

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 26, 2024



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Artist rendering of the upgraded complex due to be completed in 2026.

Groundbreaking Coming for Old Mount Vernon High School Project

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

As the Richmond Highway area revitalizes, the project at the old Mount Vernon High School plays an important role in helping local residents master technology skills and higher paying jobs.

An important step with that effort is the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony to launch the “Human Development Center,” at the school site.

According to Fairfax County, this center is part of the effort to provide “Pathways to Opportunity” for the community, and will focus on education, workforce development and life skills training programs.

“This is another remarkable \$100+ million investment, transformation and tremendous opportunity for our community. While the interior renovations have been ongoing for more than a year and a half, we are now entering the final stages of restoring the former school.

This project breathes new life into an iconic site, creating spaces for education, incubation, the arts and community services that will serve our Mount Vernon community for generations to come,” said Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck.

This high school renovation transformation is called an Adaptive Reuse Project, where they will offer educational programs to support workforce development. Phase 1 is budgeted at \$81 million. The county decided to focus on a phased approach to redevelopment that would align with the EMBARK and Bus Rapid Transit project along the Richmond Highway Corridor, which is in the planning phase.

The county said the “Complementary Elements,” at the school are the business incubation spaces, and the visual and perform-



Old Mount Vernon High School logo.

ing arts programs that are in synergy with the core and anchor element programs. Additionally, the Welcome Center and the current library, which will be converted to an event space with this project, will be used by the community for gatherings. In the meantime, the property has not gone unused. This includes the renovation and opening of the gym, a satellite Fire Marshal’s Office for the South County area, a Fairfax County Public Schools registration site, and relocation of the teen/senior center from the South County Center, according to county documents.

If you go...

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

Original Mount Vernon High School Renovation

Saturday, Oct. 5 at 10 a.m.

8333 Richmond Hwy.

Mount Vernon, Va

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/capital-projects/original-mount-vernon-high-school>

Although the completion date has been loosely set in the Summer 2026, officials have construction updates periodically on the website. The last one on Sept. 9, 2024 included some utility installations adjacent to Maury Place nearby, demolition activities and investigation of existing conditions.

Architectural Elements

Years ago, officials looked at the architecture of the original Mount Vernon High School which is on a 22-acre piece of property that was once part of George Washington’s estate. The school was built in 1939 in

the Colonial Revival, style of architecture and it was worth preserving.

In 1987, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources determined that the high school property was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the county said. The school was listed on the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register in December 2017, and in the National Registry of Historic Places in May 2018. The approximately 140,000-square-foot OMOVHS facility consists of the main high school building and several smaller buildings to the west and south of the main structure. There are two athletic fields to the southeast of the property that are scheduled for community use, the county said on their website.

Time To Walk to End Alzheimer’s
Health and long-term care costs for people living with dementia are projected to reach \$360 billion this year and nearly \$1 trillion in 2050

It’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s season, and hundreds of Northern Virginia residents will unite this weekend in a sea of purple to raise awareness and

fund for the Alzheimer’s Association. Walks will take place on the National Mall in DC on Saturday and at the Reston Town Center on Sunday. Walk to End Alzheimer’s is the

world’s largest fundraiser for Alzheimer’s care, support and research.

Among those returning to walk this SEE TIME TO WALK. PAGE 12

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TRASH CLEANUP

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



The Brownie and Daisy troops checked in at one of two stations, here with NPS volunteer coordinator, Scott Hill and FODMer Terry Chandler.



The scouts used grabbers and their fingers to pick up many discarded bottle caps in the picnic area.

Volunteers Tackle Never-ending Trash

Plastics can take hundreds of years to decompose.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Glenda Booth is President of the Friends of Dyke Marsh.

“There’s one, there’s one,” they shouted, as the 20 girls from Brownie troop 53149 and Daisy troop 53209 spotted and bagged plastic and metal bottle caps strewn around the picnic grounds of Belle Haven Park. These Stratford Landing Elementary School Girl Scouts volunteered at the Sept. 21 International Coastal Cleanup, sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh and the National Park Service. The troops are earning their “Eco Learner Badge.”

On a beautiful sunny morning, 45 adults and 21 youngsters filled bags with debris discarded along the Potomac River and in Belle Haven Park, the Marina and Dyke Marsh, from plastic bottles to cardboard to Styrofoam.

Annette Coats and Emily Noh, from Thomas Jefferson High School’s Environmental Impact Club, encouraged the scouts by explaining how pollution degrades the land, water and air. Addressing climate change, they told the youngsters to expect more severe weather events. “It could get really hot,” Annette said.

On Sept. 7, just north of Saturday’s sites, 40 volunteers collected 37 bags of trash in the Hunting Creek embayment and Jones Point Park in a cleanup sponsored by Porto Vecchio Condominiums and the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust.

Jen Cole, Director of Clean Fairfax, says the most common trash items found in cleanups are cigarette butts and single use plastic items like bottles and food service items. In the past, plastic grocery



Thomas Jefferson High School students Annette Coats and Emily Noh talked to the scouts about pollution and climate change.

bags were in the top ten list. She credits Fairfax County’s \$.05 bag tax for reducing the use of plastic bags and keeping them out of the environment.

Trash Harms

Earlier this month a study found that the world creates 57 million tons of plastic pollution every year and it spreads from the oceans to the mountains to the inside of people’s bodies. This quantity could fill New York City’s Central Park with plastic waste as high as the Empire State Building, researchers estimated.

Some plastics can take hundreds of years

Information

Friends of Dyke Marsh, www.fodm.org
GW Memorial Parkway, National Park Service, www.nps.gov/gwmp
Litter Free Virginia, <https://www.litterfreeva.org/>

microplastics enter the food web and can be ingested by aquatic organisms, fish, birds and other wildlife. Waterfowl, turtles and other animals can get ensnared in plastic six-pack rings.

Styrofoam or polystyrene, used for coolers, cups, trays and carryout “clamshells,” breaks apart into small pieces, some so small they are invisible to humans. Birds and other animals mistake the pieces for food; ingested polystyrene can be fatal.

Small animals are attracted to food morsels inside discarded containers and can get trapped. Some, like lizards, crawl inside for protection and suffocate or starve.

Federal Initiative

Park Service: George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) officials hope to reduce plastic waste by replacing current water fountains with year-round fountains and water bottle-filling stations. With the support of 15 local organizations, GWMP received a \$475,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to fund replacements. NPS has installed a new fountain at Alexandria Avenue and a second is coming soon at Theodore Roosevelt Island. “This initiative is particularly important along the Mount Vernon Trail, a popular recreational route with over one million annual visitors,” says Jonathan Molineaux, GWMP Partnership Coordinator.

The Department of Interior last year announced plans for a phaseout of single-use plastics on public lands within the decade,

“Less than 10 percent of the plastic that has ever been produced has been recycled and recycling rates are not increasing.”

— U.S. Department of Interior

to decompose. In addition to being unsightly, many items cause harm. Most plastics break down into smaller fragments. These

SEE TRASH CLEANUP, PAGE 4

TRASH CLEANUP

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Kristin, Mackenzie, Matt and Miriam Perkins collected trash in Dyke Marsh.



Alisa Wong, Charles Jackson and Jonathan Molineaux staffed a check-in station. Wong is holding a broken flower pot and Charles a piece of styrofoam.

Volunteers Tackle Never-ending Trash



Ivy Gamberini, a Brownie, has earned many badges.

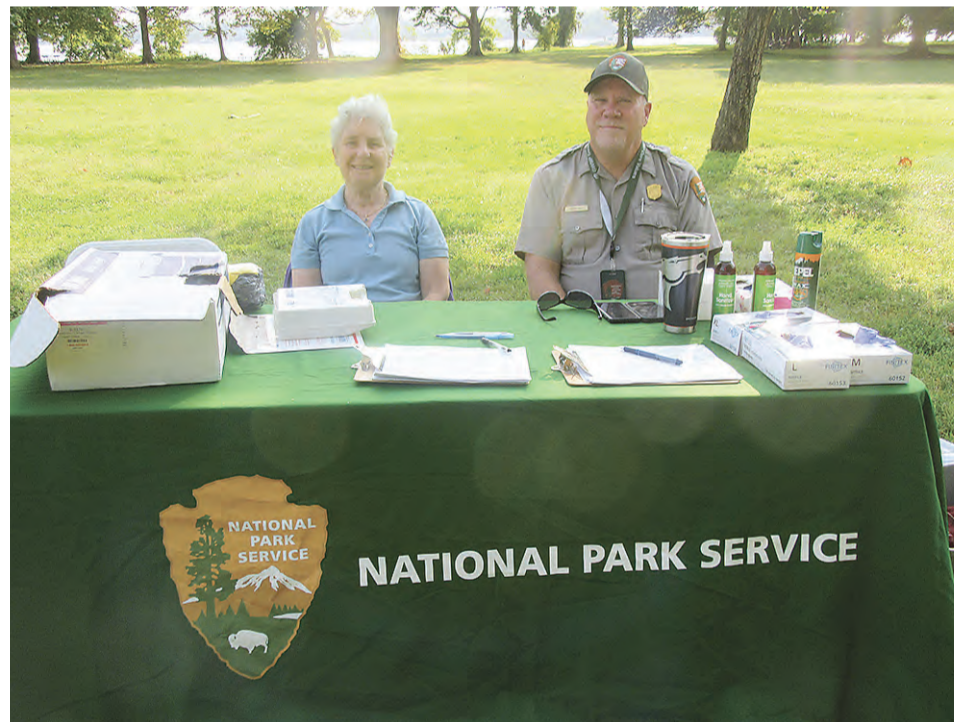
FROM PAGE 3

to reduce their procurement, sale and distribution.

“Less than 10 percent of the plastic that has ever been produced has been recycled and recycling rates are not increasing,” the announcement said. “Plastics, including unnecessary and easily substituted single-use plastic products, are devastating fish and wildlife around the world.”

Solutions

“Community cleanups, while always important, are not the solution to mismanaged trash and recycling,” says Cole. “The solutions include policy changes and support for programs that support residents’



Terry Chandler, Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteer, and Scott Hill, GWMP Volunteer Coordinator, staffed one of two check-in stations.

“Plastics, including unnecessary and easily substituted single-use plastic products, are devastating fish and wildlife around the world.”

— U.S. Department of Interior

and businesses’ management of their trash and recycling and reducing the amount of single-use plastic getting into (and out of)

the hands of people to begin with. We should be working on a bottle deposit program in the Commonwealth because all those things are what are found in cleanups.”

Foam cups and takeout containers may be on the way out in Virginia thanks to a new law. According to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, on July 1, 2025, food establishments with 20 or more locations must stop using expanded polystyrene (EPS) containers. By July 1, 2026, remaining food establishments must comply. The ban applies to any food vendors that serve prepared food, including restaurants, cafeterias, food trucks, catering com-



Among the most interesting items collected was this plastic pig.

One Way to Help:

Oct. 5, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Youth Trash Cleanup, at Belle Haven Park. Register at <https://mountvernontrail.org/events/>

panies and grocery store salad bars.

Clean Virginia Waterways supports litter taxes, recycling refunds (also called “bottle bills”) and extended producer responsibility programs. The latter programs require manufacturers and producers of products to take responsibility for the goods’ end of life. Depending on the law’s coverage, the products could be anything from mattresses to electronics to packaging.

The Mount Vernon area’s Girl Scouts are ready to take it on. As they began their work Saturday, they recited the Girl Scout promise, committing to “make the world a better place.”

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Good Shepherd Housing Marks a Milestone

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



Supervisor Dan Storck has advocated for affordable housing in Mount Vernon.



Officials from all sides cut the ribbon on Good Shepherd's 100th housing unit.

Officials cut ribbon on their 100th housing unit.

BY MIKE SALMON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Gunston apartments in Lorton, marking the 100th housing unit Good Shepherd has acquired for their clients.

Recently Good Shepherd Housing and local officials cut the ribbon in the Terrace Towne of

The ribbon cutting was attended by a handful of officials that played big roles in this area in-

cluding Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon), Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia), Supervisor Andres Jimenez (D-Ma-

son), and U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly as well as Genee Hayes, executive director from Good Shepherd Housing.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors also recognized Good Shepherd for their 50th anniversary this year.

"This milestone was achieved during GSH's 50th anniversary year and is a testament to their unwavering commitment to providing affordable housing for everyone in our community," Storck said.

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U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly addresses the crowd.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

Governor's Use of Power & Authority Questioned

Sparked by Executive Order establishing cell phone-free education K-12 public schools.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For the school year 2024–25, a cell phone pilot program will launch at select Fairfax County Public Schools middle and high schools. The pilot tightens previous school board policy.

Middle school students will lock their cell phones in their personal magnetically sealed pouch and put them in their backpacks to be unlocked at the end of the day, while high school students will place their cell phones into a cell phone storage unit at the beginning of each class.

Superintendent Michelle Reid said that it would provide the division with “invaluable data to inform future rules around cell phone usage in our schools.”

Meanwhile, Virginia’s governor issued an executive order to create “cell phone free education” to go into effect January 2025. And members of the Virginia Senate have introduced Senate Bill No. 738 as a more collaborative approach.

“Virginia’s Constitution does not give the Governor control over Virginia schools and his Executive Order is as effective as sending a letter to each school system,” said Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell.

On Sept. 17, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) released its Final Guidance for cell phone-free education in Virginia’s K-12 public schools. Youngkin directed the VDOE to solicit public opinion regarding cell phones in schools. VDOE created definitions of “cell phone-free education” and published model implementation plans to inform public school systems’ cell phone policies.

The next day, on Sept. 18, three members of the Virginia State Senate Democratic



Sen. Scott Surovell.



Sen. Stella G. Pekarsky.

Workgroup on School Mobile Phone Policy prefiled Senate Bill 738: Public elementary and secondary schools; student discipline; student cell phone possession and use for the 2025 legislative session convening on Jan. 8, 2025. Sen. Stella G. Pekarsky (D-36) of Fairfax is the chief patron of Senate Bill No. 738.

“As the former School Board Chair of the largest school division in the Commonwealth, I understand it is imperative that we strike the right balance through legislative action,” said Pekarsky. “Giving school boards, localities, and communities the tools to implement these policies to ensure their needs are met is the common sense way to accomplish distraction-free education for all.”

SB 738 seeks to establish clear, age-appropriate policies for cell phone use in schools, emphasizing the need for collaboration among various educational authorities through local school board control.

“If Governor Youngkin wants to make truly binding and effective education policy, it requires the collaboration and involvement of the General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education, and each local school board,

SEE GOVERNOR’S USE, PAGE 15

Let us know about an upcoming event
www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Thursday, October 3 between 7:20pm – 7:50pm (5 minutes)
Thursday, October 17 between 9:20pm – 9:55pm (5 minutes)

The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption. To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via e-mail, write to Events@MountVernon.org via e-mail, write to Events@MountVernon.org

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WILDLIFE



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
Box turtles are “of greatest conservation need” in Virginia and vulnerable to vehicle collisions.



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
In Northern Virginia, drivers are most aware of possible collisions with deer.



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
Salamanders, like this marbled salamander, are small and slow and migrate at night, difficult for drivers to see. “Thousands get squished,” says Dr. David Luther of GMU.

Three ways to reduce these collisions: influence driver behavior, influence animal behavior and separate animals from roads.



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
This painted turtle was the victim of a car strike, and dropped off for treatment at the Virginia Wildlife Center.



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
Red spotted newt red eft. Salamanders migrate at night and are difficult for drivers to see.

Solving the Vehicle-Wildlife Collision Problem

A well-designed over or underpass for wildlife can reduce animal-vehicle collisions by up to 90 percent.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

There are over one million vehicle-wildlife collisions in the United States every year, costing over \$8 billion and tens of thousands of human injuries, GMU biology professor Dr. David Luther told Green Breakfast attendees in an online Sept. 14 talk titled “Zooming through Nature: the Wildlife Costs of Modern Transportation.”

And while human-wildlife conflicts are usually bad news, he said his talk would offer “some pessimism, sprinkled with optimism,” including “how we can be proactive and mitigate human-caused effects. This is not just Bambi sort of stuff,” he quipped.

- ◆ A few Virginia statistics:
- ◆ Each deer collision costs around \$41,000 to the state and to people.
- ◆ Black bear collisions are rising, numbered around 1,100 to 1,300 a year.
- ◆ 81,694 drivers crashed into wildlife crossing roads in 2022, making Virginia the ninth worst state for vehicle-wildlife collisions, according to State Farm

insurance data. A “Transportation Is Everywhere” slide mapped the world’s 54 million kilometers of roads, 1.2 million kilometers of railways and 1.4 million kilometers of shipping lanes, all of which can affect terrestrial and marine wildlife, from whales to lizards to snakes. Transportation systems worldwide adversely affect 2,311 vertebrate species of which 1,134 are globally threatened, he noted.

Solutions

Luther outlined three approaches that could reduce these collisions: influence driver behavior, influence animal behavior and separate animals from roads.

Three types of structures can help separate wildlife from roads: underpasses, viaducts and overpasses. He provided one local example, an underpass on the Fairfax County Parkway near U.S. 1.

Some animals are “choosy,” will use only a certain type. Deer, for example, use underpasses, but some animals avoid dark spaces. Others are reluctant to be exposed on overpasses.

Still structures like these are “win-wins” because they make roads safer, create connectivity corridors for animals and “help biodiversity and wildlife thrive,” he said.

A Virginia Department of Transportation study found, “When you do it right, you end up reducing animal-vehicle collisions by up to 90 percent.”

Luther added, “You can recover costs in two to four years, so it can be cost effective.”

Small Animals Too

Most reporting involves large animals like deer and bears, but smaller animals are at risk too. Many animals are hard wired to migrate and disperse.

Spotted salamanders, for example, breed

“You can recover costs [of building wildlife overpass or underpass] in two to four years, so it can be cost effective.”

— Dr. David Luther

in vernal pools in the spring and then move to forage in forests. They are small and slow and migrate at night, difficult for drivers to see. “Thousands get squished,” he said. The state built a salamander tunnel in Charlottesville so they can travel under a road.

In some places, wildlife can benefit from curvy roads that force drivers to slow down.

Flashing detection monitors signaling that an animal is near can help. Car manufacturers are “toying with options,” including alerting devices. Luther said that Teslas today can alert the driver if a pedestrian is near so perhaps vehicles will do the same for wildlife some day.

Virginia Is Acting

The Virginia General Assembly directed state agencies to prepare a wildlife corridor action plan to identify and reduce barriers to wildlife movement. The completed plan spotlights high quality habitats for priority species such as state- and federally-protected species and those at risk. It also identifies human barriers to wildlife movement and recommends wildlife cross-

Find Out More

Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Virginia-Wildlife-Corridor-Action-Plan.pdf>

ing projects that could promote driver safety and habitat connectivity.

Luther listed 11 wildlife species designated by the state “of greatest conservation need” that are threatened by roads, including bog, wood, spotted and box turtles; timber rattlesnakes; eastern spotted skunk and fishers (members of the weasel family). Of the 11, the wood, box and spotted turtles are most commonly seen in Northern Virginia.

Transportation systems also fragment and disconnect habitat and create noise and chemical pollution.

Luther challenged: “We can reduce collisions and provide economic and ecological benefits. Virginia is proactively attending to this issue for both people and wildlife. Our natural heritage is ours to take care of.”

This monthly breakfast is sponsored by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District.



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
Eastern box turtle baby crossing road.
8 ♦ MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 2, 2024



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
Black bear strolling along a road. Collisions with black bears are increasing in Virginia.



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
White-tailed deer entering the travel way
www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
Snapping turtle crossing gravel road



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
Eastern box turtles are vulnerable and designated by Virginia as “of greatest conservation need.”



PHOTO BY STEVEN DAVID JOHNSON, CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY
Snapping turtle rescue.



PHOTO BY LORI A. CASH
White-tailed deer alongside gravel road
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 2, 2024 ♦ 9

Accessibility Improved at State Park

Mason Neck adds all-terrain wheelchairs.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Mason Neck State Park was the scene of a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sept. 25th to showcase the park's new all-terrain wheelchairs. The new chairs are expected to benefit park guests with mobility issues by allowing access to trails they couldn't access before.

Arrival of the Trakmaster S2 all-terrain powered wheelchair, was heralded by park management, and State Delegates Rozia Henson (D-19) and Kathy Tran (D-18), before a demonstration of the equipment. Director of State Parks, Dr. Melissa Baker said the accommodation will allow "escape into nature with more access for people with limited mobility; to more primitive trails for greater immersion." Going where normal wheelchairs cannot, use of the equipment is without charge to adults and children, but must be reserved 48 hours in advance.

Part of a two-year pilot program, the Mason Neck special purpose chair is the first of six being deployed at State parks; one within each region. Capable of handling extreme surfaces for "life off the sidewalk", the chair can reach speeds of 5.5 miles per hour, and ten plus miles distance on one battery charge. The \$20,000 chairs were funded through revenues from specialized Virginia State Park license plates. The funding



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation director Matt Wells heralds the addition of all-terrain wheelchairs saying "the outdoors are for everyone."



Department of Conservation & Recreation director Matt Wells, State Parks director Dr. Melissa Baker, Del. Kathy Tran, accessibility advisor Kris Gulden, and Del. Rozia Henson, symbolically cut the ribbon on the all-terrain wheelchair program.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

program, started in 2019, directs \$15 from the specialized plates to parks, and has resulted in over \$192,000 going to state parks.

The wheelchair caps off an extended effort by the park staff and their support group, Friends of Mason Neck State Park, to review and improve accessibility of the park for all. The Friends of Mason Neck State Park, with help from accessibility advisor Kris Gulden, were instrumental in bringing this and other accommodations to the park. Friends president and founding member Hilary Clawson tells of meeting wheelchair user Kris Gulden on the trail. Gulden became an advisor to the Friends board of directors and an inspiration to adding additional accommodations to those the park

staff had already implemented. They were aided park officials and Tran, whose district included the park before the recent redistricting. Tran and her family have long been Mason Neck park users and champions. Clawson shares, "The biggest change is the greater awareness and conversations we're having about improvements we want to make in the future."

Recently, the staff improved the handicapped parking space at the Osprey View Trailhead; installed a wheelchair accessible path to the accessible picnic tables; and added a second wooden rail along the Osprey View trail. The Friends of Mason Neck State Park covered the cost of the rail and path materials, and assisted in the installation of

the railing.

The park now has three accessible picnic tables with accommodating paths. The park also installed an Enchroma viewer behind the Visitor Center for people with color vision impairments. The viewer supplements the Enchroma glasses previously purchased by the Friends. Accessible kayak equipment, which includes a transfer board, stabilizing pontoons, paddle grips, and a trailer, allows greater water access.

Members of the Friends of Mason Neck State Park, with assistance by Gulden, recently created a trifold brochure that highlights the Mason Neck State Park's accessibility features. It was distributed to recreation and physical thera-

pists at Inova's Mount Vernon and Fairfax hospitals, and to a spinal cord injury support networking group. The brochure, available at the park visitors' center, is another part of the Friends' continuing efforts to improve accessibility at the park. The park hosted an event for International Adaptive Activity Day on Aug. 1, and holds an annual Eagle Festival held each May.

Wheelchair accessible trails include: Osprey View, High Point Road, Dogue, and Marsh View. There is an ADA-compliant observation deck planned for which design, planning, and fund raising are in progress. For more about the Friends work, see

<https://friendsofmasonneck-stateparkinc.wildapricot.org/>



Kris Gulden demonstrates using a transfer board to move from a typical wheelchair to the special all-terrain chair.



Working together for common cause created a friendship for Kris Gulden and Friends of Mason Neck State Park's president Hilary Clawson, who meet on the trail.



Those documenting the first official use of the new equipment had to hurry to keep up.

CHAMPS

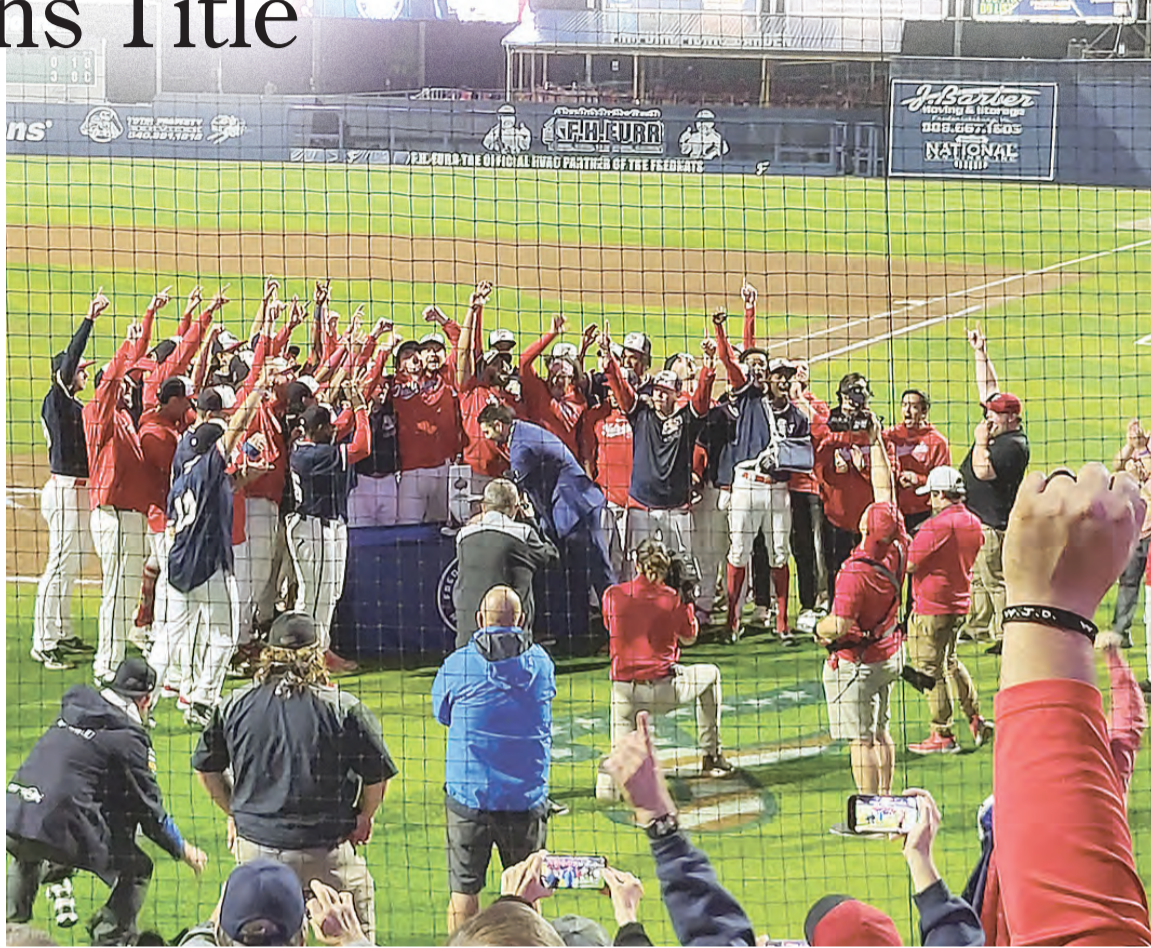
Fredericksburg Nationals Baseball Team Wins Title

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The Fredericksburg Nationals Minor League Baseball team went all the way this year and won the championship of the Carolina League last Wednesday by defeating the Kannapolis Cannonballers for the title. Players on this Minor League team use this as a steppingstone to the Washington Nationals team up in the Nation's Capital. In Fredericksburg, a historic town about 45 miles south of Alexandria, it was a big deal for the local baseball fans. Earlier this summer, the choir from Mount Vernon High School made the trip and sang the National Anthem before one of the games.

From behind home plate, the victorious FredNats can be seen celebrating their first championship season.



'Boosted Is Better'
Protect yourself against the next waves of viruses, says Inova and FX Health District.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Infectious disease specialists at Inova and the Fairfax Health District emphasize the importance of updated COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccinations, including flu, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) and pneumonia for everyone, especially vulnerable populations. Also, ensure you are up to date on tetanus and pertussis vaccines.

In an interview, Dr. Tracy Connell from Inova emphasized the need for updated vaccines due to evolving strains.

SEE 'BOOSTED', PAGE 14

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BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Night Sky, an original drama by playwright Patricia Connelly, will make its debut Sept. 27 on stage at Aldersgate Church Community Theater.

Night Sky is a family drama with humor about the bonds of family, friendship, and the inescapable changes brought on by aging as Julia, a woman in her 70s, attempts to hold onto her home, her independence, and life as she knows it.

“As a playwright, I am drawn to tell the stories of women and girls who are driven to overcome the obstacles that society unfairly places in their paths simply because of gender,” Connelly said.

Connelly began writing Night Sky after reading news stories about people losing their homes to foreclosure during the economic crisis.

“I also read about working class people who lost jobs and savings because of the downturn in the market,” Connelly added.

The central character in Night Sky is Julia, a woman in her 70s living in the South Bronx. Despite being healthy and still working, Julia is suddenly forced to face the loss of her home due to circumstances beyond her control. As people around Julia make assumptions and try to make decisions for her, Julia, with her indomitable will, remains determined to move forward independently and on her own terms.

The cast of Night Sky features Patricia Nicklin as Julia, Christine Tankersley as Julia’s daughter Jill, Kate Ives as her friend Doris, Amelie Chirhart as Julia’s granddaughter



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS

Patricia Nicklin (Julia), Brad Sperber (Richard), and Christine Tankersley (Jill) star in the Aldersgate Church Community Theater production of “Night Sky,” which opens Sept. 25 and runs through Oct. 13. www.acctonline.org

Sam, and Brad Sperber as Richard.

“Julia has lived in the Bronx for over 50 years,” said Nicklin of her character. “She is a young 72, full of energy, spirit, and a bit of moxie, which she brings to her long-time job at a diner, to her stargazing visits with her granddaughter, Sam, and to her nightly card games with her best friend, Doris. Suddenly, Julia’s life is buffeted by dramatic changes — both societal and personal — affecting her family life, her home, and her work. But she is bold and determined not to let the expectations of others control her.”

Executive producer of Night Sky is Marg Sorooos with Margaret Chapman and Bobbie

Herbst as producers. Award-winning Joanna Henry is directing.

“This is a story about life,” Henry said. “It is about the difficulties, the joys, and the unexpected challenges life throws at us. It also focuses on the different dynamics between mothers and daughters, friends, employers. We can all identify with what is unfolding on the stage and recognize a part of us in these characters, whether a teenager looking for a shooting star, a mother trying to cope with personal struggles, a diner owner re-evaluating life, a neighbor wishing to be closer to family, or a grandmother facing the sunset of life while looking for the North Star. Night

Sky is a metaphor for life with all its imperfections.”

Tankersley plays Jill, Julia’s daughter and mother to teenage Sam. “Jill is in a position so many people are in these

“This is a story about life. It is about the difficulties, the joys, and the unexpected challenges life throws at us.”

— Night Sky director
Joanna Henry

days,” said Tankersley. “She struggles with giving both her mother and daughter the independence they need, but still trying to keep them safe.

She is doing the best she can to make sure everyone is safe and taken care of but not everyone always agrees on the best way to do that.”

Added Connelly, “My hope is that audiences appreciate and take away from the play the resilience of the ageless human spirit, a recognition of the importance of family and friendship at all ages, and a deeper understanding of the meaning of home.”

“Night Sky” is playing Sept. 27 through Oct. 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308. For tickets or more information visit www.acctonline.org.

Time To Walk to End Alzheimer’s

FROM PAGE 1

year is Centreville resident Tracy Cheifetz, captain of Team Amy’s Army. The team of family and friends has been participating in the Northern Virginia Walk since 2018 in honor of Cheifetz’s mother, Amy Shimkus, who died with Alzheimer’s in March 2022. “My Mom was a nurse. She participated in drug trials and knew that they would not help her — but might help others someday,” says Cheifetz, who shares her time and enthusiasm for the cause as a member of the Northern Virginia

Walk planning committee. She encourages people to participate. “If you know someone who has or had Alzheimer’s, the Walk is a great way to honor them. I walk to raise money and hope that one day we will end Alzheimer’s.”

Natasha Carnell of Alexandria will be walking on the National Mall in honor of her mother, Marty, who is living with Alzheimer’s. Carnell knows how hard caregiving can be.

“What keeps me up at night is thinking about how many individuals living with dementia do not have access to the same level of care and commitment as Mom

does” says Carnell, who serves on the DC Walk planning committee. “I am proud of the work we are doing to raise much needed funds for continued research towards a cure and am hopeful for our collective futures.”

The number of people affected by Alzheimer’s is staggering. Nearly 7 million Americans are currently living with the disease, and more than 11 million family members and friends are providing their unpaid care. Health and long-term care costs for people living with dementia are projected to reach \$360 billion this year and nearly \$1 trillion in 2050.

“There has never been a greater need for the community to join in the fight against Alzheimer’s disease by participating in Walk to End Alzheimer’s,” said Kate Rooper, President and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association National Capital Area Chapter. “Funds raised through the Walk will provide information, education and support to people living with Alzheimer’s and their families and caregivers, while also contributing to advancing critically needed research.”

In addition to the Walks in DC and Northern Virginia this weekend, the chapter will hold Walks in Old Town Manassas on Oct.

19 and at the National Harbor and in Winchester on Oct. 26. Participants will learn about resources, support and volunteer opportunities. They also participate in a poignant Promise Garden ceremony — an experience that signifies the solidarity of the Walk participants in the fight against the disease as each person holds a Promise Garden flower representing their personal reason to end the disease.

Participation in Walk to End Alzheimer’s is free. Walkers are encouraged to raise funds. Visit alz.org/ncawalks or call 800.272.3900.

ENTERTAINMENT



Housing Alexandria is hosting its annual Fall Festival on Thursday, Sept 26, 2024 at The Garden Alexandria featuring live band entertainment, a jazz performance from the Metropolitan School of the Arts performing arts students, food and wine trucks and games.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

NOW THRU SEPT. 28

"Fascinating Fiber, Alluring Fabric" Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Features art that is either created with fiber or fabric or depicts fiber or fabric as its subject. Opening reception on Friday, Sept. 6, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on Sunday, September 29). Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

GROW WITH YOUR GARDEN AT GREEN SPRING GARDEN TALKS

The Park Authority is here to help gardeners this fall with a plant-tastic lineup of Green Spring Garden Talks, 4603 Green Spring Road in Alexandria. Learn some tips and techniques that will spruce up your plants and other "soil-mates" with the help from fellow gardeners, VCE Master Gardeners and naturalists. All events are held at Green Spring Gardens and are \$12 per person. Additional fees apply for out-of-county residents.

Alternatives for Invasive Plants. Friday, Oct. 11, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Discover the different plants you can grow to avoid other bullying plants from taking over your yard.

Make a Backyard Sanctuary for Wildlife. Saturday, Oct. 26, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Learn gardening techniques

www.connectionnewspapers.com



Old Town Cocktail Week takes place Sept. 26 to Oct. 6, 2024 at locations throughout Alexandria.

for attracting pollinators, birds and other native insects into your garden to improve habitat loss. **Composting Made Simple.** Friday, Nov. 8, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Learn the value that comes with putting compost into your yard and garden instead of your trashcan. **Adapt & Thrive with Climate Change.** Saturday, Nov. 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Extension Master Gardeners share ways to adapt your garden practices to changing climate patterns through plant selection, water management and more!

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 25

"Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons Lecture. 7 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. The Alexandria Historical Society is pleased to announce its upcoming lecture, "Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons." Local historian Madeline Feisterstein will present her research on the five military prisons of Alexandria during the Civil War. Her lecture will provide an in-depth look at life within these institutions for both Confederate and Union prisoners, examining how their presence disrupted the daily lives of Alexandria residents. Additionally, Madeline will explore the medical treatment of jailed soldiers and prisoners of war at hospitals such as Grosvenor Branch, which was the confiscated Lee-Fendall House. Attendees will gain insight into first-hand accounts from individuals who experienced imprisonment within

Alexandria's city limits, from the earliest days of battle to the beginnings of Reconstruction. For more information, contact David Heiby, Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society, at davidheiby@gmail.com or 703-869-0872.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 26

Housing Alexandria's Annual Fall Festival. 4-8 p.m. At The Garden Alexandria, 5380 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Housing Alexandria, a leading non-profit dedicated to affordable housing, invites the community to its annual Fall Festival. Tickets range from \$10-\$60, with all proceeds directly supporting affordable housing initiatives in Alexandria. Tickets include food, beverages, and raffle entries – a complete package for a fun-filled evening with a purpose. The family-friendly fair hosts a captivating performance by a jazz/tap ensemble of talented students (ages 12-18) from the renowned Metropolitan School of the Arts (MSA). Guests can also enjoy live music from local band, Live at Zac's House, while indulging in various Alexandria vendors. To purchase tickets, go to www.housingalexandria.org.

SEPT. 26 TO OCT. 6

Old Town Cocktail Week. At locations throughout Old Town Alexandria.

ROMEO AND JULIET ABLAZE



SEPTEMBER 28 - 29, 2024

"Romeo & Juliet - Ablaze" will be performed by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra on Sept. 28-29 in Alexandria.

who have lived there, and the changing community surrounding it, makes the location important to ALX275, the City of Alexandria's 275th Anniversary.

SEPT. 28-29

"Romeo & Juliet - Ablaze." Presented by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. On Sept. 28 at 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, Alexandria. On Sept. 29, at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, Alexandria. Featuring James Ross, conductor; Marlisa Woods, violin; Chris Franke, violin; Aaron Clay, bass; Antonín Dvořák: Carnival Overture; Jennifer Higdon: Concerto 4-3 (Excerpts); Maurice Ravel: Menuet from Tombeau de Couperin; Gabriel Fauré: Pavane; Gabriela Ortiz :Kauyumari; Sergei Prokofiev: Selections from Romeo and Juliet Suites.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 29

Chalk-A-Block. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Throughout Old Town Alexandria. Follow the Old Town North Tern's footprints from site to site throughout Old Town North and complete the scavenger hunt to be entered to win prizes. Chalk artists will transform the sidewalks and parking lots of Old Town North into their canvases. Live music will fill the air from a variety of artists including local favorites Mars Rodeo at Montgomery Park and Yellow Door Jazz at Canal Center. Local artists and makers will be on hand to showcase their works. From ceramics to jewelry to bath products to books and more, there's something for everyone. For more information about Old Town North Alliance, visit: <https://www.old-townnorthalliance.com>.

OCT. 4-6

Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour. 6-9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Taste unlimited samples from Virginia wineries after hours at George Washington's estate. Bring a blanket and relax on the east

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11



The Chalk-A-Block will be held on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024 in Old Town Alexandria.

Old Town Cocktail Week will feature spirited events, workshops and activities at shops and restaurants around Old Town. The festivities kick off at Art on the Rocks at the Heron Hotel on September 26 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Guests can sample up to ten unique cocktail and appetizer pairings and vote for their favorite pairing while enjoying imaginative artwork, live music and more.

SEPT. 26 AND 27

Jane Franklin Dance's Moving Stories. 7 p.m. At The Lloyd House Gardens, 220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria. Moving Stories is a movement-based work that is about historical Lloyd House and its Gardens, not as a static landmark, but rather as a place where people of different generations interact. The performance resonates with the landscape and references the site's history. Lloyd House, built in 1796, has housed many prominent people and is important to the streetscape of Washington Street, part of George Washington Memorial Parkway. The architecture of the building, the people

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NEWS

'Boosted Is Better'

FROM PAGE 11

She explained that the COVID summer surge was due to different variants and the virus's similarity to influenza. Connell advised starting vaccinations now for maximum efficacy and clarified that it is safe to receive both COVID-19 and flu vaccines simultaneously. The maximum efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine is believed to last about three-to-four months, but some protection likely extends to about six months.

According to Fairfax County Health Department's COVID-19 Program Manager Amanda Burton, the Virginia Department of Health maintains a respiratory disease immunization dashboard, which shows that about 22 percent of Fairfax residents were vaccinated with the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine.

The CDC reports that the updated COVID-19 vaccine for the 2024-2025 respiratory season can lower the risk of having long-lasting symptoms.

"What's important to remember is that the COVID vaccination has consistently decreased the hospitalizations and deaths in people who are the most vulnerable," said Connell.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 5

lawn overlooking the Potomac River, and enjoy concessions available for purchase from the Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant. Note that the Mansion will not be open during this event. Visit mountvernon.org.

OCT. 4-26

The "Artificial or Intelligence?" Art Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that explores what the future might look like with AI and whether machine learning feels artificial or intelligent at the present moment. Opening Reception: Friday, October 4 from 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed October 27). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/OCT. 5

29th Annual Art on the Avenue. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Mount Vernon Ave. between Hume Ave. and Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. The 29th Annual Art on the Avenue festival held in Del Ray features more than 300 juried artists, from quilters to card-makers to cartographers, displaying their one-of-a-kind wares. Arrive with an appetite and grab a bite from dozens of food vendors while soaking up live music (Irish, folk, rock-n-roll, country and more) along the avenue. Plus, kids activities abound with pumpkin painting, screen art weaving and more. Please note parking is extremely limited. Trolley transportation will be available from the Braddock Road Metro.

SATURDAY/OCT. 5

Fairy House Festival. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Build your own tiny fairy house using materials found in nature. Special activities will take place throughout the day including story times and crafts on the grounds of the Pope-Leighey House. The Pope-Leighey House was designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright as a small, affordable home that was built in

harmony with the nature around it. Perfect for children, families, and nature lovers of all ages!

SATURDAY/OCT. 5

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.fairfax-county.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>

SUNDAY/OCT. 6

Chamber Music Series. 6 p.m. At Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Presenting The President's Own United States Marine Band. Free.

SUNDAY/OCT. 6

Candidate Forum. 1:30-4 p.m. At Charles E. Beatley Jr. Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. The League of Women Voters is hosting a candidating forum in Alexandria. Each candidate will sit at a separate table, and voters will have 10 to 15 minutes with each candidate to ask questions. Once the 15 minutes is up, voters will rotate to a new table until all voters have had a chance to meet the candidates. This means you'll have direct access to the candidates to talk about the issues you care about the most. Questions? Email at lwvarlington@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/OCT. 11

Book Signing. 7 p.m. At the Aethnaeum, Alexandria. Depression Made Me Write This, by C. Alexandria-Bernard Thomas. Join in an inspiring book signing event with poet, orator, and teaching artist, C. Alexandria-Bernard Thomas, the author of the powerful new work, Depression Made Me Write This. At first glance, the title might suggest a narrative of glorifying struggle, but Thomas's writing takes an entirely different path. Instead, this book invites readers to see themselves as a collection of

experiences, each shaping the landscape of their lives.

SATURDAY/OCT. 12

Designing American Living. 3-4:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House provide a unique opportunity to put two American styles of architecture - separated by over a century - in conversation with one another. Take a close look at both houses to examine what it was that the architects who built these homes were trying to convey about the people who lived here, the period they lived in, and what they thought the future held. Visit the website:

<https://www.woodlawnpope-leighey.org/upcoming-events/2024/10/12/designing-american-living>

SUNDAY/OCT. 13

The Carpenter's 20th Anniversary Cook-Off. Noon to 3 p.m. At The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Indulge in an afternoon of food and fun while supporting Carpenter's Shelter! Attendees will enjoy tastings from 20 area restaurants, bid on hot ticket items during the live and silent auctions, and listen to live music. Restaurants to Date: Hard Times Café, Hen Quarter, Nando's Peri Peri Chicken, The Majestic, The Royal, What the Chef, Mystic BBQ & Grill, Bittersweet Catering, Landini Brothers, Misha's, The Warehouse, The Wharf, Pork Barrel BBQ. General Admission (Now until October 11): \$75 Adults, 25 Children (12 and under). At the Door Tickets (on October 13): \$100 Adults, \$30 Children (12 and under). All proceeds from this event will support Carpenter's Shelter, which now operates two homeless shelters in Alexandria, VA and serves 909 people total—248 children, 67 families and 500 single individuals experiencing homelessness.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 16

Yacht Haven Garden Club Benefit. Yacht Haven Garden Club's 40th annual Fashion Show, Silent Auction and Luncheon fundraiser "40 Years of Friendship, Fash-

ion and Flowers," will be held at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria. Fashions will be provided by Sara Campbell. Tickets are \$60.00. Deadline is October 9. For reservations, contact: Joyce Tami at yachthaven-gardenclubva@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/OCT. 19

9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon. TDMV Ride 8:30 a.m.; Youth and Family Ride at 9 a.m. Starting and ending at Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Early bird special! Register for the 9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon by August 31 for a discounted rate and be guaranteed a pair of Tour de Mount Vernon socks! #Tdmv2024 Register now: <https://buff.ly/46VNVtX>

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.

SEPTEMBER

Wed. 25: Suzanne Vega 'Old Songs, New Songs and other Songs' \$55.00

Thu. 26: Phillip Phillips \$49.50

Fri. 27: Eric Roberson \$69.50

Sat. 28: Eric Roberson \$69.50

Sun. 29: Jonathan Coulton and Paul & Storm \$39.50

OCTOBER

Tue. 1: Eric Hutchinson with Dan Rodriguez \$39.50

Wed. 2: Victor Wooten & The Wooten Brothers \$55.00

Thu. 3: The Lone Bellow: By Request Only Tour, with Taylor Ashton \$45.00

Fri. 4: Phil Vassar "Hits & Heroes Tour" with Melissa Quinn Fox \$55.00

Sat. 5: Raven's Night: Alchemy \$39.50

Sun. 6: Ottmar Liebert & Luna Negra \$39.50

Mon. 7: the Mountain Goats - Rule of Three Tour, with Tift Merritt \$49.50 SOLD OUT!

Tue. 8: the Mountain Goats - Rule of Three Tour, with Tift Merritt \$49.50 SOLD OUT!

Wed. 9: Rickie Lee Jones \$55.00

Thu. 10: Gerald Albright \$55.00

Fri. 11: Bilal with Halima \$39.50

Sat. 12: TUSK - The World's #1 Tribute to Fleetwood Mac \$45.00

The Positive Effect



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What a difference a week can make. Meeting with my oncologist this past Monday, we listened anxiously, and what we heard was a great report: "No PET/CT evidence of disease progression or new disease." If it wasn't the best ever scan result, then it was in the top two (we once received a "partial stable remission" during the heavy-duty chemotherapy daze when grasping at straws, euphemistically speaking, became a way of life - and avoidance of death) but I'm not quibbling or keeping score.

We were pleasantly surprised - and extremely happy, as the oncologist reviewed some of the details that led to the radiologist's finding (see above). The scan - and lab work were both compared to previous data. Dina and I were both kind of giddy, incredulous almost as to what we were hearing. In addition to the scan results, recent lab work was also discussed. It showed improved kidney function (which meant the threat of dialysis was not nearly so imminent) and a reduction in my thyroglobulin (a measure of cancer activity) from a previous peak, was yet another indicator that my thyroid cancer cells were trending in a good direction - for this moment anyway. It seems, my oncologist said, that the new medicine he prescribed is having the desired effect. I'm not cured, but neither is my body, specifically my lungs and kidneys, breaking down.

The report and the oncologist's demeanor while sharing/explaining all this encouraging news was way more than Dina and I could have hoped for. Having ridden this emotional rollercoaster for 15-plus years, we're sort of committed to a Goldilocks-type of anticipation/outcome: not too high and not too low. I take my medical results; the good, bad and the ugly, in a sort of stride.

However, 15 years and seven months of this worry has kind of thinned out our capacity to take it all in that stride. Given the added burden of treating the underlying thyroid cancer without exacerbating my new chronic kidney disease (an unfortunate side effect of the previous papillary thyroid cancer medicine I took for three years - which was working until it wasn't) seemed at the outset a bridge/outcome too far to cross. Apparently, it isn't and this most recent "Impression" from the radiologist indicates for the moment at least (oh, what a moment!), there's more life ahead than death.

As for that life, we're finishing up this appointment, with smiles all around as the oncologist exits the examining room to retrieve our visit paperwork from the printer. A few minutes pass until he returns. He knocks on the door and pokes his face into the room as he hands us our paperwork. Smiling broadly, he points to the top of the first page where has written and circled A+ and once again expresses his happiness at this initial result. Never before during our 15+ years in the cancer wars has anything of real substance like this happened where the oncologist seemed happier and more encouraged than we did. We were on cloud 9-ish as he left and said good-bye. Bounce in our step? More like walking on air. I have to admit, I'm not taking that news/grade in stride. It's too much. Besides, I deserve it. I've been on the front lines of death since Feb. 09. I'm going to allow myself to bask.

The only minor problem: I may not know how to bask. When you've repressed/locked in the vault something as bad as a non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV with a "terminal" prognosis of "13 month to two years," it's challenging to say the least to open the spigot of that emotion and see the positive. But as my late brother Richard would say: "I'll take a win whenever I can get one." And so shall I. Who says you can't teach and old dog new tricks?

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

Governor's Use of Power & Authority Questioned

FROM PAGE 7

which is constitutionally vested with the power to run their local systems," Surovell said.

SB 738 directs each school board, not the VDOE, to develop and each public elementary and secondary school to implement age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate policies relating to the possession and use of cell phones by students on school property during regular school hours.

The bill restricts student cell phone use during regular school hours; aims to prevent distractions and disruptions to the learning environment; ensures administration imple-

mentation and enforcement of the policy, minimizing conflicts with teachers' instructional responsibilities; allows exceptions for students under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan; prohibits suspension, expulsion, or removal from class due to policy violations; and violations involving disruptive behavior must be addressed following school board regulations.

VDOE
Guidelines for Cell Phone-Free Education.

Guidance
for Cell Phone-Free Education
Pursuant to Executive Order 33
September 16, 2024

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As we approach the fourth quarter of 2024, the Chris White Family Real Estate Group thanks our Mount Vernon Neighbors for another overwhelming vote of confidence with 62 area homes sold so far in 2024. Interest rates are falling every day and new buyers are entering the market poised and ready. If you're considering selling in 2024 or even 2025, now is the time to call the **PROVEN LEADERS** for a consultation!



9416 Old Mount Vernon Rd | \$1,350,000



9303 Old Mansion Rd | \$1,150,000



4501 Dolphin Ln | \$1,370,000



9394 Mount Vernon Cir | \$1,725,000



5630 Old Mill Rd | \$1,255,000



3908 Military Rd | \$3,200,000

78 homes sold in 2023!

703.283.9028

LONG & FOSTER
REAL ESTATE

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