

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 3, 2025



Jim Gravina always wanted a DeLorean after seeing the movie, “Back to the Future,” a car that was futuristic then and now, he contends.



This 1933 Chevrolet, running board and all, got attention.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Vibrant Vehicle Vibes

Hollin Hall Shopping Center parking lot is transformed into a car show two Sundays a month.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

From Chevrolets to Cadillacs, from TVRs to GTRs, 50 spotless vehicles were gleaming in the Sunday morning sun in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center parking lot on March 30, as were their owners. These aficionados eagerly analyzed horsepower, window design, suspension, exhaust pipes, finishes, cylinders and engine intricacies at the bimonthly Alexandria Cars and Coffee meetup featuring an electric mix of vehicles of all ages.

Mount Vernonite Bill Bock called the event “a Sunday morning so-

cial club,” as he answered questions about his 1972 Triumph TR6, a sports car built in England. He bought one after returning from military service in Vietnam and 51 years later bought another. Its official color is damson, not purple, he clarified. Bock maintains it himself, which includes smashing thumbs and breaking fingernails. “If you didn’t build it, it’s not yours. You own the car,” he stressed.

“I love sharing and I love everyone’s cars,” said first-timer Bill Lorenzo from Stafford, Virginia, fondly describing his 2017, supercharged, red Cadillac CTSV which can reach a top speed of 200 miles per hour. He tries that at tracking

events at Thornburg’s Dominion Raceway. Explaining why he loves his dream car, he offered, “I grew up very poor on 86th Street in Brooklyn. When I saw Cadillacs going down the street, I said to myself, ‘If I make it out of here, I will drive a Caddie.’”

Richard Murray from Lorton commented that his 1974 red Jensen-Healey two-seater is “very rare” because the English manufacturer, Jensen Motors, went bankrupt in 1976. “You can get one cheap, under \$10,000,” he said. Restoring and maintaining it is a 30-year project. Why spend time tinkering with an old car?

SEE VIBRANT VEHICLE, PAGE 7



The Hollin Hall Shopping Center parking lot is transformed into a car show two Sundays a month.



Doren Weston explained the features of his 1952 Chevrolet pickup truck.



Doren Weston explained that the gear shift on the steering column is dubbed “three on a tree.”



This Corvette’s engine is under the trunk lid. The car costs between \$70,000 and \$110,000 typically.

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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE



NPS Volunteer Coordinator Scott Hill and intern Alyssa Schaafer and the trash hauled in at one of three stations.



Michelle Black (left) recruited military families to help. Alyssa Schaafer staffed a check-in table.

Trash Cleanup Yields 2,505 Pounds

181 volunteers from all over the area converge for mega cleanup.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

They found bagged dog poop, a case of empty beer bottles, soiled diapers, soggy socks, combs, cigarette butts, cigarette lighters, a metal grill, a mattress, a shopping cart, lumber, a foam pillow, two tires, fast food debris and bottle caps. Plastic beverage bottles and aluminum cans seemed to self-multiply. Ayne Whitehead lugged out a rusted iron pipe. Her friend found a shapely bluish vodka bottle. These are just some of the items collected at the March 22 mega-trash cleanup sponsored by the National Park Service, the Friends of Dyke Marsh, the Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail, the Potomac Conservancy and Blue Star Families Connect.

For two hours or so, volunteers ages 8 to 80 combed the Potomac River shoreline, the George Washington Memorial Parkway borders and the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.

The grand totals: 181 volunteers from all over Northern Virginia collected 2,505 pounds, a ton and a quarter, of trash and provided more than 400 hours of volunteer work, said Scott Hill, Volunteer Coordinator for the Parkway.

Michelle Black, Outdoor Leader for Blue Star Connect Outdoors (BSCO), said, "Our families were truly honored to take part in the mega-trash event. This effort reminded us how important it is to give back, take care of our parks and come together as a community." BSCO connects military families with their local parks to promote well-being and strengthen community bonds.

The Most Common Litter

Jen Cole, Director of Clean Fairfax, says the most common trash items found in



NPS Volunteer Coordinator Scott Hill welcomed volunteers.



Ayne Whitehead hauled a rusty old pipe embedded in the shoreline.



This Friends of Dyke Marsh display urged people to not ignore the small trash items.



Collecting trash along the river in Dyke Marsh.

PHOTO BY BOB VELTCAMP

SEE TRASH CLEANUP, PAGE 10

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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ APRIL 3-16, 2025 ♦ 3



Even the poster has similarities to the show at Yasgur's Farm in 1969.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Last year there were smiling faces despite the rain.

“Waynewoodstock”

1027 DALEBROOK DR, MOUNT VERNON
SATURDAY, MAY 17 AT NOON

Groovy Waynewoodstock Right Here in Mount Vernon

Second annual neighborhood music event
elevates Waynewood to new heights.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

The Woodstock concert from the hippy era lives on in many ways including a movie, thousands of snapshots and in the fading memories of the attendees who camped, got soaked in the rain, and made the hippy shake dance famous.

There have been a few iterations of the concert through the years and now a neighborhood in Mount Vernon is getting ready for their second annual “Waynewoodstock,” a show with music and entertainment on a smaller scale. “It’s family friendly for sure,” said Geoff Schwartzman, one of the resident-musicians and organizer of the event.

Other groups at the show are scheduled to include Porch Pirates, Rachel’s Decision, Disco Spears and Borrowed Players. Rachel’s Decision calls themselves “Best ‘Dad Band’ in the DMV with a Mom singer, their social media said. The Waynewood Citizens Association sponsors the stage.

Food will be handled by Chalkboard Wings & BBQ as they did for the first concert last year.

At the first “Waynewoodstock,” show there were some unknowns but this year, they prepared. The tents are a little better and everyone involved went through the not-so-dry run last year. Schwartzman knows how mother nature is.

“We knew the rain was a possibility,” he said, “it was steady but not super heavy.”

There will be two stages this year so while one is breaking down, musicians will be ready on the second stage, ready to jam. They do have a groovy, colorful poster that Schwartzman’s wife made. “She’s quite an artist,” he said.

At the original Woodstock, there was Canned Heat playing “Going Up the Country,” Grateful Dead hammering out “Mama Tried,” Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Proud Mary,” and Jimi Hendrix playing the National Anthem on the Strato-caster.

Are Schwartzman and his band borrowing anything from these historic playlists for the rock fans at Waynewood? Man, that was 56 years ago but with nostalgia being such an attraction these days, it might happen. “I like that idea,” he said.



Even the poster has similarities to the show at Yasgur's Farm in 1969.

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

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League’s programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in

Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and

social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria’s preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for “Space of Her Own,” and “Space of His Own,” serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in

school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia spon-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6

Medicaid, What's At Stake

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Medicaid is a massive federal and state-funded program that provides health and long term care coverage to low-income people. It covers one in five people nationwide.

Democratic members of Congress are sounding the alarm about the impact of Medicaid cuts on Virginia and the nation. Republicans are saying there is no need for alarm. Both parties are clashing verbally after the U.S. House agreed to H.Con.Res.14, on Feb. 25, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

Mary Lee Ruby of Fairfax is very concerned about the possible cuts or program changes to Medicaid. It "would be devastating," Ruby said. Ruby is a Medicaid-funded home care provider for her 24-year-old grandson, Austin, who is severely



SCREENSHOT: SOURCE
U.S. Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (D-PA)

and permanently disabled after a brain bleed occurred during birth.

The House budget, which included \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts, would reduce federal spending by at least \$1.5 trillion.

The U.S. Senate passed its budget resolution the previous week, on Feb. 21. The House and Senate budgets are at odds, and legisla-



SOURCE X.COM/GOVERNOR VA

"Once adopted, the changes to our current biennial budget will ensure that all our obligations, including Medicaid, are fully funded," said Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, a Republican

tion needs to agree on and approve the same budget framework.

The ranking member of the U.S. House Budget Committee, U.S. Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (PA-02), a Democrat, says that the "GOP

[House] budget would force the largest Medicaid cuts in American history." Medicaid is a safety-net health care program for low-income adults and families, people with disabilities, older adults, and pregnant women. It provides free or low-cost health insurance to 150,000 people in Fairfax County, over 2 million in Virginia, and 72 million nationwide, including 2 million veterans.

U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Connolly (VA-11), a Democrat, serves the constituents in parts of Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax in Northern Virginia. Defunding Medicaid is unacceptable, Connolly said. "President Trump said during the campaign that he would not touch Medicaid, Medicare, or Social Security. That was simply not true. The Republican budget will cut Medicaid by \$881 billion to pay for tax cuts for billionaires."

Boyle wrote in his March 18 fact sheet that the House's adoption of the Republicans' budget (H.Con. Res.14) "requires deep, damaging cuts to Medicaid." The Republi-

cans' budget "instructs the Energy and Commerce Committee to cut \$880 billion [over ten years]. ... Medicare and Medicaid make up more than 97 percent of the total spending overseen by the committee, so ... the math doesn't work without deep cuts to Medicaid," Boyle said.

The federal and state governments fund the program together. Federal and state Medicaid spending totaled \$880 billion in the 2023 fiscal year. The Republican House majority's aim to cut \$880 billion from healthcare and energy over the next decade would be detrimental to low-income Virginians.

The federal government's share of Medicaid spending varies by state, ranging from a minimum of 50 percent to 77 percent. Lower per capita income states receive a higher federal medical assistance percentage, meaning the government covers a more significant share of their Medicaid costs.

SEE MEDICAID, PAGE 11

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Celebrating Women Who Make a Difference in the MVD

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

Women are... strong, resilient, visionary and empowering.

These four words frequently describe the many influential women who have shaped our country. During Women's History Month, we often focus on national figures who have made history, but what about the women making a difference every day right here in the Mount Vernon District?

Our office works closely with many dedicated and strong female leaders in local civic associations. Katherine Ward, Co-Chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVC-CA), is a powerhouse advocate and resident who has served on the Council since 2007.

You'll often find her juggling responsibilities at both the MVCCA and Potomac Riverkeeper Network tables in our Town Meeting exhibit hall, while championing important community needs. The MVCCA board is also led by many incredible women like Judy Harbeck (Co-Chair), Tamara Srader (Secretary), Cathy Hosek (Education Chair), Bindu Mathur (Planning & Zoning Chair), Ellen Young (Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation Rep) and Marty Lowery (Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations Rep). Marty also dedicates her time in our office, assisting with events and helping to research information for special projects throughout the District. In Lorton, Wendy Henley, President and Education Committee Chair of the South County Federation, works tirelessly to improve the quality of life for all residents and to help create a sense of community in South County. Her longtime commitment to community service continues to have a lasting, positive impact across the region.



Jessica Nichols



Wendy Henley



Katherine Ward



Cathy Hosek



Judy Harbeck



Tamara Srader



Valerie Wohlleben



Marty Lowery

Then there are the many women we see day in and day out during election season. If you've ever voted early at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center or visited our farmers market, chances are you've met Jessica Nichols (Mount Vernon Dems) and Valerie Wohlleben (Fairfax GOP). Whether it's raining, snowing or a perfect sunny day, they're outside talking to voters, registering new ones, answering questions and ensuring that every voice is heard.

Beyond these amazing women are countless federal workers, teachers, social workers, stay-at-home and working moms, small business owners and CEOs who are shaping our community, lifting others up and inspiring those around them. If you would like to read more stories of local women making a difference, the

County has highlighted several female leaders, including my Chief of Staff, Christine Morin. Check out their stories here: Women's History Month 2025.

But women's history isn't just for March. I encourage you to visit the Suffragist Memorial at Occoquan Regional Park or the Lucy Burns Museum at the Workhouse Arts Center to honor the women who fought for the right to vote. Explore George Washington's Mount Vernon and see firsthand the remarkable preservation efforts of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

However you choose to celebrate, there are countless ways to recognize and appreciate the contributions of women throughout the year. Learn more: <https://www.fxva.com/herstory/>

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

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

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

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

part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky 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. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit www.novasecondsaturday.com for more.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assis-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 jjking consulting@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.

Submit a Letter to the Editor

To submit a letter to the editor, email 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.

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A Connection Newspaper



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Nolan Walton got “hooked” on the British-made TVR Griffith which he saw in London when he was 16.



Angel Wells, sporting a “Bad Girl” license plate, loves driving her Nissan GTR.

Vibrant Vehicle Vibes

FROM PAGE 1

“It’s more nostalgia than anything. I gave it to myself as a college graduation gift.”

Around the corner from the “main concourse,” a firetruck red 1933 Chevrolet grabbed attention. The Mount Vernon-area owner, Chett, who declined to give his last name, explained that his antique gem is all steel, has a V8 engine and can go 60 miles per hour. “The doors even shut good,” he chuckled. The Chevy sounded like a loud, sputtering lawnmower when he pulled out.

Jim Gravina’s 1981 silver DeLorean 1981 was a stunner, with its gull-wing doors opening upward. After he saw the movie, “Back to the Future,” he was determined to get a DeLorean so 35 years later he found one in Virginia Beach on Facebook. The car never rusts because it is made of stainless steel. The U.S. company that built these cars between 1981 and 1983 in

Coming Up

- ❖ Alexandria Cars and Coffee, <https://www.meetup.com/Alexandria-Cars-Coffee/>
- ❖ Festival of Speed and Style, May 18, Alexandria, www.festivalof-speedandstyle.com
- ❖ 50th Antique Car Show, June 15, Sully Historic Site, <https://model-a-ford.org/event/50th-sully-antique-car-show-june-15-2025/>

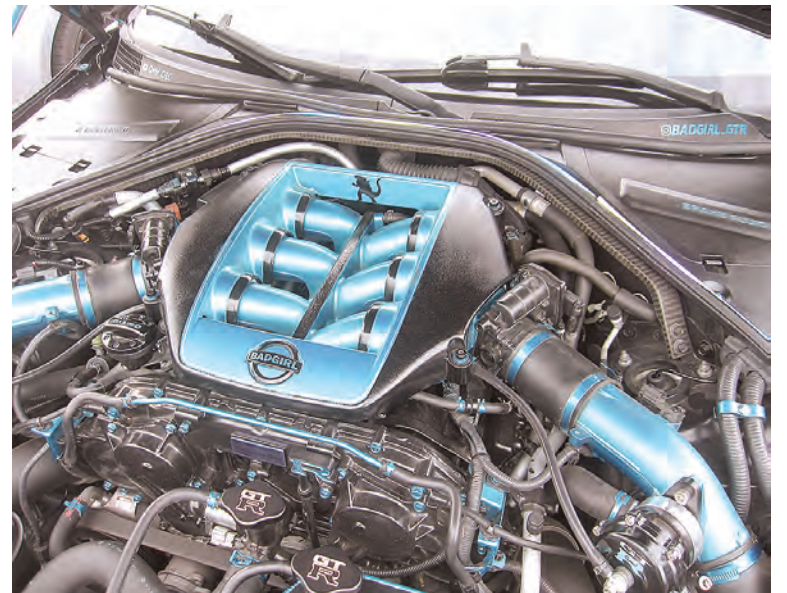
Northern Ireland only made 9,000, he said. In 1981, “It was futuristic. It stood out and still does. It takes me back to my childhood.”

Alexandrian Nolan Walton said he too “got hooked” on his car at a young age, a British-made lemon yellow TVR Griffith that he longed for since age 16.” Jeremy Dehart from Springfield lucked out when his former girlfriend wanted to unload a 1991 Toyota MR2. Given the demise of the romance, he was surprised and got it for \$1,200 – no hard feelings.

Angel Wells from Upper Marl-

boro was one of the few women showing off a vehicle. Both she and her husband, Damein, have black Nissan GTRs. Hers has 800 horsepower, turquoise highlights and “Bad Girl” on her license plate. “It’s fun,” she quipped. “I like the way it feels when I drive it.”

Prominently situated near Fort Hunt Road, Doren Weston exuded over his dark green Chevrolet pickup truck, a 1952 classic with only 87,000 miles on the odometer. A Hollin Hall resident, Weston said that the truck was not running when he got it, but he had it running in a



Angel Wells’s Nissan GTR has turquoise highlights even under the hood.

week. He basically rebuilt the truck, put in a new exhaust system, had some sheet metal parts fabricated, reupholstered the seats and painted the interior. The gear shift, called “three on a tree,” is on the steering column. “I love old pickup trucks. They speak to me. It embodies hard work and America. It symbolizes everything that’s good.”

The Cars and Coffee gathering, which started in 2012 in the shopping center, typically has 40 to 50 cars. To protect their treasures, it’s a “shine-only” event with three rules: No burnout (spinning tires) or engine revving. Treat each other with respect. No politics.

There was no politics on Sunday for sure. It was all car talk.



Jim Ketchum of Springfield brought his red Corvette Z-51.



This orange Mustang was a standout.



Bill Bock, a Mount Vernon area resident, lovingly maintains his 1972 Triumph TR6.



A sign at the landfill and a kestrel box.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



The landfill's grassland with Reworld, an energy generation plant in the background.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH



Blair Evancho conducted bird surveys on the landfill site for Fairfax County.

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

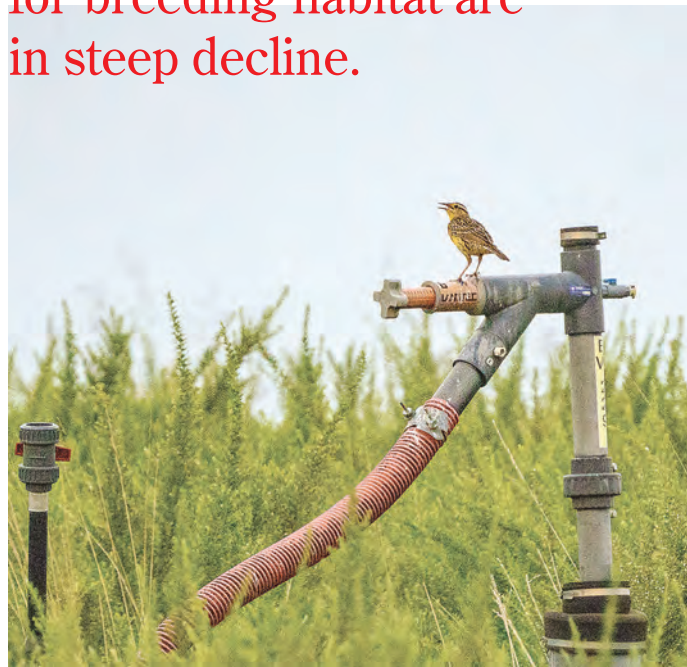


Grasslands also provide support for wildlife like this black swallowtail butterfly

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Landfill's Grassland May Be 'Only Hope'

More than half of bird species that depend on grasslands for breeding habitat are in steep decline.



PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

An Eastern meadowlark on a methane gas well at the closed-and-capped portion of the I-95 Landfill Complex in Lorton.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

In North America's spring, a bubbly song burbles up from some grassy meadows, the song of the breeding male bobolink. It is a "bubbling, jangling warble with short notes on widely different pitches; ending faster, fuller, higher," says the Sibley Guide to Birds.

Bobolinks fly up to 12,500 miles round trip to and from South America every year. With a white back, black underparts and a

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straw-colored head, breeding males are unusual. Some say they seem to be wearing a tuxedo backwards.

Bobolinks are one of three grassland birds that have been confirmed in a 50-acre closed part of Fairfax County's I-95/Lorton landfill. The other two species are eastern meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows. These are grassland specialists, birds not typically seen in other parts of Northern Virginia where meadows and grasslands are scarce. This part of the landfill is in effect a grassland.

"More than half of bird species that de-

pend on grasslands for breeding habitat are in steep decline," concluded the recent State of the Birds report. Nationally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that grassland birds have dropped by 53 percent. Most experts point to habitat loss as a major factor.

Grasslands Are Rare

Of the United States' historical 550 million acres of temperate grasslands, 62 percent are gone. In April, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology found that the country is losing 2.5 million acres of grasslands a year.

Less Mowing

Some birds, like bobolinks, turkeys and pheasants, make nests, lay eggs and raise their young on the ground. At the urging of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance (NVBA), in February, the Board of Supervisors directed the county staff to develop a plan to avoid mowing parts of the landfill property during grassland birds' nesting season, generally April 1 and mid-July, and to identify a "no-mow" area. County staff then designated an area and significantly reduced mowing there. Blair Evancho conducted a bird survey be-

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An aerial view of the I-95 Landfill Complex indicating the 10 circular sites where birds were scientifically surveyed in 2024.



Carlos Leiva and Blair Evancho, of Fairfax County's Solid Waste Management Program, documenting the birds at a study site atop the closed-and-capped portion of the I-95 Landfill Complex in Lorton.

PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

tween Aug. 22 and Oct. 17, 2024, and issued a report on March 18. Evancho documented 29 bird species in the study area. "The most recorded birds were grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow, American kestrel and eastern meadowlark, all of which are experiencing population declines," says the county's website.

County officials announced that they will continue to limit landfill mowing during the nesting season, raise the mower blades to a height of eight inches and continue monitoring birds at the site. While some mowing is needed to access methane gas wells and for worker safety, the revised mowing schedule "should give grassland birds a better chance to thrive," said Evancho.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck, who initiated the effort with the Board of Supervisors, said, "The I-95 landfill is the largest and most important grassland in eastern Fairfax County. I was very pleased to work with Mount Vernon residents to bring a Board matter, which was very strongly supported by County staff, directing development of a plan to protect nesting grassland birds on the landfill. This action positions the County to be a leader in grassland management on landfills."

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Carlos Leiva, of Fairfax County's Solid Waste Management Program, records a bird sighting within a study area atop the I-95 Landfill

The county's report concluded, "Declining grassland bird populations are a threat to healthy and diverse grassland ecosystems. On a national scale, grasslands provide essential and significant habitats for mammals, pollinators, reptiles and other wildlife of commercial, recreational, scientific, aesthetic and cultural value. Healthy grassland ecosystems provide services such as carbon



Blair Evancho, of Fairfax County's Solid Waste Management Program, who led the bird study, documents birds atop the closed-and-capped portion of the I-95 Landfill Complex in Lorton.

ty of our natural grassland ecosystems have been erased leaving agricultural land and areas with enough open space and tall grass to attract grassland birds, such as I-95 Landfill Complex, as the only hope for grassland birds in this region to find suitable habitats. Implementing efforts to encourage the presence and health of grassland birds wherever they are found through monitoring and grassland bird-friendly land use is the best way to do our part in the growing effort to save these species from decline."

Libby Lyons, President of NVBA, commended the county and said, "Grassland habitats are under threat across the country, so this work will not only help our local birds, but can provide bird-friendly practices for other landfills. NVBA has worked with Fairfax for several years, for example, putting up kestrel nesting boxes there. NVBA volunteers and landfill staff will extend last year's study on how the new mowing regime impacts birds during their spring breeding season."

Information

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/i-95-grassland-birds>

MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ APRIL 3-16, 2025 ♦ 9



Collected trash at Belle Haven Park

PHOTO BY BOB VELTCAMP



Collecting trash in the woods in Dyke Marsh

PHOTO BY BOB VELTCAMP

Trash Cleanup Yields 2,505 Pounds

FROM PAGE 3

cleanups are cigarette butts and single use plastic items like bottles and food service items. Cigarette butts, most of which are made of cellulose acetate, a plastic, are the most frequently littered item in the state, nation and world, according to Clean Virginia Waterways. Many are transported from outside buildings and parking lots into stormwater systems and ultimately end up in streams and rivers.

A September 2024 Associated Press article reported that 57 million tons of plastic pollution is created worldwide every year, enough pollution to fill New York City's Central Park with plastic waste as high as the Empire State building, wrote Seth Borenstein. After cigarette butts and food wrappers, plastic bottles and bottle caps rank third and fourth in Virginia's top ten debris list, Clean Virginia Waterways found.

Around 300 million plastic bags end up in the Atlantic Ocean, estimates Litter Free Virginia. In 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors enacted a \$.05 bag tax on single-use plastic bags, an action that many credit with reducing their use and presence in the environment.

Single-use foam cups and food takeout containers are a common type of plastic pollution. Styrofoam or polystyrene, used for coolers, cups, carryout "clamshells" and packaging breaks apart, easily blows around and floats in water. It usually breaks down into small pieces. Birds and other animals mistake the tiny pieces for food which can lead to their death.

Starting July 1, 2025, Virginia will require



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Greg Crider showed volunteers a vodka bottle found along the shoreline.

food vendors that are part of a chain with 20 or more locations to stop using polystyrene containers. On July 1, 2026, smaller food vendors must phase them out. Gov. Glenn Youngkin proposed delaying the effective dates. The state legislature retained the deadlines and on March 24, the governor proposed a budget amendment to again delay the deadlines to 2028 for large chains and 2030 for smaller firms.

More Harm

Some plastics take hundreds of years to decompose. Some contain toxic chemicals. Most plastics break down into smaller frag-



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A foam pillow, rusty pipe and metal grill await pickup.

ments, called microplastics, that can enter the food web and be ingested by aquatic organisms, fish, birds and other wildlife. Microplastics are ubiquitous, wrote Amundalata Ajasa in the March 13 Washington Post. They have been found in human organs and bloodstreams.

Plastic and glass bottles and aluminum cans are approximately two and a half times more frequently littered in Virginia than in states with what are called "bottle bills," programs in which people pay a refundable deposit and return bottles for reuse or recycling. According to Wikipedia, the beverage container cycling rate is around 33 percent nationally, but states with beverage container deposit laws have a 70 percent average rate of container recycling. Despite some advocates' efforts in Richmond over the

years, the Virginia General Assembly has not passed a container deposit law.

The USA of Trash

The United States is the world's largest generator of waste, reported Forbes in January, the country that has less than five percent of the world's population but generates 12 percent of the planet's solid waste or garbage. Each American generates over 1,700 pounds a year. These numbers have earned the U.S. the title "trashiest country on the planet," one with "a throwaway culture."

The National Park Service has a motto: "Leave no trace, pack it in, pack it out." Apparently, given the 2,205 pounds of trash collected in just two hours in this small slice of Northern Virginia, many have not gotten the message.



SOURCE X.COM/GERRYCONNOLLY

U.S. Rep. Gerry E. Connolly (VA-11), a Democrat, at his telephone town hall in March.

Medicaid, What's At Stake

FROM PAGE 5

What the Public Thinks about Medicaid

According to the latest KFF Health Tracking Poll, March 7, 2025, fewer than one in five adults (17 percent) want to see Medicaid funding decrease, and most think funding should either increase (42 percent) or be kept about the same (40 percent). KFF is an independent health policy research, polling, and news source.

Ruby's grandson, Austin, attends a Medicaid-funded daycare center, and she provides him with Medicaid-funded care outside of his daycare hours "to give his mother a break." Ruby said her son, Austin's dad, is a fire marshal in Fairfax County but "doesn't make a whole lot of money."

Ruby explained Austin weighs about 65 pounds, is blind, and sits in his chair all day. He can do nothing for himself, not even move his hands. "When you walk him through a door, you have to move his hands in because otherwise he'll get stuck in the doorway. He really requires total and complete care."

What Austin can do, though, is hear and he can smile. "He has a beautiful smile," Ruby said.

In the debate over federal Medicaid cuts, the KFF focus groups report that Medicaid enrollees emphasize the program's importance to people and their families. Although not part of the KFF focus

groups and unaware of them, Ruby said, "It would be terrible if Medicaid were cut... devastating for him (Austin) to have to be without the care Medicaid covers."

<cl>What About Medicaid in Virginia?

Medicaid is a complicated health insurer. One reason is that each state, Virginia included, sets its standards for eligibility, how it addresses population health needs, and how it funds its share of the joint federal and state program.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, unveiled his 2025 Session Budget Amendments, HB1600 (Governor's Recommendations), to the House of Delegates on March 24. Youngkin said he had taken action to fund Medicaid. "Once adopted, the changes to our current biennial budget will ensure that all our obligations, including Medicaid, are fully funded." <https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/amendment/2025/1/HB1600/Enrolled/GR/>

"This budget provides an additional \$824.5 million for Health and Human Resources over the biennium. It meets and clears a significant hurdle by fully funding the Medicaid and SCHIP forecast increase with \$720.5 million in general fund, bringing us to a total of \$16 billion in general fund and \$53 billion in general and nongen-

SEE MEDICAID, PAGE 14

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‘Native Gardens’ DC-based comedy playing now through April 13 at ACCT.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Spring is in the air and flowers are blooming in “Native Gardens,” the Karen Zacarias play that shines a comedic light on the delicate dynamics between neighbors.

Set in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C., “Native Gardens” is especially timely as the script addresses privilege, class and racism through the metaphor of gardening.

“Native Gardens is a comedy with a point,” said producer Marg Soroos. “We all can laugh at our preconceived notions that are frequently not what we anticipated. Reality can be quite different.”

Directed by Kate Ives, “Native Gardens” follows Pablo (Eddie Perez-Reyes) and Tania (Odette Gutierrez del Arroyo), a young Latino couple who are expecting a baby as they move into a historic Georgetown rowhouse. Next door are Virginia (Judy Lewis) and Frank (Chuck Dluhy), an older white couple.

Pablo is a high-powered attorney while Tania is working on her PhD. Their dream home is a fixer-upper, but Tania, an avid gardener, has plans to transform their outdoor space into a beautiful native garden.

Next door are Virginia and Frank Butley. Frank is a former long-term government employee with the General Services Administration who also has a passion for gardening. He and Tania initially bond over their mutual love for horticulture but tensions rise as she prefers an unencumbered indigenous garden to Frank’s more traditional European displays.

While Frank is determined to finally win the elusive Horticultural Society Best Garden Award, Pablo and Tania begin building a



PHOTO BY HOWARD SOROOS

Odette Gutierrez del Arroyo (Tania), Chuck Dluhy (Frank), Eddie Perez-Reyes (Pablo), and Judy Lewis (Virginia) in Native Gardens, playing now through April 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theater. www.acctonline.org

fence to showcase their garden while entertaining law firm clients. In the process they discover that their property line is two feet into Frank’s beloved garden.

As friction escalates, the two couples show their true colors. Zacarias asks the question, can such different people from totally different backgrounds find a way to compromise?

“This is a wonderfully relevant play about our perceptions and our prejudices, our hopes and dreams, our strengths and our fragilities, and at the bottom of it all, the human connection we all have,” said Ives. “All these characters are right and all of them are wrong, depending on which side of the fence they’re on. As the audience, we get to see and sympathize with both sides and learn to be neighbors along with the characters.”

“Native Gardens” is playing now through April 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theatre, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308. For tickets or more information visit www.acctonline.org.

What begins as a property debate soon spirals into a comedic border dispute, exposing both couples’ notions of race, taste, entitlement and privilege.

“All of the characters in this play are good people,” said Chuck Dluhy, who plays Frank. “I classify ‘Native Gardens’ as a comedy with a message, similar to any Norman Lear sit-

com of the 1970s. Frank says some things that might be considered racist, ageist or privileged and portraying him as sincerely innocent and ignorant rather than coming off as mean-spirited was a challenge.”

Despite the neighborly drama, the audience is treated to inside jokes that only come from living in the region with references to DC locales or jabs at government job stereotypes.

As Virginia, Lewis said she was challenged by the role.

“It was a challenge being ‘that’ white woman,” Lewis said. “I’m very liberal at heart, so to play part of a couple that’s a bit more grounded in a conservative lifestyle forced me to break down my judgement and see the other side, learn where they’re coming from.”

While Perez-Reyes could relate to his character’s drive to succeed and prove himself to his colleagues, his challenge was a common one to anyone living in the area.

“It was difficult identifying with a character who can afford to buy a house and comfortably support a family.”

In “Native Gardens,” Zacarias deftly weaves timely societal issues into fast-paced, humorous dialogue.

“I want the audience to recognize these characters as neighbors and even friends,” director Ives said. “I want them to recognize themselves, too, and remember that we all need a little grace now and then. And to remember that laughter - of which there is a lot in this play - is what gets us all through the day.”

“Native Gardens” is playing now through April 13 at Aldersgate Church Community Theatre, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308. For tickets or more information visit www.acctonline.org.

Info on Extending Express Lanes

VDOT is holding public meetings on its 495 Southside Express Lanes widening project.

VDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, is conducting an environmental study to potentially extend the express lanes system on the southern section of I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway), by approximately 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. This location was identified in Virginia’s Commonwealth Transportation Board’s adopted I-95 Corridor Improvement Plan as an area for additional study.

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.

<https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/northern-virginia-district/i-495-southside-express-lanes-study/>

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)



495 Express Lanes Proposed Project.

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

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.

ENTERTAINMENT

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 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 9

"Faces of 1" -- Public Art by Michael Alfano. At Nepenthe Gallery, Hollin Hall, Alexandria. Michael is the artist and sculptor behind the sculptures in the "Faces of 1" public art project on Route One/Richmond Highway in Fairfax County.

NOW THRU 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.

APRIL 4-26

The "Synchronous" Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features artwork by Del Ray Artisans outstanding volunteers. These members help make Del Ray Artisans a thriving organization that fosters community and acceptance. Come celebrate their dedication and enjoy their artwork. Opening Reception on Friday, April 4, 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details: Del-RayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Little Hunting Creek Cleanup. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Meet at Janna Lee Ave. Bridge. Join Scott Surovell and Delegate Paul Krizek on Saturday, April 5 to clean up Little Hunting Creek. Sign up at scottsuovell.org/2025cleanup.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

First Saturday 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,



"Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing" is playing at The Little Theatre of Alexandria now through April 19, 2025.

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.

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Garden Talk - Design a Deer Resistant Garden. 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Discover how to prevent uninvited deer from helping themselves to your garden by planting deer resistant trees, shrubs and perennials and by using a combination of fencing and repellents. Extension Master Gardeners will help you develop an effective strategy to protect your garden. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code KE6.EBFL

SATURDAY/APRIL 5

Garden Artists - Spring Wildflowers. 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (5-Adult) The spring flowers are at peak bloom. Enjoy a walk through the gardens and native plant trail as we check out stunning spring flowers. Then we will make a spring flower craft. 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 NP2.1OXI

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 dis-

course. 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.

SUNDAY/APRIL 6

Textile Treasures. 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) From flax and wool to silks and taffetas, textiles have figured in every society throughout history. Artist and collector Caroline Hottenstein reveals laborious past methods of textile care and demonstrates the art and science of it today. Learn how proper cleaning, handling and storage will preserve your heirloom textile treasures. \$48 (lecture + tea); \$23 (lecture only).

SUNDAY/APRIL 6

MEG Photo Critique. 10:30 a.m. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 312, Alexandria. Receive valuable feedback from fine art photographer Sarah Hood Salomon and connect with fellow artists. It's a great way to invest in your skills! Photographers at all levels are welcome, and there is no cost to attend. Printed images only, please.

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 original 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.

MONDAY/APRIL 14

Garden Sprouts Spring - Nature Playgroup. 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road – Alexandria. (3-5 yrs.) Your preschooler will enjoy nature-themed activities and crafts while you meet other playgroup parents one Monday a month. Through games, songs, activities and a garden walk, we will explore seasonal topics. Kids must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who does not need to register for the program. \$12 per child. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code ZHJ.53KE

FRIDAY/APRIL 18

Wright at Twilight. 6:30 to 9 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, at twilight! Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, as you watch the changing light bring out the beautiful architectural details of the house. Play games in the yard, listen to period music, and tour the house at your leisure as the sun slowly sets. Tickets are \$30, with one drink included in the price of your ticket. Questions? Call (703) 780-4000 or email woodlawn@savingplaces.org. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

SATURDAY/APRIL 19

Lafayette at Woodlawn. 12-1 p.m. At

Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Learn about the Marquis de Lafayette, French Hero of the American Revolution, his 1824 return to America and his visit to Woodlawn, home of Eleanor Parke Custis and Lawrence Lewis. Cost \$25 per adult and \$12 per student (K-12). Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

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

Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In the parking lot of The Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Parking in Christ the King's parking lot, across the street on Oakcrest, will be allowed this spring. Find native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade! Ten or 11 vendors from Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania will be hosted at this event – the largest native plant sale in the D.C. metro region! Vendors are listed on the sale website at www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org. The sale is organized and run by volunteers. Contact Scott Knudsen at 571-232-0375 or cscottknudsen@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Big Flea Market. At Del Ray, Alexandria. The @mvsapta 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



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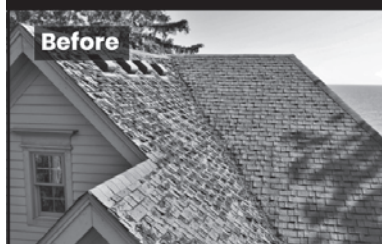
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News

Medicaid

FROM PAGE 11

eral fund support to those Virginians most in need," Youngkin said.

Given what Youngkin said, Ruby's stress about Virginia funding Medicaid may have lessened somewhat. Still, federal cuts and program changes, called by some "backdoor cuts," have not been expressed clearly. Nothing is set about the actual dollar amounts committed by the federal government to Medicaid.

<cl>What About Virginia's Trigger Law?

Connolly said that almost 90,000 of his constituents are "at direct risk of losing their health coverage. ... But that is just the tip of the iceberg. Medicaid is increasingly the tool that seniors use to access nursing home care, memory care, and assisted living facilities. Forty percent of all births in America are covered by Medicaid."

The repercussions of cutting Medicaid, especially in the Commonwealth of Virginia, are immense, given Virginia is one of nine states with "trigger laws." Virginia law requires significant cuts to enrollment or benefits if the federal government reduces its contribution to the Virginia program due to its trigger law. Now, the state pays 10 percent, and the federal government pays 90 percent.

"The consequences of cutting Medicaid would be catastrophic, particularly in Virginia, where state law mandates drastic cuts to enrollment or benefits if the federal government reduces its contribution to the program. I fought hard against the Republican budget in the House, and I will continue to do everything in my power to prevent these unimaginably cruel cuts from ever taking effect," Connolly said.

Nine states are poised to eliminate the Medicaid Expansion component of the Affordable Care Act, as they have some provision, a "trigger law" to eliminate Medicaid Expansion if federal funding is reduced, according to the Virginia Network of Private Providers, Inc. "That would end coverage for the expansion population, resulting in some 3 million people losing their health care." Most of the nine states' triggers activate if federal funding falls below the 90 percent threshold currently funded by the federal government, as does Virginia's. If funding falls below 80 percent, Arizona's trigger will eliminate its expansion.

David Broder, SEIU Virginia state council executive director, said on March 27 that SEIU is holding town halls so constituents can be

SEE MEDICAID, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

<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.

SATURDAY/MAY 3

Wine & Art Night. 7 to 10 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco Street, Alexandria. This exciting evening will feature wine tastings from Virginia's top wineries, an art showcase, a silent auction, and gourmet food and desserts, all in support of preserving Alexandria's rich history.

Event Highlights:

- Wine tastings from Prince Michel Vineyard & Winery and Slater Run Vineyards;
- Artwork from Barbara Cooper

- (paintings), Barbara Nowak (ceramics), Candace Stribling (jewelry), and Jenny Nordstrom (photography);
- Music provided by local band, DC Ambiance;
- Delicious food and dessert from Bittersweet Catering and Mari-beth's Bakery;
- Tickets: \$75 General Admission | \$125 VIP Admission (includes exclusive early access and a special reception)

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.

APRIL

- 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



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

- 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
- 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!

Medicaid, What's At Stake

FROM PAGE 14

heard even if their Congressional members are absent. The union plans to continue mobilizing constituents to demand meetings and town halls from their elected officials, even if they refuse.

"We've held round tables with three members of Congress in Virginia. We co-hosted a town hall that over 400 people came to in Congresswoman Jennifer Kiggan's district, even though she didn't We know she heard us yesterday; care workers and people with disabilities were on Capitol Hill lobbying. So we will keep doing that. We are going to keep holding actions, rallies, and lobby days," Broder said.

Ruby addressed her commitment to caring for Austin if Medicaid is not funded: "He's my grandson. I would take care of him whenever they needed it, but it would be devastating."

Frontline @seiuvirginia512 care workers from Virginia's 2nd Congressional District traveled to Washington, D.C. to ask their representative Jen Kiggans to protect Medicaid for children, families, older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans. They joined hundreds of SEIU members from around the country who travelled to Capitol Hill to share their personal stories, according to @seiuvirginia512.



SOURCE: INSTAGRAM SEIU_VA

From One Kenny to Another



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It wasn't exactly earth-shattering. Nor was it heart-stopping (thank God!). But in its own way it was eye-catching. What was it, some of you may ask? It was the new/recent Dupixent television spot featuring "Kenny and Moseetta," identified as "actual patients." Kenny was into "martial arts," it was his "passion." Moseetta enjoyed "working out." Not that either of these users/spokespersons were known to me or were into routines with which I was familiar. But there was an interesting element of this ad that caught my attention. The male was named Kenny, "an actual patient." I am also named Kenny but not an "actual patient." But I took note of this commercial for two reasons: (1) My given name is shown front and center on Kenny's shirt (actually, it's more left of center) and (2) I am the son of a psoriasis (a condition for which Dupixent is offered up as a possible solution) sufferer: my mother, may she rest in peace.

I have childhood recollections of my mother's arms and legs covered red with psoriasis. I also remember, not in great detail, but enough to know that whatever she used to try and find any relief did not work (back in the 60s). And not that there's any possibility that any of the many psoriasis medications currently on the market could in any way have benefited my mother (she died early Dec. '08). Nevertheless, I find myself drawn to the psoriasis advertisements thinking of my late mother and wondering in arrears, if any of these new medications could have helped her. (I do the same for my father, deceased Dec. '06, when I see Claritin commercials. My father had allergies and was forever taking Claritin tablets. Still, I'm likewise wondering if today's medications/formulations could have offered him some relief.)

But the psoriasis advertisement really caught my attention because the first-person advocate for this product's (Dupixent) positive effect is someone named Kenny. And not that I knee-jerk/listen/believe what anybody named Kenny says but I will admit to sort of giving him the benefit of the doubt. Moreover, my thinking isn't that Kenny knows more than some other "actual patient" not named Kenny. It simply means that I'm more inclined to listen just to see what this Kenny is saying and whether this Kenny, meaning me, could ever see myself saying it. Almost as if there's some magic/positive effect in the words spoken because there being spoken by someone named Kenny. And yet again, nothing could be further from the truth. To invoke Sgt. Schultz from the long ago "Hogan's Heroes:" "I know nothing."

Not totally true. I know sports and chocolate, and after writing a weekly column for 27+ years, I know a thing or two about creating content (no comments from the peanut gallery, please?) And even though my columns are somewhat short on substance and long on "dribble," as my late brother, Richard (died Dec. '22) described them, I guess seeing my given name on a television spokesperson's shirt triggered some familial memories. For which I'm always grateful.

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

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