Located in the Ramsey House at 221 King St., the Alexandria Visitors Center features a selection of brochures, maps and tickets to area attractions as well as a gift shop highlighting local products.
Welcome Home!

By Justin Wilson
Mayor of Alexandria

Welcome to Alexandria! On behalf of my colleagues on City Council, I'd like to extend a warm welcome and thank you for choosing this historic community as your new home.

During our 270-year history, Alexandria has been a tobacco trading post; one of the 10 busiest ports in America; a part of the District of Columbia; home to both the nation's largest slave trading firm and a large community of freed blacks; a Civil War supply center for Union troops; and a streetcar suburb for federal workers. Today, Alexandria is a growing, urban community with an unparalleled quality of life. We're a vibrant, diverse city of more than 150,000 people with a small-town feel, but just minutes from the bustle of our nation's capital.

There is so much to see and do. Our parks and green spaces are a haven for nature lovers, walkers and bicyclists, and we're a transit-oriented community, offering many options for getting around town and beyond. We're a destination for foodies, a haven for shoppers, and a place where the arts thrive. Alexandria is an Eco-City, committed to protecting and sustaining our natural resources. We're a great place for young people and a caring community.

Alexandria is also a hub of innovation, home to national, regional, and local businesses, tech startups, creative firms, trade associations and nonprofits. We host the headquarters of the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the National Science Foundation, and we will soon welcome Virginia Tech's cutting-edge Innovation Campus. It is truly an exciting time to be here!

We are a diverse city of kindness and compassion — a thriving community of engaged residents with a strong commitment to community service and charity. We are an accepting and embracing community where we treat each other with human dignity and respect. People of diverse race, color, culture, nationality, gender, age, physical ability, sexual orientation and gender identity live and work together in Alexandria and bring pride and prosperity to our community.

In Alexandria, we have a strong tradition of community, government, and organizations working together to help shape our future and support our most vulnerable residents.

We hope you will consider the many opportunities available, including serving on a board or commission, attending City Council meetings, mentoring children, or taking advantage of other volunteer opportunities through the City or through its many nonprofit and charitable organizations. Please visit alexandriava.gov/Boards or alexandriava.gov/Volunteer for more information.

Finally, as you settle into your new home, there are bound to be questions. If you need any information about Alexandria's government or services, please contact our customer information service, Call.Click.Connect., at 703-746-HELP (4357) during normal business hours.

Call.Click.Connect. may also be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the City’s website at alexandriava.gov. Please follow the City of Alexandria on social media and subscribe for our free Alexandria eNews service to receive email, text and voice notifications on the subjects that interest you, as well as important emergency alerts.

School Successes and What Still Needs to be Done

By Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

It’s hard to believe that 12 months have gone by since I last wrote for the Alexandria Gazette Packet’s Newcomers issue, at a time when I was just embarking on my journey as the Superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools. This has been an exciting year and we have certainly made some progress; however, there is still much work to do.

As most of us countdown to the first day of school on Sept. 3, with students at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School having already returned, I want to welcome all our new families and also reflect a little on what we stand for in ACPS. A new school year is a time to reflect on both our achievements and the work that still needs to be done in the coming academic year.

There is nowhere quite like Alexandria. We are fortunate to have students from 114 countries who speak 119 different languages and bring so much to our community and help to create a vibrant and fascinating culture. We also have a broad socio-economic diversity. This also brings its own unique set of obstacles that set us apart from neighboring school divisions.

Our incredible diversity is a life-learning tool in itself — one that fosters empathy and a sophisticated understanding of the 21st century world. It is an aspect of our school division we continue to take full advantage of. Whether a student arrives in our classrooms from Afghanistan unable to speak English, or born and raised in our great city, our hopes for that child are the same: that they will leave our school division the best they can be, ready to take any path they chose in life.

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Hutchings

We pride ourselves on teaching the individual child. At T.C. Williams High School we offer more than 400 courses — from the most challenging academic rigors to career and technical studies. There are few other high school facilities in the U.S. that provide such diverse opportunities as T.C. Williams.

However, equity and inclusion are sizeable ambitions and are not easy to achieve. We are not there yet but I am confident we are heading in the right direction.

This month the Virginia Department of Education released our Standards of Learning (SOL) results which showed ACPS now has a higher percentage of students testing proficient in Math than in previous years. Math has been an area of intense academic focus for the school division over the past school year, and the SOL results show 70% of all students testing proficient. These results — which show the percentage of students testing proficient in math increased by nine percentage points — demonstrate the improved delivery of math instruction due to increased professional learning and enhanced curriculum resources over the past two years.

The percentage of Black, Hispanic, English Learner and Economically Disadvantaged students proficient in math all increased by nine percentage points or more. The percentage of Black, Hispanic, English Learner and Economically Disadvantaged students proficient in math is 70%, an increase over the past two years.

This coming school year, ACPS will have an intentional focus on improving reading skills. Our instructional leaders have been analyzing the data over the past year and have already outlined areas for improvement.

This kind of success doesn’t happen by chance, nor does it happen overnight. It happens through hard work, planning, preparation and dedication for all students to experience success regardless of their life circumstances. It is our responsibility as educators to relentlessly advocate and remove educational barriers that prevent any child from reaching their highest level desired.

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. comforts a student experiencing a little separation anxiety at the Early Childhood Center at John Adams Elementary School.

See Heading, Page II
As your local, weekly newspaper, the Gazette Packet’s mission is to deliver the local news you need, to help make sense of what is happening in your community, to advocate for community good, to provide a forum for dialogue on local concerns, and to record achievements, milestones and events in the community and people’s lives.

Here in our Newcomers and Community Guide, we include details of how to vote in the upcoming elections, information on local and regional fairs and festivals, plus tips and tidbits from the community.

We invite newcomers and long-time residents alike to let us know how we’re doing and let us know what is going on in your part of the community. If you have questions or ideas, send us an email. We invite you to send letters to the editor or to send an email with feedback about our coverage.

We want to know if someone in your family or your community published a book, started a business, became an Eagle Scout, raised money for a good cause, accomplished some feat like running a marathon, supporting a cause or having art included in an art show. We publish photos and notes about personal milestones and community events, including births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, awards and obituaries.

We are also interested in events at your church, mosque, synagogue, community center, pool, school, club, etc. Email us a note about the event, being sure to include when and where the photo was taken and the names of all the people who are in a photo.

We also publish notes about news and events from local businesses. Notes about openings, new employees and anniversaries are welcome. It is especially important to us to let people know about events ahead of time in our calendar of events. We appreciate getting notice at least two weeks ahead of the event, and we encourage photos.

Your community Connection newspaper is one of 15 papers published by the independent, locally owned Local Media Connection LLC, serving the suburbs of Metropolitan Washington in Northern Virginia and Potomac, Md.

Our flagship paper, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, is one of the oldest continuously publishing papers in the country, beginning publication in 1784.

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ABOUT THE GAZETTE PACKET
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There’s No Place Like Home

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

It’s been nearly 10 years since moviegoers everywhere were introduced to the city of Alexandria, portrayed as a sleepy Southern town in the Disney film “Remember the Titans.” But times have changed and today the cobblestone streets and lively waterfront attracts more than three million visitors every year.

Once known primarily as the hometown of George Washington and Robert E. Lee, the city also claims Jim Morrison, Mama Cass Elliot, Willard Scott, Chip Esten and House of Cards creator Beau Willimon as hometown notables.

History buffs will know that U.S. President Gerald Ford was a longtime resident and that U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers lived here after he was released from a Soviet prison in 1952. And Earl Lloyd, who grew up in a segregated Alexandria, was the first African American to break the color barrier in the NBA in 1950. At 15.4 square miles and with a population of just over 150,000, Alexandria hosts nationally recognized events such as the Scottish Walk Weekend and Del Ray’s Art on the Avenue. But off the beaten paths of King Street and Mount Vernon Avenue are attractions such as the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier and the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Another Alexandria landmark is the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Located in front of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, the plaza honors the 68 Alexandrians who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

In the West End are the Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site and the Winkler Botanic Reserve, a tranquil nature sanctuary tucked in the shadows of the BRAC center and Interstate 395.

One of the city’s most obvious landmarks is also one of its best kept secrets. Located on 36 acres overlooking Old Town, the George Washington National Masonic Memorial was built in the 1920s as a memorial and museum highlighting the contributions of Freemasons to the United States. The structure also serves as a research center, library, community center and performing arts center and offers one of the best panoramic views of the city.

Tucked away on a side street in Old Town is the less obvious “Spite House.” At just 7-feet wide, it is one of the tiniest historic homes in the nation. Built in 1830, the private residence was constructed by John Hollensbury using the existing brick walls of the adjacent homes to prevent horse-drawn wagon traffic from using the alleyway.

King Street in Old Town and Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray serve as the shopping and dining hubs of the city. Both are lined with locally owned boutiques and restaurants. The free King Street Trolley runs from the “river to the rails,” bringing riders from the waterfront to the King Street Metro station seven days a week.

The many arts and entertainment offerings in town include the Birchmere, MetroStage and The Little Theatre of Alexandria. The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, which performs at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center on the campus of Northern Virginia Community College, is considered one of the finest in the nation.

If you’re looking to perform yourself, a wide variety of classes are available for children and adults at LTA’s home on Wolfe Street, where Dermot Mulroney and Academy Award winner Marcia Gay Harden honed their craft. The Alexandria Singers, a pops chorus, also holds open auditions for new members.

It doesn’t take long for even a newcomer to realize that Alexandria is a city that loves its festivals and parades, starting with the largest George Washington birthday celebration in the country and ending the year with First Night Alexandria, a day-long celebration that culminates with a fireworks finale over the Potomac River.

There are no shortage of accolades for Alexandria, from being named a Top Holiday Town by USA Today to being recognized as the best downtown of any small to mid-size city in the nation by Livability.com. So spend a few years or stay for a lifetime—there really is no place like Alexandria to call home.
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Butterfly at entrance to Oronoco Park.

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Alexandrians are known for their spirit of giving, whether it be in time, talents or resources, and there is no shortage of opportunities to get involved. But for those new to the city, a good place to start is with Volunteer Alexandria.

“Volunteer Alexandria is a connector of people and groups interested in getting involved in our community and organizations who are in need of volunteers to help them fulfill their mission,” said Marion Brunken, executive director of Volunteer Alexandria. “Often, people don’t know where to start so we will help anyone who wants to volunteer.”

Volunteer Alexandria will help connect individuals six years or older with a non-profit organization or city agency that needs assistance and suits their interests. “It’s really easy to be matched,” Brunken said. “Just visit VolunteerAlexandria.org, enter a keyword, zip code, or age, and the system populates a list of current opportunities. Or just call us 703-836-2176. We also help businesses find ways to make a difference.”

Other volunteer opportunities include Senior Services of Alexandria, which uses volunteers for Meals on Wheels deliveries as well as the Friendly Visitor Program and Groceries to Go service. Carpenter’s Shelter, the city’s homeless shelter, uses volunteers for administrative tasks and meal services. The American Legion provides support and services for veterans from World War II through the War on Terror. Members also volunteer in numerous community activities, including Rebuilding Together Alexandria, which works year-round to repair and rehabilitate homes free of cost for those in need, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, military veterans and families with children.

Since 1948, the Alexandria Sportsman’s Club has been providing scholarships to high school athletes through fundraising events and monthly meetings that feature speakers such as NFL Hall of Famer Darrell Green.

One of the oldest organizations in the city is the Departmental Progressive Club. Originally founded in 1927 when recreational facilities were segregated, the DPC’s mission is “the creation of wholesome recreation, the encouragement of good character and the fostering of fellowship among its members.” If you think you have no time to make a difference, think again. Head to Holy Cow, Del Ray’s Gourmet Burger Joint, where $.25 for each burger sold will be donated to one of more than 250 local charities as selected by the patron. Since the restaurant opened in 2012, more than 400,000 quarters, or $100,000, has been donated to local charities.

Dining out at Holy Cow is one small way to give back to the community. From national organizations like Rotary, Lions Club and Fraternal Order of the Eagles to local nonprofits like Senior Services of Alexandria, there are seemingly endless opportunities to volunteer your time and talents. “Any level of volunteering will make a difference,” Brunken added.

Get Involved
Alexandria Rotary Club www.alexandriarotary.org
Alexandria West Rotary Club www.awrotary.org
Alexandria Central Rotary Club www.alexcentralrotary.org
American Legion Post 24 www.valegionpost24.org
Animal Welfare League of Alexandria www.alexandriaanimals.org
Carpenter’s Shelter www.carpentersshelter.org
Departmental Progressive Club www.DPC1927.org
Fraternal Order of the Eagles www.foe871.com
Kiwanis, Kiwanis of Del Ray www.alexandriakiwanis.org
Lions Club of Alexandria www.lionsclub.org
Rebuilding Together Alexandria www.rebuildingtogetheralex.org
Senior Services of Alexandria www.seniorservicesalex.org
Volunteer Alexandria www.volunteeralexandria.org

Getting Out, Giving Back

Photos by Jeanne Theismann/Gazette Packet

The Departmental Progressive Club was founded in 1927 and continues today as a social and service organization.

The Kiwanis Club of Alexandria is one of many service organizations that serve the community.

Holy Cow, Del Ray’s Gourmet Burger Joint, has donated more than 400,000 quarters — or $100,000 — to local charities since its opening in 2012. The restaurant donates $.25 for each burger sold to one of more than 250 charities as selected by the patron.

The Kiwanis of Alexandria is one of many service organizations that serve the community.

The American Legion provides support and services to veterans from World War II, like Phil Lundeberg, through the War on Terror.
Getting Down to Business
Navigating the ABCs of Alexandria.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

Living in the shadow of the nation’s capital, acronyms such as DoD, NSA and DHS are a part of the daily vernacular. Alexandria has its own set of acronyms, from AEDP to WEBA, which represents organizations and various business associations that span every corner of the city.

Some, like the Chamber of Commerce, have been around for over a century, while others, like the West End Business Association, represent the needs of the city’s shifting economic demographic.

Visit Alexandria
Visit Alexandria is the city’s tourism marketing agency and attracts visitors to the city through sales and marketing programs. The Visitor’s Center is located at 221 King St. with administrative offices at 625 N. Washington St., Suite 400. VisitAlexandriaVA.com

Alexandria Economic Development Partnership - AEDP
Founded in 1992, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership actively positions and promotes commercial spaces and economic opportunities in the City of Alexandria as the city’s primary engine for economic development. AEDP serves as the leading resource for economic data, customized reports, development maps, real estate insights and information on tax and financial incentives for businesses and commercial real estate professionals. 625 N. Washington St., suite 400. 703-739-3820 or www.AlexEcon.org

Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Alexandria is home to one of the largest chambers in the Greater Washington region, with 850 professional business members and partners employing more than 49,000 people region-wide. Founded in 1906, it serves as the voice of the business community in the City of Alexandria through aggressive lobbying efforts at the local, state and federal levels. 801 N. Fairfax St. 703-549-1000 or www.alexchamber.com

The Del Ray Business Association - DRBA
The Del Ray Business Association is run by volunteers who are themselves business owners. Started almost 45 years ago, DRBA now has over 200 members and sponsors several events in the Del Ray community each year. www.visidelay.com

Old Town Business and Professional Association - OTBPA
Open to businesses of any type, OTBPA is the result of a merger of two organizations – Old Town Business (OTB) and King Street Metro Enterprise Team (KSMET). OTBPA's most visible project is the annual Alexandria Retail Coupon Book. www.otbpa.com

Alexandria Small Business Development Center – SBDC
The Alexandria Small Business Development Center is Alexandria’s economic development program that focuses on small businesses, which comprise the largest segment of Alexandria’s economy. SBDC offers individual and confidential assistance without cost to the City of Alexandria businesses and Alexandria residents with businesses elsewhere. 625 N. Washington St., Suite 400. 703-778-1291 or www.alexandriasbdc.org

West End Business Association - WEBA
The West End Business Association is comprised of West End Businesses and those that do business on the West End of Alexandria. WEBA provides members with networking opportunities, education and growth opportunities and representation before the city and economic development officials on matters important to the West End of Alexandria. www.alexandriaweba.com

Eisenhower Partnership
The Eisenhower Partnership is a group of commercial and residential property owners and occupiers along the Eisenhower Avenue Valley corridor. The Valley is anchored in the East by the Patent and Trademark Campus and in the West by the Victory Center development/Van Dorn Metro Station. www.eisenhowerpartnership.org

Carlyle Council – CCC
The Carlyle Council oversees the open spaces, parks and community amenities in Carlyle. CCC serves as the business and community development organization for Carlyle and advocates on behalf of Carlyle stakeholders on matters impacting the community. www.thecarlylecommunity.com

Old Town North Community Partnership – OTNPC
The Old Town North Community Partnership seeks to encourage the blend of residential and businesses uses in Old Town North, and make improvements in the area’s quality of life through a partnership of residents and businesses working together on common goals. The community includes North of Oronoco Street to Alexandria’s northern boundary. www.oldtownnorth.org
September 2019

FRIDAY/SEPT. 6
Patriot Day Golf Classic, 11:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. at Belle Haven Country Club, 6010 Fort Hunt Road. 5th Annual Patriot Day Golf Classic to benefit two veteran and wounded warrior organizations. Visit www.bellehavencc.com/golf/patriot for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/SEPT. 21-22
King Street Art Festival, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. on Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday at 220 King St. Featuring live music, and interactive art activities. Visit www.artfestival.com/festivals/alexandria-king-street-art-festival for more.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 21
Jane Austen Ball, 5-11 p.m. at Carlyle's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. The evening will feature a variety of English country dances in the historic ballroom, live music, and “ecdred refinements.” Period costume optional; “after five” attire encouraged. Visit www.vistalexandriava.com/event/-jane-austen-ball-15320/ for more.

Thousands turned out to celebrate at the 2018 Alexandria Irish Festival at Waterfront Park.

October 2019

SATURDAY/OCT. 5
Art on the Avenue, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Mount Vernon Ave. Art on the Avenue is a multicultural arts festival in the Del Ray neighborhood in Alexandria. Visit www.delrayartisans.org/event/art-on-the-avenue-2019/ for more.

SATURDAY/OCT. 12
Portside in Old Town Fall Festival. At Waterfront Park, 1 King St. Enjoy a day of live music, maritime history, nautical demonstrations and children’s activities on the Old Town Alexandria waterfront. Savory local food, beer and wine while experiencing boat building demonstrations from Alexandria Seaport Foundation Apprentices and knot tying from tall ship Providence. Select activities benefit the Alexandria Seaport Foundation’s mission to improve the lives of young people through adult mentoring, project-based learning and the craft of wooden boat building. Free admission; food and drink for purchase; fees for some activities. Visit www.vistalexandriava.com/event/portside-in-old-town-fall-festival/15351/ for more.

SATURDAY/OCT. 26
VolunteerFest. A region-wide day of community service helps nonprofits accomplish tasks they would not have time or resources to do on their own. Visit www.volunteerfairfax.org/individuals/volunteerfest.php for more.

Halloween Pumpkin Hunt. 10:30 a.m.; 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. at Lee-Fendall House Museum, 614 Dronoco St. Elementary school-aged children and younger may participate in the hunt and will receive a small pumpkin. The event will also feature Halloween crafts, food and drink, ghost stories and a costume parade. Tickets are $5 for adults and $15 for children participating in the hunt. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org for more.

SUNDAY/OCT. 27
Del Ray Halloween Parade. 2-4 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ave. All are welcome to march in the parade. Parade ends in a party at the Mt. Vernon Recreation Center fields featuring live music, free refreshments, games, best costume awards, and more. Free. Visit www.vistalexandriava.com/event/23rd-annual-del-ray-halloween-parade/11136/ for more.

SUNDAY-SATURDAY/OCT. 19-20
Fall Harvest Family Days, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Pioneer Farm in George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Celebrate the beginning of autumn with the family at Mount Vernon with activities including wagon rides, apple-eating and a straw bale maze. Visit www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/fall-harvest-family-days/ for more.

THURSDAY/OCT. 31
Halloween Trick-or-Treating. 5-7 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Free. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/portside-in-old-town-fall-festival/ for more.

November 2019

FRIDAY/NOV. 1
Art on Tap 2019. 7-10 p.m. at the Art League Gallery, 305 N. Union St. Craft beers from local breweries have been artfully paired with a work of art from an Art League instructor. Local restaurants have chosen a beer/artwork coupling to serve as their muse to create the perfect complimentary appetizer. Enjoy the beer, bite, and artwork trifectas, then vote for a winner. $35-$45. Visit www.eventbrite.com/e/art-on-tap-2019-tickets-5253820893 for more.

TUESDAY/NOV. 5

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 11
Mount Vernon Salutes Veterans, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Free for veterans and active duty military members, $9.17 for everyone else. Visit www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/mount-vernon-salutes-veterans/ for more.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23
Alexandria Cider Festival, 1-5 p.m. on the grounds of historic Lloyd House in Old Town Alexandria. Ticket includes tastings, a souvenir glass, live music, and activities. Food trucks available. $45 per person and will be available online shop.alexandriava.gov. $55 at the door. Visit www.vistalexandriava.com/event/alexandria-cider-festival-15421/ for more.

THURSDAY/NOV. 28
Turkey Trot, 9 a.m. at George Washington Middle School, 1005 Mount Vernon Ave. A Thanksgiving morning tradition; this fast, flat, USAFTF-certified 5-mile course through the heart of Del Ray. Registration fees vary. Visit www.alexandriaturkeytrot.com for more.

NOV. 29-DEC. 31

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 6-8,
DEC. 13-15, DEC. 20-22
Fine Art & Fine Craft Holiday Market. More than 60 Alexandria artists offer a $35 three-course dinner or a $35 dinner for two. More than two dozen restaurants are also offering lunch deals at $10, $15 or $20 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Visit www.alexandriarestaurantweek.com for more.

Alexandria Winter Restaurant Week. More than 60 Alexandria restaurants offer a $35 three-course dinner or a $35 dinner for two. More than two dozen restaurants are also offering lunch deals at $10, $15 or $20 per person in addition to the dinner specials. Visit www.alexandriarestaurantweek.com for more.

Candlelight Tour. Visit www.leefendallhouse.org or call 703-549-1899 or email contact@leefendallhouse.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7
49th Annual Campagna Center Scottish Walk Parade. 11 a.m. Old Town Alexandria. The parade begins at St. Asaph and Wolfe streets. More than 100 Scottish clans, pipe and drum bands, Scottish dancers, re-employment groups, Scottie dogs, dignitaries and, of course, Santa Claus will march through the streets of Old Town. Visit www.campagnacenter.org/scottishwalkweekend/parade for more.

SUNDAY/DEC. 1
First Night Alexandria. Events take place throughout the day at numerous venues around the City of Alexandria, with family-friendly music, entertainment and activities. Visit www.firstnightalexandria.org for more.

February 2020

MONDAY/ FEB. 17

Happy New Year

The 2018 First Night Alexandria fireworks turned the low cloud cover above the water front a rainbow of colors as revelers ring in the New Year at the foot of King Street.

Fairs & Festivals

FROM PAGE 18

Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Witness a presidential tribute and a wreathlaying at the Washington’s Tomb. Watch Continental soldiers of the Commander-in-Chief’s Guard conduct a marching drill, fire their guns, and charge at their enemy in an exciting military demonstration on the bowling green. After the smoke clears, listen to the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps play patriotic music. All day long, pose like George Washington in front of our life-sized version of Gilbert Stuart’s Lansdowne painting in the Education Center Lobby. Visit mountvernon.org or call 703-780-2000.

April 2020

Relay for Life. April–June. Fundraisers participate in all-night-long events to place throughout the course of the American Cancer Society. Visit www.relayforlife.org for specific events and details.

Mount Vernon Flea Market. Third Saturdays, April–October, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., at 8717 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Featuring art, antiques, clothing, china, glass, porcelain, pottery, books, photographs, lighting, tools, etc. Refreshments will also be on sale. Admission is free. Visit mountvernong fleamarket.wordpress.com for more info.

AUG. 18–25 Historic Garden Week. This eight-day statewide event provides visitors with a unique opportunity to see elaborate gardens with more than 2,000 flower arrangements created by the Garden Club of Virginia Members. Visit www.va.gardencentreweek.org for more.

May 2020

Memorial Day Jazz Concert. At Waterfront Park, Alexandria. A variety of jazz performances take place throughout the course of Alexandria’s Birthday along 100 Madison Street, Alexandria. Celebrate Alexandria’s birthday along the Potomac waterfront with fireworks, cake and live music. Visit www.visitalexandriavirginia.com.

Fireworks light up the sky over the Potomac River in the finale of Alexandria’s 270th birthday celebration July 13, 2019, at Oronoco Bay Park.

Independence Fireworks. At George Washington’s Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Green “General and Mrs. Washington” in the historic area before trying a turn at bocce ball and 18th-century dance demonstrations. Mount Vernon’s colonial artisans will reveal how 18th-century ice cream was made in the days before refrigerators. Enjoy a performance by Twistork Fife & Drum and the National Concert Band. Also enjoy a fireworks show. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.


WEDNESDAY JULY 4

An American Celebration. 8 a.m.–5 p.m. at Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Watch made-for-daytime fireworks shoot off over the Potomac River. Admission is $9-20, free for children 0-5. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.

SECOND SATURDAY IN JULY


August 2020

Summer Restaurant Week. August in neighborhoods throughout Alexandria, including Old Town, Del Ray, Carlyle and West End. Menu options vary by location. Visit www.AlexandriaRestaurantWeek.com or call 703-746-3301 for more.

Friendship House Festival. At Friendship Firehouse Museum, 107 S. Alfred St. Held at the historic Friendship Firehouse, the festival celebrates the special role firefighters have played throughout history, especially those of Friendship. The event will feature a collection of antique fire equipment and, courtesy of the Alexandria Fire Department, a display of modern fire trucks and apparatus. The Alexandria Red Cross and the Community Emergency Response Team will also be on hand. Other attractions include craft booths, food vendors and free birthday cake. Free. Visit www.friendshipfire.org.

Ballyshanners Irish Festival. At the Alexandria Waterfront Park, 1A Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon. Greet “General and Mrs. Washington” before trying a turn at bocce ball and 18th-century dance demonstrations. Mount Vernon’s colonial artisans will reveal how 18th-century ice cream was made in the days before refrigerators. Enjoy a performance by Twistork Fife & Drum and the National Concert Band. Also enjoy a fireworks show. Visit www.mountvernon.org for more.


Learn about the City

The City of Alexandria invites the community to learn more about city government by participating in one of its six Academy programs: City, Commonwealth Attorney, Fire, Police Senior and Sheriff. These Academies are held twice a year and are designed to inform, educate, and engage the participants in local government operations, programs, and services available to the community. All programs are open to those who live or work in the City of Alexandria; some have age restrictions. A graduation ceremony will be held at the end of each course.

These programs are offered free of charge. More information is available at alexandriavirginia.gov/academies or by contacting Elaine Scott on 703-746-4317 or elaine.scott@alexandriavirginia.gov.

Voting

On the ballot in the City of Alexandria, Nov. 5, 2019.

Find out exactly what will be on your ballot by checking www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/view-your-info and have a look at your sample ballot at www.alexandriavirginia.gov/Elections

Contact

City of Alexandria Office of Voter Registrations and Elections
132 North Royal Street, Suite 100 Alexandria, VA 22314
703-746-4050

Saturday, Nov. 2.
By-Mail Absentee. If you would like to receive an absentee ballot by mail, apply online, vote.elections.virginia.gov. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot by mail will be 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Photo ID Requirements

Virginia voters must show photo identification prior to voting. For more information, including a list of acceptable IDs, please see Virginia’s Department of Elections website at www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/photo-ids-required-to-vote/index.html.

If you don’t have a photo ID, you can apply for a free photo ID at Alexandria’s Elections office any time they are open, including Election Day. 132 North Royal Street, Suite 100. Our hours are Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This ID is valid for voting purposes only. On Election Day we are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

When you get to our office (1) you will fill out a short application, (2) we will take your picture and get your signature, and (3) you will receive your permanent voter photo identification card in the mail within two weeks. If you need to update your name or address, you may do that at the same time you come in for your ID.

If you come to our office within 30 days of an election, we will give you a temporary photo ID which you may use for the current election.

If you get to your polling place without acceptable photo ID, you can vote a provisional ballot. You will be given instructions on what to do so your vote can count.

When you register to vote in Virginia, you do not register to vote by party. Virginia is an Open Primary state which means that any registered voter in Virginia can vote in either a Democratic or Republican primary. When both parties are holding a primary election, you will be asked which primary you want to vote in when you check in to vote with your photo ID. Note, you may only vote in one primary.

Find out what’s at stake on your ballot by checking www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/view-your-info and have a look at your sample ballot at www.alexandriavirginia.gov/Elections.

2019 Voter Guide

Find out exactly what will be on your ballot by checking www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/view-your-info and have a look at your sample ballot at www.alexandriavirginia.gov/Elections.

On the ballot in the City of Alexandria, Nov. 5, 2019.

Find out exactly what will be on your ballot by checking www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/view-your-info and have a look at your sample ballot at www.alexandriavirginia.gov/Elections.

To check your registration status and find your polling place, visit vote.elections.virginia.gov, or call the Alexandria Voter Registration Office at 703-746-4050.

Virginia residents who are U.S. citizens and will be 18 years old by Nov. 5, 2019 may submit a registration application for the 2019 election. The fastest way to register to vote is to apply online through the Virginia Department of Elections vote.elections.virginia.gov. See also Alexandria’s Voter Registration Information and Application page at www.alexandriavirginia.gov/elections/info/default.aspx?id=8222

How to Vote Absentee

In-Person Absentee. In-person absentee voting for the Nov. 5 General Election begins on Friday, Sept. 20. The deadline to vote in-person absentee will be 5 p.m. on

Saturday, Nov. 2.

By-Mail Absentee. If you would like to receive an absentee ballot by mail, apply online, vote.elections.virginia.gov. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot by mail will be 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

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Long before the sun has crested over the Potomac on any given August morning, a cohort of unlikely rowers converges on the Dee Campbell Rowing Center at the river’s edge in Old Town. Among them a massage therapist, a lawyer, a local business owner, a military reservist and a retired kindergarten teacher. All are members of Alexandria Community Rowing, which marks its 30-year anniversary this season.

Each lineup of rowers readies their oars on the dock, then pulls their boat from the racks and emerges from the boathouse dock side. By 5:15 a.m., the national competitive team is in the water heading north as are two sculling doubles — boats of two where each person rows with two smaller oars versus a single larger oar or sweep. The local competitive team follows, just shy of two full boats of eight by one rower. A coxswain is nestled knees-up at the rear of each long shell, steering and echoing calls from the coach to the rowers. The coaches monitor nearby in pontoon boats, reading and responding to the wind and water and running drills when able.

“Alright, rowers. Grab some water. Long pieces. We’re getting ready for racing,” shouts Coach Jake Kennington, a graduate student at the George Washington University. “Some mornings, the water is like a sheet of glass — with the occasional rolling waves left in the wake of large boats. On a morning like this, where the water is choppy, it’s harder to run drills and teach refinement.”

Kennington came to rowing during his undergraduate years at High Point University in North Carolina. With the lengthy limbs on his 6’3” frame, he was told he had the build of a rower and was urged to join the school’s crew team. He did. Five years later, he’s coaching rowers of all ages and abilities through Alexandria Community Rowing (ACR). “It’s the best part-time job because I’m done by 7 a.m.,” he says. ACR was born out of the curiosity of parents of T.C. Williams High School rowers, who peppered coaches with questions about why their kids loved to row so much. A coach challenged the parents to show up at 6:30 a.m. everyday that summer to find out why. They did — and, they finally understood. That was more than 30 years ago.

From there grew a relationship between the high school rowing program, with its new boathouse built in the late-‘80s, and the adult rowing program, which used the boathouse and supported the high school program through Alexandria Crew Boosters. Initially ACR directed rental fees for single sculls to the boosters club. Over time, it evolved to contribute a portion of each ACR member’s dues to the boosters club.

Today ACR has 350 members and offers year-round programming to Alexandria rowers and those from neighboring communities. Rowers include students who rowed back in high school, college students who want to row over summer break, consultants and business owners who go from boats to business suits and retirees who want to be on the water. They range in age from their 20s to their 70s.

Social Chairperson Elenor Richards says, “There’s a place for everyone.” She aims to help dispel the idea that rowing is an elite sport for young people. A novice rower when she joined ACR eight years ago, Richards has served as the social chairperson for the past four. She’s worked her way up into a local competitive boat that races against other local clubs including the Capitol Rowing Club, Rock Creek Rowing and the Prince William Rowing Club. While all competitive teams race in regattas in places like Occoquan, Philadelphia and Boston, the national team competes throughout the country. Last weekend, the national team brought home two gold medals from the Masters National Championship in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

But, not every rower has to compete. In addition to the local and national competitive teams, which compete eight and 14 times a season respectively, ACR runs recreational novice programs in the spring and summer for those new to the sport and offers options for sculling as well. In all, ACR offers 10 programs and hosts a “learn-to-row day” each spring. It runs year round with co-ed boats on the water from April to November. Over the winter, rowers work on conditioning in the upper decks of the boathouse.

Membership dues vary based on the program selected and scholarships are available. The dues cover coach salaries, facilities usage fees and contributions to the boosters club.

Joanne Goodwin was also new to rowing when she joined ACR. She remembers watching the boat races on the Charles River in Boston for 20 years and finally decided to give it a go here with ACR. Today, Goodwin says she doesn’t know what she would do if she didn’t row four or five days a week. “I get such a sense of accomplishment and learning,” said Goodwin, “and I’ve met so many people with interesting backgrounds.”

Retired kindergarten teacher turned coach Alan Weatherley also learned to row with ACR. Over the last dozen years, he’s coached both students at West Potomac High School and adults in ACR.

“With a group of adults who vary so widely in fitness, ability and age, one challenge is putting together a team that works. But when it works, things tend to gel,” he says. On the boats, rowers face the backs of their fellow rowers. Much of the connection...
Heading in Right Direction

It is also important to remember that standardized testing is just one measure of success. I hope you have all had a chance to read a copy of our recently published Measuring What Matters. You can pick up a free copy in any library or from City Hall.

In Measuring What Matters, I write that if we are to see success for all our students, equity simply has to be at the core of everything we do. The work of equity needs to permeate every aspect of our work, starting from the ground up, by assessing the learning environments at our schools and providing all students with the social and emotional support they need. We need to take a look at how our specialized programs and learning pathways are implemented so that we eliminate all vestiges of modern-day segregation.

All of our students need to be engaged in a rigorous and challenging curriculum if they are to leave us fulfilled and ready for the challenges of life.

This fall, ACPS will make a decision on a model to deliver 21st century learning to the next generation of high school students. Alexandria is growing and our public schools will soon face the exciting challenge of educating up to 5,000 high school students. Since the summer of 2018, The High School Project has been exploring ways to both redefine the high school experience both in terms of programming and capacity needed to best fit future learning needs.

The School Board is being asked to consider two options: A two-high-school model that would mean building a second high school; or a Connected High School Network based on a campus model that would see all students continue to graduate from T.C. Williams High School. In either option, 9-12 grade students will learn together, eliminating the need for a ninth-grade campus.

If we do this successfully, we will be not only be redefining the high school experience for ACPS, but also delivering a direction for Alexandria. Our students are the future; their experiences and skills will ultimately define our city. It will take a community to make ACPS the best place to learn. But once we get there, the entire community will reap the rewards and the City of Alexandria will be a beacon in which to live, work, learn and play.

Don’t forget to take the time to encourage, support and listen to your child as they learn and grow. You will be amazed at what they can achieve. We know this is going to be another awesome school year. Alexandria’s children deserve the best. We will not let them down.
Rowing for All Ages and Abilities

From Page 10

The connection between these rowers happens as they learn to synchronize their strokes and rhythmically plow through the water at an even pace. The rest happens at happy hours, celebrations and while cleaning up the boathouse at the end of the season.

Alice Reid has been with ACR from the start — her sons rowed at T.C. Williams. She’s developed some close friendships with her fellow rowers over the past three decades and has also seen a lot of change. “The club is much bigger, of course. And, it’s become much more competitive over the years. Fortunately, it’s attracted more young people who have a fierce drive to win. Yet some of us who started the club as middle-aged T.C. parents have still managed to keep our oars in as we’ve aged. That’s been interesting and fun,” she says.

By 6:30 a.m., the boats are heading back to the boathouse. The pink and violet hues melt away as the sun continues its ascent. A family of geese makes its way across the river while an osprey balances atop a piling at the dock, clenching in its talons the breakfast it just plucked from the river. The rowers ease their boats dockside. Puddles form around their feet on the dock as they disembark. In lockstep, they hoist their boats atop their shoulders, then high above their heads to drain the water before heading in. In the boathouse, they slide the boats back onto the racks and collect the oars from the puddles on the dock.

By 6:45 a.m., once boats and oars are stowed, the rowers have scattered. A coach races off to get ready for a second job downtown. A DC government worker squeezes in a round of weights before getting ready to head to the office. And, a nurse heads off to get ready for her day at a free clinic in Arlington just as Old Town comes to life.

Learn more about Alexandria Community Rowing and the history of the program at: www.rowalexandria.com.