



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

The community room at the Department of Community and Human Services was brimming with donations of packages, bikes and toys received for the Holiday Sharing program.

Holiday Sharing in Alexandria

Through gifts of household necessities, clothing, toys, and gift cards, Holiday Sharing at the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services works to ensure that no Alexandria residents are left wanting during the holidays. More than 400 individuals, neighborhood groups,

faith organizations and businesses become sponsors this year to more than 400 families, 100 foster children and 174 senior citizens and persons with disabilities. An additional 300 families received an array of toys for their children at the Community Toy Drive spearheaded by Volunteer Alexandria.



Megan Beyer is greeted by Suzanne Kratzok, retiring Department of Community and Human Services' community resources coordinator, head of the Holiday Sharing Program, and incoming resource coordinator Krystal Fenwick after dropping off gifts for a family with four children on Tuesday morning, Dec. 16.

Volunteers at the Department of Community and Human Services separate holiday gifts into bags for each family on the receiving roster.



Volunteers at the Department of Community and Human Services separate holiday gifts into bags for each family on the receiving roster.

Open Carry Activists Educate Council

Open carry flyer and police sign incite protest at public hearing.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

When Jason Spitzer addressed the City Council on the importance of open carry laws in Virginia, he did so with an American flag draped across one shoulder and a rifle slung on the other. The sight of a rifle and pistols at City Council meetings is typically unusual, but when dozens of open carry rights activists assembled at the council's public hearing on Dec. 13, most showed up carrying at least one firearm. The group flooded the public forum to express their frustration with recent actions taken by the Alexandria police.

"Some flyers were sent out to various businesses about open carry, [and the] police went around handing out the flyers," said Philip Van Cleave, president of the Virginia Citizens Defense League. "People became less educated, not more. Things in the flyer

made people leery of somebody open carrying. Police did a new flyer that got rid of the original flyer and went around to businesses and distributed the new flyer."

What would later become a rally at City Council started over a post on Facebook which expressed concerns about the content of the flyer. A week later, the Police Department published a revised flyer with much of the original content removed. On a list of sites where

openly carrying firearms was prohibited, the flyer originally included government facilities. The activists, many of them from Fredericksburg and other parts of Virginia, defied this by carrying unloaded long guns and loaded pistols into City Hall.

"It's a teeth pull to try to get you to listen to logic and law that I've brought to your attention."

— Ed Levine,
Founder, Virginia Open Carry and DC Carry

"Maybe I'm just another gun nut," said Nicholas Ignacio, a Fredericksburg resident, "but we wake up every day in a world where we find our freedoms ever

SEE OPEN CARRY, PAGE 3

Tales from Santa and Mrs. Claus Bringing joy to the season — and year round.

Santa (Jack Arthur) and Mrs. Claus (Sharon Arthur)

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK ARTHUR



BY VERONICA BRUNO
GAZETTE PACKET

Imagine paying \$300 each time you need to dry clean your suit for work. That's what Jack Arthur does several times during the holiday season. You probably know his alter ego, Santa Claus, or Santa Jack as he's also referred to. And it's not just his outfits, but those of Mrs. Claus too, played with proper glee by his wife Sharon.

"We've spent at least \$5,000 on clothing," Jack Arthur said as he

described his complete roster of Santa outfits for every occasion. There's the swimming attire necessary for July 4 and summer events complete with 1890's swim

trunks and straw bowler. But let's not forget the apparel for the Mrs., which includes red and white striped bloomers, bathing skirt, SEE JOYFUL TEAM, PAGE 4

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Torpedo Factory Rings in the Holidays

Holiday open house brings in musicians, artists, food, drink, and lots of visitors as well as plenty of cheer.

Lively holiday music filled the air — both from above and on the ground — at the Torpedo Factory holiday open house on Dec. 6. Artists kept their studios open late for visitors to come in and peruse one-of-a-kind handmade gifts and original works of art.

The Alexandria Choral Society sang several seasonal classics from above on the second floor throughout the evening and the Braddock Brass Quintet completed the night with their fun rendition of holiday songs. Yelp provided an art table at the entrance where children of all ages got to create luminarias of various colors. Many of the artists had welcome tables in their studios filled with cookies, brownies, and cheese and vegetable trays. And there was even something for the adults with plenty of wine to go around.

— VERONICA BRUNO



Alexandria Choral Society (ACS) singers included Sopranos Erin Barnett, Kate Campbell Deglans, Liz Fielden, Kyle Jennings, and Heather Phillips; Altos Sara Alipanah, Heather Cruz, Emily Goodell, Becky Grisso, and Kristina Meacham; Tenors Cameron Farley, Howard Jaffe, Jason Kezmarsky, and Jeff Simmons; as well as Bass singers Rocky Ebener, Cliff Gay, Russ Moll, David Pritzker, and Scott Snyder.



Alexandria Choral Society soloist Heather Phillips sang from above.



Briana Morris, age 7, from Alexandria, tells Santa (John Skudlarek) what she wants for Christmas while munching on a cookie from one of the artist studios.

Open Carry Activists Criticize City Council, Police

fleeing, and there's nothing anyone here can say that [makes] that not true."

The flyer noted that demonstrations supporting open carry laws can cause alarm in the community and asked that if anyone witnesses anything suspicious or of concern, to notify the police on a non-emergency line. The revised flyer removed references to demonstrations and open carry activists.

While the activists mingled outside City Hall, some local citizens expressed concerns about the group.

"I cannot say that I feel more or less safe with the activists around as people," said Alexandria resident Laurie Lieberman, "I feel much less safer when they or anyone that is not a law enforcement official is around with guns."

While some open carry activists said they would not feel comfortable shopping in locations that they considered unwelcoming to firearms, other residents said they'd feel less safe at locations that welcomed firearms.

"I would probably not take some individuals with me on occasions because I would not want to expose them to the circumstances," Lieberman said.

Van Cleave said that the group had concerns that the original content of the letter

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Jason Spitzer, a Richmond resident, addresses Alexandria city council.

would lead to Swatting, where a false report of a critical incident leads to the deployment of SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) and other police units.

The second issue the activists brought to the City Council was a sign posted in the Alexandria Police Headquarters that said "No Guns Allowed."

According to Ed Levine, founder of Virginia Open Carry and DC Carry, the sign is

in violation of VA code 15.2-915. "No agent of such locality shall take any administrative action, governing the purchase, possession, transfer, ownership, carrying, storage or transporting of firearms, ammunition, or components or combination thereof other than those expressly authorized by statute," says Virginia code. "The provisions of this section applicable to a locality shall also apply to any authority or to a local governmental entity, including a department or agency."

While the code prohibits the carrying of firearms into courthouses and juvenile detention centers, it does not exempt police departments. The Alexandria Police have since removed the sign. Levine also expressed disappointment that no one on the City Council was wearing the orange "Guns Save Lives" stickers the group was providing.

"Every time I've dealt with the City of Alexandria, it's a teeth pull to try to get you to listen to logic and law that I've brought to your attention," said Levine. "If I'm driving down the road in one of your 25 mph zones and I'm going 55 and the police are going to pull me over and give me a ticket The City of Alexandria does not follow the law in many of those regards ... you can't make gun laws here in the City of Al-

exandria, there's preemption law against that."

Mayor William Euille acknowledged the concerns of the group, but said that none of the activists had asked to meet with him or other members of City Council.

"Your purpose, your content, and your concerns are very well expressed here this morning," said Euille. "That being said, there have been questions in terms of 'is this a policy of City Council' or 'is this the police responding to how the citizens think or feel.' I don't know, that's a question that needs to be asked of the police."

Euille offered to have a meeting with leaders in the Open Carry activists to make sure that, if mistakes were made, they won't happen again.

"As a city, we cannot usurp the state constitution," said Euille.

Ashley Hildebrandt, public information officer for the Alexandria Police Department, said that the police had worked with people who'd contacted them with concerns.

"The purpose of the flyer was to educate people who might not know much about open carry," said Hildebrandt. "[We were] trying to provide information to assuage fears, but it can be a very sensitive subject. The second flyer leans towards that."

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ♦ DECEMBER 25-31, 2014 ♦ 3

PEOPLE

Pendant Honors Laboy

Fundraiser yields \$8,312.

When George Mason University Professor Karen L. Bune learned that Officer Peter Laboy of the Alexandria Police Department had been shot in the head in February 2013, she wanted to do more than write about the case as a freelance writer. Bune, who teaches victimology to students at GMU, in the Department of Justice, Law and Society, understood the impact of the crime and how it would affect Laboy and his family.

She walked around for awhile with an idea in her head to create a badge pendant that people could wear around their necks and show support for Laboy and his family as well as his law enforcement colleagues who were also affected. She envisioned the plates of the badge reading, "Motor 8" — for Laboy's call sign — and Superman — for his favorite character hero.

Bune approached a long-time friend, Vicki Forness, the owner of B&C Jewelers, in Alexandria. Vicki agreed to collaborate with her on the project, and they became partners in the fundraising effort. Forness ordered the badges and did the engraving for free. It was agreed that all the proceeds would go to the Laboy family.

The fundraising effort was underway for almost 1 and a half years, and it culminated on Friday, Dec. 5, when Bune and Forness presented a check to Laboy in the amount of \$8,312.

"I feel really good about this. It was my pleasure and privilege to create this idea to thank and honor Officer Laboy for his service and sacrifice and as a show of support by all who wear the pendants that we em-



Karen L. Bune, Officer Peter Laboy and Vicki Forness



brace him with support and that we truly care. In a time when many now question the role and deeds of law enforcement, we remain Laboy Strong. I extend a special thanks to Vicki Forness for her willingness to bring my idea to fruition," Bune said.

Joyful Team

FROM PAGE 1

parasol and bathing hat. For their various bookings, they employ a civilian suit with a bowler hat, workshop Santa and a cookie-making outfit for Mrs. C., and of course the traditional suit. The Arthurs custom-order all of them from Adele's of Hollywood. And if you've visited Santa Jack at the Christmas Attic on Veteran's Day, you would have seen him in his special ordered military suit. "I was the first to have the camouflage Santa outfit," he said.

A bagpipe-playing Santa with an operatic voice, Jack Arthur graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and flew carrier planes for 21 years. He retired from the Navy and then taught computer science at the University of West Florida for 20 years.

Sharon Arthur started out as a nurse in the Navy and became only one of two social directors of the Naval Aviation Schools Command. So this Mrs. Claus knows a thing or two about etiquette and protocol.

Jack Arthur always had a booming voice. While in the Navy, he decided to grow a beard along with a group of friends as part of a dare. He also picked up the bagpipes and along with his group, performed at McGuire's Irish Pub in Pensacola. Asked by the chaplain to show up at a Christmas party for underprivileged children, Santa became a regular role.

After performing Saint Nicholas at the Winterfest in Pensacola — where a girl declared that he was clearly the "real" Santa. He asked Sharon to fill the role of wife in the act as well and they became a team. They decided to take the show on the road and tried out gigs in other locations such as Gatlinburg, Tenn.

They also went to Santa school. There are several throughout the country and the first one they attended was the Professional Santa Claus School of Denver in Denver, Colo., with Tim Connaghan, the official Santa from the Hollywood Christmas Parade. They have since gone a few more times and find it provides a great opportunity to commiserate with other Santas. "We swap war stories," laughed Sharon Arthur. "We review different questions that children ask. We help each other."

Playing the bagpipes also comes in handy for the Scottish parade in Old Town, where he has been the big man for the past three years. "Because I play the bagpipes, it fits quite well," Jack



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK ARTHUR

The formal attire — one of many outfits Jack and Sharon Arthur employ as a touring Santa team.

Arthur said.

They also split their time between their homes in Pensacola, Fla. and Fredericksburg, Va. "We're reverse snowbirds."

And it gets busy. Most times they are booked for four or five separate appearances each day of the weekend.

There are also the difficult parts of the job, like questions with no easy answers. Jack Arthur said, "I asked a little girl once what she wanted for Christmas and she said 'my daddy to let my sister back in the house.'" Sharon Arthur added, "My mother's got cancer. Can you cure my mother?" The Arthurs have found the best answer for such sensitive topics is found in the solace of the child's family faith. Jack Arthur said, "I told her I know baby Jesus" and gave her suggestions on how she can speak with her church minister about support for her mother's illness.

Grandparents and great-grandparents themselves, they recalled a time when their great-granddaughter, Cecilia-Claire was told by several children in her school that Santa didn't exist. This was news to 6-year-old Cecilia-Claire because not only does she believe, but according to Sharon Arthur, "she truly believes we're the real Santa and Mrs. Claus." And to prove it, she asked them to visit her school. Equipped with a secret service earpiece receiver, radio transmitter and microphone, Jack Arthur with the help of the teacher was able to go around the room and say hi to each student by their name as he approached them one by one. Thanks to help from the teacher's prompting in his ear piece, this Santa clearly knew all about each child.

Sharon Arthur laughed and said, "[Cecilia-Claire] turned around to the class and had this big look of 'I told you so.' They will believe for the next five years."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

'Tis the Season

Students from St. Stephen's & St. Agnes Middle School gather Dec. 10 with some of the 160 toys and gift cards collected for the Firefighters and Friends annual Toy Drive. The Upper School also contributed more than 100 toys in an effort coordinated by seventh grade math teacher Sara Odioso.

News



Fiddler David Knight kept the crowd toe-tapping and stepping throughout the afternoon.



Royal Scottish Country Dance Society member Maria Ward led the demonstrations throughout the event.

PHOTOS BY VERONICA BRUNO/GAZETTE PACKET

From Scotland to Old Town

The country dances and music of Scotland took over the space at The Athenaeum after the Scottish Walk.

Toe-tapping, fiddler music and a full crowd took in Scottish country dancing demonstrations at The Athenaeum in Old Town on Dec. 6 right after the Scottish Walk. Members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (the Northern Virginia chapter) took over the space with jigs and dances that got everyone participating. Enthusiastic participants twirled, did passes, performed multiple crosses and dance reels and had a lot of fun throughout. Maria Ward, member of the troupe, gave instructions before each dance, and the crowd quickly picked them up. They got to participate in dances with names such as the Sugar Candie, The White Cockade, The Wild Geese and the Christmas Walk.

Many of those who attended were members of the troupe, but some were taken in with the atmosphere and decided to join as walk-ins. Joni Watt, from Annapolis, Md., was at a friend's party nearby and noticed the activity and decided to drop in. Although she hails from a Scottish background, she had never done this before. She was glad she had stopped by.

Scottish Country Dancing, the social dancing of Scotland has been enjoyed in barns, ballrooms, and village halls in Scotland for over 250 years, but you can take it up more locally at the Durant Center at 1605 Cameron Street. For more information visit www.rscds-greaterdc.org.

— VERONICA BRUNO

Is Pleased to Welcome

Dawn Allen
Office Manager

To our Family

From our family to yours, we wish you the very best this Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

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9:15 and 11:15 am: Lessons and Carols, Holy Eucharist

December 24: Christmas Eve

5:00 pm: Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist (at Calloway Chapel, campus of Episcopal High School)

10:15 pm: Special Christmas music with choir, orchestra and bells

11:00 pm Festival Holy Eucharist

December 25: Christmas Day

11:00am Holy Eucharist for Christmas Day

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PEOPLE

No Warrior Left Behind

Fundraiser nets \$90,000 for EOD Warriors.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

In November 2006, Senior Airman Anthony DeMarino was part of a two-man Explosive Ordnance Disposal team that was tasked to dispose of a weapons cache in the Diyala Province of Iraq. But before the mission could be completed, the armored vehicle he was riding in rolled over when the road beneath it collapsed. Still inside the vehicle, DeMarino landed upside down in a canal submerged under water.

"We were extricated from the vehicle only to gather our equipment and explosives and continue the mission with another Army unit," said DeMarino, a resident of Del Ray. "After the disposal, we went back to the site of our vehicle where we were told that it was too dangerous for the civilian tow truck and crew to come get us. We ended up spending the night at the site in an operation that would last almost 36 hours." DeMarino suffered significant injuries to his back, although it would take doctors four years to realize the extent of the damage to his spine.

"In 2008, I returned to Iraq for another deployment where I reenlisted for five more years," DeMarino said. "Serving in the Air Force is what I wanted to do with my life. But in 2010, I underwent spinal fusion surgery to fix the ruptured discs that were a result of the rollover. The extent of my injuries and resulting surgery ended my EOD and military career."

DeMarino, 30, shared his story with more than 500 people who turned out Nov. 9 for the second annual Sons of the American Legion EOD Warrior Foundation fundraiser. Held in partnership with the Old Dominion Boat Club, the event raised more than \$90,000 for troops wounded during the disarming and disposal of improvised explosive devices.

"This was not a typical American Legion function," said SAL Post 34 Commander Frank Tobin. "It was a team effort with the entire Alexandria community coming out to support our veterans and our very generous sponsors stepping up to make this a success."

Additional sponsors for the event included Nabco, Inc., Veterans United Foundation and Marion Moon in memory of Major Craig Moon, an Alexandria resident and Air Force fighter pilot. Local restaurants



Alexandria resident Anthony DeMarino talks about how he was helped by the EOD Warrior Foundation after being injured in the line of duty while serving in the Air Force.

donated food for the event and music was provided by The Bahamas Band.

"The members of the Old Dominion Boat Club are honored to be a partner in this event," said ODBC event chair Carolyn Bell. "We are grateful to all our nation's EOD warriors who have placed themselves in harm's way to ensure our freedom as well as the sacrifices made of their families."

The EOD Warrior Foundation provides assistance to active-duty wounded, injured or ill EOD warriors, wounded EOD veterans and families of fallen EOD warriors.

"I would not be where I am today without the support of the EOD Warrior Foundation," said DeMarino, who currently serves as Special Assistant/Wounded Warrior Fellow at the U.S. House of Representatives. "Navigating the web of medical evaluation boards and Veterans Affairs disability was frustrating but the EOD Warrior Foundation remained committed to help me through the transition process." Bombs known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are responsible for the majority of injuries and fatalities on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan and EOD technicians are considered to have one of the most dangerous occupations in the military.

"At times veterans can feel lost or alone in the fight," said DeMarino, who is completing a master's degree at Georgetown University. "But because of organizations like the EOD Warrior Foundation and supporters of events like this, that doesn't have to be the case." Visit www.eodwarriorfoundation.org.



Marion Moon listens to remarks with event co-chair Col. Jim "Chili" Lindsay (USAF ret.). Moon was a Gold sponsor of the event in memory of her son, Air Force Major Craig Moon.



Post 34 past commander A.D. Carter, right, is joined at the EOD Warrior Foundation fundraiser by Lisa Lindsay, 16, Shirley Lindsay, event-co-chair Col. Jim "Chili" Lindsay (USAF ret.) and Mark Lindsay, 11.

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Supporting Inova Alexandria

The Board of Lady Managers of Inova Alexandria Hospital, celebrating 142 years of service to the hospital, presented a check for \$111,000 to interim CEO, Susan Carroll, at a holiday luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 11. The donation is the first installment of the board's pledge to purchase two neurosurgical microscopes which will support the hospital in its move to the higher level of stroke care for the community. Additional donations of over \$3,500 from memorial funds for the hospital's Cancer Resource Center, Cardiovascular and Needy Patient Funds were also presented.



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT

President of the Inova Alexandria Board of Lady Managers Ruth Corlett presents checks totaling over \$114,000 to interim CEO of the Inova Alexandria Hospital Susan Carroll at the holiday



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Gift from Gift Shop

At its annual volunteer luncheon on Saturday, Dec. 13, the Christ Church Gift Shop volunteers presented a check for \$500 from the proceeds of Gift Shop sales to Senior Services of Alexandria. The donation will benefit two programs for seniors: Meals on Wheels and AniMeals, a joint program of the Alexandria Animal Welfare League and Senior Services. AniMeals provides food for seniors' pets who, research shows, are of vital importance to their owners' health. Representing the volunteers who operate and staff the Christ Church Gift Shop (from left) are Susan Cambon, Joyce Soyster and Kathy Moore (far right) who present a check for \$500 to Mary Lee Anderson, executive director of Senior Services of Alexandria.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Decorating Mayor's Office

Students from James K. Polk Elementary School decorated Mayor William D. Euille's office for the holidays with homemade ornaments and Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer representations created from Popsicle sticks. Polk students will be going to U.S. Sen. Mark Warner's office in April to decorate it for spring.

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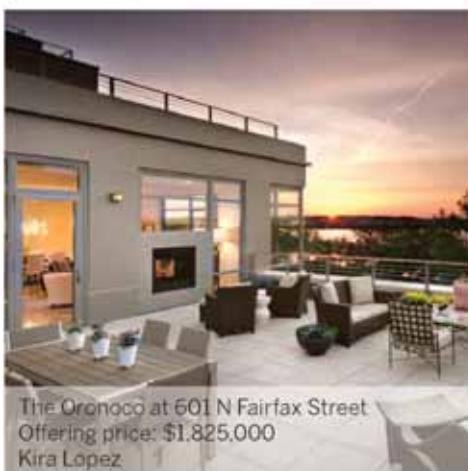
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Happy Holidays from Victoria Kilcullen and Kira Lopez. We have enormous gratitude for all the wonderful clients we have worked with this year. Please let us help you in 2015!

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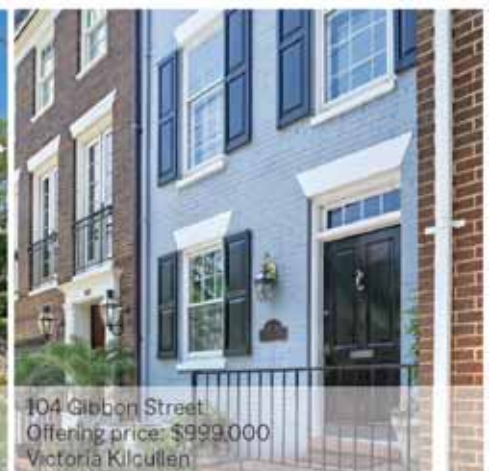
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OPINION

Merry Christmas

A message of peace and joy.

Merry Christmas. It's a magical time of year, and perhaps the Gazette Packet has over indulged in displaying the many rituals of Christmas on our pages in the past few weeks. In events around the area, a sense of community has infused holiday parades, Christmas tree lightings, menorah lightings, choral performances, singing of carols and other traditional events with warmth and joy.

But Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether you believe the Christmas story literally or in spirit, you know it is the story of joy, hope and love, the promise of redemption. So here, let us share the verse from the Bible, Luke 2: 4-19:

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for

them in the inn.

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign

EDITORIAL

to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Happy Hanukkah

Happy Hanukkah, which lasts for eight days and this year began Tuesday evening. While Hanukkah is not one of the most important Jewish religious observances, it is a celebration that gets added attention from timing. Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of a one day supply of oil for the temple lasting eight days.

Editor's Note about the Rest of 2014

This is our last regular edition of 2014. Next week, after Christmas, we will publish the children's edition, devoted entirely to the artwork and writing of local students. Our next regular editions will publish Jan. 7-8, 2015, with deadline for content and advertising of Jan. 2. In the meantime you can reach the editors at editors@connectionnewspapers.com and sales/marketing at sales@connectionnewspaper.com.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

A Christmas Carol — With local roots.

BY MICHAEL MCMORROW
GAZETTE PACKET

At Christmastide, the traditional hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem" is inescapable.

Some are attracted by the tune, others by the lyrics, yet others by both. Most people, however, are unacquainted with the connection

between the carol, the City of Alexandria, or more accurately the Virginia Theological Seminary, and a Fairfax County church.

Before and after the Civil War, the population of Alexandria and Fairfax was small and thinly spread across a sizable area. Gatherings for Sunday services were a hardship and those who gathered were hard-pressed to support resi-

dent clergy. For nearly a century, the practical solution was to have services conducted by Seminary students in a dozen or so "mission chapels" where the seminarians were called "practisers."

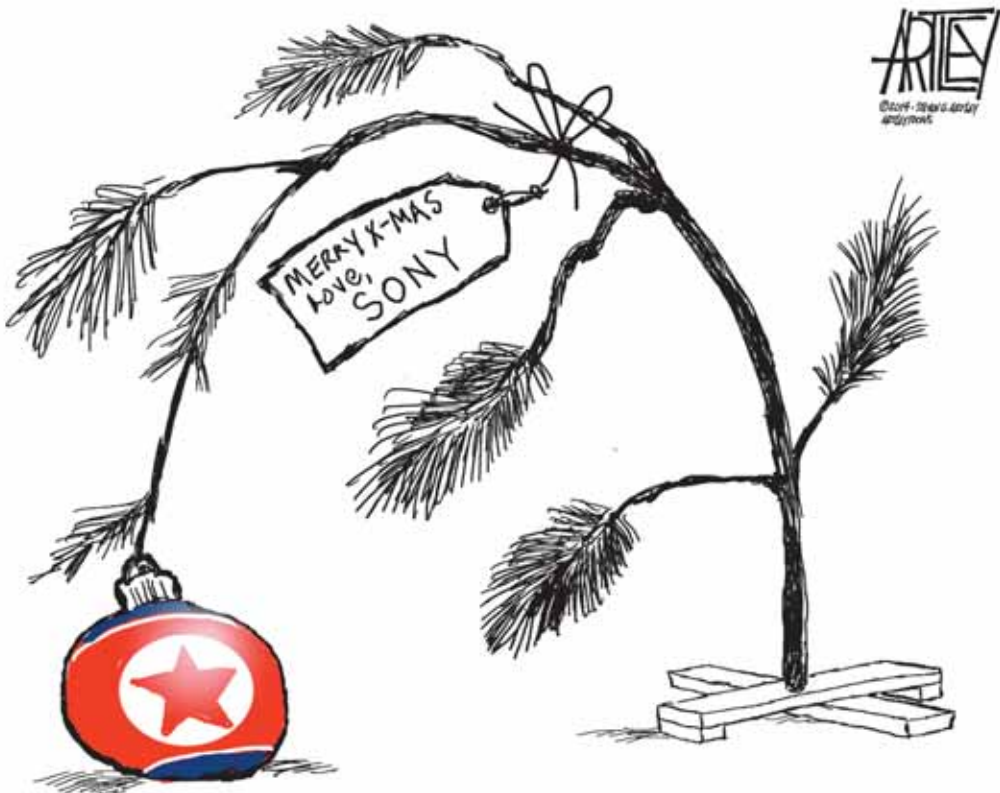
One such site was Sharon Chapel, presently and formally known as All Saints Episcopal Church — Sharon Chapel, then and now located on Franconia Road

close-by Telegraph Road. The property donor prescribed its use "for Christian education," and so it has been for over 150 years as the establishment grew from chapel to church to parish.

Harvard University graduate Phillips Brooks came from Boston in 1856 to study at the Seminary. Decades later he rose to be Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts. Throughout his career Brooks authored many scholarly tracts and was acclaimed as one of the greatest preachers in the country. Both outcomes likely were a surprise, to him and others. Academic study did not come easy, but Brooks persevered and did well. Public speaking was an even greater challenge. Both efforts may have been undermined by his distaste for Northern Virginia — in his words "a mean and wretched country" and everything "seems a half century behind the age."

During senior year at the Seminary, Brooks was student-in-charge of services at Sharon Chapel. As the story goes, his efforts at preaching were extremely wanting. On one occasion, he felt shame and embarrassment so great that he jumped from a window behind the pulpit and ran three miles to the Seminary. Each new building raised by the congre-

SEE 'O LITTLE TOWN,' PAGE 9



STEVE ARTLEY/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

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OPINION

'O Little Town of Bethlehem'

FROM PAGE 8

gation has had a "Phillips Brooks Door" constructed next to the pulpit. According to longtime parishioner Joyce Goins, no preacher ever has had use of it. Eventually, Brooks overcame his oratorical shortcomings. A biographer reports that the mission chapel "was always crowded with people standing in the doorways or outside the windows."

In 1865, Brooks went on pilgrimage to religious sites in Europe and the Middle East. Within days of Christmas, he was at Bethlehem and noted "somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been." A couple years later the memory of that little town inspired the poem which provided lyrics to the now famed carol. Brooks described the origin of the rhyme this way: "The 'Little Town of Bethlehem' was written more than 20 years ago for a Christmas service at my Sunday School [of the Church of the Advent] in Philadelphia ... Where the newspapers found it all of a sudden I do not know." The church organist had set the words to music overnight.

The Rev. Cayce Ramey is rector of the parish but a couple or three months. Asked whether services at Christmastide give special prominence to "O Little Town of Bethlehem," Ramey deferred to Music Minister Meredith Meersman. She noted that the hymn



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MCMORROW/GAZETTE-PACKET
The pulpit and the Phillips Brooks door

is featured in the musicale that, by tradition, precedes the Christmas Eve worship service. The carol also is incorporated into that evening's liturgy.

A sculpted bust of Brooks is found at the Seminary's library entrance, and the parish's hall features his image in a stained glass window and a painting.



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St. Paul's Church
warmly welcomes you to join us in celebrating the birth of Christ at one of our many Christmas service offerings:

Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist
4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist Family Service with Angel Choir and Jazz Ensemble
5:30 p.m. Choral Prelude
6:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with St. Cecilia & Women's Choirs and Brass
10:30 p.m. Choral Prelude
11:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Adult Choir & Brass

Thursday, December 25
Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 28
10:00 a.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
The Rev. Oran E. Warder, Rector
703.549.3312
www.stpaulsalexandria.com

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PEOPLE

Wheels on Wings

Paralyzed Alexandria poet hosts fundraiser for trip to international contest in New Zealand.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Normally, a trip to New Zealand for Alexandria poet Velator Smith wouldn't be an issue, especially when it's to fulfill her dream of participating in the international level speech contest for Powertalk International. But in 2011, a surgery meant to ease the strain of a tumor on her spine left her paralyzed from the waist down. Suddenly it wasn't just an issue of getting a flight to New Zealand, she would need to bring along assistants and find lodging that could accommodate her needs.

At a fundraising event on Dec. 7 featuring music, poetry, and dance, her friends came together to support her. The fundraiser set out to raise \$5,600 by March 15. That includes the \$3,400 airfare to and from New Zealand as well as the \$850 conference fee. Midway through the fundraiser, a tearful Smith told the room that she'd just received a note from a donor that said "you can take the hotel off the list, it's done".

Smith started writing and performing poetry when she was 12. As a young woman, Smith was invited by her friend Gregory Adams to perform for his writer's collective Station to Station. Adams was in attendance at the fundraiser and recited several original poems.

"I wouldn't be here today if not for Smith," said Adams, "but she asked, so how can I say no?"

Smith said she writes from her life's experiences, which changed dramatically when doctors discovered a tumor wrapped around her spinal cord.

"I've had seven surgeries to have it removed, but since it's intertwined around the cord they could not fully remove it," said Smith. "In [October], 2011, I had a surgery to remove fluid built up around the cord. I woke up, and usually after surgeries it takes about six weeks of physical therapy, and



Velator Smith at her New Zealand fundraiser.

then I come back strong. This time, I did not ... I couldn't get around the fact that I couldn't walk."

Smith says she fell into a deep depression after that and refused to take visitors. However, her mother ignored that request and continued to visit her anyway. Smith said there were two things that helped pull her out of her depression: the children that would regularly visit the hospital, and participating in Powertalk International. Her surgeries and her paralysis have forced Smith to change the way she performs, but says the nature of her work remains the same.

"My art is more spirit-felt," said Smith. "I realized I could have gone in the other direction and been really depressed about not being able to perform the way I used to ... then I realized I had friends that loved me, and it didn't matter that I couldn't walk anymore. I started my physical therapy and started working again."

Smith's friends kept asking her to continue doing her storytelling, but Smith had reservations.

"In my storytelling, I always dance," said Smith. "I thought, 'how am I going to do this story I tell about African dance when I don't have the use of my legs?' Again, I was blessed, and I did the movements from my chair. At that time I had a manual chair, I

wasn't able to turn, but now I have a motorized chair."

As she spoke, Smith seemed to subconsciously push the chair forward and backwards a little as she emphasized her points. It's not the same as being able to walk, but the movements in the wheelchair have become their own form of dance.

"When I'm in church, and the spirit hits me," said Smith, "sometimes I close my eyes and forget I'm in a wheelchair."

Confidence restored, Smith attended the local council level of the Powertalk international conference and won first place. At the regional competition, which encompasses North Carolina, Maryland, D.C. and Virginia, Smith also won first place and the opportunity to move on to the highest level, international. The international competition is held once every two years at a different part of the world — in 2015 it takes place in New Zealand.

"We've been to places like South Africa and Japan," said Beatrice Squire, who represented the Blue Ridge region at the 2007 competition in Brisbane. "When everything was over, I spent some time in New Zealand and I loved it. I loved the weather and the food, the people were so nice ... I had a good time."

For Smith, this will be her first journey in her wheelchair, but says right now her main concern is getting the funds to make the trip.

"I think I'm going to soar," said Smith. "If I conquer travelling, 24 hours, to New Zealand, and can come back ... you're talking about unstoppable."

Following the fundraising event, Smith



Brandy Robertson performs a dance routine at Smith's fundraiser.

received words of comfort from friends and strangers who'd come out to attend the event.

"I feel in my heart that you're going to New Zealand," said Patricia Lomax, mother of Brandy Robertson, who performed a dance during the program. "You've got more waiting for you, you will be there."

In the final poem she performed, Smith expressed her belief that a higher power is helping to guide her to New Zealand.

"I will strive on, I will get to New Zealand, I will overcome, go through, pass by," said Smith in her final poem at the event. "For God within me and friends like you don't tolerate giving up. I have my health, my strength, and my life."



Holiday Luncheon

Alexandria's seniors were treated to a festive holiday luncheon at First Baptist Church on King Street. Participants were serenaded by the Alexandria Harmonizers (above), treated to lunch and Santa Claus paid a special visit.



City of Alexandria's Successful Aging Committee hosted the senior holiday luncheon.

PHOTOS BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

OPINION

Making a List, Checking It Twice

By KATHARINE DIXON
PRESIDENT AND CEO
REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA



The holidays are here, so I started reviewing Rebuilding Together Alexandria's client wish list from the year. These included requests for free repairs and modifications from struggling homeowners throughout the city to help them maintain and stay in their homes. Here are some of the items we were able to check off the list:

Quantity	Item
52	Plumbing Repairs
88	Smoke/CO2 Detectors & Fire Extinguishers Installed
31	Electrical Repairs
16	Heating/AC Fixes
34	Roof Repairs
58	Paint Projects
26	Homes Weatherized during Energize Alexandria
53	Grab Bars & Handrails Installed

This list reveals many homes in our community that are safer and healthier places to live for the elderly, low-income, disabled and others we serve. What this list doesn't show are the real people behind the numbers.

Strong neighborhoods come from a combination of factors — some easily quantifiable and some that aren't, including the intangible of having long-time neighbors who look out for each other. One of these is Mary, a long-time Alexandria homeowner, who knows the history of Alexandria and whose kids babysat the other neighbor kids. Mary is one of the people we helped this year. Our volunteers painted

her house and provided upgrades that made it safer for this grandmother to get around.

COMMENTARY

So too is Anthony, a life-long Alexandrian. Over the years, he worked hard as a landscaper to provide for his six children. The work took its toll on his body, and he has been forced to go on disability. Despite the set-back, he has an unfailing belief that his children can and should succeed and has used his savings to invest in his children's futures. Partnering with Anthony, we are able to help him continue focusing on his children by making his home safe for him and his children.

Another is Alice, whose disabling medical conditions and loss of her husband have made it difficult for her to maintain the house she loves. Our volunteers helped her de-clutter her home as well as fix more serious problems in her house. In the process, Alice has embraced our volunteers in a special way, sending "Thank You" cards that mention them by name. Recently, when our volunteers came to help, she joined them for a picnic in the front yard. Her eyes tear up as she reminisces about the volunteers' generosity.

It's the real people behind the list that makes our work special and puts into context the lives we are helping improve. But the real people aren't just the clients. They are also the network of neighbors who volunteer their time and help forge bonds with neighbors in need.

Now it's time to start next year's list as we continue our work to preserve affordable homeownership and revitalize the Alexandria community. If you know an Alexandria homeowner who could use our help, please visit www.RebuildingTogetherAlex.org or call 703-836-1021.

VIEWPOINTS

What are your hopes for the New Year?

PHOTOS BY RENÉE RUGGLES/THE GAZETTE



Kathy Partain and daughter, Grace. Kathy: "I would like a sense of calm for the world and for myself." Grace: "I would like snow."



George McCree and daughter, Cameron. George: "I hope for good health for the families. We have had some health problems, this year." Cameron: "I want a puppy."



Angela General, USAF: "This might sound corny. But, I hope everyone has the most peaceful and prosperous year. I hope all resolutions come true and that they stick to them."

Christmas Eve Services

At
Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church

12:00 noon

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

All services will include Holy Communion
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#FNA20TH

ENTERTAINMENT

Countdown to 2015

Fireworks to culminate 20th anniversary of Alexandria's First Night celebrations.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The largest New Year's Eve fireworks display in the Washington region will take place along the Alexandria waterfront as First Night Alexandria celebrates its 20th anniversary with a day filled with children's activities, dancing and live performances.

"The First Night board began brainstorming new ideas in March and we're pleased to introduce the #FNA20th Instagram Contest," said First Night executive director Ann Dorman. "It's another way for participants to engage with us and be eligible to win cash prizes."

What began 20 years ago as a small, family-friendly event has grown into the premier New Year's Eve celebration in the area attracting tens of thousands of visitors to the streets of Old Town.

The festivities begin at 2 p.m. with the sixth annual Fun Hunt, which will feature new activities for couples and families. Finalists in the student Battle of the Bands competition will be featured throughout the evening, along with more than 100 performances at 22 venues in Old Town and one in Del Ray.

"The Mount Vernon Recreation Center is once again a venue for children's activities,"

Dorman said. "First Night has turned into a fun-filled all-day event with participation by many retail shops, museums and restaurants."

Additional daytime activities range from tasting events to interactive art lessons and pet-friendly gatherings hosted by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. Returning kid-friendly activities are presented by the Torpedo Factory Art Center, The Art League, the Alexandria Archaeology Museum and Hooray for Books!

Live performances kick off at 7 p.m. featuring rhythm and blues, traditional Irish music, acoustic folk and more. New acts include the vocals of Virginia native Katherine Archer and 2nd Story Band Duo, performing a world blend of jazzy blues, pop rock, Caribbean and Samba rhythms.

Children's activities continue throughout the night, including face painting, a moon bounce, clowns doing balloon sculptures and interactive games. New this year, children's performer Groovy Nate will bring his unique blend of music, movement, puppet skits and comedy to First Night, and the Old Fashioned Carnival in Del Ray will feature a ring toss, fortune teller, line dancing and more.

"We're excited about the Instagram challenge 'Extraordinary Exposures,'" Dorman said. "This 'selfie' contest is open to everyone that purchases an admission badge and attends First Night Alexandria's evening performances. Details and information on the cash prizes is available on our website."

THE GRAND FINALE takes place at midnight, with a spectacular fireworks display over the Potomac River. Volunteers for the event are still being accepted. Visit www.firstnightalexandria.org and click on Get Involved. All volunteers receive free admission, a box dinner and a First Night apron to keep.



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Madeleine Quill, 11, and Carmen Rivera, 7, pose for a photo with First Night Alexandria mascot Professor Arts Safari following last year's Fun Hunt.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER

Acclaimed saxophonist Vaughn Ambrose will return to perform at the Principle Gallery as part of First Night Alexandria.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER

Fireworks will light up the sky over the Potomac River to ring in 2015 as part of First Night Alexandria.

"As First Night Alexandria celebrates its 20th anniversary, we want to thank the incredible long-time sponsors that have made this event possible," Dorman added. "They include the City of Alexandria, Dominion Power, the Alexandria Hotel Asso-

ciation, ACVA, LCOR, Burke & Herbert Bank, Virginia Paving and our media sponsors."

For more information and a complete schedule of events, call 703-746-3301 or visit www.FirstNightAlexandria.org. Tickets are \$20. Admission is free to children under 12 and active duty military.

If You Are Going

WHAT: First Night Alexandria
WHERE: Event: 22 venues in Old Town Alexandria
Headquarters: Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St.
Fireworks Finale: Unit block of King Street and along the waterfront
DATE: December 31, 2014
TIME: Afternoon activities: 2-5 p.m. including Sixth Annual Fun Hunt
Performances: 7 p.m.-midnight at venues throughout Old Town
Fireworks: Midnight along the Potomac River at the foot of King Street
ADMISSION: \$20; children 12 and under and active military free.
For more information and to purchase badges, call 703-746-3301 or visit www.firstnightalexandria.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

Middle School Artists. Art display by George Washington Middle School students, at St.Elmo's Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Working in peer groups, the students created a written explanation of their intent to accompany the display. Visit www.stelmoscoffeepub.com.

Mount Vernon Virtual Tour.

Website users can now transport themselves to George Washington's Mount Vernon in a click of a mouse or touch of a screen through a new virtual tour. Featuring 29, 360-degree panoramic images, more than 200 points of interest, and dozens of in-depth videos highlighting architectural details, objects and anecdotes, the tour recreates the experience of being at the estate in an unparalleled way.

Tavern Toddlers. Weekly open playtime continues every Monday throughout holiday season. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Gadsby's Tavern Museum, North Royal Street, Alexandria. Caregivers, toddlers (walkers through 3 years) and visiting relatives are welcome to play, read, dance and color in the historic ballroom. No reservations required. Each week costs \$7 for a group of three, which must include one adult, and additional people are \$3. A three-visit pass costs \$18. On Monday, Feb.

16 Tavern Toddlers will be closed due to President's Day. www.gadsbystavern.org or 703-746-4242

Broadway Christmas Carol. Runs through Dec. 28 at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. Enjoy the show Wednesday-Thursday, 8 p.m., Fridays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$50. Visit www.metrostage.org for more.

Art Exhibit. Through Jan. 2 at 1717 King St. and 300 S. Washington St. BB&T Bank hosts an exhibition of portraits of African American and women Living Legends of Alexandria at its Old Town branches. Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Visit www.AlexandriaLegends.com for more.

"Friend Me" Exhibit. Through Monday, Jan. 5. Opening reception Thursday Dec. 11, 6:30-8 p.m. The Art League Gallery, Studio 21, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Jeweler Whitney Staiger melds together her friends' public avatar with an aspect of their private selves on her handmade brass cameos in a solo exhibit. www.theartleague.org 703-683-1780.

Christmas in Mount Vernon.

Through Tuesday, Jan. 6, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon decks the halls with themed Christmas trees on the estate and festive greenery in the Mansion. Visit www.mountvernon.org/christmas for more.

Painting by John Trumbull. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. through Jan. 7, at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. On loan from the Winterthur Museum, this portrait was painted by Washington's former

FOOD & DRINK

"Reveillon de Noel" Christmas Eve Dinner. At Bastille, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Chefs Christophe and Michelle Poteaux will serve a four-course prix fixe feast, with wine pairings upon request. Menu highlights include lobster bisque with poached oysters; pan-roasted foie gras; tartare of Skuna Bay salmon; grass-fed Angus beef filet roasted whole in salt crust; Hudson Valley Moullard duck breast; and a chocolate hazelnut "Buche de Noel" with cranberry ice cream. \$85 per person, exclusive of taxes and gratuities. Call 703-519-3776 for more.

"Reveillon de la Saint Sylvestre" New Year's Eve Dinner. At Bastille, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. The first seating from 5-6:30 p.m. is a three-course prix fixe for \$79, exclusive of taxes and gratuities, with wine pairings upon request. After the market surprise amuse bouche, guests will enjoy menu highlights including butternut squash risotto and parmesan broth; braised lobster in a curried coconut emulsion; bacon-wrapped rabbit loin; and coconut cake with caramelized pumpkin butter and curry ice cream. Taking things to the next level with the second seating from 8-10 p.m., guests will enjoy a four-course prix fixe for \$99, or \$139 with wine pairings, exclusive of taxes and gratuities. After the market surprise amuse bouche, guests may choose from dishes including steak tartare; seared foie gras; sautéed Wild Turbot filet; and roasted spiced pineapple marmalade almond cake. Call 703-519-3776 for more.

Old Town Farmers Market. 7 a.m.-noon, Saturdays year round. Local farmers and artists have been selling products there since 1753. Located at Market Square, 301 King St. Call 703-746-3200 or email oldtownfarmersmarket@alexandriava.gov.

Del Ray Farmers Market. 8 a.m.-noon, Saturdays year round. Features fresh vegetables and fruits in season, meats, eggs, fresh pasta and sauces, Amish cheese, yogurt, bakery goods and more. Located at the corner of East Oxford and Mount Vernon avenues. Contact pmiller1806@comcast.net for more.

aide-de-camp as a gift to Martha Washington in 1790. Regular admission rates: adults, \$18; senior citizens, \$16; children age 6-11, when accompanied by an adult, \$9; and children under age 5, free. Visit MountVernon.org for more.

"Beyond the Board" Art Exhibit. Through Feb. 22. Prudential PenFed Realty, 4900 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans' presents "Beyond the Board." A portion of artists' sales go to the

PenFed Foundation, supporting active military families, veterans and their families. Visit www.thedelrayartisans.org/shows/gww/ for more.

New Exhibit. Mount Vernon invites visitors to explore George Washington's design for the grounds of his estate, through a new exhibition, "Gardens & Groves: George Washington's Landscape" at Mount Vernon through Jan. 12, 2016. Gardens & Groves is the first museum exhibition to focus

specifically on Washington's landmark achievements as a landscape designer combining rarely-seen original documents, artwork, and books with period garden tools, landscape photography, and a scale model of the Mount Vernon estate. Included in admission \$18/adult; \$17/senior citizen; \$9/child age 6-11; children under 5 are free. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.

Alexandria Cars & Coffee invites car enthusiasts to meet for coffee at Hollin Hall Shopping Center in front of Roseina's, 1307 Shenandoah Road. Owners of classic cars, hot rods, exotic cars, motorcycles and more meet to share car stories and drink coffee. Group meets the first Sunday of every month. 8:30-11 a.m.

George Washington's Mount Vernon has joined Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and James Madison's Montpelier to expand the "Presidents Passport," Virginia's premier presidential trail. As an added bonus to this year's program, visitors to the Alexandria Visitors Center at 221 King St. showing or purchasing a ticket to any of the three presidential estates will, upon request, receive for free Alexandria's "Key to the City" pass, which grants access into nine historic sites and museums in Alexandria-a \$26 added value. Visit www.PresPassport.Monticello.org for more.

Fifty Years of Collecting. Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays noon to 5 p.m. Fort Ward Museum 4301 West Braddock Road. An anniversary exhibit of objects from the Fort Ward collection. Free. Visit www.fortward.org or call 703-746-4848.

Dinner for the Washingtons. Noon at George Washington's Mount

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ENTERTAINMENT

Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. A walking tour that goes behind the scenes to find out how food was prepared and served before the era of microwaves and TV dinners. \$5 in addition to estate admission. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ for more.

Second Thursday Music.

Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. 7 pm. Second Thursday of every month. Visit nvfaa.org to view concert calendar and listen to upcoming Second Thursday Music artists.

The Monday Morning Birdwalk has been a weekly event at Huntley Meadows since 1985. It takes place every week, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7 a.m. (8 a.m. November through March), is free of charge, requires no reservation, and is open to all. Birders meet in the parking lot at the park's entrance at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Direct questions to Park staff during normal business hours at 703-768-2525.

CAMPS, CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Tavern Toddlers. Every Monday (except Federal Holidays) 10:30-11:30 a.m. Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal Street, Alexandria. Join other families with toddlers (walkers through 36 months) to have fun in Gadsby's historic ballroom. Playtime features a craft table, book corner, toys and group dancing. \$7 for a group of three. Visit www.alexandria.gov/gadbsytavern or call 703-746-4242.

Photography Workshop. 10:30 a.m.-noon at Multiple Exposures Gallery on 105 N. Union St. Photographers and enthusiasts of all skill levels are invited to share work, ideas, and questions at this free workshop held on the last Sunday of each month, except December. No reservations. Call 703-683-2205.

Life Drawing. Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions for anyone to develop life-drawing skills further. Just drop-in for the session and bring your supplies to draw or paint our live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Del Ray Artisans is located at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org for a schedule.

DECEMBER

Tree Sale. Weekends through December, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Enjoy music, warm drinks and cookies by the fire, while surrounded by frasier fir trees. Sales benefit of community outreach programs and local schools. Choose to have 10 percent of the sale amount go to St. Aidan's Day School or a local, public elementary school. St Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Visit www.staidansepiscopal.com for more.

Alexandria's Holiday Market. At 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. Vendors will sell traditional European food, sweets and drinks combined with art and craft vendors to create a European holiday market shopping experience. The event also features the Holiday Sharing - Toy Drive program to support families in need, as well as the Hunger Free Alexandria initiative. Visit www.alexandriaholidaymarket.com for more.

- ❖ Dec. 22 and 23 —11 a.m.-8 p.m.
- ❖ Dec. 24, Christmas Eve —11 a.m.-2 p.m.

MONDAY/DEC. 22

A John Waters Christmas. 7:30 p.m. The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. \$49.50. Visit

TORPEDO FACTORY ASSOCIATE ARTIST GALLERY

Studio 12. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. About 20 artists will be showing their work in two-week exhibitions through the end of 2014. This dynamic pop-up gallery provides an opportunity for many of the associates to have their work on view. Visit torpedofactory.org/events/ for more.

❖ **Dec. 15-28:** Fritz Des Roches, paintings; Barbara Muth, paintings; Norma Hintze, ceramics; and Marilyn Spindler, paintings

www.birchmere.com for more.

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY/DEC. 22-24

Breakfast with Santa. 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Union Street Public House, 121 South Union St., Alexandria. Have breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus before they take off for the big night. \$10 per child (age 0-12) and \$15 per person (age 13+) includes a continental breakfast, visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and tax. Tickets required. Limited amount for every seating. Reservations www.unionstreetpublichouse.com/breakfast.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

Water-skiing Santa and his Kneeboarding Reindeer. 1-1:30 p.m. at Old Town Waterfront, between King and Oronoco streets, Alexandria. This is the 29th Anniversary of this one of a kind Washington, D.C. tradition and includes the Flying Elves, the Jetskiing Grinch, and Frosty the Snowman in a dinghy. Email waterski.santa@gmail.com for more.

SATURDAY/DEC. 27

Live Music. 7:30 p.m. at the Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Performance by Southside Johnny and The Asbury Jukes. \$39.50. Visit www.birchmere.com for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 28

Hank Williams Tribute Show. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$29.50. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. Events take place throughout the day at numerous venues around the City of Alexandria. Visit www.firstnightalexandria.org for more.

Live Music. 8 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Watch Seldom Scene, Bumper Jackson and The Hello Strangers perform. Tickets \$39.50. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

SATURDAY/JAN. 3

Hal Ketchum. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$35. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

SUNDAY/JAN. 4

Evening of Musical Comedy. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Tickets \$49.50. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

TUESDAY/JAN. 6

"Self Portraits: How Our Artists View Themselves." 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Feb. 8 at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St., Studio 18, Alexandria. A self portrait can be what our face/body looks like or it can be what we stand for, what we believe, what we love. Visit www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com

for more.

Choral Evensong on the Feast of the Epiphany 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Grant Hellmers, organist and choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, will direct the adult choir in a Choral Evensong on the Feast of the Epiphany. Music by William Byrd, Edward Bairstow, Malcolm Archer, and William Smith of Durham will be featured. The Three Wise Men will appear at this service. Open to all, followed by a reception. Donations and non-perishable foods will be accepted for St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry. Contact Grant Hellmers at 703-549-3312 or grant@stpaulsalexandria.com.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 7

Boomerangs Square Dance Teaching Council. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Center, 4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria. Square Dance Lessons. Welcome singles, couples, and families for an evening of fun. Free. Call Nancy at 571-210-5480 or email tom.nancystafford@cox.net or visit www.boomerangssquaredance.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 8

Second Thursday Live: Cynthia Marie Concert. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Cynthia Marie returns with her soulful voice and captivating piano playing. Special guests join her this evening. Admission \$15. Call 703-548-0035 or visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

JAN. 8-FEB. 22

Exhibition "Unearthed | Unleashed." In the Athenaeum Gallery 201 Prince St., Alexandria. An exhibition of the works of Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent. Gessner's mixed media sculptures are lyrical and reference a wide variety of natural forms. Kent's minimal works with thickly applied paint and wax appear to be a subtle, meditative reflection on organic elements and artifacts. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 10

Chords of Courage Benefit Concert. 7 p.m. at Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Chords of Courage, founded by Caron Dale, tells the stories of people who have performed an act of courage and suffered in the process or performed an act of inspiration born of tragedy. She will be joined by fellow folk musicians Kevin Dudley, Laura Baron, Bain Ennis and Matt Kohut, and members of the band R.S.V.P. With special guest Allison Silberberg. \$18/\$15 in advance. Call 703-380-3151 or visit www.focusmusic.org/venue_alexandria.php or chordsofcourage.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 11

Opening Reception of exhibition "Unearthed | Unleashed." 4-6 p.m., in the Athenaeum Gallery 201 Prince St., Alexandria. An exhibition of the works of Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

Parent Coaches Searching for Balance

Coaching one's own child can be stressful, rewarding.

BY JON ROETMAN
GAZETTE PACKET

Rick Sofield started coaching when he was in high school, helping his father coach his younger brothers in football. He continued when he was in law school, when he made extra money coaching various middle school and high school sports.

After starting a family with his wife, Alice, Sofield couldn't wait to coach his own children. The Sofields' first child was a girl named Charlotte, who turned out to be quite the athlete.

Sofield, who played four sports in high school on Long Island and four years of football and lacrosse at Harvard University, helped coach Charlotte in peeewee soccer and T-ball. When she was in the first grade, Sofield coached Charlotte's lacrosse team after convincing the commissioner of a Fort Hunt rec league to let Charlotte play against girls several years older.

While eager to succeed, Sofield initially struggled as a youth lacrosse coach.

"I had no idea what I was doing and we got killed in our first game," Sofield wrote in an email. "Afterward, a mom gave me the rule book and suggested that I read it. We got better after that."

More than a decade later, Sofield is still coaching Charlotte. In the spring of 2014, the duo led the Bishop Ireton girls' lacrosse team to a historic season of success, including the program's first WCAC championship and first VISAA state title. The Cardinals ended their 20-win season with their first-ever victory against national power St. Stephen's & St. Agnes, 9-7, in the state championship game.

Charlotte, then a junior, led Ireton in points with 48 goals and 67 assists. She was an Under Armour Underclass All-American and WCAC Player of the Year, and later signed to play lacrosse at the University of North Carolina. Sofield was named VISAA Coach of the Year and WCAC co-Coach of the Year.

Bishop Ireton will return the majority of its impact players for Charlotte's senior season in 2015.

"My dad started coaching me when I was

in first grade," Charlotte wrote. "He hasn't been my only lacrosse coach, but he has been my main coach for as long as I can remember."

From first grade through high school, Charlotte and her dad experienced ups and downs on and off the field. As several coaches and athletes in the area acknowledged, a parent coaching his or her child can be a difficult, yet rewarding process.

"When my wife, Alice, and I started our family, I couldn't wait for the kids to get old enough to coach," Sofield wrote. "I have coached all four of our kids in a variety of sports: football, basketball, wrestling, ice hockey, T-Ball, and lacrosse."

Charlotte was the oldest child, and Sofield admits she was forced to deal with his mistakes as a first time parent/coach, including not being able to separate the two roles.

"The middle school years were particularly tough for me and Char," Sofield wrote. "I hadn't learned how to separate Dad from Coach. I also saw exceptional talent in Char and felt compelled to try and maximize her ability. She has always wanted to be her best so she didn't need all the extra pushing that I was giving her. Unfortunately for Char, I learned my lessons and made my mistakes on her as our eldest and I have been much more patient and understanding with her three younger brothers."

Charlotte also acknowledged middle school was a tough time.

"Every practice was a disaster," she wrote. "But I'm happy he didn't stop coaching. I would not be the player I am today without him."

Sofield said his wife helped him realize the need for separation between father and coach.

"By the time Char got to middle school, we used to talk about virtually nothing but lacrosse," Sofield wrote. "It was around that time that Alice gently, but firmly, reminded me through a series of conversations that there was much more to my relationship with Char off the field than lacrosse. She reminded me to keep lacrosse on the field, and be a father at home."

Sofield said he still struggles at times differentiating between Charlotte as his daughter and Charlotte as No. 15 on the Bishop Ireton girls' lacrosse team.

"I've gotten much better over the past 10-plus years in separating player and child," Sofield wrote. "I'm still not always as good at it as she deserves. I sometimes find myself projecting my own ambitions for her onto her. I'm aware of it now, though, and remind myself (or sometimes she reminds



Head coach Rick Sofield and his daughter, Charlotte Sofield, left, are seen during a Bishop Ireton girls' lacrosse game.

PHOTO BY DELIA SULLIVAN

me) that it's her journey, not mine."

Keith A. Kaufman, Ph.D., a sport psychologist with offices in Washington, D.C. and Old Town Alexandria, said two potential issues stand out for a young athlete coached by a parent.

"I think two issues that jump out to me are the athlete feels like they can never escape talking about the sport," Kaufman said in a phone interview, "or they feel too much scrutiny or not enough; like they feel like they're treated differently [than other members of the team]."

Kaufman said "it's absolutely essential there are boundaries," when a parent is coaching his or her child, and it's important the child is treated in the same manner as his or her teammates. While each case is different, he said the relationship can be beneficial.

"I think in an ideal situation," Kaufman said, "it can be a great way to connect or to share something, or to feel supported or encouraged or instructed by a parent."

While the potential for burnout exists, Charlotte said she often talks lacrosse with her father, and that's not a bad thing. She also said she never views Sofield as just a coach.

"During practices and games, my dad is still my dad," Charlotte wrote. "He will always be my dad. Sure, he is my coach, and personally I think he is the best coach I've ever had, but he is my dad. On or off the field."

"Having my dad as a coach gives me an edge over other players. I am constantly around the game. And I always have a sounding board to vent my lacrosse problems

"As I said previously, my dad will always be my dad. That includes throughout messed-up drills and poor games. When everyone else goes home and leaves lacrosse on the field, I bring it to the dinner table, to family events, everywhere. Lacrosse isn't just on the field. I have my coach watching

over me 24/7.

"Lacrosse is a huge bond for my dad and I. It's our thing together. Lacrosse is a constant. But it's not a bad thing. It is something that he and I both love."

Hayfield assistant gymnastics coach Kristin Overstreet started coaching her daughter, Molly, at a young age, as well, but it didn't take long for Molly to surpass her mother's teachings.

"I also coached Molly when she was Level 3 at Cardinal Gymnastics," Overstreet said. "She quickly surpassed my coaching abilities and moved up through the Level system in club gymnastics and became a Level 9."

Molly gave up club gymnastics prior to her sophomore year, but still competes at the high school level for Hayfield. Now a junior, Molly has already captured a pair of state championships, finishing in a three-way tie for first on vault as a freshman, and setting a state record on bars as a sophomore.

At the high school level, Molly rarely needs coaching help, allowing Overstreet to focus her attention on the team's less-experienced gymnasts.

"Molly is so knowledgeable that she can coach herself," Overstreet wrote in an email. "She knows the corrections she needs to make. I just remind her to have fun and do her best. She is also a great coach to the younger/newer girls. She demonstrates skills and gives them cues for making skills easier for them."

"I love working with the Hayfield girls. We have nine girls who have never competed in gymnastics before and they improve daily. They usually need my time at practice more than Molly does, but I am always watching her out of the corner of my eye. I rarely have to set limits on her. She knows what is expected and she does it."

Molly struggles with back pain "from years of overuse, training up to 25 hours a week and the constant pounding and hard landing," her mother wrote. The pain is to the point that Molly might have to walk away from gymnastics this year, according to Overstreet.

Molly said one of the greatest benefits of having her mom as a coach is when it comes to dealing with pain.

"Some benefits for having my mom as a coach are that she knows me the best, so when I'm in pain or anything like that, she can tell," Molly wrote. "My mom is a very understanding person and her being my mom and coach, it makes it that much easier to communicate with her about what's going on, or if I don't want to do something."

Like others in the same situation, Molly and her mother experience stressful times together. However, Overstreet, who used to coach at Edison and coached her two other daughters, as well, said coaching her child has benefits.

"Special time together, great memories, great pictures, laughing together," Overstreet wrote about coaching benefits.

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SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

JANUARY

1/7/2015 Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions
1/14/2015 HomeLifeStyle
Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 19
1/21/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
1/28/2015 Neighborhood Outlook
1/28/2015 Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

FEBRUARY

2/4/2015 Valentine's Dining & Gifts I
2/4/2015 Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month
2/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle
2/11/2015 Valentine's Dining & Gifts II
Valentine's Day is Feb. 14 • Presidents Day is Feb. 16
2/18/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
2/25/2015 Pet Connection Pullout

MARCH

3/4/2015 Wellbeing
3/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle Real Estate Pullout
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- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

NEWS

Honoring Festive Door Decorations

Winners selected in 47th Annual Old Town Holiday Door Decorating Contest.

Old Town Walled Garden Club judges were on the prowl this week in the Old and Historic District of Alexandria to survey the doorways decorated for the holidays and select the winners of the 47th annual Holiday Door Decorating Contest. Winners of this year's contest will receive prizes donated by Patina Polished Living at 605 Franklin St., Metro Stage at 1201 N. Royal St., and Abaca Imports at 121 N. Royal St.

First place, receiving a \$100 gift certificate from Patina Polished Living, was the homeowner at 630 S. Fairfax St., for a beautifully orchestrated series of wreaths on the door to the home as well as the front gate and the door to the adjacent walled garden. Magnolia, fir and Scotch pine evergreens formed the backdrop to charming ornamentation with orange slices, artichokes, white tallow berries, and yellow yarrow offset with dried seed pods, and cotton brackets.

In second place, winning two tickets to MetroStage's production of "A Broadway Christmas Carol," was the home at 207 S. Lee St. This home also carried a theme across the property with the front door, the garden gate and the bay window sill featuring similar arrangements. In this case the theme was an unusual combination of magnolia and boxwood greens with thistle and antlers.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET

First place, 630 S. Fairfax St., carried its artichoke and orange-themed swags from the door to the walled garden.

Third place, winning a \$50 gift certificate to Abaca Imports at 121 N. Royal St., went to the home at 611 South Fairfax St. This door featured a boxwood wreath adorned with lotus pods, dried quince and citrus fruit slices and nuts wrapped in a bright gold ribbon encircling the door's unusual knocker, a Hawaiian clam shell.

An honorable mention was given to the wreath of champagne corks painted gold intertwined with holly leaves and berries at 510 S. Fairfax St.



The second place winning wreaths at 207 South Lee Street featured boxwood and magnolia greens with thistle and moose and deer antlers.



The third place winning wreath at 611 S. Fairfax St. featured dried lotus pods, quince and citrus fruit slices and nuts on a boxwood wreath.



An honorable mention goes to the golden champagne cork and holly wreath at 510 S. Fairfax St.

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21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE
Pursuant to the provision of section 4-1-16 of the code of the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Police Department located at 3600 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 is now in possession of unclaimed bicycles, mopeds, lawn equipment, money, scooters, and other items. All persons having valid claim to the property should file a claim to the property with reasonable proof of ownership or the items will be sold, destroyed, converted or donated. For a complete listing go to <http://alexandriava.gov/police/> and contact the Police Property Section at (703) 746-6709.

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

Obituary



John Alfke Campbell,

beloved father and faithful friend, died on Monday November 24, 2014 in Alexandria, Virginia. John is survived by his two daughters, Barbara C. Holt of California and Elizabeth C. Wilmot of Virginia. He will be deeply missed by his grandchildren, Lauren G. Wilmot and Jack Holt and his son-in-laws, Peter Adler and David Holt. He is predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Janet Campbell.

He was born in Bronxville, New York in 1924. He attended Middlebury College for a short while before enlisting in the Army Air Corps. He was a bomber pilot in World War II. He was a 1st lieutenant who flew 35 missions in a B-17. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and an air medal with 3 clusters plus 6 battle stars.

When he got out of the service he went to Columbia University on the GI bill where he met his future wife. He earned both his undergraduate and his Master's degree from Columbia.

He made his living as a salesman which was a career he was perfectly suited for as he could charm anyone into anything and made everyone who knew him feel special. He retired from Lord Abbett, a mutual fund company on Wall Street, having risen to the position of national sales manager. He and his family lived in New Canaan, CT for 40 years before retiring to Lake Placid, FL. He spent his summers at a cottage in the 1000 Islands. He moved to Virginia after the death of his wife to be with his daughter.

In Connecticut, he was active in the Senior Men's club and ran the Saint Marks Fair for many years. He was a fabulous bridge player having played on the train to New York City and he was in much demand as a bridge partner. He was an avid investor who carefully watched the market and was part of the "Ticker Club" in Florida. He loved music and the outdoors. He enjoyed skiing, hiking, fishing and travelling.

He was an outgoing man who found the best in every situation and the best in every person. He always had a twinkle in his eye, a smile and a kind word. He was a true gentleman. He is already deeply missed. A service was held for him at Paul Springs Retirement home and he will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. Donations in his name may be made to the Church of the St. Lawrence in Alexandria Bay, NY.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

PEOPLE



David Xing and Dana Schlafman trim 4x4 beams for the new accessible planter garden.



Blake Harris and Aleksandra Soominski assemble a new bench.

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET

NEIGHBORHOOD

Taylor Run

Sherry for Ladies

More than half a century ago the late Del. Marion Galland invited all the women who had helped her to victory to an afternoon party.

Time rolled on, Marion represented us well. She succeeded in stopping City Council from hanging Confederate flags on all the lamp posts for George Washington's birthday.

She asked the same women who helped her to victory to do more. "Liquor by the drink," surprisingly, was one issue we pushed. Two gentlemen who ran restaurants gave us a lovely luncheon of filet mignon and champagne, and asked for help.

Alexandria could become a center for fine dining, they declared, if we escaped the restrictions of our then-current Virginia laws, a leftover from Prohibition.

I don't suppose that many of the visitors who enjoy our fine restaurants know to what they owe their existence.

The ladies sherry party is still going strong. This year, it was at Lucy Thomson's house on Quaker Lane. Hostesses were Sherry Brown, Harlene Clayton, Becky Moore, Patsy Ticer, Marian Van Landingham and Christa Watters.

Correction

The Shooter's Hill Carollers will go out on Saturday, Dec. 27, not Friday, Dec. 26.

Everyone is welcome to help and eat a potluck dinner afterward. Please meet at 310 Park Road at 5 p.m.

— LOIS KELSO HUNT

Assisting Adult Day Services Center

Sixty volunteers from Fannie Mae teamed up with Rebuilding Together Alexandria to make upgrades of the Adult Day Services Center in Alexandria in September.

Adult Day Services is a non-profit program designed to offer services to seniors 55 years and older who may need assistance and who may not want or cannot stay at home alone during the day. Volunteers screened-in an outdoor gazebo; built garden beds that are

wheelchair accessible; installed handrails, exterior benches and wheelchair accessible picnic tables; and put in a wall to honor vets as part of their efforts to spruce up the seniors' indoor recreation space.

The population of seniors receiving services at the center is comprised of nearly 25 percent veterans and 33 percent who are wheelchair bound. The center is located in the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center on Jefferson Street.



CFNC director of social services Ansley Shackelford talks with a couple at the turkey distribution.

Distributing Food

The Child and Family Network Centers and Westminster Presbyterian Church distributed 175 frozen turkeys and all the fixings to low-income families for Thanksgiving in November. The distribution took place at the Birchmere on Mount Vernon Avenue.



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE PACKET

CFNC and Westminster Presbyterian volunteers set out holiday themed books for the CFNC students and their parents to choose from.



A Day To Serve

Members of three congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Oakland Baptist Church came to Fort Ward Park in the fall for the park cleanup, as part of Day to Serve. Sarah Archer Beck gives volunteers instructions, before sending them off to work in the park.



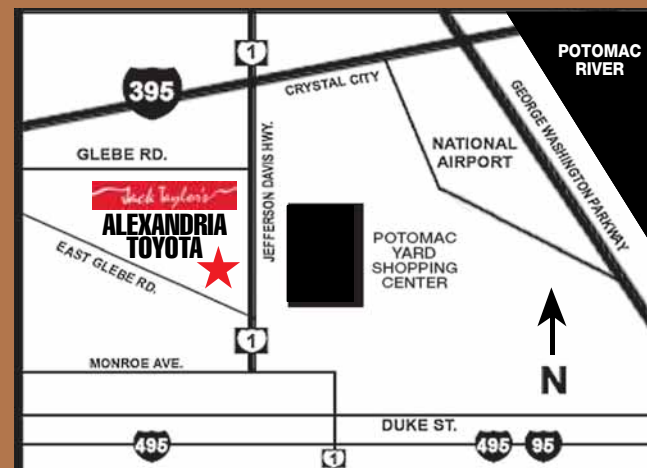
Njuguna Kabugi and his son Magana represented Oakland Baptist Church for the Day to Serve event. The church has a historic cemetery located inside Fort Ward Park.

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