

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 17, 2025

‘Immigrants Are Action Heroes’

Schwarzenegger
welcomes new
citizens at
Mount Vernon.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger celebrated Independence Day by welcoming 100 new citizens on the grounds of George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate with remarks that praised the immigrant spirit and recounted his own journey along the path to U.S. citizenship.

“When I came to this country 57 years ago, not in my wildest dreams — and I had wild dreams — did I think that one day this immigrant would be asked to place a wreath at the tomb of George Washington and to give the keynote address at this very important ceremony,” said Schwarzenegger, an Austrian who became a U.S. citizen in 1983. “To the 100 people who have just become American citizens, I say

SEE ‘IMMIGRANTS’, PAGE 8



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

More than 100 new U.S. citizens from 95 countries celebrate at the naturalization ceremony July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.



Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger delivers remarks at the July 4 U.S. naturalization Ceremony at Mount Vernon Estate.



New U.S. citizens recite the Pledge of Allegiance July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.

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ACM ATLANTIC COAST
MORTGAGE



Visitors today like to study the gun batteries from the 1890s.



The guns on these batteries had a range of six to seven miles.

Talk to Highlight Clandestine Past

Fort Hunt Park housed 4,500 prisoners of war 1942-45; many were Nazi naval officers and German scientists.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The tranquility at Fort Hunt Park today offers no hint at the clandestine goings-on there during World War II. Today's park-goers no doubt have a more pleasant time than the 4,500 German, Japanese and Italian prisoners of war (POWs) who were interrogated there in a top-secret camp from 1942 to 1946.

On July 26 at 1 p.m. the National Park Service will host an online program in partnership with the Martha Washington Library titled "Science and Espionage: Fort Hunt and Prince William Forest during the Second World War." Moderated by NPS ranger Daniel Blier, it will feature authors Ann Todd and Brian Crim. Todd, a historian, authored OSS Operation Black Mail: One Woman's Covert War Against the Imperial Japanese Army. Crim is a former intelligence analyst and professor at Keene State University.

Register at <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/14294542>.

PO. BOX 1142

Few knew about the secret outpost with the code name, P.O. Box 1142, where many prisoners were Nazi naval officers and German scientists, often interrogated by Jewish immigrants fluent in German who had fled the Holocaust.

One tactic for extracting information was to blindfold the POWs and drive them around and around monotonously on the circular road still there in a windowless bus



The guns could swing around on the semi-circular concrete.

and then take them to an underground room for questions.

Here, Army and Navy officials quizzed high-value Nazi leaders like rocket scientist Wernher von Braun and Reinhard Gehlen, head of Nazi intelligence on the Eastern Front. Almost 800 had survived sunken German U-Boats that terrorized the Atlantic Coast. "If a prisoner appeared to possess significant information, he was earmarked for shipment to Fort Hunt," wrote Matthew

Laird in "By the River Potomac."

The interrogators tried to tease out tidbits of intelligence, from officers' names to jet engine technology, especially eager to learn about the Germans' rocket and submarine technology. They threatened some reluctant POWs with a feared "Russian officer," who would suddenly appear in full military uniform. Some interrogators used enticements like games, candy and bubblegum. The ventilation systems of most cells hid listening

devices for eavesdropping on conversations.

CAMP FACILITIES

The covert camp had two wood-frame-and-concrete enclosures. Today's grassy fields, a few woody areas and picnic pavilions long ago replaced the perimeter barbed wire fence and most of the buildings of the war era, but a few remnants remain, like four chunks of cement which were bases of former guard towers.

The big open grassy expanse in the middle of the park today was the parade field. Two clearly aligned rows of trees, planted in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, mark the old service road that went through the camp.

After the war, officials ordered the destruction of most of the complex's facilities and documents. In the 1990s, when the government declassified some World War II records, camp information emerged and the Park Service conducted oral histories with some associated with the camp.

MORE SECRET STUFF A BIT SOUTH

A wooded site 25 miles south of Fort Hunt, today's Prince William Forest Park, was a spy training ground from 1942 to 1945 run by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Then called Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area, recruits had paramilitary training and learned fieldcraft, weaponry, demolition, undercover procedures, field security and close combat.

Today's visitors can see some of their cabins, the infirmary, storage structures, a water tower and a few gun mounts, most built in the mid-1930s by Civilian Conservation

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MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE ♦ JULY 17 - AUGUST 6, 2025 ♦ 3

PJ's Coffee Brings: Taste of New Orleans in Mount Vernon

Owners will add a taste of Ethiopia to the mix in Penn Daw.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

In the Penn Daw section of Mount Vernon, there's a newcomer on the coffee house scene in the shape of PJ's Coffee, a fixture out of the south that features beignet bites and other specialties straight out of the bayou.

The Alexandria location is locally owned and operated by the husband-and-wife entrepreneurs Ronald and Sofiya Ali Parker. Ronald is an IT Program Manager, and Sofiya is a flight attendant with Delta Airlines. Longtime residents of the Alexandria-Burgundy Village area, the Ali Parkers have always enjoyed spending time in coffee shops — making the decision of owning one a nat-

ural next step. With family roots on Sofiya's side tracing back to Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee, the beverage has long held a meaningful place in their daily lives and family culture.

"The original idea to start this coffee shop came from my sister," said Ronald. "I've spent countless hours in coffee shops over the years, and one day she suggested I open a store and let her run it. I thought it was a great idea and began exploring franchise opportunities. When we discovered PJ's, we were drawn to the warm décor, the exceptional coffee and the unique food options — especially the beignets. Once we met the leadership team and learned more about the brand, we were all in."

The Ali Parkers are pleased to bring PJ's Coffee to their local community and are committed to supporting it beyond just serving coffee. They plan to partner with near-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

PJ's Coffee

by schools, community centers, and service organizations to champion youth programs, education and local initiatives.

It's a good fit in an area that bounced back from a massive fire a few years ago. Located on the ground floor of the 400-unit South Alex apartment complex, the stand-alone café brings a true taste of the French Quar-

ter to Virginia with its signature beignets, small-batch roasted coffee and seasonal sips.

"PJ's" isn't named after pajamas, although there may be some customers showing up in their "jammers," for early morning coffee. This moniker is from founder Phyllis Jordan, a pioneer in the coffee industry that founded PJ's Coffee of New Orleans in 1978. She demonstrated that better beans, superior roasting techniques and pure passion for the art of coffee-making mattered. In 2008, the company was purchased by New Orleans natives and brothers Paul, Steven,

and Scott Ballard. PJ's Coffee serves a wide variety of hot, iced and frozen coffee beverages using only the best quality Arabica coffee beans, as well as organic tea and fresh breakfast pastries.

PJ's is located at 6220 N. Kings Hwy. Visit pjscoffee.com.

July 1 Brings New Laws to VA

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Health, consumer protection, seatbelts: some of the new state laws passed by the Virginia General Assembly during the 2025 session. They are grouped by topic, and nearly all of which take effect on July 1, 2025. The legislature sent 916 bills to Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin, of which he signed 599, amended 159, and vetoed 157. For the complete list of legislation from this year's session, visit the Virginia Legislative Information System website.

Health care, pregnancy, and pregnant prisoners

❖ HB2083, introduced by Irene Shin (Chief Patron), requires the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange to establish a special enrollment period for a pregnant qualified individual to enroll in a qualified health plan at any time.

❖ HB2235, introduced by Rae Cousins (Chief Patron) prohibits local and regional correctional facilities to use restraints on prisoners known to be pregnant or in postpartum recovery unless a deputy sheriff or jail officer makes an individualized determination that (the prisoner will harm herself, the fetus, the newborn child, or any other person; the prisoner poses a flight risk or the totality of the circumstances creates a serious security risk.

Consumer protections

❖ SB1339, introduced by David W. Marsden (Chief Patron), is the Virginia Telephone Privacy Protection Act; telephone solicitations by text message. Effective January 1,



SCREENSHOT FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Opioid overdoses continue in Fairfax County. SB1240, requires Virginia public school principals and heads of private schools to report certain information to the parents of enrolled students within 24 hours of a confirmed or suspected school-connected student overdose.

2026, it permits an individual receiving a telephone solicitation via text message to request not to receive telephone solicitations from a telephone by replying with the word "UNSUBSCRIBE" or "STOP" and requires the solicitor to honor such request for at least 10 years.

Cocktails to-go, Vaping Changes

❖ HB2058, introduced by Paul E. Krizek (Chief Patron) / SB 811 Aaron R. Rouse (Chief Patron), makes the previous temporary policy permanent and allows restaurants and other licensed businesses to deliver wine, beer, and cocktails to-go by third-party delivery providers.

❖ HB1946 Vaping ban for those under 21, introduced by Patrick A. Hope (Chief Patron), prohibits any person younger than 21 years of age from possessing any retail

tobacco or hemp product intended for smoking.

Child support

❖ SB805, introduced by Scott A. Surovell (Chief Patron), updates the amounts in the schedule of basic child support obligations based upon gross monthly income from \$35,000 to \$42,500.

Nazi Graffiti

❖ HB2783, introduced by Marcus B. Simon (Chief Patron), creates a Class 6 felony for any person vandalizing property with a Nazi symbol, such as a Nazi swastika, intending to intimidate. The law can apply



FCPS.EDU/CELL-PHONE-POLICY

FCPS will have a new policy, requiring students to be cell phone-free during the school day, fostering learning and positive social behavior in the classroom. Exceptions are permitted. SB738, introduced by Sen. Stella G. Pekarsky; HB1961, introduced by Del. Sam Rasoul (Chief Patron) addresses cell phone use in a new light starting July 1.

to private property as well as highways or public places.

Education & Changes in Virginia schools
❖ SB738, introduced by Stella G. Pekarsky (Chief Patron) / HB1961, Sam Rasoul (Chief Patron)), Virginia school districts have been enforcing the bell-to-bell cellphone restrictions since Gov. Glenn Youngkin's executive order last summer. Each school board is re-

SEE NEW LAWS, PAGE 14



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Fairfax County Unemployment Crisis

Joint Statement from Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell and Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay.

On Wednesday, July 16, Virginia Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Jeff McKay issued the following statement regarding the report of the rise in unemployment in Fairfax County:

<bt>We are dismayed by the staggering rise in unemployment across Fairfax County, which has reached levels not seen since mid-2021. With over 21,700 residents now unemployed — a shocking 35% increase from last year — it is clear that the reckless policies of Donald Trump and the complicity of statewide Republican leadership are directly responsible for this crisis. This threatens the decades of leadership that has made Fairfax County the economic engine of Virginia.

The Trump administration's disastrous workforce cuts have left our communities vulnerable, and Gov. Glenn Youngkin's failure to take decisive action has only deepened the economic pain felt by families across our region. Instead of prioritizing the needs of Virginians, Youngkin has chosen to align himself with the same failed policies that have led to this economic downturn. His inaction speaks volumes about his commitment to the people he claims to serve.

Adding to this crisis is Attorney General Jason Miyares' failure to take legal action to protect federal workers, unlike other state attorneys general who have stepped up to defend their constituents. This lack of leadership only exacerbates the challenges faced by our work-

force and highlights a troubling disregard for the livelihoods of Virginians.

As we face some of the highest unemployment rates in nearly four years, it is evident that the leadership of Trump, Youngkin, Earle-Sears, and Miyares is out of touch with the realities facing working families. Their misguided approach to governance has resulted in real suffering for our residents, and it is unacceptable.

The numbers tell a stark story: Fairfax County's unemployment rate has climbed to 3.3%, with the May 2025 total representing the highest level of joblessness since August 2021. This dramatic increase has occurred despite our region's historical resilience and the availability of over 126,000 open positions throughout Northern Virginia, prior to Trump taking office. The disconnect between available jobs and displaced federal workers reveals the specific and targeted nature of this crisis.

Instead of giving lip service to our federal workers and cheering on federal workforce reductions, Youngkin, Lt. Gov Winsome Earle-Sears and Attorney General Miyares need to start taking responsibility for the economic fallout of their party's policies. A simple job-posting website is wholly inadequate to address this crisis. The Governor must present a comprehensive plan that includes retraining programs, unemployment insurance extensions, and direct financial assistance for displaced workers. He needs to stand up for Virginians and leverage his close relationship with Trump to do



Surovell



McKay

something that actually benefits Virginians. Meanwhile, Miyares remains conspicuously absent while attorneys general in other states have filed lawsuits and taken decisive legal action to protect their federal workforce from politically motivated terminations. Winsome Sears needs to stop cheerleading Virginia's families' economic dislocation. Virginians deserve better than empty promises and partisan games.

The ripple effects extend far beyond the immediate unemployment statistics. Federal contractors face uncertainty as contracts are canceled, and the downstream economic impact threatens to undermine the prosperity that has long defined Fairfax County. Our local businesses, from restaurants to retail establishments, are already feeling the effects as consumer spending declines among affected families.

We call on Gov. Youngkin to immediately take action to focus on economic recovery for fired federal workers, including comprehensive retraining programs, expedited licensing for professional certifications, extended unemployment benefits, and direct coordination with private sector employers. A job-posting website alone will not solve this crisis — we need robust, funded programs that provide real pathways to employment. Attorney General Miyares must join his counterparts in other states who have courageously filed law-

suits and taken legal action to protect Virginia's federal workforce from arbitrary and politically motivated terminations.

We stand united in our commitment to fight for a fair and equitable economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy elite. It is time to reject the failed lead-

ership of Trump, Youngkin, Sears and Miyares and to put the needs of our communities first. Together, the General Assembly and our local governments must work to restore economic stability and ensure that every Virginian has the opportunity to thrive.

Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia deserve leadership that puts families first, not political ideology. We will continue to advocate for policies that support working families, create sustainable employment opportunities, and ensure that our region remains economically vibrant for generations to come.

Sen. Scott A. Surovell represents the 34th Senate District encompassing Southeastern Fairfax County. Prior to his time in the Senate, Surovell served six years in the House of Delegates. Surovell lives in Mount Vernon. He practices law and has dedicated his legislative career to fighting for Northern Virginia's fair share, protecting consumers, and preserving our environment for future generations.

Jeff McKay was elected as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in 2019 after serving as Franconia District supervisor for the previous 12 years. Since joining the Board, Jeff has been a champion for equity, education, affordable housing, transportation, revitalization, and the environment in Fairfax County.

Devastating Consequences

To the editor:

I am hoping that you will consider publishing the following letter in The Connection.

I am a Registered Nurse with a BSN, MSN, and PhD. I am also a Professor Emerita of Nursing at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

I grew up in Arlington, Virginia, where I attended Yorktown High School. During my senior year, I participated in a work/study program in which I worked for 17 hours each week at Arlington Hospital as a nurse's aide. This experience and the excellent edu-

cation I received in the Arlington public schools had a lasting impact on my life and led me to a 45 year career in nursing.

As a nursing professor I was actively engaged in research to study ways to improve care for preterm infants and for families. I received several grants from the National Institutes of Health, as well as from other organizations including the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. Several of my studies focused on identifying ways that parents could safely touch their extremely premature infants using gentle touch, since studies had

shown that some types of touch resulted in agitation and decreases in oxygen levels and adverse changes in heart rate. Some of my other studies focused on evaluating teaching programs to promote positive parent-child interactions and lead to improved outcomes for both children and their families.

I was also actively engaged in global health initiatives in many countries in Latin America and in Africa, including programs to improve nursing education and prepare nurses to address the HIV/AIDS crisis.

I am writing this letter to urge

readers to call their Senators and ask them to oppose cuts to funding for biomedical research and global health.

This funding is critical to supporting research to finding cures for diseases and for improving lives of people in the U.S. and around the world. The cuts to the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that are being proposed in the "Big Beautiful Bill" that is currently being debated will have devastating consequences for all of us.

Lynda Law (Harrison) Wilson
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formerly of Arlington, Virginia

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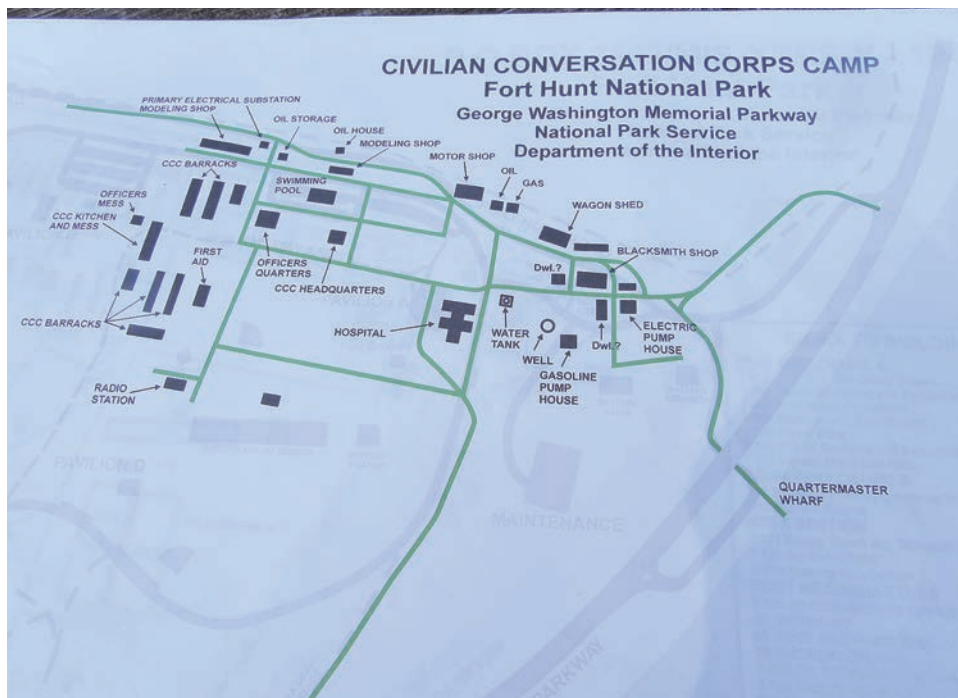
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A Connection Newspaper





A map of the Civilian Conservation Corps which was based at Fort Hunt in the 1930s.



The Battery Commander's Tower is still standing from 1902.

Talk to Highlight Clandestine Past

FROM PAGE 3

Corps men as camp facilities for inner-city children to experience nature. The park's museum collection has some artifacts representing OSS's hush-hush activities.

OTHER CHAPTERS OF FORT HUNT'S HISTORY

Native Americans hunted and fished in the Fort Hunt area from 6,000 B.C. to the mid-1700s. Captain John Smith encountered the Conoy tribe here in 1608. George Washington established a "slave village" on the property.

In 1931, an African-American Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) headed by white officers trained at Fort Hunt. In 1933 and 1934, World War I veterans protesting in the Bonus Marches demanding war pensions camped there.

Two years before Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Fort Hunt had a secret radio monitoring station to intercept and decode radio traffic from Mexico, Japan, Germany and Italy.

Four concrete gun batteries built in the

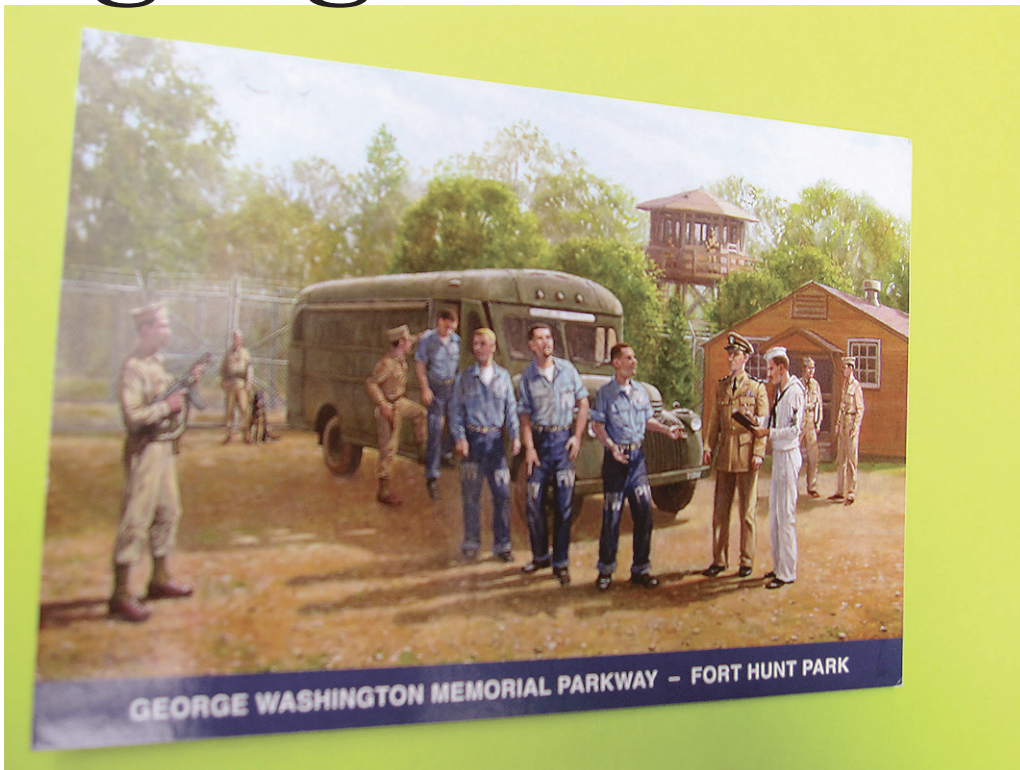


Photo of a National Park Service postcard, a painting depicting P.O. Box 1142 by Mark Churms.

1890s mystify many today. Intended for the Spanish American War, the batteries have a semicircular top so guns could swing around. Shells could weigh several hundred pounds and were raised from below on elevators.

The Battery Commander's Tower today looks much as it did when completed in 1902. Built for the nation's coastal defense system with concrete walls over two feet thick, from the top the commander could see down the Potomac River and coordinate the firing from the batteries.

The white frame house at the park's entrance was built in 1905 for non-commissioned officers and shared by two families.

A pin oak today commemorates the 1939 visit of England's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Both parks are managed by the National Park Service.

More information: Fort Hunt Park, <http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/fort-hunt.htm>; Prince William Forest Park, www.nps.gov/prwi.

OPINION

My Summer as Your Delegate

BY: DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK



I'm busy at work this summer serving you as your Delegate, here at home in the 16th District, at the Capitol in Richmond, and around the Commonwealth! If you follow me on social media, receive my newsletter, or read my column here in the Mount Vernon Gazette, you know that I always try to keep you updated on important

issues concerning the Commonwealth and apprised of my daily, year-round work on your behalf.

As you know, the Virginia General Assembly is a part-time legislature. I am one of the many legislators that has a full-time job in addition to my responsibilities as an elected official. Although we are only in our legislative session for 45 days during odd-numbered years like this one, and for 60 days during even-numbered years, I

travel often to Richmond out of session in my official Delegate capacity.

Last weekend, I traveled over to the Eastern Shore for the annual Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources Committee retreat. My colleagues and I visited the Virginia Institute of Marine Science lab, the Virginia Tech Agriculture Research Center, and several farms to learn about oyster restoration, Chesapeake Bay health, flood resilience, commercial shellfish production, saltwater intrusion impacts on

agriculture, emerging crops in Virginia, and more. Later this month, I will head to Charlottesville for the Virginia Environmental Justice Retreat for Legislators, and in August, I will attend the annual National Conference for State Legislators (NCSL) in Boston. I look forward to sharing all that we learn with you in future columns!

As a brief recap, this action-packed summer has been filled with almost weekly trips

SEE KRIZEK, PAGE 15



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET
Individuals from 95 countries await the ceremony to become U.S. citizens July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.

Arnold Schwarzenegger gives the keynote address welcoming 100 new U.S. citizens July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.

‘Immigrants Are Action Heroes’

FROM PAGE 1

thank you for sharing this day and your journey with me.”

Schwarzenegger’s remarks were the centerpiece of the annual naturalization ceremony held on the grounds of Mount Vernon. Prior

to the ceremony, Schwarzenegger placed a custom designed wreath at Washington’s tomb, praising the Founding Father as “America’s first action hero.”

“Whatever motivated you to make your way here, to want to

be a citizen of the United States, let me explain what it tells me about you,” Schwarzenegger said. “I know something about action heroes. You don’t need the special effects of Hollywood to be an action hero. Immigrants are action

heroes. It took action to get here. It took struggle to get here. And today your feet are firmly planted in America.”

The naturalization ceremony, welcoming new citizens from 95 different countries, was part of a

full array of historical events and activities at Mount Vernon in celebration of America’s 249th birthday.

“As we welcome guests to Mount Vernon for An American Celebration SEE ‘IMMIGRANTS’, PAGE 9



George Washington congratulates America’s newest citizens July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.



Martha Washington listens to remarks at the U.S. Naturalization ceremony July 4 at Mount Vernon estate.



The National Anthem is sung to open the naturalization ceremony July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.

‘Immigrants Are Action Heroes’

FROM PAGE 8

tion and fireworks, it’s important to remember that July 4th is more than a date in history,” said Doug Bradburn, President and CEO of Mount Vernon. “Independence Day is the embodiment of the ideals that George Washington fought to secure. As Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and the first President of the United States, Washington helped turn the dream of independence into a lasting democracy. His courage, leadership, and unwavering commitment to liberty continue to inspire our nation every Independence Day.”

Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, is owned and operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association, the oldest national historic preservation organization in the United States. The estate includes the Mansion, a museum and education center, gardens, tombs, a working farm, a functioning distillery, and a gristmill. It also includes the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon.

Telling the crowd that “I owe everything to this country,” Schwarzenegger encouraged the new citizens to not only pursue their dreams but to also give back in their new communities.

“The day I raised my right hand and became an American citizen was, without a doubt, one of the greatest days of my life,” Schwarzenegger said. “To be here 43 years later, standing at the home of one of my heroes to welcome more new citizens, is giving me a great gift – a gift to be part of this very meaningful ceremony. But I also ask you to think about what you would do for America as you receive America’s many blessings. I hope that you accept the responsibility to give something back, to give of yourself to some-



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET
Arnold Schwarzenegger places a wreath at the tomb of George Washington July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.



Arnold Schwarzenegger speaks after placing a wreath at the tomb of George Washington July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.

thing beyond yourself.”

Schwarzenegger praised the newest citizens and encouraged them to hold on to and share their culture and even their accents.

“The accent is nothing to be

ashamed of,” Schwarzenegger said in his trademark thick German accent. “It is a memory of your past, it is telling a story.”

He repeatedly expressed his gratitude for the “limitless opportuni-

ties” America afforded to him but also stressed the importance of holding on to each individual culture.

“America needs your story. America needs your strong immigrant spirit,” Schwarzenegger said.

“You are the people that America needs right now, with your accent, with your memories of your homeland and with your dreams. You don’t just deserve to be an American, you are needed here.”



A wreath designed by Arnold Schwarzenegger praises George Washington as America’s first action hero.



More than 100 individuals recite the oath of allegiance as new U.S. citizens July 4 at Mount Vernon Estate.



PHOTOS BY MIKE READY

Osprey and their young at the Belle Haven Marina platform nest on June 18, 2025.



Osprey tending young at the Belle Haven Marina platform nest in June.

Ospreys May Be in Trouble Again

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

They usually grow up and leave in July — ospreys, 22-inch-tall, brown and white raptors with a 65-inch wingspan, birds that nest and raise their young near open water in Northern Virginia from March to August.

Many people are intrigued watching them dive feet first to catch fish with their sharp talons, take them to the nest, rip them apart and eat and feed them to their young. They build nests, a jumble of sticks, or refurbish old nests every spring, in Northern Virginia generally along or near the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers, in trees, on platforms, duck blinds, poles and channel markers.

This year has brought some troubling signs for these impressive birds.

Ospreys in Dyke Marsh

For many years, ospreys have returned to Dyke Marsh in March and a pair has built a nest and raised their young on a platform at the Belle Haven Marina on the northern edge of Dyke Marsh. This year, the pair had two chicks, but around the end of June, one had perished.

Larry Cartwright, who has conducted a breeding bird survey in Dyke Marsh since 1994, reported on June 30, “The female was feeding the survivor today and the nestling was taking the offered food quite readily but looks a little stunted in development. The bird just sat there after eating with a quick break to jet a nice stream of excrement over the side of the nest, but little additional movement.” His July 6 report was more encouraging: “The youngster was more active today, standing up in the nest and flapping its wings for the first time. Hopefully, fledging will occur within the next two weeks.”

Ospreys at Porto Vecchio

For over a decade, osprey pairs have successfully raised young in nests on two plat-

forms near Porto Vecchio condominiums next to Hunting Cove at the confluence of the Potomac River and Hunting Creek. Three chicks from the northeast nest and two chicks on the southeast nest born this spring are now flying.

Several Porto Vecchio residents have had to come to the birds’ rescue over the years. Ospreys from these nests have died from fishing line entanglements at least twice in the past. Last summer, two residents rescued a chick from fishing line and this year, rescued two more chicks, one after falling from the nest and the second from twine wrapped around its wing.

More Ospreys

Jay Spiegel has had an osprey camera on a Little Hunting Creek nest behind his house for several years. This year a pair had two chicks, but Spiegel reports that around June 23, the chicks disappeared. He does not know why.

For several years, a pair has nested atop a light pole over Walt Whitman Middle School’s softball field. Observers saw an osprey there this year several times, but no one confirmed nestlings.

Challenges for Ospreys

Ospreys appear to be having a difficult year. Definitive data await final surveys. Local experts point to stressors like a weak shad run this spring on the Potomac, warming waters that affect the timing of fish migration, extreme cold and heat events during the hatchling phase, fewer ideal breeding areas because of ever encroaching eagle populations and more severe storms.

A May 2025 survey of nesting ospreys on Virginia’s Delmarva Peninsula, led by Dr. Bryan Watts of the College of William and Mary’s Center for Conservation Biology (CCB), reported a 90 percent decline there. He recorded nine pairs in the survey area and said that compared to past surveys from the



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Two adult and one first-year osprey on the Belle Haven Marina nest.

1970s and 1980s, “the 2025 survey reveals a nearly complete collapse of the population.” Watts concluded, “The most likely cause of the decline is prey availability. However, no osprey diet studies have ever been conducted within this site, and we know very little about trends in fish availability.”

CCB scientists previously reported that in the lower Chesapeake Bay, a silvery fish called Atlantic menhaden are nearly 75 percent of ospreys’ diet. Some conservationists argue that large-scale, commercial menhaden harvests are depleting menhaden stocks and that government officials should reduce current limits on the number landed or caught.

There have been several efforts in the Virginia General Assembly in recent years to require a comprehensive study of the menha-

den population, but those bills have failed. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s website says, “Atlantic menhaden are the target of Virginia’s largest commercial fishery, run by a company called Omega Protein, and its affiliates. Typically turned into fishmeal and fish oil products in a process known as ‘reduction fishing,’ the small schooling fish also are a key food for iconic predators like striped bass, bluefish, and ospreys. All other states have banned the practice of reduction fishing.”

More Osprey Facts

Ospreys mate for life and usually return to the same nest every spring. They typically incubate one to four eggs for 36 to 42 days.

SEE OSPREYS, PAGE 11

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News

Ospreys May Be In Trouble Again

FROM PAGE 10

Because they add materials to their nest year after year, a nest can be ten to 13 feet deep, three to six feet across and weigh up to 250 pounds. They may “decorate” their nests with items like shoes, cans, fabric, fast food debris and toys. Ospreys can become entangled in things in the nest, like plastic bags, balloon ribbons and monofilament fishing line.

Over their 15-to-20-year lifetime, ospreys

may migrate more than 160,000 miles.

In the early 1970s, osprey numbers plummeted and scientists concluded that the eggshells of ospreys, eagles and other birds were so thin that they broke during incubation and birds failed to hatch. They concluded that the hatching failure was due to pesticides that moved up the food chain. In 1972, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned DDT and populations recovered, until recently.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

One year a pair of Ospreys built a nest on a sailboat in the Belle Haven Marina.



Ospreys and other birds can get entangled in fishing line like this hanging from a tree near the Belle Haven Marina.

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ENTERTAINMENT

ONGOING

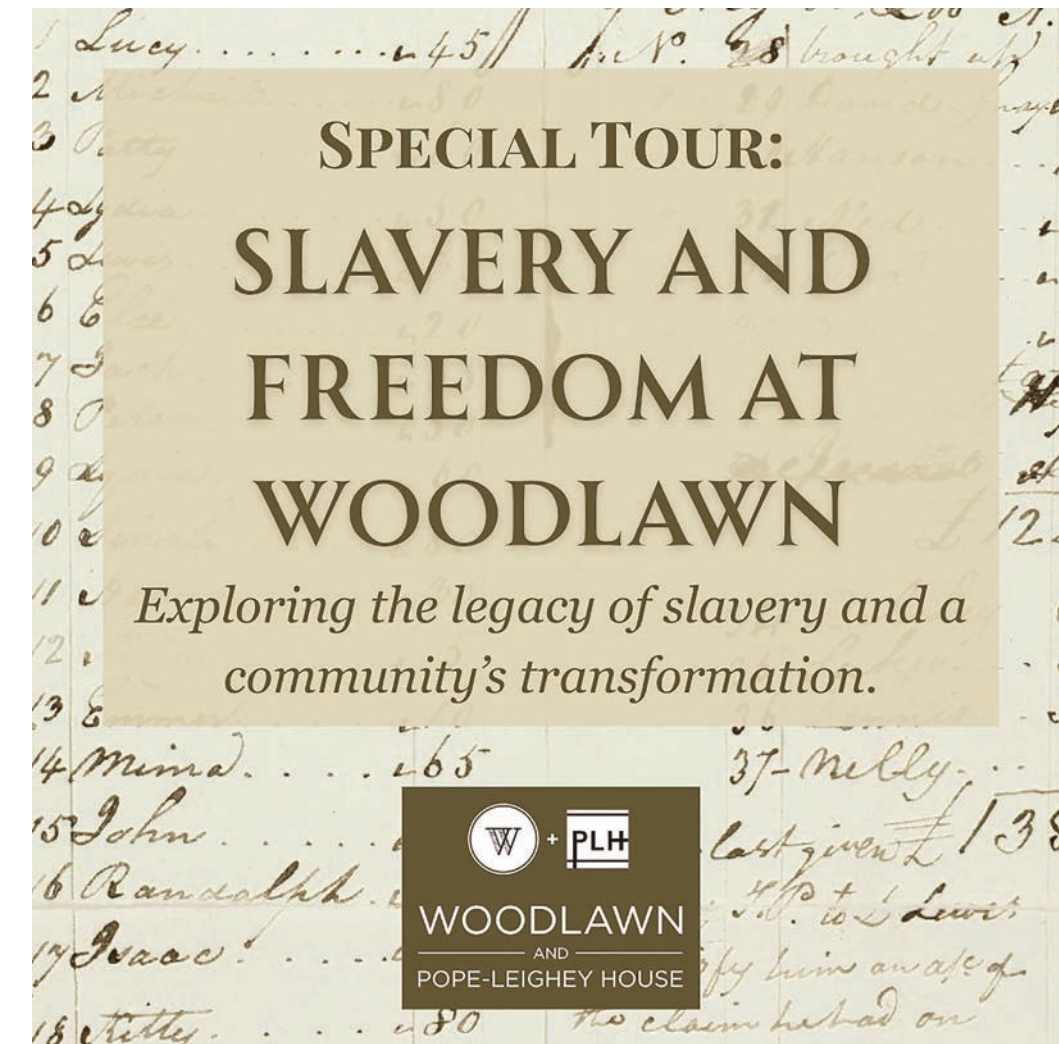
Revolutionary War Exhibit. At the National Museum of the U.S. Army, Alexandria. The National Museum of the United States Army has opened a special exhibition, *Call To Arms: The Soldier and the Revolutionary War*. The two-year exhibition commemorates this year's 250th Birthday of the U.S. Army and next year's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This 5,000 square-foot exhibition features a rare collection, specially curated by the Museum, that includes Revolutionary War artifacts from the original colonies, England, France and Canada. Among the exhibit's highlights are a pair of General George Washington's pistols, the original flag of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment carried by the Army's first African American Soldiers, and a complete Loyalist uniform—one of the rarest items in the collection. The sword of British General Charles Lord Cornwallis, presented to Washington at the surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, will also be displayed for a limited time.

NOW THRU JULY 30

Freedom of Expression Exhibit. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association presents a group exhibition that showcases a stunning array of jewelry, paintings, photography, mixed media work, hand pulled prints, and more during the month of July. Participating Artists: Victoria Barnes, Lynn Chadwick, Andrea Cybyk, Sheila Flanders, Samuel Gyulnazarian, Jon Kandel, Camille Kouyoumdjian, Michal Mitak Mahgerefteh, Anna Nazaretz Radjou, Rebecca McNeely, Diana Papazian, Karine Sapondjian, Antonio Scott, Samantha L. Shelton, Ana Tkabladze, Dixon Vergaray, Estelle Vernon, Dina Wise, and Guido R. Zanni.

NOW THRU AUG. 3

Small Stories Exhibit. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. This unique exhibition features 14 frames from 14 photographers, with each frame containing three or more photographs that together tell a "small story." These thoughtfully composed groupings offer a glimpse into intimate moments, layered narratives, and visual connections that reveal more than a single image alone. Exhibi-



Learn about Slavery and Freedom on Saturday, July 26, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

tion Artists: Russell Barajas, Stacy Smith Evans, Soomin Ham, Eric Johnson, Irina Dakhnovskaia-Lawton, Francine B. Livaditis, Maureen Minehan, David Myers, Guillermo Olaizola, Van Pulley, Sarah Hood Salomon, Alan Sislen, Tom Sliter, and Fred Zafran.

NOW THRU AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in collage, drawing, mixed media, photography, bead embroidery, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. For children and/or adults, free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA) unless noted. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer

NOW THRU AUG. 17

Potomac Valley Watercolorists "The Painted Garden" 2025 Art Exhibition and Sale. At Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. This annual fine art show spotlights many of our region's most highly-skilled and well-known water media artists, and features more than 100 original framed works on display and available for purchase. Special Event: Artists Reception – Sunday, July 13 from 1-3 p.m.

JULY 1-31

Mozzarella Fest. At Cheesetique in Del Ray, 2411 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. This month-long homage to Italy's most beloved cheeses, salumi, wine, and spirits, features a limited-time Mozzarella Fest menu,

curated tasting events and classes, and an Italian Wine Expo.

Highlights include:

- ❖ July 22 – Meet the Wines of Tuscany (in-person): A curated tasting of five Tuscan wines, each paired with a flavorful small bites.

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

THURSDAY/JULY 17

Art+Wine+Cheese Reception. 6-7:30 p.m. At the Nepenthe Gallery at Hollin Hall, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. 4th Annual Student Art Anthology. The favorite evening of the year! High school and college students from all over the DMV area are invited to submit up to three images of original artworks of any medium to our Curators, who select 15 of the submitted works to be featured at this annual event. This exhibit will be up at Nepenthe until Wednesday, July 30th.

FRIDAY/JULY 18

UNC Men's Rugby. 6-8 p.m. At the Nepenthe Gallery at Hollin Hall, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Whiskey Tasting Reception. Nepenthe Gallery and UNC's Men's Rugby are sponsoring an evening of whiskey tasting, fellowship, rugby tales, and special prizes. The USA Men's and Women's Eagles rugby teams play a double-header the following day at Audi Field in Washington, DC—players and visitors will be here from England and Fiji. Donations to the UNC Men's Rugby Club will be accepted!

SATURDAY/JULY 19

Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. 1 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Enjoy an afternoon of engaging conversation and writing! Facilitated by poet, author, and Athenaeum Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta, this workshop welcomes amateur to professional women writers ages 18–100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles. Space is limited, please RSVP to greatpublishing@yahoo.com.

SATURDAY/JULY 19

Old Town Civil War Roundtable Historical Civil War Talk. 10 a.m. At Murphy's Grand Irish Pub (2nd floor), 713 King Street, Alexandria. Don Hakenson and Chuck Mauro will be discussing their new books, "A Tour Guide and History of Col. John S. Mosby's Combat Operations in Central Virginia" and "A Tour Guide and History of Col. John S. Mosby's Combat Operations in Southern Virginia and Other States." The host is Mark Tooley.

SUNDAY/JULY 20

Farmers/Artisans Market. 9 a.m. to 1

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ENTERTAINMENT

Wright at Twilight

at Frank Lloyd Wright's Pope-Leighey House

August 8 & 22,

September 12 & 26

6:30 p.m.

Tickets \$30

The Wright at Twilight event will be held Friday, Aug. 8, 2025 at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria.

p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandia outside the Casa Chiralagua Community Center, Sundays 9-1.

are presented. Orchid owners may bring in their own specimen or work from photographs provided by the instructor. This class is appropriate for any skill level. A supply list will be emailed before class. Bring a lunch. \$112 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code 893.6Y1O

THURSDAY/JULY 24
Coffee & Connections. 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network July Coffee & Connections. A morning of networking behind the scenes at historic George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Enjoy coffee and conversation with some of the most dynamic women (and men) from around the region. Tammy Eddy, a Senior Corporate Engagement Officer at George Washington's Mount Vernon, an accomplished fundraiser and inspiring leader, will share a glimpse at the world of fundraising and the path that led her to success.

THURSDAY/JULY 24
Art+ Wine+ Cheese Reception. 6-7:30 p.m. At the Nepenthe Gallery at Hollin Hall, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Featured Artist: Anne Meagher-Cook, who is an en plein air painter who, in her own words, "...aims to express the essence of a place and moment in time—reflecting the light, colors, mood and feel." This exhibit will be up at Nepenthe until August 20th.

SATURDAY/JULY 26
Watercolor Workshop – Orchids. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Some subjects just scream to be painted in watercolors and orchids are one of those subjects. Taught by botanical artist Dawn Flores, plan and execute an orchid-inspired painting. Information on orchid anatomy, lessons on color, and a variety of watercolor techniques and transfer practices

SATURDAY/JULY 26
Floral Design Workshop – Summer Garden Design. 10:30 a.m. - noon. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Create an eye-catching summer vase arrangement with Green Spring horticulturist Parker Jennings. Using florals from the garden, mix balance, scale, proportion and contrast to create a summer design. Please register for the program and \$45 supply fee. \$46 per person. Register online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes> or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173. Code GUS.MRK6

SATURDAY/JULY 26
Finding Art Through Intentional Play with Leanne Fortney. 1-3 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Step into a welcoming space where creativity flows freely, perfection is left at the door, and your inner voice takes center stage. In this hands-on, heart-centered workshop, Finding Art Through Intentional Play, they'll use mixed media techniques and reflective prompts to explore self-compassion, grace, and personal growth themes. You'll be gently guided through an intuitive art-making process designed to reconnect you with your creative spark. No experience necessary—just bring your curiosity, a willingness to explore, and an open heart.

SATURDAY/JULY 26
Slavery and Freedom. 12-1 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Explore the lives of the

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

VDOT

Virginia Department of Transportation

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
BOTETOURT	3537	T1003	2ND.AVE./T1003	TINKER CREEK	7/1/2025
FLOYD	7506	221	FLOYD HWYS 221	BR OF DODD CREEK	6/3/2025

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

FROM PAGE 13

people enslaved at Woodlawn and the property's transformation from a plantation to an antislavery community. Cost is \$25. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

SUNDAY/JULY 27

Green Spring Past and Present. 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria.. (Adult) Learn about Green Spring's 18th century origins, its early owners and the enslaved people who once lived and toiled here. Hear fascinating stories of past residents of the 1784 Historic House and discover how Green Spring became a horticultural and historical resource for visitors today. \$42 (lecture + tea); \$18 (lecture only).

THURSDAY/JULY 31

Art+ Wine+ Cheese Reception. 6-7:30 p.m. At the Nepenthe Gallery at Hollin Hall, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Featured Artist: Nancy Bruce. Nancy will be at Nepenthe to discuss her dynamic and unique collage works. Her art is fantastic, and Nancy is, too! She will get you thinking and keep you laughing at the same time. Nancy is a mixed media artist who works primarily with recycled materials—things she has found, saved, or been given. The pieces are on canvas or panels and are in various sizes. This exhibit will

be up at Nepenthe until August 27th.

AUG. 1-30

“Lovely As a Tree” Art Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans members explore all the ways in which trees impact our lives and the earth and bring aspects of this natural phenomenon to artistic life. . Join them for the Opening Reception on Friday, August 1, 7-9pm. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/AUG. 2

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-librarys-ongoing-book-sale>.

FRIDAY/AUG. 8

Wright at Twilight. 6:30 to 9 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic

Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, and watch the changing light bring out the architectural details. Visit the website: <https://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/upcomingevents>

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.

JULY

Thu. 17: OMAR with special guest Tabi Bonney \$45.00
Sat. 19: Tell Me Lies – The Fleetwood Mac Experience \$35.00
Sun. 20: Hubert Laws \$55.00
Thu. 24: Hiroshima \$59.50
Fri. 25: The Bacon Brothers w/ Pernikoff Brothers \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 26: The Bacon Brothers w/ Pernikoff Brothers \$69.50 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 27: Judy Collins \$59.50
Tue. 29: Three Dog Night \$95.00 2nd Night Added! (7/2 is Sold Out!)
Wed. 30: Sheila E. & The E-Train \$69.50
Thu. 31: Dave Koz And Friends Summer Horns 2025 featuring Dave Koz, Marcus Anderson, Jeff Bradshaw, Leo P and Evan Taylor, plus Marcel Anderson \$95.00

AUGUST

Fri. 1: Lyfe Jennings – The Adven-

tures of Lyfe \$75.00

Sat. 2: The Extraordinary Card Magic of JASON LADANYE \$65.00
Sun. 3: Vincent Ingala & Lindsey Webster \$45.00 SOLD OUT!
Tue. 5: Nick Lowe & Los Straitjackets \$49.50 SOLD OUT!
Fri. 8: Who's Bad – The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience \$39.50
Sat. 9: 1964: The Tribute \$45.00
Sun. 10: SWITCH \$49.50
Fri. 15: JAZZ FUNK SOUL featuring Everette Harp, Jeff Lorber, Paul Jackson, Jr. \$49.50
Sat. 16: TOAST – The Ultimate BREAD Experience! \$59.50
Sun. 17: MAYSA's 59th Birthday Concert Party! \$79.50
Tue. 19: Robert Earl Keen w/ Henry Conlon \$65.00
Wed. 20: Robert Earl Keen w/ Henry Conlon \$65.00
Thu. 21: Robert Earl Keen w/ Henry Conlon \$65.00
Fri. 22: Magical Mystery Doors – Beatles, Zeppelin, Doors Tribute \$35.00
Sat. 23: Eric Roberson \$69.50
Sun. 24: Eric Roberson \$69.50
Thu. 28: SHALAMAR featuring Howard Hewett, Jeffrey Daniel, Carolyn Griffey \$75.00
Fri. 29: DANNY GATTON Birthday Celebration featuring Bill Kirchen, The Mighty Redd Volkaert, John Previti, Dave Elliot, David Chappell, Tommy Lepson, Anthony Pirog, Big Joe Maher, & more! \$39.50
Sat. 30: Raheem DeV Vaughn (band) w/ Wes Felton (trio) \$85.00
Sun. 31: Raheem DeV Vaughn (band) w/ Wes Felton (trio) \$85.00

“Ripped from the Headlines”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

“Dun, Dun.” “Can you watch my baby?” (On the streets of New York City, no less.) Said the young mother to me as we sat outside a New York City cafe. She was fussing with her baby's carrier on the adjacent seat to mine trying to secure it in some way when she looked at me, helplessly almost, and asked if I could watch her baby; she just needed “to walk inside” the cafe, she said, and grab her coffee to go. (It was apparent that there was no wait staff for the outside.) And almost before I nodded my assistance, she thanked me and quickly walked the 15 feet or so inside the cafe to grab her coffee. Sure enough, she was back in a relative flash but that didn't stop my mind from wondering. After all, I was caught, sort of, holding the baby while the mother disappeared.

Having watched hundreds of episodes of “Law & Order,” from the original to the current remake and all the offshoots as well, I've seen this episode - many times; the one where the innocent patsy, is left holding the bag so to speak. Though, in this instance, the bag was a baby - but I was holding him/watching him anyway. That's when I hear the famous “Dun, Dun” known to Law-and-Order fans everywhere. I was half anticipating that a police car would drive up alongside the sidewalk where I was sitting and catch me holding the baby and drag me off to the local police precinct where I would vehemently (or would I calmly characterize this episode as a total misunderstanding? I was just holding the baby for a minute as the mother went inside the cafe to get her coffee, I'd say) deny their accusations. Then the police would respond with some version of the baby had been reported as stolen and how was it that I was sitting there holding him. I was just doing a young woman a favor, I would stammer. Then the police would counter that there was no woman at the cafe missing a baby, and there I sat, with someone else's baby and I couldn't account for the fact that a woman, who the police said didn't exist, had asked me to hold her baby. I said, “ask my wife and my father-in-law. We were all sitting together. Did you speak to them,” I pleaded? The police assured me they would speak to everybody involved. In the interim, it was me and the baby and the long arm of New York law. Innocence as I've seen played out many times on “Law & Order” was not necessarily a sure-fire defense.

Sure enough, and thankfully so, the baby's mother (yes, she was real, married to a Norwegian man which accounted for the baby's rather unique name: Haaken or something, I didn't really understand. Though the mother was American, the baby's given name was a Norwegian one, she explained) returned coffee in hand and sat herself down next to me and the baby where she then waited for a friend - who, as it soon turned out, was as happy to see her and the baby as I was to no longer be responsible for said baby's welfare. Despite all's well ending well, as in there was no incident involving me and the police, I still couldn't help feeling as if I had somehow dodged a bullet, thankfully not literally, though I was in New York City, which again, if you've watched as many episodes of any of the ‘Law & Order’ franchise as I have, seems to happen occasionally, at least according to their writers. (I do realize that what happens on “Law & Order,” as it scrolls “the following story is fictional and does not depict any actual person or event” has nothing to do with my life.) Nevertheless, as a dedicated television watcher, I do take the story lines somewhat seriously, though I'd like to think I can still separate fact from fiction. But the beyond-a-reasonable-doubt fact in this instance: it was me and the baby, and the baby wasn't mine.

Though I am exaggerating for affect, New York City can do that to you. It's been my experience after many visits to New York City that when a city never sleeps, all sorts of irregular-type only-in-New-York things happen. And what appears on television as a drama is often drawn from some of those things that actually happen. And for a few minutes on this Friday afternoon, I felt as if I might be one of those ‘things’ that happen only in New York City. It was a bit stressful while it happened. But it's been even funnier now that it didn't. Still, I hear it: “Dun-Dun.”

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

Krizek

FROM PAGE 5

to Richmond for meetings as a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Broadband Advisory Council, and the State Water Commission, to name just a few. Just last week in Richmond, I chaired two interim commission meetings. First was the Tribal Code Commission, tasked with updating the Virginia Code to reflect federal recognition of seven Virginia tribal nations. This year, the commission plans to tackle issues such as the Indian Child Welfare Act, federal legislation that protects native children removed from their families in custody, foster care, and adoption cases, and tribal land easements. On Wednesday, the first meeting of the Joint Retail Cannabis Transition Commission, created by my HJ 497, convened, and I was elected chairman. This critical commission will serve to engage stakeholders and the public in crafting the best possible legislation to reintroduce next session to stand up an adult-use retail cannabis market and move cannabis from the street corner to behind an age-verified retail counter. Yesterday, I attended the Joint Health and Human Resources Subcommittee meeting where we discussed how federal changes will impact the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange and next year's budget.

One of my most important duties, whether we are in session or not, is my service to constituents. I receive many

inquiries from 16th district residents requesting my assistance on a wide range of issues. Recently, I have assisted constituents with letters of recommendation, VDOT matters, vital records, problems with utilities, and applying for a REAL ID, among others.

Another key part of my responsibility as Delegate is participating in and hosting community events in and around the 16th district, in addition to the many political ones. So far this summer, I celebrated with our graduates at commencement ceremonies for Bryant HS, Mount Vernon HS, and West Potomac HS, had lunch with constituents involved in the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, attended the Flag Day event at Fort Hunt park, joined Friends of Little Hunting Creek for a potluck, toured the Mount Vernon Library, and spoke at a Black Women United for Action event to celebrate the grand opening of a new permanent exhibit, Lives Bound Together: Slavery at Mount Vernon, at George Washington's Mount Vernon. Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, I toured the new historic horse racing location, The Rose, in Dumfries, and attended the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) meeting in Arlington. Most importantly, I have been busy preparing legislation for next year's General Assembly session that begins in January.

As the summer continues, I hope to see you at an upcoming event around the 16th district. It is an honor to serve as your Delegate.

New Laws

FROM PAGE 14

to stop results in the serious bodily injury or death of a vulnerable road user lawfully crossing a highway.

❖ HB2116, introduced by Del. Karen Keys-Gamarra (Chief Patron), requires the DMV to add non-apparent disabilities on a driver's license when requested by an applicant and upon presentation of a signed statement confirming the condition.

❖ HB2501, introduced by Del. Sam Rasoul, requires the DMV to implement a program for promoting, printing and distributing envelopes to assist officers in communicating with drivers with autism. Envelopes shall contain information on how to best communicate with the person, as well as space for vehicle registration, insurance and emergency contact details, along with directions for the driver on what to do with the envelope.

Protection for minors, Child labor

❖ SB854, introduced by Schuyler T. VanValkenburg, requires social media apps to provide age verification for accounts and, for any account holder under 16, limit the application's use to one hour, with a parental consent option to override this limit.

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