

Glasses are raised for one of the many toasts at the Birthnight Ball.

Birthnight Ball at Gadsby's Tavern

The first Birthnight Ball given by John Gadsby was on Feb. 10, 1797. Washington did not attend because he was still serving as President in Philadelphia. In 1798, Washington attended the Birthnight Ball held in his honor. Washington attended the Birthnight Ball again in 1799 and noted in his diary, "Went up to Alexandria to the celebration of my birth day. Many maneuvers were performed by the Uniform Corps. And an elegant Ball & Supper at Night."

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT
GAZETTE PACKET



Rick and Pat Sowers portray Mr. and Mrs. John Gadsby.



Gen. George Washington (Dean Malissa) converses with dinner guests Clarke Cooper and Michael Marin.



Jamie and Ted Borek



Colonial musicians Mistress Marty and Mr. Steve entertain the guests in the tavern room.

Left Behind

Superintendent and George Mason Elementary parents clash over school modernization priorities.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

For parents at George Mason Elementary School, all of the talk of modernization and improvements isn't resonating. According to Alexandria City Public Schools Superintendent Alvin Crawley, the school is transitioning from a quick fix mentality to a 10-year modernization process, but local parents at a School Board public hearing on Jan. 22 criticized the superintendent's decision to move George Mason Elementary down on the modernization priority list.

On Feb. 13, the Superintendent acknowledged the criticisms but said that his office had to look at the bigger picture and see what was best for the schools.

"Our community, George Mason, is very disappointed to hear that we were moved from being first to go through this process to number three," said Marie Randall, a parent at George Mason Elementary. "We have been moved behind Douglas MacArthur and Cora Kelly, and according to Dr. Crawley's timeline we would not start our project until 2022 or 2023. Since nothing has changed

SEE PARENTS, PAGE 3

Researching Ancestors

Two genealogists help African Americans trace their families' roots.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Tracing genealogies is not only impossibly frustrating for many African-American families, but many of the results they find are predictable and grim. But for two genealogists who hosted events at Alexandria's Black History Museum, that idea obscures the powerful histories and proud legacies of many families.

"Many African American families have dark pasts," said Char McCargo Bah, a professional genealogist and Alexandria historian. "Slavery, Jim Crow, the KKK ... and these families say they

SEE HELPING, PAGE 5



Anthropologist Char McCargo Bah answers questions from Alexandrians in her class.

PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

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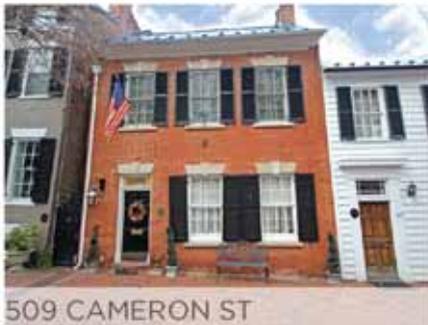
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Parents Question School Modernization Priorities

FROM PAGE 1

with the condition of our building and we still have the least amount of space per student than any other school in ACPS, we are disappointed to think that we are being moved simply because our community isn't amenable to expanding our school even though we have increased our school size by 35 percent over the last six years."

At 30 feet per student in each classroom, George Mason Elementary has the least amount of space in the classes, followed closely by 32 square feet at Douglas MacArthur. Randall noted that Douglas MacArthur Elementary, one of the schools that moved up in George Mason's place, was also in a very poor condition.

"We seem to be in a very unfortunate popularity contest of 'which school is worse,'" said Randall. "However, I think that just highlights the neglect that has happened at both schools over the years."

Built in 1939, George Mason Elementary is also one of the school system's oldest schools. The last major classroom addition was in 1949, and a multi-purpose room was added in 1961.

Joy Cameron, parent of a second grader at George Mason Elementary school, also expressed concerns that the School Board's plan for a less "band-aid" focuses repair system would end up neglecting George Mason.

"George Mason is in major disrepair," said Cameron. "[There are] leaking single pane windows with rotted sills, roofing issues, water issues with walls that never dry, rodent issues, not enough bathrooms and inadequate plumbing. Some rooms cannot be equipped with the latest technology because of the existing infrastructure, and this is just the tip of the iceberg."

"George Mason Elementary School is an old building with great character, but it needs some significant and major modernization now," said Cameron. "You all know it well enough that you placed us first on the list for modernization and expansion. Our modernization is of the highest prior-

School	SF per Student Ratio- Total Space	SF per Student Ratio- Classroom Space
Charles Barrett	144	43
Douglas MacArthur	88	32
George Mason	103	30
Cora Kelly	204	49
Jefferson-Houston*	366	95
Lyles-Crouch	166	35
Matthew Maury	117	34
Mount Vernon	138	40
James K. Polk	118	39
John Adams	152	43
Patrick Henry	105	49
Samuel Tucker	107	34
William Ramsay	99	37

*includes middle grades 6-8

You will note that George Mason and Douglas MacArthur have the lowest SF per student ratio- classroom space.

Alexandria Elementary Schools' square foot per student ratios.

ity ... Now we've been bumped years further along."

Cameron said that while the school desperately needed modernization, it's location kept it from expanding. George Mason's property is abutted by residential homes, a city park, a church, and a busy street jammed every morning with preschoolers and buses. Due to neighborhood constraints, the George Mason community vocally disapproved of expansion. Cameron and Randall both said they were concerned that the reason George Mason was pushed lower on the list. According to Crawley, this is absolutely true.

"At MacArthur, Cora Kelly, and George Mason, we're not only looking at the condition, but we have to keep adding capacity in mind," said Crawley. "George Mason was initially first, but there was discussion on the constraints that would preclude us from expanding capacity. We made the decision to add capacity at MacArthur, not at George Mason."

According to Crawley, this was an unfortunate truth to setting the school's priori-

ties for modernization. Crawley said that ACPS looked at the schools' conditions and their capacity, but also looked at opportunities for expansion. Crawley said that setting priorities for modernization is one of the biggest challenges to the budget process.

"Would we have wanted to do more? Yes," said Crawley, "but we've set a realistic agenda with the demand that is there."

Clarence Stukes, ACPS chief operations officer, said that the school modernization will start with a full feasibility study at each school that examines the physical structure of the building, historically the number of work orders at the site, and bring together a modernization committee with ACPS, school staff, and parents to set priorities for the school.

In a series of questions submitted to Stukes by School Board member Patricia Hennig, she asked whether the modernization process in the CIP would reduce the maintenance costs in the operating budget.

"No, the 'maintain until building renovation/replacement' line in the CIP will fund

unanticipated capital projects needed to keep buildings functioning until modernization," Stukes answered. "Funds in the operating budget cover routine maintenance and minor repairs."

But according to Randall, none of these modernizations will matter if the schools can't retain their staff.

"Another priority for the school board is to retain great staff," said Randall. "Our fabulous staff at George Mason has been working in substandard conditions. Our staff, including our principal, was ecstatic to hear that George Mason was the first priority project and had great ideas about what they'd like to see in a modern classroom. They are also extremely disappointed with this news and we are disappointed for them. No one wants to work in a failing work space."

Other modernization projects included renovations of school sports fields. Each of the middle schools has money in the budget for tennis courts for an average of \$35,000.

According to Crawley, these funds are not going to construction of new courts but into resurfacing and general repairs. The CIP does not include the funding to football field lights at T.C. Williams High School, but according to Stukes that's a cost that will likely be evaluated and included in the yearly adjustments at a later date.

Fifty million dollars was also set aside for a new school site to be determined in fiscal year 2019.

"We are looking at enrollment, and we need capacity at elementary, middle and high school levels," said Crawley. "We're adding capacity now, but we need to add significant capacity to middle schools."

Crawley estimated that the new school would have a 1,200 student capacity.

Stukes also emphasized that while the CIP covers a 10-year period, it is reinstated each year with flexible discussions on project funding in those years.

"The capital program is the best estimate of our needs now," said Stukes, "but there needs to be some flexibility."

ACPS Capacity Projects, Elementary

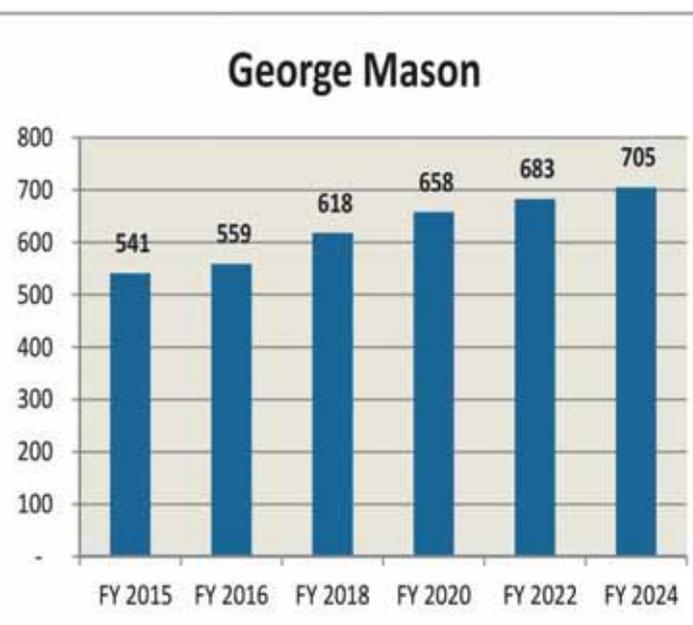
Site	Number of Additional Classrooms	Construction Fiscal Year
Patrick Henry	20	2016
James K. Polk	10	2017
George Mason	6	2018
Douglas MacArthur	2	2020
Matthew Maury	3	2022

Alexandria School modernization schedule with classroom additions.

George Mason Statistics	
Year Built	1939
Age	75
Site Area (in Sqft.)	55,935

Building Component	Year Completed
Roof	1987/2000
Windows	1990
HVAC	2002
Elevator	1976
Playground	1999
Building Additions	1949/77/2014

Current information and maintenance history for George Mason Elementary.



George Mason Elementary current student population and projections.

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Helping African-Americans Trace Families' Roots

FROM PAGE 1

would rather look forward to the future, that they don't want to talk about their past. People think their families have a lot of dark sides, but they don't know about the successes.”

Cultural historian Michael Twitty hosted a half-day class Jan. 31 on helping families trace their roots back to Africa. Bah's lecture a week later, on Feb. 7, focused on filling in the history of local families between their ancestors being brought to America and some of the oldest records families have.

“Most African American families face a brick wall: the 1870 census, and that's it,” said Twitty. “That's the oldest documented ancestor most African American families [can trace to], but they have been here much longer than most white families. Many can trace their roots further back, but don't have all of the details.”

Twitty said that African-American families have to approach genealogy different from many Caucasians. While very strict documentation is at the core of most genealogical research programs, Twitty said this is impossible for many African-American families. The pieces are there, but they can't be connected into a historical narrative. For Twitty, that narrative is key. It's not enough to know when someone was born and when they died. The details of the life

in between those dates are what makes the genealogy worthwhile.

Bah went into the detail of some local family histories. Bah had helped one local woman, Gale Brooks Ogden, discover two of her ancestors, Paul and Eliza Reddick, who were married in 1869 in Alfred Street Baptist Church. Ogden was shocked, she'd been married in the same church as her ancestors and never knew. Bah says these long-standing family traditions are fairly common, even when those practicing them don't remember their origin. Like Twitty, Bah noted that strange family names or traditions can be major clues when uncovering a family genealogy.

Many of the people she helps discover they have startling relations within their community.

“Many African Americans that came here prior to the civil war were related,” said Bah, recounting the story of two best friends that grew up together in Alexandria and had no idea that they were cousins.

“People run around talking about ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ but you don't realize how true that actually is,” said Twitty. “None of us know these stories as well as we think.”

Twitty's class helped African-Americans piece together the stories of their ancestor's lives, often using slave records to build a map of where these families have travelled. Several people in the room had already

gotten the results of a DNA test but weren't exactly sure what the results meant. Several women said they had the test and the results came back as originating from Cameroon/Congo. Twitty briefly went into some of the history of the Cameroon, back to 2000 years ago when many tribes migrated into eastern and southern Africa.

“It's amazing to know that you're a part of that migration, that history,” said Twitty.

DNA testing can be a tricky subject for genealogists. Bah confessed that she was originally against DNA when it started being implemented into genealogical studies.

“Where are all of the other juicy pieces that make these stories worthwhile?” Bah asked, but she says her opinions have changed over the years, and she now considers DNA a piece of the larger puzzle. In particular, she acknowledged its importance in finding a family's origins in Africa. She was still wary of it as a substitute for genealogy. “It's an easy way for some people to say they've found their story, but you're missing so much,” said Bah. “You don't know who they were. You see the beginning and the end, but you miss everything in-between.”

For Twitty, knowing where in Africa the family comes from can also help identify when and where their family was brought over into America. Twitty had his own journey to trace his ancestors' steps, which in-

cluded a stop in Liverpool and London to see the docks where slaves were sold and transported.

“People don't realize these cities are built on the slave trade,” said Twitty, citing Liverpool specifically. “They have no clue, in Liverpool, about their history. They just want to talk about the Beatles.”

Twitty's journey took him from rural sections of Africa to a “reveal” ceremony on a North Carolina plantation not far from where his family once tilled the land. Reveals are ceremonies where a DNA test came back and traces family heritage. Twitty chose the plantation in North Carolina as part of a campaign to “take back the land taken from us.” But Twitty warned that these reveals can be bewildering.

“Parts of genealogy can be uncomfortable,” said Twitty. According to Twitty, one-third of all African Americans report at least one white ancestor. “People's family narratives sometimes don't fit the historical narratives. DNA sometimes washes a story out.”

Twitty says he's encountered this with many Caucasian families he's talked to when approached with the fact that they have African American relatives.

“They'd be very sensitive about it,” said Twitty. “They'd say things like ‘well let me check the charts’ and I just have to respond ‘listen, you're not going to find it on the

SEE TRACING, PAGE 16



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Great Backyard Bird Count

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Thomas Pollack pointed to a white-throated sparrow on a bare tree limb, feathers puffed out in the 12-degree afternoon. “He is trying to stay warm,” Pollack commented as he scanned the sky for signs of another bird. Pollack is participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) to meet requirements for his Boy Scout Birding badge, Troop 135. The GBBC is sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology from Feb. 13-16.

“The GBBC is a great way for the community to see birds and to share what they see with other people.

**PEOPLE
AT WORK**

And it’s fun to go outside to enjoy nature and see the cool space of birds,

how they behave and interact,” said Pollack who has been a Scout for four and a half years and has already earned a number of the badges on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout. He says his dad has always been a birdwatcher and used to take him along to Monticello Park, just a block from his house. And once when he was 3-4 years old, a crow landed on his head at his grandfather’s house in West Virginia. “Lucky I wasn’t traumatized,” he said.

But it was just a couple of years ago that he began really watching birds. “There is a female cardinal by the bridge and there is a pair of cardinals in the brush,” he said, standing for a moment focusing on the bank. “Look more cardinals — the bright red male and the softer brownish-red of the female.” He says he finds it interesting that male birds use all kinds of different things from the wild to decorate their surroundings to attract the female.

As he crosses over the bridge to the pathway circling the park, he sees a dark-eyed junco hopping on the ground ahead. Up by the log there are several more small gray birds with soft white bellies flitting in and out of the branches by the frozen stream. “In the tree, what is that? Another female cardinal. They are everywhere today,” Pollack said. He also birds at Huntley Meadows and in his backyard or on camping trips. His father, Mike Pollack, points out a goldfinch in the path ahead as well as a white-breasted nuthatch inching his way up the side of the tree trunk in the distance.

Thomas explains he stands still and stares in one direction looking for movement to spot birds, usually starting high in the trees and working his way down. Or if he hears a sound, he looks in that direction. He says he probably looks at the color of the face first and the bill, the throat and top of the



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Thomas Pollack is participating in the Cornell Lab’s Great Backyard Bird Count to earn his Birdwatching Merit Badge for Boy Scout Troop 135.

head. Then the shape and the length of the tail — is it striped. “But they are still hard to identify — they’re hopping all over the place.” A chickadee splashes in a small puddle of unfrozen water at the base of a fallen log.

His father spots an unusual bird at the curve in the trail. “Is that a robin; no I think it’s a thrush.” Mike Pollack’s voice gets more excited, “it is a thrush; what is he doing here at this time of the year? Now that’s a real find.” Thomas says he mostly goes birding with his father. “My friends are not really birdwatchers.” He spots a dove in the water, and his father sees a striped song sparrow skating across the ice.

As Thomas completes the circuit around the park, he is ready to thaw out and get ready for his late afternoon tennis lesson so he is prepared for high school tennis try-outs in a few weeks. Yesterday he had delivered bread donations from Great Harvest Bakery to Father McKenna Center for the homeless in D.C. He said when after adding in school he doesn’t have too much time to go birding. But he looks up and there is one more pair of cardinals. He has lost track of how many he has seen today. It has been an unusually active day in the park just before the predicted snowstorm. When Thomas returns home and adds up his observations for an hour in the park, he will report to the GBBC database 13 different species of birds with as many as 15 white-throated sparrows, 10 cardinals, 15 mourning doves and a smattering of other species with about 30 common grackles flying over. Quite the haul for his Birdwatching Merit Badge and his first Great Backyard Bird Count.



Mike Pollack points out an unusual bird to his son Thomas who was braving the 12-degree weather to earn his Boy Scout Birdwatching Badge.



PHOTOS BY JOHN BORDNER

U.S. Fire Administrator Ernie Mitchell address the crowd at the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association annual breakfast Feb. 16 at the Hotel Monaco.

‘Fire Is Everyone’s Fight’ Friendship Firehouse holds 241st annual meeting.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Despite the bitter cold temperatures that forced the cancellation of Alexandria’s George Washington Birthday Parade, the traditional Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association breakfast took place as scheduled Feb. 16 with “General Washington” making an appearance and U.S. Fire Administrator Ernie Mitchell giving the keynote address.

“If he were here today, George Washington would be very proud of the 241 years of contributions of the Friendship Firehouse,” said Mitchell, who noted that Washington was a founding member of Friendship Firehouse in 1774. “And he would be amazed at the advances in fire service.”

Held at the Hotel Monaco, the breakfast also featured the presentation of the Rev. Ben Lynt Distinguished Service Award to Lynnwood Campbell Jr., a former member of the Alexandria School Board and board member of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and Senior Services of Alexandria.

“They tricked me into being here,” a surprised Campbell said with a laugh. “If I had known, I would have said no.”

Campbell went on to thank the many unsung heroes of the community that have gone before him, including former vice mayor Bill Cleveland, who was in the audience.

“I didn’t do anything by myself,” Campbell said. “I stood on the

SEE 241 YEARS. PAGE 7



Lynnwood Campbell Jr., left, accepts the Rev. Ben Lynt Distinguished Service Award as former Chief of Police and Friendship Firehouse board member David Baker looks on.

PEOPLE

241 Years Later

FROM PAGE 6

shoulders of so many in this community who worked to make Alexandria a better place.”

Mitchell, a resident of Alexandria since accepting his appointment from President Barack Obama in 2011, focused his remarks on fire prevention.

“Fire is everyone’s fight,” Mitchell said. “We need to work together in the business of fire service and life safety. Protecting the public — that’s what it’s all about.”

Noting that 81 percent of fire deaths occur in homes, Mitchell stressed the need for increased use of residential sprinkler systems.

“Homes are the most dangerous fire threat for most Americans yet it’s where people feel most safe,” Mitchell said. “A residential sprinkler system will save thousands of lives. Combined with smoke detectors, it’s like having a firefighter in your house — they just don’t eat as much.”

Making his final appearance as General Washington was Don DeHaven, a fixture at the annual breakfast since 1985.

“Unfortunately, this is the last time I will be with you,” DeHaven



Don DeHaven addresses the crowd for his final appearance as Gen. George Washington.

said. “The infirmities of age will prevent me from continuing in this role. But as George Washington said, ‘I shall always be ambitious of being considered a good neighbor.’ Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.”

For more information on the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association and the historic Friendship Firehouse Museum, visit www.friendshipfire.net.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

THURSDAY/FEB. 19

History: Ethics and Morality. 7:30 p.m. at Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St., Alexandria. Father John Roddy, rector of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Margaret in Alexandria, will speak about Ethics and Morality in the War Between the States as part of Alexandria’s Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the Civil War. Free. Call 703-746-4554 for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 20

Nomination Deadline. All nominations must be submitted to the Department of Community and Human Services by the close of business on Friday, Feb. 20. The Alexandria Commission for Women seeks nominations of women, men, and youth who have made a significant impact on women and girls in Alexandria. To obtain a nomination form or further information, contact Melissa Villacorta at 703-746-3132 or Melissa.Villacorta@alexandriava.gov, or visit www.alexandriava.gov/women.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

Application Deadline. The 2015 Ballyshanners St. Patrick’s Day Parade will be held on Saturday, March 7, in Old Town Alexandria. Applications for participants are available at www.ballyshanners.org.
“The Culture Queen.” 11 a.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum,

902 Wythe St., Alexandria. Jessica “Culture Queen” Smith encourages children to take ownership over their roles as cultural ambassadors of their communities. Music, movement and crafts awaken creativity, cultural awareness and a sense of empowerment within the group. \$5 per person, advance reservations encouraged. Call 703-746-4356.

SUNDAY/FEB. 22

DASH Schedule Changes. Call 703-746-DASH (3274) or visit www.dashbus.com. DASH will implement the following changes:
❖ AT1, AT2, AT3, AT4, AT5, AT7 & AT10: timetable adjustments
❖ AT8: 7-10 a.m. on weekdays, eastbound AT8 trips will use Diagonal Road to approach King Street – Old Town Metro Station instead of Callahan Drive.

MONDAY/FEB. 23

Application Deadline. 5 p.m. The Alexandria City Council is seeking applicants to fill vacancies on boards, commissions and committees. All applicants must complete a personal data record form. For a complete list of vacancies, visit www.alexandriava.gov/boards/info/default.aspx?id=2202.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 25

FAFSA Completion Workshop. 6-9 p.m. at T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King St., Alexandria. For seniors and their families. Get help applying for financial aid to pay for college. Drop by T.C. Williams High School any time during the event to receive free, confidential assistance from financial aid professionals. Bring most recent tax information. Visit www.acps.k12.va.us/face-centers/ for more.

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OPINION

Hotel Business — Up or Down?

BY PATRICIA WASHINGTON
PRESIDENT & CEO, VISIT ALEXANDRIA
AND MARYANNE RUSSELL
PRESIDENT, ALEXANDRIA HOTEL ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MANAGER, EMBASSY SUITES
ALEXANDRIA

COMMENTARY

burden of the average Alexandria household by over \$300.

The hotel development outlook is also positive. In March, the Hilton Garden Inn opens in Old Town adding 100-plus rooms. The Hotel Indigo also plans to add over 100 rooms to our new waterfront. A similar size property is planned for Robinson Terminal North. The former Eisenhower Holiday Inn site is slated for a major redevelopment that will more than triple the number of rooms to 659 and add 50,000 square feet of meeting space. Other proposed hotel projects include Braddock Road metro, Carlyle II, Potomac Yard and Landmark Mall.

THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

The recent economic report to City Council revealed a challenging picture. After leading the country at the start of the decade, the Washington metro is now 14th out the 15 largest metro areas in job growth, just behind Detroit. Clearly the decline in federal jobs is at the heart of this trend, and the private sector has not been able to pick up all of the slack. Here in Alexandria, our private sector has added 1,800 jobs since 2010. Six out of every 10 of those jobs were in hospitality and tourism.

Yet some have asked whether travel jobs are “good jobs”? Does Alexandria really want them? Here are considerations that suggest an important role for hospitality in a diversified local economy. In a city like Alexandria, with

a range of ages, work experience, and educational levels, hospitality can provide a crucial career ladder. Travel jobs equip employees with transferable skills that prepare them to succeed in any profession. Bureau of Labor Statistics research has shown that people who start in travel advance their career earnings to a higher level than other industries, including manufacturing, construction and health care. Two out of five workers who begin their career in travel go on to make more than \$100,000 per year. For women and African Americans who start out in hospitality, their maximum annual wage achieved is 6 percent above the average for all industries. For Latinos, it's 8 percent above average.

Hospitality is also a critical component in attracting other industries. Alexandria's quality of life, transportation options, accessibility and range of amenities including restaurants, history and recreation help us compete for talent. And employers want to locate where employees want to work. Alexandria's quality of life is a distinguishing competitive advantage that underpins our broader economic development efforts.

In the Washington D.C. region and in Alexandria, the economic challenges are structural, not cyclical. There is no quick fix, but it is essential that we develop a diversified regional economy that reflects our diverse population. In both the short and long term, tourism and economic development must play a pivotal role in that strategy of fiscal stability for Alexandria's government and prosperity for its citizens.

Two recent articles seemed to point to conflicting data about the state of Alexandria's hospitality industry. Two weeks ago a front-page Gazette story reported that along with income, rising hotel occupancy was the rare bright spot in our otherwise stagnant local economy. Then, last week's issue reported that the assessed value of hotel property declined 13 percent in 2014. So is Alexandria's hotel business up or down? The answer, like most things, is that there are multiple considerations. On balance however, Alexandria's hospitality sector appears to be doing well and is a vital contributor to a diversifying local economy.

HOTEL PROPERTY OUTLOOK

First the bad news: Three Alexandria hotels have closed (Hawthorn Suites, Washington Suites, and Holiday Inn-Eisenhower). That's why hotel property tax assessments fell last year. Now the good news: As of December, the midpoint in the city's fiscal year, occupancy and room rates are up. So, despite the 6 percent reduction in rooms available to rent, Alexandria's hotel lodging tax revenues are actually up 9 percent. And those tourism revenues add up; taxes by visitors reduce the tax

Modernization Needs to Include Outdoor Spaces

BY KAREN GRAF
CHAIR, ALEXANDRIA
SCHOOL BOARD

Alexandria's community, our ACPS properties need to serve the larger needs of the neighborhood and city communities.

Given this responsibility, the Alexandria City School Board has allocated money in the 10-year CIP budget for outdoor facilities improvements at the high school, one of the middle schools and several of the elementary school

playgrounds.

The CIP budget includes funding for evaluating and upgrading aging outdoor school play spaces at Matthew Maury Elementary School, Charles Barrett Elementary School, John Adams Elementary School, William Ramsay Elementary School, James K. Polk Elementary

SEE MODERNIZATION, PAGE 9

It's budget season and budget season is always tough. But this year's budget is tougher than most. Present and future capacity is real and alarming. Our city is growing fast. By September, there will be over 1,600 new students in ACPS since this School Board took office in 2013. On top of that, we know that Alexandria City also has major revenue challenges this year. The new ACPS modernization plans help manage these funds responsibly in the future by putting our buildings on a proper repair schedule.

This year's Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget presents sustainable policies and practices so that good management survives through different boards, superintendents and staff and the plan is mapped out clearly and transparently. It has also introduced the concept of modernization, a simple and sustainable approach to addressing the issues of capacity and rising projected enrollment.

Alongside much needed updates to our school buildings, modernization includes the quality and condition of our outdoor facilities.

Not only buildings, but outdoor space, are in disrepair and are not meeting the needs of the school population. Our community has more children in the schools using the play areas and sports fields, and youth sports are growing across the city too. As part of



STEVE ARTLEY/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Steven Mauren
Editor, 703-778-9415
smauren@connectionnewspapers.com

Vernon Miles
Reporter, 703-615-0960
vmiles@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann
703-778-9436
jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Jon Roetman
Sports Editor, 703-752-4013
jroetman@connectionnewspapers.com
@jonroetman

Steve Artley
Cartoonist
artley@connectionnewspapers.com

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

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

Julie Ferrill
Display Advertising, 703-778-9446
jferrill@connectionnewspapers.com

Tara Lloyd
Display Advertising, 703-778-9447
tlloyd@connectionnewspapers.com

Andrea Smith
Classified Advertising, 703-778-9411
asmith@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Editor in Chief
Steven Mauren
Photography:
John Bordner, Deb Cobb,
Louise Krafft, Craig Sterbutzel
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:
Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION: 703-778-9426
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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OPINION

Modernization

FROM PAGE 8

School, Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy and Mount Vernon Community School. Additionally, the outdoor spaces at MacArthur, Cora Kelly and George Mason will be reviewed during their building modernizations, which are scheduled in the 10-year plan.

In 2021, the plan is to improve the outdoor area at George Washington Middle School. The possible scope would include track improvements and working with the city to develop Braddock Road Park. This project is new to the budget and more details will emerge in the coming year once the community is engaged in defining the scope.

Parker-Gray football field at T.C. Williams High School is slated for an update in 2018. This will address the growing student body and expansion of sports programs.

There is money for planning a comprehensive re-design of T.C. Williams' sports facilities. ACPS will be looking to repair or replace the turf, bleachers, press box and concession and ticket stand, which

will modernize the facility. Stadium lights are also part of the planning; however, they are not yet funded in the field project.

There is no money in the budget allocated for taking legal action against any members of the community who do not support future plans for the high school. In fact, the School Board has no plans to ever use the annual legal budget to litigate with citizens in the surrounding neighborhood.

We are striving to maintain positive relationships with all our neighbors by addressing needed maintenance issues this spring, like landscaping and clean up.

Even at a time when funds are tight, it is our duty to respond practically to current and future needs. This CIP budget represents a prudent, studied and reasonable way to address our long-term and long-standing facility quality and capacity issues. This CIP budget is a sign of fiscal health. ACPS is dedicated to caring for our investments and developing our properties so that we leave a legacy of quality and pride for our citizens and students.

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'First Responders' Come to Rescue of Animals in Need

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

The call that came in from the police to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) described a fox stuck in a residential fence. What Animal Control Officer Alex Cooke found on arriving at the house in Del Ray early that Sunday morning was that the fox, a large male, was hanging by his head. As she moved closer and tried to examine the animal, he hissed and tried to bite her. Finding no visible injury, Cooke decided the best plan was to help him escape. She quickly positioned crates under the fox's paws and then tossed her catch pole around his jaw, causing him to bite down. Using the pole, she lifted the fox up, freeing his head. "He took off running and leaped over the next fence," she said.

AWLA

The rescue was all in a day's work for Cooke, one of a team of three Animal Control Officers at the AWLA, which operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter. Led by Chief Brian Rees, the officers are the city's first responders for animals, handling thousands of calls that the AWLA receives annually through the city police department and from citizens.

Many calls involve wildlife in distress.

Citizens often call after "rescuing" baby birds that appear to have fallen from nests. These birds should be left alone, Rees said, as they are routinely nudged out of the nest by their mothers, who are teaching them to fly.

The officers sometimes find themselves saving lives. Cooke, for example, routinely checks the pouch of opossums who have been killed on the road since finding a 2-inch live baby opossum inside a dead mother. That newborn was transported to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Keeping citizens and pets safe from rabies is a major responsibility of Animal Services.

Untold hours are spent documenting animal bites and scratches, reporting them to city authorities, and, if necessary, quarantining animals suspected of having rabies or animals that were bitten.

Pets that have had rabies vaccinations can be quarantined at home, Rees said, but those without vaccinations must go to the



Only the head of a fox that tried jumping a fence in Del Ray is visible from this side.

shelter for the quarantine period.

Rees and his team increasingly look for opportunities to educate citizens rather than penalize them. "When we're out on patrol, we're especially looking for dogs off leash, and when we find one, it's our duty to determine if the animal has a city license and a rabies vaccine," he said. "But instead of a citation, we often issue a 'notice to comply' and explain why the vaccines are critical. We'll follow up later to make sure they did comply."

Situations involving cruelty or neglect of animals warrant criminal prosecution, Rees said, and the AWLA works closely with the city Commonwealth's Attorney's office to bring charges in these cases.

"That office is very supportive of what we are doing," Rees said. "They see this as a growing area of law and have helped us to expand our abilities to bring strong cases to them for prosecution."

Bryan Porter, the Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Alexandria, says he has made animal cases a priority since taking office last year and has assigned one of his



A newborn opossum was rescued from the pouch of its deceased mother by Animal Control Officer Alex Cooke.

staff prosecutors, Joseph Martin, to specialize in these cases. A recent case involved a dog so neglected by its owners that it had to be euthanized. The defendant — the dog's owner — pleaded guilty to a count of animal cruelty and was sentenced to suspended jail time and ordered not to care for or possess any companion animals again.

"Animal cruelty victims can't speak for themselves, and they need strong advocates to hold people who treat them inhumanely accountable for their actions," Porter said. "Education about these issues is key. When judges and juries hear about the horrible things people do to animals, they are more likely to take the cases seriously."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More Time To Study Issue

To the Editor:

As homeowners who live near the proposed expansion of the Woodbine nursing home complex, we are concerned about the willingness of the City Council to approve this project without proper due diligence. Countless letters, blogs, emails and articles have been written by residents in the community in opposition to building a commercial, for-profit facility in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Why are the voices of the community being so blatantly dismissed? While there may be a need for Senior/Assisted Living housing in Alexandria, the city needs to conduct an independent study to determine where these facilities can be built to appropriately handle the increase in need and provide affordable housing in these facilities. This effort should be driven by city leaders not a commercial developer.

City planners should be wary of re-zoning this 1.3 acre residential parcel on King Street as it will set a dangerous precedent for other commercial expansion in residential areas. Fundamental questions have been raised about the "institutional use" definition in support of the Master Plan. It was never intended to be used for nursing home facilities. The council should commission a proper review of this and, if necessary, modify the Master Plan to properly define this term and how it applies to our zoning rules.

In lieu of rushing to facilitate the developer's commercial interests and sched-

ule, City Council should take the time to study this issue more strategically. They should conduct independent (not developer-funded) studies on the impact on traffic, water/sewer, emergency vehicle access and the creation of a new access to King Street in this most heavily congested area. Most importantly the City Council should not approve the Woodbine commercial expansion without identifying and carefully considering alternative solutions that may not require re-zoning a residential area.

Lucille DeJuliis and Hal Arneson
Alexandria

Let's Avoid Mediocrity

To the Editor:

Opponents of the Waterfront Plan often relied on hyperbole, charging that the plan would turn the waterfront into a National Harbor or Disney World. This led to a loss of their credibility. Yet they are using the same tactics to oppose individual site plans. They claim, for instance, that the Robinson terminal redevelopment plans will create a

Miami Beach on the Potomac. This comparison is as absurd as those used in the past. South Beach is an Art Deco district while the architecture of the northern part of Miami Beach is mid-century moderne.

Opponents of the redevelopment also decry the use of glass as if that product is more artificial than brick. Oddly they are silent about the large amount of glass proposed for the new Old Dominion Boat Club, to which many of them belong.

Lastly, we are told that Charleston, S.C., does better by its historic district. It might interest your serial correspondent to know that the deservedly vaunted Mayor Riley of that city opposes reproduction architecture. And, while there are fine modern buildings on the waterfront there also are large buildings such as the new Marriott Hotel — not a boutique. The big controversy there has been over cruise ships spewing pollution and inundating the city with day visitors. But the state controls the ports, not the city.

Both Robinson terminal projects have been designed by nationally recognized architects. We must avoid our habits of making major alterations by committee or for the purpose of political compromise.

Otherwise we will have mediocrity.

Jon Rosenbaum
Alexandria

Who Do Planners Work For?

To the Editor:

The Woodbine nursing home complex proposed memory care project has many local residents perplexed by ever-changing logic of both the out-of-state developer and the planning department who appear to be in the pocket of the developer.

❖ The site was too small for more than three homes on the 75,000 sq. ft. of space and the large trees had to be preserved. The developer is now able to place four times as much building on the same space and destroy most of the trees in a Tree Protection Easement and that is perfectly fine with

the Alexandria planning department. How is that logical?

❖ The developer said they wanted to serve the community and proposed 92 beds and then lowered it to 66 units. If they wanted to really serve the community they would find the appropriate location and build a 92-unit facility. How is cutting nearly a third of the facility serving the community if such a need really exist?

❖ The planning commission claims they received proffers for rezoning the property from residential to RB (areas for medium density residential neighborhoods in which single-family, two-family and townhouse dwellings are permitted). When it was brought up in an open planning hearing that the proffers would not occur as they fell outside the probability of ever reaching the criteria of enactment, the planners quickly stated that they were neither important nor part of the consideration for making the zoning change. So why were they so heavily promoted by both the developer and the planning commission in written documents if in fact they don't really matter in this zoning determination?

❖ Traffic near the existing Woodbine facility is dangerous as can be verified by anyone who drives down King Street on a regular basis or walks on the sidewalks in the neighborhoods surrounding the facility. The local communities have all come out in opposition of this expansion and have asked for a traffic study to help calm the traffic mayhem that already exists at this location. The developer has brushed this aside with the concurrence of the planning depart

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

ment. So who does the planning department work for, the out-of-state developer or the residents of Alexandria?

Mark McLeod
Alexandria

Value of Tree Lights

To the Editor:

A note to tell you that I think the tree lights have been a phenomenal success this year. In their majestic appearance the tree tops glimmering in little lights have drawn more compliments and praising than I can ever remember.

As people walk through Old Town, they remark how pretty King Street is along with the other blocks that are enjoying them. I have received more compliments myself as if I had something to do with lighting them the way they are this year. I see how evenly and professionally the strings are strung and I think it is wonderful that we finally strung them properly, going from one end of King Street to the other. Just look at the Metro and the King Street Garden Park glistening in its new lighting, which was lit in time for the Supper Under the Stars, and the glow the little lights impart all throughout the park.

Now as I walk on my evening strolls I only wish the city budget could afford to see how important those lights are in marketing the city. I personally understand the budget but can't help wishing someone would step up

and pay to keep them lit, at least through June like we did last year.

I am firmly convinced they are as important as the banners and the trolley are to attracting tourism. It's all about marketing the city to feel its fullness and to yield the prosperity we deserve.

David Martin
Alexandria

Facts on Woodbine

To the Editor:

The proposed memory care center between Woodbine and Ivy Hill on King Street will be a significant asset to Alexandria, and elderly Alexandrians and their families — objections by a few neighbors based on emotion and without basis of fact notwithstanding.

❖ Erroneous statement: Certificates of Public Need are required for the facility because it is a “nursing home” and the Virginia Department of Health is not issuing them for more beds.

❖ Fact: Staff has stated frequently, while city deems the facility to be a “nursing home” for zoning purposes, that has nothing to do with its operation or licensure.

❖ Erroneous statement: Alexandria doesn't “need” a new assisted living facility because there are other such facilities in the area.

❖ Fact: This argument makes as much sense as saying the city doesn't need Alex

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12



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Protecting Dominion's Monopoly Earnings

BY ADAM P. EBBIN
STATE SENATOR (D-30)



This past week marked “Cross-over” in Richmond, after which time each chamber of the General Assembly only works on legislation passed by the other chamber. Ten of my bills have passed the Senate and now await consideration by the House of Delegates.

I recently spoke on the Senate floor against a bill to eliminate the electrical rate reviews and adjustments, known as “The Dominion Bill” (Senate Bill SB1349).

COMMENTARY

The principal issue at stake is oversight by the State Corporation Commission (SCC) of Dominion Virginia Power and Appalachian Power (APCO). The bill would make Dominion an unregulated monopoly for the next five years.

Supporters of SB1349 claimed that the main reason to pass this bill is that it would freeze the base portion of your electric rates. The “base rate” incorporates the cost of building, closing, and maintaining power plants. Fuel consumed in generating elec-

tricity is a separate charge that will continue to fluctuate.

However, Dominion's base rates have been ruled excessive by the SCC, which in turn ordered it to credit money back to ratepayers to

the tune of a whopping \$800 million over the last seven years.

Without crucial SCC oversight, customers have no recourse to have the company's rates reviewed as required by current law. I believe this will be a de facto rate increase on millions of Virginia citizens and businesses, and will only further entrench Dominion's monopoly status.

While the bill would have Dominion not charge consumers \$80 million in fuel expenses, that pales in comparison to the \$280 million in projected annual excess revenues that would otherwise be refunded to customers.

Dominion argues that this legislation is needed to protect consumers from increased costs associated with the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Clean Power Plant emission regulations. However, the

bill does not protect customers from any future environmental compliance costs; in fact Dominion could just defer them beyond the 5-year period and pass on the costs then.

I agree with Attorney General Mark Her-ring that this argument is merely a pretext to protect Dominion's monopoly earnings and shield them from the SCC's thorough review process. Incredibly, the bill still allows the utility giant to seek special permission to raise rates.

The bill eliminates oversight by the SCC of our state's largest public utility and while it may be good for Dominion's shareholders, I don't believe that it will help the average consumer who is working to keep the lights on. Unfortunately, SB1349 passed over my objections and was fast tracked through the House of Delegates where it was opposed by Delegates Rob Krupicka, Scott Surovell, Patrick Hope, Rip Sullivan, and Alfonso Lopez.

On a lighter note, in a rare moment of levity, the Senate moved one step closer to officially choosing a new state song (or two).

In the 18 years since Virginia last had an official state song, a lot of time has been spent by more patient legislators than I sift-

ing through more than 300 potential state songs. At one point, there even was a State Song Subcommittee that considered criteria as to whether songs were dignified, singable, adaptable, and appealing to a wide audience. Much to my relief, we on the General Laws Committee took less than a half-hour to propose a compromise two-song solution. We selected “Sweet Virginia Breeze” by Steve Bassett and Robbin Thompson as our “popular” state song, and “Our Great Virginia,” which is set to the tune of “Shenandoah” with new lyrics commissioned by Virginia Tech professor James Robertson, Jr. as our “traditional” state song. The most contentious point of debate was whether we should change a lyric in one of the songs from “the heartland of America” to “the birthplace of America.” Birthplace won and I hope that the House of Delegates will concur so we can get back to focusing on weightier items.

Please take my online survey at www.AdamEbbin.com/Survey. You can also email me at district30@senate.virginia.gov and sign up for my weekly email updates at <http://www.AdamEbbin.com>. I am active on Twitter @AdamEbbin and Facebook at www.facebook.com/EbbinCampaign.

State Budget Fails Some Pre-K Students

BY ROB KRUPICKA
STATE DELEGATE (D-45)



This week the House began to debate over the state budget. The budget put forward by the House Republicans does not go far enough to provide the services Virginians need and deserve. The introduced budget continues to underfund our K-12 schools, cuts millions of dollars for preschool slots and fails to close the coverage gap for 400,000 uninjured Virginians.

I spoke on the House floor against an amendment that would severely limit what children are eligible for the Virginia Pre-school Initiative (VPI). VPI supports quality preschool programs for at-risk 4-year-olds. Children and their families participating in VPI receive assistance through early childhood education and child development, social services, children's health assessments and parenting workshops.

Currently all children considered “at-risk”

are eligible for VPI. This amendment would limit VPI access to only children “free-lunch eligible.” This amendment hurts children that may be considered at risk for factors besides poverty.

There are many other reasons a child may be considered at risk including special needs or developmental delays, children of military parents — especially if one of the parents is deployed, children who have experienced traumatic events or have extra sources of stress at home such as drug abuse in the family or victims or witnesses of violence, and English as Second Language learners. Without access to quality Pre-K, many at risk children fall behind their preschool-attending peers and show up to Kindergarten significantly underprepared and are much less likely to ever catch up to their fellow students. All children should have access to

quality Pre-K programs. The unfortunate reality is that we aren't there yet, but this amendment only serves to unnecessarily further exclude the children who need it the most.

There has been so much great bi-partisan work this year on early education. Republicans know the benefits of quality Pre-K. It is disappointing to see the Republicans take such a giant step back towards decreasing access to early education to exactly the children most in need of the benefits of Pre-K. In addition to limiting what kids are eligible for VPI, they have introduced another amendment so that if a locality has unused VPI slots, those open slots can no longer be transferred to localities with waitlists for kids trying to get in to VPI. Last year, there were 1,719 children on the waiting list for VPI. This amendment will make that waiting list significantly longer. We should be working to increase the number of children in VPI programs, not the other way around.

COMMENTARY

Ethics reform has returned this session to the House floor. Last year, the General Assembly passed a bill to limit gift giving and strengthen reporting requirements in response to the charges brought against Governor McDonnell and his wife. The legislation that passed was a feeble step towards reform and I was happy to see the issue raised again this year. However, once again the bill before the House fails to take any significant action towards limiting or holding accountable legislators for extraneous, expensive gifts, trips and meals given to them. I voted against the ethics reform package because I support the Governor's call for an independent audit and investigation body to enforce our ethics rules and I plan to keep pushing to add some type of accountability to the bill. Legislators don't need lavish gifts and meals to do their jobs effectively. We owe it to our constituents to restore faith in our elected officials and pass real ethics reform legislation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 11

andria Hospital because there are other hospitals in neighboring communities, or grocery stores because we can go to Arlington to buy groceries. The “need” is supported by the Commission on Aging, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, AARP Virginia, Alzheimer's Association, area health care professionals, and the owner's market study.

❖ Erroneous statement: Ambulances sound their sirens and disturb the peace at all hours, day and night.

❖ Fact: This will be a “memory care” facility.

cility serving able-bodied people who are frail in mind.

The idea that ambulances will come as frequently as to a nursing home that serves physically and medically frail individuals is just plain false.

I know this from my 37 years experience managing nursing and assisted living facilities, but I contacted Woodbine and the Fire Department for the facts.

In the last six months of 2014 Woodbine made 142 emergency “911” calls, and the Fire Department dispatched 174 ambulances — 142 for emergencies and 32 for

routine transportation not requiring sirens. Last week when my wife fell and broke her shoulder at 12:30 a.m. I called “911.” The ambulance drove to our house (just down King Street from Woodbine) and on to Alexandria Hospital without sounding its siren at all.

I inquired of the ambulance driver, who regularly goes to Woodbine, how often they use a siren, and he told me only when necessary to get through traffic, or when passing through an intersection against a red light. None of this has anything to do with the proposed facility, but it does illustrate

how the opposition presents unrelated, exaggerated and unsupported arguments.

Bill Harris
Alexandria

Memory Care Center Is Needed

To the Editor:

On behalf of the National Association of Retirement Counselors, a trade association for the senior services industry, I am writ-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

If State Won't, Then City Must Focus on Uninsured

WILLIAM D. EUILLE
MAYOR ALEXANDRIA



Unless a small miracle unfolds by the end of its 2015 legislative session, the Virginia General Assembly will adjourn for the third year in a row without expanding the state's Medicaid program, as allowed under the Affordable Care Act. The General Assembly's refusal to expand the Medicaid program places more than 5,000 very low-income residents (those with incomes below 100 percent of the federal poverty index or about \$11,600 for an individual) of Alexandria at continued high risk of poor health, premature death, and increased financial instability.

Research clearly shows that individuals without health insurance are much less likely to receive preventive health care and are more likely to delay medical treatment or forgo it altogether due to cost.

They are at higher risk for preventable hospitalizations and for missed diagnoses of serious health conditions. Moreover, not granting Medicaid eligibility to this population exacerbates existing coverage and access disparities among racial and ethnic groups everywhere in the Commonwealth.

As the mayor of the City of Alexandria, I am extremely troubled by the fact that the

General Assembly's failure to implement Medicaid expansion means that Alexandria (and Virginia) federal tax dollars are not being sent back to our city and other jurisdictions throughout the state, but rather are going towards helping to increase coverage in other states that "have opted to expand the program. For example, individuals with identical economic circumstances to that of our own low-income population in Alexandria but who live just across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. and Maryland, have been the beneficiaries of Medicaid expansion funding for almost two years now.

Many of the estimated 5,000 very low-income residents in Alexandria denied Medicaid eligibility are the "working poor." These are non-elderly individuals who are either working part-time or full-time but their incomes are too low to afford health insurance and they do not qualify for Medicaid. I believe an investment in their health would create a more productive workforce, leading to a growing local economy, more jobs and a more vibrant future.

The Alexandria City Council and I will continue to support the governor's efforts

to obtain an agreement with the General Assembly to expand the Medicaid program. However, as mayor I cannot and will not allow the General Assembly's inaction to further compound the inequities and disparities and barriers to accessing health care endured by so many of our most economically disadvantaged citizens. At the very least, I believe we have a responsibility to many in our low-income community to do what we can to ensure that their health conditions are not made worse or deteriorate further as a result of the denial of their access to comprehensive Medicaid coverage.

To that end, with City Council's approval, I have appointed an Advisory Panel on the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 12

ing to address some of the misinformation being propagated by the opponents of the proposed Alexandria Memory Care Center to be built on the 2800 block of King Street. It is part of our organizational mission to correct public misconceptions about aging and services for seniors.

The existing Woodbine Healthcare Center on the 2700 block of King Street is a nursing facility. Nursing beds are regulated by the state and new ones can not be built unless there is a state finding of a public need for more beds. The proposed Alexan-

dria Memory Care Center is an assisted living facility and contains no nursing beds at all. The state does not make findings of need, or the lack thereof, for assisted living beds.

While city staff may use the term "nursing home" to describe assisted living for zoning classification purposes, this does not make these nursing beds for clinical or state regulatory purposes. This has been publicly explained in a clear and definitive manner by city staff, state regulators and my office with sufficient frequency that it is no longer

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 19

Tree Clearance Sale 30% OFF All Trees 2013 & Prior	Free Estimates Patios, Walkways, Retaining Walls, Paver Driveways, Landscaping! <small>OFF-SEASON PRICING</small>
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Good Shepherd Catholic Church

Mass Schedule

Monday 6:30 pm Mass (Español)	(en Español); 6:30 pm
Saturday Evening 5:00 pm Vigil Mass 6:30 pm Vigil Mass (en Español)	Weekday & Saturday Mornings: 9:00 am Mass, preceded by Rosary (on First Friday, Mass followed by Eucharistic Adoration)
Sunday 7:30 am; 9:00 am (with Sign Language Interpreter & Children's Liturgy of the Word); 10:30 am; 12:00 Noon; 2:00 pm	Thursday & First Friday of the Month: 7:30 pm Mass (Español) preceded by 7:00 pm Eucharistic Adoration

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ENTERTAINMENT

Birth of the Blues

Bessie Smith story at MetroStage.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Twenty years after its award-winning debut at The Studio Theater, the story of legendary blues singer Bessie Smith has returned in the blockbuster musical production “Bessie’s Blues,” now playing at MetroStage.

As part of its 30th anniversary season, MetroStage has revived the story of Smith, with many of the original cast reprising their roles, including the incomparable Bernadine Mitchell as the popular “Empress of Blues.”

“It’s a great honor to revisit one of the great icons of show business,” said Mitchell, whose soaring vocals led to her nomination for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Musical in the original 1995 production.

Also returning from the original production is Roz White as Rhythm, a role that earned her a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress. The eight-member cast of “Bessie’s Blues” includes Helen Hayes nominee Lori Williams as Passion, TC Carson as Lover, Stephawn Stephens as Blood, Djob Lyons as Midnight and LC Harden Jr. as Bluesman.

The original musical garnered seven Helen Hayes nominations and walked away

with six awards, including Outstanding Resident Musical. The MetroStage revival features more than 33 songs, including Smith classics like “Nobody Knows You When You’re Down and Out.”

Book and lyrics composer Thomas W. Jones II, who received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Director/Resident Musical for the original production, is back as director and choreographer for its revival. He is joined by MetroStage veteran William Knowles as musical director.

Joining Knowles in the band is Greg Holloway on drums, Ron Oshima on sax and David Cole on guitar.

Until her untimely death in a traffic accident near Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1937, Smith was the most popular female blues singer of the 1920s and 1930s. Asked about performing the Bessie Smith role 20 years apart, Mitchell said, “I feel that I have grown as a woman, an artist and as a human being. I have experienced many life lessons and there’s a truth about the language that doesn’t need explanation. I have my own truth that is mine to own.”

“Bessie’s Blues” is playing through March 15 at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal St. For tickets or more information, call 703-548-9044 or visit www.metrostage.org.

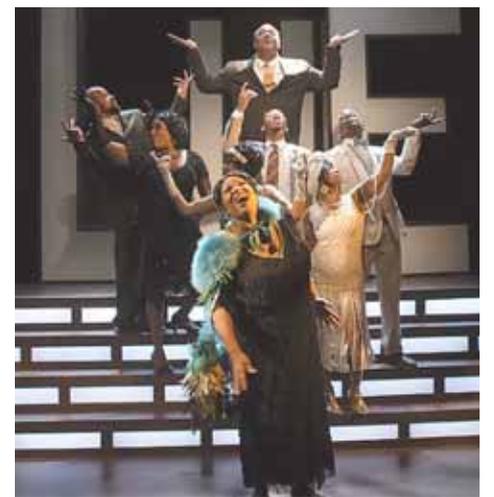


PHOTOS BY CHRIS BANKS

Bernadine Mitchell, center, stars as Bessie Smith in “Bessie’s Blues,” playing now through March 15 at MetroStage.



Bernadine Mitchell, is joined by Stephawn Stephens, Roz White, Djob Lyons, LC Harden Jr., TC Carson and Nia Harris in the MetroStage production of “Bessie’s Blues.”



CALENDAR

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

“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.

Exhibition “Unearthed |

Unleashed.” Through Feb. 22, in the Athenaeum Gallery 201 Prince St., Alexandria. An exhibition of the works of Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent. Gessner’s mixed media sculptures reference a variety of natural forms. Kent’s minimal works with thickly applied paint and wax appear to be a reflection on organic elements and artifacts. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

Mount Vernon Celebrates Black

History Month. Through February at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway, Mount Vernon. In observance of Black History Month, George Washington’s Mount Vernon highlights the lives and contributions of the slaves who built and operated the plantation home of George and Martha Washington. Throughout the

month, a daily Slave Life at Mount Vernon Tour explores the lives and contributions of the slaves who lived at Mount Vernon at 11:30 a.m. The tour will conclude with a wreath laying at the Slave Memorial site. Black History Month activities are included in admission. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.

Annual Student/Faculty Show - Art

League School. Through March 1, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, noon-6 p.m., at The Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 21. The Art League’s annual Student/Faculty Show showcases faculty works alongside hundreds of paintings, drawings, printmaking, stained glass, jewelry, ceramics, pottery, fiber, mosaics, sculpture created by students. Visit www.theartleague.org. Call the gallery at 703-683-1780 or the school at 703-683-2323.

“Bessie’s Blues.”

Through March 15 at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal St., Alexandria. “Bessie’s Blues,” features Bernadine Mitchell, Roz White, TC Carson and a cast of actors and musicians who will tell the story of Bessie Smith through a musical odyssey of the blues. William Knowles is music director. Performances are Wednesday-Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 3 and 8 p.m.; and Sunday, 3 and 7 p.m. \$55-60. Visit www.metrostage.org or call 800-494-8497.

“Front and Back.”

Through March 15, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. second Thursday of the month at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery in Studio 18 of the Torpedo Factory Art Center at 105 North Union Street,

Alexandria. Artists’ imagination plays with Items that are different front vs back; right vs left; top vs bottom; inside vs outside; right side up vs up side down; positive space vs negative space. Anything that has two or more sides can be used to show two different visuals. Free admission. See www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com for more.

Nine Paintings from John

Chapman. Through May 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway, Mount Vernon. Nine unique paintings by the Virginia born artist John Gadsby Chapman (1808-1889) illustrating landscape scenes important to George Washington’s biography are on view. Visit www.mountvernon.org.

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-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 Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon 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

Summer of Smiles. The Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities’ Summer Fun Guide, is now available. Summer camps and activities are available for youth ages 2-17 and include sports, dance, creative arts, computer, chess, enrichment, nature, adventure, Out of School Time (residents only) and classic camps. The guide has an index listing camps by week offered and age group. Registration opens Wednesday, March 18 for City of Alexandria residents and Friday, March 20 for nonresidents. Interested participants may register online or in-person at the Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. The Summer Fun Guide is available for download at www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation. Free printed brochures will be available at City Hall, recreation centers, and public libraries. Call the Registration and Reservation Office at 703-746-5414.

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/gadsbystavern 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

ENTERTAINMENT

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. Drop-in for the session and bring 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.

FRIDAY/FEB. 13-SUNDAY/MARCH 29

"In and of the Land." 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and during performances at The Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, Margaret W. and Joseph L. Fisher Art Gallery at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. "In and of the Land" is a two person exhibition of recent work in paintings by Clive Pates and ceramics by Virginia Rood Pates. Visit www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/Gallery for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 19

Photography Exhibit. 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, 2799 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington. The Hyatt's General Manager, Derrick Morrow, has partnered with the National Kidney Foundation for monthly "Art for Life" events in 2015. This month's local artist is Torpedo Factory photographer, Greg Knott. A nominal donation will allow access to the events as well as include a complimentary beverage and light

fare. All proceeds will be collected and donated to the National Kidney Foundation each month. Visit www.gregknott.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 20

Andrew O'Day. 8 - 11 p.m., at John Strongbow's Tavern, 710 King St., Alexandria. Visit www.johnstrongbows.com or call 703-329-3075.

Just Stories: Author Alice Y. Chen. 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Preschoolers will enjoy local author Alice Y. Chen as she shares her first picture book "Centipede Dragon: A Benevolent Creature." Register at <https://va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/events/signup.asp>

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

Dinner and Silent and Live Auctions. 3 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Enjoy the afternoon and evening with a silent auction at 3 p.m., followed by a wine bar at 5 p.m., a potluck dinner at 5:30 and a live auction at 6:45. Bring a dish to share. All proceeds will benefit the church. Contact Kelly Campbell at moonbeam610@gmail.com for more information. Visit mvuc.org/ for more.

Benefit Concert. 7 p.m. in the Meeting House at the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Emma's Revolution headlines a benefit concert for the Katie Tyson Fund for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Visit mvuc.org/ for more.

The Hooligans. 9-11 p.m. at John

Strongbow's Tavern, 710 King St., Alexandria. Visit www.johnstrongbows.com or call 703-329-3075.

FEB. 21-MAY 31

"Paws 'N Claws for Art." Run through May 31 at Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans and Animal Welfare League of Alexandria teamed up to present this animal-themed, fundraising exhibit. Both nonprofits receive a percentage of each sale. Also showing, but not for sale, will be UpCycle's Fur-Vor project community-based student-recycled dog art. Reception: Friday, February 27, 7-9pm. Visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org/GWW for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 22

Walk with Washington Tour. 2 p.m., at Alexandria Convention and Visitors Bureau, 221 King St., Alexandria. The walk focuses on important Old Towne sites associated with George Washington. 60-90 minutes. Free. Call 703-746-3301 for more.

Gallery Talk, Symbiosis and Tension, 3 p.m. in the Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Artists Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent explain their process, inspiration, and how their friendship played a role in the creation of the works in the show. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

Lenten Evensong. 7 p.m. at St. Paul's Church, 228 South Pitt St., Alexandria. Arlington's Tina Chancey will play early musical instruments, including the rebec, vielle, kamenj, viol, and lyra viol. Her performance

will be followed by a Lenten Choral Evensong service at St. Paul's Old Town, directed by Grant Hellmers, organist-choirmaster, and will feature music by English composer Henry Purcell. Free. Donations will go to St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry. Call 703-549-3312 for more.

Symbiosis and Tension. 3 p.m. at the Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Michael Gessner and Joanne Kent will explain their process, their inspiration, and how their friendship played a role in the creation of the works in Unearthed | Unleashed. Visit www.nvfaa.org for more.

MONDAY/FEB. 23

Agenda: Alexandria Dinner. 6:45 p.m. at The Hermitage, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Agenda: Alexandria presents "Down the Hatch: Alexandria's Luscious Libations" with Steve Bashore, manager of Historic Trades at Mount Vernon; Bill Butcher, founder, Port City Brewery; and Todd Thrasher, sommelier and liquid savant, Eat Good Food Group. Dinner catered by Bittersweet Catering at 6:45 (\$32-\$42); program only at 7:15 (members free; nonmembers \$5). Reservations required. Call Sherry Brown at 703-548-7089 or email agendaalexandria@aol.com.

TUESDAY/FEB. 24

Black History Month Celebration, 7:30 p.m. at the Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, NOVA, Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. The program will include Joyce Garrett and the rChoir of Alfred Street Baptist Church, the NOVA Jazz

Ensemble, the NOVA Community Chorus, Dr. Lisa Edwards Burrs, soprano, the DEM Vocal Trio, The Metropolitan Youth Tap Ensemble, and readings of Maya Angelou's poetry by NOVA speech and drama students. Art work by NOVA Studio will be shown. Although no tickets are required, a donation is requested. Parking is available. The concert is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Joe Windham. Call 703-845-6097, email mwhitmire@nvcc.edu or visit www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter.

THROUGH FEB. 26

African Drumming For Families. 6:30-8 p.m. Various dates and locations. African drumming is a fun way for the whole family to honor Black History Month. With a range of African djembe drums along with other traditional instruments and dancing. A light dinner, childcare and interpreter services provided free. Visit www.acps.k12.va.us/face-centers/ for details.

Bob Hume & Martha Capone. 7-9 p.m., at John Strongbow's Tavern, 710 King St., Alexandria. Visit www.johnstrongbows.com or call 703-329-3075.

Mike + The Mechanics 30th Anniversary Tour. 7:30 p.m. The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. Their first American tour in almost 25 years. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

THURSDAY/FEB. 26-SUNDAY/MARCH 1

Robert Cwiok / Enveloping Time. 12-4 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Sunday; 1-4 p.m. Saturdays at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Paintings, collage, and

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Drawing will be held at the SFA Gala, Sat. Apr. 25, 2015. Need not be present to win.

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ENTERTAINMENT

mixed media works representing all phases of Cwiok's 40-year career lead visitors on a tour through the development of an artist. Visit nvfaa.org for more.

FRIDAY/FEB. 27

Opening Reception. 7-9 p.m. at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. "Paws 'N Claws for Art," Del Ray Artisans and Animal Welfare League of Alexandria show animal-themed art with UpCycle's Fur-Vor student-created dog art. Visit www.TheDelRayArtisans.org/GWW for more.

Gala Benefit. 7-10 p.m. at Virtue Feed and Grain, 106 South Union St., Alexandria. Gala will benefit The Center for Alexandria's Children, the City's primary resource for the prevention, investigation and treatment of child abuse. Attendees will "Get Up and Boogie" to the disco sounds of the 1970s, enjoying an evening that includes a cocktail buffet, silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and "Be A Superstar" booth where patrons can purchase items to benefit the Center. Tickets start at \$150. Available online at <http://2015cagala.eventbrite.com>. Call 703-746-6008 or visit www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org.

Mike + The Mechanics 30th Anniversary Tour.

7:30 p.m. The Birchmere Music Hall, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Their first American tour in almost 25 years. Visit www.birchmere.com or call 703-549-7500.

SATURDAY/FEB. 28

2015 Generation to Generation Gala. 6-11 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, 5000 Seminary Road, Alexandria. Join Senior Services of Alexandria at the 2015 Generation to Generation Gala to celebrate honorees Christopher Campagna and his mother June Geoffroy; John and Bea Taylor and their daughters Karen Taylor Chandler and Rhonda Taylor; and the first recipient of the SSA Philanthropist Award, Ronald M. Bradley. Cocktails, silent auction, dinner and dancing. Black tie optional. Tickets at www.seniorservicesalex.org or 703-836-4414.

Andrew O'Day. 8-11 p.m., at John Strongbow's Tavern, 710 King St., Alexandria. Visit www.johnstrongbows.com or call 703-329-3075.

SUNDAY/MARCH 1

Closing Reception. 2-4 p.m. at The Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 21. The Art League's annual Student/Faculty Show, on view through March 1, 2015, showcases work by faculty alongside hundreds of paintings, drawings, printmaking, stained glass, jewelry, ceramics, pottery, fiber, mosaics, sculpture created by the student body. Visit www.theartleague.org or call the gallery at 703-683-1780 or the school at 703-683-2323.

Opening Reception. 4-6 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria. Opening for "Enveloping Time," an exhibition of the works of Robert Cwiok in the Athenaeum gallery. Cwiok's paintings, collage, and mixed media works lead visitors on a visual tour through the development of an artist. Text, print ephemera and envelopes are visual leitmotifs throughout his career. Free. Visit www.nvfaa.org.

PLTI Fundraiser. 5:30 p.m. at ABACA, 1201 North Royal Street, Alexandria and MetroStage. The Parent Leadership Institute of Alexandria will hold its annual fundraiser at MetroStage and ABACA. The evening will begin with a dinner buffet and a silent auction at 5:30 p.m., followed by "Bessie's Blues" at 7 at MetroStage. \$85 per person for the dinner and show. Visit www.plti-alex.org or contact Fay Slotnick at 703-409-6872 or fay@plti-alex.org for tickets.

MONDAY/MARCH 2

R.E. Lee Camp Dinner. 6:15 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 400 Cameron St., Alexandria (behind Gatsby's Tavern on Royal Street). Social hour is followed by a catered dinner. Hear speaker Philip Schreiber, the senior curator at the National Rifle Association talk about "The English Enfield in Confederate Service." \$25 per person; \$12.50 for those 17 and under. RSVP with a check made out to R.E. Lee Camp #726 and mailed to 401 Wilkes St.,

Alexandria, VA 22314. Must be received by Feb. 27. For additional information, visit www.leecamp.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 3

National Pancake Day. Participating local IHOPs celebrate by giving away one free short stack of pancakes with the hopes that patrons will make a donation to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's National Capital Area Chapter in lieu of payment for pancakes. Visit www.ihop.com for more.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Concert. 8 p.m. at the Lyceum History Museum, 201 S. Washington St., Alexandria. The United States Air Force Band-Chamber Players concert featuring eclectic music for Tuba-Euphonium Quartet. Concert subject to cancellation due to inclement weather. Free. Call 202-767-5658 or visit www.usafband.af.mil.

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

Opening Reception. 7-9 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Local area artists express their dreams through their art in "DREAM ON!" Visit www.thedelrayartisans.org or call 703-838-4827.

MARCH 6-29

"DREAM ON!" Runs through Sunday, March 29 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Local area artists use any media to explore and express their dreams in the "DREAM ON!" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans gallery. Using their imaginations, artists interpret their dreams—from weird to wonderful, scary to surreal. Visit www.thedelrayartisans.org or call 703-838-4827.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Live Music. 7 p.m. at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Focus presents folk singer/songwriter Peter Mayer, with guest Doug Alan Wilcox. \$18 general, \$15 in advance at www.focusmusic.org.

Tracing Families' Roots

FROM PAGE 5
charts ..."

In Twitty's class, Louis Diggs-Davis described a situation where she went to a family funeral and everyone there was white. She walked out initially because she thought she was at the wrong funeral. Twitty said this happens more often than people might expect, but told the class to confront the fact that they probably have white ancestry, and that it's not something to be ashamed of.

"Discover another history you're a part up," Twitty said, and described roaming Central Asia or living in the Roman Empire. "That's your history too. African Americans are told we can't be complicated, we can't have competing identities."

Bah also commented that the genealogy process can be frustrating, especially when she following a life story that presents conflicting information. For instance, in one investigation, Bah found that the census was inconsistent with one man's job from one year to another. She experienced this in her own family investigation and said it emphasized an important lesson in genealogy: for one reason or another, people lie, and that sometimes people's lies wind up

as historical record.

Bah's had an uncle who traveled to West Virginia to work in the mines with his cousin. When Bah's uncle arrived, he found a bunch of men gathered around his cousin's body, drinking and laughing. He killed them, and Bah had assumed afterwards that he was killed by the local town. It wasn't until Bah was doing more research into her family history that she discovered that her uncle actually escaped, became a buffalo soldier, and ended up getting married and retiring to West Point.

For both Bah and Twitty, the key lesson was giving historical context and understanding into what the lives of Alexandria's African-American ancestors were like. For Bah, who helped locate and save Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery, said the only clues to its location were two elderly Alexandrians who still remembered they had family there.

"The lesson is about giving context with documentation," said Twitty. "History will never be completely known. There's always going to be big holes in the story. But holidays, cuisine, unusual names; they're all vital information that can provide a clue to the family origin."

Miller, O’Gara Wed

Miss Kathleen Harrison Miller and Mr. Grady Daniel O’Gara were married on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014 at half past three o’clock, at Christ Church in Old Town, Alexandria. The double-ring ceremony was officiated by The Rev. Pierce Klemmt. The Palm Strings Quartet played classical English scores for the processional and ceremony. Ceremony readings were given by Mrs. Elizabeth McMahan Godwin of Vienna, close family friend of the bride and Thomas Joseph O’Gara of Evanston, Ill., cousin of the groom. Members of the Alexandria Pipes and Drums added to the festivities piping the newlyweds and their guests out of the church and entertaining with lively Irish music in the churchyard. The bride’s parents hosted a candlelight dinner and reception at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., where the Bachelor Boys Band kept the dance floor filled. Following the reception, guests returned to Old Town, Alexandria, to continue the celebration at The Fish Market.

On the eve of the wedding, the groom’s parents hosted a candlelight rehearsal dinner at The Columbia Firehouse in Old Town, Alexandria.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Forrest Miller of Alexandria. She is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Allen Fleetwood of Charlotte, N.C., and the late former U.S. Senator and U.S. Federal Court of Appeals Judge Jack Richard Miller and Mrs. Miller of Bethesda, Md. The groom is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Patrick Thomas O’Gara of Boston, Mass. He is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Donald Joseph Daniel of Trenton, Mich. and the late Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Edward O’Gara of Wilmette, Ill.

Given in marriage by her parents and escorted by her father, the bride wore a strapless Anna Maier Uhla-Maija, A-line ball gown of soft white reembroidered French floral lace with an asymmetrically pleated skirt, white Italian taffeta undergown, and a sweetheart neckline. Designed by Charles W. Bunstine II and hand stitched by designers at the Anna Maier Ulla-Maija Couture studio in New York City, the gown was coupled with a cathedral veil trimmed in the same French peony lace. The veil was complemented by a delicate headband of miniature pearls. The bride wore a diamond platinum bracelet belonging to her great grandmother, Fannie Harrison Fleetwood.

Kathleen’s hand-tied bouquet was comprised of classic garden flowers with botanical accents and was woven with English ivy from the grounds of Princeton University — her Alma Mater. The bouquet featured white astilbe, scabiosa pods, white ranunculus, astrantia, blue viburnum berry, silver brunia, rosemary, white freesia, American grown spray roses, sahara roses and David Austin white garden roses. Gently tucked in the bouquet was her great great grandmother’s — Kathleen Beattie Harrison — heirloom handkerchief, a tradition for Harrison-Fleetwood family brides.

The groom and his groomsmen wore charcoal gray suits complemented with navy blue ties with white miniature polka dots.

At the reception, elevated centerpieces featured cascading ivy, Virginia dogwood branches, white snapdragons, gooseneck loosestrife, spray roses, white stock, lime-light hydrangea, plumosa fern, chocolate queen annes lace, astrantia, garden roses, and a mix of eucalyptus.

The day’s flowers were also used to cre-



Kathleen Harrison Miller weds Grady Daniel O’Gara.

ate compote bowls that billowed over with gorgeous blooms and ivy that was woven into the designs. The ivy was a significant part of the wedding theme. The couple’s new family crest features the English ivy leaf, Irish shamrocks, Virginia dogwoods and a symbol of an eagle and coronet from George Washington’s crest.

Mrs. Caroline Fleetwood Withers of Charlotte, N.C., sister of the bride, served as Matron of Honor. Bridesmaids included Miss Katherine Anne O’Gara of Boston, Mass., sister of the groom; Mrs. Dasha Koraleva Burns of New York City; Mrs. Alexandra Gangler Wright of Baltimore, Md.; Miss Colleen Bailey O’Boyle of Mainz, Germany; Miss Anne Wilson Murphy of New

York City; Miss Cailyn Mary Reilly of Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Meghan Farrell Oppenheimer of New York City. The ring bearer was Jack Christopher Withers of Charlotte, N.C., godson and nephew of the bride. The Maid of Honor and bridesmaids wore Jenny Yoo floor-length gowns layered in charcoal tulle. Each carried a hand-tied bouquet reminiscent of the bride’s bouquet.

Dr. Brian Patrick O’Gara of Boston, Mass., brother of the groom, served as Best Man. Groomsmen included Mr. Brooks McNeil Hopple of Richmond; Captain David Joseph Donahue of Alexandria; Mr. Matteo Gallo of New York City; Mr. James Howard Hlavalek II of Boston, Mass.; Mr. Ryan Elliott Drumm of New York City; Mr. Cameron Edward Dale of New York, City; and Mr. Robert Brian Burns of New York City.

Ushers included Mr. Gregory Chapman Meushaw of Atlanta, Ga., Mr. Jay Francis Williamson of Alexandria, Mr. Bradford Park Belin of West Newton, Mass. and Mr. Peter Christian Wallroth of Jackson, Wyo. Miss Erin Sale of New York City and Mr. Heath Pendleton of Philadelphia, Pa., accompanying with his acoustic guitar, performed “Have A Little Faith In Me.”

A lifelong Alexandria resident, the bride is a 2003 graduate of St. Stephens and St. Agnes School. She graduated from Princeton University with a Bachelor of Arts in art history in 2007, where she was captain of the women’s lacrosse team. Mrs. O’Gara is in Integrated Sponsorship Sales, The National Hockey League in New York City. The groom is a graduate of The Rivers School in Weston, Mass. He graduated from Colgate University with a Bachelor of Arts in international relations and Spanish and is currently the Head Trader for RIMA Senvest Management, LLC in New York City.

Following a honeymoon in Japan, Kathleen and Grady returned to their home in New York City.

Learning the Ins and Outs of Senior Travel

BY MARY LEE ANDERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Senior Services of Alexandria’s February Speaker Series on Travel welcomed a standing room only crowd to Beatley Central Library to learn about local public transportation options and programs, as well as information and resources available to seniors traveling for pleasure.

Kicking off the program was Cherie Leporatti, Metro’s travel training coordinator, who described special programs for individuals and groups that provide personalized training on how to use the area’s subway and bus systems. To find out more information contact WMATA at www.wmata.com or 202-637-7000. Phyllis Doak and Raymond Mui from the Alexandria Transit Company talked about the DASH bus system, highlighting the new route changes outlined in the latest “Ride Guide.” DASH buses are



now very senior friendly with wheelchair ramps and an automated system that announces upcoming stops. DASH also runs the free King Street Trolley from the King Street Metro to the waterfront. Dash’s new “Plan Ahead ... Pay it Forward” campaign is designed to let riders know that beginning April 1, they must add value to their SmarTrip cards at Metro Stations, the Transit Store and most CVS and Giant stores, and will not be able to add value on the bus. This change will help keep buses running on time and more efficiently. For more details, contact DASH at www.dashbus.com or call 703-746-DASH (3724).

Other city-managed senior transit programs include the Senior Taxi program, DOT Paratransit program which provide taxi service for qualified seniors. SSA also

highlighted the Door thru Door program, which provides a free caregiver to help individuals who need assistance in getting to a medical appointment. To find out more about Senior Taxi or Door thru Door, contact the City’s Division on Aging and Adult Services at 703-746-5999. For the DOT Paratransit program, call Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-5222.

Leisure travel for seniors was also a hot topic of the morning. Maria Gillen from AARP explained the great resources available from AARP on their website at www.aarp.com including affordable group excursions and helpful trip planning tools. Noel Mariam, a Road Scholar Ambassador, gave an overview of the many trips available from this non-profit leader in educational domestic and international travel designed for seniors. You can learn more and sign up to receive their catalogue at www.road scholar.org or call 800-454-5768. You can search trips by place, interest, date of travel and level of activity. If you travel alone, Road Scholar trips are a great way

to meet people. Finding the right type of trip makes travel fun and stress free.

Attendees also got good tips from Katie Dow, librarian at the Beatley Central Library, on how to use the library’s resources when planning travel including the advantages of travel insurance and planning ahead with correct documentation. To learn more about the library’s resources go to www.alexandrialib.va.us or call 703-746-1728.

The topic for the next Senior Speaker Series event will be how to get your home “fit” for a safer and more comfortable. AARP will present their “Homefit” workshop, and speakers from Rebuilding Together Alexandria and the city’s Office on Housing will provide information about how to make these changes more affordable. The event will be at Westminster Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, March 11 from 9:30 a.m.-noon, and you can find out more at SSA’s website, www.seniorservicesalex.org or by calling 703 836 4414, ext. 10.

Black History Month Celebrations

Local students learn about the history and accomplishments of African-Americans.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

Black History Month Celebration Concert

Fourth grade student Eli West crafted a poem this month that was modeled after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous, "I Have a Dream" speech. As part of February's month-long celebration of the history and culture of African-Americans, fourth grade students at Norwood School in Bethesda, Md., wrote and delivered poems reminiscent of the speech that the famous civil right leader delivered in 1963. The students also delivered their verses before Norwood's lower school community.

"I learned more about Martin Luther King, Jr. I learned that he was a very spiritual man," said West.

The exercise was part of a broader lesson in honor of Black History Month, a time when students learn about the history of African-Americans as that history is incorporated in to the overall curriculum of many schools. From concerts to school projects, there are opportunities to join the month-long celebration.

"Black History Month is a time to honor the accomplishments of the African-American men and women who have made contributions to the world in spite of the injus-

Saturday, Feb. 21, 11a.m. at the GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. \$5 for children, students and seniors; \$10 for adults. For tickets, call 888-945-2468 or visit <http://cfa.gmu.edu/calendar/1830/>. For program questions, call 703-993-9889

tice they faced," said Sandi Hannibal, Director of Multicultural and Ethical Education at Norwood School in Bethesda, Maryland. "One might ask why it is necessary to highlight these accomplishments in 2015. After all, we have lived through the Civil Rights Era and the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964.

We have a black president. We have made so much progress. All of this is true, but in some schools the contributions and accomplishments of African-Americans are not woven into the overall curriculum, so it is important that Black History Month provides an opportunity to learn about prominent African-Americans in a very intentional manner."

Some educators are encouraging students to take time to ponder the history of African-Americans. "It's more than just the Jim Crow Laws. There're a whole host of things that African-Americans have done," said Lisa Styles, school counselor at Arlington

Public School's Career Center in Arlington. St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, in Alexandria, will host a Middle School Student Diversity Conference on Friday, Feb. 20.

"Students at the middle school age are trying to learn who they are. We want to expose kids to the ideas of identity, inclusive behavior, and respect, and to let them know that what they feel matters," said KiKi Davis, St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School director of multicultural education, diversity, and equity initiatives. "We want to give them tools to become leaders in their own schools, and it starts with being able to talk about diversity and social justice issues at their developmental level. What it looks like to them, in their lives, at this age."

St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac, Md., hosted a regional diversity conference earlier this month called "Diversity in the DMV" Conference. More than 200 representatives from independent schools in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia explored some of the tools needed for cross-cultural understanding.

Among the observances in Fairfax County

Virginia, George Mason University Potomac Arts Academy and George Mason University School of Music will present a Black History Month celebration concert on Saturday, Feb. 21, called, "The Dream Lives On."

"Black History Month is a time to honor the accomplishments of the African-American men and women who have made contributions to the world in spite of the injustice they faced."

— Sandi Hannibal, Director of Multicultural and Ethical Education, Norwood School

The Mason Wind Symphony and Vocal Studies Students, Mason Spiritual Ensemble will join local church choirs and elementary school choirs in a performance of gospel, spirituals, jazz and original compositions. The concert is designed to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other African-American leaders.

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

MARCH

3/4/2015 Wellbeing
 3/11/2015 HomeLifeStyle Real Estate Pullout
 3/18/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
 3/25/2015 Spring Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment
 FCPS Spring Break 3/30-4/3

APRIL

4/1/2015 Wellbeing – Senior Living Pullout
 Easter Sunday is April 5
 4/8/2015 HomeLifeStyle
 4/15/2015 A+ Camps & Schools
 4/22/2015 Real Estate Pullout – New Homes
 4/29/2015 A+ Camps & Schools Pullout
 4/29/2015 ... Mother's Day Celebrations, Dining & Gifts I

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- Mount Vernon Gazette
- Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
- Potomac Almanac
- Reston Connection
- Springfield Connection
- Vienna/Oakton Connection

Oakcrest School Presents



The IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People by Oscar Wilde

Friday, February 27
 Saturday, February 28
 7:30 p.m. Performances

Purchase tickets online at Oakcrest.org or at the door
 Tickets: \$8 to \$15 (based on available seating)



LETTERS

FROM PAGE 13

possible to believe that those that continue to make the argument that the state has determined there is no need for these memory care beds are doing so in good faith.

The proposed Alexandria Memory Care Center is a dedicated, dementia-care-only facility to be custom built to meet the care needs of those suffering from Alzheimer's Disease. This disease is a scourge attacking our senior population in alarming and increasing numbers.

Dedicated care centers designed to facilitate memory care are considered to be the state of the art for Alzheimer's care. There are not enough facilities of this type in Northern Virginia, with the closest one in Annandale. Dementia requires specialized care that can not be effectively delivered in a general assisted living space. While there are other models of care available in or near Alexandria — and these models are appropriate for some — a dedicated memory care center is something Alexandria should have and does not at present.

The Alzheimer's Association projects that by 2025, 7.1 million Americans over age 65 will have the disease — a 40 percent increase from today. The projected growth in Virginia is 46.2 percent, exceeding the national average.

The 66 beds that will come from this project are not nearly enough, but they will allow Alexandrians suffering from this heartbreaking affliction to remain near family without sacrificing quality care.

I am an Alexandria homeowner. I understand that an empty lot is a preferable neighbor to virtually anything that might be built, but that doesn't entitle neighbors to deprive property owners of the right to use their land in any legal manner they choose. Despite the false depiction of the developers as profiteering interlopers, the proposed site has, in fact, been part of the grounds of the Woodbine Healthcare Center for its entire existence of more than 50 years — longer than the tenure of nearly all of the detractors. As a city, we are fortunate that this is the use that these owners have chosen. The suggestion that the facility should be placed elsewhere in the city is specious. This is the land that the proponents of the project own. They can not just seize land owned by others to do this. Where better to place an Assisted Living for the memory impaired than next door to a skilled nursing center with a sterling reputation for high acuity care, including late stage Alzheimer's care? Who better to provide mid-stage memory care than the organization that has built a half-century track record for providing care right here in Alexandria?

Alan Dubow

President, National Association
of Retirement Counselors

Anyone Share This Outrage?

To the Editor:

If you have no interest in preserving the neighborhoods of Alexandria, attaining excellence in our school systems or reform-

Snow Day Cupcakes

Sean Lydon, right, contemplates his choices during a visit to Alexandria Cupcake Feb. 17. The 13-year-old Park City, Utah resident was in town visiting his former T.C. Williams High School friends when snow blanketed the region and gave the group a day off from school. Joining him for a snow day cupcake are Ella Benbow, 15, Sophia Vassallo, 15, Reed Kenny, 15 (partially hidden), and Sean's sister Caleigh Lydon, 15.



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER

ing the ways of the School Board and City Council please move on to the next letter. My pitch is directed at getting those individuals that are truly committed to our city — to become upset — I want you to feel betrayed and disappointed after reading this article — I want you to feel so shaken so let down that you will be forced to act because what is happening to our city is disturbing.

I regret to inform you that our public school system is broken. Our school infrastructure is in shambles. These schools are old and are falling apart, our academic achievement over the past two years has plummeted under the tenure of the current School Board and City Council and finally the School Board and the City Council went ahead with a \$1,200,000 tennis light project despite a citizen survey conducted in 2012 that showed overwhelming opposition to tennis courts, a total betrayal of the citizens of Alexandria as well as setting an unfavorable precedent for their wants not ours.

Last week at the breakfast chat with [Superintendent of Schools] Dr. Crawley, parents of Lyles Crouch vented their anger at the horrific structural issues at their school. Apparently there is an established bucket brigade of students and teachers that jump into action with the first drops of rain to place buckets at strategic roof leak locations to mitigate the big flood, while the funds for replacing the roof are currently sitting in the 2018 budget having been displaced from the 2016 budget. The playgrounds at Maury and Mt. Vernon are unplayable and unsafe. Parents have become so frustrated with the city procrastination policy that private funds in the amount of \$200,000 has been raised at Maury and \$100,000 in private funding has been raised by Mt. Vernon. Where are the revenues from our taxes? This is not a private funding issue — the city is responsible for our school infrastructure — so where is the money for these projects?

Our schools are in such disrepair that Polk, John Adams, Hammond, MacArthur, George Mason, Ramsay and Patrick Henry are all candidates for complete renovations. Where is the money for these projects? Did we mortgage our future on Jefferson Houston, the Taj Mahal of elementary schools, and T.C.. Williams, the jewel of the high schools?

During the current City Council and

School Board tenure, our academic standing has plummeted.

Our most important resource, our children, have been completely ignored in favor of the pet projects of the City Council and School Board — projects which eat away at our school budgets.

Concerning the pet projects: A 2012 memo stated that in a survey of 11,000 residents only 35 percent of the respondents saw a need for tennis lights. The committee stated that tennis was found to be of lesser interest than outdoor swimming pools, running tracks and playgrounds. The conclusion was that "tennis was not a high priority sport to spend city funds on, in comparison to other outdoor facilities." So if the residents did not want the tennis lights, what changed? The School Board found money to build the lights because it was their agenda not the residents. Would it not have been better to fund our schools maintenance issues? What about the new roof on Lyles Crouch or the money for Maury and Mt. Vernon playgrounds? If this letter has struck a nerve, act on it, contact the School Board and the City Council and tell them you are outraged. Tell them the time has come to make a change and that you will make that change in November.

William Goff/Alexandria

Research Is Key

To the Editor:

As a resident of Alexandria who lives near the proposed expansion of the Woodbine nursing home complex, I have marveled at how quickly the proposed memory care project has gone from non-starter with city planning and zoning officials as recently as last July, to a "get it done now" project within the past six months. Many serious issues — traffic, sewage, density, noise, surface water run-off, emergency vehicle access, and the lack of a fundamental rationale for radical rezoning of residential property — have been pushed aside.

Just a few years ago, the city planning staff informed the prior owner of this 1.3 acre triangle of residentially zoned property that it would be inappropriate to build four houses on it, and the city would only approve the construction of three homes. Even if we assume that each of those three homes were 10,000-square-foot "McMansions," their collective size would

be insignificant compared to the 75,000-square-foot commercial facility now approved by the planning staff and Planning Commission for this same space.

I have lived in Alexandria most of my life, taught at two Alexandria high schools, and spent many years working with talented undergraduate and graduate students at the largest university in Virginia. A constant message for students at all levels is to work through problems to get the right answer — not necessarily the first answer that comes to mind. Educators emphasize clear logic, primary research practices, identification of valid claims and causes, and effective evaluation.

In this re-zoning case, Alexandria planners relied considerably on information presented by an out-of-town commercial developer and a local lawyer; they have persuaded planning officials and the Planning Commission, that (i) there is a need for this facility in Alexandria; (ii) a facility should be built on the this particular tract of the developer's land; and (iii) the long-standing residential zoning regulation should be reversed to accommodate the developer's plan.

At informal meetings with the mayor and members of council in recent weeks, local residents have been told that this is not a city-driven project and that time should be taken to work through and address the proposed memory care facility scrupulously.

Therefore, some key questions for planning staff and commission include the following:

❖ Has the city completed its own independent assessment as to the need for this facility?

❖ Which primary, field specific, sources are independent and considered reliable to determine if a facility is needed?

❖ What are the specific needs for affordable memory beds in Northern Virginia, in Alexandria?

❖ Is this particular triangle of land on King Street, once considered inappropriate for three residences, appropriate for a memory care facility and its requirements?

❖ How does this space on King Street adhere to optimal space and size regulations consistent with best practices in the memory care field?

❖ How do the traffic, sewage, and construction activities of such a facility affect the sustainable, long term goals of the city?

❖ Finally, if the Alexandria community determines that a need exists, which city location serves the community best?

The City Council and the city staff must take the time and energy to research and address the above questions. Currently, it appears that city officials have relied on a singular set of authority — the developer and lawyer, who offer circular arguments (we need a memory care facility, because a memory care facility is needed); and who offer straw-person arguments (those against the project are against taking care of our elderly). These are poor research and presentation tactics. They do not allow for clear, concise, candid discussions. The issues involved are complex; they deserve careful, time consuming deliberations to serve the entire city of Alexandria well.

Victoria N. Salmon/Alexandria

T.C. Williams Gymnasts Compete at Regionals

T.C. Williams gymnasts Cailyn Lager, Jordan Mambert and Grace Girard concluded their 2014-15 season at the 6A North region championship meet on Feb. 11 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

Lager competed in the all-around and narrowly missed state berths on vault and beam. The sophomore finished ninth on vault (9.275), 10th on beam (8.75), and tied for 18th on floor (8.9) and 25th on bars (7.975).

Lager finished 15th in the all-around with a score of 34.9.

The top eight finishers on each event qualify for states, along with the top four in all-around.

Mambert finished 14th on bars (8.475), 17th on vault (9.075) and tied for 18th on floor (8.9).

Girard came in 11th on beam (8.7) and 20th on bars (8.325).

Washington-Lee's Sophie Hatcher won the all-around with a score of 37.65, followed by Yorktown's Bella Kane (37), Hayfield's Molly Overstreet (36.975) and McLean's Lizzy Brown-Kaiser (36.95).

South County sophomore Collea Burgess, last year's all-around champion, attended this year's region meet but did not compete. Burgess said her club coaches (Apollo Gymnastics) did not want her to compete.

While Hatcher was pleased with her stellar performance, it wasn't enough to save Washington-Lee in the team standings. The Generals, winners of the previous three region championships, placed third, meaning



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

T.C. Williams gymnast Cailyn Lager, seen during the Conference 7 meet, competed at the 6A North region championship meet on Feb. 11 at Lake Braddock Secondary School.

no state berth.

After finishing runner-up for three straight years, McLean won the region championship with a score of 144.425.

"It feels amazing," McLean head coach Courtney Lesson said. "They've wanted this for so long."

Battlefield finished runner-up with a score of 141.025, followed by W-L (139.525) and Robinson (137.825).

"If you looked at the individuals, there

were only one or two [Battlefield] kids up on the medal (stand)," W-L head coach Joe D'Emidio said, "but they had better depth than we did."

While W-L fell short of states as a team, Hatcher will represent the Generals as an individual. "I'm obviously really, really happy that I got first and I'm really excited to compete at states, but we were really hoping to make it to states (as a team) today," Hatcher said. "But although we didn't

make it, I'm still really, really proud of what we've all done this year. We didn't even know if we would make it to regionals and the fact that we made it here [is an accomplishment]. We still got third."

Hatcher finished first on vault (9.625) and beam (9.45), third on floor (9.65) and fifth on bars (8.925).

"Sophie was, again, on a roll," D'Emidio said. "She won the all-around at conference and here she is not missing a beat. We just hope that beat keeps going all the way to states. We're following her excitement and the team is still excited for her that she's advancing."

Hatcher's twin sister, Annie Hatcher, also qualified for states on floor (fifth, 9.55) and vault (fifth, 9.475).

The state meet is scheduled for Feb. 20-21 at Patriot High School.

— JON ROETMAN

SPORTS BRIEF

TC Wrestler Blanco-Nethery Advances to States

T.C. Williams wrestler Majik Blanco-Nethery qualified for the state tournament by placing third in the 113-pound bracket at the 6A North region tournament on Feb. 14 at Centreville High School.

Blanco-Nethery defeated Robinson's Sam Book 10-7 in the third-place match.

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

T.C. Williams High School has been selected as a 2015 Top AFS School by AFS-USA, a leading intercultural learning provider. Schools recognized for this award have excelled in promoting global competency and working to prepare students to engage in an increasingly interconnected world.

The award includes the opportunity for students of the high school to compete for \$1,000 scholarships to any 2015 AFS study abroad program.

The following students earned dean's list status for the fall 2014 semester at Christopher Newport University: **Casey Brusnahan**, political science; **Clare Cahill**, English; **Thomas Conner**, communication studies; **Elbethel Elias**, political science; **Sinda Fekir**, Neuroscience; **Morgan Garner**, marketing; **Benjamin Genovese**, biochemistry; **Frederick Gomez**, business (undeclared); **Katie Krohmaly**, applied physics; **Kylie Krohmaly**, biology; **Allison McNulla**, psychology; **Shelbi Pullen**, biology; **Rocio Ramirez**, psychology; **Rebecca Rizzo**, computer engineering; **Charles Seligman**, accounting; **Tiffany Shaeffer**, mathematics; **Joseph Simko**, computer science; **Lorena Somera**, psychology; **Emily Stuart**, cell, molecular & phys biology; **Christopher Tracey**, neuroscience; **Christina Tsantes**, communication studies; **Brooke Watson**, organismal biology; **Megan Wessinger**, psychol-

ogy; **Jenna Wingfield**, cell, molecular & phys biology; **Pace Woods**, biochemistry; and **Cecily Wynne**, theater.

Zoe Wenick Katz, a freshman majoring in merchandising, apparel and textiles, and

Elizabeth Lane Ecton, a sophomore majoring in media arts and studies, were named to the University of Kentucky dean's list for the fall 2014 semester.

Sheena Nickel was named to president's list for the fall 2014 semester at Barton Community College in Great Bend, Kan..

Adelaide Plemmons and **Michael LoGrande** were named to the dean's list at Emory & Henry College (Emory, Va.) for the 2014 fall semester.

The following Virginia Military Institute cadets are among the 768 cadets who were recently named to the dean's list for the first semester of academic year 2014-15: **Patrick W. Doolin**, a freshman majoring in history; **Alexandra L. Hastings**, a senior majoring in modern languages and cultures; **Mason S. Malone**, a sophomore majoring in mechanical engineering; **Thomas E. O'Connell**, a senior majoring in modern languages and cultures; **Patrick K. Piedad**, a junior majoring in physics; **David M. Souliotis**, a senior majoring in history; and **William O. Woodward Jr.**, a freshman majoring in history.

Tanner Beck, a student at

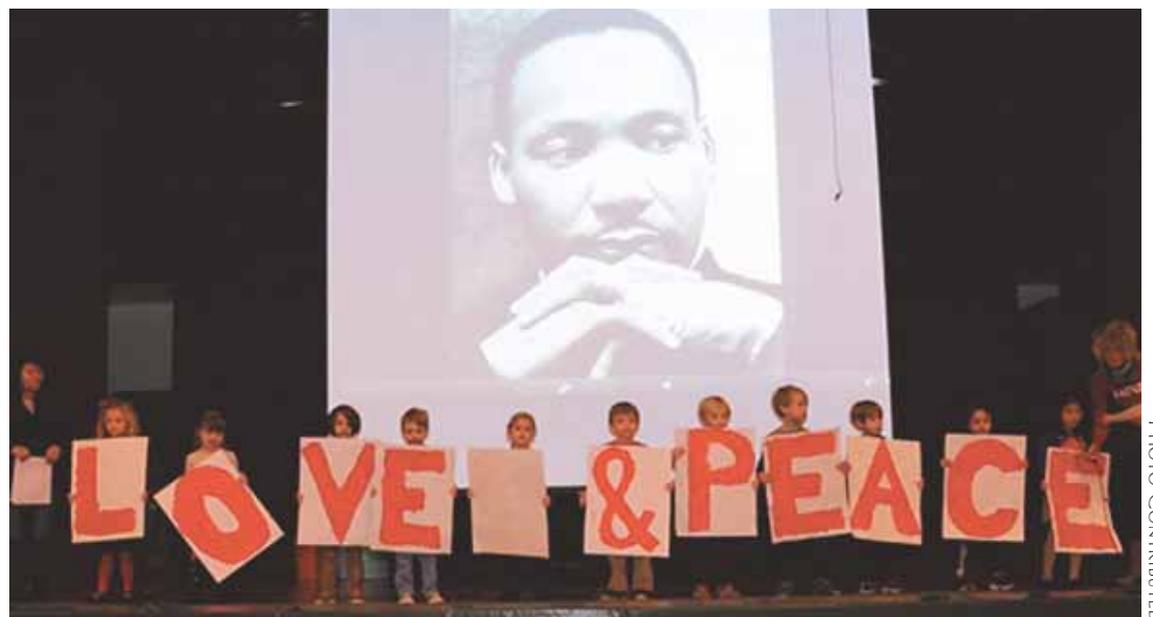


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

SSSAS Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr.

St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School students paid tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. through a number of diverse activities last month. The Lower School participated in an assembly in his honor, and second grade students took a field trip to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Middle School held a special chapel service that included readings and short talks written and delivered by the school's UNITE (Unite Now in Tolerance and Equity) and Courageous Conversations students. The Upper School held a multicultural assembly followed by student-led forums on how stereotypes affect a community.

Hampden-Sydney College, was named to the dean's list for the fall 2014 semester. Tanner is the son of Brian Beck of Boise, Idaho and LeDawn and Jeff Kissler of Alexandria.

Dwaine H. Wintz Jr. received a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from the Virginia Military Institute December 19, 2014.

Audrey Sisel, a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences, was named to the Creighton University (Omaha, Ne.) dean's list for fall 2014.

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ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NUMBER 15-02-01
The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools would like to issue the following correction to this previously advertised Request for Proposal. ACPS is seeking competitive proposals from qualified Offerors to provide Environmental Services. The proposal opening date has been changed to on or before 3:00 pm, February 19, 2015. Chris Guy Procurement Manager

21 Announcements 21 Announcements

PUBLIC REAL ESTATE AUCTION FAIRFAX COUNTY
SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH @ 11:30AM
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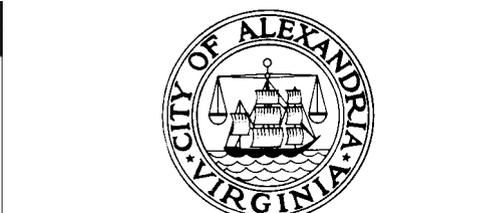


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Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, City of Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, February 21, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

21 Announcements 21 Announcements

OBITUARY
Boykin Alan Glover, 87

On Saturday, February 14, 2015, peacefully passed away in Annandale, VA. He is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Barbara Glover; daughters Karen Skidmore, Allison Brochu, and Tracy (Robert) MacArthur; grand-daughters Charlotte and Katherine Brochu; and brother Brittle (Shirley) Glover. He is preceded in death by 4 of his 6 siblings. Services will be held privately at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made in Boykin's name to SOLA, the Symphony Orchestra League of Alexandria. Additional information can be found at www.everlywheatley.com.

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Centre View South
- Zone 5:** The Potomac Almanac
- Zone 6:** The Arlington Connection
The Vienna/Oakton Connection
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21 Announcements 21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE
Sealed proposals for the City of Alexandria per specifications will be received in the office of the Purchasing Division until the date and time designated as follows:
Title: Request for Proposals No. 00000514, Sanitary Collector Sewer Hydraulic Modeling
Closing Date and Time: March 16, 2015, 4:00 p.m., prevailing local time.
The City will hold a Non-Mandatory pre-proposal conference. Date, time and location:
February 24, 2015, 10:00 AM prevailing local time
100 N. Pitt Street Suite 301, Purchasing Conference Room Alexandria, VA 22314
For general inquiries contact Cynthia Davis, Contract Specialist at 703.746.3921.
The City of Alexandria reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, cancel this solicitation, and to waive any informalities or irregularities in procedure. **THE CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO BE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS.**

21 Announcements 26 Antiques

ABC LICENSE
Las Veguitas, Inc trading as Dollar Plus & Market, 2253 Huntington Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22303. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL(ABC) for a Wine and Beer off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Martha Santos, President
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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LEGAL NOTICE
The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Rezone No. 2014-0008 to rezone property at 5000 and 5001 Echols Avenue from R-12/Single Family Zone to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Medium) in accordance with the said zoning map amendment heretofore approved by city council on January 24, 2015 as Rezone No. 2014-0008 (The Fillmore).

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Rezone No. 2014-0007 to rezone property at 4800 Fillmore Avenue from RC/High Density Apartment Zone and RA/Multifamily Zone to CDD #23/Coordinated Development District #23 for the Goodwin House.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sheet No. 010.02 and 011.01 of the "Official Zoning Map, Alexandria, Virginia," adopted by Section 1-300 (OFFICIAL ZONING MAP AND DISTRICT BOUNDARIES), of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, by rezoning the property at 5000 and 5001 Echols Avenue from R-12/Single Family Zone to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Medium) in accordance with the said zoning map amendment heretofore approved by city council on January 24, 2015 as Rezone No. 2014-0008 (The Fillmore).

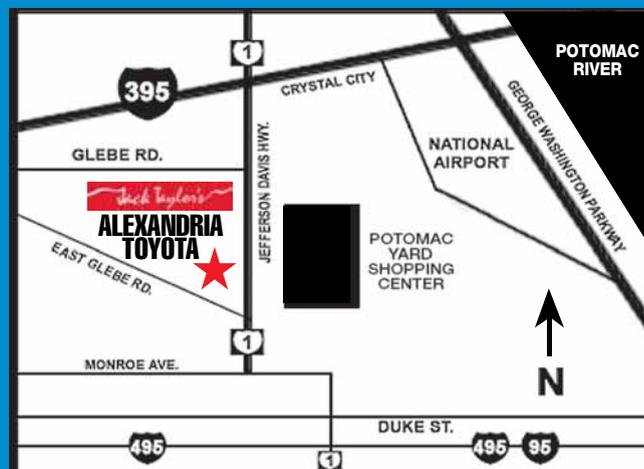
The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Rezone No. 2014-0008 to rezone property at 5000 and 5001 Echols Avenue from R-12/Single Family Zone to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use (Medium) for the project called The Fillmore.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sections 8-1-130 through 8-1-140 of Article H, (REGISTRATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS), of Chapter 1 (BUILDING CODE), of Title 8 (BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

The changes to this ordinance primarily reflect changes that were made to Va. Code section 15-2-1127 to bring the local ordinance into compliance with the amended state statute. It also reflects the City's ongoing effort to update and modernize the City Code while eliminating redundant, unnecessary, and outdated local ordinances.

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\$1,250 Cash Back



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*Covers normal factory scheduled service for 2 years or 25K miles, whichever comes first. See Toyota dealer for details and exclusions. Valid only in the Continental U.S. and Alaska.
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Add Dealer Processing Fee of \$599. \$1,250 Cash Back from Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc. available on new 2015 Prius. Customers can receive cash back from Toyota or can apply to down payment. Excludes plug-in models. See dealer for details. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25k miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids. Prius plug-in hybrid comes with an extra year of roadside assistance, for a total of three (3) years from date of purchase. Lease, APR and Cash Back offers may not be combined. See dealer for details. Offers expire 3/2/2015.

Add Dealer Processing Fee of \$599. 0.9% APR financing up to 60 months available to qualified buyers thru Toyota Financial Services. Total financed cannot exceed MSRP plus options, tax and license fees. 60 monthly payments of \$17.05 for each \$1,000 borrowed. Not all buyers will qualify. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25k miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids. Prius plug-in hybrid comes with an extra year of roadside assistance, for a total of three (3) years from date of purchase. Lease, APR and Cash Back offers may not be combined. See dealer for details. Offers expire 3/2/2015.



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Let's Go Places



Old Town Alexandria \$690,000

Wonderful charm in the SE Quadrant. Character abounds in this light-filled home. Lovely French doors lead to a brick-walled patio. Closets and built-ins provide ample storage. High ceilings, exposed beams and brick accent walls set this one apart. Minutes to airport & DC. 527 Wilkes St.

George Myers
703.585.8301
GeorgeMyers.McEneaney.com



South Alexandria \$365,000

Charming bungalow in convenient Groveton Heights location. Enjoy an iced tea on the front porch, cozy up to the toasty fireplace or throw a cookout in the fenced back yard. 4 bedrooms, 2 full baths, 3 finished levels, driveway parking. 3141 Memorial Street.

Clay Burke
703.520.4274
www.BBZgroup.com



Old Town Alexandria \$385,000

This 1-bedroom, 1-bath condo has luxurious amenities in a riverfront building and beautiful finishes throughout. The kitchen has been updated with custom cabinets, granite counters and new appliances. Gorgeous hardwoods in the spacious living and dining rooms. 1250 Washington St S #518.

Elizabeth Lucchesi
703.868.5676
www.LizLuke.com



Alexandria \$649,000

Bright, open floor plan with 2-story cozy family room with fireplace. Gleaming hardwood floors. 3 finished levels with walk out lower level, 5 bedrooms and 2.5 spa baths. Huge 2-car garage. Gourmet kitchen with granite and stainless steel appliances. Deck off eat-in kitchen area.

Catherine Davidson
703.201.1998
www.CMDrealty.net

McEneaney Associates, Inc. welcomes



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Alexandria \$499,990

Just Reduced! Gleaming hardwood floors welcome you to this lovely 4-bedroom, 3-bath home located on a large lot with extensive landscaping. Updated kitchen and baths, huge lower level rec room with tons of storage, 4th bedroom on lower level. Custom deck leads to fenced rear yard.

Vicki Binkley
703.994.0778
www.VickiBinkley.com



Alexandria \$629,000

This beautifully updated townhouse is just one block from Metro and walking distance to King Street and Del Ray. Three spacious bedrooms with the master on the entire top floor. Fenced patio has southern exposure for relaxing afternoons and gardening. 556 Colecroft Court.

Elizabeth Lucchesi
703.868.5676
www.LizLuke.com



Alexandria Del Ray \$1,349,000

Totally renovated farmhouse! 6 bedrooms and 5 baths with a main level bedroom and full bath. Gourmet kitchen opens to the family room with fireplace and deck. The lower level features a rec room, bedroom and full bath. A short walk to "The Avenue." Easy access to Metro.

Jen Walker
703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Old Town Alexandria \$987,000

Old world charm, elegance and modern conveniences fill this 3-bedroom, 3-bath, beautifully maintained, circa 1890, plaqued townhome. Custom kitchen and baths, quality finishes; sparkling floors; 2 fireplaces; walk-out basement; beautiful garden, easy parking; blocks to the best of Old Town. 323 S Pitt Street.

Mary Farrell
703.969.5522
www.ChooseMary.com