

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 25, 2024



Sandy Anderson,  
Springfield District



Robert Rigby, Jr.,  
Community Participation  
retired FCPS teacher



Dr. Ricardy Anderson,  
Mason District



Mateo Dunne, Mount Vernon  
District Fairfax County school  
board representative



Melanie Meren,  
Hunter Mill District

## School Board Changes Boundary Policy

Changes to boundary policy emphasize capacity, removes concern for impact on students.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Poised to observe its annual summer recess from July 19 to Aug. 19, 2024, during its meeting on the evening of July 18, the Fairfax School Board voted 9 to 2 on the main motion that the School Board amend Policy 8130 on Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings, as amended and detailed in the agenda item attachment. Dr. Ricardy J. Anderson, Mason District, and Melanie K Meren, Hunter Mill District, voted no. Their motions for middle and high school phase adjustments failed.

The change supports a focus on school capacity and overcrowding.

During community participation, the audience booed speaker Robert Rigby Jr. as he delivered his statement to the board via video. He discussed the issue of overcrowding in schools and expressed his support for the planned policy change. Chairman Karl Frisch demanded decorum from the crowd and warned them to do so, or security would ask them to leave. At other times, the crowd shouted over board members and speakers.

In a related action, the School Board approved two follow-on motions after approval of the amended policy: 1. That the School Board direct the Superintendent to adjust the boundaries/capacity at Glasgow Middle School during the implementation of the county-wide boundaries adjustment anticipated

after the completion of the initial review of school boundaries to include a Regional community engagement in Region 2 and in the Justice HS pyramid. (Motion by Dr. Ricardy Anderson, Seconded by Sandy Anderson) 2. That the School Board direct the Superintendent to, in addition to the community engagement outlined in Policy 8130, Section VI, which includes engagement before the cyclical review begins and after



Student speaker, Isabell Olverson, a rising 7th grader at Cooper MS

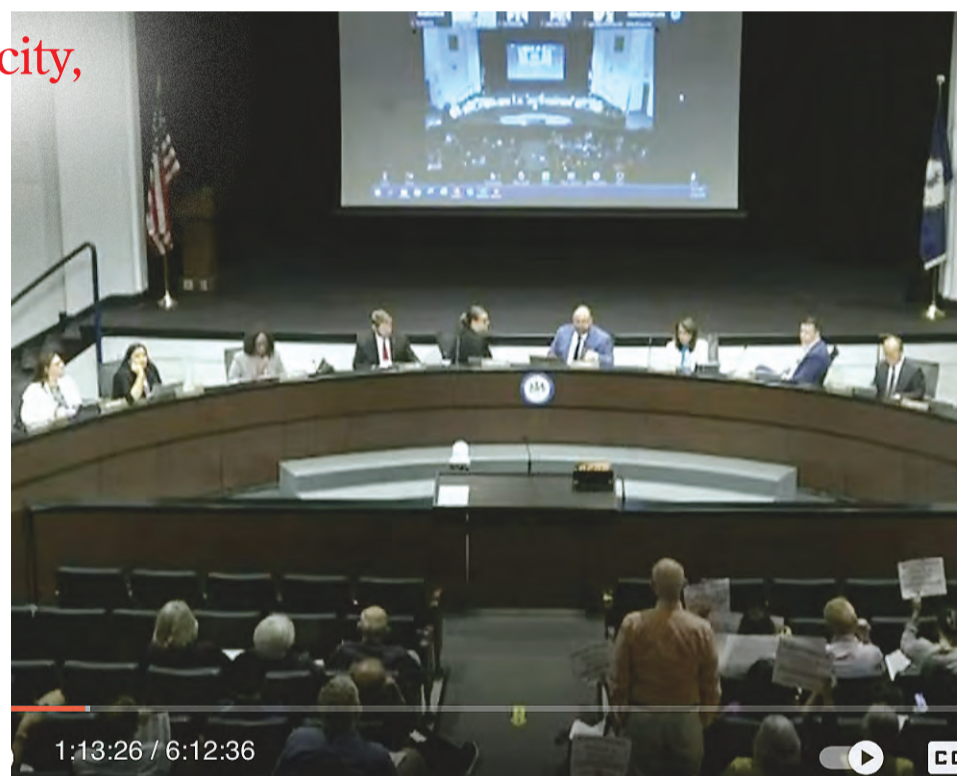
changes are recommended, establish an advisory committee consisting of community members to provide feedback throughout the review process. (Motion by Kyle McDaniell | Seconded by Sandy Anderson).

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Isabell Olverson, a rising 7th grader at Cooper Middle School, expressed concerns about removing policy language that considers the impact on students and critical 'grandfathering' for 6th-12th-grade students. "Stability is crucial, especially during these formative years. Constantly changing schools can disrupt not just my academic journey but also my social life and extracurricular activities ... I hope we can find a solution that allows students like me to benefit from advanced academic programs without the constant disruption of changing schools," Isabella said.

Ryan St. Pierre urged the board to pause the revision of policy 8130 until meaningful community engagement occurs. "Shifting districts should be based on clear data-driven

Many parents voice opposition to boundary policy changes.



Karl Frisch, chair of the Fairfax County School Board, warns the booing and jeering crowd to observe decorum or security will ask them to leave.

criteria and be the last resort after exhausting other alternatives."

Edward Phillips of the Great Falls Citizens Association again "respectfully ask[ed] the board to pause its action and create more opportunity to engage with the entire county on this critical policy."

John Smith explained that establishing local public schools was historically an exercise in community building, helping to forge "a powerful sense of community through common investment in the children."

FairFACTSMatters created a petition, garnering over 1,700 signatures. It asked the school board to clarify why they included the "equitable access" criterion in the policy language for boundary line redrawing yet failed to specify the implementation, prioritization and measurement of equitable access to programs.

Speaker Robert Rigby Jr. commented, "I hope all speakers speak with charity and kindness toward all people, residents, and children of this county." Rigby said that, as a former FCPS teacher, he substituted in every district in the county and experienced

overcrowding at each. He supported the revisions to Policy 8130 and the proposal from School Board member Dr. Ricardy Anderson because they increased transparency by bringing boundary changes to light. "We'll have them when they come up for the March public discussion ... These boundary changes are made by our elected school board members, who are accountable in the eyes of their constituents in Fairfax County," Rigby said.

The board should consider boundary changes every five years as circumstances change; spectators booed and made loud comments. Here, Frisch said, "Please stop the video." Rigby was testifying via recorded video. "Observe decorum, or security will ask you to leave."

Quiet returned, and Frisch requested that the interrupted video resume. Rigby concluded by saying that the piecemeal approach over the past five years has led them to "a truly dire situation."

FairFACTSMatters Virginia posted four

SEE NEW BOUNDARY POLICY, PAGE 15

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# Supervisors Defer Decision on Data Center Zoning

Public hearing confirms, 'The devil is in the details.'

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted 10-0 to defer their decision on a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment regarding data centers until their July 30 regular meeting. This unexpected move occurred late Tuesday evening, July 16, after a staff presentation, Q&A between the board and staff, and four-and-a-half hours of public testimony. The record would still be open for written testimony.

"To me, it would be a disservice to those who testified to try to act on this at this point," said Board Chairman Jeff McKay. He explained that the supervisors needed time to absorb the testimonies, and ask additional questions of county staff that they may think of over the next couple of days. McKay said the board would come back for a decision when it meets again, Tuesday, July 30.

The proposed data center zoning ordinance amendment would revise the permissions and add or revise the use-specific standards for data centers to address compatibility issues with surrounding uses, noise, and aesthetics. The One Fairfax Policy Area of Focus 11, as stated in the board's Equity Impact statement, "encourages a quality built and natural environment that supports a high quality of life for all people."

## Staff presentation

Fairfax County's Deputy Zoning Administrator, Carmen Bishop, presented the staff report, saying that the staff recommends Option 1. During her approximately eight-minute presentation. Bishop highlighted the proposed amendment recommendations as follows:

- ❖ A setback for the building of 200 feet and for any ground level equipment of 500 feet, unless that equipment is located on the other side of the building from the residential use.

dential use;

- ❖ 50 foot wide transitional screening yard is required between industrial and residential uses,

- ❖ Submission requirements for a noise study with a rezoning or a special exception and before site plan approval and is applicable to by-right development;

- ❖ Building design standards that would apply to by-right development to include a main entrance feature, facade variation, and fenestration; and

- ❖ A more flexible provision would apply with a rezoning or a special exception where architectural renderings could be submitted for review.

Bishop presented a diagram that, as she described it, "puts it all together and shows what a by-right data center could look like in the 5 or 6 districts with a 75-foot tall building, which is the maximum height allowed; a 200-foot setback to residential; and 50 feet of transitional screening. You have the enclosure of equipment, an entrance feature, and the fenestration."

## Supervisors Question Staff

During the board's questions for the staff, Mason Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez (D) requested a second look at slide four. He asked Bishop what equipment would be feasible to enclose. "It's been my understanding that no equipment would be able to be enclosed outside."

Bishop replied that plenty of equipment, such as generators, can be enclosed and are typically enclosed. She said other equipment can be enclosed; however,

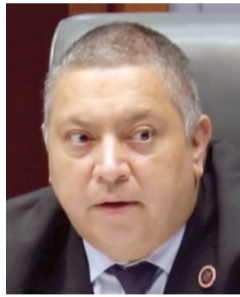
SEE PUBLIC HEARING, PAGE 4



Jeff McKay, chairman of the Board of Supervisors.



Carmen Bishop, zoning administrator.



Mason Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez (D).



Springfield District Supervisor Pat Herrity (R).

## Building design

- By right standards:
  - Main entrance feature
  - Façade variation every 150 feet
  - Fenestration: minimum 30%
- RZ/SE:
  - Submit architectural sketches, sight line studies
  - High-quality design
  - Variation in massing if within 200' of residential

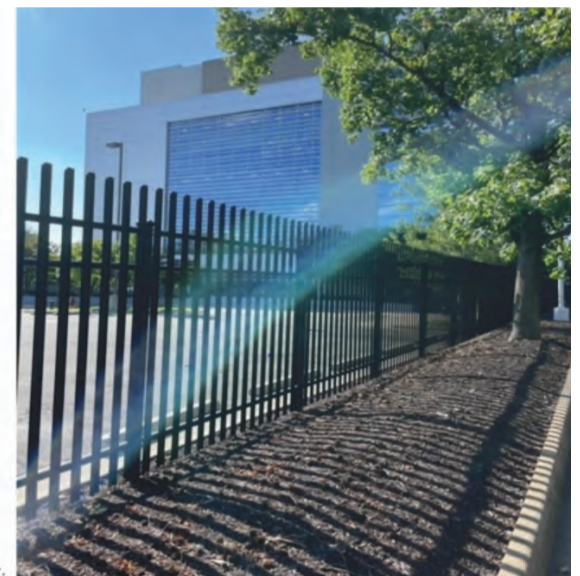


PHOTOS SCREENSHOTS

QTS, Ashburn

## Screening of equipment

- Apply in all districts
- Purpose: visual and noise
- All HVAC equipment, generators, accessory electrical substations
- Enclose if mechanically feasible
- Screening wall if enclosure not feasible



Coresite, 12098 Sunrise Valley Dr.

## Setbacks

- Building or equipment: 200' from residential use or lot line
  - Advertised range up to 500'
- ½ mile from Metro
  - Advertised range up to one mile
- Reduced setbacks with SE
- Zoning district setbacks and transitional screening also apply
  - Recent amendment: 50' transitional screening between industrial and residential



Pictometry, Coresite, 12379A Sunrise Valley Dr.

## Maximum sizes

- C-3 and C-4:
  - 40,000 SF
  - Remove the allowance for a larger size with repurposing
- I-2, I-3, I-4:
  - 80,000 SF
  - Remove the allowance for a larger size with repurposing
- Maximum sizes can be exceeded with SE



4030 Lafayette Center Dr. SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County's Deputy Zoning Administrator, Carmen Bishop, presented slides describing proposed data center regulations as detailed in the amendment under board consideration. The presentation included illustrations of building design, equipment screening, setbacks, and maximum sizes.

# Public Hearing Confirms, ‘The Devil is in The Details.’

FROM PAGE 3

equipment that typically cannot be enclosed would be something like a cooling tower. Bishop said that a wall can screen such equipment, regardless of its location on the ground or rooftop.

**Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield)** asserted that the proposed amendment could encompass nearly anything. He worried about the use of the word “feasible” in the proposed amendment versus “practical.”

“If it takes a ton more power, a ton more space, [and] a ton more units to cool that space, does that make it feasible? ... Or does that knock it out of feasible if you’re spending a whole bunch more electric money and everything else to fully enclose it?” Herrity asked the question, seemingly to ensure precision and clarity in what would be a legally binding document.

Bishop clarified that they had coordinated the standard with the building official, who suggested it would depend on the manufacturer’s specifications and the degree of equipment enclosure. She said that they heard from industry, and they provided a list of different types of equipment that they typically enclose and don’t typically enclose. “I will say we agreed on that list,” Bishop said. She cited as an example that a cooling tower “is not typically enclosed. ... That would have the screening,” she said.

**Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D)** requested a discussion on the difficulties associated with “building design” and the 30 percent fenestration, considering the need to establish objective standards in the zoning ordinance to avoid the subjective aim of transforming a data center’s appearance.

Bishop said when they were drafting the proposed standard, as they have it for by-right development, it had to be “specific,” but “maybe not too specific,” because it had to allow “developers to be creative as designs evolve over time.” The requirements include the main entrance feature and facade variation, so there is no single blank wall, Bishop explained. The variation could be accent material, texture, or color, as there is flexibility in meeting that standard. Fenestration could be included, as the standard specifically mentions windows and door features. “We’re providing direction to developers to indicate here’s what we would like to see, but not too specific, that they can’t be creative with their own designs,” Bishop said, concluding the Q&A with the board.

All full Board of Supervisors



**Renee Grebe, Northern Virginia Conservation advocate for Nature Forward:** “Chairman McKay, during the Chantilly Premier public hearing, you boldly stated that through your motion, the goal was to ‘make sure that if we’re going to do any data centers in Fairfax County, the ones we do in this county are going to be done at the highest standards we can possibly foresee.’”



**Whitney Redding, Friends of Holmes Run:** “The fact that two data centers plus a substation can be built by right means the county has not given itself the leverage to require optimal stormwater management.”



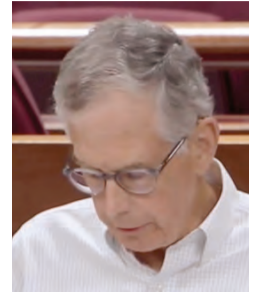
**Terry Clower, Northern Virginia chair and local government Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, runs the Center for Regional Analysis and the Steven Fuller Institute:** “Data centers are one of our few economic bright spots in this region.”



**Douglas Bell, acoustical consultant:** “There is no compelling evidence that data centers are more acoustically impactful than other permitted industrial uses.”



**Bradley Gray, owner of Worldwide Mission, data center development:** “Data centers do not consume vast amounts of water.”



**Robert (Bob) Kitchen, M.D., representing the members for Climate Action:** “Data centers do contribute to poor air quality both directly and indirectly.”

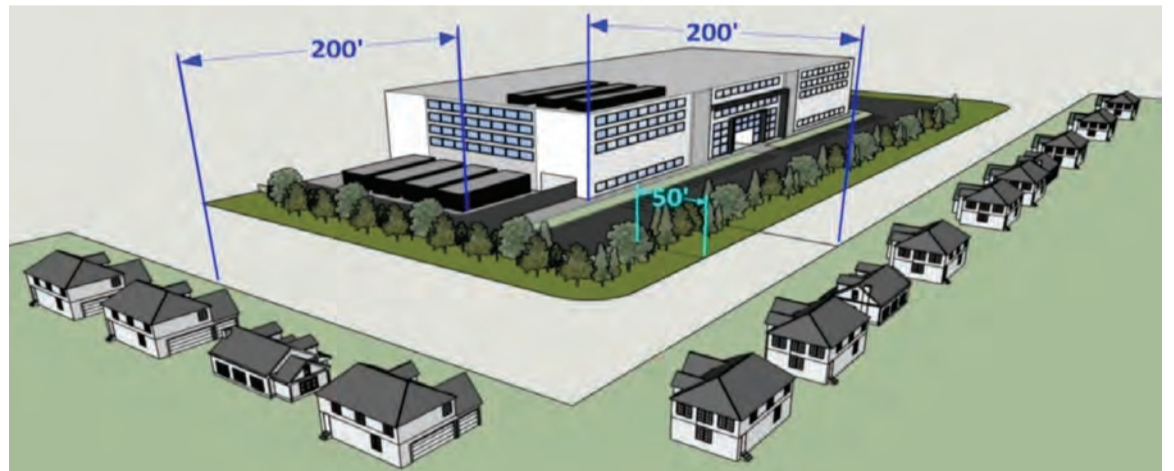
meetings are televised on Channel 16 and streamed live online with closed captions provided in English and Spanish.

### Public Testimony Excerpts

Renee Grebe, Northern Virginia Conservation advocate for Nature Forward: “We submitted written comments in partnership with 13 other organizations which you should have. Data centers might be one of the most pivotal issues of our generation. New changes that you approve today will have decades long consequences on our county and its residents.”

“Chairman McKay, during the Chantilly Premier public hearing, you boldly stated that through your motion, the goal was to ‘make sure that if we’re going to do any data centers in Fairfax County, the ones we do in this county are going to be done at the highest standards we can possibly foresee.’”

**Whitney Redding, Friends of Holmes Run:** “Data center developers have as much right to build in Fairfax County as anyone else ... The devil is in the details. The Bryn Mawr Park, Plaza 500 [data center] project is a poster child for why there needs to be more basic common sense guardrails as to how and where these data centers are live situated ... The fact that two data centers plus a substation can be built by right means the county has not given itself the leverage to require optimal stormwater management or other site specific environmental protections.”



Distance measurements between data centers and residences as in the proposed amendment.

**Terry Clower, professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, runs the Center for Regional Analysis and the Steven Fuller Institute:** “Data centers currently have a positive impact on our locality in our region, both in terms of jobs spillover economic impacts, as well as, of course, important tax revenues ... Data centers are one of our few economic bright spots in this region ... Emerging technologies depend on having the right infrastructure and data centers are a key part of that infrastructure. It is where these industries will develop. Without all of these elements of our infrastructure, we will see growth pass by.”

**Douglas Bell, senior principal consultant and president of Cavanaugh Tocci Associates, an acoustical consulting firm:** “Over the 35 years as a principal consultant at this firm I have been in charge of over 1000 projects associated with environmental sound. I’m thoroughly familiar with noise produced by all industrial facilities ... I’m qualified to speak to you about noise and data center noise. It’s my professional opinion that there is

no need for Fairfax County to provide a special zoning amendment for data centers to control sound. There is no compelling evidence that data centers are more acoustically impactful than other permitted industrial uses.”

**Bradley Gray, owner of Worldwide Mission, critical leader in data center development:** “Fairfax County and Virginia already have some of the strictest data center regulations in the country... There are some additional misconceptions that I’d like to clear up first. Data centers do not consume vast amounts of water. Most use air cooled systems with water usage similar to office buildings... Concerns about stormwater pollution are also misplaced. Modern air cooled units don’t produce runoff and redeveloping old industrial sites often increases [a] pervious area, improving stormwater filtration. Lastly, diesel containment tanks used in data centers are highly secure with double walled steel designs, leak detection and spill response.”

**Robert (Bob) Kitchen, M.D., representing the members for Cli-**

mate Action: “There can be several health problems or challenges that come from data centers. There’s a growing body of research that says that chronic noise exposure is putting nearly a third of Americans at heightened risk of hypertension, stroke and heart attacks, as well as mental health problems... A larger area in terms of a threat to health has to do with poor air quality or air pollution and many common health problems are related to this, such as cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, kidney disease, low birth weight infants, pediatric asthma as well as many others. Data centers do contribute to poor air quality both directly and indirectly. The direct contribution is through the use of backup diesel generators, which will be needed at a time of power outage ... Recognizing that right now renewable energy is not really available for backup energy, I think that the county should consider the recommendations from the Jan. 6 2024 staff report, which stated that the Comprehensive Plan incurs use of tier 4 generators and state of the art technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

# Nothing compares to what's next.



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Christopher Ritzert +1 202 256 9241



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**8513 Reformatory Way, Lorton**  
\$885,000  
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The health fair will include dozens of vendors from local schools and County agencies



Enjoy family-friendly fun with yard games, face painting, a moon bounce and free food and music.

## The Mount Vernon District Has Got Your Back (to School)

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

The new school year brings excitement and new beginnings, but it can also be a challenging time for many families, making sure they have school registration complete, health assessments in order and school supplies purchased. Join me, School Board Member Mateo Dunne, Neighborhood and Community Services and the Lorton Community Action Center at our Back-to-School Community Day on Saturday, Aug. 3 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Lorton Community Center, 9520 Richmond Hwy., for a family-friendly day of fun and to get your back-to-school checklist complete.

The event will feature free food, music, yard games, a moon bounce and face painting. Enjoy touch-a-truck opportunities and check out the Park Authority's new Wonder Wagon. Arrive early to receive free giveaways of school supplies! These giveaways are for Fairfax County residents only and proof of home address will be checked. Parents without children present will only receive ONE backpack and parents with children present will receive one bag per child. School supplies will be given away on a first-come, first served basis.



Supervisor Storck welcoming attendees to the 2023 Back-to-School Community Day.

Additionally, enjoy our health fair which will include exhibitors from local schools, the Health Department, INOVA, Community Services Board, Family Services, the Neighborhood and Community Services Care Van,

Neighborhood Health, the Medical Care for Children Partnership and more. These agencies will share information about the services

SEE STORCK, PAGE 11

## Be Safe! Hurricane Season Started

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

Earlier this summer, we saw Hurricane Beryl barrel through the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico as a Category 5 storm, so this is a good time to remind you about preparing your home and family for hurricane season.

In recent years, we have seen severe hurricane season creep ever earlier, with storms starting stronger and more destructive than nor-

mal in the face of rising water temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean. Hurricane Beryl is the first Category 5 storm ever seen in the Atlantic Ocean in the month of June since hurricane records began in 1851. Until the formation of Hurricane Beryl, the earliest a Category 4 or 5 hurricane had formed in the northern Atlantic during a hurricane season was July 8.

SEE KRIZEK, PAGE 11

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OPINION

# Biden Acts to Maximize Democracy's Chances

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



It's rare when you get to witness history in your lifetime, but today we all were able to witness American leadership at its finest.

Two-hundred-and-twenty-eight years ago, George Washington lived at a time when no man had ever abdicated power for his successor to be chosen by a democratic process. In 1776, our neighbor put his reputation, his family, his belongings, and his life on the line for an idea called America. Once the Revolution was over in 1781, he could have allowed the colonies to make him King or Emperor and he demurred.

When he was elected President in 1788, Washington could have stayed as long as he liked, until he died. Instead, he demurred again and gave up power in 1797. He established the tradition in our country that elected leaders can give up power and pass the torch to the next generation. A tradition that has carried on for over 200 years

until it was attempted to be breached on Jan. 6, 2021.

When the Capitol of Virginia was completed in 1804, there was one statue that belonged in the Rotunda - Houdon's sculpture of Washington completed in 1792. It was placed

and never moved. Today, President Joe Biden demurred to attempting to hold on to power and he did so to facilitate not just passing the torch to the next generation, but also to maximize the possibility that we continue the democracy that we call America.

Please take note of today, make it a learning experience for those in your family, and appreciate the leadership that President Biden showed today. Those of us who live in Fairfax County have a special connection to the father of our country and can take a moment to take in unfolding history.

It is an honor to serve as your state senator and the Majority Leader of the Senate of Virginia.

Surovell was Vice President Kamala Harris' 2020 Virginia Cochair.

# Beyer on Biden; Supports Harris

Congressman Don Beyer issued the following statement Sunday, July 21:

President Joe Biden is a great American. Today he made a hard decision few others could have made, showed his character, and put his country first. I am proud of my support for Joe Biden, and proud of his patriotism.

Joe Biden took office amid the deadliest pandemic in a century, the worst economic decline since the Great Depression, and one of the worst attacks on our democracy in American history. He guided our nation back to normalcy and health, presided over the strongest and fastest economic recovery in history, and achieved bipartisan legislative victories many dismissed as 'impossible' in our divided society.

President Biden's historic record of job creation and low unemployment, the revitalization of our



manufacturing sector, the passage of the American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act, the Chips and Science Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Respect For Marriage Act, and so many other accomplishments will create an incredible and enduring legacy upon which the eyes of history will look with favor. During President Biden's remaining months in office I will continue to do all I can to help build on his extraordinary record of achievements for the country.

The past few weeks have been very difficult, but I am proud to be a member of a party that tolerates dissent. We are not a cult of personality where any disagreement results in threats or purges. Democrats are not afraid to allow hard conversations and tough choices, and we are stronger for it.

SEE BEYER, PAGE 11

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## NATIVE PLANT ADVOCACY



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Avril Garland's use of improvised deer protection, and tall meadow growth contrasts with the manicured turf grass of neighboring yards.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY A. GARLAND

Conservationist friends came to Avril Garland's aid to help her property meet town vegetation ordinances, including: Lubna Dabbagh, Avril Garland, Philip Latasa, Aimee Moore Martin, Tom Blackburn, Sean Achziger, Lucy Collins and Sarah Mayhew.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Many native plants grow better in dense plantings, in meadow-like areas.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Dr. Maryam Dadkhan is gradually expanding areas of native plantings in place of turf grass which can be detected in the color variation of the mulched beds.

# Ecosystem Heroes or Ordinance Violators?

## Defending native plantings.

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

Some may remember that driving at night once guaranteed a windshield full of splattered insects. Or sitting outside in the evening promised the romance of tiny flashing lights as fireflies sought out mates. In times past, summer skies were adorned with many beautiful, large orange and black Monarch butterflies flitting toward native flowers.

Some people are willing to do more than note the passing of these serendipitous moments that mark a time when we enjoyed a healthier ecosystem. You will find several of them volunteering to restore natural habitats around us. Lauded for the significant number of hours they spend working as volunteers in area parks, volunteers are recognized for their leadership and work in managing invasive plants in public places to encourage native plants. Yet too often these same community heroes run afoul of their neighbors, homeowners associations (HOAs), or jurisdiction zoning departments when practicing the same plant principles at home. In cultivating natural meadows in their own yards, they often are chided for the same principals they practice in community public lands to acclaim.

### NATIVE PLANTS OVER TURF GRASS: ESTABLISHED SCIENCE

Well recognized in the national conservation community, Dr. Doug Tallamy, who heads University of Delaware's Entomology & Wildlife Ecology Department, a native plants guru, is author of several books on healthy ecology and how individuals can make a difference. He has written encouraging us all to move toward reducing lawn turf grass and planting native plants. His studies have shown that "every square foot dedicated to lawn is a square foot that is degrading local ecosystems." Many homeowners have heard his message and would like to follow his suggestions. However they find them-

self up against outdated rules in place and enforced by municipal zoning departments or homeowner associations. Those entities have been slow to change rules and zoning codes and adapt to this new information and the dawning importance of our local ecological systems to the planet.

### ECO-FRIENDLY GARDENING NOT UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED

Consider the experiences of a few in Northern Virginia who have sought to establish a better natural environment on their properties. Jennifer Pradas lives in an Oakton townhome community with an HOA. She regularly volunteers at her community's Blake Lane and Borge Street parks. She shares, "I don't grow grass, so I don't use lawnmowers, leaf blowers, or any other machine that spews out toxins and greenhouse gases. I don't use fertilizers other than my own compost, so my soil isn't leaching excess nutrients into the water system, which would exacerbate the pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. I rarely water my backyard, so I'm not adding to the water shortage. I don't use pesticides, so I'm not killing insects or other creatures that may be harmed. ... So what is so outrageous about my yard?"

Pradas's HOA bylaws include no restrictions on her choice of backyard landscaping if surrounded by a fence. Yet, contact from her HOA President, suggested the HOA might tighten their bylaws to deal with her "native weeds" saying, "You are not on a farm where you can choose to have a wildlife habitat." The "weeds" the HOA president referred to are Coral Honeysuckle, Bee Balm, Blue Mist Flower, Wild Cicely, Spiderwort, Penstemon, Iron Weed, American Poke Berry, Milkweed, and Wingstem — all native wildflowers. Pradas can look out her window with delight in seeing Monarchs, bees and hummingbirds enjoying her garden; recognizing that "insects are disappearing eight times faster than other animals."

Clearly native plants, like Pradas's, and their growing habits are not understood by

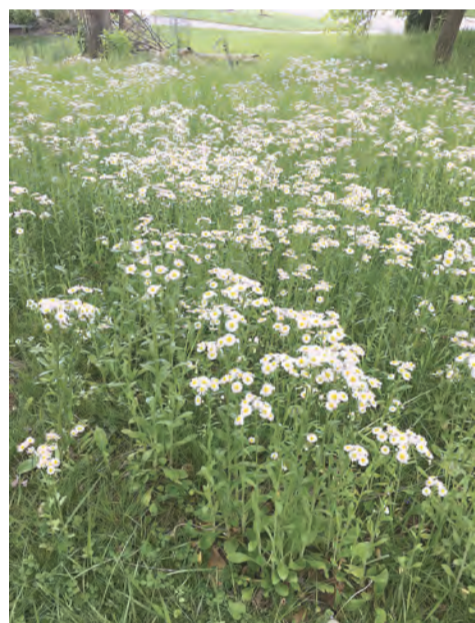


PHOTO PROVIDED BY A. GARLAND

Not even the beauty of Avril Garland's favorite wildflower, Fleabane, in bloom has saved her yard from town zoning scrutiny.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Avril Garland, follows natural landscaping practices, without mowing, fertilizing, or use of pesticides, and has had recurrent or not fully resolved compliance notification communications with Vienna's Zoning.

ing to determine what species had triggered the mow notice. She says, "There is anxiety in Fairfax County for those acting against the 'green grass' esthetic, or leaving stems standing [for wildlife], or any longer grass allowed to grow instead of cutting it every week." Although Fairfax County ordinance for residential property permits growth of grass and lawn up to 12 inches in height (FC Section 119-3-1), Emily's property appeared to draw attention due to a stony verge with intermittent weeds at the edge of her front lawn where no curb is provided.

Vienna resident, Avril Garland, is the IMA (Invasive Management Area) site leader and a long-term volunteer at Accotink Trail, who also volunteers at Southside Park. Her home property includes a variety of native plants. Garland says, "My favorite is fleabane, but I have to say that each bud in my yard is



PHOTO PROVIDED BY J. PRADAS

Jennifer Pradas choice to forego use of turf grass in favor of native flowers such as blue mist flower has drawn criticism from her HOA.

eagerly watched. Each flower, for me, is a magical improbable burst of color, especially, Black-eyed Susan, Pink Cone flower, Wood Aster, Evening Primrose, and Goldenrod."

By extensive use and protection of native plants at her home, she has received warning notices from the town. Adding to Garland's wish that she be permitted personal choice to allow her plants to grow as she chooses in her own yard, are her concerns for protecting her plants against deer predation. Her use of make-shift fencing, cages, and tree branches, to discourage or re-direct deer, have added to what some consider an unkempt look. Garland justifies her measures as less costly and necessary since the town has not addressed deer mitigation. She complains that deer, in small groups, regularly walk through her front yard grazing, and spend time in her backyard, even though it is fenced.

Garland is up against a more restrictive vegetation ordinance in the Town of Vienna. The grass height standard is three inches, and the ordinance states, "Owners of property within the Town shall not allow grass,



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Dr. Maryam Dadkhan's native plantings have required protection from deer in Vienna.

Dadkhan, also practices native planting in her yard. She has not been cited by zoning but is anxious that her tall plants and their dense habits, best for their growth, may face censor. She is following Professor Tallamy's recommendation to make gradual changes to reduce the turf grass; also a concession to her husband who likes the look of grass. She has tall meadow plantings in portions of her side and back yards. She also has a major problem with deer predation. She recently added costly, tall fencing and reinforced her existing fence line, using plant cages and Prickly Pear plants to discourage deer in her front yard where fencing is not possible.

Vienna Police Chief Jim Morris acknowledges the challenge the town faces with its large deer population and their predation of landscaping. While he says deer traffic accidents are not occurring, likely due to the town's low speed limits, police often receive complaints about deer crossing roads and damaging landscaping. The town council, with police support, will address deer management in a work session planned for Sept. 30.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE GAZETTE

Native gardeners use plants such as Bee Balm to benefit insects like this Hummingbird Clearwing Moth

### CONSERVATION ADVOCATES SEEK ORDINANCE CHANGES

Dadkhan recently addressed the Vienna Town Council, quoting Dr. Tallamy's suggestion, "We need to find ways for nature to thrive in human-dominated landscapes ... In the past, conservationists worked exclusively where people weren't; now we need to save nature where people are." (Nature's Best Hope, Dr Tallamy). Dadkhan said further, "Unfortunately, Town of Vienna 'lawn code' is not clear as to what is permissible and what is not. Even an anonymous complaint can trigger a citation for someone with native plants in their yard. Here is my question for us as a community: In 2024, do we want to ignore the biodiversity crisis and global warming, and focus on an aesthetic ruling set for us in 1800s aristocratic Europe? Or do we want to catch up with the rest of the world and change our zoning code to embrace new scientific trends?" Dadkhan invited council members to visit her yard and see what native plantings and meadows are like on a residential property.

Local entities could better define approved plantings and do more to adopt and condone conservation landscaping. Conservation landscaping includes changing turf grass areas or bare soils to incorporate environmentally sensitive design, low impact development, non-invasive native plants, and/or integrated pest management. The purpose is to create a diverse landscape that helps to protect clean air and water, and support wildlife.





Xander Conte stars as DJ Huey Calhoun in the LTA production of Memphis.

# ‘Memphis’

**LTA opens 90th anniversary season with award-winning musical.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Little Theatre of Alexandria is celebrating its 90th anniversary season and is marking the milestone with an opening production of the Tony Award-winning musical Memphis, an interpretation of the roots of rock and roll in the ‘50s that is playing now through Aug. 10.

Set in the segregated south of Memphis, Tenn., the show follows Huey Calhoun, a white radio DJ whose love for music transcends the racial norms of the day, and Felicia Farrell, a black singer who can’t break out of the clubs of Beale Street.

When the two collaborate, the golden era of early rock and roll takes flight with LTA newcomers Xander Conte as Huey Calhoun and Khanner Hancock as Felicia delivering mesmerizing performances as their socially taboo relationship powers the plot.

“Memphis is more than just a show,” said director Rikki Howie Lacewell. “It’s an electrifying journey through the intertwined realms of race, romance and the rebellious spirit of rock and roll.”

A rich and raucous score by Bon Jovi cofounder and keyboardist David Bryan propels the book by Joe DiPietro with orchestrations by Bryan and Daryl Waters

The show is loosely based on the story of Memphis disc jockey Dewey Phillips, one of the first white DJs to play black music in the 1950s. The original Broadway pro-

duction was nominated for eight Tony Awards, taking home four including Best Musical Score and the coveted Best Musical of 2010.

In one of the most challenging roles in musical theater, Conte’s summoning of DJ Huey Calhoun is spellbinding. His vocals soar, both in emotion and range from “The Music of My Soul” to the show’s signature anthem “Memphis Lives in Me.”

Partnering with Conte is Hancock as Felicia, a thrilling singer and commanding actress. Hancock particularly shines in “Colored Woman” and “Love Will Stand When All Else Fails.”

Produced by Eleanore Tapscott and Jennifer Thomas, the LTA production of Memphis is overflowing with gifted performers at the top of their game. Of particular note are Otega Okurume as Felicia’s brother and Beale Street club owner Delray, Lavender Brio as Bobby, Kemuel Van Der Puije as Gator, and Nikki Arbiter-Murphy as Huey’s mother Gladys.

Under the musical direction of Scott Richards, the R&B, gospel and rock and roll songs recall the hits of the era. Stefan Sittig adds powerful visuals with dazzling choreography.

When a singer lets loose - and, eventually, they all do - the vocal pyrotechnics turn Alexandria’s Wolfe Street into Beale Street.

Set designer Julie Fischer and costume designer Farrell Hartigan complete the transformation of taking the audience back to a time of social and musical change across the nation.

A talented cast, stirring vocals, athletic dance numbers and expert direction make for a crowd-pleasing evening to usher in the 90th anniversary season of the Little Theatre of Alexandria.

‘Memphis’ is playing now through Aug. 10 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street. For tickets or more information, call 703-683-5778 or visit [www.thelittletheatre.com](http://www.thelittletheatre.com)



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW RANDALL

Xander Conte, left, as DJ Huey Calhoun, with Lavender Brio and Peter Fannon in the musical Memphis playing now through Aug. 10 at the Little Theatre of Alexandria.



Otega Okurume as Delray and Khanner Hancock as Felicia Farrell in the LTA production of Memphis.



Khanner Hancock and ensemble in the LTA production of Memphis.

# Harris Is My Choice for President

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK



In 1796 after serving two terms as President of the United States, George Washington faced a momentous decision. Winding down his second term, which he had reluctantly accepted due to foreign conflicts and political instability typical of a new nation, he made the choice to decline seeking a third term and instead retire to life as a private citizen at Mount Vernon. At this time, he believed our new country was stable and ready for leadership to pass on to someone new.

Just ten weeks before the presidential electors were to cast their votes in the election, Washington's Farewell Address was published nationwide. Many Americans had

hoped that Washington would remain president for life and feared that his absence from leadership would bring about political upheaval. This remarkable document was not only aimed to assuage citizens about America's future without Washington, but also to offer advice on what he viewed as the greatest future threats to our country. Notably,

Washington closed his address by reflecting on his more than 45 years in public service and admitted that while he never intentionally made any mistakes during his presidency, it is still likely that he made many. He hoped that his fellow Americans would forgive these failures and that history would remember his devoted service fondly. This incredibly American decision eventually

evolved into the modern 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified in 1951 and limits presidents to two terms.

On Sunday, history was made again when President Joe Biden made the selfless decision to end his presidential campaign, demonstrating his unwavering dedication to our nation. Instead, he will turn his focus entirely on fulfilling his duties as president for the remainder of his term. Over the past three and a half years, President Biden has led our country through unprecedented challenges, achieving remarkable milestones: from strengthening our economy and expanding healthcare access to enacting historic climate legislation and safeguarding our democracy. His leadership has been a beacon of hope for our planet.

I commend President Biden for his integrity and commitment to our nation's best interests. His decision reflects the very essence of true leadership—putting the needs of the country and the American people above all else. Thank you, President Biden, for your nearly 50 years of public service, your vision, and your tireless dedication to making America a better place for all. We will continue to build on your legacy and work together to create a brighter future.

Immediately following the release of his letter he announced his endorsement of his Vice President, Kamala Harris, to replace him as the Democratic nominee for president - an action I wholeheartedly support. She will be a strong candidate and a great

SEE KRIZEK FOR HARRIS, PAGE 13

## Storck

FROM PAGE 6

they provide to students, youth and families. They will also be available to assist with obtaining public assistance services such as Medicaid, Medicare and SNAP Get hearing, vision and dental screenings done by the IN-OVA Lions Club.

Can't attend this great event? Fairfax County Public Schools has back-to-school resources available online for the first day of school on Aug. 19. Click on the links below

for resources:

2024-2025 School Year Calendar (<https://www.fcps.edu/system/files/forms/2024-01/2024-2025-standard-school-year-calendar.pdf>)

School Registration (<https://www.fcps.edu/registration>)

Information about Mount Vernon District School Board Member Mateo Dunne (<https://www.fcps.edu/staff/mateo-dunne>)

School Supply Lists (<https://www.fcps.edu/supply-lists>)

## Krizek

FROM PAGE 6

While we are fortunate to live in Northern Virginia where we rarely experience direct landfall from extreme hurricanes, these storms can still bring intense winds and rainfall that cause significant flooding and property damage. Two hurricanes in recent memory, Irene in 2011 and Isabel in 2003, left a lasting mark on our Alexandria area. Isabel alone caused over \$5 billion in damages from North Carolina to Pennsylvania. Our region experienced wind speeds peaking at 71 mph, resulting in severe tidal flooding and extensive tree damage. Power outages lasting a week or more were common, and Old Town's storm surge surpassed its historic record from the hurricane of 1933.

So, what can you do to stay prepared?

You should learn the difference between a hurricane watch and a hurricane warning. A watch means that hurricane conditions are possible, while a warning means that hurricane conditions are expected. Sign up for local alerts and warnings on your mobile device and listen to the local news and weather reports. Learn your community's evacuation plan and identify evacuation routes.

Create your own evacuation plan with a place to stay and a "go bag" full of emergency items, such as bottled water, snacks, a first aid kit, a flashlight, hygiene items, your medications and a change of clothes. Plan for your entire household including children, people with disabilities and access and functional needs, and pets. Your family may not be together when a hurricane occurs, or you may become separated, so it is important to know how to contact one another and how to re-

unite. Designate an out-of-town contact who can help your household reconnect. Be sure to practice your plan with your family.

If authorities advise or order you to evacuate, grab your "go bag" and leave immediately. If you are not in a mandatory evacuation zone, you may still decide to leave the area, you may need to move to higher ground, or you may choose to stay in your home. If you decide to stay home, remember that even if the high winds and floodwaters do not reach your home, you may still lose power or water, and you may not be able to leave your home for several days if the roads are impassable. Never drive through flooded areas: even as little as 12 inches of water can carry a vehicle away. Never wade through water: floodwaters can contain dangerous debris like broken glass, metal, dead animals, sewage, gasoline, oil, and downed power lines.

Ensure your home is protected by cleaning drains and downspouts, and anchoring any outdoor furniture. Finally, collect and safeguard critical financial, medical, and legal documents. Always maintain a 3-day water and non-perishable food supply. This year, the General Assembly reinstated the annual 3-day sales tax holiday which will take place Aug. 2-4, 2024. You can purchase tax-free hurricane preparedness products like batteries, generators, 2-way radios, bottled water, and tie-down kits. For a full list of qualifying products, visit <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/virginia-sales-tax-holiday>.

Get more information by downloading the Be Smart Create Your Family Emergency Communication Plan or visit [ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://ready.gov/make-a-plan).

## Beyer

FROM PAGE 7

"In that spirit, I look forward to a fair and open nomination process to choose the next Democratic nominee. As that process unfolds, I will support Vice President Kamala Harris, who already brings strength, compassion, and vision to the

office and the ticket. Vice President Harris' leadership and experience make her uniquely qualified to serve as President, and I am proud to endorse her to be President Biden's successor. I look forward to doing all I can in the months ahead to defeat Donald Trump and elect Kamala Harris as President of the United States.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## 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/>

## 34TH SEASON OF THE LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) announces the 34th season of its Lyceum Chamber Series, under the guidance of Music Director Laureate Ulysses James. Hosted at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, located at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria, this series promises to offer an array of exceptional weekly performances throughout the summer. All concerts are at 3 p.m.; no tickets required. Suggested donation \$25.

### LIVING. BREATHING. MUSIC.

Featuring Anna Binneweg, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic  
Ulysses James, Music Director Laureate, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic  
Alberto Rodriguez, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra  
Martin Garfield-Levine, Music Director, Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra  
Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director

### MUSIC SCHEDULE

August 4: Alexandria Baroque  
Michael De Sapio, Baroque Violin  
John Armato, Lute, Baroque Guitar  
August 11: Tapestry Cello Ensemble  
August 18: Quodlibet, Flute/Clarinet/Bassoon  
August 25: Samuel Runolfson, Cello  
September 1: Michael De Sapio, Violin  
September 8: Hai Jin, Piano  
September 15: John Sutherland Earle: Piano & Friends  
LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES SUMMER 2024 CONCERT SCHEDULE  
July 28: Maxim Pakhomov, Piano  
Works by Schubert, Dvorák, Poulenc, and Rachmaninoff

## NOW THRU AUG. 4

**Curators' Selects - Artomatic 2024.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Everyone applying to exhibit in Artomatic is accepted. Artomatic 2024, held this Spring in Washington, DC featured over 800 artists. In this Athenaeum show, three representatives of the Gallery selected several artists they had not been familiar with prior to visiting Artomatic. This exhibition features these artists and explains why the curators felt they merited wider recognition.  
Curators: Elizabeth Brown, Athenaeum Gallery Associate  
Twig Murray, Athenaeum Gallery Director  
Veronica Szalus, Athenaeum Executive Director  
Their Selected Artists: Camron Anderson, Eric Celarier, Ellen Cornett,

Louis Del Valle, Kim Dyer, Rita El-sner, Lewis Frances, Dennis Goris, A.D. Herzel, Martha Holmes, Jenny Kanzler, Phyllis Mayes, Bryan Sieling, Candice Tavares, Christian Tribastone

## JUNE 1 TO AUG. 31

**Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts.** Learn techniques in drawing, stone carving, jewelry, resin, mosaics, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria) unless noted. Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer](http://DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer)

## MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

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

### JULY

26 Bio Ritmo (Salsa)

### AUGUST

2 Eastern Standard Time (Ska and Reggae)  
9 Project Locrea (World Music)  
16 Burn the Ballroom (Alternate Rock)  
23 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)  
30 Melissa Qinn Fox (Country/American)

### AT WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

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

### JULY

27 Bela Dona Band (Funk/Jazz)

### AUGUST

3 The U.S. Air Force Strings (Alt-country/Roots rock)  
10 Ocho de Bastos (Latin/Pop)  
17 Alex Hamburger (Jazz)  
24 The U.S. Army Band Country Roads (Country)

## FRIDAY/JULY 26

**At Large Performance.** 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance and Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association at the Athenaeum Present At Large. For the July performance at the Athenaeum, Jane Franklin Dance goes beyond the parameters of a single theme to reveal multiple viewpoints and to celebrate the communal whole of a fleeting moment in time.

## SATURDAY/JULY 27

**Beats, Bites & Brews - Summer Extravaganza.** 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. Featuring Live Beats: Groove to the sounds of summer with live music performances that will set the perfect tone for your sun-soaked day; Delectable Bites: Indulge your taste buds with a variety of summer-inspired bites from local food vendors; Refreshing Brews: Quench your thirst with an array of cold beverages, including craft beers and refreshing summer cocktails in the Beer Garden; Summer Shopping: Explore local artisans and vendors offering a curated selection of summer goodies, from fashion finds to unique crafts.



The Bio Ritmo (Salsa) band will perform on Friday, July 26, 2024 at Grist Mill Park in Alexandria.



Alexandria Summer Sidewalk Sale takes place Saturday, Aug. 10, 2024 throughout Old Town Alexandria and Del Ray.

## SATURDAY/JULY 27

**Musician Clinic.** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Music & Arts Store, 4664 King Street, Alexandria. Featuring Jake Sommers and Matt Maxwell who are the rhythm section for Country Superstar Luke Combs. This free event will feature performances, Q&A and autograph sessions.

## SATURDAY/JULY 27

**Author Signing for "Spite House."** 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Hooray for Books, 1555 King Street, Old Town Alexandria. John Adam Wasowicz will be discussing and signing copies of "Spite House" at Hooray for Books. "Spite House" is book 7 of the Old Town mystery series. The story uses one of Alexandria's four spite houses as a model; the spite house in the book is located in the 400 block of Prince Street and owned by Brendan O'Leary.

## AUG. 2-31

**"The Science of Our Surroundings" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans gallery features art that draws inspiration from science and math, with a focus on diagrams, cutaways or cycles that the artist or creator may find particularly fascinating.** View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Opening Reception: Friday, August 2, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed September 1). Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## AUG. 2-16

**ALX Bark Bingo.** Come and celebrate Alexandria during the first two weeks of August with a free and fun game of bingo! ALX Bark Bingo is simple to play: 1) Fetch a bingo

card from participating stores that feature a bright yellow box on the storefront; 2) Scan the QR code on the storefront's yellow box to reveal a dog, and 3) Have a match on your bingo card? Pop into the store and get your card stamped! Win with one horizontal/vertical/diagonal bingo and email a photo of your winning card to [barkbingo@alxdogwalk.com](mailto:barkbingo@alxdogwalk.com). Winning cards will be entered into a drawing on 8/19, and four winners will receive a bag of \$300 worth of gift certificates from participating stores! ALX Bark Bingo participating stores include: Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, Bad Ass Coffee of Hawaii, Beeliner Diner, Bellies & Babies, Benny Diforza's Pizza, Boxwood, Cameron Café, District Biscuit Company, The Dog Park, ERA Clothing & Accessories, fibre space, Fiscus Glassworks,

## ENTERTAINMENT



Alexandria Restaurant Week takes place Aug. 16-25, 2024 throughout Old Town Alexandria, Del Ray, Carlyle, Eisenhower and the West End.

Frizzles Hair Salon, Kungfu Kitchen, Lost Boy Cider, Maggie Reclamations, Ms. Moxie's Moon Shop, Pippin Toy Co., Taqueria Picoso, Ten Thousand Villages, Today's Cargo, Top it Off Accessories, Whiskey & Oyster, and Zuki Moon. Visit [www.alxdogwalk.com](http://www.alxdogwalk.com)

### SATURDAY/AUG. 3

**Back to School Community Day.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Lorton Community Center, 9520 Richmond Hwy., Lorton. Enjoy a day of family-friendly fun with free giveaways of back to school supplies, food, music, games, hearing, vision and dental screenings, vaccines, the Fairfax County Park Authority Wonder Wagon, exhibitors, touch-a-truck and more.

### SATURDAY/AUG. 3

**Used Book Sale:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at

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

### SATURDAY/AUG. 10 Alexandria Summer Sidewalk Sale.

Throughout Old Town Alexandria and Del Ray. One of the longest-running seasonal summer shopping events—Alexandria Summer Sidewalk Sale—returns to the D.C. region's "Shop Small" destination on Saturday, August 10, 2024, throughout Old Town

and Del Ray. The event features dozens of Alexandria boutiques stepping out of their storefronts and offering deeply discounted summer merchandise. Learn more at [VisitAlexandria.com/SidewalkSale](http://VisitAlexandria.com/SidewalkSale). Visit [VisitAlexandriaVA.com/SidewalkSale](http://VisitAlexandriaVA.com/SidewalkSale)

### AUG. 16-25 Alexandria Restaurant Week.

Throughout neighborhoods in Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle, Eisenhower and the West End. For 10 days and two weekends, dozens of restaurants in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer a \$27.50, \$40 or \$50 in-person dinner for one during Alexandria Restaurant Week, August 16-25, 2024. The special \$27.50 offer is a playful nod to Alexandria's 275th anniversary. Find additional special offers and discounts at fast casual

## 15th Annual Alexandria Summer Sidewalk Sale

One of the longest-running seasonal summer shopping events, Alexandria Summer Sidewalk Sale, returns on Saturday, Aug. 10, 2024, throughout Old Town and beyond. The event features more than 60 Alexandria boutiques stepping out of their storefronts and offering deeply discounted summer merchandise across women's fashion, consignment, fair-trade goods, artwork, plants, home décor and more.

First-time sidewalk sale participants include Galactic Panther Art Gallery, Look Again Resale Shop, Indus Imports, Madame Coco Emporium & Everything Chocolate, Pippin Toy Co., The Genius Genus, The BEST Gift Shop and Zen Press Juice. Discounts of up to 75% off are available at boutiques including Lotus Bloom, Boxwood, Red Barn Mercantile, The Old Town Shop and more.

Shoppers can head to the Old Town Pop-Up Art Market at 101 N. Union Street to peruse offerings from Fiscus Glassworks, Bashford & Pitt, CalmConnectWell, Alexandra Schmeling Fine Art, Papazian Design and The Pink Reef from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nearby, stroll Mount Vernon Avenue during the Del Ray Vintage & Flea Market from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Shoppers are invited to follow a map of participating stores along Alexandria's red brick sidewalks for end-of-summer savings from locally owned boutiques. During the week of the event, the map will be posted online at [AlexandriaSidewalkSale.com](http://AlexandriaSidewalkSale.com), accessible via a QR code on posters at participating stores and available in print for pickup at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street.

Alexandria Sidewalk Sale is produced by Visit Alexandria in partnership with Old Town Business and the City of Alexandria.

Visit [AlexandriaSidewalkSale.com](http://AlexandriaSidewalkSale.com) for more information and store hours.

restaurants throughout Alexandria during Alexandria Restaurant Week. Alexandria Restaurant Week showcases the inventiveness of local chefs and international cuisine in neighborhoods throughout the city, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and Eisenhower and the West End. In early August, guests will find a digital flip-book of menus at participating restaurants on [AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com](http://AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

### SATURDAY/AUGUST 17

**Del Ray Bands & Brews Bar Crawl.** 12:30- 6 p.m. At Del Ray Business

Association, 2308 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Join the fun and vibrant Del Ray community for a special summer event, featuring live music in outdoor restaurant venues along the Avenue! Bands & Brews. This event is being brought to you by the Del Ray Business Association and will benefit a local non-profit. The first 250 registrants will get a swag bag with a 16 oz souvenir collectors cup! Advance tickets are \$15 (\$25 at the door), and include specials on cocktails, beer, and food at each of the 20+ participating restaura-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

## Harris Is My Choice for President

FROM PAGE 11

president should the American people elect her.

Vice President Harris's career path has marked many "firsts": she was the first Indian American senator, California's first female and South Asian attorney general, the first woman, and first Black or Asian American person to be elected vice president. And now, she is poised to become the first female president. But aside from these historic firsts, Harris in her own right is a supremely capable and uniquely qualified candidate for our nation's highest office.

Kamala Harris was born in Oakland, California, to Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher from India, and Donald Harris, an economist from Jamaica. Both her parents were passionate about the civil rights movement, and they often took young Kamala along with them to protests. As a first grader, she was bused to a predom-

inantly white elementary school during its second year of integration. She often visited India as a child and was heavily influenced by her grandfather, who fought for Indian independence, and her grandmother, an activist who traveled the countryside teaching impoverished women about birth control.

After high school, she attended Howard University, majoring in political science and economics. Harris returned to California to attend law school, and in 1990 she became an assistant district attorney in Oakland focusing on prosecuting sex crimes. Later, in the San Francisco district attorney's office, she reformed law enforcement's approach on teenage prostitution to focus on girls as crime victims.

Harris won her first campaign to become San Francisco district attorney in 2003. Under her leadership, San Francisco's conviction rate jumped from 52 to 67%. She was an early advocate against the death penalty and championed programs to help nonvio-

lent first-time drug offenders get education and job training to prevent them from re-offending.

In 2010, she was elected attorney general of California, overseeing the largest state justice department in the United States. Her office took on predatory for-profit colleges and also secured a nearly \$20 billion settlement from banks for affected homeowners following the 2008 foreclosure crisis. She also created Open Justice, an online platform to make criminal justice data available to the public. This database helped improve police accountability by collecting information on the number of deaths and injuries of those in police custody.

As vice president, she has played a critical role in rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, investing in good-paying union jobs, bringing manufacturing back to America, lowering prescription drug costs, and raising wages. Harris has been a fierce advocate for reproductive freedom and abortion rights. In

her role as president of the Senate, she has set a new record for the most tie-breaking votes cast by a vice president.

My endorsement of Kamala Harris for president is not just an endorsement of a candidate but an affirmation of our values as Democrats. It is a recognition of the need for a leader who understands the struggles of all Americans and is committed to creating a fairer, more just society. I urge my fellow Virginians to join me in supporting Vice President Kamala Harris for president. Her leadership, vision, and dedication to service are precisely what our nation needs in these pivotal times. Together, we can continue to build on the progress we've made and work towards a brighter, more inclusive future for all. This is a moment of historic significance and a testament to the enduring strength of our democratic ideals that our first president, George Washington, embodied all those years ago.

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**CALENDAR**

FROM PAGE 13

rants, live music at every venue, trolley transportation, 50/50 raffles, a photo booth, and many more fun giveaways. You must be 21+ to participate in the crawl, but children and families are welcome at family friendly establishments and at the main stage at Pat Miller Square. Visit [visitdelray.com](http://visitdelray.com).

**SATURDAY/AUG. 24**  
**Around the World Cultural Food Festival.** 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison Street, downtown Old Town Alexandria. Come and enjoy delicious foods from around the world while watching a diverse folk show with singers and dancers from different countries, then take a break and go shopping from the ethnic artisans and crafters participating in the festival.

**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](http://www.Birchmere.com).

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Sun. 28: Peter White \$49.50  
Tue. 30: Ladysmith Black Mambazo \$55.00  
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Sun. 4: Michael Franks \$65.00  
Tue. 6: Robert Earl Keen \$65.00 **SOLD OUT!**  
Wed. 7: Robert Earl Keen \$65.00 **SOLD OUT!**  
Thu. 8: Robert Earl Keen \$65.00 **SOLD OUT!**  
Fri. 9: White Ford Bronco \$35.00  
Sat. 10: 1964: The Tribute \$45.00  
Sun. 11: Trevor Hall: An Evening in a Blue Sky Mind \$65.00  
Thu. 15: Keke Wyatt \$65.00  
Fri. 16: JON B. \$69.50  
Sat. 17: JON B. \$69.50  
Sun. 18: The Secret Sisters w/ Jon Muq \$35.00  
Fri. 23: Marcus Miller \$69.50  
Sat. 24: Kim Waters \$35.00  
Sun. 25: Sandi Patty \$59.50  
Thu. 29: Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore with The Guilty Ones w/ Jon Langford & The Bright Shiners \$45.00  
Fri. 30: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00  
Sat. 31: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00

**WEDNESDAY/JULY 31**  
**Community Forum.** 7-8:30 p.m. Virtual. The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) and the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB) are seeking community input to identify systemic gaps in service and/or barriers Fairfax County residents with disabilities face. Register to attend and receive an email with access instructions. Space is limited. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities/fairfax-area-disability-services-board/community-forums>

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# School Board Approves New Boundary Policy

FROM PAGE 1

concerns regarding the proposed policy amendments. According to the group: (1) Community Instability: It requires county-wide boundary evaluations at least every five years, introducing significant instability for families, neighborhoods, and businesses. (2) Short-Term Thinking: Boundary changes are a short-term tool not addressing underlying issues impacting Fairfax County Public Schools. The school board is reluctant to consider alternative approaches, such as overhauling the process for approving renovations and building new schools. (3) No Meaningful Community Input: The school board is rushing to adopt a policy that significantly broadens its authority, with no opportunity for meaningful community input. (4) Inconsistent Data: The school board cannot provide consistent data to support boundary policy change needs.

## SCHOOL BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

During board discussions before the vote, school board member Sandy Anderson said 44 schools are over capacity or will be by

2029, 22 schools have attendance islands, and 44 schools are split feeders.

School board member Mateo Dunne supported the boundary policy changes. Shifts would be infrequent and primarily used to alleviate students' long commutes to school.

Loud cheers erupted when school board member Dr. Ricardy Anderson proposed phasing guidance to protect students when switching schools. Despite Anderson's and Meren's efforts to codify phasing protections for students, including preventing forced moves for high school sophomores and juniors, the school board voted down the amendments.

## WHAT IS POLICY 8130, AMENDED IN 2024?

According to FCPS.edu/news, the approved Policy 8130 aims "to help ensure better student achievement through enhanced instructional quality, budget optimization, and strengthened student well-being." The policy is a "guide." It creates a "framework" with four unranked criteria the division superintendent uses when considering future adjustments.

The four unranked criteria are: (1) Equitable access division-wide to programs and facilities and how that affects school programs and populations. (2) Using student enrollment projections to ensure available capacity is balanced division-wide and that school facilities are used most efficiently and effectively while avoiding or getting rid of split feeders as much as possible. (3) Proximity is crucial in promoting contiguous attendance zones and maintaining neighborhood groupings, including condominiums and apartment complexes, to prevent or eliminate attendance islands. (These occur when a specific school boundary is not adjacent to the rest of the school's boundary.) (4) Transportation should be designed to ensure the safety of walking and busing, limit the duration of transportation, and ensure efficient routes connecting the attendance areas. [Source: <https://www.fcps.edu/news/fairfax-county-school-board-updates-policy-guide-future-boundary-considerations>]

The agenda item provides greater details concerning Policy 8130, as does Boarddocs.

## "Excuse Me, Sir"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I'm guess I'm invoking Robert De Niro from the movie, "Taxi Driver," when I ask, rhetorically: are you talking to me? But it's not my television that I'm talking to, nor do I have a loaded gun in my hand. If I have anything in my hand, it's the television remote so no one, including anyone appearing on my television set is in danger. If I had an anger management problem - which I don't, I might get angry at all these people; young, old, and in between who insist on addressing me respectfully as 'sir.' 'Sir' is my father. 'Sir' is someone older than me. It can't possibly be me. I mean, I know cancer can take a few years off your appearance at the very least (and a few years off your life expectancy at the most), but I can't be 'sir' to anybody, can I? Certainly, I realize that I'm older now than I've ever been, but 'sir?' Really?

And though I readily admit to having been addressed in this manner previously, after all I am almost 70 and a 70-year-old person should be treated respectfully - as in respect your elders, and I do realize I am an 'elder;' nevertheless, the recent barrage would be an exaggeration, let's call it an uptick, of 'sirs' spoken in my direction has been a bit off-putting. Enough to think it grist for a "Kenny Column," as it's referred to at the Connection, and so here it is in all its self-indulgence - which I try, very hard by the way, to avoid.

As I've written previously about my column: it's not important that I'm writing it, it's important that it's being written about. And to summarize succinctly what exactly I'm writing about this week, I am writing about a figurative Rubicon that has been crossed: the line/time when I am the one being called 'sir,' rather than the one who is doing the calling. Don't get me wrong, I am not unhappy being called 'sir.' It's more that it's jarring in a way. Jarring in that, in my self-assessment, if there are people older than me, it doesn't feel proper to be called 'sir.' Those people and I can't be addressed similarly. If we are, then I must be, at least to a very large segment of the population that person, and/or older than I want to believe I am. In my head, I don't feel as if I'm almost 70 (in fairness what does age 70 feel like in a 70-year-old's head). I feel like I've always felt. Granted I am ever-more convinced of my age every time I must bend over and tie my sneakers. I swear I don't know what happened. Suddenly, I can't do a million things I took for granted doing with ease. The other day I picked up a baseball to throw it to a neighborhood kid who was playing catch. I barely got it to him in the air. My whole life, that's never been a problem. Now, it's not just a problem, it's a near impossibility.

As "Dirty Harry" made famous: "A man has to know his limitations." And a man of a certain age, begins to have limitations. Limitations which don't exactly enhance one's quality of living. And not that I haven't experienced some of these limitations before, it seems that being called 'sir' as frequently as I have been of late, is bringing some of these age-realities home to roost. Maybe I've been cooped up in the house too much lately? Maybe I need to get out and stop being chicken about going places? It's not as if someone is going to call me for a foul. If anything, they're likely to call me 'sir.' Now, after writing this column and fleshing out more of my feelings, being called 'sir' is not so bad. Being called "terminal" is worse. I ought to know.

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

— MERCIA HOBSON

## Virginia's Tax-Free Sales Holiday August 2-4

### Hurricane preparedness, school supply and certain energy saving products and more eligible.

Virginia's three-day sales tax holiday runs from Friday, Aug. 2, at 12:01 a.m. to Sunday, August 3, at 11:59 p.m. During the sales tax holiday, purchasers can buy three types of qualified products.

(1) School supplies, clothing, and foot-

wear: Per item-clothing and footwear must cost \$100 or less, while supplies must cost \$20 or less.

(2) Hurricane and emergency preparedness products: Per item-portable generators: \$1,000 or less; gas-powered chainsaws: \$350 or less; chainsaw accessories: \$60 or

less; and other specified hurricane preparedness items: \$60 or less.

(3) Energy Star and WaterSense products: purchased for noncommercial home or personal use: \$2,500 or less.

The Sales Tax Holiday Guidelines provide retailers with detailed lists of qualifying items and additional information.

— MERCIA HOBSON

## USDA's Free Summer Meal Services Ending

### Where to turn? New USDA program SUN Bucks and local help available.

The USDA Summer Meals program for sponsoring organization FCPS begins shutting down as early as this week. The FCPS website details different end dates for local schools' USDA Summer Meals programs. For instance, FCPS' Summer Meal Program ends on July 26 at North Springfield Elementary, as it does for Bucknell Elementary in Alexandria, Forest Edge Elementary in Reston, Clearview Elementary in Herndon, and Fort Belvoir Elementary. On Aug. 1, the programs at Armstrong Elementary in Reston and Ben Mar Park Elementary close, among others. Others run through Aug. 16. Visit Summer Meal Service Program at [https://www.fcps.edu/family-resources/student-safety-and-wellness/food-and-nutrition-programs/summer-meal-service?utm\\_](https://www.fcps.edu/family-resources/student-safety-and-wellness/food-and-nutrition-programs/summer-meal-service?utm_)

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campaign+ =&utm\_medium=email&utm\_source=govdelivery to learn when the program ends at your school.

However, as of July 24, less than four weeks remain until Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) opens on Aug. 19 for the 2024-25 school year, possibly making it challenging for some families to put food on the table for their children during the gap. Summer food assistance is available.

On July 10, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a new \$100 million investment in states, Tribal Nations, and U.S. territories to assist them in implementing SUN Bucks. Each qualified school-aged child in participating states, including Virginia, receives a \$120 grocery benefit from SUN Bucks. The benefit may be used

to purchase food at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other approved businesses.

SUN Bucks, or Summer EBT, is part of USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids. It lowers families' costs and improves food and nutrition security during summer break when children lose access to school meals. Families are encouraged to participate in all available programs. Visit SUN Programs: USDA's Summer Nutrition Programs for Kids at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer> to learn more.

Food support is available locally, too. "If you are in dire need as the summer food program is finishing, or you are worried about having enough food for you and your family, please reach out to Cornerstones Food Pantry; we are here to help," said Minnie Orozco, Program Manager, Urgent Needs and Life Skills, when asked where else can local families can turn. Her phone number is 571-323-1400.

— MERCIA HOBSON



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