



SFDC Executive Director Evan Kaufman discusses the "Faces of 1" public art with artist Michael Alfano and Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk.



Artist and sculptor Michael Alfano with his artwork that is fostering a stronger sense of place and community pride on Richmond Highway.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION
Artist Michael Alfano discusses his inspirations for the exhibit.

Public Art and Placemaking Celebrated at 'Faces of 1' Reception

The public art project, "Faces of 1," on the Richmond Highway corridor was celebrated last week at a special reception with artist Michael Alfano hosted by the Nepenthe Gallery and SFDC.

More than 75 art lovers, community leaders, and local residents gathered at Nepenthe Gallery on Thursday for a special wine and cheese event showcasing artist Michael Alfano, the sculptor behind the "Faces of 1" public art project along Richmond Highway.

The event, hosted in collaboration with the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC), highlighted the power of public art in placemaking and how initiatives like "Faces of 1" are enhancing the look, feel and identity of the corridor.

SFDC Executive Director Evan Kaufman introduced artist Michael Alfano, whose powerful sculptures along the corridor tell stories of identity, history and transformation.

Kaufman underscored SFDC's mission to revitalize Richmond Highway through strategic placemaking, business development and public art, emphasizing how

SEE PUBLIC ART, PAGE 4



Nepenthe Gallery owners Carrie and Jim Garland welcomed guests to the reception.

Nepenthe Features Faces of Route One Exhibit

The artist's works can be seen at various spots for the next year along Richmond Highway.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The new artwork on Richmond Highway was celebrated at a reception hosted by Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation in the Nepenthe Gallery at Hollin Hall. Many enjoyed the art including Supervisor Rodney Lusk. Artist Michael Alfano talked about the inspiration for his art that has become "Faces of Route One."

Nepenthe Gallery will display the exhibit of works by Michael Alfano at the gallery in Hollin Hall until April 9.

"While Michael was here from Massachusetts he agreed to meet with art students from Mount Vernon High School," said Carolyn Johnson of Nepenthe. "He gave them a presentation at Nepenthe and afterwards took them on a tour of his art on Route One."

Ten of Alfano's sculptures are displayed on Richmond Highway through the spring of 2026. The SFDC initiated and sponsored the project as part of its efforts to transform the Richmond Highway into more than a thoroughfare, with familiar spaces becoming engaging destinations that encourage explo-

SEE NEPENTHE FEATURES, PAGE 4

corcoran

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1201 Dartmouth Road
 \$1,529,000 | This beautiful 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom, detached home on a corner lot features a gourmet kitchen, wood flooring on 2 levels, a front porch, and a large deck.

Kathleen Alvarez : 703.919.1685
 KathieAlvarez.com.com



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Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
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3467 Cornice Place
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In March 2023, officials broke ground for the new government center in Franconia.

Progress at the New Franconia District Government Center Building

Intersection expands at Beulah Street and the Springfield-Franconia Parkway.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The intersection of Beulah Street and the Springfield-Franconia Parkway has expanded in recent months. Three construction cranes fill the skyline for a new hospital across the intersection from a building project that will be the new home of Franconia District Supervisor

Rodney Lusk as well as a library and area museum. This new combined government facility will be approximately 90,000 square feet with better parking and access. The 28,000-square-foot Police Station and the 4,200-square-foot Franconia District Supervisor's Office will share a space with the Franconia Museum and a 7,200 square-foot Active Adult Center. It will also have a new Childcare Center for infants to pre-kindergarten children and the Kingstowne Community Library will be expanded to a Regional Library. The current Kingstowne Library is in a bottom level space in the shopping center where Beulah Street meets Telegraph Road but it is not a "regional" library.

SEE FRANCONIA CONSTRUCTION, PAGE 11



Original site design.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTOS BY FCPS

Illegally Passing School Buses About to Get Expensive

New cameras on school bus arms will catch violators; \$250 fines start May 12.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The law about passing school buses is sometimes ignored these days, so much so that the Fairfax County school bus fleet recorded 1,453 violations in one day. The bus drivers try waving their arms or looking at the license plate, but more had to be done for students' safety. This month, FCPS launched the "School Bus Arm Camera Program," to boost safety.

The camera is mounted on the stop-arm that comes out of the side of the bus when students are getting on or off the bus. When the bus stops, the arm comes out and the camera detects vehicles that pass the bus on the side.

The camera will get the license plate and the violators will get a ticket in the mail, similar to the speed cameras that have been used for years.

"Our new stop arm camera initiative will remind motorists of their responsibility to drive responsibly and keep students safe," said School Board Chair Karl Frisch, in their press release.

Starting April 9, 50 Fairfax County school buses will be outfitted with the cameras

across the county but for the first month, there will just be warnings sent out. May 12 the county will start fining each driver \$250 for these violations. It's not all automatic though. Violation videos and license plate images are reviewed by law enforcement for approval before a warning or Notice of Infraction is issued, FCPS said.

Comments online seemed to vary. Some are against the one-month grace period that comes with the new camera rule, others are pointing out instances where the buses are speeding while others are happy with the cameras.

"Glad to see this as no one hardly ever stops on Guinea Rd in the mornings for the school bus," said one Burke area driver.

Despite some drivers passing against a flashing light, school buses are still a safe route to school, said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Between 2013-2022, 111 occupants were killed in school transportation vehicles, and 50 were drivers and 61 were passengers. More than 20 million school students ride school buses.

"However, children are more at risk when approaching or leaving a school bus," NHTSA said.

Nepenthe Features Faces of Route One Exhibit

FROM PAGE 1

ration and interaction. They've been behind several other works of art along Richmond Highway to spruce up the area and it has helped.

Alfano's work in Mount Vernon complements other works of art in the corridor that add color as well. Near Buckman Road there is a colorful mural that consists of a rising sun, a wave, an airplane and a bird. Over at Bryant Alternative School, art students completed a mosaic wall in 2017.

The "Fabric of the Community" mural by Nico Cathcart, was unveiled in November 2023 when they unveiled the "Fabric of the Community" mural, located on the side of Zips Dry Cleaning at 6216 North Kings Highway. It is described as "a visually captivating homage to the rich cultural and historical tapestry of the Richmond Hwy Corridor." It was commissioned by the SFDC and crafted by the acclaimed muralist Nico Cathcart.

At the heart of the mural is a pair of eagles, inspired by a real-life nesting pair on the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The mural's backdrop, depicting the scenic Mount Vernon trail and the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, emphasizes the community's connection to nature and the continuity of its landscape.

"I wanted this piece to highlight the local environment, and the ongoing conservation efforts with the bald eagles that live in the



Artist Michael Alfano with art students from Mount Vernon High School in Nepenthe Gallery.

surrounding trees," Cathcart said.

She included the faces of local women who are "moms and nurses and hardworking souls in the area, done to celebrate the people who live here," she said. They are together in conversation, showing a strength

in community.

In April, 2024, Cathcart completed another mural in the Mount Vernon area, on the east wall of Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church next door to a 7-11 and within view of the busy highway, also com-

missioned by SFDC.

Alfano's work is also part of an upgrade in New Jersey too. Along the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway in Jersey City, there are sculptures of Alfano's against the New York City skyline to brighten areas along the river.



Artist Michael Alfano at the opening of his exhibit at Nepenthe Gallery with Evan Kaufman, Executive Director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corp. and Rodney Lusk, Fairfax County Supervisor for Franconia.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAROLYN JOHNSON

Artist Michael Alfano with art students from Mount Vernon High School on a tour of his work along Route One.

Public Art and Placemaking Celebrated at 'Faces of 1' Reception

FROM PAGE 1

"Faces of 1" aligns with these goals by fostering a stronger sense of place and community pride.

Alfano shared insights into his life's work, his artistic process, and the inspiration behind each sculpture. Attendees had the unique opportunity to purchase miniature replicas of his sculptures and explore the gallery's diverse collection of artwork.

Special guests included Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk, who spoke about the

importance of beautification and thoughtful development along Richmond Highway, noting his efforts to ensure early projects, such as the Beacon of Groveton, prioritized pedestrian-friendly design over vast parking lots.

For those interested in experiencing the Faces of 1 sculptures firsthand, a map of all sculptures and murals along Richmond Highway is available at <https://sfdc.org/facesof1/>

Attendees enjoyed an evening of art, conversation, and networking in the elegant

setting of Nepenthe Gallery, a beloved local art space known for its weekly free wine and cheese gatherings on Thursdays at 6 PM.

About SFDC

The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the economic revitalization and enhancement of the Richmond Highway Corridor.

Through placemaking, business support, and strategic partnerships, SFDC works to transform the corridor into a thriving, at-

tractive, and community-centered destination.

About Nepenthe Gallery

Located in Hollin Hall, Alexandria, Nepenthe Gallery is a vibrant art space dedicated to showcasing a diverse range of artwork from local, regional, and national artists. The gallery hosts free wine and cheese nights every Thursday at 6 PM, creating a welcoming space for art enthusiasts to gather, connect, and explore. Learn more at NepentheGallery.com.

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MARCH 18, 2025

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at its March 18 meeting.

“And just to be clear for folks, when we authorize this, we are authorizing the maximum amount that can be implemented. So, anything below that number is still permissible within the span of this motion.”

— Jeffrey C. McKay (D), chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Options Set for Real Estate, Meals Taxes

Advertised rates are a cap on options; actual rates can be less or equal but not more.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

At the March 18 meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Chairman Jeff McKay stressed that the board was building in some flexibility by advertising a possible increase in the Real Estate Tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value. That is an increase of \$0.015 over the current rate for FY 2025. Also advertised is a meals tax of up to 4 percent. These advertised rates act as a ceiling.

The Board of Supervisors adopts the FY 2026 Budget on May 13. The actual rates can be less than advertised but not more.

“We have extensive public hearings, town halls, and a number of meetings with a number of groups that take place every budget season where we can discuss the pros and cons of the actions that we must take to balance our budget when it comes time for budget adoption,” McKay said.

The Board unanimously (with Pat Herrity absent) approved authorizing staff to advertise a public hearing to be held on April 22, 2025, at 3 p.m. to consider the adoption of an ordinance to amend Chapter Four of the Fairfax County code by adding a new Article 31 food and beverage tax. It is sometimes called a meals tax. It does not apply to groceries.

The proposed amendment states a maximum tax rate of 4 percent at implementation and the option to provide a seller’s commission of up to 3 percent of the tax col-

lected, as outlined in the draft ordinance. The supervisors approved the action at their March 18 meeting. Chairman McKay said the board had held an “entire budget committee meeting dedicated to a conversation on this subject.”

Wanting to ensure the public’s understanding, McKay explained that they were authorizing the implementation of a potential food and beverage tax for consideration through a public hearing. He clarified that the Commonwealth of Virginia allows jurisdictions to implement a meal tax of up to 6 percent. His motion asked the board to consider implementing a potential meal tax at a cap of 4 percent.

“And just to be clear for folks, when we authorize this, we are authorizing the maximum amount that can be implemented. So, anything below that number is still permissible within the span of this motion,” McKay said.

“We want to make sure that we have a public hearing on a potential meals tax for full transparency and disclosure, in concert with the annual adoption of the Fairfax County budget and related financial documents so that folks can understand the choices.”

McKay asked the board to approve the publication of the FY 2026 advertised budget, the effective tax rate increase, the advertised capital improvement program, and the required tax rates outlined in administrative Item 8. The board voted unanimously (with Herrity absent) to give notice of the public hearings that would be happening as a result.

This includes the advertisement of a real estate tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value, which reflects a potential one-and-a-half cent increase over the current real estate tax rate of \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value.

The county executive used this figure as the recommended tax rate in his budget presentation, echoing the meals tax discussion.



SPRING 2025

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- APRIL 13

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MARCH 20
- APRIL 12

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UNTIL
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Waterfront Public Art Installation: *Break Water*

APRIL
5

ALX Dog Walk and Sustainability Festival

APRIL
6

Del Ray Dog Fest

APRIL
26

92nd Historic Garden Week
Old Town Alexandria Tour

APRIL
26-27

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Season Finale: “Ravishing Rachmaninov – Ascend”

APRIL
27

PNC Alexandria Half Marathon

MAY
3-4

Alexandria Old Town Springtime Art Festival at John Carlyle Square

MAY
16-18

Mount Vernon Spring Wine Festival

MAY 17
- JUNE 8

WorldPride 2025 in Washington, D.C.

MAY
18

Old Town Festival of Speed & Style

MAY 17
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Service Above Self

PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

The Rotary Club of Alexandria recognized several members for outstanding service to the organization and to the community. Receiving awards at the March 15 Charter Night Gala at Belle Haven Country Club were: Racquel Boursiquot, Special Award of Service; Roberto Gomez, Gordon Peyton Jr. Community Caring Award; Kate Comfort, Rookie of the Year; and Taylor Barnes, Rotarian of the Year. www.alexandriarotary.or

BULLETIN BOARD

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

ern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, brianmorreale@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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

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

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in North-

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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OPINION

Expecting Governor Youngkin to Set a New Veto Record

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

As Governor Glenn Youngkin reviews the legislation we passed during the 2025 General Assembly session, Virginians should prepare for yet another round of partisan obstruction and record-setting vetoes. As provided by the Constitution of Virginia, "The General Assembly shall reconvene on the sixth Wednesday after adjournment of each regular or special session for the purpose of considering bills which may have been returned by the Governor with recommendations for their amendment and bills and items of appropriation bills which may have been returned by the Governor with his objections." As such, I am preparing to return to Richmond on Wednesday, April 2nd, for the reconvened session, also known colloquially as the "veto session." With this a Gubernatorial election year, I fully expect Youngkin to follow the playbook of Trump, Musk and his national Republican counterparts — to undermine bipartisan progress, and put ideology ahead of Virginians' needs.

Governor Youngkin has until March 24 to act on the 916 bills the General Assembly sent to his desk, including the state budget that funds critical Democratic priorities such as teacher



bonuses, disaster relief, and tax rebates for working families. As of today (Wednesday), we have received notice that he has acted on just a handful of these bills.

As you may remember, just last year, the Governor set an all-time record high for vetoing legislation passed by the General Assembly, not just in a single session, but in an entire 4-year gubernatorial term, with 201 bills vetoed. Many

of those bills vetoed would have worked to address fundamental issues impacting Virginians such as critical supports for workers and their families like increasing the minimum wage, establishing wage parity and transparency, and establishing a paid family medical leave program, protecting Virginians from gun violence, and more.

Should we come back to Richmond during the reconvened session on April 2 to another round of vetoes, unfortunately, the likelihood of overriding these potential vetoes is minimal, as it necessitates a two-thirds majority vote. However, the Governor will also likely amend several bills. These amendments only require a majority vote for rejection or approval. If rejected, the Governor will then have the final chance to either veto or sign the legislation.

At the federal level, we are watching Republicans repeatedly hold government fund-

ing hostage and block bipartisan solutions on everything from infrastructure to healthcare. The government has already been de facto shut down by Donald Trump and Elon Musk's DOGE team, which is causing untold damage to government services, not to mention to thousands of dedicated hardworking federal employees, and makes Congress essentially irrelevant. Youngkin's anticipated vetoes will reflect the same pattern: gridlock for the sake of gridlock, even if it means harming working families in Virginia. Already, he has encouraged Musk and his minions to arbitrarily and capriciously fire federal workers, many of whom live and work in Virginia.

Just as Democrats in Washington are fighting to protect democracy, workers' rights, and economic stability in the face of Republican chaos, Democrats in Virginia are ready to challenge Youngkin's anticipated vetoes and amendments. We will stand firm against his attempts to weaken protections for workers, underfund public schools, and stall progress on clean energy.

Virginians deserve better than the dysfunction we see from Republicans in Washington and Richmond alike. While Youngkin follows the GOP's obstructionist strategy, Democrats will continue to do the hard work of governing — fighting for policies that strengthen our communities, support working families, and keep Virginia moving forward.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email DAAS@alexandriava.gov.

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

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

❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road.

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

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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MUSIC

Let the Music Play James Bland music participants honored.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Participants in the James Bland Music Competition were celebrated at the Lyceum Feb. 23 as winners were named by the host Lions Club and Lions of Virginia Bland Foundation.

Chloe Lee, an 11th grade student at the National Cathedral School, placed first in the competition. She performed the Viola Concerto by William Walton. Second place went to violinist Satchit Mainali, an 11th grade student at Thomas Jefferson High School. Mainali played the Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso, Opus 28 by Camille Saint-Saens. Colleen Duggar Munoz, a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School, took third place with a performance of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor.

"It takes a lot of courage and a lot of work to get to this point, to come here and play in front of a live audience," said Osman Kivrak, one of the judges of the competition. Other judges included Ronal Butler, a past board chair of the

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, and Teri Lazar, a violinist with the National Gallery of Art String Quartet.

The competition is traditionally held during Black History Month as a memorial to African American musician and composer James Bland, who wrote traditional tunes as "Oh Dem Golden Slippers" and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny." The latter was the state song of Virginia from 1940-1997.

Under the sponsorship of the Lions organization, the Bland Foundation has been providing performing opportunities as well as scholarships to gifted music students, both vocal and instrumental, since 1948.

The purpose of the foundation is to promote cultural and educational opportunities for the musically talented young people in Virginia.

The program is open to any vocalist or instrumentalist sponsored by a Virginia Lions Club. Any resident of Virginia (or within the club jurisdiction) and attending elementary, junior, or senior high

SEE COMPETITION, PAGE 9



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Lions of Virginia Bland Foundation members, Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria members, elected officials, judges and contestants gather at the Lyceum Feb. 23 for the annual James Bland music competition.

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MUSIC

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Anjan Patel, grade 6, performs Beethoven's Ninth in the James Bland music competition Feb. 23 at the Lyceum.

FROM PAGE 8

school is eligible to participate. Awards are provided by the State Bland Committee including over \$25,000 yearly in state, regional, district, and local scholarships and cash awards.

Local sponsors included the Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria (CCNA), the Foundation for the Advancement of Music Edu-

cation, State Farm agent Rodney M. Louis, the Page 1 Foundation and Greene Funeral Home.

"I can feel a sense of community in this competition which I don't really find in other competitions," said Lee, who has been playing the viola for about two years. "I am really grateful to be able to be able to compete here."

www.blandfoundation.org



Winner in the James Bland music competition include: Satchit Mainali, second place, Chloe Lee, first place, and Colleen Dugger Munoz, third place.

"I can feel a sense of community in this competition which I don't really find in other competitions."

— James Bland 1st place winner Chloe Lee



Chloe Lee, left, is presented her first-place award in the James Bland music competition by judge Osman Kivrak as Sheriff Sean Casey and CCNA's Col. Jim Paige look on Feb. 23 at the Lyceum.



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Paving the Way

Exhibit honoring GPS pioneer Gladys West opens at VT Innovation Campus.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Navigating across town or around the world, global positioning systems, or GPS, is a technology that most people use every day. But few give much thought to how a mobile device can point to the best beignets in Paris or freshest sushi in Tokyo. A new exhibit at the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus seeks to change that as it honors Gladys West, the trailblazer credited with developing the transformative technology.

The National Center of Women's Innovation opened the interactive exhibit March 7 to shine a spotlight on West, an African American woman who pioneered the technology despite the roadblocks of her youth in a segregated Virginia.

"West was pioneering work at a time when people who looked like her, both female and African American, just weren't working in those fields," said Lance Collins, executive director of the VT Innovation Campus. "What a remarkable story and inspiration to all of us."

Local officials were joined by members of West's family for the official launch of the exhibit.

"You don't often get to meet your superheroes," said West's grandson Andre Jones. "But I got to grow up with two of them – my grandfather and my grandmother. My grandmother worked so hard and tirelessly to make an impact at her job. She just wanted to be the best at her job, she wanted to make her family proud and worked non-stop to overcome and rise above her surroundings."

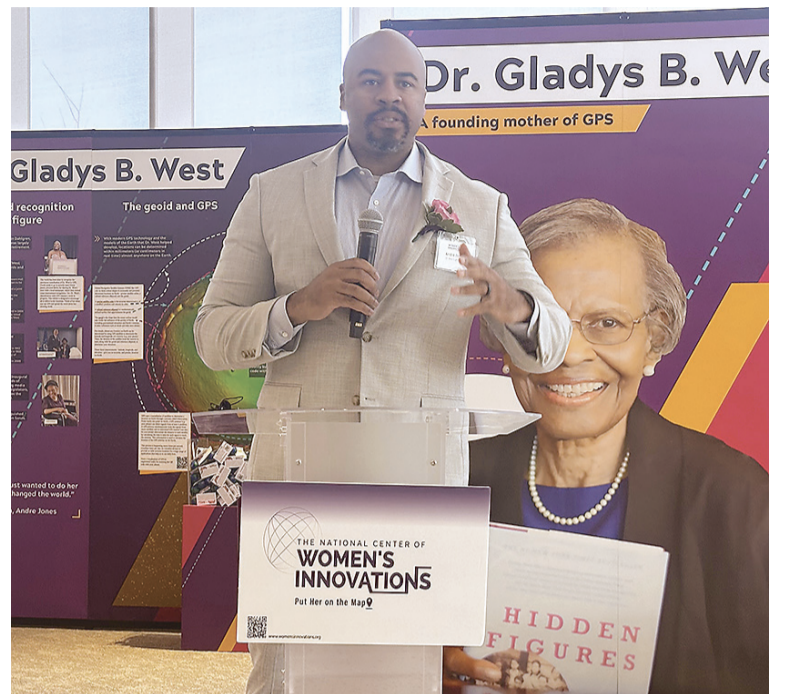
West was born Oct. 27, 1930, in rural Dinwiddie County in southern Virginia. She graduated as valedictorian of her high school, earning a full scholarship to Virginia State College where she studied mathematics.

In 1956, West was hired to work as a project manager for processing systems for satellite data analysis at what is now the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Dahlgren, Virginia. She was the second black woman ever hired and one of only four black employees. It is here that she met her husband Ira, a mathematician at the base.

During this time West led the development of a mathematical model of the world that provided the framework for GPS. She worked at Dahlgren for 42 years, retiring in 1998. In 2000, she completed a PhD in Public Administration at Virginia Tech.



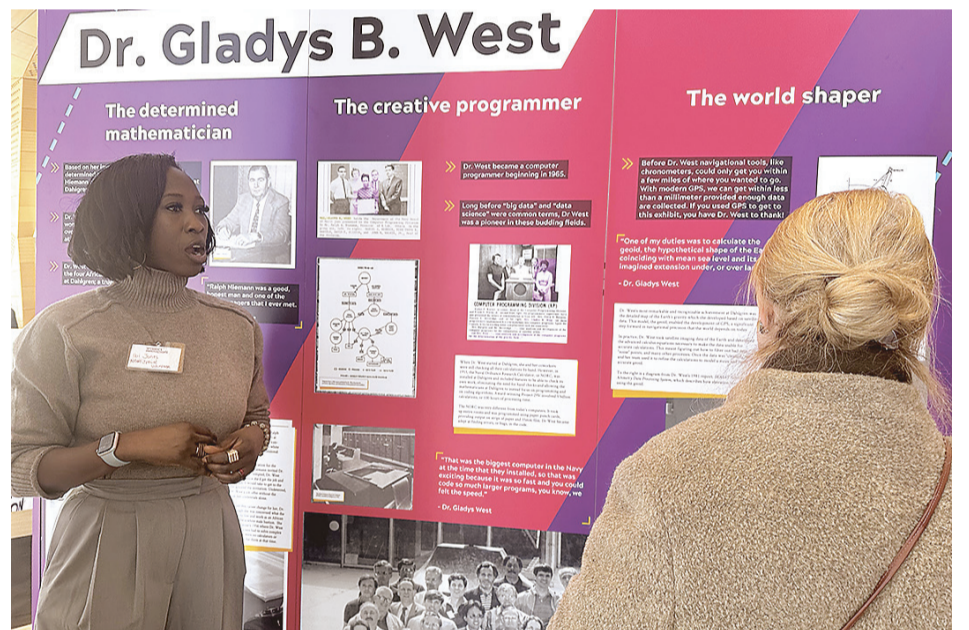
Carolyn Ogelsby, daughter of Gladys West, talks with Lance Collins, vice president and executive director of the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus at the opening of the Gladys West exhibit March 7 at the VT campus in Potomac Yard.



Andre Jones, grandson of Gladys West, talks about growing up with the woman who pioneered the modern-day GPS system.



The family of Gladys West attends the exhibition opening March 7 at the VT Innovation Campus. Shown standing are granddaughter-in-law Lia Jones, son David West, and daughter Carolyn Ogelsby. Seated is grandson Andre Jones.



National Center for Women's Innovation volunteer Ibi Jones, left, describes the Gladys West exhibit panel to a visitor.

West was inducted into the United States Air Force Hall of Fame in 2018, one of the highest honors bestowed by Air Force Space Command. Capt. Godfrey Weekes, commanding officer at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, described the role played by West in the development of Global Positioning System, saying, "She rose through the ranks, worked on the satellite geodesy, and contributed to the accuracy of GPS and the measurement of satellite data. As Gladys West started her career in 1956, she likely had no idea that her work would impact the world for decades to come."

West, now 94 years old, lives with her daughter in Fredericksburg. She was unable to attend the reception but her grandson did a quick video

call with her so that she could say hello to the crowd gathered at the exhibit.

"Leaving a legacy and an impact was not something she intended to do," Jones said. "My grandparents never bragged but please continue to put women's history at the forefront. There is a generation of young girls looking up to these heroes who inspire them to achieve."

The Gladys West exhibit will be on display at the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus in Potomac Yard Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.—4 p.m. through the end of June.

"The world needs more advocates like [founder] Jane Plitt and the National Center for Women's Innovations," Jones added. "Thank you for preserving and keeping my grand-



Gladys West, right, and colleague Sam Smith look over data from the Global Positioning System at Dahlgren in 1985.

mother's legacy alive. It is such a powerful time right now – Black history last month and women's histo-

ry this month. These are two groups that have overcome so much and are the backbone of this country."



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Construction continues at the new Franconia District Government Center building just off Beulah Street.

Franconia Construction

FROM PAGE 3

The total project estimate for the consolidated facility including the two associated parking garages is \$79.5 million. Funding was approved in the 2015 Public Safety Bond Referendum. Funding for the library, to include the Active Adult Center, was approved in the 2020 Library Bond referendum. It is scheduled to be open in the summer of 2025.

Inova Franconia-Springfield Hospital

Across the intersection of Beulah and the Springfield-Franconia Parkway is the site of the new Inova Hospital. Currently there are three large cranes for the construction, and cranes this size are new to this part of the county so this gives a feeling for how big this hospital will be.

According to the Inova plans, the new Inova Franconia-Springfield Hospital will consist of a full-service hospital, inpatient hospital, outpatient center, expansion space, a parking garage and a walkway to the existing Inova Healthplex that has been in use for years. It will be bordered by Walker Lane, the Franconia-Springfield Parkway and Beulah Street. Construction is underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2028.

Construction is underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2028.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
DINWIDDIE	6048	623	SUTHERLAND ROAD	WHIPPONOCK CREEK	3/1/2025
LOUDOUN	11147	600	NEW ROAD	BULL RUN	2/25/2025
BLAND	2942	42	BLUE GRASS TRAIL	BIG WALKER CREEK	2/19/2025
BUCHANAN	3949	651	OLD LESTERS FORK ROAD	LESTER'S FORK	2/19/2025
SCOTT	16802	665	MANVILLE ROAD	BLACK OAK BRANCH	2/13/2025
LEE	10977	764	ROUTE 764	CANE CREEK	2/13/2025
CHESTERFIELD	4993	1	JEFF DAVIS HIGHWAY	TRIB ASHTON CREEK	2/10/2025

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Traffic and Travel/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.

ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU APRIL 19

The Silent Narrator Exhibit. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. Featuring a solo exhibition of photographic work by Irina Dakhnovskaia-Lawton. The Silent Narrator explores the relationship between time and memory, storytelling, and the power of photographs and photo albums.

NOW THRU APRIL 6

Artist Jeff Bohlander. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Through the language of mixed-media, collage, assemblage, and found objects, Jeff's narrative reflects our collective journey through the complexities of our time — from climate change and social constructs to migration and technological advancements.

NOW THRU MARCH 31

Woodlawn Needlework Show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. Join in a special tour for a history of Woodlawn while discovering the stories behind pieces of the Needlework Show. Offered Fridays and Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. Throughout the month of March, enjoy free live needlework demonstrations. Tentative schedule will be available in mid-February.

NOW THRU MARCH 29

"Fairy Tales Around the World" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features artwork inspired by stories of faraway lands, perilous journeys with magical characters and fantastic creatures. Join them for the Opening Reception on Friday, March 7, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at Del-RayArtisans.org/exhibits

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 19

Senior Services Event. 10 a.m. At Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) will take its weekly newsletter "SSA Connection" live at a fun event. The program will follow the newsletter format including: a "Ted Talk;" fitness segment; cooking demonstration; local happenings and a fun "sing-along." The event is free, but rsvp by emailing events@seniorservicesalex.org or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

FRIDAY/MARCH 21

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. 7:30 p.m. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria. Bach has inspired across four centuries. His music is universal, his humanity eternal. In the splendor of St. Paul's Episcopal, James Ross leads the strings of the Alexandria Symphony in Dmitry Sitkovetsky's arrangement of Bach's Goldberg Variations.

MARCH 21-23

Capital Art & Craft Festival At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. Featuring painting, clothing, jewelry, glass, woodworking, leather, photography and ceramics. Dates are Friday, Mar 21 and Saturday Mar 22: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday Mar 23: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door; Senior & Military discounts available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACFart



The Woodlawn Needlework Show will be held March 1-31, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Japanese Teas Tasting. 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) Celebrate the National Cherry Blossom Festival with a selection of fine Japanese green teas. Hear about Japanese tea culture and learn to identify unique characteristics of green teas, their health benefits and how to brew them to perfection. Take home a sample. Delicious Japanese accompaniments served. \$35 per person.

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Garden Talk - Spring Vegetable Gardening 101. 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Adults) At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Learn how to plan, plant and grow your food in an environmentally friendly way. Extension Master Gardeners show you how to get the most out of your spring kitchen garden and enjoy home grown vegetables before the heat of summer. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code KK9.XXR

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Family Fun - Sensational Seeds! 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (3-Adult). At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Come explore the sensational world of seeds. We will examine our seed collection, explore how seeds travel, and learn how they grow into the plants that fill our gardens. Make seed bombs to take home and spread in your yard or share with friends. Then go on a walk to find seeds in nature. All attendees, including parents, must be registered for the program to control size. \$10 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code E8EK11G

SATURDAY/MARCH 22

Bishop Ireton High School 60th Anniversary Gala. 6 p.m. to Late. At Westin Alexandria Old town. Reception dinner and dancing. Cocktail/formal attire

SUNDAY/MARCH 23

Fairy Garden Workshop. 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Create a one-of-a-kind fairy garden scene out of natural materials with the help of instructor Bailey Price. Learn how to build miniature furniture using hot glue and natural materials such as dried plants, acorns, twigs and bark. Register for both the class and the \$35 supply fee. Bring a box or container that will help you transport your creation home \$44 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code ZKJ.1PCP

FRIDAY/MARCH 28

Garden Talk - Growing Tomatoes From Seed to Sauce. 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Whether you choose seeds or small seedlings, learn about the varieties to choose from as well as when, how and where to plant them. Hear the top tips on how to care for your plants to achieve a bountiful crop. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code EC4.3LCW

SATURDAY/MARCH 29

Managing Water in the Home Garden. 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Learn how to manage water in your garden using plant selections, landscape design, rain barrels and clever, low cost fixes. Keeping



The "Fairy Tales Around the World" exhibit will be held March 7-29, 2025 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery in Alexandria.

water on the property is the goal - find out how. Take a walk in the garden to observe how Green Spring Manages water runoff. Dress for the weather. \$19 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code ORR.36SD

SATURDAY/MARCH 29

Forest Bathing Walk in the Gardens. 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Experience Green Spring Gardens with all of your senses. Join Ana Ka'ahanui, co-founder of local nonprofit Capital Nature for a slow, meditative walk around the gardens. Contemplative, but more active than meditation, this forest bathing walk will help reduce blood pressure, boost immunity, and enhance mood and creativity. Decompress and feel a deeper connection with the natural world. Bring something to sit on the ground, which may be damp, and a water bottle. Dress for the weather. Cost \$35 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

MARCH 29 TO APRIL 19

"Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing." At The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Set in the jazzy streets and of modern-day New Orleans, Shakespeare's timeless Rom-Com comes to life. "There is a merry war" between the sharp-tongued Beatrice and Benedick, whose playful banter masks their growing affection for each other while their friends conspire to bring them together. Meanwhile, the earnest Claudio and Hero's romance is put to the test by a series of deceptions. This romantic comedy promises an exhilarating ride from start to finish. Thursdays - Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sunday Matinees at 2 p.m. Opening Night Pre-Show Party is Saturday, March 29, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

"Byline Old Town: A Walking Tour of Early Journalism in Alexandria." 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Near City Hall/Market Square. Led by journalist and author Michael Pope, this engaging walking tour will explore Alexandria's long and diverse press history, from the city's first newspaper in 1784 to its pioneering television figures. Participants will visit key historical sites around Market Square and learn about the early days of Alexandria's newspapers—including partisan, Black, independent, and chain publications—and the journalists who shaped public discourse. Tickets: \$20 for Members | \$25 for Non-Members

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

APRIL 11-12

2025 Spring Garden Market. At River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Presented by American Horticultural Society, celebrate the start of gardening season with the Spring Garden Market at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society. This much-anticipated annual event brings together plant, seed and garden accessory retailers, nature-focused artists and authors, gardening experts, food vendors, and fun activities for the whole family to enjoy. Proceeds benefit the operations, beautification and preservation of River Farm, part of George Washington's

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

PEOPLE

Fairfax County Man Ran Away to the Circus

The John Lewis High School alum found his calling with *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

As teenagers approach high school, running away to join the circus comes up as a last resort, but for Brandon Glass it became a reality.

After graduating from John R. Lewis High School in 2010 he dabbled in work with the people who were hearing impaired, as a stunt man in show business and is now part of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus.

Joining the circus may be something to say jokingly but “now it’s actually my life,” Glass said.

The journey there is as roundabout as a three-ring circus. “The story is quite an adventure,” he said. Out of Lewis High School, where he played the trumpet, Glass ended up at Towson University studying deaf studies and sign language. From there he went to being a stuntman in Los Angeles where he did a lot of stunt fighting with pyrotechnics. Glass described it as “basically fireworks coming out of my shoes,” he said.

The circus found him out in L.A., and now he’s the touring public relations manager, working with many of the city and town officials where the circus is performing. When they need performers, he sometimes finds people in gyms working out and they end up applying for jobs that demand physical traits and talents in the circus.

When mentioning a job with the circus, thoughts may involve elephants and tiger tamers but those days are over. In about 2017, the treatment of animals became a focus and the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus moved away from animal acts.

“We’ve shifted the focus,” Glass said, “we have no animals in the show now.” Some of the newer acts feature BMX bikes or a robo dog.

Instead, they have high-wire and acrobatic shows, and parts where the audience gets involved as well. Picture the audience joining in when a well-known rock star sings one of their hits. This year they have a triangular high-wire act with people going everywhere.

“It’s some things you’ve never seen before,” he said.



Brandon Glass



The circus is a great spectacle, even without animals.

Travelling around the country with a group of people, especially entertainers can be colorful. Everyone gets to know everyone else from the many different cultures at the circus. Connecting with people is one of the positives he’s gained from the experience. The antics of the performers are “always fun to me,” he said.

Next up for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus aka “The Greatest Show on Earth,” is scheduled to be at the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, from March 28 to April 6, 2025, showcasing an all-new production with over 50 acts.



I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study City of Alexandria and Fairfax County, VA Prince George’s County, MD

In-person Public Information Meetings
Meeting times: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Meeting format: Open house with a presentation at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
West Potomac High School (Cafeteria)
6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium)
6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Monday, April 7, 2025
Thomas A. Edison High School (Cafeteria)
5801 Franconia Rd., Alexandria, VA 22310

Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Virtual Public Information Room available starting on April 1, 2025, at
www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside

Learn about and provide input on the Virginia Department of Transportation’s (VDOT) I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study, an environmental study evaluating the potential extension of the express lanes system on the southern section of the Capital Beltway (I-495) by 11 miles from the Springfield Interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George’s County, Maryland. VDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state, and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, is conducting an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

VDOT will provide information at upcoming public meetings on the three alternatives under study to address identified transportation needs within the study area. These needs include extending and providing continuity of the express lanes system on I-495, providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion and improving travel reliability, improving safety, and providing consistency with local and regional plans. VDOT will also provide preliminary traffic analysis data and updates on study progress and ongoing coordination.

The in-person meetings will be held from 6:30- 8:30 p.m. The meeting format will include an open house with a presentation at 7 p.m. VDOT representatives will be present at various stations to answer questions.

The virtual public information room will contain the meeting presentation and boards, and opportunities to provide input.

Review information on the study webpage (www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside), during the in-person public information meetings, or during business hours at VDOT Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-691-6044 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Provide your input by submitting oral and/or written comments at the meetings, or via the online comment form at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside, email to 495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov, or mail to Michelle Shropshire, P.E., VDOT Northern Virginia Megaprojects Director, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, by Monday, April 21, 2025.

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 12

farmland and the centerpiece where the AHS promotes the art, science, and joy of growing plants. Entry fee is \$5 per individual (walkers, cyclists) or \$20 per car which includes parking and entry for all passengers. Restrictions and exceptions apply. Tickets to attend Spring Garden Market will be available to purchase online at the beginning of March at www.ahsgardening.org/spring-garden-market-2025. Call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114.

THURSDAY/APRIL 24

Day of Remembrance for Victims of Holocaust. 12 p.m. At Market Square, 301 King Street, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria hosts the annual ceremony as part of the weeklong commemoration of the national Days of Remembrance, observed from April 20 through April 27. The event is free and open to the public. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in the City Council Chamber, located on the second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street. The guest speaker will be Richard Breitman, distinguished professor, writer, and a leading historian on the Holocaust. For more info, call 703-746-5565.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Big Flea Market. At Del Ray, Alexandria. The @mvspta Big Flea is returning and they need your help! Clear out the clutter, reclaim your space, and give your stuff a second life and support the kids at Mount Vernon Community School. Needed items include small furniture, home goods, books, toys, tools, sporting goods, small appliances, and décor (note: no clothing, linens, or large furniture, please). Visit thebigflea.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Patrick O'Flaherty Performs. At Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Rd., Alexandria. 7 p.m. Born to Irish parents in Minnesota, Patrick O'Flaherty was raised from the age of 2 in their native Galway, Ireland. Playing the harmonica as a young boy in Connemara started him on a path to a professional music career that has now spanned nearly four decades. As a dedicated promoter of the

Celtic Arts, he performs as a singer and songwriter and a highly respected player of the harmonica, bouzouki, mandolin, button accordion, banjo, and mandola. Patrick is a native Gaelic speaker, and his performances include original and traditional songs in Gaelic. Info and tickets at <https://focusmusic.org/shows#sat-4-26-patrick-o-flaherty>

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Old Town Alexandria Home and Garden Tour. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Five of Old Town Alexandria's most beautiful and historic private homes and gardens will open to visitors as part of the 92nd annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia. This event invites visitors to experience the timeless beauty of Old Town's historic homes and gardens, showcased at the peak of spring bloom. The tour features stunning floral arrangements designed by garden club members. Advance purchase tickets are \$55 each and are available at www.vagardenweek.org or \$60 at the Alexandria Visitor's Center (221 King Street) on tour day. In addition to the featured five homes and gardens, tour tickets provide access to Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House, River Farm, Gunston Hall, George Washington's Mount Vernon, Green Spring Gardens, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church on the same day.

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.

MARCH

Wed. 19: ZZ Ward - The Dirty Sun Tour, with Liam St. John \$49.50
 Thu. 20: Ladysmith Black Mambazo \$49.50
 Fri. 21: Rufus Wainwright - Going To A Town Solo Tour w/ Sloan Wainwright \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
 Sat. 22: Edwin McCain \$39.50
 Sun. 23: WATCH Awards Ceremony -7pm- \$20.00 SOLD OUT!
 Thu. 27: Leo Kottke \$49.50
 Fri. 28: Dave Hollister \$55.00
 Sat. 29: Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival 2025 Mid-Atlantic Regional \$35.00
 Sun. 30: Gaelic Storm with Rever-



The Old Town Alexandria Home and Garden Tour takes place Saturday, April 26, 2025 in Alexandria.

end Peyton's Big Damn Band \$59.50
 Mon. 31 APRIL
 Tue. 1: Nubya Garcia with Magi Merlin \$29.50
 Wed. 2: Al Di Meola Electric Band 'Land Of The Midnight Sun 2025 Tour' \$59.50
 Thu. 3: Marty Stuart & His Fabulous Superlatives \$76.00
 Fri. 4: Marty Stuart & His Fabulous Superlatives \$76.00
 Sat. 5: Tom Rush with Matt Nakoa & special guest Jeff Daniels \$49.50
 Sun. 6: SOLAS "30th Anniversary Tour" \$35.00
 Tue. 8: Damien Escobar "Gemini Tour" \$69.50
 Wed. 9: An Evening with Cowboy Junkies - Celebrating 40 Years \$65.00
 Thu. 10: An Evening with Cowboy Junkies - Celebrating 40 Years \$65.00 SOLD OUT!
 Fri. 11: WAR \$85.00
 Sat. 12: WAR \$85.00
 Sun. 13: The Seldom Scene "Remains To Be Scene" Album Release Show! \$35.00
 Wed. 16: Valerie June "Owls, Omens, and Oracles Tour" \$49.50
 Thu. 17: The Aristocrats "The Duck Tour 2025" \$49.50
 Fri. 18: Steep Canyon Rangers \$45.00
 Sat. 19: Steep Canyon Rangers \$45.00
 Wed. 23: OUR HOUSE: The Music of CSNY \$55.00
 Thu. 24: 10,000 Maniacs \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
 Fri. 25: 10,000 Maniacs \$59.50 SOLD OUT!
 Sat. 26: SGGL \$39.50
 Sun. 27: WMAL Presents Free Speech Forum -7pm- \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
 Mon. 28: Leonid & Friends \$65.00 SOLD OUT!
 Tue. 29: Leonid & Friends \$65.00 SOLD OUT!

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasescondsaturday.com for more.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up

to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/tes.

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

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations.

Visit www.computercore.org/contribute. Senior and Job Programs. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Queen of Apostles Church, 4650 Taney Avenue, Alexandria. St. Martin de Porres Center offers senior and job placement programming Monday through Friday at the parish. Email Kathryn Toohey, ktoohy@ccda.net.

Be Heard at the City's Monthly Public Hearings. A schedule of the meetings can be found at www.alexandriava.gov. Voice opinions, speak about something on the docket or just speak about something you are concerned about. Sign up in advance to speak through the city's website. Anyone is welcome at any of the public hearings.

Less About Me Than It Used to Be



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having been a cancer patient now for 16+ years, I speak with some experience on the subject. Though hardly an authority on the matter, I have been there and done that, including surgery in my many years living on the presumptive edge/slippery slope that comes with a "terminal" diagnosis. For me, that diagnosis was originally heard at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist when I was given a "13 month to two years" prognosis, "non-small cell lung cancer stage IV." As Maurice Chevalier so famously sang - and I invoke it here: "I remember it well." And as much as I've tried to make light of it, make a joke about it, compartmentalize it/lock it in the vault, the reality is that cancer is the opposite of the gift that keeps on giving. It is in fact the bomb that keeps on ticking. (With apologies to John Cameron Swayze.)

How you adjust/react/respond to all that ticking is quite simply, the rest of your life. You must take the highs and the lows and the in-betweens in some kind of stride. A stride which enables you to still put one foot in front of the other, literally and figuratively, and "get busy living," to quote Morgan Freeman from the Oscar-nominated film of his: "Shawshank Redemption," and live as if you have a future rather than bemoaning that you don't. As my close friend Lynne advised me at the beginning of this journey: "Being a cancer patient is the hardest thing you'll ever do." Of course, she was right. Moreover, one can never be prepared for being a cancer patient. The real problem is that your brain has a mind of its own and once cancer infiltrates your conscience - and/or sub conscience, it is, as we say in Boston: "Katie bar the door." Which means - in effect: Look out. Trouble is coming. And cancer is trouble with a capital "C."

Aside from the obvious physical toll cancer inflicts on your body, it is the unseen and nearly unpredictable effect it has on your brain. Suddenly, or so it seems, you become a different person. Familiar certainly, but one whose opinions, interests, tolerances, initiatives, and follow-throughs change compared to the person you used to be. And its way more complicated than a bucket list that now takes on more of an urgency to complete. It's more about your attitude.

For me, at least, it became very difficult to do things I didn't/don't want to do. That includes being told what to do and/or being motivated to do things that don't benefit you (household/domestic-type-should-be-shared-responsibilities). When you're told you're "prognosed" to die in two years - or less, your focus in life narrows to include what you want to do, not what others want you to do. It's not exactly being stubborn but certainly you become set in your ways. And really, how do deny a dying man his last wish - or a reasonable facsimile thereof? This attitude/lack of tolerance permeates your brain. It's as the cancer has completely rewired your brain - without your permission.

Fighting back against this self-preservation type instinct is the parallel, but not nearly as obvious, universe, that cancer patients - certainly ones with "terminal" diagnoses including me, inhabit. Like it or not. It's an emotional reaction as instinctive as the knee-jerk when your pediatrician hit you in the knee with the mallet thing when you were a kid. I imagine it applies to similarly diagnosed non-cancer patients as well. When your world/mortality shrinks, it's impossible to act normal. ('Normal' left the barn when the doctors told you the tumors biopsied were malignant.) When this news is finally absorbed/processed/understood - and it doesn't quite happen at moment of impact, the three most important people in your life become me, myself and I. Maturing beyond this narrow but inevitable perspective is as much the goal in one's treatment as is the reduction in your cancer markers as measured by your monthly lab work. And not that you can necessarily feel a decrease in those markers, but if they come down, you sure do feel it emotionally. Moreover, if one is fortunate to experience some positive results along this cancer way, it seems to clear a path for you to become the pre-cancer-diagnosis person you used to be rather than the post-cancer-diagnosis you sort of became. This return-to-normal transition happens as seamlessly as the attitude changes that manifested when you first began coming to grips with this cancer diagnosis/abbreviated mortality. Your focus begins to broaden again and you're not always the most important person in the conversation. And in a way, it helps to not be consumed with self anymore. It's not an indication of remission, nor is it a guarantee/predictor of anything, it's more an acceptance of reality. "Cancer sucks" for sure as the motto so simply states. It's certainly a blip on the radar, but it doesn't have to be a life's sentence. Instead, it can become your life's work, one you're redefining every day.

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

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