

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 15, 2024

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/THE GAZETTE

Firefighters and Friends Continue with Compassion

Firefighters and Friends, a group started by now-retired Deputy Fire Chief Willie Bailey 26 years ago, gathered at Penn Daw Fire Station on Monday, Aug. 13 to make sure students along Richmond Highway would have the supplies they need to go back to school, even if their families couldn't afford to get them.

"Today we are packing and distributing backpacks for kids that go to schools that have a high population of students who can't otherwise afford these school supplies, so that these students aren't at a disadvantage as they start the school year," said Robert Young, president, Fairfax Professional Firefighters and Paramedics IAFF Local 2068.

Young said by nature firefighters and paramedics are dedicated to community service. "We come here every day with the desire to help people when they can't otherwise help themselves. This is just an extension of that."

Retired firefighter Domenick Iannelli said, "We come out here and help the fire department and Will Bailey with the back-

packs for kids, toys for tots and warm coats for winter."

Counselors and teachers from schools with needy students in Fairfax County will come and pick up these supplies and take them to the school to distribute to the students who need them, Iannelli said.

According to Capital One Shopping Research, updated July 14, 2024, "For one child, back-to-school supplies cost \$597 (K-12 average)," with a projected 2024 back-to-school household spending, K-12 average household spend of \$918.

Jim Stone works for MTSI (Modern Technology Solutions Inc.), and is on the Social Responsibility Committee.

"We have a business in Alexandria," Stone said. "We've been supporting Firefighters and Friends and many local charities for many years. We're here to support children in this community."

Lily Decampo is a family liaison from Mount Eagle School.

"I'm here to pick up some supplies for our school," Decampo said. "This will help us."

"We're here to support children in this community."

— Jim Stone, MTSI



A group photo of firefighters and volunteers gathered to get backpacks and school supplies ready for students whose families can't afford to get them for the first day of school next week.



Volunteer Jennifer Harris and retired firefighter Domenick Iannelli point to the banner which lists the donors for the school supply program.

"We come here every day with the desire to help people when they can't otherwise help themselves. This is just an extension of that."

— Robert Young, president, Fairfax Professional Firefighters and Paramedics IAFF Local 2068

Decampo said she would distribute most of the items through the teachers.

Willie Bailey, retired deputy fire chief from Fairfax County started Firefighters and Friends 26 years ago, for numerous reasons he said.

"As a firefighter, we were running calls on Richmond Highway in the 90s during the holidays, and we could see these kids didn't have anything. There were no Christmas trees or gifts or anything like that. So we started collecting toys. At different fire stations we raised some \$2000 the first year and went and bought some toys and took

them to the kids that didn't have anything.

"Now 20-some years later we're giving out thousands of toys every Christmas, we're giving out 1300 backpacks with school supplies today, and [will give out] a total of about 4,000 brand new coats to needy families."

To cover the costs of backpacks and school supplies, plus coats, plus toys, Firefighters and Friends must raise \$150,000-160,000 each year. Bailey said donating monetarily helps the most.

Go to <https://www.ffandfriends2therescue.org/>



Volunteers load bags full of backpacks and school supplies into a car to be delivered to a school where families need help getting what their students need to start school.



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PHOTOS BY DIANE FRAZIER @ FT HUNT FAMILY PHOTO



Supervisor Storck, who lives close by, poses with residents.



The vest almost fits.



The fire and police were happy to get a chance to meet the community in a relaxed setting like this.



Hopefully this will be his only experience with the riot shield.

National Night Out Is a Hit in Mount Vernon

Hot dogs, swimming and the riot shield were all part of the fun.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Residents of Fort Hunt gathered with Fairfax County Police officers at Mount Vernon Park and Pool for their annual National Night Out celebration on Tuesday, Aug. 6. There were barbecues, ice cream and comradery between the police and the community, which is the goal of National Night Out.

About 175 people came out from the surrounding Hollin Hall neighborhoods. There were fire trucks they could climb on, police equipment to check out and a band that played a mix of country and rock.

“The kids really loved that,” said Leo Milanski, President of the Hollin Hall Village Citizens Association. Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) stopped off as he made his rounds to different community celebrations.

National Night Out began in 1984 when Matt Peskin, founder and executive director of National Association of Town Watch, introduced it in Philadelphia as a way to break down the boundaries between law enforcement and the community.



Nothing better than climbing around the police car.



Tattoos too.



A table of community pictures from years past.

Familiar Face on the Mount Vernon Trail is Moving On Up

GW Parkway Superintendent Charles Cuvelier got a well deserved promotion.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Through the years along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Mount Vernon Bike Trail, Superintendent Charles Cuvelier has been there as the National Park Service representative, taking it all in from the trail enthusiasts, families, bicyclists and the commuters who live along the George Washington Parkway.

He was recently selected to the Senior Executive Service and will join the National Park Service Washington Office senior leadership team as the Associate Director for Visitor and Resource Protection. In this position he will lead nine divisions that encompass nearly 30 national programs, including public health, law enforcement, fire and aviation, regulations and special park uses, as well as the United States Park Police.

He will continue as Park Superintendent

through Aug. 24 and aid in the transition at which time Christine Smith will serve as the Acting Superintendent.

“My time at GWMP is transitioning, and I’d like to share this with you. I want to extend my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to work with you and your orga-

nization. Park partnerships are essential for achieving shared vision and goals, and your efforts provide direct benefits to park visitors for which we are very grateful. Together, we have realized many priorities and actions outlined in the GWMP handbook, enhancing our stewardship of the park,” he said.

Cuvelier has been with the National Park Service for 32 years and since 2019 he has served as the Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, manag-



PHOTO BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
**GW Parkway Superintendent
Charles Cuvelier**

ing a workforce of over 100 employees. Under Charles’s stewardship, the George Washington Memorial Parkway has hosted over 7 million visitors annually to notable sites including the Mount Vernon Trail, Theodore Roosevelt Island, Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove, Lady Bird Johnson Park, Arlington House (the Robert E. Lee Memorial), the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, Glen Echo Park, Clara

Barton National Historic Site, and Great Falls Park, the NPS said. With the NPS, he has also worked at Sequoia Canyon, Kings Canyon, Yosemite, the Natchez Trace, and Great Smoky Mountains.

Christine Smith, an Alexandria resident, will be taking over temporarily while the job is announced through the Federal government channels. Smith worked with Cuvelier through the years. “He absolutely earned it,” she said.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE>

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

Join Friends’ Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community,

and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City’s most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria’s top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com.

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

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer

Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria’s preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for “Space of Her Own,” and “Space of His Own,” serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

Farmer’s Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer’s

Markets, email Brian Morreale, brianmorreale@gmail.com

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at suzjdoyle@gmail.com or 571-403-0673.

The Parkinson’s Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson’s patients and caregivers are welcome.

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

Cure for Olympics Withdrawal

2024 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics offers 70 events.

“The 2024 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO) may not have breakdancing or pole vaulting or water polo, but we do have 70 plus events including track and field, swimming, cycling, pickleball, bocce and so much more beginning Saturday, Sept 14,” said Chair Riley Geary. “Hundreds of folks are registering as they check out the wide variety of both indoor and outdoor events,” he said. “We also award gold, silver and bronze medals after each event and encourage families to attend,” he said.

Online registration closes Thursday, Aug. 29 at www.nvso.us. The fee of \$20 covers a multitude of events.

Participants must be 50 years of age by Dec. 31, 2024 and live in a sponsoring jurisdiction. “Last year we hit a record number of registrations and are prepared for even more this year,” said registration chair Herb Levitan. “We have also added new events including a Sudoku pentathlon, a 100 yard individual medley to the swimming events, and badminton and bunco are returning this year,” said Levitan.

NVSO opens Saturday, Sept. 14 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in Arlington and closes Sunday, Sept. 29 after 10K and 20K cycling events. Throughout the two weeks of competition, events will take place at 26 different venues throughout Northern Virginia.

Sponsors of the NVSO are Arlington County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Loudoun County, Fairfax County, Fauquier County and Prince William County. NVSO is also supported by patrons including AARP Virginia, Adobe, Anthem Healthkeepers, Goodwin Home Health, Greenspring by Erickson Senior Living, Johns Hopkins Health Plans, Sentara Health Plans, The Jefferson, The Virginian, The Woodlands and the Woodbine, Alexandria and Belmont Bay Rehabilitation & Healthcare Centers.

NVSO is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 thus making donations tax deductible. Revenues received from registration, patrons and individual donations are used for equipment, judges, event officials, T-shirts for participants plus volunteers, graphics and flyers. There is no paid staff. Committee members include representatives and volunteers from the sponsoring jurisdictions.

SOURCE: WWW.NVSO.US



Cutting the ribbon on the new Firebirds Wood Fired Grill were (from left) Dan LaMay, Dan's Van Lines and Chamber Board Member; Del. Mark Sickles; Supervisor Rodney Lusk; Jim Winter, Firebirds regional manager; Nicholas Pallesen, restaurant service manager; and Eric Christensen, Springfield Town Center and Chamber Chairman

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill Opens in Franconia

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill celebrated their opening with a ribbon cutting hosted by Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce on Monday, Aug. 12 at their new restaurant located at 7027A Manchester Boulevard.

Joining the Chamber to welcome this new business were Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk and Del. Mark Sickles.

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill uses open flame to cook their hand-cut steaks, fresh seafood, and locally-sourced vegetables.

Join Firebird's Inner Circle for exclusive offers, a gift on your birthday, and \$10 off, simply for becoming an insider. <https://firebirdsrestaurants.com/loyalty-program>

Sidewalk Sale at Belle View Shopping Center

Saturday, Sept. 7, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., experience a day of shopping and dining at Belle View Shopping Center, 1632 Belle View Boulevard. Get ready for the Fall season by exploring the stores and local restaurants.

More than 30 merchants will be offering special deals and offers throughout the day. Discover the bar-

gains at spots like Top It Off Outlet, Pampered Pet, LIGHT, and Virginia Florist, with sales tables set up both inside and outside.

To add to the festivities, Revel and UnWined will be hosting a wine tasting from 2 to 5 p.m., either indoors or outdoors depending on the weather

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

at 703-746-9999 or email DAAS@alexandriava.gov.

FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.

* Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.

* Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Com-

munity Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road.

Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us for more.

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasecondsaturday.com

for more.

ONGOING

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+ robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com.

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit www.computercore.org/contribute.

THE EXPLORERS CLUB

AUG. 31 – SEP. 21, 2024

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Tiger swallowtail butterfly on thistle



Cabbage white butterfly



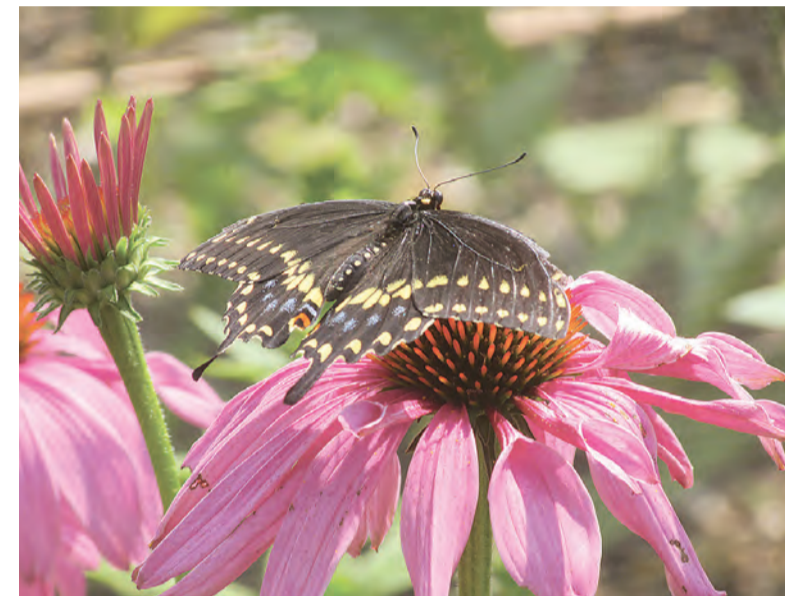
Common buckeye butterfly



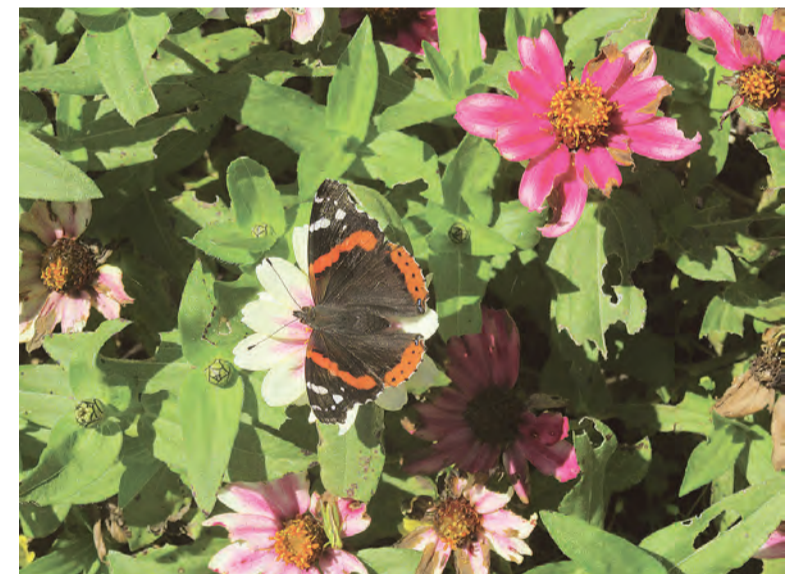
Black swallowtail butterfly



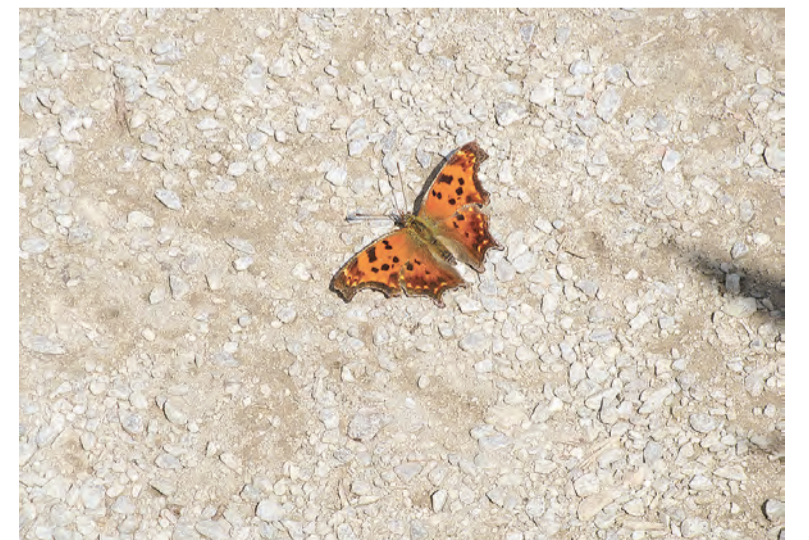
Giant swallowtail butterfly



Pipevine swallowtail butterfly



Red admiral butterfly



Question mark butterfly

Butterflies May Be in Trouble

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

This summer's heat and drought have not only taken a toll on humans, they may also be affecting the butterfly population. Some local naturalists believe there are fewer butterflies this summer in the region, but definitive conclusions cannot be reached until the season's end in late fall.

Though Hurricane Debby brought some welcomed rain to Virginia, the drought could persist. Virginia had the driest June on record since 1895 according to Drought.gov.

And other factors may be involved. Larry Meade conducts an annual butterfly survey and maintains, "Lower numbers are likely because of the heat and dry conditions. These are harsh conditions for caterpillars and there seem to be fewer flowers in the field than usual."

Alexandrian Rod Simmons has also seen fewer butterflies this year than in past years.

Butterflies need plants for all of their life stages. The National Wildlife Federation explains, "The insects need places to lay eggs, food plants for their larvae (caterpillars), places to form chrysalides and nectar sources for adults ... many butterflies and native flowering plants have co-evolved over time and depend on each other for survival and reproduction." If plants dry up and die, the caterpillars and butterflies have less food.

Other factors can affect them too, like habitat loss, the ubiquity of non-native plants and pesticides that kill all exposed insects, not just the target insects. On mosquito spraying, for example, Elizabeth Train and Elizabeth Martin wrote in a recent article, "Pyrethroids, the main chemicals that mosquito services use to kill mosquitoes in residential yards, are a class of broad-spectrum insecticides that are acutely toxic to terrestrial invertebrates, including pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Mosquito sprays kill all insects, including the caterpillars that birds rely on to feed their young throughout the breeding season. Nearly all terrestrial birds (96 percent), even seed eaters, feed their nestlings insects." <https://www.nvbirdalliance.org/news/to-spray-or-not-to-spray>

The monarch is the only butterfly to regularly undertake a two-way migration. Monarch expert, the late Dr. Lincoln Brower called it "one of the most extraordinary annual migrations on our planet, an amazing migration that eludes explanation." A western monarch population winters in California.



Monarch butterfly on milkweed



Monarch butterfly caterpillar

Meade is optimistic about this year's butterflies, offering, "I think butterflies can bounce back. Insects are resilient, so with better conditions next year, they may well do better."

Migration Miracle Is Underway

In late summer and early fall, monarch butterflies zigzag through the area en route to Mexico, joining millions to overwinter on oyamel fir trees at 9,000 to 11,000 feet. Observers estimate the size of the population by measuring the area of the forest occupied by overwintering monarchs.

The monarch is the only butterfly to regularly undertake a two-way migration. Monarch expert, the late Dr. Lincoln Brower called it "one

of the most extraordinary annual migrations on our planet, an amazing migration that eludes explanation." A western monarch population winters in California.

These orange and black butterflies, weighing 598 milligrams or one-fifth the weight of a penny, have evolved to lay their eggs on only one plant species, milkweed, called their host plant. English colonists named the insect for its colors, which reminded them of British royalty, the prince of Orange, later King William III.

When spring temperatures rise in Mexico and nectar sources become available, monarchs mate, head north and females lay eggs. The eggs become adults (see below for cycle) and this new generation flies north.

Stress

Jim Waggenger leads butterfly surveys in Northern Virginia and observes, "We're certainly seeing far fewer monarchs than usual. In the areas we're surveying, monarchs are on track to have a very bad year, possibly — without a great pickup from fly-ins in the fall — a record bad year."

University of Wisconsin-based Journey North tracks migrations and reported in February, "This past overwintering season was the second lowest on record but reports this spring and summer have been promising."

On Aug. 4, Chip Taylor with Monarch Watch emailed, "I can't tell you how big the migration will be. A lot depends on how many eggs were

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Monarch butterfly nectaring on milkweed

How to Help

Plant native milkweed and nectar plants. See <https://www.pollinator.org/monarch/monarch-resources> for appropriate plants.

Create a monarch waystation, <http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>.

EVENTS

The Friends of Dyke Marsh butterfly walk, Aug. 17, www.fodm.org
Annual butterfly survey, Sept. 15, led by Larry Meade, www.nvbirdalliance.org

Under

laid over the last 2.5 weeks north of 40 degrees latitude and then the forthcoming temperatures as that generation develops."

For details, visit <https://monarchwatch.org/blog/>.

The Monarch Cycle

Butterflies have four life stages. Females lay eggs on a leaf. After the egg hatches, the larva or caterpillar fattens up by eating leaves. That's all they do -- eat milkweed. A monarch outgrows its outer skin or exoskeleton several times and attaches itself to a support by a silky adhesive substance and becomes a pupa, a green, bag-like chrysalis that dangles delicately and transforms into a butterfly. When the adult butterfly inside is fully formed, the chrysalis splits open,



Pesticides like these kill all insects exposed to the chemicals, including butterflies and caterpillars.

the butterfly pumps fluid into its wing veins, basks in the sun to dry, hardens its wings and takes flight.

Monarchs lay eggs exclusively on milkweed plants. Adult monarchs nectar or feed on a variety of plants. Nectar is especially important for fueling the fall migration.

Virginia has over 170 species of butterflies, reports the Department of Wildlife Resources.

ENTERTAINMENT



The 48th Annual Arlington County Fair takes place Aug. 14-18, 2024 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center and Park in Arlington.



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

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

NOW THRU SEPT. 22

Fleeting Moments: Street Photography II. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist Reception: Sunday, August 18, 4 - 6 p.m. Artist Talk, Sunday: September 22, 2:30 p.m. Fleeting Moments features candid photographs that capture moments, revelatory interpretations, and brilliant reflections of the mundane - work commonly referred to as "street photography."

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.

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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 18: Quodlibet, Flute/Clarinet/Bassoon
August 25: Samuel Runolfson, Cello
September 1: Michael De Sapia, Violin
September 8: Hai Jin, Piano
September 15: John Sutherland Earle: Piano & Friends

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

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.

AUGUST

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.

AUGUST

17 Alex Hamburger (Jazz)
24 The U.S. Army Band Country Roads (Country)

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

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. 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, Frizzles Hair Salon, Kungfu Kitchen, Lost Boy Cider, Magpie 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

AUG. 14-18

48th Annual Arlington County Fair. At Thomas Jefferson Community Center and Park. The five-day extravaganza features a diverse array of food vendors, thrilling rides, friendly competitions, vendor markets, and so much more. Sensory-friendly hours will provide a quieter environment without the usual bells, whistles, and chimes on Saturday, Aug. 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The community is invited to the Opening Ceremony on Wednesday, August 14, at 5 p.m., which will feature local singers The Arlingtones and a

ribbon-cutting. New at this year's Fair (*denotes free):

- ❖ Petting Zoo: Get up close and personal with your favorite farm animals, including goats, sheep, and a mini horse!
- ❖ Solace Brewing Beer Garden: Enjoy a cold beer from Solace Brewing while listening to live music and enjoying the sights and sounds of the fairgrounds.
- ❖ Children's Market: Young entrepreneurs will showcase their products and services on Saturday afternoon at the Fair.
- ❖ Portable Planetarium Dome: Explore the cosmos in this unique viewing experience suitable for all ages, located inside the Thomas Jefferson Gym.
- ❖ WOW Wheelz Lil' Racer Track: Kids, start your engines and join us on Thursday evening to zoom around an inflatable race track.
- ❖ Headliner Bands: We are excited to welcome Pictrola, So Fetch, and The Uptown Band to this year's Fair. These energetic musicians will rock the main stage on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights of the Fair.

Fairgoer favorites returning this year include:

- ❖ Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts returns with an exhibit of some of its most popular works of art.
- ❖ Pie Eating Championship: Compete for the title of pie-eating champion at our annual pie-eating championship, sponsored by Livin' The Pie Life, TriVistaUSA, and Team Showalter.
- ❖ Big Trucks: Youngsters of all ages will delight in encountering the massive trucks on display, including kid favorites: a backhoe, dump truck equipped with a plow, and a vacuum truck, accompanied by other surprise vehicles.
- ❖ Rocknoceros: Get ready to rock the house with weekend live kids' entertainment by Rocknoceros.

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 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.

SATURDAY/AUG. 17

Port to Port Beer Festival. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria. Port to Port Beer Festival will bring 14 breweries from ports near and far to showcase their best brews. Featured breweries include Sideward Brewing and Jackie O's all the way from Orlando, Florida and Athens, Ohio, respectively, alongside local favorites like Lost Boy Cider and Cedar Run Brewing. Festival guests will receive a commemorative 5 oz. glass with their admission ticket along with three tickets for 4 oz pours. Additional drink tickets can be purchased during the festival to keep the party going. Guests will also enjoy yard games, tented seating, and live music from Road Street Avenue. On August 17th, the Tasting Room and outdoor Beer Garden will remain open to the public for regular business. However, festival beers are only available to ticket holders! Tickets are on sale for \$20 a person with an early-bird discount, increasing in price on August 10th to \$25 a person, so make sure to snag yours today for this fun new event in Northern Virginia's backyard.

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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 restaurants, 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.

TUESDAY/AUG. 20

Tuesday Night Trivia. 7 p.m. At Atlas Brew Works Alexandria, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase is bringing their high-flying, knowledge-dropping trivia action to Atlas Brew Works Alexandria every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m., starting Tuesday August 20th. The host is Mark Warburton.

FRIDAY/AUG. 23

Summer Concert Series. The U.S. Air Force Band returns to the Air Force Memorial in Arlington. Free and open to the public. Friday, Aug. 23 at 7:30 p.m. - Airmen of Note

Friday, Sept. 13 at 7:30 p.m. Air Force Birthday Concert.

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.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Find Your Ancestors! 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. Attend this conference featuring one of America's most popular genealogical lecturers. John Colletta will discuss how historical research can help to understand the day-to-day lives of our ancestors. Lively discussions will follow. Cost: \$40. Email: contact-us@mvgenealogy.org. Website: <https://mvgenealogy.org/store.php?sid=7>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

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>.

SEPT. 17-23

Fall Book Sale. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, September 17, 3:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, September 18, 10:00 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Thursday, September 19, 10:00 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, September 20, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, September 21, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, September 22, Half Price Day, 1:00-4:30 p.m.; Monday, September 23, \$10 Bag Sale, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.. \$4 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books, and media. All genres. Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria; info: 703-746-1702; www.beatleyfriends.org.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 25

Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons Lecture. 7 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. The Alexandria Historical Society is pleased to announce its upcoming lecture, "Life in Alexandria's Civil War Prisons." Local historian Madeline Feierstein will present her research on the five military prisons of Alexandria during the Civil War. Her lecture will provide an in-depth look at life

within these institutions for both Confederate and Union prisoners, examining how their presence disrupted the daily lives of Alexandria residents. Additionally, Madeline will explore the medical treatment of jailed soldiers and prisoners of war at hospitals such as Grosvenor Branch, which was the confiscated Lee-Fendall House. Attendees will gain insight into first-hand accounts from individuals who experienced imprisonment within Alexandria's city limits, from the earliest days of battle to the beginnings of Reconstruction. For more information, contact David Heiby, Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society, at davidheiby@gmail.com or 703-869-0872.

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.

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Alexandria Film Festival — Behind the Scenes

Interview with Patti North, executive director and founder of the Alexandria Film Festival.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Film Festival will run from Nov. 7-10 in several venues around Alexandria. It features high quality short and feature length films, documentaries, filmmaker panels and arts presentations. This is the first in a series of articles focusing on the background, the process and a look at the movers and shakers who make it all happen.

Q: What inspired you to start the Alexandria Film Festival 18 years ago?

Patti North: Well, at the time I was a member of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. I had always loved movies since I was a child. I realized it was the time of DVDs; a digital revolution was happening and it was going to be big. I thought there is a whole thing under our radar and we are promoting things from the Renaissance. At the time Alexandria had a number of Ethnic festivals and I thought we could put them together in an international film festival. It worked. We did get together but they didn't give up their individual festivals.

Q: Take me back. What was it like the first year?

North: The first year we had fewer than 20 film entries but we had some significant entries. One of the films by local filmmakers was nominated for an Oscar. It was about a music festival in Uganda and the devastating stories of the participants before then. One girl lost her parents who were slaughtered. She ran into the jungle and when she returned to her village she found her mother's head in a cooking pot. The music festival became a metaphor for their survival. The first year we held the festival in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office which was new and had auditorium space. It was good and bad. It wasn't set up for film and the location was buried and a challenge to get there.

Q: How did things develop from there?

North: It took a few years to attract filmmakers to come here. But we made steady progress and some of the filmmakers returned a few different times. But there was kind of a sea change in 2012. The City was still backing us at the time, and the Office of the Arts had a very good staff person who gave us significant time, especially the three months before the Festival. Suddenly she left, and the City told us they didn't have any bandwidth to give us anymore and if we wanted to continue we'd have to do it ourselves. At that point I was ready to let it go; there's only so much volunteers can do. But the volunteers wanted to go ahead so

I said ok. There were some advantages to not being connected with the City because it gave us a lot of freedom to choose what we wanted without worrying whether some language or content in the films would be offensive to them.

Q: What is your budget and what are your largest expenses?

North: This year the budget is \$43,000-45,000. The biggest expense is venue rental. We can show films anywhere but if the venue doesn't have the equipment, we have to bring it in but if they have the equipment, they are top dollar. AMC Hoffman is a big well-equipped theater and top dollar; Beasley Library is the most affordable. The next largest expense is marketing. I can't believe after 18 years people still say, "Alexandria has a film festival?" The competition for people's attention is extremely intense. If you could just run one ad, you'd do it but you don't know what message is working to compete with everything out there. We support the Festival with a grant from the City of Alexandria and the Commission on the Arts which was \$11,000 this year, and we've had some of our corporate sponsors for all 18 years. And our fellow citizens are loyal and generous in making sure the festival can prosper and grow.

Alexandria Film Festival

Find out more, <https://alexfilmfest.com/>

Q: What unexpected things have happened along the road?

North: Well, Covid was unexpected but it had some dividends. We had to do two years virtual watching on the computer. But a new platform was rising up, and we had to figure out what to do. None of us is very technical but we got the ability to offer pop up films anytime and we have done that. In person is best but it doesn't mean we shouldn't be open. Last year we had a power outage so the films had to be rescheduled until later in the day until we could solve the problem. I had eaten at a restaurant across the street and parked my car in a zoned area. When I finally left at 1 am, I found my car had been towed. It cost me \$265 to get it back. One thing I didn't expect was my new collaboration with the maestro of the Alexandria Symphony. We invited filmmakers to submit a film that would be accompanied with an orchestral piece played by the symphony. Seeing a film played in perfect synchronization — people couldn't believe it.

Q: What is the incentive for film makers to appear in the Alexandria Festival?

North: One of the reasons film festivals ex-



Executive Director
Patti North.

ist is to serve as a bridge between the filmmaker and getting noticed by the distributor. If you win an award you are not an unknown quantity anymore. We give awards at the end of the Festival in a number of different categories including Best of Festival, Best Foreign Language, Best Audience and Best Documentary Short. We don't have any overhead with the Alexandria Film Festival since all volunteers are unpaid, and I work out of my home so we are able to keep the entry fees modest although running a festival is expensive so they aren't cheap. Also we have a good professional reputation and the filmmakers know we aren't going to take advantage of them. And filmmakers like to come here and spend a weekend in Alexandria hanging out with other film people and enjoying our restaurants and fun, interesting city. Frankly, other areas that host film festivals aren't as interesting as Alexandria.

Q: What is your biggest worry?

North: At this time of the year, I try to go to sleep. This is a huge logistical nightmare. You have to have all of your ducks in a row and things have a chain reaction. You can't promote the films until they have been accepted. So many things are closely related. The logistics of operating in multiple venues at the same time, organizing content and collateral and getting folks where they need to be at the right time is pretty challenging and to do it all with unpaid volunteers is amazing. In the longer term, I worry and hope we can always retain the theater experience; it's not the same as watching TV. I screen some of the films on my computer but when I see them on the big screen the visual potential is "wow." It's really different in person. I worry about expectations falling so low that people accept artificial experiences.

Q: How would you describe the film festival?

North: We feature more substantive material so we're not likely to get Marvel submissions. The content is driven by what we like — social justice, equality, and opening the door on a little known part of the world. We aren't a themed festival like environment for instance. Once you do that there is new material that you have to let go, and we don't want to do that. We focus on things like the slave trade in Alexandria's history, our city's grandeur but also its disgrace. You have to look at the whole picture. We want to make people think and feel.

FIND OUT MORE, [HTTPS://ALEXFILMFEST.COM/](https://ALEXFILMFEST.COM/)

Really Dina?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

How long have we been married? Nearly 46 years, right? Yet, you felt the need to tell me, as an inducement to go to a Saturday-crowded local Farmer's Market to buy two tomatoes and six ears of corn: "Why don't you buy yourself a whoopie pie while you're there." Thanks, Dina. I hadn't thought of that. If there ever was a sentence/suggestion that didn't need to be uttered, it was that one: Get 'a whoopie pie'? Are you serious? I'm getting six for \$9.95. (I wouldn't have considered running that errand if it were not for the whoopie pies at the other end.

Certainly, Dina knows a few things about me after all these years. Things, let's say incontrovertible facts, that she never need think about. A few examples: I live and die with The Boston Red Sox, I love The Three Stooges, (the ones with curly), I miss my late brother, Richard, I love my dog Burton, I'm no good with tools and repairs, and I love, sweets, especially chocolate-centric ones. I don't simply have a sweet tooth. I have sweet teeth.

Now was this comment from Dina a temporary lapse in her judgment or was it an early sign of older age? After all, we have been married since "before the flood," as my late mother so often said. We're not exactly spring chickens, we're more like old goats. We pretty much have been there and done that in the relationship business. We don't (or rather won't) finish one another's sentences (that would require listening attentively to what the other is saying), but we can, with reasonable confidence, list some of undeniable truths about each other. (If you think I'm going to list some of Dina's 'undeniable truths,' you're crazy. I may be a slow learner, but I'm not stupid. I wouldn't write that list with a 10-foot pen.

She could write anything she wants about me. I'm an open book, especially, every week in this space. I'm not very complicated. I do, eat, say, buy, joke and think the same things, over and over and over again. Some might say ad nauseum. I'd say more like a continuing opportunity. Dina, on the other hand is far more in tune with the real world than I am. She prefers variety in her life, except for me. I'm the exact opposite of variety. I am, to invoke an old "Firesign Theater" bit from the 70s: I'm not simply "the same old place," "I'm the old same place." Meaning, in this context anyway, I'm like Popeye the sailor man: "I y'am what I y'am." One of the great philosophers of the Baby Boomer generation.

Olive Oil never wondered if Popeye really liked spinach. If he did, he would have muttered something memorable. (Have you seen the very old Popeye cartoons? He was always muttering something under his breath. Classic stuff.) This column is sort of what I was muttering under my breath after Dina suggested that I buy myself a whoopie pie. Like I hadn't already thought of it. Thought of it? I was already thinking where I was going to hide the remaining five whoopie when I got home.

As the errand turned out, the line for produce was around the block. I was number 79. The last number I heard called was 31. That was my cue to leave - empty handed. I then went over to the bakery where the line was much shorter, and so "it wouldn't be a total loss," to invoke a favorite Three Stooges line, I did indeed buy my six whoopie pies. And they were delicious.

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



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