

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

MAY 22, 2025



PHOTO BY US PARK POLICE SOCIAL MEDIA

Trees fell on wires too.



PHOTO BY FRIENDS OF THE MOUNT VERNON TRAIL

Trees toppled on the Mount Vernon Bike Trail too, shown in this scene south of the Dyke Marsh.

Fast Moving Storm Leads to Two Fatalities in Mount Vernon

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Storms blew through the Mount Vernon area last week causing trees to topple along the parkway and the surrounding neighborhoods causing two fatalities when trees

came down on top of occupied cars. On Friday evening, May 16, one of the victims was traveling on the George Washington Parkway in the Morningside Lane area when a tree landed on the car. The second fatality was on Frye Road near the intersection with Pole Road when another tree came

down and killed the driver. At 5:40 p.m. officers responded to Fry Road and Pole Road in Woodlawn for a report of a tree that fell onto a vehicle. When officers arrived, they located the driver, Juliana Kai Russell, 27 of Alexandria, inside the 2020 Toyota Camry. She was pronounced deceased on the

scene. In another car, members of the West Potomac High School lacrosse team were impacted by a fallen tree while traveling on the parkway but the passengers were not harmed. The U.S. Park Police responded along with the Fairfax County Po-

lice Department during the storm which had 70-mile-per hour winds causing power outages to 30,000 homes, some lasting more than two days. The Parkway was shut down that evening and into the following day, May 17, while crews cleaned up fallen trees all along the parkway.

Gerry Connolly Dead at 75

From local politics to Capitol Hill, Connolly's death leaves a 'deep hole in the hearts of so many Virginians and a deep void on Capitol Hill.'

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Gerald Edward "Gerry" Connolly, 75, died early Wednesday, May 21. "It is with immense sadness that we share that our devoted and loving father, husband, brother, friend, and public servant, Congressman Gerald E. Connolly, passed away peacefully at his home this morning, surrounded by family," announced his family. Connolly had been battling esophageal cancer, first diagnosed in November of 2024, and had begun chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments. He revealed last month that the cancer had returned.



PHOTO FACEBOOK CONGRESSMAN GERRY CONNOLLY
Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11).

In a note to constituents on April 28, Connolly wrote, "The sun is setting on my time in public service, and this will be my last term. ... I move into this final chapter full of pride in what we've accomplished together over 30 years." Congressman Gerry Connolly was a dedicated public servant, with accomplishments climate change and clean energy to immigration, foreign policy, gun violence, and so much more. On the Board of Supervisors, Connolly was instrumental in the successful campaign for rail to Dulles. Connolly sponsored and supported legislative initiatives on behalf of active-duty service members, military families, and veterans, including measures to protect them from predatory service fees, enhance Veter-

ans Administration services to veterans, provide more funding to treat brain injuries incurred on the battlefield, and assist military families when they must move to a new duty station. In one of his final press releases, posted May 8, Connolly joined colleagues in demanding the immediate resumption of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. A few highlights of Connolly's career include 14 years on the Board of Supervisors in Fairfax County, including five years as chairman; Ranking Member of the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform; senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; and 10 years as a staff member on SEE GERRY CONNOLLY, PAGE 3

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MCENEARNEY



Old Town
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\$1,850,000 | One of Old Town's celebrated Painted Ladies, this 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom Victorian townhome with a spacious floorplan is a rare opportunity to own a piece of Alexandria's rich history, so make it yours!

Jillian Hogan Homes : 703.951.7655
JillianHoganHomes.com



OPEN SUN 5/25, 1PM-3PM

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\$1,799,000 | Stunning & sophisticated, impeccably maintained, 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath brick Colonial nestled in an exclusive enclave off King Street. 2-car garage, 3 gas fireplaces, hardwood flooring, & sprawling primary suite.

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\$1,795,000 | Manor House meets Pent House. 2 bedroom suites, 1 half bath on a stunning flat lot in prime Belle Haven! One of the most beautiful gardens around! Perfect for entertaining and downsizing while living in grandeur!

Janet Catterson Price : 703.622.5984
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Overlook
5252 Winter View Drive

\$1,250,000 | This 5-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom, end-unit home has a coveted 1st floor owner's suite and over 4,600 sq ft of elegant living space filled with timeless finishes and modern comforts throughout.

Shagufta Hasan : 703.286.1207
ShaguftaHasan.com



OPEN 5/24 & 5/25, 2PM-4PM

Old Town/Fords Landing
15 Franklin Street

\$1,195,000 | Pied et Terre! This charming townhome with 2 bedroom suites and a half bath features a garage and carport. Low HOA and walkable convenience to all that Old Town offers. Handsome, move-in condition!

Janet Catterson Price : 703.622.5984
JanetPriceHomes.com



OPEN SUN 5/25, 2PM-4PM

North Old Town
810 N Fayette Street

\$880,000 | This light-filled 2-bed, 2½-bath townhouse is in the perfect location near Braddock Road Metro! Updates include new appliances, fresh paint, and new carpet on bedroom level.

Mason Bavin : 703.338.6007
MasonBavin.com



Nethergate
802 Bashford Lane

\$849,000 | Beautifully updated 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath townhome with new appliances, marble bath, private top-level suite, fenced patio, fireplace, and fresh paint. Move-in ready with thoughtful upgrades throughout.

Frances Backus : 703.395.1971
Suzanne Backus : 703.338.3594



OPEN SAT 5/24, 2PM-4PM

Riverside Estates
8400 Cherry Valley Lane

\$837,000 | Set on 1/4 acre of original Mount Vernon farmland, this beautiful, tastefully updated home has 5 bedrooms and 3 full baths. The backyard with large deck is an oasis for relaxing and entertaining.

Ann McClure : 301.367.5098
AnnMcClure.com



Old Town Village
1411 Roundhouse Lane

\$766,900 | Beautifully updated 2-bedroom 2.5-bath townhome with hardwood floors, gas fireplace, patio, balcony off primary bedroom and stylish kitchen. Condo amenities include parking, outdoor saltwater pool & gym.

Rochelle Gray : 703.328.1686
Susan Anthony : 703.795.9536



Kingstowne
7232 Cherwell Lane

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Peter Crouch : 703.244.4024
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Del Ray
409 E Raymond Avenue #8

\$389,900 | Charming urban retreat! 1-bed, 1-bath condo with den/office and serene balcony! Beautifully updated. Excellent location, close to Del Ray and Potomac Yard Metro. Off street parking and extra storage!

Lisa Smith : 703.201.3102
LisaLSmith.com



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\$345,000 | Renovated top-floor, two-bedroom unit is ideally situated set back from the main road, within a lush courtyard setting. Newer HVAC, windows, LVP flooring, and ample parking. Laundry & storage in same entry!

Heidi Burkhardt : 703.217.6009
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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE

Grand Opening of El Fogón, Plus 3 More New Members

Four new businesses have joined the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Among these new businesses is El Fogón – Authentic Mexican Tacos & Taqueria, which had their official ribbon cutting on May 8, 2025, at the Hayfield Shopping Center in Alexandria.

El Fogón Taqueria serves up authentic Mexican street tacos with a flavorful twist in a warm, neighborhood-friendly setting. Led by Chef/Owner Jorge Contreras and his business partner Andy Ayala, it brings bold, traditional flavors to the local community.

Chamber members, guests, community leaders and Virginia Del. Mark Sickles gathered for the ribbon-cutting celebration as part of National Small Business Week, honoring the contributions of local entrepreneurs.

“We’re thrilled to support Chef Jorge and Andy in launching El Fogón,” said Michael Drobnis, Board Member of the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

merce. “Small businesses like theirs are the heart of our local economy and culture.”

El Fogón Taqueria is located at 7554 Telegraph Road in Alexandria. Their menu can be viewed at www.elfogontaqueria.com/our-menu.

Three other new members in April included:

1-800-Plumber +Air in Alexandria delivers plumbing and HVAC services with a focus on customer satisfaction. Learn more at 1800plumber.com/alexandria-va.

MBH Settlement Group Kingstowne provides real estate title and settlement services throughout VA, MD, DC, and WV, with a focus on professionalism and client service. Visit mbh.com for more information.

Mobility City Alexandria offers sales, rentals, and repairs of mobility equipment like wheelchairs, scooters, and stair lifts — helping individuals live more independently. Details at alexandriava.mobilitycity.com.

More at www.mountvernon-springfield.com/businesses.

Marissa Eyon, Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce Member Engagement Committee Chair; Kyle Reglin, Chamber Board Member, El Fogón Taqueria Owners Andy Ayala and Chef Jorge Contreras; Del. Mark Sickles; Chamber Board Member Michael Drobnis at ribbon cutting on May 8, 2025.



Fun in the Sun at the Inaugural Mount Vernon District Summer Palooza

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

We’re turning up the heat this summer with a brand-new community celebration, the Mount Vernon District SUMMER PALOOZA! Mark your calendars for this FREE, family-friendly event on Saturday, June 7 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center (2511 Parkers Lane).

Enjoy live music from a favor-

ite local band, Riptide, while you grab a bite to eat at any of our FREE food options: “Taste of Mount Vernon” with samplings from local restaurants, a picnic grilled up by the Lorton Volunteer Fire Department and a local food truck! A variety of food, beverages and small business items will also be available for purchase. Kids will have a blast in the kids



Storck

zone with moon bounces, games, a petting zoo from Frying Pan Farm Park and the always-popular touch-a-truck area, featuring fire trucks, police cruisers and drone squad, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services vehicles and more. Adults can unwind in the Bunnyman Brewing beer garden and browse a wide range of exhibitors, including ded-

icated areas focused on the environment, dogs and local small businesses, as well as County programs and services.

Whether you’re coming for the music, food, kids zone or just some fun in the sun, the Mount Vernon Governmental Center is the place to be! Parking will be available across the street at Whitman Middle School and Sherwood Regional Library, we ask that you please do not park in Inova’s parking lots to leave parking for patients. We look for-

ward to seeing you, rain or shine!

This exciting new event is made possible thanks to the generous support of our community partners: Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce, South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, Inova, Reworld Waste, Casey Whitmarsh - State Farm, Pohanka and Fairfax County Police and Fire and Rescue. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/mount-vernon-district-summer-palooza>

Gerry Connolly Dead at 75

FROM PAGE 1

the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was elected president of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly.

Connolly co-chaired the Korea Caucus, Georgia Caucus, Morocco Caucus, Taiwan Caucus, and the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish

Americans. He also served as a member of the House Democracy Partnership, which supports the development of democratic legislative bodies in partner countries. He also served on the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. He was a leading voice on foreign assistance, war powers, embassy security, and democracy promotion

abroad.

Connolly co-authored the bipartisan Issa-Connolly Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act, which was signed into law in 2014 and represented the first significant overhaul of the federal laws governing IT management since the enactment of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996.

Connolly received an M.A. in Public Ad-

ministration from Harvard University in 1979. He received a B.A. in Literature from Maryknoll College in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Connolly also worked in the non-profit and private sectors, including for companies involved in global trade, technology, and government contracting.

SEE GERRY CONNOLLY, PAGE 11

Jazz Artist Entertains Many At Senior Center

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Pianist Harvey Jacobson performs for his fellow residents at Brightview.



Former Mount Vernon resident now mans the piano at Brightview assisted living.

BY MIKE SALMON
<2B>THE GAZETTE

In the lobby at the Brightview assisted living center, the sounds of Fats Waller, Cole Porter or Scott Joplin that resonate in the lobby is not the background sound system, it's lifetime musician Harvey Jacobson, 88, hammering out the classics on the grand piano over on the side. It's a sound that's appreciated by the residents and reminds people of the role jazz played in the United States.

"Mostly what I play is show music," Harvey said, "it speaks to the consciousness, it's uplifting," he added. "They love my playing," he added of his fellow residents. He used to live in Hybla Valley and gave piano lessons at Fort Belvoir at that time.

Everyone enjoys the music at Brightview Woodburn, said Vibrant Living Director Lisa Semonick. "Harvey flourishes when his peers enjoy his performances. It's amazing seeing his smile just light up when he finishes and everyone loves it," she said.

These moments in the lobby might be a moment in time for some, but for Harvey, it's the culmination of years at the piano in places as far as Carnegie Hall, Gloucester, England and John Hopkins University.

Piano was not only Jacobson's livelihood, but music was his life passion as well. When COVID hit in 2020, everything came to a halt when the concerts and venues closed, leaving Jacobson without work. He found himself in a living situation with no access to a piano, separating him from his music. This was devastating for Jacobson.



Harvey Jacobson



Pianist Harvey Jacobson has been around the world jazzing it up on the piano.

Music wasn't just his career, it was his way of connecting with the world around him.

Jacobson moved into Brightview in early March, and since then, he has found a new community in both his fellow residents and staff.

As he was enveloped in all this musical experience, his immediate gravitation to the piano came nat-

urally to Harvey. When he arrived, he immediately sat down for a song or two, or three. He rediscov-

ered his love for piano and plays for staff, residents and visitors every day.

Jacobson doesn't just play the piano, he brings joy to everyone around him.

May Is Older Americans Month

Established in 1963, May is Older Americans Month. This year's theme, "Flip the Script on Aging," is part of Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services mission year-round.

Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, in conjunction with the county's SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan, the county is transforming programs, resources and services to meet the needs of a far more active, engaged and mobile older adult population. Neighborhood and Community Services programs for older adults offer opportunities for all ages and abilities to remain active – physically, intellectually, creatively and socially – within their community.

Some of Neighborhood and Community Services' resources for older adults:

NCS Senior Centers

Senior Centers serve ages 50 and older. Hundreds of active older adults from around the county are registered members of the county's network of senior centers to pursue hobbies, fitness, special interests (such as art, music and technology), friendships and enjoy a wide variety of activities with their peers. Center programs and activities are as diverse as the needs and interests of the communities they serve.

Meals and transportation options are available. Eligibility and fees apply. Contact the Senior Center near you for details.

Virtual Center for Active Adults

The goal of the Virtual Center for Active Adults is to enrich the lives of older adults and adults with disabilities in Northern Virginia while combatting isolation. Participants can connect with peers, engage in a variety of activities and discover useful resources.

VCAA offers a variety of live, interactive programs that include engaging with other adults. There are also prerecorded programs on demand for participants to watch on their own schedule.

Adult Day Health Care

Everyone should have the opportunity to live a

great life, regardless of their cognitive or physical limitations. That's why the Adult Day Health Care program is focused on engaging participants mentally, physically and socially. The results include an overall better mood, better sleep and increased engagement — for both participants and their caregivers. Learn more about daily programs and activities and the highly skilled and experienced staff.

In its 35+ year history, ADHC has brought thousands of older adults daytime care and support. A sliding fee scale, scholarship program and transportation are available. Learn more about the Adult Day Health Care program.

Volunteering

Neighborhood and Community Services is a wonderful place for senior volunteers. Read more about volunteer opportunities, including the GrandInvolve program that places older adults in Title I schools to engage with young students to support learning.

Recent highlights and news

❖ NCS recently opened Arbor Row Center, a new senior center located in The Mather residential building in Tysons. NCS will provide programming and staffing for the new center, which offers a variety of programs for learning, fitness, technology, discussion and more.

❖ NCS will soon open Burke-Springfield Center for Active Adults (BSCAA) at Huntsman Square in Springfield. NCS held a series of community engagement sessions to obtain feedback on programs adults ages 50 and older would like at BSCAA. This location will replace the Burke-Springfield Center Without Walls.

❖ See Fairfax County Department of Family Services' resources for older adults.

❖ See the Board of Supervisors' 2025 proclamation.

For more information on all NCS programs and services for older adults, please visit Programs and Services for Older Adults. <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/neighborhood-community-services/older-adults>



State Delegate Paul Krizek, right, holds a letter of thanks for cosponsoring a bill to obtain funding for Virginia Villages organizations May 15 at Mount Vernon Country Club. Making the presentation on behalf of Mount Vernon at Home are Cele Garrett and Carol Paquette.

PHOTOS BY
JANET BARNETT
GAZETTE PACKET

It Takes a Village

Mount Vernon at Home celebrates 16 years.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Mount Vernon at Home, part of the village network of senior communities across the country, celebrated its 16th anniversary with a gala held May 15 at Mount Vernon Country Club.

State Delegate Paul Krizek was presented with a letter of thanks for his efforts in cosponsoring a bill to obtain funding for villages across the state.

Established in 2007, Mount Vernon at Home is part of the senior village concept of

support networks with volunteers assisting members to safely age in place. The grass-roots organization is committed to helping retirement age neighbors live engaged lifestyles and providing support as needed.

Members can receive services such as transportation to the grocery store, physician visits, help with home maintenance, IT needs, and other errands. Many social activities are offered such as book and movie clubs, happy hours and dining out. Volunteers provide all of the activities and services.

Mount Vernon at Home is part of a Village network, which includes more than 300 villages across the country. The village concept supports seniors who want to age in place, remaining in their homes in known environments and with a local support system.

For more information or to volunteer, visit www.mountvernonathome.org

Mount Vernon at Home president Michelle Calhoun, center, stands with board members at the annual gala May 15 at Mount Vernon Country Club. Pictured with Calhoun are Maryanne Beatty, Paula Lettice, Kathy Dismukes and Vikki Bea.



SUMMER 2025

Taste of Del Ray
JUNE 1

Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair
JUNE 7

ALX Jazz Fest
JUNE 14

Friday Market & Drag Show
at Port City Brewing Company
JUNE 14

Juneteenth Events Including:
Juneteenth Celebration at The Athenaeum
JUNE 19

Alexandria Pride Fair
JUNE 28

Alexandria and USA Birthday Celebration
JULY 12

Beats, Bites and Brews
at John Carlyle Square
JULY 26



Alexandria Sidewalk Sale
AUGUST 9

Del Ray Bands and Brews Summer Bar Crawl
AUGUST 16

Alexandria Restaurant Week
AUGUST 22-31

Around the World Cultural Food Festival
AUGUST 23

Celebrate Pride during WorldPride and beyond
MAY 17 - JUNE 30



For even more events & things to do, check out:

Visit Alexandria.com/Summer

alexandria





Fun on the dance floor.



The female vocals of Cecilia Closs and Blair Bennett send the tunes to another level.

Solid Covers Send Rock Vibes to Local Audiences

Mount Vernon-based Collective Delusion, scheduled for Fort Hunt Park.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Juggling careers, a classic rock playlist and concert schedule is part of life for a Mount Vernon-based band Collective Delusion, who will play on Father's Day in Fort Hunt Park. They hammer out a play list that spans the past several decades, catering to fans sitting on the lawn or in the VIP seats in D.C.

"We keep that music alive," said Keith Barritt, one of the guitarists and vocalists who is a lawyer when not jamming with Collective Delusion. Bass player Bill Berridge is a patent attorney and Cecilia Closs has her own practice. Other band members include Steve Westphal on guitar and vocals, Ji Jung on drums, Blair Bennett on vocals along with Closs. The two women lead the stage presentation with their singing and it gives the band a certain sound.

"Our secret weapon is the two lead female singers," Barritt said.

The band has been jamming for years but one moment that sticks out in their history was the parent-teacher talent show at West Potomac High School in 2012. Barritt's son

David was a senior that year. "We were the only parent act to sign up," he said. Being the only parent group to show at that event was a big deal for the group. David Barritt went from West Potomac to college and then followed the family lineage graduating from law school on Saturday, May 17.

The band plays everything from the Beatles to Lady GaGa, which includes Sheryl Crow, Foo Fighters, Adele, and the Rolling Stones "Beast of Burden." There are no punk rock or rap songs on their list though. "All rock and roll," Barritt said.

They are a familiar face at the Old Dominion Boat Club in Old Town but have played at the Mount Vernon Yacht Club, the Belle Haven Country Club, the Electric Palm in Woodbridge and the Wharf Stage in Washington, D.C. On April 26, they played at a porchfest in Washington, D.C. as well. This coming summer, they are scheduled to play at the Red Rocks Tequila in Centreville and the Ellipse at the Fairfax County Government Center.

This year for Father's Day, they are playing at Fort Hunt Park on Saturday that weekend. This show is part of the Saturday evening concert series the National Park Service puts on.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Three of the rockers are lawyers during the week.

NOTED BBC PRODUCER and documentarian David C. Taylor was the special guest at a Rotary Club of Alexandria luncheon at Belle Haven Country Club. Taylor, an Emmy and Peabody award recipient, spoke about his documentary "The Spy in the Hanoi Hilton," which revealed a secret communications link connecting prisoners inside the Hanoi Hilton with the CIA and Naval Intelligence. Alexandria resident and POW survivor Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel is featured in the documentary, which received the 2017 "Studies in Intelligence" award presented by the CIA director John Brennan.

PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT
GAZETTE PACKET



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.

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.

SUPPORT GROUPS

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

SEE BULLETIN BOARD, PAGE 15

Mount Vernon's New Police Commander

'Our ability to be successful is directly proportional to the public's trust in us.'

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE



Jeffrey Mauro

Major Jeffrey Mauro, the new Commander of the Mount Vernon District Police Station, sees policing as a "noble profession" that extends far beyond patrolling the streets. He explains: "Everyone wants to feel safe."

We want to collaborate with the public to get them to trust us and build a relationship. Our ability to be successful is directly proportional to the public's trust in us. We need the public."

The Fairfax County Police Department's number one mission is to prevent and fight crime, he stresses, and the police department has multiple tools, approaches and teams to carry out their mission. Examples:

- ❖ officers who respond to calls;
- ❖ officers who patrol in cruisers;
- ❖ neighborhood patrol or "bike teams," officers who bike around the community to troubleshoot and interact with people. They do not respond to dispatch calls.
- ❖ detectives who investigate crimes, from the initial report to the courthouse;
- ❖ officers who pair with licensed clinicians to address mental health crises;
- ❖ a drone unit of officers who deploy drones the size of a notebook and drones four feet wide to, for example, search for someone with dementia who may have wandered away;
- ❖ community outreach officers who can, for example, help people make their property secure;
- ❖ helicopters that conduct search and rescue missions and do aeromedical evacuation; and
- ❖ a marine patrol unit that responds to emergencies on or near the water.

Extensive Experience

Mauro started his policing career in FCPD at the Franconia station working all three shifts as a patrol officer in a district that he says "offered good exposures for a young officer" because the Franconia district has residential and commercial areas, a mall and two interstate highways.

Then he was promoted to sergeant and supervised the midnight and evening squads and neighborhood patrol unit at the Mount Vernon station. Next, he advanced to second lieutenant and worked in the Fair Oaks Station and supervised the major crimes squad. In police lingo, "major crimes" means problems like missing persons, homicides, child abuse and sex crimes. These crimes require in-depth investigations by specialized detectives.

At one point he supervised the department's crisis intervention team. He's very proud that the police department partners with the Community Services Board to have two people responding to some crisis situations, a police officer and a mental health professional, if, for example, someone is threatening to jump off a tall building. This pair together tries to de-escalate and assess the situation and calm the person down on site. In the past, officers would immediately take the person to Merrifield's emergency clinic, called the Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health.

Mauro is a co-founder of the department's drone unit and also worked in the West Springfield and Mason District stations. In February, he was promoted to major and began serving as interim commander at the Mount Vernon station when the former commander, Major Matthew Luik, retired. Mauro became permanent commander in April. He supervises 94 sworn officers, five auxiliary officers, 20 civilians and school crossing guards.

The new commander grew up in Los Angeles, California, and received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a master's degree from Georgetown University. He is a Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services certified instructor.

Crimes in Mount Vernon

Asked about crime trends in the Mount Vernon area, he said that violent crimes like domestic violence, burglaries, assaults and stolen vehicles are trending down.

Spiking up are thefts of vehicle parts and larcenies from vehicles. Thefts from vehicles are usually from unlocked vehicles, "easily preventable crimes," he notes. Shoplifting cases, especially from chain stores, have risen this year.

Police want to collaborate with local people, homeowner associations, businesses, elected officials, schools, the entire community Mauro says. The neighborhood patrol or bike teams can "hang out" with families at school bus stops, for instance he says.

On policing, he believes, "It's more than going from one 911 call to the next 911 call. It involves risk, long hours and helping people, serving the public. Law enforcement done well is a team sport."

More Information

There are many ways to volunteer with the police department and opportunities for young people considering law enforcement careers. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/GetInvolved>.

The department's Mount Vernon Community Advisory Committee has a public meeting every third Wednesday, 7 p.m. Email Mt-VernonCAC@gmail.com.

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Eagle Festival Educates and Captivates

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

Frog eggs, exoskeletons, snakes, trash, wastewater, energy generation, air pollution and brownfields, these were just some of the topics that intrigued visitors at the May 10, annual, 27th Mason Neck Eagle Festival.

And add to that, cheetahs, tigers and alligators. Cheetahs, tigers and alligators in Virginia? Festival-goers learned from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) law enforcement staffers about illegally seized wildlife.

Sponsored by the Mason Neck State Park and the Friends of Mason Neck State Park, the festival's 750 visitors interacted with 30 exhibitors from all levels of government and non-profit groups.

No one could ignore Todd and Goldberry, two live albino western hognose snakes slithering around Olivia Rivas's fingers. Goldberry was both albino and axanthic, meaning without yellow color. Rivas works at Meadowood, a Bureau of Land Management property nearby.

The intimidating cheetah and tiger drew many. Paul Bridge, a Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officer, explained that some wildlife species are illegally "harvested" (killed), some taken supposedly to be pets, and some, like sharks, caught for their fins to make shark fin soup. Bridge also displayed an alligator hide and a leather boot made from hawksbill turtles.

Birds were front and center at the Festival. Aleta Dust and Liz and Tim Dennison from Secret Gardens, Bees and Birds provided eye-to-eye contact with raptors, including a great horned and a barred owl.

"Hodor blinks a lot because he gets dust and pollen in his big eyes," explained Dust, as awed youngsters went eyeball to eyeball with this impressive avian. Hodor cannot survive on his own because his eye was injured from a vehicle collision.

Joanie Millward came from Colonial Beach to generate support for her favorite bird, the osprey. Bryan Watts with William and Mary's Center for Conservation Biology reported last year that fewer osprey young are surviving in some parts of the Chesapeake Bay, linking the trend to insufficient food, perhaps menhaden. The Virginia General Assembly this year failed to fund a planned study

SEE EAGLE FESTIVAL, PAGE 9



Caroline Seitz of Kids Nature Shows entertained all.

The festival had 30 exhibitors.



Olivia Rivas had two live albino snakes.



Parker Fox is the Virginia state parks' mascot. Jamie Leeuwrik is the park's assistant manager.



Hodor, a great horned owl, was an attention-getter.

A large frog and raccoon roamed the festival grounds.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH
THE GAZETTE



The Mason Neck Lions Club sold burgers and hotdogs.



Empanadas from Empanadas de Mendoza were popular.



Elizabeth Barbour told all to not flush grease, wipes or medicines down the toilet.

Eagle Festival Educates and Captivates

FROM PAGE 8
about menhaden's role in the bay's ecosystem.

Herps and More

Virginia Herpetology Society representatives Bonnie Keller and Mark Khosravi touted "herps," amphibians and reptiles, like frogs, snakes, lizards and turtles.

"Snakes eat rodents which can help maintain balance," Keller said. Khosravi commented that amphibians are indicators of water quality.

Amelia Wilt with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was there "to spread awareness of land conservation and opportunities available in the region," she said.

Safeguarding air and water was the topic for Gwen McCrea from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, an agency that enforces environmental protection laws, responds to pollution events and tries to prevent pollution. Elizabeth Barbour with Fairfax County's Public Works Department cautioned that fats, oils and grease should not go down the drain, saying "Can it, cool it and toss it" (in tin cans in the trash). She also urged visitors to not flush medicines or wipes because they do not break down. Fairfax County has drop boxes for unused medicines.

Brian Gottlieb, with the South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, representing businesses in the Lorton, Mason Neck, Mount Vernon and Fairfax Station areas, said he came to "support the local community." The chamber's members include businesses like Realtors, Trademaster, an HVAC company; State Farm Insurance; and Dynamic Foot and Ankle Center. The Chamber gave five \$500 scholarships to high school students recently.

Employees from Reworld, the county's waste-to-energy plant at www.connectionnewspapers.com



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers brought examples of illegal wildlife items, seized by officers: a cheetah, a tiger and a boot made of hawksbill turtle skin.



the I-95/Lorton landfill, explained that their thermomechanical facility converts waste into electricity or steam.

Youngsters of all ages enjoyed shows like "Animals in Spring" by Kids Nature Shows. Puppeteer Cobra Caroline Seitz, sporting a stuffed red and black ladybug on her head, delighted all by showing how insects metamorphosize from eggs to insects. "Mommy frog lays many eggs in the slimy, ooey, gooey goo," she declared.

Encouraging Environmental Stewardship

"The Eagle Festival is a way to honor and celebrate the hard work of conservation and wildlife organizations in Northern Virginia," said Lance Elzie, Park Manager. "Without their hard work and the efforts of individuals like Elizabeth Hartwell, much of the public land in Northern Virginia and across the state would not exist. This area is surprisingly rich with unique ecosystems and species and Eagle Fest is a way for people to learn about them and their stories."

Hillary Clawson, president of the Friends of Mason Neck Park, said, "The Eagle Festival is a vital opportunity to educate our community about the importance of conservation, the delicate balance



A replica of a bald eagle's nest is displayed in the visitor center.

of our ecosystem and the remarkable comeback of the bald eagle. It's a chance to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and foster a deeper appreciation for the natural world."

The audio entertainment was exuberant and fitting, with the Rocknoceros band singing about a purple churting turtle and "The Ants Go Marching."

Meanwhile, seemingly oblivious to the festivities, ospreys, crows, vultures, and yes, bald eagles soared overhead.

The Rocknoceros Band sang upbeat nature-themed tunes.



Eastern gray squirrels made their presence known by the chewed-off twigs, like this blooming tulip poplar.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH
THE GAZETTE



Savannah Lee (above) feels at home with the flock that reminds her of time spent on her father's farm.



The students care for the birds, cleaning their coop and collecting eggs.

Whitman Middle School's Brood of Chickens Teaches Students About Science and Life

The students of Whitman Middle School no longer get surprised if a chicken pokes its head through an open classroom window and interrupts their study with a cluck.

That's because during the past year, an internal courtyard at the school has become a happy home to a growing flock of feathered friends, now a much-loved part of the Wildcats' community.

They came to the school as eggs in an incubator for students to learn about embryo development, but it quickly became clear that the benefits of having the chickens around went far beyond textbooks. Now, they are here to stay.

After-School Program Specialist Lee Maguire, known affectionately as "chicken daddy," initially planned for a month-long experiential learning program about embryo development.

Almost a year later, staff, students, and families are captivated by the flock and what they bring to the school community.

"There was a lot of intentional effort to integrate the chickens into both the curriculum and school life," said Maguire.

He says that many students were initially unsure about how the chickens would interact with them, fearing what it would feel like to be pecked. But after time and teaching, their fascination grew, particularly when learning about the hierarchy of flocks and how that compares to human society.

Now, students help feed and care for the birds, cleaning out the



It's not unusual to see a chicken peering through a classroom window.

heated coop and collecting freshly-laid eggs.

The opportunity to hang out with the flock of the Novogen Browns, a breed known for their docile nature, has proved a motivating factor when it comes to school work, too, added Maguire.

"We have had students in remedial math classes asking outside in the courtyard, asking for more work to stay out here longer."

Some students can feel overwhelmed in the hectic environment of a large, urban middle school, and the courtyard has become a go-to place to decompress. Being around the chickens and handling them is a calming experience for many.

For others, the chickens remind them of family abroad.

Eighth grader Emma Posada enjoys being around the birds because they remind her of her

grandmother's property in El Salvador.

"Chickens are very important in El Salvador and are considered good luck. My grandma owns a lot of chickens, so I am used to being around them. I think it's really interesting to have them in school."

Savannah Lee feels right at home amongst the hens as her father raises animals on his farm out of state.

"I'll often come out here after lunch and hold a chicken or two. It feels good to be around them. You do not expect to find this at a school in an urban area like this."

The program, which aligns with the FCPS Portrait of a Graduate's ethical and global citizen attribute, has been such a success that during the next few months, and with funding from a grant, Whitman hopes to add a second coop to the courtyard to expand their flock.



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

VILLAGE HARDWARE – Alexandria Rotary Club president Jim Carmalt, second from right, makes a donation to the nonprofit Cornerstone Craftsman on behalf of Village Hardware. Located in the Hollin Hall shopping center, Village Hardware, in collaboration with Rotary, donated tools and equipment in support of the launch of the program that teaches construction skills to disadvantaged and marginalized youth ages 12-17. At left is Cornerstone founder and executive director Roberto Gomez.

Gerry Connolly Dead at 75

FROM PAGE 1

Connolly is survived by his wife, Cathy “Smitty” Smith, and daughter Caitlin Rose.

We are printing some local tributes to Connolly, which are abbreviated.

❖ **U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner:** I am heartbroken over the loss of my dear friend Gerry Connolly ... Gerry was a fighter. His sharp mind, boundless energy, and deep commitment to the people of Northern Virginia made him a force to be reckoned with, whether on the Fairfax Board of Supervisors or in Congress. He met every challenge with tenacity and purpose, including his final battle with cancer, which he faced with courage, grace, and quiet dignity.

❖ **Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA):** Everyone who runs for office says they want to get stuff done, but comparatively few actually succeed. Gerry got stuff done for years in Fairfax, where he advocated successfully for projects including the Silver Line and the Cross County Trail, which now bears his name. Then he brought the same attitude and outlook to Congress, where he wrote and passed a major postal reform, led efforts to create the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, and was one of the most tireless and active advocates for the federal workforce ever to serve in Congress. Gerry was especially proud to have been named the House’s ‘most effective legislator,’ and to have earned the trust of his colleagues to lead our Caucus on oversight and government reform, topics he knew more about than almost anyone. Everyone who worked with him knew Gerry as a pugnacious fighter for his constituents, for good government, and for a range of causes around the world. He was also warm, witty, and loyal, and he loved acting in community theater as a company member of the Providence Players of Fairfax. Above all, Gerry was beloved by his family, friends, and staff.

❖ **James R. Walkinshaw, Brad-dock District Supervisor:** Today, our community mourns the loss of a singular leader, the Connolly family mourns the loss of a devoted husband and father, and I mourn the loss of a dear friend. ... Congressman Gerry Connolly was more than a public servant — he was a singular figure and force for good in our community, in the Commonwealth, and across the country. ... We’ve lost a giant. But we will honor his legacy by continuing the work he loved — serving others, speaking the truth, and never backing down from the defense of our values.

❖ **Supervisor Rodney Lusk:** I am heartbroken by the news of Congressman Gerry Connolly’s passing. He was a true public servant who always put people first. I had the pleasure of working for him in the Providence District on many projects as his land use aide. We worked on the redevelopment of Merrifield, www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

which led to the creation of the Mosaic District, the redevelopment of Tysons I and II, and hundreds of other projects. Gerry introduced me to land use and zoning, which was the precursor to my 21-year career in economic development, and, most recently, my tenure on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. He held a special place in my life as a mentor and friend. He is one of a kind, and his legacy will live on in the Cross County Trail, the Metro’s Silver Line, the Workforce Innovation Skills Hub (W.I.S.H.) at the Hybla Valley Community Center, and affordable housing in Fairfax County. He was a tireless public servant, not only for his constituents, but for all Americans.

❖ **Jeffrey C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:** Fairfax County lost a giant this morning, and I lost a friend and mentor. There is no one whose presence is felt more throughout Fairfax County than that of Gerry. Gerry was a fighter whose tenacity and vision helped make Fairfax County the powerhouse it is today. A fierce advocate for those he represented, from our most vulnerable to federal workers and contractors, Gerry always stood up for those he represented. I am going to miss Gerry, though his memory and impact will forever be with me and Fairfax County.

❖ **Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger (D-VA-45):** Today, Virginia mourns a man who enlivened our politics, brought boundless energy to political debates, worked tirelessly to make the lives of his constituents better, and brought laughter to those around him. I feel incredibly lucky to have known, worked alongside, and learned from Congressman Gerry Connolly for many years. My memories of Gerry will forever bring a smile to my lips and a stiffening to my spine — just as Gerry would want it. As we mourn a man who will be remembered as a model public servant, a fierce man of principle, and a larger-than-life storyteller, let us do as he would want us to do — cry a little, laugh a lot, and continue the fight for all that is right. Gerry’s passing leaves a deep hole in the hearts of so many Virginians, including myself, and a deep void on Capitol Hill.

❖ **Lamont Bagby, chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia:** Today, we mourn the loss of a true giant in Virginia politics and a tireless fighter for our Commonwealth. Congressman Gerry Connolly embodied what it means to be a public servant ... His sharp intellect, quick wit, integrity, and deep devotion to making our country a better place earned him the respect of colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

❖ The Fairfax Republican Party extends its heartfelt condolences on the passing of Congressman Connolly. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones during this difficult time.



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
GRAYSON	8733	58	HIGHLANDS PKWY	CABIN CREEK	4/23/2025
LUNENBURG	11654	661	GALLION TOWN ROAD	TRIB OF REEDY CREEK	4/11/2025
GRAYSON	8915	741	HOMESTEAD ROAD	BIG FOX CREEK	4/10/2025
BEDFORD	2679	604	RIVERSIDE INN CIRCLE	HUNTING CREEK	4/8/2025

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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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU JUNE 1

Enduring Roots by David Myers. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Studio 312, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria. Featuring a visual meditation by David Myers on resilience, time, and the relationship between people and the land they tend. Alongside the collection of more than 30 photographs in the exhibition, Myers' book *Wandering Among Them* offers further depth, featuring 13 images, some of which are exclusive to the book and not part of the gallery display. The limited edition book will be available for viewing and purchase at the gallery throughout the exhibition.

NOW THRU MAY 24

The Alexandria City High School Titan Student Art Exhibition. At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Join for the Opening Reception on Friday, May 2, from 7-9 p.m., and enjoy ACHS Performing Arts students' live chamber music performances and the ACHS Visual Arts Award Ceremony. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (closed May 25). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

THURSDAY/MAY 22

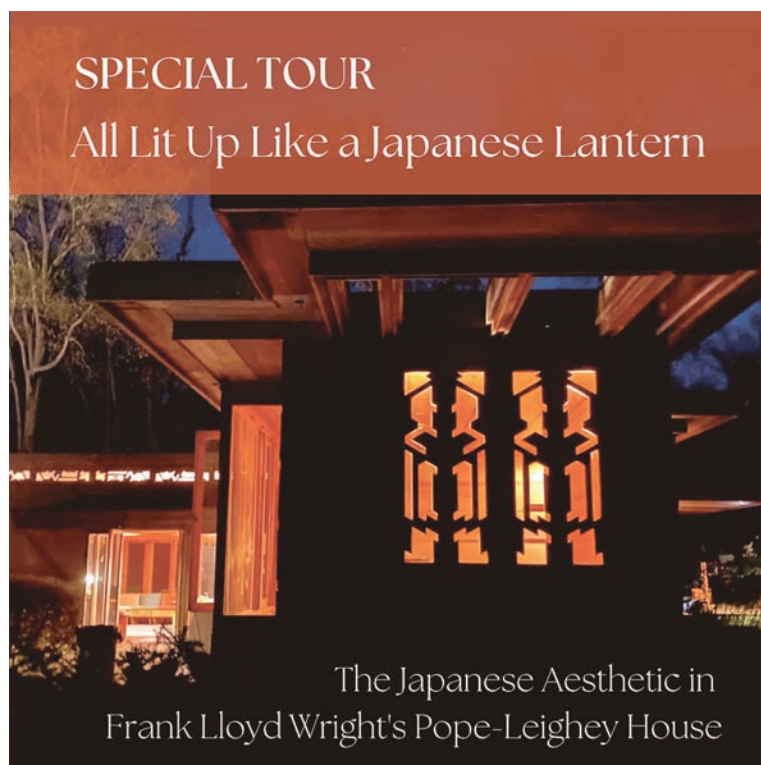
Spring Garden Tour & Tea. 1-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (Adult) Take a tour of the beautiful demonstration gardens with an Extension Master Gardener docent. Find inspiration in our horticulturists' plant choices and garden bed designs. Hear about our 18th century origins and our mission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

SATURDAY/MAY 24

Drawing Workshop – Trees and Leaves. 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Use your basic drawing skills to accurately render realistic drawings of trees and their leaves. 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. A 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 T2H.4J73

SATURDAY/MAY 24

Inalienable Rights. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Woodlawn welcomes Joe McGill and the Slave Dwelling



Like a Japanese Lantern takes place on Saturday, June 14, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

Project for a day of free programming with living historians and storytellers sharing the lives and history of people enslaved in Virginia. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

SUNDAY/MAY 25

I Like Coffee, I Like Tea. 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adult) Tea and coffee are the most popular beverages in the world, and both have legendary pasts. Learn about the history, provenance and health benefits of these flavorful, and competing, brews as we compare and contrast them. Regardless of your preference, you may change sides in the battle of the cup. \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

THURSDAY/MAY 29

Jane Franklin Dance. 7 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance and Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association at the Athenaeum Present Farewell Athenaeum. Tickets: \$23 thru May 27 (a ticket purchase supports JFD & NVFAA); \$25 starting May 28, \$28 at the door. Visit www.janefranklin.com or call 703-933-1111.

MAY 30 TO JUNE 29

"Sing Me a Sea Shanty" Art Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The exhibit explores enchanting artworks inspired by the nautical spirit. Exhibit reception on Friday, June 6, 7-9 p.m. to meet the curators and artists. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at May 22 - JUNE 4, 2025

DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

SATURDAY/MAY 31

Watercolor Workshop - Using Grids Creatively. 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) In this class you will use a grid to turn your drawings and/or photographs into a creative composition with the direction of artist and instructor Marni Maree. Then you will use watercolor to paint it! A 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 01X.L4GY

SATURDAY/MAY 31

Architecture of Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey. 12-1:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House provide a unique opportunity to put two American styles of architecture – separated by over a century – in conversation with one another. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

MAY 31 TO JUNE 1

Armed Forces Cycling Classic. The weekend kicks off on Saturday, May 31, with the Amazon Armed Forces Cycling Classic's Challenge Ride. The Challenge Ride offers a 21km closed course that welcomes cycling enthusiasts of all skill levels, and will now start and finish in our Nation's Capital. Participants will enjoy the opportunity to ride against the backdrop of Washington, DC, and Arlington's most iconic landmarks. Participants can aim



Grab a Slice of History on Friday, June 20, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

for gold, silver, or bronze medals, awarded based on the number of laps completed during the three-hour event. The weekend's activities also include two days of races, featuring the nation's top Pro/Am men's and women's cycling teams. Saturday's race will be held on a short, spectator friendly course in DC, utilizing the same start/finishing area as the Challenge Ride. On day two, the racing moves to Arlington, VA, for the 27th edition of the Clarendon Cup Pro/Am bike races. cyclingclassic.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 7

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.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

SATURDAY/JUNE 7

Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street on the Potomac River. Presented by Volunteer Alexandria, the fair features local and regional artisans who showcase their pieces across various mediums including pottery, stationery, fabrics, paintings, jewelry, photography and more. Over 90+ vendors joined us last year, including food and drink to purchase. For more information, visit Volun-

teer Alexandria | Arts and Crafts Festival

SATURDAY/JUNE 7

First Annual Summer Palooza. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Summer Palooza promises a day of fun in the sun for everyone — families, dog lovers, environmental enthusiasts and more. Highlights include live music from a favorite local band, Riptide, free food at the Taste of Mount Vernon, a petting zoo with animals from Frying Pan Park, a kids zone and touch-a-truck experiences. Attendees (21+) can also enjoy a beer garden hosted by Bunnymen Brewing.

SATURDAY/JUNE 7

60 Years of Preservation. 5:30-8:30 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. They're throwing a party to commemorate the historic move of the Pope-Leighey House from Falls Church, VA, to its current home at Woodlawn—a move that saved this Frank Lloyd Wright-designed gem, thanks to the dedication of Marjorie Leighey and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Now it's time to party in true 1960s style! Slip into your best 60s-inspired attire—think mod dresses, bell bottoms, bold prints, and vintage vibes—and get ready for a night of great food, drinks, and live entertainment that will transport you back to the era of peace, love, and preservation! Whether you're a history buff, an architecture fan, or just looking for a groovy time, this is one event you won't want to miss.

Sunset Concert at River Farm featuring Soulfire

Get ready for a soulful evening to remember as the captivating band Soulfire performs at River Farm, headquarters of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), on Thursday, May 29, 6-8 p.m. This outdoor family-friendly concert promises an unforgettable evening of music, nature, and stunning views overlooking the Potomac River. Entry is free. Parking fee is \$20. For more information and to purchase parking in advance, visit www.ahsgardening.org/sunset-concert.

Guests are invited to bring a blanket or folding chair and a picnic basket filled with their favorite foods and beverages for open seating on River Farm's scenic lawn. As the sun sets, Soulfire will set the atmosphere ablaze with an electrifying performance featuring a diverse repertoire of over a thousand songs, both classic and contemporary.

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 12

SATURDAY/JUNE 7

Senior Law Day 2025. From 9 a.m. to 12 noon. At First Baptist Church, 2932 King Street, Alexandria. Featuring "The Cost of Aging: Mental, Physical, Financial, and Legal Perspectives." Join Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association for the annual Senior Law Day! This year, plan to hear from estate planners, financial experts, and senior resource specialists as they share insights on caregiving challenges, healthcare and housing costs, and the essential legal documents everyone should have. The presentations will include a panel on how to provide caregiving in ways that support and protect the dignity of aging friends and family. Chris Leighton of Hughes & Leighton PLLC will moderate and Heidi Travis and Ashley Wembley from ElderTree Care Management will provide their expert insights on compassionate and effective caregiving. Register by emailing events@seniorservicesalex.org or call SSA's Office at 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

SATURDAY/JUNE 14

Like a Japanese Lantern. 12-1 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Discover how Frank Lloyd Wright incorporated his love of Japanese art, architecture, and philosophy into Usonian homes, and how this East Asian influence shines in Wright's Pope-Leighey House. Cost is \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpope-leighey.org/upcomingevents>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The event is made possible by River Farm sponsors and friends: Katherine Ward, Soulfire, and the Potomac Riverkeeper Network.

River Farm is located at 7931 E. Boulevard Dr., Alexandria, Virginia 22308. It is open to the public and free to visit Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (excluding special events). For more information, call (703) 768-5700 ext. 114 or visit www.ahsgardening.org.



FRIDAY/JUNE 20

Slice of History. 5:30-8 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Celebrate #CivicsSeason with (free!) pizza and history! Take a self-guided tour of Woodlawn and learn about the site's profound legacy of transformation.

JULY 14-18 OR JULY 21-25

Art Camp 2025. Del Ray Artisans invites youth ages 8-12 to Art Camp 2025 for a week of professional art instruction! Campers will have an immersive creative journey: painting, sculpting, journaling and more. During nice weather, campers will have outdoor time to get fresh air, unwind, and replenish their creative energy. All art supplies are provided. Choose July 14-18 or July 21-25 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily). \$350/child; scholarship support available. Registration at delrayartisans.org/art-camp-2025

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.

MAY

Fri. 23: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston \$69.50

Sat. 24: Chrisette Michele \$69.50

Sun. 25: Corinne Bailey Rae \$69.50. SOLD OUT!

Fri. 30: Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood (From TV's "Whose Line Is It Anyway?") \$69.50

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

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Undergrounding Wires Can Reduce Outages

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

As people in some parts of Eastern Fairfax County continue to recover from May 16's devastating storms that left approximately 200,000 customers without power for over two days and tragically claimed two lives, we are once again confronted with a stark reality: our electrical infrastructure remains vulnerable to nature's wrath and we are extremely dependent on electricity for our quality of life.

I have received dozens of requests for underground utilities in the wake of this storm. I have good news and bad news. The good news is that the Virginia General Assembly has already authorized some limited undergrounding and even authorized a special program for Fairfax County. The bad news is that our action will never be enough and there continue to be many obstacles to robust, widespread undergrounding. For example, Fairfax County has chosen not to take advantage of the program the General Assembly has made available.

In Virginia, electric power is mostly provided by utilities like Dominion Energy that have a monopoly, but provide services subject to oversight by the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) and the state legislature to ensure that they do not abuse this monopoly power. One study of universal undergrounding of all electric utilities across the Commonwealth found the cost would exceed \$150 billion.

In 2011-2012, Dominion Energy studied the feasibility of undergrounding residential electrical tap or feeder lines and the cost and the reliability improvements that could be generated. After the study, the General Assembly authorized Dominion Energy to spend a limited percentage of their annual revenues on undergrounding residential feeder lines, but not distribution or trans-



Surovell

mission lines which are larger and exponentially more expensive to bury.

This program requires Dominion to analyze a decade of power outage data and to prioritize burying lines that are the most vulnerable to outages. By prioritizing funds, this approach reduces some future outages, allows workers to focus on other problems and to restore the system to full operation more quickly.

We prohibited utilities from spending more than \$20,000 per customer served directly by or downline of the converted lines and no more than \$750,000 per mile for conversion to underground, exclusive of financing costs. The total anticipated expenditure is approximately \$2 billion and each project is reviewed by the SCC to ensure compliance with state law and Virginia's longstanding policy of minimizing electrical utility rates.

Conversions Have Reduced Outage Times by 50 Percent

Since adoption, the program has converted 7,300 neighborhood feeder or "tap lines" totaling approximately 2,480 miles of underground power infrastructure of what will eventually likely be up to 4,000 miles of overhead tap lines. Much of this has been in Fairfax County. These conversions are estimated to reduce outage times by 50 percent.

According to Dominion's most recent figures, the Strategic Underground Program has prevented an estimated 3,610 outage events every year. Even more impressive is the dramatic reduction in the system average interruption duration index (SAIDI) for customers in converted zones, from a pre-conversion SAIDI of 556 minutes to just 2.25 minutes after undergrounding. This represents a 99.6 percent improvement in outage duration.

For communities that have experienced major storms, the benefits are particularly

evident, with Dominion reporting a 20-30 percent reduction in total restoration time following severe weather events where restoration would typically exceed 72 hours. This means faster recovery for all customers across the grid, even those whose lines remain above ground, as crews can focus on other affected areas rather than dealing with the most chronically-vulnerable sections.

Virginians should understand that Dominion will only move forward with eligible programs if all homeowners on the undergrounding project agree to modify their existing easements and transformer placements to alleviate the need for time-consuming and expensive condemnation proceedings. In addition, the projects cannot include cable or telephone lines because those companies have no means to recover costs from ratepayers since they are unregulated, non-mandatory utilities.

In 2019, I carried legislation which allowed Fairfax County to adopt a tax of up to \$1 per month per household to fund burying distribution lines as long as the planned U.S. 1 Bus Rapid Transit Project would be the first recipient of funds. Commendably, Prince William County has buried distribution lines on their entire 14-mile stretch of U.S. 1. It was my hope this program would be used to improve reliability in our community, reduce project damage and enhance the beauty of the U.S. 1 Corridor, but the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has not utilized this authority.

Going forward, if underground electricity lines are important for your community, people need to cooperate with Dominion if the company determines that your neighborhood is eligible. In the meantime, I will continue to explore ways to make our electrical infrastructure more resilient as climate change continues to make the weather more volatile and bring on more frequent and more severe storms.

If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to me at scott@scottsurovell.org.

Label Me Incredulous



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I never thought I'd say this - or live long enough to say it, but I'm practically out of those return-address labels that we all were inundated with a decade or so ago (much less so nowadays). Like many people, I suppose, I kept the return-address labels - that were offered up as an inducement/shame/guilt/awareness even, of certain charitable pursuits and have used them regularly ever since. The labels were a quid pro quo/presumptive "thank you" of sorts (as were light bulbs, notepads, appointment books as well as miscellaneous pins/medallions/keepsakes and too many others to list - or remember; fireman, disabled, police officers, et cetera, I just remembered) to us to encourage us to mail a check to their organization. As a result of their unsolicited outreach, I had sheets of return-address labels that I placed in my desk drawer. Now, unbelievably so, that drawer is nearly empty of labels.

When I first started receiving these return-address labels, I was, give or take, in a diagnostic process which ultimately led to me being "prognosed" with a "13 month to two years" life expectancy: non-small cell lung cancer stage IV. Which made Kenny a very dull boy and one without too many years to live. At age 54 and a half, no less. But amazingly life has gone on. I have balanced (or tried to) the present with the maybe-having-a future. Rather than shut it down/woe is me, I decided to live like I was living (not 'live like I was dying'), that is, living with a future: a future with bills to pay and return addresses to provide. The onslaught of these return-address labels was, as my late mother used to say: "Too much for anybody's nerves." I exaggerate when I characterize their in-home penetration as overwhelming, but the frequency with which these labels/solicitations arrived in our mailbox - and requests for a contribution, was almost comical. They became, to me anyway, a kind of white-whale-type noise. After a while, I ignored the message and took the labels, only occasionally making a contribution.

Now I am down to my last sheet, actually, my last two return-address labels. Based on my diagnosis and "terminal" prognosis, I had no statistical reason to think I'd outlive my accumulation of these return-address labels. Nor did I ever think I'd live to see the completion of the ICC, but I have. Now I wonder if I'll ever see the completion of the Metro's new Purple Line. Having said/written that, I now have to say something that I've never had to say before: I need some return-address labels.

Here again, as I sit and stare at my computer waiting for results of today's every four-week lab work, I am still struggling/juggling my thoughts about life and death, the past, present and the future and where I fit. But this is nothing new. I've been through it going on 16 and half years. And though I'm very experienced at dealing with this sort of emotion, believe it or not, it doesn't get any easier. Familiar, sure. And it's never more familiar than when I use my return-address labels. When I affix a label, it takes me back to late February 2009 when I first received that "terminal" diagnosis. It's where I am now. Still, I can't help wondering if it's where I'll be later.

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

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

Sat. 31: Walter Beasley \$55.00
JUNE
Tue. 3: Steve Earle: Solo & Acoustic 50 Years of Songs & Stories w/ Zandi Holup \$69.50
Wed. 4: Scott Thompson is "Buddy Cole" in The Last Glory

Hole \$39.50

Sat. 7: The Smithereens with guest vocalist John Cowsill \$45.00

Sun. 8: Happy Together Tour 2025 Featuring The Turtles, Jay & The Americans, Little Anthony, Gary Puckett & Union Gap, The Vogues, and The Cowsills

\$109.50. SOLD OUT!

Tue. 10: Happy Together Tour 2025 Featuring The Turtles, Jay & The Americans, Little Anthony, Gary Puckett & Union Gap, The Vogues, and The Cowsills \$109.50

Thu. 12: Robert Glasper \$79.50. SOLD OUT!

Fri. 13: TWEET \$49.50

Sat. 14: Tarsha Fitzgerald Presents VOICES OF MOTOWN Father's Day Anniversary Show! \$45.00

Mon. 16: The Musical Box performs Genesis Live \$59.50

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

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.novasecondaturday.com for more.

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