

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 23, 2024



PHOTO BY ROBERT SMITH

George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent Charles Cuvelier hosted a ribbon cutting on May 19 for the bridge across Dyke Marsh on the Mount Vernon Trail, a bridge that replaces one that was nearing the end of its useful life. Glenda Booth, Supervisor Dan Storck (in yellow with bike helmet) and U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (in blue shirt) joined in.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

The group, led by Superintendent Charles Cuvelier and Congressman Don Beyer walked from the Marina Road to the bridge.

## Bridge 23 Reopens on the Mount Vernon Trail

**D**uring a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 19, the National Park Service (NPS) officially reopened Bridge 23 on the Mount Vernon Trail, located within the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. Cyclists and pedestrians can now safely use the newly reconstructed bridge, which was damaged from prior floods.

Overlooking the wetland and out to the Potomac River, the 1,070-foot-long bridge is a popular site for studying marsh life like wetland plants, birds, dragonflies and other wildlife in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

Construction for Bridge 23 began in the summer of 2023, following the completion of neighboring Bridge 24. The NPS worked closely with community partners throughout the design and construction phases. The NPS replaced and widened Bridge 23, added new pedestrian safe handrails and an updated bench and overlook.

The National Park Service closed one of the northbound lanes on the south GW Memorial Parkway for a year during construction to divert the Mount Vernon Trail onto the road and replace the bridge. This caused some backups on the Parkway most weekdays. NPS officials say that these barriers will be removed in the coming weeks.

The bridge was constructed using an innovative method to minimize the footprint of the project and to prevent harm to the underlying marsh ecosystem. Each bridge section was built individually, with construction equipment on top of the previously installed sections. To eliminate the need for construction equipment to drive over the marsh, new sections were then added from the top of the bridge, bypassing the standard approach of building up from the bottom.

The project was partially funded through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure  
SEE BRIDGE REOPENING, PAGE 11



Bikers and walkers began to use newly-opened Bridge 23 immediately.



The National Park Service closed one of the northbound lanes on the south GW Memorial Parkway for a year during construction to divert the Mount Vernon Trail onto the road and replace the bridge. NPS officials say that these barriers will be removed in the coming weeks.



Robert Smith with the Friends of Dyke Marsh explained to U.S. Rep. Don Beyer that FODM has treated 18 pumpkin ash trees in the marsh that are at risk because of the invasive emerald ash borer. The treatments appear to be succeeding.



Superintendent Charles Cuvelier gave the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail president Judd Isbell, an award for their volunteer efforts.



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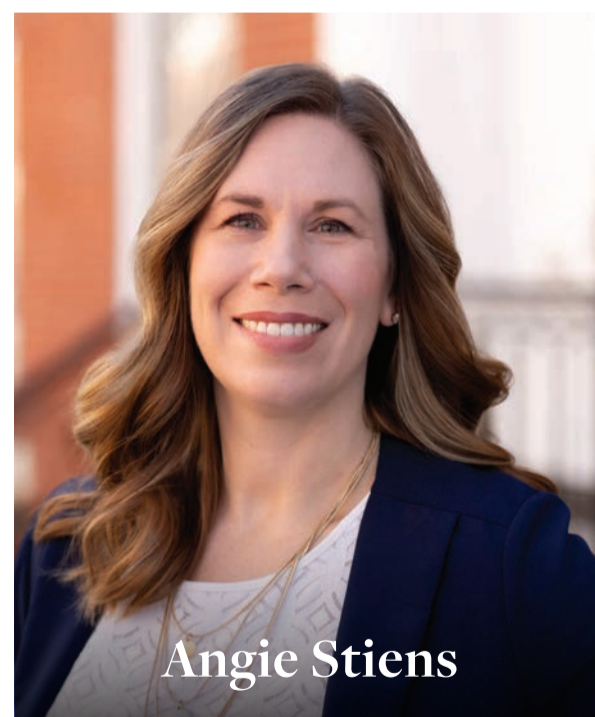
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# NEWS



At the Mount Vernon pit stop, Zach Desjardins, FCDOT Active Transportation Planner and Peyton Smith greeted cyclists all morning.



Riders gather at the pit stop at the John Carlyle building where many of the riders went up to their offices.

## Bike To Work Day in Mount Vernon Takes a Few Cars off the Road

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

As the Memorial Day weekend creeps closer, area bicyclists participated in another Bike To Work Day on Friday, May 17 to get some early morning cardio in and cut tailpipe exhaust at the same time. Workers from all over the area got up super early, jumped on their bicycles, and demonstrated that this car-free way to commute does work, at least one day a year.

This year, Fairfax County had 27 different pit stops for bicyclists. Additionally, Commuter Connections, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and other local governments hosted dozens more throughout the National Capital Region.

In Mount Vernon, cyclists have the Mount Vernon Bike Trail as the main route many take, and from

there they sometimes show up at the pit stop at Market Square in Old Town, Alexandria. Hamzat Sani, the City of Alexandria's transportation specialist, was on hand that morning welcoming about 125 bicyclists.

Bicycling has been a focus at Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck's office and he's pushed to have the bicycling facilities improved in several places around the Mount Vernon District. This includes a new bike trail bridge over Dogue Creek and trails in the Richmond Highway corridor. On Bike To Work Day, Peyton Smith, the Transportation, Parks and Housing Aide at Mount Vernon, biked to work and Supervisor Storck's office co-hosted the Sherwood Hall Regional Library pit stop with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. They had about 30 participants stop throughout the morning.



The pit stop at the John Carlyle building in Alexandria attracted many riders.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

# Idle Church Comes Down in Fort Hunt

Site will soon be the home of Collingwood Chase development.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

The old Christian Science Church at 1509 Collingwood Road in Fort Hunt closed years ago, and sat empty until recently. Now bulldozers are reworking this site into the community of Collingwood Chase, a seven-lot subdivision.

"It came down fast," said John Neer, a longtime resident who lives right down the street.

When it was a church, it was one of those places that just became part of the landscape to Neer but now it's part of the change that's happening all around Mount Vernon. On the Fairfax County General Parcel Report, this site is listed as not in a commercial revitalization district, but go west about two miles and Supervisor Dan Storck's "Embark Richmond Highway," is coming together.

This plot of land is three acres,

zoned R-3 and it is assessed at \$1,572,960, according to tax records. There are plans to build seven houses on the three-acre plot. To Neer, it looks a little smaller from the street. "They can squeeze maybe three or four houses in there," he said.

The new owner and developer is D R Horton, Inc. of Annapolis, Maryland.

There are currently turn lanes from Collingwood Road to the property and at this time, there don't seem to be transportation improvements involved, but the roads around that immediate area can get challenging at night, Neer said.

In years past, a resident that lives a few doors down used to be known for extravagant holiday light displays, and in its heyday, those displays attracted sightseers from all around but the homeowner toned it down so that the holiday light-seeing traffic has re-learned.



PHOTO BY JOHN NEER

From the street, the site of the Christian Science Church at 1509 Collingwood Road in Fort Hunt appears in early stages of redevelopment.

# Homelessness Point-in-Time Count 2024

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

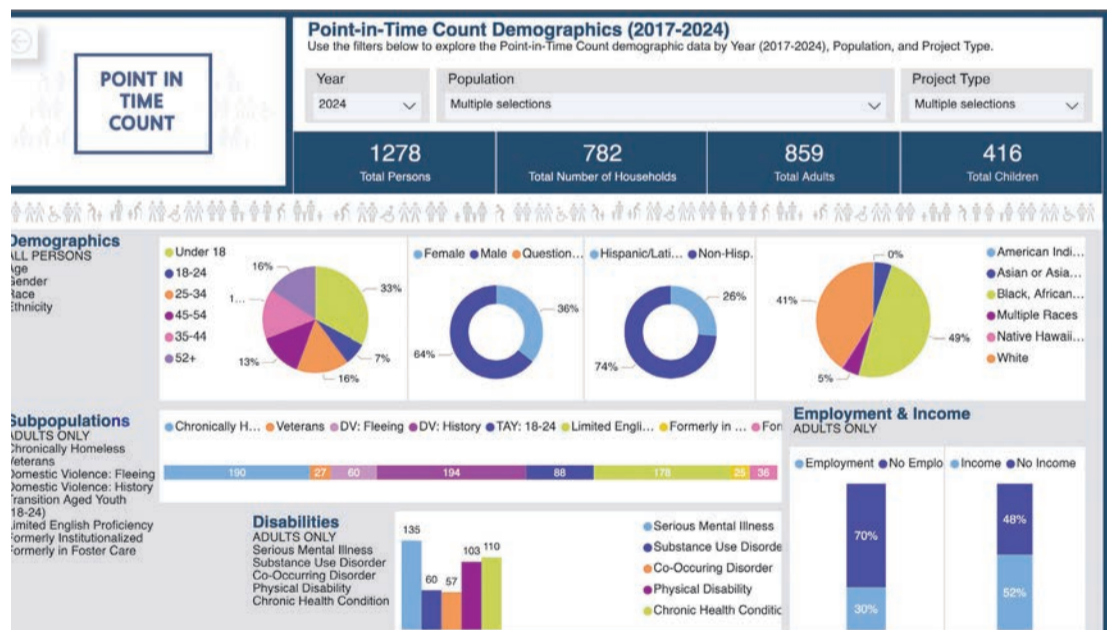
The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Homeless Services Planning and Coordinating Committee's regional point-in-time counts are a "limited and imperfect perspective." In their May 2024 report, the authors acknowledge that it is a single-night snapshot of who is experiencing homelessness in the metropolitan Washington area. Weather, shelter bed availability and other variables affect the count, which does not show the scope of homelessness or the number of people assisted weekly, monthly, or annually.

"It is not unusual for a jurisdiction to serve as many as four or five times the number of people during a year as are counted during one night of the PIT enumeration," according to the report.

In Fairfax County, 1,278 people reportedly were experiencing homelessness on the night of Jan. 24, 2024, a reduction of 2% from 2023. Fairfax County was the sole jurisdiction in the metropolitan Washington region's homeless services system that recorded a decrease.

The counties of Arlington, Loudoun, Montgomery, Prince George's and Prince William; the City of Alexandria, and the District of Columbia all saw percentage increases from 2023 to 2024. The highest percentage change was 38 percent in Loudoun County, followed by 28 percent in Montgomery County, Md.

Nine thousand seven hundred seventy-four people were recorded in the metropolitan Wash-



Point-in-time count demographics for Fairfax County

ington region's homeless services system — that total did not include people who were doubled up with family or friends per HUD restrictions. From 2023 to 2024, regional homeless count rose by 1,078, a 12 percent rise.

The 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) enumeration also shows how many individuals use year-round winter shelters, emergency shelters, safe havens, transitional housing, and permanent housing solutions.

A critical finding of the report is that with COVID-19 ending, federal emergency funding for rental assistance programs and eviction prevention measures ended. Rising housing costs compound those losses. The collaborating jurisdictions and service providers worry that many more region residents will become homeless.

The lack of affordable and available permanent homes for the lowest-income households is one of the biggest challenges to reducing homelessness in the area.

HUD mandates that communities that receive federal funds conduct the annual count during the last ten days of January. The count uses electronic administrative records to enumerate people living in shelters. Local organizations have also counted unsheltered people yearly for 24 years even though it is only required every other year.

Visit Point-in-Time Count 2024, Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, to learn more about trends by household types and subpopulations, including chronic homelessness, veterans, youth ages 18-24, survivors of domestic violence, and demographics.

# Fatal Shooting in Fair Haven

Detectives continue to investigate a fatal shooting in Fair Haven that left one man dead.

Tuesday, May 21 at 6:07 a.m., officers responded to the Citgo at 6241 Richmond Highway in Fair Haven for a shooting. An adult male, Arthur Edward Mann II, 38, of Fairfax, was found with a gunshot wound to the upper body. He was declared dead at the scene.

The suspect left the scene before officers arrived.

Preliminarily, detectives believe the suspect and victim were verbally arguing at the gas pump before the shooting. The suspect discharged a firearm, hitting the victim. The suspect is described as a Black male, approximately 5'6, 40-50 years old, with short hair, and a beard. The investigation is ongoing.

Detectives are still investigating the circumstances that led up to the shooting and are asking the community to review any home surveillance footage in the area to assist in the investigation. Anyone with information regarding this shooting, please call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 5. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone 703-246-4676

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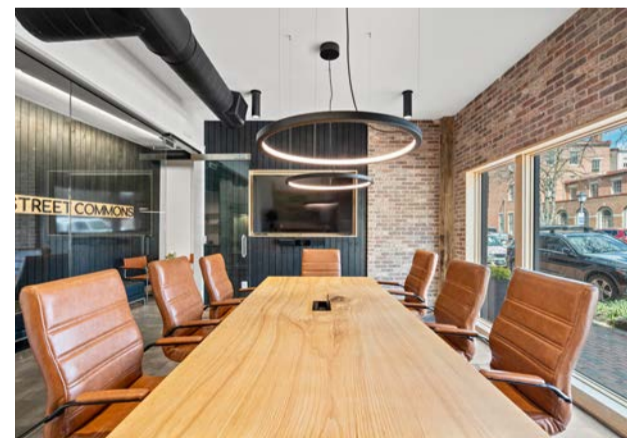
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## Focusing on the Future of Gaming

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



Krizek

This week at the first meeting of the year for the Joint Subcommittee to study the feasibility of establishing the Virginia Gaming Commission, I was re-appointed to serve as the subcommittee's Vice Chair. During the meeting, I gave the following statement to highlight the important work our subcommittee has ahead of us.

"First, I want to thank the General Assembly for passing our joint resolutions to extend this subcommittee for an additional two years to complete our work. And thank you to the members today for once again entrusting me to serve as Vice Chair.

As the Chair of the ABC & Gaming subcommittee and also the Appropriations subcommittee on Transportation and Public Safety, much of my work as Delegate serving in the legislature has focused on responsible and ethical gaming expansion in the Commonwealth and our duty

as legislators to support Virginians with gambling addictions.

In just these past few years, the Commonwealth has introduced and expanded sports betting, online Lottery, casinos, historic horse racing machines, live horse races, charitable gaming — and, for a time, "skilled" game or "gray" machines.

Our subcommittee recognizes that gaming expansion is a double-edged sword. It promises new jobs, tourism, tax revenue, and charity funds to help millions of Virginians. But this comes with the common pitfall of enabling and fueling gambling addiction, an impulse control disorder affecting roughly 4-6 million Americans of all ages, races, ethnicities, and genders. The impacts on those Americans and their families are severe.

We have not shied away from this issue. Senator Reeves and I have spearheaded efforts to address the potential harms of further legalization of gambling, including creating the Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Advisory

Committee and securing funds for the Commonwealth's Problem Gambling Fund. Our subcommittee's commitment to protecting vulnerable Virginians is unwavering as we continue our due diligence. That's why we can't overstate the critical nature of our work.

It's evident that a single regulatory framework for gaming in the Commonwealth would best ensure consistent and comprehensive oversight, eliminating regulation discrepancies and gaps across the different forms of gaming. A unified approach would promote the implementation of robust education and support services, enable effective monitoring and transparency, and provide better protection for Virginia consumers.

I also believe that a holistic approach to gaming oversight and regulation would best serve our Commonwealth's problem gambling efforts. So, with the guidance of our subcommittee's independent consultant, I look forward to learning best practices from gaming states across the country and further developing the strategy that will best serve Virginia."

### LETTER

## Proposed Data Center Amendment Won't Protect You

Don't think a 24/7 mind-numbing noise, transmission lines through your yard, or higher electric bills will happen to you? How close do you live to a property where a massive data center can be built by-right? Closer than you think as nearly all the I-5 lands are adjacent to residential in Fairfax County.

The new ordinance was supposed to implement the recommendations of the long-awaited Jan. 9, 2024 Data Center Report but falls far short; it's proposing to require a noise study up front rather than waiting for residents to complain after it is built, to require noise generating equipment to be enclosed (which is mostly impossible for HVAC/tower-cooling systems so it allows for a simple administrative override) and stops short of requiring Special Exception approval — something Loudoun County will be doing as part of its Zoning Ordinance changes this year. <https://www.loudoun.gov/5990/Data-Center-Standards-Locations>.

The County says they can't require air or water quality mitigation or protections, or stricter noise regulations, or set electrical limits with the Zoning Ordinance. But they can certainly improve their chances if they require a Special Exception approval so that all can weigh in like they did on Jan. 23, 2024 with the Chantilly Premier Mega Data Center (SE 2022-SU-00038) — the tallest and largest single data center building in Fairfax County which, through the Special Exception process, was able to secure dozens of commitments (proffers) that require the noise at the residential boundaries to be below the Noise Ordinance; require Tier 4 backup generators to reduce air pollution and spill potential (most data centers use cheaper Tier 2); require a new noise study every time noise generating equipment is added; require monitoring and mitigating at the source for sodium, bromide and other chemicals released into our water, etc. Chairman McKay even stated, "if we're going to do

any data centers in Fairfax County"...the ones we do in this county are going to be done at the highest standard we can possibly foresee."

Like the Chantilly data center, I-5 districts have evolved over time and although the County wants you to believe the I-5 and I-6 districts are for their "messiest" of uses, so we should continue to allow enormous data centers by-right, the reality is that these districts are adjacent to residential sensitive areas. Is that bad zoning? Yes, but the only thing that can be done to mitigate these poorly zoned areas is to require data centers (and let's compromise with the county here — data centers over 80,000 SF) in ANY industrial district, to be approved through the

Special Exception process.

The June 5 (7pm) Planning Commission and July 16 (4pm) Board of Supervisors Public Hearings will determine if we keep ignoring the problem or we require a Special Exception to at least give citizens and the environment a fighting chance. Please email your comments, subject Data Center Zoning Amendment, to your Supervisor (Clerk-ToTheBos@fairfaxcounty.gov), Planning Commissioner (plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov), or, sign up to speak in-person or via phone or pre-recorded video. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/data-centers>

Cynthia Shang  
Chantilly, VA  
President, Save Pleasant Valley

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND

36th Annual Candlelight Vigil of the 2024 National Police Week.

# National Police Week 2024, Annual Candlelight Vigil

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

On May 13, The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund officially added the 282 names of U.S. law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty to the Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., as part of the 36th Annual Candlelight Vigil of the 2024 National Police Week. The newly added officers' names inscribed on the wall include 118 federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty in 2023 and 164 who died in previous years.

"Their sacrifice is now being recognized after the Memorial Fund's research staff confirmed the circumstances of their death and their record of law enforcement service," states a release by the Memorial Fund. The vigil's purpose was to dedicate, honor, and remember all the newly added officers by reading aloud their names on the Roll Call of Heroes Honored in 2024.

William Alexander, CEO of The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, stated, "Their memory remains a testament to valor and selflessness, two core tenets that a law enforcement officer abides



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE VIDEO 36TH ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT VIGIL, D.C.

**Lt. Steve Troyano, Arlington County Police Department, takes rubbing of a name on the Memorial Wall.**

by when sworn into service."

According to reports, 30,000 people gathered at the mall that night. Numerous officers, including those from the Fairfax County Police Department, wore their respective uniforms. Among the many others appeared to be bereaved families of fallen officers, some with children. Listening intently to each name read aloud;

SEE CANDLELIGHT, PAGE 10



PHOTO POSTED TO FACEBOOK AT FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF  
Fairfax County Deputy, 2nd Lieutenant Jennifer Foster, lays a rose upon the Seal of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial during the 32nd Annual Council of Governments Wreath Laying Ceremony & Honor Guard Competition held on May 4 as part of National Police Week 2024. This ceremony highlights the importance of correctional officers and those who have fallen in the line of duty. In 2023, 21 correctional officers from across the country fell in the line of duty. Behind her, far right, sits Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Franconia District.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND

Chief Kevin Davis is pictured on May 7 with Monsignor Sal Criscuolo at the 30th Annual Blue Mass at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., remembering fallen heroes and supporting those who serve. During the 34th Annual Candlelight Vigil held May 13, Chief Davis read the Virginia and West Virginia sections of the Roll Call of Heroes, 2024.

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# ENTERTAINMENT



The Mount Vernon Flea Market and Arts and Crafts Fair takes place on Saturday, May 25, 2024 at the Mount Vernon Masonic Lodge.



A Sunset Concert with Soulfire takes place on Thursday, May 30, 2024 at River Farm in Alexandria.

## POTOMAC HARMONY OFFERS HARMONY & LEARNING!

School may be out in June, but the learning gets started on Wednesday nights at Potomac Harmony chorus rehearsals! Learn the art of 4-part harmony treble singing while experiencing the joy of ringing chords! Together, guests and members will rehearse new music and create harmonies lead by the expertise of our talented director Allison Lynskey. Potomac Harmony members are women and nonbinary individuals from all walks of life, live around the DMV, and have various levels of musical and singing experience. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings, 7-9 p.m., at The View Alexandria, 5000 Fairbanks Avenue, Alexandria. Questions? Contact Jackie Bottash, backrowlead@aol.com.

## WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

## MAY 3 TO JUNE 2

**"The Art of Tea" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans gallery features art that explores themes and stories woven around this aromatic beverage.** From tea cups and tea pots to the Mad Hatter or Boston Tea Party, this exhibit intrigues and delights. Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Reception: Friday, May 3, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (June 2, 12-4pm). [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## THURSDAY/MAY 23

**Book Talk.** At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Hear from historian Talmage Boston on his new book, *How the Best Did It: Leadership Lessons from our Top Presidents*, on May 23rd. This book offers an insight-

ful explanation of how the most important leadership traits from America's eight greatest presidents can be implemented by today's leaders.

## SATURDAY/MAY 25

**Mount Vernon Flea Market and Arts and Crafts Fair.** 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Masonic Lodge #219, 8717 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Up to 45 vendors, inside and outside, great variety, refreshments on site and inside the lodge. Crafters, Artisans, Antique, Vintage, Collectibles, and neighbors downsizing with practical items/household, furniture, misc. This event takes place every third Saturday of the month from March to December. Next Dates: May 25, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 (+ bonus holiday market Dec 7 or 14). Visit the website: <https://mountvernonflea-market.wordpress.com/>

## SATURDAY/MAY 25

**Singer Kate Campbell.** 7:30 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Kate Campbell is a southern singer-songwriter who writes and sings memorable folk songs infused with undercurrents of delta blues, folk, pop, and country that originate from a musical landscape spanning the less-traveled back roads from Nashville to Muscle Shoals to Memphis. Over the course of 20+ years since her acclaimed debut album *Songs from the Levee*, she has resisted the temptation to follow musical trends but instead chooses to set the pace for her unique musical journey. Advance tickets \$25 at [www.focusmusic.org](http://www.focusmusic.org), day-of \$30 (member / congregation as-applicable \$25 at the door) | webcast \$15 | Info: at [rob@focusmusic.org](mailto:rob@focusmusic.org) or [www.focusmusic.org](http://www.focusmusic.org).

## THURSDAY/MAY 30

**Sunset Concert with Soulfire.** 6-8 p.m. At River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria. Get ready for a soulful evening to remember as the captivating band Soulfire takes the stage at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society (AHS). This outdoor family-friendly concert promises an unforgettable evening of music, nature, and stunning views overlooking the Potomac River. The event is free. Donations are appreciated. Parking fee is \$20. For more information and to purchase

parking in advance, visit [www.ahsgardening.org/sunsetconcert](http://www.ahsgardening.org/sunsetconcert). For more information, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114 or visit [www.ahsgardening.org](http://www.ahsgardening.org).

## SATURDAY/JUNE 1

**Dans Un Bois Solitaire.** Songs by Mozart, Schubert, Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel. 6:30 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join 28 Chairs concerts at the Athenaeum for a vocal recital of beloved and lesser-known art songs, performed by acclaimed French mezzo-soprano Anna Reinhold and accompanied by twice-Grammy-nominated keyboard artist Jory Vinikour on piano. One-hour program followed by a French wine, cheese and chocolate celebration with the artists.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 1

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

## SUNDAY/JUNE 2

**15th Annual Taste of Del Ray.** 1-3 p.m. At Mount Vernon Recreation Center fields. Ticket holders will enjoy a wide range of tastes from top Del Ray restaurants and can cast their votes for the People's Choice award. A VIP ticket option will also be offered, giving foodies the first bites! A VIP wine tasting will take place at the Del Ray Artisans gallery from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., with early admission to the food festival starting at 12 p.m. Taste of Del Ray is sponsored by the Del Ray Business Association. For more information, visit [visitdel-ray.com](http://visitdel-ray.com).

## THURSDAY/JUNE 6

**Celebrating 50 years of Guest House.** 7-10 p.m. At ALX Community Atrium Rooftop, 277 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Mocktails, music and memories. Join them as they celebrate 50 years of achievements helping 5,000 women reclaim their lives. This year's gala promises to be an evening filled with laughter, joy, and heartwarming moments as

we come together to support the incredible work of Friends of Guest House. With live music, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and captivating company, it's an event you won't want to miss!

## JUNE 6 TO AUG. 26

**"Nature's Spirit."** Nina Tisara's mosaics and Steven Halperson's photographs and etched copper will be exhibited in the Estate House at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. The public is invited to an Opening Reception on Sunday, June 23, 2-4 p.m. (RSVP: [ninat@ninatisara.com](mailto:ninat@ninatisara.com)). The Estate House is open to the public 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday - Friday and 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Since the Estate House will occasionally close for rental events the public is encouraged to call 703-768-5780, ext. 137, to be certain the exhibit is open for viewing.

## JUNE 7-30

**"All About Love" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that explores love broadly: romantic love, love of family, love of pets, strong friendships, etc. Works by dozens of local artists will be on display and available for sale. Opening Reception: Friday, June 7, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## SATURDAY/JUNE 8

**Summer Huzzah.** At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Experience 18th-century life at the Summer Huzzah. This summer evening offers 18th-century entertainment, food, music, and more. A special VIP experience includes food and whiskey tastings.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 8

**Old Town Alexandria Arts & Crafts Fair.** 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street, Alexandria. Volunteer Alexandria is thrilled to present the Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair on June 8, 2024, at Waterfront Park located at 1 Prince Street on the Potomac River. The fair is free to attend and features local and regional artisans who showcase their pieces across various mediums including pottery, stationary, fabrics, paintings, jewelry, photography and more. Featuring more than 80-plus vendors including food and drink to purchase.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 15

**Columbia Pike Blues Festival.** 1-8 p.m. At the intersection of South Walter Reed Drive and Columbia Pike in Arlington. This year the Festival celebrates women in blues with a lineup of all-women-fronted bands offering a full array of blues, R&B, and funk performers of national and regional note that includes: headliner Bette Smith, Eden Brent, Mama Moon & the Rump Shakers; The Stacy Brooks Band and the Honeylarks.

## 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).

## MAY

Thu. 23: Ruth Moody (of The Wailin' Jennys) \$35.00  
Fri. 24: Chante' Moore \$79.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 25: Walter Beasley \$49.50  
Sun. 26: Maggie Rose: No One Gets Out Alive Tour w/ Fancy Hagood \$29.50  
Fri. 31: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston \$65.00

## JUNE

Sat. 1: The Smithereens with Marshall Crenshaw \$45.00  
Sun. 2: WMAL Free Speech Forum -7pm- \$55.00 SOLD OUT!  
Tue. 4: The Allman Betts Band w/ J.D. Simo \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Wed. 5: China Forbes (of Pink Martini) w/ Duo Caliente \$35.00  
Fri. 7: Bill Kirchen & Too Much Fun and Dale Watson & The Lone Stars \$39.50  
Sat. 8: Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes \$59.50  
Mon. 10: John Hiatt w/ Rebecca Porter \$75.00 SOLD OUT!  
Tue. 11: Happy Together Tour 2024 featuring The Turtles, Jay & The Americans, The Association, Badfinger, The Vogues, And The Cowsills \$99.50 SOLD OUT!  
Wed. 12: Eric Benet \$79.50  
Thu. 13: Marc Cohn \$55.00  
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Mon. 17: Steve Earle: Alone Again - Solo & Acoustic \$65.00  
Tue. 18: Chayce Beckham w/ Pug Johnson \$29.50  
Fri. 21: Tarsha Fitzgerald Prod. Presents Voices of Motown 'Anniversary Show' \$39.50  
Sat. 22: Judy Collins w/ Oakland Rain \$59.50





PHOTO BY FCPS

The Fairfax County School Board will adopt the FY 2025 Approved Budget on Thursday, May 23.

# Pay Increase Goes from 6% to 3% for All FCPS Staff

## Last-ditch attempt for 5% raises for teachers, support staff.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

**O**n Thursday, May 23, Mateo Dunne, the Mount Vernon District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board, launched an effort to amend the superintendent's proposed FY 2025 Approved Budget. Dunne seeks to replace Superintendent Michelle Reid's 3.0 percent across-the-board pay raise with a "targeted" 5.0 percent pay increase for the division's personnel and teachers. The school board is adopting the FY 2025 Approved Budget that evening.

From the beginning of the Fairfax County School Board budget discussions in January of this year, Dunne and some of the other school board representatives objected to any pay raise for administrators, especially those already earning more than \$200,000. Dunne argues that the pay raise should focus on teachers and support staff, including cafeteria workers, custodians, librarians, school bus drivers, and school counselors.

"These are the people who educate, feed, transport and care for our children during the school day, and they are the ones who deserve a salary increase this year," Dunne said. "Every single dollar should be spent to ensure they receive fair and just compensation."

The school board approved the FY25 Budget Priorities Resolution on Jan. 25, 2024.

The resolution directed Reid to include competitive pay with consideration "for differentiated pay for hard-to-fill positions, such as teachers in Title I schools and special education teachers."

"Instead, the superintendent proposed an across-the-board 6 percent pay raise for all FCPS employees, including herself," Dunne said.



PHOTO BY FCPS  
Mateo Dunne

currently the superintendent "earns more than the president [of the United States] and her chief of staff is paid more than the secretary of defense."

"It is unconscionable to increase the pay of administrators at a time when our teachers are overworked and underpaid," Dunne said.

An outcry from some Fairfax County Public Schools staff and others erupted at last week's budget public hearings as Fairfax County Public Schools attempted to finalize its fiscal year 2025 budget, currently written with Reid's recommended compensation adjustment at 3.0 percent instead of 6.0 percent for all staff. State and county funds for schools came in at less than the schools budget hoped for. The county budget came in \$89,028,182 less for schools than FCPS had budgeted, and state revenue was also reduced by \$16,291,557 less than FCPS budgeted.

But Fairfax County Public Schools annual FY 2024 budget will increase from \$3.5 billion to \$3.7 billion in FY 2025.

Dunne states, "In particular, the county is providing an additional \$165 million, which results in the FY 2025 budget being the largest budget increase for FCPS in over ten years," Dunne added.

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# Candlelight Vigil

FROM PAGE 7

the crowd stood silent under the shared weight of all the officers who died in public service and their families' losses.

Chief Kevin Davis, Fairfax County Police Department, read a section of the Roll Call of Heroes, 2024. "From the Commonwealth of Virginia, Joseph Edward Carey, Sr.; Mark Christopher Wagner, II (bell tolls). From the State of West Virginia, Steven Paul Gitlin, II; Cory Stephen Maynard (bell tolls)."

Following the Roll Call readings on the National Mall, participants lit their candles, generating waves of golden flickers across the long, dark distances to the United States Capitol and Washington Monument.

In a video produced by The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund of the 2024 Candlelight Vigil, Arlington County Police Department Lt. Steve Troyano says, "We lost Harvey to 9-11-related cancer. It changes everything."

Terrica Gibson, a survivor, says, "The wall remembers and honors them."

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund reports that, with new names in 2024, the wall now bears the names of 24,067 officers. Among the names are six Fairfax County Police Department law enforcement. They are Sergeant John Joseph Donohue, EOW: Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022, cause: COVID-19; Second Lieutenant Francis Joseph Stecco, EOW: Saturday, Oct. 25, 2008, cause: drowned; Master Police Officer Michael E. Garbarino, EOW: Wednesday, May 17, 2006, cause: gunfire; Detective Vicky Anne Owen Arnel, EOW: Monday, May 8, 2006, cause: gunfire; Captain Tommy F. Bernal, EOW: Thursday, June 28, 2001, cause: motorcycle crash; and Police Officer Karen Jean Bassford, EOW: Wednesday, July 27, 1977, cause: automobile crash.

According to preliminary data compiled by The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund in its 2023 End-of-Year Preliminary Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report, 47 officers were shot and killed in the line of duty. Compared to the 63 officers shot and killed in 2022, this number represents a 25 percent decrease. However, the report states, "The number of men and women fatally wounded by gunfire remains a pressing concern for law enforcement personnel."

The report cites that traffic-related incidents claimed the lives of 37 officers in 2023, a 27 percent decrease from 51 in 2022.

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# Bridge Reopening

FROM PAGE 1

Law, and in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration.

Mount Vernon Trail is an 18-mile paved multi-use trail stretching from George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate to Theodore Roosevelt Island and is enjoyed by millions of visitors every year. The trail is a hub for recreational activity and connects with regional trails including the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, Custis Trail, Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, Four Mile Run Trail and Woodrow Wilson Bridge Trail.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is a \$1 trillion investment in America's infrastructure and the single largest investment in road and bridge repair and reconstruction since the interstate highway system was built. The law allows the NPS to make strategic and significant investments to repair critical infrastructure as well as enhance conservation and recreation opportunities.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



This year's narrow-leaf cattails were beginning to get their flowers which in the summer turn brown.



Congressman Don Beyer and Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck



GWMP Superintendent Charles Cuvelier and Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck with some of the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail.



Red-winged blackbirds were establishing territories in the cattails of the wetland near the bridge.



Many walkers use the bridge to observe marsh life, including spatterdock plants that have yellow, golf-ball-like flowers.

## "Drill Baby, Drill" ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... is not what I was telling my dentist recently – during multiple visits (I use that term lightly). After years of dental neglect, I've finally had "some work done," as they say. And if I were to be saying anything, it would have been "pull, doctor, pull." But given the number of teeth extracted over two four-hour appointments, the dentist didn't need any encouragement from me. He was quite clear and determined to pull all the teeth fit to be removed. The number might have totaled a baker's dozen before all was "Novocained" and pulled.

This dental journey began with Dr. Frimm in Newton Centre, Ma. He was the family dentist that tended to all the Louries. From a young age then I was indoctrinated into the world/need for dentistry. Fast forward to the last few years. I had continued to be a regular visitor to the dentist until my long-time adult-era dentist died somewhat unexpectedly at his age 72. Though the practice sent out an email announcing his death, there were no referrals included. I was, in effect, set adrift-ish. As a result, me and my teeth were left to fend for themselves. With no more electronic reminders from a dentist, I had no reason/reminder to schedule an appointment with the dentist, if you know what I mean (barring any immediate teeth issues: crowns, root canals, sensitivity to hold or cold, et. cetera)?

As you might imagine, my teeth and gums suffered accordingly. The lack of enamel that finally broke Kenny's resistance was the failure of a main tooth (three from the center on the top left) to hold its respective place. If it were Halloween, I would have had the perfect look to go as a hockey player. I wouldn't say I looked like "The Great Eight," when he has his game face on (I believe his missing tooth is on the upper right); nevertheless, since it's not Halloween, the toothless look is not what I was after. Moreover, with crowns missing their tops and other teeth issues: teeth missing, teeth cracked) and the difficulty eating as I didn't have enough teeth – top or bottom to masticate (grind and chew) my food into small enough pieces, it was, as my late mother would say: "Enough already." Combine that with the dry-throat side effect from my cancer medicine and eating/swallowing not only became a challenge, it also became a fear, as food occasionally would get stuck in my throat. That meant of course, no air and no breathing, very scary. (It only needs to happen once before you know you never want it to happen again, so you begin to take precautions. After years of miscellaneous precautions, a visit to the dentist became an inevitability.)

I'm not exactly a shell of my former self but eating had taken on an entire new modus operandi. It was no longer about pleasure, it became more about avoiding pain – and death, if you want to know the truth? Death caused-by-blockage. Because I might not have had the required amount of patience – and teeth, quite frankly, while eating (trying to eat slowly and chew my food), I often ended up swallowing larger pieces of food that my mouth/throat couldn't quite handle. Soon, it became obvious, even to me that I couldn't ever take a bite of food without a glass of something nearby (as well as "bite-sizing" to very small portions). And the few times I neglected to take this precaution, like with a dessert, I nearly paid the ultimate price. After a year or two of this recurring difficulty, combined with the other teeth/dental issues I was experiencing, I bit the bullet (not really) and made the necessary dental arrangements which has led to this column. (As for the real pain: the cost of all this work and the meager coverage offered by your typical dental insurance policy covering up to \$1,000/\$1,500 per year, as an example, paying for this volume of repair and replace is something else that's been hard to swallow.)

It's been nearly a month now – and two payments since this dental journey began. I'm not quite home free yet, but I'm a lot closer to the promised land (although medical and dental procedures rarely come with promises) and a return to dental normalcy. Dental normalcy meaning – for me, that I can chew and swallow my food without fear, and without making absolutely sure there's glass of something nearby, just in case the not-expected thing happens. In addition, I'll have completed my dental payment plan so even though I may be cash poor, I'll be teeth rich. This dental business will address, finally, a situation I've been anticipating and worrying about for years. Using my cancer diagnosis as an excuse as in, why bother, it was easy to back-burner the dental demands until I looked like hell and had difficulty swallowing my food, so much so that mealtime had become fear time. And the last thing a cancer patient needs is additional fear. Cancer fear is more than enough on its own. Oddly enough, having my dental issues resolved seems to make dealing with my cancer easier in some respects. And easier will come at a time when my cancer issues may once again be rearing its very ugly head. As Rachel Maddow says: "Watch this space."

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

## New Work Honoring 2024 Centennial Of George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue

The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Music Director Christopher Zimmerman, will present the Virginia premiere of Peter Boyer's Rhapsody in Red, White, and Blue, with piano soloist Jeffrey Biegel, on Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 4 p.m. at George Mason University's Center for the Arts. Biegel commissioned the work from Boyer to commemorate the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's landmark masterwork Rhapsody in Blue, which is also on this concert program. This special program that honors the past and looks to

the future of American classical music closes with Amy Beach's "Gaelic" Symphony.

Biegel and Zimmerman discuss the new Rhapsody and its influences in a pre-concert talk at 3 p.m.

"Our season finale is a celebration of great American orchestral music, old and new, known and unknown," said Christopher Zimmerman, FSO conductor and music director. "The centerpiece is a brand-new piano concerto by the young American composer Peter Boyer, inspired by Gershwin's beloved "Rhapsody in Blue" with which it is paired. Again, we bring in the virtuoso performer for

whom the piece was written, the great American pianist Jeffrey Biegel."

Rhapsody in Red, White, and Blue takes the form of a single multi-sectional movement — like Gershwin's original — that contains allusions to blues influences and depictions of iconic American vistas.

Before introducing local audiences to Boyer's new American classic, Biegel also joins the FSO for the work that inspired it all: George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, which was originally premiered on February 12, 1924 with Gershwin himself as soloist.



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