

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 10, 2024

Jeff Todd Way Site for Annual Trash Clean Up

This annual event will be held Saturday, Oct. 19 this year.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The trash along Jeff Todd Way seems to be relentless, and so have the efforts of his family and friends who have been behind “Clean Up Jeff Todd Way,” between Telegraph Road and Richmond Highway in the Woodlawn area of Mount Vernon.

Jeff Todd was a Mount Vernon community figure and was killed in a car accident in 2011. The clean-up event has been held every year since. He was also a former chairman of the Mount

Jeff Todd Way Clean Up Day

8 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 19
Meet at Wegmans in Hilltop Village Center
7905 Hilltop Village Center Dr,
Alexandria, VA 22315

Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce and had such an impact they named a road after him.

This year, on Saturday, Oct. 19, the chamber and area residents will be heading out in fluorescent vests with trash bags in hand to continue this effort. They are asking everyone to meet at the Wegmans in Hilltop Village Center at 8 a.m. where they will map out a plan. There is a shuttle to Jeff Todd Way, which is about two miles from Hilltop. For high school students, it's an opportunity to gain volunteer hours as well.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Looking east, past clean ups along Jeff Todd Way have resulted in over 20 bags of trash each year.

The GW Memorial Parkway Needs Attention

By SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

As someone who has lived in our area for 54 years, I view the George Washington Memorial Parkway (the “Parkway”) as one of our community’s crown jewels. After the U.S. Army relocated 15,000 new employees to Fort Belvoir in 2005, nonresident commuter traffic increased on the Parkway and so has the speed of cars. The road has become much more dangerous, especially at intersections, resulting in dozens of injuries and even some deaths.

Between 2018 and 2021, Congressman Don Beyer, Delegate Paul Krizek, Supervisor Dan Storck and I worked to develop a community consensus on solutions. Congressman Beyer secured funding for road marking improvements and the National Park Service (NPS) conducted a lengthy safety study to identify solutions. NPS found excessive speeding to be a major problem.

I gathered and submitted over 500



Surovell

community comments offering solutions. In 2021, NPS implemented a “road diet” to slow vehicles’ speed, cause vehicles to bunch and create gaps for safer intersection left turns. In addition, NPS made further modifications to the Belle Haven Road and Belleview Boulevard intersections after receiving community feedback via Congressman

Beyer’s Office.

Accidents have declined with implementation of the traffic diet and increased traffic volumes on Fort Hunt Road and Sherwood Hall Lane have not materialized according to VDOT data. However, in the last week, there have been three accidents at the Parkway and Belle Haven Road. We clearly need to do more.

A Historic Road

The Parkway is not just a highway like most others. Congress authorized its construction to preserve and enhance the Potomac River valley, to keep the river’s banks in public ownership and to pay tribute to the first U.S. President George Washington

by creating a grand gateway to his home, Mount Vernon. It opened in 1932 as a 40-mile, slow-speed road with various units that combine the natural, historic and recreational sites with over 7,000 acres of parkland.

Changes to the road are subject to the National Historic Preservation Act because the Parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Features like stop lights are inconsistent with Congressional intent and the Parkway’s historic character. Some have suggested building a Belle Haven Road roundabout, for example. That is projected to cost \$7 million and is likely cost prohibitive. NPS must comply with the historic preservation law and inconsistent changes could subject the NPS to litigation.

Addressing Speeding

In addition to the accidents, I have received complaints about excessive speeds and late night-drag racing. The U.S. Park Police have been missing in action, many locals contend, and our requests for more enforcement have been largely ignored. Therefore, Delegate Krizek and I asked the Virginia State Police to conduct enforcement operations, but because the Parkway is fed-

eral property, its traffic rules are set in the Code of Federal Regulations and can mostly only be enforced by the U.S. Park Police.

Congressman Beyer has asked the NPS to install speed cameras, but federal law does not allow the revenues from enforcement to be recaptured by the NPS to fund the program. Congressman Beyer introduced legislation, but it has been blocked by members of the Congressional Freedom Caucus, claiming privacy concerns.

Therefore, I am drafting legislation for the state legislature to authorize the Virginia State Police and Fairfax County Police to conduct traffic enforcement on the Parkway. In addition, I am researching the legality of authorizing either the state or Fairfax County to enter into an agreement with the NPS to install and operate speed cameras on the Parkway.

We will continue to engage the community to help find solutions to improve safety on the Parkway, reduce collisions and maintain its historic character.

If you have additional questions or ideas, please email me at surovell@senate.virginia.gov. It is an honor to serve as your state senator.

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OPEN SUN 10/13, 1-3

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Hospital Project Underway in Franconia

Officials break ground for full-sized hospital in growing area.

By Mike Salmon
The Gazette

In the growing Franconia area, a groundbreaking ceremony was recently held for a new full-sized hospital on the corner of Beulah Street and the Springfield-Franconia Parkway just outside Kingstowne.

The 110-bed hospital will be on a plot of land that is next to the current Inova Healthplex that has served as medical needs for the residents of Franconia for the past 15 or 20 years, but the healthplex is more like a clinic since it has no beds for long-time patients and it can't accommodate the same level of medical operations as a hospital.

"The Inova Franconia-Springfield Campus will ensure more families in our community have access to high-quality, compassionate care closer to home," said Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay at the Franconia-Springfield groundbreaking. "These projects highlight Inova's commitment to partnering with local governments to strengthen healthcare delivery and improve health outcomes for all of our residents."

"We're looking at future growth," said Inova spokesperson Melissa Portez Riddy, referring to the growing community of Kingstowne on the east and the redevelopment of central Springfield on the west. There are road projects on the books, a data center halfway finished on Loisdale Road, and apartments going in at Springfield Town Center so the population of the area is growing. The hospital will be within walking distance to the existing Springfield-Franconia Metro Station on the blue line.

Inova also broke ground for a new hospital at Landmark, a former shopping mall that is a few miles up I-95, which will replace the aging Alexandria Hospital on Seminary Road. Together the two facilities will replace the existing Inova Alexandria Hospital.

All these changes will have some impact on medical coverage for the surrounding area.

"Inova's commitment to providing greater access to world-class care runs deep, as we invest billions back into the community to enhance healthcare services and ensure that our neighbors have access to the care they need for generations to come," said Dr.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Chairman Jeff McKay and Supervisor Rodney Lusk amongst the crew breaking ground on the new hospital off Beulah Street in the Kingstowne area of Fairfax County.

J. Stephen Jones, President and CEO of Inova Health System at the groundbreaking at Landmark. The Inova Franconia-Springfield Campus will be equipped with advanced emergency care, surgical services, and specialized inpatient care.

The current Emergency Room in the HealthPlex will remain in place until emergency services can move to a larger space in the new hospital. The former ER space will be renovated for other community healthcare services after the move.

DPR Construction will lead the construction efforts, and the hospital is expected to be completed in 2028. For more information on Inova's eastern region development plans, visit <https://www.inova.org/easternregion>.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Staff from Inova Mount Vernon Hospital pose for a photo in front of a rendering of the new Inova Alexandria Hospital Sept. 30. Shown are Inova Mount Vernon President Roberta Finch, Inova Mount Vernon Chief of Nursing Alquieta Brown, and Inova Mount Vernon Chief Medical Officer Bete Hannah.



Dr. Stephen Jones, President and CEO of Inova Health System, speaks at the groundbreaking of the new Inova Alexandria Hospital Sept. 30 at the site of the former Landmark Mall.



Riders getting ready for the Tour de Mount Vernon at the Workhouse Arts Center in 2022.

Join Us for the 9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

Get ready to pedal your way to a good time in the Mount Vernon District! Join me and Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) for the 9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon Community Bike Ride on Saturday, Oct. 19, starting and ending at the Workhouse Arts Center. This annual event will be packed with adventure, family fun and a little challenge, all set against the backdrop of our area's historical and cultural treasures.

Here's what you need to know:

The main TdMV ride kicks off at 8:30 a.m., giving cyclists the option of tackling a 40-mile or 20-mile route. Riders will explore key locations of the southern and central Mount Vernon District, highlighting the Potomac Banks historical, ecological and cultural sites. Whether you're a biking enthusiast or just looking for a fun ride through beautiful landscapes, this is your chance to pedal through paved roads and trails while enjoying a little extra challenge through South County.

Fairfax County Police and ride monitors will be on hand to help keep you safe and on the right path, so all you need to focus on is enjoying the ride! The ride will end with live music, sweet potato chili and beverages provided by



Check-in for the Tour de Mount Vernon ride will start at 7:45 a.m. and check-in for the Youth & Family ride will begin at 8:30 a.m.

the new Bunnyman Brewing Cafe.

If you're looking to involve the whole family in some cycling fun, don't miss the Youth & Family Ride! This 3-mile adventure kicks off at 9 a.m. and includes many engaging activities, from a bike rodeo, bike parade and hands-

on activities. And what's a day of family fun without some treats? Kids (and parents) can enjoy snow cones, popcorn and play yard games while taking a break from the action.

Whether you're an experienced cyclist or just looking for a day out

with the family, there's something for everyone at the Tour de Mount Vernon. Grab your helmet and water bottle and register today to join in on the fun. <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/mountvernon/tour-de-mount-vernon-2024>

Let's ride!

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A Connection Newspaper



Vote to Support Tax Relief for Military Families

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

On the ballot this year, Virginians will have the opportunity to vote for a constitutional amendment to provide equitable tax relief to surviving spouses of military service members who died in the line of duty.

A question I've seen asked is why this tax exemption must be accomplished through a constitutional amendment as opposed to passing a bill. The short answer is that the Virginia Constitution outlines the framework for how taxes are levied in the state, as well as grants local governments the general right to impose personal property taxes within Article X. Also listed within that article is property that is considered exempt from state and local personal property taxes such as certain state-owned property, public libraries, and non-profit cemeteries. Because taxation is established through the Constitution, any changes made to tax-exempt property must therefore be a constitutional amendment. However, it is important to understand that the standard for passing a con-

stitutional amendment is much higher than an average bill.

So, what is the process for an amendment to the Virginia Constitution to be passed? Making any change to the constitution is cumbersome by design to prevent the adoption of frequent or impulsive amendments. First, an amendment must be proposed by the House of Delegates or Senate and agreed to by the majority of the members in each chamber. Next, the same amendment must be passed by the legislature a second time, but only after the General Assembly has undergone an election. Only then can the amendment be placed on the ballot for voters to decide.

The amendment on our ballots this year was first introduced by my colleague Delegate Kathy Tran in 2022, and the amendment subsequently passed the required two times in the 2023 and 2024 sessions with a legislative election in between.

The Virginia Constitution currently provides property tax relief for certain members of the military and their spouses. In 2010, Virginia voters approved a property tax ex-

emption for veterans who have a 100% service-connected permanent and total disability and their spouses at their principal place of residence. In 2014, Virginia voters agreed to a property tax exemption for surviving spouses of members of the United States Armed Forces who were killed in action, as determined by the U.S. Department of Defense.

The current definition of "killed in action" in the Virginia Constitution refers to military members killed in combat, while "killed in the line of duty" references members who died in the line of duty with a Line of Duty determination from the United States Department of Defense which includes members killed during active or inactive duty training, drill weekends, or traveling to or from their place of duty.

I first became aware of this oversight in our tax code in early 2021 when a constituent contacted me to share her experience as a Gold Star spouse receiving the property tax exemption for surviving spouses in Fairfax County. After several years, she was sent a letter that she owed back taxes due to an eligibility error as her spouse was killed

in the line of duty instead of as a result of enemy action. My office assisted her with a one-year exemption for her property tax, but it was clear that a permanent legislative fix was necessary.

This election, I encourage you to vote yes on this critical amendment to recognize the broad scope of service and sacrifice made by our service members and their families. Service members who were killed in the line of duty, including in training or operational accidents, were serving essential roles defending our nation. This amendment brings fairness to tax relief benefits for families of Virginians who made the ultimate sacrifice, regardless of how they died during service.

The surviving spouse community in Virginia is small. According to the United States Department of Defense Actuarial Report in 2021, out of over 8.5 million Virginians, there are only 182 surviving spouses, including those of individuals killed in the line of duty. If approved, this constitutional amendment would be meaningful and impactful for this small community of surviving spouses.

Urgent Concerns Ongoing Purge of Voter Rolls

Letter from U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly to Gov. Glenn Youngkin about voting roll purges is shared with readers of the Connection:

Dear Governor Youngkin and Attorney General Miyares,

I write to express my urgent concerns regarding implementation of Executive Order 35 and the Commonwealth's potential violation of federal law. Specifically, I am alarmed by the ongoing purges of Virginia's voter rolls within 90 days of an upcoming election, a practice that would violate the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993, which restricts states from conducting systematic voter roll purges within this timeframe.

The NVRA restricts states from systematically removing voters from voter rolls within 90 days of a federal election to prevent widespread disenfranchisement and ensure the integrity of the voting process. This restriction is designed to protect voters from

being wrongly purged close to an election, which could disrupt their ability to cast ballots.

This 90-day restriction helps minimize errors in purges. Voter roll purges can sometimes be based on inaccurate data, leading to the wrongful removal of eligible voters. The 90-day restriction provides a buffer to prevent last-minute mistakes that could deny people their right to vote, especially when the time to correct errors is limited.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The 90-day restriction prevents disenfranchisement. If voters are removed from rolls too close to an election, they may not have enough time to correct the situation (such as re-registering or proving their eligibility). This buffer ensures eligible voters are not disenfranchised due to administrative errors or insufficient time to respond.

The 90-day restriction ensures election integrity. The law seeks to maintain stability and confidence in the voter registration system during a critical period leading up to elections. By limiting voter roll changes

within this time frame, it prevents politically motivated purges that could unfairly target certain groups of voters or influence the out-

come of an election.

The 90-day restriction also protects vot-

SEE URGENT CONCERNS, PAGE 10

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

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

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Supervisors Honor Karla Bruce

One Fairfax Policy: Former Chief Equity Officer has 25 years of impactful service.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

During their meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 8, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors presented a resolution to honor and recognize Karla Bruce, the county's former Chief Equity Officer. Bruce who has served 25 years in the county. Her significant contributions include creating the One Fairfax Policy. "One Fairfax is a joint racial and social equity policy of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board. The 2016 One Fairfax Resolution commits the county and schools to intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services."

Chairman Jeffrey McKay highlighted the significant generational impacts of Bruce's work, emphasizing its importance in improving

the quality of life for future generations.

"Because of the work that's here, these impacts are going to be significant," said Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Franconia District.

Supervisor Jimmy Bierman, Dranesville District, said Bruce has not stopped trying to ensure that people understand what equity means, "that a rising tide DOES lift all boats, and that we are all in this together."

Supervisor Andres Jimenez, Mason District, said Bruce's critically important work also allows the younger generations to see themselves in her efforts.

Bruce said it had been an amazing journey. "Outside of being a parent, I don't believe I've had another life experience where I've had the opportunity to hold and shape something so important while at the same time being molded and shaped."



SCREENSHOT

The Fairfax County Supervisors present the county's former chief equity officer, Karla Bruce, with a resolution to honor and recognize her 25 years of service.

Jury Convicts Former Officer In Death of Unarmed Suspect

Guilty of reckless handling of firearm; not guilty of involuntary manslaughter.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Friday, Oct. 4, a jury made up of eight women and four men convicted former FCPD Sergeant Wesley Shifflett, 36, of reckless handling of a firearm, related to the shooting death of Timothy McCree Johnson, 37, on February 22, 2023. The jury found him not guilty of involuntary manslaughter. Felony reckless discharge of a firearm carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. It acknowledges Shifflett bears some criminal responsibility in the shooting death. A sentencing hearing is set for Feb. 28, 2025. Caleb Kershner, Shifflett's attorney, said he plans to appeal.

"I hope it gives the Johnson family some closure to know that they are not alone in seeing that Mr. Shifflett did not act in accordance with the law," said Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano.

Shifflett and another officer chased Johnson, suspected of shoplifting two pairs of sunglasses from Nordstrom, in a foot pursuit from the Tysons Corner Center mall into a dark, wooded area. Shifflett testified, "[Johnson] tripped and did a barrel roll and as soon as he tripped, he came up on his knees and was facing

me ... He just looked at me and didn't respond to commands. He then reached into his waistband and was moving back and forth." Shifflett testified he was the "most scared" he had ever been.

Shifflett fired his gun and a bullet from his gun hit Johnson once in the chest.

The police body-camera footage confirms Shifflett saying, "Stop reaching," after he fired. Other officers rushed to Johnson and rendered aid. Police found that Johnson did not have a weapon. Johnson was pronounced dead at the hospital.

"Unfortunately, we have a two-tiered system of justice where some people's lives and liberty are worth more than others. And certainly, there are still institutional barriers to holding law enforcement officers accountable when they break the law," said Descano. He explained that Virginia law allows officers, but not prosecutors, to present evidence to a regular grand jury, giving police more power at the critical prosecution stage.

"I want the people of Fairfax County to know that whether it is in the community, in the courtroom, or in the halls of power in Richmond, we will continue to fight for a fair and just system that meets the needs of all our community members," Descano said.

Shifflett's attorneys argued he was doing what he was trained to do and put a law enforcement officer on the stand who said officers are trained to fire twice when they believe they are in danger. "He was acting in self-defense ... He was acting to preserve his own life, that's not even close to negligence." Kershner said during the case.

Melissa Johnson, Timothy's mother, said in a televised statement after the court's verdict on Friday that most Black and brown families who find themselves in the same situation do not even get this far. She highlighted what "they have achieved in this wrongful death case in 590 days is unprecedented, and it is a miracle."

Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis fired Shifflett soon after the shooting.

The trial encountered near mistrials, according to Johnson. Defense lawyers filed, then withdrew, a motion for a mistrial after a witness testified without his lawyer present. Jurors watched a portion of police body-camera footage of Shifflett telling his supervisor he told Johnson to show him his hands — a command he never gave during the pursuit. The court refused to admit that portion of the video as evidence. Later, the lead prosecutor experienced a medical emergency, delaying the

proceedings for a week.

Johnson said that they witnessed the firing of the white ex-Fairfax County police officer in the death of a Black unarmed man. "We have had to request a special grand jury indictment. We have gotten a speedy trial and all of the instances that have come up against us since this case and this trial began, up until today's jury verdict, all of this in only 590 days together."

Johnson thanked Descano and his team. "The Commonwealth has shown to do what is right ... even when doing so meant poking the Blue hornet's nest. Today's verdict has afforded Mr. Shifflett a second chance, a benefit that my son, Timothy McCree Johnson, was not afforded."

"We stand for 'Justice for Timothy', and today we accept the jury's verdict," Johnson said. "I forgive [Shifflett] and I have no malice in my heart toward him. He knows the truth and that is between him and his Maker."

Look Back at 'Justice for Timothy,' April 1, 2023

Melissa Johnson stood for two hours at the Fairfax NAACP Justice Rally outside the Fairfax County Government Center on April 1, 2023. The Connection reported. "My heart is broken ... I volunteered to add my voice to help this

go a little bigger and broader. Yes, this is about Timothy, but this is a justice rally for us to petition the leaders of this county here to do the right thing, for the right reason."

What was most difficult for Johnson, she said, was that, as a mother, she watched the police body-camera footage. "I witnessed my son's testimony as he lay there after being shot. Timothy yelled out, 'I don't have anything in my hand.' ..."

"Remembering my son's last words, before he took his last breath, he said to that officer, 'Hurry, hurry.' I say that to you ... Chief [Davis], Justice.' I say that to you, Supervisor McKay; I say that to you, Commonwealth's Attorney Descano. Hurry, hurry. Justice is calling. Hurry ... This is why I am here."

Timothy's right to due process was taken away from him when both officers, not under any danger, imminent or otherwise, willfully made a decision to pursue him, unholster their guns, and fire their weapons."

To learn more about the Fairfax County Police Department General Order governing the use of force, review General Order 540: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/sites/police/files/assets/images/chief/generalorders/go_540.pdf

NAACP to County: Adopt Encampment Closure Policy

Supervisors respond.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

The Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP calls on the county's Board of Supervisors to adopt clear policy guidelines for removing encampments of unsheltered residents. Chapter leadership Niki Zimmerman, president, and Mary Paden, chair of the housing committee, outlined the proposal in a detailed five-page letter they sent to Chairman Jeff McKay on Sept. 11 and copied to supervisors and county staff.

The guidelines address the county's homeless population's needs, humane treatment, and civil rights. According to the 2024 Point in Time count, Black individuals make up about 50 percent of the homeless population in Fairfax despite representing only 10 percent of the overall county demographic.

The chapter's six-point proposal, as described by Zimmerman and Paden, recommends that the board create an advisory group of residents and experts to review the guidelines and those from other jurisdictions and finalize a document that states the policy outcomes desired by elected officials and allows flexibility where needed to achieve the outcomes.

Fairfax NAACP's recommended guidelines for clearing homeless encampments when necessary and reasons why. Content is edited for space and clarity.

- ❖ The county should offer encampment residents an indoor shelter with overnight accommodation, where they can receive food and social services; daytime shelter to those who are elderly or have mental or physical health issues and notification of how to obtain alternate shelter.

Providing adequate temporary shelter for vulnerable individuals is crucial since it could take 4-6 months for permanent housing in the county. While permanent supportive housing is being developed, funds should be allocated for interim 24/7 shelters to alleviate suffering.

- ❖ Any planned removal must announce the time and date at least two weeks in advance, publicly on the county website, in a press release, and to the tent encampment through posted notices. This is in keeping with the current advice from the county attorney.

- ❖ County employees clearing an encampment must include co-responders, mental health professionals from the Community Services Board, and officers trained in de-escalation techniques to carry out the operation without harming the homeless people. "We prefer that police not carry lethal weapons but rather tasers."

- ❖ Witnesses must be invited and could include a representative of the National Lawyers Guild in DC, an attorney, or a representative of a civil rights group such as the NAACP. Witnesses may take notes and photos and record the event. News media should be allowed to speak to witnesses and homeless people being removed.

- ❖ Homeless people who are being displaced should not be arrested. Although they



Belongings left behind at the Reston encampment Sept. 10.



On Sept. 10, a resident of the Reston encampment packs up his belongings to move to another site.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE GAZETTE

can technically be charged with trespassing, it is better to achieve compliance without charges, as they can have adverse and cascading effects on people who are indigent.

- ❖ Put the encampment residents' belongings in storage for 60 days at a known transit-accessible location so they can retrieve them for free. Establish a mechanism for them to bag and tag a certain amount of their possessions that they may be unable to carry from the site.

The NAACP leaders argued that when homeless individuals relocate from one encampment only to resettle in another one and no assistance is provided, it may worsen their situation emotionally and medically, a concern referenced by the Washington Post in "Sweeps Worsen Health of Homeless."

Zimmerman and Paden noted that recent county clearings of encampments, such as "The Hill" in Reston and Mantua Park, near Fairfax City, were conducted without significant incidents. However, they highlighted that the process could have benefitted from established public guidelines to reduce uncertainty and tension. They reported that each camp had about 40 tents at its height.

Additionally, they are unaware of any countywide policy guidelines in Fairfax. However, they recognize that the county's Department of Health and Human Services adheres to the "Fairfax Encampment Response Protocol" for encampment removal. The proposed guidelines are per the U.S.



Niki Zimmerman,
president of Fairfax
County branch of
NAACP



Mary Paden, chair
NAACP Fairfax housing
committee.



Jeffrey C. McKay,
chairman, Fairfax
County Board of Su-
pervisors.

and clarity.

- ❖ Office of Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk- "At this time, Supervisor Lusk has no comment. This topic is currently under review by the Fairfax County Office to End and Prevent Homelessness and the Fairfax County Continuing Care Committee."

- ❖ Office of Chairman Jeff McKay replied to use the comment he sent Mary Paden. "The two-week notice before clearing an encampment is a standard part of our protocol," McKay points out, and the "two

most recent clearings were done without incident.

"That is because Fairfax County's approach to the issue is one that puts the individuals first and treats them with the humanity and respect they deserve. While I strongly support our approach," McKay writes he "will ensure that the NAACP's suggestions are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate senior staff as well as the County's Continuum of Care Board to see how our current protocol may be improved." He adds, "Professional outreach is a priority in all situations."

- ❖ Office of Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn- "I very much appreciate the NAACP's suggestions and agree we should lead with compassion and treat the unhoused with the humanity and respect they deserve. I have asked that the NAACP's suggestions are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate senior staff as well as the County's Continuum of Care Board to see how our current protocol and processes may be improved."

Interagency Council on Homelessness, 19 Strategies for Communities to Address Encampments Humanely and Effectively (April 2024), and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, Housing, Not Handcuffs Encampment Principles & Best Practices (2024).

Zimmerman and Paden copied Christopher Leonard, director of the Department of Health and Human Services; Thomas Fleetwood, director of the Housing and Community Development Department; Thomas Barnett, director of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness; and Karla Bruce, chief equity officer, on the letter.

Access the Fairfax County NAACP letter at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yb4BKj3MNOZRBp3EnACzaLB-aqOE_FN1tQQgutzaqEOyU/edit.

Supervisor Comments:

The Connection contacted the ten members of the Board of Supervisors for comments, represented here with edits for space

ENTERTAINMENT



Alexandria Ghost Tours and Haunted Pub Crawls have started at various locations in Old Town Alexandria.

ONGOING

Alexandria Ghost Tours and Haunted Pub Crawls. Alexandria Ghosts offers guided ghost tours and adults-only haunted pub crawls nightly that highlight the city's dark history and unique local lore highlighting Alexandria's haunted history. The tours feature stories from historic sites and iconic locations like the Carlyle House, Ramsey House, and the infamous Wilkes Tunnel. Each experience transports you to the city's eerie past, a time before it was a trendy place to live, work, and play. Alexandria has a tragic history so disturbing it's often hidden from tourists who descend upon the city daily.

The Four Terrifying Tour Experiences of Alexandria Ghosts:

1. Alexandria Ghosts: Phantoms of the Potomac: Explore Alexandria's haunted history as you follow in the ghostly footsteps of George Washington and other restless spirits in this colonial city.
 2. Alexandria Ghosts Boos and Booze Haunted Pub Crawl: Combine history, hauntings, and a lively pub crawl in Alexandria's haunted bars.
 3. Alexandria Ghosts Ultimate Dead of Night Haunted Ghost Tour: A deep dive into Alexandria's eerie past, from Native American history to Civil War hauntings.
- ❖ Meeting Locations: 323 Cameron St, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Phantoms of the Potomac); 138 N Royal St, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Pub Crawl & Ultimate Dead of Night Tour); 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (Washington's Footsteps). Visit <https://alexandriaghosts.com>.

WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS

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

um on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>

GROW WITH YOUR GARDEN AT GREEN SPRING GARDEN TALKS

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

- Alternatives for Invasive Plants. Friday, Oct. 11, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Discover the different plants you can grow to avoid other bullying plants from taking over your yard.
- Make a Backyard Sanctuary for Wildlife. Saturday, Oct. 26, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Learn gardening techniques for attracting pollinators, birds and other native insects into your garden to improve habitat loss.
- Composting Made Simple. Friday, Nov. 8, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Learn the value that comes with putting compost into your yard and garden instead of your trashcan.
- Adapt & Thrive with Climate Change. Saturday, Nov. 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Extension Master Gardeners share ways to adapt your garden practices to changing climate patterns through plant selection, water management and more!

NOW THRU OCT. 27

Alexandria Plein Air. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Six artists began regular outdoor painting sessions in and around Alexandria, VA to help cope with the pandemic. They have continued the practice and this exhibit displays their interpretations of local sites, natural and man made, in a variety of seasons. Featuring: Mary Anne Cochran-Fox, Calina Franzosa, Seana Gallagher, Renee Lachman, Theresa Miller and Karen Thuermer.

OCT. 4-26 The "Artificial or Intelligence?" Art Exhibit.

At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave.,

Alexandria. Features art that explores what the future might look like with AI and whether machine learning feels artificial or intelligent at the present moment. Opening Reception: Friday, October 4 from 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed October 27). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

OCT. 9-10

Flower Show: "The Chemistry of Fall." Wednesday, 2 to 5 p.m.; Thursday 8-11 a.m. At River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. The 19 garden Clubs in District II from Northern Virginia are holding a flower show titled "The Chemistry of Fall" at River Farm. The public are invited to view the local horticulture grown by the garden club members as well as the beautiful designs and photography they have created. District II is one of the 4 districts in the National Capital Area Garden Club organization. There are currently 60 garden clubs with over 2,100 members in our area that covers northern Virginia, southern Maryland and the District of Columbia. Contact Anne Dremluk at yachthavengardenclubva@gmail.com.

FRIDAY/OCT. 11

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

SATURDAY/OCT. 12

Designing American Living. 3-4:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy,

DEL RAY ARTISANS Neighborhood Arts Day
Chirilagua
 Del Ray Artisans en colaboración con Casa Chirilagua
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 Patrocinado por la ciudad de Alexandria & The National Endowment for the Arts



Chirilagua Neighborhood Arts Day takes place on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2024 in Alexandria.

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

<https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents/2024/10/12/designing-american-living>

SATURDAY/OCT. 12

Chirilagua Neighborhood Arts Day. 12-4 p.m. Free, outdoor, community art-making event at the Four Mile Run Conservatory (4109 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA) in partnership with Casa Chirilagua. Artist instructors will lead hands-on art activities for all ages, including ColorWOW drawing, brite kites, paper flowers, gelli prints, and Guatemalan worry dolls. Live music by the band Marimba Maya Awal. This is a family-friendly event! Details: delrayartisans.org/community-arts

OCT. 12-20

5th Annual Old Town Oyster Week. 11 a.m. 5th Annual Shucking Competition at Daniel O'Connell's Irish Restaurant & Bar at 112 King Street on Saturday, October 12th at 11 a.m. Visit participating restaurants throughout the week for featured oyster and Guinness pairings, and don't forget to vote for your favorite one!

SUNDAY/OCT. 13

The Carpenter's 20th Anniversary Cook-Off. Noon to 3 p.m. At The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Indulge in an afternoon of food and fun while supporting Carpenter's Shelter! Attendees will enjoy tastings from 20 area restaurants, bid on hot

ticket items during the live and silent auctions, and listen to live music. Restaurants to Date: Hard Times Café, Hen Quarter, Nando's Peri Peri Chicken, The Majestic, The Royal, What the Chef, Mystic BBQ & Grill, Bittersweet Catering, Landini Brothers, Misha's, The Warehouse, The Wharf, Pork Barrel BBQ. General Admission (Now until October 11): \$75 Adults, 25 Children (12 and under). At the Door Tickets (on October 13): \$100 Adults, \$30 Children (12 and under). All proceeds from this event will support Carpenter's Shelter, which now operates two homeless shelters in Alexandria, VA and serves 909 people total—248 children, 67 families and 500 single individuals experiencing homelessness.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 16

Yacht Haven Garden Club Benefit. Yacht Haven Garden Club's 40th annual Fashion Show, Silent Auction and Luncheon fundraiser "40 Years of Friendship, Fashion and Flowers," will be held at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria. Fashions will be provided by Sara Campbell. Tickets are \$60.00. Deadline is October 9. For reservations, contact: Joyce Tami at yachthavengardenclubva@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/OCT. 19

Aware. 1-3 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join in a family friendly, free event curated by the Athenaeum's Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta. Aware is a community-based collaboration with a mission to entertain and inform the community. Twelve (12) pre-selected poets, musicians, and storytellers will provide awareness artistically that focuses on important topics bringing forth their knowledge, personal experiences, and perspectives using

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA

NOW THRU OCT. 13

Life's a Stitch. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.
At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Life's a Stitch x4 looks at 4 very different ways that art quilts and fiber sculpture can use both humor and drama to express character and story. Website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/lifes-a-stitch>



The Workhouse Haunt: Twisted Tales of Terror takes place Oct. 4 to Nov. 2, 2024 at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

NOW THRU OCT. 27

"Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors." At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. September: Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. October: Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 4 p.m. Special October Twilight Performances: Dracula show combined with admission to the haunted trail that same evening. Filled with clever wordplay and pop culture references, Dracula is a gender-bending, laugh-out-loud reimagining of the gothic classic. In the treacherous mountains of Transylvania, a meek English real estate agent takes a harrowing journey to meet a new and mysterious client, the most terrifying and ferocious monster the world has ever known: Count Dracula! Famed female vampire hunter, Jean Van Helsing, and company chase Drac from Transylvania to the British countryside to London and back. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. Back for its 11th season, one of Northern Virginia's most popular Halloween events is bringing even more scares (and laughter) to its creepy outdoor walk-through trail. The Haunt will lead guests on a frightening journey that brings them along the abandoned, historic buildings of the former prison, where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights and sounds that are not for the faint of heart. This year's theme, Twisted Tales of Terror, features more than a dozen creepy live-action scenes portray-

ing classic fairy tales gone wrong, including Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Pinocchio and more. To keep everything moving along, guests will travel in small groups via a timed entry. While waiting for their timeslots, or following their trail experience, guests can enjoy Halloween fun in the Rizer Pavilion: DJ-mixed music (Fridays, Saturdays, and Halloween Night); refreshments at the bar, including Halloween-themed alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks; sweet and savory food truck treats; and Halloween art and trinkets in the Haunt Pop-up Shop. Tickets are on

sale now; prices start at \$25 per person. Visit www.workhousearts.org for schedule and event details.

SATURDAY/OCT. 12

Fire & Rescue Department Open House. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Stations will be hosting an Open House Event. Visit your local fire and rescue station and join in the activities and learn about fire safety. Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 6-12, 2024.

225 juried artisans in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Attendees may buy directly from the artisans who create the work, all of which is crafted by hand. Hours: Friday, Oct 11 and Saturday Oct 12: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday Oct 13: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$11 in advance Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACFart

OCT. 11-13

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. Featuring

SEE ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA, PAGE 10

OCT. 4 TO NOV. 2

Workhouse Haunt: Twisted Tales of Terror. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, plus Halloween night.

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ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA

FROM PAGE 9

SUNDAY/OCT. 13
Clifton Day. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the Town of Clifton, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. Now celebrating the 56th year of Clifton Day, the annual town event celebrates the beauty and charm of the beloved town of Clifton. Join in experiencing the magic of arts, crafts, entertainment, and food they have in store. Live music, children's activities, pony rides, a beer and wine garden, and other delicious food and beverage choices add to the fun. Visit the website: www.Cliftonday.com

SUNDAY/OCT. 13
Fall Festival. 2-5 p.m. At Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center, 10800 Belmont Blvd., Lorton. Fall Festival - food, cider, pony rides, live music, pumpkin painting, family friendly games. Cost is \$100. Call 703-402-3613. Visit the website: <https://simplechanges.org/events/fall-festival/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 19
9th Annual Tour de Mount Vernon. 8:30 a.m. Starting and ending at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. Riders will enjoy a fun ride through the many Potomac Bank's historic, ecological and cultural sites in the southern and central parts of the Mount Vernon District. The route consists of paved roads, paved trails and has some challenging sections. The event is rain or shine. Kickoff at 8:30 a.m. Short Route 20 miles; Long Route 40 miles. Youth and Family Ride Kickoff at 9 a.m. Youth Route 3 miles. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/MountVernon

FAMILY SKATE AND DANCE NIGHT
This fall, the Family Skate and Dance Nights at Franconia Rec Center will feature a lively schedule. Skaters of all ages will enjoy the festive themes, tasty food

SEE ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA, PAGE 11

LETTER

Urgent Concerns

FROM PAGE 5

ers. The NVRA includes provisions to make voter registration easier, especially for groups that are often underrepresented, such as minorities and low-income voters. The 90-day rule helps prevent sudden, large-scale removals that might disproportionately affect these communities.

Given the potential for errors in systematic voter purges, the rapid pace of the ongoing purges required by Executive Order 35, and the proximity to Election Day, the Commonwealth must cease any voter purging activities that violate federal law.

I look forward to your immediate and personal attention to this matter to protect the integrity of our elections and ensure the Commonwealth is complying with federal law.

U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly
Fairfax

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

the Power of Words and Voice to focus on such topics as: What it means to be Brave, Running Towards Love, Women's Mental and Physical Health, Kidney and Liver Health, Cancer, Musical Self-exploration, and more! Space is limited and RSVP is required. RSVP to greatpublishing@yahoo.com

SATURDAY/OCT. 19

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

OCT. 24 TO DEC. 21

"A Focus on Nature." At Coldwell Banker Realty, 310 King Street, Alexandria. Opening reception Oct. 24 from 6-7:30 p.m. Art exhibit featuring the nature-themed photographs of Steven Halperson and mosaics of Nina Tisara. Steven Halperson, Tisara Photography, has over 30 years' experience in portrait and event photography. For this exhibit, he is returning to his roots in fine art photography and making use of digital camera software to create strikingly beautiful images. Nina Tisara retired from the photography studio in 2007 and began creating intricate mosaics which are now widely exhibited and collected. Nina is the founder of Living Legends of Alexandria. A portion of all sales will be donated to the Coldwell Banker Realty Cares Foundation, a program that helps support selected nonprofits in Alexandria and throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. For additional information, contact Rachel Carter, RCarter@cbmove.com or Nina Tisara, Ninat@ninatisara.com.

SATURDAY/OCT. 26

Old Town Family Trick or Treat. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Various locations in Old Town Alexandria. Bring the family and enjoy trick-or-treating in various shops



"A Focus on Nature" can be seen Oct. 24 to Dec. 21, 2024 at Coldwell Banker Realty in Alexandria.

and restaurants in Old Town along upper and lower King Street and select side streets. Visit oldtownbusiness.org in the coming weeks for details on the starting point and map pick-up location.

SUNDAY/OCT. 27

Old Town Doggie Trick or Treat. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At The Dog Park, 705 King Street, Alexandria. Bring your dog for a howling day of walking through Old Town and visiting participating merchants who will offer treats for your four-legged companion. Start at The Dog Park boutique, located at 705 King Street. Visit oldtownbusiness.org.

SUNDAY/OCT. 27

28th Annual Del Ray Halloween Parade. 2 p.m. Begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte Ave. Alexandria. One of Del Ray's favorite traditions, the annual Del Ray Halloween

Parade, returns once again. Costumed children, pets and babies in decked-out strollers are invited to march and show off their finest and scariest Halloween garb. For more information, including details on entering the house decorating contest, pet costume contest and stroller decorating contest, head to visitdelray.com.

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.

OCTOBER

Wed. 9: Rickie Lee Jones \$55.00
Thu. 10: Gerald Albright \$55.00
Fri. 11: Bilal with Halima \$39.50
Sat. 12: TUSK – The World's #1 Tribute to Fleetwood Mac \$45.00
Sun. 13: Both Sides Now: The

Music and Lives of Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen Starring Danielle Wertz and Robbie Schaefer \$39.50

Mon. 14: An Evening with Larry Wilmore: Comedy, Magic, and 'Merica \$35.00

Wed. 16: Debbie Gibson – Acoustic Youth: Songs and Stories from The Electric Youth Era \$59.50

Thu. 17: Yächtley Crëw \$45.00

Fri. 18: The Whispers \$95.00

Sat. 19: The Whispers \$95.00

Sun. 20: Boney James \$95.00 SOLD OUT!

Wed. 23: Private Event

Thu. 24: AJ Ghent & His Singing Guitar \$35.00

Fri. 25: William Clark Green with Erin Kinsey \$29.50

Sat. 26: Tom Paxton & The Don-

Juans with sp. guest Noel Paul

Stookey of Peter, Paul & Mary

\$49.50

Sun. 27: Oleta Adams "Farewell

Tour!" \$55.00

Tue. 29: The Robert Cray Band

\$59.50

ENTERTAINMENT EXTRA

FROM PAGE 10

and fun music of these skate nights hosted by the Fairfax County Park Authority. Join the fun and break out your quad skates, inline skates or dancing shoes (bring your own skates/footwear) and take a spin around Franconia Rec Center's gym floor. Each skate night includes music from a guest DJ, as well as food, snacks and drinks available for purchase (Please note that outside food/drink not permitted). Tickets for everyone (skaters, dancers, spectators and chaperones) cost \$10 and can be purchased in advance online. Or you buy them at the



A Fall Festival will be held Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 at Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center in Lorton.

door for \$15.
Oct. 26: Halloween Costume Party (6-10 p.m.)
Nov. 16: Franconia Hold 'Em

Skate and Dance Night (Country Night) (6-9 p.m.)
Dec. 21: Holiday and Ugly Sweater Skate and Dance Night (6-9

p.m.)

SPOOKTACULAR FUN IN FAIRFAX COUNTY PARKS

Get ready for a spooky, fun-filled Halloween season in Fairfax County parks! The Park Authority is presenting a fantastic lineup of Halloween programs and events are designed to delight all ages. Whether you're looking for ghostly mini golf, tricks and treats or family-friendly ways to show off your favorite costume, we have events planned for all ghosts and goblins! Goblin Golf. Burke Lake Park; Oct. 12-13-19-20, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Having My Cake and Eating It, Too



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

You regular readers might remember a two-part column I published a year or so ago concerning a specific dessert: "Entenmann's Marshmallow Devil's Food Iced Cake" that I love but am rarely able to find it in any of my local supermarkets (and/or per the Entenmann's site, which enables you to locate a selected item within a designated number of miles: "10, 25, 50," et. cetera). This difficulty has forced me to make arrangements elsewhere. (The two columns detailed my purchase in Phoenixville, Pa. of said item while visiting friends.)

Fast forward to a few weeks ago. I'm shopping at my local Safeway looking for some sale items. However, regardless of my main point in shopping there, I always swing by the Entenmann's display to see what's new and if by some miracle, anything interesting has appeared. Rarely, per this column, has anything interesting appeared. But, as a lifelong member of Red Sox Nation, I know about hope springing eternal or for you non-members: even a blind squirrel finds an acorn once in a while.

As I approached the Entenmann's display, I could see what looked like, my "Marshmallow Devil's Food Iced Cake". At first reaction, I couldn't believe my eyes. Why now, all of a sudden, is this cake on the shelf? To be certain, I picked it up, confirmed its identity, checked its sell-buy date and examined the box as thoroughly as I've examined anything. I couldn't find any reason not to buy/believe what I was seeing so I grabbed two boxes and soon was out of the store giddy with enthusiasm. Once home, I placed both boxes in the freezer and waited to surprise my wife, Dina. (Not that she's the cake fiend that I am, but I figured she'd be happy for me, knowing my eating requirements as well as she does).

Since my arrival home sort of coincided with dinner, I decided to get through the main course as quickly as possible and then dessert to my heart's content. However, knowing Dina as I do, the idea of skipping dinner to go right to dessert wouldn't have flown. It would have barely walked, so I ate my dinner with as much fake gusto I could muster. As soon as it was prudent/safe (if you know what I mean?), I asked Dina if she was ready for dessert. She replied in the affirmative - like she was doing me a favor. Doing me a favor? This cake is royalty in the dessert world. It deserves respect and appreciation. A cake of this substance and taste doesn't exactly grow on trees. Heck, it rarely appears in stores - that I ever know about anyway. And yet, here it is. And there it goes. Cake number one was gone in a day, cake number two soon followed.

Something unexpected has happened at this Safeway. When I return, naturally I likewise return to the Entenmann's display looking for my cake. And more often than not, the cake is placed in its familiar spot. And as often as you can guess, I am indulging my sweet teeth and buying the cake. I've purchased more than a few of these cakes over the past four weeks, making up for lost time you might say, and have thoroughly enjoyed myself. Even Dina has admitted that this cake is pretty good (stop the presses).

I think that I've now purchased enough of these cakes that, (and I've never worked in a store with inventory, so I don't know how things get re-ordered, but I'm starting to wonder), I think my purchases are registering. I say this because every time I return to the store now, there sits my cake in the Entenmann's display, as if it's just another dessert item. Does the reordering algorithm include feedback from the store manager/department heads. Do they just reorder products that have been purchased previously? Or is it handled by the regional people? Conversely, if the item isn't bought, will it stop being reordered?

I don't know what to do. I'm afraid, if I believe any of the last paragraph, that if I stop buying the cake, it will stop being ordered and will disappear from the Entenmann's display. I still love the cake but I'm feeling some pressure. I think I may have become my own worst enemy. I never thought I'd feel or say this, but I might need a break. But then what?

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