

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

NOVEMBER 14, 2024



Honorees of the 18th Annual Police & Firefighters Tribute gather for a group photo, celebrating the bravery, dedication, and service of Fairfax County's first responders and public safety professionals. The event, hosted by the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce, recognized exceptional achievements across law enforcement, firefighting, and emergency medical services."

Chamber Holds Police And Firefighters Tribute

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce held its 18th Annual Police & Firefighters Tribute on Friday, November 1, at the Hilton Springfield. Community members, elected officials, public safety personnel, and their families all gathered to honor the courage and dedication of Fairfax County's law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency responders.

The evening opened with a welcome from Chamber Chairman Eric Christensen, who acknowledged the sacrifices of police, fire, and EMS personnel and expressed deep appreciation for their crucial role in maintaining the area's security and well-being. Distinguished guests included Fairfax County Board Chair Jeff McKay, Supervisors Pat Herrity, Rodney Lusk, and Dan Storck, alongside leadership from the Fairfax County Police and Fire Departments and Fort Belvoir and emcee journalist Jonathan Elias.

The event began with the Fairfax County Joint Ceremonial Honor Guard's presentation of colors and singing of the national anthem by Master Police Officer Genevive Kirk, followed by an invocation and blessing from Reverend Jeri Field of the Fairfax County Police Department.

Roberta Tinch, President and CEO of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, shared remarks on the significance of supporting the local public safety community and the honor of contributing to this annual event.

Jonathan Elias then led the awards portion of the evening, which recognized the outstanding efforts of police, firefighters, and volunteers across various Fairfax County stations.

The awards honored those who exemplify excellence, courage, and a deep commitment to their community.

Award recipients were as follows:

Franconia District Police Station

- ❖ Police Officer of the Year: Private First Class Sean Crotty
- ❖ Detective of the Year: Mohammad Amini
- ❖ Volunteer of the Year: APO Robert Reece
- ❖ Meritorious Service Award: John Sherburne
- ❖ Supervisor of the Year: Sergeant Brian Donoghue

Mount Vernon District Police Station

- ❖ Police Officer of the Year: Police Officer First Class Jacob Ucakay
- ❖ Detective of the Year: Amanda Showronski
- ❖ Auxiliary Police Officer of the Year: Keith Shaver
- ❖ Supervisor of the Year: Sergeant Ryan Malloch
- ❖ Meritorious Service Award: Parking Enforcement Officer Frank Sims Jr.

West Springfield Police Station

- ❖ Police Officer of the Year: Police Officer First Class Cherise Milligan
- ❖ Detective of the Year: Steven Malloch
- ❖ Volunteer of the Year: Auxiliary Police Officer Vinay Narang
- ❖ Meritorious Service Award: VIP Dave Saunders
- ❖ Supervisor of the Year: 2nd Lt. Jason Krull

Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department

- ❖ Public Safety Dispatcher of the Year: Communicator Brandi Welch
- ❖ Fairfax County Firefighter of the Year: Richard Cantarella
- ❖ Volunteer Fire Fighter of the Year: Paul Lago
- ❖ The Fire & Rescue Department EMT / Medic of the Year: Tech Alex Clark

SEE TRIBUTE, PAGE 10

New Metrobus Program Impacts Mount Vernon Commuters

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Along Richmond Highway, many commuters depend on the Metrobus lines to get to work and shopping, so when Metro's new program called "2025 Better Bus Network," goes into effect this month, schedules and routes might get shifted around.

Metro describes their "2025 Better Bus Network," as a bus network and service plan that reshapes the entire Metrobus system within current resource levels of the FY2025 budget. It is designed to connect people with destinations better, increase bus frequency, clarify the bus service so everyone can understand it, and prepare for the future, all without adding to the budget.

To come up with changes to help the riders, Metro had a public comment period between May 13 to July 15, where they received more than 13,000 comments on the proposed 2025 Network.

In Mount Vernon, the area is heavily reliant on the Fairfax Connector bus lines but there are two Metrobus routes – the 11Y and the REX bus – that serve the corridor. The 11Y known as the "Mount Vernon Express," will be under the new "2025 Better Bus Network" as will the REX bus, an Alexandria bus system that's managed by Metrobus, that serves Fort Belvoir south post, Woodlawn, Hybla Valley, Groveton, Beacon Hill, Huntington station, Eisen-



New bus plans have impacts in Mount Vernon.

hower Ave station, U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, and the King Street station.

Under the new program, Metrobus will eliminate 510 out of their 9,500 bus stops system-wide. It is not clear yet if this will impact the 11Y or the REX stops in Mount Vernon. Metrobus will implement the network in the summer of 2025, said Gregory Potts, the Metrobus Virginia Government Relations Officer.

The REX bus is called the F1X now instead of the F10. Changes to the service are minimal, but the Mount Vernon Express, bus F19, will experience changes on the weekend services. The existing 11Y bus has similar routes.

The Fairfax Connector is a separate bus service under the county and it has buses that serve Mount Vernon including bus route 101 in Fort Hunt, 151 Engleside, 152 Groveton, 161 and 162 in Hybla Valley, 171 Richmond Highway and 301 Telegraph Road. There are no reported changes for those routes.

SEE NEW METROBUS, PAGE 10



There are several bus options along Richmond Highway.

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Old Town | \$4,375,000

Circa 1835, this magnificently restored architectural gem features original plaster moldings, heart of pine floors, 12' high ceilings, double parlor living room, regal dining room, 8 fireplaces with original mantels, 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths and a 2nd floor library. The renovated chef's kitchen offers top-of-the-line appliances, coffee bar, large island with seating, and an adjoining family room with French doors open to the beautiful garden & private patio. Two off-street parking spaces and a small garage complete this historic beauty. 209 South Saint Asaph Street

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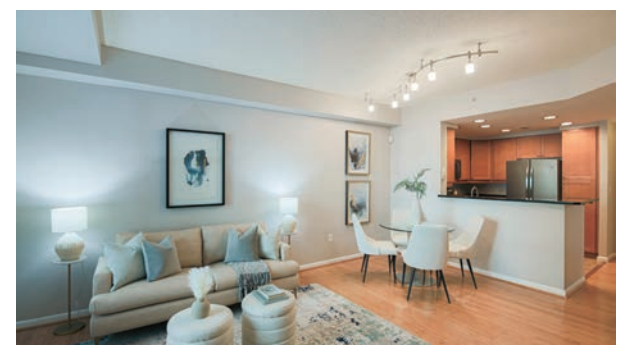
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TCG employees gather at Whitman MS in Alexandria to help provide supplemental nutrition for students attending Bryant HS, Mount Vernon HS, Quander Road School, Sandburg MS, West Potomac HS, and Whitman MS.

Community Partners Rally to End Teen Food Insecurity

Amazon Sponsors Food For Neighbors Event.

The power of local businesses and community volunteers working together to make an impact was on full display this weekend when Amazon sponsored the Food For Neighbors event to mobilize the community to help fill the food pantries in local schools. Through the Food For Neighbors Red Bag Program and generous food drives from eleven area businesses and other groups, the community collected and sorted over 28,800 pounds of donations bound for 47 local schools. 31 of these schools are in Fairfax County, where more than 1,560 households donated food and toiletries and over 600 volunteers rolled up their sleeves in the Centreville, Falls Church, Fort Hunt, Herndon, South County, and Springfield areas to collect, sort and deliver.

“Amazon’s continued partnership and generous donations have played a pivotal role in expanding our services into new communities,” said Karen Joseph, Founder and Executive Director of Food For Neighbors. “Their support has made a real difference for thousands of students facing food insecurity and has allowed us to provide much-needed, ongoing assistance.”

Amazon volunteers helped to receive and sort food and toiletries at multiple locations, including two in Fairfax County. Working at Irving Middle School in Springfield was Melissa Robinson of Amazon Community Impact. She shared, “At Amazon, we want to be good neighbors. Food security is an is-

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Kiwanis Club of Tysons enjoys a morning of sorting food together in Alexandria. On February 1st, they will also be holding their Polar Dip fundraiser that benefits nonprofits, including Food For Neighbors.

sue that employees are passionate about supporting. We are proud to support the Food For Neighbors fall food event for the second year in a row.”

Gonzalo de Dios was among other Amazon volunteers working in Springfield with Robinson. He noted, “We don’t realize there are a lot of people who are hungry. A little effort goes a long way for people without means.”

Despite Northern Virginia being among the most affluent areas in the state, over 1 in 3 students in Fairfax County were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the 2023-2024 school year. Food For Neighbors works to ensure that supplemental food

is readily accessible to students during the school day and to take home over weekends and holidays.

“At TCG, we’re committed to making a meaningful impact by actively addressing food insecurity in our communities,” shared Debbie Buchanan, FSO/Executive Assistant to the President of TCG, Inc., whose team helped at Whitman Middle School in Mount Vernon.

Christopher Kozusko, President of the Kiwanis Club of Tysons, which also had a team at Whitman, echoed Buchanan’s sentiments. “Dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time, the Kiwanis Club of Tysons appreciates this opportunity to help tackle teen food insecurity in

Fairfax County Bonds Election Results

UNOFFICIAL AS OF NOV 11, 11:31AM

Transportation Bonds

| | Votes | Percent |
|-----|---------|---------|
| Yes | 357,053 | 66.21% |
| No | 182,198 | 33.79% |

264 OF 264 PRECINCTS; 0 EARLY VOTES LEFT

Public Safety Bonds

| | Votes | Percent |
|-----|---------|---------|
| Yes | 374,957 | 69.60% |
| No | 163,753 | 30.40% |

264 OF 264 PRECINCTS; 0 EARLY VOTES LEFT

SOURCE: VPAP.ORG

US President Election Results

UNOFFICIAL AS OF NOV 11, 11:31AM

| Candidate | Votes | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Alexandria | | |
| Harris | 60,264 | 77.29% |
| Trump | 15,359 | 19.70% |
| Stein | 760 | 0.97% |
| Oliver | 397 | 0.51% |
| West | 201 | 0.26% |
| De la Cruz | 166 | 0.21% |

32 OF 32 PRECINCTS REPORTING; 0 EARLY VOTES OUTSTANDING

Arlington

| | | |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Harris | 97,228 | 77.89% |
| Trump | 23,925 | 19.17% |
| Stein | 1,254 | 1.00% |
| Oliver | 790 | 0.63% |
| West | 251 | 0.20% |
| De la Cruz | 227 | 0.18% |

54 OF 54 PRECINCTS REPORTING; 0 EARLY VOTES OUTSTANDING

Fairfax County

| | | |
|------------|---------|--------|
| Harris | 377,522 | 65.76% |
| Trump | 176,158 | 30.69% |
| Stein | 10,178 | 1.77% |
| Oliver | 2,844 | 0.50% |
| West | 1,246 | 0.22% |
| De la Cruz | 1,151 | 0.20% |

264 OF 264 PRECINCTS REPORTING; 0 EARLY VOTES OUTSTANDING

Fairfax City

| | | |
|------------|-------|--------|
| Harris | 8,583 | 64.89% |
| Trump | 4,188 | 31.66% |
| Stein | 188 | 1.42% |
| Oliver | 70 | 0.53% |
| De la Cruz | 47 | 0.36% |
| West | 28 | 0.21% |

6 OF 6 PRECINCTS REPORTING; 0 EARLY VOTES OUTSTANDING

SOURCE: VPAP.ORG

Alexandria.” On Feb. 1, the Kiwanis will continue to make an impact through its Polar Dip fundraiser in support of Food For Neighbors and other nonprofits.

“I want our amazing volunteers and business partners to know that their contributions are making a profound impact. Thanks to their dedication and generosity, we’ve been able to reach far more students than we ever imagined when we started in 2016,” said Food For Neighbors Founder Karen Joseph.

“School staff continue to share how the consistent food support is helping students attend school more regularly, stay focused in class, and improve their academic performance. Together, we are changing lives and giving these students opportunities to thrive.”

To learn more about Food For Neighbors and join more than 3,100 Red Bag donors and over 3,600 volunteers, scan the QR code below or visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/get-involved/>.

Fairfax County Board Wants a New Tax on Food

Here's why it's a bad idea for everyone.

By Gary Cohen

Local government budgets are hard to manage. We all get that. Finances are strained and our county board is limited in how they can raise revenue. But, too often, to government officials, it's just a numbers game. They forget that, when the government at any level raises revenue, it comes from taxpayers.

Fairfax County isn't immune from budget woes. If anything, the size and diversity of our county places bigger demands on government than is the case in many of our surrounding jurisdictions. Funding infrastructure, services and schools is a huge job with huge price tags. Too often, government leaders forget that there are two sides to the ledger, and that spending restraint can be an effective budget balancing tool just as tax hikes can.

Sadly, today, in the face of anticipated budget shrinkage, Fairfax County officials are squarely focused on new taxes, not spending restraint. And, if that's not enough, the tax they are eyeing is a food

tax of up to 6%, levied on all restaurant meals, prepared ready-to-eat foods (sandwiches, grocery store chickens, etc.) and beverages sold in the county. We already pay 6% sales tax to the state on these items, so piling on another tax of up to 6% would effectively tax costs of meals and many food items by 12%. When you consider that inflation has raised food costs by 20% since the pandemic ended, it's easy to see how many family budgets are strained to the breaking point.

Imposing a new tax on restaurants and ready to eat foods is not the answer to the county's budget concerns. The reasons are clear, and simple.

First, it burdens Fairfax County families the most. County leaders want you to believe that a food tax will fall mainly on out-of-county diners at expensive restaurants ... business travellers on expense accounts. And, while some of that is true, study after study has shown that a food tax – and a restaurant meals tax – impacts local county residents disproportionately. According to the National Restaurant Association, 70% of restaurant meals between \$15 - \$25 were paid by local citizens. For meals less than \$8, that number rises to 85%. That means a meals tax will tax people who can least afford it, where it hurts them the most.

Second, it will place an un-

fair strain on county restaurants with far reaching ripple effects. It will reduce the number of diners in our restaurants, how often they dine out, what they order, and how much they tip their wait staff. This isn't just "spin" from restaurants, it's fact. Restaurants are still reeling from the economic impacts of Covid and inflation. More restaurants have gone out of business in the last year than we can count. We operate restaurants all around the DMV area. When neighboring Prince William County implemented a new food tax in June of 2022, the impact on our restaurants there and our employees was clear and significant. Upon imposing the new tax, sales in our Prince William restaurants fell almost immediately 4% lower than any of our restaurants in Fairfax County. Diners were coming in less frequently, and when they did come, our check average was lower by approximately \$1. This also resulted in smaller tips for our employees as diners, stung by the higher price, sought ways to control their spending. And, when we serve fewer meals, we buy fewer supplies so business for our suppliers falls off accordingly, impacting their employees as well.

What this means in a practical sense, for county budgeters, is that the revenue they expect to see from a new food tax will not likely materialize. It will be less because

taxpayers will reduce their purchases. Put simply, if you tax something more, people buy less of it.

But, from a bigger picture perspective, the government attitude towards taxation, and this tax in particular, result in lower standards of living for all our residents hitting lower income families the hardest. When incomes fall, families make adjustments. When business is off, restaurant owners like us do the same. It's time the county took the same level of responsibility towards finances that its residents do and make adjustments that won't lower the standard of living of our people and won't damage the businesses here that support communities with jobs, payrolls, opportunities, and choices.

Fairfax County Supervisors will consider this new food tax early next year. They hope to include the authority to impose the tax in the budget to generate as little attention and opposition as possible. Then, once authority is approved, they'll put a number on it of 1 to 6%.

They hope you won't notice, but you will when you dine out or buy that rotisserie chicken at the grocery store. Tell them no.

Gary Cohen is the Executive Vice President of Government Affairs and Franchising for Glory Days Grill, a 45 year resident of Fairfax County and a lifelong restaurateur.

Rebuttal to Krizek

On Oct. 31 the Mount Vernon Gazette ran an opinion piece by State Delegate Paul Krizek. It was another example of Democratic Party machine propaganda. He was telling people to vote for democracy by rejecting Trump. He made no mention of the Democratic party ticket of Harris and Walz. Is this the right way to talk to voters, trying to scare them into voting a certain way? And what about the other side of the story? There was no rebuttal by the Republicans. I resent the notion that everybody around here is part of the Democratic party machine. The American people voted as they saw fit. This is democracy. There is a great, big America out there beyond the Beltway and the federal government deep state swamp of Washington DC. Maybe the Democratic party needs to take stock of itself. Maybe Biden should have stayed on the ticket, maybe they made a mistake anointing Harris, maybe they made a mistake picking Walz as the VP. Take a good look at yourselves Democrats.

Greg Paspatis
Alexandria, Va

The City of Alexandria instituted a meals tax beginning in 1975, and currently the tax is 5%.

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

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.

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 donaalrea@aol.com.

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

Mount Vernon Gazette

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore, Glenda Booth
Contributing Writers

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Art/Design:
Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper



Radium Girls Coming Up

By SAMANTHA VROMAN
MOUNT VERNON HIGH
SCHOOL CLASS OF 2027

Mount Vernon High School students are going back in time for their fall production Radium Girls, written by D. W. Gregory, produced by special arrangement with the Dramatic Publishing Company of Woodstock, Illinois.

Radium Girls is a compelling theatrical play based on real historical events in the 1920s. In the show, Grace Fryer (Natalie Stankiewicz), a young teen at the start of the story, works for the U.S. Radium Corporation painting watch dials with a paint that contains radium, an element that glows in the dark and we know today, is toxic. Radium during this time frame was believed to be a miracle, a magical element that could cure diseases as serious as cancer. Soon enough, girls at the factory start dying as a result of radium exposure. Arthur Roder (Matthew Boehm) the president of the U.S. Radium Corporation is on the other side of the fight against the radium girls as he soon proves to be a multifaceted man who is just trying to do what he thinks is right as others try to push him towards a darker path.

Raymond Berry (Rayne Garcia-Cruz) becomes the lawyer fighting against Edward Markley (Phoenix Bryant) to bring about justice for the factory girls. Grace is fighting for herself and her friends in this tragic but powerful play.

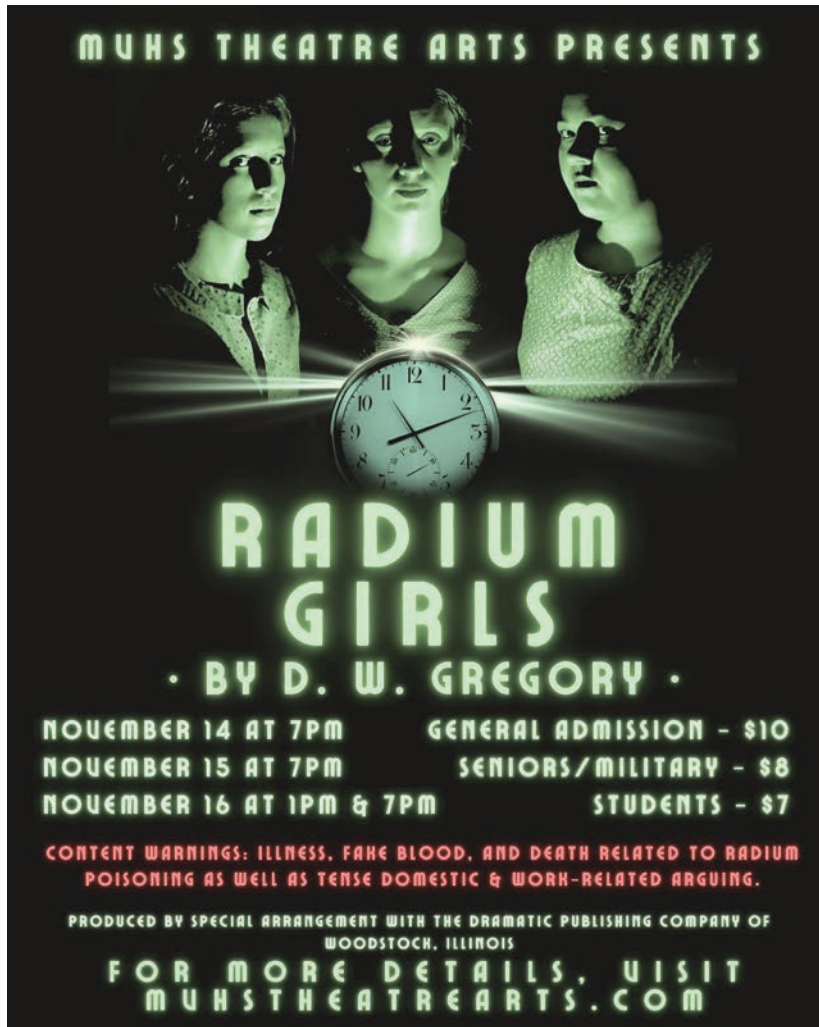
The actors in our show have taken on a new challenge with this show to accurately portray this era. Not to mention, their dedication to taking on the serious topics within the show and handling them with maturity and grace. Most of the cast has taken on multiple roles and have worked to balance all the different personalities and emotions that they must portray for this production.

Let's not forget about our attentive crew who come in after school and on weekends to create this post-

World War I world. Each crew has had different challenges to their tasks but has still managed to get it all done and add their own touches to the show. Multiple costumes, accurate makeup, a set that immerses you in the story with props that elevate the performance along with new marketing opportunities.

Radium Girls will be on stage in Mount Vernon High School's Andrew Lee Pauley Theater which is also known as the little theater by door 4, on Nov. 14 and 15 at 7 p.m., with a 1p.m. matinee on Nov. 16, with a final performance at 7 p.m. on Nov. 16.

Staying after each show will reward viewers with the pleasure of participating in a talkback. Talkbacks are when certain guests are brought on stage after the show and the audience will have the ability to ask the questions. Some talkbacks happening after the production include certain members of the cast, and production team. Tickets for this show can be purchased online at mvhstheatrearts.com



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HISTORY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Commission Chair Lynne Garvey-Hodge announced she will end her 20 years of History Commission service.



The conference attracted 130 people to the Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax City.

Telling All the History of Fairfax County

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

This is the second of a two-part series reporting on the November 2 Fairfax County History Commission's conference. Part 1 was in the Nov. 7 Connection newspapers.

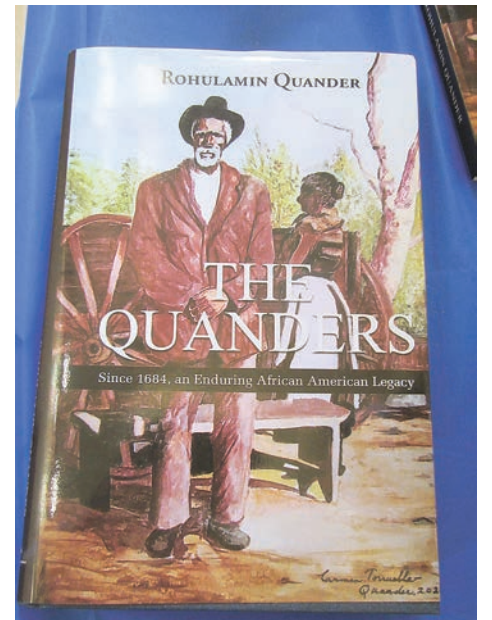
The theme, "The Power of Place," permeated the Fairfax County History Commission's 20th annual conference on Nov. 2, including the power of places long gone.

Keynoter and filmmaker Ron Maxwell challenged the 130 attendees to discard all preconceptions when studying history. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly urged the audience to "tell our true history," warts and all.

Two speakers spotlighted two minority communities that no longer exist, but the power of those places persists in memories and legacies, they said.



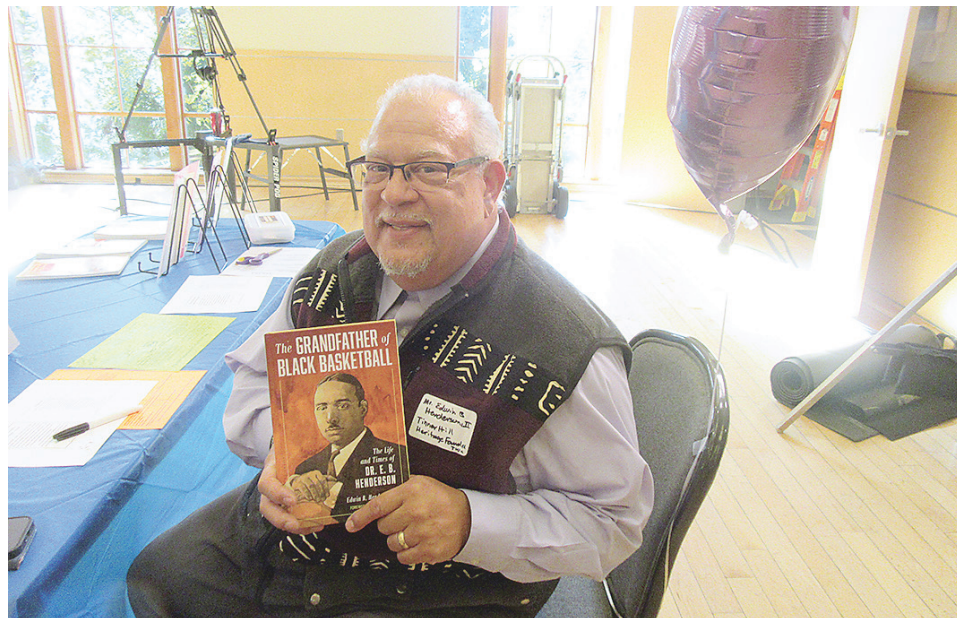
Judge Rohulamin Quander promoted his book about the Quander family.



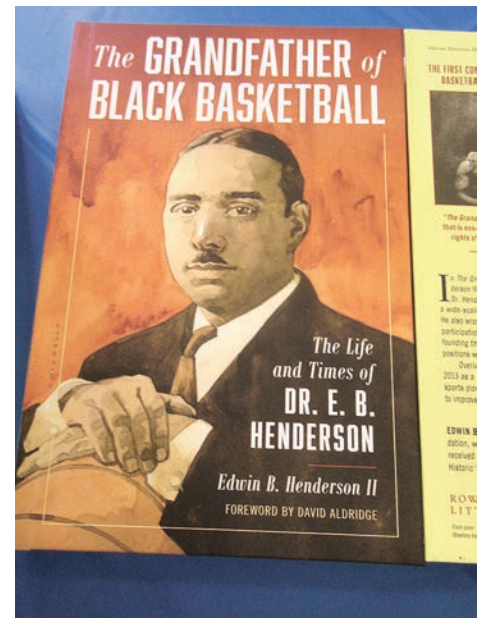
SEGREGATED MILITARY HOUSING

Judge Rouhulamin Quander, a retired Washington, D.C. administrative law judge, traces his family back 11 generations to the 1670s, one of the oldest documented African-American families in the United States. Encyclopedia Virginia reports that Egya Amkwandoh was kidnapped in Ghana and forcibly brought to America enslaved. When asked his name, he answered "Amkwandoh," which was misinterpreted as, "I am Quando." Eventually, the Quandos or Quanders acquired land in the Mount Vernon area and Maryland.

Quander described Youngs Village, a community inside today's Fort Belvoir that the U.S. Army built as segregated housing for African-American soldiers and their families in the 1940s, and named for African American Officer Colonel Charles Young. At first, the children had to travel five miles to school



Dr. Edwin Henderson, author of the "The Grandfather of Black Basketball," organized the first athletic league of African-Americans. He is the director of the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation, which helps preserve African-American history in Northern Virginia.



SEE HISTORY, PAGE 7

HISTORY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



PHOTO COURTESY OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION NEWS, COLLECTION OF THE WIRTZ LABOR LIBRARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

A photo of Hannah Nokes was published in 1936 in a magazine.

FROM PAGE 6

in Gum Springs, but in 1946, the Army built the Belvoir Colored School, Quander said.

In 1948, President Harry Truman ordered that the military be desegregated. In the 1950s, the families in Youngs Village were forced to move and the homes demolished. Army officials eventually named its seven streets for African American soldiers killed in World War II. The Army also renamed Robert E. Lee Road to EO 9981, for Truman's executive order abolishing segregation.

Noting that George Washington enslaved some Quanders, Judge Quander concluded, "This is not African American history. It's history from an African-American perspective."

MERRIFIELD'S PAST COMMUNITIES

African-American ethnographer Marion Dobbins opened by declaring, "I do not have a home to go back to." One of her ancestors in 1874 bought land in Mills Crossroads, today the Merrifield area, and helped establish a community called The Pines, one of three African-American communities in the area. Dobbins fondly recalled her grandmother's accounts of this close-knit community.

The early residents were truck farmers who grew produce and sold it in Washington, D.C. In 1894, families built the First Baptist Church of Merrifield and in 1898, a "colored school" which stood until 1964, still without electricity or indoor plumbing.

In 1964, the Fairfax County School Board sent residents of The Pines a letter indicating that the county would build a school on their land, giving them 60 days to move and threatening to use eminent domain if necessary. The county offered \$16,000 to each property owner, people who were mostly mortgage free. Dobbins's grandmother moved to a neighboring town called Williamstown, an African American community on today's Gallows Road, roughly what is now Fairfax Hospital. Suddenly, at age 64, she was saddled with a mortgage. The Pentagon's construction displaced African Americans who moved to Williamstown, Dobbins said.

"Fairfax County never built the school," said Dobbins. "It's now a soccer field and

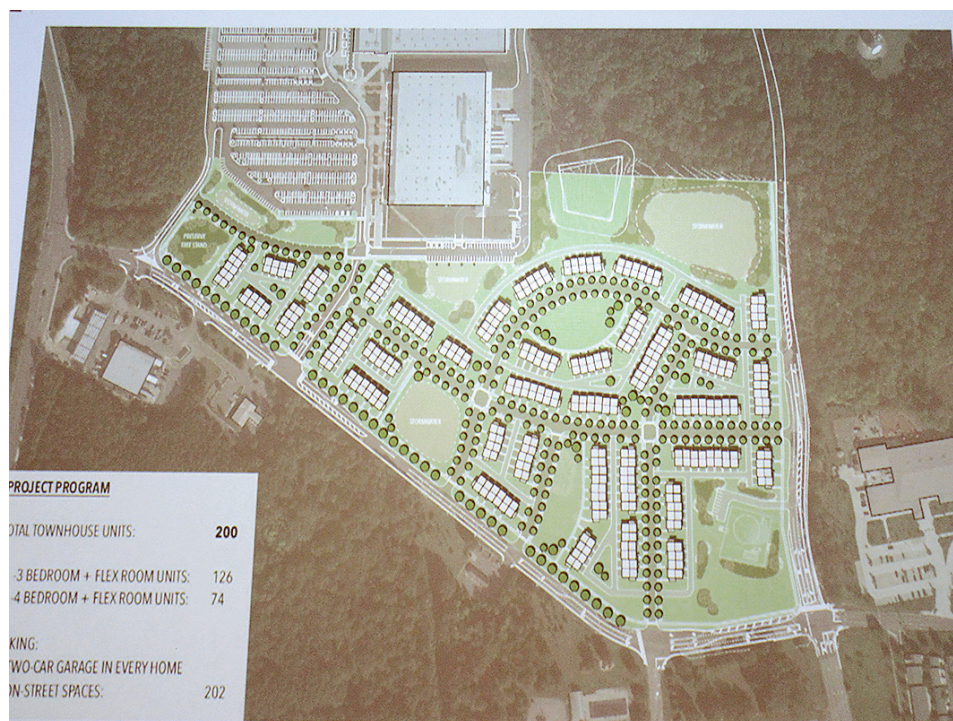
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Historian Amy Bertsch recounted the life of Hannah Nokes, likely a transgender person in 1930s Northern Virginia.



Fairfax City Mayor Catherine Reed (right) presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Glenn Fatzinger, a historian who lives in Mount Vernon.



Dr. Rohulamin Quander focused on a former, segregated community on today's Fort Belvoir built for African-American service members and their families.



Hannah Nokes's grave marker.

community gardens." A county marker recognizes the displaced community and cemetery where church members are buried.

Dobbins recalled that growing up in segregated times, "We could not go to the Merrifield Drive-in." When buying new shoes, her mother had to draw her foot on a piece of paper to match the shoe size because she was not allowed to put on the shoes or try on clothes. Fairfax County "has come a long way," Dobbins said. "We now are embracing our history. Black history is American history. You cannot have history without all of it."

Dobbins fears that the country is "returning to the lost cause scenario," an ideology that tried to justify the Civil War as a just cause and reframed slavery as states' rights. Dobbins satirized, "When slaves loved to be slaves and life was nice."

"We were a family and we had a home. We don't have a hometown now," she lamented.

GENDER VARIANT IN THE 1930S

Historian Amy Bertsch told the story of someone that records call both Hammond Nokes and Hannah Nokes, a person assigned as male at birth and probably gender variant. She worked for the McMillan family in Herndon, did laundry and later ran a boarding house. When called as the prosecution's witness in a 1932 murder trial, Hannah wore a wig, hat, dress and necklace. Reporters described her as a "boy/girl, a fairy, a lady man." During the trial, her nephew identified her as his aunt.

Pictured in a 1936 magazine promoting rural electrification, Hannah was "known for her industry and good nature ... and is regarded with affection and respect by her neighbors," the article stated. When Hannah was hospitalized, nurses discovered she was biologically male. She wore a blue dress in her coffin in 1872. One death notice identified her as Miss Hammond Nokes and another as Hammond (Hanna) Nokes.

History is not simple or straightforward, attendees heard. Dr. Ted McCord, retired George Mason University history professor, said, "Local history conferences help us link residents to their surrounding communities, giving them greater understanding and appreciation for those who have gone before them. Conferences also can inspire local people to pursue their family histories and their contributions to their neighborhoods."

The History Commission gave several awards including the Lifetime Achievement



A street that connects with Fort Hunt Road in Mount Vernon is named for the Quander family.

ENTERTAINMENT

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Joe Theismann's Restaurant. 8 a.m. Located at 1800A Diagonal Road, Alexandria. Dates: Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. This holiday season, create unforgettable memories with Breakfast with Santa in the enchanting Old Town Alexandria at Joe Theismann's Restaurant. Start with a festive family-style breakfast featuring delectable options like french toast, smoked salmon, and tater tots. Children will love the take-home treats and a magical moment meeting Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo. Adults can indulge in bottomless Prosecco bellinis or classic mimosas for \$15. Babies join for free, while kids are \$29.50 plus tax and adults are \$53 plus tax.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Mia's Italian Kitchen. 8 a.m. Located at 100 King Street, Alexandria. Dates are Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. Celebrate the season with a festive breakfast feast featuring a delicious spread served family-style, including breakfast pastry & bagel basket, smoked salmon, and scrambled eggs. At Mia's Italian Kitchen, children will enjoy take-home treats and a magical visit with Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo that captures the Christmas spirit. Adults can enjoy bottomless classic mimosas and Prosecco bellinis for \$18. Babies join for free, while kids are \$34 plus tax and adults are \$57 plus tax.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

At Ada's on the River. 8 a.m. Located at 3 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Dates are: Saturday, Dec. 7, 14, 21; Sunday, Dec. 8, 15, 22. Join Ada's on the River for a festive breakfast feast, where you'll enjoy a delicious family-style spread including breakfast pastries, pancakes, yogurt parfait, and tater tots. Children will receive take-home treats and a magical visit with Santa Claus, complete with a keepsake photo that captures the Christmas spirit. Adults can indulge in classic mimosas, bellinis, or Prosecco. Adults can indulge in bottomless Prosecco bellinis or classic mimosas for \$15. Babies join for free, while kids are \$29.50 plus tax and adults are \$53 plus tax.

OCT. 31 TO DEC. 8

Susan J. Goldman Exhibit. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist talk, Saturday, November 30, 1 p.m.

OCT. 24 TO DEC. 21

"A Focus on Nature." At Coldwell Banker Realty, 310 King Street, Alexandria. 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



"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" can be seen Nov. 15-24, 2024 at Bryant Alternative High School in Alexandria.

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.

NOV. 1 TO DEC. 1

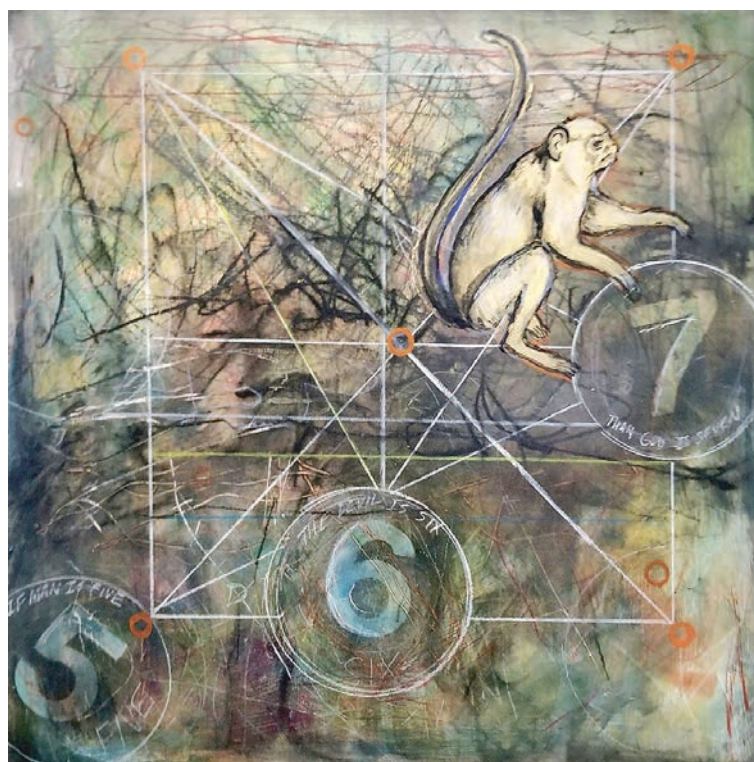
Del Ray Artisans "\$100 & Under" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Showcases members' artwork all priced at \$100 or less. The art is sold on an art-to-go basis. The gallery walls are packed with great art at prices all art-lovers can afford. Opening Reception: Friday, November 1, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Closed Thanksgiving Day. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

NOV. 10 TO DEC. 10

Pope-Leighey House Tours. 12-1 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. By 1941, the year Pope-Leighey House was completed, Frank Lloyd Wright had studied Japan for almost a half-century. He had become a serious collector of woodblock prints--even writing a book on the subject--and had won acclaim for his design of the Tokyo Imperial Hotel, one of the few buildings to survive the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. On this special tour, visitors will discover how the famous American architect incorporated his love of Japanese art, architecture, and philosophy into Usonian homes, and how this East Asian influence shines in Wright's Pope-Leighey House.

THURSDAY/NOV. 14

Matt Higgins: Artist and Art Professor. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Nepenthe Gallery is honored to partner with Philadelphia Matt Higgins and represent his original, dynamic and powerful paintings. Higgins' paintings are included in numerous private collections and a wide range of interior design projects



The Del Ray Artisans "\$100 & Under" exhibit runs now through Dec. 1, 2024 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, Alexandria.

including residential properties, corporations, and hotels. Higgins paints with passion, expression and JOY and uses a wide variety of mediums that are often unexpected and just right!

NOV. 15-23

"A Man for All Seasons." At Bishop Ireton High School, Garwood Whaley Auditorium, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. It runs November 15, 16, 22 and 23 at 7 p.m., and November 17 at 2 p.m.

NOV. 15-24

"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." At Bryant Alternative High School, 2709 Popkins Lane, Alexandria. Presented by Mount Vernon Community Children's Theater (MVCCT). Featuring 44 young actors between the ages of 8 and 18 from 27 schools across the

DMV. The show will have a six-day run: Nov. 15 at 7 p.m., Nov. 16 at 7 p.m., Nov. 17 at 3 p.m., Nov. 22 at 7 p.m., Nov. 23 at 7 p.m., and Nov. 24 at 3 p.m. For tickets, visit MVCCT.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16

Bi-Lingual Children's Concert - Musicales Bilingues Para Ninos. 4-6 p.m. At the Patrick Henry Rec Center, 4652 Taney Ave., Alexandria. Presented by WMPA - Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. WMPA offers a fairy tale set to music, narrated in English and again in Spanish. Nearly 20 WMP musicians will perform Benedikt Brydern's "The Town Musicians," an adorable tale by the Brothers Grimm. Free.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16

Celebrate Gum Springs' 191st

Anniversary. 6-9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Celebrate Gum Springs -- The oldest African American community in Fairfax County with Keynote Speaker Don Scott. Tickets \$125. Event host: The Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

SATURDAY/NOV. 16

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents Carmina Burana "Abound". 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center. Featuring the Choral and Youth Choir with Ingrid Lestrud, Artistic Director. Visit alexsym.org.

SUNDAY/NOV. 17

Autumn Afternoon Serenade. 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Join in an afternoon of chamber music! Music will include pieces by Ginastera, Telemann, Valerie Coleman, Louis Karchin, and Mozart & Ravel arrangements by Liam Cameron.

THURSDAY/NOV. 21

Jennifer Barlow: Food Inspired Art. At the Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Jennifer Barlow is a local oil painter with a sweet tooth! Come to Nepenthe Gallery to meet her and see the collection of unique and fun original artworks -- just in time for the holidays! Barlow is absolutely an artist whose art will lift you up!

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

Tree Lighting Ceremony. 6 p.m. Celebrate the city's official start to the holiday season at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, with appearances from Major Justin Wilson, the Town Crier and even Santa himself. A few weeks later on December 8, take part in the Del Ray Tree and Menorah Lighting as you enjoy tunes and hot chocolate and hand-painted holiday windows along Del Ray's storefronts.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

Alexandria Cider Festival. 1 to 5 p.m. At Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St., Alexandria. Celebrate Virginia Cider Week with a special tasting event on the grounds of the historic Lloyd House in Old Town Alexandria. Event tickets include cider tastings, live music, a tasting glass and a little history, too. This event will take place outdoors. Proceeds benefit the historic Alexandria museums. Admission: \$50 (Presale through October 31); \$55 (November 1 to 22); \$65 (at the door); \$25 designated driver purchase.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

Holiday Shop 2024. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Over 50 vendors including Pottery, Ceramics, Glass, Wood, Metal, Fabric, Jewelry, Yarn, Paintings, Photography, Mosaics, Cards, Books, Bags, Candles, and Soaps, Baked and Canned Goods, Household Collectibles and Lunch. Quilt Raffle "Yakata Dreams" \$3 per ticket. Free entry, Free parking, Cash and cards accepted - some vendors may not be able to accept cards. Visit the website www.MVUC.org.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11
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News

FCPS Names Hinn to Lead Health and Medical Program

New ACE program to focus on health and medical careers.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools Adult and Community Education (ACE), a leader in training for workforce development and skills-based education, has named Jerry Hinn as the new Health and Medical Careers Specialist to lead the Health and Medical program.

As FCPS ACE's Health and Medical Careers Specialist, Hinn is responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of Health and Medical programs designed to prepare students with work readiness skills, licenses, and certificates specific to their career



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jerry Hinn to lead FCPS Adult and Community Education Health and Medical program.

family-owned businesses and has held various academic positions, including Department Chair at Hondros College of Nursing. He also currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at Northern Virginia Community College and Blue Ridge Community College, teaching in subject areas such as Anatomy and Physiology as well as Biology.

Hinn has pursued a Doctorate in Science Teacher Education from Vanderbilt University, pursued a Doctorate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Cincinnati, and a Masters in Zoology and Animal Biology from North Carolina State University. Hinn began his post-secondary education at

Virginia Tech, where he earned a bachelor's in biology

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare is one of the fastest growing industries. It is predicted that 3.3 million healthcare jobs will have been added by 2030. In Virginia alone by 2026, it is projected that there will be more than 12,000 nursing and medical assistant roles to fill.

"We could not be more enthusiastic about Jerry Hinn taking on the Health and Medical Careers Specialist role," commented Paul D. Steiner, FCPS ACE

Adult and Community Education Administrator. "Students and the FCPS ACE team have raved about his contributions and innovations to-date, and we look forward to what we will be able to accomplish for our students and the community with Jerry at the helm of the Health and Medical program."


Added Hinn, "I am highly motivated to build from the highly successful Health and Medical program already established and identify ways we can expand and enhance the program to best fit today's needs as well as future needs of the industry, employers, and our students."

www.aceclasses.fcps.edu

field. Additionally, Hinn will play a role in recruiting and selecting instructors; as well as ensuring that the Health and Medical program consistently meets revenue targets.

"There is tremendous opportunity for students and those thinking about developing a career in health and medical, both locally here in Fairfax County, Northern Virginia, and beyond," Hinn said. "We want to empower our students and the community with health and medical course programs that are going to set them up with the skills they need in order to perform at a competitive level."

Hinn brings extensive experience as a former COO of three




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News

Tribute

FROM PAGE 1

- ❖ Company Officer of the Year:
Captain Karen Torpey

Fort Belvoir Emergency Services

- ❖ Fire & Emergency Services
Leader of the Year:
Samantha Green
- ❖ Firefighter / Medic
of the Year: Austin Oakley
- ❖ Firefighter of the Year:
Roy Ellis
- ❖ Public Safety Dispatcher
of the Year: Jonate Williams

Fort Belvoir Police Department

- ❖ Civilian Police Officer of the Year: Jessenia K. McElroy
- ❖ Investigator of the Year: Sergeant Michael Yannes II
- ❖ Military Police Officer of the Year: Sergeant Brandon Z. Soyer
- ❖ Civilian Police Supervisor Officer of the Year: Captain Tera Y. Henry
- ❖ Army Security Guard of the Year: Clair Dusart
- ❖ Army Security Supervisor of the Year: Jamal R. Tillman

Christensen thanked the evening's sponsors, including Title Sponsor Inova Health Systems, with additional support from Presenting Sponsors BrightView Senior Living, LeMay & Company CPAs, Reworld, ServiceMaster National Capital Restoration, and Wegmans. Public Safety Champion sponsors included Alban Tires, Dominion Surveyors Inc., Fairy Bronze Mother, Hilton Springfield, Retirement Unlimited, Inc., and West Springfield Rotary Club.

Christensen wrapped up the night with heartfelt words: "These men and women have inspired me. I'm sure all of us are touched by their commitment and service."

For upcoming Chamber events, visit www.mountvernonspringfield.com/events.

New Metrobus

FROM PAGE 1

"The One" Bus Rapid Transit

Along Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon, a bus rapid transit system is planned as a commuting tool with an extra lane for these BRT buses called “The One.” Although the planned start date for this BRT system is still about ten years away, it did take a significant step forward on Sept. 19, 2024 when VDOT announced a widening project completion date of 2032, which shaved a couple of years off the BRT schedule. The future BRT line is dependent on that widening project.

To see how the 2025 Better Bus Network will impact commutes, go to www.wmata.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

SATURDAY/NOV. 23

The Good Folk Performs. 7 p.m. At Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. FocusMusic and WFMA present The Good Folk at Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church. The Good Folk, Meghan Mette, Eileen Estes, Joanna Clare, Sophie Chang, Agi Kovacs, and Patrick Winch, deliver powerful instrumentals, haunting vocals and three styles of percussive dance. Cost is \$25 in advance (members \$22.50) / \$30 at door (members \$25) Virtual Tickets: \$15 (\$13.50 for members. Info at <https://focusmusic.org/shows/#sat-11-23-the-good-folk-alexandria-and-virtual>

SUNDAY/NOV. 24

Georgetown Saxatones. 2 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Get ready to rock the house with everything from alternative to pop to soul with the Georgetown Saxatones. As Georgetown's only community service a cappella group, they are passionate about sharing their music in support of worthy causes. Donations are welcome during the performance and the Saxatones will donate all of their proceeds to a humanitarian charity.

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

Plaid Friday Alexandria. Alexandria's 50 Small Business Black Friday returns for another holiday season to highlight and celebrate Alexandria's iconic array of independent businesses. Known as the top destination for locally owned retail, 50 participating businesses are asking customers to shift their shopping this holiday season by kicking off Black Friday shopping at Alexandria boutiques for steals and deals on Friday, November 29. Several participating businesses will open at 6 a.m. For more details on participating businesses and special offers, visit plaidfridayALX.com.

SUNDAY/DEC. 1

8th Annual Old Town Tuba Christmas. Presented by WMPA - Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. 3 p.m. At Market Square/Old Town Farmers Market by City Hall, Alexandria. Free. Christmas carols and holiday tunes with tubaists of all ages. Free.

TUESDAY/DEC. 3

Yoga Nidra. 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Experience Pope-Leighey House in a unique way through Yoga Nidra, a type of guided meditation that allows participants to achieve deeper states of relaxation. Cost: \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcoming-events/2024/12/3/yoga-nidra>

DEC. 6 - 8

Alexandria's iconic holiday weekend. The 53rd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade is Saturday, Dec. 7, followed by the 24th Annual



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

Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. <https://visitaalexandria.com/holidays/biggest-weekend/>

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Taste of Scotland. 6:30 p.m. At The Atrium, Old Town Alexandria. Campagna Center and partners will celebrate the holiday season and its Scottish heritage during the Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend in Alexandria, starting with the 2024 Taste of Scotland. This festive party, held on the Friday before the parade, invites guests to sample Scotch and enjoy delicious food, music, and entertainment, with all proceeds supporting the Campagna Center. For 50 years, this beloved event has helped improve the lives of Alexandria's children and families through impactful programs. Visit <https://www.campagnacenter.org/tasteofscotland2024/>

DEC. 6-21

Holiday Tours. 5-7:30 p.m. At woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Tour the Pope-Leighey House during special evening tours and see the home decorated for a mid-century holiday. Tours are offered December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, with tours every half hour between 5 and 7 p.m. Space is limited, advance registration is recommended. Cost: \$20. Visit the website <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org>

DEC. 6-22

29th Annual Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 29th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2025 wall calendars support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Holiday Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 6-8, Dec 13-15, Dec 20-22). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/holiday-market-2024

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Holiday Parade Day. Alexandria's

two signature holiday parades starting with the 53rd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade sponsored by Wegmans at 11 a.m. followed by the 24th Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights sponsored by Amazon at 5:30 p.m., with riverside festivities for the whole family starting at 2 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Support Youth Musicians. WMPA - Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association. 3 p.m. At Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road, Alexandria. Join both the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and the Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra as they perform. The program offers a variety of music: Hoffmeister Viola Concerto, Mvt. I - Isaiah Reed, soloist Seitz Viola Concerto, Mvt. I - Tate Commission, soloist Capriol Suite - Peter Warlock Slavonic Dance in C - Furiant - Antonin Dvořák. Free.

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Holiday Dreams Orchestra Concert. 3 p.m. At the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Street, Alexandria. Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic performs with the Alexandria Choral Society. Duke Ellington's "Nutcracker Suite" headlines, under the baton of Music Director Anna Binneweg. This concert promises to transport the audience into a realm of festive delight, "Holiday Dreams" offers a captivating blend of seasonal cheer and musical charm. Grace-Evangeline Mason's "The Imagined Forest" sets a magical tone, weaving together melodies that evoke the spirit of the holidays. Tickets \$35 adults, \$30 seniors, 18 & under just \$5.

THURSDAY/DEC. 12

Del Ray Holiday Sip & Shop. Special promotions and complimentary wine and refreshments.

DEC. 13-15

Gustave Marche de Noel Gift Market. New this year, be immersed in a magical new European Christmas market experience in Del Ray during the inaugural Gustave Marché de Noël Gift Market, a weekend

chock-full of holiday happenings including the Old Town North Holiday Market & Farmers Market, Christmas Market & Holiday Craft Show at John Carlyle Square and more.

DEC. 14-15

Nutcracker Ballet. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. At 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. both days. Presented by the Metropolitan School of the Arts. Veronica Quezada, MSA alumnus and part of the International Tour of West Side Story, will play the part of Sugar Plum Fairy, joining a cast of 150 MSA students. Tickets are \$21 to \$35. Visit www.metropolitanschoolofthearts.org

TUESDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa Show. 1 p.m. Begins at BARCA Pier, 2 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. For a sight you have to see to believe, head to the waterfront between BARCA Pier and Founders Park to witness the Waterskiing Santa Show, featuring Santa and his friends gliding along the Potomac River. There is also a rumor the Grinch will try and steal the show at 12:45 p.m. before the show starts. Santa and his pals begin at BARCA Pier at 1 p.m. and ski north to Founders Park before circling back south and finishing at Ford's Landing.

DEC. 31, 2024

30th Annual First Night Alexandria. 2 p.m. - 12 a.m. Throughout Old Town Alexandria. Experience the region's signature family-friendly New Year's Eve festival of music and more. A community celebration of the performing arts, First Night Alexandria rings in the new year with music, comedy, and dance. This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m. on Alexandria's waterfront geared to families who want to enjoy the show with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront. Visit <https://visitaalexandria.com/events/30th-annual-first-night-alexandria>

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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Sun. 24: Marshall Crenshaw w/ James Mastro \$35.00
Mon. 25: Girl Named Tom: The Joy of Christmas Tour \$55.00
Fri. 29: The Seldom Scene & Dry Branch Fire Squad \$45.00
Sat. 30: The Manhattans Featuring Gerald Alston \$65.00

"Cheese and Crackers"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I remember it like it was a few weeks ago rather than the three-plus decades it has been. It was the moment when I understood – for the first time, a phrase my father had been saying for years. We were driving east on Rt. 9 from Framingham, Ma. on the way to Rt. 128 (the beltway of Boston sort of) as I was joining him on a business trip to Newport R.I. I was sitting in the passenger seat of my father's Buick Grand Marquis, we were just talking when in response to something (I can't remember that), he said it: "Cheese and crackers." Immediately I looked at him and said: "Is that what you've been saying all these years? Cheese and crackers? I thought you were saying Jesus Christ. I started laughing. I must have heard him utter this exclamation a thousand times. Yet, on this day, I heard it differently, you might say. (Say it fast, with a partial stutter, like my father always did and it might sound the same to you. It sure did to me – for years.) Add to the fact that my father regularly made-up words that were not in any dictionary ("surgerize," and "conflition" come to mind) and half the time you weren't sure what the heck he was saying. On this day, while riding in the car, I understood – for once.

Rarely would Richard or I accompany my father on his driving trips to visit clients and prospects throughout New England. Aside from the fact that we were both living in Washington, D.C., these trips home to Ma. were timed to occur during his business trips (he sold jewelry/was a manufacturer's representative) when he would be away from home for two-to-three nights. We came home while my father was away to keep mother company so she wouldn't be alone. Having suffered irreparable nerve damage in both ears years before, my mother (I was going to say "she, again" but I can still hear my father admonishing us: "Don't call your mother 'she'") was hearing impaired. As you might imagine, being home by herself was a bit scary for my mother. As an example, how could she call for help and engage in a conversation over the phone or even hear a fire alarm. Certainly, she could speak but she wouldn't be able to answer any questions and provide the kinds of answers that might ultimately save her life.

But this trip home was for my father's benefit. He was nearing aged 70 – when he was planning to retire. Yet five days a week, he drove all over New England selling jewelry. Most days he would drive hours in the morning, hours between appointments, and more hours in the evening on the way home. He never complained. He loved what he did. After owning a jewelry store in downtown Boston ("Barry's Jewelers") for over 20 years, this outside sales alternative/lack of overhead was perfect for him. Nevertheless, my mother always worried because "(A) she was a worrier and (B) my father wasn't getting any younger and she could see the toll it was taking on him. And when he told the story about driving on Rt. 9 and somehow ending up on the crossroad below, asleep at the wheel, not remembering even taking the exit, we all worried some more. My father's business was all about driving. There was no plan (B). He was the sole source of income and needed to make money so my parents could retire to Fl. This drive to Newport was in pursuit of that family goal. Since the trip there was up and back in the same day, I went along and then drove home the multiple hours back home in the late afternoon so my father wouldn't have to. My brother made similarly timed visits. It was a win-win. We got to spend time alone with our father and it helped our parents manage their lives/reach their financial goal while approaching their retirement. And the lobster roll we'd have for lunch in Newport was just a side benefit. I can still see my father taking his first bite.

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

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