

# Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

## 67 Dead After Airplane Collides with Army Helicopter

Wreckage and passengers plunge into the Potomac River.

BY JAMES LIBRESCO AND  
NOAH STERNBERG  
THE GAZETTE

Officials said there are no survivors after a commercial jet with 64 passengers and an Army helicopter carrying three soldiers collided shortly before 9 p.m. on Jan. 29 outside of Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA) in Arlington and plummeted into the Potomac River.

An Alexandria Police Department dispatch at exactly 9 p.m. described the event as a “mass casualty incident” and deployed Alexandria fireboats and ambulances.

An initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration found that air traffic controller staffing at Reagan National Airport during the crash was “not normal for the time of day and volume of traffic,” according to the New York Times. One air traffic controller was covering two different positions at the time of the collision, but a former FAA air traffic manager, told CNN this was a common practice. The airport reopened the day following the crash and is at full operational capacity, though several airlines canceled some scheduled flights.

The airport had 19 fully certified controllers as of September 2023, according to a report to Congress,

which is well below the FAA's target of 30. But as one of his first actions as president, Donald J. Trump froze hiring for groups of federal employees including air traffic control personnel. Trump, at a press conference in the White House, blamed Barack Obama, Joe Biden and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for the crash.

Washington's Fire Chief John Donnelly confirmed the worst possible scenario at a separate Thursday morning press conference.

“We don't believe there are any survivors,” he said, adding that “extremely frigid conditions,” including “heavy wind” and “ice on the water,” made the rescue operation difficult to manage.

Horrifying audio from the police scanner the previous night revealed that divers found multiple people still buckled into their seats. As of Feb. 2, 55 victims have been identified, Donnelly said at a press conference. Donnelly said that after officials extracted the plane the following day, they would be able to “recover everyone.” That task was complete on Tuesday, Feb. 4.

Three students and six parents — including two school officials — from Fairfax County Public Schools were on the fatal flight, with several returning from a figure skating camp, according to a statement from the FCPS superintendent of schools.

It is still unclear if any Alexandria residents were involved in the



PHOTO BY NOAH STERNBERG/THEOGONY

Officials used a floating crane Feb. 7 to remove the wreckage of American Airlines flight 5342 and the Black Hawk helicopter that collided midair.

“Three of our FCPS students and six of our FCPS parents were lost, affecting multiple schools and departments here at FCPS. Two of the parents were current or former FCPS staff members. Multiplying the grief are the siblings” and others ...

— Michelle Reid, superintendent, FCPS

crash.

“Our prayers are with everyone affected,” said Alyia Gaskins, Al-

exandria's mayor, in a statement. “This devastating loss is felt by all of us.”

This article was first published in *Theogony*, Alexandria City High School's student-run newspaper.

## Helicopter Involved Flew Out of Fort Belvoir

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

The helicopter involved in the tragedy at Reagan National Airport operated out of Davison Army Airfield at Fort Belvoir.

Fort Belvoir put out a statement on social media following the crash. “While performing a training mission a United States Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from Bravo Company, 12th Aviation Battalion, Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, Va., collided in midair with an American Airlines Bombardier CRJ700 regional jet Flight 5342 Wednesday night at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. The FAA, NTSB and the United States Army will investigate. The NTSB will lead the investigation. We are working with local officials and will provide any additional information once it becomes available,” it said.

According to the Army, the three soldiers aboard the helicopter have been identified. They were Staff Sgt. Ryan Austin O'Hara, 28, of Lilburn, Georgia, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Loyd Eaves, 39, of Great Mills, Maryland and Captain Rebecca M. Lobach, 28, from Durham, N.C. was the third pilot on the Army helicopter. It is not known if all the remains have been recovered yet.

Helicopters have operated out of Davison for years and have been the subject of noise complaints from housing in the immediate area, most of which was built years after Davison was in service.

The helicopter which collided with the plane at Reagan National Airport flew out of Davison Airfield which is across the street from the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, which displays some of the Army helicopters such as this one.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

Related stories on pages 12-13, 17, 18, 19

live who you are

OPEN SAT 2/8, 2-4PM



**Old Town**  
**710 Duke Street**

\$1,799,000 | This 1826 3-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom home in the historic St. John's Academy combines original period details with modern conveniences.

**Mason Bavin** : 703.338.6007  
MasonBavin.com



**Old Mill At Mount Vernon**  
**5005 Halley Farm Court**

\$1,299,900 | This 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom colonial features a 2-car garage, sunroom, finished basement, and stunning outdoor space featuring a pool and fire pit.

**Julian Burke** : 703.867.4219  
JulianBurke.com

COMING SOON



**Nethergate**  
**1113 Michigan Court**

\$875,000 | Beautifully updated 4-story townhouse features 2 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths, a chef's kitchen, multiple living spaces, a private patio, and an unbeatable location.

**Mary Taylor** : 703.785.5619  
MaryTaylorRealtor.com



**Carlyle Towers**  
**2181 Jamieson Avenue #1203**

\$820,000 | Stunning views and fresh updates are part of the luxury in this 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom condo. Fabulous amenities and 2 parking spaces. Walk to Metro and shops.

**Ann McClure** : 301.367.5098  
AnnMcClure.com

OPEN SUN 2/9, 12-2PM



**North Old Town**  
**1208 Powhatan Street**

\$775,000 | Charming home with 2 bedrooms and 1 remodeled bathroom. Situated in an unbeatable location with easy access to major commuter routes. Great fenced yard and easy parking.

**Jillian Hogan Homes** : 703.951.7655  
JillianHoganHomes.com



**Carlyle Towers**  
**2121 Jamieson Avenue #1007**

\$719,900 | This 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom high-rise home boasts modern upgrades, perfect for relaxing or entertaining. Includes 2 garage spaces and a convenient storage unit.

**Susan Anthony** : 703.795.9536  
**Rochelle Gray** : 703.328.1686



**Fairlington Towne**  
**3918 Keller Avenue**

\$550,000 | Charming 2-bedroom, 1.5-bathroom townhome blends modern updates with classic appeal. Features include fresh paint, a remodeled kitchen, and plenty of storage.

**Shagufta Hasan** : 571.355.2510  
ShaguftaHasan.com



**Logan Circle**  
**1111 11th Street NW #104**

\$399,900 | Spacious 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom 1st-floor unit features a bright and open floor plan in a prime DC location. Easy access to 3 metro stations, restaurants, cafes, and more!

**Wendy Santantonio** : 703.625.8802  
WendySantantonio.com



**Potowmack Crossing**  
**1632 W Abingdon Drive #302**

\$298,000 | Updated 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom apartment with modern flooring, a bright kitchen, spacious living room, in-unit laundry, and great amenities.

**Kristen Jones** : 703.952.0441  
KristenJones.com

corcoran

MCENEARNEY

Corcoran McEneaney | 109 S. Pitt Street | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.549.9292 | corcoranmce.com

©2025 Corcoran Group LLC. All rights reserved. Corcoran® and the Corcoran Logo are registered service marks owned by Corcoran Group LLC. Corcoran Group LLC fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Each franchise is independently owned and operated.

ACM ATLANTIC COAST  
MORTGAGE

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# The Ringing Success of the Bell Family

A family's historical connection to Alexandria and the Masonic Temple.

BY CHAR McCARGO BAH  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE PACKET

The construction of the Masonic Temple on Shooter Hill began on June 5, 1922, and it took 10 years to complete. There was a cornerstone ceremony that took place on Nov. 5, 1923. President Calvin Coolidge laid the cornerstone using the same trowel that President George Washington had used on September 18, 1793, when he laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol building. Many dignitaries and Masons attended the ceremony. Unfortunately, John S. Bell, who delivered the building materials for the Masonic project, did not live to witness that ceremony or the completion of the Masonic Monument in 1932. His participation in the building of the Masonic Temple became part of his family's oral history.

It was a warm morning when John Stuart Bell left his home on Oct. 4, 1922; the morning temperature was 53 degrees Fahrenheit. He drove his wagon and a team of mules from his home at 409 North Patrick Street before sunrise to pick up his load from the brickyard. That day would be the last time he'd see his wife and four children. Bell headed to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial construction site to deliver his supplies. It was 7:30 a.m. when the team of mules that he was driving ran away and threw him off his wagon. The wagon rolled over him and crushed his chest. Bell was immediately taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead. His body was taken to Demaine's mortuary chapel, where the coroner's jury investigated his death. It was determined that Bell's death was caused by the accident.

Bell's descendants, Freida Bell Brockington and Andrew "Andy" Evans learned that John S. Bell worked on the Masonic Temple, but did not know about the role he played in its construction. He was a well-respected man in his community.

Bell was born in Winchester, Va., in 1868. His father's name was John and his mother was named Mary. They were free African Americans before the Civil War. After 1870, John Sr. moved his family to Alexandria and he lived on Fairfax Street. Bell's mother died in 1895, and his father died sometime before 1900. The obituary stated that his mother's services were at Shiloh Church and that she was a well-known and respected resident of Alexandria. Freida remembers hearing stories about her family history. Her great-grandmother, Mary Forrest Bell, the wife of John S. Bell, lived a long time, from 1874 to 1973. Freida said Mary worked for Mr. Smoot, who owned the lumber yard. Mary was renting when she was working for Mr. Smoot; Freida recalls her family saying that Mr. Smoot said to Mary, "You probably paid for this house over and over in rent, you need to buy a house." After getting advice from Mr. Smoot, Mary purchased the house at 510 North Alfred Street.

Another descendant, Andy Evans, shares



John J. Bell and his daughter, Freida Bell Brockington.



John A. Bell

PHOTOS COURTESY FREIDA BELL BROCKINGTON

The Bell family became successful in every endeavor they undertook, and every succeeding generation did better.

stories about John S. Bell's son, John Augustus Bell. Andy said, "My grandfather lived at 405 North Henry Street. He worked at the Mutual Ice Company, delivering ice to the African American communities. He drove an icehouse truck and took ice from his truck to his customers. He carried a big block of ice on his shoulder. My grandfather did this until he was around 70 years old."

This family is very proud of its heritage.

Each generation, from John Bell, who was born in 1845 and migrated to Alexandria from Winchester, to the next generation of John S. Bell who is associated with the Alexandria Masonic Temple, to the next generation of John A. Bell, that worked for Mutual Ice Company; and to Frieda's father, John J. Bell, that worked for the federal government. The latter was a well-known photographer. The Bell family became successful in

every endeavor they undertook, and every succeeding generation did better. Freida and Andy did well, just like their forefathers.

Bell would be proud of his two great-grandchildren. Freida retired from the Federal Government after 37 years of service. She was an Associate Director at the U.S. Selective Service System, overseeing the agency's Human Resources, Financial Management, and Contract Procurement. During her government career, she became involved in real estate and continued this career into her retirement. Freida has been a Realtor for 30 years. She maintains a viable real estate business and is skilled in staging, marketing, and investments. If that was not enough, she is also a talented Interior Designer and Event Planner.

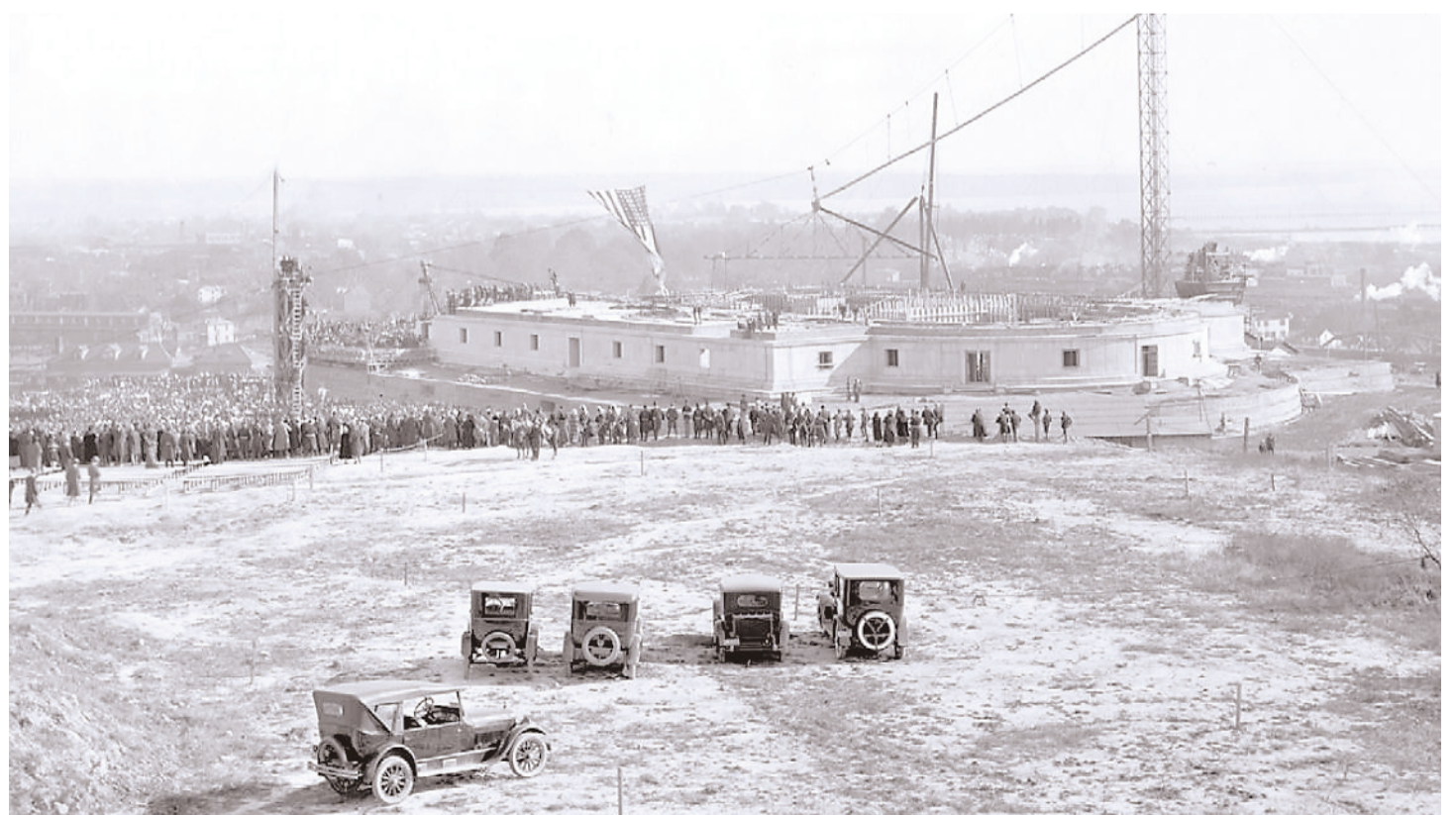
Andrew "Andy" Evans has lived a very productive life.

He has been a politician, an activist, an author, a counselor at George Mason University, and now a comedian. Again, just like his ancestors, he is a high achiever.

The accomplishments made by the four generations of John Bells are major achievements for their family. Each generation built a legacy of a solid foundation of hard work, entrepreneurship, and resilience that would continue in the future.

Each time one of the Bell family members sees the George Washington Masonic Temple, they will remember John S. Bell, who contributed to its construction.

The writer, Char McCargo Bah, is a published author, freelance writer, independent historian, investigative/genealogist researcher, and a Living Legend of Alexandria. Her blog is <https://www.theotheralexandria.com>.



Laying of the cornerstone of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial on Nov. 1, 1923.

PHOTO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

# Casino Bill Passes Senate

Surovell defends bill as possible solution to fiscal stagnation.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE GAZETTE

**M**ore than a casino bill is on the Virginia Senate agenda Tuesday, but one might not know it from the Mount Vernon Town Hall held Saturday, Feb. 1. During the nearly two-hour event, three Democratic state legislators representing Mount Vernon in Fairfax County spoke, including Scott A. Surovell, the Senate of Virginia Majority Leader and Senator for Virginia's 34 District. Surovell's bill passed the Senate (24-Y 16-N) on Tuesday, Feb. 4.

The other two legislators were Del. Mark Sickles and Del. Paul E. Krizek. All three spoke and actively engaged with constituents. The meeting was live streamed and an online video is available for viewing on Facebook.

The Virginia General Assembly hit crossover on Tuesday, Feb. 4, when bills must pass in their respective chamber in order to be considered by the other chamber. The town hall covered a broad range of the legislators' priorities and issues within the Mount Vernon community and Fairfax County as the legislators engaged directly with constituents.

However, no bill discussed at the town hall elicited more passion from the public attending than Senate Bill 982. At one point, Surovell threatened to shut down the meeting if heckling continued.

After Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) signed bills stripping Richmond from the list of Virginia's eligible host cities for a casino following its second failed referendum attempt in November 2023, eyes turned to Fairfax County. Given the parameters of Surovell's bill, SB952, the casino location being offered is Tysons.

Suppose both houses pass SB952, and the governor signs it into law. In that case, the legislation will authorize the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to place a casino referendum on the next election ballot to allow county voters to decide whether to approve adding Fairfax as an eligible location for a casino.

With Democrats narrowly controlling both chambers of the state legislature in 2025 — the House of Delegates with a 51-49 majority and the Senate with a 21-19 majority — the Democrats do hold the majority.

In the weeks ahead, consideration of the bill will move to the House of Delegates.

The number of people wearing red NO FAIRFAX CASINO t-shirts made Surovell's Senate Bill 952 the prominent legislative issue at Saturday's town hall.

Surovell defended that if a referendum is passed, the casino entertainment establishment at Tysons, currently being promoted by an interested developer, will take up only 5 percent of the floor space. He spoke about the possible benefits of a casino, to reduce impact of increasing real estate taxes on residents, which are now the highest in Virginia for any county, and the need for the county



**Sen. Scott A. Surovell, chief patron of SB982 Casino gaming; eligible host localities. The bill passed the Senate (24-Y 16-N) on Tuesday, Feb. 4.**



**Del. Paul E. Krizek, chief patron of HB2498 Virginia Gaming Commission; established, penalties, report.**

to diversify its revenue sources. There are limited options to do so.

Surovell said that Virginia is losing millions of dollars in revenue to the MGM casino across the river in National Harbor, Maryland. He suggested that his proposed casino could lower taxes for Fairfax County residents and pay for schools in the county and elsewhere in Virginia. Surovell said the entertainment district proposed would generate "\$200 million a year in net revenue for Fairfax County" and that "diversifying revenue sources is crucial for Fairfax County." Real estate taxes burden residents, including renters. Opponents question whether the

Surovell closed on the issue, saying he wanted "to remind everybody this is not a vote for a casino."

"It's a vote for a referendum. And if everybody thinks they have strong arguments, take it to the voters and let the voters decide what they want or not. They don't want it? They don't? They don't have that, seriously. So this is about, you know, democracy."

Authorizing a casino in the Northern Virginia market is projected to increase state revenue and economic benefits could increase statewide gaming tax revenue by an estimated additional \$155 million (59 percent) and employ an additional 3,200 workers, says a 2019 JLARC study. "A Northern Virginia casino is projected to attract substantial revenue from out-of-state customers and retain in-state about \$100 million that Virginia residents are currently spending at casinos in other states."

Del. Paul E. Krizek (D-Mount Vernon) introduced Virginia House Bill No. 2498. He is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Gaming and expressed concern over the passage of SB982 before establishing a Gaming Commission. Krizek participated in the town hall on Saturday with Surovell.

HB2498 would create the Virginia Gaming Commission, which would be separate from the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of government. The Commission would be in charge of all legal gambling in the Commonwealth except for the state lottery.

Krizek's bill outlines the qualifications needed to be a commissioner and a mem-



SCREENSHOT OF FACEBOOK VIDEO

**Sen. Scott A. Surovell, Senate of Virginia Majority Leader speaks at the Mt. Vernon Legislative Town Hall on Saturday. To his right is Del. Mark D. Sickles with Del. Paul E. Krizek at the end of the table.**



SCREENSHOT OF FACEBOOK VIDEO

**Del Paul E. Krizek, who represents District 16.**

ber of the Virginia Gaming Commissioner Board, as well as the powers and duties of those individuals. Current employees of relevant state agencies would also be transferred to the Commission. The bill contains numerous technical amendments.

The No Fairfax Casino Coalition stated in a Jan. 27 email to Senators and Delegates that the 2019 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study is not a substitute for a comprehensive impact analysis of a casino in Fairfax County. The No Fairfax Casino Coalition is calling for the members

of the General Assembly to support HB2498 and oppose SB982.

According to the late Sunday night press release by No Fairfax Casino, "Senator Surovell's Senate Bill 982 targets properties on Route 7 in Tysons that are reportedly controlled by a local developer, Christopher Clemente, a principal of Comstock Holdings and managing director and principal of Comstock Partners."

Tuesday, crossover in Virginia; and The Connection will be in production for the first of our twice-monthly print editions.

# Fatal Hit and Run In Woodlawn

**D**etectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating a fatal pedestrian hit-and-run crash in Woodlawn last week.

On Jan. 29 around 8:34 p.m., officers responded to the intersection of Richmond Highway and Buckman Road in Woodlawn for two pedestrians who were struck by a vehicle.

Preliminarily, detectives determined Erica Tibbs, 33, of Alexandria, and her 5-year-old child were crossing Richmond Highway from west to east while not in a crosswalk. The driver of a 2007 Chevrolet Suburban was traveling northbound on Richmond Highway and struck Tibbs and the child. The driver of the Chevrolet Suburban

abandoned the vehicle a short distance away and fled before the police arrived.

Tibbs and the child were transported to the hospital in life-threatening condition. Tibbs was later pronounced deceased at the hospital, and the child remains in stable condition.

The investigation into the crash continues as detectives work to identify the driver of the Chevrolet Suburban.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call the FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 703-246-4676

# Guilty, Cruelty to Children

**A** Fort Belvoir woman pled guilty Jan. 27 to assault with a dangerous weapon; assault by striking, beating, and wounding; and cruelty to children, according to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

According to court documents, on Oct. 8, 2024, China Ashley Charles, 38, was enraged at her 10-year-old child because his bedroom was messy. She struck him with a chair, dresser drawers, a hot iron, a charging wire, a hairbrush, and a large serving spoon. She attempted to strike his face with the iron, but he blocked it with his hands. When Charles hit the child with the charging wire, his finger was cut and began bleeding.

Charles tried to hide her crime by making the child sit in a cold bath and splashing cold water on his face.

The child dropped onto the roof from his second-floor bedroom and then jumped down from the roof and fled. He was recovered by police with substantial bruises, abrasions, a knot on the back of his head, and a cut and bleeding finger. The child was transported to the emergency room at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital by ambulance.

Law enforcement recovered numerous items from China's residence, including the iron, chair, hairbrush, spoon, multiple dresser drawers, and a sweater and a shirt with "I'M ON PUNISHMENT" written on them in black marker. Several of these items appeared to have blood on them, and further examination confirmed that the child's blood was located on the iron and at least one dresser drawer. The child's sister reported that China had been beating him for the past four years.

Charles is scheduled to be sentenced on May 9 and faces up to 16 years in prison. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Erik S. Siebert, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Jake Cameron, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Field Office, Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, made the announcement after U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema accepted the plea.



## 38th Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting

**Saturday, February 8, 2025**

**NEW TIME**

**8:30 a.m. – Exhibit Hall Open**

**10:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m. – Speakers, Q&A's and Virtual Tour**

**Mount Vernon High School**

8515 Old Mount Vernon Road

Mount Vernon, VA 22309

**Live on Channel 16 & Facebook**

More: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/)

**Be There for the Big Reveal:**

**New Name, Logo & Identity for the OMVHS Redevelopment Project!**

Learn More



### CONNECT WITH TEAM MVD

Keep informed! Sign up for the Mount Vernon Advisor newsletter and follow us on social media!  
Visit: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/>  
Call: 703-780-7518 (TTY 711)  
Email: [mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Same Company, Same Employees,  
Same Great Value - Now Celebrating 20 Years!**

## TWO POOR TEACHERS Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling



- Electrical (ELE)
- Gas Fitting (GFC)
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVA)
- Plumbing (PLB)
- Residential Building (RBC)

Fully Insured & Class A Licensed  
Since 1999



**10% down**  
nothing until the job  
is complete for the  
past 17 years

**Free Estimates 703-999-2929**

Check if your contractor is licensed at the state level  
<http://www.DPOR.virginia.gov>

**Visit our website: [www.twopoorteachers.com](http://www.twopoorteachers.com)**

Past issues of

**THE CONNECTION  
NEWSPAPERS**

back to 2008  
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

# BIRDING



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A male northern cardinal



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Nuthatches feed upside down.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A Carolina Wren

# Bird-feeding Can Bring Winter Cheer

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

**I**n winter's cold grip, there's a show going on outside with multiple "actors," if you set the "stage."

Our avian neighbors will provide hours of entertainment and more importantly, education, at, around and under bird feeders. As many as 15 to 20 different species could visit a feeder throughout one day in Northern Virginia.

Part of the drama could be little birds like

four- to five-inch-long Carolina chickadees patiently deferring to the larger, more aggressive birds, like red-bellied woodpeckers, which are around nine inches long. But some plucky little birds like titmice might not give a hoot when the big ones arrive and compete successfully for a meal. Keen observers will learn that some birds like white-breasted nuthatches feed upside down at feeders while others like dark-eyed juncos, winter visitors, and year-round mourning doves snarf up seeds on the ground.

Around 60 million Americans feed birds at

## Information

Northern Virginia Bird Club, <https://nvabc.org>

Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, [www.nvbirdalliance.org](http://www.nvbirdalliance.org)

Project Feederwatch, <https://feederwatch.org>

Great Backyard Bird Count, February 14 to 17, [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

their homes, to support birds, to mitigate the habitat we've all degraded and destroyed and to address the decline of three billion North American birds since 1970 as reported by the National Audubon Society.

In the winter, many natural food sources are gone. Snow-covered plants and ground can be especially challenging for birds. Even with human-introduced feeding, birds still consume three-quarters of their diet elsewhere, says Cornell University experts.

## What Backyard Birds Need

The key to attracting birds is to meet their three basic needs for food, water and shelter. The more a property can include those elements, the more birds will use the property. A bird bath usually attracts birds. As for shelter, nearby evergreens and brush piles are ideal. Birds like "staging areas," nearby vegetation and trees where they digest or monitor feeders before darting over for a meal.

For seed-eating birds, black oil sunflower seeds are the all-around favorite because they are high in fat and have thin shells that are easy to crack. Some birds will also eat sunflower hearts, nyjer and safflower seeds,

suet and nuts.

The more diverse the food, the more diverse the birds that show up.

Experts recommend growing and leaving some natural food for winter's birds, like leaving native berries and other fruit on bushes, trees and plants like dogwood, holly, cedar, Virginia creeper, sassafras, sumac and American bitterweet. Ground-foraging birds will find seeds that fall from summer's flowers. Leaf litter can provide a banquet of insects, seeds and nuts.

Some people save and dry squash and melon seeds. For some birds, seeds are not a major part of their diet so fruit like dried raisins and currants, soaked in water or frozen berries, "served" on a plate can attract the non-seed-eating birds.

## Where to Put Bird Feeders

For bird watching, the feeder should be visible from your home and easy to fill. Ideally, birds need natural shelter like trees and shrubs nearby for cover and from which to come and go, but far enough away so that squirrels and cats cannot jump from the veg-



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A house finch and female northern cardinal



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A red-bellied woodpecker



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Birds like this cardinal like to fluff their feathers in bird baths.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Other wildlife like this deer eat bird seeds too.

SEE BIRDING, PAGE 7

# Inaugural Superbowl Soberride Launched

A local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this Sunday's Super Bowl LIX.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the inaugural 2025 Super Bowl SoberRide® program will be in operation beginning at 8 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9 and operate until 4 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 10 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this eight-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl SoberRide promo code will be posted at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

"Nearly 40-percent of U.S. traffic fatalities during the 2022 Super Bowl period involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's President.

WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl campaign effort is the charity's first new SoberRide offering in a decade. WRAP also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and the winter holidays through and including New Year's.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl SoberRide® campaign include 395 Express Lanes, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days

Grill, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2025 Public Partner SoberRide® Sponsors include the District of Columbia Highway Safety Office, Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 93,706 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

## Bird-feeding Can Bring Winter Cheer

FROM PAGE 6

etation onto feeders. Brush piles can provide escape cover.

More than one billion birds die from window collisions in the United States each year, says the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance. Birds mistake the reflection of trees and vegetation in windows for open space and fly into the glass. It's not just skyscrapers. One- to three- story buildings, including homes, cause 44 percent of the bird deaths from window collisions, and buildings four to eleven stories high cause most of the remaining deaths, says the Alliance.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology recommends placing feeders at least 30 feet away from windows.

### Regular Cleaning

It's important to keep bird feeders and the ground below them clean because bacteria can accumulate and spread disease, especially as temperatures warm. Wash feeders around twice a week with mild soap and water, rinse well and dry.

Store bird seed in a tight, dry container, preferably metal, to prevent disease and protect the seeds from rodents and other

critters.

Birds also need water to drink. If the water is less than two inches deep, they'll use it to fluff up their feathers. Experts recommend changing the water daily and scrubbing the bird bath weekly.

Why feed birds? Larry Meade, president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club, says, "Feeders give people enjoyment and engage them with their local birds. Also, Project Feederwatch and the Great Backyard Bird Count provide an opportunity for people with feeders to collect valuable data on bird populations."



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A downy woodpecker



cogir

ALEXANDRIA  
FILLMORE  
SENIOR LIVING

OFFERING INDEPENDENT LIVING  
AND ASSISTED LIVING

CALL US TO  
SCHEDULE A TOUR!

(571) 579-3837

ELANCEALEXANDRIA.COM

400 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

\*Limited time offer. Some exclusions may apply.  
Contact community for more details.

FREE  
MONTH OF  
RENT!\*

# Come One, Come All to the Mount Vernon District Town Meeting!

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK



Come out and learn what we have in “common” at our 38th Annual Town Meeting. This year’s event on Super Bowl Saturday will go for the win and share important District and County information, including a reveal of the new name, logo and identity of Original Mount Vernon High School. Established by my predecessor, Gerry Hyland in 1988, the Town Meeting has become a cherished community tradition that I am fortunate to host year after year to connect with residents and honor his legacy. We will begin the program with a tribute to him, recognizing his decades of dedicated service to our community and the lasting impact of his leadership.

Join us Saturday, Feb. 8 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (NEW START TIME) at Mount Vernon High School (MVHS) (8515 Old Mount

Vernon Rd.) to see your neighbors, meet your local elected officials and engage and learn about the County budget, schools and other issues important to you. Our popular Exhibit Hall runs from 8:30 – 10 a.m. featuring many County agencies and local service providers. The Park Authority will be conducting onsite interviews for the highly anticipated reopening of the Mount Vernon Rec Center. Take a moment to check out the KidBiz Young Entrepreneurs Expo which features many “small” business owners selling homemade treats and products. While walking around and engaging with your neighbors, stop and listen to the music by the MVHS Chamber String Quartet.

The program runs from 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., featuring special recognitions and the flying virtual tour of the District with updates on recently completed, current and future projects, followed by Q&A panels with local

leaders. You will hear from Congressmen Don Beyer and Gerry Connolly, Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, County Executive Bryan Hill and Mount Vernon School Board Member Mateo Dunne who will be speaking and answering questions from residents.

Join us in-person or stream from your home on Facebook @SupervisorDanStorck and Channel 16 <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable-consumer/channel-16/stream>.

We are excited to show you all that is happening in the District.

By now you should have received my annual Advisor in your home mailbox, highlighting major accomplishments and projects from the past year, as well as our focus for 2025. Be sure to check it out and if you have any questions, comments or want to connect with Team MVD, be sure to join us for the 38th Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting! <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/38th-annual-town-meeting>

## Can Data Centers Co-Exist with Responsible Development and Increased Energy Demands?

BY SEN. ADAM P. EBBIN



Every time you make an online purchase, scroll through social media, or check your email, a data center processes the information. Data centers contain storage for computer systems for everyday usage by consumers and businesses, and have grown exponentially in recent years, with usage expected to double in the next few years. Northern Virginia has the largest data concentration center in the world, handling 25 percent of Internet traffic in the Americas and 13 percent of the total in the World. One data center in Ashburn alone averages 31,000 credit card transactions per second. These transactions are a key part of our modern economy, and keep the Commonwealth on the cutting edge of innovation and commerce.

With the rise of artificial intelligence, data center demand is growing even faster than anticipated. More than 23 bills dealing with data centers were introduced in the General Assembly, including my bill, SB 1449. More than 13 of those bills remained under consideration as of

Monday, Feb. 3.

After spending a year researching the data center industry and soliciting input from more than a hundred diverse stakeholders, ranging from technology advocates and utilities to environmentalists and grassroots activists, the Virginia General Assembly’s highly respected Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) released their findings in December. JLARC found that data centers are responsible for more than 74,000 jobs and \$9.1 billion in annual revenue in Virginia.

However, data centers are not without some concerns. They require a huge amount of energy to operate. Data center energy usage can vary from the equivalent of the average usage of 20,000 homes to over a million homes. By 2040, unconstrained demand could double our energy needs, and we must balance the economic benefits with the challenges and energy impact of data centers.

Other potential data center challenges include power transmission lines, water usage, noise issues, and construction near historic sites. JLARC says we are a relatively water-rich state, but that usage could be more efficient. We must work with local governments to address these challenges and ensure that we are still on a path to transition to a greener energy mix as the demands around data centers increase.

SEE EBBIN, PAGE 9

## Environmental Wins and Losses at Virginia General Assembly Crossover

The Virginia General Assembly session has reached its midpoint, marking some wins and losses for key environmental measures.

These measures would enhance our management of Virginia’s living resources, provide better planning for our growing solar industry, improve water quality, protect public health, and align

with Governor Youngkin’s recent recommitment to Chesapeake Bay restoration.

At this point known as “crossover,” bills started in one chamber must be passed in order to move to the other chamber for consideration, a key moment for legislation focused on flood resilience, protection of vital species, and advance-

SEE ENVIRONMENTAL, PAGE 9

### Submit a Letter to the Editor

To submit a letter to the editor, email [editors@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:editors@connectionnewspapers.com) or via the following form <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/>

Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy.

Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

Never miss an issue, get a free digital subscription, <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe/>

[www.MountVernonGazette.com](http://www.MountVernonGazette.com)

Twitter @MtVernonGazette

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to [connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe](http://connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe)

NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
[gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mary Kimm  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Jeanne Theismann  
[jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@TheismannMedia

Mercia Hobson  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Ken Moore, Glenda Booth  
Contributing Writers

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment Advertising  
703-778-9431

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Art/Design:  
Laurence Foong  
Production Manager:  
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager:  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

A Connection Newspaper





# Virginia Budget on Track

## Report on transportation and public safety funding.

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK



**O**n Budget Sunday this week, as Chairman of the Transportation and Public Safety subcommittee, I gave the report of the subcommittee. Here's what I said:

"Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the Transportation and Public Safety Subcommittee, I am pleased to present to you our budget recommendations.

In the Transportation arena, last year's budget included a \$325 million general fund infusion including support for transit in Northern Virginia (WMATA) and toll relief in Hampton Roads, in addition to the \$21.7 billion in transportation funds we appropriated over the biennium.

The subcommittee's budget recommenda-

tions today include an additional \$175 million general fund for the I-81 Improvement program based on your decision to earmark this funding contingent on the 2024 year-end surplus. This funding not only will expedite construction projects along the I-81 Improvement program but will also save money in the long run.

The subcommittee's other transportation amendments focus on modernizing the distribution of our transportation dollars. To that end, the subcommittee supported legislation to update the allocation formula within the Department of Aviation and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to ensure our funds are spent in their most efficient manner.

In addition, the subcommittee is recommending \$8 million from the Transportation

Partnership Opportunity Fund be allocated to support a dredging project near the launch site on Wallops Island. This project is needed for the continued development of the rocket launch site and reflects the direct linkage between transportation improvements and economic development.

A general fund item the Subcommittee felt needed to be supported is \$250,000 for the Department of Transportation to complete a study of the impact the development of the state's highway systems had on African American communities. As we move forward as one Commonwealth it is important to understand our past.

**IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC SAFETY**, the subcommittee report provides \$4.1 million in additional general fund for local sexual assault and domestic violence agencies. This is a critical investment of general fund re-

sources to continue our efforts to offset ongoing declines in federal support for these important services.

The Subcommittee report recommends over \$6.3 million in new general fund spending to enhance healthcare services for individuals in state correctional facilities and to expand career and technical education programs. These investments aim to improve conditions within the prison system and support better outcomes for individuals upon release.

Finally, in the area of Veteran's services, the Subcommittee recommends funding to expand veteran's reentry and suicide prevention programs.

With that, Mr. Chairman, the report of the Subcommittee is now before you and the members of the Committee. I hope it will be the Committee's pleasure to adopt the subcommittee's report."

# Environmental Wins and Losses at Virginia General Assembly Crossover

FROM PAGE 8

ments in clean energy.

## Key environmental wins and losses include:

Protecting Virginians from Flooding and Extreme Weather

❖ HB 2034 introduced by Delegate Shelly Simonds: This establishes efforts to protect the state's existing tidal and nontidal wetlands, which are natural water filterers and sponges. This bill passed the House and will now head to the Senate.

❖ HB2630 introduced by Delegate Rodney Willett and HB2638 introduced by Delegate Patrick Hope: Another natural sponge that cools our neighborhoods and reduces our energy use, trees would be easier to preserve and replace under these two bills that expand local authority. Both passed the House are under consideration by the Senate.

❖ HB 2077 introduced by Delegate Paul Krizek and SB 1335 introduced by Senator Da-

vid Marsden: These bills allow federally-recognized tribal governments access to Community Flood Preparedness funding. Both bills passed their respective chamber.

❖ HJ 434 introduced by Delegate Michael Feggans and HJ 437 introduced by Delegate Kelly Convirs-Fowler: HJ434 direct studies on how state and localities would fund Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSR) plans. HJ437 reestablishes the Joint Subcommittee of Recurrent Flooding. Both bills passed the House and on to the Senate for consideration.

## Protecting and Restoring Key Species

❖ CBF is disheartened that legislation for an oyster stock assessment helping ensure the wise management of the state's oysters as well as legislation and an accompanying \$3 million budget amendment to move forward with a much-needed study of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay did not advance in the General Assembly.

CBF thanks Delegate Paul Milde for introducing the menhaden efforts and again notes the increasing need for scientific studies into the impact of factors including climate change and an industrial fishery on this important forage fish.

❖ CBF continues to support HB2782 introduced by Delegate Shelly Simonds that removes the one-fish daily limit for blue catfish longer than 32 inches, helping to reduce the predatory pressure of this invasive species in the tidal waters of the James, Rappahannock, and York Rivers. HB2782 has passed the House and is under consideration by the Senate.

## Durable Future for Clean Energy

❖ To achieve established clean energy goals without unduly compromising farmland or forests, CBF supported legislation from Senators Deeds and McPike and Delegate Sullivan to create a state advisory body for localities considering utility-scale solar projects. The legislation also required a regional

energy plan. CBF is disappointed this measure did not advance.

## Reducing Pollution

The General Assembly showed continued strong support for reducing pollution in the budget by proposing funding for three key pillars of pollution reduction: agricultural best management practices, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, and investment in the Stormwater Local Assistant Fund, a matching grant program for projects that reduce polluted runoff such as stream restoration and rain gardens.

Practices like fencing cattle out of streams, planting streamside trees and grasses, and many others are the most cost-effective steps Virginia can take to restore the Bay and local streams. At the same time, many of Virginia's sewage treatment facilities have made important progress in nutrient reductions in recent years due to investments made by the General Assembly.

CBF Virginia Policy Manager Jay Ford released the following statement:

"Protecting Virginians from costly flooding, extreme storms, and the health impacts of pollution is a bipartisan issue. This crossover period saw robust support for pollution reduction and measures to proactively prepare the Commonwealth for costly storms and flooding on our horizon.

"While we celebrate the progress made on several key environmental fronts, the losses related to menhaden and oyster studies and the need for a comprehensive clean energy strategy highlight the urgency of the challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay.

"This moment presents a significant opportunity for legislators to demonstrate their commitment to a healthy environment and resilient communities.

We urge them to prioritize the measures that will ensure a cleaner, healthier Virginia for the next generation."

# Ebbin

FROM PAGE 8

My Bill, SB 1449, will empower localities to require a sound study before a data center (or other "high energy use facility" that uses more than 100 megawatts of power) can be sited within 500 feet of houses or schools. It will also allow local governments to decide whether a site assessment of potential impacts on nearby resources – such as water, agricultural land, parks, historic sites, or forestland – is appropriate before approving a new facility. Del. Josh Thomas of Prince William has

similar, but not identical, legislation that has passed the House of Delegates.

I believe my legislation will strike a reasonable balance: it will empower localities to make more informed choices as they manage responsible data center development, while not overly burdening an essential industry that already falls under many local, state and federal regulations that are intended to protect Virginians.

For the past 15 years, data centers have helped provide economic growth, jobs, and funding for commu-

nity priorities in the Commonwealth, especially in Northern Virginia.

Loudoun County alone reaped \$875,000,000 in 2024 in tax revenue from data centers, an increase of 19.5% from the year before, helping the fast growing county to fund their needs with lower property taxes than neighboring jurisdictions. I am hopeful that we can continue to be a leader in technology and 21st century jobs. If managed correctly, data centers can provide jobs, substantial tax revenue, and further investment in the Commonwealth.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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 volun-

teer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://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](http://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 [donaldr@aol.com](mailto:donaldr@aol.com).

# A Treatment for the Commercial Truck Eyesore

New form available on the Fairfax County website to report these trucks.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

Over in the corner of the neighborhood church parking lot, a truck is parked and it seems to come and go when no one is looking. Some similar trucks sometimes also park on neighborhood streets, alleys, places where parking is limited and are an eyesore to many, but calling the local elected official may not be the answer.

In Fairfax County, they have a new option called the Parking Violation Public Report, a form on the county website where these vehicles can be pointed out officially and hopefully the situation can be addressed.

Supervisor Dan Storck's (D-Mount Vernon) office initiated the tool as part of their parking campaign. The Richmond Highway corridor lends itself to truck parking due to the number of side roads.

"More and more lately, we are seeing our public streets littered with illegally parked commercial vehicles like large box trucks, dump trucks and tractor trailers. Not only



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Trucks parked haphazardly on the roadside could be reported with new county form.

is this a safety hazard, it's intrusive to our neighborhoods, blocks our businesses and limits walkability, while diminishing the sense of community we are striving to create," Storck wrote in an editorial. Storck announced it to the Board of Supervisors in October.

Although the Richmond Highway does have its share of parking violations, it also happens in other districts such as Springfield and Braddock. In Springfield, they have had complaints in Supervisor Herry's office in a widely dispersed issue. But in the Braddock

District, trucks often park over by the Target on New Guinea Road as well as Port Royal Road which is sometimes used as a roadside storage area for trucks and trailers.

On the count form, there are six questions pertaining to the parked truck. If one question warrants a "yes" response, the truck or vehicle "may be reported for illegally parking," it says on the form. There is a map included on this page so the complaint can be filed with a map indicating exactly where the truck is.

In Fairfax County, commercial trucks

Questions on the "Parking Violation Public Report."

Is the answer to any of these questions "yes"?

1. Is the vehicle "obstructing traffic," meaning, parked in a travel lane?
2. Is it in a signed "no parking" area?
3. Is a commercial truck parked in a residentially zoned area?
4. Is the vehicle parked "long-term," meaning 15 days or longer from when the police first 'tag' the vehicle?
5. Is the vehicle part of a "fleet," meaning, two or more vehicles of the same company parked on a public road?
6. Is the vehicle parked closer than 10 ft. from a driveway, closer than 20 ft. from an intersection or closer than 30 ft. from a stop sign?

parked in residential areas are addressed in Fairfax County Code, Section 82-5-7 that prohibits parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts. Vehicles parked in violation are subject to a \$100 fine for each violation and may be towed at the owner's expense, it says.

The form can be accessed here: [Parking Violation Public Report](#)

PEOPLE

## Bugs and Hisses, Osprey Platforms and Honored with Award

What's next for Susan Laume?

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Susan Laume just received the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Naturalist Volunteer of the Year Award for 2024. When she isn't digging out the grass from a parking lot island and filling it with dirt and mulch to create a pollinator garden, she might be working on the plan for her next osprey platform at a local park or holding her weekly meeting with her park volunteer team to determine which trails need maintenance.

The award presentation by Zoom on Jan. 23 highlighted her 350 hours of service and her 324 sign ups by other volunteers in the last two years as well as her inspired "lead by example" style. Kathy Stewart, who nominated Laume for the award says, "Susan's breadth and depth of activities is astonishing. She puts in the time and the work. She is my inspiration and mentor."

Laume traces her avid interest in environmental and conservation issues back to her childhood growing up on a farm in southeastern rural Pennsylvania. "We had plenty of room to roam the fields; it was an idyllic childhood in a lot of ways." This interest got pushed to the background with a full time job but when she stopped work full time and added a dog to her life a few years ago things turned around.

"I was on nature trails a couple of hours a day walking my dog. On one of my walks in Laurel Hill Park I met a man in the bushes with a bucket. The next week I saw him again in 80 degree plus weather pushing a

full-size lawn mower, and I thought, 'Oh my gosh this guy's great but he shouldn't be doing it all by himself; maybe I could help.'" So

she organized a group of volunteers which morphed into a Fairfax initiative to establish park volunteer teams. "We got the Elly Doyle Park Service award that year which is the biggest park authority award."

In 2021 Laume led the effort to turn the HOA common space where she lives into a meadow. "It really started out as an economic thing; we were paying landscaping to mow for years and then invasive vines started to fill the space, and we had to pay more and more and no one was using it."

Laume says she suggested they stop mowing the common space and formed a working group. "It was a hard sell with the neighbors who thought the overgrowth would look bad." She says they planted 57 trees, a lot of natives and surrounded them with protective cages, mostly to keep the deer away. Then in 2023 they became aware of a couple of grants. The first from Audubon allowed them to get rid of invasives and the second from the state allowed them to plant 16 more trees and shrubs. "We added a mulched pathway and put up some signs about the native plants."

Of all her efforts Laume says her heart project is the Memorial Dog bench. "Our trail buddies used to walk together with our dogs. One puppy died young, and we came up with the idea of a bench." She said they got five people together to pay for the bench and planted some dogwoods and redbuds since there was a red dog in the mix. "It is in a nice spot at the conjunction of trails."



From left. Kathy Stewart, Susan Laume and Dr. Karin Lehnigk after the 2024 caterpillar count where Laume was presented with the surprise "Bugs and Hisses" sign from a group of volunteers for her years of working with the team.



Susan Laume poses with sheep of the Lamb Mowers crew while taking a break at the HOA common meadow area.

SEE SUSAN LAUME, PAGE 11

# Inaugural Superbowl Soberride Launched

A local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this Sunday's Super Bowl LIX.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the inaugural 2025 Super Bowl Soberride® program will be in operation beginning at 8 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9 and operate until 4 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 10 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this eight-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the Soberride code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl Soberride promo code will be posted at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 9 on [www.Soberride.com](http://www.Soberride.com).

"Nearly 40-percent of U.S. traffic fatalities during the 2022 Super Bowl period involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's President.

## Susan Laume

FROM PAGE 10

Laume is currently looking forward to March when the ospreys will migrate back. "A few years ago one of the park managers decided they may need to take down the pole at the old Nike site in the park where a nesting pair of ospreys had been for several years, and they wanted to find an alternative site but couldn't find any Boy Scouts to take it on as a project."

Since Laume was thinking that taking down the pole would eliminate the osprey nesting site, she stepped in with her trail buddies and found an alternative site in Laurel Hill Park. One of the group found a plan to build an osprey platform, and Laume enlisted the park maintenance crew who came with a tractor and a Bobcat with a bucket to install the new osprey platform. While it had worked this time, "It was a method we didn't want to use again because it wasn't safe," Laume remembers.

Later on they found two abandoned utility poles and Laume thought, "Wow, we could do a couple more since there are breeding osprey at Occoquan and South County High School who are having chicks, the chicks will need nesting areas." This time Dominion was willing to donate two of their poles instead, and when the ground was just right and not too wet in October 2023, two additional nesting platforms were installed.

Laume has held classes for participatory science projects for kids, written dozens of articles on conser-

vation for local newspapers, led trash pick up efforts and invasive plant removal, led caterpillar counts and butterfly/dragonfly surveys. Now she is thinking about her next project and waiting for the ospreys to return home.

WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl campaign effort is the charity's first new Soberride offering in a decade. WRAP also offers its Soberride program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and the winter holidays through and including New Year's. Sponsors of WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl Soberride® campaign include 395 Express Lanes, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2025 Public Partner Soberride® Sponsors include the District of Columbia Highway Safety Office, Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's Soberride® program has provided 93,706 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.



Installation of the osprey nesting platform at Laurel Hill Park in 2023.

*Susan Laume is an award-winning writer with the Connection Newspapers. So is Shirley Ruhe.*





Helping you Transition from  
**Hospital to Home**

Subacute Rehab • Long Term Care • Memory Care  
Respite Care • Pulmonary Care • Urgent SNF™

900 Virginia Avenue, Alexandria, VA, 22302  
(703) 684-9100 | [alexandriahc.com](http://alexandriahc.com)

[www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising)



Mount Vernon Gazette



Potomac ALMANAC

**Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!**

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.



For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email [sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Become a chamber member today and get ALL of the benefits!**

[www.mountvernon.springfield.com/member-benefits/](http://www.mountvernon.springfield.com/member-benefits/)

- One Year Membership
- Membership decal and plaque for your business
- Exclusive access to Chamber committees and marketing activities
- Discounted admission to all events
- Free admission to networking events
- Access to key information on public policy issues affecting your business
- Web profile in online business directory
- Business listing in the annual Community Guide
- Receive and provide Member-2-Member discounts
- Digital version of Chamber member logo to display
- Your News promoted on the Chamber website, e-news, and social media
- Promote your events in the online community calendar
















# Community Mourns Young Ice Skaters Gone Too Soon

## Two Woodson High students die in tragic plane crash.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**hen an Army helicopter collided with a passenger jet at Reagan National Airport last Wednesday, Jan. 29, the tragedy killed 67 people. It ended their future hopes and dreams in an instant and forever changed the lives of those who knew and loved them.

The victims included friends Edward Zhou and Cory Haynos, both 16. They attended Woodson High in Fairfax, skated at the Fairfax Ice Arena and were members of the Skating Club of Northern Virginia (SCNV).

They were among 14 ice skaters returning from watching the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Wichita, Kan., and participating in a developmental camp there for young skaters. Compounding the loss, the parents of both young men – Kaiyan Mao and Yu Zhou, and Stephanie and Roger Haynos – were also aboard the plane, perishing along with their sons.

Expressing how “saddened and devastated” it is, Fairfax Ice Arena issued a statement saying, “We are mourning the heartbreaking loss of members in our skating community, who were some of our nation’s brightest rising stars in U.S. Figure Skating. Our deepest condolences go out to the victims’ families, friends and the figure-skating community.”

### Edward Zhou

The Skating Lesson, an ice-skating website popular with the ice-skating community, wrote that Edward “was tiny when he first learned how to skate, but he was fearless and unafraid of trying anything new. It’s been said that his coaches loved coaching him because he always smiled and laughed every time he fell. Edward was known for relentlessly cheering on the other skaters. He was an only child, and his parents were always at the rink; [the three] traveled together everywhere.”

Woodson junior Cat Boyett has been friends with Edward since they were in seventh grade at Frost Middle School. “What stands out to me was his unyielding kindness to all his friends and everybody he met,” they said. “He was one of the most outgoing people. Whenever I saw him in the halls at school, he’d give me the biggest smile and wave. His smile was infectious and just lit up the room.”

Cat and Edward both belonged to SCNV and skated together at its home rink – the Fairfax Ice Arena – until last year, when he moved to the MedStar Capitals Iceplex in Arlington. “He was such an amazing skater; he’d gone on to the National Development Team in the past,” said Cat. “Edward and other skaters from all over the country had



Edward Zhou at a 2023 competition.



Edward Zhou with a skating certificate and trophy.



Edward Zhou before a piano concert.

qualified for the National Qualifying Series, and they got to go to the developmental camp in Wichita because of it. The camp ended last Tuesday.”

PSA Airlines Flight 5342 – carrying Edward, Cory, plus other local skaters and their families home to the Washington Metropolitan area – was some 15 seconds from landing on the runway at Reagan, last Wednesday, around 9 p.m., when the mili-



Edward Zhou celebrates his mother's birthday with his dad.

FAMILY PHOTO IN NY TIMES



Friends Edward Zhou and Cat Boyett at the SCNV picnic in summer 2023.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHARI BOYETT

tary helicopter collided with it.

The impact caused the plane to break in two, plunging it and the helicopter into the icy waters of the Potomac River. A massive search-and-rescue effort ensued. But ultimately, the plane’s 60 passengers and four crew members and the Black Hawk helicopter’s three soldiers all perished.

“I found out Thursday morning when my mom told me,” said Cat. “I’d heard there’d been a crash, but didn’t know the details. And then I had this sinking horror and realization that Edward wasn’t coming back from Wichita. I had to leave school early – I was crying all day. And ever since then, I’ve been up and down.

“Thursday, at the ice rink, they’d set up a memorial table of flowers – which has now grown exponentially – and it was good to be with my community. A poster board was set up for each of the kids that skated there – Edward, Cory, Olivia and Brielle – with their photos on it, so people could write messages on it. There were also videos of each skater set up.”

Olivia Ter, 12, and mom Olesya of Maryland, were on the plane, too, as were Brielle Beyer, 12, and mom Justyna of Aldie. “Last week, I was watching Olivia skate,” said Cat. “It’s just so surreal that I won’t see

# Community Mourns Young Ice Skaters Gone Too Soon

FROM PAGE 12

them again.”

Cat said Edward started skating at age 6. “He loved skating and being on the ice,” said Cat. “Edward was the reason I kept skating because he was my first friend at the rink, and we skated freestyle sessions together.”

He was also a standout student, plus an accomplished pianist. His piano teacher, Livia Lai wrote on Facebook, “Edward was only 3 when he first joined my Yamaha group music class. He was funny, intelligent, compassionate, curious, enthusiastic and kind. Edward will be deeply missed.”

Indeed, Cat’s mom, Shari Boyett, called Edward “an outstanding, conscientious student with a passion for doing well in all areas of his life.”

“We’re both AP students, and he took classes like AP chemistry and computer science,” added Cat. “He wanted to someday do something in the STEM field [as a career]. Edward’s parents pushed him to excel in skating, piano and academics, but he loved it all. We were talking two weeks ago about how he felt about computer science and that he’d finally gotten a handle on it. He also got 100 percent on his AP chem test. And in November, he’d landed his first triple lutz. We were always thrilled for each other’s achievements academically and on skates.”

Now, said Cat, the atmosphere at Fairfax Ice Arena is “so sad. A lot of the coaches there saw these kids growing up and basically raised them. I feel like there aren’t even words to describe how hard it is for me to know I’ll never get to see or hug Edward again.”

“He exuded so much joy. He could be silly – like when one of the coaches was filming a skating-skills test and he did funny things to avoid being on the video. He was thoughtful, too. For my 16th birthday last January, he got me a seafoam-green Polaroid camera because that’s my favorite color.”

On Sunday, the Fairfax Ice Arena skaters gathered for a private memorial to share their memories of their lost friends. And that same night and again this Friday, there’ll be counseling sessions at the rink. Woodson will also have counselors available.

To honor Edward, Cat will “keep on skating and striving toward my academic and skating goals. And I’ll hold the love Edward had for skating in my mind.”

Boyett said Edward’s parents came to the U.S. from China to study in graduate school and to have a better life. “They wanted a child for so long, so when Edward came along, he was their precious jewel. And it’s important that we keep his memory alive and keep him in our hearts.”

Since the crash, she said Cat’s received countless texts and phone calls from people expressing their support for them. “The arms of love extended from family, friends and the skate community have been tremendous,” said Boyett. “We have to grieve and feel our feels, but it’s my fervent hope that Cat will be able to live and skate joyfully in Edward’s honor.”



From left, Stephanie, Cory and Roger Haynos.



Cory Haynos on the ice.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF LANCASTER



Cory Haynos at a 2023 competition.



Cory Haynos enjoying the outdoors.

AIMEE CHO/NBC-4



Cory Haynos at home.

AIMEE CHO/NBC-4

## Cory Haynos

Cory Haynos qualified for the U.S. Figure Skating training camp in Wichita after placing third in his division at a sectional competition last November in Massachusetts. Former Swedish national medalists Kalle Strid and Mikael Olofsson were his coaches. And the day before the crash – on the last day of training camp, he landed a triple axel. He’s survived by his sister Emily, a college student in Ohio.

The Skating Lesson described him as “a powerful skater who dreamed of making it to Nationals as a competitor.” And Robin Wilson wrote online that his mother Stephanie served on the board of the Skating Club of Northern Virginia, and his supportive father Roger even cut music for his son’s routines.

“I remember Cory and his father Roger well,” added Wilson. “Dad used to pick up Cory from school to take him to skating practice or out-of-town competitions. His parents would send me clips of his performances. They were so proud of his talent and put their heart and soul into promoting his successes. May they all RIP and their memories be eternal.”

There was an outpouring of condolences for Cory and his family on The Skating Lesson’s Facebook page. Cindy Rose called the crash devastating and sent prayers for all who died – and “especially for Emily, who lost her whole family.”

Nancy Kelskey said the tragedy was “just heart wrenching in every way.” And Betty Morgan noted that Stephanie Haynos subbed

at her former school and Roger worked in IT before retiring from FCPS. “May they all rest in peace,” she wrote.

“I sat next to the parents for hours [last] weekend at Nationals and we talked about the balance of skating and high school,” said Sarah Hamilton. “They were so very proud of their son and his accomplishments. I was heartbroken for their daughter, Cory’s sister.”

“They were part of our local skating world; I’ve known them about 12 years, since their daughter skated,” said Haley Perez. “They volunteered and helped out everywhere and were so devoted. I just can’t imagine what Emily is going through.”

SEE ICE SKATERS, PAGE 19



Muslims for Just Futures met with Del. Mark Sickles and other legislators to discuss several bills.



Del. Mark Sickles supports Civica's work in Petersburg to make insulin. He met with Allan Coukell and others to discuss their plans.

# A Day In the Life Of a State Legislator

When the General Assembly is in session, a delegate's work is never done.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

**M**ark Sickles, a Fairfax County member of the Virginia House of Delegates, sees his job as problem solving. And the problems never stop rolling in.

On one recent Wednesday morning in Richmond in a little over two hours, Delegate Sickles met with a steady stream of professional and citizen lobbyists in eight back-to-back meetings. In mid-morning, he ran downstairs and snarfed up a cake slice to celebrate state Senator Louise Lucas's 81st birthday, amid a swarm of solicitous lobbyists. He had started his day at 7 a.m. at House Speaker Don Scott's prayer breakfast.

First up in his office was Allan Coukell, Chief of Governmental Affairs for Civica, a pharmaceutical company with a manufacturing facility in Petersburg, Virginia, who lobbied for \$5 million in state funds to produce insulin. Sickles said, "I'm happy to help."

Next came a team from Children's National Hospital. They supported a bill to bar baby food that has toxic heavy metals exceeding Food and Drug Administration limits and a bill requiring school districts, using federal funds, to provide breakfast and lunch to students at no cost. Dr. Danielle Dooley argued that healthy nourishment enhances learning. Sickles responded, "Thank you for taking care of our children." In 2024, Children's

National provided care to 45,000 children in eight Virginia localities, including Fairfax and Arlington counties, Dooley said.

Meeting three: Lifepoint Care hospital officials from the southwest Virginia town of Richlands advocated for rural hospitals, noting that rural people often travel long distances to get care. When Sickles asked, "What is your hardest job?" they answered, "Recruiting and retaining staff," so they partner with high schools and community colleges to create a pipeline of future employees.

Next up: Hospital pharmacists seeking more authority to compound medications and distribute them within their health system, one way of addressing drug shortages, they contended. "It's common sense," Sickles commented.

The lobbyists kept coming. Virginia Association of State Parks representatives advocated for more state parks funding and opposed locating data centers near parks. "They should be in industrial parks," said Sickles.

In between meetings, unscheduled, Sickles accepted a flashlight from the Virginia Health Care Foundation.

Meeting six: Equifax officials opposed legislation requiring the state to competitively bid their service, now used by the state, that verifies income eligibility for state programs.

Next group: Muslims for Just Futures. Among several issues, they promoted fee-based lending, an alternative to traditional



Del. Mark Sickles attended a birthday party for Sen. Louise Lucas who represents the Portsmouth area.

interest-bearing lending practices that conflict with Islamic law. The group also advocated for affordable housing on faith-based properties.

Finally, as the daily, 11 a.m. Democratic Caucus meeting neared, in came emergency dispatchers seeking eligibility in the state's disability and retirement system. Sickles sympathized and then headed for the tunnel to the Capitol building.

In the 14-story General Assembly building, the halls, café and elevators seem to teem with lobbyists. "Lobbying is a thriving industry," Sickles quipped.

## 'The House Floor'

The House of Delegates convenes daily at noon. Delegates first announce constituents

SEE DAY IN THE LIFE, PAGE 15  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# A Day in the Life

FROM PAGE 14

observing from the gallery. Then, they grind through parliamentary arcana, steps mysterious to the average person, like the third reading on the uncontested calendar, considering the committee substitute and engrossing the bill.

Afternoons are often consumed with committee hearings and votes, for Sickles, the Appropriations Committee, what to fund or not, from colleges to railroads to civil aviation. More lobbyists make their passionate pitches.

The delegate's evenings involve preparing for the

next day, meeting with more constituents and lobbyists and attending lobbyists' receptions. He typically finishes around 9 or 10 p.m.

Why does he do this? "If you're curious about how things work, this is the place to be," he says. "The more you learn, the more you need to learn." It's all about public service, not a lucrative pursuit. Delegates are paid \$17,600 a year.

But it does inspire awe. The House of Delegates is 405 years old, dating back to the colonial House of Burgesses. Sickles offered, "When you return after a long absence, you feel a sense of history and realize you are a very small part of it."

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Del. Mark Sickles has a desk in the back row of the House of Delegates chamber, next to Fairfax County Delegate David Bulova. Facing the speaker, Democrats sit on the right side and Republicans on the left.



The entry panel and Virginia seal at Del. Mark Sickles's office in Richmond's General Assembly Building.



Del. Mark Sickles listens to and questions people who testify before the Appropriations Committee.



Del. Mark Sickles huddles with (left to right) Delegates Betsy Carr, Paul Krizek and David Bulova.

## Committees and Accomplishments

Now in his 22nd year representing part of eastern Fairfax County, Del. Mark Sickles has carved out a specialty in health care. He chairs the Health and Human Services Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources. He also serves on the Privileges and Elections Committee and the Rules Committee.

He counts among his top accomplishments three initiatives. One bill, now law, bars a hospital from charging a patient more than the insurance plan covers, other than the patient's co-payment and deductible. Another would make drug pricing more transparent by requiring all links in the drug chain, from the manufacturer to the pharmacy, to report drug prices and by requiring the state to publish the prices annually. To implement the federal Affordable Care Act, he successfully created a state health insurance "exchange" or agency for uninsured people to buy insurance, an alternative to using a federal entity.

Sickles is originally from Arlington and worked for 18 years for Weeks Marine, a marine services company. Today, when not doing his delegate work, he works with Moran Global Strategies on federal legislation.

Information

Mark Sickles, <https://marksickles.com/>

General Assembly, <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov>



Representatives of Muslims for Just Futures watched the House of Delegates proceedings from the gallery, chaired by Speaker Don Scott from Portsmouth.



The 14-story General Assembly Building, home of state legislators' offices.

# ENTERTAINMENT



Alexandria Restaurant Week runs now through Feb. 9, 2025 at nearly 100 restaurants in Alexandria.

## JAN. 1 - FEB. 23, 2025

**Ice & Lights at Cameron Run** offers daytime ice skating on weekends/holidays throughout January and February.

## JAN. 16 TO FEB. 23

**Eclipse: An Athenaeum Sculpture Invitational.** At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Artist Talk: Sunday, February 23, 2 p.m. Curated by Alison Sigethy, Eclipse is an all sculpture show examining light and shadow, liminal space, and the passage of time. Every artist brings a unique perspective to their work. Pairing sculptures by different artists amplifies that perspective. Sometimes those perspectives sing in harmony, sometimes they debate. In either case, the experience of each individual work is heightened by the art it is paired with.

## NOW THRU FEB. 9

**Alexandria Restaurant Week** returns January 31 to February 9, 2025. For 10 days and two weekends, nearly 100 restaurants will offer a \$30, \$40 or \$50 prix fixe dinner for one. Plus, find special fast casual offers.

[https://visitalexandria.com/restaurants/restaurant-week/?mc\\_cid=6333e6a5dc&mc\\_eid=-c8aed55232](https://visitalexandria.com/restaurants/restaurant-week/?mc_cid=6333e6a5dc&mc_eid=-c8aed55232)

## FEB. 7 TO MARCH 1

**The "MeWOW: Fabulous Felines" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Celebrate the mysterious and fascinating world of cats with "feline forward" artwork. Opening Reception on Friday, February 7, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## FEB. 8-MARCH 1

**Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical.** At the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. Thursdays to Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. Matilda Wormwood is an exceptionally gifted child with an extraordinary love of books, an incredibly vivid imagination, and just plain rotten luck in the parental department. Along with her friends and her teacher, Miss Honey, Matilda stands up for justice against the headmis-

stress (appropriately dubbed "The Trunchbull") and other adults who "can't be bothered with the affairs of "wretched, filthy children."

## SATURDAY/FEB. 8

**Garden Talk - Spice It Up with Herb Gardening.** 10:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Bring out the best in your cooking with herbs grown in your own garden. You'll be amazed at the difference it can make, adding fragrance and flavor to your recipes. Join Extension Master Gardeners to learn to how to plan, plant and harvest herbs in your garden or in a container, that look as good as they taste. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code A4RW62F

## SATURDAY/FEB. 8

**Starting from Scratch with Seeds.** 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Grow flowers, vegetables and herbs from seed and expand your garden. Be inspired by Green Spring staff members as they discuss potting mixes, containers, seed treatments, lighting, fertilization, watering, seed sources and timing. Then take home a few seeds to start your own collection. \$23 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code J1VKQFD.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 9

**Grand Romantic Gestures.** 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Expressions of love have taken many forms throughout the centuries, from the sublime to the ridiculous. As Valentine's Day approaches, explore some history-making grand romantic gestures that went far beyond cards and flowers. \$40 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 9

**Winter Lecture - Gardens in the Age of Jumping Worms.** 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Researcher Jordan Thompson will dive into the impacts of the invasive Asian jumping worms on

soil health and garden ecosystems. Learn about the unique challenges these worms pose to soil structure, nutrient cycling and plant growth and get practical advice and actionable steps to preserve your garden in the face of this growing threat. \$15 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code K07.9K57

## TUESDAY/FEB. 11

**Cocktail-Making Class.** 6 p.m. At Vola's Dockside Grill & Hi-Tide Lounge, 101 North Union Street, Old Town Alexandria. Vola's invites guests to join them for a fun and interactive cocktail-making class at the Hi-Tide Lounge. Guests will have the opportunity to shake up two signature cocktails while enjoying a variety of appetizers, all for \$60 per person (plus tax). Whether celebrating Valentine's Day early with a special someone or simply looking for a unique night out with friends, this event offers something for everyone. The service charge is included in the price, but space is limited, so reservations are recommended to secure a spot. Visit <https://www.voladockside.com>.

## WEDNESDAY/FEB. 12

**Galentine's Celebration.** 6 to 8 p.m. At Palette 22 VA, 4053 Campbell Ave., Arlington. Join Palette 22 VA for a fun-filled Galentine's celebration at Art & Sip - "I Can Make My Own Flowers". For just \$65 plus tax, guests will dive into the art of crafting stunning, long-lasting paper flowers in a relaxed, creative setting. No prior crafting experience is needed—under the guidance of skilled instructor Jill Welch, attendees will learn to transform simple sheets of paper into beautiful blooms. By the end of the night, each participant will walk away with at least one gorgeous flower, plus the skills and materials to create a small bouquet of three to five flowers at home. Visit <https://arlington.palette22.com/>.

## THURSDAY/FEB. 13

**"Romance & Mystery."** 6 p.m. At Elaine's Restaurant, 208 Queen Street, Alexandria. Best selling romance author Robin Covington and mystery writer John Adam



Eclipse: An Athenaeum Sculpture Invitational can be seen now through Feb. 23, 2025 at The Athenaeum in Alexandria.

Wasowicz combine for "Romance & Mystery Night." Robin will highlight 'Daring the Player,' a prequel novella to her new sexy sports romance series. John will discuss 'Spite House,' book 7 of the popular Old Town Loves Mystery series.

James Ross plays and conducts Mozart & Schubert. Also featuring Lee Hinkle, marimba Mozart Horn Concerto No. 2; Kevin Puts, Mari-ma Concerto Schubert Symphony No. 9, "The Great C Major." Visit [AlexSym.org](http://AlexSym.org).

## FRIDAY/FEB. 14

**Barca Pier & Wine Bar.** 6 to 8:30 p.m. At 2 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Barca Wine Bar will host a special Valentine's Day Wine Tasting with Ardi Staka. Guests will be greeted with a welcome drink before enjoying a multi-course wine tasting paired with food. Throughout the evening, Ardi will share captivating stories from the vine, offering insights into the grapes and wine regions behind each selection. The experience is priced at \$90 per person (plus tax). Whether attending with a partner, close friend, or on a first date, this event promises to be a memorable evening. After the tasting, guests are invited to stay and enjoy a delicious dinner at Barca to round out the night! Visit: <https://www.barcaalx.com>.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**Workshop - Make a Hand-Bound Watercolor Journal.** 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Learn from Mani Maree how to make a hand bound journal by sewing signatures together filled with watercolor paper and various types of paper. You will create a unique cover and add other special touches to some inside pages. Your journal will be a unique treasure ready to be filled with drawings, paintings or writing. It will be special but it is made to be used often. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code Y1S.QTNQ

## SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**George Washington Birthday Parade.** 2-4 p.m. At 300 King Street, Alexandria. Thousands of spectators will line the streets of Old Town Alexandria to cheer on the oldest and largest George Washington Birthday Parade in the country! This year's parade theme is George Washington: America's Commander-in-Chief, marking the 250th anniversary of the start of the Revolutionary War and founding of the United States Army. The Parade Grand Marshal will be Lieutenant General Heidi J. Hoyle, Deputy Chief of Staff of the United States Army. The parade features drum corps, color guards, bands, community and fraternal organizations, youth groups, local merchants, city dignitaries, and, of course, General Washington and Martha Washington.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, Alexandria. Featuring James Ross who plays

## SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**"History & Mystery."** 4:15 p.m. At Heron Hotel, Old Town Alexandria. Attend "History & Mystery" at the new Heron Hotel at the corner of Washington and Prince Streets, with a focus on George Washington as the first Spymaster-in-Chief who employed spy craft to win the American War for independence. The event will feature Town Cryer Ben Fiore-Walker, retired civilian U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army Historian Kathy Shenkle, Brendan O'Neil, and John Wasowicz, author of 'Spite House,' the new Old Town mystery. Copies of the book signed by all of the speakers will be available, with 20% of the proceeds donated to a local non-profit educational organization. The free event will serve hot chocolate to all attendees!

## SATURDAY/FEB. 15

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** 7:30 p.m. At Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall Alexandria Featuring



# Tragedy on the Potomac

Local lives lost as first responders aid in recovery.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The bodies of all 67 victims of the Jan. 29 plane crash along the Potomac River have now been recovered. Among those were Alexandria residents 12-year-old Olivia Eve Ter and her mother Olesya Taylor.

Taylor, a pediatrician in her home country of Ukraine, had texted her husband Andrew

Ter just one minute before the fatal crash between American Eagle flight 5342 and an Army Black Hawk helicopter. She leaves behind her husband, mother Olga and daughter Anne Valerie.

“The pain of this loss is profound, especially for Anne Valerie, who now faces a world without her mother and sister,” said Alla Levin, who has organized a GoFundMe for the family. “I also want to acknowledge Olesya’s mother, Olga, who is grieving the loss of both her daughter and granddaughter. This

family was built on love, and now they are left with an unimaginable void.”

The Unified Command said on Wednesday that the bodies of all 67 passengers killed in the crash have been recovered and identified. “This marks a significant step in bringing closure to the families and the community,” the Unified Command said in a news release.

Among the emergency personnel responding to the scene were 30-40 first responders from the

SEE TRAGEDY, PAGE 18



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Alexandria resident Olesya Taylor, right, shown with her husband Andrew Ter, was among those killed in the Jan. 29 collision between an American Eagle airliner and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Alexandria resident Olivia Eve Ter, 12, was returning from an ice skating competition when she was killed in the Jan. 29 crash.



PHOTO/ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Debris from the wreckage of the collision between American Eagle flight 5342 and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter is removed from the Potomac River Feb. 4.

## ENTERTAINMENT

and conducts Mozart & Schubert. Alexandria Symphony, James Ross, Conductor and Horn Soloist; Lee Hinkle, Marimba; Mozart Horn Concerto No. 2; Kevin Puts Marimba Concerto; Schubert Symphony No. 9, “The Great C Major.”

### SUNDAY/FEB. 16

**Winter Lecture - Rethinking the Invasive Plant Issue.** 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Join the conversation with JC Raulston Arboretum director, Mark Weathington as we assess what is a native plant and what plants are truly invasive. Mark shares his insights into these complicated issues and proposes ideas about where we should be focusing our time, energy and money. Exclusionary ecology cannot put the genie back in the bottle, so let’s rethink our approach to invasive plants to achieve realistic, optimum outcomes. \$15 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code PSO.QN87

### SUNDAY/FEB. 16

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** 3 p.m. At George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Featuring James Ross who plays and conducts Mozart & Schubert.



Nepenthe is proud to exhibit original artworks by six local artists in the Winter Solstice 2025 exhibit. Pictured (from left to right) are Nancy Ramsey, Lori Welch Brown, Camille Kouyoumdjian, Celia Chadwick and Todd Key. Missing: Lesley Clarke. Artists, friends, and the local community gathered on January 23rd for an ART+WINE+CHEESE opening event at the gallery. The exhibit will be up through February 19th.

Alexandria Symphony, James Ross, Conductor and Horn Soloist; Lee Hinkle, Marimba; Mozart Horn Concerto No. 2; Kevin Puts Marimba Concerto; Schubert Symphony No. 9, “The Great C Major.”

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19

“Strategies for Addressing Solo Aging, Social Isolation, and Mental Health for Seniors.” 1-2:30 p.m. At Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. Many older adults in our community are aging by themselves or what we like to call “solo aging.” This can cause anxiety and a fear of loneliness,

but it doesn’t have to be that way. By taking advantage of resources to stay connected to the community and developing a network of friends, solo aging isn’t so scary, and even maybe the best time of one’s life. Senior Services of Alexandria, along with At Home in Alexandria (AHA), a local senior village, is bringing together a group of experts in the field to talk about this topic by exploring practical strategies for supporting older adults as they navigate solo aging, combatting social isolation and prioritizing their mental health. Speakers include Steve Gurney of the Positive Aging Community, and Rhonda Williams, Supervisor of the city’s Older Adult Clinical Services Team. Also, attendees will learn about local resources on how to stay connected to the community. This event is free! Please RSVP by email at [events@seniorservicesalex.org](mailto:events@seniorservicesalex.org) or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

### FRIDAY/FEB. 21

**The Thirteen: To The Field of Stars.** At 7:30 p.m. At Virginia Theological Seminary, Immanuel Chapel, 3651 Deanery Dr. Alexandria. The Thirteen returns to the mystical Camino de Santiago de Compostela – Camino of St. James of the Field of Stars – with two works that explore transfiguration: David Lang’s Pulitzer Prize-winning the little match girl

passion and Gabriel Jackson’s 2011 To the Field of Stars.

### THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).

### FEBRUARY

Thu. 6: Karyn White \$49.50  
Fri. 7: Yasmin Williams – Acadia Tour, with Amadou Kouyate \$29.50  
Sat. 8: Who’s Bad: The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50  
Tue. 11: Mdou Moctar (Special Acoustic Performance) with Janel Leppin \$35.00  
Thu. 13: Infamous Love Songs: An OVER THE RHINE Valentine’s Concert \$39.50  
Fri. 14: Valentine’s Day with KEVIN ROSS \$65.00  
Sat. 15: Valentine’s Day with KEVIN ROSS \$65.00  
Sun. 16: Daryl Davis Presents: Thanks For The Memories 2024! \$39.50  
Wed. 19: Billy F. Gibbons \$89.50 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 20: Drew Lynch \$45.00  
Fri. 21: Gary Gulman “Misfit Stand Up Tour” \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sat. 22: Newmyer Flyer Presents: Laurel Canyon \$39.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sun. 23: Chayce Beckham \$29.50  
Fri. 28: Aaron Watson “Buy The World A Round” Tour 2025 \$35.00

The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted  
IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY



**\$1000 OFF\***  
OR  
**\$1500 OFF** when financing with remodelingloans.com™ OR **0% Interest** For 18 Months™  
**OFFER EXPIRES 3/31/2025**

**BATH CONCEPTS INC**

CALL NOW (844) 945-1631

\*Includes labor and product; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 3/31/25. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. \*\*Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify/ Participating dealers only. See your dealer for details. ©2024 BCI.



**Human Trafficking?  
NOT IF I SEE IT**

You have the power to stand up to abuse in Virginia. Call #77 to report suspicious behavior and be a human-traffic hero.

**HVA**  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING VIOLENCE ASSISTANCE

Be prepared before the next power outage.



**It's not just a generator.  
It's a power move.™**

Receive a free 5-year warranty with qualifying purchase\* - valued at \$535.

Call 844-947-1479 to schedule your free quote!

**GENERAC**

\*Terms and Conditions apply.

**CLASSIFIED**  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM  
TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

**Brown v. Board of Education  
SCHOLARSHIP  
COMMITTEE**

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS  
THROUGH APRIL 11, 2025

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the General Assembly to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia between 1954 and 1964 due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance. The scholarship is now available to those individuals and to their descendants. The program is open to eligible applicants for the 2025-2026 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:  
**BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV**



**Sign up for  
FREE DIGITAL  
SUBSCRIPTION**

to any or all of our 15 papers  
**WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE**



**BULLETIN**

**Tragedy  
on the  
Potomac**

FROM PAGE 17

Alexandria Fire Department, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue sent 22 units/pieces of apparatus and 68 personnel. The Salvation Army, headquartered in Alexandria, was on site as well as City Cruises, operators of the Alexandria Water Taxi, providing support for the rescue and recovery operation.

"We are deeply grateful for the people who risked their lives last night on a moment's notice, and spent the whole night on the river in the ice and the wind, serving us," said U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, who has opposed the expansion of flights at DCA.

"Through the NTSB investigation we've got to make sure that at the federal level - and with the support of Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. - we're doing everything we can to make sure that this does not happen again."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to remove all major parts of the American Airlines plane by Thursday. Operations will then shift to removing the remaining debris from a field which extends along the Alexandria waterfront to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Beyer, whose district includes Reagan National Airport, held a candlelight vigil Wednesday evening at Rivergate City Park in Alexandria.

"As our community remains deeply saddened by this tragedy, this candlelight vigil will allow us to come together in remembrance of the lives we lost and offer our collective support to the families, friends, and loved ones directly impacted," Beyer said in a message to constituents.

As recently as 2024, Beyer and other regional elected officials opposed the FAA reauthorization of additional flights into DCA.

"National is home to the busiest runway in America," Beyer said at the time. "The airport is designed to serve 15 million passengers annually. Last year, it served 24 million. That is 9 million passengers, or 60 percent, over capacity. Any additional flights that are added to DCA will worsen delays, exacerbate pilot and flight crew exhaustion, and risk the safety of flights in and out of National Airport. Safety, not convenience, must come first."

SEE TRAGEDY, PAGE 19  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Community Mourns Young Ice Skaters

FROM PAGE 4

“Eddie Haynos (Roger’s dad) lost his only son, his daughter-in-law and only grandson,” said Marie Burnley. “My heart breaks for him. Emily lost her mom, dad and brother – heartbreaking. God, surround them with your love, strength and healing power.”

Matthew Alan LaRaviere of Southern Virginia said his heart was broken at the loss of his cousin Roger, plus Stephanie and Cory. “Roger has always inspired me by his absolute love for his family and dedication to providing only the best for his wife and kids,” he wrote. “Cory was an amazing skater with a very bright future with the U.S. Skating Team.”

“Recently in a conversation with Roger, he was excited about his son’s future and seemed honored that my wife and I were planning to travel north to see Cory perform. We all were expecting Cory to represent our country [someday] in the U.S. Olympics. While Roger, Stephanie, and Cory’s plane did not land safely back on this earth, their flight no doubt continued on into the arms of a loving Saviour ready to welcome them home. Please pray for their daughter Emily, my uncle Eddie, Stephanie’s family, and all the others who are suffering.”

Jane Ellen said Roger “was so proud, sending screen videos of Cory’s recent progress; gone way too soon. Roger, my friend, I miss you already. My heart is broken. I’ll miss hearing about the kids and their success, both on and off the ice. Godspeed.”

“Such a tragedy,” added Monica Estevez. “Sending my condolences and prayers.

Words cannot express the pain.”

“Praying hard for Emily,” wrote Jen Marco. “Someone, hold this young lady close. Do not let her go.” And Erica Page Brewer said she “can’t imagine the unbearable grief Emily’s facing.”

Ozge Ovun Sert wrote that “both Cory and Eddie were from my daughter’s high school. It is incredibly heartbreaking and devastating for the families and the community. I think this tragedy reminds everyone [of] the meaning of life and gratitude. We are alive today, but we may have been in that plane yesterday. They will always be remembered with their smiles.”

In addition, Olga Garrity – who coached both Cory and Emily – has set up a gofundme page to try to raise at least \$50,000 for Emily, 19, to help her finish college and meet her daily expenses. Teacher Terry Barr implored, “I taught both Emily and Cory for years, and Emily needs our help. Please donate if you can.”

Explained Emily Desjardins, “Emily Haynos lost her entire immediate family on the flight, at the young age of 19. The challenges facing her in the days ahead are enormous. I skated with Emily for many years at Fairfax Ice Arena, and she and her whole family were loved by all.

“Roger and Stephanie were wonderful parents and so very proud of both Emily and Cory. They were the kind of people that were always the first to volunteer, always the first to help. In their memory, please consider donating to make the road ahead a little bit easier for Emily.” To contribute, go to [https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-emily-hay-](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-emily-haynos-in-honor-of-cory-stephanie-and-roger?fbclid=IwY2xjawINLsxleHRuA2FlbQIX-MAABHemPp0svoy81EemdbUIBgt_y8N-PqAMj7kIkzSKrjnee807HLLLeP2PNyD9g_aem_dh0ZrxCk1e5dg31VmBrWuA)

[nos-in-honor-of-cory-stephanie-and-roger?fbclid=IwY2xjawINLsxleHRuA2FlbQIX-MAABHemPp0svoy81EemdbUIBgt\\_y8N-PqAMj7kIkzSKrjnee807HLLLeP2PNyD9g\\_aem\\_dh0ZrxCk1e5dg31VmBrWuA](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-emily-haynos-in-honor-of-cory-stephanie-and-roger?fbclid=IwY2xjawINLsxleHRuA2FlbQIX-MAABHemPp0svoy81EemdbUIBgt_y8N-PqAMj7kIkzSKrjnee807HLLLeP2PNyD9g_aem_dh0ZrxCk1e5dg31VmBrWuA).

The First Baptist Church of Kingstowne, which the Haynos family attended, also established a donation site for them. Go to <https://fbckingstowne.churchcenter.com/giving> and select “Haynos Family Bereavement Fund.”

On Fairfax Ice Arena’s Facebook page, skating parent Leonard Tengco said everyone there – coaches, staff, skaters, parents – become like family. So when the unthinkable strikes, it affects them all.

“The staff watched those kids grow up and blossom into nationally competitive skaters and are now left to endure the pain caused by their tragic end,” he wrote. “My heart deeply aches for my ice rink and the local figure-skating community. I offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of those who have died.”

“So sad, so many, so young,” added Nancy Costello. “They are skating on the most perfect ice rink now, with their angel wings, as one big family.”

◆ ◆ ◆

U.S. Figure Skating wrote, “We’re devastated by this loss and are holding the victims’ loved ones closely in our hearts. “We’ve established the U.S. Figure Skating Family Support Fund to provide financial assistance to [our] families directly impacted by the tragedy.” Go to <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/usfigureskatingfoundation/event/usfigureskatingfund/>.

## “Diechotomy”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a longtime cancer patient, I’ve always made a point of exuding as much positivity as I could muster (or die trying). My theory was that if I put out positive vibes than I’d likely receive them back. And by receiving positive vibes, et cetera, I’d feel more positive myself. Basically, it’s a cyclical/selfish strategy to make me feel positive/good. And if there’s one emotion a cancer patient can’t get enough of, it’s positivity – with a side of humor.

After 15+ years of various interactions with people who see me regularly and others who hardly see me at all, I have become hip to their well-intentioned observations. The dichotomy is, most of the comments about my appearance have been wrong but said for the right reason: my self-image/self-confidence. They tell me I look great. Incredibly so almost given the ravaging effects of chemotherapy. And though I’m not a look-in-the-mirror type guy, I certainly see what I look like every morning as I look in the mirror while I brush my teeth and often, it ain’t pretty. The treatment’s side effects don’t usually enhance your appearance. Far from it, in fact. (The understatement of the last decade and a half. Hardly is chemotherapy to be confused with a health and beauty-type spa.)

As the years have passed (thank God!) I have noticed an unintended consequence of these, almost universally, flattering descriptions of my appearance. The “You look great, Ken” is invariably followed by a comparison to how bad I looked the last time this person saw me. Which in arrears now means I looked terrible before; my face was drawn, its color was off, my pallor was gray and so forth. Meant as a sincere expression of encouragement and my improvement/wherewithal on my condition, they are all too familiar. I can’t look good now and have looked bad before when before I – at that time, you said I also looked good and so and so on going back to 2009, when my chemotherapy began. Every present I was told I looked good compared to every before when I was told I looked bad. It was sort of an ambidextrous-type comment: I looked both bad and good - simultaneously. Irrespective of the truth, I was praised with positivity. As such, my reflection in the mirror bothered me less as their opinions seemed to affect me more. And if I did receive any negative/possibly honest opinions, I would recall one of my late father’s go-to advisories: “Every knock is a boost.” Regardless of what observations were made to/about me, I took it all in stride. Never too high. Never too low. And when the always good now/always bad before juxtaposition became clear to me, I laughed. I guess that’s what friends and family do for people they care about.

Not that occasionally there wasn’t an ounce (literally) of truth to their intended-to-be-sincere comments, but I never believed half of the over-the-top descriptions of how good I looked anyway. Besides, it was more important/beneficial to me that people’s attitude toward me was upbeat and encouraging. Granted, the truth might set you free, but I needed/preferred that the lies carry me forward.

Undergoing chemotherapy is a long slog. And for me there were no guarantees. I’m not cured by any means, but I sure am grateful for all the positivity I received.

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

# Tragedy on the Potomac

FROM PAGE 18

As far back as 1991, when the airport marked its 50th anniversary, former Alexandria Mayor Charles Beatley also indicated concern about the expansion of air traffic in the region.

“It’s a very substandard airport for the sophisticated and even medium-size jet,” said Beatley, a retired airline pilot who flew into National for 23 years starting in 1943. “Still all hazards are relative.”

Olivia Eve Ter was a rising star in the figure skating community. She was a group of skaters competing in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships and development camp in Wichita, where the American Eagle flight originated. Ter earned silver and gold at her two events this season before finishing fourth in the juvenile girls division at the 2025 Eastern Sectional Singles Final to receive an invitation to National Development Camp.

As recovery operations continue, the Unified Command is asking anyone with information about the Potomac and Anacostia rivers recovery operation to call 911 and to not touch or remove anything.

**“We are deeply grateful for the people who risked their lives last night on a moment’s notice, and spent the whole night on the river in the ice and the wind, serving us.”**

— Rep. Don Beyer



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Olesya Taylor, back left, with her mother Olga and daughters Olivia Eve Ter and Anne Valerie Ter. Taylor and Olivia Eve Ter were killed in the Jan. 29 collision at Reagan National Airport.

www.MtVernonSpecialists.com



**CHRIS WHITE**  
FAMILY REAL ESTATE  
OF LONG & FOSTER



*75 Homes SOLD in 2024!*



2219 Lakeshire Dr | \$1,595,000



3608 Center Dr | \$1,545,000



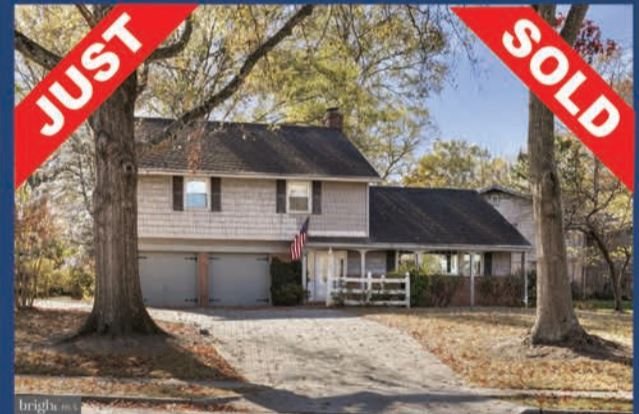
3100 Waterside Ln | \$1,075,000



4835 Stillwell Ave | \$855,000



9416 Old Mount Vernon Rd | \$1,280,000



3123 Little Creek Ln | \$785,000



3609 Surrey Dr | \$1,507,454



8230 W Boulevard Dr | \$1,210,000



3702 Carriage House Ct | \$1,250,000

**LONG & FOSTER**  
REAL ESTATE

703.283.9028

www.chrisandpeggywhite.com  
chris.white@longandfoster.com

Alexandria/Old Town Historic ~ 110 N. Royal St. 3rd Floor Alexandria, VA 22314

BEST OF  
**WASHINGTONIAN**  
TOP PRODUCING AGENT 2015 - 2024