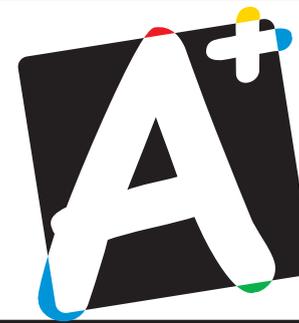


Alexandria Gazette Packet



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25 CENTS

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 18, 2019

Thanks a Million Spring2ACTion tops \$2 million for local causes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

If money talks, there was a collective roar across the city April 10 as tens of thousands of donors went online to break the \$2 million mark and set a record in the annual Spring2ACTION online giving day.

A total of 9,423 donors contributed \$2,038,032.88 to 162 various Alexandria nonprofits during the ninth year of the community-wide online giving initiative. The total surpassed last year's record by \$269,532.

"We are so proud to be part of such a generous community" said Heather Peeler, president and CEO of ACT for Alexandria, the organization that founded and sponsors the event. "Once again, Alexandria came

SEE SPRING2ACTION, PAGE 27



The Alexandria crew team gathers during the April 10 Spring2ACTION online giving day. The Crew Boosters raised \$14,585 to support the team.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Fire Damages Seaport Center

ASF apprentices aid in rebuilding efforts.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Apprentices with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, whose Seaport Center was damaged by a fire on the evening of April 3, are aiding in the process of rebuilding the ASF timber frame structure along the Old Town Waterfront.

The Alexandria Fire Department responded to a call at approximately 10:30 p.m. reporting a fire in the vicinity of Blackwall Hitch Restaurant. Firefighters arrived within minutes to find smoke billowing out of the second floor windows of the ASF building, which serves as a workshop for the apprenticeship program.

ASF Executive Director Kathy Seifert sent an email out within hours to reassure the community that no one was injured in the fire.

"Fortunately, no one was in the workshop and the damage was very localized, thanks to the fire department's quick response to a call from a neighboring restaurant alerting them of smoke," Seifert



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

An Alexandria Seaport Foundation apprentice examines the charred remains of a project at the Seaport Center, which was damaged in a fire on April 3.

said.

The fire was contained to the first floor of the building, doing significant damage to the north west section of the workshop. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

"Miraculously untouched was a beautifully handcrafted boat just weeks from completion,"

SEE ASF, PAGE 26

Seeking 'Dignity And Respect'

DASH bus drivers, ACPS custodians ask council to boost pay, retain jobs.

BY DAN BRENDAL AND
BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER
GAZETTE PACKET

Continuing recent organizing efforts, bus drivers and school custodians asked City Council to allocate more money in Alexandria's budget at a public hearing on Satur-

day, April 13.

Though council has known of the drivers and custodians' situations, the groups' specific budget requests came too late. Council's deadline to propose additions and deletions to City Manager Mark Jinks' budget was Friday, April 12. Extra funds explicitly for DASH

SEE JOBS, PAGE 18

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Green Late Deal

Broken promises and missed deadlines plague Eco-City Alexandria.

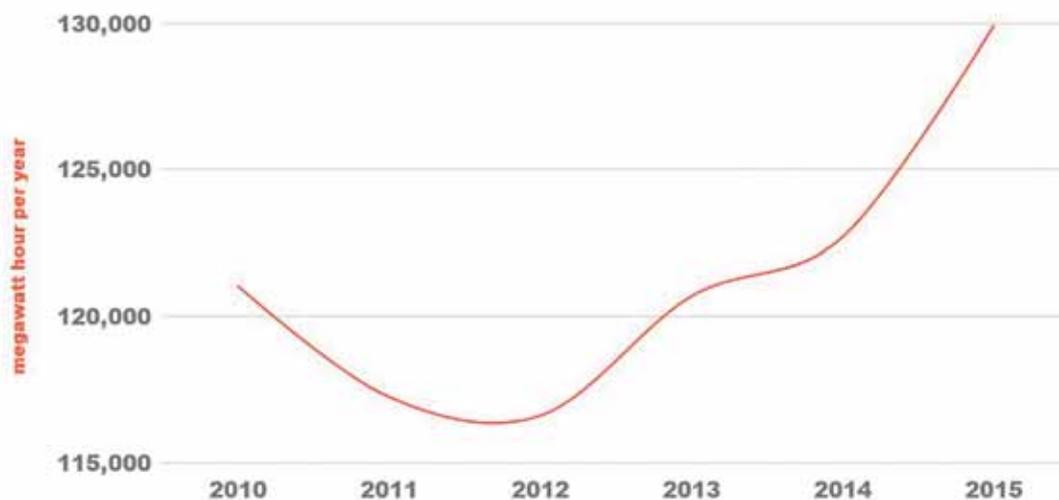
BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria adopted its Eco-City charter with great fanfare in 2008 along with a promise: The charter would be renewed in a decade. That deadline has now come and gone with no plans to update it. In 2009, members of the City Council approved an Eco-City action plan along with another promise: It would be renewed in five years. Once again, city officials breezed through that deadline. The promised annual progress reports happened for a while, but city officials haven't released one since 2016. For some members of the Environmental Policy Commission who were part of shaping Eco-City a decade ago, the broken promises and missed deadlines are frustrating.

"Frankly, I feel like the last four years of leadership were caught up in other dramas," said Danielle Fiedler, who was chairwoman of the commission when Eco-City Alexandria initiative was adopted. "If you're going to have this environmental action plan, you should be updating the short term action items. Those should be revisited every five years in order to stay on top of this."

The last decade has offered a mixed picture for the city's environmental health. Alexandria continues to dump more than 10 million gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac River every year, although city officials now have a plan after state lawmakers threatened to withhold money from city schools in 2017. Energy use in city government facilities has increased 11 percent since 2012, reflecting a tension between growth and conservation. Alexandria currently purchases renewable energy credits equivalent to 60 percent of its energy use, although the city manager's proposed budget calls for 100 percent by next year. And

Alexandria Government Operations Energy Use



source: Eco-City Progress Report and Key Environmental Indicators

then there's that charter revision that never happened and an action plan that city officials are just now getting around to updating.

"You don't accomplish things by making a list and putting them on the shelf," said former Del. Rob Krupicka (D-45), who helped create Eco-City Alexandria as member of the Alexandria City Council. "You accomplish things by making a list and then constantly revisiting it."

THE IDEA OF Eco-City Alexandria began with a strategic planning process back in 2007, shortly after the United Nations concluded that the rise in global temperatures was the result of greenhouse gas concentrations. When the Alexandria's action plan was adopted in 2009, Alexandria was one of a handful of cities across the country that had created its own plan for dealing with climate change. The timing worked well for Alexandria because when the global economy tanked, city officials had a ready-made list of shovel-ready projects that quali-

fied for federal stimulus money. Plans to install solar panels at Beatley Library, for example, were fast-tracked for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"In Alexandria, we recognize the quantity and sources of energy used by local government, businesses and residents affects our environment and quality of life," said then Mayor Bill Euille during testimony to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in the summer of 2009. "Local governments play a critical role in improving energy efficiency, shifting the country to cleaner sources of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The action plan laid out a series of goals and metrics. Now, a decade later, city officials say many of those goals have been achieved. Greenhouse gas emissions, for example, are on track to be reduced by 20 percent the 2005 level by 2030. Every new municipal building in Alexandria has been designated LEED Silver or better since 2005. And although Alexandria never set a target

for renewable energy production, city officials currently purchase renewable energy credits equivalent to 60 percent of city government electricity usage. When City Manager Mark Jinks introduced his proposed budget for fiscal year 2020 in February, he included plans to improve on that success.

"During FY2020, all expected city government electrical use will be linked to renewable sources such as wind, solar and biomass," Jinks wrote in the introduction to the budget. "As part of the green buildings policy review and report to City Council this spring, I will recommend that the city raise its green building goal for city facilities from the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver standard to LEED Gold."

ADVOCATES FOR ECO-CITY say the biggest success is one that can't be easily quantified — a culture shift at City Hall. Before Eco-City, concerns about the environment were largely the domain of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. Critics worried that approach would not be successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions or encouraging renewable sources of energy. That's why they say the exercise of putting together an action plan and assigning specific goals to departments throughout the city government was a success in its own right, shifting the priority from one department to across the organization.

"One of the successes that lurks in the action plan is a mindset that the city has got to do its bit for the environment, and that is now enshrined in all the planners," said Peter Pennington, who was a member of the Environmental Policy Commission when the Eco-City initiative was launched. "When developers come in with a brand

SEE GREEN, PAGE 30

Earth Day Agenda Alexandria: Green Report Card

Is the city addressing environmental concerns? What's happening with the Eco-City Alexandria initiative? Join Agenda Alexandria for a wide-ranging discussion of these issues on April 22 at the Hermitage, located at 5000 Fairbanks Ave. in the West End. Reception starts at 6:30 p.m.; program starts at 7 p.m. Cost is \$5 at the door; optional dinner starting at \$32. Panelists include:

❖ Bill Skrabak is deputy director of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. He has a bachelor of science in chemical engineering



from Lafayette College and more than 30 years experience in the environmental field. Before coming to work in Alexandria, Skrabak was enforcement manager for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. He is currently the manager of the Office of Environmental Quality, where he leads the city's Eco-City effort.

❖ Dean Naujoks is the Potomac Riverkeeper as part of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network. He has a bachelor's degree in environmental



policy and sustainable development from North Carolina State University and more than 20 years of environmental nonprofit experience. Before joining the Potomac Riverkeeper Network, he served as the Upper Neuse Riverkeeper and the Yadkin Riverkeeper.

❖ Andrew Macdonald is a former vice mayor of Alexandria. He has a doctorate in geology from the University of Western Ontario, and he has served as a member of the Environmental Policy Commission and chairman of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. He is



currently chairman of the Environmental Council of Alexandria, a nonprofit group established to protect the city's natural resources from development.

❖ Kenneth Warren is a senior at T.C. Williams High School who is the co-founder and CEO of a group known as Community United for Renewable Energy, which he created after traveling to India in 2016. As the leader of CURE, Warren works with school officials to help them make environmentally sustainable investments in Alexandria City Public Schools.



Final City Budget Tweaking

Council finalizes proposed adjustments for May 1 final budget vote.

BY DAN BRENDEN
GAZETTE PACKET

In adopting the FY 2020 budget on May 1, City Council will vote on 15 proposed adjustments to City Manager Mark Jinks' operating budget and 10-year Capital Improvement Program. Jinks proposed a \$761 million general fund operating budget and \$1.6 billion 10-

year Capital Improvement Program in February. Since that time, council has debated its finer points. Departmental staff have also updated their revenue forecasts and made some technical adjustments, yielding a net additional \$233,000 for council to decide what to do with.

Around this time each year, in what's called the addition-and-deletion — "add/delete," for short — individual

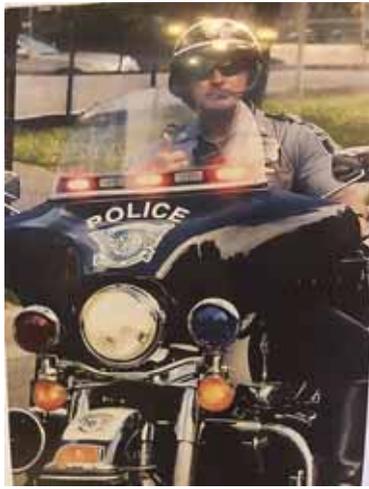
council members submit how they'd like to adjust the city manager's proposal. Two other council members must co-sponsor an submitted addition or deletion in order for it to become eligible for a final vote. This year, council members offered up 15 potential adjustments, all of them attaining to necessary co-sponsorship threshold.

No council member's proposal represents more than half-a-percent change in magnitude over Jinks' original proposed general fund budget.

For more, visit www.alexandriava.gov/Budget. Submit online comments to council about their add/delete proposals at www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-FY20AddDelete.

Proposal	Dollar Amount (rounded)	Description	City Council Sponsor & Co-Sponsors							Impacts leveraging other funds (e.g., matching grants, state or fed programs)?	If ADD, how offset additional cost?	If DELETE, how use savings?
			Justin Wilson	Elizabeth Bennett-Parker	Canek Aguirre	John Chapman	Amy Jackson	Del Pepper	Mohamed Selfeldin			
ADD	\$200,000 (FY 20); \$200,000 (FY 21); \$600,000 (FY 22); \$900,000 (FY 23); \$900,000 (FY 24)	... for the local grant match obligation for the federal 2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. Would fund 9 new firefighter positions, toward completing full 4-person staffing on all the city's fire engines.	S	C	C	C	C	C	C	Would provide city match for \$1.5 million of federal funding over 3-year grant period	From undesignated contingency funds	
DELETE	\$491,000 (FY 20)	... from the proposed appropriation for Inova Alexandria Hospital under the current Memorandum of Agreement addressing uncompensated care. Would allow city departmental staff to assess ramifications of the recent expansion of Medicaid eligibility (covering the second half of FY 2019).	S	C	C	C	C	C	C	TBD		To contingent reserve
ADD	\$330,000 (FY 20)	... to fund Virginia Retirement System enhancements for existing and future Sheriff's Dept. personnel. Would bring Sheriff's Dept. compensation and benefits more in alignment with comparator jurisdictions. Release funds after Public Safety Work Group review.	S	C	C	C	C	C	C	No	Projected new revenue from federal gov't for use of City Detention Center bed space	
ADD	\$103,000 annually	... to fund WasteSmart programs, including new glass drop-off program and other efforts designed to achieve the vision of the city's approved WasteSmart Strategic Plan.	S	C	C	C	C	S		TBD	Increase annual Residential Refuse Fee from \$406 to \$411 per billable household	
DELETE	\$84,000 (FY 20)	... from proposed Zoning Inspector for enhanced commercial corridor enforcement. Funds to be placed on hold, pending review and report to council on night/weekend staffing, policies and coordination between the APD and other depts.	S	C	C	C	C	C		TBD		To contingent reserve
MOVE	\$700,000 (FY 20); \$1.1 million (FY 21); \$900,000 (FY 22); \$1 million (FY 23); \$1.1 million (FY 24)	... from operating budget to 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for ACPS textbook replacement. Change would treat textbooks as "educational infrastructure" rather than an operating expense.	S	C	C			C	C	No		
ADD	\$125,000 (FY 20)	... for one-year startup costs to create local Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program. After city staff have prepared a plan for implementation staff, council would vote whether to appropriate some or all of the funds	C		C	C	C	S		Encourage private green building improvements by attaching capital improvement financing debt service to property assessment	From undesignated contingency funds	
ADD	\$200,000 (FY 20)	... to city's early childhood care and education programs, to reduce waitlist times for those programs. City manager would provide council a recommendation how best to assign funds to specific programs, with priority to investments leveraging available, external resources.	S	C			C	C	C	Local funds could yield matching state/fed funds	From undesignated contingency funds	
ADD	\$150,000 annually	... for Family Unit Due Process Universal Representation Access Program. Through this program, the city would select a non-profit legal services provider to provide legal counsel to Alexandria residents facing deportation.	C		C	C	C	S		No	From undesignated contingency funds	
ADD	\$35,000 annually	... to extend King Street corridor tree lighting from 5 months to 11 months per year	C			C	C	S	C	No	From contingent reserves	
MOVE	\$3.9 million	... in revenue generation from \$33 motor vehicle license ("decal") fee, which council eliminated on March 16, to 33-cent increase on personal property tax rate. The shift in revenue source would yield no net budget change. But charging a rate rather than a flat fee shifts the tax burden onto owners of more expensive vehicles. Owners of vehicles valued less than \$10,000 will pay less than before, owners of vehicles value more than \$10,000 will pay more.	S	C	C		C		C	No		
ADD	\$20,000 annually	... to expand education and outreach regarding the city's Environmental Action Plan, to inform citizens of best practices / behavioral changes that would promote environmental preservation.	C	C			C	S		No	From contingent reserves	
ADD	\$86,000 annually	... to expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) ("food stamp") program from 2 to 3 of the city's farmers' markets, and to increase outreach to build awareness of the program at all locations.	C	S			C	C		Would increase dollars from existing Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant, other fed benefits for eligible residents	From undesignated contingency funds	
ADD	\$100,000 annually	... to ACPS operating transfer, "toward the city's effort to fully fund ACPS budget." Asked what the additional money is intended for specifically, Chapman and the ACPS administration declined to comment, each deferring to the other for clarification.			C	S			C	No	From contingent reserves	
ADD	\$60,000 (FY 20), \$120,000 annually thereafter	... for additional "equity staff." The addition intends to expand the internal & external equity work that the city will be undertaking, to cover a wider range of equity issues (race, sexuality, gender).			C	S			C	No	From revenue re-estimates	

PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET



Officer Jim Fowler served 12 years on the motorcycle squad before retiring April 1 after 25 years of service with the Alexandria Police Department.



Jim Fowler, with his wife Patty, right, and mother-in-law Eileen Samuels, celebrates his retirement from the Alexandria Police Department April 1 at Fiona's Irish Pub in Kingstowne. Fowler served 25 years on the force, the last 12 on the motorcycle squad.



Officer Jim Fowler, right, in an undated photo with Col. Gregory Gadson, then the Garrison Commander of Fort Belvoir. Fowler retired April 1 after 25 years with the Alexandria Police Department.



Jim Fowler, left, with APD Officer Bennie Evans at Fowler's retirement party April 1 at Fiona's Irish Pub in Kingstowne. Evens is wearing a hoodie from Fowler's new business venture, Slick Sledz, a custom motorcycle building company.

Fowler Retires After 25 Years

APD motorcycle veteran to create custom bikes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Surrounded by family, friends and fellow officers, Jim Fowler celebrated his retirement from the Alexandria Police Department April 1 after 25 years serving the City of Alexandria.

Fowler spent his last 12 years as part of the APD motorcycle force and the crowd gathered at Fiona's Irish Pub in Kingstowne wished him well on his newest venture, Slick Sledz, a custom motorcycle building company.

"My time with the department has been incredible," said Fowler. "But now I'm looking forward to spending more time

on Slick Sledz."

Fowler spent six years serving in the U.S. Coast Guard as a weapons specialist. His last duty station brought him to Alexandria, where he joined the APD in 1994. He is involved with various veteran's organizations, particularly those serving disabled veterans.

Fowler holds a bachelor's degree in Administration of Justice from George Mason

University but his love of motorcycles led to his creating Slick Sledz, a business he started in 2015 while still serving full time on the force.

"Now that I can spend more time with Slick Sledz, I hope to see it continue to grow," said Fowler, who is a certified Harley Davidson technician. "I can't thank my family and friends enough for all their support."

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The Struggle Continues

Wexler's book lays out her dilemma with feminism vs. the Catholic Church.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

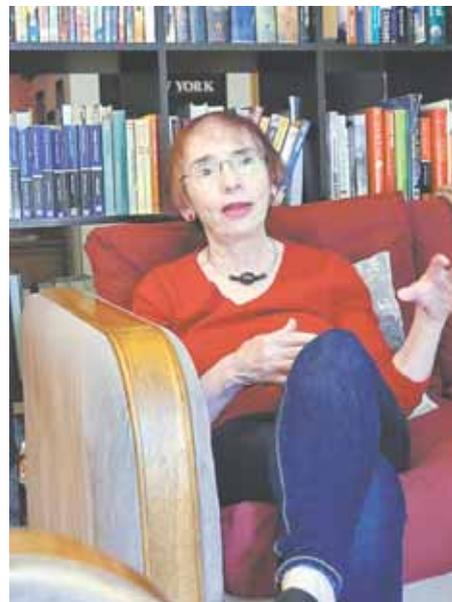
Celia Wexler is on a journey. Her struggle with whether she could continue to be a feminist and a practicing Catholic came to a head in 2014 with Pope Benedict's conservative views. He issued a doctrinal assessment proclaiming that nuns were radical feminists who spent too much time helping the poor and not enough time fighting abortion. He assigned three bishops to monitor their behavior. "That really got to me."

Wexler has written a book about that struggle, "Catholic Women Confront their Church: Stories of Hurt and Hope," in which she tells stories of Catholic women through the lens of their personal experience. She says, "This is my perilous journey."

The process started with a question and she wanted to get a sense from other women she admired, women who wanted to stay in the church but were struggling. "Not all of them stayed Catholics. I was extra fortunate that people were willing to spend a lot of time for interviews of several hours and sometimes follow-up. Most of the women I didn't know."

Chapter 9 was about Barbara Blaine who died tragically before the book was published. She had been abused starting when she was 13 by the assistant pastor of her church and felt guilt about not being good enough because she didn't know it wasn't her fault. After four years she broke free but carried a terrible burden.

Wexler says it got buried and didn't surface until she was 29. "She could have spent the rest of her life healing but she was not like that so she would speak to bishops. Only one listened to her but she didn't give up. She was an amazing Catholic. She was so kind and loving. The church



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Celia Wexler, journalist and author of "Catholic Women Confront Their Church"

had broken her heart."

Chapter 2 tells the story of Sister Simone Campbell. Campbell is director of NETWORK, a Catholic social-justice lobby based in Washington, D.C. "so prayerful but such a good lobbyist." Wexler says Campbell talked in sound bites but was so profound with an amazing sense of humor. "She said she decided to reform Congress because it was so much easier than reforming the Catholic Church."

Wexler says she felt it was important if she was going to ask these women to share their stories that she should share her own. The first chapter of her book chronicles her own experience with the faith of her father which "was not a warm and fuzzy faith" through the scary nuns of her childhood to her teenage progression with the war between mind and body and the endless vigilance against "impure" thoughts.

The first chapter says her conflicted feelings about the church grew more pronounced when "I moved to Northern Virginia in 1996. Walking into a Catholic church in Alexandria, Virginia, was like walking into the 1950s ... the Diocese of Arlington is known for its conservatism and was the second-to-last diocese in the country to permit girls to be altar servers." Still she says, "But with all of the pain, the rituals of Catholicism brought great beauty into my life."

Wexler said all of her work was done on the couch in her living room from her little table. "No office." It took about two years to write her second book on Catholic women. She interspersed writing with interviews. Her chapters would go through 12 revisions. "I did a lot of background research, had to learn a lot more about Catholicism, the Vatican, history over 50 years. It was really important that this have some intellectual heft."

She would ask her husband, who is a journalist, for advice and her daughter. "Then I would get mad and accept some of their suggestions." She said it was very important to her to make clear she is not an expert or theologian; she is a journalist and writes what she can substantiate. There were points where she thought, "What am I doing?" but when she got to six profiles, it felt good.

She says it's a lot easier to write a book than to sell it. But she has a good agent and has had a number of book events where she connects with other women who tell her their stories. "I thought I was the only one."

Wexler's first book was the award-winning "Out of the News: Former Journalists Discuss a Profession in Crisis," another book



Celia Wexler on her living room couch where she writes all of her books and articles.

about conflicts and struggles. "My husband says, 'I hope you don't decide to write a book about marriage.'"

She says she was in Rome last September for the launch of "Visions and Vocation" to which she had contributed a chapter. "It opened up another world to me. Women all over the place may have issues but agree women should have a larger role. After all, we're half of the church. We could share what was driving you nuts."

Wexler says she is a cultural Catholic and that Catholic identity starts when you are born. She loves the liturgy and the community of singing in the choir. She believes in the Ten Commandments, "Do unto each other," and being an ethical person. To give up Catholicism at this point in her life would have been like giving up a part of her body.

She says that faith is bigger than the institution and the Catholic Church is a human institution run by flawed human beings. "I came to the conclusion it was possible to remain a feminist and a practicing Catholic. And yet, it's not like I've stopped struggling."

Boys & Girls Club Joins with Starbucks on Beautification

Event is part of city's Spring2Action day.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

When Alston Waller was 5 years old, he first attended activities at the Dunbar Alexandria-Olympic Boys & Girls Club in Alexandria benefiting from their mentoring even at that young age. Fast forward two decades and he is now the branch director at its location on North Payne Street, helping children in the area and providing a role model.

On April 10, he welcomed the group from Starbucks for the fifth year in a row to perform a "beautification project" on the facil-



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE PACKET

Alston Waller addresses the group with Mike Menchel in the main room on North Payne Street.



Mike Eckstone with plants for the front garden.

SEE BEAUTIFICATION, PAGE 20

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The Center for Alexandria's Children board chair Kerry Donley, left, honors Tom and Magaly Hirst with the Champion of Children Award at the 10th annual CAC Gala April 4 at the Old Dominion Boat Club.



City Council member Amy Jackson, Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter, John Porter, Meg Bonnit, Meredith Bonnit and Michael Hadeed at the April 4 CAC Gala in Old Town.

'Champions of Children'

Local philanthropists honored at CAC 10th anniversary gala.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Center for Alexandria's Children honored community philanthropists Tom and Magaly Hirst with the Champion of Children Award at its 10th annual CAC Gala April 4 at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

"Tom and Magaly Hirst and the Mason Hirst Foundation have made a profound impact on Alexandria's children," CAC board chair Kerry Donley said in presenting the award. "Since 2012, they have doubled contributions for ACT during Alexandria's Spring2ACTION online giving campaign, providing more than \$1 million to aid Alexandria's children."

The Hirsts were introduced to ACT shortly after moving to Alexandria 12 years ago. In addition to the Spring2ACTION matching grants, the couple supports 28 different local nonprofits through their ACT donor advised fund.

"Through our grants we really hope to encourage other Alexandrians to give," said Magaly Hirst.

The couple was taken by surprise when they learned that they would be honored at the CAC gala, which took place during April's National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

"We really shun the limelight as much as we can," said Tom Hirst. "But we are grateful for the honor and the recognition is very much appreciated."

The Hirsts were surrounded by friends and family, including five of their grandchildren, as they received their award. Also in attendance were elected officials and representatives of the many nonprofits supported by the Mason Hirst Foundation.

The Hirsts learned of the Center for Alexandria's Children through their association with ACT.



Tom and Magaly Hirst pose for a photo with their grandchildren after receiving the Champion of Children Award at the Center for Alexandria's Children Gala April 4 at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

"Using ACT's donor advised fund frees us from managing the day-to-day operations of a foundation," Tom Hirst said. "The staff has helped us sharpen our focus on organizations that align with our priorities. With CAC, our ultimate goal is the prevention of child abuse through training and education."

Founded in 2007, the Center for Alexandria's Children is a public-private partnership that provides comprehensive services to children who have reported abuse. It has expanded its scope to include prevention, education and outreach pro-

grams aimed at eliminating child abuse within the community through training programs and a specialized Learn & Play Group program aimed at strengthening families.

"We are very fortunate to have a community trust such as ACT to manage our donor advised fund," said Magaly Hirst. "That allows me the time to visit the individual organizations and really see the impact they are making. It's nice to receive this honor and we are glad to be able to help those who are doing so much good in the community."

See www.centerforalexandriaschildren.org.



ACT for Alexandria CEO Heather Peeler draws a winning raffle ticket from a jar held by board chair Kerry Donley at the CAC gala April 4 at the Old Dominion Boat Club.

Magaly Hirst with grandson Eric Henson, who is showing off a water bottle he won in the CAC silent auction.



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/
GAZETTE PACKET

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

George Washington Chapter Celebrates 65th Anniversary

The George Washington Chapter celebrated its 65th year on April 13 at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria, with more than 70 compatriots and guests in attendance. The chapter was chartered on April 2, 1954 with 14 members. The chapter today has more than 250 members and continues to grow.

Chapter Vice President Jay Henn served as master of ceremonies. The event began with a Junior ROTC Bronze Medal presented to Cadet 1LT Tyler Herod, a student at Mount Vernon High School. The SAR Law Enforcement Medal was then awarded to Officer K.C. Webb with the Fairfax Police Department. Two new members were inducted by President General Warren Alter: John Easley and Michael West.

During the ceremony, guests were serenaded by Sgt. Don Francisco, fifer at the Mount Vernon Estate. After luncheon, greetings were brought by SAR President General Warren Alter, Virginia Society SAR 2nd Vice President Jeff Thomas, and by Kate Waller Barrett DAR Regent Claire Bennett.

The guest speaker was Holly Lynn McKinley Schmidt, Virginia DAR Historian, whose topic was "Children of the American Revolution-Training Tomorrow's Leader."

The Sons of the American Revolution was founded in 1889 which also marked the 100th anniversary of George Washington



PHOTOS BY PAUL WALDEN

Sons of the American Revolution President General Warren Alter addresses the meeting.

taking the oath of office of the President of the United States. The charter was established by an Act of Congress and signed on June 9, 1906 by SAR Compatriot President Theodore Roosevelt. It consists of 50 societies with more than 500 local chapters, several international societies with more than 33,000 members. All members have proven descent from either someone who provided military service during the Cause for Independence, or provided material or financial support to the cause. Patriot an-



More than 70 people attended the celebration of the chapter's 65th anniversary.



The anniversary cake

cestors are both male and female. The objects of the society are to be patriotic, historical and educational.

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OPINION

Odd Use Of Statistics

To the Editor:

Kudos to Joe Sestak for his comments in the April 5 Gazette Packet addressing safety statistics that City Council has not done relative to the major lane changes proposed for Seminary Road between North Howard Street and Quaker Lane. Seminary Road needs its scheduled re-pavement due to its condition. However, it appears Council and Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) have been providing safety statistics that are not for the approximate 1.1 mile area (North Howard Street

LETTERS

to Quaker Lane) to separately try to also justify narrowing Seminary Road from four lanes to two lanes at the same time — adding turn lanes, two bike lanes, and widening the sidewalks (no mention has been made relative to bus stops in this area.)

As Joe Sestak pointed out in his letter, the accident rate the City uses — not to repave the road, but to justify two bicycle corridors on East Seminary — is actually that of West Seminary, which is 11 times higher than East Seminary (which actually has one of the safest traffic records in Alexandria!) Then why is the safety/accident issue not being emphasized on West Seminary starting westerly at North Howard Street? And why is the City using “safety” in the safe part of East Seminary Road to falsely say that is why bicycle lanes are needed? Every survey, every meeting by city representatives says the bicycle lanes are for safety — but data shows there isn’t an issue here.

The majority of residents in the area are strongly against this illogical and ill-conceived notion for this major change to Seminary Road except for a relatively few guided by and for their special/personal interests. For those who have safety concerns, there are several 25 mph signs, stop lights, walk signs, a speed measurement sign, and crosswalks in this specific

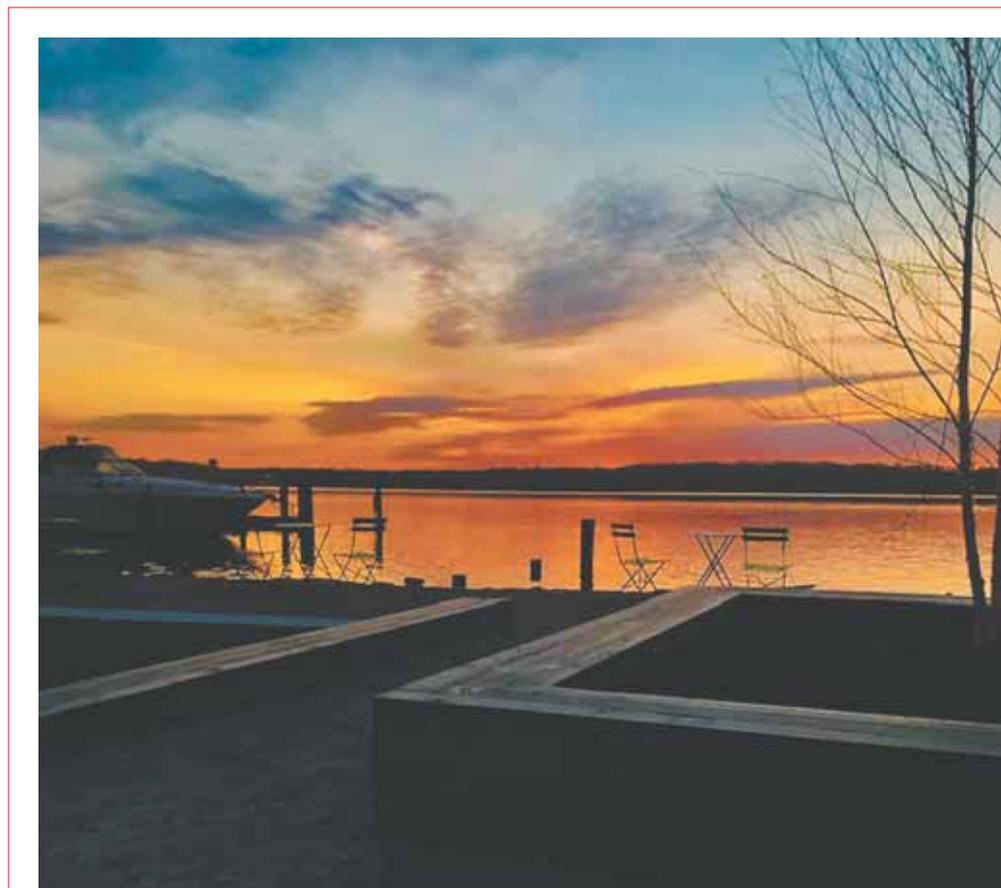


PHOTO BY DIANA BANAT

Sunrise at Waterfront Park

Thursday, April 4

stretch of road.

Safety/accidents in this stretch are not the issue here that the City is using as its basis for this major road change. There are none. If this proposed change is as a result of accident statistics compiled by the City then how can we trust their judgement on all the other major road changes they have already made based on their compilation of data? If the majority of taxpaying citizens do not want or need this extraordinary, unnecessary, and costly road change to this portion of Seminary Road then

why isn't Council and T&ES taking heed and is hell bent on its completion just to satisfy the few people who favor it? What safety measures will it provide if there are no safety problems as Joe Sestak provided in his well-researched statistical data? Council and T&ES need to do better research as to where safety measures actually need to be addressed. They need to be mindful of the vast majority of residents who feel there aren't safety issues of any magnitude between North Howard Street and Quaker

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET

Working on Gas Service Lines

While a workman holds up a “Slow” sign on Skyhill Drive in the Clover College Park area of Alexandria, seven workers and large trucks have begun work to replace 105 gas service lines. Washington Gas estimates the work will be completed within 10 weeks, weather permitting.

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF
AN APPLICATION BY VIRGINIA ELECTRIC AND POWER COMPANY FOR APPROVAL AND
CERTIFICATION OF POTOMAC YARDS UNDERGROUNDING AND GLEBE GIS CONVERSION
PURSUANT TO TITLE 56 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA
CASE NO. PUR-2019-00040**

On March 7, 2019, pursuant to Virginia Code § 56-46.1 and the Utility Facilities Act, Code § 56-265.1 *et seq.*, Virginia Electric and Power Company ("Dominion" or "Company") filed an application and supporting documents for approval and certification of electric facilities ("Application") with the Virginia State Corporation Commission ("Commission").

Specifically, Dominion seeks to convert the overhead portion of 230 kilovolt ("kV") Glebe-Ox Line #248 and 230 kV Glebe-North Alexandria Line #2023 between Glebe Substation (located in Arlington, Virginia), and Potomac Yards North Terminal Station ("Potomac Yards Station") (located in the City of Alexandria, Virginia) to underground lines and to tie the converted lines into Glebe Substation. This conversion would include the removal and replacement of related underground lines comprising a total installation of approximately 2,100 feet of new underground cable from existing manhole #110 to new manhole #111 to Glebe Substation ("Potomac Yards Undergrounding"). Of the 2,100 feet of underground line Dominion proposes to install, 1,100 feet would be installed using microtunneling and 1,000 feet would be installed using existing underground right-of-way. Dominion also proposes to remove 550 feet of underground cable and pipe from Potomac Yards Station to new manhole #111 and to remove 1,000 feet of cable only from new manhole #111 to existing manhole #110. Dominion also seeks to convert and rebuild the Company's existing Glebe Substation to a Gas Insulated Substation (collectively, all the work described above comprises the "Project").

Dominion asserts that the proposed Project is necessary to comply with the expiration of an existing Special Use Permit issued by the City of Alexandria. The Special Use Permit is expected to expire January 1, 2021. According to Dominion, the proposed Project is necessary to permit the Company's remaining transmission facilities in the area to provide adequate service to the Company's existing customers located in the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, consistent with North American Electric Reliability Corporation Reliability Criteria. Dominion further asserts that the proposed Project would improve operational performance, maintain critical energy infrastructure needed to provide continued reliable electric service to facilities depended upon to provide critical services, and to maximize available land use to accommodate necessary transmission terminations.

The proposed Project would require new right-of-way across Four Mile Run. Dominion explains that no feasible alternatives have been submitted to the PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. specifically limited to this proposed Project because the key driver for the Project is the undergrounding requirement in the City of Alexandria's Special Use Permit.

Dominion anticipates an in-service date of May 2022 for the proposed Project, subject to Commission approval and outage scheduling. Dominion estimates the conceptual cost of the proposed Project to be \$122.8 million, including approximately \$59.3 million for transmission-related work and approximately \$63.5 million for substation-related work (2019 dollars).

Description of the Proposed Project

For the existing line relocation under the Potomac Yards Undergrounding, the entire Potomac Yards Station, including three double-circuit 230 kV structures, two single circuit structures and conductors would be removed. Also, approximately 550 feet of two existing double circuit underground lines, currently entering Potomac Yards Substation would be removed and the connection relocated directly into Glebe Substation. Each line consists of two sets of three conductor bundles, with one three-conductor bundle per line. At the tie-in point 550 feet from the existing Potomac Yards Station, four new steel pipes would be installed turning northwest, crossing U.S. Route 1, going under Four Mile Run, and proceeding north into Glebe Substation. Four three-conductor bundles, high-pressure fluid-filled ("HPFF") cables will be removed from the Potomac Yards Station to existing manhole #110, where cables could be removed to facilitate this undergrounding project. This is approximately 1,550 feet, the distance of this line relocation is approximately 1,100 feet.

After the four HPFF cable pipes are installed into Glebe Substation, approximately 2,100 feet of new cable for each pipe would be installed in each pipe from existing manhole #110 to Glebe Substation.

Because the Potomac Yards Undergrounding would be constructed underground, no structure heights are provided.

All distances and directions are approximate. A sketch map of the proposed route accompanies this notice. A more detailed map of the proposed route may be viewed on the Commission's website: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/pur/elec/transline.aspx>.

The Commission may consider a route not significantly different from the route described in this notice without additional notice to the public.

A more complete description of the proposed Project may be found in the Company's Application.

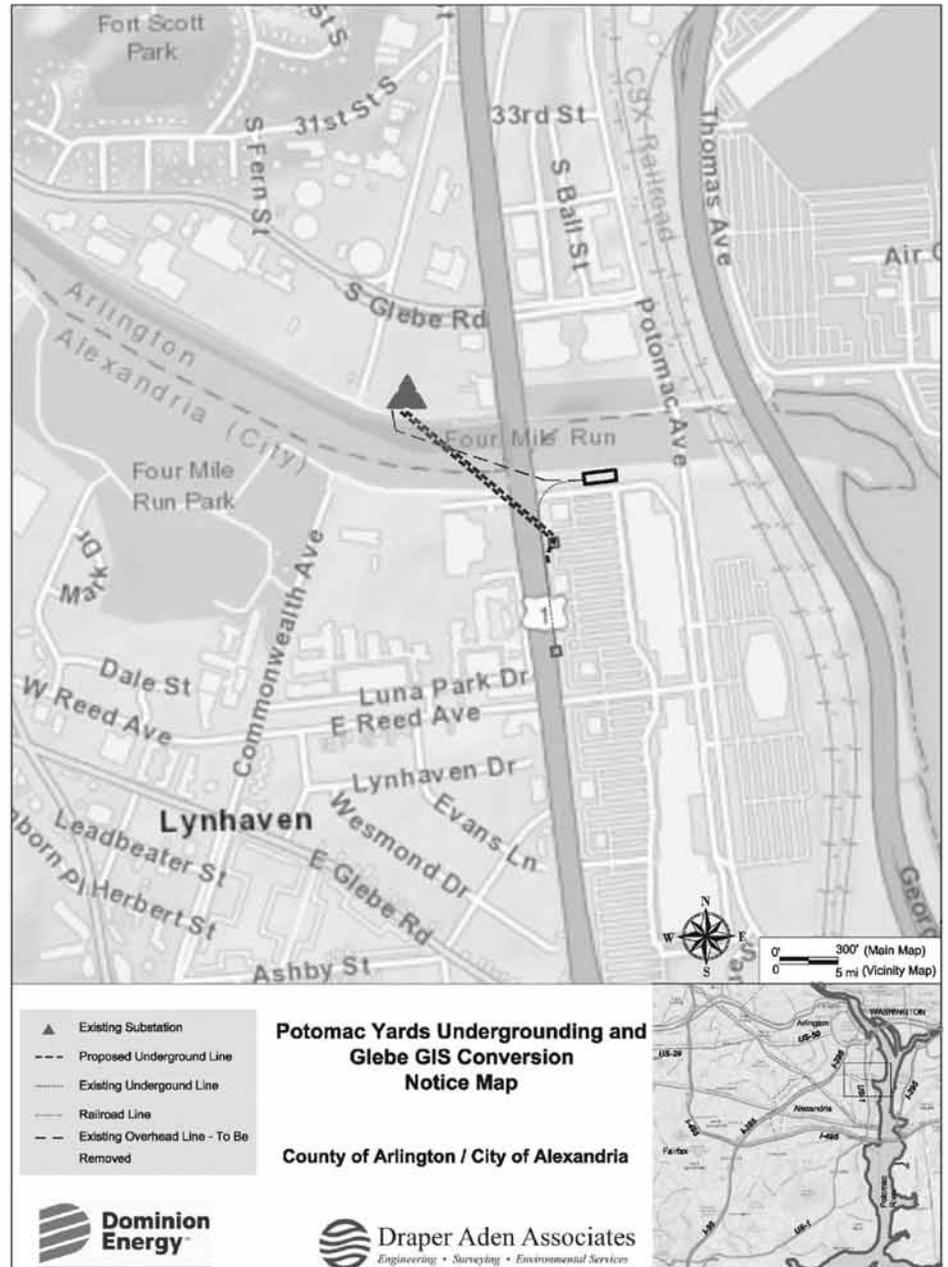
The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Hearing in this proceeding that, among other things, scheduled a public evidentiary hearing to be held on July 23, 2019, at 10 a.m., in the Commission's second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, to receive testimony from members of the public and evidence related to the Application from the Company, any respondents, and the Commission's Staff. Any person desiring to testify as a public witness at this hearing should appear fifteen (15) minutes prior to the starting time of the hearing and contact the Commission's Bailiff.

Copies of the public version of the Application and documents filed in this case also are available for interested persons to review in the Commission's Document Control Center, located on the first floor of the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Interested persons also may download unofficial copies from the Commission's website: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case>.

Copies of the Application and other supporting materials also may be inspected during regular business hours at the following location:

Attn. John Mulligan
Dominion Energy Virginia
10900 Nuckols Road
Suite 400
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Attn. Karl Mortiz
City of Alexandria Planning & Zoning
Room 2100
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314



Attn. Steven Cover
Arlington County Department of Community
Planning and Housing Development
Suite 700, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Copies of the public version of the Application may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company, David J. DePippo, Esquire, Dominion Energy Services, Inc., 120 Tredegar Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. If acceptable to the requesting party, the Company may provide the documents by electronic means.

Any person or entity may participate as a respondent in this proceeding by filing, on or before May 14, 2019, a notice of participation. If not filed electronically, an original and fifteen (15) copies of the notice of participation shall be submitted to Joel H. Peck, Clerk, State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. A copy of the notice of participation as a respondent also shall be sent to counsel for the Company at the address set forth above. Pursuant to Rule 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure ("Rules of Practice"), any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2019-00040. Interested persons should obtain a copy of the Commission's Order for Notice and Hearing for further details on participation as a respondent.

On or before July 16, 2019, any interested person wishing to comment on the Company's Application shall file written comments on the Application with the Clerk of the Commission at the address set forth above. Any interested person desiring to file comments electronically may do so on or before July 16, 2019, by following the instructions on the Commission's website: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case>. Compact discs or any other form of electronic storage medium may not be filed with the comments. All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2019-00040.

All documents filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and Format*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice.

The Commission's Rules of Practice may be viewed at <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case>. A printed copy of the Commission's Rules of Practice and an official copy of the Commission's Order for Notice and Hearing in this proceeding may be obtained by the Clerk of the Commission at the address set forth above.

VIRGINIA ELECTRIC AND POWER COMPANY

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

lane to justify this significant change. Joe Sestak and others deserve our wholehearted gratitude for their interests in attempting to save this ill-conceived notion from becoming reality. Money would be better spent for additional police/salaries instead of this proposed major road change for “safety/accident:” issues when in fact that is not factually correct — check out the incident numbers for this area of concern. Face facts and the desires of the majority — not the few with influential ability and incorrect data.

Bettie McKay
Alexandria

Increased Cut-through Traffic

To the Editor:

Similar to what John Adams said about facts, orthodoxies are stubborn things. In this decade, Complete Streets and Vision Zero traffic policies have become orthodoxies of Alexandria’s city government. To be sure, a reading of City Council Resolution 2244 reveals that any time a road is to be repaved, there is almost no choice but to make it a “Complete Street.” And it is not truly complete if it does not include bike lanes and promote “road equity” for all users, whatever that means. City Council’s resolution may sound good, but its rigid

adherence to these policies may portend a future disaster for traffic flow and mobility in Alexandria.

City Council members should learn the lesson of another orthodoxy held in the 1990s by the elected officials and city manager of that era. Called “Pay-as-You-Go,” the policy mandated that the city never use its AAA-bond rating to fund capital expenditures. Instead it called for paying for expensive school renovations, fire trucks, road improvements, and other large projects from that current year’s operating budget.

This, notwithstanding operating budget limitations, the existence of proven and long-accepted municipal budgeting practices, and the availability of the lowest possible interest rates with a AAA-bond rating in hand.

At the time, those of us who served on the city’s Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee repeatedly expressed our concerns to City Council and the finance staff that Pay-as-You-Go was mortgaging the future of taxpaying citizens. We believed that the policy would lead to

deferral of needed facility renovation and replacement and major infrastructure maintenance projects. Not to mention dramatic increases in tax rates in future years. It all fell on deaf ears. The city manager and finance staff continually maintained that the city had no major needs that would require them to bypass the Pay-as-You-Go policy. Hard stop.

It would become evident in later years

that Pay-as-You-Go was disastrous for the city and taxpayers. Larger school, sewer, facility, and road projects were deferred to the 2000s and even the 2010s, or ignored altogether. In fact, we are still living with the impact of the Pay-as-You-Go decade as the population has grown dramatically and residents clamor for large capital expenditures on the one hand, and complain about ever-increasing tax rates on the other.

The similar intransigence of today’s city leaders regarding Complete Streets and Vision Zero promises to mortgage the future of Alexandrians’ quality of life, mostly for the benefit of a small but vocal minority of two-wheeled residents who have advocated for the policies. This is all playing out, yet again, with the proposed narrowing of Seminary Road, a project facing a growing groundswell of opposition from residents throughout Central Alexandria and the West End.

City Council seems unconcerned that narrowing major vehicular arteries has already led to more congestion and — even more concerning to residents — dangerous cut-through traffic on secondary and neighborhood streets. Since these projects comported with their orthodoxies, City Council’s view seems to be “so be it,” despite the higher risks of future gridlock on arterial roads and tragic accidents on secondary and neighborhood streets.

A more thoughtful approach would be to holistically address the need for arterial traffic flow now and in future years. Beyond

that, the city could still use Complete Streets as a toolkit for making tactical design decisions, rather than as the current strict rule set that drives bad design decisions. This would also afford City Council and staff the leeway to apply judgment on road redesign projects, truly consider the community’s expectations and preferences, and more seriously consider the longer-term implications of their decisions.

Otherwise, years from now, the city councils of the 2010s may be remembered as the group whose disastrous Complete Streets and Vision Zero orthodoxies changed Alexandria for good. But not in a good way.

Bill Rossello
Alexandria

Better Traffic Safety Solutions

To the Editor:

Over the last 10 years cut through traffic and congestion along local, residential roads in central Alexandria has negatively impacted the quality of life for many residents, including my family. In 2016, the Central Alexandria Traffic Task Force was developed to study our anecdotal reports of cut-through traffic and resulting safety concerns.

The December 2017 study results proved
SEE LETTERS, PAGE 25

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HISTORY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FRANCES NORTON-BURTON

Reuben Anthony Burton at work in California.

Making His Ancestors Proud

BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

Some of the biggest fires that the United States has seen have been in California. One man with deep roots in Alexandria, Reuben Anthony Burton, has been fighting these fires in California for almost 20 years. He has been involved in structure fires, medical aids, rescues of all types, vehicle accidents and fires, and all fire calls that were dispatched to his fire department in California. He has fought fires all over California, and up to the Oregon border and Nevada. Every summer for 18 years, Burton has fought large fires that were 1,000 acres or more.

While he and his fellow firefighters were fighting the Darby Fire in Arnold, Calif., the 9-11 attack took place in New York City and at the Pentagon. As a result of the 9-11 attack, all air support was suspended for a short time in the United States that restricted firefighters to tackle fires on the ground only.

Since 2001, fire departments have had a stair-climb to replicate the number of steps firefighters would have had to take to get to the top of the Twin Towers in New York. Burton climbed stairs in the Renaissance Towers Building in Sacramento, Calif. to honor those fallen firefighters. Other fires that he was involved in that had large properties and life losses were: the 2003 Cedar Fire in San Diego, Calif. that involved 273,246 acres, destroyed 2,820 structures and killed 15 people, and the 2015 Valley Fire in Middletown, Calif. which destroyed 1,955 structures and killed four people.

Burton knew he wanted to be a firefighter as early as 6 years old. He would tell his mother, Frances Burton, that when he grew up he would become a firefighter. He began his fire career as an intern in 1998; a

full-time firefighter in 2000 for California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; a fire Apparatus Engineer in 2005 for Nevada County; and a fire prevention officer in 2018. Recently, Burton accepted a position as a Fire Inspector I/Peace Officer for the Cosumnes Community Services Fire Department in Elk Grove, Calif.

He was not the first person in his family to become a firefighter but he was the only member of his family to be a firefighter in California. Two of his cousins in Alexandria from his Robinson/Carter families were firefighters. Clayton Thompson is a retired Captain and Kendall Thompson also a retired Captain served the community at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue.

Burton was born to Reuben Arnold Burton and Frances Norton Burton on July 26, 1975 in Sacramento, Calif. He graduated from Columbia Southern University in Alabama with degrees in Fire Science and Occupational Safety and Health. He is the only child of his mother, Frances Elizabeth Norton-Burton. He is a great fan of the Washington Redskins. His mother is a native Alexandrian, and the daughter of Arthur Norton and Mamie Carter. Norton-Burton's family has been in Alexandria since the Civil War. Like generations of his family, Burton was christened at the family church in Alexandria. He and his mother are descendants of the Robinson and Norton families whose members are buried in the Alexandria Freedmen's Cemetery. His ancestors fought and died to have a chance to be part of the American dream and for his life's dream to help others. When you hear about a fire in California know that one of our own has been out there fighting and saving lives.

Char McCargo Bah is a published author, freelance writer, independent historian, genealogist and a Living Legend of Alexandria. She maintains two blogs, <http://www.theotheralexandria.com> and <http://www.findingthingsforu.com>.



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Some Shelter Pets Clock In as ‘Office Animals’

On their road to adoption.

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

Walking through the halls of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA), a visitor might notice something a bit unexpected: Many of the offices are guarded by baby gates.

No, toddlers aren't afoot. The gates are keeping the shelter's "office animals" safe and secure.

At any given time, as many as 10 cats, dogs and other animals are receiving special attention as office mates of staff members. Some are cats too fearful for the activity of the adoption floor; others are dogs who need close monitoring as they undergo medical treatment. Longer-term office stays are assigned by managers, but some, says Animal Care Associate Elena Carver, "just come hang out with us because they need a little extra love that day."

Carver is one of about 10 Animal Care associates who take care of feeding and medications for the dozens of animals at the shelter every day, including the office foster animals. They also assist the staff veterinarian with administering basic vaccines and perform all "intake" medical exams. "Whoever brings an animal into the shelter hands him to someone like me," Carver said.

Dogs, cats, rabbits and other animals who may "shut down" in the shelter, refusing to eat or interact with people, often find their way into the Animal Care office. They've had a big, chunky pit bull who, in his exuberance, barreled around the office, even pushing over the baby gate. And they've been joined by a series of tiny dogs needing special attention. "I love old, small dogs who might be blind or deaf and feel lost in the kennel," Carver said. If they're fright-

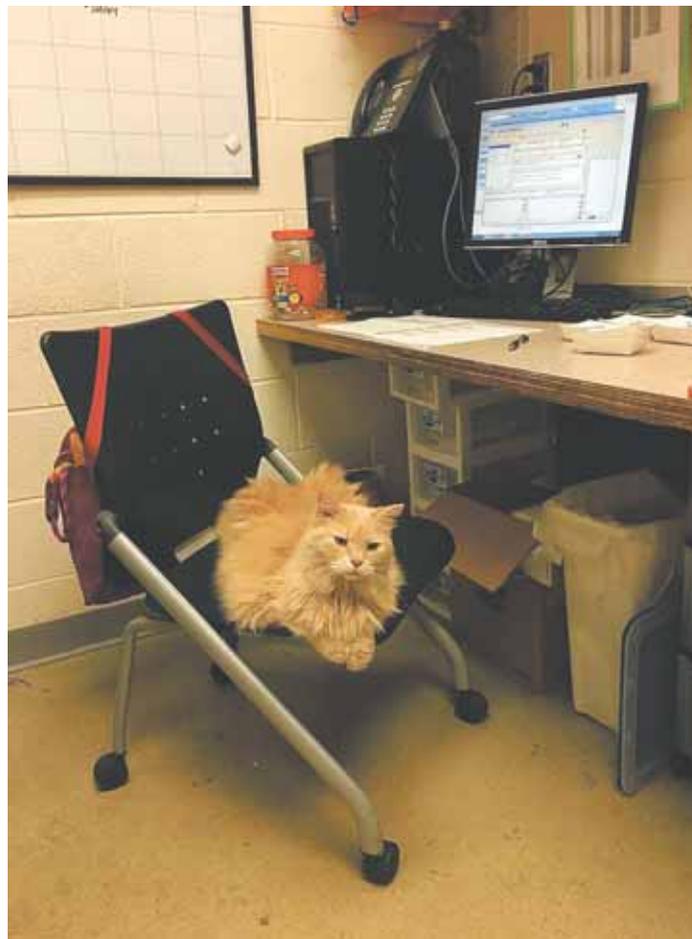
ened or trembling, she'll find a heating pad to warm them up. "I want them to know we're there for them."

Besides comforting the animals, the staff learns a lot about an animal by observing him or her so closely all day. Information gathered during office hours can be useful when providing potential adopters with information as well.

But the value extends beyond information collecting. "To me, it's so lonely without an office cat," said AWLA's Senior Manager of Community Programs Joanna Fortin, who's hosted about 30 cats over her past four years at the AWLA. "Of course, some of them can be a bit clingy, so I may have to plop one in my lap in order to type on the computer. I've had a few cats I would call office assistants. They 'helped' with typing or filing — for better or worse."

Fortin recalls a black-and-white cat named Domino who was a bit sassy with people and needed some extra space. Over several weeks in her office, where Domino had room to explore and a cat tree to climb, his attitude shifted, she said. When a couple who was looking to adopt a lively cat heard about Domino from the AWLA staff, they visited him in Fortin's office and quickly fell in love with him. "They saw his quiriness and decided he was just the cat they were looking for," Fortin said. He went home the same day.

Staying in an office can be a relief for animals seized in neglect or abuse cases, says Krystal Yates, one of the AWLA's Animal Services officers responsible for enforcing city codes, educating the public about animal issues and responding to animal emergencies citywide. A variety of "case animals" have found a safe place in the



Fluffy takes over the computer chair in an AWLA office.

AWLA PHOTOGRAPH BY ELENA CARVER

A 17-year-old calico cat called Cali is now the picture of relaxation. When she arrived at the shelter nearly a year ago she was suffering from the effects of diabetes and kidney disease. Recognizing the need for some special attention, a staff manager asked the administrative team to watch over her. She soon asserted herself as the group's office manager and demanded a bed on the desk of Administrative Specialist Audrey Alessi, where she could keep an eye on the whole crew, though she has tested the desks and chairs of every office staffer during her regular escapades. Diligent monitoring by the staff veterinarian has put her diabetes into remission, and Cali is now available for adoption.

A "resume" put together to provide potential adopters with more information describes Cali as "AWLA Office Catadministrator" whose current duties include extensive napping (20 hours/day), desk decoration and simplification, and "supervising a staff of 35 well-meaning non-cats."

Cali doesn't seem to mind being confined by a baby gate, though she sometimes tries to accompany staff members to meetings. "When we're all ready to go home at night, she gets more energetic," Alessi said. "She'll try to follow us down the hall. But when you say her name, she always comes right back."

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization. Operating the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, which is Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter, the AWLA touches the lives of more than 6,000 animals every year, including strays, lost pets, local wildlife, rescued animals and animals surrendered by their owners. The AWLA is committed to addressing animal homelessness, promoting animal welfare and serving as an educational resource for the community. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org.

Animal Services work area, dogs like Rico, a tiny Chihuahua who had been abandoned in front of the shelter.

When he was found, Rico was extremely underweight, and he needed extra TLC during the weeks when the officers attempted to find his owner and conduct a hearing to officially take custody of the dog.

"We don't know what Rico went through before we met him, but I think it really helped him to spend some time close to people, including the volunteers who walked him," Yates said. "But having animals like him around as we work really helps us, too. Everyone is calmer and more relaxed."



AWLA PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL KAPLAN

Annie sports a staff uniform during her tenure in an AWLA office.



AWLA PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE BERNSTEIN

Animal Care Associate Elena Carver holds two dogs who joined staffers in an office for the day.



AWLA PHOTOGRAPH BY JOANNA FORTIN

Domino the cat expresses some extra energy.

OPINION

'Sharing the Love' with \$10,198

BY MARYANNE BEATTY
DIRECTOR, OUTREACH
SENIOR SERVICES OF ALEXANDRIA

Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) was recently awarded \$10,197.75 by Meals on Wheels America for its participation in the 2018-2019 Share the Love Event as one of eight participating Meals on Wheels America members in the state of Virginia. The state earned a total of \$66,285.40 from Subaru of America for its participation in this year's event.

"SSA is proud to have participated again in this year's Share the Love campaign bringing awareness to the issues of hunger and isolation among our nation's older adults," said Mary Lee Anderson, SSA's executive director. "SSA will use the money awarded to expand its Senior Nutrition Program to serve more homebound seniors residing in the City of Alexandria."

This is the 11th year for the Subaru Share the Love Campaign that runs annually from November – early January. Subaru dealers donate \$250 for every new Subaru purchased or leased to the customer's charity of choice, including Meals on Wheels America. Over the past 11 years, with the continued support through the Share the



Love event, organizations such as SSA have helped to deliver more than 2.2 million meals to homebound seniors and hosted over 340 local events, including many in Alexandria. Almost 1,000 Subaru volunteers support their local Meals on Wheels programs during the holiday season. SSA is thankful to Beyer Subaru of Alexandria for its monthly commitment to delivering meals to older adults in Alexandria.

You can find out more about SSA's Senior Nutrition programs at www.seniorservicesalex.org or contact Nathan Toews, director of SSA's Meal Programs at 703-836-4414, ext. 115 or email him at mealprograms@seniorservicesalex.org.

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2204 Mt. Vernon Avenue

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Requesting Council for Funds To Boost Pay, Retain Jobs

FROM PAGE 1
and custodians didn't make the final 15 "add/delete" proposals [see page 4], on which council will vote next month. A proposed addition of \$100,000 to the schools' allocation could potentially go toward maintaining some custodial positions, if the School Board were to decide to use the money that way.

DASH DRIVERS PUSH FOR PAY RAISE

In search of better pay and benefits, drivers for DASH, Alexandria's largely city-funded bus system, unionized under the Amalgamated Transit Union in November. They and DASH management have been trying to hammer out a collective bargaining agreement since February.

"DASH operators are the lowest paid fixed route operators in the region," according to union literature. "[They] are paid between \$3 to \$10 per hour less than their peers at the Fairfax Connector, the DC Circulator, the Loudoun County Connector and at WMATA Metrobus. They have a 20-year wage progression. ... [Others] in the region reach top pay after only 5-8 years."

The union reckons an additional \$2.8 million from the city would bring DASH wages and benefits up to par. To petition council for that amount in the FY 2020 budget, more than 30 drivers and others attended Saturday's hearing.

Illustrating a theme of respect, recurrent throughout the public testimonies, Marvin Falwell, a 34-year veteran DASH driver, said: "I get more respect out on the street than I do at DASH. ... City hall needs to appreciate the drivers. It's not an easy job, it's getting harder every day."

Arthur Wright, a 19-year DASH veteran, said: "It's not easy operating that bus. And then you get off the bus at the end of the day and you realize that you don't even have enough money. I have to work extra days just to pay my rent It wears on you. My wife's sick. I'm tired of working all these hours."

Didier Balagizi, a DASH driver from Congo, said: "I have brothers and sisters back there, and also here I have a family to support. It is hard. Do you want me to drive eight hours, ten hours, and then after work I'm going to go drive for Uber for another eight hours? ... Is that safe? It is not."

Alphonza "Big Al" Clements, a DASH driver, said: "The sign of a good employer is [not having] a high turnover rate."

But, according to Everett Warren: "When I started with DASH we had 18 people in my class. ... There's only four left. The other 14 started and went to a better paying job."

The union also wants an investigation into what they deem a pattern of DASH hiring anti-union consultants. And they want two DASH drivers, whom they think DASH unfairly terminated, reinstated.

"We have been pleased with our [collective bargaining] progress thus far," said DASH General Manager Josh Baker.

Union organizer Chris Townsend takes a less optimistic tone, saying that, without more progress to the union's satisfaction,



DASH bus drivers, sporting Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 t-shirts, outside city hall after petitioning City Council to help raise their pay at a public hearing on Saturday, April 13.

PHOTO BY BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER



Debra Carter, and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 organizer, at the DASH board meeting on Wednesday, April 10.

PHOTO BY BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER

drivers will take a strike authorization vote on Saturday, April 27.

"I think the city owes it to give you a proper compensation," said Councilman Mohamed "Mo" Seifeldein. He called on DASH to make bargaining headway before the summer Metro shutdown.

The Alexandria Democratic Committee Labor Caucus also expressed support for the drivers' efforts, including toward "a fair wage and benefit package," according to the caucus' co-chairs Russ Davis and Sean Casey.

SCHOOL CUSTODIANS RESIST PRIVATIZATION

Hoping to preserve their jobs against privatization, school custodians asked council to appropriate additional money to the School Board.

In 2007 the School Board agreed to privatize janitorial services through attrition — voluntary job changes, retirement — of school-employed custodians. However, this year, Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings proposed cutting the process short, laying

off some 30 remaining custodians in one fell swoop. Though he's said he aims to improve cleaning efficiency and not to cut costs, the transition would save the schools about \$900,000, according to an earlier estimate from the schools' administration.

Dawn Lucas of the Education Association of Alexandria, an employee representation organization, told council on Saturday: "Our custodians are hard working and dependable employees. ... [They] should not be penalized because [the school system] did not develop and follow an attrition plan. ... While I understand the City Council does not have line item authority in the [schools'] budget, several School Board members have expressed a desire to keep the custodial positions if funding were made available. ... They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

Jamar Hines, a custodian, who testified before council with his son at his side, said: "I show my children that hard work will always keep you on the right path. We work hard. We were told that if you work hard, you can continue your job. That promise has been broken now. ... [A job fair facilitated by the school system] was kind of disrespectful. ... They didn't have a plan for our attrition, and they don't have a plan for our future."

Sharena Hollins, a 17-year veteran school custodian, said losing her healthcare benefits would hamper her daughter's medical treatments.

"When all of you ran for office, all of you here told us you care for the citizens, the children, the community, and now you have a chance to show us," she said. "Put your words into action and please add funds ... so we all can keep our jobs."

The Alexandria Democratic Committee also passed a resolution in favor of existing custodians retaining their positions.



ACPS custodian Sharena Hollins, accompanied by her daughter, tells City Council she wants to preserve her job against privatization.



Jamar Hines, accompanied by his son, tells City Council he wants to preserve his job against privatization.

Opportunities for community service and/or religious education are some of the reasons that parents might consider switching a child from public to private school.



PHOTO COURTESY SSSAS

Making the Leap from Public to Private School

Signs that a public school isn't meeting your child's needs.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Elizabeth and Kent Hillegass noticed that their 6th grade son's grades began to drop while the number of times they received notices from the school regarding his misbehavior had increased. He was also having challenges socially.

"He was really unhappy, the other kids made fun of him, he didn't have any friends and to top it off his grades were awful," said Elizabeth. "I would lie awake at night crying because I felt helpless."

After a series of neuropsychological tests, the Hillegasses learned that their son had ADHD. The testing psychologist advised them to see an education consultant who helped them determine that a quiet school environment with small class sizes would best suit their son's needs. The Hillegasses ultimately decided to send their son to a private school with a student-teacher ratio of 10 to 1.

"We've always been supporters of public education, but the class sizes and noisy environment were too overwhelming for him," said Kent. "It was like he was lost and unable to focus when he was at school. He couldn't sit still and pay attention in classes and was always getting into trouble, which made him feel ostracized, like he was the bad kid in school."

A parent's decision to move a child from public to private school can be based on factors that run the gamut from smaller class sizes to tuition that can cost as much as \$50,000 annually. Although it's a choice that should not be taken lightly, there are signs that it might be time to make the change if it's possible, say education consultants.

"I suggest to parents that they focus on the needs of their child, not on the prestige that they think a private school holds or the sticker on the back of your car that lets everyone know that your child attends a certain school," said Kim Hardy who was the education consultant to the Hillegass family. "There's a range of factors that parents should take into consideration."

The first, advises Hardy, is whether their child is

happy and well adjusted. "If a child is bored or frustrated at school, not just because their grades aren't good and they've given up, but there are also cases where students are making straight As without much effort and are bored because they aren't being challenged."

When the accommodations that a school can offer don't meet the needs of one's child, that's another clue that a change is necessary, suggests Arlington-based education consultant Rita Fetters.

"Some children need to be in a classroom with a low student teacher ratio so that teachers have time to redirect students who have trouble staying focused," she said. "Other students need a lot of exercise and outdoor activity to release energy so that they can focus better in class. Public schools may not be able to offer that."

The Heights in Potomac, Md. builds activity and exercise into each school day including outdoor recess and a challenging physical education program that not only releases energy, but teaches important life skills.

Fetters says some parents make the change because they want specialized opportunities that a public school might not offer.

"If religious education is important to a family, that is certainly one reason to leave a public school," she said. "If a family wants their child to be involved in public service beyond what is required to graduate, they might choose a private school that has community service built in to the curriculum."

One such school is St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School (SSSAS) in Alexandria, Va. "Our school offers religion classes and weekly chapels," said Mandi Sapp of SSSAS. "We also have a ton of service-learning opportunities that students ... do throughout the year, including global service trips offered in Middle and Upper School. We have done a lot of work with ALIVE (ALEXandrians InVolved Ecumenically) in Alexandria."

If a child is unhappy and asks repeatedly to change schools, Fetters believes that is a reason to give serious consideration to academic switch.

"At the end of the day, parents have to take a long, hard look at their child and their family," Fetters said. "They have to find the best school for their family, not the one that's most prestigious or most popular. Does what the school offers as a whole align with your family's values and your child's needs. Whether it's public or private, that's what a parent must determine."

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Beautification

FROM PAGE 6

ity as part of the City of Alexandria's "Spring2Action," event presented by ACT for Alexandria. He recognized some of the faces from years past. He called the group: "Another family."

They lucked out with a sunny day to plant bushes and shrubs outside, fix some of the club's dilapidated bicycles, and neaten some of the rooms inside in time for the 80-100 children that come to the club after school every day. Through the years, the Boys & Girls Club helped him overcome challenges that come from growing up in a lower income situation, and help pave the way for him to go to college. "They gave me my first care package for college," Waller said.

As Waller addressed the volunteers in the game room, he talked about the role-playing activities they do. "We do real-time situational activities" and told them about his history at the club. He mentioned the number of stories he hears from the youths about becoming pro football and basketball players that differ widely from reality in these children's lives, just as when he was growing up. "These are the real stories they need to hear," he said.

The Starbucks group divided up and took on various tasks. "When the kids get off the bus today, it will be totally different," said Mike Menchel, a volunteer who spends



Jackie Galvez from the Starbucks in the Springfield Town Center finds gardening gloves that fit.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE PACKET



Out front, everyone has gardening ideas for the streetscape plan.

much time at the club.

For the Starbucks employees, who came from the Springfield, Kingstowne, Falls Church and Beacon Mall stores, it was part of the company's "Global Month of Service." There were 28 volunteers in all.

"I thought this was a perfect fit," said Jodi Hanaity, manager of the Springfield store on Frontier Drive. "I'm really good at house

repairs," added Hannah Blackerby, a shift supervisor from the Beacon Mall store in the Fairfax County part of Alexandria. Mike Eckstone from Bailey's Crossroads had done this a few years before and took to the front garden, even though he does not have a green thumb. "We'll throw on some new mulch," he said.

The club in Alexandria is part of the Boys

& Girls Clubs of Greater Washington which adheres to the motto "Great Futures Start Here." Activities include Standards of Learning Tutoring, Money Matters, Keystone Club, Sports, and Life Skills Training. The front room in Alexandria had signs for such activities as chess club, basketball, board games and Xbox. There is a gym in the basement as well.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Art Exhibit: “(No) Comfort Zone.”

Through April 28, gallery hours at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. The “(No) Comfort Zone” exhibit reflects people, places and things that are in and/or out of their comfort zone. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

Photography Exhibit: “Ranch

Life.” Through May 5, daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursdays, 2-8 p.m. at Multiple Exposures Gallery, The Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N Union St., Studio 312. Sandy LeBrun-Evans visited Eaton’s Ranch in Wyoming last year and was enamored with the lifestyle and how easy it was to forget the troubles of the world and to get lost in the past. Visit www.multipleexposuresgallery.com or call 703-683-2205.

Art Exhibit: “Bugs. Or Kafka on Prozac.”

Through May 5, gallery hours at The Art League, 105 North Union St., Studio 21 in the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Megan Partridge’s “Bugs. Or Kafka on Prozac” takes a closer look at these tiny creatures that are often overlooked. The artist imparts each arthropod with a personality as distinct as their biology, from the bedraggled bug aptly named Hangover Cricket to the speeding blur in Super Bee. Exhibitions are free and open to the public. Visit www.theartleague.org or call 703-683-1780.

Juried Show: “East Meets West.”

Through May 19, gallery hours at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union St. Ikat weaving, Batik, Sashiko embroidery, Shibori dyeing, hand stamping, and other Eastern techniques and clothing styles are integrated with Western designs and techniques. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work will also be exhibited. Free admission. Call 703-548-0935 or visit www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com for more.

Kathryn Coneway Exhibit. Through May 31, at Huntley Meadows Visitor’s Center, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria. Coneway’s mixed-media art combines collage and photographic transfers, and it expresses her observations of nature. She uses mulberry paper to create a ground of color and texture. A



PHOTO BY SHELLEY CASTLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Attendees at the 2018 block party celebrating their love for their pets.

Love Your Pet Day Block Party

Local businesses will host a block party on Roth & Colvin streets in the West End with proceeds benefiting the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. The kick-off will be held mid-way along Colvin Street at 11am, hosted by Dr. Katy Nelson. Children and leashed pets welcomed. Sunday, April 28, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free admission. Visit www.alexandrialoveyourpetday.com.

reception will be held Sunday, March 10 from 2-4 p.m. Students from Kathryn Coneway’s winter class at Huntley Meadows will also display work. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows.

SATURDAY/APRIL 20

Mount Vernon Flea Market. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at 8717 Fort Hunt Road. Flea market will take place the third Saturday of every month (through September). Refreshments available for sale. Admission is free. Visit mountvernonfleamarket.wordpress.com for more info.

Boundary Stone Bike Tour. 9:15 a.m. at Entrance to East Falls Church Metro Station (under I-66 on Sycamore Street). See 12 historic D.C. boundary stones in Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax County on this 35-mile tour. The pace will be leisurely with many stops with easy-to-moderate difficulty and a few long

uphill climbs on bike trails and paved streets. Bring lunch, water, and any type of bike. No reservations necessary. Sponsored by Center Hiking Club (www.centerhikingclub.org), \$2 for non-members. Contact Bernie Berne at 703-243-0179 or bhberne@yahoo.com.

Hamilton’s BFF & Frenemies

Specialty Tour. 10-11 a.m. at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St. Inspired by the musical Hamilton, hear about Washington, Lafayette, Jefferson, Madison, and Burr, who all came to the tavern, and delve into the issues they faced and how their choices impacted local citizens. This specialty tour is offered every Saturday in April. \$15 per person, \$12 for museum members. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/shop for tickets.

Floral Design Workshop – Spring

Bulbs. 10-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (16-Adult) Enjoy spring colors indoors with a beautiful spring bulb flower arrangement. Learn about the special conditioning and design considerations of working with bulbs from certified designer Betty Ann Galway as she leads participants through creating this spring bulb design to take home. Materials provided for \$30 supply fee. Program fee is \$39/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktaks/ using code 245.F4BB or call 703-642-5173.

Raptor Rapture. 10 a.m.-noon at Belle Haven Park, GWMemorial Parkway. Youngsters of all ages can see big birds called raptors (owls, hawks) up close when the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Secret Gardens Birds and Bees, the National Park Service and the Monarch Teachers Network “host” these birds. These birds were injured and rehabilitated. They cannot survive on their own in the wild. No pets, please. Free. Visit www.fodm.org.

The Biggest Easter Egg Hunt. 10 a.m.-noon at Mount Vernon High

School, 8515 Old Mt Vernon Road. Washington Community Church, a non-denominational church located in the Mount Vernon area, will host The Biggest Easter Egg Hunt, complimented by 20,000 candy-filled eggs, face painting, juggling, inflatables and prizes. Children, through age 12, can register to participate. After the hunt, prizes including stuffed toys, Nintendo Switches and bicycles, will be distributed through a raffle drawing. The Biggest Easter Egg Hunt is open to the community; everyone is welcome to attend. Visit wecchurch.com for more.

Walking With Washington Tour. 2-4 p.m. at Ramsay House, Alexandria Visitor’s Center, 221 King St., Alexandria. Explore important sites associated with George Washington in his hometown of Alexandria. This guided walking tour of historic Old Towne covers significant people and events in Washington’s life and in American history, with stops at Ramsay House, Market Square, Carlyle House, Wise’s Tavern, Duvall Tavern/Charles Lee House, Gadsby’s Tavern, Washington’s townhouse, The Lord Fairfax House, the “Light-Horse” Harry Lee house and Christ Church. Free. Visit washingtonbirthday.com or call 703-379-7460.

“Elegant Easter” Floral Arrangement Workshop. 4-6 p.m. at Bon Vivant Cafe + Market in Del Ray. Participants will create their own unique floral centerpiece for their holiday festivities. Intended for teens to adults, but children are welcomed as guests or helpers at no cost. \$49, includes all instruction, materials and fresh flowers/greens. Tickets are available through Eventbrite.

Country-Western Dance. 7-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance with lessons, 6-7 p.m. and open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages

welcome. Admission for members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org for more.

APRIL 20-28

Architecture Week. Enjoy exclusive tours of recently completed buildings, participate in sketching and virtual reality workshops, visit an architecture school, see an exhibit of award-winning buildings designed by local architects, tour architecturally significant historic churches with expert architects, and build a ‘Scrap City’ or participate in an architectural scavenger hunt. Visit www.aianova.org for more.

APRIL 20-JULY

Living Legends of Alexandria:

African American Activists. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. Living Legends of Alexandria: African American Activists highlights the work of African American men and women who have made important contributions to the growth and productivity of the City of Alexandria. Call 703-746-4356 for more.

MONDAY/APRIL 22

Eco-City Report Card: Is Alexandria Cleaning Up Its Act? 7:15 p.m. At The Hermitage Auditorium, 5000 Fairbanks Ave., Alexandria. Part of the Agenda:Alexandria program, which falls on the fourth Monday of the month, begin at 7:15 p.m. Programs are \$5 each or free with your \$35 membership, payable on-line at www.AgendaAlexandria.org/sign-up page or at the door by check or credit. All are invited to a pre-program dinner if desired. Dinner is 6:45-7:15 p.m., prices starting at \$32 with reservations by the Friday prior to the program. Visit www.Agenda:Alexandria.com.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 24

Denim Day. The City’s Sexual Assault Center (SAC) is sponsoring displays, exhibits, workshops and events around the community to raise awareness of sexual assault and support survivors. The SAC invites the community to show their support for survivors of sexual assault by wearing jeans on Denim Day. For more information and a full list of events and activities, visit alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence.

FRIDAY/APRIL 26

Family Splash Night. 6-9 p.m. At Chiquapin Park Rec Center and Aquatics Facility, 3210 King St., Alexandria. Featuring John Adams and Patrick Henry Schools schools. Enjoy swimming, a floating obstacle course, games, relays, refreshments, music, diving for prizes and more. Different schools are featured at each event but all are welcome. Admission is \$4 per person upon entry. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/Recreation for more.

Play: “Yet I Stand.” 7 p.m., at the Lee Center, Kauffman Auditorium, 1108 Jefferson St. The City’s Sexual Assault Center (SAC) is sponsoring displays, exhibits, workshops and events around the community to raise awareness of sexual assault and support survivors. “Yet I Stand,” is a presented in partnership with Friends of Guest House, the City of Alexandria Domestic Violence



Cleve Francis

Live Music: Cleve Francis

A blend of many musical styles, from country, to blues and jazz. Enjoy Cleve Francis for an evening of musical storytelling. Saturday, April 27, 7:30-10:15 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. \$35. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Program, and SAC. For more information and a full list of events and activities, visit alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence.

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

Garden Day Craft Sale. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St. Stop by historic Carlyle House during Alexandria Garden Day to tour the museum and purchase crafts by local artisans. Visit www.carlylehouse.org or call 703-549-2997.

Project Discovery Walkathon. 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. At Fort Ward Park, 4301 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Come join the fun at the 23rd annual Project Discovery Walkathon. Based at T.C. Williams High School and the Minnie Howard 9th Grade Center, Project Discovery prepares and motivates low-income and first generation college-eligible students to access opportunities in higher education. This Walkathon is the spring fundraiser and all proceeds go to the program. Free. Visit alexandriava.gov/ProjectDiscovery.

Native Plant Sale. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. in the parking lot at 1701 N. Quaker Lane. Plant sale hosts 10 vendors from three states selling native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade. Free admission. Call 571-232-0375 or visit www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org.

Watercolor Workshop – Color Theory. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (16-Adult) Understanding color is essential to creating work that captivates the eye and evokes certain moods or emotions. Through a series of exercises lead by artist Dawn Flores, learn to understand tints, shades and tones, the color wheel, complementary colors, warm and cool colors and color schemes. Make useful charts and swatches that can be used for future reference. \$93/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code F91.8B8F or call 703-642-5173.

Hamilton's BFF & Frenemies Specialty Tour. 10-11 a.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 North Royal St. Inspired by the musical Hamilton, hear about Washington, Lafayette, Jefferson, Madison, and Burr, who all came to the tavern, and delve into the issues they faced and how their choices impacted local citizens. This specialty tour is offered every Saturday in April. \$15 per person, \$12 for museum members. Call 703-746-4242 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/shop for tickets.

Becoming American. 10 a.m.-noon Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Carefully curated, *Becoming American* is a selection of documentaries representing a selection of diverse immigration experiences drawn from both the past and present. Each of the sessions is moderated followed by discussion after the viewing. Light refreshments will be available. This program is designed for adults, high school students may attend with an adult. Free, pre-registration is required at shop.alexandriava.gov.

Community Pet Fair. 10 a.m.-noon in front of the Ruby Tucker Family Center at 322 Tancil Court. The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) will hold a free Pet Care Fair, offering rabies and other vaccinations and other services at no cost for pets in Alexandria's underserved communities. Residents can also take advantage of basic grooming and nail trims, pet food, behavioral advice and more. Dogs must be on leash, and cats must be transported in carriers. Visit alexandrianimals.org for more.

Earth Day Celebration. 10 a.m.-2



Metro School of the Arts (MSA) student Emily Gross with MSA instructor Charlie Abel.

Spring Ballet: Coppelia

Coppelia is a charming, humorous ballet of infatuation, deception, and finally a love that prevails. Dance along with Swanhilda and Franz as they find their way to love and "happily ever after." Sunday, April 28 and May 5, 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. at Metropolitan School of the Arts, 5775 Barclay Ave., Alexandria. \$12. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org for more.

p.m. at the Lenny Harris Memorial Fields at Braddock Park, 1005 Mount Vernon Ave. The City of Alexandria will host the 26th Annual Alexandria Earth Day and Arbor Day celebration. This family-friendly event includes the ninth annual Upcycling Showcase, where students from Alexandria City Public Schools will present unique fashion items and other upcycling creations based on the event theme, "Climate Change – Take Action." Admission is free, and food and beverages will be available for purchase. Visit alexandriava.gov/EarthDay or call 703-746-5592.

Bus Tour: "From Slavery to Freedom." 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon. This special bus tour begins at Mount Vernon with an exclusive viewing of Mount Vernon's Lives Bound Together exhibition, on slavery at George Washington's plantation. Afterward, visitors will walk to Mount Vernon's Slave Cemetery for a site talk by archeologists, followed by a lunchtime lecture (box lunch provided). Guests will board a bus to Alexandria and visit Freedom House Museum, then on to Alexandria's Contraband and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial. The tour will conclude at Mount Vernon at 4 p.m. The tour will go rain or shine and has extended periods of walking over uneven terrain. \$40. Get tickets at shop.alexandriava.gov/.

Celebrate Historic Garden Week.

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Five of Old Town Alexandria's finest private homes and gardens will open to the public, as part of Historic Garden Week in Virginia, the oldest and largest house and garden tour in the nation. This walking tour features private townhomes and secluded gardens located along the tree lined streets of Alexandria's historic district, refreshments and a marketplace at the Athenaeum, and is just steps away from Old Town's fine dining and boutique shopping. \$45 in advance at www.vagardenweek.org or at the Alexandria Visitor Center at Ramsay House (221 King St.). On the date of the tour, \$55 at the Athenaeum (201 Prince St.) and at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House (323 South Fairfax St.). Tickets will not be sold at individual tour homes.

Spring Open House. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at EMMAvet Veterinary Urgent Care, 1628A Belle View Blvd. EMMAvet and the Belle View Shopping Center welcome the community to their Spring Open House for a clinic tour, raffle prizes, food from Primo, and exclusive deals from many of Belle View Shopping Center neighbors. Well-behaved and leashed dogs are welcome. Free. Call 703-373-3774 or visit emmavet.com for more.

Spring Benefit Concert: "Kindred Spirits." 3 p.m. at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. Celebrate connections, including friendship, kinship, sisterhood, and even

frenemies. This event will feature Sopranessence's arrangements of music from popular operas & operettas such as Hansel and Gretel, The Mikado and Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*; audience-favorite musicals like *Miss Saigon*, *Cinderella*, *Wicked*, and more. Proceeds support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Through Friday, April 26: \$20; \$10, ages 12 & under. All tickets \$25 at the door. Visit ourconvergence.org for more.

Live Music: Cleve Francis. 7:30-10:15 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. A blend of many musical styles, from country, to blues and jazz. Enjoy Cleve Francis for an evening of musical storytelling. \$35. Call 703-549-7500 or visit www.birchmere.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 28

Britain on the Green. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. The 22nd Britain on the Green show will feature two hundred British cars and motorcycles, music, food trucks, youth activities, and admission to Gunston Hall and grounds. \$10 adult; \$5 children 6-18. Visit www.capitaltriumphregister.com/bog/ or call 703-522-6571.

Love Your Pet Day Block Party. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Local businesses will host a block party on Roth & Colvin streets in the West End with proceeds benefiting the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. The kick-off will be held mid-way along Colvin Street at 11am, hosted by Dr. Katy Nelson. Children and leashed pets welcomed. Free admission. Visit www.alexandrialoveyourpetday.com.

Spring Ballet: Coppelia. 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. at Metropolitan School of the Arts, 5775 Barclay Ave., Alexandria. Coppelia is a charming, humorous ballet of infatuation, deception, and finally a love that prevails. Dance along with Swanhilda and Franz as they find their way to love and "happily ever after." \$12. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org for more.

APRIL 29-MAY 26

The "Weekends" Kiln Club Show. Gallery hours at Scope Gallery, 105 North Union St., ground floor Studio 19 of the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Artisan creations are as unique as that match made in heaven, ideal as an anniversary gift, engagement congratulations or to commemorate the hoopla of getting hitched. Capture a moment in clay, recall a scene with ceramics and upgrade important goings-on with Scope Gallery. Call 703-548-6288 or visit www.scopegallery.org for more.

TUESDAY/APRIL 30

Rare 1792 Gold Coin on Display. In the Donald W. Reynolds Education Center, at George Washington's Mount Vernon. On the 230th anniversary of George Washington's first inauguration, visitors will have the opportunity to view the 1792 Washington President gold eagle pattern coin, the earliest gold pattern proposed for U.S. coinage and the only gold coin with this design. This unique piece, on loan indefinitely from a private owner, will remain on view as part of Mount Vernon's educational experience for its more than 1 million annual visitors. Visit mountvernon.org/1792coin.

Twilight & Tipple Tours. 6-9 p.m. at Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway. Experience Frank Lloyd Wright's Pope-Leighey House by twilight. This tour series is a rare chance to see one of Wright's houses illuminated against a night sky. Grab a drink, included in the price of the tour ticket, and walk through the

house on a leisurely, open house style tour with plenty of time to take stunning photos. \$35. Visit www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/ for more.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 2-4

Sailing on String. Thursday-Friday, 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, 10 and 11:30 a.m. at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Arts on the Horizon produces original work exclusively for children ages 0-6 and their families. Follow two curious explorers on a voyage into a world made of string. This gentle, engaging performance features object transformation, movement, live string music, and captivating design. Best for children ages 0-2 and their families. Sign interpreted performance May 11, 10 a.m. \$7. Visit www.ArtsOnTheHorizon.org or call 571-549-1270.

FRIDAY/MAY 3

UCM Give From the Heart Gala. 6 p.m. at Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road. Hosted by The Friends of UCM, the 2019 Gala is also part of UCM's 50th Anniversary Celebration. The theme for the yearlong celebration is "50 Years of Neighbors Helping Neighbors." Honorary Co-Chairs are U.S. Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) and Mrs. Addy Krizek, both former UCM Board members. \$200. RSVP at www.ucmagency.org.

Fostering the Future Gala 2019. 7 p.m. at Hummingbird, 220 South Union St. The Fund for Alexandria's Child hosts its Annual Fostering the Future Event — Captain's Night. This annual fundraiser supports the work of The Fund in providing life enriching opportunities for children in foster care and those at risk of abuse and neglect. Join for an evening of live/silent auction items, an oyster bar, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, music and dancing. Nautical or cocktail attire. \$100. Visit www.FFAC2019.givesmart.com for tickets.

MAY 3-11

Old Town Cocktail Week. Take part in Alexandria's growing craft scene and enjoy specialty cocktails at restaurants and attend more than 20 events at boutiques, historic sites, restaurants and more. Old Town Cocktail Week is presented by Old Town Business with support from the King Street Corridor Initiative. Old Town Cocktail Week kicks off with Art on the Rocks on May 3, presented by The Art League at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and culminates with a Meet the Makers Virginia Spirits Tasting Event on May 11 at Gadsby's Tavern Museum. Admission varies depending on the event; visit OldTownCocktailWeek.com for details.

MAY 3-JUNE 2

Art Exhibit: "Sacred Feminine." Gallery hours at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. This show explores female energy, the power of life and birth; it connects that energy to ideas, expressions, dreams, life and all of existence. Tap in to your Sacred Feminine and channel the goddess. An opening reception takes place Friday, May 3, 7-9 p.m. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

SATURDAY/MAY 4

Ribbon Roses Workshop. 10 a.m.-noon at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Roses made of ribbons make beautiful and enduring gifts. Hear snippets of ribbon history while crafting a ribbon

PHOTO BY LAURA MANN

CALENDAR

rose. Supplies included and refreshments served. Class meets at the Historic House. \$28/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code AC9.3578 or call 703-642-5173.

Pillars to Pavers. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St. This walking tour will explore the streets of Alexandria with stops to highlight how buildings have been preserved and reused for future generations to enjoy. \$35. Call 703-548-1789 or visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

Grand Opening. Noon-6 p.m. at School of Rock Alexandria, 3260 Duke St. Family fun and kid friendly event. Discounts on programs and camps. Regional School of Rock House bands will be performing live. Ribbon cutting and guitar smashing ceremony. Free trial lessons. Raffle. Food and fun. Free. Call 571-376-ROCK or visit Alexandria.schoolofrock.com.

New Musical Reading: Ponzi. 2 p.m. at Nannie J. Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. A first reading of the new musical Ponzi, with music and lyrics by Lois Ccesarini. Weary of war and want, people were anxious to believe their fortunes would soon change for the better. Enter one Charles Ponzi, with his signature smile and cock-sure confidence, ready to take anyone's hard-earned money and turn it into gold. No tickets required; free will donation.

SUNDAY/MAY 5

Spring Ballet: Coppelia. 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. at Metropolitan School of the Arts, 5775 Barclay Ave., Alexandria. Coppelia is a charming, humorous ballet of infatuation, deception, and finally a love that prevails. Dance along with Swanilda and Franz as they find their way to love and "happily ever after." \$12. Visit www.metropolitanarts.org for more.

MONDAY/MAY 6

Mouse in the House. 10-11 a.m. at Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St. Adapted from the book "The Mouse of Amherst" by Elizabeth Spire, Mouse in House reveals an unlikely friendship between a lively mouse and reclusive 19th-century poet Emily Dickinson. Free. Call 703-933-1111 or visit www.janefranklin.com/mouse-show.

Garden Sprouts Spring-Nature Playgroup. 10-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (3-5 yrs.) Preschoolers enjoy nature-themed toys and puzzles while parents chat. Explore monthly topics with games, songs, activities and a garden walk. The May topic is worms. \$8/child. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code EDA.9A9B or call 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 7-11

Sailing on String. Tuesday-Friday, 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, 10 and 11:30 a.m. at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Arts on the Horizon produces original work exclusively for children ages 0-6 and their families. Follow two curious explorers on a voyage into a world made of string. This gentle, engaging performance features object transformation, movement, live string music, and captivating design. Best for children ages 0-2 and their families. Sign interpreted performance May 11, 10 a.m. \$7. Visit www.ArtsOnTheHorizon.org or call 571-549-1270.

THURSDAY/MAY 9

Garden Tour & Tea. 1-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green



PHOTO BY CLENDIA BOOTH

An Eastern screech owl is one example of the raptors visitors can see up close.

Raptor Rapture

Youngsters of all ages can see big birds called raptors (owls, hawks) up close when the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Secret Gardens Birds and Bees, the National Park Service and the Monarch Teachers Network "host" these birds. These birds were injured and rehabilitated. They cannot survive on their own in the wild. No pets, please. Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m.-noon at Belle Haven Park, GWMemorial Parkway. Free. Visit www.fodm.org.

Spring Road. (Adult) Tour the lush demonstration gardens with master gardener docents. View show-stopping plants of spring and learn how to grow them. Hear about Green Spring's past and how horticultural and historical resources are shared with visitors today. \$32. Call 703-941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988.

Archaeology After Dark: Fort Delaware and the Alexandria VCP. 6:30 p.m. at The Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St. Lab Manager Kevin Bradley introduces the Alexandria Veterans Curation Program (VCP) and its unique mission to serve military veterans and rehabilitate at-risk United States Army Corps of Engineers archaeological collections. He will highlight the program's preservation efforts of the Fort Delaware Civil War prison camp collection. \$12/person; \$10 FOAA/OHA members. Visit www.foaa.info/events.

Audubon at Home. 7:30-9 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. The Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society presents Audubon at Home. For membership and other information, visit vnps.org/potowmack/.

FRIDAY/MAY 10

Garden Talk-Purple Plants to Punch up the Garden. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Punch up a garden with purple. Whether a warm or cool color garden, purple makes a great accent. Extension Master Gardeners show how to incorporate this color into a garden all year round with flowers, foliage, and fruits. \$10/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 9E2.831B or call 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/MAY 11

WPHS Car Show. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at West Potomac High School, 6500 Quander Road. Open to all vehicle makes, models, years. People's Choice awards for favorite overall, engine, and "Diamond in the Rough." Free admission for spectators; show participants, \$20. Music, raffle, concessions, event t-shirt available. The is the largest fundraiser held for WPHS PTSA All Night Grad Celebration. Sponsors for the event are also needed. Visit

www.angcWestPotomac.com for more.

Build a Rain Barrel Workshop. 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. Rain barrels collect rain water and reduce erosion from a downspout and help save money on water bills. Attach a hose and use it to water plants and flower beds. \$55. Registration is required, register online prior to the workshop at nvsxcd-velocitypayment-com.3dcartstores.com/Rain-Barrels_c_8.html.

Watercolor on Canvas. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Learn to paint with watercolor on canvas with the help of artist Marni Maree. The process for this medium is very different from paper and quite fun. Experience painting more "subtractively," by put-ting paint on the canvas then moving and removing the color to create the subject. Bring photo references of what you want to paint. \$93/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 2A7.9143 or call 703-642-5173.

Paint-A-Pot Workshop. 10-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (16-Adult) Get crafty at Green Spring Gardens wit some fun, flavored teas for you to sip while decorating a clay flower pot with paint and decoupage. Green Spring staff will provide the supplies and know-how, participants provide the creativity. \$38/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 624.F5D9 or call 703-642-5173.

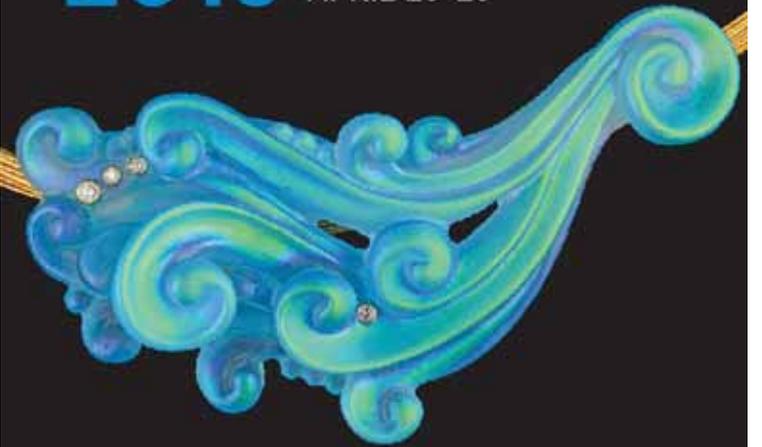
Plants & Design-Season-Long Beauty. 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) May is a great time to plan for season-long beauty in the garden. Get to know great plant combinations for home, wildlife, and pollinator gardens, including easy-to-grow edibles and showy perennials. Horticulturalist Brenda Skarphol will demonstrate how to divide plants and discuss how to best care for new plantings and divisions. \$18/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code B82.5679 or call 703-642-5173.

Becoming American. 10 a.m.-noon Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

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ENTERTAINMENT



High-fire creamer-sugar set hand printed with nasturtiums by Pam Eisenmann of Springfield; Crystalline-glazed vase by Bikki Stricker of Falls Church; High-fire stoneware platter brush painted with koi said to bring prosperity with love seal detail in red by Tracie Griffith Tso of Reston; Warm woodfired pitcher by Stephen Lally of Alexandria; Emerald crystalline-glazed porcelain plate by Lorraine Colson of Alexandria.

The "Weekends" Kiln Club Show

Artisan creations are as unique as that match made in heaven, ideal as an anniversary gift, engagement congratulations or to commemorate the hoopla of getting hitched. Capture a moment in clay, recall a scene with ceramics and upgrade important goings-on with Scope Gallery. April 29-May 26, gallery hours at Scope Gallery, 105 North Union St., ground floor Studio 19 of the Torpedo Factory Art Center. Call 703-548-6288 or visit www.scopegallery.org for more.

Carefully curated, *Becoming American* is a selection of documentaries representing a selection of diverse immigration experiences drawn from both the past and present. Each of the sessions is moderated followed by discussion after the viewing. Light refreshments will be available. This program is designed for adults, high school students may attend with an adult. Free, pre-registration is required at shop.alexandriava.gov.

Pillars to Pavers. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St. This walking tour will explore the streets of Alexandria with stops to highlight how buildings have been preserved and reused for future generations to enjoy. \$35. Call 703-548-1789 or visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

Container Gardening for Food, Fun and Beauty. 10:30 a.m.-noon at Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road. Learn to grow edible and ornamental plants in containers on a porch, deck, balcony or patio. This workshop will cover soil, containers, maintenance and selection of suitable plants. This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. Free. Advance registration requested at mgnv.org. Questions? Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

The Alexandria Kinderchoir Performance. Noon at the La Bella Strada Festival, 100 E. Windsor Ave. The Alexandria Kinderchoir, founded in 2015 as The Del Ray Kinderchoir, is Alexandria's only children's community choir, with choristers now heralding from across the city. The non-profit is celebrating its growth with a name change, coinciding with a move to Convergence for its larger rehearsal and performance space. Visit www.alexandriakinderchoir.org for more.

Family Fun-Mothers in Nature. 12:30-1:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (5-Adult) Learn all about mothers and babies in the natural world. Butterflies, frogs, and even flowers have amazing life cycles. Take home a flower and its baby (a seed) and watch the life cycle unfold. \$8/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code DDC.2F8D or call 703-642-5173.

SUNDAY/MAY 12

Mother's Day Tea. 1-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (Adults) Chef and food historian Nora Burgan highlights culinary traditions associated with mothers and Mother's Day. Enjoy cooking demonstrations for chocolate-dipped strawberries and strawberry shortcake - just like Mom used to make. A special afternoon tea menu tops off the festivities. Favor bag included with tea. Programs are

by reservation only. Call 703-941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988. \$48 (program + tea); \$18 (program only).

MONDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 13-19
National Public Gardens Week.

Come by Green Spring Gardens and celebrate National Public Gardens Week with tours, displays, programs and annual Spring Garden Day plant sale highlighting some of the interesting and exciting plant and history projects that Green Spring has to enjoy. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring or call 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/MAY 14

Simpson Garden Stroll. 10-11 a.m. at Simpson Park Gardens, 420 E. Monroe St. Join in the first stroll of the year at Simpson Gardens. Tour the gardens' demonstration beds that feature waterwise gardening, scented plants, plants that attract pollinators, plants that prefer shade, and plants that illustrate the use of structure and texture. Extension Master Gardeners will be in the garden to answer questions on sustainable gardening practices. Free. Call 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.

TUESDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 14-18

Sailing on String. Tuesday-Friday, 10:30 a.m.; Saturday, 10 and 11:30 a.m. at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Arts on the Horizon produces original work exclusively for children ages 0-6 and their families. Follow two curious explorers on a voyage into a world made of string. This gentle, engaging performance features object transformation, movement, live string music, and captivating design. Best for children ages 0-2 and their families. \$7. Visit www.ArtsOnTheHorizon.org or call 571-549-1270.

SATURDAY/MAY 18

Mount Vernon Flea Market. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at 8717 Fort Hunt Road. Flea market will take place the third Saturday of every month (through September). Refreshments available for sale. Admission is free. Visit mountvernonfleamarket.wordpress.com for more info.

Green Spring Garden Day and Big Plant Sale. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia (MGNV) and the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society will be joining over 40 vendors selling plants at Green Spring Gardens. There will be a bake sale and food trucks. This event is hosted by Friends of Greens Spring Gardens (FROGS) and proceeds help purchase plants for the gardens and support educational efforts at Green Spring. Free. Visit

www.friendsofgreenspring.org/programs-a-events/spring-garden-day-2019 or call FROGS at 703-642-5173.

Becoming American. 10 a.m.-noon Alexandria's History Museum at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Carefully curated, *Becoming American* is a selection of documentaries representing a selection of diverse immigration experiences drawn from both the past and present. Each of the sessions is moderated followed by discussion after the viewing. Light refreshments will be available. This program is designed for adults, high school students may attend with an adult. Free, pre-registration is required at shop.alexandriava.gov.

Pillars to Pavers. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St. This walking tour will explore the streets of Alexandria with stops to highlight how buildings have been preserved and reused for future generations to enjoy. \$35. Call 703-548-1789 or visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

The Alexandria Kinderchoir Spring Concert. 3:30 p.m. at Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. The Alexandria Kinderchoir, founded in 2015 as The Del Ray Kinderchoir, is Alexandria's only children's community choir, with choristers now heralding from across the city. The non-profit is celebrating its growth with a name change, coinciding with a move to Convergence for its larger rehearsal and performance space. Visit www.alexandriakinderchoir.org for more.

SATURDAY/MAY 25

Pillars to Pavers. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden, 614 Oronoco St. This walking tour will explore the streets of Alexandria with stops to highlight how buildings have been preserved and reused for future generations to enjoy. \$35. Call 703-548-1789 or visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

SATURDAY/JUNE 8

Floral Design - Contemporary Pavé Arrangement. 1-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. (16-Adult) Certified Floral Designer Betty Ann Galway shares techniques for constructing and balancing a beautiful, contemporary, pavé floral arrangement of grouped flowers. Pavé design groups flowers in a grid, like a paver, for a gorgeous, modern effect. Make and arrangement to enjoy at home. Later, reuse the container to practice. Materials provided for \$30 supply fee. Program fee is \$39/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes/ using code 9C6.A2DC or call 703-642-5173.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 12

what many individual residents have been stating, the volume of cars diverting from arterial roads to our local, residential streets averages thousands per day. The study also found that 42 percent of this trip volume originates and ends outside of the City of Alexandria. The resulting congestion and safety issues are top of mind for impacted Alexandria residents. This is particularly concerning given a recent VDOT study which showed that traffic within Central Alexandria will reach unsustainable proportions by 2020, even during non-peak hours.

City officials are right to work to address this trend and the resulting safety impacts. I am concerned, however, that the focus has been to lower speeds and reduce driving lanes on the roads intended to sustain higher volumes of cars. Unfortunately, these changes, such as those on King Street and Quaker Lane, have resulted in significant safety issues on connecting local and neighborhood streets. These streets are taking on increasing numbers of frustrated drivers who are speeding, not stopping at stop signs, and damaging or totalling legally parked cars in front of residential homes. Despite these impacts, the speed limits on neighborhood roads remain unchanged and are the same as arterial roads, enforcement is inadequately funded to cover the need, and now the city is moving forward with a proposed “road diet” for another major corridor, Seminary Road. Two of the three proposals up for consideration reduce from four



Traffic on Cambridge Road.

to two the number of travel lanes on this major route.

Seminary Road should remain four lanes, and none of the three proposals put forward is sufficient to address concerns raised by the impacted neighborhoods. Seminary Road is the home of our local hospital and a fire station. Beginning in 2020, it will also become the connecting corridor for Douglas MacArthur elementary students traveling in cars and buses to and from their swing space

in the former Patrick Henry School building. These are just some of the many critical reasons why reducing the number of driving lanes on Seminary is inappropriate and will only exacerbate existing traffic and safety concerns in Central Alexandria.

That said, Seminary Road is one of many areas in Central Alexandria that needs safety improvements, and I support making appropriate changes to that end. I ask that the city instead consider the following traffic and safety changes that will meet the needs of all Central Alexandria residents seeking relief:

- ❖ Allocate the necessary resources to increase enforcement of traffic violations in all of Central Alexandria. This must also include neighborhood streets.
- ❖ Reduce lane widths to 10 feet to encourage drivers to slow down, create sufficient space for bike lanes in areas of need, and create additional buffer space between the road and sidewalks.
- ❖ Adjust speed limits to ensure residential/local street speeds are slower than the speeds for arterial roads.
- ❖ Increase pedestrian safety by installing more crosswalks and using crosswalk flashing lights.
- ❖ Install traffic lights at intersections that are unsafe for turning vehicles.
- ❖ Widen sidewalks to allow cyclists off-road options.

I am proud to live in the City of Alexandria, but my quality of life is hurting. The sea of red “Traffic Voter” signs throughout

Central Alexandria last year demonstrate that I am not alone. We are frustrated city officials continue to take steps only to make the situation worse.

I urge city officials to rethink road diets of arterial roads and take these better steps to improve our traffic, our safety, and our peace of mind. That’s a vision worth pursuing.

Jill Hoffman
Alexandria

Chaos Reigns

To the Editor:

The more I look at the city’s Vision Zero web page with all the sanctimonious pledges by all the city officials, the more disgusting the city’s concessions to “scooters run amok” seems to be.

While scooters are not mentioned as a means of conveyance in the city’s 2017 Vision Zero plan, that’s not to say they don’t fit within the “multimodal” description of transportation in this plan. The city’s vision zero program has been overwhelmed by a disruptive actor (scooters) and someone will shortly die because this “test phase” runs unchecked.

In my opinion, the Vision Zero plan is a way to spend money on alternative transportation modes and socially engineer residents out of their cars. The commitment to safety is certainly an important by-product.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 28

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ASF Apprentices Aid in Rebuilding Efforts

FROM PAGE 1

Seifert added. “The response from the community has been heartwarming. We have received calls, emails and overwhelming offers of support. We feel very fortunate that the fire didn’t do more damage. We are in the process of cleaning and rebuilding the affected portions of the Seaport Center and we will be back to 100 percent of our operations as soon as possible.”

According to Seifert, everything was cleared out of the first floor and a professional cleaning service assessed and cleaned the water, fire and smoke damage. The second floor was not impacted by the fire itself but suffered smoke damage, which was also cleaned.

“Most of the tools and equipment on the first floor will have to be replaced,” Seifert said. “We will then begin to rebuild the first floor so as to get our apprentices back in their workspace.”

The ASF is using the fire as a teaching experience for its program apprentices.

“Our apprentices are learning to work through a difficult event, keep their poise and positive attitude, and dig in to the hard work of rebuilding,” Seifert said.

The ASF used the recent Spring2Action initiative to raise awareness about the fire and rebuilding efforts. The organization raised \$46,976, seventh among 162 participating nonprofits.

Founded in 1993 by Joe Youcha, the ASF Apprentice Program is a nationally recognized program that provides struggling young adults the career, educational and life skills necessary to secure and maintain employment.

“Through adult mentoring, project-based learning and the craft of wooden boat building, ASF provides a safe haven for young people to grow, gain self-esteem and become thriving, self-sufficient citizens,” said Seifert, who spent 12 years with the foundation as chief fundraiser before becoming executive director in July of 2018.



An apprentice with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation removes a section of charred wood from the Seaport Center April 10 following a fire in the building on April 3.



Apprentices with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation gather outside the Seaport Center April 10 during clean up work following a fire on April 3 that damaged the first floor workshop.

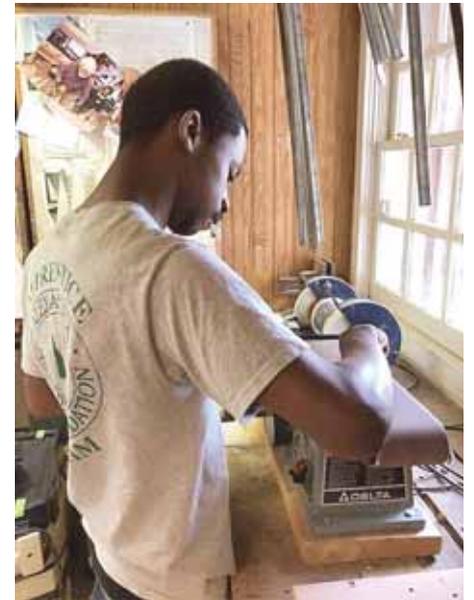
Under Seifert’s leadership, a newly formed Board of Directors led by Helen Morris and a large matching donation received in July, ASF is planning a growth strategy. For the past year, the Foundation has focused on refining all aspects of its Apprentice Program curriculum for improved retention and placement; has retained local marketing firms, Hudson Studios and Ironistic, to recreate its website and update its brand; and is building a fleet of small boats to serve its “on-the-water” boating skills portion of the apprentice curriculum.

“We are also gearing up for our major annual fundraiser, Wine on the Water, to be held on Friday, June 1, on Alexandria’s waterfront,” Seifert added.

ASF is currently working with the city to secure additional space on the water to serve more apprentices and has formed a collaborative with local organizations Tall Ship Providence Foundation, Visit Alexandria, Alexandria Archaeology and Office of Historic Alexandria to heighten maritime heritage awareness along the waterfront.

For more information or to make a donation to the ASF rebuilding efforts, visit www.alexandriaseaport.org.

The Alexandria Seaport Foundation’s Seaport Center building was damaged in a fire on April 3.



An ASF apprentice works on a project at the Seaport Center on April 10. The building was damaged in a fire on April 3.



An ASF apprentice is back to work April 10 after the Seaport Center workshop was damaged in a fire on April 3.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Del Ray Café owner Margaret Janowsky, right, poses with Brooksie Koopman and At Home in Alexandria Executive Director Cele Garrett during the April 10 Spring2ACTION online giving day. The Del Ray Café donated a percentage of proceeds that day to AHA, which raised a total of \$27,814.

Frank Fedarko, center, sings bass during an a cappella performance of the Alexandria Harmonizers at Virtue Feed & Grain as part of the organization's April 10 Spring2ACTION online fundraising campaign. The Harmonizers raised \$18,958.

Spring2ACTION Tops \$2 Million for Local Causes

FROM PAGE 1

together to support the nonprofits that are essential to our city."

This year featured more donors, more donations and 18 first time nonprofits, including the Friends of Rocky Versace, who participated in an effort to raise funds to refurbish and repair Alexandria's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

"This was a great first effort for us," said Kevin Rue, who spearheaded the fundraising on behalf of the organization. "We raised \$10,015, placing 49th of 162 participating organizations. We didn't quite meet our goal but hope to raise the remaining \$8,749 over the next five weeks so that the Capt. Rocky Versace Plaza will be ready prior to our Memorial Day Ceremony."

This year's top prize winners included the Alexandria Soccer As-

sociation (most donors: 755), RunningBrooke (most dollars raised: \$127,257), and Team Urban Alliance (top free agent fundraiser).

Local businesses joined in the action by hosting happy hours and events to promote the online giving for various organizations. The Del Ray Café donated a portion of their April 10 proceeds to At Home in Alexandria while Virtue Feed & Grain saw the Alexandria Harmonizers perform an a cappella concert as part of their fundraising efforts.

"Spring2ACTION is our biggest fundraiser," said Randall Eliason, who was performing with the Alexandria Harmonizers as they raised \$18,958. "We are celebrating our success and just enjoying each other's company."

Since its inception in 2011, Spring2ACTION has raised more than \$10 million for local

nonprofits. In addition to awarding \$40,000 in prizes to the nonprofits raising the most dollars and most donors, ACT leveraged additional dollars from Donor Advised Fund holders to provide more than \$380,000 in matching grants and gifts.

New this year was a Spring2ACTION pilot business fundraiser program in collaboration with seven local businesses, collectively raising \$86,444.

For the Friends of Rocky Versace, Spring2ACTION, hosted on the Give Gab platform, was just the beginning. The organization is continuing to take donations at givegab.com/nonprofits/friends-of-rocky-versace.

"Spring2ACTION opened doors for us to get the word out on our goal to restore and repair the Rocky Versace Memorial Plaza," Rue said. "We are already signed up for next year."

For a complete list of leaderboards and sponsors, visit www.Spring2ACTION.org.



Hard Times Café founder and owner Fred Parker dons a Friendship Firehouse hat prior to serving chili at the Lloyd House during a Spring2ACTION reception for Historic Alexandria Museums. The April 10 event raised \$8,175 as part of the Restore Our Reel campaign to restore the historic Prettyman Hose Carriage.

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 25

But, this feel good program and virtue signaling by all the city officials who “took the vision zero pledge” is proven to be an empty commitment every time a helmetless scooter rider runs another stop sign, brushes another pedestrian on the sidewalks, or clogs another crosswalk or intersection day or night. And, motorized bikes are soon to appear at Capital BikeShare stations to make matters worse.

Who is in charge of our streets?

City Hall has clearly abandoned their responsibilities and the police are unable to enforce the chaos that reigns.

Bob Wood
Alexandria

Pause Program On Scooters

To the Editor:

Scooters! Scooters! That’s all I hear from all my friends in Old Town. The number of scooter in-

idents is unreal; you just can’t make up what some of these scooter riders are doing. This new “breed of cat” makes the errant and defiant bike riders in this town look like paragons of traffic obedience.

The most flagrant infractions include illegally riding scooters on sidewalks, often at 15-20 miles per hour (some have been clocked at 22-25 miles per hour). Sooner or later, a pedestrian is going to be hit, and hopefully it will not be a fatal encounter. Moreover, not one

of these scooter jockeys are wearing headgear as protection. Recently, I saw an adult with a 7-8 year old boy in front of him on the scooter, operating at max speed on a sidewalk. It is also commonplace for scooter operators to meander in the middle of the streets, zig-zagging back and forth. As is the case of the belligerent bicyclists, scooter drivers essentially ignore the laws governing their usage. Although scooters are omnipresent — they are docked on almost every corner (mostly on the sidewalks blocking foot traffic), there is absolutely no enforcement of the traffic laws in this city; of the numerous flagrant breaches to be seen, scooters are the worst example.

One example of a positive approach to the scooter issue is that of San Francisco. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) monitors a myriad of problems throughout the country on a daily basis. Due to the aforementioned scooter problems, the city decided to terminate their scooter program until all of the problems were eliminated.

The San Francisco Management Transportation Agency (SFMTA) then created a set of rules outlined in “appropriate permits and requirements to regulate motorized scooters sharing in the public right of way.” The scooter program was terminated for a period of three months, and it was only reinitiated after the SFMTA was satisfied that all of the major problems had been corrected. Santa Monica also experienced the same problems, and shut down their operation also

until they were satisfied that the problems had indeed been corrected. The Alexandria City Council should take heed from other jurisdictions, and should immediately shut down the scooter program. It should not be restarted until an enforcement process is in place. Why wait until someone is hurt, or even worse, Alexandria?

Townsend A. “Van” Van Fleet
Alexandria

Littering With Scooters As Litter

To the Editor:

How many of us walkers, drivers, residents, shoppers have come across what appears to be litter in the street or on a lawn or on the sidewalk or any public place and are offended or confused as to why it is allowed? I am talking about the proliferation of scooters that are just left anywhere.

A beautiful day in the park or even just walking out of our homes can be spoiled by the sight of what appears to be discarded garbage. It also presents a hazard to people walking.

Have we sold out to the scooter companies at the expense of our enjoyment of our public tax funded areas? Let’s have scooter parking areas like we do for rental bikes. If you want to rent a scooter you should leave it in a safe area for the next renter.

Larry Cholden
Alexandria

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO ADOPT AND CHANGE CERTAIN RATES, FEES AND CHARGES

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Alexandria, Virginia Sanitation Authority d/b/a Alexandria Renew Enterprises, Inc., hereby signifies its intent to change certain rates, fees and charges to become effective **July 1, 2019** and hereby sets the date of **Saturday, May 11, at 9:30 a.m.**, at the Authority’s administration office, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 for a public hearing to receive comment regarding same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Executive Officer is hereby directed to have published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Alexandria, for two consecutive weeks, notice of the proposed change in the schedule of rates, fees and charges and the day and time of the public hearing.

The proposed rates, fees and charges are:

Description	Meter Size	Effective	Effective	Effective
		Oct 1, 2017	July 1, 2019	July 1, 2020
		Per 1,000 Gallons	Per 1,000 Gallons	Per 1,000 Gallons
Individually Metered Residential Service - Wastewater Treatment Charge	All Meters	\$6.77	\$7.63	\$8.50
Commercial Service - Wastewater Treatment Charge	All Meters	\$6.77	\$7.63	\$8.50

Description	Meter Size	Current	Proposed	Proposed
		Effective Oct. 1, 2017	Effective July 1, 2019	Effective July 1, 2020
Residential Base Charge	All Meters	\$9.61	\$10.83	\$12.05
Commercial Base Charge	5/8”	\$28.83	\$32.49	\$36.14
	3/4”	\$28.83	\$64.97	\$72.29
	1”	\$72.07	\$81.22	\$90.36
	1-1/2”	\$144.16	\$162.43	\$180.71
	2”	\$230.65	\$259.88	\$289.14
	3”	\$432.47	\$487.28	\$542.14
	4”	\$720.77	\$812.13	\$903.56
	6”	\$1,441.56	\$1,624.26	\$1,807.13
	8”	\$2,306.50	\$2,598.81	\$2,981.40
Minimum Deposit Based on Meter Size		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Residential Customer Activation Fee		\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00

Revised on July 1, 2019 and shall remain in effect thereafter until further revised.

BULLETIN BOARD

SATURDAY/APRIL 20

Stream Monitoring Workshop. 9-11:30 a.m. at Jerome “Buddie” Ford Nature Center, 5750 Sanger Ave. Learn more about the health of local streams using the Virginia Save Our Streams methodology to assess Holmes Run by classifying macroinvertebrates. Best for ages 16 and up. Space is limited and registration is required, register at tinyurl.com/y2ogc97b and email joni.calmbacher@alexandriava.gov with questions.

TUESDAY/APRIL 23

City Council Legislative Meeting. 6 p.m. City Hall, Council Chamber, 301 King St. Contact City Clerk’s Office, gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov, 703-746-4550.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 24

Green Building Policy Update Task Force Meeting. 8:30-10:30 a.m. in City Hall’s Sister Cities Conference Room 1101, 301 King St. The fourth meeting of the Green Building Policy Update Task Force will review and comment on a proposed draft of the Green Building Policy update. All project and meeting information can be found at alexandriava.gov/GreenBuilding. Questions may be

directed to Ann.Horowitz@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-3821.

THURSDAY/APRIL 25

Annual Membership Reception. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum – Alexandria’s History Museum, 201 S. Washington St. The Commonwealth Republican Women’s Club’s Annual Membership Reception with guest speaker Thomas P. McDevitt, Chairman, The Washington Times. Topic: Conservatism Today. Buffet and wine bar. Visit www.alexandriacrwc.org for more.

FRIDAY/APRIL 26

Code Administration Technical Training. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at City Hall, Room 1101, 301 King St. The City of Alexandria Department of Code Administration is sponsoring a free technical training on the Significant Changes to the ICC A117.1 Accessibility Standard – 2009 Edition. Space is still available for the free training for design professionals, contractors, and customers. This training will be presented by the International Code Council and will provide 6 hours of AIA, ICC, and DHCD continuing education units. Lunch and light refreshments will be served. To register, email pete.mensing@alexandriava.gov.

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Legals

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:

RFP819: COORDINATION OF THE ALEXANDRIA MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERY PROGRAM

RFP Close Date and Time: May 22, 2019, 4 p.m., local time

For general inquiries contact Michael F. Hauer, CPPO, CPPB, Deputy Purchasing Agent, at 703.746.4295.

The City of Alexandria reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, cancel this solicitation, and to waive any informalities or irregularities in procedure. **THE CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO BE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS.**

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Announcements

Announcements

**ALEXANDRIA RENEW ENTERPRISES (AlexRenew)
INVITATION TO BID NO 19-064**

AlexRenew is seeking competitive sealed bids for the Building J Facilities Relocation and Decommissioning project.

Building J is a two-story, 42,000 square-foot brick building with a basement that was constructed in 2000. The project will relocate critical administration and laboratory functions from Building J to Buildings G/1 and G/2. Work includes, but is not limited to the demolition of Building J, and provision of a new chilled water plant, one new laboratory (approximately 5,000 square feet), new locker rooms (approximately 3,250 square feet), a new fiber optic room, new server and electrical rooms, a new roof, new break, training and control rooms, and a three-level stair tower.

Sealed bids with the notation "**Building J Facilities Relocation and Decommissioning - Contract No. 19-064**", will be received at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attn: Maryam N. Zahory, Purchasing Agent, on or before 2:00 p.m. local time on May 21, 2019. Solicitation documents may be obtained from the AlexRenew website at <https://alexrenew.com/business-opportunities> and the Commonwealth of Virginia website <http://www.eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-i-buy-for-virginia.html>. A mandatory pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 1 p.m. local time at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Announcements

Announcements

Announcements

Announcements

**ALEXANDRIA RENEW ENTERPRISES (AlexRenew)
INVITATION TO BID NO 19-041**

AlexRenew is seeking competitive sealed bids for the construction of the Process Air Compressors (PAC) System Upgrade Project. Work includes, but is not limited to construction of a new Blower Building; the installation of six turbo blowers and associated mechanical, electrical and instrumentation equipment; and the replacement of air piping, supports, and insulation. Sealed bids with the notation "**Process Air Compressors (PAC) System Upgrade Project Contract No. 19-041 - BID ENCLOSED**", will be received at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attn: Maryam N. Zahory, Purchasing Agent, on or before 2:00 pm, May 21, 2019. Solicitation documents may be obtained from the AlexRenew website <https://alexrenew.com/business-opportunities> and the Commonwealth of Virginia website <http://www.eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-i-buy-for-virginia.html>. A mandatory pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. local time at Alexandria Renew Enterprises, 1800 Limerick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Announcements

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

As It Is Happening



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Thankfully I woke up today (duh!) – without the crushing, incapacitating fatigue that I woke up with two weeks ago, post-my-last-immuno-therapy infusion.

As I have written previously, I did not alert my oncologist to my bedridden status then or since as I have been trying not to worry that I had crossed some Rubicon-type line concerning my treatment and its side/straight-on effects. Apparently, and I will continue to believe (cling to this belief) that my inability to get out of bed two Saturdays ago was indeed an aberration rather than an actualization, of life in this new Kenny lane.

So here I sit at my desk writing away, fully dressed, teeth-brushed and clean-shaven, all by 8:15 am, pill-popping as I go.

As I recall two weeks ago, when I finally summoned the strength to extricate myself from under the covers to get dressed and attempt to walk downstairs and restart my day (I had gotten up earlier to feed our cats breakfast and give Chino his insulin shot), “The clock on the wall” (clock radio, actually), to quote George Thorogood, said 3:53 p.m. (And other than bathroom breaks, that was all I could muster in the nine hours since I woke up at 7 a.m.)

No pain, just zero energy. It was almost as if I was paralyzed.

Writing back to the present, anticipating this morning, I’ve been a bit apprehensive the last few days – fearful that when I awoke today, I would once again be fighting that terrible fatigue and considering a new reality in my cancer existence.

When my eyes popped open at 6:30 this morning, I was grateful (as my father used to say: “Any day that I wake up is a good day”) and relieved that when I raised my right arm to roll back the covers, I did so with relative normalcy; and even more relieved when I was able to swing my legs out from underneath the covers and onto the bedroom floor where I had no difficulty getting my bearings. Before too long (maybe 30 seconds or so), and after a few deep breaths, I stood up and officially began my day without any further adieu. Although I hadn’t taken any Roloids: “Oh, what a relief it is!”

Dare I say then it will be a normal day, up and at ‘em with nary a hint of fatigue in the forecast.

Rain, however, is in the forecast and given the date on the calendar: April 13, 2019, I have to face an even greater challenge than the fatigue I experienced two weeks ago: clothes shopping.

More specifically, I have to buy a suit, as well as some upgraded good-looking casual attire which my wife, Dina will approve and that Kenny’s budget will tolerate, as I’ll be attending a family wedding and rehearsal dinner beginning May 3, 2019.

One more concern: my weight. It’s not good. It’s the talking-scale-joke-will-one-of-you-please-get-off, bad. But I have no choice. Today’s the day (for availability reasons) or it will be “Good night, Irene.” Is there a tent sale going on anywhere?

You know, now that I think about it – and feel it, I may be feeling a little fatigue.

Maybe it’s not the best day to be trying on ill-fitting clothes ALL DAY. What if I don’t have the manual dexterity to be in and out of dressing rooms, up and down while in them and back and forth to the clothing racks with shoes, slacks, shirts and suits?

What if today is another day in my life – which seemingly began at birth, where I spent hours in the “Husky”/“Portly” departments at Jordon Marsh, Filene’s Basement and Kennedy’s in downtown Boston, trying to find Kenny some “school clothes” that fit, that is excruciating AGAIN? Granted, it wasn’t cancer then as it is now, but for an overweight young boy, it was torture personified and the experience imprinted me for life as a serial-clothes-shopping-hater.

Got to go. Wish me luck. I’ll need it.

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

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NEWS

Green

FROM PAGE 3

new scheme they have to face up to the fact that there are environmental things they have to do.”

There’s the open space requirement, for example, that they have to meet. And when some tried to install a green roof and call it open space, members of the commission pressed city officials to make sure big-money interests were not gaming the system. Then there’s the desire for LEED certified buildings. As it turns out, Alexandria didn’t have to press developers too much on that because the market demands shifted and sustainable building practices have become the norm with most projects. Perhaps the more difficult hurdle is the population itself with Alexandria residents finding a way to decrease the carbon footprint of their own lives.

“The city has done a lot of things to heighten awareness. But I think ultimately it comes down to individual behaviors, and I think there’s still a long way to go.” said Patrick Hagan, a member of the commission when Eco-City was created. “I think that the behavior of individuals is what really needs to change.”

ENERGY CONSUMPTION is one of the metrics that Alexandria began documenting in Eco-City annual reports starting in 2011, a reflection of the city’s efforts to cut back on greenhouse gas emissions. In the first two years, energy consumption declined by 4 percent. But since 2012, consumption of energy for government use increased 11 percent. City officials say that’s a reflection of new city facilities, including a new police headquarters and a new fire station — both data-heavy buildings that have a higher demand for power.

“In some ways, that’s the cost of delivering services to the community,” said Bill Egers, energy manager for the city government. “As we deliver more and more services, there’s a tradeoff. And that tradeoff is an absolute increase in overall energy consumption for both electricity and natural gas.”

Those Eco-City annual reports may be a thing of the past though. It’s been three years since the last one, and now city officials are ready to move into the next phase of the environmental initiative. Last October, City Council members approved a short-term update to the Eco-City action plan. And this summer, council members will be considering a long-term update. That could open the door to a new Eco-City charter, which would finally fulfill the broken promise from a decade ago.

“With our new City Council makeup and our new mayor and vice mayor it would be really helpful for them to take a look at what the actual vision is,” said Jessica Lassiter, a former member of the Environmental Policy Commission who helped create Eco-City Alexandria. “We need to take a look at the actual vision for the city and make sure it’s still relevant because I think a lot has changed.”

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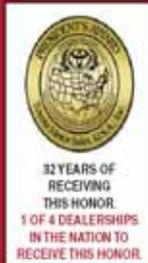
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