age-old adage says. I once again was appointed to serve as the Chair of the Transportation and Public Safety subcommittee on Appropriations, and the ABC and Gaming subcommittee of the General Laws Committee.

New for this year, I have an additional third subcommittee chairmanship for the Campaign Finance

subcommittee of Privileges and Elections. In addition to serving on Appropriations, General Laws, and Privileges and Elections, I now serve as a member of Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources (ACNR). This will be my first session serving on ACNR, and I look forward to the opportunity to have a bigger voice on environmental issues that face our Commonwealth, and especially our community. I also serve on a number of subcommittees within these four committees. In total, I will serve on four standing committees, chair three subcommittees, and serve on seven subcommittees, which is the most I have sat on to date during my four terms.

Between these important committee meetings and preparing to present my 24 pieces of legislation, my staff and I take dozens of meetings daily with constituents as well as stakeholders and advocates to learn more about other bills introduced by my colleagues.

It will certainly be a very busy session!

## Expanded Virginia Gambling to be Considered by General Assembly

BY SENATOR ADAM P. EBBIN

**V**irginia's legal gaming landscape has shifted rapidly over the past five years. In decades past, legal gambling was limited to the Virginia Lottery, authorized in the early 1990s through a statewide referendum. Prior to five years ago, the only other legal form of wagering in Virginia was charitable bingo and "pull-tab" machines. Charitable gaming provides a sizable portion of funding for many of Virginia's nonprofit organizations, and is regulated by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

However, in 2018, Virginia expanded gaming when the General Assembly legalized wagering on "Historical Horse Racing" (HHR) machines at the Colonial Downs racetrack in New Kent County and six other sites, including the Town of Dumfries in Northern Virginia. The satellite locations required local approval though a local referendum before they could move forward. The HHR machines are overseen by the Virginia Racing Commission.

In 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation that autho-

rized gambling on most professional sporting events, overseen by the Virginia Lottery. Sports betting is available online, on a cell phone, or at a Virginia-based casino and other certain locations.

In addition, the General Assembly - in 2020 - legalized casino gaming (overseen by the Virginia Lottery) at up to five locations pending approval in a local referendum. They include Portsmouth, Bristol, Norfolk, Danville, and Richmond. Since 2020, four of those cities have passed the required referendum and opened a casino. However, Richmond voters defeated a referendum to approve a casino two times in a span of three years.

Three of the major gaming issues in 2024 are the potential legalization of "gray machines" (or "skill games"), the possible addition of casinos in Northern Virginia and Petersburg, and the legalization of slot machine-like Video Gaming Terminals (VGTs) in restaurants around the state.

As I wrote in the Richmond Times-Dispatch this past fall, I



Sen. Adam Ebbin

am not a fan of gray machines, primarily because they are often encountered in non-traditional gaming environments, like convenience stores where families might shop for everyday items, or restaurants. This contrasts with destination-oriented gaming sites like a casino, where a consumer has

made a conscious decision to seek out gambling. For several years, the machines operated in a "gray area" that was not explicitly legal.

In my opinion, gray machines don't serve the consumer interests of Virginia's gambling public. Unfortunately, as of this writing, the bill to legalize gray machines does not contain a system that the Commonwealth could verify or audit to ensure that the Department of Tax-

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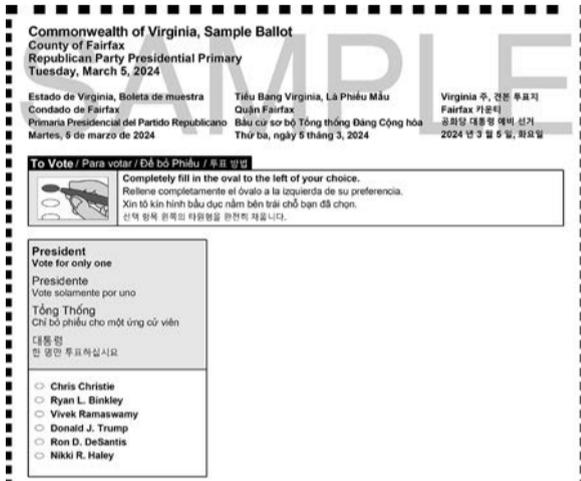
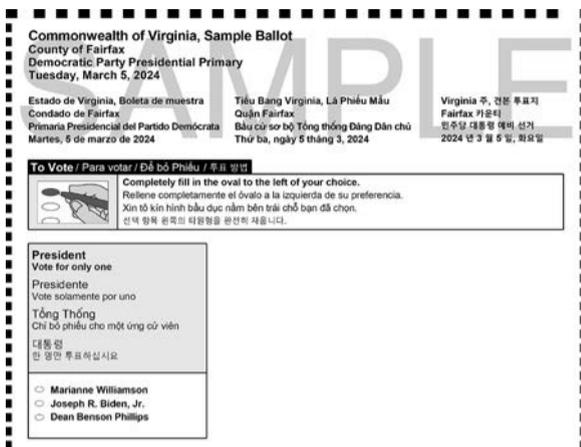
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## Are You Ready for This?

### Early voting for U.S. Presidential primary begins Friday, Jan. 19 in Fairfax County.

Early voting begins Friday, Jan. 19, for the March 5 presidential primary election.

There are separate primaries for the Republican and Democratic candidates for president. In Virginia, voters do not register by political party, but a voter may only cast a ballot in one of the presidential primary elections.

Three locations will be open for early voting on weekdays:

- ❖ Fairfax County Government Center: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ❖ Mount Vernon Governmental Center: 1 to 7 p.m.
- ❖ North County Governmental Center: 1 to 7 p.m.

These voting locations will be closed for the George Washington Day holiday on Monday, Feb. 19.

Before going to vote, double check the hours early voting sites are open because times vary by location.

Any registered voter can cast their ballot at any early voting site. The last day to vote early is Saturday, March 2, at 5 p.m. Weekend voting will be offered at every early voting sites on two Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Saturday, Feb. 24

and Saturday, March 2

An additional 13 early voting locations will be available beginning Saturday, Feb. 24. Weekday voting hours at these locations will be from 1 to 7 p.m.

- ❖ Burke Centre Library
- ❖ Centreville Regional Library
- ❖ Franconia Governmental Center
- ❖ Great Falls Library
- ❖ Herndon-Fortnightly Library
- ❖ Jim Scott Community Center
- ❖ Lorton Community Center
- ❖ Mason Governmental Center
- ❖ McLean Governmental Center
- ❖ Sully Governmental Center
- ❖ Thomas Jefferson Library
- ❖ Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library
- ❖ West Springfield Governmental Center

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 5. If you want to vote on that day, you will need to vote at your regularly assigned polling place.

Voters must show identification wherever they vote. You may use as ID a copy of your: current utility bill; bank statement; government check; paycheck; other government document with the voter's name and address. Photo IDs remain an acceptable form of identification — and you can even use an expired Virginia driver's license no matter how long ago it expired.



## 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
FRANKLIN	7964	757	SKILLET RD /RTE 757	STORY CREEK	12/29/2023
FRANKLIN	7858	635	EDWARDSVILLE RD /RTE 635	LYNVILLE CREEK	12/19/2023
ALBEMARLE	712	641	BURNLEY STATION RD	BURNLEY BRANCH	12/6/2023

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](mailto: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.*

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Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Jillian Latham, 12, of Fairfax Station, and Kendall Anderson, 15, of Fairfax, work on the gooey pinecone birdfeeders that will help support birds through the winter at Hidden Oaks Nature Center.



From left, Will Russell, 6, of Burke; Raylan Weeks, 7, of Springfield; and Harper Reid, 10, of Alexandria, have mastered the art of no-sew blankets for veterans. Volunteers made 60 blankets for Capital Caring Health to distribute to veterans in hospice care.

# Volunteer Fairfax Mobilizes Hundreds for

## Weekend of Service 2024 benefits those in need and bolsters volunteerism.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Since 1974, Volunteer Fairfax has been amplifying community impact by connecting and mobilizing people and resources to build capacity for stronger communities.

During the first of its two annual 2024 region-wide days of service, the MLK Weekend of Service, the nonprofit sought to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a "beloved community." Through volunteerism, projects aimed to empower individuals, build bridges of understanding, and address social problems. Working with the Fairfax County government and other stakeholders, Volunteer Fairfax intentionally considers inclusion, equity, and diversity in delivering community programs and services.

Volunteer Fairfax began with a Community Conversation on Racial Equity via Zoom on Wednesday, Jan. 10. Natasha A. Harrison moderated the discussion, titled "So You Think You Know Racial Equity: Practices and Competencies to Build Stamina and Strength." Volunteer Fairfax spokesperson Tammy Deem said they will post the recorded webinar online after editing it.

Teen helper Nico Torres-Padilla, 17, of Fort Belvoir, makes power packs for Food for Others. Volunteers put together 500 power packs of food to distribute.

On Jan. 15, Volunteer Fairfax convened a "Give Together." The massive program brought together children, teenagers and college-aged students from across the county to participate in service projects.

"We had over 700 volunteers registered for the day's event who [each] contributed approximately seven hours of service that supported 13 agencies," Deem said.

The activities aided the organization's mission and promoted the National Day of Service as a "day on, not a day off." Families, even those with very young children, took part, and some teen and college-aged volunteers helped the younger children finish the projects. They addressed food insecurity, elder care, emergency response, environmental stewardship and animal welfare concerns.

Volunteer Fairfax collaborated with the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Response, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, Capital Caring Health, Kids Give Back, Computer Core, the Pozez Jewish Community Center, and the Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

Deem said, "Today's Give Together event helps our teens and youth learn the importance of volunteerism and civic engagement, contributing to their ability to become engaged members of their community."

To volunteer or donate with Volunteer Fairfax, go to <https://www.cfp-dc.org/nonprofits/1442/Volunteer-Fairfax/>.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX

Twenty-seven college-aged volunteers assisted with Volunteer Fairfax's Give Together event and represented ten countries.



Eva Coleman, 2, of Arlington, and Elijah Coleman, 8, of Arlington, create treat bags to go home with adopted animals at Fairfax County Animal Shelters. Other children helped with the treat bags, small blankets and snuffle mats for pets at Fairfax County Animal Shelters.



# National Day of Racial Healing

Jan. 16 is the day in Fairfax County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

Racial healing is central to racial equity. This year marks the 8th annual National Day of Racial Healing.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation at the Northern Virginia Community College Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center in Annandale on Friday, Jan. 12, proclaiming Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024, National Day of Racial Healing in the county.

Jeff McKay, chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Dalia Palchik, supervisor of Providence District, signed the proclamation on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and all county residents.

The National Day of Racial Healing is part of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Truth, Racial Healing Transformation (TRHT) efforts. According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, "The effects of racism are evident everywhere: in the places where we live, learn, work and play, in our social interactions and in our systems and policies. People experience these effects when they take their children to school, apply for jobs, rent or buy a home, visit a doctor, try to access healthy food, in interactions with the police, and more."

The proclamation is consistent with the county's One Fairfax Policy commitment to advancing racial and social equity.

Reached for comment, McKay said, "We are proud to live in a community that understands the impacts of racism linger and that we can always do better." He emphasized that one of Fairfax County's most significant strengths "is our cultural diversity and the empa-



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fairfax County Supervisor Dalia Palchik (D-Providence) (in red jacket) presents the proclamation declaring National Day of Healing in Fairfax County as Jeff McKay (D-At Large), chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, stands behind her.

thy we share for one another."

Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services partnered with the Northern Virginia Community College TRHT Campus Center to collectively impact the racial healing and trust-building needed to achieve transformational changes in policy and practices in Fairfax County, according to the proclamation.

Palchik said in an email that she and her colleagues on the board and their counterparts on the school board and county staff witness and deal with the impacts of inequities every day. "NOVA is one of the most diverse campuses in the country and thus is a great place to commemorate these efforts and celebrate those individuals here who make a difference," Palchik wrote.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities designated Northern Virginia Community College as a Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Center in 2021. NOVA is one of 71 named colleges and universities.

For more information about NOVA's efforts around the TRHT initiative, contact Dr. Sherrene DeLong in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at sdelong@nvcc.edu.

## Bus Improvements

FROM PAGE 1

Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and at Sacramento Drive in phase 1 and

at Radford Avenue, Russell Road and Mount Vernon Highway in Phase II of VDOT's widening project.

In addition to those two intersection improvements, there are a few more that are in the funding process. In the December 2023 MVCCA newsletter "The Record," there was some information about the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approving funding for three projects to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the Mount Vernon District. Those projects included:

- ❖ \$500,000 committed to widen pavement and add a bike lane on Fort Hunt Road from Belle Haven Country Club to Woodmont Road and create a bicycle lane connection from Richmond Highway to Belle View Boulevard.

- ❖ \$100,000 to upgrade crosswalk with rectangular rapid flashing beacon on Fort Hunt Road and Westgrove Boulevard at Rollins Drive

- ❖ \$420,000 to add a missing signalized crosswalk on the west leg on Huntington Avenue and Fenwick



The One bus for Richmond Highway.

Drive.

In addition, a few bus stop improvements were listed under "Transportation Projects," on the Fairfax County website. On the eastbound side of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway at Old Mount Vernon Road; crews installed loading pad, sidewalk, curb/gutter/handicap ramps along with drainage and grading work. Another improvement was made at Pole Road at Orville Street where they installed a loading pad and some drainage improvements.

Other improvements are in the design stage. This includes bus shelters at Richmond Highway at Woodlawn Trail and another at Rolling Road at Edinburgh Drive in the southern Springfield area. Construction is under way on a bus shelter at Arlington Drive and Richmond Highway where they are putting in a bench, sidewalk along with grading and a bus shelter.

Sites are being surveyed for bus stops at Huntington Avenue at Hunting Creek Road and another stop at Sherwood Hall Lane at Richmond Highway. At all these construction and future construction sites, drivers may experience lane closures but not major delays.

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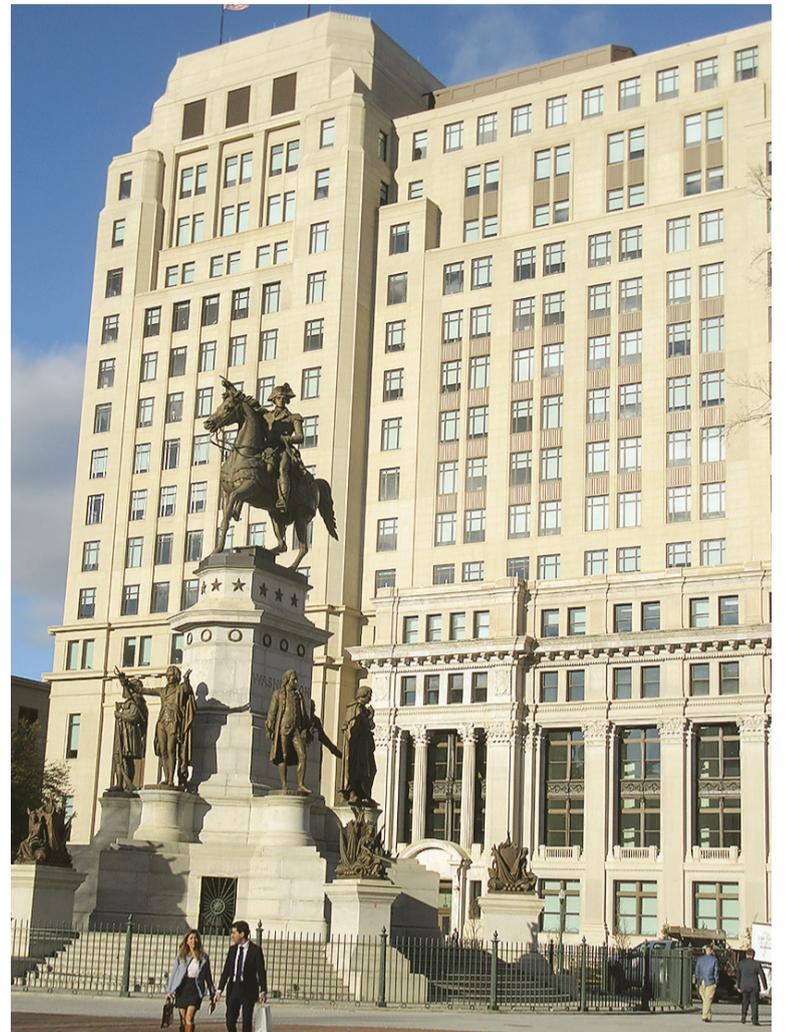
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# ROLL CALL

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



All the state legislators, including these senators, were sworn in and signed an oath of office.



Virginia's legislators have offices in a newly remodeled building. General George Washington is still prominent in Capitol Square.

## General Assembly Convenes

The 2024 session of the Virginia General Assembly began on Jan. 10. Here, photographer Glenda Booth of Mount Vernon gives a snapshot of the day, mostly in the Virginia Senate, state Capitol, Richmond.

The General Assembly meets annually, beginning on the second Wednesday in January, for 60 days in even-numbered years and for 30 days in odd-numbered years, with an option to extend annual sessions for a maximum of 30 days. The Senate of Virginia and the Virginia House of Delegates, both bodies of the Virginia Legislature, meet in the historic, working Capitol building in Richmond, Virginia. Representatives will consider thousands of pieces of proposed legislation during the session.

<https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/>



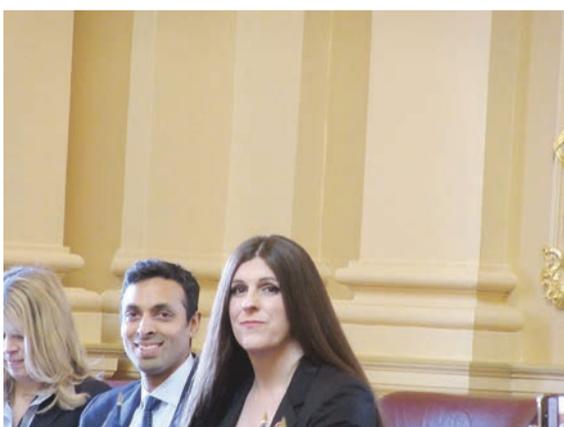
Alexandria Delegate and House of Delegates Majority Leader Charniele Herring came to the Senate and announced that the House of Delegates had officially organized and was ready to begin work.



Senator Scott Surovell, elected by his colleagues to be the Senator Majority Leader, was sworn in. Surovell represents Mount Vernon in Senate District 34.



Lt. Governor Winsome Sears is the presiding officer of the Senate.



For new Northern Virginia Senators Suhas Subramanyam and Danica Roem, January 10 was their first day of official business in the Senate chamber.



All 40 senators answered the roll call.



The media had a strong presence, here filming from the Senate gallery.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU FEB. 11

**“The Who’s Tommy.”** At Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-3 Theater, Lorton. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. If you already know The Who’s remarkable rock opera, then you’ll be singing along. If you don’t, then you’re in for a real treat! This spirited stage production offers some startling, fascinating variations from the movie, so if you think you know Tommy...come see what’s new!

## WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

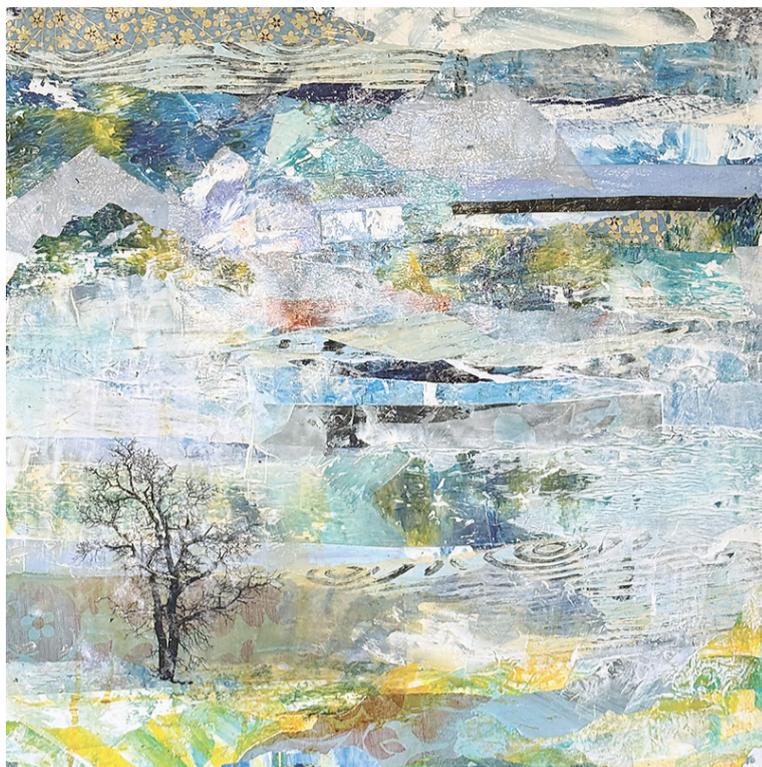
**Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria’s Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits 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/>

## JAN. 5-27, 2024

**“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). [DelRay-Artisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRay-Artisans.org/exhibits)

## JAN. 11 TO FEB. 18

**A Delicate Balance Sculpture.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Curated by Jackie Hoysted and produced by Veronica Szalus, A Delicate Balance is an all-sculpture show that explores the idea of achieving equilibrium. Perhaps more than ever, today we have a greater awareness of how everything operates in such a delicate balance - be it ecosystems, politics, relationships or personal well-being. We must navigate life without tipping too much in one direction so that we can strive for harmony, but at



**Visions of Resilience: Art for Climate Justice can be seen at Del Ray Artisans Jan. 5-27, 2024.**

times something radical is required to achieve it.

## JAN. 19-28

**Alexandria Restaurant Week.** For 10 days and two weekends, more than 70 restaurants in Alexandria will offer a \$30, \$40 or \$50 in-person dinner for one during Alexandria Restaurant Week, January 19 to 28, 2024. Special menus are available in-person at participating restaurants throughout Alexandria’s neighborhoods, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle, Eisenhower and the West End. The revised three-tiered pricing structure reflects feedback from Alexandria Restaurant Week participants following the 2023 summer promotion.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 21

**January Sound Bath - Clarity.** 4-5:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Art of Movement Building 11, Lorton. If you haven’t tried one of the monthly Sound Baths, you owe it to yourself to check out this super cool way to relax and rejuvenate! Each Sound Bath is uniquely created with a selection of instruments that could include steel drums, Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, bells, harps and other out-of-the-ordi-

nary instruments. January’s Sound Bath is about liberating clarity by alleviating the mind of interfering “noise.”

## SATURDAY/FEB. 3, 2024

**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.

## FRIDAY/FEB. 9

**The Thirteen Presents “Path of Miracles.”** 7:30 p.m. At St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Road, Alexandria. In Path of Miracles, British composer Joby Talbot takes the listener on a musical journey on the mystical Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The contemplative progression of the Camino is built into the structure



**Alexandria Restaurant Week is Jan. 19 to 28, 2024 at restaurants in Alexandria.**

of the work, with the four movements of the work titled after the four main posts along the Camino. Talbot incorporates various medieval texts in many languages and musical styles as diverse as those of Taiwanese Bunun people and medieval chant. Paired with projected images of the cosmos by renowned Italian virtual designer Camilla Tassi, The Thirteen’s performances of Path of Miracles promise to be replete with beauty and wonder.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**37th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting.** At Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road. Times: 7:45 a.m. to 9:25 a.m. - Exhibit Hall Open; 9:30 a.m. to noon - Program: Speakers, Audience Q&A and Virtual Tour; Noon to 1:30 p.m. - Taste of Mount Vernon.

## FEB. 10-11

**Alexandria Symphony Announces ASO at 80 Project**  
Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center;  
Sunday, February 11, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial.  
Four original pieces, commissioned in honor of the 80th anniversary of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO), will be presented as part of the ASO at 80 Project. Led by Music Director James Ross, the commissions will premiere throughout the 2023-2024 season as introductions to four of the five performances.  
On February 10 and 11, 2024, the program entitled “Do Not Go Gentle”

opens with Milad Yousufi’s Aurora, drawn from his experience as an Afghan refugee and inspired by a poem dedicated to his mother. His works express both his pride in his country of birth and his longing to return. Visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.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](http://Ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).

## JANUARY

Wed. 17: ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE: An All-Star Band Celebrates THE BEATLES 60th Anniversary in America, featuring Kasim Sulton, Steve Kimock, Prairie Prince, Gil Assayas, Bobby Lee Rodgers, Mark Rashotte, Andy Forgie, with narration by Michael Des Barres \$64.00  
Fri. 19: Newmyer Flyer Presents LAUREL CANYON: Golden Songs of Los Angeles 1966-72 \$35.00  
Sat. 20: Lyfe Jennings \$75.00  
Wed. 24: Herman’s Hermits starring Peter Noone \$55.00  
Fri. 26: Who’s Bad – The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50  
Sat. 27: Dar Williams with The Nields \$45.00 SOLD OUT!  
Sun. 28: Forever Tina – A Tribute to the Queen of Rock N’ Roll \$39.50  
FEBRUARY  
Fri. 2: Will Downing \$79.50  
Sat. 3: Will Downing \$79.50 SOLD OUT!  
Tue. 6: Rosanne Cash: ReInventing The Wheel 1993-2023 with John Leventhal and Band \$79.50  
Wed. 7: Rosanne Cash: ReInventing The Wheel 1993-2023 with John Leventhal and Band \$79.50

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## Winter Weather Precautions for People with Dementia

**W**inter weather conditions — colder temperatures, snow, ice and early darkness — can be dangerous and even life-threatening for 150,000 people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia in Virginia. For their 354,000 caregivers, the stress and challenges to keep their loved ones safe during this time can be overwhelming. By preparing in advance, caregivers can make a big difference in keeping their loved one with safe.

"People living with Alzheimer's and other dementia can be vulnerable during winter weather because their judgment may be impaired and they may be unable to communicate discomfort," said Cindy Schelhorn, senior communications director with the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. "It's really important to take extra precautions with these individuals when there is severe winter weather or other excessive weather conditions like snow or ice."

- ❖ Be prepared. Check weather conditions regularly and have emergency plans in place.

- ❖ Bundle up. Help the person living with Alzheimer's dress warmly for winter weather conditions by wearing dry, loose-fitting layers and covering exposed skin.

- ❖ Prevent slips. Balance and mobility can be a challenge for a person living with Alzheimer's or dementia. Assume all surfaces are slick; assist the person by taking smaller steps and slowing down.

- ❖ Take advantage of the daylight. Winter months bring decreased sunlight and shorter days. Visual perception can be a challenge for those living with Alzheimer's or other dementias, and can cause increased confusion or disorientation in dark or shadowy environments both inside and out.

- ❖ Prevent wandering. Wandering is one of the most frequent and challenging problems that caregivers face and can be extremely dangerous in colder conditions. Shorter days during winter months can also increase the risk of "sundowning." Monitor closely for agitation or restlessness as day transitions into night. Tips to combat sundowning: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/sleep-issues-sundowning>

- ❖ Buddy up. An Alzheimer's Association survey says a whopping 84 percent of caregivers said they would like more support in providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, especially from their family. It can be hard for caregivers to find time to complete simple tasks outside of the home. Don't hesitate to ask others for help with errands, grocery shopping or with snow/ice removal.

More safety tips can be found by visiting the Alzheimer's Association website at [alz.org/safety](http://alz.org/safety). The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline also provides free reliable information and support to all those who need assistance. Call the Helpline toll-free anytime at 800-272-3900.

# BULLETIN BOARD

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

## 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](mailto:fcsvanow@gmail.com) or [www.FCSVA.org](http://www.FCSVA.org). Or call 703-817-9890.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**STEM VOLUNTEERS.** The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) needs scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians to assist K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) teachers in the Northern Virginia Area, during the 2016-17 school year. In the 2015-16 school year, the numbers of STEM volunteers in Northern Virginia were: Fairfax County - 40, Arlington - 20, and Alexandria - one. Details of the collaboration are worked out between the teacher and the volunteer, and may involve giving demonstrations, assisting in lab experiments, lecturing on special topics, assisting with homework, etc. The hours are flexible, and volunteers attend a one-day training in September before being assigned to schools. To see how volunteers are assisting their teachers, view the video clips at [www.seniorscientist.org](http://www.seniorscientist.org). To volunteer, contact [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

**Assistance League of Northern Virginia** is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

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

**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](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov)) at 703-324-4547.

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

**RSVP**, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

**Line Dance Instructor** needed for the Gum Springs Senior Program once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Volunteer Solutions, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711.

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

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

**Yoga Teachers** are needed. Help improve a person's well-being by teaching yoga classes to adults who are staying in a residential facility. The day/time is flexible, but would be during the week. Prior yoga instruction is required. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/viva/volunteers.htm) for more.

**The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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

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

**The Gum Springs Senior Program** in Alexandria is looking for a Line Dance Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Kingstowne Center for Active Adults** in Alexandria needs Instructors for the following classes: Country-Western Line Dance, Hula Hoop and African Style Dance. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Hollin Hall Senior Center** in Alexandria needs instructors for the following classes: Basic Woodworking, Italian and Ballroom Dance. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Mount Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center** in Alexandria needs front desk volunteers and patient Card Players. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

**The Advisory Board of the Joe and Fredona Gartlan Center** for mental health is looking for volunteers. The board meets the second Tuesday of the month from 9-11 a.m. at Gartlan Center 8119 Holland Road.

**Mount Vernon At Home** is a community Village, providing support, services, and community to seniors in the area. Volunteers are needed for a variety of services, with transportation to medical appointments are greatest need. They can also use help with in-home handyman work and handling IT problems. If you are interested in volunteering, contact us at [info@mountvernonathome.org](mailto:info@mountvernonathome.org) or call 703-303-4060.

## Nothing Much to Say



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Given that it's Mon., Jan. 1st and the Connection is in the middle of a two-week hiatus from publishing, I am nonetheless attempting to write a relatively time-sensitive column ahead of its Jan. 17th publication date, as a column for Jan. 10 has previously been submitted. Which as you regular readers know is part of what I try to do weekly, so you all are current, to the degree my "currency" matters that is. And writing something current on Jan. 1st for publication on Jan. 17th is hardly likely to be current.

Moreover, considering the 24/7 news cycle, especially as it relates to cancer patients, two-plus weeks is an eternity and is the very definition of stale. Yet here I sit, pen in hand, trying to write something that will still be fresh - and interesting, in 16 days or so. Here goes:

For the moment (more like two weeks going on three; not sure if the end is in sight), I am off my cancer medicine. Unfortunately, for the wrong reasons: side effects negatively impacting a major organ. I have always feared that my cancer treatment might have to be adjusted/stopped because the side effects were causing other problems. (I saw this happen to my mother-in-law as she finally succumbed to the cancer in her liver.) My other problems have mostly involved my kidneys. Problems caused by the introduction of chemotherapy (an extremely harsh chemical at its worst) into my body. A treatment which while effective at killing cancer cells, is also killing other cells, and as it happens, is filtered through the kidneys as it exits the body. Chemotherapy (not all), but the ones selected for my lung cancer, are hard on the kidneys. Aside from many of the side effects with which most people are familiar: hair loss, fatigue, loss of appetite, to name a few, the less obvious - to the naked eye/casual observer, is what the chemotherapy is doing internally to the patient's major organs. And for the doctor to keep tabs on these effects, regular lab work is required. And it's this lab work which tells the tale initially about your internal affairs. Affairs which might not manifest in any tangible way. The way you find out is the doctor tells you. My tale has been mostly about my creatinine level, a measure of kidney function. Recently my potassium level likewise rang the bell, so its measure has now become as important as my creatinine, and 'important' meaning, how it adversely affects other organs.

So much so that a nephrologist is now on the team (and part of my lab work includes orders from her). I'm grateful for the attention but fearful of the consequences. Consequences which don't likely bode well. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Nevertheless, I am now entering uncharted territory: a cancer patient who, due to complications/side effects of the medicine used to treat the cancer tumors, is no longer on that or any other anti-cancer medication - for the first time in 14-plus years (and not because I'm in remission; conversely, I may be in trouble though). But since my next lab work is not for another week (Jan. 8), but I know now (actually don't know) is as current as the subject matter is going to be. Therefore, in my mind, this waiting period/period of relative inactivity means that all the medical news - about me, that's fit to print, is mostly what I've written about today. There will be nothing new until Jan. 9-ish (too late for the Jan. 10 edition), so the update will have to wait until Jan. 17th. And therein lies my writing dilemma: what can I write about now that won't be old news when it ultimately appears in print? Not that I'm going to be penalized for submitting material that on the day it's made public might be mostly irrelevant, it's more that it might be a waste of your time to read it. But given the timing/timetable, I can only try to write an inevitable wrong by advising you all of the facts when I knew them - weeks ahead of when this column is printed, and let the chips fall where they may.

Chips which very well may change the course of my history. A history which semi baffles the medical professionals entrusted with my care. In short, I've lived longer that originally "prognosed," and my body (including those pesky 'major' organs) have endured the rigors of chemotherapy well. Until now, that might be. And now I may have crossed the Rubicon. The party, such as it's been, may be over. Granted this is all preliminary and simply the musings of a cancer patient dealing with the little information being in the wrong hands: mine, but with nothing to know/learn for two weeks, all I can do is "muse" - and try not to make myself miserable in the interim. Perhaps there's a plan "B" and only time, as they say, will determine whether the content of this column is simply a moment in time, or whether it's a turning point that will change my future/present when all the medical data is reviewed. If you're interested, as Rachel Maddow says: "Watch this space."

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

# Expanded Virginia Gambling to be Considered by General Assembly

FROM PAGE 4

ation and the small business owners where the machines are located get their fair share of the proceeds. I am also concerned that some proposals to legalize gray machines do not contain protections to dissuade wagering by underage Virginians.

I also expect that bills to establish casinos in the Tysons area of Northern Virginia, along with a conference center, and in the City of Petersburg, will generate much attention. As Chairman of the General Laws and Technology Committee, I have appointed a Gaming Subcommittee so that the numerous, and complex gambling bills can be compared and considered, with the exception of one bill that was considered by the Commerce and Labor Committee.

I also serve on the Joint Subcommittee to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Virginia Gaming Commission to provide a more unified governance of the various forms of

gambling in Virginia. As described above, the current landscape for Virginia gaming involves the Virginia Racing Commission, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Virginia Lottery. I believe that one single entity overseeing what is now a regulatory patchwork would better serve the public.

## 39th Senate District Town Hall - Sunday, Jan. 21

This Sunday, Jan. 21, from 1 pm to 3 pm, at Alexandria City High School, please join me and Delegates Charniele Herring, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Alfonso Lopez, and Adele McClure for a 39th Senate District Town Hall. The event will be moderated by Virginia public radio reporter Michael Lee Pope, who will pose questions pre-submitted online or at the event. If you would like to RSVP, or pre-submit a question, visit [www.adamebbin.com/townhallrsvp](http://www.adamebbin.com/townhallrsvp)

## Stay in the Know

You can stay on top of General Assembly events through the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) website. On that site, you can find many helpful links, including:

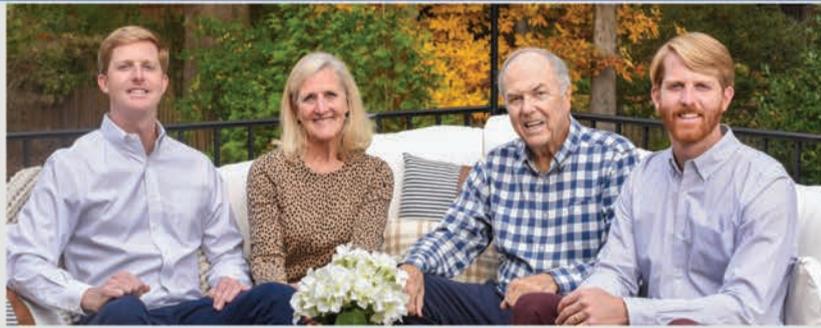
All legislation introduced, including the bills that I am putting forward;

You can find listings of all members of the General Assembly, as well as the committees that hear legislation, and the regularly-updated meetings calendar that lists when committee meetings and other events are taking place;

You can find a live feed of the State Senate, and any meetings of Senate committees here, as well as archived footage of recent State Senate hearings and floor proceedings.

My new legislative email address is [SenatorEbbin@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:SenatorEbbin@senate.virginia.gov). You can also reach us at our new Richmond phone number 804-698-7539.

It is my continued honor to represent the people of the 39th Senate District.



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