

## Pre-Pay Limbo

Region wrangles new federal tax law.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

Could you prepay your real estate tax in 2017 and avoid the 2018 federal tax law's cap on a state and local deduction option? The new law went into effect Jan. 1, but many Northern Virginians made a last minute push to try and prepay 2017 property taxes before the law went into effect. Whether this tactic will work is unclear, and left localities in an understaffed holiday season reeling to try to keep up with the initial demand for prepayments followed by a wave of requests for refunds.

"Under new tax legislation, only the first \$10,000 of state and local taxes are going to be deductible for tax year 2018 and forward," said Craig Fifer, director of communication and public information for the City of Alexandria. "This led to many asking if they can prepay their state and local taxes in 2017 to see if they can avoid the increase in 2018."

Fifer said the city has always  
SEE PRE-PAY, PAGE 17



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/GAZETTE PACKET

**First Night**  
Fireworks light up the sky over the Potomac River to usher in 2018 as part of the First Night Alexandria celebration. More photos, page 3.

## Final Sentencing in Perez-Ferman Murder

The trials for the murder of Jose Luis Perez-Ferman have come to a close. Two years ago, Perez-Ferman was lured into a park by a woman he'd been messaging online. Her boyfriend, Alvaro Saenz Castro, and another man, Reinaldo Membreno Portillo, hacked Perez-Ferman to death with machetes. Castro and Portillo were both members of the gang MS-13, though the crime was not related to gang activity. The body was discovered the next morning at the playground in Beverley Park. On Dec. 21, Castro was the last of the culprits sentenced. Castro, now 23 years old, will receive 60 years in the penitentiary with 15 years suspended.

Portillo pled guilty to first degree murder and was sentenced to 60 years in the penitentiary with 30 years suspended, on condition of probation. Leidi Granados Gutierrez, the 16-year old woman who lured Perez-Ferman into the park, was charged as an adult with compounding a felony. Gutierrez was sentenced to commitment with the Department of Ju-

venile Justice and a suspended adult sentence upon her release, with compliance to supervised probation. Gutierrez had grown up in El Salvador as a victim of MS-13, but relationships with the gang had followed her to the United States where she fell in with Castro. When he discovered the explicit messages between Gutierrez and Perez-Ferman, Castro had pushed Gutierrez to arrange a meet up in a park, where Castro said he wanted to talk with Perez-Ferman. But when Perez-Ferman arrived, he was immediately confronted by Castro and Portillo, who chased him across the field as he tried to run away. Perez-Ferman was discovered with stab and slash wounds across his body and had been nearly decapitated during the attack.

During the trials, Perez-Ferman's family was regularly in attendance, wearing white shirts honoring their son. Family members described him as charming and a pillar of support.

— VERNON MILES

## Finding a Spot

### New commercial parking standards under review.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria has changed since the 1960s. Its parking standards have not. For years, commercial businesses filing for permits in Alexandria have requested and mostly received reductions for parking. Now, at the Planning Commission meeting on Jan. 4, a new set of parking standards for commercial properties will be proposed. If approved, the Right-Sizing Commercial Parking Standards will go before City Council at a public hearing on Jan. 20 for approval.

"In '60s, Metro, Dash, and Bikeshare weren't options," said Katie North, principal planner for Transportation and Environmental Services. "In terms of commercial uses, the way people are getting around has changed. Thinking about retail; people buy things online. There's been a bigger push for neighborhood-serving restaurants. For hotels, people usually Uber rather than renting a car and parking it [on-site]."

North says one of the biggest new features of Right-Sizing Commercial Parking Standards is the new Enhanced Transit Area Map. Currently the zoning parking dis-

trict map breaks the city down into six districts of parking requirements, but the new parking standards simplify the map to two areas: those that are within a half-mile radius of enhanced transit options and those that aren't. Enhanced transit options in the new parking standards are listed as existing and future Metro stations, transitway routes, and King Street Trolley stops. Areas outside of the enhanced transit zones will require greater parking than those inside the zones.

The right-sized Commercial Parking Standards were preceded by a study that found that 10 percent of the surface area in Alexandria is covered with parking space, and that much of it is underutilized. The study of 60 commercial sites across Alexandria found that during peak usage, 39 percent of the spaces were unused. At some sites, like Canal Center, peak occupancy was as low as 25 percent.

Christopher Ziemann, division chief for Transportation and Environmental Services, also noted that one of the biggest changes in the new parking standards is a parking exemption for small businesses.

"One of biggest changes as we  
SEE FINDING A SPOT, PAGE 5

Summary of Proposed Parking Requirements by Land Use

	HOTEL		OFFICE		RETAIL		RESTAURANT	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
	Per room		Per 1,000 sf		Per 1,000 sf		Per 1,000 sf	
Within Enhanced Transit Area	.2	.4	.25	1.50	.25	3.0	1.0	3.0
Beyond Enhanced	.25	.7	.75	2.25	.75	4.0	1.0	4.0

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# Happy New Year Frigid temps, fireworks usher in 2018.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**D**espite frigid temperatures, thousands of revelers descended on Alexandria to ring in the New Year as a midnight fireworks show ushered in 2018 and concluded the 23rd annual First Night Alexandria celebration.

"We had a few less attendees this year but those who did come out had a great time," said First Night Alexandria executive director Ann Dorman, who estimated a crowd of about 8,000 compared to 10,000-12,000 last year. "Hotels reported a few cancellations but said that those who attended are already booking for next year."

More than 150 performances took place at 24 venues in Old Town and Del Ray, with live music, dancing, children's face painting and games. A Fun Hunt took place during the day and a Battle of the Local Stars at the Durant Arts Center featured a special appearance by local favorite Keira Moran, who used the evening to record a live performance with the T.C. Williams Orchestra.

A graduate of T.C. Williams High School, Moran's six-song performance with the 22-piece orchestra was recorded for a special set that will be available on iTunes early next year. One hundred percent of proceeds from sales on iTunes will go to APCS.

"Unfortunately this is probably Keira's last performance with us," Dorman said. "She's living in L.A. now but we were lucky to have her back."

After 17 years at the helm of First Night Alexandria, Dorman is stepping down. She was recognized for her efforts by former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran at the Durant Arts Center.

"I'm really proud of how First Night has



**Former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran honors First Night Alexandria executive director Ann Dorman for her 17 years of service.**

grown," Dorman said. "There was no First Night in 2000. Then in 2001, in spite of 9/11, we pulled off a great event that has become a signature event for the city."

The First Night concept was launched in Boston in 1975. While hundreds of First Night events across the country have disappeared since that time, First Night Alexandria has continued to grow and thrive, becoming one of the largest and most successful events in the region while adhering to the original concept of charging one price for an array of family-friendly entertainment.

"I'm sorry we did not go out with a banner year," Dorman said. "Next year will be a transition period for the First Night organization so I'll still be around. But I also plan to go out and see some of these great entertainers I've been hiring all these years."

For more information, visit [www.firstnightalexandria.org](http://www.firstnightalexandria.org).

**First Night Alexandria board member Kerry Donley at the Durant Arts Center.**



PHOTOS BY WILL NICCOLLS

**Bill Kirchen and Too Much Fun perform at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center.**



**Mayor Allison Silberberg with singer/songwriter Keira Moran.**



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/GAZETTE PACKET

**Stella Mazzeo poses for a photo with Professor Arts Safari (Ander Bordner).**

# To the Rescue Firefighters and Friends distribute toys to families in need.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**C**hristmas arrived early for more than 250 children from local Head Start programs and Hopkins House as they picked out toys and visited with Santa during the annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue toy drive distribution day Dec. 12 at Penn Daw Fire Station 11.

"We distributed over 3,500 toys, bikes and gift cards to 80 schools, shelters and nonprofits in Alexandria and Fairfax County," said Alexandria City Councilman and Fairfax County Battalion Chief Willie Bailey, who founded the toy drive 18 years ago. "Prior to the distribution to school representatives, we escorted and gave toys to local preschool kids."

Bailey said that 800 new coats were also given out to children in need. More than 80 volunteers were on hand to help with the distribution, including firefighter Dave

Saunders and his son Hunter as Santa and his elf, and Caring Angels Therapy Dogs and their handlers.

Sponsors of the toy drive include: Firefighters & Friends to the Rescue; Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department; Apple Federal Credit Union; Whole Foods; Ken & Kelly Savittiere; Jack Taylor Toyota; Nationwide Credit Corporation; Caring Angels Therapy Dogs; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax; Local 2068; Union Street Public House Restaurant; Bruce Witucki; Fairfax Fire & Rescue Retirement Association; Promax Realtors; Fairfax County Federation of Teachers; Mission BBQ; InspirLit (provider of 100's of new books); FCAC Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Saint Stephens & Saint Agnes Middle School; Fairfax County Police Department; Fairfax County Sheriff's Office; Primo Family Restaurant; Modern Technologies Solutions; Irish Times Restaurant; Anthem Health Keepers Plus; and Gates Hudson.

"So many organizations came together



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**First responders from across the city gather for a photo Dec. 23 at Samuel Tucker Elementary School after distributing more than 800 toys to children and families in need.**

today to make this a wonderful event not only for the kids but also for the volunteers," Bailey said. "We had staff from the local schools telling us that some families were deciding whether to pay a bill, purchase food for the household, or buy gifts for the kids. Hopefully today we were able to take some of the pressure off of those families and make that decision a little easier."

For the eighth year, students at St.

Stephen's & St. Agnes Middle school assisted Bailey in collecting toys for families in need.

"I have been asked for so many years why I do this," Bailey said. "All I can say is that I learned to give not because I had much but because I know exactly how it feels to have nothing. The best gift I have received for the past 18 Christmases is watching the smiles on the kids' faces."

# Running Tight Fiscal Ships

Annual financial reports say city and schools are operating judiciously.

BY DAN BRENDEN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Recently released Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs) show that the city government and public school system maintained their long-term trend of fiscal soundness in FY17.

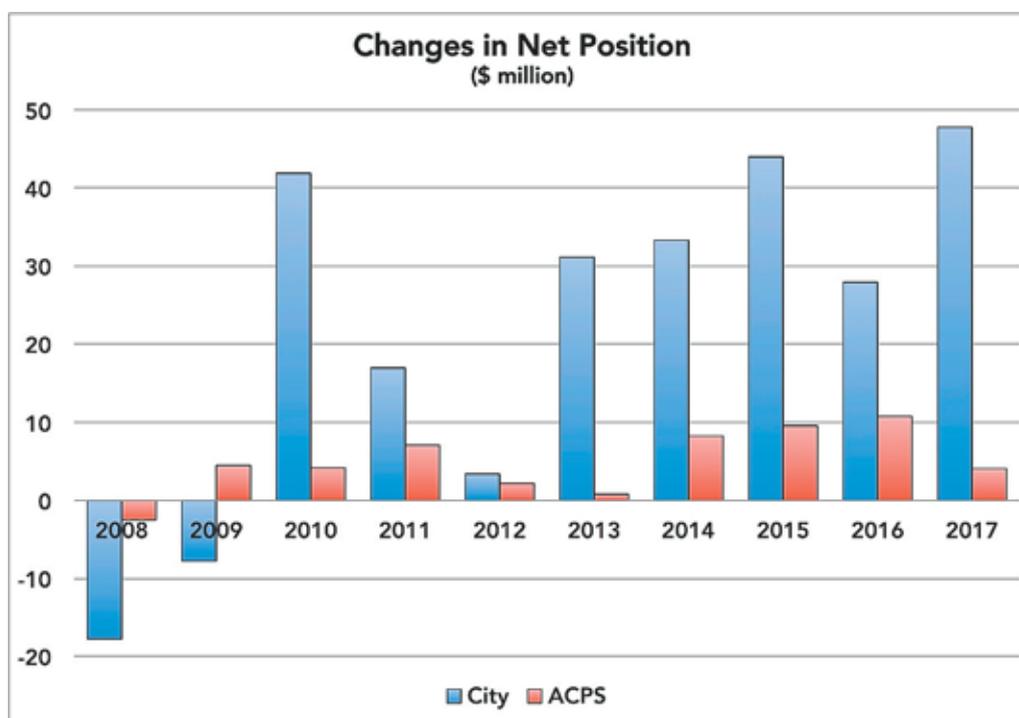
The city's CAFR explains that it serves "to present fairly the [reporting entity's] financial position," adhering "to the principle of full disclosure so that the reader may gain the maximum understanding of the [reporting entity's] financial affairs." It serves as a kind of counterpart to the budget; whereas the budget looks to the future, the CAFR looks in the rearview mirror, showing, "What did we actually do and how did that financial performance end up?" said Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) CFO Michael Herbstman. Each document includes financial statements, an independent auditors' report, various statistics and discussion and analysis from the reporting administration. The City Council and School Board received their FY17 CAFRs Nov. 14 and Dec. 14, 2017.

The auditing firm CliftonLarsonAllen probed various aspects of the city and schools' financial operations in order to obtain "reasonable assurance" that both administrations' financial statements "are free of material misstatement." Based on their tests, the auditors' subsequent "unmodified" or "clean" opinion is "the best form of assurance you can get on your financial statements' audit," said the firm's Greg Bussink. The city and ACPS have also received various awards for excellence in financial report for many years running.

Various metrics indicate fiscal health. One is total "net position." According to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), a standards-setting organization, "Net position is the difference between assets and deferred outflows, on the one hand, and liabilities and deferred inflows, on the other." These include non-monetary capital assets (land, buildings, etc.) and long-term bond and/or pension payments. Net position "is effectively the bottom line," said Kendel Taylor, the city's finance director, in an email.

The city's CAFR says that, "Over time, increases or decreases in [a reporting entity's] net position are indicators of whether its financial health is improving or deteriorating." The city and schools' net positions have trended upward over the past decade, increasing year-over-year in FY17 by \$48 million (12 percent) and \$4 million (2 percent), respectively.

Another indicator of fiscal health is "fund balance." Fund balance is similar to net position, though narrower and shorter-term in scope, indicating only the net of financial assets and liabilities of specific funds maintained



by the reporting entity — especially the General Fund (general operations) and the Capital Fund (capital infrastructure projects). Fund balance is of "central importance to the credit reviews performed by municipal bond analysts," serving "to identify the available liquid resources that can be used to repay long-term debt," according to GASB. This is particularly germane in the case of the city government, upon whose bonding and taxing authority ACPS also largely depends for its revenue; ACPS does not have such authority of its own. The city and schools' total governmental fund balances have also trended upward over the past decade, increasing year-over-year in FY17 by 78 million (22 percent) and \$15 million (66 percent), respectively.

Fund balance is an especially useful indicator for telling the school system's fiscal story, which unfunded state-level pension liabilities might otherwise distort. In FY15, accounting standards changed such that reporting entities started including such pension liabilities in their calculations, causing a big dip in net positions. The city's net position stayed positive after the adjustment; but ACPS, having assets at the time equalling only about one-thirteenth the city's, dropped into deficit territory, where it remains despite having continued to climb from year to year. ACPS staffers say they're doing the best they can with what they can control.

"When we pull in the unfunded teachers' retirement liability, that's a long-term obligation, it throws us into a deficit position. But our annual short-term to medium-term picture that most governments operate within, that's their horizon, we're fine," said Michael Covington, ACPS's accounting director. For FY17, ACPS reported a net position deficit of \$164 million but a positive fund balance of \$38 million. Eventually the state, which controls pension contribution rates, will "have to set rates that are higher than the actuarial calculation [i.e., statistical forecast] in order to catch up that unfunded liability. We're sort of kicking the can down the road, at the state level." But at the local level, "we have suffi-

cient fund balance, compared to even other jurisdictions, and compared to what our budgeting process determines that we need," he said.

Cost-per-pupil, an efficiency measure, also helps accurately to tell ACPS's story of fiscal stewardship, say Herbstman and Covington. While ACPS's student enrollment increased by 43 percent in the past decade, its expenditure per pupil has fallen by 5 percent. ACPS still spent more per student than all other regional school divisions except Arlington County and Falls Church City. But ACPS also has a relatively larger proportion of higher-cost students. In FY17, 29 percent of ACPS students were "English Learners" and 59 percent were eligible for free and reduced-price meals — in both cases, the third highest of 10 regional school divisions, according to the FY18 "Washington Area Boards of Education Guide," an annual report. English Learners require additional teachers and support systems; and while the free and reduced-price meals themselves are federally funded, the percentage of eligibility is a good proxy for other non-federally funded student services, such as extra tutoring and family counseling, said Herbstman.

The city's CAFR also provides information about the city's debt. Three debt ratios that the city tracks have all increased over the past decade: debt as a percentage of total fair market value of taxable properties; as a percentage of per capita income; as a percentage of general government expenditure. But all measures are within their state-mandated and/or self-imposed limits. In the first case, while the state constitution would allow the city to carry debt equal to 10 percent of total fair market value, the city carries only 1.43 percent. That leaves \$3.3 billion in untapped legal debt capacity.

Asked why the city doesn't issue more bonds in light of its many looming capital projects, Taylor said in an email: "The issuance of significantly more debt beyond what is planned could negatively impact the city's bond ratings. ... City staff have looked at the debt ratios of our neighbors and other jurisdictions who also

SEE RUNNING TIGHT, PAGE 5

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Enhanced Transit Area Map for Commercial Parking Requirements

The map depicts an aggregate 1/2 mile transit walkshed roughly mapped to existing city streets and parcels. The walkshed is based on existing and anticipated stations and entryways. The purpose of the map is to differentiate future parking requirements for commercial developments and tenants. Requirements generated by the map are not intended to apply to residentially zoned properties that fall within the walkshed area. The map does not imply that residentially zoned properties will be rezoned as commercial for redevelopment. Until a Locally Preferred Alternative is selected for enhanced transit service along the Duke Street corridor, properties within the bounds indicated by the dashed lines may use the maximums developed for properties beyond the Enhanced Transit Area. The Enhanced Transit Area minimums will remain applicable.

# Finding a Spot

FROM PAGE 1

became a lot more aware of the impact of the parking requirements adopted in the '60s, [was] the burden on small businesses," said Ziemann.

Many small businesses in Alexandria move into spaces that were originally built without a requirement for retail or restaurant type parking. These small businesses are often required to try and find access to parking somewhere off-site.

During one of the City Council discussions on parking standards, Vice Mayor Justin Wilson referenced a joke in Del Ray that all of the new businesses claimed the same parking spot behind a bank as their off-site parking.

Under the new parking standards, any non-residential uses that have a minimum parking requirement of two spaces or less could be exempt from providing parking.

This is similar to exemptions granted in Baltimore and Annapolis. Under the proposed minimum parking requirements, this exemption would apply to restaurants with less than 2,000 square feet, retail and office uses in the Enhanced Transit Area with less than 8,000 square feet, and retail and

**"In terms of commercial uses, the way people are getting around has changed."**

**— Katye North, Principal Planner, Transportation and Environmental Services**

office uses outside the Enhanced Transit Area with less than 2,667 square feet.

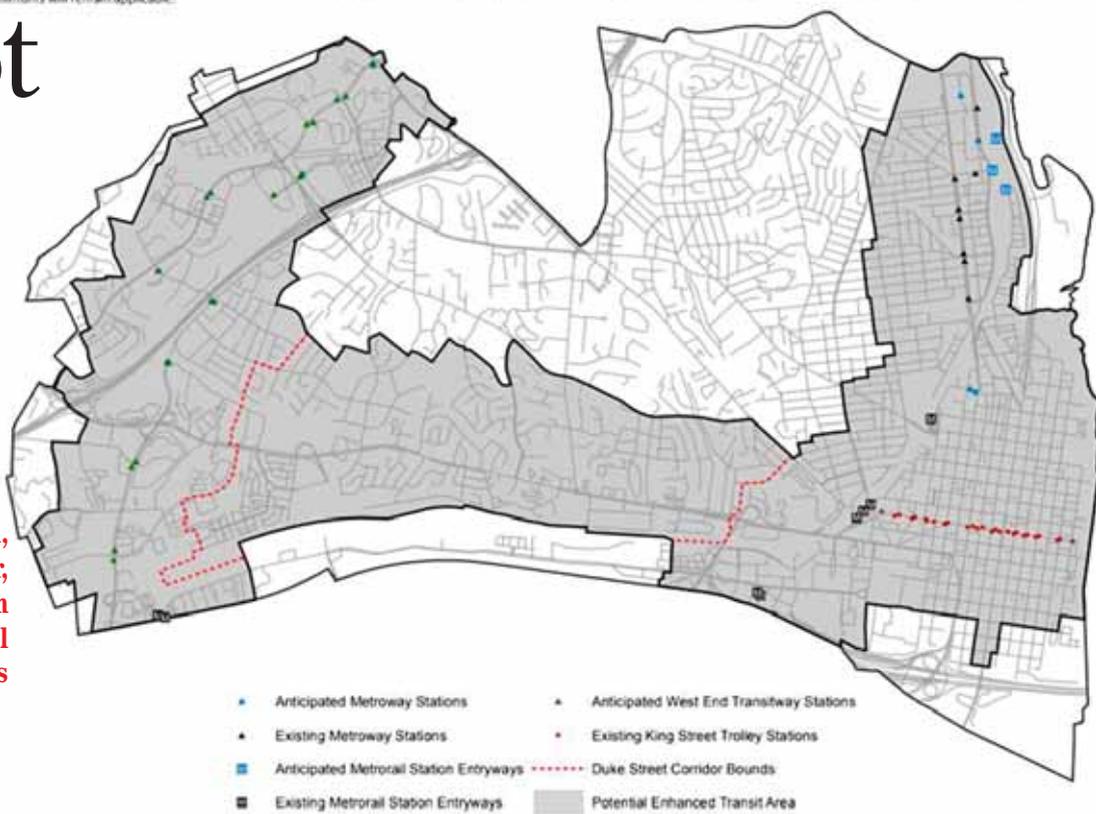
"This might encourage some of the new developments to create spaces for small businesses," said North. "It might encourage existing buildings to turn over into something more active for the rest of the neighborhood."

One of the last big additions of the new Right-Sizing Commercial Parking Standards is the imple-

mentation of a shared parking policy to facilitate and encourage multiple commercial properties to collaborate in providing parking. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance only allows shared parking through an administrative special use permit for uses that are not open at the same time. Due to the

requirement that no portion of the hours of operation can overlap, the report says very few businesses are able to take advantage of this provision. Rather than no overlap in hours of operation, the new parking standards allow for shared parking based on times of peak parking usage.

The new parking policy would immediately go into effect if approved by City Council. Monitoring and evaluation of the new standards would continue over five to 10 years to assess how the standards meet the goals, particularly with regards to preventing spillover impacts on residents.



# Running Tight Fiscal Ships

FROM PAGE 4

hold AAA and Aaa ratings from Moody's and Standard and Poor's and believe that the current debt policy is appropriate for the city's economic situation and population. It should be noted that last May City Council approved an increase in the debt policies to recognize changes in the fund structures, the ratios of other Northern Virginia jurisdictions and the city's considerable capital needs. This will increase the city's ability to issue debt to fund infrastructure investments."

Taylor added: "We've made a conscious effort to try to increase General Fund Balance, at the recommendation of credit rating agencies." The city has beefed up

its General Fund balance as a percentage of General Fund revenue to 15.96 percent — the highest it's maintained in the last decade above its self-imposed floor of 10 percent. "This reserve is available to address financial emergencies and fluctuations in revenue cycles. ... Having a reserve is important to the credit rating agencies. It reflects our ability to respond to extraordinary events, as well as to smooth the effects of changes in the economy (sequestration, the recession). We would never rely on this as an ongoing source of funding, but we can use fund balance for emergencies," she said.

The city and schools have posted their CAFRs on their respective websites.

## CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Alexandria Police Department.

### JAN. 1

The Alexandria Police Department investigated a "shots fired" at First Street and Parker Gray School Way. There were no injuries.

### DEC. 26

The Alexandria Police Department investigated a "shots fired" call in the 5700 block of Sanger Avenue. There

were no injuries.

### DEC. 25

The Alexandria Police Department investigated a "shots fired" call in the 900 block of N. Patrick Street. There were no injuries.

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 2000 block of Jefferson Davis Highway. A suspect brandished a firearm and stole a backpack from the victim. There were no injuries.

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## PEOPLE

# Local Singer Rorie Pursues Her Passion

**Killer ESP hosted video filming.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
GAZETTE PACKET

New York has had an influence on musicians through the years, and the Big Apple was part of the picture when Erin Rea Ochocki broke away from the 9-5 world, adopted the one-name of Rorie and hit the stage as a singer. She hasn't looked back. "I traveled around the city, playing shows by myself and realized that was my passion," the 20-something singer said.

Fast forward a few years and Rorie has a name of her own, and several EPs, including one called "Dawn," that consists of four songs she's highlighting at her show at Vienna's Jammin' Java on Jan. 14.

"Dawn" focuses on overcoming obstacles and struggles that crop up in life, and Rorie has seen a few of these struggles to know first hand. In New York, for example, she worked for a nonprofit, devoting her time to combat human trafficking, and worked with a roommate on a music video to raise awareness. The roommate, Jordan Ippolito, danced a choreographic routine in a deserted, dusty structure to drive home the point.

Rorie did some video work in Old Town, Alexandria where she lives now. A video company called Open Valve Studios from Los Angeles, flew into town with their equipment and they spent a few days filming, including part in Killer ESP coffee shop on King Street. "They were really fun, we filmed for three days, we were really good friends after that," she said.

Video production guru Franck Tabouring of Open Valve Studios, was happy with the



**Alexandria resident and singer-songwriter Rorie is playing her EP called "Dawn," at Jammin' Java in Vienna on Jan. 14.**

folks at Killer ESP and the City of Alexandria as well. He came into town without having much time to scout locations, and just popped into Killer ESP and it all worked. Killer ESP is an independent coffee shop run by Rob Shelton, and their handmade mugs, local art on the walls and independent attitude was just what they needed. "When you deal with tight locations like this one, you just have to adapt and keep equipment down to a minimum and simply go with the flow, which was very easy to accomplish given the overall naturally relaxing atmosphere in Alexandria," said Tabouring.

The Open Valve film crew likes to shoot video on location, and the atmosphere in Old Town, Alexandria worked out well. He scouted places via the internet and Google Satellite, and then contacted city officials and it was "smooth sailing," he said. "It's wonderful when you get to travel to a place where filming is encouraged and welcomed," he said.

Shelton, the manager at Killer ESP, has

## Details

Rorie is playing at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave E. on Sunday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. Visit [www.jamminjava.com/](http://www.jamminjava.com/) or call 703-255-1566.

seen Rorie in for a cup of coffee a few times and was enthusiastic when Open Valve called. Although he couldn't be there in person for the video shoot, "I just told them to come in and make themselves at home," he said, even suggesting the front room as a good spot because of the light. "She's super talented and takes a warm, organic approach to production," he said of Rorie.

It's not her first experience in Alexandria though. They also played at Alexandria's First Night on New Year's Eve last year.

Rorie likes to write her own music and bases most themes on her own life, as many musicians do. Some influences on her style include Joni Mitchell of the 1960's fame, and the X Ambassadors. The rest of her band include Dwayne Butler on drums, Doug Kurucz on bass, and Patrick McLaughlin on guitar, all from Northern Virginia. On the videos, she waltzes around, searching for



**Rorie embraces life in her songs.**

something just out of reach, sporting a hair-style highlighting her bangs, similar to Zoey Deschanel of TV fame. She is familiar with the hipster genre, and embraces it. "I think it's a cool thing to be a hipster," she said.

"Climate," is one of the songs on her Old Town video, and she seemed to know what she wanted to video to resonate, said Tabouring. "She connected with our style and always welcomed our input, while we made sure to stay true to the song's message and what she had in mind both visually and emotionally," he said. Rorie admits to carrying around a notepad and taking down notes of inspiration from time to time.

She's played at Jammin' Java a few times before, so they know her music. "As a whole, Rorie's music tells stories of both heartache and hope," it said on the Jammin' Java show preview.



**Rorie and her band have been at Jammin' Java several times over the past few years.**

PHOTOS BY  
MIKE SALMON/  
GAZETTE PACKET



## Cheerleading Invitational

The city's Department of Recreation hosted its Annual Alexandria Holiday Cheerleading Invitational on Dec. 16 at T.C. Williams High School. The competition featured youth cheerleading teams from Charles Houston, Cora Kelly and William Ramsay Recreation Centers as well as other teams from the metropolitan area. The cheerleading teams competed in four divisions in front of an estimated crowd of 1,000 people. The competition's Master of Ceremonies, DJ EZ Street, from 93.9 WKYS Radio Station, who has been the MC for the event for the past 20 years was honored for his public service to the City of Alexandria. The Spirit Award was also named after Sonya Diggins one of the city's long-time employee and coach for Charles Houston Recreation Center, who died in September. The winners of the first Sonya Diggins Spirit Award were Charles Houston and William Ramsay Recreation Centers. The next Spring Cheerleading Invitational will be held in April 2018. Recreation Programs and cheerleaders wanting to participate in future events should call 703-746-5402 for more information.

# OBITUARY

## Gene Meaker Dies

Miracle League player dies at 56.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

William "Gene" Meaker, a lifelong Alexandrian, died unexpectedly Dec. 23, 2017. He was 56.

Meaker was born in Alexandria on July 24, 1961, to William Joseph Meaker and Mary Virginia Lawson. Meaker was a member of the Sons of the American Legion and along with his brother, Michael, participated in the city's Miracle League sports program for individuals with special needs.

"Gene was one of our original members when we started the Miracle League in 2011," said Mac Slover, director of Sports for the City of Alexandria. "He and his brother Mike always came to games excited to play. Gene in particular always greeted the volunteers, smiling and saying 'we're playing baseball today!'"

As a member of the Sons of the American Legion, Meaker provided janitorial services to Post 24 in Old Town.

"Gene was a fixture at the Legion," said Post 24 Commander Doug Gurka. "He loved to kid around and had this dry sense of humor that everyone loved. He was always a reliable and hard worker and did his job with a smile."

Meaker was preceded in death by his father. Survivors include his mother, Mary Lawson, and broth-

ers Michael Lynn Meaker of Alexandria and David Wayne Meaker of Fredericksburg.

A funeral service will be held Thursday, Jan. 4, at 10 a.m. at the Chapel of Demaine Funeral Home, 520 S. Washington St., with burial to follow at Washington Street United Methodist Church Cemetery.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**William "Gene" Meaker, at right, with his brother Michael, died Dec. 23, 2017, at the age of 56.**

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Heart Association.

"Gene was such a great guy," Slover added. "He always looked after his brother Mike and was a favorite of all the volunteers. He was always happy and enthusiastic and one of our exceptional players in the program. We'll all miss him."

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# OPINION

## 2018 A Happy New Year? At least some cause for hope ....

Virginia's election last November, just two months ago, was the first in the nation since the current administration took over in Washington.

Here in Virginia there was some anxiety and uncertainty rolling into Election Day. First, at least one race will not be decided until later this week. Second, the Democrats swept the statewide races, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General.

### EDITORIAL

Democrats hoped to make gains in the House of Delegates. It's fair to say no one anticipated the Democrats taking the House. After all, Republicans held a 66-34 majority, a nearly insurmountable advantage.

Democrats gained at least 15 seats in a turn-about that could leave the House split 50-50.

New members include the first transgender woman to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, the first lesbian delegate, the first Asian-American woman delegate and the first two Latina delegates.

Virginia's success has generated buzz about pursuing sweeping change in other state legislatures around the country.

Del. Marcus Simon said it well recently (on Facebook): "If someone had told me on Jan. 1, 2017 that one year later Democrats would have picked up no fewer than 15 and probably as many as 17 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates I would have said, 'Love your optimism, but don't get carried away.'"

"My advice to anyone running for office or thinking about running for office, or working for people running for office in 2018: Get carried away."

The new look and balance in the General Assembly could provide progress on some long stalled issues. (More Democrats in office do not equate to progress in all of these areas, it's important to note.)

❖ Expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to cover hundreds of thousands of poor people without coverage

❖ Nonpartisan redistricting and use of national best practices when it comes to drawing

political district boundaries after the next census.

❖ Progress in transparency, and making public information public. This includes lawmakers killing most proposed legislation with unrecorded voice votes in subcommittee, with no accountability or record of how members voted. It should also include rolling back some of the many exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act passed by the General Assembly.

❖ Ethics reform, campaign finance reform.

❖ Making it easier, not harder, to vote.

❖ More control over utility rates and pollution.

❖ Criminal justice reform, including raising the threshold for a felony from \$200 to \$500.

❖ Tax reform.

A "wish list" could go on at some length. The 2018 session of the Virginia General Assembly begins Jan. 10.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Not Smart, Not Right, and Not Fair

BY DON BEYER  
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (D-8)

On the day the House passed the Republican tax bill, I took to the Floor to oppose the bill.

My colleagues from both parties who opposed this bill did a thorough job illustrating the compelling reasons to oppose it: the regressive nature of the tax cuts, which will mostly flow to the very wealthy, the attacks on the Affordable Care Act which will lead to 13 million more uninsured Americans, the trillions of dollars it will add to the national debt.

### COMMENTARY

I share this opinion, but also had another perspective to offer.

I worked for four decades to build a successful small business in Northern Virginia. So I'll be honest with you: this bill cuts my taxes.

I still voted against it.

I voted no in part for my constituents, who overwhelmingly opposed this immoral bill, but I also voted no for my employees.

The people we've employed over the years are the business. I've always tried to treat the women and men who work for me well and pay a living wage. It's rewarding to see them get married, start families, and chase their dreams.

My employees simply will not benefit from this bill the way that I do.

They will get small cuts that expire, and many will eventually see tax increases. They'll get a tiny child tax credit, much smaller than the one millionaires get. The cuts for businesses, raising the estate tax threshold to protect families that worth \$11 million, and other benefits billionaires will remain after the meager cuts for the middle class expire. Eighty-three percent will go to the wealthiest 1 per-

cent of the country by 2027.

Their kids will be stuck with the tab for the trillions of dollars this bill will add to the national debt, debt which itself may be used to attack Social Security and Medicare soon.

As a member of the Joint Economic Committee I also know that U.S. companies are sitting on \$17 trillion in capital. Yet, for some reason, Republicans claim against all evidence and advice from economists that giving these same companies more is going to spur magical levels of growth that will somehow trickle down to working people.

We all want a healthy, vibrant economy, but we'd do better by focusing on workforce development, human capital, building skills, and repairing infrastructure.

Unfortunately, Republicans rejected that path in favor of pursuing tax cuts for people like me at the expense of the middle class.

It isn't smart, it isn't right, and it isn't fair.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Fulfill Vision Zero Now

To the Editor:

Alexandria Families For Safe Street (AFSS) congratulates City Council for approving the Vision Zero (VZ) Action plan. While the plan calls for "zero" deaths and serious injuries from vehicles crashes by 2028, the city's Police and Transportation Departments have rendered plans that have specific actions to be enacted within specific timelines and provides accountability as to which department is responsible for achieving the plan's goal. Many parts of the plan will be implemented in the near term. Over the past few months AFSS has urged City Council to "Implement Vision Zero Now," not

wait until 2028. We created a broad coalition of citizens to support our petition's motto and last month we presented to City Council over 1,340 signatures on our petition that was collected over six weeks to serve as testimony to our community's support of an expeditious roll out of the VZ plan. We congratulate City Council and staff for submitting a bold and comprehensive program with clear benchmarks on how an environment of safer streets can be adopted throughout the City of Alexandria.

Now that the plan is approved, the challenge is to quickly put into service the four critical components of the VZ plan. Namely; Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation (of crash statistics) and Education. To their credit, city staff submitted a plan that appears to be an excellent start for the VZ program. We are hopeful

that the city allocates the necessary resources to carry out this urgently needed program. Otherwise the plan will falter, and people will continue to be seriously injured or killed (242 people were injured in crashes in 2016, including 90 pedestrians who were struck and injured plus 4 citizens killed. Full disclosure, I was one of the 90 people walking who were struck by a vehicle and survived last year.)

A key VZ component that the citizens of Alexandria can help with is the Educational part of the plan. We need to develop educational programs that engages drivers, cyclists and pedestrians alike to be aware of fundamental streets safety practices. Such basic concepts like, "Speed Kills and Maims ... slow down" or

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

## Alexandria Gazette Packet

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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A Connection Newspaper

The Alexandria Gazette Packet is distributed weekly to selected homes in the City of Alexandria. Any owners or occupants of premises that do not wish to receive the paper can notify the publisher by telephone at 703-778-9426 or by email to circulation@connectionnewspapers.com, and the distributor will be notified to discontinue service.



## OPINION

# Making an Impact

BY JANE HESS COLLINS  
COMMUNITY LODGINGS  
COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

**G**iving in Alexandria is a two-step process, said John Porter. First, find where your passions lie. Second, ask how you can have the most impact and make the most difference.

Porter, the recently-retired president and chief executive officer of ACT for Alexandria, the city's community foundation, speaks from authority. He was already involved with ACT before retiring in 2009 from a 40-year career with the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). He was a founding board member of ACT and involved since the beginning discussions in 2004, then accepted the president/CEO position five years later. Retirement would have to wait.

### COMMUNITY LODGINGS

His job gave him a holistic view of the city's needs, nonprofit missions and citizen philanthropists. Community Lodgings, he said, "fills a very important need" in Alexandria's Arlandria/Chirilagua communities. Porter noticed that need during his ACPS days, and he credited Community Lodgings for steadily addressing housing, education, safety, security and family support over the last 30 years.

Those wraparound services are critical. "It's not usually one issue that affects a family, although there may be a primary issue, like finding affordable housing," Porter said. "Organizations that delve into a variety of different areas to help families have the opportunity to have a much more lasting and broader impact. When you provide

those multiple touches for families you have more of an impact in making some dramatic, lasting change."

Porter is adamant that early childhood intervention is critical in assuring all children have an equal chance at success. It's crucial, he said, that children have place to go to after school where they can interact with others, study, and feel safe. He praised Community Lodgings' after school program, and their staff and volunteers, as "people who care and want to help and are concerned about the kids they work with."



John Porter

Caring is especially important, he added, if parents lack the language or skill set to assist their children with school work. The city's immigrant families must provide for their families, learn the area's customs and culture, and figure out the city's support services, which are often presented in English and without the help of translators. Community Lodgings' bilingual staff often assists these families in navigating through those challenges.

In Porter's view, Community Lodgings' key to its longevity has been its people, community support, and delivering the goods. "Success breeds success," he said. "Community Lodgings has followed through, made a difference and continues to make a difference."

As for finding your passion and looking for impact, Porter gives Community Lodgings his seal of approval. "Community Lodgings is one of those organizations that fills a variety of those resource needs for youth and families in our community," he said. "If you care about helping families new to our country, people in need, housing, family or educational support, consider Community Lodgings."

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 9

"Drivers look into the crosswalk when turning" can save lives and avoid serious injuries. All of the AFSS crash survivors or other members who lost a relative were victims of crashes while walking or biking in the middle of crosswalks with the right of way in our favor. In addition to the crash survivors we are fortunate to be joined with many concerned citizens who themselves have experienced too many "near misses" of almost being crashed into by a vehicle. It is also incumbent upon pedestrians to be properly engaged with prudent street safety practices while walking our streets.

AFSS is evolving its focus in 2018 to be an advocacy group encouraging our fellow citizens to interact with each other as drivers, cyclist and pedestrians to promote street safety. If we can engage each other by being cautious and courteous, we can foster a safer environment of mobility while exercising friendly practices to ensure we all arrive at our destinations as planned. If you are interested in helping AFSS to pro-

mote educational street safety practices, please contact us. A large coalition of engaged citizens will help the VZ plan become a reality "Now."

**Mike Doyle**

Alexandria

*Mike Doyle is a founding member of Alexandria Families for Safe Streets, a grassroots coalition of traffic crash victims, family members and concerned citizens for street safety.*

## Preserve Natural Environment

To The Editor:

The appreciation for old trees, a steep, forested ravine, and natural springs and stream inspired the Karig's nearly a century ago to carefully build their home amidst old-age oaks and commemorate the setting with the name Derwyddon — "An Oak Grove Where the Druids Dwell." Sadly, if the spirits of the Druids still inhabit this property's

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 10

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## OPINION

### Honoring Slavery?

To the Editor:

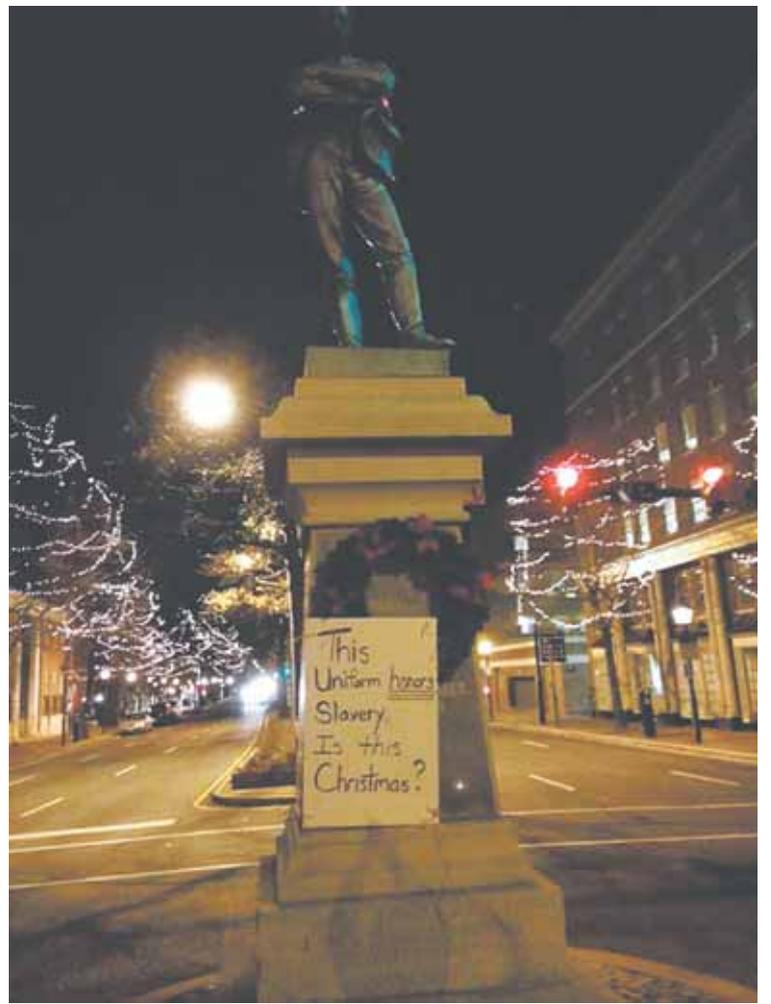
My name is Maryel Barry and I work for an area public school.

Every week day for nearly the last 20 years, I have driven by the Confederate statue on Prince and South Washington streets twice a day, going to and from work. It is upsetting. During the Christmas season, however, when wreaths adorn him in holiday style, it is especially shocking and I find myself in despair about it.

I called City Hall and was informed that the statue is private property of the Daughters of the Confederacy and unless the state legislature does something about it, no one can remove it.

I decided that I needed to stop being angry about this and do something. Therefore, a colleague of mine and I drove into Old Town and carefully placed posters, recycled from science projects at school, on the statue's front and back. Both read, "This uniform honors slavery. Is this Christmas?" We did not harm the statue in any way.

Within minutes, the police appeared and gave us tickets and removed the posters. As I respectfully explained to the officers, I have an adopted 7-year-old African American child at home and it was crushing for me to have to explain to her what the statue represents. Further, I could not explain to her



The posters read: "This uniform honors slavery. Is this Christmas?"

why it is honored in Old Town, Alexandria. I also was at a loss for words in explaining to her why there are wreaths on him at this time of year. Finally, I asked the officers that if they were I, what would they say or do, and that I desperately needed help with this. No one had an answer for me.

I am saddened having to see this statue every day, and resent that I, my daughter, and others have to see it. It very simply celebrates the enslavement of people. I am horrified by it and causes hurt.

**Maryel Barry**  
Alexandria

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 9

old forest canopy they are sure to be soundly evicted if the environmentally destructive "Karig Estates" development plan, approved by Planning and Zoning in November, is not checked and balanced by City Council on Jan. 20.

The disastrous construction plan for Karig Estates at 3832 and 3834 Seminary Road calls for razing much of the property's forest, regrading and filling in much of the ravine, adding four oversized houses and extensive impervious surface, replacing a natural waterway with an artificial, soon-to-be overburdened storm water system, and a myriad of other serious environmental concerns. There's a reason steep, forested ravines like this with streams and wetlands weren't developed in the past.

However, Alexandria believes such sites are perfectly suitable for major development, ignoring the many valid concerns raised by experts, by science based studies and reports, and by the experiences of city residents — voters and taxpayers — whose properties have

been damaged by previous development in the contiguous area of Seminary Ridge. Remember, too, all of the carbon taken out of the air by these old trees that helped purify the air we all breathe will be released. Clearly, nothing in the proposal advances the goals of the city's Environmental Action Plan, or substantiates claims of Alexandria's being an "Eco-City." For example, there is a forested spring and wetlands on the property designated to be protected by a 50-foot buffer. In Alexandria, however, such protection does not preclude allowing a 15-foot wide sanitary sewer line through the wetlands, thereby destroying the very resource "intended" to be protected.

If it is to be developed, the Karig's Derwyddon can only accommodate a maximum of two buildings, including the current residence; three new buildings is reckless, and four even more so. While tearing down the current home and squeezing in another building close to the Beth El Congregation property will still result in lots of old oaks and woodland

nearer Seminary Road to being removed, but it's the only effective compromise to both sides if development is imminent.

Let's make a fresh start in 2018 to appreciate and preserve the last of Alexandria's natural environment — not after everything valuable is gone but while there's still time. It's up to City Council to do just this by remanding this sure-disaster back to Planning and Zoning for proper planning and overhaul.

**Robert and Suzanne McLaughlin**  
Alexandria

### In Praise of First Night

To the Editor:

After a chaotic year of upheaval, uncertainty and ugly rhetoric from the White House that permeated all phases of life in the Washington area, in the USA and in the world, 2017 ended on a high note

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15

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# Ready for the Cold

Preventing, recognizing and treating hypothermia and frostbite.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**F**rigid temperatures and the chill of winter can usher in dangerous health conditions, particularly for those most vulnerable: the elderly and young children. Two of the most prevalent cold-weather ills are hypothermia and frostbite. For those who have to be outside when it is dangerously cold, knowing the warning signs and prevention techniques for these conditions are the keys to keeping them at bay, say health care providers.

“Even a typical winter in this area can be dangerous,” said Amy Talbot, Ph.D. of George Mason University. “But extreme conditions can make it even worse for those most vulnerable.”

Hypothermia, which occurs when one’s body core temperature drops, can develop more quickly than many people realize, says Talbot. “Obviously feeling very cold is a warning sign, but also shivering and experiencing signs that the cold is affecting your brain, so feeling disoriented, stumbling or losing balance easily, unusual speech pattern or changes in personality.”

Frostbite is when the skin and underlying tissue are damaged by cold temperatures, says Beth Lowe, RN, a private-duty nurse in Arlington. “During the beginning

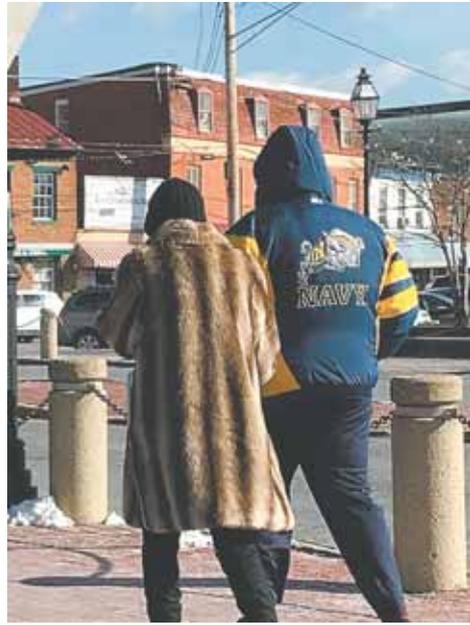


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**Record cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia.**

stages of frostbite, you might see your skin turn red and you’ll feel numb or tingling or stinging,” she said. “The main thing to remember is not to try to re-warm your own skin, because you can do more damage. It’s best to seek emergency medical treatment.”

Dressing in layers and wearing shoes that are appropriate for extreme cold are keys to preventing hypothermia and frostbite, advises Carolyn Johnson, Ph.D. of Montgomery College. “When it’s extremely cold you want to wear clothing that traps your body temperature and protects you from cold air and wind,” she said. “A basic formula to keep in mind: a base layer that should be made from a fabric that wicks away moisture. The second layer should trap heat so it should be made of a polyester fleece over something similar. The top layer should be waterproof and windproof.”

Lowe recommends avoiding cotton clothing during the extreme cold because if it gets wet, it can make you cold. “Many of these preventative measure are things that most people already know, but may not think about until it’s too late,” she said.

Another preventative component, says Talbot, is nutrition. Both food and liquids can help keep one’s body warm. “Skipping a meal can make you more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite,” she said. “It’s important to eat carbs and protein for energy when you’re going to be outside for a prolonged period of time, like if you’re hiking or playing sports.”

If you believe that you are beginning to develop frostbite or hypothermia, Lowe says

## LOCAL SHELTERS

For those who are not able to seek shelter, social service providers in Virginia and Maryland are ramping up efforts to provide shelter to those who need to get out of the cold. For more information:

**Fairfax County**  
703-691-2131 or [fairfaxcounty.gov](http://fairfaxcounty.gov)

**City of Alexandria**  
703-548-7500 or [alexandriava.gov](http://alexandriava.gov)

**Montgomery County**  
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[montgomerycountymd.gov](http://montgomerycountymd.gov)

**Arlington County**  
703-228-1300 or 703-228-1010  
[publicassistance.arlingtoncounty.gov](http://publicassistance.arlingtoncounty.gov)

in order to avoid advancing the seriousness of the condition, move your body by doing jumping jacks or some other vigorous movement and get out of the frigid elements. “There’s no set amount of time that it takes for [hypothermia or frostbite] to develop, so it’s important to keep an eye on those who are most vulnerable. But once you notice the warning signs you can try to stop the conditions before they advance, by drinking plenty of fluids, eating carbs and getting inside to a warmer temperature.”

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Decline Corporate Donations

To the Editor:

*City Council candidate Mo Seifeldein, Tuesday, Dec. 26, urged fellow Democratic candidates for the City of Alexandria Council to take a stand in rejecting contributions from developers and other private companies.*

Dear City Councilmembers and Candidates,

For too long now, special interests, including private developers, have tried to influence our elections. I believe — and I know you do too — that the interests of each and every Alexandrian is as important, if not more important, than the interest brought by private corporations operating our city.

Today, I request your assistance in restoring the public’s confidence in local politics. I ask you, fellow Democrats, to join me in taking a principled stand. My campaign will never — now or in the future — accept donations from private corporations. I ask you to join me in refusing campaign contributions from private corporations. Let’s make sure this election truly puts the citizens of our great city first.

I look forward to your responses.

**Mo Seifeldein**  
Alexandria

### Plea to City’s Voters

To the Editor:

Next November, a new mayor and City Council will be elected. However, there are a number of considerations to ponder; first, why elect someone who has made a career out of being on the City Council? Although City Council experience is a good idea, after a few terms, it may be beneficial to have fresh ideas from new members.

The following are Alexandria City Council members and their length of time in office: Del Pepper, 33 years; Paul Smedberg, 15 years; Justin Wilson, 10 years; Tim Lovain, 10 years; John Chapman, 6 years; and Mayor Allison Silberberg and Willie Bailey, who have served just one 3-year term. Although this particular council will not tax us while running for office in 2018, they will surely inflict grave damage to our personal finances during the off election years. As an example, the 2017 property tax increase of 5.7 cents added \$750 to my tax bill. With storm water and combined sewer fees, my total 2017 contribution to the city increased by approximately \$1,000. Councilman Justin Wilson was directly responsible for this increase, since he convinced the other council members to adopt his tax increase initiative. In light of this approach, I would like to ask the citizens of Alexandria why they vote for council members who exhibit the following behaviors:

- ❖ Constantly espousing a tax and spend mentality. Perhaps voting for those who advocate the use of better financial man-

agement principles would be a better solution.

- ❖ Continually increasing the density of an already dense city. With over 9,000 residents per square mile, Alexandria is the densest city in Virginia. This has put our traffic, parking, infrastructure, schools, demand for services and financial stability all into question. One should only vote for those who are inclined towards a sensible growth approach for future developments.

- ❖ Continually endorsing any increase to the debt, which is currently over a half billion dollars. Even more dramatic is the annual debt service payment of around \$82 million a year. Obviously these funds could be better served elsewhere, such as for the improvement of our decaying infrastructure.

- ❖ Failing to streamline government practices. An independent performance audit of the city’s Operating, Capital Improvement and Schools Budgets is in order to ensure that the citizens of this great city are receiving cost effective, efficient and reliable services. Former Governor Wilder performed a statewide audit for then Governor Warner, and found numerous cost saving measures, that can easily be replicated in Alexandria if citizens select the right individuals for Council. If not, Alexandria only has itself to blame.

**Townsend A. “Van” Van Fleet**  
Alexandria

## BULLETIN BOARD

*Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.*

### WINTER SHELTER OPEN

**The Alexandria Winter Shelter**, located at 930 N. Henry St., is available for anyone experiencing homelessness or needing a warm, safe place to go. The shelter is open daily with regular hours from 7 p.m. to 7:30 a.m., through March 31. For more information about the Winter Shelter, call 703-548-7500. To learn more about the City’s housing assistance and homeless services, and to download a list of community resources for the homeless and other persons in need, visit the City’s Homeless Services page at [www.alexandriava.gov/dchs](http://www.alexandriava.gov/dchs).

### THURSDAY/JAN. 4

**2017 Top 10.** 7-8:30 p.m. in the large community room at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Councilmember Del Pepper will present her list of the 2017 top ten newsworthy items at the Holmes Run Park Committee meeting. Visit [www.alexandria.lib.va.us](http://www.alexandria.lib.va.us) or call 703-746-1702.

## Taylor Run

During the actual Christmas season, that is the 12 days of Christmas, look for the Shooter’s Hill Junior Carolers coming around the Taylor Run neighborhood singing carols and collecting donations for Children’s Hospital. They are continuing a tradition begun more than 50 years ago and only once cancelled because of severe cold. The carolers hope that all our generous neighbors will open their doors and their checkbooks for this very worthy cause.

— LOIS KELSO HUNT

# ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**Potomac Fiber Art Show.** Through Jan. 7, various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. The show will be supplemented with juried items on Dec. 5. The Torpedo Factory has new hours, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily and weekends, and 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

### The Artist's Process Lecture.

Through Jan. 7, various times at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Featuring sketches and studies by members of the Washington Society of Landscape Painters, this exhibition focuses on the process of painting in the field and trying to capture the essence of what may be in the final work. Created quickly, these studies serve as shorthand that informs the creation of the final pieces. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

**Cameras and Clay.** Through Jan. 21 at Potomac Fiber Art show through Jan. 7, various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. Featuring the work of 34 photographers and clay artists. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

### "Terracotta Warriors" in Market Square.

Through March 11, all day in Market Square, 301 King St. Two replicas of the famous "Terracotta Warriors." Each replica stands six feet tall and weighs about 500 pounds, and will be on display through March 2018. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov).

### Mercy in Alexandria Walking Tour.

Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at Alexandria Visitors Center, 221 King St. Experience an inside access tour of 19th century Alexandria. Inspired by the PBS mini-series "Mercy Street," accompany a trained military historian through Civil War-era Alexandria and learn the actual history behind the TV show. Short tours are \$15, private tours for five are \$149. Visit [www.dcmilitarytour.com](http://www.dcmilitarytour.com) for more

### The Lyceum: 175 Years of Local History.

Ongoing, Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. On view in the museum's Coldsmith Gallery, the historical objects and images featured represent The Lyceum, the community at work, and commemorations and celebrations. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are invited to "be the curator" and think about why the various artifacts are in the museum's collection, and about how tangible representatives of the past help tell the story of Alexandria's history. Free. Visit [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org).

### 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/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mtvernon/) or call 703-768-3224.

### Medical Care for the Civil War Soldier Exhibit.

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

### Alexandria's Nurses and Hospitals



## Visitors

**"Terracotta Warriors" in Market Square, on display in Market Square, 301 King St. Two replicas of the famous "Terracotta Warriors." Each replica stands 6 feet tall and weighs about 500 pounds, and will be on display through March 2018. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov) for more.**

### During the Civil War.

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

### Shield of Earth: Defending the Heart of the Union exhibit.

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

### Who These Wounded Are: The Extraordinary Stories of the Mansion House Hospital exhibit.

Ongoing, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays, noon-4 p.m. at the Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Come see the site that inspired "Mercy Street," the new PBS' series inspired by real events that took place at Carlyle House. [www.carlylehouse.org](http://www.carlylehouse.org) or call 703-

549-2997

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

**Flamenco Show.** Wednesdays and Thursdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at La Tasca, 607 King St. Watch dancers and guitarists perform traditional flamenco. Free to attend. Call 703-299-9810 or visit [www.latascausa.com](http://www.latascausa.com).

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

### Their Fates Intertwined: The Lees of Alexandria in the War of 1812.

Wednesday- Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, 1-4 p.m. Lee-Fendall House and Gardens, 614 Oronoco St. A new exhibit on the experiences of the Lee family in Alexandria during the War of 1812 examines the contributions of Alexandria's citizens during the conflict that led to the writing of our national anthem through the lives of this iconic Virginia family. Visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703-

548-1789.

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

**Fifty Years of Collecting.** Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays 12-5 p.m. Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. An anniversary exhibit of objects from the Fort Ward collection. Free. Visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org) or call 703-746-4848.

**Dinner for the Washingtons.** 11 a.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. \$7 in addition to estate admission. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org).

**Evenings at the Athenaeum.** Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. 7 p.m. Second Thursday of every month. Visit [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org) to view concert calendar and listen to upcoming Second Thursday Music artists.

**The Monday Morning Birdwalk** takes place weekly, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7 a.m. (8 a.m. November through March), is free, requires no reservation and is

open to all. Birders meet in the parking lot at the park's entrance at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Direct questions to park staff during normal business hours at 703-768-2525.

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

**Wake Up Wednesdays** featuring The Pop Up Cafe. 7-9:30 a.m. on Wednesday's near the King Street Tunnel - Carlyle Entrance located near 2000 Duke St. near Motley Fool. The cafe will feature coffee, live music to help commuters start the day off right and donuts from Sugar Shack. [maurisapotts@gmail.com](mailto:maurisapotts@gmail.com)

## CAMPS, CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

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

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

### The Harmony Heritage Singers

(Mount Vernon Chapter of Barbershop Harmony Society), a daytime, a cappella, Chorus, rehearses on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, monthly, at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Newcomers welcome for fun or to book for a performance. Visit [www.HHSingers.org](http://www.HHSingers.org), or call Bruce at 703-352-5271.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 5

**Exhibit Space Sale Begins.** Various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St. Target Gallery's annual special exhibition and art sale, March 15 show. Exhibition Dates: March 10-25. Annual Art Party, scheduled this year for Friday, March 23. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

## SUNDAY/JAN. 7

**Meet the Plant Artist.** 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Botanical Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Great Falls artist, Betty Ganley will be presented with the First Place award for her watercolor, La Plumage at the event. Vienna Art Society multi media art exhibit, "Up Close To Mother Nature" will be on exhibit until Feb 25. Call 703-642-5173.

**O Luminous Night.** 6-7:30 p.m. at Christ Church, 118 N. Washington St. Savour the joy and peace of the holiday season with ensemble Armonia Nova in an evening of music from northern European lands. Call 703-549-1450 or visit [armonianova.org](http://armonianova.org).

## MONDAY/JAN. 8

**Ballroom Dance Classes.** 7-9 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Led by Gary Stephans, class focuses on the Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing, Salsa, Merengue, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Samba. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

## JAN. 9-FEB. 4

**"Déjà Vu," Art Exhibit.** Various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. Potomac Fiber

# ENTERTAINMENT

Arts Gallery show "Déjà Vu," highlights the work of artists Elizabeth Davison, Elise Miller, and Dianne Harris Thomas. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

## THURSDAY/JAN. 11

**Local Author Thursdays.** 7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Ralph Peluso, the featured author of the week will be talking about his book "512." Visit [theoldtownshop.com](http://theoldtownshop.com).

**Native Plant Interactions.** 7:30 - 9 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. A talk by Charles Smith, to kick off the lecture series looking at the interactions and relationships in plant communities from the visible framework of our living world. Visit <http://vnps.org/potowmack/events/>.

## FRIDAY/JAN. 12

**Concert at Blessed Sacrament.** 8 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road. Free. Email [mcushmac@comcast.net](mailto:mcushmac@comcast.net) or call 703-548-1176.

## SATURDAY/JAN. 13

**Watercolor Workshop: Painting on Yupo.** 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Paint on slick plastic called yupo with in-structor Marni Maree. \$90. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call 703-642-5173.

## SUNDAY/JAN. 14

**Puppy Training Seminar.** 3 p.m. at Head to Tail Spa dog grooming, 430 Hume Ave. Dog grooming and a seminar by dog expert Jodi Goldberg.

Call 703-400-4401.  
**Meet the Artist.** 4-6 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Ellyn Weiss discusses Form and Void, her exhibit that will be on display from Jan. 11-Feb. 25. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org).

## TUESDAY/JAN. 16

**Ancestry Lecture.** 1-3 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Getting the Most Out of Ancestry.com: genealogist Sharon Cook MacInnes speaks on how to successfully search the ancestry.com website's billions of records and family trees. Call 703-768-4101.

**NOVA Community Chorus Auditions.** 7 p.m. at the NVCC Alexandria campus, 5000 Dawes Ave. Rehearsals are held on Tuesday nights and begin on January 16, under the leadership of director Chad Steffey. Contact NOVA Alexandria Music Faculty member, Lisa Eckstein, at [leckstein@nvcc.edu](mailto:leckstein@nvcc.edu) or 703-845-6252.

## THURSDAY/JAN. 18

**Meet the Author.** 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Dwight S. Hughes discusses "A Confederate Biography: The Cruise of the CSS Shenandoah." \$15. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

**Air Force Band Concert.** 8 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall 4915 East Campus Drive. Special appearance by tubist Patrick Sheridan. Visit [www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/](http://www.nvcc.edu/schlesingercenter/).

## FRIDAY/JAN. 19

**Community Dance.** 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500



## Meet the Artist

Meet the Plant Artist on Sunday, Jan. 7 from 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Botanical Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Great Falls artist Betty Ganley will be presented with the First Place award for her watercolor, La Plumage, at the event. Vienna Art Society multi media art exhibit, "Up Close To Mother Nature" will be on exhibit until Feb 25. Call 703-642-5173 for more.

**PRESCRIPTION FOR DANGER**



PROPERLY DISPOSE OF UNWANTED MEDICATIONS AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

**Alexandria Police Headquarters**  
3600 Wheeler Avenue

**First Baptist Church**  
2923 King St

**Alexandria Fire Station 210**  
5255 Eisenhower Ave

**The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray**  
2204 Mt Vernon Avenue

SYMPTOMS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

- Changes in mood
- Changes in sleeping
- Curfew violations
- Drug paraphernalia
- Lack of grooming
- Loss of appetite
- Low energy
- Missing work/school
- Slurred speech
- Unexplained weight loss/gain
- Temper outbursts

Suspect Problems?  
Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Drop-off your unwanted medications  
**Saturday**  
**January 6, 2018**  
**10:00AM-2:00PM**

DID YOU KNOW?

- Many people believe prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs because a doctor prescribed them—they're not.
- More people die accidentally from prescription drugs each year than all types of illegal drugs combined.
- Combining pain killers or anti-anxiety drugs with alcohol multiplies the effect—your heart or your breathing can stop.
- Drug-induced deaths now exceed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in more than 17 states.
- Most kids who abuse prescription drugs report they get them from their home medicine cabinets or from friends.
- Proper disposal of unwanted medication prevents environmental contamination of our waterways and soils.

SYMPTOMS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG OVERDOSE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abnormal pupil size</li> <li>• Agitation</li> <li>• Convulsions</li> <li>• Paranoid behavior</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Drowsiness</li> <li>• Hallucinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea and vomiting</li> <li>• Non-reactive pupils</li> <li>• Staggering or unsteady gait</li> <li>• Sweating or extremely dry, hot skin</li> <li>• Tremors</li> <li>• Unconsciousness</li> <li>• Violent or aggressive behavior</li> </ul>
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Suspect an Overdose? Call 911

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION COALITION OF ALEXANDRIA



Go to [www.PreventItAlexandria.org](http://www.PreventItAlexandria.org) to learn more

THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND



FREE CONCERT!

Schlesinger Concert Hall | Alexandria, Virginia

Patrick Sheridan

Thursday, Jan. 18 at 8 p.m.

world-renowned tubist



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~SAVE THE DATE!~

Concert Band Collegiate Symposium  
Saturday, Feb. 3 at 8 p.m.  
Schlesinger Concert Hall | Alexandria, Virginia

[www.usafband.af.mil](http://www.usafband.af.mil)

## ENTERTAINMENT

# 4 Dates to Circle for January

BY HOPE NELSON

The new year brings with it a passel of new things for food and beverage lovers to do around town. Here are some events that shouldn't be missed.

### Port City Brewing

#### Doppelbock Release — Friday, Jan. 5

In the next installment of Port City's lager series, the brewery releases its hearty, heady doppelbock for the inaugural weekend of the new year. The malty, deep-hued lager is a formidable companion on a chilly evening, as is Port City's new fire pit, which will be roaring all night (weather permitting).

Grab a meal at the Borinquen Lunch Box, which will pull up around 5:30, and stay to listen to music at 7-10 p.m. 3950 Wheeler Ave.

### Osteria Marzano

#### Italian Cooking Class — Saturday, Jan. 6

Channel your inner Italian and take a lesson from Chef Carmine Marzano as he teaches how to make some homestyle favorites. From grissini breadsticks to braised beef agnolotti pasta to a decadent chocolate amaretto custard and more, you'll come away

*Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com).*

with some new culinary tricks up your sleeve. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 6361 Walker Lane. \$85 per person.

### Lena's Wood-fired Pizza

#### Date Night Game Night — Tuesday, Jan. 9

Have the dark, cold days of winter gotten you a bit down? Spice up the week with a game night at Lena's, and bring your sweetheart along. The pizzeria will have a variety of games to bring the two of you closer together — or perhaps further apart depending on who's a sore loser. While you're there, order Lena's famous giant meatball to share or divide and conquer with the likes of a Panini and individual pizza. 4-11 p.m. 401 E. Braddock Road. Reservations recommended.

### Gadsby's Tavern

#### History by the Glass — Friday, Jan. 19

Learn all about the genesis and history of the hot toddy alongside mixologist Branden Beasley at this event in what is arguably Alexandria's most storied tavern. This event isn't a spectator sport; lift a glass of a hot beverage or two throughout the evening while learning about how the beverage intersects with Alexandria and American history. Nibble on an appetizer or two along the way. 7-9 p.m. 134 N. Royal St. \$50 per person.

## CALENDAR

Shenandoah Road. Third-Friday Community Dance with the Mount Vernon Swing Band. Live music conducted by Owen Hammett. Open to the community. \$4. Call 703-765-4573.

### SATURDAY/JAN. 20

**Winter Tree Day.** 10-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Take a walk in the woods to examine trees in their wintry state. Get to know some evergreens and learn how critters use trees as their homes during our coldest months. \$6. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates) or call 703-642-5173.

### Tea Tasting: A Tea for Each

**Continent.** 10-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Sample teas from each of the seven continents of the world. \$25. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates) or call 703-642-5173.

### SUNDAY/JAN. 21

#### NOVA Community Chorus

**Auditions.** 7 p.m. at the at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Contact Herb Levy at [Herb@FocusMusic.org](mailto:Herb@FocusMusic.org) or 703-380-3151.

### MONDAY/JAN. 22

**Ballroom Dance Classes.** 7-9 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Led by Gary Stephans, class focuses on the Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing, Salsa, Merengue, Rumba, Cha-Cha and Samba. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

### JAN. 26-FEB. 4

#### Alexandria Winter Restaurant

**Week.** Various times in neighborhoods throughout Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray and the West End. \$35 three-course dinner or \$35 dinner for two; select locations offering lunch from \$10-20 per person. Visit



[www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com](http://www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

### THURSDAY/FEB. 1

#### Alexandria Poetry Contest Entry

**Deadline.** 5 p.m. at the City of Alexandria, The Office of the Arts, a division of the Department of Recreation. The "DASHing Words in Motion" poetry contest, topics edge on transportation, ideas might stem from The Alexandria Transit Company's DASH buses motto is "Keep Alexandria Moving." Call 703-746-5565 or email [cheryllanne.colton@alexandriava.gov](mailto:cheryllanne.colton@alexandriava.gov).

#### Blues Night with Meigs Hodge.

7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Meigs Hodge explores Delta and Chicago styles through the music of Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, and others; as well as contemporary standards and original compositions. \$10. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 3

#### Watercolor Workshop: Paint a

**Winter Scene.** 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn to paint a winter landscape in watercolor with the

## Local Author

**Another night of "Local Author Thursdays," on Thursday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Ralph Peluso, the featured author of the week will be talking about his book "512." Visit [theoldtownshop.com](http://theoldtownshop.com).**

help of artist Erik Hottenstein, who demonstrates techniques for translating photographs into winter scenes and provides guidance for your individual piece. \$90. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates) or call 703-642-5173.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**Salon at the Statehouse III.** 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Ashley and George Wilson will welcome 50 guests to their recently renovated, historical home, where dinner will be served. \$100. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

### FEB. 15-MARCH 3

**U-Street the musical.** Various times at The Richard Kauffman Auditorium (Lee Center), 1108 Jefferson St. U-Street, the musical is an exploration of homelessness in America brought to life with 12 musical numbers, and a 30-member cast from around the D.C. metro area. The production is also a fundraiser to support programs for low-income youth in Alexandria. \$20. Call 703-640-4980 or visit [www.momentumcinc.org](http://www.momentumcinc.org).

**Happy New Year from all of us at Le Refuge.**  
Thank you for your patronage in 2017.  
We hope to see you in 2018.

# Le Refuge

## Restaurant

### Winter Specials

- Split Pea Soup with Smoked Sausage
- Asparagus with Fresh Smoked Trout
- Venison Medallions
- Beef Wellington
- Rack of Lamb
- Dover Sole
- Cassoulet
- Frog Legs

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[www.lerefugealexandria.com](http://www.lerefugealexandria.com)

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# PASTA

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- Choose Your Toppings
- Choose Your Sauce
- Includes Salad Bar & Hot Bread

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# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

— literally.

Thanks to the skillful planning of the First Night committees, those who attended this sprightly New Year's Eve ritual (in spite of the frosty weather outside), found a tranquil oasis of soothing sounds, upbeat tempos, rocking rhythms, and a joyful sense of togetherness as we sifted among the 48 options to choose from. They ranged from Haydn and Mozart to Elvis, to foot-stomping Ruthie and the Wranglers, to the Step Dancing, violin-playing members of the Irish Breakfast band, to the peaceful and soothing melodies from the Washington Philharmonic Woodwind Quintet, and many other outstanding sounds. Bravo!

Of particular note were the many fun things offered to young children. In addition to the usual face painting, balloon sculptures, clowns, puppets, craft projects like ship building, and tunes for tots, there was the boon for parents in the Countdown for the Kiddies from 7 to 8 p.m., so they could have their own celebrations, tailored to earlier bedtimes.

One of my favorite memories of the night were the many pint-sized preschoolers who took to the dance floor of the Masonic Temple with zest and enthusiasm, to swing and sway to the Honky Tonk melodies of Bill and Bob Classic Country show. It was pure magic! I wanted to embrace their carefree joie de vivre and unfettered happiness.

Watching from the sidelines, I suddenly felt freed from the shackles imposed on those of us living in the Washington area since Jan. 20, 2017, who were in the front-lines of these seismic shifts. On a daily basis, I have felt as though "fear" was now part of my life as I worried for the first time about nuclear war, as a possible deadly reality. I worried about alienating our long-time allies, turning our backs on major environmental concerns and walking away from the Paris Climate accords, espoused by 192 other UN member countries, or global security concerns with NATO and our other treaty partners. I worried about our lack of humanity, in not passing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or welcoming legislation for the 800,000 DACA young people — with 97 percent of them in school, at work or in the military. I worried about living in the presence of an inert, uncaring, self-centered Congress that chose to do nothing when one man in Nevada randomly shot almost 600 innocent people. Or one of their own was shot at an Alexandria ball field ... And there was

no response from Congress.

Thank you, organizers of First Night, for the musical reprieve that freed my soul for a few blissful hours. And thank you to the City Council, that provided the financial support for this worthwhile event.

**Kathleen M. Burns**  
Alexandria

## A Tale of Two Hills

To the Editor:

The current debacle involving the proposed Karig Estates residential development resembles a similar controversy that played out a decade earlier at the property known as 5325 Polk Street.

Both properties have strikingly similar environmental attributes — steep slopes, unstable marine clay soils, high-quality tree canopy, water features, resident wildlife, and connectivity to other natural areas and established residential neighborhoods — that thoroughly exemplify the defining qualities embodied in the city's "Eco City" aspirations, while raising bright red flags for development.

Both garnered fierce neighborhood opposition to residential development proposals due to the likelihood of negative impacts on adjacent neighbors and the loss of prized and increasingly rare natural open space.

Yet the outcomes of the respective development proposals after the city planning and zoning (P&Z) review process tell two completely divergent tales: today, one of these 3-acre properties is Polk Street Nature Park, while the other is poised to become "Karig Estates" — an enclave of McMansions on a soon-to-be denuded hillside perched on an unstable, runoff-prone slope directly above and adjacent to an established neighborhood, Seminary Ridge.

While no one here is suggesting that the city turn the Karig Estates property into a park, what the record at Polk Street and many other places clearly shows is that the city can and often does wield the authority to control not only whether, but how, a given site is developed in order to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

This is exactly what occurred at Polk Street, where P&Z officials cited a litany of familiar environmental and engineering complaints for rejecting multiple development plans. The challenges are virtually identical at the Karig Estates site — indeed, the names "5325 Polk Street" and "Karig Es-

tates" are interchangeable on the basis of site characteristics alone.

Yet these very same officials have refused to exercise even a modicum of that authority to shape the Karig Estates development in what are relatively minor ways that would, nevertheless, honor the city's own environmental aspirations and avoid exacerbating already severe slope stability and stormwater runoff problems for dozens of downslope neighbors.

The glaring disparity in the treatment of these two very similar properties speaks volumes about the dysfunction and lack of consistency within the city's P&Z process, and shows why "40 percent tree canopy," "protecting springs, ravines, and wetlands," and other critical environmental policies are far too important to leave in the hands of conflicted and indifferent city planning agencies.

Since the citizen's advocacy for 5325 Polk Street, I have been a FEMA public assistance project specialist (2013 – present) and have personally seen, inspected, and witnessed slope failure due to marine clay following natural disasters in various parts of the United States. Why the city's documented geological information on the marine clay at the Karig Estates site is being ignored baffles me. Should City Council approve this project, I will push to have all owners state in all deed transfers they are aware their property includes unstable Marine clay.

**Elizabeth Wright**  
Holmes Run Park Committee  
chair, 2005 - present

## Suggestion on Renaming Roads

To the Editor:

While all the other salient aspects of the proposed development on Seminary Road have been criticized, the name "Karig Street" has not yet received the attention I believe it deserves. While it's hoped that the proposed road won't come into being, I'll use it to make a larger point.

In the recent debates about removing Confederate statues and renaming streets, people have pointed out that the latter can be disruptive and costly: signs, maps, and other amenities have to be changed, and those who live on the street have to update all their own documents. But these difficulties should only make us the more determined that future streets will, in the interim, compensate for the

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# LETTERS

FROM PAGE 15

malign choices of the past by bearing the names of prominent African Americans, first, and then of slaves associated with Alexandria, which, we recall with horror, was one of America's largest slave trading centers.

To me this seems like such a good solution to a complex problem that I can't imagine why the city hasn't hastened to adopt it as a policy. It's easy enough to draw up a list, and I hope our own native son, Samuel Tucker, will be on at least a portion of the renamed Jefferson Davis Highway. Again, how could any Alexandrian official not seize the opportunity to encourage this? Quite apart from its moral value, it would be good for business: it would add to the many very old historical sites of our beautiful city a site reflecting an event of a trifling (by our standards) 75 years ago. And what a gift to parents of children who neglect their homework: "Listen, Samuel Tucker went to jail for the privilege of sitting in the library studying!"

First things first, though. At the top of the list should be the name of any soldier or police officer from Alexandria who is killed in the line of duty. Again, surely this is axiomatic. Giving your life for others is on a moral plane by itself. The fact that many of these heroes are young reinforces the imperative to commemorate their names publicly.

I'd be fascinated to hear what arguments could be made against any of these points.

**Elisabeth Vodola**  
Alexandria

## Please Save Remnant Forest

To the Editor

The Carrier-Karig property, which bears the names of its former owners, is located on Seminary Road, across from the Episcopal Seminary and adjacent to Beth El Hebrew Congregation. The back portion of this 3.3-acre property consists of 1- 1½ acres of forested steep slopes and a spring fed wetland. According to Rod Simmons, the city's natural resource manager, there are trees on these slopes which are 100-200 years old. It is contiguous to several acres of mature forest owned by Beth El, also featuring steep slopes and ravines. The city's natural resource manager has also verified that the spring-fed wetland forms the headwaters of Strawberry Run, water which ultimately ends up in the Chesapeake Bay.

Along with other members of Beth El, I have spent hundreds of hours over the last few years working in Beth El's forest to remove invasive species and encourage the regrowth of native understory trees and woodland flowers. In 2016, I noticed evidence of drilling for soil samples and tagging of trees on the Carrier-Karig property. I needed to know more about what the owner had in mind. What I discovered alarmed me. The planned development calls for razing the existing home which faces Seminary Road and for construction of four 5,000-6,000 sq. ft. new homes to be set in

a row stretching from Seminary Road all the way back into the forested ravine. A new road will be needed to access these homes from Seminary Road. The most significant concern quickly became the fourth home, which was and still is to be constructed at the back end of the property on the steep and forested slope which sits directly above the spring fed wetland. The placement of this home is very unwise and all but ensures clear-cutting a significant portion of one of the few remnant mature forests left in the city. This plan also subjects the steep slopes to grading and filling, the construction of huge retaining walls, probable pile driving and the inevitable erosion. Given the high component of marine clay on these slopes, this intensive development will also cause probable slope failure which will harm the neighbors living adjacent to this property. And the placement of this home will most certainly degrade the water quality of Strawberry Run and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. Without the trees holding the soil in place, rainwater will carry silt from the slopes into the wetland and smother it.

The current plans call for funneling runoff into the city's storm sewers, water that will contain pollutants from the roofs, sidewalks, lawns and roadways of this new development. The city is now taxing businesses and residents alike to generate the huge sums of money needed to improve the quality of water coming out of its storm sewers. The existing plan will only exacerbate this problem.

The goal is not to prevent development of the Carrier-Karig property, but instead to protect the forested slopes and wetland. By doing so, we will also help the city enforce its regulations which call for no further degradation of water quality, particularly where the water ultimately ends up in the Chesapeake Bay. Reasonable development of this property is inconsistent with four large homes, but if a fourth home must be built, the solution is to move that home off the slope and shift it 40-50 feet towards Seminary Road. The largest, oldest and most valuable trees are on the slopes and in the ravine and not on the level ground which is far more suitable to construction. The developer can take advantage of the existing landscape by locating the new homes so that they overlook those slopes. There is simply no need to destroy the forested slopes and ravine.

I have lived in Alexandria for 30 years. I am a homeowner and taxpayer. I have a stake in the environmental health of the city. I have a 10-year-old daughter. I want her to attend services and other activities at Beth El and then take a stroll through that lovely woodland. These woods are special. Not only do the trees absorb greenhouse gases and emit oxygen, but in spring migrating birds descend to feed and rest. In summer the trees and canopy create a cathedral-like environment. This forest is also home to local breeding species, like the beautiful towhee. Why not enrich the new home owners, as well as the neighborhood and the city by building away from the forested slopes and ravine? This will leave 1-1½ acres or so of wooded slopes, which when combined with Beth El's forest, will

constitute a 3-4 acre refuge. What a lovely playground that forest could be for the children of the new homeowners. Maybe they will enjoy seeing the pileated woodpecker I have seen in those woods. It is a crow sized, spectacularly red-crested woodpecker which emits a raucous jungle-like call. The majesty of seeing such a bird calling and alighting on a huge tree in the ravine might be special for neighborhood children and adults alike. I also found an eastern box turtle in the woods near the wetland. These declining beautiful animals are also universally loved by children. I imagine there are very few left in Alexandria. There will be no pileated woodpeckers, box turtles or migrating warblers if the woods are clear-cut on the slopes and ravines to make space for the fourth home. What a travesty if this occurs when a feasible alternative exists. If the developer cannot see his way to eliminate that fourth home, the city should at least move it off the slope and about 40-50 feet closer to Seminary Road. And please run the new sewer line back to Seminary Road instead of downhill through the forest and vulnerable wetland. If this development can be tweaked to move the construction away from the environmentally sensitive features of the property, we will all benefit. If not, then once again humans will have traded what God and Mother Nature gave us for an engineered environment and we will be all the poorer for it.

This matter will be decided at a public hearing by a vote of City Council on Jan. 20.

**Jeremy Flachs**

*Alexandria resident and board member, Beth El Hebrew Congregation.*

## Preserve ODBC Building

To the Editor:

At the last City Council public hearing, on Dec. 16, I urged the council to preserve the Old Dominion Boat Club building rather than demolish it, as is now planned.

As a Boat Club member, I know that the club's building has been well-maintained and is well-equipped to provide indoor and outdoor space for various city-sponsored activities and events. It also could be rented to private groups so as to generate income to more than pay for the operation and maintenance of the building and grounds.

The club's grounds could easily be melded into Waterfront Park and the open space in front of the Torpedo Factory so that there would be a smooth pedestrian flow along that portion of the waterfront.

The outdoor uses proposed for the interim plan for Fitzgerald Square, the park planned for the end of King Street, could easily be accommodated without having to tear down the building. If anything, retaining the building would enhance those uses. Much-needed restroom facilities, for example, could be built on the building's ground floor.

One of the saddest aspects of the redevelopment of the Alexandria waterfront has been the extent to which historic buildings

have not been preserved. Demolishing the clubhouse building, portions of which are almost 100 years old, will eliminate one more link to the city's waterfront history.

I fully appreciate that demolishing the clubhouse building will enhance the river views from Vola's Dockside Grill and Hi-Tide Lounge, and most likely the profitability of that restaurant, but that is not a good reason to demolish a perfectly usable building.

Although demolition plans are quite advance, it still is not too late to say: Stop! Let's rethink the wisdom of demolishing a fine, historic building that can readily be repurposed by the city for public use and as a complement to the interim plan for Fitzgerald Square.

If the clubhouse building is torn down, I predict that sometime in the future, and perhaps in the very near future, regrets will emerge about that demolition. If I am still around, I will be among the first to say, I told you so — the building should not have been demolished.

In response to my remarks, Mark Jinks, the city manager, stated that the city's waterfront plan envisions a major park at the bottom of King Street. That plan included tearing down the ODBC building. Plans, though, are not set in concrete.

As happens quite often, plans change when circumstances change. For example, even though the waterfront plan calls for a hotel at Robinson Terminal North, its current owner has determined that it is not economic to build a hotel there. The waterfront plan must therefore be amended to reflect that reality.

It is not too late to reconsider the demolition of a perfectly fine building that the city can readily repurpose for numerous public uses. Delaying the start of demolition, now scheduled for March, will not cause irreversible harm to the city or the waterfront.

I urged the council to stop, take a breath, suspend plans to demolish the building, and reconsider how it can be utilized until such time as the city is ready to move ahead with constructing a permanent Fitzgerald Square Park.

**Bert Ely**  
Alexandria

## Support Fair Elections

To the Editor:

The future of our Commonwealth, and our Virginia General Assembly, the oldest continuous legislative body in the western world, hangs in the balance of two decisions that will be made this week. If you care about what we can achieve here in Virginia, I hope you will tune in.

The first is a scheduled drawing to determine the outcome of a House of Delegates race in Newport News where Shelly Simonds was determined the winner by one vote after a recount verified by both candidates and a three-judge panel. But the losing candidate, David Yancey, had his team

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# Pre-Pay

FROM PAGE 1

taken pre-payments, but that it was still unclear whether or not it would be deductible for federal taxes. "If you would like to give us money before it's due, we will take that, hold it, and apply it to future balances," said Fifer. "We do not have to change our policies or procedure to accept prepayments. However, we can't tell the individual taxpayer whether there's any benefit to prepayment."

In Northern Virginia, this led to a flood of prepayments. Fifer said over 650 people sent in over \$6 million in prepayments.

"We've had one of those weeks around here," said Carla de la Pava, Arlington County treasurer. "It is unexpected and 40 percent of the staff is out on vacation."

A statement released by the IRS on Dec. 27 clarified that items were only deductible from 2017 if they were assessed in 2017. Fifer said that Alexandria cannot assess 2018 real estate taxes in 2017. But Fifer and de la Pava said there is still the possibility that the future interpretation of the law could change.

"The jury is still out on whether this will be deductible," said de la Pava. "The IRS has put out something saying it will not be deductible. We took in over \$3 million yesterday alone and people are still making their payments. It's not like they're buying something on sale they might not use later. If they have money in the bank, the opportunity cost is fairly low. People are taking a chance that maybe something will change. If you don't make the payments, you definitely won't be able to take advantage of it."

On the last day to make the payment in 2017, de la Pava there were over 1,8000 customers pre-paying \$14.7 million in taxes in Arlington.

"Now many want refunds," said Fifer. "We spent that last week and beginning of this week scrambling to accept prepayments, now we're working to go through the refunds. This puts a significant strain on local governments to receive and now refund this many prepayments."

While other states have been working to review their tax cycles to accommodate the issue, in Virginia, Fifer said the assessment cycle begins on Jan. 1 and ends June 15. "There are experts and tax advisors telling people different things," said de la Pava. "I don't think there's any clarity. This bill Congress passed has created a lot of uncertainty and people are responding."

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**Legals**

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v. ) Case No.: 03-C-16-010819  
DAVID EZEQUIEL RODRIGUEZ BARRERA )  
Defendant. )

**NOTICE - ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
The above plaintiff has filed a complaint entitled: Complaint for Custody and Request for Findings of Fact to Permit Minor's Application for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, in which she is seeking custody of Keiry Gabriela Rodriguez Beltran and findings of fact to permit application for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

Notice is hereby issued by the Circuit for Baltimore County, that the relief sought in the aforementioned Complaint may be granted, unless cause be shown to the contrary. Defendant is to file a response to the Complaint on or before 2/9/2018. Failure to file the response within the time allowed may result in a judgment by default or the granting of the relief sought, provided a copy of this Notice be:

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**Obituary**



**Klima Baer**  
On Dec 27, 2017, Christine Klima Baer died of complications from Alzheimer's disease. She is survived by two daughters, Jenna Hart (Wes) and Alexa Cutten (Ashley), and grandchildren Eva, Archer and Ryan; brothers Rod, Tom, Richard and Dave; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, Jean Gustafson Klima and William Klima. She was born Oct 29, 1950 in Washington D.C., grew up in Alexandria, graduating from Hammond High School, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Her marriage ended in divorce. Upon college graduation she was offered a position at the White House in Presidential correspondence. She worked for Presidents Nixon through Bush II, and was a witness to, and involved in, much history. She retired in 2005 and moved to St. Augustine, FL. Illness forced her to move back to Virginia in 2008. During her last years she was cared for by many wonderful loving individuals who the family is thankful for. She was a devoted daughter, mother, and loved animals, traveling, history, art, antiques and the beach. She was an amazing lady, a kind and loving soul, who left us way too soon. A celebration of her life was held Wednesday, Jan 3, 3PM at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA. The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be made in her name to The Turtle Hospital, Marathon, Florida, or the Alzheimer's Association.

**Obituary**



**Rachel Morgan Hoggatt,**  
age 97, passed away December 20, 2017 at West Florida Hospital in Pensacola, Florida where she had been under Hospice care for a short period of time prior to her death. Rachel was born in Moorhead, Mississippi on October 7, 1920. She was the last of ten children of James A. and Martha M. Morgan. The family moved several times before settling in Ruleville, Mississippi where she graduated from high school and attended Mississippi Delta Junior College in Moorhead, Mississippi and Draughans Business School in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1944 she was working as Clerk of the Local Draft Board when she married James L. Hoggatt, a young Captain in the Air Force and on leave from the war in Europe. After his return from another year in the war in Europe, they moved around to several Air Force bases and came to the Alexandria, Virginia area in 1965 where James was stationed at the Pentagon. They joined Plymouth Haven Baptist Church immediately where Rachel worked as Financial Secretary for almost ten years. After the decease of her husband in 1978, Rachel worked at Groveton High School before retiring. Rachel is survived by one daughter, Barbara Jo Kicklighter; son-in-law, Ray Kicklighter; two grandchildren, Eric Dahlgren and Brittany Dahlgren and several nieces and nephews. A Funeral Service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 6, 2018 at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Alzheimer's Association by calling 1-800-272-3900 or by going to their website at ALZ.com.

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NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/18.

**4 WHEEL ALIGNMENT \$64<sup>95</sup>**

Your car's alignment suffers, and can cause uneven tire wear and steering problems.

INCLUDES: Inspect suspension, ball joints, struts & shocks, tire condition and set tire pressure.

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**VARIABLE DISCOUNT**

**\$15.00 OFF** when you spend \$100.00 - \$199.99  
**\$30.00 OFF** when you spend \$200.00 - \$299.99  
**\$45.00 OFF** when you spend \$300.00 - \$399.99  
**\$50.00 OFF** when you spend \$400.00 or more

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*Jack Taylor's*  
**ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA**

Check your windshield. Does your sticker say **11/17, 12/17, or 1/18**? If so, your VA Safety Inspection is now due

**VIRGINIA STATE INSPECTION FREE**

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CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT **703-684-0710** OR SCHEDULE ONLINE AT **ALEXANDRIATOYOTA.COM**

# Alexandria trusts McEneaney Associates



there when it counts

McEneaney.com



## Rosemont \$1,200,000

One block from King Street Metro, this 1930s brick Dutch Colonial on a 9,000-SF lot exudes light & airiness. Entrance foyer, living room & dining room have original pine floors. Kitchen/family room opens to deep backyard. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths up and finished "au pair" basement.

**Kay Blemker 703.623.8563**  
[www.KayBlemker.com](http://www.KayBlemker.com)



## Del Ray \$839,900

3-bedroom, 2.5-bath detached house. Open and bright layout, updated kitchen, family room & mudroom addition, oversized master suite. Fantastic outdoor space - large fenced yard, deck, detached workshop & parking for 3 cars. Walk to Metro & "The Avenue." 210 E Monroe Ave.

**Jen Walker 703.675.1566**  
[www.JenWalker.com](http://www.JenWalker.com)



## Stoneybrooke \$543,000

Large center hall colonial near Fort Belvoir/Bolling AFB/Pentagon/Andrews/Ft Myers/DC. Three finished levels. Large kitchen/family room overlooking deck. New gas range. Extra fridge in basement. Professionally landscaped and maintained rear yard. Near shopping.

**Phyllis Sintay 703.472.3563**  
[www.psintay.com](http://www.psintay.com)



## Porto Vecchio \$525,000

Stunning, gorgeous condo with double master suite, renovated kitchen, wood-burning fireplace, built-in bookcases in second bedroom. Enclosed balcony overlooks Hunting Creek & Belle Haven CC with sunset views. Garage parking. Pet friendly, tennis & pool.

**Susan Craft 703.216.4501**  
[www.SusanCraft.com](http://www.SusanCraft.com)



## Stratford Landing \$572,000

Motivated seller! Pack your bags! This home is waiting for you with fresh paint, gleaming hardwoods, updated kitchen and baths, large spacious rooms. Lovely lower level includes large recreation room, storage and half bath. Private deck backing to woods.

**Vicki Binkley 703.994.0778**  
**Phyllis Sintay 703.472.3563**



## Alexandria \$215,000

Potowmack Crossing Condominium. 1-bedroom, 1-bath on the 3rd floor. Large windows let in lots of sunlight! New carpeting, new bathroom, parking space. Access to community pool & tennis. Minutes from Mt Vernon Trail & bus stop directly to DC. Cats only. 1634 W Abingdon Dr #302

**Laurel Conger 703.577.6899**  
[www.LaurelConger.com](http://www.LaurelConger.com)



## Old Town \$725,000

Beautiful 3-level brick townhouse a short stroll to Braddock Metro with 2 off-street parking spaces. Updated kitchen. Large deck and patio off living room. Third bedroom on upper level could be office/family room. New hardwood floors in living and dining rooms and new carpet on upper 2 levels. No HOA fees!

**Chris Hayes 703.944.7737**  
**Gordon Wood 703.447.6138**



## meet Kathy Hassett

We are pleased to announce Kathy Hassett has joined the Alexandria office of McEneaney Associates. If you are thinking of buying, selling or renting, call Kathy today at 703.863.1546, or stop by our office.

109 South Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

**Trusted. Everywhere.**

**Kathy Hassett**  
703.863.1546  
[khassett@McEneaney.com](mailto:khassett@McEneaney.com)  
[khassettproperties.com](http://khassettproperties.com)

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