

## The Secret to 'Jointness' Council and School Board consider political will necessary to work together.

BY DAN BRENDEN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**t a joint work session held Tuesday, Jan. 30, City Council and the School Board acknowledged that political leadership is required to improve their intergovernmental collaboration.

In May, following a contentious budget cycle, council established the Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force. Council charged the task force, consisting of "blue ribbon" experts, to recommend how to streamline certain city and schools' facility projects, and also how to improve capital planning and implementation processes. The task force's 16 final recommendations, outlined in a 54-page report and spanning two hours of discussion Tuesday, covered a lot of ground. But, throughout, they stressed the theme of "jointness:" that the city and schools need to work better together in planning and delivering core governance "capabilities" — including though not necessarily in the form of capital projects.

"It probably surprises nobody in this room that there isn't a jointness with respect to the existing process. I think that's why we ended up here," said task force member Eric Wagner Tuesday. Among other things, the task force's written report says: "Alexandria lacks a unified and distilled vision for the future;" "The CIP [10-year Capital Improvement Program] process lacks joint City and ACPS [Alexandria City Public Schools] vision, collaboration, coordination, and execution;" "The CIP process provides a frag-



Members of the City Council and the School Board met in a joint work session on Tuesday, Jan. 30.

mented view of capital needs citywide."

To rectify this, the Task Force's report recommends that, by year's end, the two governing bodies take three steps, among others.

First, the governing bodies should establish a Joint Capital Management Council (JCMC), co-chaired by the city manager and schools' superintendent. Currently each governing body oversees its own project planning. The JCMC would "serve as the glue between each entity." It would cull and recommend "which projects hold the most promise in providing capabilities for deliver[ing] services to the residents of Alexandria and ... at cost, on schedule, and

with the planned scope." The JCMC represents part of the task force's overall strategy "to infuse new structures and processes that will in turn impact behaviors and culture." Vice Mayor Justin Wilson believes the JCMC "the most important body" that will emerge from the task force's recommendations.

Second, the governing bodies should "initiate visioning sessions for a joint 'targeted new reality,'" or shared "strategic vision for the future," according to the task force's report. Currently, "Each entity has its own strategic plans and vision but not a document that distills them together and that would support understanding priorities and

tradeoffs." A common vision would help to "clarify priorities for decision making" against a common yardstick. The lack of shared vision "impacts nearly all other recommendations put forth by the Task Force."

Third, the governing bodies should begin developing a joint facilities master plan. This plan would serve "as the road map for reaching Alexandria's targeted new reality" and "provide ongoing context and guidance to the CIP." Alexandria is a small, enclosed city with no possibility of geographical expansion. City officials can reasonably forecast "what population density we could absorb," said Task Force member Elliot

SEE COUNCIL SCHOOL, PAGE 20

## Short Bridge, Big Compatibility Issues

**Arlington moves forward with bridge park, but Alexandria lags behind.**

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**nyone who has travelled along Route 1 between Alexandria and Arlington, or taken the Mount Vernon Trail, has passed



Four Mile Run leading under Short Bridge Park.

Short Bridge Park. As the name suggests, it's a short railroad bridge over Four Mile Run that, since the rail fell into disuse, has been overgrown with vegetation. The actual park land in Arlington is a small plateau overlooking Four Mile Run on the Arlington side. While the park is currently a neglected patch along Arlington's southern border, new plans will see the park revitalized over the next few years on the Arlington side. But in Alexandria, dreams of a connected park remain in limbo.

At the Arlington County Board meeting on Jan. 27, the

SEE FOUR MILE RUN, PAGE 20

## By the Numbers

**Interim superintendent gets raise.**

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**lexandria has a new superintendent, Gregory Hutchings, but with six months before he officially takes over at Alexandria City Public Schools, the School Board voted

to give a raise to current interim superintendent Lois Berlin for staying on past her contract.

It was part of the consent calendar at the Jan. 25 School Board meeting, but School Board member Karen Graf pulled it out for

SEE SUPERINTENDENT, PAGE 22

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# Squishiness or Flexibility?

School Board wrestles with how best its budget should communicate its needs.

BY DAN BRENDEN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he school system's FY19-28 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) reflects the School Board's challenge to articulate to City Council and the public its overarching budget philosophy. "We want to make sure that you all understand ... that this 10-year CIP [leaves] major gaps" in student seating capacity, School Board Chair Ramee Gentry told City Council at a Jan. 29 joint work session.

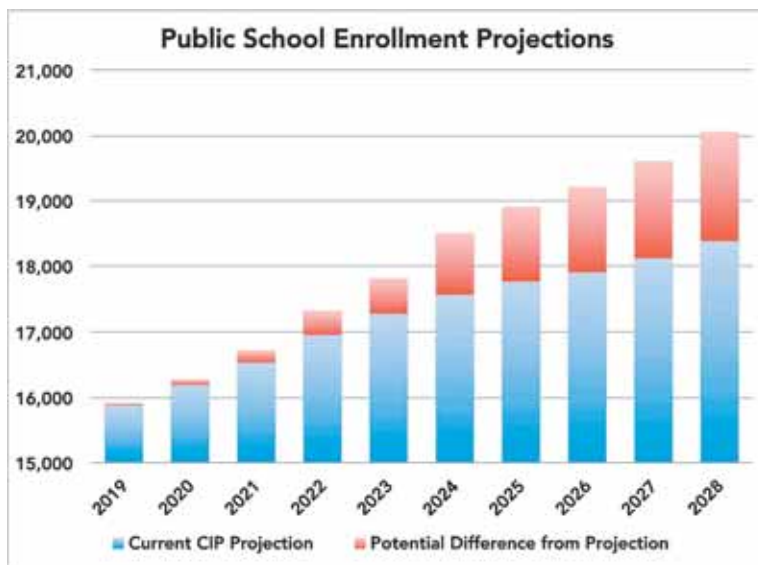
On the one hand, the School Board knew that when they unanimously adopted their CIP on Jan. 25. The plan deliberately delays and cuts capacity-adding projects, aligning with recent recommendations from a "blue ribbon" advisory task force. Those recommendations were, in part, to accommodate the limited year-by-year funding indicated by the city manager. As a result, the schools' CIP this year weighs in at \$475 million, down from \$611 million last year.

On the other hand, the School Board fears giving any impression that this paring back is an acceptable long-term solution. They've grappled with how to communicate their students' full needs, if not through specifically allocated dollars. Ultimately they decided to illustrate unmet needs in the language of their CIP adoption resolution and budget document. This language conveys the expectation that means outside the normal CIP convention — naming projects in specific years with specific dollar amounts — will address unmet needs. These new means, as of yet undeveloped, are also task force recommendations.

One is a joint facilities master planning process between the city and schools. As with the city's other master plans, this would entail stretching planning and funding considerations beyond the current 10-year timeframe. For example, though the School Board's present CIP excludes pre-K expansion, their adoption resolution suggests that the new master plan should include it. School Board member Karen Graf says this new master plan "is going to be a key for generations, not just this moment."

Another unconventional means includes preliminary allocations in FY19 for feasibility studies (\$1.4 million) and property acquisition (\$30 million). These provisions are unique in that they're not yet associated with named projects — which projects they become will depend on still unsettled variables. A feasibility study might indicate an already-owned property, or the School Board might acquire a new property, which is suited for one project but not another. These decisions will in turn enable other project's details to fall in place. Graf hopes to identify "viable properties" before the city's budget process ends in May.

"Where I think some people are seeing squishiness, I think I'm seeing us being thoughtful, and us recog-



**Increasing enrollment drives the need for more schools. That's the core narrative of the public school system's 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Seven years of past forecasts, when compared with actual enrollment, have been, on average, consistently conservative. Karl Moritz, the city's planning and zoning director, said in an email: "Our forecasts are sufficiently accurate for long range planning. ... The go-or-no-go decision on any specific education facility is going to take place about 3 years before construction," and by that time the forecast "is going to be very good."**

nizing that we don't want to find ourselves in a position where we're backing up," said Gentry. She thinks the School Board's chosen approach will lend itself to flexibility as complex circumstances evolve.

Other School Board members worried that this approach doesn't clearly communicate the full magnitude of the schools' capacity crisis.

Even if the School Board executes all the named projected in its CIP, enrollment forecasts show the seating deficit rising to 2,010 in FY28, up from 1,579 in FY18. The gap could widen further; it won't likely widen less. Forecasts over the last 7 years, while nearly 100 percent accurate 1-2 years in advance, have, on average, increasingly undershot actual enrollment 3 years in advance and beyond.

School Board member Christopher Lewis said during earlier deliberations: "I get the flexibility point; I'm talking about clarity of thought. ... We can either be clear, or we can put out a bunch of vague ideas and say, 'We're going to work it out with you, council.'" Past adoption resolutions haven't included "extensive explanations" about what the CIP doesn't include. He added later: "This budget does not ask for everything that we need ... This philosophy ... puts a faith in the City Council that they have not earned after years of kicking the can down the road." He said he almost voted no because the School Board "didn't seem to have a focused vision of how to approach making that full ask beyond what's in this budget. And I think we have work to do there."

Graf said: Council is "looking for cement out of [the task force's recommendations]," meaning solidified project sequencing. "We need to somehow deliver that that isn't necessarily possible. ... We have numbers in here and statements in [our CIP], but we know they don't address the holistic issues. ... That's something we're going to have to contend with

SEE EXPLAINING SCHOOL, PAGE 9



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL K. BOHN

**The Old Dominion Boat Club's commemorative anchor awaits its transfer from the old ODBC clubhouse site on King Street to the new location.**



**A forklift carrying the ODBC anchor approaches the club's new facility on Strand Street.**



**ODBC members accompany their anchor en route their new clubhouse at the foot of Prince Street.**

## Anchors Aweigh

**"Our move is now complete."**

BY MICHAEL K. BOHN

**M**embers of the Old Dominion Boat Club celebrated a milestone in the move to their new clubhouse at the foot of Prince Street on Friday, Jan. 26. They hoisted their commemorative, 3,000-pound anchor from a grassy spot adjacent to their old building at 1 King St.

and carried it by forklift one block south to the new site.

"We look at moving the anchor as a symbolic step in the club's relocation," club president Richard Banchoff said as he walked alongside the forklift and anchor in the morning sunshine. "In a nautical sense," he said with a smile, "our move is now complete."

In 1971, several ODBC members led by John Friday, the club's commodore, convinced officials at the Washington

SEE OLD DOMINION, PAGE 9



# Route 1: An Affordability Wars Story

**Housing affordability in peril along Route 1; Alfred Street Baptist Church redevelopment moves forward.**

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

**R**oute 1 South has been an affordable part of Alexandria for over a century. It was one of the predominantly black neighborhoods that arose out of the Civil War era to shelter former slaves seeking refuge in the north, who bonded together in Alexandria to form a community. Then during urban renewal, it was redeveloped to include workforce housing and affordable apartments. Now, as prices continue to rise for homes in Alexandria, the city is working to stave off market demands for luxury homes and save one of Alexandria's historically affordable neighborhoods.

"Within the area that is the primary focus of this update to the plan we have three properties that have been deeply affordable for a very long time because they have had these Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rental subsidies," said Helen McIlvaine, director of the Office of Housing.

According to McIlvaine, the properties were all at one point owned by a national company, AIMCO, and were sold in 2009. One set of homes is owned by the Alfred Street Baptist Church, the other by a New York real estate investment company called Ares. McIlvaine says the ones owned by Ares, called The Heritage and Old Towne West III, could not renew that contract with one year of notice.

Between the two sites, there are 215 committed affordable housing units. There are 140 committed affordable units at Heritage and 104 market affordable units. At Olde Towne West III there are 75 committed affordable units. Heritage's rental subsidies from HUD are renewed on an annual basis, and the rental subsidy contract on Olde Towne West III expires in late 2019. Many of these units are family sized, which is in high demand for affordable housing in Alexandria.

"It's in the general neighborhood where other housing is very expensive," said McIlvaine. "Without something like this, there are very few ways to put the breaks on housing costs."

Redevelopment of the homes along Route 1 South is inevitable, but city staff say the battle now is working to keep housing affordability part of the redevelopment.

"There is an acknowledgement that some of these will develop over time," said Jeff Farner, deputy director of Planning and Zoning. "This is a chance to be proactive and establish vision for corridor. Part of this plan is to be proactive and make sure whatever we come up with sort of reinforces the character of the corridor."

Farner said identifying the character of the corridor is one of the main focuses of the ongoing community meetings. Throughout January, a series of pop-up meetings took place throughout the neighborhood and surrounding locations. Two community meetings will be held in February, one on Feb. 15 from 7 to 9 p.m. at a location to be determined, and one on Feb. 20, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lee Center. Monday, Feb. 26 through Saturday, March 3, a charrette will be held at the Lee Center Exhibit Hall, hosting evening community meetings and promoting engagement with staff. By the week of April 16, a draft plan will be released for public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council in June.

Meanwhile, to the west, Alfred Street Baptist Church is undergoing expansion. The contract on the Alfred Street Baptist Church affordable properties is set to expire in 2019-2020. Two townhomes with 22 units of affordable housing will be demolished as part of the expansion plans, with residents relocated to properties owned by the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation. There are 55 other committed affordable units owned by Alfred Street Baptist Church in the surrounding neighborhood.

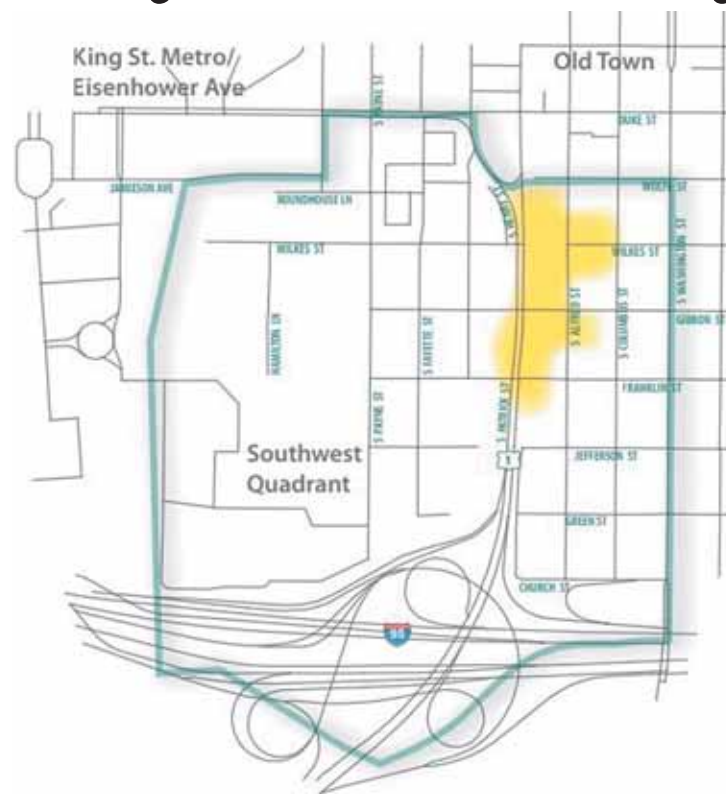
"We are hopeful that we will come up with a plan to potentially help incentivize them to renew their contracts on a long-term basis and provide ways to either preserve or redevelop them," said Farner.

"We're lucky that Alfred Street has fully embraced the planning process," said McIlvaine. "I think our goals are aligned, that we are all interested in preserving the housing affordability. Among the things we have talked to them about, we're working together to preserve those contracts over the long term. That's part of what this planning process is about: what tools and strategies can we use to keep all of the units affordable. They are due to expire beginning next year, which is one of the reasons that the planning process is time sensitive."

Over the last year, Alfred Street Baptist Church has been working on and slowly moving forward with plans for construction. McIlvaine says a memorandum of understanding is being developed between the city and the church that the 22 units being lost as part of the construction will eventually be replaced.

"That could be part of the redevelopment of the other 55 units, or could buy a building nearby," said McIlvaine, "but we want these to be units we're not currently counting."

For the remaining 55 units, McIlvaine said the planning process is still in the earliest stages, and it's unclear whether they will be renovated and refinanced or whether they will be redeveloped as a mix of afford-



**Map of the Route 1 South housing affordability area.**



**The Heritage, one of the Route 1 South affordable neighborhoods.**

able and market rate. But with the contracts expiring next year, McIlvaine said it's critical to begin the planning for that sooner rather than later.

"This has been on our radar for a while," said McIlvaine. "We want to be at a point where we have dates and a real plan."

As for the church redevelopment, Rob Kerns, division chief for Planning and Zoning, says the church has been in discussions with the city about the expansion for two years.

"It's a large endeavor, and they've been working with the community through various meetings and revisions," said Kerns. "They've been working around making changes based on neighborhood and staff feedback, and bringing along their congre-

gation which ultimately has to pay for this project. The Board of Architectural Review comments recently subtly adjusted the building to again be more friendly to the historic district and neighbors, as well as working with underground parking garage. They're having technical studies done there because have to be careful about underground water situation. They're getting into the fine detail for viability and cost."

Kerns said the project is expected to come to a public hearing this fall.

"They have not been in a rush for this project," said Kerns. "They're pacing along to try and do it correctly, bringing neighbors and parishioners along. They were originally looking at spring, but moved to fall to make sure everything is in order."





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## PEOPLE

# 'They're Just People' Local jail chaplain discusses religious ministry in the world of criminal justice.

BY DAN BRENDL  
GAZETTE PACKET

**M**yron Contee has ministered to inmates at the Alexandria jail for 24 years, first as a volunteer, the last nine as the official (though unsalaried) inmate chaplain. This conversation (edited below) covered how his ministry interacts with the criminal justice system. This is the third of an ongoing series of interviews with local religious leaders about religion in the public square.

**A CONVERSATION** Contee oversees about 110 volunteers from various religious congregations, of whom the regulars represent about seven denominations. He also serves as an assistant minister at St. John Baptist Church, where he worships; runs two small businesses (plumbing and home remodeling); and started a nonprofit called Second Chance Ministries.

### Describe briefly how you came to this work?

Contee: I actually used to be an inmate here ... at this same, very jail. While here, after giving my life to the Lord and converting, the desire to come back and minister here was felt [to be] a great need. ...

### What do you see are the biggest challenges to inmate rehabilitation?

Contee: If it's a person that has been repeatedly in this situation, their mindset is one of failure. They have a problem, they can't see success, and everybody's beginning to tell them this is what they're going to be. So getting their mindset to change ... to change to something that they can't see. ... [And] having the right discernment to give information that is needed, that's good for them, but sometimes hard to swallow. ...

### Does your ministry also seek to make changes at the systemic level? ... Advocacy to improve jail policies or advocacy at the level of legislation, whether local or state?

Contee: I appreciate the sheriff that we have here, and the staff that I'm allowed to work with. I'm given the opportunity to bring in changes to programs offered. For instance, I'm bringing in a group ... to come in and sit down with inmates and just talk about life trials and struggles. ... I do anger management classes [for] the inmates ... It's simpler to work inside the policy. ... Once they [the administration] see the changes taking place, they have the authority to change the policy. ... There have a couple other chaplains that came in here and didn't last long because they wanted to change the policy. ... There's some flexibility that will never happen in here. ...

### With the prophetic call to speak truth to power, when you're a chaplain in any public entity ...

### sometimes there can be a conflict of interest ...

Contee: I'm governed by the laws of God to obey the laws of man. There are some things that, if it [were] in my power, I would change. ... [But] if it's not that great of a difference, it's not worth ... trying to take that hill. ... Before I deal with trying to work outside it, let me see what I can do inside this [set of parameters]. Because if you see I can do good with what's inside the box, ... you may make the box bigger for me. It's better if you make the box bigger than I fight to make it bigger. ... I may not [be able to] change policy, but if the program becomes part of the policy, then I am changing policy. ...

### You said there are some things that if you could change them, you would. ... Can you give an example or two of what those things would be?

Contee: ... Policy used to be that, to be [an intermittent] volunteer, ... you didn't have to go through the training to at least come into the facility ... you only had to go through the training to be on the "master list" [of regular volunteers]. ... Well, now you only can come in here one time [per year] like that. The next time you come, you have to go through the [Saturday] training and get cleared and put on the master [list]. ... [That hampers my ability] to bring people in and out for different spiritual reasons, to minister. ...

### Do you network with any ministries that are either upstream or downstream, so to speak, from the jail in order to establish ... a continuity of spiritual care?

Contee: Yes, a lot of churches ... A little bit with probation/parole. I do know people at social services. I know a couple of individuals at the shelters in the area. ... I set up a mentors ministry. It's not at full effect now, I have mentors in place that were supposed to be coming in, mentoring inmates ... three months before their release, and then mentoring out in the street six months [after their release]. ...

### Do you have ministerial points of contact ... so that when people ... get transferred to a prison ... you can call up Joe Chaplain there? Or does each step of the way have to have a chaplain who gets to know [the inmate]?

Contee: No. Each step of the way they probably have to get a [new] chaplain to know. ... If we have federal inmates, they might be going anywhere in the United States ... The state inmates, we know where they'd be going. ... I do interact sometimes with some of the [other] local jails ...

### How about more upstream stuff? Do you engage in any kind of



Myron Contee

### preventative or intervention-type ministries or programs, say, with the public school system, or Boys and Girls Club, or whatever?

Contee: Not as much as I would like to. I'm available to a lot of those ministries, if they have needs for my services. ...

### Do you minister in any way to inmate families?

Contee: Yes. ... It all depends on the situation, if it creates an opportunity ... If something happens for some reason and I have to contact the family member, or the family member contacts me, and dialogue is given, however that dialogue happens determines how we proceed ...

### I would think that ... a young adult is in here, got into whatever trouble he got into, that that's not a stand-alone, bubble thing. That might be related to family disorder ...?

Contee: ... [In one] situation, a son had gotten locked up. His mother wanted the church that she was going to come see him. ... He didn't want them to come. But come to find out in my conversation, the issue wasn't the church coming; the issue was his mother. So we're working on how to get his mother to come see him so that they can resolve their personal issues ... Because the conflict is mother-and-son. ... So things like that ...

### Sometimes your ministry does bleed over into [your relationship with] the deputies ...?

Contee: ... Most of my personal [interactions] with staff are unrelated to this, to inmates. ... The only time staff have come to me about inmate issues is if they want me to talk to certain inmates, because they were worried there were certain things going on. ...

### Tell me a little bit about how you minister to inmates with faith traditions other than your own?

Contee: ... If you request from me a visit from a specific denomination, then I try to set that up for you, where they can come in and do whatever you require one-on-one. My responsibility is to attempt [as] best as I can to fulfill whatever your religious preferences or priorities are. If you come to me seeking counsel, I can only counsel you from the perspective that I am. ... I do not try to counsel you from what you believe, because I can't, because I might not understand what you believe. ... I'm not trying to be you. I'm just trying to be real with you. ...

### Have you ever run into a more obscure case, where you really had

### to hunt down somebody to help?

Contee: My job is to try to find them; if I can't, then I can't. But then some things I won't find. ... [For example, Wicca] ... because it's a religion of sorcery. I don't want to bring any sorcery that deals with security here. So I'm not trying to bring anything into the facility that may [cause] afflictions on the deputies or any of the staff members ... If you notice, I didn't deal with it being your religion; I deal with the results of what religion may do ... Things can be conjured up from the spiritual world and cause damage ...

### If you said to me, this religion involves animal sacrifice and they have to bring in a knife to do it, that's a nonreligious security risk. But you're talking about a security risk of a spiritual nature that not everybody's going to recognize as a risk.

Contee: Not everybody would. But part of my responsibility, as a religious leader in the facility, is to guard the spiritual aspect of the facility. Regardless of what someone else might see, I need to see the spiritual repercussions ...

### I say as part of the Nicene Creed at Mass every week: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of ... all things visible and invisible" [including spiritual beings like angels, some of them fallen (the devil, demons)]. ... So I get it — from a Christian perspective. But [some would] say that's a problem of religious freedom, when you have a Baptist [person] deciding what is spiritually dangerous and what is not.

Contee: ... Why would I want to allow something to come in that's going to create even more confusion, with different spirits operating [in here]? ... That [would mean] I'm now creating a harmful situation to somebody. No. They've got enough they've got to be on guard with than to allow that stuff in. So I don't have to denounce the religion. ... Wiccan people would be against it. But there's certain parts of different denominations that can't happen in here anyway. ... They can't light candles [during Catholic Masses, because fire's not allowed] ... I could find something in every denomination ... that we can't do here. ... Outside this facility, you have some religious freedom and some choices that you don't have inside here. ... This is a facility that's supposed to be secured. ... I'm going to err to the side of caution.

### My understanding of the First Amendment is not that you can exercise your religion to the infinite extent, anywhere, anytime you want. There are restrictions on the practice of religion even in normal

SEE 'THEY'RE JUST PEOPLE', PAGE 9



# Standing Up for Equal Rights and Justice

Grassroots Alexandria steps up.

BY RIKKI GEORGE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**B**arely a year old, Grassroots Alexandria (GRA) has gained momentum by being visible, twice a month, in the heart Old Town Alexandria opposing white supremacy.

A large part of GRA's activism involves finding "opportunities to make dialogue," said Jonathan Krall, who with Sarah Stott, founded Grassroots Alexandria because "we were alarmed by the 2016 election and wanted to do something other than sit and fret."

A membership organization with 100 active people (656 on Facebook), GRA focuses on issues related to LGBTQ rights, such as helping trans youth in Alexandria's school system, white supremacy, environmental stewardship, affordable healthcare, communications and vulnerable communities.

"We work with communities to find solutions," said Zeina Azzam, GRA's Vulnerable Communities team leader, supporting the concerns of others, including the Tenants and Workers United, the Alexandria NAACP and members of the Alexandria Human



PHOTO BY JONATHAN KRALL

**State Sen. Adam Ebbin, third from left, joins Grassroots Alexandria, at a protest on King and Patrick streets to oppose white supremacy. These protests occur every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. GRA then walks to the Appomattox statue on Prince and Washington streets to protest until 2 p.m.**

Rights Commission.

At a Jan. 24 GRA meeting, Matt Harris, chair of the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, presented his personal views of

equal rights under law and how equal rights is not yet a reality in Alexandria. He believes "racial inequalities of today are entirely due to the complacency and apathy

of the majority."

Yet Alexandria compared to other areas is probably better at addressing problems, according to Harris. It has a progressive Human Rights Commission, City Council and now Grassroots Alexandria.

GRA took small steps forward raising over \$400 for a transgender legal fund thanks to a bake sale in Del Ray. And bigger steps in 2017 led to Alexandria's City Council unanimously passing a resolution initiated by GRA to protect and expand access to quality, affordable healthcare for all Alexandrians.

Today, recent increases in immigration and customs enforcement (ICE) activity is a particular concern for GRA, as are police data transparency issues and restorative justice, a policy that focuses on keeping students in school rather than applying suspensions.

These concerns are captured in GRA's monthly meetings, letter-writing campaigns, protests and more.

"We're engaged citizens," said Mo Seifeldin, a City Council candidate who attended GRA's Jan. 24 monthly meeting, "not just about development but human rights. I love to see this. Engaged citizens make good communities."

For information on Grassroots Alexandria and how to get involved, go to <http://grassrootsalexandria.org>

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# 'Do Not Stand Idly By'

Community organizing groups press U.S. mayors on gun safety.

BY DAN BRENDEN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**N**orthern Virginia community organizers joined interstate partners on Jan. 25 in Washington, D.C. to press U.S. mayors for safer gun technologies.

Metro IAF comprises 22 organizations, including VOICE in northern Virginia, in 10 states and the District of Columbia. Representatives converged in the capital to press the U.S. Conference of Mayors on Metro IAF's "Do Not Stand Idly By" (DNSIB) gun safety campaign. The campaign title references a Bible verse: "Do not stand idly by while your neighbor's blood is shed."

A so-called smart gun uses technology, like fingerprint recognition, so that only approved users can fire the weapon. The National Rifle Association, a lobbying group, doesn't oppose such technology in principle. But it "opposes any law prohibiting Americans from acquiring or possessing firearms that don't possess 'smart' gun technology," according to its Institute for Legislative Action website. The rationale is that such laws would serve "to prohibit the manufacture of traditional handguns, raise the price of handguns ... and, presumably, to embed into handguns a device that would allow guns to be disabled remotely."

Instead of changing laws, Metro IAF



**A fingerprint-activated trigger lock manufactured by Identilock.**

wants public sector purchasers of firearms and ammunition to put market pressure on manufacturers. According to Metro IAF, public sector purchasers make up 40 percent of the total domestic market — 25 percent from the military, 15 percent from law enforcement. Metro IAF believes that organizing purchasers to buy smart tech — and to apply shareholder pressure, if they're invested in gun companies — could create incentives for manufacturers to incorporate such tech into their products. Currently, 123 public and law enforcement officials, including Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, have associated themselves with DNSIB.

"Forty percent of the purchases of weapons in this country every year are made by our mayors and police chiefs and sheriffs and governors and our federal government.



**Metro IAF, an interstate community organizing coalition, urged the U.S. Conference of Mayors on Jan. 25 in Washington, D.C. to embrace new gun safety technologies.**

That's real purchasing power," said Metro IAF's Rabbi Joel Mosbacher at a public briefing after he addressed the mayors' conference. That "is the key to our campaign."

Linda Reid from Milwaukee's Common Ground, a Metro IAF affiliate, showed off a new fingerprint-activated trigger lock manufactured by Identilock, a Detroit-based company. After learning of it from Common Ground, a police chief in that area authorized officers to purchase the device using

department funds. This particular device has gained some preliminary NRA approval. One NRA publication included the Identilock trigger lock on its 2017 holiday gift list. Another noted that the tech allows for fast access and easy mobile carrying, such as in a car or purse.

"Instant access is really important to a lot of gun owners," said Reid. "This [technology] is a huge step forward. If this makes it on the market, it could draw funding dollars ... for other smart technology. ... Because this local police department was so excited about it, they're inviting [the product developer] to present it to all the Milwaukee County departments. ... It's our foot in the

door to get user acceptance of this technology."

The Alexandria police department currently secures its weapons through "other means," which are much cheaper than smart tech, said Mayor Allison Silberberg.

She says cost is an important consideration for the city's budget, but would encourage private gun owners to consider such options.

Learn more about Metro IAF and DNSIB at [www.metro-iaf.org](http://www.metro-iaf.org) and [www.donotstandidlyby.org](http://www.donotstandidlyby.org).

## Voting Now Open for Heart of Del Ray Award

**Five nominees**  
**"represent the heart**  
**and soul of Del Ray."**

**V**oting is now open for the 2018 Heart of Del Ray award, sponsored by the Del Ray Business Association.

Every February, the Del Ray Business Association presents the Heart of Del Ray Award to the business that serves as the heart and soul of Del Ray, as determined by a public vote of neighbors and customers. Selection is based on which business best demonstrates their warm and welcoming attitude to the community/customers, their commitment and generosity to the community, and to their overall contribution to the Del Ray community.

The nominees for the 2018 Heart of Del Ray — plus comments from the customers who nominated them — are:

❖ **Bean Creative:** "Bean Creative always gives to the community. Young and old look forward to Spooky Bean every year for Halloween. Their yard is filled with bands, artists, dogs, and others during Art on the Avenue, La Bella Strada, First Thursdays and other Del Ray events. They provide space for the We Live Big public art projects that inspire us all. Finally, Bean Creative opened their yard the evening of June 14, 2017 for the community to gather,

share the shock and start the healing process after the Simpson Field shooting."

❖ **Pork Barrel BBQ/Holy Cow/The Sushi Bar:** "Besides great food, they are one of the most community-minded businesses in the DC area." "Holy Cow donates a quarter of every burger to area non-profits. They even organized a fundraiser for Al's, one of their competitors, and they rent a flatbed to cut down and donate Del Ray's gigantic Christmas tree every year. No matter the event, they pitch in by volunteering or sponsoring. They are what makes Del Ray so special."

❖ **Rock Of Ages Music (ROAM):** "What John Patrick and his team of talented instructors have done for musicians and children in the neighborhood is astounding and I know they do it with all of their heart! They coordinate great community events like ROAMFEST and the Del Ray Music Festival that help showcase what a great neighborhood Del Ray is, and at the Halloween Parade, they donate every year to the T.C. Williams High School Marching Band."

❖ **St. Elmo's Coffee Pub:** "What can one say — an institution in Del Ray. A great place to meet friends or listen to music." "When you think of anchors in Del Ray, you think of St. Elmo's. Staff always makes you feel welcomed and the owners are wonderful in supporting local causes and events." "Have been going to St. Elmo's for years and thankful for having such a friendly and welcoming place to go and meet friends or



**Former Heart of Del Ray winners Pat Miller, Bobi Bomar, Jen Walker, Serdar Basegmez, Megan Brown, and Eric Reid present the 2017 Heart of Del Ray award to Margaret Janowsky of Del Ray Cafe. Voting is now open for the 2018 contest.**

just relax."

❖ **Taqueria Poblano:** "A neighborhood favorite — like Cheers where you walk in and they know your name." "We love the food and love to take friends from out of town because it always feels so welcoming." "Appreciate Jeff [Wallingford] and Taqueria Poblano who are always willing to support community events." "Besides the best margaritas ever, the staff is always friendly and happy to see you. Taqueria Poblano is the heart and soul of Del Ray."

Visit [www.visitdelray.com](http://www.visitdelray.com) to vote; voting closes at 12 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 8. A large heart-shaped award will be displayed on the winning business on Friday, Feb. 9 to greet them for the Valentine's Day weekend.

Past winners of the award include A Show of Hands, Jen Walker McEneaney Associates, Bobi Bomar Homes of Alexandria, The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray, Greener Cleaner of Del Ray, Del Ray Pizzeria, Mind the Mat Pilates & Yoga, Caboose Cafe, and Del Ray Cafe.





## New Deputies Join Sheriff's Office

The Alexandria Sheriff's Office recently welcomed eight new deputies to its ranks. From left: Gjavon Wooden, Virgil Usana, Alexis Turner, Angela Speight, Jacquelyn Olson, Elpidio Munoz-Pineda, Jamal Ford and Jason Bebow are sworn in by Edward Semonian, Clerk of the Circuit Court, during a ceremony at the Alexandria courthouse on Monday, Jan. 29. Sheriff Dana Lawhorne congratulated the new deputies and wished them well in their careers. They started several weeks of training at the Sheriff's Office and the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center later that day.

## Explaining School CIP Budget

FROM PAGE 3

in the wake of the task force's work." School Board member Bill Campbell said: "I just want to make sure we don't get caught up around anyone thinking that extending to 20 years [i.e., beyond the CIP's 10-year timeframe] is critical, in terms of diluting things. Because we could do it in 10 years." Under the current plan, "seating will be worse [in 2028] than it is today."

The School Board's CIP philosophy generated mixed but tentatively positive reactions from council members on Jan. 29.

Councilman Tim Lovain expressed "skepticism" about allocating substantial property acquisition funds before exhausting other alternatives.

Vice Mayor Justin Wilson expressed anxiousness to work out the details about what the task force has recommended. Councilmen John Chapman and Willie Bailey both said it's time for council to start making hard choices about budget and land use priorities.

"If we're in a crisis," let's start looking at decisive "crisis solutions," said Chapman.

## 'They're Just People'

FROM PAGE 6

**day-to-day life. ... Maybe [due to] professional responsibilities ... Everybody's going to have their different personal opinions about where the line gets drawn. ...**

Contee: And any answer could be right or wrong.

**I imagine that you deal with some pretty heavy stuff ... Do you have any kinds of practices of your own kind of spiritual self-care? ...**

Contee: I try not to carry it with me. ... You see incidents where an inmate might not have gotten treated fair, in a certain situ-

ation. But you can't change that. ... Or, they might have gotten a bad deal in court. ... For some reason, God has given me the ability to separate.

**What is the biggest misconception out in the public about inmates?**

Contee: That everybody in here is a criminal. ... The only difference between someone in here and somebody out there is that they made a mistake and got caught. ...

**People in here are not intrinsically criminal people ...**

Contee: ... They're just people, just like you and [me].

## Old Dominion Boat Club's Milestone

FROM PAGE 3

Navy Yard to donate the anchor to the club. A crew from Arlington Iron Works used one of their cranes to lift the anchor from a truck onto a concrete pad. One of the members welded on braces to stabilize it, and, after a thorough sandblasting, another

painted it.

ODBC member Anthony Henderson, whose family operates Henderson's Moving Services in Arlington, drove the rental forklift. Afterward, as he climbed down from the apparatus, Henderson smiled and said, "I'm glad that went smoothly."



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## Toxic Litter

To the Editor:

When is the city leadership going to crack down on cigarette butt littering in Alexandria? Dropping a cigarette butt in Alexandria according to state law is a misdemeanor crime that can get a person 12 months in jail as well as a \$2500 fine. Cigarette butts are the single most littered item in the world surpassing plastic bottles in numbers.

It's estimated that 180 billion cigarette butts are discarded to the environment worldwide each year. A casual stroll down any street in Old Town will show the acute observer that there is a whole lot of crime occurring in this beautiful city that is not being addressed. The crime of discarding your spent cigarettes butt on the streets of Old Town is not a victimless crime. Cigarette butts are now classified as toxic waste and are made of non-biodegradable material. There is enough nicotine in 200 cigarette butts to kill a human being.

Most human are too intelligent to consume cigarette butts as food, but our local wildlife is not. All too often wildlife will eat cigarette butts mistaking it for food. A cigarette butt discarded in Old Town has a very good chance of making it too the Potomac river when it rains due to Old Town's 1800's vintage sewer system. If a cigarette butt makes it to the Potomac river it will likely flow down into the Chesapeake Bay where it will either be eaten by marine life or settle on the bottom of one of the most bountiful bays on this planet, slowly decomposing its nicotine.

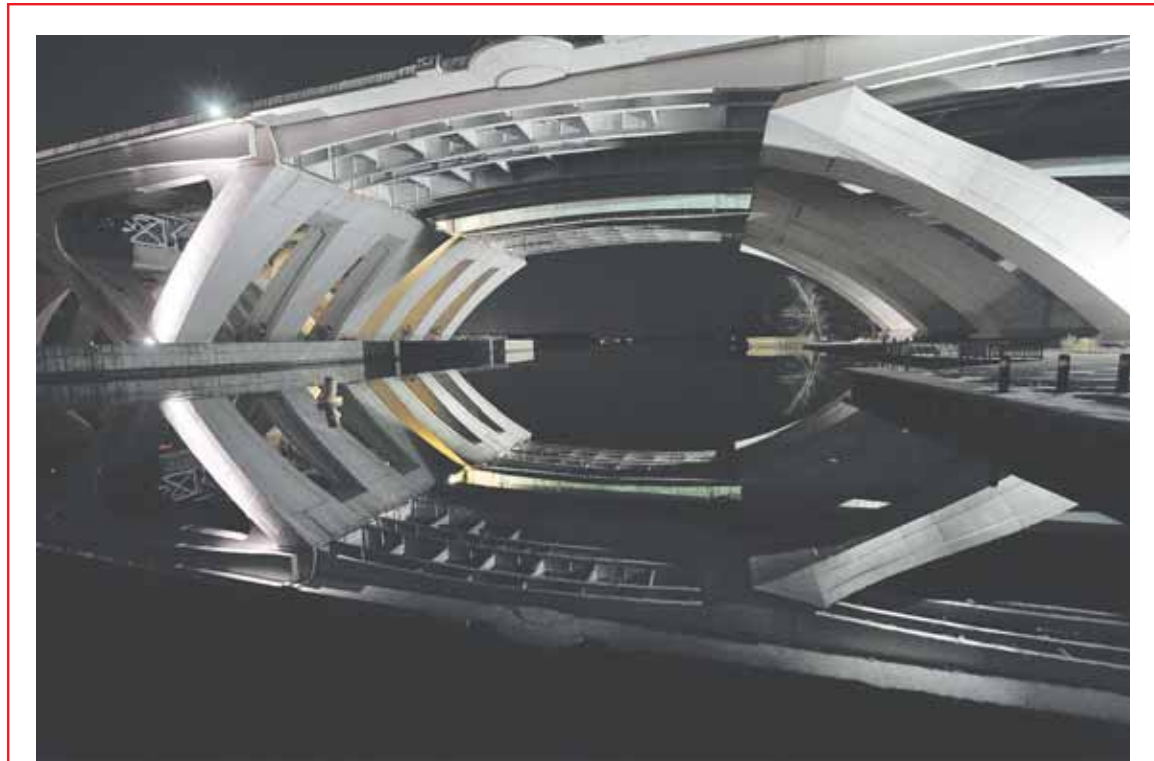
Last year according to public records, our Police Department issued the grand total of four tickets for littering, Arlington did a little better. The city must do more to educate people who still smoke that littering is not acceptable and if person who smokes on the street and continues to litter may end up being fined.

**Dan Lynch**  
Alexandria

## Business Friendly

To the Editor:

If most Alexandrians were like me, they may be as surprised and pleased as I have been to find both the city's mayor and its entire Planning and Zoning staff to be some of the most cooperative, helpful, and understanding individuals I could have encountered in launching a challenging new business venture.



## Reflection

The Potomac River looked like glass under the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge on Jan. 20.

PHOTO BY C J HEATLEY III

In recent years I took over the management of our family's office and residential buildings. After going through the necessary research, it became apparent that a new, shared-medical-office concept was the appropriate model to use in developing one floor of the Bradlee Medical Office Building. My regional builder, Eagle One Contracting Inc., and my local business partner, Christopher Hanna, both bringing extensive Northern Virginia experience, warned me that the required timetable for completion might be overly-ambitious and unrealistic. In fact, in any other jurisdiction, it would be near impossible.

Well, they didn't know Mayor Allison Silberberg. I had met her a few months earlier and found her to be small-business friendly. On learning of our new concept, she immediately arranged an in-person meeting with city Planning and Zoning executives. They were encouraging and focused on their goal of helping local businesses cut through the regulatory weeds.

Indeed, as the development phase progressed, it was apparent that city inspectors and associated officials were prompt, helpful, and cooperative, bringing the project to completion right on schedule. My well-experienced business partner observed that he had never experienced a more effective build-out process.

At the recent open house for Alexandria Shared Medical Offices, we were honored that Mayor Silberberg was present to celebrate with us. Alexandria can be as proud as we are grate-

ful for its effective and productive mayor and Planning and Zoning Department.

**Cecilia Gondor**

## Environmental Lesson

To the Editor:

I listened to the public hearing on the Karig Estate site at the last council public hearing. The basic issue was: Did the ravine on the site plan, often a wet area with an intermittent stream, denote a Riparian Protection Area (RPA)? If it did, then the plan to build five houses did not offer enough protection and the site plan should subtract one of the five houses to offer the required protection.

I thought the case for the RPA was proven by an expert's scientific report submitted to the council and the years of observations of neighboring homeowners and members of Temple Bethel which is another adjoining neighbor. Only the mayor agreed with that position.

All six members of the council agreed with the city's director of environmental policy who maintained on very thin evidence that no RPA existed.

Listening to him caused me to remember another environmental case, one in which I was very involved — the closure of the power plant in the Northeast neighborhood.

That all started because residents near the obsolete coal-fired power plant observed the fine particles of soot collecting on their window seals and seeping into their homes. The same director of environmental policy who serves today responded to their complaints by saying the soot was just common urban dirt.

That inspired Poul Hertel and Elizabeth Chimento to hire an expert on atmospheric conditions and prevailing wind directions, and to take a lump of coal from the power plant's coal pile and some collected soot from their homes to a lab for chemical analysis. They were the same.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 11

## Correction

The location of the pothole pictured in last week's Gazette Packet was incorrect. It was in the 900 block of Wolfe Street near the driveway of Heritage At Old Town.



PHOTO BY GERI BALDWIN

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# Scientific, Evidenced-Based Policy and Marijuana

BY CHARNIELE HERRING  
STATE DELEGATE (D-46)



**S**cientific, evidenced-based policy. When I am operating in a policy area that is not one of my primary areas of expertise, I always ask first for scientific, evidence-based research. Whether from doctors, scientists, or social scientists, this is where I start to bring together my values and reality into how I vote on an issue. Over time as new evidence is discovered or proven, it means that my positions sometimes evolve. One of the areas this has happened is in the way we treat marijuana. While I have always been open to medical marijuana as prescribed by a doctor, the evidence is mounting that we need to reconsider the way we treat this substance.

In the past I have voted against decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana and other measures related to the sub-

stance; however, I have consistently voted for studies on the matter of medical marijuana and decriminalization. In the past several sessions, we have seen narrowly drafted pieces of legislation that allow certain cannabis oils and products to treat very specific medical conditions, like epilepsy. I met young children who are survivors of serious medical conditions — some of which have only been made bearable by the use of cannabis oil or other by-products. I have seen legislation that allows for specific illnesses to be treated by specific marijuana-related products. While each and every time we legalize a non-harmful treatment that can make the lives of children and adults better, to lessen their suffering, I am glad we claim victory.

To take that a step further this year, after a year of study, the Joint Commission of Healthcare released their study that resulted in the bipartisan HB1251, which states “a practitioner may issue a written certification for the use of cannabidiol oil or THC-A

oil for the treatment or to alleviate the symptoms of any diagnosed condition or disease determined by the practitioner.” I am very happy to be a co-sponsor of this bill. However, as more and more research is available, it makes me wonder if we are going far enough.

A step forward year after year, is one of the most heartening things you can see as a legislator. When there are victories for Virginians, there is always enough credit for everyone — especially since no one person is responsible for changing the law like this. But even as we work to get this legislation passed, I have to go back to my initial thought... the evidence-based research. The evidence here is that we should trust doctors... it is the same principle as when I talk about women’s healthcare, of which I have been a strong advocate. I think that while we have been making positive steps year over year, it is time to reconsider the larger issue of marijuana. My preference is for the federal government to take action to update laws surrounding the legality and use of marijuana for the country as a whole, but as they fail to do so in a reasonable way,

it may be time for our state to act in more than a piecemeal way around the edges of a larger issue.

While I have been tepid in the past of lessening restrictions on marijuana use, this year I cast the lone vote to allow a very moderate decriminalization bill out from subcommittee to a full hearing in the Courts of Justice Committee. It struck me that we may be getting stuck in old patterns using old data, and that in the end an issue this large and with so many people vocal on both sides deserves a full public hearing. While I am still taking steps forward on the issue of marijuana outside of its medical uses, I welcome input from my constituents. I always want to be using the facts, and evidence-based scientific research as well as pushing forward the viewpoints of the people I represent.

*Charniele Herring represents Alexandria City’s 46<sup>th</sup> District in the Virginia General Assembly where she serves as House Minority Caucus Chair and on the Courts of Justice, Counties, Cities, and Towns, and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committees. Follow Herring online at [www.charnieleherring.com](http://www.charnieleherring.com).*

## COMMENTARY

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 10

After that they presented their written report dealing with the health effects of fine particles of coal dust at a citizens’ meeting. I was serving a term as co-chair of the Federation of Civic Associations at that time and was asked to chair the meeting.

Eventually after a lot more citizen organizing and help from the city, the plant was closed. A few years have passed but it is all fresh in my mind. I recount it all now just to remind everyone, including the six council members, that the determinations of the director of environmental policy are not always sound.

**Katy Cannady**  
Alexandria

## Other Side of Airbnb

To the Editor:

We’ve been living in Old Town for 15 years. Three years ago we decided to buy a bigger house on the same block. We were going to sell our old house but we have a large extended family and thought that if we could carry the costs on our old home through Airbnb (or come close enough), we could use the house for family gatherings and friend visits in order to make it economically feasible. It was working well enough to keep it going for the benefit of having our extended family all in the same house rather than scattering them through other family members houses in the D.C. area. When family visited, we ate at restaurants in town, they shopped in Old Town stores and spent their money locally. When Airbnb guests stayed in our house, they did the same. Our house can accommodate 10 people. Guests had reunions, weddings and family gatherings and rented venues in town (like Virtue Feed and Grain) for their

celebrations as well as going out to restaurants in town for most of their meals.

With the added registration and taxes, we will probably just sell our old house. More than likely, a family with children will buy the house, add kids to the school system and instead of eating in restaurants they’ll eat at home and not spend money as tourists would at shops in town. Large families oftentimes can’t afford to pay for five hotel rooms vs. an Airbnb and will just go some place cheaper than Old Town.

I believe that the new regulations and taxes are short sighted — and labeling Airbnb part of a “disruptive economy” is contrary to the actuality.

I can understand regulating businesses that buy homes to operate as quasi hotels, but taxing people additionally who are already paying their real estate taxes and are renting their home occasionally to help with fixed costs is wrong.

**Larry Traub**  
Alexandria

## City Could Buy Open Space

To the Editor:

Except for Mayor Silberberg, the rest of the City Council displayed its predictable pro-developer disposition when they voted to allow the wooded, environmentally sensitive area known as Karig to become four trophy houses. If this happens, then lost forever is open land in a city that is becoming denser by the day in every way.

Unless I missed something, no one — certainly not any member of our deaf-to-citizen City Council — proposed buying the developer’s purchase contract. Baffling since apparently money is not the issue for, during the same proceeding that our City Coun-

cil elected to pave the Karig property, it found funds to help a land rich, but financially beleaguered church monetize its property by building affordable housing.

Saving Karig also brought out the By Right advocates. They made their point: unless a property is zoned otherwise, then its owners have the right to develop it. And get this: Most of Alexandria is currently zoned to accommodate single family dwellings. For example, the vast holdings of the Episcopal Seminary, mostly open land, has been long zoned for single family dwellings; potentially hundreds of houses.

I acquired this revelation when, some years ago, I was visiting city hall. The city employee with whom I spoke also opined that if all the By Right owners build on their property, then Alexandria will have twice as many dwellings as it has now. The employee was quick to point out, however, that no one has ever made an accounting of the dwelling density, and their prospective occupants, current zoning permits.

What this suggests is that it’s time to assess whether current zoning is serving the city we have and the one we want to bequest to the future. City Council candidates who genuinely care about Alexandria should support creating a commission to ascertain what realistic options exist to alter current zoning to foster land conservation.

If none exist, then at least a campaign could be created to contact the owners of what little open land exists to assist them be fairly compensated for placing an easement on their property that will keep it undeveloped in perpetuity. Programs already exist for just this purpose. My point: Without action, the status quo is evermore development and density, which our history shows are preludes to higher property tax for all.

And, in the meantime, it’s not too late for the city manager to reach out to the Karig developer to at least explore the parameters of a deal where everyone benefits.

**Jimm Roberts**  
Alexandria

## Unsuited for Construction?

To the Editor:

I am neither a builder nor an architect, but it certainly does baffle me when a city and its government decide to build on land that is unsuited for construction.

At the recent City Council meeting, the message is loud and clear — build because where there is space there is tax revenue and the planning and zoning commission will run interference for the council with 7-0 votes to set up the council’s 6-1 vote. (Mayor Allison Silberberg voted no to build — yes for the neighborhood.)

A geological report by Tony Fleming, geologist for the city, cautioned against construction in an area saturated with marine clay and stated the area was unsuited for building. Likewise, Mr. Simmons, the city’s resource manager challenged the need to build due to the removal of the tree canopy which would alter storm water passage and create issues with the neighbors downstream. The issue was lost on a technicality that the staff of planning and zoning saw nothing illegal in building in marine clay, or near a stream or removing 60-plus trees. The question to be asked — is it safe to build on marine clay and if, as Tony Fleming suggested, it is not safe, would residents be put in danger?

The issues with marine clay are well

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12



# Working To Reform Criminal Justice System

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



**C**riminal justice reform is front-and-center in Richmond this year. The theft of any item worth over \$200 is considered a felony in Virginia – tying us with New Jersey for the lowest threshold in the entire United States. Raising the felony grand larceny threshold, last changed in the 1980s, has been a multi-year bipartisan effort in the Senate. This session, five Democrats and two Republicans introduced separate bills to increase the threshold to \$500 or higher. I co-sponsored Senator Suetterlein's (R-Roanoke County) SB 105, which incorporated the other seven bills. Also on my agenda is marijuana decriminalization. Unfortunately, SB 111, my bill that would have changed simple marijuana possession from a criminal offense to a fine, was unfortunately defeated Monday in the Senate Courts of Justice Committee.

A sign of progress did occur when the Senate voted, 23-16, to pass "ban the box" legislation from Sen. Rosalyn Dance (D-Petersburg) on Friday. That bill, which I co-sponsored, would require state and local agencies to wait until after a provisional offer of employment is extended to a potential employee before ask-

ing about the applicant's conviction record. People deserve a fair shot at employment, and after someone has paid his or her debt to society, we ought to give them a true second chance.

Families like Fred and Laura Tarantino of Alexandria also deserve a second chance. Fred, an Air Force reservist, and Laura, a student at GMU who volunteers at RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) are parents seeking to adopt a brother or sister for their biological son, but due to a nonviolent drug possession conviction in Ms. Tarantino's past, the couple cannot even be considered as candidates to adopt in Virginia until a full decade has passed since the offense. Laura, who was herself adopted from Peru at 3-weeks-old, and Fred could move to the District of Columbia, Maryland, or 47 other states, but as they told the Washington Post, "Virginia is where we have settled and what we call home, and we'd like to remain here." Their moving testimony before the Senate Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee led the committee to unanimously pass my legislation, SB920, to lower the adoption barrier from 10 years to five years, in alignment with federal standards.

Those who fall into debt should retain the capacity to pay back those debts. In Virginia, medical professionals can have their licenses suspended if they fall into delinquency or de-

fault on student loans. The practice of revoking the means by which professionals pay back their loans is counterproductive. Worse still, the threat of license revocation only applies to medical professionals, and not other professional licensees. Why should this penalty target dental hygienists, and nurses, but not attorneys, architects, or accountants? The bill I introduced, SB919, a companion to HB456, carried by Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Fairfax) will protect those individuals burdened by student-loan debt and ensure that they have the capacity to keep their licenses, continue serving the community, and repay what they owe.

Punishment should fit the crime. Sen. Bill Stanley (R-Franklin) and I have introduced legislation, SB181, which eliminates the automatic revocation of driver's licenses for those who fail to pay their court fees and fines in a timely manner. SB181 passed the Senate Courts of Justice, 12-2, and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee to fit into the budget before considering whether to advance it to the full Senate vote. It doesn't make sense to take away a person's means to get to work if they are struggling to pay a debt, especially when the offense in question is not related to driving.

Please consider following me on Twitter @AdamEbbin, liking my Facebook page at facebook.com/ebbincampaign, emailing your views to me at district30@senate.virginia.gov.

It is my continued honor to serve the people of the 30th District,

FROM PAGE 11

known. The soil is porous and unstable due to the fact it shrinks and swells in response to moisture — moving and expanding foundations until there are landslides and cracks in foundations costing thousands of dollars to repair. A FOIA document revealed 21 homes in the Seminary Hill area have performed water proofing treatment to ward off flooding. Another woman spoke of a 28-foot long crack in the foundation of her house requiring more than \$100,000-plus to fix. Is this a mere coincidence? I think not. The change in the topography at the proposed site is extensive due to construction and will have further downstream effects for other residences in Seminary Hill.

The issue here is the planning and zoning staff. During the Patrick Henry project as the Latham neighbors lamented for the loss of open space to a mammoth new school, the answer from the staff was: "Did you really think this open space would always be there?" For planning and zoning, the best space is no space; we will build until there is no space. We build for tax revenue.

**Bill Goff**  
Alexandria



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## OPINION

# Celebrating 50 Years

BY CASSIE CHESSON  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT  
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA



**Cassie Chesson**

**S**enior Services of Alexandria is celebrating its 50th anniversary serving the community with a Golden Anniversary Gala this March.

The event will be a festive reunion, honoring the legacy of those who have helped build Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), including founders, former honorees, and former board members. The organization anticipates 400 guests, including Alexandria city officials, and other community leaders.

### SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Senior Services of Alexandria's 50-year history began in 1968 when the organization was founded as Senior Citizens Employment and Services of Alexandria. By 2000, it was determined that a new century required a new vision to address an aging society, so the organization shortened its name and expanded its mission and services.

George Pera, former senior minister at Westminster Presbyterian Church was board president during this time of transition and recently reflected, "That [name change] was a turning point for me because, whereas in the past, we had a rather small focus of work, the words Senior Services of Alexandria opened us up to a real future of all kinds of possibilities working with seniors."

"I am so proud today of how very involved SSA is in a myriad of programs that meet the needs of seniors," he said.

Since its inception, SSA has implemented and maintained life-sustaining and life-enriching services for the community's seniors including Meals on Wheels, which operates 365 days a year and delivers over 48,000 nutritious meals each year, and Groceries to Go, a free grocery delivery program for seniors who are homebound or have limited physical mobility.

For the socially isolated, the Friendly Visitor program arranges for weekly visits with carefully-paired

volunteers to ensure meaningful friendships and fulfilling conversation. A DOT Paratransit Program provides low-cost transportation for 1,650 disabled persons across the city, and an educational Speaker Series draws more than 1,000 seniors annually.

Just in the past year, the organization has upgraded and digitized its Meals on Wheels infrastructure to streamline deliveries and client tracking; received the top Virginia "Best Practices" award for its Groceries to Go Program; partnered with the Alexandria Library System to offer cultural programming; implemented a Senior Ambassador Program; and earned a place in the Catalogue for Philanthropy as one of the best small charities in the D.C. area.

The history of the nonprofit will be memorialized at the Golden Anniversary Gala in an honorary video. Key figures within the organization's past, including Mr. Pera and founder Bill Vosbeck, will tell the story of SSA's past, present, and future.

"To look ahead at our next 50 years, we must first take a moment to look back at the successes and progress of our first 50," said Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson.

"That's why we are reaching out to past Gala honorees, former board members, and key figures like Bill and George. We want them all to be part of this special celebration, and thank them for helping to create and build SSA into the vibrant organization it is today."

The evening, hosted at the Westin Alexandria, will feature live music by Bruthers Plus One and a wine pull presented by UnWined. A silent auction will feature travel getaways, sporting tickets, and elegant restaurant packages.

After dinner, the lucky winners of the exciting raffle will be revealed. This year's prizes include an Apple EarPods and an Alexa Show; a \$150 gift card to Vermilion; a luxurious spa basket from Sugar House Day Spa & Salon and a \$500 getaway package to gamble, eat, and stay at MGM National Harbor Casino.

Come reminisce and support a good cause. The Golden Anniversary Gala will be held on Saturday, March 17 at the Westin Alexandria. Call 703-836-4414 ext. 110 or go to [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org) for more information about sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets.

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Send at least two weeks before event.

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**ALIVE!** offers numerous programs that

aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and

groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 20

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## VALENTINE'S DAY



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PICKET FENCE  
**Accessories like Moon Melt Lotion Bars by Moon Valley Organics at The Picket Fence in Burke might appeal to those who want to create to a spa at home.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME ON CAMERON  
**A bouquet of felt flowers in assorted colors like these that were handmade in Nepal, is a gift with a charitable flair from Home on Cameron in Alexandria.**

## Gifts for Valentine's Day

**Local tastemakers offer thoughtful giving suggestions.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

One of the most heavily gifted holidays is Valentine's Day. In fact, much of the fun is the anticipation. In preparation for Cupid's Day, a few local style aficionados offer up ideas to sweeten the celebration.

For those deserving some pampering, create a spa experience at home with NW Rainforest Body Cream, advises Isabel Chiotti of Sonoran Rose in Potomac.

"Soaps and candles also make great gifts," she said. "It can also be fun to think outside the box," said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke. "Surprise your Valentine with a gift certificate for a spa day or a shopping spree at her favorite store. Put together a basket of a few of her favorite things."

Among the things that Thomas suggests are Moon Melt Lotion Bars by Moon Valley Organics. Decadent and indulgent, these scented moisturizers combine herbs and beeswax to help fight dry skin, she says.

For the romantics, Susan Nelson and Todd Martz of Home on Cameron in Alexandria suggest a bouquet of felt flowers in assorted colors, handmade in Nepal. These eye-catching, fair trade buds offer bursts of color and benefit women artisans who are heads of households.

For the bedhead, Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished Living in Old Town Alexandria recommends silk charmeuse pillowcases by Branche. "These won-

derful pillowcases help preserve one's hairdo and help to keep away wrinkles," she said.

For the stylish, a fur neck warmer is a cozy suggestion that Mertins offers. And for the traditionalists, "Flowers are always welcome and, of course, the color red being very popular as it conveys deep emotion," she said. "Don't be afraid to give varieties other than roses."

For the nostalgic, Kevin Sweitzer of Thos. Moser, Handmade American Furniture, believes that an heirloom quality beacon box to hold keepsakes would be ideal. "[It's] meant to be passed down from generation to generation," he said. "A really nice and memorable Valentine's gift."

For the entertainers, Nelson and Martz suggest all natural, hand blown glass candles, while Mertins says bar accessories work as gifts for mixologists.

For those with a sweet tooth, Chiotti recommends hot cocoa by the Cocoa Company, brown sugar toffee by Gearharts Fine Chocolates or caramels by Big Picture Farm.

For almost everyone,

Suzie Clayton of Dalton Brody suggests picture frames. "From wood to Lucite to silver, there's something for everyone," she said. "It's more about finding the right thing for the right person."

"Some of the most meaningful gifts are those which are handmade including cards and a home-cooked romantic dinner," added Mertins. "Don't forget the bubbly and always lots and lots of chocolate."

**"It can be fun to think outside the box."**

— Courtney Thomas, The Picket Fence



PHOTO COURTESY OF SONORAN ROSE  
**A basket of spa items like NW Rainforest Body Cream from Sonoran Rose in Potomac is an indulgent Valentine's Day gift.**



**Susan Nelson and Todd Martz of Home on Cameron suggest all natural, hand blown glass candles.**

PHOTO  
 COURTESY OF  
 HOME ON  
 CAMERON



## Novo To Conduct Music of Many Cultures

BY MELINDA KERNC

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra continues its 74<sup>th</sup> season, featuring the four final candidates for music director. The finalists are diverse, conducting symphonies from Xalapa, Mexico to Lucena, Spain — from the Los Angeles Philharmonic to the Washington National Opera. One final candidate will be chosen as the next music director to conduct the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 2018-2019.

**ALEXANDRIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** The third candidate, José-Luis Novo, will conduct on Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m. at Schlesinger Concert Hall, and Sunday, Feb. 11, 3 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, with a program focused on themes of nationalism. On the program are Debussy's "Petite Suite" and Lutoslawski's "MaBa Suite." Debussy's "little suite" is originally written for two pianos, based on poetry by revered French poet Paul Verlaine; Lutoslawski's "little suite" was written for Polish National Radio, celebrating folk song traditions. The concert opens with the Overture to Verdi's

opera "Nabucco," lamenting the captivity of the Hebrew slaves.

José-Luis Novo currently serves as music director and conductor of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra. He has held positions with the Binghamton Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Pops Orchestra. As guest conductor, he has led the Baltimore Symphony, Fresno Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and Cleveland Philharmonic.

The performance closes with Sibelius' epic Symphony No. 2 in D Major. "Music can commemorate significant events in history," comments Maestro Novo. "Dec. 6, 2017 marked the centennial anniversary of Finland's independence from Russia, a particularly appropriate case in point. The first time I heard this piece, I fell in love with it. It still gives me goosebumps when I hear it. The audience will feel this intensity just as the Finns connected with it during this pivotal time in their history."

Concert attendees, musicians and community members are invited to provide feedback after each performance in order to assess the four final candidates. The ASO plans to announce the new music director



**Conductor  
Josei-Luis Novo**

PHOTO BY  
MICHAEL ADAMS

following the final concert of the season, and special events are planned to introduce him to Alexandria and the surrounding community.

The Alexandria Symphony is a fully-professional orchestra drawing from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region's wealth of musical talent. Many musicians perform with other orchestras and top military

bands. The ASO performs Saturdays at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center and Sunday matinees at the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Adult tickets are \$20-\$80, with \$5 youth, \$10 student and military, senior and group discounts available. To order tickets and for more information, visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org) or call 703-548-0885.

## CALENDAR

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

### ONGOING

#### Alexandria Winter Restaurant

**Week.** Through Sunday, Feb. 4 in neighborhoods throughout Alexandria, Virginia, including Old Town, Del Ray and the West End, participating restaurants will offer a \$35 three-course dinner for one or \$35 dinner for two; select locations offering lunch from \$10-20 per person. Call 703-838-5005 or visit [AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com](http://AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com).

**"Déjà Vu," Art Exhibit.** Through Feb. 4, various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 29. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery show "Déjà Vu," highlights the work of artists Elizabeth Davison, Elise Miller, and Dianne Harris Thomas. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

**"POUR."** Various times through Feb. 19 at Torpedo Factory Art Center, TAG Gallery, 105 N Union St. #311. Featuring Jennifer Brewer Stone and Whitney Staiger. Brewer will be showing mixed media pieces with resin, texture paste, various paints and gold leaf. Staiger is a jeweler and will be showcasing how to cast into cuttlefish bones, one of the oldest ways of casting metal. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

**"Form and Void."** Various times through Feb. 25 at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Ellyn Weiss's work is guided by a commitment to environmental sustainability and scientific truth, and her sheer delight in working with materials to make art. Using tar, wire, liquid plastic, printing on acrylic, and large-scale drawing, Weiss's creations are a reflection on survival and regeneration. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

**"Winter Respite."** Through Feb. 25, Wednesday-Sunday, noon-4:30 p.m.

at Green Spring Historic House, 4603 Green Spring Road. NOVA Plein Air Artists debuts its exhibit "Winter Respite." NOVA Plein Air Artists is a group of Northern Virginia artists who regularly paint together in outdoor settings; in local public and private gardens, parks, farms, wineries, and at other local sites. This show features their recent oil paintings showcasing floral still lifes, landscapes and florals, painted en plein air. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring).

#### New Project Studio.

Through Feb. 28, various times at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 8. Over the course of three months, Korean painter and sculptor Suh Yongsun will transform the New Project Studio into a workshop and community space for discussions and creativity. He will explore public, social, and political issues in present-day Korea while developing a visual discourse of his time creating in Alexandria. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

**"Passages."** Through March 4, various times at Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 2. Target Gallery's next exhibition, Passages, explores the lasting effects migration has on cultural identity from the perspective of immigrants and immigrant families from across the global diaspora. The juror for this exhibition was Adriana Ospina, curator of the Permanent Collection and Education at the Art Museum of Americas. Visit [torpedofactory.org/partners/target-gallery](http://torpedofactory.org/partners/target-gallery).

#### "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) for more.



**Country, Not A War Series, Antonius Bui, 28" x 32", hand-cut paper, relief ink, spray paint, hand woven textiles for stencils and reclaimed Vietnam War photos, 2016.**

## 'Parallel Lives'

In Parallel Lives transcultural humanity is on display. Curated by Brigitte Reyes, five artists (Antonius Bui, Amy Chan, Nekisha Durrett, Muriel Hasbun, and Jeff Huntington) bridging diverse cultures and aesthetic traditions embrace and explore their place in the world. Various times, March 1-April 15, at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Opening Reception: Sunday, March 4, 4-6 p.m. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

### 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) for more.

#### 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.

### FEB. 2-MARCH 10

**Art Exhibit.** Various times at The Gallery @ Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. The All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns for its third and most exciting year so far. This year's expanded event features over 90 Alexandria high school students and will welcome two additional schools to its juried exhibition; Commonwealth Academy and The Howard Gardner School. Visit [www.ourconvergence.org](http://www.ourconvergence.org).

### SATURDAY/FEB. 3

**Alexandria Warehouse Sale.** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square. The "Super Bowl of Shopping Event" (always occurring the Saturday of Super Bowl weekend), the 13th Annual Alexandria Warehouse Sale will take place at the Westin Hotel located in the Carlyle District of Old Town Alexandria. Free to enter. Visit [www.AlexandriaWarehouseSale.com](http://www.AlexandriaWarehouseSale.com).

**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 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/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) or call 703-642-5173.

**Fighting for Freedpeople.** 11 a.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Learn how two women, one black and one white, helped improve conditions while carving out new roles for themselves in 19th century America. Paula Whitacre's recently published book, "A Civil Life in an Uncivil Time," is a biography of Julia Wilbur and tells the story of how Wilbur and Jacobs became effective advocates for free





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## ENTERTAINMENT

**John McCrary,  
director of  
Music and  
Liturgy at  
Blessed  
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FILE PHOTO BY  
SHIRLEY RUHE

## Pre-Lenten Concert Features Bach, Mozart

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

**T**he Blessed Sacrament Festival Choir and Orchestra will perform works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johann Sebastian Bach on Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church on West Braddock Road.

Six years ago, John McCrary, director of Music and Liturgy at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, began a special series performed on the Friday before Lent that focuses on music not often sung and offering special opportunities for the performers. Last year it was “The Prodigal Son” by Sir Arthur Sullivan (without Gilbert) that hadn’t been performed in the United States for over 75 years. McCrary selected this year’s music because “it is very different than last year to avoid comparison. It also suits the soloists best and I have a special liking for this music.”

This year’s Bach will be sung in German. The Mozart is in Latin, “but we are using the Austro-German Latin diction rather than the Italianate Latin that people are more used to. Each year varies because the choir always performs the selections in the original language. And,” he added, “Bach wrote his music for instruments, and voices have to sing that type of music and it is difficult.”

Celia Wexler, a member of the choir who has sung in these concerts for the last 6 years said, “The mu-

sic is always demanding, and John always reminds us that singing in a language is far different than speaking it. So those of us who have learned French or German or Italian find it takes a lot of practice to sing in those languages.”

McCrary says the 33-person choir has been practicing since October and has been meeting twice a week. McCrary invites members of the community to participate with the church choir, and a few join in each year for these special concerts.

Selections include Bach’s Ascension Oratorio BWD 11 and a Pentecost Cantata “Erschallet ihr Lieder,” BWV 172 that are not often performed as well as Mozart’s “Dixit et Magnificat,” KV 193 and the “Litaniae de venerabili altaris Sacramento,” KV 243 which were both written while Mozart lived in Salzburg in his early 20s. McCrary explains the Litany was a forward-looking piece for Mozart at the time since it used two different violas as well as flutes which were unusual for that period.

Featured soloists include Michelle Kunz and Joshua Hong, Washington National Opera, and Philip Pickens, San Francisco Opera. Wexler said, “There is no thrill quite like singing with an orchestra of professional musicians, and serving as the choral backdrop for our superb soloists.”

The community is invited and there will be a free will offering at the door.

## CALENDAR

people’s rights. Whitacre will be available to sign copies of her book. Call 703-746-4356.

**A 1760s Celebration.** Noon-4 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Join in to wish a very happy birthday to Alexandria town founder, Col. John Carlyle. Festivities will include 18th-century dancing, live music, and a birthday treat. Admission is free, donations are welcome. Visit [www.novaparks.com](http://www.novaparks.com) or call 703-549-2997.

**Freedom House Museum Tours.** 1-5 p.m. at Freedom House Museum, 1315 Duke St. The Freedom House Museum was once the headquarters and holding pen for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, Franklin and Armfield. The building is currently owned by the Northern Virginia Urban League and together with the Office of Historic Alexandria, the public is

invited to visit the museum in this historic reminder of slavery. Admission is \$5 per person. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Tickets can be purchased online, or by cash or check at the door. Visit [www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/](http://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/).

### SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Walk with Washington Tour.** 2 p.m. at the Alexandria Visitor Center (Ramsay House), 221 King St. Focuses on some of the most important Old Towne sites associated with George Washington. 60-90 min. Free. Recommended for ages 10 and older. Call 703-746-3301.

### MONDAY/FEB. 5

**Microgreens.** 7-8 p.m. at Barrett

Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Microgreens: What Are They, Why They Are So Fabulous, and How to Grow Them. Join us to learn their many benefits, and some simple ways to grow these delicious, nutritious and inexpensive baby plants and sprouts at home. Come prepared to get a bit dirty while planting one’s own microgreen garden in class. Free. Advance registration requested at [mgnv.org](http://mgnv.org). Questions, telephone 703-228-6414 or [emailmgaralex@gmail.com](mailto:emailmgaralex@gmail.com).

### WEDNESDAY/FEB. 7

**Swing Dance.** 9-11 p.m. at Nick’s Nightclub, 642 South Pickett St. The Cutaways, with Dave Kitchen, promise a great time for swing dancers. An accomplished singer/songwriter active in the roots rock scene for over 15 years, since 1995



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# ENTERTAINMENT

Dave has been nominated for a dozen or so of the Washington Area Musician's Association's WAMMIE Awards and has won twice. \$10. Visit [nicksnightclub.com/](http://nicksnightclub.com/).

## THURSDAY/FEB. 8

**Artists Reception.** 6-8:30 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, TAG Gallery, 105 N Union St. #311. With a demonstration by Jennifer Brewer Stone and Whitney Staiger. Brewer will be showing mixed media pieces with resin, texture paste, various paints and gold leaf. Staiger is a jeweler and will be showcasing how to cast into cuttlefish bones, one of the oldest ways of casting metal. RSVP on Facebook at <http://jennifersartgallery.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jrdhjudt-jytiuthly-m/>.

**Artist Reception: Passages.** 6-8 p.m. Various times at at Torpedo Factory Art Center, Target Gallery, 105 N Union St. The newest exhibition in Target Gallery, the contemporary exhibition space for the Torpedo Factory Art Center, explores the lasting effects migration has on cultural identity. Passages gives an intimate look in to artists' individual experiences and how they shaped who they are today. Visit [torpedofactory.org](http://torpedofactory.org).

## FRIDAY/FEB. 9

**Concert.** 7:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road. Director of Music John McCrary will conduct the Blessed Sacrament Festival Chorus and Orchestra with soprano Michelle Kunz, alto Sally Monson, tenor Phil Pickens, bass Joshua Hong in a concert of works including Bach's Ascension Oratorio and the Litaniae de venerabili altaris sacramento, KV143. Donations are encouraged. Email [jmccrary@blessedsacramentcc.org](mailto:jmccrary@blessedsacramentcc.org) or call 703-998-6100, ext. 103.

## SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**Fancy Nancy Author Visit.** 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. Visitors should dress in their fanciest ensemble (that's fancy for "outfit") as Hooray for Books! welcome back Jane O'Connor. She will present and sign her final Fancy Nancy picture book, Oodles of Kittens. To secure a spot in the signing line, stop in, call 703-548-4092, or email [order@hooray4books.com](mailto:order@hooray4books.com) to purchase a copy of Oodles of Kittens. Recommended for children ages 3 and up. Free admission. Visit [www.hooray4books.com](http://www.hooray4books.com).

**Seed Swap Day.** 12:30-4 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, , 4603 Green Spring Road. Washington Gardener magazine is hosting the 13th annual

## 5 Foodie Dates to Circle in February

BY HOPE NELSON

From Super Bowl festivities to chili cook-offs, February is packed from end to end. Here are some of the month's best bets.

### APPETITE Super Bowl Party at Murphy's, Feb. 4

Whether you're there for the game, the commercials, or the half-time show, pull up a stool and settle in for Super Bowl LII at Old Town's venerable Irish pub. While the New England Patriots play the Philadelphia Eagles, you can feast on Sam Adams drink specials and Murphy's Super Bowl party menu filled with football favorites. 6:30 p.m. 713 King St.

### Microgreens Lecture and DIY Class at Barrett Branch Library, Feb. 5

What are microgreens, and how can you use them? The Virginia Cooperative Extension – Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia hosts a talk and hands-on workshop focusing on the benefits of microgreens and how to grow them. Get ready to get your hands dirty and learn some new culinary skills. 7-8 p.m. 717 Queen St. Free, but registration requested at [mgnv.org](http://mgnv.org).

### Captain Gregory's Drag Dinner, Feb. 6

Ring in Mardi Gras in style with a two-course dinner and drinks while you take in a "Salute to Divas" drag show at Captain Gregory's. The popu-

lar Shi-Queeta-Lee will preside over the proceedings, which will pay tribute to the likes of Tina Turner, Beyonce, Adele and Amy Winehouse. Two seatings at 6:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. 804 N. Henry St. \$85.

### Del Ray Citizens Association Chili Cook-off, Feb. 10

It's definitely still chili season, and what better way to enjoy it than with a multiple of varieties, each one serving as the entrant's best? Taste as many chili styles as there are competitors at the DRCA Chili Cook-off – and wash it all down with some beer. May the best chili chef win. 5-7:30 p.m. Commonwealth Academy Gymnasium, 1321 Leslie Ave. Free for members; \$10 for non-members.

### Metro Red Release Party at Port City Brewing, Feb. 16

Port City is bringing back its popular double red ale a bit early this year due to an ahead-of-schedule shipment of Citra and Amarillo hops. But its calendar shift is beer lovers' gain. This annual favorite is that way for a reason, teeming with citrusy flavors bubbling just under a bitter veneer. Metro Red will be offered up on tap and in six-packs; pick up a meal from the Borinquen Lunch Box food truck to complete the experience. 3-11 p.m. 3950 Wheeler Ave.

*Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).*

Washington Gardener Seed Exchange at Green Spring Gardens. These seed swaps are in-person and face-to-face. Bring extra seeds and swap them with other gardeners. Participants can learn, network and prepare for next year's seed collecting. Registration is strongly recommended as space is limited. Register online at [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3210698](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3210698).

**Freedom House Museum Tours.** 1-5 p.m. at Freedom House Museum, 1315 Duke St. The Freedom House Museum was once the headquarters and holding pen for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, Franklin and Armfield. The building is currently owned by the Northern Virginia Urban League and together with the Office of Historic Alexandria, the public is

invited to visit the museum in this historic reminder of slavery. Admission is \$5 per person. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Tickets can be purchased online, or by cash or check at the door. Visit [www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/](http://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/).

**Champagne and Chocolates Fundraiser.** 4-7 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Champagne, small plate hors d'oeuvres, desserts, mansion tours by costumed historical interpreters, raffle and live auction to benefit educational programs for George Mason's Gunston Hall. Music by Robinson High School String Quartet. Cocktail attire. \$50 per person. RSVP by Feb. 3 at [bit.ly/champagneandchocolates2018](http://bit.ly/champagneandchocolates2018). Call 703-550-9220.

**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.

**ASO Presents: Debussy & Sibelius.** 8-10 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center, 4815 E Campus Drive. Join the ASO and Maestro José-Luis Novo for a concert with nationalist themes. The ASO presents Debussy's Petite Suite, the Overture to Verdi's epic Nabucco and Lutoslawski's MaBa Suite. Written on the heels of his acclaimed Finlandia, the concert ends with Sibelius' Symphony No. 2. \$20-\$80 adult, \$5 youth, \$10 student. Call 703-548-0885 or visit [www.alexsym.org](http://www.alexsym.org).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 11

**Art of the Book - Paper.** noon-1 p.m. at Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane. Historic Huntley is offering three classes this winter that delve into different aspects of book making. Register for any of the series. Call 703-768-2525 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley).

**Chocolate and Wine Tasting.** 1-3 p.m. at The Italian Place, 621 Wythe St. Join The Italian Place of Old Town for a complimentary wine and chocolate tasting before Valentine's day. Meet local chocolatier, Sarah Dwyer from Chouquette in Maryland who will offer a variety of chocolate samples. Free. Call 571-777-8981 or visit [theitalianplaceofoldtown.com](http://theitalianplaceofoldtown.com).

**Walk with Washington Tour.** 2 p.m. at the Alexandria Visitor Center (Ramsay House), 221 King St. Focuses on some of the most important Old Towne sites associated with George Washington. 60-90 min. Free. Recommended for ages 10 and older. Call 703-746-3301.

**Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.** 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Enjoy a world tour exploring themes of nationalism, led by Maestro José-Luis Novo. \$5-\$80. Visit [alexsym.org](http://alexsym.org).

## 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).

## SATURDAY/FEB. 17

**Freedom House Museum Tours.** 1-5 p.m. at Freedom House Museum, 1315 Duke St. The Freedom House Museum was once the headquarters and holding pen for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, Franklin and Armfield. \$5 per person. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Tickets can be purchased online, or by cash or check at the door. Visit [www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/](http://www.visitalexandriava.com/listings/freedom-house/4676/).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 18

**Alexandria Wedding Showcase.** 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at The Westin Alexandria 400 Courthouse Square. 50+ exhibitors, fashion show, brides across america wedding dress giveaway. Call 703-652-5367 or visit [alxweddingshowcase.com/](http://alxweddingshowcase.com/).

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**Chef Oscar Cruz picks handful of golden raisins ...**



**Sprinkles Parmesan on creamy risotto ...**



**Grabs handful of baby kale ...**

## Meet Chef Cruz **Vola's Dockside Grill & Hi-Tide Lounge**

PHOTOS BY  
SHIRLEY RUHE

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

**E**xecutive Chef Oscar Cruz gathers a handful of golden raisins. He says, “when you have salmon and something creamy, you need to add a little sweet.” Cruz is preparing seared, blackened salmon with barley risotto, a special he just introduced today at Vola’s Dockside Grill on Union Street. He says, “I create this recipe. It sells very quickly.”

Cruz has precooked 8 ounces of barley for 20 minutes. His ingredients are all lined up on the counter mise en place. Cruz heats an aluminum skillet to medium, pours in a half cup of heavy cream and adds the barley risotto. “It will cook for six minutes.” He adds the raisins, then

sprinkles in the Tablespoon of grated Parmesan. Cruz pinches a little premixed salt and pepper. “People do like salt, especially heavy smokers. But I’d rather add less and let them put on more later if they like.”

“I’m going to start the salmon now.” Cruz pulls out a large drawer and carefully selects about a 7.5 ounce piece of fresh salmon. He scrapes a metal spatula across the grill to clean it off and places the salmon on the grill. It will take about three minutes on a side. “I like to make it between medium rare and medium.”

Cruz keeps an eye on the risotto. As he stirs the risotto, it turns creamy, and he tastes a small spoonful. “Needs a little salt.” Cruz heats a small skillet to high and adds a dollop of butter mixed with chopped parsley and garlic. He tosses a handful of baby kale into the skillet and stirs it to coat with the butter. Cruz flips the skillet and tosses the green leaves into the air and then adds them to the risotto.

“Now let’s plate it.” Cruz pulls out the nicely blackened salmon from under an oval aluminum platter which he had placed over

the salmon in the last stage of cooking. “That is to get air all around the salmon so it can cook on all sides.”

Cruz spoons out the risotto onto the middle of a large white plate. He arranges the piece of salmon on the top. “Now I’ll finish with tartar sauce.” Cruz has mixed mayonnaise with lemon juice, capers, chopped shallots and diced cucumber. He spoons a generous helping on top of the salmon. “Now fresh herbs — a mixture of parsley, tarragon and lemon zest. It is ready to go.”

Cruz has been at Vola’s for two months. His days begin at 7 a.m. and “the time I go, I don’t know. It depends on business.” Cruz started cooking in Salvador when he studied it in high school. He explains it is not like high school in America. You are required to attend grades 1-9 and then you can choose “from too many types of high school — nursing, mechanics.” Cruz chose cooking “because I came from my family farm. We grew everything.” He says, “we were very poor, and I saw an opportunity to do something different in my life.”

But when he applied for a restaurant, all they had was a dishwasher spot. “In my country if you cook, you cook; if you prep, you prep; if you are a dishwasher, you wash dishes.” He took a culinary class for a month and got a job in a real restaurant. “After three years of cooking in my country, I decided to move here. I didn’t know anything about kitchens in the U.S.” So he worked demolition for six months. “I was feeling like what do I do with my life. I didn’t speak English or have any family here or friends.”

“I remember the day. It was raining. I was sitting in front of my building at 1 in the afternoon when an old man on a bicycle came by. He asked me what I was doing and I told him ‘looking for a job.’” He says the man told him there was a restaurant that just opened up a week ago. So Cruz applied for a job and ... “they hired me as a dishwasher. I worked 3 p.m.-3 a.m.” But he says the manager saw his potential “and my heart started beating when she asked me to try the salad station one week and then one week on the grill.” In America you can go from dishwasher to executive chef.



**Selects 7.5 ounce piece of salmon ...**



**Perfectly blackened salmon ...**

**Seared blackened salmon with barley risotto.**





# Council, School Board Work on Working Together

FROM PAGE 1  
Branch.

"There is no reason that we can't establish at least a working set of assumptions about how the city will develop." These can inform the total set of capabilities that citizens will ultimately require.

The schools' adopted CIP already presumes that such a master planning process will occur.

Several other task force recommendations also relate to jointness: consider the CIP as a "citywide portfolio" of capability delivery, rather than focusing on individual projects; standardize the criteria for evaluating the

condition of capital assets; consolidate design guidelines and construction standards; use the same equipment maintenance schedule, tracking software and other standard operating procedures related to construction and asset management.

Task Force member Marshall Cook asked the elected officials: "What do you think is the biggest barrier to accomplish our recommendation of jointness?"

"Political will," said Councilman John Chapman. "Some of what was discussed here has been discussed by individuals around this table and in the community."

For example, last March, before the task

force's advent, School Board member Karen Graf suggested creating "a whole-city committee" and "total city strategic plan."

"It's just a matter of folks [applying] the political will to get it done; to pull people together; to say, this is the way forward and move in that direction," said Chapman. Though he used the term "political will" broadly in his remarks, he said: "I know it is up to us."

Responding to a question from School Board member Bill Campbell about whether there might be constitutional or other legal barriers to jointness, Task Force Chair Lynn Hampton replied: "There's no prohibition

[against] volunteering to work together." As previously reported, other Virginia jurisdictions already utilize various joint practices and structures: Prince William County has a Joint County/School Capital Process Team; Chesterfield County has a jointly staffed Audit and Finance Committee; James City County's Comprehensive Plan addresses both county and school facilities, and their planning commission prioritizes both entities' projects together according to common criteria.

Visit the city's web site to access materials related to the task force, including its final report.

# Four Mile Run Muddied by Different Funding Sources

FROM PAGE 1

park was officially named Short Bridge Park; a tongue-in-cheek reference to Arlington's Long Bridge Park near the 14th Bridge also undergoing a park planning process. While plans at Long Bridge Park involve an extensive community center and aquatics facility, it's stunted cousin will see a scaled-down renewal. Currently, the only paved trail is a zig-zag jutting into the park created by Alexandria as a temporary connection to Four Mile Run. A new network of paths will cut through the site, connecting Potomac Avenue with Route 1, and connecting the street level with the trail.

The tree canopy on the site will also be expanded, with 82 new trees planted along the trails. An overlook will allow pedestrians to step off the narrow bike trail at the waterline and enjoy Four Mile Run. Staff reported that public art projects will be implemented under the bridge to try to mitigate the "scary" atmosphere that currently consists of spider-webs and gang tags.

But while plans for the border-spanning park are underway on the Arlington side, one frustration expressed at the Arlington County Board was that Alexandria has no plans to develop its side of the park. The Alexandria and Arlington border crosses Four Mile Run, includes the bridge itself, and technically cuts into the northern banks midway through where the park is currently located. Plans for the park currently include improvements on the Alexandria side on the northern side of Four Mile Run, but stop at the bridge. So at Short Bridge Park, the bridge itself will remain overgrown and inaccessible. According to Arlington staff, Alexandria's plans for the area currently center around the AMC movie theater site to the south.

"There is a plan," said Jack Browand, division chief with the city's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. "What's holding it up is the funding for the Alexandria portion, which is basically the elevated bridge portion, is developer dependent. Once certain triggers are hit, then the funding becomes available that allows the plan to be realized. Arlington is ahead because they have a different funding source."

The timeline for that funding is dependent on the density of construction in the



Four Mile Run trail, with a fence closing off the park.

North Potomac Yards project, so while the project is in Four Mile Run Master Plan, Browand said it's likely still several years out from being funded.

"That's a little disappointing," Arlington County Board member John Vihstadt said. "I am concerned we're going to be spending significant amounts of money for improvements on Alexandria side."

"I was wondering if we could push a little bit," suggested Arlington County Board member Libby Garvey. "Maybe we should talk to our colleagues about making the bridge more usable. That's such a major connection. It's fenced off."

But Arlington County staff noted that there were problems with building a park on the bridge that added complications to the Alexandria side. Building on a railroad bridge is a double-edged sword, because while its industrial use means the bridge is strong enough to support the load of a park, it also means the bridge has significant potential contamination. Arlington staff said Alexandria is unlikely to make an investment on the bridge until it is able to make improvements, leaving Arlington with a one-sided bridge project.

Browand said environmental contamination clean-up has been a part of many park projects along the revitalized Potomac Yard, all of which is located on what was once a major rail hub.

"It's an old railway, so there is some con-

taminated material," said Browand. "It's nothing that's unexpected. When [we were] building Potomac Yard Park, there were mitigation efforts that had to be taken care."

"It's probably fair to say there are really no plans in what anybody would reasonably call the near term," said Arlington County Board member Christian Dorsey. "In effect, if and until that happens, what we do here needs to work both as interim condition and be compatible with anything that might happen long term. We might need to look at this as the park we live with for the next 15 to 20 years. Part of why we're calling the park what we're calling it and why we designed it in such a way is based on anticipation for what they might be calling it later."

Final design will be underway throughout 2018, with construction expected to begin by the end of the year. The trail connection will cost \$750,000 and is 80 percent funded by a Federal Transportation Alternative Grant, with Arlington County matching for the remaining 20 percent unless staff can secure additional funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation. The park improvements are identified in the 2017-2026 CIP at a cost of \$3,750,000 with final design in 2022 and construction in 2023, but hired consultants suggested the price could go as high as \$5,961,000.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13  
contact the Volunteer Coordinator at  
volunteers@alive-inc.org.

### THURSDAY/FEB. 1

**Submission Deadline.** 5 p.m. The "DASHing Words in Motion" poetry contest brings recognition to writers, promotes an appreciation of poetry as an art form, and provides inspiration to individuals using the Alexandria Transit Company's DASH Buses and Trolleys. The competition encourages quality writing from writers 16 years or older, who live, work or study in the City of Alexandria. To enter, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/Arts](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Arts).

**Sewer System Plan Stakeholder Group Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at City Hall, 301 King St., Sister Cities Room 1101. In June, Alexandria City Council approved a resolution to reconvene the Stakeholder Group to assist in monitoring the development of the Long Term Control Plan Update for the City of Alexandria's combined sewer system. The

meeting is open to the public. For more information about the Long Term Control Plan and the City's combined sewer system, visit [alexandriava.gov/CleanWaterways](http://alexandriava.gov/CleanWaterways).

### FRIDAY/FEB. 2

**Grant Application Webinar.** 8:30 a.m. Registration is required. Login information will be sent upon registration. The City of Alexandria's Office of the Arts will be accepting applications for Arts Program Grant. The Office of the Arts will conduct a series of grant workshops and webinars to assist interested applicants. New applicants or arts organizations who have not applied in the past two years are required to attend. All applicants are urged to attend these free workshops and webinars. Online application forms, instructions, and frequently asked questions for all grant programs will be available online at [www.alexandriava.gov/Arts](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Arts).

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 20



FROM PAGE 20

reports may be available from the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS](http://www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS) for eligibility and required documents.

### Announcements

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### Employment

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### SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 3-4

**Swim Clinics.** At Chinquapin Park Recreation Center & Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St. The City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities welcomes Olympic Medalist Amanda Weir to conduct three high performance swim clinics. Swimmers of all ages are invited to register to participate in the clinics, observe for free, and meet the Olympian for a Q&A and autograph session after each of the clinic. Fees vary by age session and registration is available at [www.fitterandfaster.com](http://www.fitterandfaster.com).

- ❖ Ages 9 and under: Saturday, February 3 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- ❖ Ages 10-12: Saturday, February 3 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- ❖ Ages 13 and over: Sunday, February 4 from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

### FEB. 3-APRIL 14

**Tax Assistance.** Saturdays, 9 a.m.-noon; Wednesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. at Department of Community & Human Services, 2525 Mt. Vernon Ave., (Mt. Ida side door). Free financial counseling and accessing credit

### MONDAY/FEB. 5

**Grant Application Workshop.** 7 p.m. at Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. The City of Alexandria's Office of the Arts will be accepting applications for Arts Program Grant. The Office of the Arts will conduct a series of grant workshops and webinars to assist interested applicants. New applicants or arts organizations who have not applied in the past two years are required to attend. Due to changes in the granting process, all applicants are urged to attend these free workshops and webinars. Online application forms, instructions, and frequently asked questions for all grant programs will be available online at [www.alexandriava.gov/Arts](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Arts) on Jan. 2.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 11

**Campaign Kickoff.** 3-5 p.m. at Los Tios, 2615 Mount Vernon Ave., Del Ray. Join Mayor Allison Silberberg's re-election campaign kickoff. All are welcome. There is no charge to attend.

### Announcements

### Announcements

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### Announcements

### Announcements

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### Legals

### Legals



Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, City of Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Sections 8-1-111(DEFINITIONS), 8-1-113 (RENTAL INSPECTION DISTRICTS ESTABLISHED), and 8-1-12- (RIGHT OF ENTRY) of Article G-1 (RESIDENTIAL RENTAL INSPECTION DISTRICTS), of Title 8 (BUILDING CODE REGULATIONS) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended. The proposed City Code amendment clarifies that the areas of the City that are subject to the City's Residential Rental Inspection Program are the year 200 Alexandria census tracts 1.01, 1.03, 1.04, 1.05, 3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 4.01, 5.00, 6.00, 7.00 8.02, 12.02, 12.03, 12.04, 13.00, 14.00, 16.00, 18. 01, 18.02, and 20.01. This clarification is needed because the City's census tract numbers have changed since time of the program's creation and City Code Section 8-1-113 does not specify which census year program, nor is the intent to make any additional structures subject to the program. Additionally, this proposed City Code amendment makes a few non-substantive/stylistic changes to City Code Sections 8-1-111 and 8-1-120.

\*\*\*\*\*

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLICATION. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL. If the mayor finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting, this meeting will be continued to the following Saturday January 20, 2018. GLORIA SITTON, CMC, CITY CLERK

### Legals

### Legals

#### PUBLIC NOTICE:

**PROPOSAL TO CLEAN UP AN UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST) SITE**  
There has been a release of petroleum from an underground storage tank system at:

4368 King Street  
City of Alexandria, Virginia 22302

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) required King Enterprises of VA, Inc. to prepare a Corrective Action Plan to remediate petroleum fuel contamination at the Site. The Corrective Action Plan was submitted to the DEQ on January 12, 2018.

If you have questions regarding the cleanup, please contact:

Mr. John Diehl, CPG, LRS  
Environmental Consultants and Contractors, Inc.,  
43045 John Mosby Highway, Suite 100, Chantilly, Virginia 20152

If you would like to review or discuss the Corrective Action Plan with the staff of the DEQ, please feel free to contact Mr. Alex Wardle of the DEQ at (703) 583-3822 or [Alexander.Wardle@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:Alexander.Wardle@deq.virginia.gov). The DEQ Petroleum Program Remediation Division will consider written comments regarding the Corrective Action Plan for 30 days following the publication date of this notice, and may decide to hold a public meeting if there is significant public interest. Written comments should be sent to the DEQ at the address listed below. The DEQ requests that all written comments reference the tracking number for this case: PC # 2018-3059.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
Northern Regional Office  
Attn: Mr. Alex Wardle  
[Alexander.Wardle@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:Alexander.Wardle@deq.virginia.gov)  
13901 Crown Court, Woodbridge, VA 22193

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### Employment

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## Space In Which I Wouldn't Get Lost

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



As a follow up to last week's column titled "Lost in Space," I have a few recommendations for the medical profession, oncologists particularly, as it relates to their comings and goings and the effect it might have on their patients, many of whom have been characterized as "terminal," as I was.

Respecting and appreciating the fact that on a good day, our anxiety level is likely off the chart, we need you to work with us, not against us.

And though I can certainly recall how I was encouraged to reach out – either by phone or electronically, whenever we had questions or concerns, I believe there needs to be an upgrade to that advisory. That 'encouragement' works fine when you're here/on site. However, based on my most recent experience, I need that 'advisory' to work equally fine when you're not here.

Ergo: I want to meet and develop some kind of relationship with the oncologist who will be covering for you when you're absent. I want that oncologist's name, email address and phone number (none of which I had during this most recent experience). I want some assurance/acknowledgment that this oncologist knows who I am, how I'm treated and is familiar with any special circumstances pertaining to my care and feeding. Moreover, I want "t.l.c.," because I definitely deserve it.

As for the oncologist's goings; on the occasions when, for whatever reason, you're away from your office. I want to know before, not after. I don't want to learn about it by reading a default email saying you're out of the office. Though I appreciate knowing after, it's not good enough. I want to know all the time. In fact, every time you're away, I want to know. Whether or not I have any medical activities (lab work, infusion, scans) planned, I want to know, just in case something unexpected – or even expected, happens.

This would help me to prepare, anticipate, assimilate and coordinate any and all future medical activities so that I could determine in advance, if necessary, an action plan. One that would proactively solve/prevent a problem rather than reacting to one as most recently happened to me. I don't want any more surprises. I don't want to experience any lack of communication at any time. I don't care about how or why. I simply want to know ahead of any potentially complicating circumstances, not behind. I'm already feeling some relief just writing about it.

How can this be implemented? Electronically of course. I don't need any calls. A don't-reply email is fine. I know that system/process works when I want to communicate with you and/or review information which has been posted online. What I want to know next is the doctor's schedule, not hourly, maybe not even daily (although I wouldn't be averse to it), but weekly for sure, electronically in my inbox first thing Monday morning.

Knowing the doctor's availability will help me manage my expectations and minimize my stress. As a cancer patient, I never know what I'll want or when I'll want it. But finding out the easy way (in advance) is certainly preferable to finding out the hard way (during/after).

Medically speaking, I don't want to miss anything nor do I, living forward, want anything to be missed. If you can email an after-appointment summary, you can certainly email me a pre-appointment schedule of when and where my primary care physicians (oncologist and internal medicine) will be. Because out of sight unfortunately doesn't mean out of mind, unless I know otherwise.

And that's my goal: to mind my own business and not have to worry about yours.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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## NEWS

### Superintendent

FROM PAGE 1

public comment to raise some concerns. "The position of superintendent is one of the most difficult and fulfilling positions," said Graf.

"My colleagues wanted to make sure you were appreciated for wanting to stay on another six months before [Hutchings] arrives.

However, this is a difficult financial climate for ACPS and the City and is why I'm fundamentally opposed to voting for this just as I would object to a board raise or a staff member raise outside of a normal budget process. I hope you understand that it is not a commentary on your service; but commitment to stewardship of taxpayer funds."

Graf was alone on the board with her concerns, however, with School Board member Veronica Nolan speaking a moment later to use the commentary on the item to praise Berlin.

"I do have concerns with this contract," said Nolan. "I believe it's below market value. You're being paid below what your predecessor and successor are."

Yet, a Freedom of Information Act request of school superintendent contracts showed Alvin Crawley received a base salary of \$215,000 per year in 2014 with an annual \$25,400 contribution to a retirement fund. That rose to \$224,782.50 in 2016 with \$31,100 per year towards retirement. Gregory Hutchings will receive a base salary of \$236,000 per year, with \$27,000 annually contributed to a retirement fund.

When Lois Berlin was brought on as interim superintendent in 2017, her salary was \$20,000 per month. Berlin's contract ran from July 24 to Jan. 31, accumulating \$80,000. The contract also stipulates a monthly \$2,000 contribution to Berlin's retirement fund. At the Jan. 25 School Board meeting, Berlin's pay was elevated to \$22,000 per month for the period of Feb. 1 to June 30, with a \$2,500 retirement contribution.

If calculated monthly, Crawley's initial salary would have been \$17,916.67 per month in 2014, then \$18,731.93 when it rose in 2016.

Calculated monthly Hutchings' base pay would be \$19,666.67. Even factoring in retirement plans, Berlin's pay was above the superintendents before or after her even before the raise.

But Nolan also noted that it is not uncommon for interim superintendents to make more for stepping into a temporary role.

Nolan laid out the challenges that superintendents deal with every day, from a macro-school management level to dealing with micro-personnel issues. Nolan suggested that institutional sexism played a role in Berlin's salary being undervalued.

"I am embarrassed that a seasoned person such as yourself, a female, is being paid less than the male counterparts before and after," said Nolan. "You were only asked to be here for six months, and you're being here after. I think you're worth this and more."



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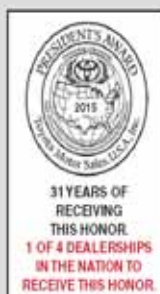
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