



PHOTO BY CHRIS BANKS

The Alexandria Singers perform at MetroStage March 18 during the organization's annual Cabaret and fundraiser.

Chordially Yours

MetroStage hosts The Alexandria Singers cabaret.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Long before there was “Glee,” there was The Alexandria Singers, who for over 40 years have dazzled audiences around the world with their choreographed performances of popular music. On March 18, the Singers held its annual Cabaret and silent auction fundraiser, selling out two performances at MetroStage.

“Who knew that 80 singers could fit on our little stage?” said MetroStage Producing Artistic Director

Carolyn Griffin. “With two sold out performances, auction items set up in the lobby and 80 singers on stage, it was great fun to host The Alexandria Singers and a wonderful way for their patrons to be introduced to MetroStage and for MetroStage to get to know The Alexandria Singers.”

From Berlin (as in Irving) to Brooks (as in Garth), The Singers wove together a variety of musical numbers into a lively, scripted production under the creative eye of Music Director Bill Colosimo.

“It’s a rare and wonderful experience when both performers and patrons can connect in such an intimate, personal, satisfying way,” said Colosimo in thanking supporters. “You made that happen at MetroStage this weekend by your warm acceptance of our gifts of music and fun.”

Comprised of musicians of all ages and backgrounds, The Singers are a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit music education and performance group and have represented Alexandria abroad with tours in Russia and Austria, and in area venues such as the Kennedy Center, Verizon Center, the White House and DAR Constitution Hall.

“Our silent auction alone raised over \$6,500 in contributions from our patrons, members, and fans,” said Catherine Colosimo, who handles marketing for the organization. “It was truly an incredible day.”

Visit www.alexandriasingers.com.



PHOTO BY TOOL JAMPATHOM

Members of The Alexandria Singers perform at MetroStage during the annual Cabaret and fundraiser March 18.

BIDing War

Proposed Business Improvement District divides King Street community.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

Those opposed and those in favor of a new Business Improvement District have much in common. Many of the business owners on both sides of the debate feel that the city has not properly maintained the streetscape along King Street and has not provided proper services to local businesses. Most local business owners agree that the lack of these services has hurt busi-

ness. But where the local business community remains sharply divided is how to bring these services back to businesses in Old Town, and more importantly: who will pay for it.

Several in the city are pushing for a Business Improvement District (BID). BIDs are 501c nonprofits made up of business and property owners within the borders of the BID. The BID provides public space and events management, advocacy for local busi-

SEE BID, PAGE 8

Halfway There

Almost everything to know about the city budget — so far.

BY DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

The city is about halfway through deliberating the proposed FY2018 budget. Here’s a survey of the ground covered so far. Dominant themes that have emerged include long-term health of infrastructure and of collaboration between the city and Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS).

Feb. 21: Proposed Budget Presentation

City Manager Mark Jinks formally proposed his budget, culmi-

nating a process of engaging citizens, city staff, and City Council.

Despite “anemic revenue growth and increasing expenditure demands,” Jinks said his proposed budget will “help ... keep our community in sound social, economic, and physical condition.”

Jinks’ proposal consists of two main components. First, the annual operating budget pays for the city and schools personnel, services, and debt. Jinks proposed an all-funds grand total of \$874 million. That’s a 2.5 percent increase over last year, owing in part to

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 16

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Living History

Eight Alexandrians selected as 2017's Living Legends.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

Alexandria is a city of living history. Beyond the colonial era buildings and the significant landmarks across town, the Living Legends of Alexandria seeks to identify, honor, and chronicle individuals who have made significant contributions to the quality of life in Alexandria. At its awards ceremony on March 16 in the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, eight Alexandrians with backgrounds in civil rights, local philanthropy and public service were chosen as this year's Living Legends.

The ceremony also marked the 10-year anniversary of the program, which started in 2006 when local artist-photographer Nina Tisara was working on obituaries and discovered that many people whose lives she was documenting had not been photographed.

"In some ways, I feel like I have no right to be here," said Tisara as she looked out at the reception with dozens of past and present Legends. "Just think of all these people: the brilliant minds and energy all gathered in one place. I was just a photographer. I was lucky."

The program's roots are in Tisara's photography, which she said gave her a passport into different communities she'd never been to before.

"The purpose of Living Legends is to document our current history," said Tisara. "Whatever circle or community you're in, open your eyes and look around, see the people who should be recognized for their vision and determination."



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES / GAZETTE-PACKET

The Living Legends of Alexandria gathered at the March 16 ceremony.

KERRY DONLEY

Two of those honored at the at the 2017 awards were former Mayors Kerry Donley and Bill Euille. Donley, currently senior vice president at John Marshall Bank, was first elected to Alexandria City Council in 1988. He served as mayor from 1996 to 2003, returning to the council for a term in 2010. As a councilor and mayor, Donley led the resolution for the Wilson Bridge reconstruction, zoning at Potomac Yards, bringing the Patent and Trademark Office to Alexandria, and pushing for capital funding for Samuel Tucker School and the Beatley Central Library.

"It's an honor," said Donley. "I always wanted to [be in public service]. I wanted to be a part of good public policy. I wanted to make a contribution. People are required to make this world a better place than they found it, it's as simple as that."

BILL EUILLE

Euille's public advocacy started as a child, working alongside his mother as she volunteered at Ebenezer Baptist Church and various local civic causes. After graduating college, he worked as an accountant at a construction company and later formed his own contracting firm in 1987. Two years

after he graduated college, Euille became the youngest School Board member ever appointed and served on the board for 10 years. Euille also created the William D. Euille Foundation which supported the Alexandria Scholarship Fund and various programs for city youth. Euille was elected to City Council in 1994 and was elected as the city's first African American mayor in 2003. Euille was also the city's longest-serving mayor.

"It was an honor," said Euille. "It's a very competitive process. Honored to be named a living legend, and have respect for the others selected and honored as well. I continue to hope to live up to that title, being a legend, by mentoring and providing support [for young people in the city]."

SANDY MODELL

Modell was one of only three women working at DASH when she took over as general manager 28 years ago. Modell credits fellow Living Legend Mayor Patsy Ticer with encouraging her and showing that women could push through barriers to make a difference in the workplace. During her time as the CEO and general manager DASH, the transit system grew from 17 buses to 80 and expanded its network across the city. Modell was also a longtime advo-

cate for building a new transit center, which finally opened in 2009 to serve as a hub for bus transit in Alexandria. Modell retired from DASH in 2016.

"I'm humbled," said Modell. "When I first found out I was chosen, I was overwhelmed. That I could be standing up here with so many great Alexandrians, it feels awesome."

MARY ANNE WEBER

Weber has dedicated more than 50 years of her life to journalism, including 14 years as editor of the Alexandria Gazette-Packet. Weber also assisted with the founding of the Living Legends program, and has served for 10 years on the Alexandria Community Services Board, a group of volunteers appointed by the City Council that oversees use of public funds to provide mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services. Over the years, Weber has served on a variety of boards and commissions working to benefit Alexandrians with mental health issues.

"It's exciting," said Weber, "It's all so unreal. There's so many people here that do so many things for our city."

JEN WALKER

Walker doesn't just sell homes in Del Ray, SEE LIVING LEGENDS, PAGE 25

Operation Purple Rain

A year-long investigation by the Alexandria Police Department, along with other state and local law enforcement in Virginia and Maryland, has shut down a major heroin trafficking ring operating in the region. Eleven residents of Northern Virginia and Maryland were arrested on multiple counts related to illegal drug possession, distribution, and racketeering.

"Heroin dealers have been taken off the street," said Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring. "[Heroin] is a drug that has no place in Virginia streets, schools, or home."

On the morning of March 11, eight search

SEE OPERATION, PAGE 5



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES / GAZETTE-PACKET

Commonwealth Attorney Bryan Porter announces 11 arrests connected to major heroin trafficking ring.

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NEWS

Operation Purple Rain

FROM PAGE 3

warrants were executed at residences in the City of Alexandria, Prince William County, Fairfax County and Prince George's County. Eleven suspects were arrested. Ten firearms were seized, along with several vehicles, more than 400 grams of heroin, 330 grams of cocaine, 19 grams of PCP, seven pounds of marijuana and \$18,000 in U.S. currency.

Herring emphasized that while attacking the drug suppliers was a major success, combatting heroin addiction will also require committed resources to rehabilitation.

"Make no mistake: this is a real crisis," said Herring. "We have to attack this problem with everything we have."

Virginia State Police Criminal Investigative Bureau Director Gary Settle said the investigation

started last spring after a series of overdose cases hit local hospitals. The investigation led to a single supplier in Maryland with a network throughout the region.

"This was not just a few street deals," said Settle. "This was a complex network with thousands of dollars in heroin. There people were putting others' lives at risk for their financial gain."

Herring and others thanked the work of Lieutenant Michael Kochis, Commander of the Alexandria Police Department Vice Narcotics Section, and the undercover detectives who worked on the investigation.

Additional arrests and charges are pending. The cases will be prosecuted jointly by the City of Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney and Office of the Virginia Attorney General.

— VERNON MILES

Suspect Arrested in Bank Robbery Scheme

It was a heist unlike anything in Alexandria's criminal history. On Dec. 16, three simultaneous emergencies struck across the city, and police said they were all the work of Lamont Sellers.

The first emergency hit at 2 p.m. when a bomb threat came in for Charles Barrett Elementary School. The school had to be evacuated. Immediately afterwards, the school central office was shut down when a call came in about a suspicious and heavily armed man in the area. Then came the final call, and the only real emergency of the three: a bank robbery at the Wells Fargo near the Minnie Howard Campus. Police currently believe the two

other emergencies, both of which were false alarms, were made to distract from the bank robbery.

At 2:05 p.m., police say a man entered the bank, passed the teller

a note, and implied that he had a weapon. He demanded money, which the teller surrendered, and the suspect fled with an undisclosed amount of cash. There were no injuries.

"It's interesting, we don't usually see this degree of planning into a bank robbery," said Crystal Nosal, public information officer for the Alexandria Police Department. "But when people do this, we still track them down."

While an elaborate plan, its effectiveness was questionable. Nosal said there was not a substantial delay in response caused by the other emergency calls, and the suspect was identified by surveillance video from the robbery. Sellers was charged with robbery, threats to bomb, and false summoning of law enforcement. He is being held without bond.

— VERNON MILES

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Alexandria Police Department.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

❖ The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 5400 block of Duke Street. Three suspects in masks brandished a firearm and stole cash from a business. There were no injuries.

❖ The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a pedestrian struck crash in the 200 block of W Glebe Road. A child was struck by a car and has serious injuries. The car stayed on scene.

❖ The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a weapon violation in the 6200 block of Duke Street. A security guard fired gun in the air at a fleeing larceny suspect armed with a knife.

There were no injuries.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 500 block of Slaters Lane. Two suspects brandished a firearm and stole keys and a vehicle from the victim. There were no injuries. A 2010 white Nissan Ultima was stolen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 400 block of N. Armistead Street. The suspect brandished a firearm and stole belongings and cash. The victim suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to a local hospital.

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PEOPLE



Award winners pose for a group photo March 20 at the 2017 Salute to Women Awards at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Pictured in front: Doratheia Peters, Lisette Torres, Martha Carucci, Laurie MacNamara, Patricia Paxton, and Lavon Curtis. In back: Kendall Walker, Yolanda Carrasco, Mildred Rivera, and Lisa Smith.



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Commission for Women chair Monika Jones, Councilwoman Del Pepper, Making a Difference award winners Yolanda Carrasco and Mildred Rivera and NBC4's Julie Carey.

Leading Ladies 10 honored in Salute to Women Awards.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It was standing room only as more than 225 attendees celebrated The Alexandria Commission for Women's 37th Annual Salute to Women Awards March 20 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The commission recognized 10 women for their civic accomplishments and the improvements they have brought to the well-being of Alexandria's women and girls. The awards represent achievement in a range of private and governmental pursuits, including: arts, business, service to youth, public policy, health and safety, public service and civic leadership.

The 2017 honorees are: Patricia Paxton – Leadership in Business and Career Development Award; Yolanda Carrasco and Mildred Rivera – Making a Difference Award; Kendall Walker – Youth Community Services Award (youth); LaVon Curtis – Youth Community Services Award (adult);



Susan Lowell Butler Lifetime Achievement Award winner Doratheia Peters with Councilman John Taylor Chapman.

Martha Carucci – Women's Health and Safety Advocate Award; Laurie MacNamara – The Marguerite Payez Leadership Award; Lisa Smith – The Donna Bergheim Cultural Affairs Award; Lisette Torres – The Vol Lawson Award; and Doratheia Peters – The

Susan Lowell Butler Lifetime Achievement Award.

"It is especially meaningful to receive the Susan Lowell Butler Award," said Peters of the Lifetime Achievement Award. "I knew Susan and saw the difference she made to this community. It is very special to receive



Award presenters McArthur Myers and former state Sen. Patsy Ticer with Sandy Modell, who was recently honored as a 2017 Living Legend of Alexandria.

an award that is named in her honor."

Proceeds from the event will support the Sexual Assault Center and the Domestic Violence Program. For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities with the commission, visit www.alexwomen.com.

Charting His Course ASF apprentice builds for the future.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

For nine months, Jay Helinski worked as an apprentice with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation. But in order to graduate from the nationally recognized program known for "building boats and building lives," he needed to complete a final project.

As Helinski worked his way through the curriculum, he decided to approach ASF staff with what turned out to be an unusual request: he asked permission to build a boat for his final project. Despite the program's focus on boat building, most apprentices lack the desire and skills to complete a project of this magnitude.

But Helinski had researched the boat he wanted to build, designed a budget and came up with a plan for making that budget work. Without hesitation, Helinski was given the green light by ASF staff.

"It is a thrill to see young people like Jay navigate their way through the apprentice program," said Kathy Seifert, vice president of development for the foundation. "Jay is a true testament of the good work being done at ASF through adult mentoring, project-based learning and the craft of wooden boat building."

The ASF boat building apprenticeship program is a workforce readiness program which helps at-risk youth between the ages of 17-22 acquire the career, social and self-esteem to become productive, responsible adults. As with most applicants to the program, Helinski came to ASF during a difficult time in his life.

"Jay could have either allowed the challenges of his situation to overcome him or determine a way to move beyond them," Seifert added.

As soon as Helinski entered the program, it was apparent to ASF staff and volunteers that he was committed to gaining the life



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Surrounded by fellow apprentices and staff, Jay Helinski, center, poses atop his hand crafted boat Feb. 28 to celebrate graduation from the Alexandria Seaport Foundation's apprentice program.

and career skills needed to build a successful future. According to staff, not only did Helinski begin to thrive in a very short period of time, but he became an inspiration

to other apprentices in the program, providing them the encouragement they needed to push through each day.

On Feb. 28, Helinski's final project became a reality. Family, friends, ASF board members, staff and volunteers gathered at the Alexandria waterfront to watch as Helinski launched his handcrafted "shellback dinghy" and rowed it around the edge of the Potomac River.

Now that he has graduated, Helinski is also ready to launch himself back into the world. He is planning to re-apply to art school and pursue a career in engineering and design.

As graduate apprentice and now full time ASF staff member Jimmy Gottfried said, "If you're ever wondering what goes on in that floating timber frame on Old Town's waterfront, I can tell you it's nothing short of lives being forever changed."

For more on the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, visit www.alexandriaseaport.org.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Proposed Center Makes Progress

The Charles Houston Advisory Council teen members organized a dance to raise money for a new teen center at the Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St. Nearly 90 neighborhood teens turned out and contributed over \$200 on Saturday night, March 11.

According to Paul Hamilton, the Advisory Council's president, the goal is to raise \$70,000 to develop and outfit the new center. To date, \$45,000 plus pledges totaling \$12,500 have been raised.

Two open visioning meetings with the teen center management and then with teens are to be scheduled in the next month. The Advisory Council members want designs completed in May and all approvals by July to have the teen center open in the fall of 2017.

To make a donation, visit the Advisory Council's Go Fund Me site at

www.gofundme.com/chrc-teen-center-renovation-2vhnqxw

Or find the Go Fund Me link on www.charleshoustonrec.com

— RIKKI GEORGE



PHOTO BY RIKKI GEORGE/GAZETTE PACKET

What do today's teens want? According to a graffiti board with teen comments at the Charles Houston Recreation Center, teens want a space of their own with new technology to do homework and have fun.

All Alexandria Reads Focuses on Art Crime

The Alexandria Library will celebrate All Alexandria Reads from April 1-May 9. This year's featured title is "Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures," an account of the experiences of Robert K. Wittman who tracked down and negotiated the return of priceless works of art as an FBI agent. Wittman will discuss a number of his cases including tracking down the Bill of Rights as well as works of art by Rockwell, Monet and Rembrandt.



Robert K. Wittman

The All Alexandria Reads program is designed as a community event to create shared experiences through reading. This year it is focused on the Whitman book with

companion books chosen for younger readers and the events will focus on art and artifacts as well as crime scene investigations.

Programs will include book discussions, art classes, lectures, story times, an escape room, film screenings and music programs. On April 27 the author will visit Alexandria to speak to students at T.C. Williams High School and will present a community program at 7 p.m. This is the 10th year for this signature event at the library and is made possible through a grant from the James M. Duncan, Jr. Library Foundation, Inc.

— SHIRLEY RUHE

Supporting ALIVE!

Garrison Miller, manager of the Giant Store on Duke Street in Alexandria, and Diane Charles, executive director of ALIVE! Inc., launch "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" March 4 to support ALIVE!'s hunger relief campaign. Within less than four days, donation boxes and grocery carts were overflowing. Miller said, "With one in five families in Alexandria struggling to put food on the tables, Giant is committed to this partnership." As part of this effort, Giant donated a \$1,000 gift card to ALIVE! to purchase food from Giant for ALIVE!'s food program.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



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McWilliams Ballard

BID Proposal

FROM PAGE 1

nesses, and streetscape improvements beyond what is provided by the city. The BID would also serve as a point of contact for disseminating information on new policies and proposals that affect businesses within its district.

Every business between the King Street Metro Station and the Waterfront, with Cameron and Duke streets forming most of the north and south boundaries, will be a part of the new BID. The BID also extends along parts of Washington Street and includes the areas of the Waterfront between North and South Robinson Terminals. The BID is funded by a tax on all commercial properties within that district.

“The proposed tax rate is 10 cents per \$100 of assessed value,” said Stephanie Landrum, president and CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership. “The tax would be levied on property owners, and it would come to them in the annual real estate tax bill. The way the proposal is written now, this tax will be levied next year. Tax rate is set in May 2018, first payment made by property owners in June 2018 ... based on the 2018 assessments.”

An estimated \$2.2 million will be collected by the city and transferred to the BID. The tax is only levied against commercial property owners within the confines of the BID, though a process exists for residents to opt into the program and have a vote in the BID. For businesses that are mixed commercial and residential, property owners only pay for the portions of the building that are commercial.

According to Landrum, the idea of a BID for Old Town has been around since at least 2005 when a retail study first recommended a BID for King Street. The idea has resurfaced again over the years, notably as a recommendation of a study by the MGM readiness task force. A subcommittee of the Waterfront Commission also undertook a year-long study of governance models for local businesses and concluded with a recommendation for a BID.

For many of the city’s business community, the BID is a way to provide the services they feel the city hasn’t.

“King Street looks shabby,” said Jody Manor, a local restaurateur. “Look at the ground, at the tree wells. It doesn’t look good. And we’re competing with other areas who do have BIDs, who help make their areas look competitive. We have to up our game.”

But other local business owners are wary of a BID and say the services they will be paying extra for are ones the city should already be providing.

“A lot of us don’t know where the taxes we already pay are going,” said Cindy McCartney, owner of Diva Designer Consignment and Other Delights. “We’re paying a lot of money ... I don’t see why that shouldn’t be put back into businesses.”

“Everybody’s concerned,” said Kyong Yi, owner of Fontaine Caffé & Crêperie. “Tax rates for all our properties went up already. So now we’re going to put another tax? I

don’t think people are really happy about this. We’re all trying to watch our budget. If majority wants this, I’m willing to try it. But first I need to see that the business community does want this. I don’t think the city knows. Ten or 20 people [supporting this] does not represent the hundreds of businesses ... I’m not against a BID, but I think if you create something, you have to identify if there is a need and if people want it.”

Landrum and many supporters of the BID argue that, while the city taking the reins and providing these services would be ideal, it’s not realistic

“The number one question we get is: why doesn’t the city just pay for this?” said Landrum. “It’s a fair question ... [but] given the city’s financial situation, it’s unrealistic or impossible to assume city will designate \$2.2 million for beautification, activation, and marketing of Old Town. We need this to stay competitive and the city is not in a position to step up.”

“There is a possibility of enhancing Alexandria and making it more attractive to tenants and tourists,” said David Martin, owner of Gold Works. “You’d be stupid not to have a BID. The city can’t pay for [services]. The city can’t budget that in. They want schools improved. They want police officers paid more. Everything they want is more important than street maintenance.”

Martin was the driving force behind the lights in the trees along King Street. He hopes that a new BID could help finance the lights being kept on year-round, as well as other similar projects to help make King Street more visually appealing.

“I want this city to look as good as Shirlington, Paris, or Miami,” said Martin. “Without a BID, we won’t get what we need ... I think it’s affordable, and without it, you’re not going to get [these services]. My store depends on the quality of the street. The streets haven’t been cleaned, and without a BID, they won’t be. People against the BID are being shortsighted.”

OTHERS BELIEVE the timing of the potential BID tax along with a the recently proposed increase in city taxes could drive out smaller businesses trying to operate along King Street.

“As a longtime retailer, I can appreciate the effort and the meaning, and I’ve been really trying to keep an open mind, but because City Council proposed significant property tax increase, this is not the time,” said Kim Putens, owner of Bloomers. “We have chronic problems, and I don’t believe an extra tax is the way to go about it ... It’s difficult for me to understand: we get absolutely no services from the city. We don’t even get trash picked up. They can’t find a way to fund and improve the single business district that they have.”

More than beautification, Putens said vacancy rates along King Street are what’s killing local businesses.

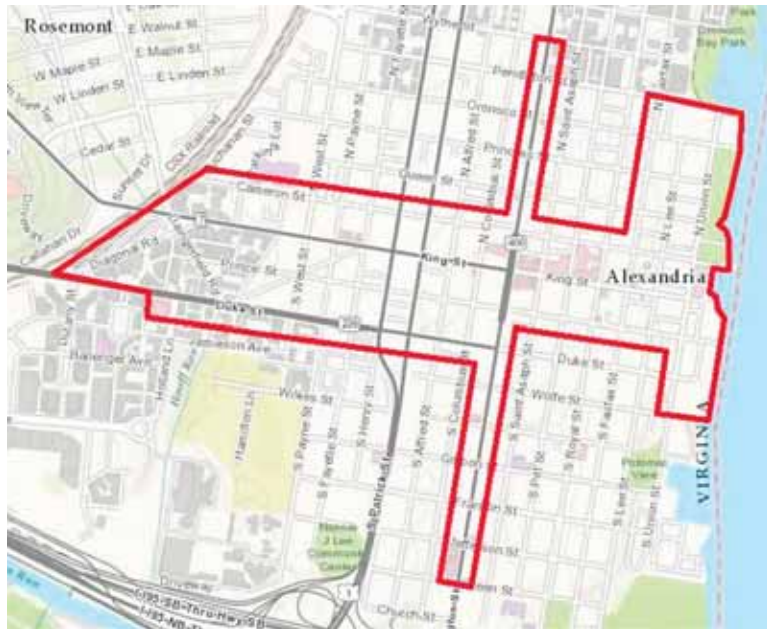


IMAGE CONTRIBUTED

Boundaries for the proposed Business Improvement District

“Having empty buildings along King Street does not draw customers to this town. Point blank,” said Putens. “I’m across the street from a chronically empty building ... for at least 15 years. In a historic town like Alexandria, with so much to offer, that’s inexcusable. And there are chronic examples up and down King Street. Twenty years ago: people didn’t walk past Washington Street. Walk up to there, then turn around. There wasn’t anything. When you approach a block with five empty spaces, people are going to think there’s nothing going on.”

Like the others, McCartney said she agreed with many of the ambitions of the BID, but is unconvinced that the program can provide them.

“Their dreams are all well and good, but it’s all very pie-in-the-sky,” said McCartney. “I feel like the things they want to do are terrific, but I don’t think just businesses should pay ... the attitude towards businesses needs to change. We have had to fight not to pay extra taxes and extra bills, and it has all been a fight up-hill.”

McCartney also criticized the process by which the BID has been advertised. In a door-to-door survey, many businesses owners along King Street had not heard of the BID. Landrum says flyers about the BID were sent to property owners, but one of the challenges in advertising information about the BID process is that no comprehensive lists of businesses within the affected area currently exists. Landrum says various types of lists have been used, such as emails provided to the Boutique District or to AEDP, but some businesses do not belong to any such groups.

“Frankly, this is one of the issues that a BID would solve,” said Landrum. “Right now, there’s no one place that has comprehensive lists like this.”

The academic view on BIDs is mixed. Frank Shafroth, director of the Center for State and Local Government Leadership at George Mason University, said there are a number of benefits a BID can bring a community.

“Research indicates that BID’s have been successful in reducing crime rates,” said

Shafroth in an email. “BIDs have had a large, positive impact on the value of commercial properties — on average enhancing values significantly more rapidly than comparable properties in the area — but outside the district. That means the evidence would point to their success in improving the level and quality of local neighborhood amenities.”

However, Shafroth said some of the success is dependent on the scope of the BID.

“That being said, the size of a BID matters,” said Shafroth. “Studies have indicated that small BIDs have little to no impact, and can actually lead to reductions in commercial property values. The minimum threshold in New York City, for instance,

is about \$200,000 per year in assessments — a level which fails to raise sufficient capital to make any observable impact. While Alexandria is obviously not New York City, establishing a minimum threshold would matter.”

Terry Rephann, a regional economist with the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, was a city councilor in Cumberland, Md. in the late 1970s. Rephann said the central business district was facing a lot of competition nationwide because shopping was moving to the suburbs and the downtown area had to compete with indoor malls and other shopping centers accessible by the new interstate.

“They were losing business, so they created a plan to revitalize the downtown area, to create a pedestrian mall with brick over the old streets and create event programming, marketing, and do additional landscaping,” said Rephann. “But the increased tax rate was a detriment for businesses. They could move right outside the tax area and gain the same benefits. It was a failed experiment. It didn’t have a huge impact on the vitality of that region.”

But Rephann noted that a BID in a less rural area could have different results, as the success of BIDs in Arlington have shown.

“Areas that are primarily office downtowns where they create more of a mixture of retail, that works out a little bit better than more remote, rural mid-size towns,” said Rephann. “There’s different challenges. There are some measured positive impacts, property values and reduced crime.”

Unfortunately, Rephann said, academic research into BIDs is limited. The organizations are created at local levels and Rephann said no larger database for BIDs exists to make research on the topic feasible.

Information about the proposed BID is available at oldtownbid.com. The site includes a list up upcoming meetings, but the time and location for April are still “to be determined.”

“We will be moving towards request for City Council to receive [the proposal] in May,” said Landrum. “It depends on how these meetings continue to go.”

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ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ❖ MARCH 23-29, 2017 ❖ 9

LETTERS

Fully Fund Schools' CIP

To the Editor:

As former School Board members (2013 through 2015), we understand the challenges faced by our school system. Students come into our buildings from many countries, speaking many different languages, with many different disabilities, and levels of ability. Yet for 180-plus days per year, ACPS's more than 2,000 employees give them every ounce of effort possible, more than anyone could expect for the money they are paid. (Not to mention the hundreds of volunteers who do the same.) The results are showing. You can not only see it in the data (which itself tells an important but very small piece of the story) but you can see it in a more important way by talking with students who have benefited from this work.

Now it is budget time, the season for the annual community debate about how much to spend on our schools. We write today on the specific issue of the ACPS Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. Decades of neglect (as well as declining or stagnant enrollment that lulled the community into thinking ACPS did not need much CIP support) have left our buildings overcrowded and falling apart. These conditions directly impact student achievement. They directly impact teacher retention, which in turn also affects student achievement. In the past five or so years, ACPS has been creative in trying to find ways to improve the situation. Staff and board have tried desperately to strike a balance between adequate improvement/expansion and the limited financial resources of the city. As a city, we can only kick the can so far down the road. That needs to end now.

Credit is cheap right now. We implore the City Council to issue bonds to invest — yes, we used the term “invest” because this is an investment in our community — in our school system. The time for nit-picking has come to an end. Teachers who need adequate work space are not nit-picking. Students with disabilities who need resource rooms are not nit-picking. Art teachers who simply want a classroom for students' creativity to bloom are not nit-picking. These are basic needs of a public school system.

We have worked personally with most of these council members and we know the entire council cares about this community and has an instinct to do the right thing for the children of the city, who also happen to be the future adults of the city. It is now time for the rest of the community to stop the bickering and own up to our responsibility to properly fund our schools.

Kelly Booz
Stephanie Kapsis
Justin Keating

Former ACPS School Board members

Who Paid Protest's Price?

To the Editor:

On Wednesday March 8, many of the teachers of the Alexandria City Public Schools and the School Board taught the students and citizens of our city a series of lessons. However, they may not necessarily be the lessons they



STEVE ARTLEY/GAZETTE PACKET

wanted to teach. It is apparent to many that these individuals, with the acquiescence of the board, put their own concerns over those of our students and taxpayers. First, as a result of Wednesday's protest, the students that were in most need were forgotten. The purpose of educators is to educate and in a city where we have high performing schools just blocks from unaccredited ones, our system and students need education now more than ever. Protests have their place but not at the expense of the education of our next generation.

Second, as many of the teachers demonstrated, a protest has results and consequences. Perhaps students could respond by protesting homework, or grades, or citizens could protest taxes that fund teacher pay for those who engage in activities that do not involve student instruction, or any number of vicious circles.

Third, as some of these teachers who protested and the ACPS advocate for their FY18 budget request, all citizens and taxpayers should consider reforming school policy so that students are put first and instruction is the priority. My hope is that the teachers and board plan to improve those schools that are unaccredited or are overcrowded, rather than providing pay increases for teachers who do not teach. Additionally, this protest underscores the need for school choice policies that allow taxpayers to send their funds to schools that teach students rather than encourage teacher protests. Perhaps U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has a valid point after all.

Andrew Lund, Alexandria

Another Bad Deal for City

To the Editor:

Once again the City of Alexandria is left high and dry by developers for whom they bent over backwards. With the news that JBG is planning to sell its properties in the West End — the properties that comprised the bulk of the

Beauregard Small Area Plan — the city is left with another up-in-the-air development plan. The city's cozy relationship with the developers didn't inoculate them from being blindsided by this news. I drive past the Mount Vernon Village Center every day with its boarded up, empty storefronts. Despite concerns of low-income residents in the community who would be directly impacted by the ambitious redevelopment of this Arlandria strip mall, the city again bent over backwards for developers who planned a large mixed use development on the site. So the once-busy local shopping mall emptied out and turned into a largely abandoned eyesore. The residents in the Beauregard area made their concerns clear, too. They were being squeezed out of their homes by ever-increasing rents and utility costs levied by the very same developers who planned to evict them one day to make room for an upscale development designed to accelerate gentrification in one of the last affordable communities for working Alexandrians.

In 2012, the City Council approved a mega development for the West End that gave the developers tens of millions of dollars of extra value. City Council members claimed to have secured over 800 units of affordable housing. Now five years later the developer is selling out and to date we have gotten nothing. And it is unclear whether we will ever get anything.

The newly released Alexandria budget does not include sufficient funds to either save existing affordable housing under threat from development or to bring new housing on line. With ambitious new development planned for the Oakville Triangle, Landmark, and Hoffman Center, will this City Council leverage opportunities it has with developers to obtain and protect affordable housing?

Sammie Moshenberg
Canek Aguirre
Victoria Menjivar
Alexandria

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

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PHOTO BY CERI BALDWIN

Framed by Snow

The plaque on the rock at Veteran's Memorial Walkway honors all deceased Alexandria veterans. Located along the bike path of the 500 block South Columbus and Wilkes Street, it was dedicated by the City of Alexandria on Nov. 11, 1979.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 10

Vision for Torpedo Factory

To the Editor:

We appreciate the Gazette's coverage ["Paint by Numbers," March 16] of this important new study by the Steve Fuller Institute. We are particularly grateful that the article recognized how the uncertainty of the current governance limbo at the Torpedo Factory Art Center is leaving our artists and their businesses in a precarious position.

Many of the voices cited in the article, however, seem to miss a crucial point of the Fuller Study: that the Art Center is a catalyst for economic growth in Alexandria. The goal of the study was not to canvas all sources of the city's tourism revenue, as Visit Alexandria's Patricia Washington seems to imply, but to illuminate how the Art Center contributes to the city's economic vitality and how we might capitalize on our unique qualities to the benefit of all of Alexandria. Washington is right to recognize the Art Center as a "major attraction" and that now is the time "to make the Torpedo Factory more." We will continue to work with Visit Alexandria to ensure that Alexandria remains a leading tourist destination.

It is equally misleading to limit any discussion of the city's management of the building to the past six months. The Torpedo Factory Art Center Board (TFACB), to which the article gives short shrift, was the entity that the City Council created in 2011 to raise money for marketing and capital improvements as part of a larger drive to revitalize the Art Center. That city-sponsored effort floundered — a fact that Washington, who sat on the TFACB, fails to mention when she criticizes that Artists' Association as a proponent of the status quo. The TFACB struggled to raise money to invest in the Art Center, developed a contentious relationship with the artists it was

supposed to champion, and never acknowledged the performance failures of the CEO and of their own shortsighted policy directives.

Given that history, the article's suggestion that some artists haven't noticed a change is not surprising. After six years of having the opportunity to lead, the city has yet to provide the vision for the future they claim our artists lack. Still, in spite of great uncertainty, a 15 percent rent increase, and a drop in services, our artists continue to be optimistic, creative, and cooperative.

It is great that a few artists continue to do well in their business under the current environment, but we want to ensure that all artists have the opportunity to thrive. That is why we launched the Artists' Association Business Plan last September not just for the future of our organization, but for a more dynamic and engaging Torpedo Factory. It remains the only business plan offered with an actionable roadmap to a self-sustaining Art Center. We hope the Gazette can continue to shed light on this issue to propel the conversation forward.

Rachel Kerwin
TFACB President

Trolley Tourists From Expanded Parking

To the Editor:

After reading the interesting article "Paint by the Numbers" [Gazette Packet, March 16] summarizing the study to help provide direction to better realize the potentials of Alexandria's unique tourist assets I thought of suggesting some ideas that might help with that endeavor.

Concerning our present and future direction of the Torpedo Factory, tourism, and the waterfront of Old Town, I believe a once-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12

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Susan Perry is the Vice President of Client Services at Care Options, a Lifematters Company. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Virginia with 25 years of experience in acute care, long-term care, rehabilitation, home care and hospice care settings. Susan has served as a member of the Geriatric Consultation Team at Inova Fairfax Hospital. She has a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Diane Vance is the Program Manager for the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. She has been immersed in dementia care professionally and as a caregiver for many years. Diane served as the Director of Dementia Care Services in Assisted Living and Director of an Adult Medical Day Program for elderly individuals with cognitive impairments. As a passionate advocate for those with dementia and their families, she has provided invaluable support to many.

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 11

in-a-lifetime opportunity exists to utilize not only the prized property of the abandoned power plant but the rail right of way that runs to the power plant then along the riverfront to the undeveloped warehouse and pier next to Founders Park.

With planning and leadership to develop and tie these separate developments into something greater than the sum of their parts, the city has an opportunity to add value to the tourist brand and alleviate problems with the added increase in traffic at the same time. Rather than more condos or townhomes built where the power plant stands, what if a development with large vertical expanded parking was incorporated in the planned complex away from the streets and waterfront of King Street along with a trolley system utilizing the rail right-of-way adjacent the waterfront delivering tourist to both the future development at the edge of Founders Park and to the future developments at the King Street waterfront?

What if tourists were enticed to park away from the side streets of downtown with more affordable parking fees at the north end of Old Town and they could enjoy the wonderful view of the Potomac and D.C. skyline from a railed trolley car delivering them to the attractions of Old Town at King Street? Similar to the draw of San Francisco's streetcars, Old Town would make a romantic city even more so and alleviate the problem of traffic and parking on our streets. I also would suggest a study to mimic what some of the cities of Europe have successfully achieved with their main street / boulevard. Setting aside some space used by cars on King Street would allow more access for tourist and pedestrians to walk along and free up areas for restaurants to expand outside dining and display space for shops. This would attract more people to experience the many restaurants and shops of King Street.

Charles Mayfield
Alexandria

Audit Schools' CIP Projects

To the Editor:

Before the City Council funds any CIP monies for ACPS, it is imperative that there be an audit of all of ACPS CIP projects. Clearly, Alexandria taxpayers have well taken care of funding our school system for many years and clearly, ACPS, the School Board and Superintendent Alvin Crawley continue to move monies around from one CIP project to another, thus creating one of the greatest ponzi schemes in Alexandria.

Alexandria taxpayers only have to pay the debt service incurred by ACPS, which this year is \$28.5 million. All other monies in the city budget that go to our school district are for ACPS to use as they see fit and unfortunately, our elected officials cannot tell Superintendent Crawley and all School Board members how to spend these funds. Recently, ACPS found \$5 million to be shifted from Polk Elementary School over to Patrick Henry. They have also found another \$15 million from another CIP project or its capital funding budget.

I do not support giving one more dime to ACPS until said audit is performed and we all know how these monies are being spent. Further, it should be mandated that Superintendent Crawley and the School Board issue a public statement that they, not the mayor/council, can spend these funds anyway they want without any accountability. This must end and the only way to find out where they have hidden these monies is through an audit.

Yes, this is about the children. However, it is just



PHOTO BY CERI BALDWIN

Snapshot

Along the 400 block of South Washington Street, through strong wind, rain, and snow, a squirrel survives in its nest throughout winter and into spring.

as important that all PTA members, principals, teachers and other school staff start asking questions about poor school buildings, leaking roofs, schools inhabited by rats and everything else related to the health, welfare and safety of all students to Superintendent Crawley and members of the School Board.

School maintenance is the responsibility of ACPS and not the City of Alexandria. Hopefully ACPS will tell these folks the truth about how they keep moving money around because they certainly have not been honest with Alexandria taxpayers for years.

Annabelle Fisher
Alexandria

Federal Cuts Impact Alexandria

To the Editor:

As the president and CEO of Rebuilding Together Alexandria, it is disheartening to see that the budget debate in Washington largely ignores the very real impact that spending cuts will have on communities throughout the nation.

Take the impact on housing. More people are struggling to maintain their home or pay their rent each month. New research from the National Low Income Housing Coalition found a national shortage of more than 7 million apartments that are affordable to our nation's 11 million families with extremely low incomes. This means that there are only 35 affordable apartments for every 100 extremely low income families. Because the mortgage or home maintenance or "rent eats first," these families are forced to make harmful trade-offs and skimp on groceries, medical care, and other basic needs.

Every state and congressional district is directly
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Repairs Help People Stay in Their Homes

BY BREANNE
DRISCOLL
REBUILDING TOGETHER
ALEXANDRIA



Mr. R came upon Rebuilding Together Alexandria in 2013 from a newsletter he had picked up. He was in a situation where he was in dire need of assistance. His hot water heater was “spurting” everywhere. Mr. R has six children and raising them as a single parent on a fixed income can make it difficult to pay for house repairs. His roots to Alexandria run deep, owning a home in a historic part of Alexandria, playing sports at T.C. Williams in his younger years, and being a mentor and coach to children at a local recreation center. With enthusiasm he states, “I am a proud native of Alexandria. I believe our city is the most beautiful place one could have the privilege to live. Alexandria’s rich history and current community diversity is a beacon for other communities to appreciate and follow the principals that govern our belief.” He has remained positive, even inspirational, through it all.

Rebuilding Together Alexandria, over the

past few years has been able to assist Mr. R with critical health and safety repairs, so he can concentrate on more important priorities in his everyday life like getting his children dressed, fed, and off to school every day. We have replaced his water heater, installed handrails and grab bars in the interior and exterior of his home, repaired drywall, installed a bathroom vanity, and most recently repaired the roof that was severely leaking. Mr. R reiterated his appreciation in a follow-up survey staff conducted, “I have a high standard of safety entering and leaving my home because of Rebuilding Together’s efforts and concerns about my welfare and safety. I now have easy access entering and exiting my porch front door and rear of house. The comfort and safety that the bath and shower rails provide, words can’t express. The repair to the roof



Rebuilding Together Alexandria provides a variety of free repairs to help residents live in their homes.

has restored the structural integrity to my home.”

When following up with Mr. R, staff noticed he was using electrical heaters in his home because he could not get his furnace pilot light lit. Rebuilding Together staff began to get this issue resolved immediately. Rebuilding Together Alexandria’s Executive Director Katharine Dixon wants to reinforce to residents in the City of Alexandria that, “Without our funding, Mr. R and his six children would have weathered the winter with no heat. With the proposed FY18 federal budget, many organizations that serve residents like Mr. R will face the impact that spending cuts will have on people and communities throughout the nation.”

For more information call 703-836-1021, email kd@RebuildingTogetherAlex.org, or visit www.RebuildingTogetherAlex.org.

LETTERS

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impacted by this growing problem. Yet, low spending caps — required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 — have already led to deep cuts to critical housing programs. Since 2010, HUD funding has been cut by \$4.3 billion. The programs hardest hit include those that support housing construction, public housing, community development, and housing for our neighbors who are elderly or have disabilities.

While the White House and Congress have reached short-term agreements in recent years to provide some modest budgetary relief, harmful spending caps will return for the fiscal year 2018 budget. Add to that the additional cuts proposed by the President. Local jurisdictions will be put in the very hard position of determining what social services to fund that the new federal budget won’t.

Unless Congress acts, millions of low income families could be negatively impacted and thousands of families could lose access to stable housing, putting them at increased risk of homelessness.

The impact of these cuts will be felt nationwide and in Alexandria. Rebuilding Together Alexandria’s work

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HOME OF THE WEEK

Belle Haven

You have to love sunshine to live here! This spacious home has sun from every direction and is totally move in ready. Some of the features include beautiful newly refinished hardwood floors on 3 levels, painted inside as well as the exterior, 5 bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms, and a finished basement. The gourmet kitchen has an island, breakfast room, pantry, mudroom and French doors leading to a flat back yard, patio and gardens. The master bedroom has a dramatic wall of windows, wood burning fireplace, walk in closet, and spa bathroom with double vanities, water closet, large walk in shower, spa tub. Zoned heat and a/c with a NEST system. And the list goes on. Let your story begin here. <http://bit.ly/2nDXbZB>

Snap Shot

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 13

in affordable homeownership preservation prevents hundreds of city homeowners from being one home maintenance bill away from a missed mortgage payment or bankruptcy or homelessness. By providing free home repairs, we enable our low-income Alexandrians, including the elderly, those with disabilities, veterans, and families with children, to remain stably housed in safe and sanitary conditions. Improved and stable housing conditions are not only critical for residents, but also for neighborhood revitalization and overall community health: multiple studies show strong connections between housing stability and improved student achievement, adult job productivity, and increased well-being.

It is time for the President and Congress to lift these arbitrary low spending caps that have done little to address our nation's debt problem, but which continue to undermine critical pieces of the federal safety net including housing. Policymakers need to look at the harm these spending cuts have on our communities, and not just numbers on a page.

Katharine Dixon

President/CEO

Rebuilding Together Alexandria

Looking to Church's Future Development

To the Editor:

The Alfred Street Church is poised to make a massive mistake. It's sad because its rich history is inspirational and ennobling. The trials it and especially its members during the last two centuries surmounted would have caused congregations of weaker constitutions to collapse, if not during slavery, then during reconstruction, or at any time in the long era of Jim Crow segregation and belittlement.

Throughout these travails, the Alfred Street Church has grown. It's again bursting at its seams. Its current solution: use an entire city block wherein its current facilities are located to create a gigantic house of prayer. Unless it comes to its senses, the Alfred Street Church will entrap itself physically unable to grow any further.

Moreover, the building design it submitted to the city Board for Architectural Review is breathtaking, but for the wrong reasons. It celebrates the Alfred Street Church wealth; not its piety and purpose.

It even insults the eye not to mention the purse of its tithers, the church-going members who'll be on the hook to pay the many-million dollar mortgage for this monolithic structure. This is not the right message for a church that has forever been dedicated to the poor and the needy and those marginalized by their skin color.

If its members really want to pay homage foremost to Mammon while simultaneously insulting their neighbors who have beseeched them to scale down their structure, then they should at least consider where their next church and associated structures should be built when it outgrows the too-big one it seems intent on building.

It's not too late for the Alfred Street Church leaders to draw strength from the

only city Architectural Board member to oppose the building design. Coincidentally, she was the only board member who actually walked the building site. After she did, she realized it was no place for a mega-church. Pray the Alfred Street Church leaders and members have the same epiphany.

Jimm Roberts

Alexandria

A Better Way To Rebuild

To the Editor:

Citizens I need your help. At a recent City Council meeting concerning the school budget, the children of our schools discussed the presence of mold in the ceiling of our schools, water leaks, the lack of heat and air conditioning, gas leaks at Hammond necessitating multiple evacuations and the rats that inhabit our schools all of which lends credence to what we already knew — we are in crisis mode. Our schools are unhealthy, unfit for occupancy. This whole issue of total neglect of school maintenance and an insensitive governing body who sat on their hands and kicked this down the road in lieu of other pet projects even though we knew in 2009 and 2010 (6.2 percent increase in enrollment in 2009, 2.8 percent increases in 2010) that there was trouble ahead, the school population was advancing. A governing body that never rendered a project on time and on budget — who thought tennis lights were more important than schools. I present to you the culprit: The School Board, "less newly elected members." We have all owned up that there is a crisis at hand. We must commit to fixing the problem but based upon what has happened in the recent past Patrick Henry and Jefferson Houston, I believe there is a better plan to move forward.

Councilman Paul Smedberg has suggested a blue ribbon panel of experts to monitor the school repairs, Councilman Timothy Lovain has introduced the idea of a czar, an expert to tackle the problem, while Councilman Justin Wilson advocated the revenue route — increasing the tax increase that City Manager Mark Jinks proposed by more than 100 percent, so the citizens will bear the brunt of this project. Mr Jinks wants to raise the debt service by 20 percent which would wreak havoc with our financial ratios and jeopardize our AAA bond rating.

I suggest another alternative — a private partnership. It is obvious that our School Board, facilities and planning staff are in over their heads. They are simply unable to deal with the school structural issues. We pay big salaries to these planning and facility heads but get very little in return. The underlying principle behind PPP's is that while the private sector needs to be responsible for the delivery of a particular service such as a school it does not have to be responsible for providing a particular service (construction) or undertaking the investment — it can be shared. In this way all members of the PPP do what they do best: We educate, they build and finance.

With three new schools to build and five more to renovate, the idea of shared risk

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HOME SALES

In February 2017, 145 Alexandria homes sold between \$1,925,000-\$110,000. This week's list represents those homes sold in the \$1,925,000-\$315,000 range. For the complete list, visit www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Address	BR .	FB	HB	...	Postal	City...	Sold Price	...	Type	.....	Lot	AC	Postal	Code	Subdivision
733 UNION ST S	3	...	4	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,925,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22314	.....	BACKYARD BOATS
15 FORREST ST	5	...	5	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,671,942	...	Detached	.....	0.18	.....	22305	.....	MOUNT IDA
104 FRANKLIN ST	3	...	4	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,460,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22314	.....	BACKYARD BOATS
207 LEE ST S	4	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,425,000	...	Semi-Detached	0.05	.....	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
603 VIEW TER W	4	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,260,000	...	Detached	.....	0.12	.....	22301	..	GEORGE WASHINGTON PARK
110 GIBBON ST	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,255,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22314	.....	POMMANDER
2100 MAIN LINE BLVD	4	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,240,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.06	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
738 BLUEMONT AVE	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,167,027	...	Townhouse	....	0.00	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
120 COLUMBUS ST N	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,139,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	.....	CHURCH SQUARE
737 WATSON ST	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,101,478	...	Townhouse	....	0.00	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
1250 WASHINGTON ST #721	3	...	3	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,100,000	...	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	PORTO VECCHIO
420 PRINCESS ST	4	...	3	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,094,000	...	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
3808 GRIFFITH PL	5	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.. \$1,010,000	...	Detached	.....	0.23	.....	22304	.....	SEMINARY RIDGE
711 CUSTIS AVE E	4	...	4	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$990,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
808 GRAND VIEW DR	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$975,000	....	Detached	.....	0.16	.....	22305	.....	BEVERLEY HILLS
408 JOHN CARLYLE ST	3	...	3	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$950,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	....	CARLYLE CITY RESIDENCES
108 W MONROE AVE	5	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$920,000	....	Detached	.....	0.15	.....	22301	.....	DEL RAY
1601 RUFFNER RD	4	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$900,000	....	Detached	.....	0.30	.....	22302	.....	OAKLAND
512 COLUMBUS ST	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$900,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22314	.....	CARRIAGE WORKS
309 CROWN VIEW DR	4	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$885,000	....	Detached	.....	0.20	.....	22314	.....	CLOVER
610 ROYAL ST S	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$880,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.07	.....	22314	.....	YATES GARDENS
906 ALLISON ST	4	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$849,000	....	Detached	.....	0.19	.....	22302	.....	BEVERLEY ESTATES
418 FAYETTE ST S	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$840,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN VILLAGE
116 EARLY ST N	4	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$825,000	....	Detached	.....	0.23	.....	22304	.....	ALEXANDRIA
307 WASHINGTON ST N	4	...	1	...	3	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$825,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
731 ALFRED ST N	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$818,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN COMMONS
419 PITT ST N	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$815,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	.....	CHATHAM SQUARE
714 GRAND VIEW DR	4	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$800,000	....	Detached	.....	0.16	.....	22305	.....	BEVERLY HILLS
212 SPRING ST E	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$799,000	....	Detached	.....	0.11	.....	22301	.....	ROSEMONT PARK
629 PUTNAM PL	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$783,500	....	Detached	.....	0.21	.....	22302	..	GEORGE WASHINGTON PARK
1004 PENDLETON ST	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$782,400	....	Townhouse	....	0.06	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
913 BERNARD ST	3	...	3	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$775,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.06	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN CRESCENT
2410 POTOMAC AVE #102	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$765,000	....	Duplex	.....	.....	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
1722 OAKCREST DR	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$760,000	....	Detached	.....	0.11	.....	22302	.....	DYES OAKCREST
116 WOLFE ST	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$750,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
1905 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY#102	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$745,000	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARDS
3516 CAMERON MILLS RD	4	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$745,000	....	Detached	.....	0.19	.....	22305	.....	BEVERLEY HILLS
707 BRAXTON PL	6	...	5	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$730,000	....	Detached	.....	0.11	.....	22301	..	GEORGE WASHINGTON PARK
1316 MAIN LINE BLVD	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$723,000	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22301	.....	POTOMAC YARD
706 SCARBURGH WAY	4	...	3	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$723,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN GREENS
1001 CAMERON ST	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$719,000	....	Attach/Row Hse	0.02	.....	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
387 CAMERON STATION BLVD	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$710,300	....	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22304	.....	CAMERON STATION
1318 DEWITT AVE	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$689,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22301	.....	DEL RAY
1403 PRINCE ST	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$665,000	....	Attach/Row Hse	0.03	.....	.....	22314	.....	CHELSEA
4608 LAMBERT PL	3	...	2	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$655,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22311	.....	STONEGATE
2703 DEWITT AVE	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$639,000	....	Duplex	.....	0.09	.....	22301	.....	ABINGDON/DEL RAY
4604 KIRKLAND PL	3	...	2	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$630,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22311	.....	STONEGATE
406 TENNESSEE AVE	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$627,000	....	Detached	.....	0.15	.....	22305	.....	BEVERLY HILLS
108 BROWNS MILL DR	4	...	3	...	2	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$617,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22304	.....	TOWNES AT CAMERON PARKE
17 LINDEN ST E	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$615,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22301	.....	ROSEMONT
219 DEL RAY AVE E	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$615,000	....	Semi-Detached	0.07	.....	.....	22301	.....	DEL RAY
412 SECOND ST	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$613,500	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22314	..	WATERGATE OF ALEXANDRIA
4675 KIRKPATRICK LN	2	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$602,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.06	.....	22311	.....	STONEGATE
5536 FORRESTAL AVE	4	...	3	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$599,900	....	Detached	.....	0.18	.....	22311	.....	SHIRLEY FOREST
270 CAMERON STATION BLVD	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$593,270	....	Townhouse	....	0.02	.....	22304	.....	CAMERON STATION
1107 PRINCESS ST	3	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$590,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22314	.....	PARKER GRAY
600 S. FAYETTE ST	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$575,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.08	.....	22314	.....	JEFFERSON HOMES
909 PENDLETON ST	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$572,000	....	Semi-Detached	0.04	.....	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN
239 TENNESSEE AVE	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$565,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22305	.....	WARWICK VILLAGE
1091 CHAMBLISS ST	3	...	3	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$565,000	....	Detached	.....	0.28	.....	22312	.....	LINCOLNIA HILLS
1115 CAMERON ST #314	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$565,000	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	THE PRESCOTT
525 FAYETTE ST #313	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$565,000	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	THE HENRY
452 CLAYTON LN	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$560,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22304	.....	EDSALL RD T/H
605 HENRY ST S	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$550,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22314	.....	JEFFERSON HOMES
3121 KING ST	4	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$545,000	....	Detached	.....	0.16	.....	22302	...	MCKENZIE LEWIS PROPERTY
204 BURGESS AVE	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$542,500	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22305	.....	WARWICK VILLAGE
3314 MONTROSE AVE	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$537,500	....	Townhouse	....	0.05	.....	22305	.....	LYNHAVEN
915 PATRICK ST N #502	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$534,900	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN COMMONS
9 LEADBEATER ST	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$516,300	....	Semi-Detached	0.07	.....	.....	22305	..	WILMAR PARK/LAND OF HERBERT
1608A HUNTING CREEK DR #A	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$499,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	OLD TOWN GREENS
954 HARRISON CIR	2	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$480,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22304	.....	SUMMERS GROVE
5151 ECHOLS AVE	2	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$475,000	....	Detached	.....	0.43	.....	22311	.....	WASHINGTON FORREST
1503 WOODBINE ST	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$466,400	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22302	.....	KENWOOD TOWERS
18 CARRIAGE HOUSE CIR	2	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$465,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22304	.....	COLONIAL HEIGHTS
4010 TANAY AVE	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$455,000	....	Detached	.....	0.17	.....	22304	.....	QUAKER HILL
6020 RICKETTS WALK	3	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$450,100	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22312	.....	QUANTRELL MEWS
19 MOUNT VERNON AVE	2	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$443,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.04	.....	22301	.....	ROSEMONT
2645 CENTENNIAL CT	4	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$437,500	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22311	.....	SEMINARY HEIGHTS
2909 DINWIDDIE ST	2	...	2	...	0	ARLINGTON	.... \$434,000	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22206	.....	FAIRLINGTON VILLAGE
1250 WASHINGTON ST #314	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$425,000	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	PORTO VECCHIO
4681 LAWTON WAY #303	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$415,500	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22311	.....	MANORS AT STONEGATE
3726 EDISON ST	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$414,000	....	Townhouse	....	0.03	.....	22305	.....	HUME SPRINGS
3810 EDISON ST	3	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$411,000	....	Duplex	.....	0.03	.....	22305	.....	HUME SPRINGS
1207 PITT ST N #3C	2	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$410,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	CANAL PLACE
610 WEST ST #103	2	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$406,000	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	COLECROFT
505 BRADDOCK RD #702	2	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$402,500	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	COLECROFT
181 REED AVE E #304	2	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$400,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22305	.....	PRESTON
2686 CENTENNIAL CT	3	...	3	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$400,000	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22311	.....	SEMINARY HEIGHTS
126 ROBERTS LN #200	3	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$400,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	FORT ELLSWORTH
525 FAYETTE ST N #604	1	...	2	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$395,000	....	Mid-Rise 5-8 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	THE HENRY
1735 BRADDOCK PL W #301	2	...	2	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$387,500	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22302	.....	KINGSGATE
3742 JASON AVE	2	...	1	...	1	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$385,000	....	Townhouse	.....	.....	.....	22302	.....	FAIRLINGTON TOWNE
4902 29TH RD S #A1	2	...	2	...	0	ARLINGTON	.... \$373,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22206	.....	FAIRLINGTON VILLAGE
1023 N. ROYAL ST #104	1	...	1	...	0	ALEXANDRIA	.... \$370,000	....	Garden 1-4 Floors	.....	.....	.....	22314	.....	ABINGDON ROW

Almost Everything To Know about City Budget So Far

FROM PAGE 1

ACPS's operating request, of which Jinks proposed to fund 99 percent.

Second, the 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) — of which the annual capital budget constitutes the first year — pays for major, multi-year infrastructure projects. Jinks proposed \$2 billion through FY2027. That's a 20 percent increase over last year, owing mainly to overhauls of sewers, Metro, and ACPS and city facilities. Mayor Allison Silberberg called this combination "a bit of a perfect storm." The state and feds mandate sewer improvements. Jinks supported WMATA's requested subsidy, saying, "Metrorail is our economic lifeline." He proposed funding 61 percent of ACPS's \$611 million CIP request, saying, "[W]e can't afford the whole thing."

Jinks also presented a \$325 million "supplemental" CIP. It provides unfunded alternative options for the council to consider. About two-thirds have to do with ACPS, one-third with an array of other projects — for example, affordable housing and a new swimming pool.

To balance the budget, Jinks proposed increasing the real estate property tax rate by \$0.027 (2.5 percent), increasing various fees, and bumping up the city's debt ceiling.

"I think the staff has left no stone unturned and ... so there is no more fat," said Councilman Tim Lovain. "And that'll be the challenge as we go forward."

Feb. 21 – Work Session #1: Revenues, Compensation and 5-year Financial Plan

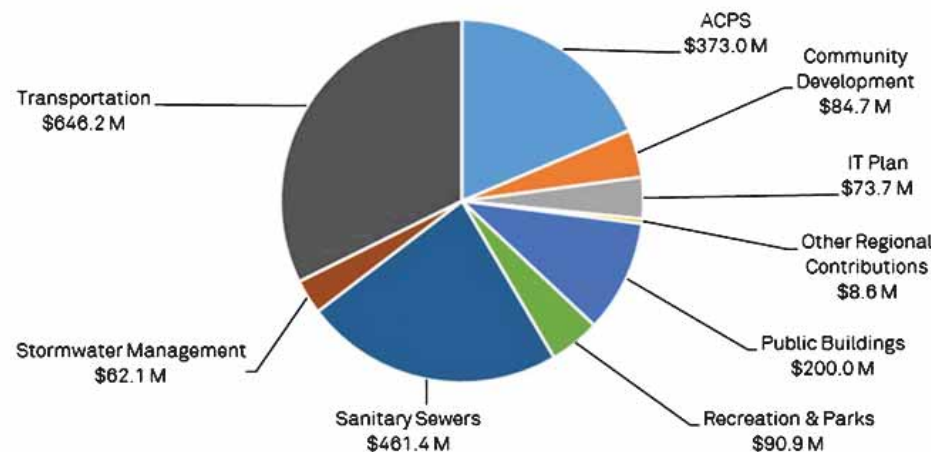
Morgan Routt, the city's director of management and budget, outlined noteworthy sources and changes in Alexandria various revenue streams.

The city generates half of its revenues through real estate taxes. Over the last six years, new construction has added \$20 million annually in new revenue. The proposed \$0.027 increase would add another \$10 million. Alexandria's tax rate — residential and commercial — would remain lower than other Northern Virginia jurisdictions in all but one case. Altogether, the proposed tax and fee hikes would cost homeowners an average \$300 extra per year.

The proposed 30 percent increase on the Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Fee generated much discussion. The increase would pay for improvements to the city's four "combined sewer" (storm water plus wastewater) outfalls into the Potomac. The rate "is expected to increase by double digits annually," said Routt's presentation slide — a total increase of 500 percent by FY2027.

Participants debated the pace increase. Jinks recommended "proceed[ing] with all deliberate speed" in order to buy good will with the state. Rather than a gradual phase-in, Vice Mayor Justin Wilson wanted "one larger increase that is directly attributable to a ... potential [state] legislative action" Silberberg advocated "a gradual increase" because "for a lot of families this has a huge impact," which they must plan

FY 2018 - FY 2027 Capital Budget Expenditures
\$2.001 billion



for. And Councilwoman Redella Pepper feared that too much revenue growth at once might tip the city's hand, dissuading state subsidization.

Regarding compensation, participants mainly considered a proposed change to the Supplemental Retirement Plan for city employees. Retirees can take their pension as a one-time lump sum. But the city's current formula provides employees with an unintended and unsustainably high amount. Jinks said that last year around 70 retirees received an average lump sum of \$200,000 each — \$14 million total. This payout depleted more than 10 percent of a fund that needs to support as many as 1,500 retirees. So Jinks proposed amending the formula to yield smaller lump sums. "We need to make this change because the system is hemorrhaging monies and will not be financially stable if we leave this in over the long-term," said Jinks.

Regarding the city's five-year planning model, Routt noted that expenditures are growing about twice as fast as revenues. The model projects a shortfall as high as \$72 million through FY2022. "This is one thing that we'll want to be mindful [of] as we move through the budget process and we're making final decisions. We have tried to take long-term sustainability into consideration in making some of the decisions that we made going into the budget," said Routt.

Feb. 28: City Debt Policy Update



Kendel Taylor, the city's finance director, outlined proposed amendments to loosen the city's debt policy. More borrowing would enable spreading the cost of more CIP projects over time.

Alexandria is one of a handful of cities nationally that gets a AAA credit rating. "The rating agencies base their determination on our economy, our tax base, our overall finances, fund balance, city management, as well as our pensions and our debt," said Taylor.

Because certain infrastructure is "self-supported" through fees, "we're actually over-conservative with how we're looking at our debt," said Taylor. So Jinks proposed that the limit for "debt as a percentage of fair market real property value" increase from 1.6 percent to 2.5 percent. He also proposed that "debt service as a percentage of general government expenditures" increase from 10 percent to 12 percent. His proposed CIP would cause these ratios to rise as high as about 2.1 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively — above the current but below the proposed ceilings.

Several council members praised the increase. Wilson noted the "hidden debt" in delaying capital projects. Their costs "go up at a rate that ... exceeds the cost that the city pays to borrow"

Responding to discussion about leftover debt capacity, Jinks cautioned: "The future that far out has so many unknowns that leaving room is important."

Silberberg reiterated another potential revenue source: "We absolutely must hold hands with all the jurisdictions in the area and say that we need a dedicated revenue stream — maybe that one percent sales tax across the region — for Metro."

March 1: Work Session #2 - Capital Improvement Program

Wilson said, "I want the CIP to be based in firm reality," summing up "the theme we've been talking about the whole night." Unspecified funding sources — what Wilson called "unicorns" — include, for example,

where to find \$80 million in dedicated revenue for WMATA.

Discussion also focused on poor cross-communication between the city and ACPS. "We know that we can only fund a certain amount. But ... we have not been given ... the prioritization of ... what [ACPS] can do or what they want to do with their sites," said Councilman John Chapman. "We have always struggled when we are dealing with a municipal building that is driven by another entity, whether it is ARHA or ... ACPS," said Wilson.

Lovain suggested that a "construction management czar within ACPS," rather than "one person [in charge] per project," might streamline the process. He also inquired about increasing borrowing to fund some of the supplemental CIP. "I think we also need to look to the schools for assistance," he said.

March 8: Work Session #3 - Public Schools

City Council and the School Board addressed inadequate collaboration. ACPS governs itself, though its revenue — 83 percent in FY2017 — mostly comes from the city. City Council decides the overall dollar amount, though not how ACPS uses it. Both sides expressed some frustration with the process.

The city has bristled at the schools' CIP request. Jinks said that his proposed compromise is still "the largest increase a city manager has ever put forward."

ACPS thinks its need for "modernization" (renovating existing schools) and "capacity" (building new schools) accrued from long neglect. "[W]e're saying this every year ... because we're not getting funded each year," said School Board member Karen Graf. ACPS, already over capacity by more than 1,000 students, projects average enrollment growth of 12 percent through 2022. "[L]ast year we were asked [by City Council] to come forward with, 'What would it take to close the seating gap?' And that's what this proposal does. And it was completely ignored in the city manager's proposal," said School Board member Christopher Lewis.

ACPS increased its capital outlook from six to 10 years in FY2012, "at the request of the city," says its FY2012 CIP. Of ACPS's first-year appropriation and total CIP requests since that time, the city has funded an average of 96 percent and 74 percent, respectively, according to a March 6 memo from Routt's office. Annual shortfalls over that period average \$1.3 million and \$86 million, respectively. On average during that timeframe, the city has funded 99.6 percent of ACPS's annual operating budget requests.

Both sides expressed a general desire to communicate and collaborate more effectively. "The citizens look at us and they don't see two bodies," said Graf. Chapman said "trust still needs to be built," especially toward seizing joint land acquisition opportunities. ACPS wants to hire a "communications outreach specialist" though

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 17

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Developing a City Budget and Capital Improvement Plan

FROM PAGE 16

Silberberg questioned this addition while the city has shed personnel. Chapman said “a change in process or ...procedure” might suffice. Lovain revisited his idea about a school construction czar. Though Lewis expressed “a concern” that the selection committee for such a position might include even one member from the city staff.

Participants made little headway in hashing out dollar figures, agreeing they should meet again.

March 13: Public Hearing

Council heard testimony from 64 residents, 38 of whom spoke in favor of ACPS.

“While I have heard this called ‘the perfect storm,’ that insinuates that we were not able to project this would happen, which I highly disagree with. We’ve watched this ‘perfect storm’ develop for a 10-year period and it should not be a surprise to anyone,” said ACPS parent Marie Randell.

Many told of overcrowding and dilapidation: Crumbling foundations and playgrounds; leaking ceilings and mold; students wearing winter coats indoors because malfunctioning heating; classes in hallways and windowless converted utility and office spaces; bean bags in classrooms because not all students have chairs; students standing in lunch lines so long they barely have

time to eat; and shoddy plumbing and flooding when it rains.

Others worried about maintaining economic vibrancy and a sound tax base. “I can tell you firsthand that companies are selecting other jurisdictions with increasing regularity partly due to the inferiority of our public school system,” said commercial real estate agent David Goldstein. “I know we’ve had people complain that raising property taxes or floating a bond is somehow punishing homeowners. But, let’s be honest, people looking to buy a home and businesses looking to relocate pay close attention to the school system,” said ACPS parent Justin Rosario.

Only a few spoke openly against ACPS’s request. Jack Sullivan called ACPS “profligate.”

Other topics ran the gamut. “Investment in affordable housing is an investment in vital infrastructure for this city,” said Michelle Kroker of Housing Alexandria, a coalition. City employees challenged the proposal to change the Supplemental Retirement Plan. The Chamber of Commerce urged haste in building the new Potomac Yard Metro Station. Another speaker said council should quit the project. Others favored funding childcare subsidies, health care for the poor and uninsured, and other human services. Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics pushed for a new pool at the Chin-

quapin Rec Center. Others supported recreation center activities for seniors.

March 14: Introduce Maximum Property Tax Rates

Discussion focused on a two-part motion from Wilson, which ultimately passed 6-1, with Silberberg voting no. One part set a maximum tax rate of \$1.13 per \$100 of assessed value. City Council may adopt a lower, but not a higher, rate in the final budget. The three-cent increase over Jinks’ proposal would serve as “a cash capital funding source” for the CIP, said the memo. The maximum rate plus fees would cost homeowners an average \$460 extra per year.

The other part directs the creation of a Joint Ad Hoc Alexandria Municipal Facilities Plan Steering Committee. This independent committee — comprising experts in construction, financing, public-private partnerships, etc. — would give dual input to the city and ACPS’s future budgets. It would also advise about using buildings jointly for education and city administration. In a March 18 interview, Wilson said he thinks ACPS is “cautiously optimistic.” Jinks will work out the details and present a comprehensive recommendation in the next few weeks.

“We need to get ourselves to a 10-year capital funding level that is sustainable and

then stick to it ... And that’s clearly going to require additional revenue,” Wilson said. With respect to ACPS, “It’s got to be so much more collaborative at both the staff level and the policymaker level”

Several council members expressed openness to a final tax rate lower than the maximum, though they supported the higher ceiling. “If any individual one of us is committed to a lower tax rate, bring [the council] a real proposal to do that. What are your cuts? ... That hasn’t been done in the past,” said Chapman. Several also supported trying a new approach to the city-ACPS interface. “That whole dynamic, that whole relationship, has to change,” said Smedberg.

Silberberg countered: “To have that 5.7 cent increase, on top of the new fees, is a great deal to ask of our taxpayers ... I was actually going to suggest ... 3 or 3.25 [cents].” Regarding the new joint committee, she said, “I think that we have these other [existing bridging] entities. We’re potentially ... adding another layer”

“I’d also like to make sure affordable housing is in this conversation,” said Councilman Willie Bailey. Some “say folks are leaving the school system. But how come the school system is overcrowded then?” Pepper agreed, saying, “Everybody here ... ran on affordable housing.”

SEE ALMOST EVERYTHING. PAGE 23



Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Business Summit

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We are taking questions from our members! Tweet us @alexvachamber or email Maria Ciarrocchi mciarrocchi@alexchamber.com with your questions!

Legislators participating (confirmed as of 3/14/2017):

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State Senator Adam Ebbin
State Delegate Charniele Herring
State Delegate Mark Levine
Alexandria Mayor Allison Silberberg
Alexandria Vice Mayor Justin Wilson
Alexandria City Councilman Willie Bailey
Alexandria City Councilman John Taylor Chapman
Alexandria City Councilwoman Del Pepper
Alexandria City Councilman Paul Smedberg

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SPRING FUN, FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

Cafes, Bars Bring in Springtime-Worthy Beers

By HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Sure, you could stick with the same favorite brews all year long — but where's the fun in that? As the weather changes, so do local restaurants' beer menus. Here's what made the cut.

Lost Dog Café, 808 N. Henry St.

Don't get too comfortable with Lost Dog's beer list at any given time — the pizzeria and sandwich purveyor tends to keep the menu lively with tap takeovers and frequent substitutions depending on what's in season and what looks fun. The taps are numerous — sporting nearly two dozen varieties on draft at any give time — and visitors are sure to find something that piques their interest.

As with many other bars and restaurants of late, Lost Dog breaks out its menu in specific varieties — fruity, hoppy, dark, and the like. And one of the café's current best selections sits squarely in the fruity arena — though a cider it's not. The Mandarin Nectar from Alpine Beer Company screams spring — from the sweet notes stemming from orange blossom honey and orange zest to spiciness of coriander, this brew is worthy of a sip (or a second order).

The Majestic and No. 9 Lounge, 2000 Mount Vernon Ave.

Adjacent to its sister restaurant, Evening Star Café, the Majestic and upstairs No. 9 Lounge are always available for a weekend, happy-hour, or late-night beer. (Don't con-



Alpine Brewing's Mandarin Nectar is a sweeter beer that's light enough to enjoy with a pizza or sandwich at Lost Dog Café.

fuse this Majestic with the Majestic restaurant on King Street — they're not related.) Cozy and comfortable for catching a March Madness game on the bar TVs or catching up with friends at a table, both the upstairs and downstairs bars are the perfect place to try a new brew.

On tap right now, among many other options: Manatees at the Power Plant, a beer brewed in partnership between D.C.'s 3 Stars Brewing and Miami's J. Wakefield Brewing. It's labeled as a Berliner Weisse, but don't expect this to be a light-and-airy



Del Ray's Majestic is a comfortable, homey spot to try a new beer while watching a game or catching up with friends.

beverage. Instead, it's essentially a sour beer, thanks in large part to the ugly fruit it's brewed with. But don't let that put you off — rather, it should pull you in.

Rustico, 827 Slaters Lane

Long considered a go-to spot for quality craft beer, diners will always find something new and exciting to try at Rustico, which bridges the neighborhoods of Old Town and Del Ray quite nicely. When the weather's nice, sit outside the restaurant and watch the world go by; when it's still too cool, the

popular indoor bar will meet your needs very well.

If you're looking for a mild, easy-to-drink beer that still carries a great deal of character, you could do much worse than the Bare Bones Kolsch from D.C.'s Hellbender Brewing. Hoppy and slightly bitter, the Bare Bones will help you toast spring in style without overpowering your taste buds.

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

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

UCM Raffle Tickets. Ongoing, the United Community Ministries is raffling off a trip to Cancun at the 'Give From the Heart' Gala on May 6 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 600 Dulany St. \$175 admission, \$25 raffle ticket. Visit www.ucmagency.org for more.

The Hand Print Workshop. Through April 2, various times at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Dennis O'Neil's Hand Print Workshop exhibit features a wide representation of the prints created by these artists in his Alexandria studio, including some by William Christenberry and Renee Stout, as well as works by O'Neil himself. Opening Reception, Sunday, Feb. 26, 4-6 p.m. Visit www.nvfaa.org or call 703-548-0035.

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.

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.

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.

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.

THROUGH MARCH 26

Spring Book Sale. 4-8:30 p.m. at Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. \$3 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books and

audio-visual items. All genres. \$1 day on Sunday, March 26. Visit www.beatleyfriends.org or call 703-746-1702 for more.

THURSDAY/MARCH 23

Greendale Women's Golf League.

1:30-3:30 p.m. at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre Drive. The Greendale Women's Golf Association is an 18-hole league that plays once a week on Thursday mornings at the Greendale Golf Course on Telegraph Road. The league is open to experienced golfers of all abilities. Join the information session to discuss the upcoming golf season. Call 703-399-6496 or visit gwgl.wordpress.com for more.

Kasey Chambers in Concert. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. Seth Walker opens. Visit www.birchmere.com or sethwalker.com/ for more.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 23-25

Used Book and Art Sale. Various times at the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. Email mary.paden@gmail.com or call 703-298-2176 for more.

MARCH 24-APRIL 16

Water Taxi to National Mall. Departing at 11:10 a.m., 1:35 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. from the waterfront at Cameron and Union streets. Potomac

Riverboat Company offers a 30-minute direct water taxi to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to access events of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, including the Blossom Kite Festival. \$28 round-trip for adults, \$16 one-way for adults; \$16 round-trip for children under 12; \$8 one-way for children under 12. Visit www.potomacriverboatco.com/ water-taxi/national-mall/ or call 703-684-0580 for more.

FRIDAY/MARCH 24

Women of Civil War Alexandria Tour. 11 a.m. Tour starts at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Presented by the National Women's History Museum. \$15. Call 703-461-1920 or visit www.nwhm.org/get-involved/events/walking-tours for more.

Photographer Lecture. 7-9 p.m. Gallery at Convergence, 1081 N. Quaker Lane. Nina Tisara's photographic series: "Converging Paths and United in the Spirit," and "Witnessing Worship: Connecting through the lens of faith," will run March 17 to June 17. Call 703-998-6260 for more.

SATURDAY/MARCH 25

Bike-A-Thon: Wolverine Green Fundraiser. 8-10 a.m. at at Fort Hunt Park, Fort Hunt Road. Ready, Set, Ride for the West Potomac High School Wolverine. Email

ride4thefunofit@gmail.com.
Volunteer Open House. 9:30-11 a.m. Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St. Explore what it takes to volunteer at Gadsby's. Call 703.746.4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org for more.

"Beyond the Battlefield" Walking Tour. 10 a.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Take a trip down "Mercy Street" in this 1.75-mile walking tour featuring locations featured in the PBS drama. \$15 in advance, \$20 the day of the program. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum or call 703-838-4994.

Friendship Firehouse Museum Tour. 11 a.m.-noon at the Friendship Firehouse, 107 South Alfred St. Learn about the Friendship Fire Company's firefighting procedures and equipment, as well as the different roles the organization played in serving the community. \$5 for adults and \$4 ages 10-17. Visit shop.alexandriava.gov or by call 703-746-3891 for more.

Artist Reception. 2-4 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 East Campus Drive. Artist Lina Alattar highlights her show "At the Seams," which runs March 17-April 30. Call 703-575-4705 for more.

World Freerunning and Parkour Federation. 6-10 p.m. at Urban Evolution Alexandria, 5505 Cherokee Ave. Athletic competition for a slot in

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 21

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SPRING FUN



The Spring Garden Market at River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Drive, runs Friday-Saturday April 21-22. Vendors from across the Mid-Atlantic region will offer a large selection of plants such as vegetable seedlings, natives, unusual trees, and pollinator favorites. Garden art, tools, and other accessories also will be available. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer gardening questions. \$5. Call 703-768-5700 or visit www.ahsgardening.org.

what is springing to life. Visit mgmv.org for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Japanese Culture Drinks. 4:30-6 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Explore the fusion of liqueur and fruit that is umeshu or Japanese plum wine. \$38. Ages 21 and older. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ or call 703-642-5173 for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 8

Ikebana Workshop. 10 a.m.-noon at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Ikebana is a Japanese art of flower arrangement. Learn its rich symbolism and fundamentals, and take home a flower arrangement. \$38 and supplies extra. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ or call 703-642-5173 for more.

TUESDAY/APRIL 11

Garden Experts Answer Questions. 11 a.m.-noon in Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe St. Stop by and chat with the VCE Master Gardeners who maintain the Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens and see

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/APRIL 22-23

Barley & Music Fest. noon-6 p.m. at John Carlyle Square Park, 300 John Carlyle St. Craft brews from 18 artisanal breweries, live entertainment, and food vendors. Email barleymusicfest@gmail.com for more.

SUNDAY/APRIL 30

Creating a Bird-Friendly Garden. 1-3 p.m. at Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe St. Learn easy tips to entice birds and other beneficial pollinators to the yard. Visit www.alexandriava.gov for more.

SATURDAY/MAY 6

Spring Art Market. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Del Ray Artisans' Spring Art Market showcases original artwork from local artists in a wide range of mediums. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/ArtMarket for more.



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Alexandria Gazette Packet

Spring Dining



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SPRING FUN

3 Al-Fresco Dining Spots for Spring

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

As the weather warms up, restaurants' patios, porches, and sidewalks find themselves dotted with tables and chairs just waiting for visitors. Here are three can't-miss locations for dining outside.

Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap, 401 E. Braddock Road

Lena's patio is quickly becoming one of Alexandria's most popular spots for outdoor dining, and for good reason. Though the pizzeria is on a busy corner, the patio feels secluded, private, without being isolated. Want to make friends? Sit at the fire pit and strike up a conversation with your neighbors. Or choose a table for two and enjoy a date night. If the temperature drops when the sun goes down, don't fret; the restaurant will fire up some outdoor heaters and hand out blankets to keep your legs warm.

While you're out there, best to enjoy some food. You'd be crazy not to order the polenta fries to share; the polenta-parmesan sticks have a salty-savory taste that will leave you scooping up every crumb. On to the main course: The prosciutto and arugula pizza offers up slices of meat accompanied with the peppery tang of greens; the mushroom pizza highlights wild mushrooms with a creamy garlic sauce and truffle oil to top it off.

Carluccio's, 100 King St.

Though it's true that Carluccio's indoor space is also quite nice, the Italian eatery's outdoor seating is the perfect place to people-watch. Its sidewalk location puts visitors in the heat of the action near the King Street waterfront, and there's always something interesting to see as tourist and neighbors alike amble by.

Order a glass of wine and peruse the menu. Olive lovers will enjoy the giant variety offered as a starter;



Carluccio's sidewalk alongside King Street is a great place to dine outside and people-watch at the same time.

bruschetta is also a great choice. For a main course, the penne giardiniera — penne pasta with fried spinach balls and zucchini — is an unusual and hearty choice. Or consider the risotto del giorno; you'll be happy with whichever of the rice dish varieties is on the docket for the day.

Taqueria el Poblano, 2400-B Mount Vernon Ave.

The front patio at Del Ray's Taqueria el Poblano could be compared to a postage stamp in size, but it's highly coveted real estate in Alexandria's Mexican-dining circles. It's worth the sometimes-lengthy wait to snag one of the half-dozen or so tables on the patio; there's nothing quite like feeling the spring breeze while sipping your margarita, after all.

While you enjoy that frosty beverage, peruse the menu and spy a couple of favorites right off the bat. The chile relleno, a poblano pepper stuffed with cheese and topped with ranchero sauce, is a winner no matter your mood. Or order one of the taqueria's burritos — options include bean and cheese, green-chile pork, beef, and more — and expect to be full for hours.

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

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 18

the championship in Las Vegas. \$35 for participants, \$5 for spectators. Email salil@urbanevo.com or call 855-646-5271 for more.

The Migration Project. 7:30 p.m. at the Durant Art Center, 1605 Cameron St. Stories of relocation explore the push and pull of human flight, featuring Jane Franklin Dance, artists Rosemary Feit Covey and Dawn Whitmore. Call 703-746-5560 for more.

Concerts at St. Luke's. 7:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 8009 Ft. Hunt Road. Oscar Paz-Suaznabar, an 11-year-old virtuoso pianist including works of Scarlatti, Haydn and Chopin and Marion Baker, one of Washington area's premier cellists performing unaccompanied cello works by Bach and Sibelius. \$20 adult, \$15 senior and free to 18 yrs and under. Visit www.saintlukeschurch.net/events for more.

MARCH 24-25

"Not My Baby." Friday show at 7 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 7 p.m. at the Richard Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. Visit notmybaby.bpt.me.

SUNDAY/MARCH 26

Dressage Riders. 10:30 a.m.-1:30

p.m. at the Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, 8400 Lorton Road. Free. Dressage riders from Little Burgundy Farm, Alexandria, will launch the 2017 show season. Email inquire.ces@gmail.com or call 703-395-3299 for more.

Ides of Bark Dog Festival. 1-5 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway. All canines of Fairfax County and their human companions are invited to come learn pet care, CPR, and first aid techniques from experienced pet technicians, connect with local dog vendors, win cool prizes, and enjoy a demonstration by the Fairfax County Police Department K9 Unit. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/idesofbark/ for more.

18th-century Medical Science. Every 30 minutes between 1-4 p.m. at The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, 105 S. Fairfax St. This hour-long program includes a tour of the museum and hands-on demonstrations of science led by re-enactors. Visit www.apothecarymuseum.org or call 703-746-3852.

Asian Brush Painting Exhibit. 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. See the Asian brush painting of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of America. Free. Call 703-642-5173 for more.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 29

Ann Wilson of Heart. 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. Part of a 20-date solo tour. \$110. Visit www.birchmere.com for more.

Lectio Divina. 7:30-9 p.m. at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road. Listening with the Ear of the Heart. Susan Robbins Etherton. Visit www.staidansepiscopal.com/Center-for-Spiritual-Deepening or call 703-360-4220 for more.

THURSDAY/MARCH 30

Civil War Music. 6:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Join historian Carson Hudson and fiddler Arden Clark as they musically explore the story of a time when America was at war with itself in the 1860s. \$25. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum or call 703-746-4994 for more.

FRIDAY/MARCH 31

Opening Reception. 7-9 p.m. at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. "Breaking the Glass Ceiling – The Sky's the Limit" exhibit at Del Ray Artisans runs March 31-April 30. Artists reflect on this metaphor of pushing through barriers. Visit www.thedelrayartisans.org or call 703-838-4827.

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SPRING FUN & ENTERTAINMENT

ACCT Presents 'Connecticut Yankee'

Mark Twain farce about American who is transported back to 6th century England.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
GAZETTE PACKET

Aldersgate Church Community Theater (ACCT) is presenting "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" from March 24 to April 9. This farce is about a modern-day American who finds himself transported back to 6th century England where royalty, knights, ladies of the court, an all-too-perky page, and a dastardly wizard all come together in a story about political intrigue in the Court of King Arthur.

Producers Jayn Rife and Marg Soroos wanted to do a classic show and decided that humorist Mark Twain had not been done in a long time, and that the community would enjoy it.

Director Rich Amada said using his own inimitable style, Mark Twain wrote the 1889 novel as a lighthearted romp through a period of time known as the Dark Ages, and playwright John G. Fuller tried to remain true to that spirit with his whimsical stage adaptation. "My goal as director is to maintain the darkly comic farce that's the hallmark of this classic tale," he said.

Amada said his greatest challenge was to find a cast that understands how to play comedy. "You know what they say — you can't teach it. Either you're funny or you're not," he said. "This play isn't a drawing room comedy with characters trading clever clips. It's a high-energy frolic, and it needs actors who can't just be funny. We scoured



From left: Angelena LeBlanc (Mrs. Bennett/Queen Guinevere); Jim Pearson (King Arthur); Scott Stofko (Sir Sagamor le Desirous); Mike Dobbryn (Hank); and Ted Culler (Sir Lancelot) rehearse in ACCT's production of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court."

high and low to find just such a cast, and we've got it. It's fun to watch them work."

He added: "I hope the audience enjoys this show as much as we've enjoyed putting it all together."

Colin Davies plays the role of Merlin, an ignorant, pompous, self-centered and self-important sexist. He called him "a man with no redeeming features. Although it is possible that at the end of the play he does have some realization of his serious character flaws," he said.

He said the challenges in his role were trying to make a deeply unpleasant person likeable in some way, making the arcane Old English come alive, and growing a beard.

He hopes audiences take away from the play that "science trumps hearsay; knowledge trumps ignorance; and decency

trumps cruelty."

Emily Golden plays the role of Morgan Le Fay, the villainess in the story. "Although she is the sister of King Arthur, she is working to overthrow him with the hope of taking over his kingdom," she said, adding: "Morgan is ambitious and not afraid to go after whatever she wants. She is used to getting her way and the playwright describes her as having a 'black' heart."

She said there were two big challenges for her in working on this piece. "First, it is really hard to memorize Old English. This was the first time that I have worked on a show that uses this kind of language, and I personally really struggled in the beginning with understanding what my lines even meant," she said.

She added: "Second, this is also the first

time that I am playing the 'bad' person in the story. It was definitely a new experience for me trying to understand the character of Morgan Le Fay and bring that character to life in a multi-dimensional, realistic way."

The main message of the show was for everyone to just get along, she said. "A lot of crazy, zany and improbable things happen along the way but, in the end, Hank tries to teach everyone that just by being a little nicer, we each can make a little bit of a difference in the world," she said.

Mike Dobbryn plays the role of Hank, a driven no-nonsense kind of man who has a tendency to get worked up when things don't go his way or when people have trouble seeing things from his point of view, which he would most likely deem the correct point of view.

He said his biggest challenge was making the mistake of trying a new method of memorizing his lines for the play. "I spent about two weeks on this method before I finally discovered that it didn't work for me at all. The method I tried works best for auditory learners, and as it turns out, I'm not an auditory learner," he said. "I went back to the method I had used on previous shows that works in spite of it being time-consuming. From my mistake, I hope we can learn a lesson: if you are going to take on a piece of work that is larger than what you are generally used to, stick to your tried and true methods; don't try that newfangled method other people swear by."

He added: "I hope that people walk away from this play with the same lesson I have learned time after time in my own life: Women are always right."

Aldersgate Church Community Theater (ACCT) is presenting "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" from March 24 to April 9. Tickets are \$12-\$15. Showtimes are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. The venue is located at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Visit www.acctonline.org.

CALENDAR

Music. 7:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Tetiana Khomenko (balalaika) and Vitalii Lyman (piano) will present an evening of diverse music. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum or call 703-838-4994.

SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Watershed Clean-Up. 9-11:30 a.m. at

Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Help remove bottles, cans, tires, and other carelessly dumped debris from local streams. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/.

Forgotten Fairfax Lecture. 11 a.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Forgotten Fairfax Presents Beacon

Field and Hybla Valley Airports: A Talk by Anna Marie Hicks and Harry P. Lehman. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library or 703-293-6227, ext. 4.

Gunston School House. 5-7 p.m. at 411 Jackson Place, Del Ray. Historical setting sponsored by the Alexandria Committee of the Colonial Dames. \$30 or \$100 for two people

for the wine and appetizer party. Visit wp.nscdava.org for more.

Rum Punch Challenge. 7-9:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St. \$50 per person, or \$100 to include both admission and a VIP pre-event tasting of Bacardi's special rums. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.gadsbystavern.org.

SUNDAY/APRIL 2

Science and History. 1-4 p.m. at The Apothecary Museum, 105-107 S. Fairfax St. Highlights where science and history mixed, with a collection of medicinal herbs, shop furnishings, and apothecary bottles and equipment. call 703.746.3852, or visit www.apothecarymuseum.org.

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OPINION

Ease Yoga and Café Offers Senior Discount

Newest business to participate in Silver Service Card.

BY TARA CASAGRANDE
OWNER, EASE YOGA AND CAFÉ

Yoga for all, and the world would be a better place. Although not everyone may agree with this statement, this is the belief at Ease Yoga & Cafe located at 3051 Mount Vernon Ave. in the wonderful neighborhood of Del Ray, Alexandria.

On Wednesday, March 8, the hard-working staff at Senior Services of Alexandria took up the offer to take a break from caring for many of the seniors in Alexandria to instead take care of themselves. The Ease Yoga & Cafe staff were excited for a number of the Senior Services staff who, “.... don’t really like yoga” to make their way into the studio for a yoga class.

The studio is owned by long-time resident and mother of three, Tara Casagrande. With a great location at the end of Del Ray close to Arlandria, Ease Yoga & Cafe offers ample

parking, highly trained teachers, beautiful sunlit studios, a lovely wrap around porch, a welcoming, nurturing and non-competitive environment as well as delicious South Block smoothies, juices and bowls for after yoga (or anytime between 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekends).

The Senior Services staff left the class feeling well nourished in mind, body and soul after a gentle yoga class led by Becky Sutton, Ease Yoga & Cafe’s manager of customer service and all things Yoga. These gentle yoga classes are offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:30 a.m. and Saturdays at 8 a.m.

Since opening less than two years ago Ease Yoga & Cafe has expanded its schedule to include close to 30 classes per week. Some of the classes offered include Kid’s Yoga, Yin Yoga, Men’s Yoga, Beginner Yoga, Warm Yoga, Rope Wall Yoga, Flow & Meditate and many more. For a list of classes



MaryAnne Beatty, Mary Lee Anderson, Tara Casagrande and Dolores Viehman.

and workshops, you can visit www.easeyogacafe.com or follow Ease on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Working together with Senior Services of Alexandria, Ease Yoga & Cafe is offering a senior discount to seniors in Alexandria as the newest business to participate in the Silver Service Card Senior Discount program. Ease is offering \$10 off of the Ease New Client Welcome Package which typically sells for \$50 for five classes. Therefore, for only \$40, seniors can try out five classes at Ease Yoga & Cafe (classes are good for six months). One can take advantage of this discount by entering the code SSA upon purchase. To view the list of businesses participating in the Silver Service Card go to SSA’s website at seniorservicesalex.org. If you are a senior 60 and over and live in the City of Alexandria and don’t have your Silver Service card call SSA at 703-836-4414.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 13

makes enormous sense. With an estimated \$611 million to repair and rebuild the schools I believe it is absurd to finance projects on the backs of the citizenry. There is no monetary ROI here. It’s a school, it’s an infrastructure project, treat it as such. Utilizing the private sector, we can build for less, we can contract with the private sector to maintain the schools and you can be assured there will be no Taj Mahals, no cost overruns, no lack of transparency, just brick and block, a slate roof, a routine maintenance schedule, they will last a lifetime.

Bill Goff
Alexandria

Failure of Management

To the Editor:

Like many other Alexandria citizens, I was tired of hearing that the real estate tax rate increase of 2.7 cents per hundred dollars of assessed property value was not only the smallest increase in five years, but it is also one of the lowest rates for residential and commercial property owners in all of Northern Virginia. So what did the City Council just do? Vice Mayor Justin Wilson proposed a three cent increase to the tax rate, resulting in a total increase of 5.7 cents per hundred. Of course, in this one-party town, everyone on City Council (except the mayor) voted for this new real estate tax rate increase.

Mr. Wilson has finally admitted that the tax-and-spend approach is not working, and

that the City Council needs to develop a real plan. This is most ironic, since Mr. Wilson roundly criticized Bob Wood and I during the 2015 election debates for pointing out numerous flaws in Alexandria’s current planning, programming and budgeting system. On numerous occasions, I have also asserted that Alexandria is overdue for an efficiency and effectiveness audit in order to determine its overall financial picture.

We are a city with a debt of \$600 million, and an annual debt service of \$90 million. Infrastructure costs over the next 10 years will be about \$2 billion, which would include \$611 million for the schools, and \$400 million for mandatory combined sewer systems projects to be completed in the next eight years. With all of this looming, why is the Alexandria City Council pressing ahead with a \$268 million Potomac Yards Metro station that duplicates the existing Bus Rapid Transit system already in place? Additionally, the entire Metro system is hurting, with a greatly reduced ridership, eroded service, and a \$290 million debt of its own.

Metro has also indicated that it wants the close-in suburbs to contribute even more, so this will be still another unfunded expense. It is patently clear that the City of Alexandria is in need of better fiscal decision-making. Wake up, Alexandria! It is time for the citizens of Alexandria to demand that their elected officials act in a fiscally prudent manner. The failure of management to solve the problems facing us will no longer suffice.

Townsend A. “Van” Van Fleet
Alexandria

Almost Everything

FROM PAGE 17

March 15: Work Session #4 - Healthy and Thriving Residents

Council engaged in the first of four sessions, each organized around a budget “focus area.”

Participants discussed sustainability of programs in light of expected federal cuts. “[B]y all the accounts [the federal budget is] going to be pretty devastating across the board,” said Smedberg. “I really do think we have to prepare for this, even if it’s half of what they’ve proposed, it’s going to be major shifts, and some very tough decisions will have to be made” The federal budget came out the following day.

Kate Garvey of the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) worries about changes to Medicaid, “particularly for behavioral health services reimbursement.”

“Another likely target is transit,” said Lovain, speculating that demands on the city to subsidize WMATA might increase further.

“There are all sorts of areas where we get aid but not enough ... to cover what the program is supposed to,” said Jinks. However, because the feds forward allocate funds for certain programs, the city would have more than a year of “lead time” before cuts took effect. In a March

21 interview, Roult said the city is taking a full “inventory” of its federally subsidized services.

“[I]f the community wants a certain level of service ... this is why the tax rate is: whatever. ... It’s not just schools — ... we’ve got a lot of ‘this’ [and] ‘that’ we’re picking up the tab on. I don’t think our community understands that ... as well as I think they should,” said Chapman. “I hate to say it, but it’s an easier conversation for the city when someone else pulls the money”

The Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA) is moving toward opening recreation centers for specific uses only, but reducing overall hours of operation. “So all the programs still are offered. I’m just trying to operate it differently, in a more efficient, entrepreneurial manner to save tax [dollars],” said RPCA’s James Spengler. Silberberg and Pepper worried about the impact of RPCA cuts, as well as fee increases, on seniors and low-income families.

“It’s an example of some of the things that a lot of our departments are going to have to deal with moving forward,” said Smedberg. “[I]t just sort of states the reality of things.”

Residents can find budget documents, videos, and calendars at www.alexandriava.gov/budget.

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21 Announcements

ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NUMBER 17-02-04

The Alexandria City School Board dba Alexandria City Public Schools is seeking responses from qualified Offerors interested in Disposal of "Out of Adoption" Surplus Text Books & Library Discards.

Sealed Responses with the notation RFP# 17-02-04 DISPOSAL OF "OUT OF ADOPTION" SURPLUS TEXT BOOKS & LIBRARY DISCARDS will be received in the Central Procurement Office, 1340 Braddock Place, Suite 620, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, on or before 3:00 pm, April 6, 2017. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock stamp in the Procurement office. Responses 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 703-619-8140, or by downloading the RFP from the ACPS website at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/financial-services/purchasing>, after registration on the Vendor Self Service system.

All questions must be submitted before 3:00 p.m., on March 27, 2017. If necessary, an addendum will be issued and posted 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 applications and to waive any informalities in any response.

Francine Morris, Buyer
Procurement Department

21 Announcements

Obituary



Virginia "Ginger" Speagle Lutz of Alexandria, VA died March 13 after an extended illness and hospitalization at 74 years old. A native of Hickory, NC, daughter of Paul Speagle, Sr. (deceased) and Virginia "Lady" Speagle (deceased), Ginger received her Bachelor's degree in Education from UNC Chapel Hill (Go Tarheels!) and Master's Degree in Education from George Mason University. Ginger taught 5th & 6th grades for 4 years in North Carolina and 37 years in Alexandria, VA. She was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma Society for key women educators and 50 years as a member of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. A lifelong Lutheran and member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hickory, NC and St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springfield, VA and with volunteer opportunities too numerous to name, Ginger lived her faith by supporting Lutheran Marriage Encounter, St. Mark's Sunday School, and other education venues to share her knowledge. She spent many years as a Girl Scout and served 30+ years as Treasurer for Cub Scout Pack 614. She was an advocate for the arts, an avid gardener, and lover of God's creation. She is survived by Tim (husband of 44 years), son Allen (Heather), son Matthew (Katherine & 3 grandchildren), brother Rick Speagle (Pat), brother John Speagle (Nancy), and many nieces, nephews, and other relatives. Funeral service will be held Saturday, April 1 at 11am Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hickory, NC and Memorial service on Saturday, April 22 at 11am St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Springfield, VA. Memorial donations welcomed in support of Lupus Research Alliance www.lupusresearch.org, Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp www.carolinefurnace.org, and Arthritis research. www.everlywheatley.com

21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE

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

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-Winston Churchill

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21 Announcements

Obituary

Betty Gladys Hileman, age 93, died peacefully on Monday October 17, 2016 at the Labier Geriatric Home located at 5707 Dawes Street, Alexandria, VA. Betty was born in London, England on July 17, 1923. She was raised by her parents Albert and Ellen Adams in London, England and survived all her British brothers and sister, Burt, Donald and Maisie.

Betty attended the Richmond County School for Girls in London on scholarship and graduated in 1939. The start of World War II prevented her from continuing her studies at the University of London. She was sixteen and went to work in London as a bookkeeper. As the war continued and America entered the war and our GI's came to England she had the pleasure to meet First Sargent Leroy Edgar Hileman of the Army Corp of Engineers from Johnstown, Pennsylvania. They became engaged and were married in a church wedding on April 1, 1944.

When World War II came to an end Betty joined her husband in Johnstown, PA, although Leroy was stationed at Fort Belvoir, VA. She traveled to the United States in February of 1946 on the Queen Mary ocean liner, still painted battleship grey, and docked in New York City. Betty then became one of 40,000 war brides from World War II, she was twenty-three years old.

With the unfortunate death of her husband Leroy on September 27, 1964, she gave up her life as a stay at home Mom and went to work full time at the National Association of Dental Laboratories to finish raising her three children. She became known as "Betty Bookkeeper", continuing her career in accounting and retired as NADL's controller after twenty-five years of service in 1989.

Betty will be remembered as a strong individual who overcame many hardships in her life. She was never one to shy away from a challenge and when considering her childhood in London and growing up during the Great Depression and coming alone to America at a young age, she was very brave. Betty became a US citizen in August 1953 and was a true Patriot and proud to be an American, although she loved her homeland of England and took many trips back to London to visit her relatives.

She was a terrific seamstress and loved to knit and sew. Betty loved working in her yard and was laying pavers in her back yard in her eighties. She was very involved with the American Legion when her husband was alive and studied military history. Because of being in harm's way during World War II, she had a great dislike of war.

In her lifetime, Betty beat diphtheria as a child, colon cancer in 1975 and the bombing of London during the German Blitz of London during World War II, but she could not beat father time.

Betty is survived by her three children, Diane, Robert and Gary. She had four grandchildren, two grandsons by Robert, Rob and Michael. She also had two granddaughters by Gary, Katherine and Kristin. She had one great granddaughter that was born after she passed away, a beautiful baby girl by her grandson Rob, Caroline Elizabeth Hileman.

Betty's ashes will be buried alongside her beloved husband, Leroy, at Arlington National Cemetery on April 3rd at 11:00am. There will be a brief graveside military service. Donations are not necessary, but Betty would request you do a good deed for an individual in her memory. DEMAINE FUNERAL HOME, Alexandria, VA is handling the arrangements. www.demaenefuneralhomes.com

21 Announcements

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is recommending the Four Mile Run Connector Bridge ("Project") to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation for partial funding made possible by assistance from the Recreation Trails Program. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) is soliciting public comment on the Project. The Project includes the installation of a new pedestrian/cycling bridge that transcends an unnamed tributary within the Four Mile Run Park connecting two existing trails. At this time the trail has only one entrance/exit at the western side of the newly restored Four Mile Run Park wetlands, thus leading trail users to a dead end. The Connector Bridge project would install a 115 foot bridge over the wetlands and to the eastern part of the park at the softball field, improving safety and connectivity in the park.

RPCA is accepting comments for 30 days from initial announcement with a deadline of April 21. A plan for the project is available online at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/hub.aspx?id=14042> and the RPCA offices at 1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Prior to the grant award, comments must be provided in writing and may be submitted where the plans are available, by mail or email. Contact information: Dana Wedeles, dana.wedeles@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-5491. If awarded, RPCA will hold a pre-construction meeting with the public

21 Announcements

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**2017's newly
inducted
Living
Legends of
Alexandria**

2017's Living Legends

FROM PAGE 3

she's part of the ongoing work to build the neighborhood as a community. Cinema Del Ray, one of Walker's projects, is one of the most popular events in the Del Ray neighborhood. The summer program features movies on the field at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center and regularly draws crowds of local parents and children.

"It's humbling," said Walker. "I feel like there's so many people that deserve this award. And being around everybody here tonight, it's great. I was particularly honored to meet Colonel Underwood."

ETHEL UNDERWOOD

Even among a prestigious crowd, Underwood was treated with particular reverence. Underwood is a World War II veteran and was the first African American woman promoted to the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve. Underwood enlisted in 1943 and trained as an emergency medical technician. In 1963, Underwood and a group of friends took a train from New York to Washington D.C. to participate in Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington. In 1979, her last assignment brought her back to the region, where she led a special project for the National Medical Association's children's immunization program in Alexandria. Underwood retired from the military in 1985 and became director of nursing at Woodbine Convalescent and Nursing Care. After her retirement from the military, Underwood also became involved with local civic engagement, became chair of the Alexandria Commission on Aging and helped to found the Alexandria Black History Museum, where she still volunteers. Underwood has also served on boards for Inova Alexandria Hospital, Hopkins House, the Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage, and Living Legends of Alexandria.

CARTER FLEMMING

Flemming is a third generation Alexandrian, and said her parents set the example for her at a young age in emphasizing public service. Flemming also said she knew Elizabeth Anne Campagna, founder of Alexandria's Campagna Center, who helped her understand that it was a plea-

sure and responsibility to help those in the city who weren't as fortunate.

"It's a great thrill," said Flemming. "Alexandria is my home, to be honored like this, it's quite exciting."

Over the years, Flemming has held positions in the Campagna Center, Alexandria American Red Cross, Alexandria United Way, Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority, and a dozen other local non-profits. Flemming also served children in need as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), assisting neglected and abused children in the court system. Flemming was the longest serving Alexandrian CASA volunteer.

"You meet such great people," said Flemming. "You meet people of all ages and backgrounds who really enrich your life. You think you're giving to them, but they're really giving to you as well."

GWEN MULLEN

"It's very exciting," said Mullen. "I'm truly honored. It's nice to think that there's someone like Nina [Tisara] chronicling what the people in Alexandria are doing."

Like Flemming, Mullen said she grew up in a family where her parents emphasized getting involved and helping out in the community. From 1993 to 2001, Mullen served as the executive director of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. While there, Mullen worked to build new corporate partnerships and expand fundraising efforts. Mullen was able to nearly triple the number of scholarships awarded by the program, from \$100,000 in 1993 to \$288,000 in 2001. From there, Mullen became executive director of Senior Services of Alexandria and founded the program's annual fundraising gala. From 2006 to 2016, Mullen became executive director of the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium, tripling the number of students served by the program from 75 in 2005 to 220 in 2013. Even in retirement, Mullen still actively advocates for each of the causes she spent her career promoting. Mullen says her next advocacy boost will be trying to raise Alexandria's graduation rate.

"I just see things that need to be done," said Mullen. "It's all about leveling the playing field. So look around you, in your community: see what still needs to be done."

3

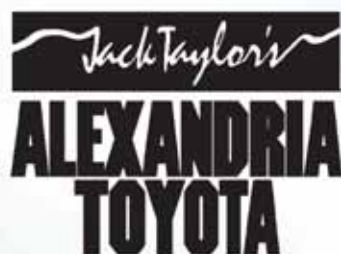
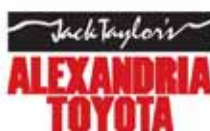
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