

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 30, 2024



Col. Joseph Messina, Garrison Commander Fort Belvoir, delivers remarks at the Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony May 23 at the Cold War Memorial at Long Parade Field.



Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander Col. Joseph Messina, right, with Army veteran and VFW Post 609 Commander Col. Gerald Krueger (ret) and Jessica Krueger at the Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony May 23 at the Cold War Memorial at Long Parade Field.



Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander Col. Joseph Messina, right, is joined by Command Sergeant Major Garth Newell and VFW Post 609 Commander Col. Gerald Krueger (ret) at the Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony May 23 at the Cold War Memorial at Long Parade Field.

PHOTOS BY DEBBIE GRAY

Remembering the Fallen

Fort Belvoir holds Memorial Day observance.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

The U.S. Army Garrison at Fort Belvoir commemorated Memorial Day with a wreath laying ceremony May 23 at the Cold War Memorial at Long Parade Field.

Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander Col. Joseph Messina delivered opening remarks, emphasizing the history and significance of the Memorial Day observance. Col. Gerald Krueger (ret), Commander of VFW Post 609 in Alexandria, was the keynote speaker.

"Memorial Day is about recognizing and honoring those military personnel who gave

the ultimate sacrifice in war," Krueger said. "They were killed in combat, or went missing in action, or died of their injuries, or in other instances died of diseases incurred in war zones. In some wars, as many or more soldiers died of disease as those who died from guns and bullets. Our country commemorates all these military forces."

During the event, 260,000 American flags were placed at headstones. Krueger, who served 25 years on active duty in the Army, expressed gratitude for the sacrifices made by service members and highlighted the importance of remembering those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in war. Additionally, there

was a Memorial Day event at the National Museum of the United States Army on May 26 located on the Fort Belvoir base.

"Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day, taken from the practice of decorating graves to pay tribute to fallen soldiers of the Civil War, and to honor their memory," Krueger said. "Eventually, renamed Memorial Day, it was first recognized as a Federal Holiday in May 1971. Since then, it is observed on the last Monday in May, a date that was selected so that the spring flowers would be in full bloom."

Krueger introduced special guests including Lt. Col. Tim Stoy (ret) and his wife Spe-

cial Forces Capt. Monika Stoy (ret), who were joined by Monika Stoy's 92-year-old mother — a refugee from North Korea.

"The Stoy's lead symposiums and remembrance ceremonies across the country and abroad on the historic saving efforts of the 3rd Infantry Division, dating especially from World War I and World War II," Krueger said.

Also in attendance was Ray Delpesche, the incoming VFW District 10 Commander in Northern Virginia. "Today, we come together to remember those who gave their lives while serving in the military," Krueger said. "As we honor the sacrifice of the fallen, let us be reminded that our freedom came at a price."



VFW Post 609 Commander Col. Gerald Krueger (ret), second from left, with retired Army veterans Lt. Col. Timothy Stoy and Special Forces Capt. Monika Stoy. Monika Stoy's 92-year old mother (left), a refugee from North Korea, joins them at the May 23 Memorial Day observance at Fort Belvoir.



VFW Post 609 Commander Col. Gerald Krueger (ret), left, with Command Sergeant Major Garth Newell and VFW Northern Virginia District Commander Ray Delpesche at the May 23 Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony at Long Parade Field.



Chief Warrant Officer LaShon White watches over the wreath prior to the Memorial Day ceremony May 23 at Fort Belvoir's Long Parade Field.

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This country estate in the city features 6 bedrooms and 5½ bathrooms on a half-acre lot. The luxurious gardens have a koi pond, and inviting seating areas while the front porch beckons. Inside there are high ceilings, vintage pine floors, and glass doorknobs adding 1920's charm to modern comfort. Built in 1990's this home has a 30-foot art gallery foyer and five fireplaces on four levels. A circular driveway can accommodate a dozen cars, and the property is securely fenced and has remotely-operated gates, perfect for kids and pets! 509 Lloyd's Lane

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It Takes a Village Mount Vernon At Home celebrates 15 years.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE GAZETTE

Mount Vernon at Home, part of the village network of senior communities across the country, celebrated its 15th anniversary with a gala held May 23 at River Farm.

SENIOR LIVING State Senator Scott Surovell and Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck were on hand to celebrate the milestone, as was Delegate Paul Krizek, who presented a celebratory proclamation to board member Maribeth Bersani.

Established in 2007, Mount Vernon At Home is part of the senior village concept of support networks with volunteers assisting members to safely age in place. The grassroots organization is committed to helping retirement age neighbors live engaged lifestyles and providing support as needed.

“We do this by connecting our members to exciting programs and events and to critical resources



State Delegate Paul Krizek, right, presents a resolution marking the 15th anniversary of Mount Vernon At Home to board member Maribeth Bersani at the organization’s annual gala May 23 at River Farm.



Del. Paul Krizek, Mount Vernon At Home executive director Kathy Dismukes, State Sen. Scott Surovell, board member Deborah Matthews, and Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck celebrate the 15th anniversary of Mount Vernon At Home at the organization’s annual gala May 23 at River Farm.



Outgoing Mount Vernon At Home board president Paula Lettice, right, with Synergy Home Care CEO Mitch Opalski May 23 at River Farm.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

needed to maintain and support vibrant lives as they age,” said Mount Vernon At Home executive director

Kathy Dismukes. “As families increasingly consider aging in place as the safest and most secure op-

tion for seniors, organizations like Mount Vernon at Home play a crucial role in supporting vibrant lives

for retirement-age neighbors.”

For more information, visit www.mountvernonathome.org

Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber Awards \$28,000 in Scholarships

Fourteen scholarships were awarded to local high school students by Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce to recognize the outstanding achievement of graduating seniors planning to continue their education in a business-related field.

The Chamber’s 2024 Distinguished Business Scholars are Ibrahim Zamir, Annandale High School; Jack Garlock, Bishop Ireton High School; Victoria Cremer, Bishop Ireton High School; Tyler Pinkney, Edison High School; Sydney Wong, Hayfield Secondary School; Caitlin Luu, Lake Braddock High School; Michael Banks, Lewis High School; Conner Crowley, Mount Vernon High School; Kathleen Higgins, South County High School; Sean Cousins, South County High School; Abi Little, Thomas Jefferson High School; Willa Bowers, West Potomac High School; Nairi Masih, West Potomac High School; John Ogden, West Springfield High School.

The scholarships were presented Thursday evening at a special reception hosted by the Army Historical Foundation at the National Museum of the United States Army.

“The scholarships presented this evening not only allow these students to continue their education, but they also provide them with a framework to perhaps come back someday and make a lasting impact on our own community,” said Alex Thalacker, chair of the Chamber’s Education Partnership. “That is the true reward behind the Chamber’s work.”

“The Chamber selects as least one scholarship recipient from each of the high schools in our service area,” said Holly Dougherty, president of the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce. “We were all in-



From left, Don Camarata, Reworld; Michael Murphy, Mount Vernon Knights of Columbus; Tammy Call, NMUSA; Roberta Tinch, Inova Health Systems; Victoria Cremer, Bishop Ireton High School; Jack Garlock, Bishop Ireton High School; Conner Crowley, Mount Vernon High School; JP Ogden, West Springfield High School; Caitlin Luu, Lake Braddock Secondary School; Abi Little, Thomas Jefferson High School; Sydney Wong, Hayfield Secondary School; Sean Cousins, South County High School; Nairi Masih, West Potomac High School; George Ksenics, Andrews Federal Credit Union; Willa Bowers, West Potomac High School; Alex Thalacker, Fairfax County EDA; Ibrahim Zamir, Annandale High School; General Burt Thompson, NMUSA; Tyler Pinkney, Thomas Edison High School.

spired by these students and their goals. They have the potential to really contribute and become a positive influence in the community.”

Scholarships are made possible by the generous donations of local businesses and by funds raised at the annual Chamber Golf Classic. Businesses that provided complete scholarships are Reworld (formerly known as Covanta Fairfax Inc.), Ourisman Auto-

motive dealerships, CDI Inc., Palo Alto Networks, Mount Vernon Knights of Columbus and Cisco.

This continues the Chamber’s annual tradition of providing scholarships to students planning to study business. The Chamber has awarded scholarships for more than 20 years and this year’s scholarships totaling \$28,000 brings the Chamber’s cumulative scholarship giving to more than \$332,000.



National Museum of the United States Army, museum director Tammy Call and retired General Burt Thompson, president of the Army Historical Foundation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE HALPERSON/TISARA PHOTOGRAPHY



The Cross County Trail crossing Accotink Creek in the Springfield area.

National Trails Day

County recognizes 10th anniversary of Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Although Fairfax County has many bike trails for family outings, commuting to work, or a scenic ride along the Potomac River, there's nothing like the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail to see the real Fairfax County.

On June 1, county officials and U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) are celebrating the Cross County Trail and the others in Fairfax County as a salute to National Trails Day.

"It connects several neighborhoods and offers the potential to be a foundational piece of the broader Northern Virginia trail network with the W&OD, the Mount Vernon and Four Mile Run Trails," said Joy Faunce, the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling president. "The CCT is a significant contributor to the Fairfax County trail network," she added.

Parts of the trail are not for the casual rider though. The nearly 41-mile trail goes through stream valleys, crosses busy roads and puts the rider out in the woods with the birds and deer so it seems miles from the suburban landscape when in reality, it's just

National Trails Day

In celebration of National Trails Day, join the Park Authority and Congressman Gerry Connolly for the 10th Anniversary of the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail and a ribbon cutting for the new bathroom facilities at the Laurel Hill Central Green on Saturday, June 1 from 9 - 11 a.m.

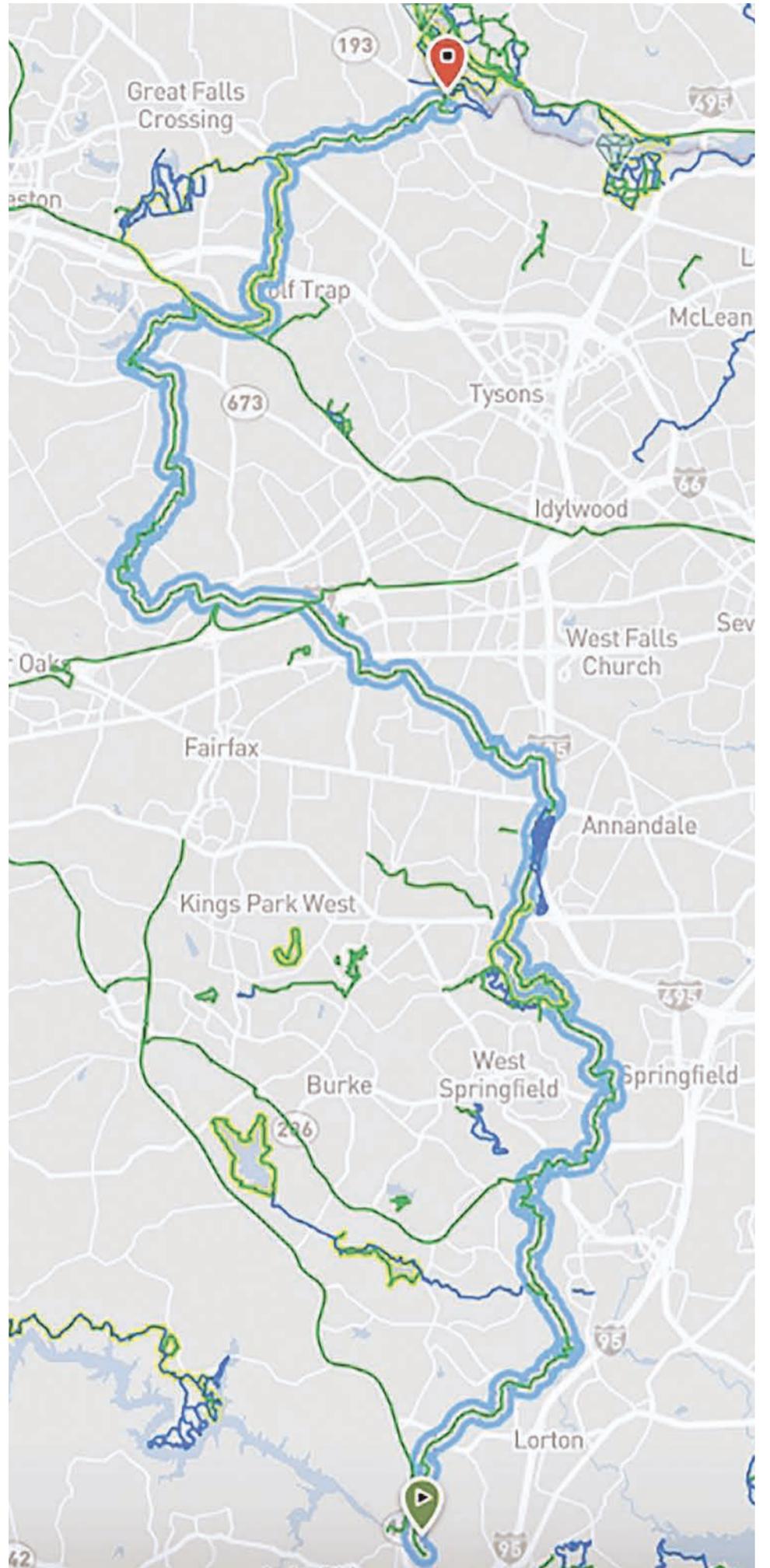
a short side-trail away.

On the northern end, the trail starts near Difficult Run in the Great Falls area, and the trail sets off in the woods, snaking along the creek for a while, giving the cyclist a quick feel for what may lie ahead for riders. Bikes with thin racing tires are not recommended for this part of the trail.

The trail goes under Leesburg Pike, still parallel to Difficult Run, across the Dulles Access Road, towards Lake Thoreau, and then south through Oakton. After crossing I-66, it follows Accotink Creek for miles through Wakefield Park, around Lake Accotink and through Springfield, along the Franconia-Springfield Parkway before going along the Pohick Stream Valley over to the Laurel Hill Golf Course and finally ends at Occoquan Regional Park.

Trail Blazing

All this did not just happen without much planning and rerouting, that began in the late 1990s by hiking enthusiast Bill Niedringhaus, who noticed a nearly continuous stretch of publicly owned land across the county. At that time, Gerry Connolly was the



These trail markers are posted along the trail to guide the cyclists and hikers.

Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and he supported the effort and introduced a resolution to create the trail in 1998. Construction of the trail began in the early 2000s and in 2014, the 40.5 mile trail was named after Connolly, the FCPA said.

Reporter Note: I biked the whole trail in

one day years ago when the internet was just in its infancy. I was dropped off in the morning at the trail's start near Difficult Run in the Great Falls area, armed with a paper map and determination. That evening, I arrived at the Occoquan River with a new view of the county and the value of planning a trip like that.

School Board Adopts FY 2025 Budget

Can't win 'em all.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

When it comes down to it, the newly tenured Fairfax County School Board, seated on Jan. 1, 2024, had, as R. Kyle McDaniel, a member at large, said, "a very interesting, long, deliberate budget cycle" this year.

At its meeting on May 23, the Fairfax County School Board voted to adopt Fairfax County Public Schools' Fiscal Year 2025 Approved Budget, totaling \$3.7 billion. This represents a net increase of 6.6 percent, or \$232.2 million, above the FY 2024 adopted budget. Nearly 86 percent of the approved budget is targeted for instruction.

When presenting the budget approval motion, Dr. Ricardy Anderson, representing the Mason District, said budget approval usually provokes "strong reactions and emotions," with everyone strongly believing and articulating that school budget "reflects our values."

"We must acknowledge the disappointment with this budget for this board ... Our full request has not been granted," Anderson said. She emphasized that further delays caused by the lack of a governor-approved budget created additional chaos for the board.

Anderson noted that the board passed a "robust budget resolution" earlier this year; its purpose was to communicate the board's priorities with Superintendent Michelle Reid. Priorities included the "development of a "student student-focused, equitable, needs-based proposed budget for this year aligned to the Division's Strategic Plan and inclusive of the board's priorities to focus on FCPS workforce, recruitment, and retention to include competitive compensation with consideration for differentiated pay for hard-to-fill positions, such as teachers in Title One schools and special education teachers."

Kyle McDaniel, member at large, second-

ed the budget approval motion. He said creating a school budget required a delicate balance between competing needs since there are not unlimited resources. In Virginia, school boards do not have the authority to raise their own funding, "adding an additional layer of complexity," he said.

McDaniel paraphrased and read an excerpt of a letter from the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers union, which voiced support for the budget: "They believe this approach is essential for maintaining unity and morale among our dedicated staff. By remaining steadfast and united, we can continue to provide the best possible education for our students and maintain a positive, collaborative work environment for all staff members."

McDaniel said he trusted the teachers' associations and "the folks who made this budget."

"I trust our superintendent. I fully recognize I am one of 12. I don't always get what I want. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. Is this budget everything I want? No. But it's also not everything everybody else wants. That's life, and I'm happy to support it."

The adopted budget includes a 4 percent compensation increase for all employees and maintains the mid-year 2 percent compensation increase for all employees, which the School Board approved in January. It also contains funds to keep class sizes consistent with projected enrollment increases, continue key multiyear initiatives and provide resources to support student well-being outside the classroom.

According to FCPS News, the following budget items will be priorities in the FY 2024 Year End Budget: Thirty additional minutes for extended day contracts for special education teachers; funding for the ERFC (Enter Retirement Feeling Confident) Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP); and one-time funding for an expansion of athletics, including boys' volleyball and girls' wrestling.

Watch the FCPS School Board Meeting with Budget Approval at <https://www.youtube.com/live/GD6COX4Y4dE?t=2272s>.



SUMMER 2024

JUNE 2

15th Annual Taste of Del Ray

JUNE 8

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JUNE 15-16

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JUNE 21-22

Portside in Old Town Summer Festival ft. ALX Jazz Fest @ Portside

JUNE 22

7th Annual Official Pride Bar Crawl

JULY 13

Alexandria and USA Birthday Celebration

JULY 20

Second Annual Best of the West by West End Business Association

JULY 27

Beats, Bites and Brewsin Old Town Alexandria (at John Carlyle Square)

AUGUST 17

Del Ray Bands and Brews Summer Bar Crawl

AUGUST 24

Around the World Cultural Food Festival

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Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)



Eastern Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*)



Eastern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta picta*)



Juvenile Woodland Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

Tantalizing Turtles

Turtles have inhabited the earth for 220 million years, largely unchanged during that time; Virginia has 25 species and subspecies of turtles.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Although turtles are slow, unseen much of the year and often trivialized in cartoons, “Turtles provoke a sense of wonder and amazement,” Dr. Matthew Close told 67 enthusiasts on May 15 in an online presentation sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh, the Friends of Little Hunting Creek and the Friends of Mason Neck State Park. Dr. Close is Associate Professor in Radford University’s Biology Department and treasurer of the Virginia Herpetological Society.

Turtles are reptiles that have inhabited the earth for 220 million years, largely unchanged during that time. Virginia has 25 species and subspecies of turtles. In May, turtles start to move around, searching for food, mates and nesting sites.

Most have an upper shell called a carapace with keratin scutes and a lower shell called a plastron, a characteristic that makes them unique. Turtles never shed their shells. Individual turtles’ shells have unique patterns that stick with them, he said.

They are ectothermic or cold blooded and bask and seek sunny spots to raise their body temperature. Turtles eat invertebrates and some vertebrates. Many terrestrial turtles hibernate or overwinter in burrows.

They have low survivorship during their first few years because birds and mammals feed on the eggs and on small turtles. “Most hatchlings do not live past the first year, so it takes them a long time to replace themselves,” according to A Guide to the Turtles of Virginia.

Turtles have what Close called “high site fidelity,” a homing behavior. An individual turtle will spend much time in the same place with their home range usually near their nesting site. “Box turtles need to be in touch with each other,” he offered.

Turtles are ecologically important because they help keep the ecosystem in balance by eating slugs, insects and algae. Birds, fish and raccoons eat turtle eggs.

Virginia maintains a list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need, with Tier I indicating the highest need for protection of the animal and its habitat, down to tier IV, a classification indicating a need for some habitat protection or more information. On the tier I list are these: the bog turtle, eastern chicken turtle, green sea turtle, Kemp’s ridley sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle and the wood turtle.

“We know little about what they do day to day,” Close said, and for some species, “We don’t know what they eat, when they forage or when they mate.”

Virginia Examples

Close described several common Virginia species. The aquatic snapping turtle spends most of its time underwater. The largest turtle in the state, it can be almost 20 inches long and weigh over 50 pounds.

The almost eight-inch woodland box turtle is “very terrestrial” and can close itself totally, said Close. Its brown and orange carapace blends in with dead leaves.

Eastern painted turtles have dark carapaces, yellow plastrons, red and yellow stripes on their neck, legs and tail and a yellow spot behind each eye.

Spotted turtles have a black carapace with at least one yellow spot on each scute. They are threatened by the illegal pet trade.

The most abundant non-native turtle is the red-eared slider.

Multiple Threats

Close outlined several threats: Number one is habitat loss and fragmen



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Larry Cartwright conducting the breeding bird survey in Dyke Marsh.



PHOTO BY HIEN NGUYEN

Osprey bringing a stick to a platform, building a nest.

30 Years of Documenting Breeding

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Birds are all aflutter these days, mating, breeding and raising young.

Larry Cartwright is now in his 31st year of documenting the birds that breed in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, the freshwater tidal marsh just south of Alexandria. Over 270 bird species, breeding and non-breeding, have been observed there over time.

Until July 4, Cartwright and others are recording by species which birds breed and raise their young in the marsh, confirming them as a confirmed breeder, probable breeder, possible breeder or present. In 2023, they recorded 46 species. Of those, seven species were probable breeders and eight were possible breeders. Included were five breeding raptors: ospreys, bald eagles, a red-shouldered hawk, a great horned owl and a barred owl. This was the first time anyone documented five raptors breeding there at the same time.

How does one know a bird is breeding? Volunteers observe behaviors, that birds are carrying food or nesting material, mating, nest building or young are begging parents for food. When nestlings beg, they usually stretch their necks upward and often make repetitive sounds. Some “lazy teens” learn to feed themselves, but still expect parents to bring them food.

Recognized by the Park Service

This spring, Cartwright presented his 30 years of Dyke Marsh surveys at the National Park Service’s Spotlight on National Park Resources, an event that showcases researchers who conduct investigations in D.C.-area national parks.

Summarizing 30 years of data, Cartwright concluded that both land and marsh birds in Dyke Marsh are in decline or have disappeared, and some are changing their breeding habits. Some may be adapting to changes in habitat. These conclusions may be specific to Dyke Marsh or reflect regional

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PHOTO BY JANE GAMBLE

Orchard oriole carrying nesting material, breeding behavior.

changes.

One possible reason is that the invasive emerald ash borer is attacking pumpkin ash trees and dying or declining trees expose nests and increase predation. Other possibilities are changes or decline in the prey base, marsh erosion and tidal channels widening.

Examples

Orchard orioles are successfully raising young, but Baltimore orioles appear to be in decline, with no breeding evidence seen in 2023. Eastern kingbirds are common in Dyke Marsh, but they appear to be modifying their breeding strategy, reports Cartwright. They normally start building nests by late May and have three or four nestlings that they primarily feed dragonflies and damselflies. Other FODM surveyors led by

Jim Waggener are finding that these insect populations appear to be declining.

The striking yellow prothonotary warblers appear to be doing well, perhaps benefiting from the declining ash trees, since there may be more tree cavities for nest sites. Woodpeckers drill holes in tree snags which become nesting sites for these and other cavity-nesting birds.

Least bitterns have stopped breeding activity in the south marsh as channels have widened, but they now seem to be occupying a smaller area, preferring narrow channels in dense cattail habitat. Populations are not dropping. There were six to ten breeding pairs with at least three family groups in 2022 and 2023.



PHOTO BY ED EDER

Marsh wren in Dyke Marsh cattails

Marsh Wrens

“We heard the wrens this morning before there was light to see them. All over the marshes we heard them, singing in a steady chorus, each song a gurgling chatter, brief but repeated with hardly time for breath between. When it became light enough, we saw the singing wrens as far as the eye could reach over the marshes, carried upward on fluttering wings above the grass tops by the very exuberance of their song and sinking back again. The dots were bobbing up and down everywhere, like a natural effervescence given off by the marsh.”

– Louis Halle, *Spring in Washington, 1947*

2017 was the last year marsh wrens were confirmed breeding in Dyke Marsh.

Troubling Findings

On the troubling front, unlike past years, surveys in recent years found no evidence of northern parulas, yellow warblers or Acadian flycatchers.

2017 was the last year marsh wrens were confirmed as breeders, with one male near an active nest. Dyke Marsh historically supported the only known nesting population of marsh wrens in the upper Potomac tidal zone. In 1950, Dyke Marsh observers count

SEE BIRD SURVEY, PAGE 8

WILDLIFE

Tantalizing Turtles

FROM PAGE 6

tation, for example, by development, roads and filling marshes.

Turtles are killed by vehicles and harmed by pesticides and litter.

Some people poach and collect turtles, some for their cultural traditions, for example, as trinkets or talisman.

Diseases like the ranavirus can spread between species.

How to Help Turtles

Leave turtles alone in the wild.

Plant native plants, remove invasive plants and create wild areas.

Don't keep turtles as pets.

Don't relocate turtles. If you have to move one for its safety, move it in the direction it was headed.

Avoid littering and avoid using herbicides and pesticides.

"I enjoyed the program and learned a lot," said Dixie Sommers.

Carolyn J. Gamble concurred: "The talk was a very enjoyable learning experience."

More Information

Turtle Species, <http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/>
Wildlife Rehabilitators, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators/>



Woodland Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

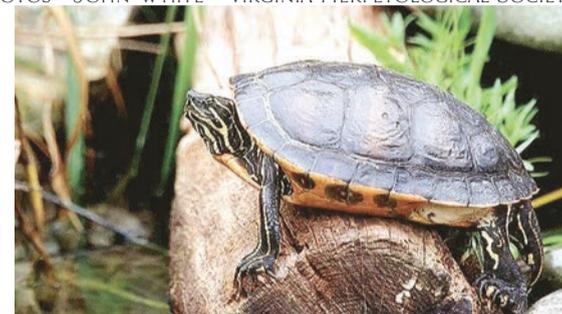


Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

PHOTOS ©JOHN WHITE - VIRGINIA HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*)



Northern Red-bellied Cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*)

Breeding Bird Survey

FROM PAGE 7

ed 87 singing males and in 1998, 38. In 2011, they documented 10 territorial males.

Why do these volunteers go out before dawn to survey breeding birds? "Dyke Marsh is almost like a second home," Cartwright said.

"I delight in the successful breeders like the prothonotary warblers with their bold golden color and ponder the decline of other species. There is both joy and sadness in the marsh."

For 20 years Cartwright has also managed the bluebird box survey at Huntley Meadows Park.



PHOTO BY ED EDER

Prothonotary warbler feeding young out of the nest.



PHOTO BY JOHN CUSHING

Least bittern

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ENTERTAINMENT

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/>

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

At Grist Mill Park
4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

- JUNE**
7 Joe Falero Band (Latin Music)
14 Chuck Brown Band (Go Go/Funk/Soul)
21 Munit Meslin with Qlatse Band (Ethiopian Music)
28 The Artimus Pyle Band - Honoring Ronnie Van Zant's Lynyrd Skynyrd (Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band)

- JULY**
5 Cecily (Soul, Jazz)
12 Strutman Lane (Funk/Pop)
19 Doc Robinson (Rock and Roll)
26 Bio Ritmo (Salsa)
AUGUST
2 Eastern Standard Time (Ska and Reggae)
9 Project Locrea (World Music)

- 16 Burn the Ballroom (Alternate Rock)
23 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)
30 Melissa Qinn Fox (Country/Americana)

At Workhouse Arts Center
9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton
Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

- JUNE**
1 The U.S. Navy Band Cruisers (Pop/Rock)
8 South County High School Jazz Band (Youth Jazz Band)
15 Beginnings - a Celebration of the Music of Chicago (Chicago Tribute Band)
22 Wicked Sycamore (Contemporary Folk)
29 Workhouse Fireworks Festival (Ticketed event. Visit www.workhousearts.org)
JULY
6 EU Sugar Bear (Go Go/Funk)
13 Robin and Linda Williams (Folk)
20 Fast Eddie & The Slowpokes (Blues)
27 Bela Dona Band (Funk/Jazz)
AUGUST
3 The U.S. Air Force Strings (Alt-country/Roots rock)
10 Ocho de Bastos (Latin/Pop)
17 Alex Hamburger (Jazz)
24 The U.S. Army Band Country Roads (Country)

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

SATURDAY/JUNE 15

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: June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 (+ bonus holiday market



The Frank Lloyd Wright Birthday Celebration takes place on Saturday, June 8, 2024 at the Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.



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

Dec 7 or 14). Visit the website: <https://mountvernonfleamarket.wordpress.com/>

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. For more information, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114 or visit 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.fairfaxcounty.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 visitdelray.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.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10

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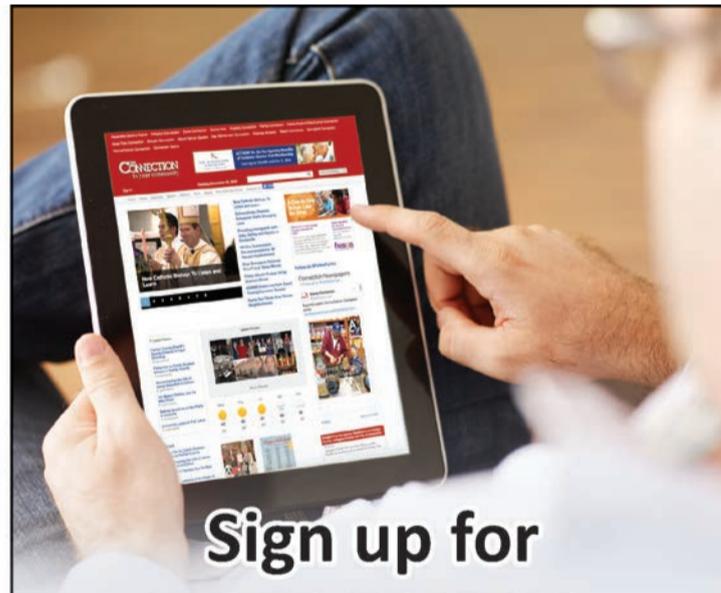
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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 9

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!

THURSDAY/JUNE 6

Author Event with David Baldacci 6:30-8:30 p.m. At Virginia Theological Seminary, 3630 Bishop Walker Circle, Alexandria. The Alexandria Library Foundation is excited to host #1 New York Times bestselling author David Baldacci at this year's Author Event and Reception. Mr. Baldacci's latest book, *A Calamity of Souls*, was released April 16 and subsequently landed at #1 on the New York Times Best Sellers List. Mr. Baldacci will discuss his experience as an author; share tales from the road; and talk about the historical significance and research that went into the writing of this book, more than a decade in the making.

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). 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

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. Featur

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

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Top It Off Grand Opening in Belle View

Top it Off Outlet will celebrate the grand opening of their new location at 1508 A Belle View Blvd, Alexandria, VA 22307, on Wednesday, June 12, with special sales beginning at 4 p.m. and the ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. The ribbon cutting will be hosted by Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Between 4 – 7 pm customers that spend at least \$50 will receive any \$25 item free. This popular store for women's clothing and accessories is packed with summer styles and new jewelry.

Co-owners Karena Rasser and Elizabeth Hoenscheid said, "When we founded Top it Off in 2003, we wanted to bring versatile, timeless styles to women at prices they would love: the look for less. Today we are still very focused on our mission – empowering women with effortless styles that help make them confident in everything they do."

"Tired of corporate America in 2003, we started out getting placement for our hand-sewn ribbon belts around Boston and wherever we were traveling. We have continued to

introduce new classic accessories and apparel, getting some of our best inspiration from Top It Off customers. Together with our team, we are always listening for what women wish they were wearing and strive to bring them the perfect mix of style, quality and price."

Carried in more than 2,000 boutiques and gift stores around the US, Canada and the Caribbean, Top It Off can be found in Belle View Shopping Center, Del Ray or your favorite vacation destination, and always online at TopItOffAccessories.com.

Man Arrested After Fatal Pedestrian Crash

Officers have arrested a man following a fatal pedestrian crash in Huntington.

Yesterday, around 12:37 a.m., officers responded to the intersection of North Kings Highway and Huntington Park Drive for a pedestrian crash. The driver of the vehicle remained on scene and was treated for injuries considered to be not life threatening.

Preliminarily, detectives from FCPD

Crash Reconstruction Unit determined that the driver was driving a 2023 Acura MDX northbound on North Kings Highway. The vehicle left the roadway, struck a median, and continued onto the sidewalk where he struck Lucius Gaskins, 54 of Alexandria, before striking a tree. Gaskins was declared deceased at the scene. The driver was charged with Driving While Intoxicated and Refusal

and is held at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center without bond.

Detectives believe alcohol was a factor in the crash and speed is still under investigation.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

Did You Hear That Other Shoe Drop?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Neither did I. But I sure felt it. The pain that I felt in my left side was somewhat reminiscent of the pain I felt 15 1/2 years ago – in my left side, when my cancer symptoms first presented. After a few days of left side pain, something unexpected happened: The pain migrated from my left side/ribs to my right side/ribs. By the weekend, more symptoms. I remember sitting on the couch at home watching television and not being able to bend over to stand up. Then when I couldn't expand my lungs to take a breath, I knew something was wrong. My symptoms weren't moderating, they were getting worse. Never a good sign. And so, we went to the Emergency Room on Jan. 1st no less. The rest, as you regular readers know, ad nauseum, is that yours truly became "Kenny with cancer."

Recently, that pain returned. A couple of days later, with the pain not subsiding, I realized, given my cancer history, that I should see my primary care physician and have him assess my symptoms. Which I did. He directed me to have an X-Ray. The results of which were inconclusive. And so, the next step in the diagnostic ladder was ordered: a CT scan. (As a cancer patient, my orders are always "Stat," meaning immediately, if not sooner.) The next day I received the CT results from the previous afternoon's scan and sure enough, unfortunately, the cancer had spread. Where it spread, and how much it spread were not really addressed by the radiologists. On these reports, released automatically, often before even my doctor sees the results, are replete with medical jargon describing what the scan shows. It certainly tells a story. However, it's not the whole story. (Certainly not one I understand, anyway).

The whole story and/or a more detailed explanation of the scan comes when the oncologist follows up and summarizes the results. Six days later, including a weekend and I'm still waiting for that call, a call that the oncologist emailed me would be coming Thurs. or Fri. of last week. It's now Tues. Still no call. Certainly I realize I'm not his only patient, and I have been down this road for over 15 years, nevertheless; as much I compartmentalize these kinds of delays, and try to roll with the punches, the truth is, returning to the original scene of the crime, so to speak, has given me cause for concern. Not that I've ever been in remission, but neither have I been "spreading" cancer though my original characterization of stage IV which meant the cancer was inoperable and it had metastasized (meaning spread). Yet, here I am, a cancer survivor going on year 16. The papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV, had spread from my thyroid into my lungs at the beginning of this journey when the pain first manifested (see paragraph one). Which time has clarified as a slow-moving thyroid cancer, rather than the non-small cell lung stage IV, originally diagnosed. Given the results and language of the radiologist's report - that I can understand, it appears that the party (relative calm and control of my initial cancer diagnosis) is over. However, it's only speculation since I've not received a call back from my oncologist. Granted, I have some experience in this cancer department, but I learned a long time ago to wait until I've spoken to the oncologist and not overreact to facts not yet in evidence. And so here I sit waiting, semi patiently. Don't get me wrong, I'm not in a hurry to hear bad news. But I would like to hear something so I can move forward already. Because for the moment, I feel stuck. And 'stuck' is the wrong place for a cancer patient to be.

However, to be honest, I've been waiting/anticipating this day ever since I was first diagnosed back in Feb., '09. It was early March of that same year when I received my first of many infusions (I've estimated that I've been infused over 100 times). And after every quarterly assessment of my disease (in coordination with a CT scan), I always took good news in stride, never getting too high or too low because subconsciously I was preparing for this day. And this day is when the cancer begins to spread. Never a promising sign. (Neither is not hearing back from your oncologist in a timely manner.) It's easy to speculate – in the wrong direction when you've not received the actual details. But that's what cancer does. In addition to the physical damage, there's emotional damage. It's been my experience that cancer changes you emotionally, in ways that you never anticipated. Things matter – or they don't, it's difficult to know how you'll feel from one day to the next. But I always felt there was a next day so the stress of it was manageable, sort of. Now, however, it's been 15+ years since I was first diagnosed "prognosed" and I can't help wondering if I've finally overstayed my welcome, if you know what I mean? Cancer is very often a killer. Who am I to beat the odds? I've always thought that the longer I live with cancer, the closer I'll be to not living with it. And I don't mean a cure, I mean its resurgence. And "spread" is very much 'resurgence.' It's a bad sign for sure. I just hope it's not a fatal one.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

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

WANT TO BE A CHANGE-MAKER?

A shout-out to young people who are aspirational change-makers is wanted in a new youth-led initiative to help address high rates of illiteracy within the community. The Youth Ambassador role in Alexandria provides a young person with a platform to advocate and talk about the falling rates of reading skills and create increased community education and awareness about the vital importance of foundational literacy skills for lifelong benefits. Registration for the Youth Ambassador Program is now available. The 4-month

youth leadership development initiative will provide training and support, plus connection to 600 other young people around the world. Email: Ambassador@worldliteracy-foundation.org

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. www.volunteeral-alexandria.org

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and

Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeral-alexandria.org/ALIVE>

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

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board

of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsOfAMHC@gmail.com.

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@aol.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 10
ing more than 80-plus vendors including food and drink to purchase.

SATURDAY/JUNE 8

Frank Lloyd Wright Birthday Celebration. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Celebrate the life and work of Frank Lloyd Wright! Enjoy an open house tour of the Pope-Leighey House and learn about the history of the house and its designer. In the yard, enjoy activities related to Wright's life and work, snap a photo wearing his iconic style of hat, and grab a celebratory bite of cake. Cost is \$15 for adults and \$5 for students (K-12), 5 and under are free.

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. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

MAY

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

Fri. 14: Asleep At The Wheel 'Happy Trails Tour' \$39.50

Sat. 15: Pieces Of A Dream \$49.50

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

Sun. 23: Christian de Mesones aka Big New York \$39.50

Mon. 24: The Wallflowers w/ Justin Trawick \$75.00

Tue. 25: The Wallflowers w/ Justin Trawick \$75.00

Fri. 28: Bela Dona Band \$39.50

Sat. 29: Gary Puckett & The Union Gap \$45.00



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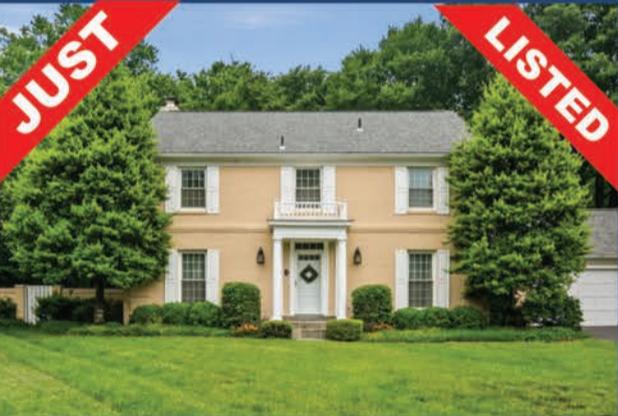
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