

'Life As I See It'

Local author turns adversity into purpose.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Angela Harris was barely five months into her marriage to School Board member Chris Harris when she began experiencing severe headaches and blurred vision in October of 2019. Following a series of tests, a doctor delivered the news: Harris had a brain tumor that required immediate surgery.

"I had always worn glasses growing up so I thought the blurred vision just meant I needed a new prescription," Harris said. "I thought it was just part of getting older. But instead doctors found that there was something behind the eye that ended up being a

"We can't let one little thing discourage us from continuing to live."

— Author Angela Harris on losing her vision

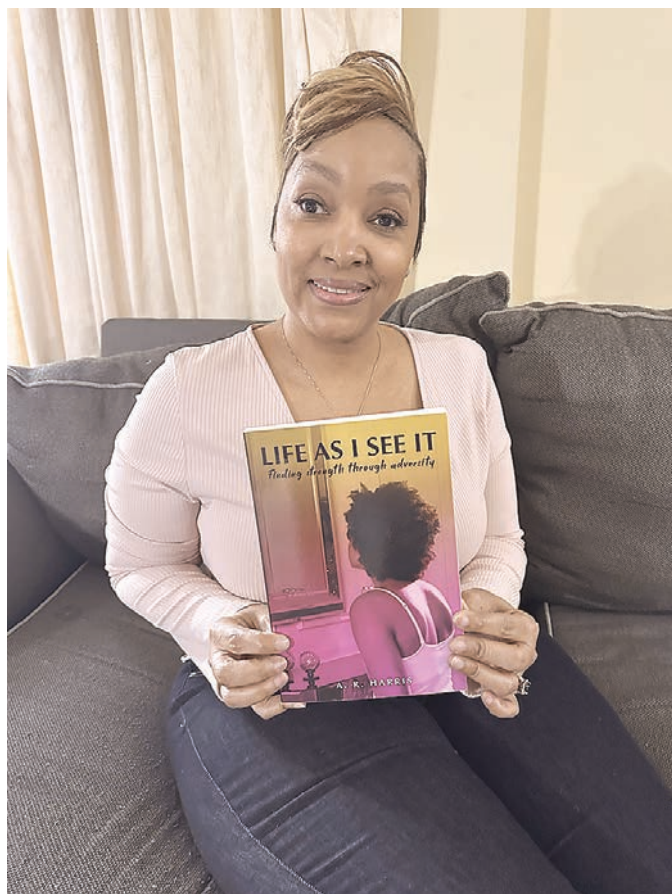
meningioma brain tumor. It was four centimeters large so at that point radiation was not an option. It had to be removed."

The risky procedure was a success but it came at a cost. Harris awoke from the procedure to find she had lost her vision. The date was Oct. 25, 2019.

"I don't think I really understood what had happened," Harris recalled. "It didn't sink in until several days later that my vision was not going to come back."

Adjusting to her new reality, Harris founded the IMperfeKtlymade Foundation, a non-profit organization to support blind and visually impaired people in the community. Last October, Harris and IMperfeKtlymade held its first fashion show fundraiser at The Garden in Alexandria, featuring models who

SEE HELPING, PAGE 14



Angela Harris, who lost her sight just months after marrying School Board member Chris Harris, holds a copy of her new book "Life As I See It."



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Angela Harris gets a kiss from husband Chris Harris.



A makeup artist puts the finishing touches on Angela Harris backstage at the IMperfeKtlymade Foundation fashion show Oct. 19, 2024, at The Garden in Alexandria. Harris, who is blind, founded the organization to assist blind and low vision members of the community.



Angela Harris describes losing her vision, which is detailed in her new book "Life As I See It."

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National Fentanyl Awareness Day April 29

In recognition of National Fentanyl Awareness Day on April 29, the Opioid Work Group is distributing Opioid Harm Reduction Bags to raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl-laced illicit drugs and provide life-saving resources. Harm reduction bags include:

- ❖ Naloxone, a nasal spray that reverses opioid overdoses.
- ❖ Test strips, allowing individuals to test substances for the presence of fentanyl or xylazine.
- ❖ Educational materials and community resources to support prevention, treatment, and harm reduction efforts.

Community members who want to be equipped with these first aid resources or learn more about treatment options are encouraged to pick up a harm reduction bag from April 26 through May 2 at designated City locations.

For a list of locations and times, visit alexandriava.gov/Opioids. Bags are available at no cost—without judgment, only support and resources to save lives.

The presence of fentanyl in counterfeit pills, often disguised as Oxycodone, Percocet, or Xanax, continues to drive overdoses nationwide. Alexandria residents can help prevent medication misuse and spread life-

saving information by:

- ❖ Taking only medications prescribed by a doctor or purchased from a pharmacy.
- ❖ Educating others about the dangers of fentanyl in counterfeit pills and street drugs.
- ❖ Using conversation guides to discuss substance use risks with youth.
- ❖ Safely disposing of unused or expired medications at designated drop-off locations.
- ❖ Securing medications with free locking medicine boxes.
- ❖ Accessing and carrying free Naloxone for emergency overdose response.

For more information on harm reduction efforts and substance use resources in Alexandria, visit alexandriava.gov/Opioids.

The City's Department of Community and Human Services provides access to treatment for people dealing with any form of substance misuse. Call 703-746-3636 (Virginia Relay 711) 24 hours a day. For help stopping the use of heroin or other opioids, call the Opioid Treatment Program at 703-746-3610. Always call 911 if you suspect someone is overdosing. Visit alexandriava.gov/Opioids for more information. Visit alexandriava.gov/SAPCA to learn about ways to prevent youth substance misuse.

Harm Reduction Kits

Harm Reduction Kits will be available free for pickup at the following locations:

SINGLE DAY LOCATIONS

Event	Day	Hours	Location
Drug Take Back Day	Saturday, April 26	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Alexandria Police Department Headquarters (3600 Wheeler Ave.)
Drug Take Back Day	Saturday, April 26	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Fire Station 210 (5255 Eisenhower Ave.)
Drug Take Back Day	Saturday, April 26	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray (2204 Mt. Vernon Ave.)
Drug Take Back Day	Saturday, April 26	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Woodbine Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center (2729 King St.)
Drug Take Back Day Mark Center	Saturday, April 26 Tuesday, April 29	10 a.m. - 2 p.m. 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Wegmans (150 Stovall St.) 4850 Mark Center Dr. First floor lobby
NOVA Shelter Care	Tuesday, April 29	3-6 p.m.	4850 Mark Center Dr. First floor lobby
Recovery Court	Thursday, May 1	2-3 p.m.	520 King St 4th Floor Court room 4

WEEKLONG LOCATIONS

Event	Day	Hours	Location
Beatley Library	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Friday through Saturday	5005 Duke Dr.

REC CENTERS

Event	Day	Hours	Location
Chinquapin Park Recreation Center & Aquatics Facility	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	9 a.m. - 9 p.m.	3210 King St.
Charles Houston Recreation Center	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	9 a.m. - 9 p.m.	901 Wythe St.
Leonard "Chick" Armstrong Recreation Center	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	9 a.m. - 9 p.m.	25 W Reed Ave.

OTHER SITES

Event	Day	Hours	Location
All American Barber Shop	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	Monday to Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.	1106 Queen St.
Heads-Up Barbershop	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	Monday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Friday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.	300 N Fayette St.
Casa Chirilagua	Saturday, April 26 - Thursday, May 2	Monday to Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.	4109 Mount Vernon Ave.

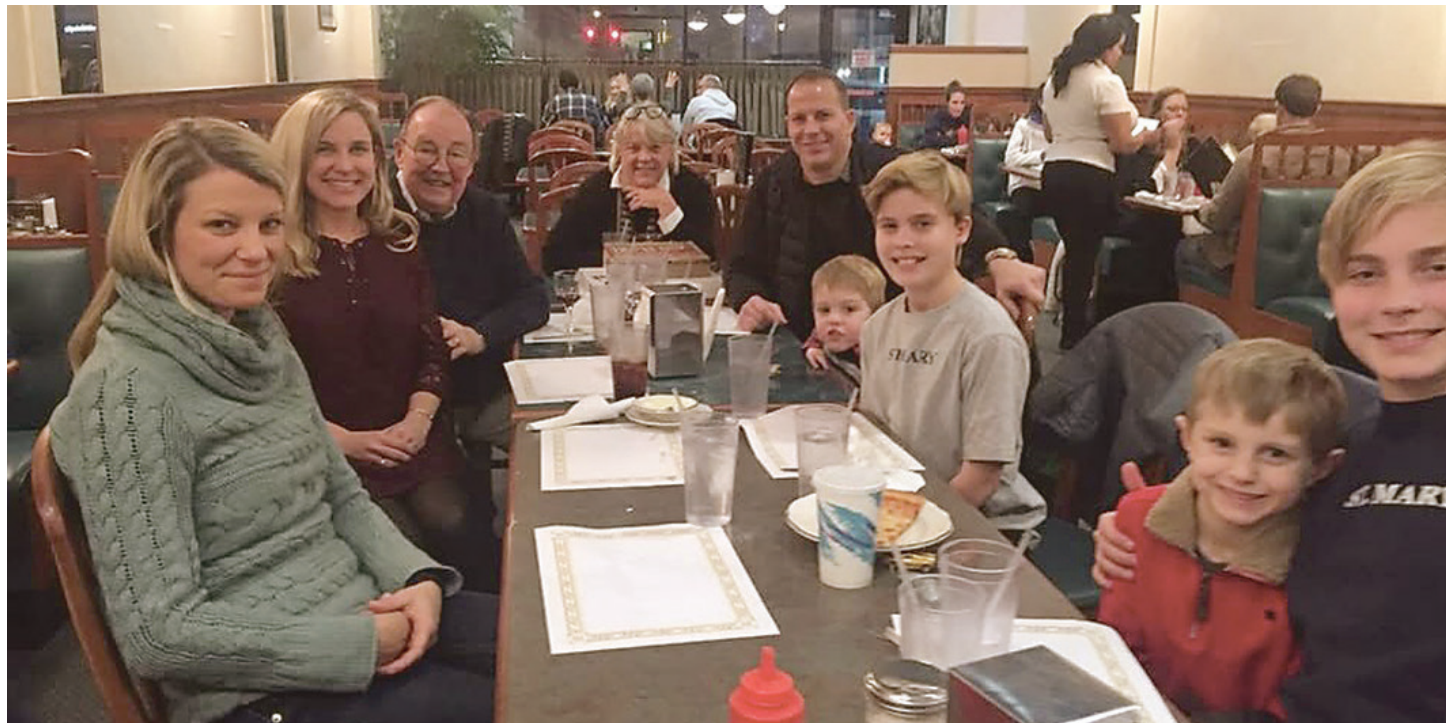
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OBITUARY



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Noted architect Revell Michael died April 7 at the age of 93.



Revell and Ann Michael in an undated family photo.

G. Revell Michael Noted architect dies at 93.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

G. Revell Michael, a noted architect credited with the design of hundreds of churches, libraries and numerous residential projects throughout Alexandria, died April 7 at the age of 93.

A resident of Alexandria for more than 60 years, Michael was known for designs that adhered to the context and character of their location. For six years he served as a respected member of the Board of Architectural Review.

"Revell was a marvelous man," said Tom Hulfish, former chair of the Architectural Review Board. "He was an excellent architect and did very nice things throughout Alexandria."

Michael was born Nov. 24, 1931, to George Revell Michael and Mildred Heiser Michael. He was raised in Baltimore, attending public schools before spending his final year of high school at the home of his ancestors in Accomack County in Virginia.

Michael received a Bachelor of Arts De-

gree from the College of William and Mary and a Bachelor of Architecture Degree from the University of Virginia. While in college Michael was active in the William and Mary Theater, the Colonial Williamsburg Players, and the outdoor drama The Common Glory. As a senior in college, he enlisted in the Richmond Light Infantry Blues and after graduation served with the Army and Air Force in Korea.

Following his military service, Michael gained his early design experience in the architects' office of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. While there he worked closely with renowned authorities on Virginia's colonial tidewater architecture. This was the impetus that led him to the Charlottesville office of Milton L. Grigg, FAIA, a native Alexandrian and a church architect who was among the original restoration architects of

Monticello.

In 1963, Michael joined the Alexandria firm of Saunders & Pearson where he designed his first residential project, Cameron Mews, in Alexandria's waterfront area. He went on to design many building types including over 600 new residences in Alexandria's Old and Historic District. His designs have gained the approval of architectural control boards in Alexandria, Fairfax, Leesburg, Middleburg, Annapolis, and Savannah, Georgia.

Until his retirement from active practice in 2001, Michael was a principal in the architectural firm of Michael & Richards, Ltd., the successor firm to Michael & Michael, Inc. which he founded in 1967 with his former wife Linda H. Michael. A major element of the firm's practice was its mentorship of aspiring architects with several

alumni becoming highly regarded in the profession.

Michael served as president of the Alexandria Businessmen's Club, the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects, the Virginia Foundation for Architectural Education, and the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association, (the Athenaeum).

In addition to memberships in professional organizations and learned societies, he was active with service organizations including the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, the Loudoun Tourism Council, and the University of Virginia Alumni Association. In 2000 he was admitted to membership in the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Michael is survived by his wife of 26 years, Ann Dozier Michael, five children, and five grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held Wednesday, April 23, at 10 a.m. at Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax Street.

"Rev was quite the raconteur," Hulfish added. "He spoke so well and was known to always have a good story to share. He will be missed."

"Revell was an excellent architect and did very nice things throughout Alexandria."

— Former Architectural Review Board chair Tom Hulfish

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

Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office

manager skills would be the ideal candidate. www.volunteerallexandria.org

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/ALIVE>
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.

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's

top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com.

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 donaledge@aol.com.

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that

aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

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.

Aging in Place

National Home Care Advocacy Day.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Aging in place. It's what most Americans want as they get older: to stay in their own homes and maintain independence for as long as possible. But concerns about safety, getting around, or performing daily activities sometimes necessitate the need for home care in order to avoid moving into an institutional care facility.

Driven by an aging population, the home care industry has become an essential pillar of the healthcare system offering non-hospital care solutions to support individuals who require assistance with daily living or managing chronic illness.

With over 4.5 million individuals currently employed as home health aides or personal care aides in the United States, providers from across the country participated in National Home Care Advocacy Day April 9 on Capitol Hill to ensure legislators were aware of the latest industry needs.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Synergy Home Care of Arlington/Alexandria CEO Mitch Opalski, center, poses with fellow home care advocates during National Home Care Advocacy Day April 9 on Capitol Hill.

"Home care is getting more and more focused in the continuum of healthcare," said Mitch Opalski, CEO of Synergy Home Care of Arlington/Alexandria. "Awareness is a big part of our advocacy. It's important that people know that home care is vital in keeping people healthy and out of the hospital."

To avoid institutional care, older adults or those with disabilities may

need one or a combination of two types of home care: home care and home health care. Home care refers to non-medical care such as home-maker services (laundry, cooking, etc.), assistance with daily living activities (walking, bathing, etc.), personal care, or companionship.

Home health care must be prescribed by a doctor or nurse practitioner and is delivered by licensed medical professionals such as reg-

istered nurses or physical therapists. Medicaid and Medicare are the largest payers in home health spending in the United States, but much is also paid out of pocket.

"The second reason that we're on the Hill is to specifically ask Congress to support legislation that helps our industry," Opalski said. "What we're focused on right now is the cost. Our kind of care is only covered by one type of in-

surance – a specific long term care policy that not many companies do and most people are not aware of. So families are left paying out of pocket. If you can't afford it you don't get the care or it's done by a family member or you go on Medicaid. What we're telling Congress is if there's no government program to pay for our kind of care, if it's not covered by Medicare, give

SEE AGING IN PLACE, PAGE 11



Mitch Opalski, right, CEO of Synergy Home Care of Arlington/Alexandria, and Dr. Felix Gbee, CEO of Synergy of Leesburg, visit U.S. Sen. Mark Warner's office as part of National Home Care Advocacy Day April 9 on Capitol Hill.

Celebrating Passover

Children learn the rituals of their faith.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Each spring, three major holidays are celebrated for the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths: Ramadan, the holiest month for Muslims, was March 1 through March 30; Easter, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus for Christians is April 20; and Passover, which began April 12 and will end April 19, celebrates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

"We are teaching the kids about Passover," said Jen Halpern, Agudas Achim Preschool director and director of young family engagement. "We are in the midst of learning about celebrating Passover, we are teaching them the elements of this story and lots of the traditions and rituals."

Halpern used crafts and music to teach the class of 2- to 5-year-olds the story of Passover.

"We really want them to understand that this is a celebration of freedom," Halpern said. "We want them to understand what it means to be able to make your own choices and to understand that this is a celebration of Jewish freedom and also a freedom for

all people."

Each class had a different craft ranging from creating matzah, Afikomen bags or preparing Seder plates.

"The rituals are the way that we celebrate and the objects represent a part of the Passover story," Halpern said. "It's really important for all of their activities to be very hands-on -- we're not just talking at them but we're engaging them and engaging their senses."

The Seder is the ritual meal used to illustrate the story of Passover.

"We use the Seder to feel as if we were there and to remember that in some way we were all present at this event," Halpern said. "It is a very long meal but in many ways it was designed with children in mind. There are opportunities throughout the meal for the children to ask questions and to participate."

The children also used music to learn about the plagues that befell the Jewish people with students creating props and performing a sing-a-long for family and friends.

"Even a silly story about frogs jumping around in a Pharaoh's bed or on his head or in his underwear help tell the story," Halpern said.



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Children at Agudas Achim Congregation preschool hold objects representing Passover including matzah, the Afikomen bag, a picture of the parted Red Sea, and a picture of Moses and Miriam during a Passover class March 27.

More importantly, Halpern added, "Three of the world's biggest religions celebrate a very special holiday. We celebrate Passover

and our neighbors, many of them celebrate Easter and Ramadan and I just want to wish everyone a beautiful spring holiday season."



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Alexandria Gazette Packet Wins Awards

Each year the Virginia Press Association (VPA) holds a competition to select the best published material from newspapers and news sites from across the state. This is one of the largest competitions in the country and judged by journalists from outside the commonwealth.

The Connection and Gazette newspapers received thirteen awards for their work in 2024. The awards were announced at the Omni Richmond on April 12 where the Virginia Press Association “celebrated the talent, dedication, and impact of those shaping the media landscape.”

In the Alexandria Gazette Packet

Jeanne Theismann, Third Place for Column Writing, “Legends of Alexandria” Judge’s comment: “An extremely elegant way to present spotlight stories. Each story was informative and well presented. Good solid writing by Jeanne Theismann highlighting a lifetime of achievements by each individual.”

Jeanne Theismann, Third Place for Education Writing.

In the Mount Vernon Gazette

Glenda Booth, Second Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story. Judge’s comment: “It’s a tough assignment to tackle stories of critical importance but with an

overarching theme that in less competent hands might be overlooked. In this case each story was well researched and written and succeeded in holding the reader’s attention.”

Glenda Booth, Second Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing Susan Laume, Third Place, Picture Story or Essay, “Washington’s Birthday”

Judge commented there were several events submitted in this category but this rose to the top for the variety of angles and events depicted. “I really liked the smoke rising over the costumed soldiers. Good work!” Susan Laume, Third Place, Health, Science & Environmental Writing

In the Arlington Connection

Eden Brown & Shirley Ruhe, First Place for Headline Writing. Judge’s comment: “Cutely conveys the squirrel’s success, with a nod to the A-team. Love it.”

Eden Brown & Giovanni Flores, Second Place for Combination Picture and Story, “Memorial Day.” Judge’s comment: “Wonderful photos and variety of quotes that hit hard. Very well done coverage



Bonnie Hobbs



Glenda Booth



Susan Laume



Bonnie Hobbs



Shirley Ruhe



Eden Brown

for an annual event.”

Shirley Ruhe, Second Place, Personality or Portrait Photo, “Way Too Long.” Judge’s comment: “The musician in the foreground and background each bring a different feeling to the photo.”

Shirley Ruhe, Second Place, Feature Series or Continuing Story, “Food Insecurity Series.” Judge’s comment: “Lovely writing on an important subject that focused on issues affecting so many communities in the country beset by widening levels of poverty in what we think of as a land of opportunity.”

In the Fairfax County North Connection

Bonnie Hobbs, Second Place, Feature Writing Portfolio. Judges comment “Your writing and interviews were so thorough.

I appreciated the perspective you gathered for the Chantilly High job fair in particular and your coverage of Maj. Jane Russell’s career was clear and informative.”

Bonnie Hobbs, Second Place, In-depth or Investigative Reporting, “Senior Housing Approval” Judge’s comment “Lots of deep diving here on airport issues re: noise and how it could affect a senior housing project. I liked the “side bar” story on the misrepresentation of a sub-committee’s decision. Thank you!

In the Fairfax County South Connection

Bonnie Hobbs, Third Place, Investigative-Government. Judge’s comment “Thorough recap and coverage of unusual decision by local city to part ways with city manager. Reporter hit bases with all sides told and what is possibly next as new council prepares to take office shortly after outgoing council left them with no city leader.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOUNT VERNON LADIES’ ASSOCIATION
George Washington.

ting the ceremonial kick off of the Fairfax 250th Celebrations which will include hundreds of events throughout the County over the next two years.

This significant anniversary is a celebration of not only how our country began, but also the first steps of the journey we have been SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL!, PAGE 7

Semiquincentennial!

Fairfax County Kicks off 250th Celebrations with George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

I am thrilled to invite you to join the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association and the Fairfax 250th Commission as we kick off the Nation’s Semiquincentennial Celebrations here in Fairfax County! Sunday, May 4, is the 250th anniversary of the day George Washington departed his beloved Mount Vernon to attend the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where he was ultimately appointed commander in chief of the newly created Continental Army.

For the duration of the war, he only briefly returned to his estate for a day or so in September 1781, prior to the Yorktown campaign and ultimate victory.

At 1:30 p.m. on May 4, as part of Revolutionary War Weekend at George Washington’s Mount Vernon we will be recognizing this moment with remarks from “George Washington,” as well as myself and Mount Vernon President & CEO Doug Bradburn. US Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll and Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay have also been invited.

Following the remarks, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at the Patriots Path, Mount Vernon’s brand-new installation of a military encampment for guests to visit year-round. George Washington, along with musicians and reenactors will march down the Patriots Path and out the front gates to “head to Philadelphia.”

This rich visual display is befit-

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jeanne Theismann
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner,
Mark Mogle
Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe
Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier,
Glenda Booth
Contributing Writers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Hope Nelson
Food Writer
hope@kitchenrecessionista.com
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope
Senior Reporter
michaelleepope@gmail.com
@michaelleepope

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

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

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

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

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

Art/Design:
Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:
Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.



Semiquincentennial!

FROM PAGE 6

making over the last 250 years. This is not only just a celebration of our history, but of our movement toward greater justice and equity, and the journey to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence that all people “are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is a time to commemorate what defines us as a nation and the values that we hold most dearly. We have come far,

but we have more work to do to ensure these values for all Americans.

I am proud to be a leader in the County’s Semiquincentennial planning, starting in 2020 with the unanimous support of my Board colleagues, by directing the Fairfax 250 Commission be established to create and host appropriate events and celebrations. We look forward to you joining us on May 4 and throughout the next two years.

To learn more about the Fairfax 250th Celebrations, visit: <https://www.fxva.com/fairfax250/>.

Library: Freedom to Learn

Dear editor at Fairfax Connection,

I visit my library every week. It’s full of people using the resources there. The meeting

rooms are booked for community meetings, children are there with their parents picking out books, people are working on their own laptops using the WIFI, and people use the library’s computers because they don’t have their own. In gener-

al there is a lot of life in the library. I save money by checking out books rather than buying them. I’ve made friends there by volunteering my time to keep library services running. We need libraries because they help support people of all ages and backgrounds. A library is central to a well informed public. We need to protect the library and what it stands for. The freedom to learn is priceless!

Karen Moore
Fairfax Station, 22039



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
WYTHE	19757	681	BRUSHY MOUNTAIN ROAD	BR REED CREEK	3/25/2025
FRANKLIN	7914	703	AYERS ROAD 703	POPLAR CAMP CREEK	3/19/2025
ALBEMARLE	746	680	BROWNS GAP TURNPIKE	LICKINGHOLE CREEK	3/13/2025
SCOTT	23815	812	RED STONE DRIVE	STREAM	3/11/2025
DINWIDDIE	6037	619	COURTHOUSE ROAD	HORSEPEN BRANCH	3/10/2025
FLOYD	7503	221	FLOYD HWY SOUTH221	BRANCH HOWELL CREEK	3/7/2025

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.

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Saturday, April 26 | 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



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SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

The U.S. is experiencing an opioid epidemic and Alexandria is far from immune. The best way to fight this epidemic is to dispose of unused or expired prescription and over-the-counter medication. Individuals can drop off medication at these designated locations during this event or year-round at a permanent drop box location. Never flush medication down the toilet or place down the sink! Unsafe disposal of drugs can harm the environment. To learn more about the importance of safe medication disposal, visit alexandriava.gov/go/1981.

Alexandria Take Back Day Drop-Off Locations*

- | | |
|---|---|
| Alexandria Police Headquarters
3600 Wheeler Ave. | The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray
2204 Mt. Vernon Ave. |
| Alexandria Fire Station 210
5255 Eisenhower Ave. | Walgreens Pharmacy
3614 King St. |
| Woodbine Rehab. & Health Center
2729 King St. | Wegmans
150 Stovall St. |

*NO NEEDLES ACCEPTED AT THESE SITES

Can't make it to Drug Take Back Day? Dispose of medications year-round at one of these permanent drug drop box locations!

- | | |
|--|--|
| The Neighborhood Pharmacy
2204 Mount Vernon Ave.
Monday-Friday: 9 a.m.-7p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: Closed | Alexandria Police Headquarters
3600 Wheeler Ave. Just inside the entrance Available 24/7 |
| Inova Alexandria Hospital
4320 Seminary Rd.
Emergency Department Available 24/7 | |

NEEDLE DISPOSAL BOX ALSO AVAILABLE AT THIS LOCATION!



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Dave O'Neill brought vegetables from Harrisonburg, Virginia.



Ryan Starnes came from Kentucky and had prepared for messy weather.



Many trays of young vegetables awaited shoppers.

Diehard Gardeners Brave the Elements at AHS Garden Market

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
GAZETTE PACKET

It was a rainy, drippy slog that tested gardeners' grit on April 11, the first of the American Horticultural Society's (AHS) two-day, annual, spring garden market in Mount Vernon. Ellen Sliger with Nature by Design said the temperature, hovering around 44 degrees, was 20 degrees below normal, as she tried to operate her handheld credit card machine with gloved fingers.

The 35 vendors, most huddled under sodden tents awaiting customers, tried to keep spirits up. "Today we have the diehard gardeners," said Dave O'Neill with Radical Roots from Harrisonburg, Virginia.

By 2 p.m., Ben Stowe with Little Hat Creek Farm had had about 30 customers since the 9 a.m. opening.

It rained, poured and drizzled all day. The plants loved it.

On Sunday, the rain had stopped, but the sky was overcast and gray. By 1 p.m., the temperature had inched up to 50 degrees. Nonetheless, the plant lovers descended. By the 3 p.m. end, around 1,300 had purchased and perused over two days. Last year, around 2,300 people shopped on two sunny days.

Stowe brought "ecologically grown" vegetables, fruits and other plants from his Nelson County, Virginia, farm. This was his third year, calling it "a good market." His website says "We are doing our best to leave our land and our community better than we found it."

The "Peony's Envy" sign lured the curious by the name alone. Kathleen Gagan grows only peonies at her Bernardsville, New Jersey, farm and gave Cory McGee of Hollin Hills a how-to-grow-peonies tutorial. "I'm trying to learn," McGee said.

On peonies, Gagan explained, "I got into this by accident. It's the first crop I grew that did not fail. The deer won't eat them." She has a 14-acre display garden and 12 acres in production at her farm. Asked how many peonies? She replied, "Tens of thousands."



Shoppers braved the rain and loaded up wagons with their purchases.



Bruce Ciske makes vases in his Mount Vernon-area studio and goes to the market every year.

Mount Vernon-area potter Bruce Ciske goes every year to sell his distinctive vases and containers, often bought by Ikebana enthusiasts. "I wouldn't miss it," he said. "There are pleasant people here."

Ryan Starnes's iron garden art, including butterflies and dragonflies made from spoons, forks and knives, sparkled even in the rain. He's with Greg's Art and Garden and came all the way from Covington, Kentucky.

Inside the estate house, more art, woodworks, stoneware, floral arrangements, ceramics, soap and other products were for sale.

This year's market sponsors were Hartley Botanic, Bartlett Tree Experts, Burke and Herbert Bank, Wegmans, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Thomas Fannon and Sons, Alexandria Living Magazine and Party Potty.

AHS headquarters at River Farm is on the northernmost of George Washington's five farms.

Tallamy Coming Up

On April 17 at 2 p.m., in a virtual program, native plant champion Dr. Douglas Tallamy will discuss his new book, *How Can I Help? Saving Nature with Your Yard*. For more programs, visit www.ahsgardening.org/.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Kathleen Gagan from New Jersey gave Cory McGee from Hollin Hills a lesson in peony growing.

Comment Now on Housing 2040 Master Plan

The City of Alexandria's Office of Housing invites the community to provide feedback on the draft Principles and Goals developed to guide the Housing 2040 Master Plan. Input received will inform the development of the final Housing 2040 principles, goals, and recommendations.

Please use the comment form to provide feedback on the draft Principles and Goals through April 20. To access the form in Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Dari, and Pashto, please select your preferred language in the upper right hand corner of the comment form. The Principles and Goals are also available in Spanish; Amharic; Arabic; Dari; and Pashto.

The draft Principles and Goals were shared at the Housing 2040 Community Meeting and Open House on March 18 at Patrick Henry K-8 School. The meeting presentation and boards (Financial Tools Board;

Preservation Board; Homeownership Board; and Tenant Issues Board), including a summary of the Housing 2040 Survey findings, are available on the Housing 2040 website.

Background: The 2013 Housing Master Plan established principles, goals, and strategies to address Alexandria's housing needs through 2025. In collaboration with the community and local partners, the City is undertaking an update to the Housing Master Plan through 2040. Presentations and recordings of the Housing 2040 kick-off meetings and follow-up meetings on Housing 2040 topics are available at alexandriava.gov/HousingPlan.

Starting with the Housing Needs Assessment, the Housing 2040 process will establish new housing affordability goals and examine housing policies, programs, and tools to support all Alexandria residents and workers. The current Housing Master Plan ends this year, 2025.

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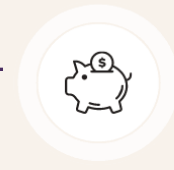
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Extend Express Lanes on the Beltway?

After public meetings, deadline for public comment is April 21.

Preserving Space for Future Metrorail

- Alternatives under consideration incorporate rail preservation across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge through:
 - » Retaining existing, unoccupied space, or
 - » Incorporating a commitment to convert necessary space to rail transit in the future
- Rail preservation commitment would be incorporated as part of environmental (NEPA) process, which must receive federal approval.
- Terms within any potential contract or concessionaire agreement would incorporate a requirement for conversion to rail transit in the future.



I-495: Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge
*Should future transit (i.e., rail) be provided by others

VDOT Public Information Meeting April 2025

A VDOT poster indicates that “rail preservation would be incorporated.”

Typical Sections for 1 and 2 Express Lanes Alternatives

1 Express Lane Alternative

Virginia (I-95 to Eisenhower Ave.)

Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge

Maryland (I-295 to MD210)

2 Express Lanes Alternative

Virginia (I-95 to Eisenhower Ave.)

Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge

These are representative typical sections based on planning-level design

Public Information Meeting April 2025

This poster shows the two express lane build options.



At recent public meetings, attendees visited VDOT stations and discussed the proposal with VDOT staffers. April 1 at West Potomac High School.



VDOT's Michelle Shropshire chaired the meeting at West Potomac High School on April 1.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

Stop-and-go traffic congestion on the Beltway/I-495 approaching the Woodrow Wilson Bridge from vehicles traveling both the east and west is a frequent, frustrating headache for many drivers, especially daily commuters.

The Virginia Department of Transportation has a possible solution – 11 additional miles of express toll lanes.

At public meetings on April 1, 2, 7 and 9, VDOT officials presented the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study, which started in 2022 and focuses on the stretch of the Beltway from the Springfield interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) to the route 210 interchange in Maryland near National Harbor.

On April 1 at West Potomac High School, Michelle Shropshire predicted, “Traffic conditions will get much worse,” citing modeling from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Shropshire is the VDOT Megaprojects Director for VDOT's Northern Virginia District. VDOT's analyses predict that under the “no build” alternative (existing conditions) by 2050, on westbound lanes, morning travel times could more than double, from 16 to 52 minutes; on east-

bound lanes in the afternoons and evenings, from 21 to 54 minutes.

They presented three options: no build; one express lane in each direction from Van Dorn Street to the Maryland 210 interchange; and two express lanes in each direction from Van Dorn Street to the I-295 interchange.

There would be no loss of existing lanes. “We would use the space we now have,” said Shropshire. Describing the current 94 miles of express or “managed lanes” in Northern Virginia as “a robust system,” these plans would fill a gap, the last segment without express lanes.

The VDOT officials' justifications for the project's needs are providing continuity in the current system; offering more travel choices; reducing congestion; improving safety; and providing consistency with local and regional plans.

Today, over 200,000 vehicles travel on Interstate 495 between the Springfield interchange and Interstate 295 on average each day. During peak hours, by 2050, adding one lane could move 1,600 more people, VDOT contends. Adding two lanes could move 2,400 more people. They said that currently 50 percent of vehicles going east exit at route 210 or In-

SEE AFTER PUBLIC MEETINGS, PAGE 15

Schedule:

April 21, deadline for public comments

June, public hearing on the preferred alternative

Mid- to late-2025, regional transportation planning board decision

Late 2025, public hearing on the final environmental assessment

Early 2026, federal decision

Information, public comment form:

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

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Aging in Place

FROM PAGE 4

us some other kind of relief.”

Opalski and other home care advocates from across the state had meetings with congressional representatives, including those from U.S. Sen. Mark Warner’s office.

Advocates lobbied in support of the following pieces of legislation:

❖ The Credit For Caring Act (118th Congress - S.3702, H.R.7165): Allows an eligible caregiver a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for 30 percent of the cost of long-term care expenses that exceed \$2,000 in a taxable year.

❖ Lowering Costs for Caregivers Act (119th Congress - H.R.138): Allows individuals to use tax-free health savings accounts (HSAs) and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) on medical expenses for their parents and loved ones.

❖ Homecare for Seniors Act (118th Congress - H.R.1795): Allows tax-exempt distributions from health savings accounts to be used for qualified home care services such as assistance with eating, bathing, and dressing.

“As people get older they get more chronic diseases that need to

be managed,” Opalski said. “Our aides are the ones who are best at doing that. It could save the healthcare system a lot of money by keeping people out of acute care settings like nursing homes and the hospital by overseeing medication compliance, good nutrition, exercise, and mental stimulation. What we are asking for is not a burden on the government and is not going to be an additional cost to the federal budget.”

An AARP report found that family caregivers spend, on average, 26 percent of their income on caregiving expenses or over \$7,200 annually. Family members and others who provide care for veterans spend on average \$11,500 of their personal income on out-of-pocket costs related to caregiving each year.

“We fought for two years to get the Elizabeth Dole Act passed regarding home care services for veterans,” Opalski said. “The advocacy works. It takes time but still it’s worth it to take a day out of our busy lives and go on the Hill and try to keep home care somewhere in the mix.”

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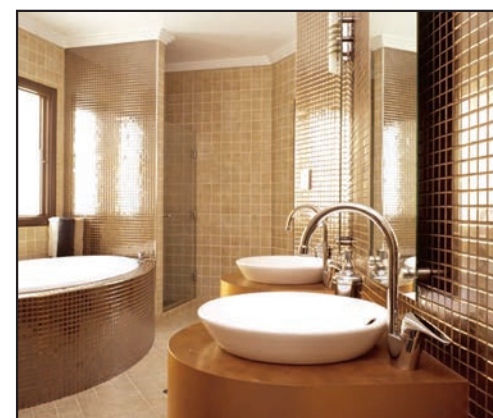
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Wright at Twilight can be seen on Friday, April 18, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

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 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. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THURSDAYS, APRIL 17, MAY 8 & 22

Spring Garden Tour & Tea. 1-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Take a tour of the beautiful demonstration gardens with an Extension Master Gardener docent. Find inspiration in our horticulturists' plant choices and garden bed designs. Hear about our 18th century origins and our mission today, then step inside for afternoon tea. Garden tours run rain or shine. \$42 (lecture + tea).

FRIDAY/APRIL 18

Garden Talk - Attracting Bees, Butterflies & Bugs. 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adults) Put out the welcome mat for pollinators such as bees, birds and beneficial insects by providing a garden in plant diversity for food and habitat. Extension Master Gardeners help you with plant lists and share techniques for attracting these pollinators. \$12 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code D2A.VNJO.

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>

APRIL 18-19

Tree and Shrub Seedling Distribution. At Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Friday from 3 to 7 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. A free tree and shrub seedling distribution will be held. Fairfax ReLeaf, a local non-profit, has partnered with Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, Amazon and Arbor Day Foundation to support this event. The goal of this event is to increase the tree canopy thereby benefiting the environment and community residents through improved air quality, climate change mitigation, and enhanced outdoor spaces. Species available will be buttonbush, elderberry, red maple, and bald cypress.



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

SATURDAY/APRIL 19

Spring Plants for Small Gardens. 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adults) Join Green Spring Gardens' curatorial horticulturist Brenda Skarphol on a walk to look at the variety of colors and forms of beloved spring plants. See a mix of herbaceous perennials, trees, shrubs, and vines that grow well in small spaces, from containers to patios to gardens. Get plant recommendations tailored to your garden. 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 OGM.5ZHK

SATURDAY/APRIL 19

Colored Pencil & Acrylic Workshop. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Colored pencils and acrylic layering is a fantastic technique for building up soft textures, sharp edges, and rich colors. Drawing from colorful photographs or still-life objects of flora and fauna, artist Dawn Flores helps you explore the techniques used to take colored pencils a step beyond their traditional use. Supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code BD3.TFLL

SATURDAY/APRIL 19

Family Fun - Mother Earth. 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (5-Adult) Earth is a special home for all living things both big and small. Take a day to learn about motherhood in nature, explore mythology on Mother Earth, and make a craft using natural materials. Walk our natural gardens and learn how the plant provides for all animals and plants. All attendees, including parents, must be registered for the program to control size. \$8 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code R8M.797S

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 week-long 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.

THURSDAY/APRIL 24

Poem in Your Pocket Celebration. 6:30 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. The City of Alexandria Poet Laureate will be joined by winning poets of the 2025 DASHing Words in Motion poetry contest, who will have their poems displayed inside the DASH buses and trolleys in April. Limited seating will be available, so reservations are encouraged. If you wish to read a poem, or to make a reservation email poet@alexandria.

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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 @mvcspta 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.

APRIL 26-27

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: Ravishing Rachmaninov. Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall. Sunday at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial. Featuring Alexandria Symphony; James Ross, conductor, and Sofya Gulyak, piano.

SATURDAY/APRIL 26

Drawing Workshop – Wildflower Illustration. 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Use your basic drawing or painting skills to illustrate wildflowers. Artist and instructor Caroline Hottenstein shows you how to use the media of your choice - a micron pen, watercolor, graphite, or colored pencils to capture and highlight details. Previous drawing experience encouraged. Please bring a bag lunch. Supply list will be emailed before class. \$107 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code NWØ.NF9W

SUNDAY/APRIL 27

Odd Jobs of Yore. 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Many once-commonplace occupations have vanished due to changing technology, social norms and labor laws. Discover fascinating and surprising jobs and professions of the past – from leech-collector to town crier, clock winder to

rat catcher - that can amuse and appall us today. \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

SUNDAY/APRIL 27

The PNC Alexandria Half Marathon. 7:30 a.m. In Old Town Alexandria. The PNC Alexandria Half Marathon will replace the traditional 10-mile distance, offering runners 13.1 miles through the heart of Old Town and nearly 10 miles of scenic out-and-back running along the George Washington Parkway. The adult race will feature two distance options for runners - 13.1 Mile or 5K for runners of all skill levels. The half marathon and 5K will kick off on King Street in front of City Hall and conclude on N Union Street. After the adult race, the 600-meter Kids Dash, sponsored by The Kidz Doc, a fun, family-friendly event for children under 12 will take place at 10:30 AM. Each participant will receive a bib number; after the race, kids will be rewarded with a medal and a post-run treat. As the race concludes along the Potomac in Alexandria, participants can celebrate in the beer garden for adults over the age of 21 courtesy of Port City Brewing Co. Visit <https://www.alexandriahalf.com>.

MONDAY/APRIL 28

Getaway - Ladew Topiary Gardens. 8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adults) Spend a spring morning at Ladew Topiary Gardens enjoying a tour of the house and beautiful gardens. The beautiful spring bulb displays will be in bloom, along with spring flowering trees. Lunch will be served at the cafe on the grounds. Trip departs Green Spring Gardens at 8:00 am and returns at 6:30pm. Includes motor coach, admission, tour and lunch. Trip cancellation deadline: April 14. \$159 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 8A8.3NVM

FRIDAY/MAY 2

7th Annual Senior Summit. 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. At the Lorton Community Center, Alexandria. Join Neighborhood and Community Services for a fun, engaging and informative event filled with County resources for you! Enjoy a free lunch provided by Retirement Unlimited, Inc. You won't want to miss raffle prizes, the popular exhibit hall and special presentations.

SATURDAY/MAY 3

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, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

FRIDAY/MAY 3

Alexandria Spring Fling. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Old Town Alexandria. This lively, family-friendly celebration invites locals and visitors alike to explore Old Town's charming streets while supporting its vibrant small business community. The day will be filled with engaging activities for all ages, including tarot card readings, hands-on crafts like build-your-own flower bouquets, outdoor yoga sessions, snow cones, and more surprises around every corner. Shoppers can browse and discover exclusive in-store experiences at beloved boutiques such as Eries Interiors, Three Sisters, Red Barn, Penny Post, Pippin Toy, Mint Condition, Shoe Hive, Monday's Child, Bishop Boutique, She's Unique, and over 20 other participating shops. Many stores will feature festive pop-ups, trunk shows, and special activations during regular hours, making it a perfect day to celebrate spring and shop local in Old Town. Visit <https://oldtownboutiquecommunity.com/>



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

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 Maribeth's Bakery;
- Tickets: \$75 General Admission | \$125 VIP Admission (includes exclusive early access and a special reception)

FRIDAY/MAY 9

Wright at Twilight. 6:30-9 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. Call (703) 780-4000 or email woodlawn@savingplaces.org. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

SUNDAY/MAY 18

Old Town Festival of Speed & Style. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Old Town Festival of Speed & Style, presented by Burke & Herbert Bank, celebrates its sixth year in Old Town Alexandria. This high-profile event features an impressive lineup of rare supercars and vintage motorcycles, a live fashion demonstration at noon, live music, family-friendly fun, and a judged car awards presentation. The Festival draws thousands of visitors, boosts local business, garners media attention, and donates all proceeds to local nonprofits: ALIVE!, Community Lodgings, and the National Breast Center Foundation. Visit www.festivalofspeed-andstyle.com.

THE BIRCHMERE

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

APRIL

- 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
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- 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!
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Announcements

The Murder of RFK
by Michael Calder
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Obituary



Revell died April 7, 2025. He was the son of George Revell Michael and Mildred Heiser Michael of Baltimore. He was educated in Baltimore public schools spending his final year of high school at the home of his ancestors in Accomack County, Virginia. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the College of William and Mary and a Bachelor of Architecture Degree from the University of Virginia. While in college Revell was active in the William and Mary Theater, the Colonial Williamsburg Players, and the outdoor drama The Common Glory. As a senior in college, he enlisted in the Richmond Light Infantry Blues and after graduation served with the Army and Air Force in Korea.

Revell's early design experience was gained in the architects' office of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. While there he worked closely with renowned authorities on Virginia's colonial tidewater architecture. This was the impetus that led him to the Charlottesville office of Milton L. Grigg, FAIA, a classist, a native Alexandrian, and a church architect who was among the original restoration architects of Monticello. In 1963 Revell joined the Alexandria firm of Saunders & Pearson where he designed his first residential project, Cameron Mews, in Alexandria's waterfront area. Since then he designed many building types including churches, libraries, numerous residential projects including over 600 new residences in Alexandria's Old and Historic District. His designs adhered to the context and character of their locale. They have gained the approval of architectural control boards in Alexandria, Fairfax, Leesburg, Middleburg, Annapolis, and Savannah, Georgia.

Until his retirement from active practice in 2001 Revell was a principal in the architectural firm of Michael & Richards, Ltd., the successor firm to Michael & Michael, Inc. which he founded in 1967 with his former wife Linda H. Michael, FAIA. A major element of the Michael firm's practice was its mentorship of aspiring architects. It boasted several alumni who became highly regarded in the profession. Revell served as president of the Alexandria Businessmen's Club, the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects, the Virginia Foundation for Architectural Education, and the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association, (the Athenaeum). He served for six years on Alexandria's Board of Architectural Review. In addition to memberships in professional organizations and learned societies, he has been active with service organizations including the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, the Loudoun Tourism Council, and the University of Virginia Alumni Association. In 2000 he was admitted to membership in the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Survivors include his wife of 26 years, Ann Dozier Michael, five children, and five grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held on Wednesday, April 23rd at 10:00 am at Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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'Life As I See It'

FROM PAGE 1

are blind and visually impaired.

"This foundation assists other organizations to provide services and glasses to people that can't afford it or don't have insurance," said Harris of the three-year-old nonprofit. "Events like the fashion show give individuals like myself that are blind or have other visual impairments the opportunity to be a part of these community events that we're sometimes excluded from."

Harris followed that up with a new book, "Life As I See It: Finding Strength Through Adversity," which came out last month.

"It took me two years to write and then rewrite it," Harris said. "I wanted people to know that just because people who are blind don't have vision that we can still do things. We just have to do them differently."

"Life As I See It: Finding Strength Through Adversity" discusses Harris' struggles and highlights how she coped with trying times. It shows her resilience, her fortitude, and her optimistic approach toward life despite all the difficulties she faced.

"The last thing I remember seeing was my husband before we headed back to the operating room," Harris recalled. "I miss most being able to see my husband smile, just seeing him and the kids. And now I have a granddaughter I've never seen. But what keeps me going is that things could have been 10 times worse. I am not bed-ridden and I can still hold and feed my granddaughter. And helping other blind individuals through the foundation keeps me excited."

Technology advances keep Harris connected with screen readers allowing her to navigate a computer, cell phone and other devices.

Eternally optimistic, "Life As I See It" shows her resilience and her positive approach toward life.

"I don't think anyone expects to lose their vision," Harris said. "I had no clue that was even a possibility. 'I guess it goes back to just knowing that things could have been different. I'm still here and I am so blessed I still have my husband, who has never left my side, he has never wavered.'"

Harris' book is available at book-sellers such as Barnes & Noble, Amazon and Apple Books.

"I don't think the blind community is excluded on purpose," Harris said. "I think people just don't know how to make adjustments or how to include us. But we can't let one little thing discourage us from continuing to live."

For more information on Harris' foundation, visit www.imperfektly-made.com



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Residents talk with VDOT representatives about the toll lane proposal. On April 1 at West Potomac High School.

After Public Meetings, Deadline For Public Comment is April 21

FROM PAGE 10

terstate 295 in Maryland.

Access points to and from the toll lanes would be at Van Dorn Street, U.S. 1 and interstate 295 and route 210 in Maryland. The footprint of the current interchange at U.S. 1 will not change, they said.

Officials cited a VDOT commissioner's letter and federal commitments to preserve the option for Metrorail on this stretch of the highway. "Rail preservation commitment would be incorporated as part of the environmental (NEPA) process, which must receive federal approval," states VDOT's document and continues, "Terms within any potential contract with or concessionaire [a private partner] would incorporate a requirement for conversion to rail transit in the future." The Wilson Bridge's design left space for transit or express lanes. Shropshire said, adding, "Both build alternatives have rail preservation when the region deems it appropriate."

The project also includes possible new bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Holly Dougherty, President of the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce welcomed the study and offered, "We are hopeful that extending the express lanes will be another component of a robust transportation system that benefits economic growth."

Doubts and Questions

At the April 1 hearing, attendees raised questions about costs, financing and traffic predictions. Mount Vernonite Greg Crider who attended the meeting said, "It seems that nobody attending the meetings are for the express lanes, except VDOT. Perhaps VDOT should shut down the study and



VDOT

495 Express Lanes Proposed Project.

spend its resources elsewhere."

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, has multiple concerns. "From the outset this has been a biased study that starts with their conclusions-first 'purpose and need' statement to 'extend and provide continuity of the Express Lanes system,'" he emailed, "which effectively excludes other alternatives like transit with transit-oriented development from satisfying their self-defined purpose."

Many studies on highway widening projects show that the expanded I-495 would generate more traffic, Schwartz emphasizes, a phenomenon called "induced demand," build it and they will come. More driving cancels out any congestion reduction within five to ten years, Coalition for Smarter Growth maintains.

Schwartz also argues that this expansion could block future rail. "The bridge was explicitly designed to hold the weight of Metrorail. Metrorail was a top goal of the public and the city of Alexandria and Prince

George's County when the lawsuits were settled over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge," he said. "VDOT is not providing documentation and legally binding assurances that the toll lanes will be removed to place Metrorail on the bridge."

He also charges that the study fails to analyze the traffic impacts on connecting roads like U.S. 1, Telegraph Road and Van Dorn Street.

At the April 1 meeting, Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck urged people to share their concerns. "I'd like to stress the importance of your engagement. This is not a done deal for the Mount Vernon community. You should get your concerns addressed. There will be more opportunities. We need to hear from you," he said.

https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/media/vdotvirginiagov/projects/northern-virginia/i-495-south-side-express-lanes-study/495-South-side-April-2025-Public-Information-Meetings-Presentation_acc03312025_PM.pdf

Doggone It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Well, that wasn't much fun at all. What fun that wasn't was those 45 minutes when Burton, our adolescent, two-and-a-half-year-old golden retriever went missing, his first such unsupervised and very unapproved sojourn off-leash this morning. (It might have been fun for him, but it was anything but for us.) Though he has his identification/who to call on his dog tags, as well as a chip embedded (with his owner's name and contact information on it); as any dog/pet owner knows, one of the least guaranteed outcomes in dog ownership is that your dog will return home on his own, some good Samaritan will act amazingly on your behalf and actually call you or that your dog will survive the ordeal (or that you will).

As it happened, Burton was out for his morning walk (his first since his last outing before bedtime) with his mother/my wife Dina as per usual (she does first-thing-in-the-mornings, I do the rest of the day). Typically, Burton's morning walk occurs in the miles of woods directly behind our house ("Belly Acres," I call our house). Never off leash despite the privacy (our house is also at the end of a dead-end street); still, sometimes (how about all the time) Burton likes to play tug of war. And if one isn't careful/doesn't have a secure hold of his leash, he may squirm away and off he'll go. Which is exactly what happened this morning between Dina and Burton. It has likewise happened to me.

What happened after Burton got loose is that I, as co-owner/father received a frantic phone call from Dina (co-owner/mother). Actually, there were multiple calls (I was in the shower at the time and didn't hear a ring). When I finally answered the phone, Dina said those words that dog owners everywhere dread hearing. For me it was: "Burton's gone." I asked her what had happened. After learning the circumstances and timeline, I said I was still wrapped in a towel, but I'd be outside as soon as possible.

Within 10 minutes or so, I was outside looking and listening for Dina. When I heard her yelling Burton's name, I walked in the opposite direction (to cover more ground). We live on two acres as do most of our neighbors. With woods all around us and a four-lane state road a quarter mile away, the places for Burton to go to get lost or hurt are numerous. Not finding him in the usual acreage, I got in my car and drove north up our street to the state road (shaking all the way fearing the worst that he might have been hit/killed by a car on it) and with the windows down, I started calling his name and looking all around. Fortunately, when I reached the state road, there was no sign of Burton (thank God, if you know what I mean?) so I turned right and drove a few hundred yards ahead and turned down the next road which sort of borders our property thinking Burton might have wandered through the woods attracted to the sounds of cars. Again, no luck so I drove the minute or two back home.

Just before I was to turn left onto our street, my cell phone rings, and when I answer, I hear the words that all pet owners in a similarly panicked state hope to hear: "I got him," said Dina. Can you say sigh of relief with an exhale to match and of course a verbal: "Thank God" by me. A dog on the loose with woods that go on for miles protecting above-ground power lines and a below-ground gas pipeline), animals everywhere, flowers blooming, people dirt biking and some locals even shooting guns and the potential for dog distractions with sounds and scents is everywhere, and the sooner we find Burton the better. Well, we did find him, or rather he found us. We were lucky. Heck, he was lucky - and smart. He knew where he lived, and we hoped we knew where he might be. Sure enough, he was coming home at the same time we were out looking for him.

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

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