

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023



The proposed sidewalk would help residents get to this park.



Recently this car went off the road, into the ditch and flipped.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Newington Residents Speak Out on Dangerous Cut-Through

Along Newington Road, a sidewalk would help pedestrians and cyclists.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

For years, Newington Road was known as the cut-through from Telegraph Road and Fort Belvoir to I-95 and most just accepted this designation without much push back. Traffic has picked up in all of Fairfax County and a few more houses were built along Newington Road. Now the lack of a sidewalk puts pedestrians, students and bicyclists in danger, so some have stepped in to fix the situation.

"It is extremely dangerous for pedestrians, elderly, children, seniors, people with disabilities, really anybody that tries to walk because you are sharing the road with cars," said Newington resident Greg Lyon who was behind a petition passed around recently that showed a majority of residents along this street support the sidewalk.

Others commented on the Nextdoor neighborhood link. "I see people walking up and down the sides of the road all the time and it's super dangerous if someone decides to speed," said Chelsea Bolanos who lives on Newington Road. Julia Ebron's mailbox has been hit twice. "I hold my breath everytime I come out of my driveway," she wrote.

Sandy England has lived off Newington Road for 15 years and sees people speeding all the time. "We not only need sidewalks, we need speed bumps like they have in other parts of the county," she wrote.

A traffic count by the Virginia Department of Transportation in 2020 showed that 5,000 cars a day use this road, mainly as a cut-through to I-95 and 400 trucks a day use it too, despite the "no trucks" designation of the



In a past snowstorm, the lack of shoulders on this road was a factor in this crash.

road. Lyon brought this up with Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) two years ago and spoke out at one of the Board of Supervisors meetings as well. "Adding a sidewalk or safe path would align with the principles of Fairfax County's 'Safe Streets for All' Recommendations," he told the board. "There's widespread community support for a sidewalk," he added.

One official gave Lyon a ballpark figure to build a sidewalk along an existing road at \$1 million a mile and since the stretch along

Newington Road is less than a mile, it could possibly be under \$1 million. This sidewalk would take six feet of the front yards along that stretch too.

Storck supports the idea but noted that funding is an issue, as it is with many of the transportation improvements that are needed in the county. "Securing funding will likely remain our biggest challenge due to the limited dollars and the high number of needs," wrote Storck in responding to Lyon, dated July 21, 2023. "To be sure,



On Newington Road, it's dangerous for pedestrians to walk.

this community petition and the support from residents along Newington Road will be strongly considered as part of the Active Transportation Prioritization process, and I will make sure that this community input is included as part of the public engagement process," Storck's letter stated. "While funds are limited, a decision is being made in the next three months for a new funding round for smaller spot projects to improve pedestrian and bike safety. A larger funding round is anticipated next year," he added.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE

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www.BabsBeckwith.com



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www.JenWalker.com



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Old Town Village | \$1,895,000

Thursday, 9/21, 5-7PM, be among the first to tour this rarely-available, two-story Charleston style courtyard home! This amazing 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath home offers the perfect flow for festive gatherings with a beautiful kitchen & private patio. 2-car garage. 1201 Wilkes St
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This striking, award-winning, historic home has been meticulously restored and is ready for its next steward. Sited on an expansive corner lot, 325 Queen Street offers exquisite interiors, a breathtaking garden, and a charming detached garage. 325 Queen Street
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Seminary Ridge | \$1,550,000

Beautiful colonial in fantastic location! 4 bedrooms, 4 baths, newly refinished hardwoods, sparkling white kitchen, family room with gas fireplace, finished basement, and spacious yard with stone patio perfect for outdoor entertaining. 3705 Fort Worth Avenue
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www.GordonWoodRealtor.com



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Ann Duff 703.965.8700
www.AnnDuff.com



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Roadside Business Signs Stand the Test of Time

Old signs spur nostalgia and familiarity in Mount Vernon.

By Mike Salmon
The Gazette

Under the old sign at the Mount Vernon Car Wash, George, a nearby resident, was getting his car washed as he looked across at the sign at the taco place. “Taco Lucas, that has nostalgia, been there close to 50 years,” he said. But it turns out, the car wash sign has been there a long time too, “maybe fifty or sixty years,” said the owner. Both signs are old and a little faded, but they’re still doing the job as well as they did in the early days.

Changes are coming along Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon, but a handful of old signs are still advertising business. There is a bigger purpose though, and that’s their value in placemaking and wayfinding for the community and the traveling public.

According to the International Sign Association in Alexandria, a sign is an “eye-popping way to grab the public’s attention,” their website said. Signs are an opportunity to grab the attention of the passerby. The five factors of sign visibility are size, angle, location, luminance and contrast. They don’t mention familiarity or duration – factors the older signs along Richmond Highway have.

David Hickey, International Sign Association’s vice president of advocacy, called many of the signs “community landmarks,” and cited a few famous examples such as the Domino’s Sugar sign in the Baltimore Harbor and the Citgo sign outside Fenway Park in Boston. “The value of that kind of branding is significant,” he said.

Neon Needs No Introduction

Many businesses use neon signs to bring in more attention, particularly after dark. They are full of the nostalgia factor that attracts many. According to Neon Creations sign company, neon signs were developed by French engineer Georges Claude in 1902, and patented by 1910. He started experimenting and found that when he added different elements to the tube created different colors. The first ever neon light was two neon-tube lamps created by Claude in Paris in 1910, www.connectionnewspapers.com



In recent years, trees have grown up around this aging trailer park sign.



This sign has been on the job since the 1980s.



Even being a little crooked catches the eye.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



This neon sign is a familiar site in Mount Vernon.



The plastic snow cone screams nostalgia at this barbecue drive-in.

Believe it or not, there are sign museums across the country:

MUSEUM OF NEON ART (MONA):
www.neonmona.org (Glendale, CA)

AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM:
www.americansignmuseum.org (Cincinnati, OH)

TENDERLOIN MUSEUM:
www.tenderloinmuseum.org (San Francisco, CA)

NEON MUSEUM:
www.neonmuseum.org (Las Vegas, NV)

IGNITE SIGN ART MUSEUM:
www.ignitemuseum.com (Tucson, AZ)

NATIONAL NEON SIGN MUSEUM:
www.nationalneonsignmuseum.org (Dalles, OR)

NEON MUSEUM OF PHILADELPHIA:
www.neonmuseumofphiladelphia.com (Philadelphia, PA)

Neon Creations said.

Neon was big through the 1960’s but suffered a downfall when a neon sign was looked at as “tacky.” Today they are coming back though. People

are beginning to see it as an art form, Neon Creations said. Actual neon has been pushed aside though in the name of going green. “The trend for signs is LED signs,” Hick-



The black on white color scheme is easy to read.

ey said, “it still looks like it’s neon.” The Domino’s sign in Baltimore did go LED in recent years.

There is a movement to save the old signs and the International Sign Association has a study of best practices called “Saving Historic and Vintage Signs,” conducted

ed by James Kellaris, professor at the University of Cincinnati. They polled 100,000 consumers in all 50 states and found that 77 percent agreed that vintage signs are worth preserving. Neon signs are frequently the big purchase on the “American Pickers,” reality show.

Visitors Explore Fall's Bounty

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Berries, Blossoms and Seeds in Dyke Marsh.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

“There is so much going on in tidal systems,” restoration ecologist Charles Smith told 35 curious “explorers” who walked the Haul Road Trail in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve on Sept. 16.

With near-perfect balmy weather, they studied some of fall's phenomena, from eagles to egrets, from dogwoods to doghobbles.

“Marshes have equal productivity to rain forests,” Smith offered. Wetlands are rich, biodiverse habitats because of “lots of plankton, plant biomass and sun penetration into the water,” he said. Kirk Havens, Virginia Institute of Marine Science wetlands ecologist, calls them “biological supermarkets.”

“In an area the size of an average desktop, there can be as many as 8,300 animals,” he has pointed out. Dyke Marsh is a freshwater marsh with tides around three feet twice a day.

“Plants tell you where you are, the hydrology of the system,” said



Thirty-five people on two separate walks at Dyke Marsh had multiple ecology les-

Smith, explaining that some plants thrive in wet soils and others grow only in drier, upland soils. The preserve's terrain has gradations, from the drier uplands to wetlands to open water.

Peak Bloom

Bees seeking nectar were probing the yellow-orange, funnel-shaped flowers of the jewelweed, a plant that thrives in moist soil. River bullrush and wild rice, plants growing in standing water, were swaying in the gentle breeze.

Buttonbush and wild indigo plants also like saturated conditions, Smith said. Pointing to arrowhead rising from the mucky bottom, with multiple snails feeding on the leaves' surfaces, Smith explained that there are three types of wetland plants: emergent, floating and submerged.

“We are now at peak bloom for wetland plants,” he noted. Pickerelweed, an emergent, had violet-blue flowers on a spike. The vivid, blood-red cardinal flowers, rising from a tangle of green, de-

lighted all. Some of the spatterdock or yellow pond lilies still had yellow golf-ball shaped flowers left over from the summer. The sea of bright yellow tickseed sunflowers stretching across parts of the marsh “tell us we are in high marsh,” Smith told the group.

Seeds and Fruits on Display

Fall is also an opportune time

to learn how plants disperse seeds and to study their fruits or berries. Fuzzy, hotdog-shaped cattail flowers were releasing their seeds to the wind. People, human dispersers, found tick trefoil's green triangular seed pods clinging to their pants. Redbud and ash tree limbs were loaded with dangling pods, getting ready to drop their seeds.

Poison ivy vines and swamp doghobbles sported berries too. In the drier areas along the Haul Road Trail, Smith pointed out a native cucumber plant with “funky fruit.” Some of the smooth sumac trees still had their pointy red berry clusters. Smith said he had made a tea from them and one walker said someone made jelly with them, but both urged caution in eating wild plants. The nodding, arcing goldenrod plants, which favor dry land, were also bee magnets.

Jim Gearing found the walk to be a learning experience. “Charles Smith added a good number of plant identifications to everyone's list,” he commented.

Charles Monteiro agreed, saying, “My knowledge of flora in Dyke Marsh doubled in two information-packed hours with Charles.”

Silver maple and Virginia creeper leaves were starting to turn red, a sure sign of the approaching autumn.



The wind disperses narrow-leaf cattail seeds.



Birds eat poison ivy's berries.



Snails were feeding on arrowhead leaves.



Tickseed sunflowers are a sea of yellow in the fall.



Ash trees seed pods hung from their limbs.



Redbud tree limbs were heavy with seed pods.



Native wild grapes are at their height.



Doghobble has beautiful berries this time of year.



A Red Bag event at Whitman Middle School in Mount Vernon.

Amazon Delivery Vans Support Local Schools

Hundreds of local volunteers joined Food For Neighbors in the fight against teen food insecurity.

Amazon volunteers joined Food For Neighbors in the fight against teen food insecurity on Saturday, Sept. 9. Working side-by-side with other community members at Arlington Career Center, Herndon Middle School, and Whitman Middle School, Amazon helped sort and deliver nearly 8,000 pounds of food and toiletries donated by more than 570 households for local secondary schools.

In total, eight hundred volunteers, across nine active sorting sites, helped process 23,000 pounds of donations Food For Neighbors collected that Saturday morning from 1,700 Northern Virginia households. The effort will help over 5,800 students in 42 secondary schools in Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties.

Amazon's hands-on support underscores a \$155,000 donation from Amazon Fresh last Fall, and the volunteer spirit demonstrates the company's continued dedication to lifting up the communities where its employees work and live.

Amazon participated in Food For Neighbors' Red Bag Program kickoff event during its Global Month of Volunteering, an initiative where Amazon employees in the DMV and across the world come together to volunteer and engage even further with their communities for causes they're passionate about.

"We're committed to supporting the immediate needs of students and their families – these often include providing food, shelter, clothing, and more. Thanks to community partnerships like this, we're able to provide students the support they need to keep learning," said Melissa Robinson, principal program manager of Volunteering at Amazon.

"We're thrilled to celebrate Amazon as a Food For Neighbors Community Champion and sponsor of our first Red Bag food and toiletry collection event of the new school year," shared Karen Joseph, Founder and Executive Director of Food For Neighbors. "Amazon's philanthropic partnership and \$155,000 donation through Amazon Fresh helped us quickly expand our services into Arlington Public Schools last school year, where we helped approximately 970 hungry students, many of whom received support weekly."

The Red Bag Events are the heart of Food For Neighbors. They mobilize individuals to shop for nonperishable food and essential toiletries, which they place in a red bag and leave on their doorsteps for collection. Volunteers, organized by neighborhoods, pick up the donations and bring them to one of nine central locations, where volunteers sort and then deliver needed food and toiletries to school pantries. School social workers, counselors, and family liaisons identify students in need and distribute food and toiletries to them.

Complementing programs provide food pantry shelving and storage for schools as well as grocery store gift cards for the most vulnerable students.

Although Food For Neighbors welcomes additional Red Bag donors and volunteers as it continues to meet the need in the schools it is currently serving, and to say "yes" to new schools requesting support. New in September is Leesburg's Belmont Ridge Middle School, which brings the total number of partnering schools to 42.

Also key are the financial donations from individuals, foundations, businesses, and other organizations, which help keep the Red Bag and Grocery Gift Card programs running.

Hunger is closer than you think. To learn more about becoming involved as a Red Bag donor, volunteer, monthly Hunger Hero, or community partner, visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/get-involved/> or send an email to getinvolved@foodforneighbors.org.

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Seniors Thrive in South Fairfax

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK
MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Dedicated, beautiful 55+ communities like Spring Hill, The Fairfax, Gum Springs Glen and the new North Hill make the Mount Vernon District a great place to age in place. Not only do we have these dedicated communities where seniors can grow and thrive, we also have many senior centers where older residents can learn, recreate and engage. I was pleased to host my 5th Senior Safety Summit last week to bring hundreds of older adults together with information, education and resources, as well as to answer questions about aging and living in our area. The event at our newest Senior Center in Lorton included presentations by me, Police Crime Prevention Officer Sean Corcoran, Fire and Rescue Life Safety Specialist Wyleng Liew and USA Pickleball District Ambassador Helen White. The resource-rich exhibit hall was a hit, featuring over 30 County agencies and local organizations. Thank you to all who attended!

The new Lorton Community Center, Library and Park are a wonderful addition to our County services, including bright, airy rooms, modern amenities and new programming. Activities and programs include bingo, book club, discussion groups, painting, yoga, belly dancing, rum-

SEE SENIORS THRIVE, PAGE 9



Police Crime Prevention Officer Sean Corcoran speaks to a packed house at the Mount Vernon Senior Safety Summit last week.



Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck speaking at Senior Safety Summit last week at the Senior Center in Lorton.



Dan Storck interacting with the attendees.



The exhibit hall at the Senior Safety Summit featured over 30 County agencies and local organizations.

LETTER/OPINION

How Right to Work Helped Black Workers

To the editor:

Regarding Del. Paul Krizek's Sept. 7 opinion article, "Labor Day Is So Much More," in his advocacy for unions in Virginia, suggests that our state's Right to Work law is "rooted in a historical context of racism." A more accurate reading of history reveals the opposite.

Prior to the Civil War, much of the workforce in the South was from mostly black, enslaved people skilled as carpenters, bricklayers, painters, blacksmiths, harness-makers, plasterers, shoemakers, and other trades. After the Civil War and during Reconstruction, these skilled craftsmen were finally able to enjoy the fruits of their labor earning wages commensurate with their skills.

Once Reconstruction was disbanded by southern Democrats, black employment in the skilled professions was restricted by southern organized labor.

During the Jim Crow era of rac-

ism, black workers and families moved north for better economic opportunities particularly in growing industries in manufacturing and construction. Northern Unions implemented racist policies to prevent southern blacks from working in these industries. Worse, there were documented instances where Union activists instigated race riots in cities such as St. Louis, (July, 1917) where hundreds of black Americans lost their lives and property as Union members burned black neighborhoods.

Our residential industry today in Virginia, and particularly, Northern Virginia, is dominated by workers of color, engaged in mostly skilled labor. These workers earn wages that equal or exceed union wages in comparable industries. Many of these workers are recent immigrants that quickly establish themselves as valued workers and often become contractors further enhancing their economic value.

Right to Work Law does not prevent workers from organizing or joining unions. The law is intended to prevent the government from forcing workers to unionize.

So why is Del. Krizek relying on past history to justify more government controls that some might think only benefit Union leaders and their political counterparts? No, Del. Krizek, Virginia's workers

do not need to be forced to join unions. They should be able to seek employment with open opportunities, free of coercion and racism. Let's look to the future and I encourage you to use your considerable talents to enhance economic policies that benefit all workers.

Rick Genuario

President, Genuario Construction Company, Inc.

HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Why Is Food Insecurity Still An Issue?

BY STEPHANIE BERKOWITZ

Nearly a year ago today, the White House announced the first national Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health in 50 years to unite America to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030. During that time, I addressed how food insecurity

disproportionately affects people of color, older adults, and people with disabilities. Rising food and fuel prices undoubtedly accounted for the increased number of families seeking support from food banks.

September is Hunger Action Month and it is a time to raise awareness about food insecurity

SEE SENIORS THRIVE, PAGE 9

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OPINION

Early Voting Begins September 22nd

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



Krizek

Get ready for the upcoming November General Election in Fairfax County, where all 140 seats in the Virginia General Assembly are up for grabs. Along with Senate and House seats, 12 other local offices are on the ballot, including Clerk of Court, Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff, Chairman of Board of Supervisors, District Supervisor, School Board Members At-Large, District School Board Member, and Soil and Water Board Members. As you know, Virginia holds elections every year, but this year is extra special: it is what we call an "off-off-year" election. Virginia is one of just five states in the entire nation that conducts off-year elections, meaning an election when no federal offices are on the ballot. Virginia takes it a step further with "off-off-years", when there are also no major statewide offices such as Governor or Attorney General on the ballot.

Early voting begins this Friday, Sept. 22. Here in the new 16th House District, we are fortunate to have an in-person early voting location so accessible to us at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center on Parkers Lane. Before you head out to vote, make sure your

voter registration is current and accurate, and remember to bring an acceptable ID. For a full list of accepted identification methods, you can visit <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/voterid/>.

The voter registration deadline is Monday, Oct. 16, but you can still register up to and including Election Day and cast a provisional ballot. If you prefer to vote by mail, request a ballot by Oct. 27 at 5 p.m., and postmark it by Election Day. Those who have already applied for a mail ballot can expect to begin receiving them on Sept. 22.

Voting early offers flexibility and reduces Election Day wait times for all. And, with a bill I passed in 2019, if you arrive at an early polling location and are still in line at closing time, you can remain in line and cast your ballot. In total, voters now have 45 days before Election Day to cast their ballots.

This election is crucial, as it impacts various critical issues that affect the daily lives of Virginians. With a one-seat majority in the Virginia Senate, Democrats defended abortion rights, gun safety laws, public education, LGBTQ+ protections, clean energy standards,

SEE EARLY VOTING, PAGE 11

Beyer Shares Constituent Stories Of Hardship From 2018-19 Government Shutdown

Shutdowns are very bad, actually.

From the office of U.S. Rep. Don Beyer

U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA), who represents a Northern Virginia district containing one of the largest concentrations of federal employees in the U.S. House, today shared excerpts of letters constituents sent him during the 2018-19 shutdown. Their stories, shared with personal identifiable information removed, show the hardship and uncertainty experienced by federal employees who were furloughed or worked without pay during that shutdown.

The 2018-19 lapse in appropriations resulting from Donald

Trump's demands for border wall funding caused a partial government shutdown of many agencies, affecting 800,000 federal employees.

If Republicans block passage of government funding beyond Sept. 30, 2023, it will result in a wider shutdown that would halt pay for far more of the federal government's 2.2 million permanent, civilian, non-postal employees. Large portions of the nation's millions of contractors would also face loss of pay, many of whom never received back pay after previous shutdowns. More than half

SEE BEYER, PAGE 10

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU OCT. 8

Progression Exhibit. At Multiple Exposures Gallery (MEG), at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union Street, Alexandria. The exhibition features a sequence of photographs, with each one chosen for its relation to the previous image. The relationships among the 56 included images may be based on composition, color, geography or other characteristics — the choice was left to each of the 14 contributing artists. Exhibition visitors are invited to observe each image as it appears in the sequence and consider what the connection to the previous image might have been. Exhibition Artists: Soomin Ham, Tim Hyde, Eric Johnson, Clara Young Kim, Irina Lawton, Sandy LeBrun-Evans, Matt Leedham, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sislen, Tom Sliter and Fred Zafran. Exhibition hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

ALEXANDRIA COLONIAL TOURS' GHOST & GRAVEYARD TOUR

Wednesdays through Sundays in September at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Nightly in October at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria. Walk your way through the charming streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost and Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Visit alexcolonialtours.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/>

SEPT. 1-30

The "Farther Afield" Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Featuring art by local artists that takes the viewer on a journey, whether that is someplace an hour away from Alexandria or halfway across the world. Opening Reception: Friday, September 1, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 1). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SEPT. 2-30

Perspectives Exhibit. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Lanningham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Gallery 311, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Lanningham Gallery presents Perspectives, a juried membership show featuring artworks that showcase the talent and creativity of the TFAA. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, jewelry, works on paper, sculpture, and more. The following artists are featured in the main exhibit: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Helen Power, Karen Waltermire, Nancy Ramsey, Ann Barbieri, Tara Barr, and Lynn Chadwick.

SEPT. 7 TO OCT. 15

Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Stine. At The Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist's Reception is Sunday, Oct. 1, from 4-6 p.m. Award-winning painter Anne Stine debuts her latest collection of encaustic works titled, Every Rock Has a Story, in September, at the Athenaeum Gallery.



The Made in ALX Fall Makers' Market will be held Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023 in Alexandria.

Made in ALX Fall Makers' Market

12-5 p.m. At Port City Brewing Co., 3950 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria. This is the fall's most fun sip-and-shop, featuring craft beer from the award-winning Port City Brewing Co. along with food, shopping and activities. The kid-friendly and pet-friendly event will feature more than 30 artists from Alexandria and nearby with a wide variety of crafts and items. Several vendors will be new to the Made in ALX Fall Makers' Market this year!

This year's market will include: a scavenger hunt with prizes from Made in ALX and Port City Brewing Co. the National Breast Center Foundation Angel Wings photo station oracle readings with Alexandria's Blonde Spiritual Millennial Sarah Locke new crafts and artworks from the region's best artists, creators and makers. Food vendors will include Rockland's BBQ, Kam and 46 Hawaiian and Filipino Food Truck, Watts Popcorn, Pickles & Cures, and Scuttlebutt Bakeshop.

Her collection of 20 geological paintings explores the interconnection between Earth and humanity through representational and abstract imagery. "Every rock has a story", a popular geological phrase, meaning history is captured within the Earth's formations from the majestic mountains to the tiniest pebbles that reside beneath our feet.

Festival is your one-stop destination for gardening inspiration and unique finds. Gather your friends and family and join us for a day filled with nature's beauty and the joy of the gardening community.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 21

Taste of Old Town North. 4-8 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 North Royal Street, Alexandria. The Taste of Old Town North is a free, family-and pet-friendly event where you can shop at the farmers market, create 'art in the park,' taste gourmet dishes and wines from local restaurants and businesses, taste cider from Lost Boy Cider, participate in instructor-led wellness demos and listen to music from two local bands. Participating restaurants include Julia's on the Potomac, St. Elmo's, Yunnan by Potomac, and Hank's Oyster Bar. The Taste will feature a reading by City of Alexandria Poet Laureate Zeina Azzam of the three winning haiku from the Haiku Project. Visitors to the Taste can also learn more about the great work of ALIVE!, a local non-profit dedicated to fighting poverty and hunger and helping neighbors in need. The rain date for the Taste of Old Town North is September 28, 4:00 - 8:00 pm.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Fall Garden Festival. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. This free event celebrates a world of unique plants, captivating garden accessories, live music that sets the perfect ambiance and delectable food options to satisfy your cravings. It's not just any garden gathering -- it's a vibrant celebration of all things green and gorgeous. The Fall Garden

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

The HALLOWEIRD Art Market. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features a variety of artwork from local artisans celebrating the spooky and playful sides of the fall season and aerial performances by Monarca in Flight. Join us for lots of fun at this outdoor, family-friendly, rain-or-shine event. HALLOWEIRD takes place at corner of Commonwealth and Mount Vernon Avenues). Details at DelRayArtisans.org/halloween-2023

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

Eisenhower Partnership Rock The Ave Block Party. 12-4 p.m. At Saltbox in Alexandria. Eisenhower Partnership, a non-profit advocacy organization promoting local businesses and development of the Eisenhower Valley in Alexandria, VA, introduces the first ever inaugural Rock The Ave Block Party. SaltBox, a hybrid warehouse and office space, partnering with the Eisenhower Partnership to host an old school style block party. This outdoor, free, family-friendly event will feature kid-friendly activities, local Eisenhower businesses and area artisans, live music from Yellow Door Concert Series, a pop-up Cider Garden hosted by Lost Boy Cider and much more. Visit <https://eisenhowerpartnership.org/events/>.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 23

81st Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Admission:

\$45/person. The Twig, The Junior Auxiliary of Inova Alexandria Hospital, proudly announces the 81st Annual Historic Alexandria Homes Tour to be held on Saturday, September 23. New this year, a digital tour book guiding participants through the homes will be accessible to ticket holders via their mobile device. Hard copies of the tour book are available for purchase, in advance, for \$5 each. Please note that this event sold out last year, so early ticket purchase is recommended. Visit thewig.org/homes-tour.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 24

TUESDAY/SEPT. 26

Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens. Tuesdays @ 10. 10 - 11:30 a.m., Simpson Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Meet and talk with Extension Master Gardeners in the Simpson Demonstration Gardens to learn about lawn alternatives suitable for our climate and your growing conditions. Free.

SEPT. 27-30

Fall Book Sale at Duncan Library. At 2501 Commonwealth Ave, Alexandria. Friends of Duncan Library Members can take advantage of a special Members-Only Preview Sale and will receive discounts throughout the rest of the sale.

Book sale hours:

- ❖ Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023, 5-8 p.m. Members-Only Preview Sale
- ❖ Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. General Public Sale
- ❖ Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. General Public Sale
- ❖ Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. General Public Sale

Books will be priced at \$3 for hardcover, \$2 for paperback, unless otherwise marked. Book sale profits go directly back to Duncan Library to support the purchase of books, programming, materials, community events, equipment and more.

SEPT. 30 TO OCT. 1

21st Annual Alexandria Art Festival. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria. Rated one of the top 100 art shows in Sunshine Artist Magazine, the annual art festival features a variety of works exemplifying the gifted artists in regions from all over the country.

SEPT. 30 AND OCT. 1

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. Sept. 30 at 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center. Oct. 1 at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial. Tchaikovsky's 4th & Brahms Violin – ASO at 80-oh! Brahms' violin concerto soars with lyricism and virtuosity—soloist Elissa Lee Koljonen brings it to life. Lester Green kicks off the ASO at 80 celebration with flair. Tchaikovsky's dramatic symphony concludes a powerful season opener. Elissa Lee Koljonen appears by arrangement with the Curtis Institute of Music.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 30

Native Plant Sale. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 1701 N. Quaker Lane parking lot, Alexandria. Largest native plant sale in DC Metro Area hosts 12 vendors from VA, MD, PA, DC, and MA selling native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade. 20th anniversary of this sale! This event is free. Call 571-232-0375 or www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org.

Oct. 7, 2023

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. 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>.

Seniors Thrive in South Fairfax

FROM PAGE

mikub and so much more. The campus includes an open gym, fitness room, fitness/walking trail and computer labs. Seniors can bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the park, watch excited children on the playground and grab a book from the library to read in the sun.

COVID helped us all realize the importance of interacting with others, making senior centers a perfect place to connect. Mount Vernon fortunately has senior centers at Lorton, Hollin Hall, Kingstowne and Original MVHS. There is also an option for those who prefer to engage from their own homes, the Virtual Center for Active Adults. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/virtual-center-active-adults> to discover live events, on-demand programs, resources and self-directed activities.

The County also offers Adult Day Health Care, Meals

on Wheels, congregate meals, transportation, therapeutic recreation services, technology education and a variety of other services.

Learn more here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/older-adults>. You can also learn about a myriad of activities, events and services in the County's Golden Gazette publication (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/golden-gazette>)! Community based organizations also support this age group with programs like neighbors helping neighbors, free transportation and bi-lingual Spanish support lines, including Mount Vernon at Home, Shepherd's Center Fairfax-Burke and NV Rides. Please contact our office at mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov

or 703-780-7518 if you think there are other ways we can improve our community for all who live here. See you around the neighborhood!

Why Is Food Insecurity Still An Issue?

FROM PAGE 6

in our communities. According to Feeding America, 658,470 Virginia residents are experiencing hunger. A heartbreaking statistic to note: 182,170 are children.

Six months ago today, on March 15, recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) felt the sting of the rising costs of day-to-day living and food inflation when the federal government terminated the SNAP Emergency Allotment program. SNAP recipients would no longer receive the second monthly allotment they relied on to supplement their food income during the public health emergency.

As a result, Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) prepared for this dramatic increase in residents seeking food assistance, knowing that the end of SNAP Emergency Allotment benefits would affect approximately 213,000 qualifying Northern Virginia residents.

According to The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Insight Region Report, "In Northern Virginia, seven percent of families — 20,000 households with one or more children under the age of 18 — live in poverty: their annual income falls below the minimum

set by the federal government for what they need to feed, shelter, and clothe their families." These statistics highlight the personal cost of inflation in Northern Virginia and represent families' monthly difficulties in choosing between paying for basic necessities, including food, electricity, clothing for children, or rent.

Northern Virginia Family Service's Hunger Resource Center bridges the gap between decreased food allotment benefits and increased prices. The Hunger Resource Center annually provides healthy and nutritious food to nearly 5,000 residents from more than 1,300 families in the Greater Prince William community.

This year, bridging the gap has become imperative for the people we support. High food prices have become a harsh reality for families with low and middle incomes, as well as older adults on fixed incomes. The staggering 10% year-over-year increase in food costs has created an unsettling imbalance, further exacerbated by the weight of housing, childcare, and healthcare expenses and the financial strains of adults supporting multi-generational living arrangements. The struggle to meet basic

needs has reached a critical point.

Hunger and food insecurity are chronic crises for many, and the depths of this need are growing, especially as food prices continue to increase.

At NVFS, we are grateful to partner with grocery stores, farmers' markets, corporations, and individuals who give wholeheartedly. Without their donations and support, we would be running on empty.

While food banks can help families avoid the difficult choice between putting food on the table or paying their household bills, we must also tackle the broader issues of food insecurity and address the systemic factors that create barriers to financial security: income inequality, housing and childcare costs that are unattainable, health disparities, and more. We need to delve deeper into the broader issues, listen and work together to find sustainable solutions that eliminate the need for food distribution centers in the first place.

Stephanie Berkowitz is the President & CEO at Northern Virginia Family Service, a human services organization recognized locally and nationally as a leader and innovator of social impact.



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OPINION

Beyer

FROM PAGE 7
of Americans say they live paycheck to paycheck.

A shutdown would also result in the loss of key services to the American people across the country, weaken national security, and damage the economy. Despite the hardship a shutdown would inflict on millions of Americans, however, House Republicans continue to downplay the negative effects of – and even express the desire to see – a government shutdown.

“I urge my colleagues to remember that there are a lot of real people out there who will be hurt if there is a government shutdown. These letters and emails show how shutdowns are a disaster for my constituents, our region, and millions of Americans across the country,” Beyer said.

“When Donald Trump caused a shutdown five years ago, we had people who work for the government of the most powerful country in the world waiting in food lines in our capital city. Today untold numbers of federal employees and contractors – most of whom live and work outside the capital region – are preparing to face that hardship and uncertainty again.

“Intentionally forcing millions of workers to go without pay and shutting down essential services for the American people isn’t responsible governance, it is extremism,” Beyer said. “Yet today Republicans in both chambers are confidently predicting a shutdown that they are themselves making more likely with bad faith posturing, nihilism, and unrealistic demands that violate the Speaker’s agreement with President Biden.”

Beyer is the lead sponsor in the House of the End Shutdowns Act. He previously helped pass legislation during the 2019 shutdown that ultimately gave back pay to federal employees at the end of that shutdown, and guaranteed back pay to federal employees following any future lapse in appropriations.

Excerpts from letters from 2018-29 shutdown:

Letter One:

My name is [REDACT] and I am a resident of [REDACT]. I am also a Federal employee. I currently work, or should be currently working, in [REDACT]. As I sit at home, I think of all of my work piling up and reports with fast approaching due dates; I want to be able to do my job. Next week will be my first missed paycheck due to the current furlough.

I would like to tell you about the hardships that my family is currently facing. SEE BEYER SHARES, PAGE 11

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Beyer Shares Constituent Stories

FROM PAGE 10

rently enduring. We have a small savings, but not much, and estimate that we may be able to miss two of my paychecks before we are in dire straits. I have a husband, who is currently working, but who also has a lower income than I do, so relying on his income alone is not an option. We are a one car family, as I have been able to rely on the Metro to take me to and from my job; just two days ago we needed a large brake job on our car. That was an \$800 unexpected and unavoidable expense and at a time when I have no income. We are relying on credit cards which, until last month, we had been working diligently to pay off.

I have a two year old son; he is currently in daycare. To pull him out of daycare temporarily to save money would forfeit his spot and, as you may know, daycares in this area are at a premium and waitlists are long. In addition, daycares in the DMV area are also very high cost; we are required to continue to pay more than \$1500 a month for his daycare while we wait for the government to re-open.

If that were not enough, we recently found out that we are expecting our second child. At a time that we should be making every effort to save money, instead we are terrified about how we will pay our rent next month, adding to our credit card debt, not paying down our student loans.



Letter Two

Having been in the military, we are no strangers to government shutdowns. However, until this point, we had not experienced one in which there was seemingly no end in sight. This email is not a political message (we are well aware of the Hatch Act), but instead a plea to you, our elected representative, for help. We love our jobs, and we love contributing to the greater good. We have been fiscally responsible ... and we have multiple months worth of savings for emergencies such as this. However, the prospect of a shutdown lasting months, or even years, is terrifying.

While [REDACT] has told us that our health insurance will continue to be covered even though we are not getting paid, how long will that last? At what point should

we start applying for other jobs? And how can I take leave when our baby is born if all leave has been cancelled? It is the undefined length of this shutdown, the not knowing, that is the worst part. ... Nevertheless, we continue to go to work each day without pay and without knowing what the future holds.



Letter Three

I am a ten-year federal employee [REDACT]. I am on furlough and am extremely concerned about the adverse effects of this shutdown. On a personal level, I'm concerned that my federal health insurance (which covers myself, my husband, and our two-year-old son) will lapse. I am even more concerned, however, for the many families facing difficulty paying their rent, mortgages, and other bills due to the lapse in appropriations. It is completely unacceptable that federal employees are facing eviction, late fees, and adverse credit actions because our Congress cannot pass a budget.



Letter Four

I am a single mother to 3 small children. My ability to provide for my children stops the moment the government goes into shutdown. As an [REDACT], my job is difficult enough as it is. However, every [REDACT] is placed under undue stress when our ability to provide for our families becomes limited.



Letter Five

I own a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business that has contracts with the Federal Government. Our contracts with [REDACT] have been stopped due to the shutdown. My company and our employees work hard to support the Federal Government to help them solve complex issue and ultimately save taxpayer money. Up to this point I have chosen to pay our employees that are not able to work. I have expended our available cash and have taken loans against my home to keep paying our employees. I am now at a decision point. Do I borrow more money or do I layoff my hard-working employees. With no end in sight I struggle with what to do.

Early Voting Begins September 22nd

FROM PAGE 7

and more. On the flip side, extremists have pushed inaccurate history teaching, favored wealthy corporate tax cuts, and worked against democracy.

Let me emphasize that each and every vote counts. Several of this year's June primary election races were decided by just a handful of votes. For example, the Republican candidate in SD-29 in Prince William County won his primary race by only 2 votes. And, in 2017, a key House of Delegates race ended in a dead tie and was decided by pulling a winner's name out of a fishbowl! In many of these local races, and especially with so many new candidates running for office, you have the opportunity to be a deciding vote.

This is even more so the case in an off-off year election, where turnout is lower than in a Presidential or Gubernatorial election year. Do not sit this one out!

If you are interested in volunteering your time, there are a plethora of opportunities to assist in this year's elections, including becoming a poll worker with the Fairfax Office of Elections, participating in voter registration drives, assisting a candidate of your choice with door knocking or phone banking, attending or hosting events, and finally assisting at the polls on Election Day.

Virginia sets the example. We are the bellwether for the nation. So, let's send a message this November that divisive policies won't work for Virginians or the nation. Vote for your Democratic Party candidates.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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On The Cusp of ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... my/our 45th wedding anniversary on Oct. 20, 2023, quite by familial coincidence, my wife, Dina and I attended her Godson's wedding in Philadelphia last week. Yes, we risked our lives and limbs while escaped prisoner Danelo Cavalcante was on the loose. Nevertheless, we figured it was an acceptable risk, given the occasion. We we're fortunate however, as were the bride and groom and all invited guests, that the wedding wasn't happening at Longwood Gardens, a magnificent and well-known, former Dupont Estate, located in Kennett Square - in Chester County, Pa. Due to the escaped convict, the grounds were closed as a precaution. But other than a few raindrops that landed on the assembled guests, as well as on the bride and groom, the late afternoon/early evening festivities went on without a hitch, although none of us remained dry. And though Danelo was a topic of conversation throughout, since he wasn't an invited guest, we weren't worried too much, as we all ate, drank, and danced to our heart's content.

Seeing so many people so much younger than ourselves dancing the night away with their futures very much in front of them was in stark contrast to us as our futures are our present and have pretty much already been lived. The age difference between Chris, Shannon, and yours truly and most of their friends is almost 40 years, a generation and a half. We are contemporaries - of their parents. Yet, we attended as peers of a sort, who happen to be family. In addition, I think our knowing Chris his entire life gave us a certain curiosity and legitimacy among many of Chris and Shannon's friends. After all, we were there at Chris' birth.

I wouldn't say it was awkward being around so many 20-somethings, but I will admit to it being a teachable moment/learning experience as the generations - as worlds did on a long ago "Seinfeld episode," collided. Though we acted our age, comparatively speaking, we stayed out past midnight, and tried to be as interested in the attendees lives as the occasion allowed. Meaning, the music was loud and hearing any conversation was challenging. Still, we tried to stay in the moment. All of which was made easier at the pre-wedding and afterparties that occurred in the hotel's bar, as well as at the groom's mother's house the following day for Sunday brunch. In each instance, the energy and enthusiasm were super positive and amazingly genuine.

All throughout the weekend festivities, I couldn't help looking around at all the younger people and doing the math, and juxtaposing our ages and marital years, and wondering (A) where had all the time - since we got married in Oct., '78, gone and (B) how in the heck did we get this old? Granted, you are young as you feel, or as Grouch Marx so famously said: "You're as young as the woman you feel," so I don't feel old even though my wife is age 68. It matters more to me what's in your heart and head more so than the color of your hair or the lines in your face. I prefer to listen to what one says and does, not focus of what they can't do. Moreover, I want to see if they still have a rye smile on their face and a bounce in the step, regardless of their age or circumstances. I realize age/years married is just a number but holy smokes, 45, compared to witnessing and participating in a married couple's day one of year one, gave us both (Dina and I) pause and cause to reflect. I can't say "What a long, strange trip it's been," because unlike The Grateful Dead, we've generally colored between the lines and stayed on the straight and narrow. Though we've accumulated lots of life's experiences, we tried not to offer too much advice too soon to too many people, many of whom were getting ready to embark on their own post-college adventures. We figured they'd live and learn on their own. They didn't need any unsolicited advice from us.

But the occasion and simultaneous reflection of our life together didn't give us indigestion or constipation or remorse/anxiety in the least. Instead, it gave us/me one of the happiest weekends we've experienced in quite a while. Being around all these young people, full of hopes and dreams and ambitions for the future was infectious, even for us old fogies. It wasn't at all bittersweet. It was more like milk chocolate for me: extremely satisfying.

Best wishes to Chris and Shannon. We look forward to seeing them soon and hearing about their honeymoon abroad, and hanging out with them and their friends, if they'll allow us. It turns out their energy and enthusiasm were just what this older couple needed - and prefers. "Peace and serenity" is for "Festativus," not the rest of us.

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



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4108 Old Mill Rd | \$730,000



9390 Warburton Ct | \$1,200,000



8353 Wagon Wheel | \$650,000



4325 Tarpon Ln | \$950,000



1112 Cedar Dale Ln | \$1,220,000



5210 Burke Dr | \$877,000

55 homes sold in 2023 so far!

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