

Commemorating Brotherhood

Universal Lodge #1 celebrates 172 years in Alexandria.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

There are few cities with as visible a Masonic presence as Alexandria. The National George Washington Masonic Memorial has become a symbol of the city. The Freemasons are fraternal organizations commonly known today for their dedication to charity and their attire. But beneath the apron and chains, the Freemasons of Universal Lodge #1 have a long history of brotherhood and overcoming segregation.

“To the uninitiated it looks like pomp and circumstance,” said Dgessey Major, “but to those who understand ... it means everything.”

“It’s about the continuum of taking care of society, especially with regard to widows, orphans and charity,” said Macarthur Meyers, a member of the lodge. “You take a good man and make him a better man. At the time of our founding, people didn’t want blacks to be Freemasons, they wanted them in positions of servitude. That’s why we were [sponsored] by an

SEE LODGE’S, PAGE 6



Masons from Universal Lodge #1 gather outside Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church for their 172nd anniversary celebration.

PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

Setting Goals

Alexandria’s Five Year Plan starts at foot of King Street.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

At its Jan 28 public hearing, the City Council adopted the FY2017 through 2022 Strategic Plan. Through FY2018, the plan recommends actions to help the city reach certain goals in various categories related to life in Alexandria. Over the next five years, the Strategic Plan will be the central guide to projects approved and funded by City Council.

Ten categories are identified in the plan as areas where city government will continue to develop resources, ranging from changes to the waterfront to encouraging citizens to get more exercise. Each item of the plan also includes a selection of actions to be taken for the FY 2018 year.

The first section of the city’s Strategic Plan focuses around ensuring that new development coming into Alexandria’s neighborhoods is compatible with the historic environment. To this end, the action items for FY 2018 focus primarily around a series of small

area plans and two major developments at the end of King Street. Action items for FY 2018 include:

- ❖ Construct Interim Fitzgerald Square
- ❖ Design the Waterfront Flood Mitigation with early utility construction
- ❖ Award a design build contract for the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Project
- ❖ Digitize historic documents that illustrate changes to city’s urban landscape
- ❖ Commemorate and interpret Alexandria’s role in WW I
- ❖ Continue preservation of the historic ship and other artifacts from Alexandria’s waterfront
- ❖ Complete Old Town North Small Area Plan
- ❖ Conduct update of North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan
- ❖ Begin Mt. Vernon Avenue planning study
- ❖ Provide support for the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Old Town.

While the action items are scheduled for fiscal year 2018, the Old Town North Small Area Plan, the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan, the work on the interim Fitzgerald Square Park, and the

SEE ALEXANDRIA’S, PAGE 3

Alexandria, Arlington Construct Bigger and Better ‘Bridges’

Local safety net organization helped 500 people rebuild their lives last year.

BY EDEN BROWN
GAZETTE PACKET

Like any other Alexandria mother, Amina Amir was bursting with pride that her daughter would be graduating from high school this spring, with plans to go to college, and that her son is in the U.S. Navy in California. But unlike most Alexandria mothers, Amir is a domestic violence survivor. She was taken out of her home a few years ago by a detective who referred her and her 13-year-old daughter and 17-year-old son to Bridges to Independence

for emergency shelter from domestic abuse. They were placed in rapid rehousing in a three-bedroom apartment not long after, to rebuild their lives.

At the Screwtop Wine Bar in Clarendon on Feb. 6, this mother of two stood up and thanked a crowd of about 40 community-minded residents for giving her and her children a chance to live outside the shadow of domestic violence. Amin said she remains awed by the dedication of the staff at Bridges to Independence, a safety-net nonprofit organization which helps individuals and families

in Arlington and the City of Alexandria out of homelessness and into stable, independent futures. “They miss time with their families to help families they’ve never met before, generous with their time and their help; they remain our family,” she said.

It seemed like family, Monday night. Former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran, who was a founding board member 30 years ago when the organization was called the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless (AACH) was there. “I started working with an Episcopal priest, Rosemari Sullivan, whose

vision it was to create this,” Moran said.

Lars Flori interjected: “It was Jim Moran who arranged for an earmark of a House Bill to enable AACH to purchase their original building at 932 North Highland

St., which is one of the reasons we can raise capital today.”

“Bridges” — as it is known in the community — has launched a \$2.5 million capital campaign for a new headquarters space in Arlington.

SEE ARLINGTON, PAGE 24





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there when it counts

Alexandria's Five Year Plan Starts at Foot of King Street

FROM PAGE 1

examination of a potential BID are all currently underway and scheduled to be considered by the City Council before the summer break this year. While Fitzgerald Square Park and the Waterfront Flood Mitigation are ongoing projects, the upcoming budget discussions mean the two projects could begin work in 2017 or 2018.

Greg Useem, chief performance officer, said the action items are either approved or are already being worked on as per the Strategic Plan. Some projects could be ongoing past FY 2018, like the digitization of the city's historic documents. Karl Moritz, director of Planning and Zoning, said funding is identified for most of the projects and several projects are moving forward within the next few months.

Interim Fitzgerald Square Project

Mitch Bernstein, director of the Department of Project Implementation, said the interim Fitzgerald Square Project is currently going through the development site plan. Bernstein says the demolition of the Boat Club will go to the BAR in mid-March for a public hearing. The development site plan for Fitzgerald Square Park will be presented to the Planning Commission in May, then later that month to the City Council for approval of special use permits. Bernstein says construction is expected to begin a year from now, contingent on when the Boat Club vacates their property.

"How long the park is interim for is contingent on funding," said Bernstein. "It's a budget question. The way it's currently budgeted ... planned for seven or eight years. The project is budgeted for \$1 million. When the final design is approved we'll have a tighter cost estimate."

Bernstein says the idea for an interim park had support from the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce as an economic benefit.

"We're creating a new space available for use," said Tony Gammon, deputy director of the Department of Project Implementation. "So if the city wants to go forward with an ice rink or a marketplace, we've always



Renderings for the interim Fitzgerald Square Park Project.

said we're making it a flexible space."

The idea of an ice skating rink at the foot of King Street has been in discussion at City Council since the park concept was approved in 2014, but some local residents are less in favor of the idea.

"Please, just no ice skating rinks at Fitzgerald Square Park," said Yvonne Weight Callahan.

Bert Ely, co-chair of the Friends of the Alexandria Waterfront, said he believed the city should keep the Old Dominion Boat Club and convert it to a city-use facility.

"It's a functional building," said Ely. "As part of an interim plan, they should keep that building. Utilize it instead of tearing it down."

Flood Mitigation

Flood mitigation on the waterfront has been a contentious issue in the past. During heavy rains, waters tend to flood the foot of King Street and often rise as far inland as Union Street. Several local citizens have expressed opposition to the city's preliminary designs, which call for the rain to be trapped behind a beachhead and pumped back into the Potomac.

"It's not that there's opposition to flood mitigation, it's how you do it," said Ely. "The strategic plan doesn't get into that, but it's an important issue."

Bernstein says the city has just finished

the fact finding phase of the flood mitigation and is beginning to move into the design phase. Gammon said the FY2018 funding will allow the city to begin utility work for the plan. This involves rebuilding some existing sewer works as a precursor to flood mitigation and undergrounding the remaining electrical lines near the end of King Street. Indigo Hotel and Robinson Terminal South buried most of the electrical lines in the area as part of their development, but there's still a section of overhead wires that need to be buried. Separate from the utility work, Gammon said the final design process for the stormwater management system could take a year or two.

"The budget is the driving factor in this," said Gammon. "Prior year funding got us through the preliminary design. Now, it's subject to city funding. We will be making phasing recommendations to them to inform the budgeting. The FY2018 funding is not going to change the undergrounding and utilities that need to be replaced first, it's more about the major elements of construction: the tens of millions in bulkheads and promenades."

Potomac Yard Metro

Potomac Yard Metrorail made progress at the Feb 7 Planning Commission meeting, with the commission voting unanimously to subdivide the parcel of land currently

holding the Regal Movie Theater to facilitate the development of the site into the new Metro station. In 2016, designs for the Metro station were approved, including pedestrian bridges to give the site greater access to the Potomac Yard shopping areas nearby. The Metro station is planned to open in 2020.

Business Improvement District

At the City Council meeting on Jan. 28, the council changed the language of the Strategic Plan from the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Old Town to "consideration" of a BID. Though several BIDs have been successful in Washington D.C. and Arlington, some local residents and businesses have expressed concerns about the BID's impact on Alexandria. The BID will promote and help manage local businesses, but will also come with a 10 cent tax per \$100 of assessed value for commercial properties. The BID will be considered by City Council in March.

On Wednesday, Feb. 22, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce will host a forum at 7:30 in The Westin Alexandria hotel to discuss how BIDs work and how they have impacted other local jurisdictions.

The next section of the Strategic Plan looks at how to create a more inclusive city, with a focus on adding to the city's stock of affordable housing.

Tilelli to Keynote Friendship Firehouse Breakfast

Event kicks off George Washington Birthday celebration.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Gen. John H. Tilelli (ret.), one of only 216 people in the history of the U.S. Army to be promoted to the rank of four star general, will be the keynote speaker at the Feb. 20 Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association annual breakfast.

The breakfast, which serves as the traditional kick-off to the city's slate of George



Gen. John Tilelli (ret.)

Washington Birthday celebration events, will be held at The Alexandrian (formerly the Hotel Monaco), and will feature the presentation of the Ben Lynt Distinguished Service Award and an update on the Friendship Conservation Project.

"A brief report will be given on the status of the Conservation Fund for restoring the two hand-drawn vehicles in the Firehouse Museum," said Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association board member Bill Kehoe. "The Fund is now entering its second year and donations are gratefully accepted."

During a distinguished 37-year military career, Tilelli served as Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 1994 to 1995, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Forces Command from 1995 to 1996 and Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command/Commander in Chief of the Republic of Korea and U.S Combined Forces Command/Commander of U.S forces Korea from 1996 to 1999.

Tilelli served two tours in the Vietnam War, four in Germany and three in the Pentagon. His combat tours include assignments as a Company Commander in Vietnam and as Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division during the Persian Gulf War. After retiring from the Army in January 2000, Tilelli served as president of the USO and

as chairman of the board of the Military Officers Association of America.

A resident of Alexandria, Tilelli currently serves as chair of the Widener University Board of Trustees, and is chairman and CEO of the consulting firm Cypress International.

The program will begin at 9 a.m. at The Alexandrian, 480 King St. Tickets are \$35 and are available online at www.friendshipfire.net. Payment can also be mailed to Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, P. O. Box 22505, Alexandria, VA 22304. For additional information contact Bill Kehoe at KehoeFD@aol.com or by phone at 703-751-6416.

Among events following the breakfast are

SEE FRIENDSHIP, PAGE 6

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Bobi Bomar and Ellen Patrick 703-927-2213



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Melissa Schultz - 703.407.5847
Ana Rivas Beck, Esq - 703.772-.3526



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Alex/Old Town \$950,000
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Alex/Old Town Village \$875,000
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Open Sunday 2-4pm

Del Ray \$874,000
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NEW LISTING

Alex/Old Town \$795,000
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Open Sunday 1-4pm

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Alexandria \$515,000
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COMING SOON

Alexandria/Rosemont
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The Full Monte

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Monte Durham, co-host and fashion director of TLC's "Say Yes to the Dress: Atlanta," will be the featured guest at the first annual Alexandria Wedding Showcase Feb. 19 at The Westin Alexandria.

A career bridal image consultant, Durham is well known in Alexandria, where he resides and celebrated his own wedding in 2013. He will host a VIP reception and participate in the showcase.

"We are really excited about the inaugural Wedding Showcase," said Lorraine Lloyd of Visit Alexandria. "The quality of our vendors along with our program sets this apart from typical wedding showcases."

More than 50 local vendors will participate in the showcase, which will also serve as a benefit for Brides Across America, a nonprofit that provides weddings and wedding gowns to military and first responder couples nationwide.

"With Monte's help, 10 brides chosen by Brides Across America will select their gowns at the showcase," said Visit Alexandria's Megan Hosford, a member of the Wedding Showcase committee. "The gowns have been donated by Brides Across America and Global Bridal Gallery, an Alexandria wedding dress



PHOTO COURTESY TLC

"Say Yes to the Dress: Atlanta" host Monte Durham will be the featured guest at the Alexandria Wedding Showcase.

Wedding Showcase to feature "Say Yes to the Dress" host Durham.

boutique. And \$2 from each ticket sold to the Wedding Showcase will be donated to Brides Across America."

Hosford, who has a background in wedding planning, said the idea for a showcase began a year ago.

"Alexandria is a premier destination for weddings," Hosford said. "We wanted to engage the many wedding vendors with the goal of creating a great wedding community."

Showcase committee members include Blackwall Hitch, Eat Good Food Group, Global Bridal Gallery, Modern Bridal Studio, Potomac River Boat Company, The Westin Alexandria and Visit Alexandria.

"This really is a community effort," Lloyd added. "Sponsors of the showcase include Engaged! Magazine, The Westin Alexandria, Kimpton Lorien Hotel & Spa, and Visit

Alexandria. And we couldn't have done it without the support of the Alexandria Marketing Fund."

Featured vendors will include bakeries, boutiques and caterers; dress and tuxedo boutiques; entertainment and music providers; florists; photographers; salons and spas; transportation and other service providers; and hotels and other venues.

Local celebrity chef Cathal Armstrong will discuss selecting the perfect wedding menu and mixologists from Blackwall Hitch and PX will present a demonstration on seasonal cocktails.

Showcase attendees who purchase tickets before
SEE WEDDING, PAGE 7

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Hands Held High for 44 Years

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Cora Reed steps out into the intersection of S. Asaph and Gibbon and holds her arms up high. “You got to do that so they can see you.” Reed has been a school crossing guard for the Alexandria Public Schools for nearly 44 years. She started over on Beaugard “at ... it’s been so long I can’t remember.” Then she was at Jefferson-Houston Elementary School for a number of years before coming to her present spot at Lyles-Crouch Elementary School.

Reed says she had a husband who didn’t want her to work. She had some friends who were crossing guards and they urged her to try it. She said her husband didn’t mind. “He was a good provider, and I was a good wife.”

**PEOPLE
AT WORK**

Now Reed works from 7:15 to 8:05 in the morning and 2:25-3:05 in the afternoon. She says she really has a lot of traffic. “Some people say they don’t see you. With all the lime green you got on that’s hard to believe. Everyone is in a hurry. These cars try to get a jump start across the street so you have to be alert.” Reed continues “some people try to sneak up on you, but when you have your hand up, it means don’t go until I say so.” And when it gets close to 8 a.m. they all spurt for the front door so the kids aren’t tardy.”

Reed views herself as a shield. She says that often parents walk across the street with their children behind them. The child may drop something in the center of the street and stop to pick it up. “Praise God; no one has ever been hit. I try to take charge.” Reed says, “A lot of parents thank you for what you do. I try to keep them moving and not standing on the corner.”

Despite the nearly 70-degree day in February Reed is wearing a fur-lined hat, two heavy sweaters and tights under her pants. A woman crosses the walk with a tiny dog on a leash. “How are you today?” A regular, she comments. Reed says the women school crossing guards used to wear skirts. “That’s been some years ago. But then they changed to pants;



Cora Reed raises her hands high in the air to stop cars from four directions at the corner of S. Asaph and Gibbon outside Lyles-Crouch Elementary School.

that’s what we all wanted. She says she keeps a raincoat and rain hat and heavy coat in her car. “I call it my house on wheels.”

Reed doesn’t know all of the names at her crosswalk yet this year but she knew them at the end of last year. She enjoys making a new friend. “I had a little baby last year who was very shy. Then in time she started to look for me. And then she started waving at me across the street.” Reed says if she misses a day people want to know where she has been.

She steps into the street, blows a loud whistle as a mother and three children cross on the opposite street.

A taxi stops in the crosswalk and rolls down the window. “Hi David, how’s your mom? Tell her I said hello.” Reed says she sees kids wearing lots of shorts these days, even in the winter. And kids used to carry their books but now they fill a backpack with heavy books.

“It’s a wonder their backs aren’t messed up.”

Reed says there was an awards ceremony last year where she was honored for her 43 years of service. When they got to her, “they said they saved the best for last,” and everyone got up and clapped. She had longer service than anyone. “You wouldn’t believe the years tick away like that.”



Cora Reed stands on her corner ready to act as a shield to get the children safely across the street on their way home from school.



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

Masons from the Universal Lodge #1.

Lodge’s Anniversary

FROM PAGE 1

English lodge, not an American one. Even under slavery, though they were viewed as second class, they still took it upon themselves as humanitarians to enhance the quality of life for all people. It’s a responsibility.”

The Universal Lodge No. 1 held its 172nd year anniversary at the Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church, the oldest black church in Alexandria, on Feb. 5. Roberts Memorial and Universal Lodge #1 have an interwoven history, with one of the church’s ministers, Robert H. Roberts, serving as the fourth Grand Master of the Lodge.

“Masons have been deeply involved in pushing for freedom, and this church has been at the forefront with several progressive movements and attitudes,” said the Rev. Dr. James Daniely, church pastor. “We share a similar worldview

formed by learned behaviors and the fact that racism is alive and well today.”

Daniely said he believes the mission of the church, and the Freemasons, is just as important now as ever.

“We need to push young people forward and foster a sense of hope, in spite of the walls and blockages, because we believe God is there for the faithful,” said Daniely. “That does not mean we will win every battle ... but we believe in the end, he shall reign.”

Before the service began, the Masons filed into the church wearing the vestments of their order. The Masons of Universal Lodge No. 1 were joined by the leadership of lodges from D.C. in the celebration of their anniversary. After the service, the Masons presented Worshipful Past Master John Morgan of Universal Lodge No. 1 with a special pin marking 50 years of service to their lodge.

Friendship Firehouse

FROM PAGE 3

a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution (Old Presbyterian Meeting House from 11 a.m.-noon) and the Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony (Market Square from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.).

The centerpiece of the day will be the George Washington Birthday Parade from 1-3 p.m. As home to George Washington, the city is host to the nation’s largest George Washington Birthday parade, which marches a one-mile route

through the streets of Old Town with nearly 3,500 participants.

Retired Police Chief Earl Cook will serve as Grand Marshal of the parade with Olympic boxing silver medalist Shakur Stevenson making a special guest appearance. For information about participating units, parking, maps, route and status, visit www.washingtonbirthday.net or call 703-829-6640.

For a complete list of February events celebrating George Washington, visit www.VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday.

OBITUARY

W. Jeff Knicely

W. Jeff Knicely, 59, of Alexandria, died at his home on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2017 following a recent illness.

He was born in Wabasha, Minn. on April 2, 1959 ... moving to Virginia in 1960 with his family. Jeff graduated from Mt. Vernon High School in Alexandria in 1977. After working most of his life in Alexandria, he was employed by the Master Roofing Company in Alexandria at the time of his death.

He is survived by his mother Anna Mae Knicely and brother Will Knicely both of Alexandria, as well as two nephews Jesse



Knicely of Bradstown, Ky. and Shane Eberly (Knicely) of Burke.

He was preceded in death by his father Wiley H. Knicely in 1982 and sister Jackie E. Knicely in 2002.

Jeff was very active as an auto mechanic and enjoyed fishing, hunting and antique cars.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017 at the Commonwealth Baptist Church, 700 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria. The family will receive guests at a reception immediately following the service in the lower level of the church.

Wedding Showcase To Feature Durham

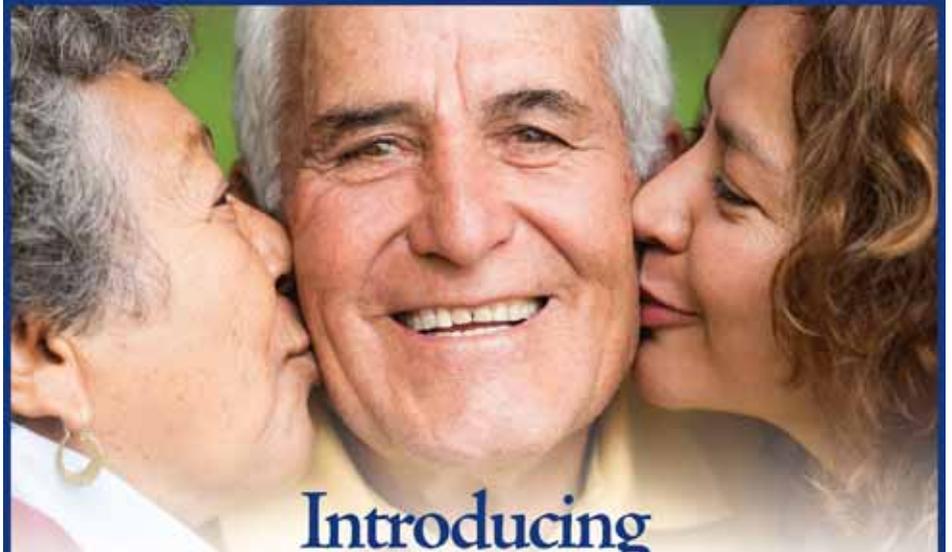
FROM PAGE 5

Feb. 12 will be entered in a drawing to attend a VIP champagne reception with Durham. All attendees will be entered to win multiple other wedding-related prizes, including the opportunity to display the Virginia Is For Lovers "LOVE" letters at their own wedding.

The Alexandria Wedding Showcase will be held Feb. 19 at the Westin Alexandria Hotel, 400 Courthouse Square, from 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. Advance tickets can be purchased online for \$15 each or \$20 per couple or \$25 per person the day of the event.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.alxweddingshowcase.com.

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The Journey to the Other Side of the Street

Success occurs one-on-one.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Lavonne Williams and Michael Diffley sit sharing an afternoon cup of coffee remembering their journey. They recall the day they met in 2007. Williams said, “I was a homeless ex-offender, staying at the day shelter on Henry Street and sleeping on the streets at night. Mike pulled up in a truck and asked if anybody wanted to help him transfer mattresses donated from hotels to the furniture bank at ALIVE!”

Diffley added, “Like many other days I would look for the older black guys in their 50s because I knew they had been through a lot of stuff and I liked to listen to their stories. My comment to him was he won’t be on the streets. His comment to me was he will come and help me move furniture.”

Though they didn’t realize it at the time, at that moment a bargain was struck.

Williams said, “Mike gave me a jump start on being able to find work.” Diffley said, “You can roll the dice 40 times and the law of probability says you get snake eyes; you get a job. But an ex-offender rolls the dice 40 times and gets rejection and quits. They need people to take them on one-on-one, to roll up their sleeves.” He points to Williams and back to himself. “This works,” he said.

At the time Williams also panhandled in front of St. Joseph Catholic Church where Diffley is a parishioner. Many people that he calls his “regulars” were giving Williams money and when they asked him what do you want, he would say, “I want work.”

Diffley said, “I got to know him better. I made it a point to talk to him. So many people pass by and don’t even give the time of day to the homeless. Lavonne has a great personality.” At the time Williams had some medical problems; he was a heavy smoker.

Williams added, “They stuck a little cord in my vein to scrape the extra plaque out.”

Williams said when he met Diffley he had gotten “real tired” of living on the street. He slept in used car lots and went to businesses on King Street where trucks were unloading at 5 a.m. to earn \$20 just to get something to eat. He said it took him “a while to get the concept of his situation in its entirety. I was trying to live on both sides of the street at the same time. I have taken Mike through a couple of headaches and he hasn’t given up on me.”

Diffley explains that Williams was on probation and still smoking marijuana. “He thought he could beat the charge. That really hurt and he knew it. We had the walk around the block talk.” Diffley said Williams was close to going back to jail and me saying to myself ‘it’s too hard for me to do anymore.’ But I still remember it. I said, ‘do you want to come over to my side of the street or not.’ He said, ‘I’m ready, Mike.’”

Diffley added, “To do what Williams did, that’s not easy to do. All your friends are over there on that side of the street, your social network, your drug supply.”

Williams said, “There are a lot of people who say they want to do something but to put their foot in it is an entirely different perspective. You would rather stay where you are and beef than to look for work.” He thinks of Jamison who first got him involved in panhandling. “He is a perfect example. Jamison has been panhandling for years. He says he can make more money than working for anybody.” But sometime Jamison will get tired and want to get off the street and sleep on the couch and connect with Diffley.

Williams had been released from Lorton Prison in 1997 and told not to have a D.C. address anymore so he woke up in the D.C. jail and walked to the Potomac Avenue Metro, got on the train and came to Alexandria. He said it’s the biggest letdown because there are expectations that the gov-



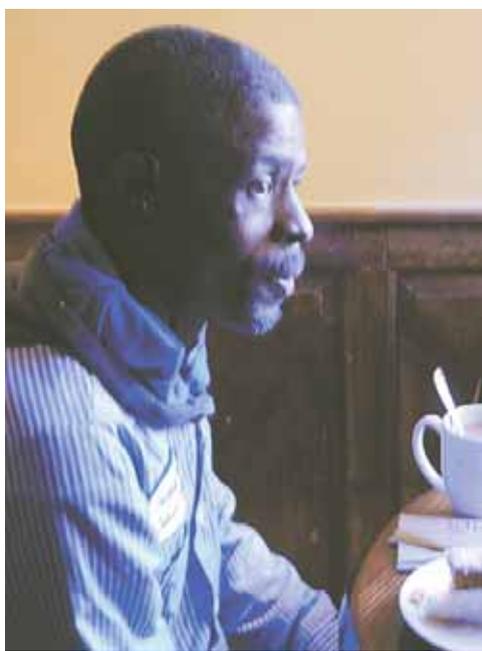
Lavonne Williams, formerly an ex-offender and homeless, remembers the day he met Michael Diffley. They began a journey together, sometimes up and down,

that has led Williams from the streets to a room and his own business, Alexandria Labor Co-Op.

ernment has programs to help you. “Back in the day when you went to the unemployment office they had a Rolodex that they would get out and talk to employers about ex-offenders. There was a tax credit for employers who hired an ex-offender. But,” he added, “if you don’t do one-on-one, sending us out is useless.”

Diffley says there are programs to help write resumes but do they take someone to find a job? “No, they are too busy writing resumes and with their computers.”

Williams says when you get out, “you got



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Lavonne Williams points out he has taken Diffley through a couple of headaches but “he hasn’t given up on me. We’ve gotten real close.”



Michael Diffley, a former colonel in the Army and later a high school teacher in D.C., says ex-offenders and homeless need people to take them on one-on-one if they are going to make it.

30 days. The first two weeks people are glad to see you. Then it’s ‘what do you do all day? When I leave, you’re here; when I come home, you’re here.’” He was married at the time so had some family support. He lived with his wife and her family. But as time went by he wasn’t comfortable with her family’s illegal activities “so I took her and moved to New Jersey.” Williams got a job “with a pretty good company” repairing computers, a skill he had learned in prison. His job performance was so satisfactory they wanted to hire him permanently. It was when he had to fill out an application that they discovered his prison background and decided he “wasn’t clean enough. So they let me go.”

Williams had been at Lorton for 11 years. “When I went in I knew what I did was wrong but it was based on a vendetta for my sister.” He explains someone gave his sister a “hot shot,” a dose of heroin and cocaine at the same time. Now her mind fluctuates from 12-years-old to her current 53 years “and me and my dad are the only ones she recognizes off the top.” He says he went after the guy who did it.

He said being in jail was close to life on the street. At Lorton, except driving, he says they did everything they did on the outside, like hustling and selling drugs. “We had carry-out soul food, some dormitories had parties.” He says the slightest thing was magnified in jail, “like if you said the wrong thing about somebody’s visiting wife.”

And there weren’t many fistfights. “If you’re coming at me, you’re coming at me to kill me.” Diffley’s personal journey that led him to the street where he met Williams began when he was a colonel in the Army stationed in New Orleans in the early ‘90s. He was involved in the Little Brother

hooked on social justice.” As the 12 years of teaching went by, he fell in love with the youths who were trying so hard, sometimes without any parents. He became much more progressive. “I used to be a Republican.” Now he wants to do the things that society is obligated to do.

Williams says he has a lot of blessings. “I have a program for low-income mothers.” They help him sort food for ALIVE! in exchange for community service hours. He has recommended several homeless for employment and he loads up boxes of food that a police officer delivers to homeless on the street. “Lavonne has become quite a philanthropist,” Diffley said.

With the help of Diffley, Williams has started his own business, Alexandria Labor co-op,

labor source for yard work, moving furniture, heavy cleaning inside and out, and other times when you need a helping hand on a project. Diffley said, “Williams is a hard worker. He once walked from D.C. to the ALIVE! Warehouse to meet his regular Saturday morning obligation. We worked to get him incorporated and so he got some focus.”

Williams said, “You have to reset your mind from being a panhandler.” He currently has regular clients and six employees. His goal for the future is to have a 50 percent self-sufficient business, with vehicles, tools, uniforms and an active payroll. He said when he upgraded from sleeping in used car lots to a couch, “I never understood what this upgrade could mean.” Now he wants more.

Diffley helps subsidize his current room. “I’m in a room now with a private bath.” He says he is on a ladder now that will continue to go up. “Mike and I have gotten so close. Going down is not in the equation.”

Part III

Concluding a three-part series focusing on prisoner reentry in Northern Virginia.

Program and “this was the first time I had interacted with folks on the other side of the street.” He came back to D.C. for his last tour and looked for some way to get involved again. Since he had graduated from West Point, had two degrees from MIT and a Master of Business he decided he had the credentials to teach so got a position in the inner city. “The more I did, the more I got

“Mike gave me a jump start on being able to find work.”

— Lavonne Williams

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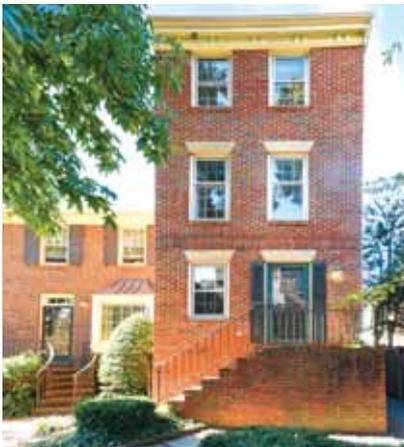
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OPINION

First Amendment Is Alive and Well

BY RONALD GOLDFARB

“Congress shall make no law ... abridging ... the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Having worked in D.C. and lived in Alexandria since 1961 when I came to work for Robert Kennedy in the Justice Department, I've experienced the First Amendment in real time action, by assembling and petitioning my government for redress of grievances.

In 1963 my wife and I stood near the Lincoln Memorial where Martin Luther King, Jr. pleaded to the world for civil rights for all people, and delivered his immortal “I Have a Dream” speech. About 250,000 people — black and white — peacefully gathered in the nation’s capital to plead for President Kennedy to provide 19 million Afro-American descendants the right to vote, travel, and work.

Fears abounded. The D.C. police and FBI were present on the streets. There were altogether over 8,000 guardians of the peace. The federal government and many businesses were closed. Hospitals canceled elective surgery so all beds would be available for riot-related emergencies. Jails were emptied to provide room for predicted arrests. Judges were on around-the-clock standby.

These precautions were not necessary. The assembly was non-violent. People arrived from all over the world and marched with dignity. Many swarmed around the Reflecting Pool in

a field of humanity that ran all the way to the Washington Monument.

On that day we listened to the greatest orator of his time pleading for racial justice, claiming that the time had come “to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood,” calling for “the fierce urgency of now,” then urged on by Mahalia Jackson, departed from his prepared text and segued into his immortal plea, “I have a dream,” that reverberates still in the hearts and minds of all decent people.

The New York Times called the event “the most impressive assembly for a redress of grievances in America’s history.” The Washington Post reported that the assembly was a happy combination of prayer meeting, picnic, and political rally, a crowd “united in a sense of brotherhood and common humanity.” The next year, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed.

Unfortunately, many of the social injustices deplored on that summer day in Washington, D.C., have not yet been overcome. But Aug. 28, 1963, was a seminal moment in American history. It demonstrated the power and dignity of democracy in action.

In 1971, the scene was more fractious when my wife and I joined Vietnam War protests on the streets of Washington D.C., a gathering which was rougher and more proactive than the 1963 event. We were gassed, with many others, near Dupont Circle by police overreacting to the noisy protests. Eventually the public demonstrations worked. The war was ended, too late, but it might not have ended when it did without these public pro-

tests. Critics of the war hastened the end of it, and resulted in a president leaving politics.

In 1986, my wife, daughter and two human rights activist friends, the late Pat Derian and Rose Styron and their daughters marched on a sunny day near Congress in a sea of women who came from across the country to support the ERA. But this time their pleas were not successful in terms of reaching the goal that gave rise to that march. But peace prevailed and eventually the goals they asserted then have been advanced in major ways.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017, an estimated half million Americans filled the streets of Washington, as did huge crowds in other cities in America and around the world to claim rights they felt were disparaged by the Trump campaign and election. The Saturday crowds far surpassed Friday’s relatively insignificant inaugural crowds. President Trump now argues about the relative size of his crowds — those applauding his election, and those crying out against it.

My children who attended here in D.C. and other locations reported a cheering good spirit, upbeat communal behavior, welcoming friendly law enforcement officials, filled bleachers, and an upbeat camaraderie.

Now what remains after people returned to their homes away from Washington, D.C. is the question: how does this experience change the future? Will the energy become harnessed into a movement that changes politics? We all ponder that question, bravo to the people who are trying.

COMMENTARY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another Hotel?

To the Editor:

A group of investors have recently held meetings in the Durant Center with some home owners as well as absentee house owners on Harvard Street attending. Harvard street is a beautiful one lane street

between Cameron and King street with shaded trees a few blocks from the King Street Metro. At the present time there is no major problem with parking since on both sides of the street there is off street parking. On the odd number side of the street there are beautiful porches in front of each

house which is raised up above the sidewalk and street level. Harvard Street is not in the Old Town Historic District but its town houses are now almost 100 years old. The street has become an expensive one to live on with a house generally selling for \$700,000 or above. Developers want to make some major changes to the immediate surrounding area of the street.

A six-and-a-half story hotel is proposed to be built on the 1600 block of King Street with white bricks not the historical red. Also, the back of the hotel will be a glass façade. Before the hotel is built developers propose to destroy two buildings. One building is historic having been built around 1900ish. It is occupied and or owned by the United States Navy Association, having been restored a few years back. It is a beautiful red brick three- or four-story building with an attached open parking lot to it at the corner of King and Harvard streets. The second building to be destroyed is presently offices. The 1600 1619 Naval Association building or its owners have signed a “Right to Own” so that the hotel

will have the right to tear down the two buildings and build a 124-126 room hotel with restaurant.

I live on Harvard Street and have lived there since 1975. I have seen many older buildings ripped down to make room for office buildings and hotels. The hotel at King and Harvard if built will be one of three hotels on one city block. It is totally beyond imagination to have this many hotels on one city block. It is proposed to destroy four mature trees on the entrance of Harvard Street at King Street so that new ones will be replaced as well as develop a two-way entrance to the street so that it will be easy for hotel guests to enter and leave the hotel. The present parking lot will be destroyed and a one level underground parking lot will be made available also for guests. Pole poles will be used. A large pole almost blocks the entrance to the alleyway on the side of the proposed hotel that has to be removed since it holds the electric lines providing electricity to nearby office buildings. The devel-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13



STEVE ARTLEY/GAZETTE PACKET

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OPINION

Choosing One's Future

BY MONIQUE ALCALA

Nearly two weeks ago just across the Potomac, the United States inaugurated its 45th president – Donald J. Trump. It took only seven days for his Administration to put forth and sign an executive order that barred Syrian refugees indefinitely and blocked entry into the U.S. for citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

The consequences were devastating. Countless individuals, including a 5-year old child from Maryland, and a Sudanese mother who had a valid visa coming to visit her son in intensive care in Washington, D.C., were detained or completely turned away at airports. Once word spread of these grave

injustices from across the country, communities were outraged — protests across the country, including right here in Dulles International Airport, erupted spontaneously.

Fortunately, on Friday, a U.S. District Court Judge in Seattle put a temporary, nationwide restraining order on the executive order due to its likely unconstitutionality. The administration immediately appealed the ruling and aims to reinstate the “ban” entirely — and I have a problem with that.

Despite its checkered past, the bedrock Virginia ideals of social justice and equality are becoming the consistent pattern in our Commonwealth. 21st Century Virginia values can only make us more prosperous as we become more welcoming to all who seek to make their home here. As a resident of Alexandria, I view the President's ban to be an affront to these values. It threatens the vibrancy of our diverse communities who bring their families and their talents to this beautiful city to live, work, and create businesses and contribute to our local economy.

We have a critical election next November and the stakes have never been higher. So far, all notable Virginia Democrats have condemned the President's executive orders. Republicans like fringe gubernatorial candidate Corey Stewart, on the other hand, have fully embraced it. And Ed Gillespie's

untimely and tepid response to the crisis likely gave us a glimpse into what Virginia families can expect from his tenure as governor.

Republicans cite the fight against terrorism and national security as the justification for taking such extreme measures. But this is simply divorced from reality.

There exists no magical list of countries or group of people, vulnerable refugees or not, that we can “ban” to keep us perfectly safe from any future attack. Pursuing these reckless and empty gestures will do nothing but embarrass the U.S. on the world stage and alienate many of the very people we rely upon as partners in the fight against terrorism. And to add fuel to the fire, these policies play directly into the hands of ISIL, who argue — like the Trump Administration — that Muslims cannot peacefully co-exist in the West.

With our federal government failing, it is incumbent upon all of us to prove that argument false. While other states in the U.S. are given a brief respite before the 2018 midterms, Virginians will be given the first opportunity to show true leadership when we elect our statewide offices. We must choose between continued prosperity and freedom or a future limited by economic inequality and intolerance. We must stand steadfast as allies to those who choose to come to this country, whether just for a visit or to start a new life here.

Monique Alcala, a resident of Alexandria, is a partner with the Truman National Security Project. The views expressed are her own.

COMMENTARY

Write

The Gazette Packet welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed.

Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

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What Do We Do with a Problem Like Alexandria?

Re-imagining the city.

BY KERRY CARTER

There's that guy at the intersection of South Washington and Prince Streets in Old Town who is causing problems for a lot of people. To many he is a permanent protester, holding up traffic, distracting drivers and refusing to move. Like many of the professional protesters hanging around in Berkeley and NYC in recent days, his upkeep is supported by someone else's money. But we'll get back to him in a moment.

What to do about Alexandria, that once quaint but lively seaport town, captured by the Union during the Civil War and involuntarily thrust into the political and social fray. That beautiful and thriving "Southern" community that chose to defy the United States. The town where for almost 100 years slaves were bought, sold and placed into households and other servitude, then unceremoniously buried and forgotten. The city that held on to this legacy by naming many streets, parks and alleys, not to mention memorials, after dead Southern warriors and rebel leaders. It begs the question: what do we do with a problem like Alexandria?

If you put gospel stock in most everything written in the press, you'd believe that the

majority of people born and raised north of D.C. are afraid to venture downwind of the airport for fear of entering a Dixie wasteland full of gun totin', bible thumpin' xenophobes. Stories daily abound regarding the backwardness of our Commonwealth, despite the plain fact that our state has for years elected quite liberal senators, now has the most left of center governor and attorney general ever, and currently has an Alexandria city government that could be politely described as, well, very progressive.

But back to our problem: What to do with this backwards town named Alexandria, that to some seems lost in time and struggling to hold on to its unhappy heritage?

Fear not, visitors, residents and curiosity seekers, I have a solution. There is no need to tear down, rearrange or destroy anything in our city that reminds us of the past. Let us instead re-imagine Alexandria! Might we together engage in a mindful and happy re-thinking of our avenues, lanes and structures in a manner that all can embrace? Could we purposefully re-create the ultimate, non-threatening safe space — dare I say "sanctuary" full of warm and knowable names? And, since history is considered a dying field of study in our schools and universities, should we not, in keeping with the times, take an entirely new tack? Yes! We

must begin anew by appealing to a 21st century populace that celebrates the culturally contemporary, the inoffensive, recognizable and undeniably hip.

Here are just a few examples of what I am humbly proposing for your consideration:

❖ Re-imagine Green Street: a place where the environment is always guarded and cared for.

❖ Re-imagine Wolfe Street: a reminder that we must be vigilant in protecting the endangered species of the world.

❖ Re-Imagine Lee Street: Who better to honor than Bruce Lee, actor, entertainer, really cool dude and champion of all kids who experience bullying?

❖ Re-imagine Cameron Street: Ms. Diaz would likely be grateful and possibly enticed to stop here for a latte after visiting Congress to testify on any one of her important concerns.

❖ Re-imagine Franklin Street: Named after one of our greatest artists — Aretha — and a place where people of all nations, faiths, backgrounds and musical tastes will always be re-re-re-spected. Right on, I love her!

❖ Re-imagine Queen Street: A street open to interpretation and many possibilities but definitely calling for a rainbow flag on every block.

❖ Re-imagine King Street: Many options here: MLK of course since we don't have a MLK Boulevard. There is also Stephen (nah, too scary in my opinion) and Billie Jean, but neither have MLK's undeniable gravitas and stature. So the reason for re-imagining the street to honor this great man is rather obvious. And why not, down with the monarchy!

Sincere apologies if none of the above re-imaginings rise to Alexandrians' high standards. I am certain that among the hundreds if not thousands of creative imaginers who reside in our fair city, suitable re-imagining could be applied to any nook or cranny deemed to be outdated or offensive.

Now as to that traffic stopper, the youngish, good-looking, mustachioed guy who resolutely stands with arms crossed on his stone pedestal, looking south on Washington Street in his sturdy military jacket, slouchy boots, with tousled hair and toting a very au courant man purse on his right hip. After a much thought and in view of the aptly named cross-street, and with great admiration for and appreciation of a man too soon deceased who we all loved and admired, I propose a "monumental change." Let us not be intimidated by the obstinate, defeated Confederate soldier who for many years has challenged our driving skills and historical sensibilities. May his visage instead be joyfully re-imagined by all of Alexandria as The Artist Formerly Known as Prince.

COMMENTARY



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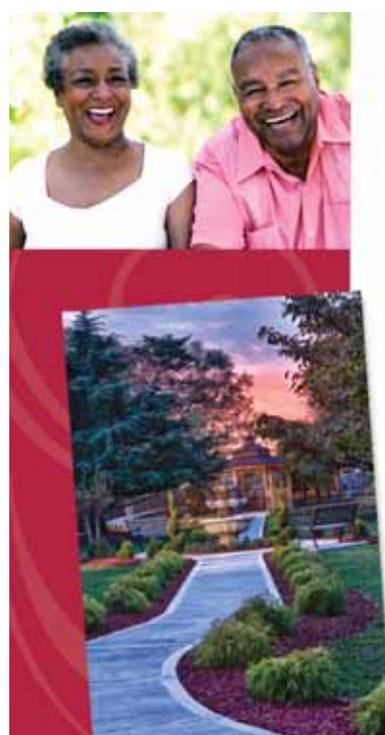
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OPINION

Plank in the Progressive Eye

BY DAN BRENDEL

Donald Trump has a lot of people worrying about “alternative facts.” Rightfully so. But I also worry about progressives who seem to think their facts don’t come from a world of alternatives.

I am not a relativist. I am perfectly comfortable talking about absolute and objective reality. But we are subjective creatures. We navigate through reality like a submarine through the ocean. My ship has no windows. I study my charts. I sound out the world with my sensors. At best it’s a functionally factual method. But I would be a fool of a captain if I thought the “facts” on my charts and sensors were literally the same things as the facts outside my hull.

My charts and sensor readings are renderings, interpretations, approximations, full of assumptions. I didn’t make any given chart. Maybe I pencil in corrections here and there, but for the most part I received it. I trust it as far as it goes. But I know that the cartographers had an interest, made choices about which facts to render, how to render them, and which to omit. I know that the chart itself is not factual just because it has facts rendered on it. Likewise, I trust my own soundings as far as they go. But I understand that I’ve chosen when and where to make them, what to measure, and how often. I know that the lines between my data points are interpolations, not data points themselves, and certainly not the real world outside.

If I don’t vigorously differentiate between the narratives of bathymetric and barometric charts, or between fitted curves and the seafloor, then sailing on my boat should give you little comfort.

Many progressives are conflating soundings and charts with reality. It’s evident in the very term progressive. I’m a theologically conservative Catholic. I believe in the garden-to-city trajectory of God’s plan for creation, as well as in humankind’s responsibility to participate. I embrace the concept of objective progress. But, in concrete politics, “progress” is a value-laden term. Charts and soundings of progress may or may not accurately render the actual terrain of progress. In the conservative Catholic mind — and I would hope in anybody’s mind — the Right and Left have both mapped some things rightly and some things wrongly. But instead there is an idea that opposite conservative politics is progressive politics. It’s not just change; it’s progress. Liberals are straining

facts through a sieve of values, but still convinced that the end product is objective.

But every fact has valid alternatives. How we sift, render, prioritize, exclude, and connect these alternatives is an act of judgment. The facts do not render this judgment upon themselves. “The whole truth” is a fine ideal for jurisprudence, but it is impossible. So while there may be a clear difference between a factual account and a purely fictional account, there is no such thing as a purely factual account that is not tinged by myth — a personal myth, a party myth, etc.

For example, Clinton suggested during the campaign that abortion is a matter of women’s health care. Trump went as far as to suggest that abortion should be a punishable crime. I would argue that both of these narrative accounts touch on fact, neither of them on all the facts.

According to a 2013 study in BMC Women’s Health about why women seek abortions, about as many respondents cited “concern for [their] own health” (6 percent) as concern that a baby would “interfere with their ... career plans” (7 percent).

Since I have never heard a convincing reason why life doesn’t begin at conception, I honestly don’t see why the latter reason should sound plausibly closer to health care than to a crime. But even dismissing the criminal possibility as extreme, the exchange of careers for human lives that would otherwise exist is certainly not an incontrovertible fact of progress.

Even outright lying from one’s opponent doesn’t mean that one’s narrative account of reality came down from the mountain written in stone by the finger of God. To the extent that liberals think they hold the holy tablets — and I fear many are increasingly emboldened by Mr. Trump’s falsehoods to think precisely that — then they have constructed a false dichotomy. But heed the prophets. The Israelites weren’t heroes just because Pharaoh was a villain. Nobody’s safe from the intellectual shoals just because an opposing sea captain is sailing blind.

We should be concerned about facts, not least because of Mr. Trump — but not only because of him. If we’re just now becoming concerned that politics perilously bends the fact-narrative continuum, I don’t think we’ve been looking hard enough in the mirror. We need to navigate with humility and conscience, not to call a preferred version of bad seamanship virtue.

Dan Brendel writes on faith-based issues for the Gazette Packet.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

opers have stated that they will take it down and construct underground electric wires. Massive construction will take place as well as other developments taking place in the area and explained in a previous letter to the paper.

This proposed hotel is not needed in this part of the city since it is saturated with new hotels. In fact Alexandria does not need another hotel any place in this city. There are two basic reasons why: New hotels developing in Harbor Place across the Potomac River in

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14

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A 'Big Weekend' Celebrating Washington's Birthday

BY JOSEPH S. SHUMARD
CHAIR, ALEXANDRIA GEORGE WASHINGTON
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

This is the third in a series of articles about the George Washington Birthday Celebration. For more information, please visit www.washingtonbirthday.com.

By now you should be feeling “in the groove” as Alexandria celebrates Washington’s Birthday with an increasing number of activities. The Winter Warmer Ladies Tea was held at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum on Fe. 5, the first “Walking with Washington” tour was given last weekend (with three more to come, every Sunday in February), and the Cherry Challenge continues through Feb. 11 with 43 of the finest Alexandria restaurants presenting cherry-themed drinks, starters, entrees and desserts. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 13

Maryland, and the continual decline in small businesses and shops up and down King Street either closing or going online. Why in the world would anyone want to come and stay in another new hotel when in years to come or possibly even in 2017 there is nothing here of quality to see or do. I am not in favor of supporting a new hotel in the King Street Metro area on King street, and the destruction of the last remaining older historic building, and I am not alone in this view. I know many people who live, work and play here who have the same feeling as I do.

Jim Melton
Alexandria

Washington And the Poet

To the Editor:

When George Washington was appointed by the Continental Congress in 1775 to take command of the fledgling American military forces, a young lady in Providence felt compelled to compose a patriotic poem and send it to him at his headquarters in Cambridge across the Charles River from Boston, then occupied by the British. The 43-line poem “His Excellency George Washington” was well received by George Washington not only because of its glowing tribute and encouragement, but because the poem acknowledged the imminent struggle for freedom and independence.

*Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.*

(direct links are on our website) to see pictures of many of the offerings and the commentary of many enthusiastic patrons.

We are turning our attention toward the “big weekend” of Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; Feb. 18, 19, and 20. Starting with the Birthnight Banquet and Ball (which is sold out) through the end of the George Washington Birthday Parade, there are five major events held in 46 hours. Most of these are free and accessible to everyone. So let me tell you about these events:

Let’s jump to the Revolutionary War Reenactment at Fort Ward Park on Sunday, Feb. 19 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. It’s a day-long emersion in the Revolutionary War, from the soldier’s perspective. Reenactors from up and down the Atlantic Coast come with authentic weapons, battle gear, and uniforms to show you what it was like to be a fighter in the 18th-century. You will experience how they lived, what they ate, and how they prepared for battle. Visitors can interact with the knowledgeable

reenactors, ask questions, and see things up close. Then at 2 p.m. there will be a narrated skirmish between British and American troops and visitors can observe the strategies and tactics of war at that time, very different from today.

Monday is a big day and starts off at 9 a.m. with the Friendship Breakfast, hosted at the Alexandrian Hotel by the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association (which was founded in 1774). This annual tradition features “George Washington’s” first appearance of the day, an address by retired Four-Star General John H. Tilelli, the awarding of the prestigious Ben Lynt Award for public service, a hearty breakfast, and good fellowship. Tickets: \$35.

At 11 a.m. is a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of the unknown soldier of the American Revolution in the cemetery of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they host colonial military and civilians to honor

the soldiers of the Revolution. Free.

At noon is the Armed Forces Community Covenant Ceremony at the Parade Reviewing Stand at Market Square. Come honor our nation’s veterans, listen to brief remarks by senior military officials and civilians, pledge support for the active military and their families, hear music by the Quantico Marine Band, and visit informational booths, and displays. Free.

At 1 p.m. the nation’s largest George Washington Birthday Parade marches a one-mile route through the streets of Old Town Alexandria. With nearly 3,500 participants, this community parade honors Alexandria’s favorite son. The Grand Marshal is retired Police Chief Earl Cook. Special guest is Olympic silver medal winner, boxer Shakur Stevenson. It’s not too late to join us as a marching unit and we still need parade marshals and drivers for dignitaries. For information about participating units, parking, maps, route, status and to volunteer, go to www.washingtonbirthday.com.

The poem sagaciously and sanguinely predicted victory over the British:

*Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.*

Shortly after receiving the poem George Washington wrote the young lady expressing his appreciation and extending an invitation to meet with her, and did so in March 1776. This is especially remarkable because that the shining light was Phillis Wheatley, an African slave who had been purchased by the Wheatley family of Boston. She had come from West Africa (probably Senegal) when she was just 8 years old.

The Wheatleys encouraged their own daughter to tutor the slave girl in Greek, Latin and other subjects, and she mastered them so well that she was regarded as a prodigy. When she was only 12 years old she started to write poetry, and in 1773 she published a book of poetry which made her a world celebrity. In that year Wheatley made a literary tour to England and upon her return to Boston her master opted to manumit her.

Wheatley drew the favorable attention of America’s founding fathers, including George Washington, who told her that “the style and manner [of your poetry] exhibit a striking proof of your great poetical talents.” She is recognized as the first African-American woman to publish a book, and she is a cornerstone in African American literary heritage. Among other honors, the Phillis Wheatley YWCA in Washington, D.C. is named for her.

The meeting between George Washington and Phillis Wheatley has been regarded as an early instance of racial tolerance and may have contributed to George Washington’s evolving attitude towards slavery. In 1776 he reversed an earlier deci-

A Cross-Cultural Connection

Rebecca and Elodie met through the SOHO program back in 2014. On the first day of the program, they were sitting together and immediately had a great connection. Rebecca is from El Salvador originally and is very interested in other cultures

MENTOR OF THE WEEK

and Elodie is from France and loves to share her love for international travel. Rebecca quickly asked Elodie to talk to her about her country, cultural differences and what language people speak in France. Elodie also wanted to find out about Rebecca’s original country of El Salvador. A friendship quickly built from there.

Each Thursday evening, they met through the SOHO program and worked on art projects together, including painting, making pillows, ceramics, and other projects with the objective to create a space for Rebecca in her home. At the end of the program Rebecca was sharing a room with her brother and made her “corner” her own space with crafts she had worked on all year long with Elodie along with some new fun things they bought together.

After two years of starting the program, Elodie and Rebecca have a close friendship and see each other on a regular ba-



Elodie Guillen and Rebecca

sis to see movies, go to coffee, do some shopping or just talk about school, life, and everything in between. As Elodie says, “Rebecca has brought so much more to my life than I had ever imagined. We have a very strong bond that I plan to cherish for life.” Elodie was so happy when Rebecca told her that she had decided to take French in middle school and promised Rebecca to take her to Europe when she graduates from high school.

SOHO is a member of the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership (AMP). AMP was created in 2006 to ensure that quality mentors and mentor programs are available for Alexandria’s youth and young adults in need. To learn more about SOHO, visit: <http://spaceofherown.org/> or to learn more about AMP, visit <http://www.alexandriava.gov/Mentoring>.

sion and permitted the enlistment of black soldiers; eventually about 9,000 slaves joined the patriots. In his last will and testament Washington famously freed the slaves he owned, providing for the education and training of the young and lifetime support for those too old or unable to work. Indeed, Phillis Wheatley’s influence on

George Washington may have been more momentous than she could have ever suspected.

Edgar A. Bates
George Washington Chapter, Sons of
the American Revolution
Alexandria

ENTERTAINMENT



Pour two sauces together for reduction.



Strain out solids.



Toss potatoes with Cajun spice.



Final step: ladle sauce on mahi mahi.

Meet the Chef: Homero Escobar

Cajun specialties at RT's on Mount Vernon

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Homero Escobar juggles three pans on high heat on the front burners in the kitchen of RT's Restaurant on Mount Vernon. "I am making the sauce and the topping at the same time for the mahi mahi," he said.

IN THE KITCHEN

A 20-gallon pot of veal bones with celery, onion, carrots and parsley simmers on a back burner. "We use veal stock in most of the sauces. This will cook about 6-8 hours." Today Escobar is making the daily special "crusted mahi mahi with Creole meuniere sauce." This kind of meuniere sauce is much different than the French. Today's recipe will make enough for 10 servings although usually he makes enough for 40-50 diners at one time.

Escobar drops 1/2 pound of tiny cubes of Andouille sausage into a saucepan with 1/2 cup of canola oil. "This will cook on a high burner for 3 minutes." While the Andouille is cooking, he starts working on the sauce on the adjacent burner.

Escobar pours 2 cups of 40 percent cream into a skillet with 1/2 cup of unsalted butter cut into two large chunks. He will reduce the cream down a little to let it thicken. As the cream comes to a boil, he said, "You can boil heavy cream but milk

will burn. A lot of people don't know that."

On the far burner Escobar prepares another part of the sauce in a separate saucepan. Later it will be added to the heavy cream. He adds one small-diced onion, 2 bay leaves, 1 small lemon peeled and a cup of Worcestershire sauce. He says he will reduce this to about 1/4 and that will take 5-10 minutes. "When Worcestershire is reduced, it becomes sweet," Escobar said. "This is real New Orleans, rich and spicy."

The mahi mahi is ready for the broiler. Escobar adds a little butter to an ovenproof oval dish and sprinkles the fish with Cajun spice. New Orleans cooking is known for its variety of spices, and this particular combination is salt and pepper, dried onion and garlic and cayenne. "The mahi mahi will sit under the broiler for 3-4 minutes and then finish off in the oven." As he watches the progress of each pan, Escobar pulls the sausage off the burner and lets it rest on the counter. He melts in two-thirds cup of grated Grana Padano Parmesan cheese and adds 1/2 cup of breadcrumbs into the sausage. "It's time to take out the mahi mahi and finish the dish."

In the meantime an order has come in for chicken gumbo. The lunch crowd has started to arrive. Escobar says that on weekdays they serve 40-50 for lunch but "on weekends it is crazy. It could be 150-170 for dinner. Nine skillets are stacked in the corner. "We use all eight burners at once."



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Homero Escobar, executive chef at RT's Restaurant on Mount Vernon, has lined up his ingredients for the special of the day, "crusted mahi mahi with Creole meuniere sauce." He will juggle three burners as he makes two sauces to combine later and the Andouille topping at the same time.

He drains off a little of the butter in the dish with the fish and reaches for the Andouille topping which goes generously on top of the fish. "I use these julienne carrots as a garnish." Escobar opens the heavy oven door and slips the fish back in the oven at 500 degrees for another 3 minutes. It is time to add the cream to the Worcestershire combination. His assistant, Sandra

Membreno, hands him the large whisk to mix the two together in the pan. The sauce will now cook for another five or so minutes to let it reduce a little.

"The last thing is the cubed potatoes. I have cut these Idaho potatoes into large cubes and deep fried them." To finish them off, he sautés them with a little canola oil for 1-2 minutes. "I will throw in a little scallion and Cajun spice." He flips the potatoes in the air to turn them over in the pan. "Now I'll arrange the potatoes in the center of the dish and top them with the mahi mahi." He places the julienned carrots on the side of the dish.

Escobar removes the sauce from the stove and strains the solids out into a bowl to discard later. "Now for the final step." He dips a two-ounce scoop into the sauce and pours the sauce artfully around the fish.

Escobar says his favorite dish at RT's is the chicken and Andouille gumbo. "The customers like the gumbo, too, and the gigantic shrimp with Jack Daniels cream. It's a signature dish at RT's and owner Ralph Davis says he can't reveal what is in it. Escobar has been at RT's since it opened in 1985. He came to America from Guatemala in 1981. "There I ate a lot of beans and corn and chicken with fresh chili peppers." He adds that he ate a lot of spicy food but not the same spices as the Cajun combination that enhances many of his dishes at RT's.

He says it was his dream to be a chef since he was a teenager. "My first job was working in a restaurant kitchen and I discovered I had a kitchen skill."

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

RockNBlades. Fridays in February 8:45-10:30 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ice Skating, 2017 Belle View Blvd. Skating with music. \$12 admission includes rental skates.

Multiple Exposures Gallery.

www.connectionnewspapers.com

Through Feb. 12 at Torpedo Factory Art Center, #312, 105 North Union St. Colleen Henderson's A Study in Contrasts, and Sandy Lebrun-Evan's McDowell County, WVA. www.multipleexposuresgallery.com

"Sanctuary." Through Feb. 18 in the Commons Fireplace Alcove of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. Selected black and white photographs from Nina Tisara's "Sanctuary" series, shot in Huntley Meadows Park. A closing reception will be held on Feb. 18, 6:30-7:15 p.m., followed by a concert by Nova Chamber Orchestra beginning at 7:30

p.m. Email Nina Tisara at ninat@ninatisara.com or call 703-765-5950 for more.

Convergence Arts Initiative.

Through March 4, Fridays 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Gallery @ Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. Highlights the artwork of students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams, and St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m. Email danabh@ourconvergence.org or call 703-998-6260 for more.

Ceramic Guild Show. Through March

5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. "Customer Appreciation: Welcome to our World" Ceramic Guild show at Scope Gallery. Visit www.scopegallery.org, www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope or call 703-548-6288 for more.

China Photography Exhibit.

Through March 6, various hours at the Bisdorf Building, NVCC, 5000 Dawes Ave. "China in my Eyes" photography exhibit. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, noon. Visit www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/ or email JZelloe@aol.com for more.

Mixed Media Exhibit. Through March 14, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the St. George Gallery, 105 North Alfred St. Inspirational approaches in mixed media inhabit this art exhibit. Call 703-299-9495 or visit www.StGeorgeofEthiopia.com.

The Lyceum: 175 Years of Local History. Ongoing, Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. On view in the museum's Coldsmith Gallery, the historical objects and images featured represent The Lyceum, the community at work, and



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ENTERTAINMENT



LEBRUN-EVANS PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Multiple Exposures Gallery

Multiple Exposures Gallery is on display through Feb. 12 at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, #312, 105 North Union St. Featuring Colleen Henderson's A Study in Contrasts, and Sandy Lebrun-Evan's McDowell County, WVA. Artist reception is Jan. 14, 2-4 p.m. www.multipleexposuresgallery.com

commemorations and celebrations. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are invited to "be the curator" and think about why the various artifacts are in the museum's collection, and about how tangible representatives of the past help tell the story of Alexandria's history. Free. Visit www.alexandriahistory.org for more.

Pick-Up Hockey. Ongoing, Wednesdays and Fridays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ice Skating, 2017 Belle View Blvd. Play hockey with other hockey buffs, hitting slap shots and learning puck handling skills that the pros use. Players must have full equipment. 16 and older. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mtvernon/ or call 703-768-3224 for more.

Medical Care for the Civil War Soldier Exhibit. Ongoing at the Fort Ward museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. ongoing exhibit which features original medical instruments and equipment from the Civil War period and information on Union Army hospital sites in Alexandria. Free. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/fortward for more.

Alexandria's Nurses and Hospitals During the Civil War. Ongoing at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. An exhibit on the life of Clarissa Jones, a nurse at The Lyceum hospital during the Civil War. The true story of a nurse in Alexandria during the war, drawing parallels with characters portrayed in the PBS drama "Mercy Street," with references to the experiences of other nurses, such as Anne Reading, who worked in the Mansion House hospital, and Jane Woolsey, who served at the Fairfax Seminary hospital. Admission is \$2. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/lyceum for more.

Shield of Earth: Defending the Heart of the Union exhibit. Ongoing, museum hours Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. -5 p.m., Sundays, noon-5 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road. Highlights of the exhibition include military passes issued by Provost Marshal's Office, construction tools, and original photographs of some of Washington's defenders. 703-746-4848 or www.fortward.org.

Who These Wounded Are: The Extraordinary Stories of the Mansion House Hospital exhibit. Ongoing, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays, noon-4 p.m. at the Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St.

Come see the site that inspired "Mercy Street," the new PBS' series inspired by real events that took place at Carlyle House. www.carlylehouse.org or call 703-549-2997

"Ancient Art of Movement." 1 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Carmen Shippy, retired professional dancer, teaches a series designed for ages 50 and above. Movements are designed to strengthen core muscles and increase flexibility. Adjustments will be made for those with physical limitations. First lesson in the series is free for non-center members. To continue lessons, a yearly membership to all Senior Center programs is \$48. Call 703-765-4573 to sign up.

Color Disorder Exhibit. Ongoing, Thursday through Sunday, noon-4 p.m., Sundays, noon-4 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. A joint exhibition of artists Katie Baines and Amy Chan who use diverse painting materials such as acrylic, gouache, airbrush and screen print to build energized abstract paintings. www.nfaa.org or 703-548-0035.

French Movie Night. Every Thursday, 7 p.m. in the back room of Fontaine Caffe and Creperie, 119 S. Royal St. View a French film. Free, no reservation necessary. Call 703-535-8151 or visit www.fontainecaffe.com/reviews.html.

Alexandria Cars and 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.

Fifty Years of Collecting. Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays 12-5 p.m. Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. 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. 12 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. A walking tour that goes behind the scenes to find out how food was prepared and served before the era of microwaves and TV dinners. \$5 in addition to estate admission. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.

Second Thursday Music. Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. 7 p.m. Second Thursday of every month.

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ENTERTAINMENT



11th Annual Swing for Pink

"Our fight against breast cancer"

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Thank you to the hundreds of wonderful community members who joined us on October 28th for our 11th annual Swing for Pink event. You helped raise \$12,800 to help fight breast cancer.

This money will benefit the Breast Care Institute at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital and the Joseph Viar and Bonnie Christ Cancer Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital.

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Alexandria Symphony

On Feb. 11-12, an All-Mozart Concert, 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E Campus Drive. The concert has a focus on musical masterpieces, led by five conductors, anchored by a classical "popular" favorite from the symphonic canon. \$20-\$80, \$5 youth and \$10 student with military, senior and group discounts available. Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885 for more.

Visit nvfaa.org to view concert calendar and listen to upcoming Second Thursday Music artists.

The Monday Morning Birdwalk takes place weekly, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7 a.m. (8 a.m. November through March), is free, 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.

Civil War Sundays. 1-5 p.m. at Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 North Union St., #327. Learn more about the Civil War as it occurred in Alexandria. Find dioramas, newspaper articles and more Free. Visit www.alexandriaarchaeology.org.

CAMPS, CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Community Dance. 7:30-9:30 p.m. every third Friday at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Live music. Tickets are \$4. Call 703-765-4573.

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 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.

THURSDAY/FEB. 9

Fort Belvoir Update Breakfast. 8-9:30 a.m. at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road. Col. Holbrooke will provide an update on planned improvements. \$25 for Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber Members and Guests, \$35 Non-Chamber. Visit mtvernon-leechamber.org.

West End Business Association Happy Hour. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Los Tios Grill, 241 S. Van Dorn St. \$10. Visit www.alexandriaweba.com/ for more.

Author Charles Mills. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Mills discusses his book "The Civil War Wedding," an entertaining look at the customs and superstitions of weddings during the Civil War era. RSVP at admin@nvfaa.org

Schoolyard Native Gardens. 7:30-9 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Matt Bright talks about schoolyard native gardens and what home gardeners can learn from them. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/ or call 703-642-5173 for more.

FEB. 10-12

Pet Adoption Weekend. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday at Pet Valu, Bradlee Shopping Center, 3652 King St.

Support local animal shelters, dogs and cats for adoption. Call 571-970-5878 for more.

FEB. 9-MARCH 19

Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery. Torpedo Factory, Studio 29, 105 N. Union St. Cosmic Sights and Sounds, comes as the winter night sky's grand collection of brilliant stars begins to give way to the vernal equinox. This show will also highlight the work of featured artists Carol Bodin, Mickey Kunkle, and Lynda Prioleau. Visit www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 11

Beaches in the Coastal South. 11 a.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Andrew W. Kahrl discusses the history of southern beaches, and how they transitioned to luxury properties such as resorts and condominiums. Free. Call 703-746-4356 for more.

Toys at Historic Huntley. 1-2 p.m. at Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane. Travel back in time to explore old-fashioned toys and games. \$7. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park or call 703-768-2525 for more.

Artists' Reception. 2-4 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 East Campus Drive. Artists' reception for three exhibiting shows for artists Winston W. Harris, John M. Adams and Lonnie Pauls. Free.

AHA Benefit Concert. 3-5 p.m. at GW National Masonic Memorial Theater, 101 Callahan Drive. "Affairs of the Heart," a concert supporting the American Heart Association. \$30, \$25 for seniors/military; \$15 for youth; add \$5 for at-the-door tickets, \$75 for family four-pack. Visit www.sopranessence.org or call 571-348-4664.

Twig Snowflake Sale. 4 p.m. at The Twig Shop, 106 N. Columbus St. Everything on sale at this organization dedicated to providing financial aid, volunteer service and support to Inova Alexandria Hospital. Call 571-251-1717 or visit www.thetwig.org.

Nocturnal Animals. 5:15-7:15 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Look and listen for owls, beavers and other animals that are active at night. \$8. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/ or call 703-768-2525 for more.

All-Mozart Concert. 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E Campus Drive. The concert has a focus on musical masterpieces, led by five conductors, anchored by a classical "popular" favorite from the symphonic canon. \$20-\$80, \$5 youth and \$10 student with military, senior and group discounts available. Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885 for more.

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Gazette Packet

ENTERTAINMENT

EatsPlace Café Aims To Join Works of Art

The DC-based restaurant has “popped up” at the Torpedo Factory.

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Old Town’s Torpedo Factory is known for helping artists grow and develop — and sell — their craft. But beginning late last month, there’s another kind of incubator on the scene within the factory walls. EatsPlace, which bills itself as a “pop-up” and restaurant incubator, has made itself right at home with a café for breakfast, lunch, or an early dinner.

“EatsPlace is all about building community and having events and happenings all around food, because food I really believe is a catalyst for other things — for getting people together,” said founder Katy Chang. “... When people get together and community forms, and neighbors start talking to each other ... amazing things happen.”

EatsPlace’s flagship space is situated in the Washington neighborhood of Petworth, and it’s there that the groundwork was laid for a more formalized café in Alexandria. The original location remains a space where new or visiting chefs can develop a presence — and a fanbase. In fact, foodies with deeper pockets can even elect to invest in up-and-coming chefs, Chang says.

“If you are really into the food scene, you can basically invest in an up and coming chef or an established chef from out of town,” Chang said. “... When they go to their own brick-and-mortar space, you can follow them to that.”

The EatsPlace Café concept in Alexandria is a bit different from the Petworth studio, Chang says. For

one, the menu will remain more consistent, shifting primarily with the season rather than more frequently with individual chefs.

“This concept is more self-contained ... it’s a café/marketplace. Since we are open in the daytime and have longer hours, we can have a whole retail section where we promote local foods from Virginia, of course, but Maryland and D.C. as well.”

Among some of the top retail selections: Virginia peanuts, naturally, as well as mushrooms from Good Sense Farm.

But the star of the café is, of course, the fresh foods available on the daily menu. Among the highlights: Three different variations on a grilled-cheese sandwich, including a kimchi grilled cheese, which is the most popular version, Chang says. Ingredients are sourced from local farmers, and along with the standard menu fare, there will be some signature dishes here and there.

“As far as the collaboration with our chefs, they’ll do a signature sandwich, but we’re going to try to keep the menu somewhat consistent,” she said, adding: “Which is not to say we won’t do a fondue night or something.”

Also on the upcoming docket: Demonstrations and classes, Chang says, including child-friendly classes. She’s finalizing the spring schedule now but hinted at the potential for a kimchi how-to demo or — for the adults — a beer-brewing class. Even when attendees don’t try again at home, Chang says, the demos help people “appreciate the craftsmanship” behind each technique.

Just a couple of weeks in, Chang has been pleased by the neighbors’ response.

“People have been so kind,” she said. “I always thank people for coming to visit us, but they thank us for opening!”

Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

APPETITE

CALENDAR

SUNDAY/FEB. 12

Live Animal Lunchtime. noon-1 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Bring lunch to Huntley Meadows and dine with a special animal guest — a snake, turtle, or toad. Learn about the critter’s diet, adaptations and habitat through crafts and hands-on learning. \$7, dessert included. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/.

Gardening Author. 1:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Marta McDowell shares the history of the White House gardens and signs her book, “All the Presidents’ Gardens” after the lecture. \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ for more.

All-Mozart Concert. 3 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. The concert has a focus on musical masterpieces, led by five conductors, anchored by a classical “popular” favorite from the symphonic canon. \$20-\$80, \$5 youth and \$10 student with military, senior and group

discounts available. Visit www.alexsym.org or call 703-548-0885 for more.

MONDAY/FEB. 13

Anti-Valentine’s day kickboxing. 5-6:30 p.m. at iLoveKickboxing, 660 S. Pickett St. Shred Your Ex, a positive way to ditch the Valentine’s Day doldrums and get fit in the process. Free for members of iLoveKickboxing. Visit www.ilovekickboxing.com or call 571-429-4290.

Vegetable Gardening Lecture. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Vegetable Gardening Part 2: Planning and Preparation. Free. Email mgaralex@gmail.com or call 703-228-6414 for more.

TUESDAY/FEB. 14

Submission Deadline. 2017 Needlework Show & Sale mail-in entries: Jan. 11-Feb. 14; walk-in entries: Feb. 12-14, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Looking for needlework pieces that showcase many techniques in both traditional and contemporary designs. woodlawnevents@

savingplaces.org

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 15

Historical Gardens Lecture. 9:30-11 a.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. The Alexandria/Mount Vernon Antiques Club will have Dean Norton, the horticulturist at George Washington’s Mount Vernon Plantation, speaking about the various authentic historical gardens at the Mount Vernon estate. Call 703-360-4979 for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 16

Business After Hours. 5:30-7 p.m. at The Wharf, 119 King St. Enjoy refreshments and hors d’oeuvres with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce while networking with other business and nonprofit professionals. Members \$10, non-members \$25, and members at the door \$25. Visit web.alexchamber.com

U.S. Navy Band. 7:30 p.m. at the Schlesinger Concert Hall, NOVA, Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive. Free. Visit www.navyband.navy.mil/ or call 202-433-4777 for more.



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ENTERTAINMENT

FEB. 17-18

Arlo Guthrie in Concert. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. \$110. Visit www.birchmere.com

FEB. 17-26

Winter Restaurant Week. Neighborhood restaurants throughout Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and the West End. \$35 three-course dinner for one or \$35 dinner for two; select locations offering lunch from \$10-20/person. Visit www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com or call 703-746-3301 for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 18

Eco-Savvy Symposium. 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn why plant and animal life biodiversity is critical to a healthy ecosystem and what can be done to bring diversity to your own backyard. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/.

The Lee-Fendall House as Civil War Hospital. 10 a.m. at the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. "This Tide of Wounded" tour of the museum and grounds highlights the Lee-Fendall House's role as a hospital during the Civil War. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org or call 703-548-1789 for more.

Historic Candy Story. 11 a.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Susan Benjamin is the founder of True Treats Candy, the nation's only historic candy company, and will highlight African American

history via the sugarcane industry. \$10. Call 703-746-4356 for more.

Experiences of Slavery. 2 p.m. at the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. "From Slavery to Freedom," this tour interprets the Lee-Fendall House from the perspective of its enslaved inhabitants, exploring the experiences of slavery in the city. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org or call 703-548-1789 for more.

Photo Exhibit and Concert. 6:15 p.m. at Chapel of Mt Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. The Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra will play the music of Prokofiev, Grieg. There will be an open house for a black and white photographic series "Sanctuary" of Huntley Meadows Park, plus a preview of new mosaic art, both by Nina Tisara. Free. Email music@mvuc.org for more.

FEB. 18-19

Presidents Day Breakfast Sampler. 9 a.m.-noon at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway. Join "General Washington" for a sample of hoecakes prepared by Mount Vernon staff. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.

Visit with George Washington. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy. Mingle with costumed characters from George Washington's world, followed by an 18th-century dancing demonstration, birthday cake and wreath laying ceremony. Adults, \$20; children ages 6-11, \$10; and children under 5 free. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.



Needlework

Needlework takes center stage at the Woodlawn Needlework Show and Sale at the Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway during the month of March. Visit woodlawnpopeleighey.org for more.

SUNDAY/FEB. 19

Revolutionary War Reenactment. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Learn about a soldier's life, see authentic weaponry and uniforms from the Revolution. Watch an actual battle between British and Colonial troops. Free. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard for more.

Top 10 Plants for the Garden. 1:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Horticulturists Karen Rexrode and Keith Tomlinson of Meadowlark Gardens and Judy Zatsick discuss their favorites. \$10. Call 703-642-5173 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ for more.

Washington Metropolitan

Philharmonic Concert. 3-5 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Pianist Thomas Pandolfi playing Paderewski's Piano Concerto in A Minor, and Duke Ellington's The River. \$20; children 8 and under are free. Visit www.wmpamusic.org.

Barbershop Harmony Concert. 3 p.m. at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. The 30-member Harmony Heritage Singers present a concert of popular songs. Free. Call 703-765-4779 or email gronbrandt@gmail.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 20

George Washington's Birthday. 9

a.m.-5 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Highway. Celebrate the national observance of George Washington's Birthday by visiting his home and burial site free of charge on this day, and watch a variety of activities. Visit www.mountvernon.org/ or call 703-780-2000 for more.

Wreath Laying Ceremony. 11 a.m.-noon at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolution, at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax St. Join the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution as they host colonial military and civilians to honor the soldiers of the Revolution. Free. Visit VisitAlexandriaVA.com/GWbday for more.

George Washington Birthday Parade. 1 p.m. at at Fairfax St. and Gibbon St. Grand Marshal is retired Alexandria Police Chief Earl Cook. To march in the parade or volunteer, visit washingtonbirthday.com/parade/, email gwvolunteers@gmail.com or a text to 703-408-4483.

TUESDAY/FEB. 21

Winter Gardening Lecture. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Learn early season practices that will save you time, money and labor. Free. Email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 23

Starving the South. 7:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Andrew F. Smith discusses his book "Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War," and sign books. \$10. Call 703-746-4994, or visit www.alexandriahistory.org.

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BUSINESS

Striking a Chord

Guitar Center stages lively opening.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Bruce Shepard stood alone under a parking lot street light taking it all in — the crowds, the music, the unusually balmy January weather. After a year-and-a-half of planning, Jan. 12 was opening night for the Guitar Center's newest location in the Alexandria Commons Shopping Center and Shepard was instrumental in making it happen.

"This is a great location for us," said Shepard, a New York City corporate real estate expert who scouts potential locations for the music store retailer. "We did a lot of research and demographic analysis and decided that Alexandria would be a good fit with our other stores in the Mid-Atlantic."

Hundreds of people from around the region waited in line to enter the store. With record-setting temperatures in the 70s, no one complained as musicians from T.C. Williams High School and the Blue Tips Band entertained the crowd and free raffle tickets were handed out for dozens of prizes that included gift cards, a PA system, musical accessories and a Gibson Les Paul Studio electric guitar.

"We've spent so much money at Guitar Center over the years it's exciting to finally win something," said Alexandria resident Mary Beth Buchholtz, who won a PA system.

Inside was controlled chaos as everyone, young and old, became a kid in a candy store trying out instruments ranging from guitars to keyboards to drums and DJ equipment.

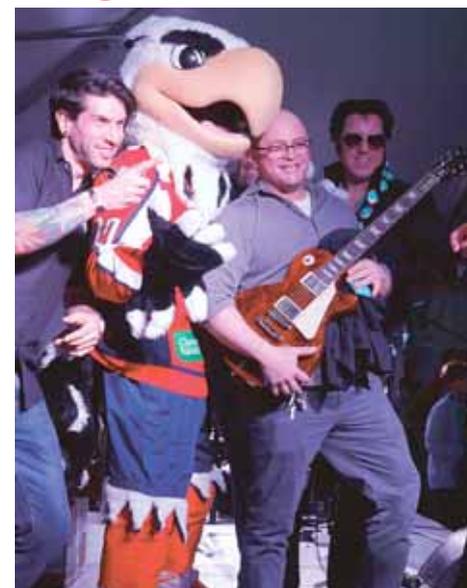
"This is probably the liveliest opening event I've seen in my four years of living in Alexandria," said Jeff Peterson, president and owner of Minuteman Press. "The Guitar Center did a great job of promoting this."

Guitar Center bills itself as "home to the world's largest selection of popular guitars, basses, amplifiers, keyboards, workstations, drums, percussion, microphones, PA systems, DJ equipment, stage lighting, recording software, studio gear and more."

Music lessons are available at the Alex-



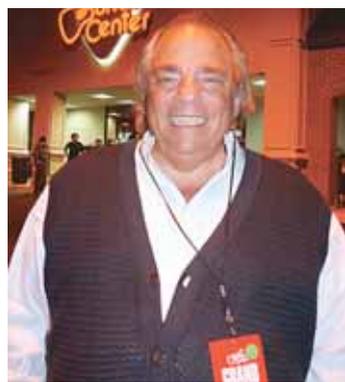
Musicians from T.C. Williams High School pose for a group photo after performing at the grand opening of the Guitar Center Jan. 12 at Alexandria Commons Shopping Center.



Grand prize winner Jerry Smolkin, second from right, poses for a photo with his new Gibson Les Paul Studio guitar at the Jan. 12 opening night celebration of the Guitar Center at Alexandria Commons Shopping Center.



Matt Carpenter and his 3-year-old son Luke check out the keyboard section of the store.



Guitar Center representative Bruce Shepard at the store's grand opening celebration Jan. 12 at Alexandria Commons Shopping Center.



Mary Beth Buchholz celebrates winning a new PA system during the opening night raffle.



Stephen Pelerin tries out a left-handed guitar on opening night of the Guitar Center in Alexandria.

andria location along with a selection of vinyl records and sheet music for various instruments.

As Shepard was savoring the evening, he paused briefly to look ahead to his next project.

"In two months we'll be opening our next location in Silver Spring," said Shepard, who has been with Guitar Center for 17 years. "But tonight it's all about Alexandria. This is a great market for retail and it's good to see all the energy and excitement here

tonight."

Guitar Center is located at 3155 B Duke St. in the Alexandria Commons Shopping Center. For hours or more information, visit www.guitarcenter.com or call 703-370-6240.

BUSINESS NOTES

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

Mental Health America, headquartered in Alexandria, received two grants for the following programs: Screening-to-Supports for their existing online mental health screen program and developing a whole health Peer Specialists program.

EatsPlace Cafe and Market, is opening a second location in the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St.

Dr. Lawrence Singer at **DC Smiles** has a patent for a device and method he created to help with trauma patients who experience teeth and jaw trauma.

The **Weichert, Realtors** office in

Alexandria/Old Town was recently recognized for leading its Weichert sales region, which is comprised of offices throughout Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Orange, Prince William and Warren counties, for resale revenue units.

Thomas J. Curcio received the Attorney of the Year "Good Scout" Award Thursday, Dec. 8 by the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Curcio is a partner with the Alexandria personal injury law firm Curcio Bergeron.

iLoveKickboxing recently opened their eighth Virginia franchise located at 660-662 S. Pickett St. It offers fitness classes where members gear up with boxing gloves and perform conditioning drills and kickboxing techniques on heavy bags. Instructors motivate and

encourage participants to "go the extra mile" to get results based on their personal goals.

The Alexandria/Old Town office of **Weichert, Realtors** was recognized in December as the lead office for resale listings in the Weichert sales region, which is comprised of offices throughout Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Orange, Prince William and Warren counties.

Frances Reimers recently launched **Firestarter**, an Alexandria-based consultancy that helps individuals and small businesses better leverage their personal brand through social and earned media.

Kathy Mejasich, has been appointed director of external relations for Wesley Housing in Alexandria.



Marching to Valentine's Day

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Bloom Fresh Flowers at 625 S. Washington St. is putting a fresh spin on the Million Women's March on D.C. to celebrate Valentine's Day. BJ Plecki, an employee of Bloom Fresh Flowers who participated in the march, presented owner Stephen Robinson with a design idea channelling that historic day.

Bill Would Hinder Municipal Broadband Program

BY CHARNIELE HERRING
DELEGATE (D-46)

Our future, at least part of it, exists on the internet. Already many in our country and across the world depend on this tool for commerce, information gathering, and even government transparency. However, a real question that has to be posed is how to we access the internet. Many have a connection at home, though in rural areas this is not always the case. Or, in the case of places like Alexandria where competition for service providers does not exist, we live at the mercy of wireless phone companies or our single local cable provider.

While attracting different providers is an option in some places, and federal programs exist to help bring broadband to underserved areas, it leaves places like our

COMMENTARY city in a quagmire. For many reasons we have not attracted additional competitive service providers to the City of Alexandria for cable and internet. In a long-awaited response to this, the city is working toward a municipal broadband program. They are looking to build the infrastructure needed to connect public buildings and then enter into public-private partnerships to ensure residential buildings to have access to the new network. This type of partnership has been successful elsewhere and gives us the opportunity to ensure the best service and pricing through competition in the marketplace. It means competition to make sure we have networks that can meet our needs and we have more than one option for a service provider to keep pricing fair.

From Alexandria's Chamber of Commerce to consumers watching Netflix at home, Alexandrians are looking for good alterna-

tives to make sure that we have the best access to the internet — it affects our economy, our regional competitiveness, our home values, and of course for many of us ... our daily lives.

This year in the House of Delegates HB 2108 was proposed that would stop our city from moving forward with this type of plan. It would make it difficult for any locality that has existing service of at least 10/MBPS download and 1/MBPS upload speeds to be allowed to build out a municipal network.

Thankfully, during the committee process, some of the worst parts of the legislation were addressed. However, I am still opposed to the current version of the bill because it creates an environment that makes moving forward with municipal broadband concerning.

The new version of the legislation proactively empowers current Internet providers with a monopoly to undermine local

communities which are working to modernize their local broadband infrastructure. It removes FOIA exemptions for any information related to “the fixing and revision of rates, fees and charges.” This potentially creates a loophole in which requests for competitively sensitive information, trade and proprietary information can be made and could in turn be used to undermine the operations of their competitors.

Access to the internet in a way that allows us to use modern technology is important for growing our local economy, competing regionally for jobs, and helping to education our youth. I have always been taught that in the vast majority of cases competition in the market helps make services better and more affordable. For something that has such an impact on us every day, we should not shy away from making sure we have done everything we can to have the best and most affordable service.

Session Chugs Along through Crossover

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

On Tuesday, the General Assembly passed “Crossover,” the session halfway point by which each chamber must complete work on its own bills and begin considering legislation passed by the other body. The Senate has passed eight pieces of my legislation and we've secured some victories for progressive values. From advancing non-discrimination in public employment for the LGBT community, to promoting research in the emerging field of energy storage, I am confident these bills would move Virginia forward. We've faced some challenges as well. Nonetheless, I came to Richmond knowing working for criminal justice reform, equality for all Virginians and gun violence prevention, would be an uphill, but important battle. I also introduced legislation to make it easier to vote, promote good government, and cut

COMMENTARY red tape for small businesses.

We've made serious headway on marijuana reform this year. Currently, those charged with first time marijuana possession face a six month suspension of their driver's license, in addition to fines, community service and other penalties, whether they were behind the wheel or not. This poses a serious threat to employment for many Virginians. With the support of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys and the co-sponsorship of Sen. Bill Stanley (R-Franklin County), the Senate passed a bill (38-2) I've been working on for several years that removes that mandatory suspension. But, we still have work to do. Nearly 80 percent of people in Virginia support marijuana decriminalization, according to a poll released this week by the Virginia Pilot newspaper. A bill I introduced to decriminalize marijuana was referred to the State Crime Commission for study, and I'm hopeful that the commission will see the

benefits of moving in the direction of many other states.

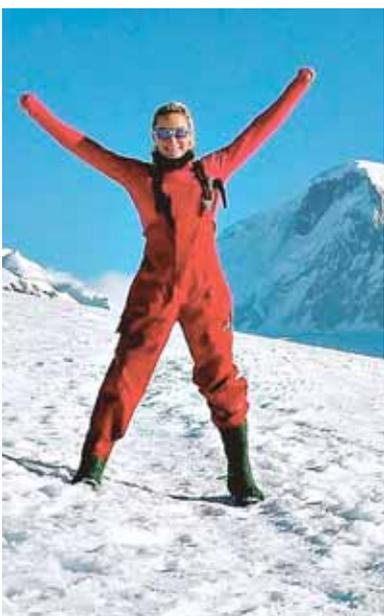
My legislation to forbid discrimination against LGBT government employees in Virginia was once again passed by the Senate. Three of our last four governors have issued executive orders to protect state employees from discrimination on the basis of sexuality orientation, gender, and other protected classes. This bill would codify those protections and extend them to local government employees as well. Unfortunately, two pieces of legislation I introduced, which would have removed the outdated ban on same-sex marriages from the Virginia Code and Constitution, were referred to the Code Commission. The commission, which reviewed the same issue in 2016, sent legislation back to the General Assembly, stating it was our responsibility to act on these bills. We cannot allow this ping-pong game to continue. Failure to act on this legislation tells LGBT Virginians that they are not equal, and that is not acceptable.

I'm continuing my efforts to advance sensible gun violence prevention. I introduced a bill that would've made it a crime for adults to allow children under five to handle guns. This failed to advance out of committee despite the fact that, just in the last year, more than 50 people were killed in the U.S. by toddlers handling firearms. Unfortunately, all bills that promote gun violence prevention continue to face unyielding opposition from by groups like the Virginia Citizens Defense League.

My agenda also includes a range of other topics. I advanced a bill through the Senate which saves a step for small businesses in obtaining their ABC licenses. In partnership with the Virginia Young Democrats, I also put forward legislation to mandate Family Life Education in all Virginia school divisions to reduce teen pregnancy.

Please consider following me on Twitter @AdamEbbin, emailing your views to me at district30@senate.virginia.gov and visiting AdamEbbin.com.

Brooke Curran, shown after completing the Antarctica Marathon, raises money for children's charities through The Running Brooke Fund.



Mini-Moves to Fight Winter Blues

BY BROOKE CURRAN

Did you know even a short burst of exercise can not only boost your mood, but it helps activate your brain, too? It's true. Exercise not only keeps our bodies healthy, it helps our brains work better, reduces stress and fights depression. That's a powerful combination.

We see impressive results when kids in classrooms and programs around Alexandria participate in the Move2Learn program. When we fit exercise into their day, the kids not only feel better, they learn better, too.

Even just a few minutes of heart-pumping exercise can have tremendous benefits.

Especially during these winter months when our activity level can slow down and we're often indoors, it's important to get our heart rates up.

It is easier than you think to fit a few minutes of movement into your day. Here are five easy ways to help keep you and your family active this winter.

Feeling frustrated? Take a mini-break and do 25 jumping jacks.

Young kids? How about a quick game of follow the leader? Start with a march in place.

Did someone say they're bored? Put on your favorite upbeat song and dance.

Build some strength and get your heart rate up with a quick set of 10 pushups and

10 squats.

Multitask — take your dog and kids outside and play a quick game of chase.

Remember, even just a few minutes of exercise can get your brain fired up, your heart pumping and lift your mood. So, grab your loved ones, pull your kids off the sofa and get moving.

For more information about the benefits of exercise and brain health, and how Alexandria's kids are benefiting from moving in the classroom, visit www.runningbrooke.org.

City House, Country House

Home offers sunny interior and bucolic surroundings.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

European craftsmanship, a free-flowing floor plan and light-filled rooms characterize a home that was designed according to the vision of a local jurist. Located in Alexandria's Braddock Heights community, the home, which sits on more than 1.3 acres, met the specifications of the late George M. Giammittorio, a former Alexandria Circuit Court judge.

"The home is sited on a bucolic lot in the heart of Alexandria," said Sue Goodhart, real estate agent, The Goodhart Group at McEneaney Associates. "Few homes still in the city have lots this size. It is very private."

At once grand and cozy, the home was designed with entertaining in mind. It boasts an expansive, sunny kitchen equipped with four ovens, an island and a breakfast room, which is warmed with a fireplace. An abundance of light streams in through floor-to-ceiling Palladian windows that offer a view of the home's manicured landscape.

The current homeowners "created the great room with a kitchen and open space ... and have prepared the home for sale by



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MCEANEANEY ASSOCIATES
Floor-to-ceiling Palladian windows allow an abundance of light to stream into the kitchen this Alexandria home.

repainting and updating throughout," said Goodhart.

Those updates can also be found on the home's upper levels, which include a master suite and three additional bedrooms. A third level includes an open loft space, which Goodhart says is ideal for sleepovers for a family with children. On the home's ground level are a recreation room with

built-in storage and a second fireplace. It also includes an au pair suite with private entry and finished kitchen.

"Throughout the original house are touches of the handcrafted work created by artisans brought in by the judge from Italy," said Goodhart.

A multitude of bird species, include bald eagles, have been spotted on the property

by its previous owners, making it an ideal setting for bird watching, says Goodhart. "It was a lovely family home but now the owners are downsizing as the children are grown and scattered around the country," she said.

Located at 2416 Ridge Road Drive, the home is on the market, listed for \$2,095,000.



A multitude of bird species, include bald eagles have been spotted on this property making it ideal for bird watching.

FEB. 11TH

HOME RENOVATION

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Since 1987

Signing Day

12 TC students sign on to play football at colleges.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

After a year of hard work and last minute victories, T.C. Williams High School Football Team made it to the playoffs for the second time in the last 26 years. Though they were eliminated in the first round, the players' drive and determination left an impression on colleges. On Feb. 1, 12 students from TC's football team signed on to play with college teams across the country, many of them winning scholarships to help pay for their education. "It feels good," said Teyan Williams, attending Livingstone College with a full ride scholarship. "I love basketball, but size carried me through for football. And now I have the opportunity to go to college. Education first: you never know what could happen. You could get hurt, so I need to use this opportunity to get a good education." Williams was a linebacker and full-back on the team. Williams doesn't know what he's going to study yet, but said he wanted to work in a field that involves computers.

"I'm so proud," said Williams' mother, Ayana Thompson. "It's a four hour drive, and we've got it planned. We're excited he's going. When I found out about the scholarship I was about to cry. I had to hold it in. I am such a proud parent. He gives it everything when he's on the field."

Many of the parents and staff credited Coach James Longerbeam for pushing the students to do

their best, both on the field and off.

"We're very proud," said Principal Dr. Jesse Dingle. "It's nice that they continue to play football, but the most important thing is getting an education and these scholarships. I also credit the leadership displayed by the coaching staff, which placed a renewed emphasis on character, teamwork, and Titan-pride."

"To be here less than a year and get all these kids scholarships?" said City Councilman Willie Bailey, "He's a phenomenal guy. He really cares about these students."

"It's easy when you have good kids," said Longerbeam.

At the signing, teammates congratulated each other and reflected on their historic season.

"All the hard work finally paid off," said Benton Lewis, attending Minnesota West Community Technical College to study marketing and business. "We have a real chance to better ourselves."

This year was the second time in the last 26 years that T.C. Williams' football team made it into the playoffs.

"We were elated," said Lewis. "This hasn't happened in a long time. Everybody here has known each other basically since elementary school. We really did this together."

Even off the field, the players are a team. After their group picture, they moved through the crowd of parents and staff together, greeting each other's families.

"We've been working towards this day," said Garrett Roach, "We've been really looking for-



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

Bottom row from left: Teyan Williams, Livingstone College (N.C.); Cesar Alfaro, Virginia State University; Steve Massaquoi, Minnesota West Community Technical College; top row from left: Brandon Duncan, Livingstone College (N.C.); Raymond McGuire, Livingston College (N.C.); Daniel Davis, Livingstone College (N.C.); Tyrese Randall, Yuba College (Calif.); Jarien Hillian, Minnesota West Community Technical College; Garrett Roach, South Dakota College of the Mines and Technology; Martice Briscoe, Yuba College (Calif.); Ben Patterson, Stevenson University; and Benton Lewis, Minnesota West Community Technical College.

ward to this for a long time. I'm just as excited for them as I am for myself." Roach will be attending the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to study engineering. He found out on Monday that he got into the school and on the football team. "I came up from Tampa on short notice," said his father, Dennis Roach. "He said, 'Dad, I'm signing tomorrow' so I got the first flight up here."

"We're so proud," said Nancy

Roach, his mother. "He's worked so hard for this. He's been persistent, and that's what gets you places."

Nancy Roach said that persistence was visible in the team throughout the season. Garrett Roach and other players repeatedly looked back on their game against West Potomac High School, where West Potomac was ahead and the clock was winding down. With a last minute touch-

down and two point conversion, TC turned the game around and won. Later, in the first round of the playoffs, West Potomac had their revenge and eliminated TC in a 26-0 game, but the players and parents still reflect fondly on that rousing last minute win.

"They stood up and didn't give up," said Nancy Roach. "Other teams get down and they give up. This team never gave up. They would fight to the very end."

Alexandria, Arlington Construct Bigger and Better 'Bridges'

FROM PAGE 1

For over 30 years, individuals and families experiencing homelessness have turned to Bridges for support. Bridges' services provide the skills, knowledge, and community networks people need to become and remain self-sufficient. In 2016, Bridges served nearly 500 individuals in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria.

Board member Kopp Michelotti said his favorite thing about Bridges is the Kickball Tournament. "They always pick the hottest day of the summer to hold it, and it is always fun. Sponsors pay to set up teams, so it is a fundraiser, but mostly an event that brings the whole community together." Board member Kris Finney's favorite thing was the running program she manages. They have about 20 youths, the children of clients, who run together. They train for the 5K races around town: Clarendon Day 5K, Turkey Trot, the Marymount 5K. Pacers

Running Shop in Clarendon helps support the runners. "It's the health piece of running, the mental health piece, and the supporting the community piece, yes," said Finney. "But perhaps most important is the mentoring piece." The goal of Bridges is to interrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty, she said. "So an important piece of that is getting the kids on track. We provide mentors who run alongside the kids and help them train. The mentors are volunteers who come from all walks of life and help expose the kids to people from outside their circle they wouldn't ordinarily meet. It may seem like a minor aspect, but those mentors have a big impact." Finney is always looking for volunteers.

"Let me tell you what I love about Bridges," said Jennifer Murchandani, the new president of the board. "It's the Lemonade Stand, because what Bridges does, especially for the kids, is a lot of non-tan-



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN

Former U.S. Rep. and founding member of AACH Jim Moran with Microsoft "Youth Spark" representative Tunisha Thigpen, and Strategic Consulting Partners Chief Development Officer Jasmine Gould.

gibles. The Lemonade Stand is about that. The kids have all the fun of setting up a stand, making the lemonade, and selling it. They bond. But they also work out the real life finances: 'How much did we spend? How much did we take in?' Since Bridges is about breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty, the values which are conveyed by such activities are important and possibly not otherwise available to these kids. It may be intrinsic in families who don't know poverty to talk about finances, teach kids about money, and engage in healthy exercise. But it may not be intrinsic in families with challenges. So we teach them to have fun, give back, and handle money. It is really hard to quantify a program like this, but the results show it works," said Murchandani.

Amir and her children are a good advertisement for the program. Amir went to school and got a degree in criminal justice,

SEE BRIDGES, PAGE 26

26 Antiques 26 Antiques 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements

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ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NUMBER 17-01-02

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking proposals for World Languages, K-2 Spanish Language Arts, & K-2 English Reading Textbooks for ACPS Schools.

Sealed Proposals with the notation RFP# 17-01-02 World Languages, K-2 Spanish Language Arts, & K-2 English Reading Textbooks will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, March 6, 2017. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Proposals appropriately received will be opened and the names of the firms responding will be read aloud. RFP documents may be obtained at the above Procurement Office or by calling 703-619-8162, or by downloading the RFP from the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/financial-services/purchasing/>

All questions answered will be posted as an addendum to the ACPS web site.

No RFP may be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days after the opening of proposals except as may be set forth in the RFP.

ACPS reserves the right to cancel this RFP and/or reject any or all proposals and to waive any informalities in any proposal.

Gerald W. Amacker (Jerry)
ACPS Senior Buyer

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Zone 3: The Alexandria Gazette Packet The Mount Vernon Gazette	Zone 6: The Arlington Connection The Vienna/Oakton Connection The McLean Connection The Great Falls Connection

OBITUARY



Kitty Lou (Schafe) Kohnke, age 83, was born in Washington, D.C., and passed away on February 3, 2017. She graduated from George Washington High School in Alexandria, VA and married her childhood sweetheart. Kitty worked for the Department of the Army (HQDA) in the Pentagon as a Military Personnel Management Specialist (Compensation & Entitlements), and upon retirement was awarded the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal for setting record achievements, establishing a pattern of excellence, exceptional character, and demonstrating distinguished courage throughout her career. She enjoyed serving in church, gardening and traveling in her retirement years. Kitty Lou is survived by her four children, Susan Ann Panajotov, John Robert Schafe, III, Mark Dayhoff Schafe and Dr. Glenn Eugene Schafe and her four granddaughters; Natalie Anne Henry, Alexandra Nicole Panajotov, Kaitlin Marie Schafe and Brooke Ann Schafe, and one great-grandson, Ethan James Schafe. The family will receive friends on Saturday, February 11th at 10am followed by a funeral service at 11am at St. John's Lutheran Church, 5952 Franconia Road, Alexandria, VA. Interment will be held immediately following the funeral at Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria, VA.

Obituary

Mary Kay Spink, 80, a retired CIA administrative officer, passed away on February 3rd, 2017 in Arlington VA. She was a resident of Arlington for nearly 60 years. Mary Kay was born in South Bend, IN to Robert and Marjorie (Blakeman) Spink on February 29, 1936. She was raised in St. Joseph, MI, and graduated from Purdue University in 1958. Mary Kay was recruited by the CIA while still in college, and moved to Washington D.C., after graduation. She served overseas in Khartoum (Sudan), Paris, London, and Vienna, as well as stateside in D.C. Mary Kay worked for the United States government for 28 years. In retirement, she was active in the Georgetown Presbyterian Church. A member for nearly 50 years, she served as a deacon, an elder, and in many other capacities. She loved to help others, and especially enjoyed volunteering through her church as a sponsor for refugee families, taking them under her wing on their path to citizenship. She volunteered for the Washington National Opera and the Arlington Voter Registration Office, giving countless hours of her time over 20 years. A life-long learner, she enjoyed taking courses through the Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute. Mary Kay enjoyed traveling with her friends, and especially enjoyed singing. A one-time member of church choir, she also performed with a number of singing groups, including the Arlington Senior Singers Chorale. Mary Kay was preceded in death by her parents and a sister, Barbara (Daniel) Yoder, of Mark Center, OH. She is survived by her nephews, Jerald (Lois) Yoder of Hicksville, OH, Richard (Karen) Yoder, and Philip (Linda) Yoder, all of Mark Center OH, as well as 18 great-nieces and nephews, and 31 great-great nieces and nephews. Mary was dearly loved and will be greatly missed by her family and friends. A memorial service for family and friends to honor Mary Kay's life will be held on Saturday, February 11th, at Georgetown Presbyterian Church at 1:00 p.m. Interment will be in South Bend, IN, in a private ceremony. Memorial contributions may be made to Georgetown Presbyterian Church.

ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INVITATION TO BID NUMBER 17-01-07

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking bids for Roof Replacement at Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy.

Sealed Bids with the notation ITB # 17-01-07, Roof Replacement at Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, Friday March 3, 2017. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Bids appropriately received will be opened and the names of the firms responding will be read aloud. ITB documents may be obtained at the above Procurement Office or by calling 703-619-8162, or by downloading the ITB from the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/financial-services/purchasing/>

All questions must be submitted before 3:00 p.m., February 24, 2017. If necessary, an addendum will be issued and posted to the ACPS web site.

A pre-bid conference/site visit will be held on February 15, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the address listed above.

No ITB may be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days after the opening of bids except as may be set forth in the ITB.

ACPS reserves the right to cancel this ITB and/or reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in any bid.

Gerald W. Amacker (Jerry)
Senior Buyer

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.
-Theodore Roosevelt

21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE

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

Light tomorrow with today!
-Elizabeth Barret Browning

OBITUARY



Ruth T. Fenn, artist, educator, mother and wife, passed away on January 24, 2017 in Alexandria, VA. She was a long-time resident of Greenwich, CT, relocating to Alexandria in 2013 following the death of her beloved husband, Albert H. Fenn.

Ruth was born June 29, 1927 on Long Island to the late George F. Tansey, Sr. and Catherine Gibbons Tansey. Ruth's brother George Tansey Jr. and his wife Barbara preceded her in death. Her brother-in-law Roger Fenn and his wife Sandy and two of their children, Tammy Lu and Amy Beth also preceded her in death.

Ruth is survived by her children, Mark W. Fenn (married to Raffaella Marie Rizzo), Carey Fenn Moses (married to Michael Moses) and Michael R. Fenn, her brother-in-law Richard Fenn, two grandchildren, two great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

While living abroad in Paris, France and Florence, Italy, Ruth traveled extensively throughout Europe with her family and learned French and Italian. She continued her travels in retirement, taking river cruises in Russia and China, as well as a special trip to Ireland with her husband.

Ruth graduated from Parsons School of Design in New York, where she studied Costume Design and Illustration. She received an art degree from Accademia Di Belle Arti in Florence, Italy. Upon returning to the United States, she earned her Bachelor degree from the University of Bridgeport, CT and was an art teacher at Riverside and Parkway elementary schools.

Ruth began her career working for Bonwit Teller in New York City and did fashion illustrations for Carson Pirie Scotts & Co in Chicago. Her flair for fashion and design were evident throughout her life. Always visually inspired and creative, Ruth used patterns, color and various textures to create many different art forms.

During her lifetime, Ruth had one-woman art shows, exhibited her work at juried shows, and participated in group exhibitions of local art societies.

Ruth was a longtime active member of the Old Greenwich Arts Society, Alliance Francaise, Greenwich Library's Hurlbutt Gallery/ Flinn Gallery and the Greenwich Symphony Guild.

Funeral Services will be held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Alexandria, VA on Friday, February 10, 2017. Online condolences can be made at www.EverlyWheatley.com.

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LIVE AUCTION COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
Thursday February 23, 2017 @ 12:30pm
365 Denbigh Blvd, Newport News, VA

SUMMARY

Primary Property Type: Commercial	Parking Spaces: 9
Building Size: 2,640 SF	Lot Size: 0.36 Acres
Year Built: 1964	Total Sq. Ft.: 15,505
2016 Assessed Value: \$299,000	Front Footage: 100 FT
New HVAC System	Depth Footage: 125 FT
No. Stories: 1	Zoning: C1

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EMPLOYMENT Bridges

FROM PAGE 24

although she joked that she still has her retail job at Williams Sonoma and knows more about kitchen equipment than she ever thought she would, and her children participated in the youth development program affiliated with the 4H program. They are still in the same three-bedroom apartment that was originally found for them by Bridges but they are self-sufficient. And they still have Bridges in their lives, like alumni of a good school: they come back to give back.

"I have a great story about the lemonade stand," said David Sklar, another board member. "I remember when the kids decided to donate the proceeds of the stand to a homeless animal shelter. It wasn't until I went in one day and saw these dogs all over the place and the kids holding up a big paper cheque for '500 dollars' that it hit me: here were these kids who were homeless, working to raise money to help homeless pets. I was moved. And you know what? I was so touched by their willingness to help these dogs, I picked one out and adopted it."

Departing Board President Lars Flori says Bridges is entering a new phase, having spent the previous 30 years building up an organization and expanding its services. It is ready to go to the next level, especially given its success with children. Over 60 percent of Bridges clients are under the age of 18. Bridges has hired Strategic Consulting Partners to help them plan into the future.

Dan Blaine, chair of the Capital Campaign, urged those in the room to get involved. "Bridges was lucky to find Dan," said Jeanette Norton, director of development. "He is very active in the nonprofit community in both Arlington and Alexandria, and although he is an insurance broker, he just happens to also have a background in fundraising and agreed to take on this project."

Blaine didn't seem daunted at all by having to raise \$1.5 million for a building that hopes to open in September 2017. "I've gotten the amazing task of having to talk to all the great people who are involved with Bridges," he said. "Think about what you might be able to do for us. Consider a hard hat tour (of the building under construction), discuss how you might be able to help, and get the word out: showing up is critical."

Sam Kelly, executive director of Bridges, told the crowd of supporters Bridges will contribute \$1 million from the sale of its previous building. When coupled with the additional \$1.5 million fundraising goal, the campaign will fund the purchase of the organization's new ground floor headquarters, a 4,700 square-foot multipurpose space, as well as outfitting the building and furnishing it to fulfill Bridges' expanded programmatic and organizational needs. "I know you will show up for us as you always have," he told the crowd.

To learn more about the capital campaign and donate, call 703-525-7177, ext. 112, or visit <https://bridges2.org>.

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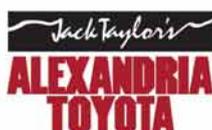
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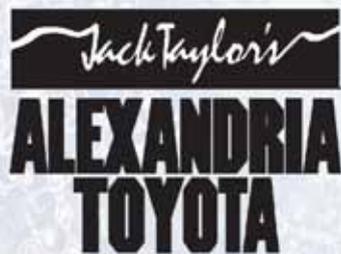
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