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Alexandria Gazette Packet

WELLBEING

PAGE, 18

25 CENTS

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MAY 3, 2018

Healing Through Reflection

Trees planted in Memorial Garden to honor victims of 2007 Virginia Tech shooting.

BY JAMES CULLUM
GAZETTE PACKET

The lives of Joe and Mona Samaha were disrupted 11 years ago. Flanked by his wife and local politicians at Chinguapin Park on Sunday, Samaha reflected on the life and untimely death of his daughter, Reema, who was killed by a lone gunman at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007. He dedicated a memorial garden to her and the other victims.

"For what we will have learned on our journey and revealed to all victims everywhere is that we can believe in God again, we can live again, we can laugh again, we can breathe again and we can trust again," said Samaha, who is the president



Joe and Mona Samaha lost their daughter, Reema, in the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting. Here are the couple at the dedication of a memorial garden in memory of those injured and killed at Chinguapin Park on April 16.

of the Virginia Tech Victims Foundation, which sponsored the building of the memorial. "And the greatest gift is that we are able to find forgive

SEE HEALING, PAGE 26

Splitting the Bill

Meals tax debate divides council.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Every year, there's 30 million meals sold in Alexandria. Across every restaurant and diner, there's a four percent meals tax at the end of every receipt in addition to the six percent sales tax. But as the city budget nears its approval on May 3, the consensus on the City Council seems to be set in favor of increasing that meals tax by one percent, adding 16 cents to a \$16 meal, to put into dedicated funding for affordable housing. But at the council's final add/delete session on April 30, questions about the financial sustainability of the plan resurfaced and Mayor Allison Silberberg put forward an alternative plan.

In previous add/delete sessions, the plan put forward by Councilman Willie Bailey would raise \$4.75 million a year to be dedi-

cated to affordable housing. Silberberg, and City Councilors John Chapman and Redella "Del" Pepper signed on to the proposal. Vice Mayor Justin Wilson and Councilmen Paul Smedberg and Tim Lovain expressed reservations.

"Every time we've had dedicated funding in the past, and we saw this with open space, where money was sitting in a fund and you had schools and you had other priorities come forward," said Smedberg. "There was nothing coming forward with open space, and what did councils do? They saw the money sitting there and they grabbed it and took it. That's what I'm concerned about beyond philosophical opposition to dedicated funding in general. I'm concerned money sitting in a fund could potentially be taken. Even with dedication, future councils aren't required to keep that. I think

SEE DEDICATED, PAGE 12

Tuberculosis Found at Patrick Henry Elementary School

Help for those who may be at risk of exposure.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Once known as the consumption, tuberculosis (TB) was a terrifying everyday reality for many Americans who watched loved ones cough blood into rags and wither away. But today, the relatively rare outbreak of TB is treatable and

curable, a process currently underway at Patrick Henry Elementary School where someone in the school was discovered to be diagnosed with TB.

On April 30, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) sent out an alert that TB was discovered and contained. Dr. Kim Luk from Alexandria's Department of Health said the system of healthcare providers in the U.S. have a list of infectious diseases that, if found, they are required to report. Among them is tuberculosis.

"An individual at Patrick Henry was found out to have been diagnosed with active tuberculosis,"

said Raashi Rastogi, Alexandria Health Department communications officer. "As soon as we found out, the person was quarantined and taken out of the school and started on proper treatment. Alexandria City Public Schools took precautions to make sure the students were safe and there is no longer any ongoing risk of exposure. The school was disinfected immediately and the air filters were replaced with new filters."

Now, Rastogi says the Health Department is moving into the second stage of the process.

"We're identifying all of the students and staff who may have

come into contact with the individual and may be at risk of exposure," said Rastogi. "Over the next week or two, once isolated, we'll be setting up a process for testing for TB for free at Patrick Henry. In the next two weeks we will be sending letters and giving calls to

all students and staff determined to be at risk. They can come in for a blood test to determine whether or not they have TB and start treatments if they do."

While tuberculosis isn't rare, Rastogi said the city has been

SEE TUBERCULOSIS, PAGE 26



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Townhouse Plan Advances for Old Colony Inn Site

Commission approves hotel redevelopment into townhouses.

BY VERNON MILES
GAZETTE PACKET

Land use attorney Catherine Puskar warned neighbors two years ago opposing the development of the Old Colony Inn as a hotel that the alternative, redeveloped as townhomes, would mean building in closer proximity to nearby residences. Two years later, after the developers behind earlier plans to redevelop the property as a new hotel backed out from the proposal, Puskar's prophecy is coming true as Toll Brothers Inc.'s proposal to redevelop the site as townhouses received unanimous approval the May 1 Planning Commission meeting.

If these plans fare better than the earlier ones, the former Old Colony Inn will be redeveloped as 19 condominium townhouses with new streetscaping and tree plantings on the surrounding streets. The site will also bring in a \$139,457 contribution to the city's Housing Trust Fund.

The plans for the hotel redevelopment generated controversy in 2016 when residents argued that the development would



Figure 5: West Elevation



Concept rendering for the new townhouses at the Old Colony Inn.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Concept rendering for the new townhouses at the Old Colony Inn.

overshadow neighboring residents. At the commission meeting, there was only one resident arguing for changes to the proposal.

"If you surveyed residents of Canal Way, everyone would say it's too tall and there's a nice continuum of buildings," said resident Ken Adami. "That it's disruptive and not very attractive. But I think most residents would agree that's a battle we fought before and we're not going to win today."

On the Planning Commission, the consensus uniformly favored the development, though some said they liked the previous Old Colony Inn plan.

"I'm disappointed by the proposal," said Commissioner Nathan Macek. "The hotel use a few years ago [was] more appropriate use of site, but given that it was not

feasible use of the site, I'm comfortable with the design proposed here."

Others on the commission argued there was nothing outstanding about the site's design but that the developers had done managed to find a plan that neatly fit into place.

"I think you've done a good job with a difficult site," said Planning Commission Chair Mary Lyman. "The design of the townhouses looks like it fits into Old Town."

SEWER OUTFALL

As the next stage in the city's ongoing plans to reform its Old Town sewer infrastructure, the Planning Commission unanimously approved a transfer of ownership of the troublesome outfalls to Alexandria Renew. Though procedural, the docket item

gave commissioners a chance to express their relief at City Council's approval of a plan to build pipes to carry overflow to a water treatment plant.

"It's a relief not to be facing a plan that put tanks into the park," said Commissioner Maria Wasowski. "I'm relieved to see this solution. This is part of the progression of where we need to be going."

"It makes sense to transfer this to the people who know what they're doing," said Chair Mary Lyman.

Paths Not Taken In a tight budget year, what options didn't find traction?

BY DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

As the FY 2019 city budget process ends, what potential alternative designs didn't make the cut, especially with looming infrastructure challenges and certain trends of service reduction?

The gigantic costs surrounding sewers, Metro, city facilities and public schools are well known.

City Manager Mark Jinks fully funded the schools' 10-year capital improvement request, though only after the school system trimmed some \$130 million off its prior year request. School Board Chair Ramee Gentry cautioned in January that "major gaps" remain.

Several services have trended downward over the last decade, according to a recent OMB report. Between FY 2009 and FY 2018, inflation-adjusted funding fell by \$7.3 million (8 percent) and staffing by 84 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (9 percent) in the following areas combined: community & human services; recreation, parks & cultural activities; libraries; and health.

"The city has been cutting back or eliminating lower priority projects and programs for some time. ... There's not a lot of fat left on the bone," said Councilman Tim Lovain in an email. Local government's "core missions" include "public safety, public education, public health, and some add, public works. Those programs do account

for the lion's share of our budget."

Yet Jinks' proposal contained numerous items that may not easily fall into those categories, such as:

- ❖ Office of Historic Alexandria: \$4.1 million, 27 FTEs
- ❖ Visit Alexandria (taxpayer-funded tourism marketing): \$3.3 million
- ❖ Cultural activities (special events, arts): \$2.5 million, 13 FTEs
- ❖ Communications & public information: \$1.5 million, 8 FTEs (for comparison, Fairfax County advertised \$1.8 million, 21 FTEs)
- ❖ Chinquapin ceramic floor tile replacement: \$540,000
- ❖ Public art acquisition & conservation: \$353,000
- ❖ Hanging flower baskets on King Street: \$103,000
- ❖ Summer interns: \$75,000

For cost comparison, Councilwoman Redella "Del" Pepper proposed adding a position for \$41,000 per year to assist older adults seeking employment. She proposed offsetting this cost by delaying funding for another position. She declined to comment on line items, but said that each had "some good solid reason." She had a hard time finding anything to cut, she said.

Councilman John Chapman proposed purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) for \$81,000 per year to counterbalance city facility greenhouse gas emissions. He proposed offsetting this cost in part by reducing other staff hiring. He didn't re-

spond to a request for comment.

All told, council members proposed add/delete adjustments for only a few line items and only five taxes and fees, out of over 600. All of council's proposed tax and fee adjustments were for net increases. Aside from Councilman Willie Bailey and Vice Mayor Justin Wilson's separately proposed meals tax increase for affordable housing, the largest new influx resulted from \$1.2 million in re-estimates and technical adjustments, and not from affirmative action by council.

"If there's something we missed in terms of efficiencies, we should look at that with fresh eyes next year," said Mayor Allison Silberberg.

There's also the question of city-owned property.

In 2007, the Economic Sustainability Work Group recommended that "The city should periodically evaluate [its] properties to determine their long term use which would be in the long term best interest of the city. The city should sell, lease or otherwise dispose of properties that it determines are not needed for a public purpose after determining what is the highest and best use of those properties. Parcels the city owns in commercial areas or high land value areas should receive special focus. Funds derived from land sales or lease payments should be reprogrammed to meet currently unfunded city capital needs."

The city hired a firm to analyze 361 city-owned parcels. In 2009, the firm recom-

mended eight properties "as high-priority for potential sale/redevelopment." By 2016, the city had disposed of seven of these, generating net proceeds of \$115 million, according to a newsletter by Wilson.

Last fall, Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force member Amy Liu said: "I feel like there needs to be a ... discussion about whether we just have too many assets that need to be maintained, and so we want to shrink that portfolio"

Task Force member Dwight Dunton suggested that it'd be cheaper to move city hall's functions to an office building than to renovate the current historic building. And Task Force member Dave Millard said the Torpedo Factory comprises the city's "single most valuable piece of property" and an "opportunity cost."

The city also owns seven museums and runs programming at four additional historic sites, according to Jinks' proposed budget. Most are in Old Town, where property values are high.

Asked if the historic/arts use of these properties represents their "highest and best use," city spokesman Craig Fifer said in an email: "The determination of the best use of a property takes into account more than quantitative economic measures, especially in the case of historic properties that cannot be replicated elsewhere."

Wilson says processes underway will determine how better to utilize city hall and the Torpedo Factory, though selling them

SEE SPENDING, PAGE 9

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ❖ MAY 3-9, 2018 ❖ 3



Lazarus Christ Church food pantry clients write letters to legislators about proposed changes in SNAP.

‘Dear Representative Beyer’

A patron of the Lazarus “food pantry” at Historic Christ Church sits around a table in the church library on Thursday, April 26 hand writing a letter to U.S. Rep. Don Beyer about proposed cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The proposed legislative changes in the program would impact the people gathered in the room who depend on SNAP for assistance.

Twenty-one other patrons of the food pantry are writing letters to Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner as well urging them to “work on a bipartisan farm bill that protects and strengthens domestic nutrition programs, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.” These letters will be delivered on May 7 to the Congressional offices by a delegation of adult and youth members from Christ’s Church and the patrons of the food pantry.

Proposed changes in the SNAP program would impose stricter work requirements

and include benefits and eligibility cuts.

The letter states: “SNAP already encourages work. When individuals can meet their basic needs, they don’t have to worry about where their next meal will come from, so they can focus on finding and keeping a job.”

The current SNAP requirements include not voluntarily quitting a job, taking a job if offered, and participating in employment and training programs.

SNAP (sometimes referred to as food stamps) provides a monthly supplement for purchase of nutritious food for a household meeting certain resource and income qualifications. For instance, in the state of Virginia, eligibility limitations translate into \$1,005 monthly income for a household of one at 100 percent of poverty to \$3,444 net monthly income for a family of eight.

— SHIRLEY RUHE



Mayor Allison Silberberg, right, poses for a photo with Kay and Terry Zerwick and Nancy Kegan Smith at the Gadsby’s Tavern Museum Society’s Springtime in Paris fundraiser April 14 at Gadsby’s Tavern. Kay Zerwick served as gala chair and Smith is president of the organization.

Spring Is in the Air

The Gadsby’s Tavern Museum Society held its annual fundraising ball April 14 in support of preservation efforts of Gadsby’s Tavern Museum.

The signature “Best Bib & Tucker Ball,” a colonial term for one’s best dress, featured a Springtime in Paris theme with all profits from the ball and silent auction going towards the preservation, educational and outreach programs of Gadsby’s Tavern Museum.

“Last year one of the things the Society did with the money it raised was purchase

a major manuscript collection for Gadsby’s Tavern called the Irwin Papers,” said Society president Nancy Kegan Smith. “This has the 1802 inventory and a lease for Gadsby’s Tavern, which at the time was called the City Hotel.” Mayor Allison Silberberg attended the event as did the Marquis de Lafayette, as portrayed by Michael Halbert. Entertainment was provided by Doc Scantlin and his band and Chou Chou.

For more information, visit www.gadsbystavernmuseum.us.

— JEANNE THEISMANN

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PEOPLE

'Gatsby's Speakeasy' Gala raises funds for ASO.

The Roaring '20s came to life April 14 as the Symphony League of Alexandria held its 31st annual ball and auction at the Westin Alexandria Hotel.

With a theme of "Gatsby's Speakeasy – an Evening of Gin and Jazz," the ball attracted more than 150 patrons and raised funds for the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.

Gant Redmon and Shawn McLaughlin served as the evening's live auctioneers. The event's signature offering, the ASO Wine Cellar, was won by ASO board president Anne Best Rector.

The previous weekend the ASO wrapped up its regular season of programming with Nicholas Hersh as guest conductor. Hersh was the last of four finalists to perform with the ASO as part of the search for a new music director. Other finalists include Michael Rossi, James Ross and José-Luis



Roger Parks and Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Board President Anne Best Rector.



McNearney Associates managing broker Dave Hawkins, second from left, with his wife Amy and McNearney associate broker Rochelle Gray and her husband Ken at the April 14 annual SOLA ball.



Becky Mahood and Adron Krekeler

Novo.

"We are in the process of making a decision," said Rector of the year-long search to replace longtime Maestro Kim Allen

Kluge. "We had some exciting guest conductors this year and expect to make an announcement soon on who will be the new music director for the ASO."

To learn more about the four ASO finalists, visit www.alexsym.org.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Cari Baumann and Derek Mattioli get into the spirit of the Roaring '20s at the Symphony League of Alexandria's "Gatsby's Speakeasy" gala April 14 at the Westin Alexandria. The annual fundraiser benefits the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra.



Julie Lineberry, right, applauds Adron Krekeler as the winning bidder on the chance to drive a Lamborghini Huracan at the April 14 SOLA ball.



Shawn and Cassie McLaughlin



Fran and Gant Redmon

Gorka Draws Standing-Room-Only Crowd

National security expert and best-selling author Dr. Sebastian Gorka spoke at the annual Membership Reception hosted by the Commonwealth Republican Women's Club (CRWC) at the Lyceum on April 26. The standing-room-only audience enjoyed Gorka's stories from his time in the Trump Administration, his lessons from history, and his views on current events.

In his presentation, Gorka admonished conservatives for being negligent in not recognizing the steady creep of liberal control over the educational system and the media. He implored conservatives to become more vocal and active to ensure that conservative voices are heard and their values are preserved.

Gorka, a Fox News commentator, autographed copies of his book, "Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War," at the end of the presentation.

CRWC is Alexandria's local chapter of both the Virginia Federation of Republican Women (VFRW) and the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW). Each year, CRWC holds a membership reception event to highlight the club's involvement



Dr. Sebastian Gorka with CRWC officers (from left) Susie Miller (Hospitality Chair), Eileen Brackens (President), and Linda App (VP Membership).

in the local political community. CRWC encourages local conservative women of all ages to become more politically involved by helping support and elect Republican candidates to public office at the local, state, and national levels. The club also has a con-

servative book club and organizes activities to support local community charitable organizations. More information on CRWC is available at <http://www.alexandriacrwc.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/AlexandriaCRWC>.



Former Vice Mayor Bill Cleveland and wife Ruth attending the CRWC annual Membership Reception at the Lyceum.

City Council candidate Kevin Dunne, at the CRWC Membership Reception, is the only Republican on the ticket for the local race in 2018.





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It is a great honor and privilege for McEneaney Associates to announce that Jen Walker has been selected as the 2018 Small Business Philanthropist of the Year by Volunteer Alexandria. For more than 20 years, Jen has made significant contributions to Alexandria communities and beyond. Jen Walker's name is synonymous with community, and she has earned incredible respect from her peers and Alexandria residents for her generosity. From starting Cinema Del Ray to mysteriously spreading a message of kindness throughout Alexandria with her signs, it is simply natural for Jen to give back. Jen Walker is first a philanthropist and community leader, and second a homes specialist. In sum, Jen has been involved in more than 20 charitable community organizations and leadership roles in Alexandria as well as finding clients the home of their dreams. We are extremely proud of her accomplishments, and McEneaney Associates congratulates Jen Walker as the 2018 Small Business Philanthropist of the Year.

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PEOPLE

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**Weighing in on
community-wide
issue of mental health.**

BY DAN BRENDL
GAZETTE PACKET

Below is the sixth in an ongoing series of conversations with local religious leaders about religion in the public square.



Maurer

The Rev. Dr. Scott Maurer pastors West City Fellowship, a small Christian congregation in the West End, which wants “to bring the Kingdom of God to our community,” according to its web site. To that end, the church partners with the New Day Help Center, its nascent nonprofit offshoot.

At New Day, Maurer and others offer pastoral knowhow to the community through various free services, including counseling. Over 15 years of ministry, Maurer has garnered much practical experience working with marriages, families, addictions, depression, etc. He thinks that

A CONVERSATION

experience would benefit people outside the church too, especially those who can’t afford mental health services. New Day also offers youth mentorship; hospitality and English-learning for immigrants; seminars to build family and social skills; coordination between other local faith communities and local government. Learn more at www.westcityfellowship.com and www.newdayhelp.org, or call 571-406-5902.

In a previous conversation, you said you want to “release” into the community what the churches have to offer. What do you mean?

It has been my experience that when people think about what our Alexandria churches have to offer our community, they typically think about things like food pantries, help with housing, or a volunteer pool that can be tapped for existing programs. All these things are valuable and important. But I think that the most valuable things our churches have to offer are our content and our community (and the two are tied together). For example, churches can offer our youth rich responses to the anxiety that so many of them experience these days. Churches offer deeply thoughtful guidance to having a thriving marriage and healthy family. But, because this value is not often recognized outside the church doors, it remains “unreleased.” That is a tragedy.

What is the New Day Help Center, its origins and purpose? How do it and your congregation as a community of faith relate?

New Day Help Center is our attempt at “releasing” the content and community I just mentioned. We offer free individual and family counseling. We also offer personal development seminars to teach some of this

content — for example, healthy marriage, conflict resolution, anger management, responsible manhood, etc. We are faith-based, but we serve all people. The people we serve have differing levels of interest in faith issues, so we engage them how-

ever they are comfortable. Some are interested in joining a group or a faith community as part of their healing. In these cases, we do our best to connect them with an appropriate faith community. It may be the church that I pastor [or] another faith community.

Do you hope to impact any particular demographic or need? What have been the results so far? What kind of people and life issues are you encountering most?

We serve anybody — no charge — no questions asked. This is a core value because we believe that there are people out there that do not have the money to get the counseling they need, but they do not qualify for free counseling. Rates of addiction, suicide, trauma, depression, addiction, etc. are increasing but much of it goes unaddressed. Of those we have seen so far, many are coming for relationship issues. We are also seeing anxiety, depression, addiction, and anger to give you some examples. These cases range from fairly mild to quite severe.

How does your pastoral identity and experience relate to your counseling non-Christian people about issues that aren’t necessarily religious in nature? For example, your literature says you might apply “Christian principles,” though “in ways that are relevant to non-Christians,” and refers to practices like “prayer therapy” and “confession/forgiveness.”

My motivation stems from a firm belief that God took flesh in Jesus Christ, died for my sins, rose again, ascended into heaven, and now he calls me to engage with him in building his kingdom in order to bless the world. I really believe that and take it seriously. Therefore, a big part of joining Jesus in this work is loving people unconditionally and doing everything I can to heal them of whatever causes them to suffer and keeps them from living the abundant life Jesus offered. With that said, people have every right to believe whatever they want to believe. I certainly respect that. This is one of the reasons that we are upfront in our literature about the fact that we apply Christian principles. I am open about the fact that I am a pastor in addition to the counseling work I do. As I discuss these things with people, I also ask them about their own

SEE ‘RELEASE’, PAGE 17

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Spending Decisions

FROM PAGE 3

outright isn't currently a likely option.

"There aren't a lot of people willing to let the market decide whether a historic building should be preserved or not. And the argument is certainly made that our historic buildings attract a lot of tourists who spend a lot of money," said Lovain.

Fifer says he doesn't believe the city has conducted a comparable study of its real estate inventory since 2009.

"Does it make sense to ... do another comprehensive look at all

of our real estate? Maybe."

But not necessarily, said Wilson. He affirms the importance of historic preservation, but wonders "whether the government needs to be the one to do that, or solely do that. In a lot of communities there are nonprofits that take that on ... You don't see [other jurisdictions] spending the money that we do on these kinds of historic properties."

Councilman Paul Smedberg and Jinks also didn't respond to a request for comment. School Board members either didn't respond or said they weren't sufficiently familiar with the city's finances.

Renovating on RED Day

RED Day (Renew, Energize and Donate) is an initiative dedicated to celebrating Keller Williams Realty's year-round commitment to improving their local communities. Each year, on the second Thursday in May, associates from across the United States devote their time to renewing aspects of the neighborhoods in which they serve. This year, Keller Williams Realty Old Town Office will be working May 10 with New Hope

Housing in Alexandria, a nonprofit agency in Northern Virginia committed to helping to end homelessness.

The KW Old Town office will work to renovate four of New Hope's homes. All of the staff, agents and their families will clean, paint and re-decorate these units. The cost of renovation will be \$2,000 per unit. KW is raising funds to purchase supplies and furniture.

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OPINION

May: Senior Health and Fitness Month

Come to the May 23 Senior Health and Fitness Fair.

BY MARYANNE BEATTY
DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY OUTREACH
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

This May will be the 25th anniversary of “National Senior Health and Fitness Month.” During May, communities are encouraged to hold events that promote regular physical activity and to showcase what local organizations are doing to improve the health and fitness of older adults in their communities. Alexandria is leading the pack in promoting healthy activities for

seniors with its annual “Health and Fitness Fair” being held this year on Wednesday, May 23 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Lee Center at 1108 Jefferson St. in Old Town.

This fun event has a little something for everyone. Participants can join in healthy food demonstrations, receive free health screenings, have fun line dancing with friends and family, and try out simple exercise programs intended to improve balance and strength.

The event starts off with the Alexandria Recreation Department providing an overview of all the activities for older adults, including clubs and groups that meet regularly. Did you know that there are several free activities for 55-plus including game nights, knitting, card playing, and movie days? Recreation Department staff will be on hand to talk about the

various activities at different centers around town and how you can get involved.

Light refreshments will be served at this free event sponsored by the City of Alexandria’s Successful Aging Committee, which includes representatives of the city’s Division of Aging & Adult Services, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and Senior Services of Alexandria. Free health screenings and workshops will be provided by The Fountains at Washington House, PK Silver, Giant Food, Northern Virginia Resource Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing and many others.

To register, go to seniorservicesalex.org or call Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Important Step Forward

To the Editor:

Several weeks ago I called out the two candidates for mayor for their failure to support an increase in the meals tax and to dedicate funds for affordable housing. Despite a rash of last minute attacks from restaurant owners, I want to publicly thank Mayor Silberberg and Council Members Del Pepper, John Taylor Chapman and Willie Bailey for standing up for affordable housing and supporting dedicated funding for affordable hous-

ing. With \$7 million a year between meals and dedicated property taxes we are taking an important step toward addressing a decades-long crisis and providing a range of housing for restaurant workers, retail employees and public service professionals.

Jon Liss
Alexandria

Hobbling Business

To the Editor:

The city of Alexandria’s web site promotes our location as “one of

the best places” to do business on the East Coast. On page 18 of the city’s Strategic plan, we commit to policies that make small businesses “flourish” and attract visitors. The specific plank reads thusly:

“In 2022, Alexandria is a business destination and center of innovation. Alexandria’s business community is diverse, inclusive and robust. Mixed-use development is oriented around transit hubs and activity centers. Small businesses are supported and flourish, and the historic district and museums attract visitors that contribute to the tax base.”

The current proposal to assess a new tax on the restaurant industry is contrary to this stated principle and should be rejected by the City Council.

Data from the National Restaurant Association indicates that the average profit margin in that industry is only 3 to 4 percent. A new tax by the city of 1 percent would be an unreasonable attack on those already-thin margins in a difficult business.

Advocates of this new restaurant tax make two arguments defending this approach and they are both false on their face and fail to mitigate the danger of the proposal.

First, the idea that the tax “would be paid by diners” and not the businesses demonstrates a failure to understand basic consumer economics; all added costs are paid by the diners and all externally added costs like taxes threaten margins. Alexandria is already a high cost jurisdiction due to high real estate expenses, high labor costs, and an existing city tax and regulation structure that is one of the most expensive in Virginia. Restaurants are already charging diners as much as the market will bear for their product — any additional cost will necessarily come out of the owner’s potential take, even if it is assessed on the sale.

Second, advocates of this tax argue that over half the cost would be paid by non-residents, therefore mitigating the adverse effects of the revenue mechanism. This argument implies that our visitors are hostages who have no choices and that a disincentive to visiting has no downside. Anyone making this case is willfully ignoring the

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13



A Thank You Note

Many thanks to the city’s Transportation & Environmental Services. On Saturday, April 28, nearly 700 volunteers spread out across Alexandria to make repairs in the houses of limited income residents, many of whom needed help “to clear stuff out” of their homes. The remarkable staffers of T&ES’ Residential Trash Collection division went above and beyond, removing countless piles of debris and yardwork. Thank you T&ES.

— STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OF REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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A Connection Newspaper

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



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Dedicated to Housing?

FROM PAGE 1

it makes it more palatable to put it in the general fund. Maybe one year it's a million dollars, maybe the next year 10 million, but that's based on plans and market forces."

On the other side of the issue, defenders of the dedicated funding argued that everything about affordable housing, from needs to opportunity, is consistent except for funding.

"Even when projects aren't lumpy, even when pretty lined up for us, we don't dedicate funds," said Chapman. "It's not the projects. We've had projects lined up for a couple years, and we've never taken the opportunity to line up the resources around it. There's no lumpiness in the need. We have folks coming to our housing department looking for opportunities to do projects. What is lumpy is developer contributions."

Chapman also warned that the city's current system of relying on developer contributions could be in its twilight, with developers already expressing a desire not to contribute more to the fund.

"[Let's] not just do this as a charity, let's systematically do it," said Chapman, "a regular stream of revenue that helps bolster that."

"I started this ruckus, so I might as well say a few words since I was the one," said Bailey. "One of the things I ran on was affordable housing. I went from outhouse in southern Virginia, to public housing, affordable housing, to being able to buy a house. Alexandria offered us that mobility escalator and it's dying. There are 22,000 or 23,000 employees in this city taking our tax dollars and spending them somewhere else. [Those are police] officers and firefighters. Do we even care? I'm tired of kicking this platinum can down the road."

Chapman and Silberberg also both pointed to the council's unanimous support for dedicated funding for the Metro system from the state legislature as a hypocrisy for saying there was opposition to the idea of dedicated funding. Smedberg countered that state funding was different, funded as a dedicated portion of the budget rather than raised directly from taxes.

In Virginia, 195 localities have a meals tax. The majority of them, 108 localities, have a meals tax over four percent. The median rate in Virginia is five percent, with the average for cities being six percent. In its 2018 budget, Richmond increased its meals tax from 6 percent to 7.5 percent. When Alexandria raised its meals tax in 2008 by one percent, city staff said there was no discernible economic impact. But the proposal still has critics among local business owners. While the meeting didn't have a public speaker section, when Bailey was testifying about growing up in Alexandria's affordable housing a woman stood up and shouted at the council that they should be ashamed of themselves for proposing a meals tax increase.

In an effort to get around the necessity of a meals tax, Silberberg proposed a third plan that seemed to appease neither side.

"If what we're committed to is adding dedicated funding to the affordable housing fund, the \$4.75 million, that is similar to about 1.2 cents on the tax rate," said Silberberg. "So if Councilman Bailey and others were interested in pursuing that; if you take the .6 cents for dedicated funding for the affordable housing fund, leaving that alone, and increasing the dedicated funding by 1.2 cents, that would make it 1.8 total. That is equivalent to the meals tax. What we could do ... would be asking [City Manager Mark] Jinks in the Fall that we want an additional 1.2 cents in dedicated funding for affordable housing fund in budget guidance in next spring so it's already in proposed budget. In essence, it would be tripling dedicated funding for the affordable housing fund in a time when our city really needs it."

The response from both sides was immediate.

"The meals tax has been in discussion since December," said Bailey. We've all, agree or disagree, been in discussion. I don't think it's fair to staff to try to work on something in the last minute."

Lovain noted that Silberberg's plan would be nearly impossible to implement. Given that the tax rate had already been set for fiscal year 2019, Silberberg's plan would have to be set up to take place in next year's budget season.

"I seriously question to what extent we can bind a future council on a tax rate," said Lovain. "You're also talking about ... a one year delay in substantial funding for affordable housing, which I think is questionable ... I'm very nervous about the prospect of binding future councils for five or 10 years instead of following the priorities in years to come. I think there's serious questions about your proposal."

"I'm baffled," said Wilson. "I'm getting whiplash here. Last year, during our budget process, you were very eloquent in opposing the budget in saying we should not raise the tax rate to put money in the CIP to fund an unspecified list of school projects. Now here we are a year later, you're saying we should raise the tax rate next year to put money in the CIP for an unspecified list of affordable housing projects."

Silberberg defended her plan by saying that her preference would be to find that dedicated money inside the budget without needing a tax increase. Jink warned that the go-to place to cut funding is in city government, but that city is already operating with less staff than it had 10 years ago, despite the city's population increase. Jinks also expressed reservations about the city's ability to implement Silberberg's proposal.

"I would be concerned at this point about locking in any real estate tax rate and dedicating it for the fiscal year 2020 budget," said Jinks. "We have many challenges coming at us for 2020; school enrollment, [Metro], debt service growth. I would be concerned about setting out a new marker outside of the fiscal year 2019 funding plan for any new purpose without knowing what all the financial issues are going to be facing us." The final budget is scheduled for approval on May 2.

BULLETIN BOARD

SATURDAY/MAY 12

City Council Public Hearing Meeting. 9:30 a.m. at City Hall, Council Chamber, 301 King St. Contact City Clerk's Office at gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov.

MONDAY/MAY 14

Foster Parent Orientation. 6-7:30 p.m. at Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road. The City of

Alexandria will hold a free, no obligation information session for prospective foster parents. For questions or to RSVP, call 703-746-5858 or email Christine.Levine@alexandriava.gov.

College Planning. 6 p.m. (pizza dinner); 6:30 p.m. (presentation) at T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King St. All 9th and 10th grade families are invited to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria's College Night Virginia, a

free, college-planning event where families can get answers to questions about college admissions and paying for college. Free. Register at www.acps.k12.va.us/face-centers/. Interpretation will be available with registration. Email abigail.osei@acps.k12.va.us or call 703-824-6730.

Candidate Debate. 6-7 p.m. at T.C. Williams High School auditorium, 3330 King St., Alexandria. Free and open to the public.

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

multitude of choices available to diners in a diverse metropolitan area and the reliance of other business sectors on the visitors attracted to our city by our vibrant dining scene. As a boutique owner of two stores in the heart of our restaurant district, I benefit from the region-wide popularity of places like Landini Brothers and Virtue Feed & Grain and need them to have competitive price advantages against their competition across the river. If you tax restaurants, you tax me, in the form of lost traffic.

Lastly, this proposal is a continuation of a troubling trend at City Hall of failing to exercise budget discipline when new priorities arise. This year's proposed general operations budget of \$712 million is a 3.5 percent increase over last year's budget. If the city wants to fund new priorities like affordable housing, then city leaders should have the courage to cut existing spending programs, or hold their growth flat in real dollars, to pay for the new items. Our city's businesses do this every year – we cut existing expenses to make way for new initiatives. It is only reasonable to ask city government to meet its own priorities with the

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 15

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HISTORY

Miller's Kindergarten School

BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

Prior to 1965 the public school system did not have a Kindergarten program, and African Americans in Alexandria took their children to private Kindergarten schools in their communities. There were several well-known private schools like Mrs. Alma Pinn- Murray, Mrs. Ethel Chichester-Nelson, Mrs. Mary Howard-Penn and Mrs. Martha Napper-Miller's Kindergarten school. For Mrs. Miller, her students wanted her story known.

Mrs. Miller had a couple of occupations before she started the Martha Miller Kindergarten School; she was a laundress and a dressmaker by 1920. Early in the 1920s, Martha married Pierce S. Miller who worked for the railroad at Potomac Yard. The couple lived at 402 and 404 North Patrick Street in the 1920s and early 1930s. By the mid-1930s, Mrs. Miller established her Kindergarten School at 404 North Patrick St. Soon, she realized that she needed more space, so Martha, her husband and her adopted daughter, Anna Woodlawn, moved to 1020 Oronoco St. where she expanded her school. Mrs. Miller retained the services of Christine Butler and Saretta Norton to assist her with the school.

Many students who attended Mrs. Martha's school loved her style of teaching. The students learned to read, write and do arithmetic. Mrs. Miller was strict and loving. She taught children from the mid-1930s to 1950. Three of her students expressed their fond memories of her. Mrs. Norma Jennings-Turner said, "My grandmother wanted me to be prepared for school, and she asked Mrs. Martha for some reading materials. She gave my grandmother books for me to read. When I started regular school, I excelled and graduated from high school at the age of 15."

Mr. Gerald Wanzer attended Mrs. Miller's school, and he said, "I probably attended Mrs. Martha's school around 1948 and 1949. She taught her classes in her home at 1020 Oronoco St. How do I remember that Dick and Jane reading book and also her ruler, if you acted up in her class, she would surely use that ruler."

Frances Norton-Burton also attended Mrs. Martha Miller's school and she remembered Mrs. Miller as a no-nonsense teacher and she credits Mrs. Miller for her love of learning, and her interest in books. Her Kindergarten school was not a place to play but a place to learn. She said, "It was very structured. There was time for learning and time for recess, but it was made clear that we were there to learn."

Mrs. Miller taught many children in Al-



PHOTO BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

The house on Oronoco Street where Martha Miller had her Kindergarten School from 1930s -1950.

exandria who did well in school and continued their education after high school. Some of her students became government workers, teachers, social workers, entrepreneurs, firefighters and worked in private businesses like the supermarket and the telephone company.

Mrs. Martha Madalene Napper-Miller was born Jan. 3, 1878 in Alexandria to Samuel Napper and Cora Marshall. She never had any children of her own but she adopted a daughter, Anna Woodlawn David and she raised Albert Miller. Her husband, Pierce S. Miller died on July 2, 1949. On Sunday, March 23, 1952 on a cold rainy spring day, Mrs. Martha Miller died at the Alexandria Hospital. The dreary weather was fitting for the attendees whose hearts were full of sadness. Her funeral was held on Tuesday, March 25, 1952, 3 p.m., at Alfred Street Baptist Church. Her family, former students and friends were among the large crowd that attended her funeral. Reverend A. W. Adkins who officiated the service said his last words to her at the grave site. She was buried at Douglas Cemetery. Seventy-years later, many of Mrs. Martha Miller's students remembered their time spent at her school. They were the fortunate ones who were disciplined by a caring teacher who gave them a positive school experience and prepared them for public education. You have done a great job Mrs. Miller and your former students will never forget you.

Char McCargo Bah is a freelance writer, independent historian, genealogist and a Living Legend of Alexandria. Visit her blog at <http://www.theotheralexandria.com> for more about "The Other Alexandria."

CORRECTION

In "Shaping the Future Through Transit" [Gazette Packet, April 25], the National Capital Region Transportation

Planning Board (TPB) should have been referred to as a metropolitan planning organization, not as a transit agency.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 13

existing revenue sources in what is already one of Virginia's highest taxed jurisdictions.

National data indicates that the independent restaurant sector is one of the best breeding grounds for women-owned businesses, with nearly half under women ownership. Alexandria has many great examples of this, and many of them like Nicole Jones of Stomping Ground and Jill Erber of Cheesetique have already weighed in with well-reasoned expert opposition to this tax. If City Council cares about nurturing the independently-owned business sector that has made us the envy of the region, it will refrain from hobbling it with this unwise and undisciplined tax.

Elizabeth Todd

The Shoe Hive and The Hive

Expand Medicaid

To the Editor:

For four years, the General Assembly has debated expanding Medicaid, leaving the lives of 400,000 uninsured low-income Virginians in the balance. Their inaction has also cost Virginia

more than \$10 billion in federal funding thus far. The time is now to expand Medicaid in Virginia.

As a former employee of the Virginia Department of Social Services, I worked every day with uninsured households who had to live in fear that an unexpected illness or injury would mean financial ruin for their family. Every day that we don't expand Medicaid is another day hundreds of thousands of Virginians may not seek treatment when they need it to avoid paying thousands of dollars in medical bills. We now have an opportunity to make health care available to those who need it.

Expanding Medicaid isn't just the right thing to do — it'll save Virginia money. Last month, a bipartisan group of Delegates and Governor Northam showed that expanding Medicaid could save Virginia \$421 million over the next two years. That's money that could be invested in education, job training programs, infrastructure repairs, raises for our teachers, or wherever else the money is needed. We have an opportunity to help more Virginians get the care they need - and to save money doing it. We need Medicaid expansion now.

Maani Stewart/Alexandria

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Thanks a Million Spring2Action raises \$1.76 million for local charities.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET



Dawnielle Miller, executive director and co-founder of Casa Chirilagua, celebrates Spring2Action day April 25. The nonprofit raised \$59,440 from 351 donors during the 24-hour online fundraising initiative.

With a few clicks of a mouse, thousands of donors logged on April 25 to participate in ACT for Alexandria's eighth annual Spring2ACTION day, an online giving event dedicated to raising funds for local nonprofits.

Within the span of 24 hours, 9,381 donors raised \$1,768,501 for 157 Alexandria nonprofits, an increase of \$176,042 over 2017.

Since its inception in 2011, Spring2ACTION has raised more than \$8 million for local nonprofits. This year saw more than 20 nonprofits participate for the first time in the online fundraising initiative.

Additionally, dozens of local businesses hosted events to support local nonprofits, including free donuts at Sugar Shack to 25 cents per meal donations from Holy Cow Burgers, Pork Barrel BBQ and Sweet Fire Donna's to Alexandria Restaurant Partners



Carpenter Shelter's April Shroeder, left, with ACT's Betsy Micklem during Spring2Action day April 25.



Kayla Hornbrook of the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation at Sugar Shack Donuts during Spring2Action day April 25.



ACT president and CEO Heather Peeler, left, stops by Red Barn Mercantile during Spring2Action day April 25.

donating 5 percent of all sales to Spring2ACTION.

Throughout the day, ACT's Donor Advised Fund holders provided \$300,000 in matching grants and gifts during the online initiative. For the second year in a row the Alexandria Soccer Association took top prize in the Most Donors category (713) and

RunningBrooke repeated at the top of the leaderboard with the Most Dollars raised (\$112,861). Other top prize winners included: Free Agent Fundraiser – Team NoVA for Urban Alliance; and Spring4ART Leaderboard – Alexandria Harmonizers.

For a full list of winners and sponsors, visit www.Spring2ACTION.org.



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For questions and accommodations, contact Cheryl Anne Colton at 703.746.5565 or cherylanne.colton@alexandriava.gov.

Thanks to our food sponsors: El Tipico, El Paso, Los Tios Grill, Los Toltecos, San Antonio and Taqueria Poblano.

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

City of Alexandria
**OFFICE OF
THE ARTS**



Presented by the Office of the Arts, a division of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.



Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center had a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the same day of Spring2Action, Wednesday, April 25.

Center Benefits from Spring2Action

During Spring2Action on April 25, the families and staff of the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center as well as many others in the city helped raise over \$9,000 for the Kelley Cares Foundation. The foundation has supported the Therapeutic Recreation program and other programs offered at the center since 2005. Last year over \$10,000 was raised to purchase roller skates, hoverboards, scooters, helmets and pads. These items are considered part of the new "All Things on Wheels" program at the cen-

ter, enhancing the fine and gross motor skills, balance, physical fitness and hand eye coordination of the participants in the programs.

This year's donations will go towards purchasing new adaptive playground equipment for the Nannie J. Lee playground. The center provides full inclusion summer camps, after-school programs, adaptive activities and special events year-round. To volunteer at the center, register for summer camp or donate, call 703-746-5535.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

'Release What They Have To Offer'

FROM PAGE 8

spiritual ideas. This helps me tailor my approach to the person. I am familiar with many modern non-Christian psychotherapies and I employ elements of many of them. But I will bring in biblical principles to whatever degree the person is comfortable.

Regarding "prayer therapy," this is something we offer if people are interested. I have seen people helped by this after years of unsuccessfully trying other things. You also asked about forgiveness, and this is something the Bible speaks a lot about. Much modern psychology has recognized the human impact of unforgiveness and has developed therapies that sound increasingly like what Christianity has taught for a long time. Also, confession has been shown to be a powerful tool in setting people free of guilt that literally could make them physically sick. Christianity has several thousand years of wisdom with themes such as these — much of this wisdom has been backed up by modern research. I am not ashamed of the rich Christian content we have to offer those with mental health needs. For us not to at least make it available would be unethical in my opinion. Of all the people we've seen so far, even those who have said they were not particularly interested in Christianity have returned for further services. That tells me that they feel accepted, comfortable, and helped.

How do you, or how might you, relate to or collaborate with the public and private sectors — local government, schools, legal/penal system, healthcare — on the larger mental health issue? What are the opportunities and challenges? For example, your literature talks about a "matchmaking mechanism" and "handoff."

This remains a big challenge. I believe that the public sectors and the faith communities should work together in healthy ways. In Alexandria, this works pretty well in the areas of housing, hunger, and mentoring for example. But I don't think we've figured this out in the area of mental health — and here I'm including all the "inner person" issues such as behavioral health, youth resiliency, substance abuse, prisoner rehabilitation, and so on. This is a shame because there is a lot of research showing the positive effects of faith-based programs and that at-risk members of

the community benefit from faith-based solutions more than wealthier community members. I think there is culpability for this on the part of both the local government and the faith communities. The faith communities need to learn to better package their community offerings in ways that are usable by the local government entities that deal with these issues. And the local government needs to recognize the value of faith communities for things beyond food, housing, and volunteers. Helping our local government and our faith communities better address these "inner person" issues is part of New Day Help Center's mission. There is a lot of work to be done here, and I am hopeful that our local government and our faith communities will decide that this is important enough to give some real focus — otherwise, I think much benefit to our communities will remain "unreleased." So, we'll see.

We've previously discussed two approaches that faith institutions might take when engaging the wider society and other disciplines: (1) society shouldn't hinder us from doing things separately our own terms, let us do our own thing; or (2) can we be present in secular systems and structures that already exist, but while staying true to our religious values? An accurate framing?

I think you've framed it well. And I guess my preference would be for a sort of hybrid of these approaches. I call this hybrid "entrepreneurial pluralism." The idea is to create an environment where social entrepreneurs can be creative with their ideas about helping people. The result is that people in need have many options and have an increasing chance of finding the best solution for them. Government can play a critical role in facilitating this kind of environment. The key is to minimize regulation while keeping public risk at acceptable levels. If this is done well, the payoffs can be significant. But it takes work, commitment, creativity, and courage — especially if this is going to work in the broad area of mental health.

How do you perceive the church-and-state dynamic at the national level? The local level? If you had all Alexandria faith leaders together or on a conference

call, what would you tell them with regard to the city?

I think church/state dynamics are working very well in some places and not so well in others. For example, the Tennessee and Ohio governments are emphasizing the importance of engaging their faith communities to combat

the addiction epidemic. It may be that they are more desperate to figure out how to do this, but I think we need to figure out this cooperation in Alexandria before we reach the point of desperation. What I'd say to Alexandria's faith leaders might be to ask if they and their members are truly committed to do the preparatory work,

and make the necessary sacrifices to minister to the "tough cases" — especially those under that broadest definition of "mental health"? And what I'd say to our local government leaders would be to encourage them to ask the faith communities how they can help the faith communities better "release" what they have to offer our city.

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**Monday, May 14, 2018
6pm-7pm**

TC Williams High School Auditorium
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This event is **FREE** and open to the public.

Submit A Question

Have a question you'd like to ask the candidates? Please email questions to Maria Ciarrocchi at mciarrocchi@alexchamber.com

**At the time of planning no candidates for Mayor from other Parties have filed yet.*

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5/2/2018.....Wellbeing
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WELLBEING

Erasing the Stigma

Mental Health advocates work to tear down barriers to treatment.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

It was during college when Laura Greenstein began to notice that something was not quite right. "I noticed that things that were creating anxiety on a daily basis, they weren't just situational," she said. "My anxiety was grabbing onto anything that it could. If I was running late, I would start to panic. Any small thing became a big issue."

"My mother has always been supportive, but when [my anxiety] got to a certain point some close friends and family began to stigmatize it," said Greenstein, who now works for the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in Arlington. "They would say, 'You're not doing enough.' It was difficult to feel that I wasn't being fully accepted."

After months of therapy and recent session with a psychiatrist who prescribed medication, Greenstein said that she is beginning to feel some relief. She even began blogging about her experience. "This was my first time sharing my story," she said. "It's been a really validating process. Being open can really improve your outlook."

During May, Mental Health Awareness Month, Greenstein and other mental health advocates are sharing the ways in which negative perceptions about mental illnesses can impact those who suffer from it. NAMI reports that approximately 1 in 5 adults and children in the United States are experiencing mental illness in a given year. Only 41 percent of those adults received mental health treatment, while slightly more than half of children aged 8-15 received those services. One of the roadblocks to treatment, say mental health professionals, is the stigma surrounding mental health.

"Micro-aggressions towards individuals with mental illness are very common, such as assuming that someone with a mental illness is inferior, stupid, or not in control of their own behaviors," said Jessica McLaughlin, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Montgomery College. "Because of our society's misperceptions of mental illness, many individuals struggling with mental health problems feel ashamed and isolated. They may even feel like it is not appropriate to seek help. "[And] being on the receiving end of these hurtful comments and beliefs actually worsens symptoms."

With a theme of "Cure Stigma," NAMI activists are encouraging people to educate themselves and eradicate the stigma which can be a roadblock to those who suffer from mental illness to get the treatment they need. They were afraid of being labeled, so they suffered in silence.

This is particularly true with teenagers and pre-teens, advises Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D., a child psychologist who specializes in anxiety disorders. "A mental illness stigma may cause a teen or pre-teen to be hesitant to admit to her or himself that they are having a mental health problem, to share with a parent, teacher, or pediatrician about their problem, and to seek mental health treatment," she said.

The stigma surrounding mental illness is an important issue that often goes unrecognized, says McLaughlin. "Individuals with mental illness face both overt and covert discrimination," she said. "For



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA GREENSTEIN

Laura Greenstein is using her personal experience with anxiety to help others who suffer from mental illness.

example, there is an assumption that people with mental illness are violent or crazy, which is not true. However, our belief in these myths can affect someone's ability to find employment or obtain housing."

"Education is a powerful tool in combating mental health stigma, and community-wide, mental health awareness campaigns are helpful," added Isenberg. "Individually, kids often search online to check out what their symptoms mean. Education from credible websites, and those of mental health organizations often provide clarity and guidance for those seeking help."

Allowing those who might be experiencing symptoms of a mental illness to speak freely about their condition without fear of judgment can remove barriers to treatment advises McLaughlin. "That means asking how we can help, listening with an open mind, and being nonjudgmental," she said. Sometimes it can be a tremendous help just to let someone know that they have someone to lean on and that they are not alone."

People can also fight the stigma of mental illness by being accepting and supportive of people who are experiencing mental health issues, and by modeling this acceptance for their children, suggests Isenberg. "Employers can encourage employees to use mental health days as needed, and to permit longer lunch hours or flexible dismissal or arrival at times to accommodate therapy appointments," she said. "Similarly, schools can work with families to allow kids to use free periods, lunch periods, etc. to attend therapy when an after-school time is not available and the need for treatment is significant."

A family's attitude about the mentally ill can affect a child's willingness to ask for help, advises Isenberg. "A child who comes from a family that does not consider mental health issues to be real or problematic may be reluctant to share with her or his parents," she said. "Similarly, kids whose friends stigmatize mental health issues, or kids who don't talk much about personal issues with friends, are often unsure about sharing with their friends. On the contrary, kids who believe their families and friends will be sensitive and supportive to them are more likely to be open with them about any concerns they are having."

McLaughlin says the conversation needs to happen on a national level. "One of the most important things our nation could do is make therapy services more easily accessible," she said. "We should encourage individuals to seek treatment, not make them feel embarrassed. There is nothing more courageous than someone who is willing to advocate for their own mental health."

ENTERTAINMENT

Pipeline Playwrights To Present ‘Unfocused’

Stage reading of
Jean Koppen’s play
at MetroStage.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

Playwright Jean Koppen will be presenting a reading of her play, “Unfocused,” as part of Pipeline Playwrights’ second-annual play reading series on Monday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m., at MetroStage in Alexandria. The play, directed by Jordan Friend, is about five strangers who gather for a focus group on their voting habits, unaware that the “client” hopes these citizens will identify the next American president.

According to Koppen, “‘Unfocused’ takes place in modern day, but the audience doesn’t know when exactly (whether it’s prior to the 2016 election, today, or in the near future). The audience also does not know who the client for the focus group is — not until the end of the play. It’s also about the ‘politics’ behind political research and how appealing to less-informed voters affects candidate selection.”

She added: “The play is a satirical look at Americans and our approach to elections. Although it does not reference current political figures, it speaks heavily to the issues concerning our current electorate.”

She said that focus groups require bringing strangers together, so she needed to introduce characters and establish relation-



Literally, a photo of an “unfocused” focus group.

ships quickly to keep the audience engaged. “Comedy relies considerably on pacing and timing, which can be difficult to perfect when it’s me alone with my computer. Hearing actors read the lines in front of a live audience will allow me to see where I’ve succeeded and where I need to do more work,” she said.

As far as audience takeaways, she hopes first and foremost that the audience laughs. “The current divisiveness of politics has been depressing and I think many of us could use a moment of levity,” she said. “I also hope people think about their civic responsibility to be informed and vote. In countries throughout the world people take their right to vote far more seriously than

Americans. I would like people to find humor in what I’ve presented, and work hard to keep the situation I’ve presented from being representative of our country.”

Koppen’s full-length play “Black Hole” was produced by Port City Playhouse in Alexandria. Short play productions include: “Capsmittment” (Active Cultures, Sportaculture Playwriting Competition winner); “Politics and Deportation” (Atlas Intersections Festival); “Married Bliss” (Strangeloop Theatre); “Housekeeping” (The Alumnae Theater’s New Ideas Festival); and “Slight Delay and Wearing White After Labor Day” (Haddonfield Plays and Players). Full-length play readings include: “The Best Worst That Can Happen” (The



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Playwright Jean Koppen

Kennedy Center Page-to-Stage Festival) and “Unprotected” (Pipeline Playwrights 2017 reading series).

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.

“Unfocused” will be presented on Monday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m., at MetroStage, located at 1201 North Royal Street in Alexandria. Suggested donation is \$10. After the reading, enjoy refreshments and informal conversation with the playwright and actors. Koppen is a member of the Dramatists Guild. Visit www.jeankoppen.com.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Art Exhibit A Study of Manhattan.

Through May 6, gallery hours at the Art League Gallery, 105 North Union St., Studio 21, in the Torpedo Factory. Paintings by Robert Gilbert: A Study of Manhattan: Power, Dominance, and Excitement. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

Art Exhibit: 2018 Emerging Artists.

Through May 20, daily 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday until 9 p.m. at Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 2. Target Gallery, the contemporary exhibition space of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, introduces a new annual exhibition series featuring the work of emerging artists of the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia region. This inaugural year’s exhibition features the work of Katie Barrie, Ronald Jackson, Hollis McCracken, and Holly Trout. Visit torpedofactory.org/partners/target-gallery.

Mathematics Show.

Through May 20 at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery at Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union St., Alexandria. Featuring the work of Mary Ann Robinson and Sylvia Saborio. The beauty of mathematics will be on display: hyperbolic geometry, fractal art, the golden ratio, the Fibonacci

series — all serve as rich sources of inspiration for this theme. Call 703-548-0935 or visit www.potomacfiberartsgallery.com.

Benson Bond Moore Landscapes.

Through May 31 at Studio Antiques and Fine Art, 524 North Washington St., Alexandria. Free admission. Over 70 paintings and numerous natural history prints from the estate of a private collector will be on display. Call 703-548-5188 or visit www.studioantiques.net

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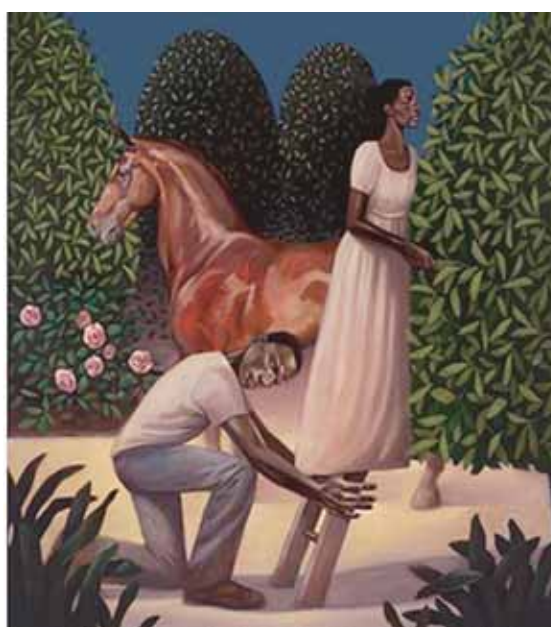
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through mid-June at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Greenhouse, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Volunteers grow dozens of tomatoes and vegetable varieties, herbs, and flowers from seeds and cuttings using organic practices. Visit www.Mvuc.org.

Mount Vernon Farmers Market Opens.

Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-noon at Sherwood Hall Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Every Wednesday (through Dec. 19), 15 local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; meats; breads and pastries; honey, jams and jellies; dairy products and eggs; herbs; and more. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

THURSDAY/MAY 3

Ikebana Show Reception. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Art League, Studio 21, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105



Ronald Jackson, “Couple in the Garden with a Horse,” 2016, oil on canvas.

2018 Emerging Artists

Target Gallery, the contemporary exhibition space of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, introduces a new annual exhibition series featuring the work of emerging artists of the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia region. This inaugural year’s exhibition features the work of Katie Barrie, Ronald Jackson, Hollis McCracken, and Holly Trout. They were selected by a jury panel consisting of Ksenia Grishkova, director of Touchstone Gallery; Blair Murphy, independent curator; and Jack Rasmussen, director and curator at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center. The exhibit runs through May 20 at Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory, 105 North Union St., Studio 2. Jury Panel Talk: Thursday, May 10, 8 p.m. Visit torpedofactory.org/partners/target-gallery.



Holly Trout, “Trophy,” 2017 – plastic animal legs mounted on wood.



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ENTERTAINMENT

5 Dates to Circle in May

BY HOPE NELSON

From Cinco de Mayo to beer yoga, May is a jam-packed month of activities for diners of all stripes. Here are a few of the city's best bets.

Springtime in Paris Restaurant Week at Bastille, May 1-6

With a rash of 70- and 80-degree temperatures of late, springtime weather may finally be upon Alexandria. And though there's no Eiffel Tower as a backdrop (will the Masonic Memorial suffice?), Bastille invites you to take a seat on the patio and pretend you're in Paris. Partake of a three-course lunch or dinner for a sensible price while soaking up the sun (or moon). 606 N. Fayette St. \$25 for lunch, \$35 for dinner. Reservations recommended.

First Friday Taste of Cinco de Mayo at Durant Arts Center, May 4

Kick off the weekend's Cinco de Mayo festivities a day early at the Durant Center. Mexican culture will be on display through music, dance and, of course, food. Grab some grub from the likes of Los Tios, El Paso, Los Toltecos, Taqueria Poblano and more while you take in a folklore performance and lots of live music. 1605 Cameron St. 6-9 p.m. \$9.

Chocolate and wine tasting at Carlyle House, May 5

CALENDAR

North Union Street, Alexandria. The Art League welcomes back the Washington, D.C. branch of the Sogetsu School for the 17th Biennial Ikebana Show, May 1-6. Sogetsu members select works of art by Art League instructors and artists to inspire and complement their Ikebana arrangements. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

FRIDAY/MAY 4

Building Safety Month. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Market Square, 301 King Street, Alexandria. The annual awareness month recognizes the importance of building safety codes and the professionals who implement them. The free event will feature a proclamation by Mayor Allison Silberberg and remarks by City Manager Mark Jinks, followed by lunch and exhibits from city departments and the local building community. The event will also feature a free training session on wood cutting and notching, presented by Simpson Strong-Tie in City Hall, Room 2000, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Garden Talk: Rock Gardening. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Master gardeners share how to design and plant a rock garden display with small and dwarf perennials and evergreens. \$10/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 282 2401 or call 703-642-5173.

First Friday: "Taste of Cinco de Mayo." 6 p.m. at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. The evening will showcase Mexican music food, music and dance. Mexican culinary delights start your evening sponsored by local restaurants. Meet

Sweeten up your Cinco de Mayo with a pairing of two of life's great vices. Woodbridge's Potomac Chocolate Company will match up their wares with suitable wines for a delicious way to celebrate a Saturday evening. Breathe in the fresh air on the historic house's Magnolia Terrace while you sip and nibble on sweets and savory snacks. 121 N. Fairfax St. 6:30-9 p.m. \$40; registration required.

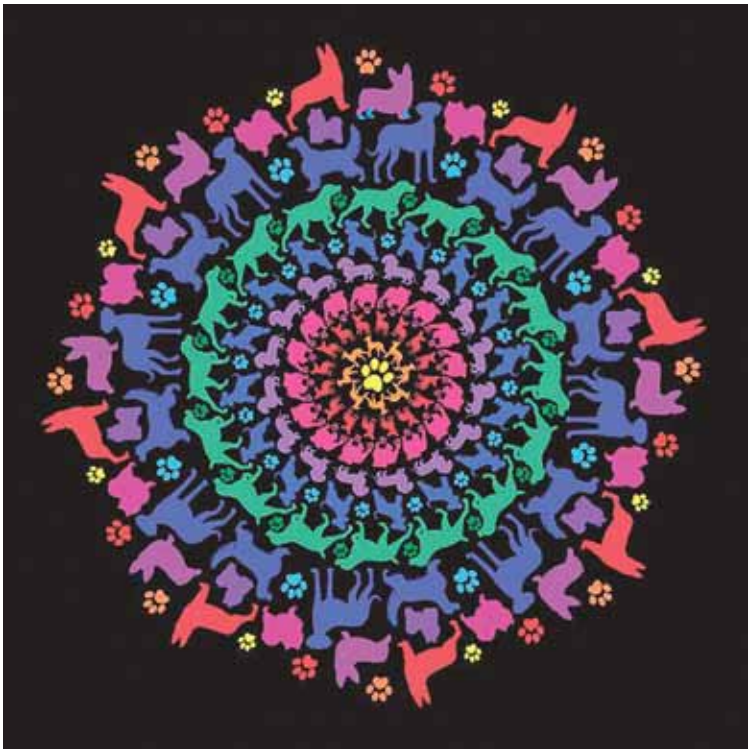
Beer and Yoga Fundraiser at Port City Brewing, May 19

Port City has joined forces with VETOGA, a non-profit offering yoga, meditation and healing arts classes for military veterans, to sponsor a fundraiser for the group's teacher training program. Admission to the event includes a 60-minute yoga class and a free beer to "rehydrate" after the fact. 3950 Wheeler Ave., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$25; reservations recommended.

Grape Expectations Wine Book Club at Sonoma Cellar, May 21

Join other ravenous readers – and Ellen Crosby, the author of this month's book, "The Champagne Conspiracy: A Wine Country Mystery" – at Sonoma Cellar to lift a glass and chat about literature. The book takes place in Virginia wine country, adding a bit of local realism to the discussion. 207 King St., 7-8:30 p.m. \$30; \$15 deposit required at time of reservation.

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



"Nama-Stay" by Sarah Chittenden.

Art Exhibit: Atomic Dog

The exhibit inspired by man's best friend, "Atomic Dog," is presented by Del Ray Artisans and The Dog Store. It features photography, painting, sculpture and mixed media. May 4-27, gallery hours at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Opening reception Friday, May 4, 7-9 p.m. Visit www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

and greet begins at 6 p.m. The Mobile Art Lab will be on hand with some interactive art activities beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble,

Northern Virginia's premier Mexican folkloric performing company will begin at 7 p.m. "Son de Lucha" will provide traditional Jarocho style rural music of Veracruz. \$9 per

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ENTERTAINMENT

person. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/default.aspx?id=60286.

Art on the Rocks. 7:30-10 p.m. at the Art League, Studio 21, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Tickets: \$55. They're challenging mixologists from Chadwicks, Brabo, Mia's Italian Kitchen, Vola's Dockside Grill, Virtue Feed & Grain, and The Wharf to select an installation from the Biennial Ikebana Show as inspiration to create the most artistic cocktail and appetizer pairing and then compete for the title of 'Art on the Rocks' champ. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

Navy Band Concert. 7:30 p.m. at Schlesinger Concert Hall, NOVA, Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. Free. No tickets required. They will be honoring veterans. Visit www.navyband.navy.mil/.

SATURDAY/MAY 5

Iraqi Children 5K Race. Check-in 7 a.m.; Race 8 a.m. at U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 600 Dulany St., Alexandria. The 5K is a benefit for Iraq's most vulnerable – orphans, street children, and children displaced by ISIS. The Iraqi Children Foundation provides counseling, medical attention, legal aid, food and shelter, and education to affected children. Cost is \$30 with \$5 monthly increase before May. Visit the website at www.iraqichildren.org or email cindy@iraqichildren.org.

All-Ages Scavenger Hunt in Old Town. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Hit the streets and alleys of Old Town to look for architectural features and clues to the past. Find the OHA cart in Market Square between 9 a.m. and noon to pick up a map and clues. Finish at Alexandria Archaeology Museum at the Torpedo Factory by 3 p.m. for a prize. Come as a family or with a group of friends, event is for all ages.

Free to play. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/90900.

Gunston Hall's Writing Workshop. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Students will explore the 18th century through writing exercises and activities. By engaging with educators and writers, students will get hands-on with history and become reporters, write fiction, pen poems, and craft biographies. Open to current fourth and fifth graders. All sessions, materials, and snacks are included. Reservations are required and space is limited. Contact Mary Kristen Craver at 703-550-9220, ext. 240, or mkraver@gunstonhall.org or visit the website at www.gunstonhall.org.

Plants & Design: Hummingbird Garden. 9:30-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Attracting hummingbirds to the garden is fun and easy to do. Learn fascinating hummingbird facts and how to create a garden habitat for hummingbirds with Green Spring horticulturist Nancy Olney. \$22/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 289 3101 or call 703-642-5173.

Pet Care Fair. 10 a.m.-noon at the Ruby Tucker Family Center, 322 Tancil Court, Old Town Alexandria. Sponsored by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) to provide free rabies vaccinations and other services to the pets of Alexandria's underserved community. Information about these efforts can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org/Spring2Action.

Explore the Betty Veatch Collection. 10 a.m.-noon at Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 North Union Street, #327. American University's Betty Veatch collection documents 54 archaeological sites in the Potomac Creek estuary. This area has been occupied for thousands of years and was the location of the village of Patowomeke, which John Smith encountered in his explorations of the Potomac River in 1607. Join



“Tram to Roosevelt Island,” oil, 36"x24"

A Study of Manhattan

Paintings by Robert Gilbert: A Study of Manhattan: Power, Dominance, and Excitement runs through May 6, gallery hours at the Art League Gallery, 105 North Union St., Studio 21, in the Torpedo Factory. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

Friends of Alexandria Archaeology for a free Java Jolt lecture with Erin Cagney. Artifacts from the collection will be on display. \$5 suggested donation at the door. Reservations are required. Email archaeology@alexandriava.gov or call 703-746-4399.

RecFest. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Armistead L. Boothe Park, 520 Cameron Station Blvd., Alexandria. RecFest is a day of fun for the whole family, with activities representing the city's aquatics, exercise and fitness, sports, enrichment, creative and performing arts, environmental education, out-of-school time, and summer camp programs. Attendees can enjoy free demos and clinics, opportunities to meet instructors and staff, and a chance to register for programs and camps on-site. Visit <https://apps.alexandria.gov>.

Preparedness Awareness Weekend. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Gum Springs Community Center, 8100 Fordson Road. Preparedness Awareness Weekend will help families increase their resiliency by providing step-by-step methods to develop their emergency preparedness plans and kits. Families will learn how to put together emergency preparedness kits. Also includes car seat checks and hands-only CPR demonstration. Free. Lunch included. Call 571-350-1000, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/fairfaxpaw.

Ballet: Snow White. 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. at the Ernst Cultural Community Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Presented by the Metropolitan School of the Arts. The show will feature MSA ballet students bringing to life the story of Snow White and the seven dwarfs. Tickets are \$15 per person. Go to www.metropolitanarts.org to purchase.

Chocolate & Wine Tasting. 6:30-9 p.m. at Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Join Potomac Chocolate on the Magnolia Terrace for an evening of locally made chocolates paired with delicious



“New York Turmoil,” oil, 24"x36"



Celebrate National Astronaut Day with Astronaut Clayton Anderson, author of “A Is for Astronaut: Blasting through The Alphabet.”

Celebrate National Astronaut Day

Retired Astronaut Clayton Anderson, author of “A Is for Astronaut: Blasting through The Alphabet.” Anderson takes readers on an A-Z tour explaining not only what it means to be an explorer in space but also the science (and dangers) of space flight. Topics include the history behind and ongoing mission of NASA, famous astronauts and their missions, equipment and innovations, and explanations of key terminology. Friday, May 4, 6:30 p.m. at Hooray for Books!, 1555 King St. Visit www.hooray4books.com.

wines. Tours of the house will run from 6:30-7 p.m. with the tasting at 7 p.m. \$40. Tickets are available online. Ages 21 and over only. Registration required, no refunds. Visit www.novaparks.com.

An Evening of Magic & Illusion. 7-8:45 p.m. at West Potomac High School, 6500 Quander Road, Alexandria. Magicians and illusionists perform for one night only. Strolling magicians in hallways and in the theater before the show. Cost: \$15 in advance for adults and \$10 for children. At the door, \$20/adults and \$15/children. Email Danny Selnick: daniel.selnick@yahoo.com or visit ibmring50.org/magi-whirl-home/gala-show/.

Songs of Love and War. 7:30 p.m. at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria. Alexandria Choral Society presents Songs of Love and War, featuring Eric Whitacre's “Five Hebrew Love Songs” as well as the recipients of ACS's Sing-Off Grant Program. Tickets are \$20/adults; \$15/senior/military/student; child under 13 free. Tickets available at www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/boxoffice.

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo. At Jackson 20, 480 King St. Visit jackson20restaurant.com.

Celebrate Kentucky Derby Day. At Morrison House, 116 South Alfred St. Visit morrisonhouse.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 5-6

Revolutionary War Reenactments. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at George Washington's Estate, 3200 Mount Vernon Hwy., Mount Vernon. Step back in time during one of the largest Revolutionary War reenactments in the region Watch hundreds of Continentals, Redcoats, Hessians, cannon, and cavalry in action on the estate. Visit moutvernnon.org.

SUNDAY/MAY 6

13th Annual 5K VisionWalk. 9 a.m. at Cameron Run Regional Park. Hundreds touched by vision loss will rally to fight blindness at the



“Turnips and Greens,” 2018, watercolor by Alice Kale.

Inspired by Nature

Celebrate the return of spring with Inspired by Nature: Paintings of the Potomac Valley Watercolorists, on exhibit throughout the Green Spring Gardens' Horticultural Center and Historic House. The exhibition brings together some of the area's top watermedia floral and landscape painters. Through June 24, gallery hours at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Opening reception, Sunday, May 6, 1-3 p.m. Visit www.FairfaxCounty.gov/Parks/GreenSpring.

ENTERTAINMENT

Foundation Fighting Blindness' VisionWalk to raise \$137,000 to support promising gene therapy, stem cell, and pharmaceutical-based research that could save and even restore sight. To participate or support the VisionWalk, visit www.fightblindness.org/NorthernVirginiaVisionWalk.

Wetlands Awareness Day. Noon-4 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Bring friends and family to stroll through the forested paths and immersive half-mile boardwalk trail. Learn about beavers, birds, bugs, and more. Call the park at 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/.

Opening Reception: Inspired by Nature. 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Celebrate the return of spring with Inspired by Nature: Paintings of the Potomac Valley Watercolorists, on exhibit throughout the Green Spring Gardens' Horticultural Center and Historic House from May 1-June 24. Visit www.FairfaxCounty.gov/Parks/GreenSpring.

Civil War Lecture. 3 p.m. in the Vault at Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King St. Civil War Historian, Don Hakenson, will be speaking on Unknown Civil War Engagements Outside of Alexandria Virginia. Hakenson is an author, historian, and tour guide on all things Civil War. Suggested donation: \$10. Limited seating, RSVP to info@IHCHPS.org.

New Bucknell Manor Park Playground. 5 p.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2223 Beacon Hill Road, Alexandria. Bucknell Manor's old playground was demolished to make way for the new features. The \$100,000 project was financed

through the 2016 Park Bond as part of a plan to install new playground equipment at aging parks to bring them into compliance with safety and ADA standards. Call 703-324-8662 or via Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2018/z-ir045.

MONDAY/MAY 7

Seniors Only Golf Tournament. 8 a.m. at Greendale Golf Course, 6700 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. Players age 55 and older will compete in a one-day, 18-hole, individual stroke-play tournament with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. Divisions will be determined by sign-up, with a minimum of eight players per division. Cost is \$45 per person, which includes tournament day greens fee, power cart, breakfast, lunch and prizes. Call 703-971-6170 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/greendale.

MAY 8-JUNE 17

New Photography By Fred Zafran. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, in The Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Studio 312, Alexandria. With "Along the Poet's Narrow Road," Zafran returned to Japan in 2016 to photograph along the pilgrimage of Japan's most famous poet Matsuo Basho. Visit www.multipleexposuresgallery.com.

TUESDAY/MAY 8

Simpson Gardens Stroll. 11 a.m.-12 noon, Simpson Park Gardens, 420 E. Monroe St., by the YMCA. Master Gardener volunteers will be in the Simpson Park demonstration gardens to answer questions and provide

information on sustainable gardening. Simpson includes beds that feature waterwise gardening, scented plants, attracting pollinators, plants that prefer shade, and beds that illustrate the use of structure and texture in the garden. Free. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgaralex@gmail.com.

Charity Softball Game. 6 p.m. at Four Mile Run Field. The Old Town Business and Professional Association is hosting a charity softball game: Old Town vs. Del Rey. Proceeds will benefit ACT for Alexandria. They will be raising the money from sponsors and raffles with prizes. Free to attend. Visit www.otbpa.org.

Sowing the Seeds of Victory: War Gardens in America. 7-8:30 p.m. at Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Sowing the Seeds of Victory: War Gardens in America: Provides an overview of home food production during World War I and describes how contemporary gardeners can grow the same crops in their gardens today. Free. Advance registration requested at mgov.org. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgaralex@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 9

Butterflies and Climate Change. 7:30 p.m. at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Talk by Dr. Leslie Reis, assistant professor, Georgetown University, Department of Biology. She will summarize her work with three species of butterflies (the monarch, the Baltimore checkerspot, and the silver-spotted skipper). Presented by the Friends of Dyke Marsh. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fodm.org.

Calling All Filmmakers

The Alexandria Film Festival kicks off its 12th year with its annual Call for Entries now open. Filmmakers from anywhere in the world can enter short and feature-length films of any genre on two digital platforms: Filmfreeway.com and Withoutabox.com.

Festival judges will evaluate hundreds of films before selecting the best to bring to the city, for the three-day event Nov. 9-11. The program will ultimately feature more than 50 free and ticketed films — including many premieres — to delight, entertain, and inform area film enthusiasts. AMC Hoffman 22 Theater and Beatley Central Library will again serve as venues for the festival.

Traditionally, the festival offers three awards: Best of Fest, with a cash prize of \$300, Grand Jury Award, with a prize of \$200 and Audience Award, with a prize of \$100.

For the first time, the festival will offer a \$250 prize for best documentary. Alexandria producer and entrepreneur Joe Cantwell, who is also a past AFF award winner for his film "Ride The Divide," has endowed the

"Joe Cantwell Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking."

"Alexandria has long been home to people whose deeds and lives are the subject of fascinating true stories," Cantwell said. "It is only fitting for the Alexandria Film Festival to curate the best documentary features from around the world for an audience that loves living history. I am proud to support the festival and the community by underwriting this new non-fiction film award program."

"It means so much to us that an alumnus of the festival would pay it forward by sponsoring this new award," said festival chair Margaret Wohler. "We have featured some fantastic documentaries at the festival and are excited to be able to offer this great incentive to talented documentarians."

The Alexandria Film Festival is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by a grant from the Alexandria Arts Commission and numerous corporate sponsors including Burke and Herbert Bank, Hilton Hotels, and Connection Newspapers.

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SPORTS

TC Girls' Soccer Eyes Return to State Tournament

Titans shut out Annandale on senior night.

BY JON ROETMAN
GAZETTE PACKET

Claire Constant was the fifth and final member of the T.C. Williams girls' soccer team to be honored prior to the Titans' senior night match on April 27 against Annandale.

As Constant walked to midfield with family and friends, it was announced that one of her favorite memories was the Titans' run to the 2016 state tournament. Constant was a sophomore when TC captured the first conference championship in program history and eventually reached the state semifinals.

Two years later, Constant and the Titans appear ready to create some new memories.

T.C. Williams defeated Annandale 7-0 on Friday, improving the Titans' record to 11-1 and extending their win streak to seven. With the postseason approaching, TC appears capable of a return to states.

"I think this team is just very hungry, as was that 2016 state cup running team," said Constant, who will play at the University of Virginia. "We all know what the goal is and we all know how to achieve it."

While the Titans are on the same page



T.C. Williams senior Claire Constant scored two goals against Annandale on April 27.

about their desire to reach states, Constant and a few of her teammates have the benefit of leading through experience, having been members of the 2016 team that put T.C. Williams girls' soccer on the map. Those Titans won 19 games, including a victory over Woodson in the conference final and surviving an 11-round penalty kick shootout against Chantilly in the opening round of the region tournament.

Senior midfielder Bella Ponzi and junior forward Caroline Bates were also key contributors on the 2016 team and have helped put this year's squad in a position to make a deep postseason run.

"I think one of the biggest similarities

[between the 2018 and 2016 teams] is that everyone wants it — everyone's looking toward that goal of states," said Ponzi, who will play at the University of Georgia. "I think that makes a big difference. We're confident in ourselves and I think that really helps."

Constant and Ponzi each scored two goals against Annandale on Friday.

Bates found the back of the net with a header that gave the Titans a 4-0 lead late in the first half.

"We can play [Bates] anywhere," TC assistant coach Liz Blount said. "We can play her at defender, midfield or forward and she can adapt to any situation anywhere we

put her and be successful."

Sophomore midfielder Caley Zack and senior forward Rachel Sedehi each scored a goal for the Titans.

TC sophomore keeper Charlotte Russell did not surrender a goal.

The Titans have also received contributions from nine freshmen this season, led by starting center backs Ava Chader and Megan Munson.

Through 12 games, TC outscored its opponents 67-7. The Titans' only defeat came against Hayfield on April 6, when TC came out on the wrong end of a 2-0 final.

"I actually think we knew [we would have a strong team] coming into the season," Blount said. "We have a core group of returners from last year and we have a group of nine freshmen and they've just mixed well and have become this one unit working interchangeably. We can put any 11 on the field at a given time and they can succeed."

TC faced Forest Park on Wednesday, after the Gazette Packet's deadline. The Titans will close the regular season with a Gunston District road game against Mount Vernon at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8. From there, the Titans will enter the postseason with their sights set on returning to the state tournament.

"I think this is the team to do it," Constant said.

"I don't think I'd want any other team going into my senior year. I believe in these guys and, definitely, this is the time we're going to get our state ring."

T.C. Williams Crew Prepares for States

Eight boats post wins in regular season finales.

The T.C. Williams High School Crew Team finished the regular season on April 28 with most of their boats at the Charlie Butt Regatta on the Potomac River at Georgetown, and two Women's Doubles racing at the Al Urquia Regatta on the Occoquan Reservoir. Titan rowers, coxswains, and coaches continued to tweak their game as they prepare for two weekends of Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association (VASRA) championship competitions.

For the third week in a row, the TC Men's First 4+ rowed to victory, clinching the win with a time of 5:05.3, ahead of home town rival West Potomac (5:22.7) and Stone Bridge (5:30.8). For Titans Stefanos Psaltis-Ivanis, Connor McGivern, Jake Souza, and Ian Willmore, and coxswain Michaela Gleeson, the next challenge comes

at Occoquan on May 12 for the state title.

Following a win in their early morning heat, the TC Women's First 8 also secured a win in their final with a time of 5:15.4, besting Yorktown (5:23.5) and McLean (5:25.0).

"Our race was strong from the beginning—we flew right off the start in front of the other boats," said 1-V-8 senior rower Grace Hogan. "You could feel everyone's excitement as we were rowing."

Senior boatmate Charlotte Carey added that "there's really no better feeling than finishing a race knowing you had the best one possible. I think Charlie Butt set us up for a strong next few weeks and I'm really looking forward to what the end of the season brings."

Hogan, Carey, and First 8 rowers Grace Vannatta, Grace Asch, Madeline Toaso, Rachel Knapp, Grace Fluharty, and Blythe Markel, and coxswain Paula Filios now turn their attention to States on May 12.

Racing together as a boat for only their second regatta, the



The TC Women's First 8.

Men's Lightweight 4+, featuring rowers Wogan Snyder, Campbell Bright, Matt Cheung, and Cameron Luther and coxswain Kai Linehan, won their final with a time of 5:25.3.

Senior cox Linehan explained that during practice in the week prior to the race, "we focused on a particular technique that our

coach [Matt Schilling] recommended to increase the rowers' number of strokes per minute. We used it at the beginning of the race to get a jump start . . . and then later in the race to clinch a strong finish."

The TC Women's Second 8 and Lightweight 8 boats competed in a combined race category at the

CB, with each boat advancing from their respective heats to the final. In that event, TC's Second 8 — rowers Ailysh Motsinger, Cleo Lewis, Emma Carroll, Madeleine Allen, Elspeth Collard, Charlotte Milone, Julia Clements, and Lydia Greenwood and coxswain Sara Rider —

SEE TC PREPARES, PAGE 25

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TC Williams Novice girls beat Sidwell Friends by .9 seconds on Saturday at the Charlie Butt Regatta in Georgetown.

TC Prepares for States

FROM PAGE 24

cruised to the finish line in 5:19.8, ahead of Washington-Lee (5:21.2) and the TC Lightweight 8 (5:30.7).

After "racing up" for most of the season in the elite Men's First 8 category, Titan juniors and sophomores in the Men's Junior 8 boat treated fans on the Georgetown waterfront to an exciting final with a fast 4:49.9 win, a boat length ahead of second-place Yorktown. It was a sweet victory for rowers Townson Cocke, Emmett Cocke, Carl Chidlow, Jr., Christian Burrell, Tom Schmolcke, Jonathan Hernandez, Kenneth Crumm, and Griff Austin and coxswain Clare Williams.

The TC Women's Third 8 boat continued to beat expectations and opponents as they clinched a Charlie Butt Regatta victory with a time of 5:33.4 over Yorktown (5:49.0) and W-L (5:53.5). The Titan Women's 3-V-8 includes rowers Grace Willmore, Maggie Coombs, Cameron Bowman, Annalise Roberts, Julianne Joven, Ellie Nebolsine, Emily Surratt, and Lillian MacBride, and coxswain Zaida Calix-Tello.

The Titan Men's Frosh 8 boat raced other freshmen at the Charlie Butt in a warm-up for the VASRA

state championship on May 5. TC Class of 2021 rowers Noah Schuerhoff, Barry Najarro-Blancas, Harris Babin, Matthew Posson, Stephen Ralis, Braden Porterfield, Anthony Castellano, and Patrick Kenny and coxswain Jake Solomon clinched a 4:54.9 triumph over McLean (4:58.3) and Yorktown (5:33.5) as they prepare for a run at the Virginia Men's Frosh 8 title that the TC Class of 2018 brought back to the Dee Campbell Rowing Center three years ago.

In a repeat of their April 21 race in Delaware, the TC Women's Novice 8 notched a 5:43.4 victory at the Charlie Butt, just .9 seconds ahead of Sidwell Friends and more than 10 seconds over third-place Yorktown. Rowers Shevlin Jaffe, Taylor Motsinger, Ava Snyder, Nikki Harris, Ella Scontras, Maile Organeck, Violet Knott, and Zoe Lutzker, along with coxswain Maddy Glanz, power one of three novice women's boats in the TC Williams rowing program.

In other finals at the Charlie Butt, the Titan Women's Fourth 8 placed third, the Women's Frosh 8 placed second, and the Men's Novice 8 placed third in their respective races. These and other TC crew junior boats will compete on Day 1 of the VASRA Championship Series held at Occoquan Reservoir on May 5.

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Sealed proposals for the City of Alexandria per specifications will be received in the office of the Purchasing Division until the date and time designated as follows:

Title: Request for Proposal No. 00000754,
Temporary Staffing for the Alexandria Adult
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Closing Date and Time: May 31, 2018,
4:00 p.m., prevailing local time.

There will be a non-mandatory pre-proposal
meeting on May 11, 2018 at 10:00 am EST in
the purchasing conference room located at
100 N. Pitt St. Alexandria, VA 22314

**For general inquiries contact Randy
Burns, CPPB, Purchasing Agent at
randy.burns@alexandriava.gov.**

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You Mean Next Week Tuesday?

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Today, Sunday, April 22, I am not on any real – or imagined, deadline pressure, quite different than my previous column (“You Mean Tomorrow Tuesday?”), published April 25. This column isn’t due until nine days from now, since my copy editor returns from vacation that Tuesday. And of course, since there’s no abbreviated/immediate-type deadline, and it’s a relatively quiet weekend at home (as opposed to the “triple threat” Tuesday I wrote about last week), Chino, in addition to any of our other four cats, are nowhere to be found. Certainly, they’re all sleeping. I mean, it is 12:30 pm. In fact, as I get up to investigate, Chino is sleeping on the very same chair he ended up on last week. This week however, when I have minimal deadline pressure, Chino has minimal Kenny interest. At present, he is not the least bit involved in the creative process, other than as a point of reference, that is.

And just as Chino is minding his own business – for now, I am able to mind mine and stay on task. It is so much easier to do so when my writing pad is not the exact midpoint and/or crossroads for where Chino is and for where he wants to be. Therefore, I have no excuses for not maintaining a creative flow as pen is put to paper. No cat interruptions or interference whatsoever. To quote my late father, I have no “encumbrances” – at the moment.

More so even than Chino walking right to left across my desk (and back of course). I just received an email from my oncologist, yes on the weekend, telling me that my two scans taken on Wednesday, April 18, continue to show “stable.” News, with which I’m extremely fond of writing – properly, I can live. As much as I could likewise live with tumor “shrinkage” as well, I am ALWAYS pleased when I see my new favorite word: “stable,” in any communication from my doctor. For a cancer patient still undergoing treatment – as I am, or for any cancer patient in remission, a “stable” result is hardly the problem. The problem is growth and/or movement or appearance elsewhere in the body. (For lung cancer patients, movement to the brain, which occurs in approximately 30 percent of patients, is the predominant worry. As such, I get a brain MRI regularly.) So, no scan-result pressure. No post-chemo side-effect pressure. No newspaper and/or deadline pressure. And no cat-related pressure compounding any of the aforementioned pressures. Ergo, the ‘pressure’ is officially off. And when the ‘pressure’ is off, my creativeness is on. Though this may not be the best column I’ve ever written, it’s certainly been one with the least amount of ‘encumbrances.’

And speaking of my father, Barry, who died in 2006, and now my mother, Celia, who died two years later, almost to the day, what I am particularly grateful for is the timing of my diagnosis/prognosis: it all happened after they had died. They never knew. My first symptom manifested four weeks after my widowed mother was laid to rest. They both know now though as I regularly update them when I visit their gravesites at the cemetery. And though the conversations are mostly one-sided, still, it brings me comfort and a peculiar sort of joy to share the details of my treatment and the miscellaneous pressures I experience, some of which I’ve mentioned and some of which I haven’t. Many of those my parents knew about, and were often topics of discussion – while they were alive.

I was lucky then and I continue to be lucky now. Great parents before and an amazingly fortunate post-cancer-diagnosis after. Whoever I have to thank: thank you.

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

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News

Healing

FROM PAGE 1

ness. May we dedicate this grove in the memory of those lost on April 16, 2007.”

The memorial garden includes 32 red buds, a gravel walkway and three park benches all designed to serve as a reminder to end gun violence. It was designed by Virginia Tech’s architectural graduate school students Jenn Burch, Jake Fettig, Lynda Ramirez-Blust, Xiaolan Zhou and supervised by Nathan Heavers.

Freshman state Del. Chris Hurst (D-12), a former broadcast journalist whose fiancée Alison Parker was murdered in 2015 while conducting an on-air interview, also attended the event.

“We can contemplate the way that people die, and how horrible it is when it’s by gunfire, how brutal it is when it’s with a bullet. But we can also contemplate all of the wonderful things that the 32 who were killed at Virginia Tech accomplished in their lives,” Hurst said. “I’ve certainly had to contemplate what happened to Alison, and what happened to us, and just like these trees they started as seeds. And we had a seed that we planted together. It only grew to be a sapling before it was cut down.”

Mayor Allison Silberberg recalled the June 2017 shooting at Simpson Field, which wounded multiple people, including House Minority Whip Rep. Steve Scalise.

“Just recently I stood with members of Congress who were attacked at Simpson Field. They just had their first practice the other morning, and to say it was emotional is an understatement,” Silberberg said. “For generations to come, people will be able to walk through this grove of trees and think about what has happened, but also what can be in our society.”

Tuberculosis

FROM PAGE 1

lucky in avoiding the diagnosis as long as it has.

“We haven’t had an incident like this in the school system in over a decade,” said Rastogi. “At the same time, looking at some of our neighbors, Fairfax County Public Schools has had a few incidents, some at a much larger scale. It’s not something completely out of the ordinary or completely unexpected to encounter in a school.”

Fairfax County had three separate incidents of tuberculosis in schools last year.

“In general, we might not be used to hearing about TB, but it is an endemic infection,” said Luk. “People get exposed, but not everyone gets infected or gets the disease. For the average person’s immune system, for this disease, the system is quite capable of containing and eliminating it. Only 30 percent of those exposed to TB get infected. Only 10 percent of those move from an infectious state to active disease. It’s a slow growing bacteria that’s been around for a long time that not everyone gets sick from.”

Luk said some of the symptoms of TB can be coughing and being sick for an extended period of time, especially if it lasts longer than three weeks.

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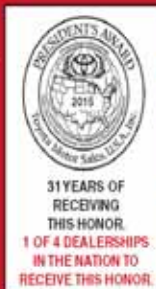
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