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Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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MARCH 22, 2018



PHOTOS BY MARK MOGLE/GAZETTE PACKET

Performers from the Boyle School of Irish Dance entertain the crowd at the 37th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade March 18 in Old Town.

Luck of the Irish

Ballyshaners host 37th St. Patrick's Day Parade.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Pat Troy's Irish eyes were smiling as Alexandria's 37th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade was held March 18, two weeks after its originally scheduled date
SEE BALLYSHANERS, PAGE 8



Mayor Allison Silberberg, left, joins parade Grand Marshals Pat and Bernadette Troy on the reviewing stand.



Dancers from the Lauren O'Neill-James School of Irish Dancing perform during the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 18 in Old Town.

Massive Need

Local religious charities strain to help thousands of households get by.

BY DAN BRENDL
GAZETTE PACKET

Twelve local religious institutions provided an estimated \$1 million in financial assistances to over 5,000 struggling households in 2017, yet

attest to a greater need than they can meet.

Christ Church's Lazarus Ministry in Old Town, headed by Melanie Gray, serves as the center of gravity for the so-called Emergency Financial Providers. Other providers include the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Mary Catholic Church; St. Paul Episcopal Church; Episcopal Church of the Resurrection; St. Joseph Catholic Church; the Old Presbyterian Meeting House; Alfred Street Baptist Church; St. Rita Catholic Church; Fairlington United Methodist Church; ALIVE; the Salvation

SEE LOCAL, PAGE 28

Ticer Remembered

Former Mayor honored by friends and family.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

In a world without Patsy Ticer, there is no incoming Potomac Yard Metro stop. There are no sweeping redevelopments under way north of Old Town to transform the area into a modern commercial and residential district. In this world, the entire north end of Alexandria is shaped around a megalithic Washington Redskins stadium. It was Ticer and her staff who stood against pressures from the state and the Redskins owners



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE PACKET

Arlington County Board member Libby Garvey

to preserve Alexandria's scale and identity. It's another example of just one way that Patsy Ticer, the first woman to become mayor who

SEE COMMISSION, PAGE 27

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The Golden Rule Lessons from the Barbershop Bible Study Ministry.

BY JAMES CULLUM
GAZETTE PACKET

William Charity walked into the All American Barbershop as he does every Wednesday, slow and steady, greeted by that familiar sound of electric hair clippers and the voices of dozens of men chit chatting before getting down to business. At 102, Charity, who drove a taxicab in Alexandria for 52 years, is easily the eldest member of the Barbershop Bible Study Ministry, which started at the shop at 1106 Queen St. three years ago with only six members. There are now over 40 members.

A voice shouted: "Happy to see you, Mr. Charity!"

"Good evening, everybody! I'm happy to be here!" he responded, almost shouting, shuffling past a team of reverends and group members to his chair in the back to hear about God and the Bible. The talk, which started a few minutes later, was focused on Ephesians 4:23-24, which reads, "Let the spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes."

Charity is also a deacon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Alexandria. What's his secret to longevity? The Golden Rule.

"Mind your own business and treat people the way you want to be treated," he said.

The men sat, some in barber chairs getting their haircut, others in folding chairs and seats aligning the shop walls — listening to the lessons of practicing peace and love during challenging times. They also had a cake for Charity, who celebrated his birthday on March 13.

"I've been very fortunate here in Alexandria," Charity said during the discussion. "Everybody knows me. I bet you can't hit three people in the head that don't know me. And nobody knows my first name. Ev-



The Barbershop Bible Study Ministry is held every Wednesday at the All American Barbershop in Old Town at 1106 Queen St. The group started with six men and now there are more than 40.

PHOTOS BY JAMES CULLUM/GAZETTE PACKET

erybody calls me Charity."

The group was founded by the late Geoffrey Thomas, lifelong Alexandrian Gary Jordan and shop owner Booker T. Wilkins. Discussions are led by Jordan, former senior pastor Dr. Lee Earl of Shiloh Baptist Church and deacon Ron Jewell of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Jordan started work at 12 years of age shining shoes at the barbershop in 1969 — so this is home. Incidentally, the All American Barbershop will celebrate its 50th anniversary next month.

"We have a 102-year-old man who is learning to this day," Jordan told the group. "As men in



William Charity (center) leads the Barbershop Bible Study Ministry in song.

this room, if you want to change the way you act, you've got to change the way you think. Everyone in this room knows trials and tribulations will come their way."

Earl is not your average preacher full of dogma and tradition. He said people are becoming increasingly disenchanted with organized religion and that it limits freedom of expression.

"The only way you can capitalize off of energy is if you can control it and direct it," Earl said. "We have to listen to people as a way to validate their reality, and then if they don't like that reality we can give them an alternative reality based on Christian principles, because they're looking for something. That's why they come in here."

One of the members, Carlton M., was homeless and addicted to crack.

"I was sleeping on the corner and on porches and this place saved me," he said. "It started right outside there in that alley, hitting some crack, and one of these brothers said, 'This is not God's plan for you. You're bigger than that.' I put that crack pipe down and never used it again. Now I'm a driver making good money and I'm engaged. I come here every Wednesday, man. I get off work and I come right here."

Everyone held hands at the end of the talk, and Charity took them home with an old spiritual. Raising his chin, with clear eyes and wire-rimmed glasses, his soft and strong voice carried across the barbershop and was soon joined by a chorus of strength.

"Lord, you know I love everybody ... Deep down in my heart ... In my heart ... Lord I want to love everybody ... In my heart ... In my heart."

Alexandria: Quiero Taco Bell New Tex-Mex fast food chain in the heart of Old Town.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Despite opposition from residents, the City Council approved on March 17 the new Taco Bell Cantina location on King Street with some compromises.

Local resident Katy Cannady said the Taco Bell seemed at odds with the city's plans to create a world class waterfront and the discussions about supporting local business that came out of last year's Business Improvement District discussions.

"At least I thought behind those appeared to be an effort to create an Old Town that would provide a unique visitor experience; something that could not be duplicated," said Cannady. "Today, I seriously question whether there is any thought process at all in the Alexandria planning department or Planning Commission. Where is the thought process in allowing Taco Bell to open in the

heart of Old Town?"

Cannady and others took particular objection to the business' late hours and serving alcohol.

"The city spends considerable money on economic development, there is entire city staff devoted to it," said Cannady. "Surely they can come up with a better eating establishment This is bound to attract customers who come for the beer and not the tacos. It's what we in Texas when I was growing up call 'a beer joint.'"

The Taco Bell Cantina is scheduled to remain open until 2 a.m., an outlier in Old Town where most establishments close by midnight or earlier. Local resident Michael Hobbs said part of the special use permit consideration is conformity to the neighborhood standards, where Hobbs said such late night dining doesn't fit.

Yvonne Weight Callahan spoke on behalf of the Old Town Citizens Association and expressed agreement with Hobbs' concerns.

Cathy Puskar, a land use attorney representing Taco Bell, argued that the restaurant filled a vital niche in Old Town by supplying food to those out late at night, including employees working at other nearby stores that have nowhere to eat when they get off work. Puskar also expressed frustration that residents who said they were happy with Subway in Old Town and fine dining establishments that serve alcohol objected to a Taco Bell that served beer.

"There's this idea that if you're getting a beer at a Taco Bell you're drunk and stumbling in the road but that's not happening when you're drinking wine and mixed cocktails at our fine dining?" asked Puskar.

The City Council did express concerns about the late hours, and the outdoor dining hours were agreed to be cut back to 11 p.m. but the argument that the late hours of the restaurant served local night owls and evening workers convinced the council.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Future home to the Taco Bell Cantina

"I think one thing people who are not out late at night forget is that most of our restaurants that are open until 1 a.m., the kitchens are closed at 11 p.m." said Coun

SEE TACO BELL, PAGE 30



Norma Stratton 703.966.0756 & Margaret Keagle 571.332.5264
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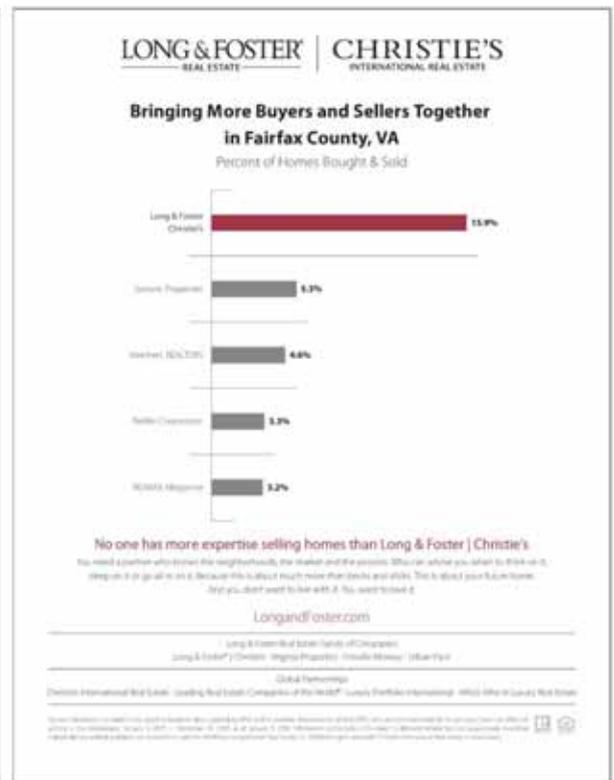
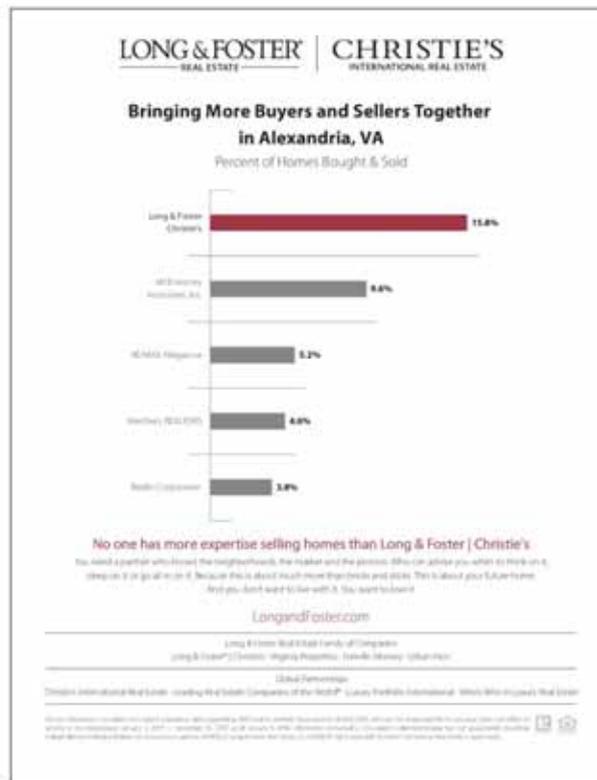
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NEWS

APD Officer Arrested Faces domestic violence charges.

The Alexandria Police Department placed an officer on administrative leave and removed his police powers on March 16 related to his arrest for crimes associated with domestic violence.

The department began investigating Khurram Chaudhary, 31, of Woodbridge, a nearly four-year veteran of the Alexandria Police Department, on an internal complaint last week when domestic

violence allegations came to light. Staff contacted Prince William County Police to conduct a concurrent criminal investigation with city detectives. The city investigation is ongoing.

Chaudhary was arrested for rape, malicious wounding with a caustic substance and assault and battery by the Prince William County Police Department on March 16.

CRIME REPORT

The following incidents were reported by the Alexandria Police Department.

MARCH 20

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a commercial robbery in the 600 block of King Street. Two suspects robbed a pharmacy. There were no weapons or injuries.

MARCH 18

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 100 block of Bragg St. One man assaulted another and stole

his wallet. There were no serious injuries.

MARCH 17

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 500 block of Four Mile Road. A group of men assaulted and stole a cell phone from another man. There were no serious injuries.

MARCH 16

The Alexandria Police Department is investigating a robbery in the 1900 block of King Street. A group of juvenile males stole items from a cab driver. There were no injuries.

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‘Respect for God, Creation, One Another’

Jewish congregation seeks just and compassionate balance in community.

BY DAN BRENDEL
GAZETTE PACKET

Below is the fifth in an ongoing series of conversations with local religious leaders about religion in the public square. It's edited for space.

Rabbi Steven Rein leads Agudas Achim, a Conservative Jewish congregation founded by 14 families in 1914. Over the decades, the congregation grew, meeting at various sites until settling in 1958 at its current location, about half-a-mile north of T.C. Williams High School. Rein “is committed to building a caring community, fostering Jewish learning, and encouraging our members to turn words into action,” according to the congregation’s web site. He’s also a reserve Air Force chaplain. Chaya Silver serves as the education and youth director. She oversees the congregation’s religious school, which, through Hebrew studies and other activities, aims to “impart a positive, lasting Jewish identity” to some 125 students.

Does your congregation have a systematic doctrine for engaging the wider secular community? I think of the Prophet Jeremiah telling the Israelite captives in Babylon to “seek the welfare [Hebrew: ‘shalom’] of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.”

Rein: Certainly Judaism in general, and our specific denomination of Conservative Judaism, speaks to ... what we like to call “tikkun olam” — sort of repairing the world, making the world a better place. ... [This is] an overarching guideline or value that gets acted upon in individual communities.

Is the city itself an object of, not just care, but transformation, in your mind? The religious congregations in this city do an awful lot with regard to charity.

Rein: We constantly struggle with — struggle in a positive way — how to act on our values in the public sphere. I’m not going to stand up on the pulpit and tell people, “You need to vote for So-and-so,” or dictate people’s politics. There’s a tradition in the community of ... lobbying individual congressmen or -women on issues ... [But] at least since I’ve been here, I can’t recall instances of, “Let’s go speak to the local council person on such-and-such an issue.”

Silver: We, as a minority religious community here, need to work with compassion and patience with the larger community that doesn’t always take into account the needs of our religious calendar. [For example, in the public schools,] standardized testing on holy days. [Also,] because



Rabbi Steven Rein

there aren’t a lot of Jewish congregations in the area, we can’t quite specialize. ... We have to cast a very broad net and have a very big tent ...

Rein: The [congregation] has pretty equal representation from three jurisdictions. If our focus becomes ... Alexandria city local politics, two-thirds of the congregation [are left out.] As opposed to, when you bring it up a level to statewide, let’s say. The Jewish community participates every year in an advocacy day down in Richmond, and looks at things that are important to Jewish values that people are active on. Or on national levels. In June we have representatives coming from an organization called Mazon, which is an organization that focuses on lobbying and advocating in Congress on getting to the root cause of hunger challenges within the U.S.

The Hebrew word translated as “welfare” is “shalom.” What is shalom?

Silver: There are things like widows, orphans, children, animal rights that everybody can get behind. Some of the more complex issues — whether its reproductive rights or gun [related] constitutional rights, free speech — I think then we do have challenges, as any faith community would, which is, how do we balance the uniqueness of who we are ... with the understanding that we live in a country that celebrates multiculturalism? And where do we sort of pull back and when do we say, “No, I can’t cross this line because it’s a singular value that I’m not willing to change?” It’s not always easy in this country these days being in the minority. [For example,] secular events that are scheduled on Saturdays, where that writes us out; or it forces a family to choose. We’re straddling those two worlds over and over again.

Rein: As a minority faith community, there’s certainly a lot of time spent just on identity-building and maintaining our own identity. I think folks have an easier time accepting minorities who are interested in sort of blending in. I think minorities who want to continue maintaining their distinc-



Chaya Silver

tiveness is a little more challenging.

Silver: [Shalom comes] from the root that means “wholeness” or “completion,” as opposed to “welfare.” When that happens we have peace, ... we do take care of the communal welfare and those in need. ... It’s a complex concept ... We want all that is good in us to be all that is good in you — your health, your wellbeing.

The prophets talk a lot about “justice” [Hebrew: “mishpat”] and “righteousness” [Hebrew: “tzedaqah”]. ... I’m dubious as to whether contemporary English, and certainly partisan vernacular, translates these concepts accurately. What are the prophets calling for?

Rein: We often translate [tzedaqah] either as “righteousness” [or] “charity.” The root is “zedek” [another word meaning “justice”] ... What’s the symbol of justice? It’s the scales. How do we achieve wholeness, is literally creating a balance in the world in which we live ...

Silver: The balance is between compassion and justice. Those two things in our culture are always in a very delicate balance. Even multiculturalism, even the ability to say, “We have core differences, but it’s more important to me that we live peacefully than being right in the pursuit of what I want. ... Mishpat is about balancing the letter of the law with the compassion and justice that really happens when we implement the law. [I think the prophets are calling for] a subtle and beautiful balancing between black-and-white and compassion.

Rein: We sometimes can go down the path of sacrificing justice on the altar of justice. You could take the modern example of, “What do we do with the children of illegal immigrants?” Sometimes the right thing to do may not always be strict justice. That sort of opens the plethora of different opinions as to, how do we then respond to situations where you can’t just rule like a computer, input this and output the answer? You’ve got to use the human heart and emotion.

My parish is in Old Town and we have taken a real interest in the affordable housing issue in our area. It used to be the wrong side of the tracks, now it’s the right side of the tracks [and gentrification forces people out].

Rein: Strict justice would say, “Whatever you can get for your square-footage, that’s what you should get for it.” But if you sprinkle in righteousness ... at least Judaism would say — I think most of our faith traditions would say — “Yes, you are your brother’s keeper. No, Cain, you’re wrong.” Sometimes we need to do what is best for, not just law books, but for people.

What are the elements of justice and righteousness that you think are most critical at this moment in Alexandria? Positive and negative.

Rein: The city, while not necessarily perfect, is working to ensure that there is affordable housing. [Also,] while there are challenges with having a singular high school in the city, it enables there not to be, “That’s the wealthy high school for people who can afford to be in the wealthy neighborhood,” and, “That’s the poor person’s high school ...”

[During Civil Rights people of faith] stood in the public arena in various ways and said, “No. That thing that is happening culturally, that’s not OK, that needs to be fixed, politically, economically, in a lot of different ways.” What would be the Pettus Bridge of Alexandria, where faith communities would come out and say, “No”?

Rein: It certainly seems that there’s not a singular cause or issue of the day. And I think even those causes that are very important, we struggle to keep them out of partisanship.

Silver, referring to local protests against white supremacy: If you start by teaching hate, and that’s your fundamental value, then nothing else is going to happen. We take that truth, which is, we are all created in the image of the divine, and that’s got to be a starting point. The fundamental teaching of showing respect for God, respect for creation, respect for one another — that’s the very heart of what we’re doing; then we can grow.

Rein: I think it’s the core of Judaism.

I think ... people can have an [attitude of] “I put the there’s-no-vacancy-for-hate sign in my lawn, and therefore that means that I’m an accepting person.” But when it comes down the concrete things that would allow different people to actually live here and be your next-door neighbor, [Alexandria] gets just as not-in-my-backyard as

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Ballyshanners Host 37th St. Patrick's Day Parade

FROM PAGE 1

due to exceptionally high winds throughout the region.

"I am so proud to sit on the reviewing stand and see the flags of Ireland and the United States flying together," said Troy, chairman emeritus of the Ballyshanners organization and founder of the parade. "John Fitzgerald and other city founders were from Ireland and are a significant part of our history. Those flags are flying in their memory and for a legacy that should not be forgotten."

Originally scheduled for March 3, the parade was postponed as high winds moved through the city leaving thousands without power. While the traditional pre-parade Classic Car Show was unable to be rescheduled, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria held its annual Fun Dog Show in Market Square prior to the start of the parade.

With sunny skies and mild temperatures, thousands lined the streets of Old Town as Irish step dancers, bagpipers and four-legged parade participants entered the crowds.



Madison Kennedy enjoys the St. Patrick's Day parade atop the Hard Times Horse.

tained the crowds.

"I never thought 37 years ago that all these great things would be happening," Troy said. "It's beautiful to see the streets lined with Irish flags and to know our heritage continues to be celebrated."



The Notre Dame Alumni Band performs during the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 18 in Old Town.



ShamrockRs Irish Dancers perform during the parade.

PHOTOS BY MARK MOGIE/GAZETTE PACKET



Ballyshanners Chairman Emeritus and Living Legend of Alexandria Pat Troy watches the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 18 in Old Town, an event he founded 37 years ago.



The National Potomac Yacht Club members enjoy the parade from atop a boat.



Boys and Girls Club Summer Camp participants take part in the St. Patrick's Day parade.



Crowds line the streets of Old Town for the Ballyshanners St. Patrick's Day Parade.



Members of Troop 55035 wave to the crowd during the St. Patrick's Day parade.

NEWS

Legislators Come Home

Council receives update
on 2018 legislative session.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Overall, it's been a disappointing season for Alexandria's legislators. At the City Council meeting on March 21, national and state elected officials returned home to testify to the council about the results from Richmond and Washington D.C.

The one crowning success for Alexandria in the state legislature was a push for state funding to the Metro system. State Sen. George Barker, who had helped draft the legislation, told the council that the state legislature will give the Metro system the full \$154 million per year requested.

"This is something that hasn't been done before," said Barker. "This is three different state entities coming together on our own to put this together. It's needed and critical. The Metro is important to the economy of the Washington Metropolitan Area. It's vitally and critically important to the economy of Virginia. If we don't fix this now, it will be doing damage to the economy of Virginia."

However, Barker said the legislature is still bitterly divided over Medicaid expansion issues. While many Republicans in the House of Delegates have come out in favor of Medicaid expansion in Virginia, Republicans in the Senate remain deeply entrenched against expansion, warning that it's reliant on unstable funding from the federal government.

"The Medicaid expansion is why we don't have a budget right now," said Barker. "The House and Senate disagree. Senate Republicans have taken the position that they don't want any vote on it until they have a caucus."

Del. Charniele Herring said that 2018 has been an unusually cooperative session on the House of

Delegates side. The one stumbling block she said the bipartisanship faced, she said, was on gun control.

"Our one bad day was, of course, for gun violence," said Herring. "I'm trying to have faith that everyone wants the same result, it's just how we get there."

Sen. Adam Ebbin lamented that even what he saw as his most palatable gun control reform, a bill criminalizing loaded open carry for people who are intoxicated in public, failed.

Del. Mark Levine likewise noted that his five bills adding to the total 69 bills related to gun control were all rejected. These were bills that ranged from banning bump stocks to universal background checks and banning firearms from protests.

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 27



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CLARIFICATION

"School Resource Officer Fires Gun," Gazette Packet, March 15, incorrectly noted that City Councilor John Chapman favored eliminating the school resource officer program. He said he does not want an expansion of the school resource officer program in elementary schools.

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ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ♦ MARCH 22-28, 2018 ♦ 9

Access to Child Care for Working Families

BY DR. TAMMY MANN
CAMPAGNA CENTER



Dr. Tammy Mann, president and CEO of the Campagna Center, testified before the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education on March 6 to provide her perspective on The Child Care for Working Families Act and its goal to improve access to high-quality preschool for low- and middle-income children.

The Child Care for Working Families Act was introduced by U.S. Representatives Bobby Scott (VA-03), ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and Jared Polis (CO-02), and Senators Patty Murray (D-WA), ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and Bob Casey (D-PA) as a comprehensive early learning and child care bill to ensure affordable, high-quality child care for working families across the country. The Act expands access and makes it possible for more working parents to benefit from subsidy assistance. It aims to increase workforce training and compensation supports such that wages align with credentials and experiences, leading to an increase in the number of early

educators earning a living wage.

Mann's testimony focused on the importance of affordable, quality child care and its positive impact on working families and their contributions to the economy. Referencing her 25 years of experience in early childhood education — most recently as president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and as CEO of The Campagna Center which supports children and families in Alexandria through early learning programs such as Head Start and after school programs — she spoke of the individual, family, and societal benefits derived from access to early learning opportunities and child care.

“Throughout my time in this field, I have been witness to children who blossomed with the support of knowledgeable, skilled early childhood educators, and to families who have been able to build their lives as a result of access to child care which allowed them to work towards a sustainable financial future.

“Working families make sacrifices and hard choices every day in order to put the needs of their children first. But when it comes to child care, parents shouldn't have to choose between affordability and quality.

“Decades of research has shown the critical nature of the early years, and the benefits that accrue to individuals and to society when we invest in those years. This research firmly demonstrates that early experiences directly affect brain development and future learning, behavior, and health.

“Today, early childhood education contributes 1.1 percent to the gross domestic product, equivalent to \$163 billion, according to a new report released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. Research also supports that access to child care enhances productivity at work and reduces absences among employees. In short, an investment in early care and education is an investment in a productive workforce which strengthens our economy.”

COMMENTARY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Much Bigger Issue Here

To the Editor:

I have great respect for the Alexandria Police Department having worked with them for 15 years as a probation and parole officer.

However, I take exception to remarks attributed to the Chief Mike Brown on the police officer's firing of his weapon at the George Washington Middle School.

Chief Brown said the officer was embarrassed “and on behalf of the APD we apologize for any inconvenience.” His remarks ended with, “I can only imagine how embarrassed he might be and some of the ribbing he might be getting from his colleagues.”

This is not an embarrassment. It is not an inconvenience. It is not something to rib someone about. It is about a deadly weapon being

fired in a middle school.

Arm our teachers? I don't think so.

Kevin Bergen
Alexandria

Need vs Nice To Have

To the Editor:

Dan Brendel's commentary [“On Leadership,” Gazette Packet, March 8] distinguishes between “critical infrastructure” and “nice-to-have,” implying that a Chinquapin swimming pool is less critical than new schools and affordable housing.

A new pool is most critical of the three because learning to swim saves lives and young adults who know how to swim serve critical needs in our military and emergency services. The U.S. has had a

navy and coast guard since the Republic's early days, whereas public education did not become an expectation of government 'til the late 19th century and affordable housing 'til the New Deal. Defense of our country and its interests requires many recruits who have the ability to swim. Alexandria's Old Town Pool is nearly a century old — predating the city's “affordable housing” program.

Parents of public school children typically support increases in school funding freighted by the general taxpayers, but expenditures for subjects not subject to “standards of learning” annual assessment exams are not critical. An “art cart” because a classroom is needed for basic learning, for example, is a prudent economy below the high school level.

“Affordable housing,” where free market pricing dictates otherwise, is a “nice-to-have” so long as transportation networks support commutation from more affordable parts of the metropolitan area. An “economically diverse” population is a “nice-to-have,” not critical. Many places do fine without such.

Ironically, education expenditures lead to locales having top-quality schools which attract residents which bids up housing prices, making housing less affordable.

More money spent on schools generates a “need” to spend more on affordable housing. Alexandria's cost-of-living is under one-and-a-half times the U.S. overall but we throw at schools more that double the U.S. average per student expenditure. Places which

spend far less find they have plenty of affordable housing.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Fix Botched Land Use Decisions

To the Editor:

The city's handling of the Karig Estates project is considered by many to have been a botched planning and civic engagement process. However, the Karig ravine, forest, and natural channel stream are not yet destroyed and are awaiting a 60-day, from Jan. 20, 2018 Council decision, no construction appeal period. It is hoped that the city will right its errors by revisiting key land use issues.

In particular, the recommendations of the 2004 Open Space Steering Committee Report to Council of “properties that should be closely examined as candidates for open space acquisition” says pretty much everything that opponents of this planning debacle have maintained all along — some 14 years later. Maddeningly, all are key facts which the city from 2017 to present stubbornly contested.

No one is faulting the city for not having the Open Space funds to buy the Karig property, even if it were realistically for sale. What is at fault here is the city's rejection of the basic environmental facts of the Karig property — and facts that the city tried its best to ma

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12



Snapshot

PHOTO BY HAL HARDAWAY

Honey waiting for Mum outside Starbucks on Friday morning, March 9.

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FROM PAGE 10

nipulate and dismiss. None of these complaints are personal against anyone nor are they about what the city legally can and cannot do, but rather attitudes and values.

One such fact — that the city installed a “storm drain system [in the Karig ravine] to reduce storm water ponding” — so obviously proves the ravine to be an intermittent stream that it is astounding why TES staff’s insistence to the contrary at the Jan. 20, 2018 council hearing wasn’t met with complete incredulity. The intermittent stream issue was key because if the Karig waterway was indeed declared an intermittent stream, which it certainly is, then by ordinance no development would have been allowed there. In other words, two of the four buildings would not be allowed. Once again, development interests over environmental protections and concerns.

The city-installed infrastructure in the ravine also raises questions concerning legality. Does the city install expensive infrastructure on private property that is later to be tossed away for development interests? And does it not mean that if the city spent public monies on storm drain infrastructure on private land, that staff in fact believed it to be necessarily related to enhancing an intermittent stream?

The answers to these questions should reveal that the council was misled on Jan. 20, 2018 by TES staff in their insistence that no intermittent stream occurs on the Karig property. The city’s installing storm drains in a “historically natural channel intermittent stream” (TES) would likely only have been done if there was such a stream to modify. There would be no need to drain a non-waterway.

There are only three choices of what to call the Karig channel: perennial, intermittent, and not a stream. Installing drains to reduce areas of ponding is textbook proof that the channel is an intermittent stream, regardless of how one argues the semantics. What TES staff basically told council on Jan. 20 regarding the nature of the stream is the complete opposite of this. In other words, regular stormwater and groundwater movement in a channel, at a minimum, is the definition of an intermittent stream, if not constant enough to qualify as a perennial stream, but it can never be considered a non-waterway.

And if the city’s installation of stormwater drains in the Karig natural channel creates a public easement on grounds that the site is a public stream channel, then the city should be held responsible for not protecting its investment and the stream by allowing development to later completely destroy the channel.

C. Dara
Alexandria

Revolving Door Staffing

To the Editor:

I have always supported maintaining competitive salaries for our public safety employees and have written so for many

years as a member of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC). To be fair, budgets are ornery and complex. Priorities are difficult to sort out, demands from various stakeholders great and they require year-round attention to manage properly.

But my advocacy for fair and competitive compensation for police and other public safety departments extends far beyond the difficulties of preparing meaningful budgets or my membership on advisory committees. It comes from serving a career in the Alexandria Police Department and watching this fight about fair pay predictably, and unfortunately, repeat itself over many years at the expense of exceptional men and women who serve our city with distinction every day.

Many of these dedicated public servants will ultimately decide the fight is not worth it. They will simply take their talents to departments next door for more pay, as they have in past years. This is unfortunate. Revolving door staffing is harmful, costly and detrimental to maintaining continuity in the delivery of public safety services in any jurisdiction, particularly Alexandria.

The time to act is now. Failing to act decisively and proactively in a city long committed to fundamentals of good government — public safety, education, infrastructure, community engagement, innovation and the like — should concern every fair-minded resident of our great city.

David P. Baker

Former Alexandria Chief of Police

Praise for Students And Faculty

To the Editor:

The following letter was addressed to the principal of George Mason Elementary School.

I am a longtime resident of Alexandria, and my daughters are alumnae of George Mason.

On Wednesday morning this past week, I stood in front of George Mason while about 70 of your students stood with their posters and held a demonstration on behalf of stricter gun control measures to increase school and student safety. The demonstration was quiet, restrained, respectful, and very poignant. Clearly the student leaders had done a thorough job organizing the event, as they had done with their presentations previously at the city-wide rally on the same issue.

My heartiest congratulations to you and your faculty for the job you did coaching and preparing the students. As I am sure you know, they received national coverage for their work that was well deserved. I know that in those hours these students learned many lessons in — among other things — civics, organizational management, human relations, communications, and public speaking.

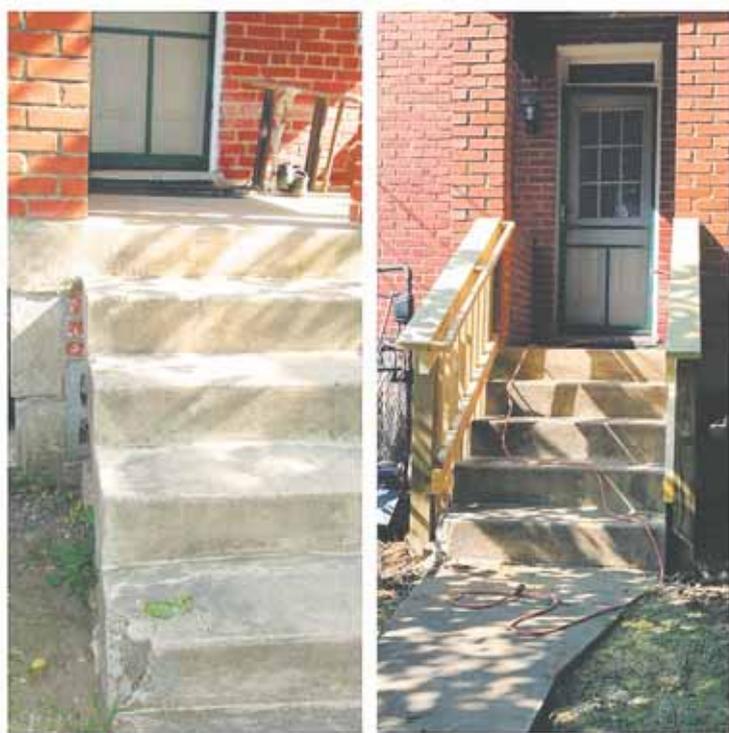
You made the neighborhood proud. Thank you.

Kitty Porterfield
Alexandria

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Before and after work by Rebuilding Together Alexandria.



Project Update

What’s been done to the Hume Springs and Lynhaven neighborhoods so far?

BY BREANNE DRISCOLL
OUTREACH MANAGER
REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA

Last May, Rebuilding Together Alexandria was awarded a \$500,000 Project Reinvest grant to implement various projects in revitalizing the Hume Springs and Lynhaven neighborhoods. We were one of only two grant recipients in the state of Virginia.

Over the first 10 months of this 18-month grant, Rebuilding Together Alexandria has made critical health and safety improvements to the homes of 17 low-income families and individuals in those neighborhoods.

REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA

Among the improvements made were the replacements of two broken stoves, one refrigerator, and one washing machine, and the installation of a comfort height toilet. We also provided six major furnace, nine electrical, and six plumbing repairs, replaced two roofs, and installed a chairlift. Multiple handyman repairs, including handrail installations, were completed by our skilled volunteers and contractors.

Feedback from the homeowners has been humbling. One recipient commented, “I was impressed with everything Rebuilding Together Alexandria has done for me to include front and back tree work, gutter replacement and repair, replacement of a broken stove, furnace repair, new floor tile in kitchen and work on my front porch. So many things I would not have been able to do on my own. So grateful. Thanks again!”

Today, nearly 50 percent of households in these communities have incomes of less than \$60,000 (less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income). We have been serv-

ing this community for more than 20 years, and are proud to build on that progress, increasing access to safe and healthy housing, encouraging active and healthy living, and fostering community connectedness.

Our work doesn’t end in the home! We have partnered with Alexandria City Public Schools and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities to accomplish much-welcomed revitalization projects throughout the second half of this year. Rebuilding Together Alexandria will convert open space to a multi-generational park and build a large scale community growing garden, all serving the areas of Hume Springs and Lynhaven. We have also made physical improvements at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology including exterior painting upgrades, removing unsafe tree limbs, and installing a new bike rack for students.

“Our overall vision for this Project Reinvest initiative is to revitalize the Hume Springs and Lynhaven neighborhoods through efforts that are resident-driven, sustainable, and proven effective in order to improve the health and well-being of community residents,” states Katharine Dixon, president and CEO of Rebuilding Together Alexandria.

Rebuilding Together Alexandria is an award-winning, mission-driven organization that creates healthy neighborhoods for Alexandria residents by maintaining affordable housing for low-income homeowners, revitalizing community spaces, and creating homeownership opportunities. Since 1986, more than 27,000 volunteers have worked on 2,137 projects, leveraging \$7.5 million worth of in-kind value to Alexandria. Rebuilding Together’s work contributes to helping the City remain economically, socially and culturally diverse.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 12

Commemorating Presidents Day

To the Editor:

A recent letter ("A Maligned First President," Gazette Packet, Feb. 22) misrepresents the attention the Alexandria Library pays to commemorating Presidents Day.

The Alexandria Library is committed to recognizing our city and nation's rich diversity and history. Recognizing federal holidays, local historical events, and national events allows the Library to be very versatile and inclusive in its programming.

During February, our branches highlight books for adults and youth to teach about the accomplishments of United States presidents, specifically focusing on the lives of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Library displays are curated by our professional staff to entice and educate readers, and Library leadership has not restricted such displays on the basis of content or space.

This year, the Duncan branch held two programs for children around the theme of George Washington. These programs, which featured a children's author and a reenactor, attracted about 80 participants.

While all exhibits must be sponsored by the Library, the Library is happy to establish partnerships with other organizations to cosponsor programs. For example, the

Library partnered with the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee to display the George Washington Dictionary from our special collections at the George Washington Breakfast. We would be happy to collaborate again when approached by the Committee.

Kathleen Schloeder

Chair, Alexandria Library Board

Keeping Children Safe

To the Editor:

I am writing about the need to keep children safe in schools. In relation to the gun debate, some are calling for more guns and more police in schools. Personally, I see police in schools as a negative.

I'd prefer that resources be spent to expand our Restorative Justice program from our high school to our middle schools. Restorative Justice is an alternative to suspension. At a recent public forum, held at the Cora Kelly School, numerous parents came out to speak in favor of Restorative Justice. The crowd at that event represented the many races and ethnicities of our city. There was a remarkable lack of dissent. There was broad concern that punitive approaches disproportionately affect students of color.

In other public forums, I've heard similar comments with regards to police in schools. As I see it, the best way to avoid the situa-

tion where punishment is meted out disproportionately to students of color is to get rid of punitive approaches. I want my tax dollars go to experts on children, not experts on punishment. Let us please get the police out of our schools.

Jonathan Krall

Alexandria

Nonprofit Movie Theater?

To the Editor:

After several attempts to find a tenant, Alexandria's Old Town theater on King Street continues to remain empty. Although Roger Fonz sold it off several years ago, despite several new owners, it has never reopened as a theater. However, there is indeed a solution to this dilemma: Benchmarking!

The Key West Film Society manages and operates the Tropic Cinema Theater in Key West Florida, which is a renovated carpet warehouse with a four screen multiplex and 250 seats. The theater is run by Key West residents, who have formed a 501C3 nonprofit corporation in order to run first-run movies and art features. It opened its doors in 2004, and since then, it has operated successfully. Volunteers run every facet of the theater, to include an extensive con-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14



PHOTO BY GERRI BALDWIN

Beauty Newly Unfolded

A new flag was flown at The Heritage At Old Town, replacing the Old Glory on a windy March 13 afternoon.

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Best Bib and Tucker Ball

To support Gadsby's Tavern Museum.

BY NANCY KEGAN SMITH
PRESIDENT, GADSBY'S TAVERN
MUSEUM SOCIETY

Top 10 things about Gadsby's Tavern that you may not know and why you should go to the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society's Hallmark Best Bib & Tucker Ball:

10. "Over the span of two centuries, the Tavern has attracted leading figures in this country and guests from abroad who considered is accommodations among the finest to be had at any inn in the United States. Beginning with General Washington, five Presidents are known to have been wined and dined at Gadsby's, while a sixth, President Harry S. Truman, twice attended plays staged by the Little Theatre of Alexandria." [Quote from Dorothy Parker "The Story of Gadsby's Tavern"]

TOP 10 **9.** George Washington partied like it was 1999 – really 1799 (and 1798) – at his Birthnight Ball held at the City Tavern. Thomas Jefferson celebrated his inauguration as president in the historic ballroom in 1801 and was regaled with 16 toasts throughout the night. The newspaper said, "... style and elegance with which it was furnished, at so short a notice, reflect the highest credit on the taste and industry of Mr. Gadsby."

8. Gadsby's visitors have also included three First Ladies: Eleanor Roosevelt, Betty Ford, and Rosalynn Carter; and one Pope — Pope John Paul II.

7. During his 1824 tour in honor of his service as a Revolutionary War hero the Marquis de Lafayette was celebrated at Gadsby's Tavern where a banquet was held in his honor. It is in recognition and appreciation of its long connection and historic connection with France, that the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society decided on its Springtime in Paris theme for this year's Ball.

6. Gadsby boasts one of the last remaining urban ice wells in the area. It preserved ice harvested from the river in the winter. The ice well could hold up to 68 tons of ice. The recent renovation of the Ice Well has won three architectural design awards.

5. The City Tavern (part of the Gadsby complex we know today) was the 5-star hotel of the 18th century in Alexandria. The hotels amenities included a "large stock of good old liquors," the services of a washerwoman, and — for only 20 cents in 1801 — clean sheets.

4. The building's most famous ghost story — the Tale of the Female Stranger — inspired Port City Brewery's Long Black Veil beer. The tale of the Female Stranger is

about a woman who arrived in Alexandria by ship in October of 1816. Having become ill, she was taken to the finest tavern in town — Gadsby's Tavern — and was given a room, a doctor and two nurses to care for her. Her identity, however, was kept a mystery. On the 14th, she died at the age of 23. She is buried at St. Paul's Cemetery and a table-top tomb bears the inscription "In the memory of the Female Stranger ..."

3. In the summer of 2017, Gadsby's Tavern Museum was the first place in Alexandria to host a Time & Place exhibit — an initiative of the Alexandria Office of the Arts' public art program, in partnership with the Office of Historic Alexandria. The exhibit was called "Centennial of the Everyday" which featured a series of installations throughout the historic Gadsby's Tavern Museum reflecting the artists' research on the history of women, enslaved peoples, and anonymous citizens in Alexandria whose stories are rarely told.

2. On March 1, 2018, thanks to its ongoing fundraising efforts, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society purchased an important archival collection, the Irwin Papers, and officially donated it to the Museum which will now be preserved at Gadsby's Tavern Museum. This collection consists of 373 items, detailing the business, shipping, and real estate enterprise of the Irwin family of Alexandria from 1776-1925. Thomas Irwin owned the City Hotel, now part of Gadsby's Tavern Museum, from 1815 to 1929. A key item is an original copy of John Gadsby's inventory from 1802, listing his assets from furniture to enslaved people by name.

1. Mr. Gadsby was known for his lavish events and that tradition continues today. Do not miss your opportunity to attend one of Alexandria's social events of the year — The Gadsby's Tavern Museum Society's Best Bib and Tucker Ball. The Society introduced the annual Best Bib & Tucker Ball to raise money for preservation, restoration and educational and cultural programs for Gadsby's Tavern Museum. The term Best Bib and Tucker means one's best clothes and was first used in 1747.

On April 14 from 7 to 10:30 p.m, Paris comes to Alexandria as this year's theme is Springtime in Paris. The Ball will feature a "joie de vivre" atmosphere with live music and entertainment by Doc Scantlin and the Dazzling Chou Chou performing the Can Can with the "Girlfriends." Dining will feature sumptuous cuisine, libations, an oyster bar, and champagne. Fabulous Silent Auction including fine jewelry, fine French glass and art. To add to the fun there the Marquis de Lafayette and his wife will be joining the Ball. Tickets for his wonderful evening of are \$150 per person and can be purchased at www.gadsbystavernmuseum.us. It is not often that one can partake of a truly historic setting with so much merriment, cuisine and libation, and at the same time support a worthy cause.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 13

cession stand. The nonprofit corporation's board of directors is elected from volunteers within the city and in addition, a great deal of the funding to sustain this operation comes from citizen donations. Why not contact the leadership of this group to get a few pointers? It is a shame to let this great theater space remain vacant, so let's get to it, Alexandria!

Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet
Alexandria

Building a 'People's Coalition'

To the Editor:

I was fortunate enough to attend Mayor Allison Silberberg's announcement on Sunday, Feb 11 at Los Tios Restaurant in Del Ray of the start of her campaign for reelection as mayor of Alexandria. It was truly a memorable event.

There were several things that made the event memorable. First was the atmosphere in that room: joyous and electric! The room was packed, her announcement was greeted with cheers and applause, and the crowd was joyous about the priorities for her time and policies in her second term that Mayor Silberberg announced.

And these were not just her supporters who attend political events across the city. The crowd — packed in as they were — was made up of some politicians and political activists, to be sure. But when I looked around that rainy afternoon, it was clear that this was a crowd of the people, who were proud to be part of a people's campaign, in line with Mayor Silberberg's declaration that she sees herself as "The People's Mayor." And her announcement speech wasn't just a rehash of statements. Instead, in an unrehearsed speech, she developed a cadence of call and response that brought the crowd to full-throated yells of approval. When she followed up every announcement of her policy priorities — priorities ranging from continuing to fight for thoughtful, appropriate development that fits in, is to scale and protects our neighborhoods and communities to continuing to fight for more affordable housing — with a rhetorical question, "Are you with me on this?", the crowd yelled out a resounding "Yes!" time and time again.

Supporters left the restaurant, as did I, with arms full of message cards and lawn signs, and with an animated discussion among them that left us all clear that we had participated in a truly historic event: the announcement by only the second woman mayor in Alexandria's history, that she was standing for reelection, determined to spend another three-year term building a "People's Coalition" to construct a more livable Alexandria. I am proud to be wholeheartedly supporting her.

Helen R. Desfosses
Alexandria

More of The Same?

To the Editor:

The upcoming mayoral election is simple. If you want more of the same, vote for Justin Wilson and incumbent council members. Otherwise, vote for Allison and a new slate of council members.

Since I moved to Alexandria on July 4, 1994, the school system has continually struggled with capacity issue becoming more and more acute with explosive redevelopment. When T.C. Williams was rebuilt recently, it obviously was built to meet yesterday's capacity needs vs. to meet a growing student population. With our elementary kids, the system buses them around town due to capacity issues. Every year, the council provides lip service and little real action and opt instead to borrow or spend money on discretionary projects around the city.

With every new development and redevelopment the council passes zoning ordinance variances and exemptions handing them out like candy on Halloween — to paraphrase [former mayor] Bill Euille, to build the tax base. If that was the case, the city should be able to provide ample funding to allow the school system to meet the needs of educating our public school kids. Additionally, if this was the case, then our first responders should be receiving pay that parallels other local jurisdictions.

With that, it is laughable for a council member or Planning Commission member to say they are not in the pockets of developers. The evidence can be found in every quadrant of the city. Why council members take the time to voice concerns of dissenters is laughable when they always vote the party line. It begs the question, why bother with elections, just let the city democratic committee run the city.

Maintaining the historical ambiance of Old Town? Its Federalist facade obviously is no longer the case. Then again, nearly 20 years ago the city passed a plan to address its antiquated sewer system. Gibbon Street was redone, and then everything else went on the back burner so we could take on discretionary projects like the Route 1 transit way. That was \$50 or \$60 million in borrowed money that could have gone a long way towards the sewer system or a new school. So it was laughable when the Virginia passed a law forcing Alexandria in to action and the council acted shocked.

It is simple. The City of Alexandria is overdue for new leadership. My vote is for Allison, but there is also a third choice for mayor and there are plenty of new candidates to put fresh faces on the council. Redevelopment is fine, but let's make sure it fits and not look like it was transplanted from another state. The future of our schools and retention of our first responders depend on and require new leadership for our city.

Ruben "Bill" Duran
Alexandria

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 16

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Shelter's Program of Services Proves Lifeline for Cats

Sneaks is one of many happy endings.

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

A black cat named Sneaks is one lucky feline. Sneaks was 14 years old, suffering from untreated diabetes and FIV (a virus similar to HIV) when he was surrendered by his owner last April to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA). Like most cats who come to the shelter, Sneaks' first stop was "Healthy Hold," a quiet room where cats can acclimate to their new surroundings and the staff can get to know them, to get a better idea of their health and behavior.

AWLA Sneaks appeared emaciated, his inky coat dull and speckled with dandruff. Dr. Kaci Angelone, AWLA's staff veterinarian, ordered infusions of intravenous fluids and an array of food choices to stimulate his appetite. To keep on top of any changes in the cat's health, Dr. Angelone took Sneaks under her wing as an "office cat," a common practice at the AWLA for animals who need special attention.

At any given time, several cats partner as "office mates" with AWLA staffers. Most are cats seeking a little extra socialization before they are ready for adoption or in need of observation for medical or behavioral issues. Many eventually move on to the adoptions floor to meet the public, and others are made available for adoption directly from an office or a foster home.

Many staff members find hanging out with a feline makes the day go more quickly. "I love it," says Senior Manager of Community Programs Joanna Fortin, who has worked alongside about 25 coworker cats in her three years at the shelter. "My office isn't the same without one."

Under Dr. Angelone's care, Sneaks was fed a special food mix and slowly began to eat more and become more active. But treatment for diabetes, which he desperately needed, could not begin until he began to eat more consistently. It was time to seek a foster caregiver for Sneaks.



PHOTO BY ALISON LANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Sneaks, looking dapper

AWLA has a dedicated team of fosters who regularly take in animals in need of individualized care in a home setting. Some of these cats have significant medical or behavioral needs, some are senior cats and others are tiny kittens, too young for adoption and in need of round-the-clock care. AWLA's Community Outreach and Adoptions Coordinator Echo Keif found the perfect landing spot for Sneaks — the Springfield home of Janelle and Andrew Hartley.

The first order of business was to start Sneaks on insulin for his diabetes. A demonstration by Keif got them on their way, and soon the Hartleys had rearranged their schedules to administer insulin to the cat every 12 hours. Before his recuperation began, Sneaks showed some classic signs of diabetes, like constantly crying for water. His fosters had to cover the floors with "pee pads" because he wouldn't use the litter box, and they also had to keep Sneaks separate from their own cat because of Sneaks' FIV infection. "But even when he wasn't feeling good, he was still a snuggly, happy cat," Hartley recalled. "He wanted to sit in laps and be petted. He was always so sweet."

By September, after spending three months at the Hartley home and making regular visits to the AWLA veterinarian, Janelle Hartley had to leave the country for work travel. Sneaks was feeling much better, no longer begging for water, his diabetes apparently under control. AWLA found new foster care for him, and in November, one of the caregivers brought him in to the shelter to visit for a special Foster Adoption Showcase.

He was placed in a decorated pet stroller, and volunteer Jen Salan pushed him around



Sneaks the cat, in a stroller decorated for autumn, goes for a spin in the shelter with volunteer Jen Salan.

to promote adoptions. Salan is one of 250 AWLA volunteers who help keep the shelter humming, doing everything from walking dogs to laundry to helping out with events. Some work to help socialize cats. Although the AWLA receives funding from the city for most basic services, programs like these — and the time and resources devoted to animals like Sneaks — are only possible through donations from the community.

A photograph of Sneaks in the stroller became a social media hit. Soon a picture of him on a website caught the eye of Christina Thompson of Laurel, Md., and her boyfriend, Dane Howard. Thompson's father had recently died, and she was interested in adding a companion animal to their family to ease the grieving process. With the AWLA's help, the couple set up a meeting with Sneaks at the shelter.

Sneaks' FIV and diabetes diagnoses didn't scare them a bit. All they could see was his now-beautiful, silky coat, goldish green eyes and outgoing personality. They adopted him, one of 690 cats adopted from AWLA in 2017. Seven months after a seriously ill Sneaks had arrived at the shelter, he had found health — and his home. The bright outcome for Sneaks was a direct result of AWLA's services carefully designed to help cats.



Sneaks' long-awaited family, adopters Christina Thompson and Dane Howard

"When we heard he got adopted, we cried," said former Sneaks foster caregiver Janelle Hartley.

Sneaks has adjusted well. "Sneaks is really low-maintenance and takes his insulin very well," Thompson said. Sneaks made new friends when Thompson took him to her pet-friendly office. "Everyone was so impressed by his calm demeanor and friendly personality."

Sneaks now mostly stays close by his human companions' side — even when he goes with Howard to explore the outdoors, wearing a harness and leash. "Having a senior cat has been amazing for us," Thompson said. "Anytime someone's looking to adopt a pet, it's important to have an honest idea of one's lifestyle and what age of pet is best for them. Sneaks is absolutely the perfect cat for us because he fits in so perfectly with our lifestyle. The health issues are just a small piece, we just love him so much. I think he has a lot more life in him."

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, which operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter on contract with the City of Alexandria, is an independent, local, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The AWLA is committed to ending animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare, and serving as an educational resource for the City of Alexandria community. More information is at AlexandriaAnimals.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 14

She Persists; She Listens

To the Editor:

Persist! That command to action describes Mayor Allison Silberberg's character. In her first citywide election, she outperformed all City Council seekers, becoming vice mayor. In the next and most-recent city election, she again won the vote, becoming the city's

second female mayor — despite being challenged after she won their party's primary by the then-incumbent mayor.

The theme of March, National Women's History Month, is: "Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." That's our mayor!

Not only does Mayor Silberberg persist — she listens. She is constantly out in communities hearing neighbors, unafraid to be a minority voice at council, the 1 in a 6-1 vote as a matter of principle for the people — for example, when council voted 6-1 to

time-limit citizens' remarks at council session openings. Just as Alexandrians played a foundational role in the late 18th century, Mayor Silberberg continues to lead on ethics reviews and reforms. Unpopular? Sometimes. But, unafraid.

President Jimmy Carter signed National Women's History Week into law on March 8, 1980. Congress enacted National Women's History Month in March in 1987. March 8 is now International Women's Day. March 12 was National Sunshine Week ... when journalists and American citizens spotlight such timely issues as government

transparency, journalism ethics, freedom of speech, and The First Amendment. These are all issues Mayor Silberberg champions ... and honors as emblems of Alexandria's iconic story.

She persists. She listens. She stands up for people. Her Honor, our Mayor, is a woman about whom one can say: "Nevertheless, She Persisted."

Carol James
Alexandria

OPINION

Bishop Ireton Embodies 'The Addams Family'

BY KELSEY FRANKLIN
THOMAS S. WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL

When you're an Addams, you need to have a lot of talent. Or so it would seem, after watching Bishop Ireton High School's production of "The Addams Family" on March 10.

Written by Andrew Lipka, Marshall Brickman, and Rick Elice in 2010, this Tony-nominated show follows the iconic Addams family as a grown up Wednesday falls in love with sweet, boy-next-door Lucas — an absolute nightmare for Gomez and Morticia (and not the good kind)! Uncle Fester plots to help Wednesday and Lucas by calling on the family's ancestors, making for a wild family reunion.

Overall the show was positively horrifying! The ancestors were stunning as an ensemble, each displaying their own individual character when dancing and reacting to the Addams' onstage antics. Gabby Baniqued, who choreographed the show and played a convincing Saloon Girl ancestor, dazzled with both expression and clean dancing. In addition, in Abigail Abraham's performance as Alice Beineke, she was able to show off her beautiful vocals, and her portrayal of quirky suburban mother and poet was delightful. Mal Beineke, portrayed by Kevin McNerney, demonstrated immense en-



PHOTO BY LISA MARIE CHENEY

From left: Sophie de Waal, Kathleen McNerney, Olivia Hays, Elizabeth Gatley, Emily Graham, and Gabby Baniqued.

ergy and consistent character choices throughout the production.

One of the most powerful performances was by Olivia Hayes as Morticia. Her mannerisms and voice brought the seductive, stern character to life. Her performance was convincing,

and numbers such as "Just Around the Corner" showed off her humorous side as well. Jake Carlo as Gomez also put on an impressive performance, facing the challenge of having an

SEE ADDAMS, PAGE 29

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Manners in the Tech Age

Etiquette classes aim to teach lost art of manners.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL

On a sunny, autumn day a group of 10-year-old children sat around an a formal dining room table at a home in Arlington. The boys wore blazers, pressed khakis and shiny loafers, while the girls have donned festive dresses, nude stockings and wore grosgrain ribbons in their neatly combed hair. They had arrived at the home for a lesson in etiquette, but most of them would have rather been someplace else.

"I have to leave early for a soccer game," said Jimmy, who didn't bother hiding his glee over missing part of the class.

In an era when it's commonplace to order pizza on a smartphone and coordinate play dates by text, old-fashioned etiquette can appear obsolete. A recent survey of teachers shows that 73 percent of instructors believe that students are less polite than when the teachers themselves were students. In the age high-tech conveniences, children can become over scheduled and under socialized, which has led to an uptick in the number of parents who are enrolling their children in etiquette classes, say protocol instructors.

"Parents have a tremendous interest in etiquette classes because so many parents realize that they don't have that knowledge themselves, said Dorothea Johnson, who founded the Protocol School of Washington and is the author of the book "Modern Manners: Tools to Take You to the Top," which she co-authored with her granddaughter actress Liv Tyler.

"I think most parents know that good manners and etiquette will be important to their [children's] future," added Henryette Neal who teaches etiquette classes for children through the Fairfax County Park Authority. "Young people will be educated, but without proper social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly." Neal is also the owner of Steppin Out Charm and Imaging Studio.

The result of fast-paced lifestyles combined with overloaded schedules is a generation of children who place more value on social media savvy than on knowledge of social graces. Family dinners are replaced by fast food, says one parent. "Who needs good manners to gobble down a slice of pizza," said Carole Mincey of Alexandria, whose 14-year old daughter and 11-year old son have taken etiquette and ballroom dance from Mrs. Simpson's Classes, one of the area's invitation-only etiquette schools. "Because everyone is so busy and technology is so advanced, reality television shows are setting standards of behavior and handwritten thank you notes have been replaced by emails and texts."

Good manners are as important to a child's future success as academics, says another parent. "I feel like if people know what do to do in social situations it empowers them," said Sarah Henry of Chevy Chase, mother of a 10-year old daughter and a 12-year old son. "If you're unsure of what to do it can make you feel intimidated. So it's all about empowering chil-



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY

Henryette Neal teaches etiquette classes for children.

dren with knowledge. And it's good for them to be exposed to proper etiquette in case they're not getting it at home. And if they are getting it at home, etiquette classes can reinforce it."

Interactive class sessions help keep their children engaged in the etiquette lessons. "They key is to keep the children occupied," said Johnson. "For example, when teaching proper introductions, I would call two children up to the front of the room and have them introduce themselves to each other."

In addition to learning such common courtesies such as saying "Please," "Thank you" and "You're welcome," children learn to write thank-you notes and introduce themselves to others by making direct eye contact and offering a firm handshake.

"Knowing how to give a proper handshake is important. When I took my seven-year-old granddaughter Liv to formal events, her little hand went out as she was being introduced to someone," said Johnson. "I could take her anywhere because she had impeccable manners."

Henry says that in a class that she coordinated for her daughter's Girl Scout troop, part of the curriculum included having the children form a receiving line with parents where they practiced handshakes and eye contact.

"We also printed proper table setting samples online and give the girls n plastic forks spoons, knives, napkins and a copy of the place setting," said Henry. "We talked about how to talked about the placement of the utensils, how to hold a knife and fork properly. One of my pet peeves is watching people hold a knife like it's a stick."

These are good life lessons, says Neal. "Etiquette classes are important because people still need to be respectful of others, and it starts with our children," she said. "A simple please and thank you is important."

"Young people will be educated, but without good social skills they will not be able to present themselves properly."

— Henryette Neal, etiquette instructor

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Bill Stokes reacts as his name is called as the winner of two tickets to see the musical "Hamilton" at the Kennedy Center.



Jay Thomas, right, poses for a photo with Stephanie, Casey, Leslie and Jim Lindsey at the Senior Services of Alexandria Golden Anniversary Gala March 17 at the Westin Hotel.

All That Glitters SSA celebrates Golden Anniversary.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

For 50 years, Senior Services of Alexandria has provided service and support to the city's seniors and their families and caregivers. On March 17, a crowd of more than 350 turned out to help SSA celebrate that milestone at its Golden Anniversary Gala.

Held at the Alexandria Westin Hotel, SSA used the occasion to recognize previous honorees, past board members and the many donors and volunteers who have contributed to the organization.

"We had a wonderful turnout, including

Bill Vosbeck, who was one of our founders," said SSA executive director Mary Lee Anderson. "Highlights of the evening were the many former honorees who attended this golden anniversary and the video which featured interviews with Bill Vosbeck and former board president George Petra."

Another highlight of the evening came when Gregg and Monica Murphy, presenting sponsors of the gala, called out the names of the raffle winners, which included the coveted prize of two tickets to see the Tony Award-winning musical "Hamilton" at the Kennedy Center. Bill Stokes of the Washington Network Group was the lucky winner.



Alexandria Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Councilman Willie Bailey.

The mission of SSA is "to foster independence and self-sufficiency, enabling seniors

within the city of Alexandria to age with dignity." Known for delivering Meals on Wheels, it has expanded its services to include a Friendly Visitors program, Groceries-to-Go, AniMeals on Wheels, Senior Law Day and a monthly speaker series. Anderson also announced a new Senior Ambassador Program to help facilitate awareness of SSA services among the city's seniors.

"We're still tallying up the numbers but this was a very special evening," Anderson said.

For more information about Senior Services of Alexandria, visit www.seniorservicesalex.org.

Honing Operations Council discusses implementing task force's process improvement recommendations.

BY DAN BRENDEL
GAZETTE PACKET

At a work session on Wednesday, March 14, the City Council discussed plans to streamline local government operations, especially incorporating recommendations from Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force.

One of the task force's flagship recommendations was that the city and school system together should implement a "capability delivery model." Summarizing, City Manager Mark Jinks said this model of planning and delivering services to citizens starts by asking, "What are you trying to accomplish? And then you go figure out the best way to do it. Too often the default position in government bureaucracies is starting out with, 'This is how we're going to do it to solve a problem,'" often by building a facility. The model encourages analysis of alternatives to building capital projects, and structured phases of planning, allowing decision-makers more opportunities to reassess and change course before committing big money.

It's yet to be seen how well the city and schools will collaborate in such a venture. At the previous work session, Vice Mayor Justin Wilson said of the Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, recently converted from an office building: "We went out and bought a building; there's two floors of the building that we still have no idea how we're going to use. And we have municipal needs out there, too. So I don't want to point to that as a shining example of the process working. In fact, that's what I'm trying to not do next time. I want 'us' to go out and do this together, mindful of 'our' city-and-schools' needs."

The task force recommended "that leadership proactively challenge traditional practices and methods for capital project and service delivery ... This includes embracing opportunities such as public private partnerships, joint use, co-location, shared municipal services, adaptive reuse." Public private partnerships leverage public dollars with private sector or philanthropic dollars.

"This is what we need to do, particularly bringing other people's money to the table, instead of going immediately to our CIP [10-

year Capital Improvement Program] for 100 percent of all the dollars," said Jinks.

To help realize these recommendations, the city proposes to create a new "public-private partnership facilitator" position. This person would report directly to the city manager. He or she would need to be empowered with the city manager's delegated authority to shake things up cross-departmentally, said Wilson.

The city also plans to add two new positions to planning and zoning. They would help with overall "process improvement," and "also things like land use policy changes that might be needed to enable co-location, ... [or] to allow schools to be replaced before [the old ones are] torn down," said Karl Moritz, planning and zoning's director. The latter could avert the need for costly and logistically challenging school "swing space" — for example, by rezoning public open space adjacent to an existing school for a new school. This hasn't always been easy. At an October task force meeting, the schools' Erika Gulick said that it took years to rezone a piece of open space for a relocatable classroom at Douglas MacArthur

Elementary School.

The new hires would also help to redesign aspects of the development process for public facilities. Currently, it's "a very linear, sequential process," said Moritz. A revamped process would enable certain elements to go on concurrently. The new positions would also add staff capacity to deal with a large CIP.

Jeremy McPike, the city's general services director, spoke to the importance of considering how to deliver multiple capabilities through the same public facility. For instance, the city and schools' vehicle fleet maintenance facilities are next to each other. The city is studying the potential for combining these services. McPike expects to receive an initial assessment in April and to deliver recommendations to council in the fall.

The work session ended on a high note, with Kendel Taylor, the city's finance director, outlining the health of the city's pension and benefit plans.

"Long-term pension liability funding is

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 29

ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Spring Book Sale. Through March 25, at Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will kick off their Spring Book Sale with a Members' Preview on Tuesday, March 20, 4-8:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door). The sale continues Wednesday, March 21, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Thursday, March 22, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Friday, March 23, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Saturday, March 24, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; and Sunday, March 25, 1-4:30 p.m. \$3 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books and media items. All genres. \$1 Day on Sunday. Call 703-746-1702 or visit www.beatleyfriends.org.

Photo-documentary Study. Through March 25, various times at Theatre Two, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. Select photos from artist/photographer Nina Tisara's photo-documentary study of worship in Alexandria's predominantly African American churches for Avant Bard's production of the "Gospel at Colonus."

March 150. Through March 25, gallery hours at Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Target Gallery's popular annual exhibition and art sale, March 150, returns to the Torpedo Factory Art Center for the 8th year. This yearly all-media exhibition features nearly 200 works created by artists local to Alexandria and the greater D.C. region. The only requirement to be on view in the exhibition is that artists needed to use the gallery-supplied 10" x 10" panel. All work in the show is priced at \$150. visit torpedofactory.org/event/march150-8th-annual-special-exhibition-art-sale/.

Woodlawn Needlework Show and Sale. Through March 31, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (closed Tuesdays) at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway. The 55th annual Needlework show and sale at Woodlawn Estate, the historic home of Nelly Custis, America's foremost needleworker. Exhibits, vendors, workshops, house tours, and more for the whole family. Adults \$15, k-12 \$6, 5 and under free. Call 703-570-6903 or visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/annualneedleworkshow/.

"Finishing Flourishes." Through March 31, gallery hours at the Torpedo Factory Art Center's Scope Gallery, 105 North Union Street, ground floor Studio 19. Artists have a ball with "Finishing Flourishes," as they put forth their finest, and elevating detailing as the high-point in design. Perfect punctuation on a pot makes tops twerk or handles swirl with grace. Edges flute and ruffle and feature lacy, racy cut outs. Call Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.scopegallery.org.

"Drone Zone." Through March 31, gallery hours in the Art League Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union St., Studio 21. Drones appeared in Beverly Ryan's artwork in 2015, inspired by questions about their use in warfare. Ryan explores questions related to this topic in her multi-media exhibit, "Drone Zone." visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

"Outdoors In." Through April 1, various times at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. "Outdoors In" showcases the ways artists see nature and depict it in



The play reading for "It's My Party!" about the Women's Suffragists' fight, will be held on Monday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage in Alexandria.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Party Like it's 1919

"It's My Party!" about Women's Suffragists' fight, gets reading at MetroStage.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

Playwright Ann Timmons will be presenting the world premiere reading of her play, "It's My Party!" as part of Pipeline Playwrights' second-annual play reading series on Monday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage in Alexandria.

"It's My Party!" directed by Catherine Tripp, explores what happens when two different factions ignite political change using very different tactics. This play reveals competing strategies, daring stunts, and bitter rivalries that propelled the suffragists' fight for the 19th Amendment. Using modern vernacular for some characters, the language highlights the generational and philosophical split between and within the two major factions.

According to Timmons, "It's My Party!" is a play about the two primary groups of American women who crusaded for the passage of the suffrage amendment (19th Amendment) in the early 20th century. Their strategies are wildly divergent, based on different understandings of how to best accomplish this," she said.

"The National Woman's Party represents the 'radical' wing headed by Alice Paul, who adopted techniques of the militant suffragists in England led by Emmeline Pankhurst. The National American Women's Suffrage Association is the larger, more mainstream group led by Carrie Chapman Catt, and it prefers to work within the existing system," she said.

She continued: "The play presents the ways leaders of these groups help and hinder each other in pursuit of their shared goal. At a time when women are struggling to gain any political power in the U.S., it fascinates me that these women manage to keep their 'eyes on the prize' and not be distracted by forces (internal as well as exter-



Ann Timmons

nal) trying to pit them against each other and neutralize their argument." She said she loves writing historical plays and immersing herself in the research of a given period. "The past has so much to teach us. I felt this particular fight, with its tremendously partisan nature, resonated with today's political movements, where factions often splinter over specifics and litmus tests abound," she said.

"But the challenge is, of course, tearing myself away from the research and creating a framework for the story that modern audiences can relate to. How to put the specific situation of the Suffrage fight from 1913-1919 in context, while creating a world that is relevant and entertaining. As opposed to an illustrated history lesson," she said.

She continued: "I hope audiences will see the connections between what the suffragists did to win the vote and what women and minorities are doing today to win seats at the table. This story shows different tools these women used as they spoke truth to power and accomplished an important goal. I would love to see the stories of Alice, Lucy, Carrie and the other heroic women inspire new audiences to keep fighting the good fight."

Pipeline Playwrights is a group of women playwrights based in Northern Virginia, working together to support, present, and promote each other's work with the goal of moving their plays into the local and national theater pipeline. Each of the current Pipeline Playwrights — Jean Koppen, Ann Timmons, Nicole Burton, and Patricia Connelly — is presenting a reading of a new full-length play in the 2018 spring reading series at MetroStage.

Timmons will be presenting "It's My Party!" on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. at MetroStage. The venue is located at 1201 North Royal St. After the reading, enjoy refreshments and informal conversation with the playwright and actors.

paintings, sculptures, textiles, mixed media, and drawings. Before the camera, much of what we knew about nature came from artists and others who drew and painted what they saw and experienced. Artists include local students. visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

THURSDAY/MARCH 22

Local Author Thursday. 5-7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Book signing by John Adam Wasowicz, "Daingerfield Island." Light refreshments. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

World War I Lecture Series. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington St. Join The Lyceum for Women's History Month and three lectures about women's contributions to the World War I war effort. "Sowing the Seeds of Victory: The Women's Land Army of America in Virginia and Washington DC, 1917-1920," by Anna Kiefer. In 1917, the Women's Land Army of America began recruiting women who would work the land while America's farmers served in the Great War. \$10 per person. Reservations recommended. Tickets at shop.alexandria.gov.

Vegetable Gardening Part 3. 7-8:30 pm, Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Manage and Maintain Your Vegetable Garden. Discover simple, earth-friendly and smart gardening practices, like crop rotation and intercropping, to attract pollinators and other beneficial insects and to control common garden pests. Learn to identify diseases and how to manage them. Also pick up tips on space-saving techniques for small gardens. Free. Advance registration requested at mgv.org. Questions, telephone 703-228-6414 or emailmgarlalex@gmail.com.

Jazz 4 Justice Concert. 7:30 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. The Alexandria Bar Law Foundation and NOVA Nighthawks present John "The Smoker" Kocur, a saxophonist and composer who is a fixture in the D.C. Jazz Scene for 10 years. A Jam Session starts at 6 p.m. The T.C. Williams High School Jazz Band, directed by Doug Rogers, will also perform. Buy tickets through the website J4Alexandria.wordpress.com.

Lost Towns of Fairfax County - Mount Vernon Region. 7:30-9 p.m. at Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane. Mount Vernon Regional Historical Society presents Fairfax County historians Heather Bollinger and Jeff Clark speaking about some of Fairfax County's lost towns and communities — vibrant areas which featured schools, churches, shops, and civic centers. This talk will focus on communities in the Mount Vernon area, such as Colchester, Accotink, and both the white and African-American communities of Woodlawn. visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/circuit/lost-towns-fairfax-county-mount-vernon-region.

THURSDAYS-SATURDAY/MARCH 22-24

Used Book and Art Sale. Thursday, 1-5 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane. Used book and art sale fills two buildings at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church. Gently used art, children's books, rare/old books and individually priced books will be in the church building. Saturday is half price in the church and \$5 a bag in the mansion. visit mvuc.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

“Must Love Music” and “WXYZ.Ó

Thursday-Friday, 7:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday, 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Richard Kauffman Auditorium, The Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. Original musicals starring actors with Down syndrome and autism. In “Must Love Music” Love and music are the only way to escape the spirits on a mysterious island. Then, the big city newsroom at “WXYZ” may be too much for rookie reporter from the country. visit www.art-stream.org/see-a-show.



High-fire stoneware brush painted duck with maple butter dish with sculpted knob by Tracie Griffith Tso of Reston, Va., Raku vessel with pagoda finial by Klaudia Levin of Silver Spring, Md., Raku fired vessel with natural wood handle by Heidi Schramm of Arlington, Va., High-fire spiral-handled mugs by Mami Grignol of Alexandria, Va., Stoneware sapphire jar with embellished looped finial by Ana Cavalcanti of Bethesda, Md.

FRIDAY/MARCH 23

Garden Talk: Vegetable & Herb Gardens.

2-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. There is nothing more delectable than a homegrown tomato or fresh herbs and now is the best time. Master Gardeners demonstrate how to plan, plant and harvest a fabulous vegetable and herb garden. Adults. \$10/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 182 2701 or call 703-642-5173.

March 150 Art Party. 7-10 p.m. at at Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Target Gallery is partnering with the Factory Society, an independent young-patrons group that supports the Torpedo Factory, for the March 150 Art Party. Guests have an opportunity to mingle with other art enthusiasts and meet many of the artists who have artwork on view in the show. All art is priced at \$100 exclusively during the Party. Tickets are \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door. visit torpedofactory.org/event/march150-8th-annual-special-exhibition-art-sale/.

Musical Offering: Via Crucis (The

Finishing Flourishes

Artists have a ball with “Finishing Flourishes,” as they put forth their finest, and elevating detailing as the high-point in design. Perfect punctuation on a pot makes tops twerk or handles twirl with grace. Edges flute and ruffle and feature lacy, racy cut outs. Gallery hours through March 31 at the Torpedo Factory Art Center's Scope Gallery, 105 North Union Street, ground floor Studio 19. Call Scope Gallery at 703-548-6288 or visit www.scopegallery.org.

Way of the Cross. 7:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 W. Braddock Road. The 14 Stations of the Cross will be prayed in a musical setting for choir and organ by Franz Liszt. The Blessed Sacrament Adult Choir will sing with organist Quinn Moss. Email jmccrary@blessedsacramentcc.org or call 703-998-6100, ext. 103.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 23-31

“Cherry Blossom Week.” Daily, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursdays until 9 p.m. at The Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association (TFAA) is honoring the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival with their own Cherry Blossom Week. With a schedule of events that includes artist demonstrations, private tours, and in-studio specials, cherry blossom fun

blooms at the Torpedo Factory Art Center. More than 50 of the 82 working artist studios at the Torpedo Factory Art Center will have cherry blossom-inspired art on display or for sale, and interactive events will occur all week. Complete details of the TFAA's Cherry Blossom Week, including studio maps, can be found at torpedofactoryartists.com/cherry.

SATURDAY/MARCH 24

World Day of Puppetry. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. The National Capital Puppetry Guild and the Office of the Arts will present the 2nd Annual “Celebrate the World Day of Puppetry” with family-oriented puppet performances, hands-on workshops, exhibits and sales tables. Nine puppetry performances will feature Bob Brown Puppets,

Dinorock, Silly Goose and Val, Goodlife Theater, and more. \$5. visit bit.ly/2FKcqqh.

Japanese Garden Design. 9:30-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Japanese garden design is an art form thousands of years in the making. Stone, gravel, water, bridges, paths and plants all hold significance. Horticulturalist Bevan Shimizu will teach you the essentials in creating a Japanese style garden. Adults. \$22/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 285 7201 or call 703-642-5173.

“Beyond the Battlefield.” 10 a.m. outside the Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St. The Lee-Fendall House will offer “Beyond the Battlefield,” a guided walking tour of Civil War sites in Historic Old Town. The tour will last approximately two hours and cover a route of 1.75 miles.

Participants re encouraged to wear comfortable shoes. Advance tickets are \$15 through the museum's website, or \$20 the day. Space is limited. visit www.leefendallhouse.org, or call 703-548-1789.

What's In Your Closet – Thrift Shop or Treasure? 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Bring that textile piece you want to know more about to be appraised by expert Newbie Richardson of Costume and Textile Specialists. Call 703-570-6903 or visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/annualneedleworkshow/.

Atlantic Crossings in Wake of Frederick Douglass. 11 a.m. at Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St., Alexandria. The SEE CALENDAR. PAGE 25

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ENTERTAINMENT



Choose a cozy seat by the fire to enjoy your meal.

La Trattoria's bar area has seen some renovations that have given the room a more airy look.

Old Trattoria Is New Again

BY HOPE NELSON

Details

La Trattoria, 305 S. Washington St.

Hours: 4:30-11 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 4:30-midnight Friday, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

Homemade: "We make all the pasta now, all the bread. Quality is very important to me. It's less about profit to me than it is about pride," says owner Michael Strutton.

Sometimes, all it takes to infuse an Alexandria institution with new energy is just a little TLC.

At least, that was the case for La Trattoria, the new butterfly emerging from the cocoon of the venerable Trattoria da Franco, one of Old Town's

APPETITE most historic and beloved Italian eateries. Blending modernization with the Trattoria's existing old-world charm, owner Michael Strutton aims to preserve the historic while propelling into the future of Alexandria dining.

But then, Strutton was a loyal patron of Franco Abbruzetti's creation in the first place. And he thought he knew how to resurrect an establishment that might have seen better days.

"I've been coming here for years as a customer; pretty much every Saturday night I came here for probably five years. I'm extremely involved in my Italian culture, so this was to me in Old Town as close as I could get to that as far as food, and just a vintage experience which I appreciate more than trendy or 'fad' type dining," he said. "I knew that Franco had ideas of retiring or selling, and I knew that this place was underperforming and really needed an injection of energy and vision ... and so it was just always on my mind."

When Abbruzetti did list the restaurant with a broker, Strutton made his intentions known. And after months of negotiation and legalities, La Trattoria emerged in its new form.

The first thing you'll notice about the restaurant nowadays is its curb appeal. Strutton and his team renovated the patio right away, hoping to take advantage of the waning warm days when summer turned to fall and then to colder climes still. Then they turned their attention to the dining room and bar — where there were some decisions to be made.

"Our initial vision was to make (the dining room) more of a pizzeria and (the bar) to be a more formal dining room," he said. But impending popularity soon nixed those plans.

"We were just so full, we were overflowing into the other room, and even more than that, long waits and turning people away," he said. "And we just sat down and decided that the pizzeria had to go. We just had too much demand for finer dining."

Take a lap through the bar area and it's easy to see the facelifts that have gone into brightening the room. The shelving unit behind the bar is gone, revealing exposed brick, and the wine storage to one side of

the area was removed to display a window that many patrons never knew existed. The now-formal dining room has received a fresh look, as well, maintaining its elegance with a fresh coat of paint.

But what diners are really there for is the food, and Strutton beams when discussing it. Rather than focusing on European Italian cuisine, Strutton aimed for the restaurant to pivot more towards an Italian-American cultural focus.

"I think most of the restaurants in this town are European-style Italian, and they're a different culture. I don't speak Italian, I've never been to Italy — but I have been to Brooklyn," he laughed. "I'm from New Jersey, my family's from New York, so this is an entirely different culture. Even the language is different."

Along with upping the ante in the ambiance department, La Trattoria's menu has also been brought up to modern dining standards.

"We elevated the ingredients for every single dish," Strutton said. When it comes to Parmesan, "we buy a wheel of grana padano and we shred it. ... The average customer probably doesn't even recognize it difference, but to me it's an important part."

So, too, has the sauce seen a bit of a change.

"This is my family recipe sauce. ... To me it's a process of building something; using really good tomatoes are essential. Cost is really high for those things but it's so worth it," Strutton said.

La Trattoria's rebirth has brought with it a great many changes, of course, but Strutton aims to keep diners coming back with hints of the old blended with new ideas. While that can be a difficult balance with longtime regulars, Strutton says he wants to make it work.

"We still have a lot of regulars and it's a tricky thing, easing them into the new brand and concept without them feeling like they've been left behind. It's not the same place. You walk in, it's totally different," he said. "But it is the same in that ... I'm here every night, the same people make the food, the concept, the charm is still here."

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

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 22

museum will host a special program on the connections established by Frederick Douglass on his trip to Ireland and Britain in 1845. Free. Call 703-746-4356.

Arlandria Eggstravaganza. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Four Mile Conservatory Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave. This annual family-friendly event is one of the most EGGciting spring events in the Alexandria/Arlington area. This year's event features entertainment by the Rainbow Rock Band, Groovy Nate, and Uncle Devin. The day also features plenty of food, activities, and games for the whole family. Multiple egg hunts for children under 11 with a special area for those 3 and under. Free. visit www.arlandriaeggstravaganza.com.

Women's Civil War Day. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. Civil War reenactors will interpret the dress, skills and contributions of women during the Civil War period with on-going displays and activities. The program features a quilting demonstration, interpreters portraying the role of women in camp, on the battlefield and engaged in soldier relief efforts, and displays of period clothing and accessories. Free. Call 703-746-4848 or visit alexandriava.gov.

Powhatan Way of Life. noon-2 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Huntley Meadows will show you how the Powhatans used the plants and animals we see every day for medicine, food, clothing and fun. Learn about a way of life from 400 years ago by grinding corn, making a clay pot and mastering corn darts. Go on a guided tour to see the park from the perspective of a Virginia Indian. For ages 4-adult. \$10 per person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Painting with Wool - Needle Felting Workshop with Dani Ives. 3-6 p.m. at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. An introduction to the ever-popular style of needle felting, to "paint" a design from wool. Call 703-570-6903 or visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/annualneedleworkshow/.

SATURDAY/SATURDAY/MARCH 24-31

Fairfax County Parks. Egg-citing activities are breaking out at parks throughout Fairfax County in March. visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2018/psa055.

On Sunday, March 25 — Stop by the Easter Egg Hunt at **Sully Historic Site**. The historic site is offering an egg hunt, egg-related games and an Easter craft for children age 1-8. \$8 per child. Wagon rides cost another \$2 per person. **Lake Fairfax Park** will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt for children age 1-6. \$8 per child.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center is running a Dinosaur Egg Hunt on March 25, 29, 30, 31 and April 1. Enjoy a dinosaur-themed program and outdoor egg hunt while visiting Dinoland in Nature Playce. The program is for children age 2-8. \$8 per child.

On Saturday, March 31, **Burke Lake Park** is hosting a day of fun called Baskets and Bunnies. There will be egg hunts, carousel and train rides, crafts and games. \$12 per person in advance; \$16 the day of the event. **Clemyjontri Park** is offering an Easter Egg Hunt, crafts and photo ops with the Easter Bunny for children age one to nine. \$7 per child. Add a carousel ride for \$2.

SUNDAY/MARCH 25

Marine Band Living History: For

"The President's Own." 2 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, 4915 E. Campus Drive, Alexandria. Concerts are free, no tickets required. Visit www.marines.mil/.

Women's History Month at Ivy Hill Cemetery. 3 p.m. at Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King St. Authors H.L. Brooks, and Dea Schofield conduct readings and a book signing. They will read from their new books, amid a haunting atmosphere in the vault. This reading event is not recommended for children under 15. Space is limited, R.S.V.P. at 301-395-9541 or 703-549-7413 ext.1112 or email info@ihchps.org.

Live Music: Magpie. 7 p.m. at the George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Since 1973, Terry Leonino and Greg Artzner have brought their unique sound and remarkable versatility to audiences everywhere, featuring traditional and vintage Americana to contemporary and stirring original compositions. Tickets are \$18 in advance at www.focusmusic.org/buy-tickets and for members, \$20 at the door.

MONDAY/MARCH 26

Children's Needlework Workshop. 3-5 p.m. at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway. Spread the joy of needlework to the young people in your lives with Nelly's Needlers. For children ages 9-15. Call 703-570-6903 or visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/annualneedleworkshow/.

Common Sailors and the Braddock Expedition. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, 121 N. Fairfax St. In this lecture, Kyle Dalton will explore the lives and experiences of common sailors in the eighteenth century through the lens of the Braddock Expedition. A little known detachment of 33 Royal Navy sailors trudged through the wilderness and fought at the disastrous battle on the Monogahela. Admission is free, donations are welcome. visit www.novaparks.com or call 703-549-2997.

MONDAY-FRIDAY/MARCH 26-31

Spring Break Camps at Huntley Meadows Park. Elementary school age children can discover what life was like for the first people to use what is now Huntley Meadows Park. Program attendees will need to bring a snack, lunch and drink.

❖ **The Pioneer Survival Camp** is for 6-12-year-olds. Camp hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. \$295 per child for county residents and \$310 for out-of-county campers. Register online at go.usa.gov/xneTd.

❖ **Animal Babies in Spring** is for 4-6-year-olds. Camp hours are 9 a.m.-noon. \$195 per child for county residents and \$210 for out-of-county campers. Registration is at go.usa.gov/xneTw.

Huntley Meadows Park is located at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Call the park at 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 28

All That Glitters is Goldwork. 4-6 p.m. at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway. Join Royal School of Needlework graduate, goldwork expert and Nelly's Needler Deborah Merrick-Wilson for this introductory workshop. Materials include a complete, ready-to-go kit, and a comprehensive Directory of Metal Threads. Call 703-570-6903 or visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/annualneedleworkshow/.

William Ramsay and Business in 18-Century Alexandria. 7:30 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. The Alexandria Historical Society and the Office of Historic Alexandria present Dr. Nancy Davis, curator emerita at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, discussing Alexandria merchant William Ramsay and his 1753-1756 ledger books. \$5 for non-members, and free to members of the Alexandria Historical Society. Memberships can be purchased at the door (open at 7 p.m.). visit www.alexandriahistorical.org/.

THURSDAY/MARCH 29

Easter Egg Hunt. At Cameron Run Park, Alexandria. Children, 2-11 years old, are invited to celebrate spring with coloring, games and photo opportunities with the Easter Bunny. Bring an Easter basket to collect eggs, a raincoat if it's sprinkling, and a camera to take photos with the Easter Bunny. Each hunt is \$10 per child, plus a \$3 online service fee. visit apm.activecommunities.com/novaparks for details and to register.

FRIDAY/MARCH 30-SUNDAY/APRIL 1

Easter Egg Hunt. Friday, 3 p.m.; Saturday, 10:30 a.m., 12:30 and 2:30 p.m.; Sunday, 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum, 614 Oronoco St. Activities include games, crafts, refreshments, and photos with the Easter Bunny. Every participating child will receive an Easter egg. \$12 children, \$5 adults. Call 703-548-1789 or visit leefendallhouse.org.

SATURDAY/MARCH 31

Hike Thru Wildflowers. 10 a.m.-noon at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Huntley Meadows naturalist and artist Margaret Wohler leads a spring hike focusing on spring wildflowers. Learn techniques to sketch these flowers and how to enhance your observation skills. Cost is \$9/person. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

Locals' Alley Saturdays. 12:30-2:30 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Meet the makers of local goods, featuring Dimitri Olive Oil & Vinegar tastings. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

A Treasury of Tea. 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Discover myths and facts behind the history of tea and the many tea types. Hear about social impacts of tea, changing fashions of the tea table, and teatime traditions and etiquette, and learn how to brew teas to perfection. Adults. Reservations required: \$32/person (program + tea), \$12 (program only). Call (703) 941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988.

Live Music: Cleve Francis. 7:30-10 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave. An evening of eclectic music with Cleve Francis and his large band performing their own brand of country, folk, blues, light rock and jazz. \$35 plus fees. Email muzicdoc@gmail.com or visit www.clevefrancis.com.

THURSDAY/APRIL 5

Local Author Thursday. 5-7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Book signing by Craig Roach, "Simply Electrifying: The Technology that Transformed the World, from Benjamin Franklin to Elon Musk." Light refreshments. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.



Come and Join us for Holy Week

All are welcome to worship with us!

March 25 Palm Sunday

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with the Reading of the Passion, **Zabriskie Chapel, 3606 Seminary Rd.**

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with the Reading of the Passion, **Immanuel Chapel, 3737 Seminary Rd.**

March 29 Maundy Thursday

Immanuel Chapel, 3737 Seminary Rd.
7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Liturgy with Foot Washing

March 30 Good Friday

Immanuel Chapel, 3737 Seminary Rd.
12:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross
6:00 p.m. Children's Service
7:30 p.m. The Solemn Liturgy for Good Friday

March 31 Holy Saturday

Immanuel Chapel, 3737 Seminary Rd.
7:30 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter

April 1 Easter Sunday

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Zabriskie Chapel
3606 Seminary Rd.

9:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist,
Immanuel Chapel, 3737 Seminary Rd.

An Easter Egg Hunt will be held between the 9:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. services, 3737 Seminary Rd.

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On the Menu

News bites from local restaurant scene.

BY HOPE NELSON

Closings, permits for new eateries, fresh takes on existing spots — it's been a busy few weeks for Alexandria's restaurant scene. Up first: The closure of a decades-old institution.

GERANIO CLOSED

Longtime diners were surprised to find a note from Geranio in their inboxes and on the restaurant's Facebook page explaining that the four-decade-old restaurant had shut its doors for good.

"It is with a heavy heart, but a lightness of being, I announce the closure of a 42-year-old institution in Old Town Alexandria," wrote Chef Troy Clayton. "... My heartfelt thanks to all of our loyal guests in what was a second home to us all. It was a great run, and in so far as all good things eventually come to their natural end, we all did it well from the first day to the last."

A week later, Clayton announced plans for a new restaurant in Occoquan, Va., this spring, taking the place of the closed Blu 1681.

URBANO 116 PROCEEDS WITH RESTAURANT PLAN

After receiving unanimous approval for its special use permit by City Council in February, Urbano 116, to be located at 116 King St., is moving forward on its development.

Brought about by the creators of Parker-Gray's Mason Social, the restaurant is slated to be a 163-seat Mexican restaurant to add some spice to lower King Street. No opening date has been named as of yet.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

MARCH/APRIL

Academy Programs. The City of Alexandria invites the community to learn more about City government through the upcoming Alexandria City Academy, Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Community Academy, Alexandria Community Fire Academy, Alexandria Community Police Academy, and Alexandria Senior Academy. These programs are designed to inform, educate and engage the community on how local government works. Class sizes are limited. Visit alexandriava.gov/Academies.

HANK'S PASTA BAR OFFERS LUNCH

Hank's Pasta Bar has opened its dining room for midday service, with an aim to balance both quick-bite business needs with a longer-stay sit-down affair. With lower-priced "Express" offerings, such as salad-and-sandwich or salad-and-pasta combinations ranging from \$11 to \$13, patrons on the go can eat well and still make it back to the office in time for the afternoon onslaught.

Got a little more time? Order up a selection of small plates, including seafood specialties and house-made ricotta, and pop open a bottle of wine to share among friends.

Lunch hours begin at 11:30 a.m.; Hank's is located at 600 Montgomery Street.

CELEBRATE THE SWEET 16 AT UNION STREET PUBLIC HOUSE

Union Street Public House is getting into the March Madness spirit with its own version of the Sweet 16, featuring four divisions of kegs facing off to battle for No. 1. From Thursday through Sunday, four beers each from DC, Virginia, Maryland and the nation at large will vie for a spot on the beer tap line for six months.

Notable entries include Brew Republic's Patriot 212, Midnight Brewing's Rockville Red, Stone Brewing's Buzzer Beater and Dogfish Head's SeaQuench Ale. Union Street Public House is located at 121 S. Union St.

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

WINTER SHELTER OPEN

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



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Multicultural Fair

The Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center hosted its first Multicultural Fair on March 1 and celebrated not only Black History but the center's diversity as well. The event highlighted the diverse group of youths in the Youth Achieving Greatness and TR Achieving Greatness programs — providing a taste of everyone's culture and traditions and fostering a sense of community, friendship and family. Cultures from Bulgaria, Philippines, India, Italy, Africa and Australia, to name a few, were represented. For more information about the Youth Achieving Greatness and TR Achieving Greatness programs, contact Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center at 703-746-5535. Summer Camp registration is also available now; stop by the office at 1108 Jefferson St.



Katie Attiken with daughter Gia in the window modeling at The Gap with a view of the St. Patrick's Parade.



PHOTOS BY CERI BALDWIN

At St. Patrick's Day Parade

At Sunday's St. Patrick's Day Parade, from left, Det. Ryan Clinch; Sgt. Dave Cutting; Will Oakley, Alexandria Committee of Police Local 5 president; with Officer Constance Kniesler, all want fair pay for police officers and firefighters in upcoming city budget.

Commission for Women Honors Former Mayor

FROM PAGE 1

later served as a state senator, played a role in shaping what Alexandria is today.

Ticer died on Aug. 7, and at the March 19 ceremony in the George Washington Masonic Memorial, friends and family of Ticer gathered to celebrate the former mayor. In a video aired at the memorial, citizens across Alexandria narrated Ticer's life. The three mayors that followed Ticer all expressed their admiration for Ticer both personally and professionally. Among those who spoke about Ticer were other women in local politics, who said she'd been a compatriot and a role model.

"The difficulty of women in leadership cannot be understated," said Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey. "Women who are strong and forceful are seen as [expletive]. If you talk anywhere near as much, you're seen as talking too much. It's hard for women now, and it was really hard when Patsy got started."

Garvey said Ticer was dismayed by and often struggled against the "good old boys" that run the Virginia legislature. Garvey said Ticer would often say it was depressing working against the male-run machine.

"It takes tenacity and stick-to-it-ness," said Garvey. "She lived through sheer tenacity with integrity, as an elegant lady who stayed above it all and stayed true to herself."

Garvey once recalled Ticer saying that her mind was different from that of a many of her male counterparts because she often wouldn't make up her mind on an issue until after the discussion.

"I think she would be proud of the modern women's movement," said Garvey. "I think things are really starting to change,



The Ticer family accepts the Women's Hall of Fame award.

fundamentally. She let us all, women and men, strive to stay above it and make this a world we all want to be in."

Ticer's granddaughter, Patricia Janowsky, shared memories of Ticer as a grandmother and as a state senator from a time when Janowsky was her page.

"She taught me from a young age how to wave and be a lady," said Patricia Janowsky. "She always carved out time for [me], and she was the only person to approve of my

driving because we got where we were going as fast as possible."

Patricia Janowsky said that, as a state senator, her grandmother taught her that the most powerful person in the room isn't the loudest, but the one people listen to.

Ticer's daughter, Margaret Ticer Janowsky, said her mother was driven by a lifelong drive to service and drawing fulfillment from bettering the world around her. Janowsky brought a plaque that had



Margaret Ticer Janowsky.



Patricia Janowsky.

hung in her mother's bathroom that said "What you are is God's gift to you, what you become is your gift to God."

Janowsky said it was telling of how her mother lived and engaged with those around her.

At the end of the ceremony, the Alexandria Commission for Women announced that it would be launching a Women's Hall of Fame with Ticer as the award's first recipient.

Council Receives Update on 2018 Legislative Session

FROM PAGE 9

"We were very successful on a lot of things, but on gun violence there is a very clear partisan divide," said Levine.

Of local interest, Levine noted that a bill authorizing the relocation of the Appomattox statue on Prince Street failed, as it has for years.

Ebbin noted that there was a budget pro-

posal to give funding to Alexandria for its multi-year, state-mandated overhaul of its stormwater sewer system. Richmond and Lynchburg has received state funding for similar projects, but the legislature rejected the proposal for Alexandria, though the prospect remains open in years to come to fund it.

"Regardless of that, we have to get this

done and we are committed to doing it," said Mayor Allison Silberberg. "Other cities had help.

It will be \$380 million for all four outfalls. It's a huge lift for us."

"I heard 'sometime we might get it', but when is that?" asked Councilwoman Redella "Del" Pepper.

"Is that the last year? Is that in the next

year or two? This is a big lift."

U.S. Rep. Don Beyer also spoke about progress in Congress, noting that an omnibus spending bill is due later this week, but that Democrat leadership had pulled back from demanding provisions for the protection of Dreamers, hundreds of thousands of young immigrants who came to the country illegally as children.

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Local Religious Charities Strain To Help Thousands

FROM PAGE 1

Army; and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington.

"I think we make assumptions that these people just come to us repeatedly [and] get used to us being a source of their income. And that's just not true," said Gray. In making the providers' data public, she hopes people will "change their views of the poor and people in need, and become part of this. Most people do not want to be in this situation. All the myths, I get dispelled every week. The human being in this can get lost."

She says people come to fill a gap: a "medical emergency, car issue, a death, hours cut back. ... Usually we're dealing with emergencies. ... If you're an Uber driver and your car breaks down, your whole world has just ended."

Diane Charles, director of ALIVE, said in an email that she hopes the public will "be aware that the city is not able to help everyone who needs assistance." She also hopes "to build a picture that Alexandria should be focusing on how to increase the amount of affordable housing so that people don't have to seek assistance in order to live here."

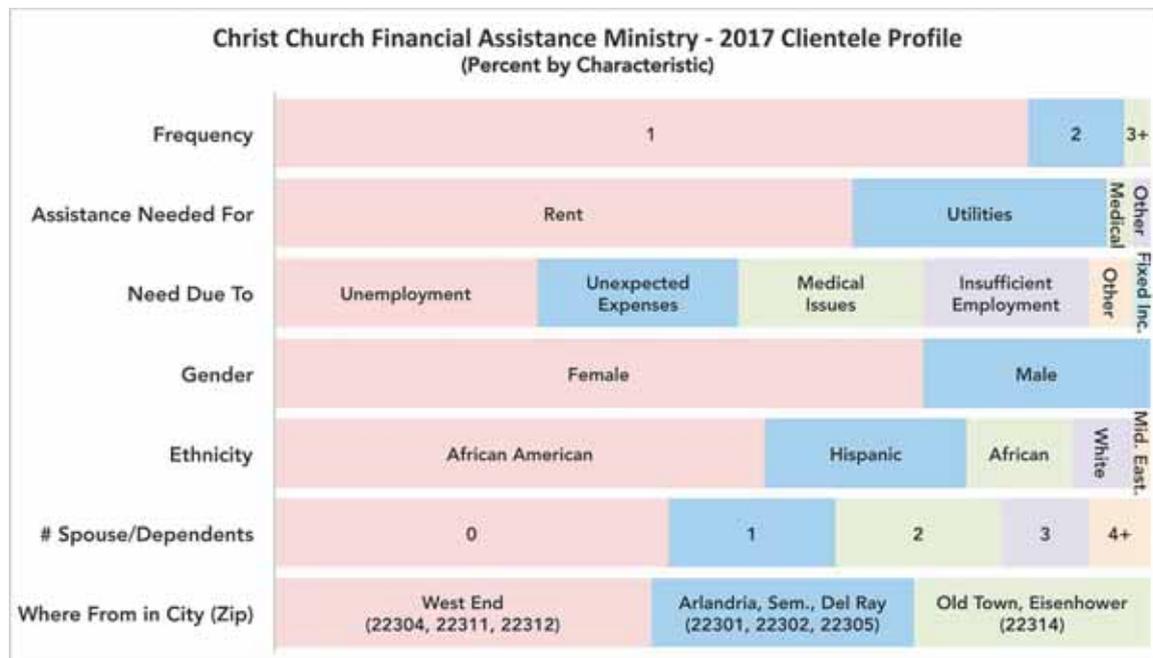
"We all have to turn away people," said Gray. Each week, Christ Church can provide counselors and assistance to about 15 people, but has to turn away about 9-12 people.

Likewise, ALIVE receives "more requests for financial assistance than we can fulfill," said Charles.

The providers cross-talk and pool resources, and also maintain working relationships with utilities and public agencies. They help negotiate bills, debts, repayment plans to prevent evictions. Through a separate ministry, contributors have provided \$100,000 over 2 years to assist 22 refugee families in Alexandria that previously came through Lazarus ministry. And in 2017 Christ Church's food pantry served over 2,000 guests with a total of nearly 5,700 people in their families — an additional \$10,000 in assistance.

The providers have seen an uptick in tenants needing help with late fees, especially from the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA), an independent agency that administers public housing locally.

"Early last summer, all of the providers started seeing this trend in [ARHA tenants] coming to us with late fees dating back to 2014," said Gray. "These late fees were not only super confusing to the residents, but also greatly in question ... We couldn't get a pa-



Christ Church is the hub of financial assistance ministry network that includes 12 local religious congregations and nonprofits. Of its partners, Christ Church keeps some of the most granular data, providing a snapshot of households struggling to make it in Alexandria.

per trail from them to show what had happened. ... [ARHA's] front-line staff, we really enjoy working with and we collaborate with quite well. It's just when there are questions of accounting, that's where our problems have been."

Moreover, Gray says ARHA is inconsistent. Sometimes its late fee is 10 percent of the tenant's portion of the rent (which she says ARHA doesn't always update punctually). Other times its late fee is 10 percent of the whole rent, including the portion covered by federal subsidy.

Dipti Pidikiti-Smith of Legal Services of Northern Virginia, a non-profit law firm, to whom Gray sometimes refers clients, put the issue to ARHA's board of commissioners in November. To illustrate, Pidikiti-Smith addressed the case of Lolita Crowder, a public housing tenant evicted in October. The rent on Crowder's unit was \$1,141, of which she was responsible for a fraction that varied with her income. For missed payments, ARHA regularly charged a late fee of \$114 — 10 percent of the total — according to an ARHA tenant account history generated in September. In several instances, this amounted to nearly double the missed payment — for Crowder, one month's rent turned into three.

By ARHA's reckoning, Crowder owed about \$8,200; by Pidikiti-Smith's reckoning, about \$4,900, including late fees calculated at the lower rate.

The U.S. Code requires that public housing leases "do not contain unreasonable terms and conditions." Pidikiti-Smith thinks calcu-

lating late fees based on total rent is unreasonable. She cited a HUD regulation stating that a Section 8 voucher holder "is not responsible for paying the portion of rent to [a private landlord] covered by the [housing authority] ...". She also furnished the commissioners with several records indicating that ARHA had determined other tenants' late fees using the lesser calculation.

ARHA CEO Keith Pettigrew said in December: "There's nothing in the regs that say that [ARHA's practice is] illegal or that that's wrong; it doesn't say that at all.

... For them to say that it's unreasonable, I don't understand that at all, because if you pay your rent you wouldn't have to worry about it."

Crowder missed a July court date; the court issued a default judgment in ARHA's favor. On Sept. 28, the court ratified a repayment agreement between Crowder and ARHA: nearly \$5,200 no later than Oct. 16, and then \$3,000 in late fees by a plan subsequently to be worked out. Crowder says a family member loaned her the money for the first installment. But she missed the

deadline by a few days, said Pidikiti-Smith. ARHA didn't take the money; Crowder was evicted. She bounced around staying with family, as far away as Woodbridge, though her children went to school in Alexandria. Her belongings went into storage (for \$190 per month, if they remained there past December).

Though she admitted to owing back rent, Crowder maintained in December that ARHA had wrongly calculated her late fees. She also said that ARHA staff were generally uncommunicative leading up to her eviction, in some cases not responding, or taking weeks to respond, to calls and emails.

Pidikiti-Smith thinks ARHA should have a standard operating procedure that "triggers a step of assistance" to resolve tenant debts earlier. In Crowder's case, "they just sort of sat on it and let it balloon."

"Contrary to what has been portrayed, this case is not merely about the amount of late fees charged by ARHA but more importantly, the arrearage," ARHA's administration told Pidikiti-Smith in an email.

Gray says she's seen changes in the private rental market, too: "Landlords are less forgiving, as bigger companies buy these properties, that we used to be able to negotiate with, we can't anymore. ... So therefore we're looking at more late fees than we've ever seen. And much swifter moves to [initiate] eviction [proceedings]."

City Tax Rates

City Council voted unanimously on Wednesday, March 14, not to raise certain principal tax rates in FY18 over FY17 rates. When council adopts the budget in May, they could decide on lower, but not higher, rates than the advertised

— DAN BRENDL

figures. The vote was preceded by a long discussion — but no specific proposals — about raising public safety salaries through shifting line items or raising other revenue.

Addams

FROM PAGE 17

accent, with aplomb. Dagny Scannell wowed the audience with her beautiful soprano, tackling difficult songs such as “Pulled” with apparent ease. Her song “Crazier Than You,” performed with Andrew Holland as Lucas, showed off the chemistry between the two. The relationship between Wednesday and Gomez, too, was very well-acted and heartwarming, as their father-daughter relationship developed throughout the show.

Libby York as Pugsley Addams put on a spectacular performance both vocally and in terms of acting, especially during the song “What If.” Nick Ward as Uncle Fester had the audience screaming — with laughter, of course!

Technically, the show was also highly impressive. The incredible, two-story set was well-detailed, perfectly capturing the macabre nature of the Addams family. The revolving platforms and working chandelier stood out in particular. The brilliant costumes team created wonderful costume pieces for each character, with painstaking attention to detail, which reflected their unique personalities. Morticia’s long dress was a nostalgic recreation of the memorable character’s look, while its transformation into a dress more suited for a tango during “Tango de Amor,” allowed the students to add their own personal flair to the show.

With a scarily talented collection of actors and crew members, Bishop Ireton’s production of “The Addams Family” had audience members rising from their graves!

Budget

FROM PAGE 20

critical” for the city’s bond rating, she said. “How you fund your pension liability is a very strong criterion” that rating agencies consider.

The optimal funding ratio for a pension fund is 80 percent, she said. The fire and police pension and the city employees’ supplemental pension both hover within a few points of that target.

The city’s Other Post-Employment Benefits (healthcare, etc.) plan is about 40 percent funded, climbing steadily over the past 3 years. The national average for OPEB funding is 7 percent.

“This is kind of a report card for you guys [council], that you have funded your pensions responsibly,” said Taylor.

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Almost Exactly Four Days ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... was the length of time during which we were powerless a few weeks back when the wind nearly brought down the house; yet it was no laughing matter. I might have written this column sooner but until Tuesday, March 6 – when the power finally came back on, we were semi-frozen to the bone. The old-fashioned thermostat in our living room indicated 42 degrees at its most frigid.

Aside from the obvious physical discomfort – made a bit more bearable while wearing hats, gloves, coats and scarfs – inside, the toll the cold took on my mental acuity was much less manageable. My brain still worked, but not overtime. It was, to invoke a “Star Trek” reference: “On impulse power,” somewhere between barely functioning and imminent danger.

This power outage was the most significant we had experienced at “Belly Acres” in the 26 years since we took ownership in late May 1992. And though this four-day non-sojourn was difficult, it was for us not a return down power-outage lane. We have been lucky in our time here; very little has upset the apple cart. Considering the hundreds of trees that surround our house, and the many thuds they all made as they fell and hit the ground that extremely late Friday night/early Saturday morning, the miracle is that not one of them hit the house, or either of our two cars parked in the driveway.

I wouldn't say I woke up in the morning to find our house relatively unscathed because as of 3:30 a.m. when I felt the house shudder for the first time, I never was able to fall back asleep as I kept bracing myself for incoming trees and limbs. Given the potential damage and hassle a direct hit likely would have caused, a power outage seemed a minor inconvenience, all things considered.

As it happened, when the power came back on, I was not at home. I was en route to the Glenmont Metro station in Wheaton to pick up Dina. When I came to a stop at “Kiss and Ride,” I looked at my cell phone and noticed a “missed call” from one of my neighbors. I immediately called back and soon heard my neighbor, Helene, singing “We're in heaven, ...” with the explanation – not in verse – that power had returned to New Birmingham Manor (the official name of our 10-home dead-end street). BG&E, our utility company, had finally come by to cut/trim the tree that had been uprooted in the storm and fallen across the power line which electrifies our neighborhood.

As difficult as it had been for some of us, it had not been nearly as difficult for the four neighbors who had generators and thus were prepared and able to keep the lights on and the heat circulating. One of whom was kind enough to call around the neighborhood and offer hot showers as well as refrigerator and freezer storage to anyone interested. Given that the previous week was a post-chemotherapy week for me when I'm not eating much and shopping at supermarkets even less, we had minimal food in the freezer - all of which ended up being a loss, and a bit less than usual in the refrigerator which, after putting the contents into two coolers filled with ice, ended up being a gain.

Oddly enough, I haven't re-inventoried the refrigerator/freezer as yet. I don't know if I'm being paranoid or just plain lazy, but I haven't felt inclined to stop and shop, not even at the Giant. I imagine the feeling will pass because after eating out every night; some fast, some slow, over the last week or so, I'm probably way over our imaginary budget and way under prepared for the next go around. But as is often heard on basketball courts on playgrounds all over America: “No harm. No foul.”

The four days without power weren't particularly pleasant but we survived the ordeal nonetheless and may have even learned something in the process: our long underwear still fits.

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

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PEOPLE

A Conversation

FROM PAGE 6

anybody else.

Silver: Oh, absolutely. [Our] school pens say, “Know Jewish, Do Jewish.” Knowing it is great. Doing it, that's different.

As a Catholic, I feel a major tension between the two big partisan platforms [especially regarding the spectrum of “pro-life” issues: e.g., abortion, poverty, the environment]. Does your community feel any similar tension?

Rein: Some 70 percent [of American Jews] are registered Democrats. [Yet] I think people feel frustrated that there's no political camp that really speaks to their values. “Of all these things I care a lot about, which one am I going to now choose to vote on?” ... [For example, because Jewish school is expensive,] discussions about [the trade-offs of providing public monies for] private school education.

Silver: The most important thing for [some American Jews] is the importance and safety of the state of Israel. For others, they're saying, “Yes, I think that's a core value for who I am as Jewish, but I can no longer let that be [the top priority].” It's difficult for every person I know, especially in a country now that's so split, black-and-white, right-and-left, because none of these issues are so black-and-white. All of those things will have to have the ability to find ways of working together and compromise — even compromises that hurt our very souls. I think [that's] where the value of working locally in some ways has maybe a bigger value than a national election. How can I even worry about whether I have a president who's pro-life or a president who's pro-choice when I live in this wealthy area and we have mothers giving birth and dying [at a rate higher than the national average]? Sometimes the answer is the less wrong one. Teaching how to do that ... is a big part of what we do.

Rein: It's not enough to say, “Well, I tried, so I'm done now.” ... Each and every day we have to wake up and say to ourselves, “What am I going to do today to help move those scales or that needle a little bit more towards the balance?”

Taco Bell

FROM PAGE 3

cilman John Chapman. “There's no food to get. You can get beer, but people can't get anything to eat. This will probably be one of the only food opportunities for people here late at night.”

Chapman said that people getting off shifts at other late night restaurants will be able to come to the Taco Bell to get food. Chapman also noted that the late night dining would also net Alexandria greater opportunity for tax revenue.

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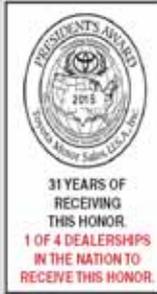
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