



Alexandrians Sit on Edge of Eviction

Unemployment crisis due to coronavirus leaves families in jeopardy.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

The impact of the coronavirus with loss of income has led to a roller coaster for many Alexandria families who have fallen behind on their rent. A mix of Federal funding measures through the CARES Act as well as a series of Federal and state moratoriums have given a brief reprieve from evictions.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law March 27 to blunt the impact of the economic downturn set in motion by the pandemic and to ease the worst of a recession. This act expanded unemployment benefits, made direct payments to families and made loans available to small businesses.

As part of the CARES legislation, a moratorium was imposed on evictions for rental properties with federally backed mortgages or that participate in various federal housing subsidy programs. This includes almost 40 properties in Alexandria. In addition, Virginia imposed a moratorium on other rental evictions, but that expired



Legal Services lawyers Mary Horner and Alexandra Lydon advertise assistance for tenants facing eviction in front of the courthouse and assist filling out the 60-day affidavit.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Southern Towers Apartments, site of a number of eviction cases.

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

June 29. The moratorium on Federally subsidized properties expires July 26.

The CARES Act also allocated

state and local financial assistance for rent and mortgage relief. Alexandria has allocated \$4 million from this fund to this massive city-

wide emergency rental assistance program that has received more than 3,300 applications to date.

According to Helen McIlvaine,

Director of the Office of Housing, this will be used to help approximately 2,200 households that experienced COVID-related income loss with payments of \$1,800 (\$600 per month for three months). She adds, "In exchange for accepting the funds (which approximate the monthly cost to operate a rental unit), we ask landlords to certify that they will work with the tenant and the Housing Office in good faith to help the resident maintain their housing."

McIlvaine says the City is also offering a program funded with spe-

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'Cancel Our Rent' Southern Towers residents protest eviction hearings.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Residents of Southern Towers apartments gathered July 15 at the Franklin P. Backus Courthouse in Old Town to protest for the cancellation of rent payments and demand an extension to a statewide moratorium on evictions, which expired last month.

"We are here today protesting the more than 150 evictions that have been filed at Southern Towers since the moratorium has been lifted," said a spokesperson for the Democratic Socialists of America, who partnered with the residents in the

PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



protest. "We are opposed to the evictions and feel it is morally wrong to expect the residents to pay rent during the pandemic."

The moratorium on evictions expired June 28 as Gov. Ralph Northam announced the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Assistance Act.

SEE 'CANCEL OUR RENT', PAGE 7

Residents of Southern Towers protest during eviction hearings July 15 outside the Franklin P. Backus Courthouse in Old Town. Organized by residents and the Metro D.C. Democratic Socialists of America, the protest called for the cancellation of rent payments.



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City Employee Dies in Car Crash

Robert Bloom was Public Safety Systems Administrator.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Robert Bloom, the Public Safety Systems Administrator in the Department of Emergency and Customer Communications (DECC) for the City of Alexandria, died July 20 after his SUV struck a traffic pole at the intersection of North Kings Highway and Telegraph Road in the Huntington section of Fairfax County. He was 61 years old.

According to police, the crash occurred around 9:24 a.m. when a 2018 Honda CRV driven by Bloom struck the pole while traveling westbound on North Kings Highway. Bloom, the sole occupant of the vehicle, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Debris from the crash caused damage to a second vehicle but the driver was not injured. The intersection remained closed for several hours as police investigated.

Bloom joined the city in 2016, following previous roles with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the City of Baltimore and telecommunications vendors. After beginning his career in a



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

City employee Robert Bloom was killed in a fatal car crash the morning of July 20. He was 61.



PHOTO BY @SOYANAA VIA TWITTER

Emergency vehicles on the scene at the intersection of North Kings Highway and Telegraph Road following the crash that killed Robert Bloom.

small county 911 center in Pennsylvania, Bloom helped implement nearly every advancement in 911 technology over the next three decades.

The city's website said it was "devastated by the loss" of Bloom.

"Bob was an extremely dedicated and talented professional, whose 30-year career in public safety

demonstrated a deep commitment to saving lives and serving people," read the statement. "His technical expertise, industry knowledge and practical experience helped protect first responders and the communities they serve."

Bloom earned several of the top certifications in his field and was regarded as a national leader in

public safety telecommunications. He chaired the 2019 international convention of APCO International (the global organization of public safety communications professionals) and served on APCO's cybersecurity committee.

In 2020, Bloom led Alexandria to become the first city in the United States to enable staff to answer

911 and 311 calls from home. This helped DECC reduce the risk to staff from COVID-19 and ensure continuity of service to the community.

The cause of the crash remains under investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call 703-280-0543.

150 Years of Service APD marks founding of police department.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Police Department marked the 150th anniversary of its founding with an informal gathering July 15 at police headquarters.

"There are not a lot of agencies worldwide that are this old," said Sgt. Biruk Dessalegn, a school resource supervisor. "It's usually the larger agencies like New York or Philly that have been around this long so it is unique for a department of our size to be marking this milestone."

The Alexandria Police Department was founded on July 15, 1870, with a captain, a lieutenant and 19 patrolmen. All officers were issued star-shaped tin badges but each had to supply their own uniforms and guns. In 1918, the Motor Unit was established with the purchase of one Harley-Davidson motorcycle for use in answering



Members of the Alexandria Police Department hold a banner marking the 150th anniversary of the department's founding July 15 at police headquarters. Shown are: Sgt. Biruk Dessalegn, Officer Kirill Schipanov, Motor Officer Loren Smithwest, Lt. Chris G. Ware and Lt. Bart Bailey.

emergency calls.

"This department has an outstanding reputation," said 26-year APD veteran Lt. Bart Bailey. "I take a lot of pride in working here. There have been a lot of rewards and a lot of challenges through the years but in the end it is all worth

it."

Sponsored by the Alexandria Police Foundation, the luncheon replaced a larger planned gathering that was canceled earlier this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. www.alexandriapolicefoundation.org



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria police officers relax during a courtyard luncheon at APD headquarters July 15 marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the department.

"There have been a lot of rewards and a lot of challenges through the years but in the end it is all worth it."

— APD Lt. Bart Bailey

At the Crossroads

Lawmakers to slash the state budget and consider criminal-justice reforms.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The threadbare Franklin and Armfield office on Duke Street stands at the crossroads between racial injustice and economic crisis. It's a ramshackle building now, but it was once the headquarters for the largest domestic slave trading firm in the United States, present at the creation of the systemic racism that plagues Virginia cops and courts. It's also the city's latest acquisition, and the state budget was to include \$2.5 million to help transform it into the Freedom House Museum.

But then the pandemic hit, and the governor hit the pause button on that line item as well as all the other spending priorities of the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate.

Last week, the governor called for a special session on Aug. 18. Lawmakers will head back to Richmond and rebalance the books after the revenue losses associated with the coronavirus pandemic. They'll also consider a host of criminal justice reform efforts that have emerged in the wake of the death in May of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was killed by white police officers in Minneapolis.

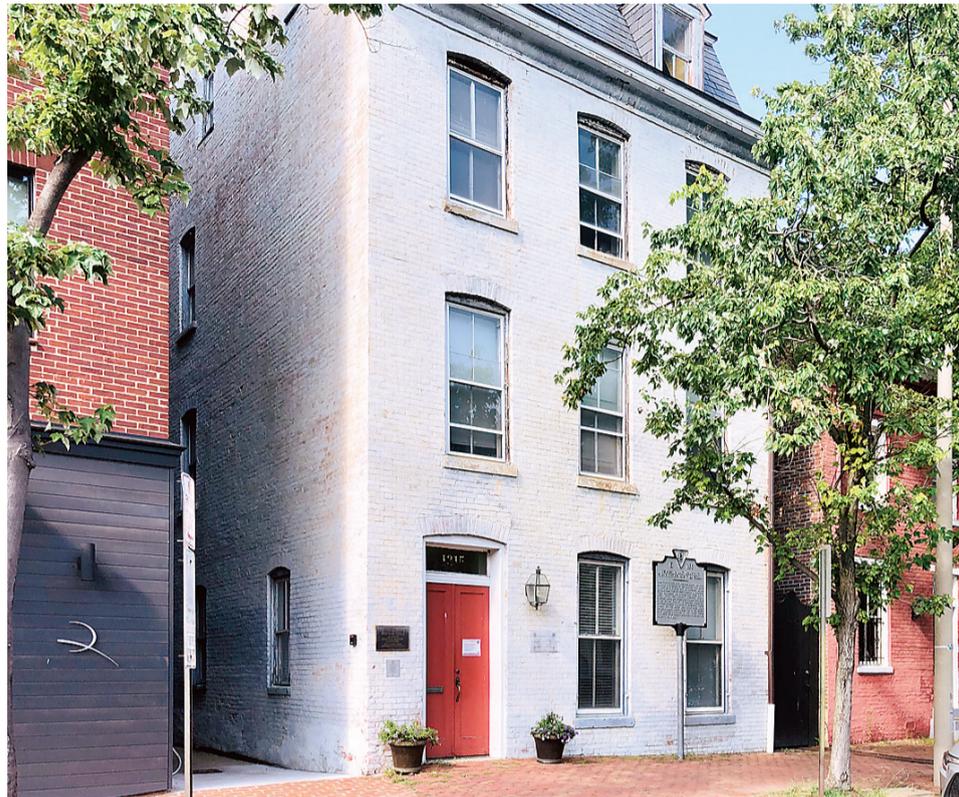
One of the budget line items on the chopping block is that appropriation to help renovate the old Franklin and Armfield office.

"Our investment in restoring Freedom House dovetails with what we are trying to learn and what we are trying to teach people about this issue," said Sarah Graham Taylor, legislative director for Alexandria. "But we're also realistic about the budget environment and the competing priorities."

Before the pandemic, the new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed an ambitious \$135 billion budget loaded with new spending priorities. Then the economy crashed, and Gov. Ralph Northam hit the pause button, unalloting \$2.2 billion of new budget line items. At the time, a doomsday scenario from the Secretary of Finance projected that lawmakers would need to slash as much as \$2 billion out of the budget. But the revenues weren't all that bad, and members of the General Assembly are probably going to be forced to cut only \$1 billion.

"I was able to get funding into the budget for sexual assault and domestic violence, making sure we have an education program and that we're supporting social services," said House Majority Leader Charniele Herring. "That's still a priority of mine, but because of what's happened we may have to triage. So it may not be able to be fully funded."

Public-school teachers might not end up with the 2 percent raise they were promised before the pandemic. Colleges and universities might not get money that was earmarked to help keep tuition from increasing. Local governments might not get money for affordable housing programs, and a series of water-quality improvement projects might be on the chopping block. Lawmakers are hoping Uncle Sam will bail them out.



Before the pandemic, Alexandria was to receive \$2.5 million to help renovate the old Franklin and Armfield slave-trading office into the Freedom House Museum. Now that money is in doubt.

Before the pandemic, new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed an ambitious \$135 billion budget loaded with new spending priorities. Then the economy crashed, and Gov. Ralph Northam hit the pause button, unalloting \$2.2 billion of new budget line items.



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— Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30)

"We don't have anything from Congress as to how much support they may provide because they've not provided any support thus far related to revenue reductions," said Sen. George Barker (D-39). "In fact when they did the CARES Act back in April, they explicitly said none of this can be used for that. Everything has to be used for expenditures that are new expenditures specifically related to the coronavirus."

CRIMINAL-JUSTICE REFORMS will take up time and attention during the special ses-

sion, and lawmakers will be trying to navigate their way through a series of complicated changes at breakneck speed. Last month, Senate Democrats released an expansive list of proposals including everything from banning no-knock warrants and chokeholds to cancelling funding for police departments that have disproportionate use of force incidents. The list also includes reforms like prohibiting officers from having sex with detainees and prohibiting police from shooting at moving vehicles.

"I think the most important thing, because

"Our investment in restoring Freedom House dovetails with what we are trying to learn and what we are trying to teach people about this issue."

— Sarah Graham Taylor, legislative director for Alexandria

it's what created the situation, is policing. We have to deal with the recruitment, training and pay," said Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw. "Three years ago, the beginning pay for a state trooper was \$36,000. We raised it to \$44,000 because we were losing people left and right. You can't tell somebody to put their life on the line for \$44,000 a year. It's absurd."

Some of the proposals from Senate Democrats would expand local authority, which is limited by a quirk of Virginia government known as the Dillon Rule. One proposal would create an option for local governments to have citizen-review boards with power to investigate, and possibly even discipline, officers accused of wrongdoing. Another proposal would create authority for local governments to use mental health staff to respond to particular calls for service instead of law-enforcement officials, sometimes called Marcus alerts.

"If you're mentally ill and something's wrong and someone shows up with a gun and a uniform that's not as reassuring as having a mental health counselor come and de-escalate if an officer wasn't needed," said Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30). "When they talk about defunding the police, this is where a lot of this misinformation comes from because rather than defunding they're talking about adding funding to have mental health counselors available."

Although Senate Democrats have released a list of proposals they'll pursue during the special session, House Democrats are taking a different approach. They have scheduled a series of virtual public hearings where they will take testimony from interest groups and stakeholders. Then, after the hearings, House Democrats plan to announce a list of priorities. Del. Mark Levine (D-45) said he will use his position as chairman of the Public Safety Subcommittee to make sure police unions aren't exerting undue influence over disciplinary decisions.

"There's a question about police unions, and I think we need to divide them up into seeking benefits like pay, health care, PTSD, paid-family leave and vacations, which I think they have every right to collectively bargain for," said Levine. "And then there's things like chokeholds, discipline and use-of-force standards. They can have their say in the discussion, but it can't be part of any police contract."

Alexandrians Sit on Edge of Eviction

FROM PAGE 1

cial COVID Community Development Block Grant funds from HUD that helps income-eligible renters in City-sponsored affordable housing projects make partial rent payments of \$1,500 per household to their nonprofit landlords. With the \$671,000 available, they expect to help approximately 450 households. "So far we have made payments to help more than 300."

The Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program was enacted June 29 to prevent evictions. It provided \$450,000 and is being administered locally by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to prevent evictions.

Kate Garvey, Director of the Alexandria DCHS, says, "We are having to use every tool in the toolbox." ACT for Alexandria and ALIVE are able to get dollars out quickly. Susan Hahn says ACT has been a large source of grants while other sources such as FEMA are hard, hard work, mind numbing for little dollars.

Garvey says they are trying to estimate needs looking forward. "We are still coming up short." She explains if you have 1,000 households with \$1,500 rent a month for 6 months, it translates into the need for \$7-9 million. She says they are trying to work systematically. "One family at a time takes too long."

Melanie Gray, Director of Outreach and Ministry for Historic Christ Church says,

"We have been working on this for months." Christ Church has a Lazarus Ministry that reaches out to assist with rental needs. "We knew there would be a time when evictions would become a real problem." It happened on June 29 when Virginia's eviction moratorium was lifted. In addition the moratorium in the Federal CARES Act expires on July 26. "We have to hustle."

The new rental assistance programs have proven to be so popular they have stressed the system. City workers in their traditional jobs were called away from their normal functions to expedite and implement this new process and the courts to serve more eviction notices in a short timeframe than they could normally handle.

But community resources quickly focused on the need for immediate implementation. Gray says, "I applaud how quickly they assembled a system to disperse the CARES funds." Garvey says they will be meeting with the delegation on Monday. "We will be making clear that this is one of our top priorities." They will be requesting extra CARES dollars.

Statistics released by the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel and Stout indicate 342,000 Virginia households are unable to pay rent and at risk of eviction with an estimated shortfall of rent of \$487 million dollars. This translates into 34 percent of renter households unable to pay rent

SEE ALEXANDRIANS, PAGE 12

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Going Back to the Dark Ages

To the Editor:

With the July 8 decision by the Supreme Court to ban insurance coverage for contraceptives for women, we have gone back to the Dark Ages, where men in management will decide “what is best” for women who work in their offices and in their companies.

Perhaps this Court should have instead tried this case under the Fourteenth Amendment, which notes that no state may “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Is this not blatant discrimination based on gender to favor the men and not the women in applying this insurance ruling?

Why is there no uproar when males use the generic forms for the sexual prowess drugs like Viagra and Cialis and submit those receipts to their insurance companies for reimbursement?

Thanks to the voting by the 5 male majority members of the Supreme Court, my boss now has the

right to decide what prescriptions my insurance will cover, and not my doctor.

This is not a new problem.

In 1873, Congress passed the Comstock Laws which criminalized the use of the U.S. Postal Service for anyone to send out by mail any information on contraception. In 1909, lawmakers tightened the law to prohibit delivery of those materials by railroads. And in 1922, Congress banned any foreign importation of these ‘salacious’ materials.

These intrusive and insulting laws remained on the books until 1965 when the Supreme Court intervened in the case of Griswold v Connecticut, when it ruled that it was unconstitutional for the federal government to prohibit married couples from using birth control. At that time, 26 states also prohibited the dissemination of birth control information for unmarried people.

In 2021, it is time for the Courts, Congress and various religious officials to stop equating “sex” with “sin” and to instead treat birth

control as a private medical option, and not as a moral issue or an economic one.

These jurists and politicians should take the advice from my Irish Catholic, church-going mother, who was pregnant nine times. We lived in Oak Park, Ill., which the local newspaper declared “Oak Park’s fertile acres.” The data supported this assertion. In a two-block area, there were 242 kids. That included the Gallaghers with a brood of 14; the Graneyns with nine girls; and the O’Brians with nine boys. I had only one friend who was an only child.

Before she died, my mom said she wanted to have a “serious conversation” with me, as the oldest child. She noted that, “after much thought,” she had finally decided that “birth control isn’t a sin.” And she wanted me to convey that information to my sisters. I said no, since it was none of my business. But added that’s the kind of information that should come from one’s mother. My mother never got around to the contraception conversation, and died shortly af-

terwards. One sister at that time had two tiny tots -- and went on to have 10 more children.

There is great irony that the defendant in the birth control case is an order of celibate Catholic nuns, who have no need for this medication. Nor have they been required to pay for it for anyone else. Similarly, five of the Supreme Court Justices have had ties to the Catholic Church and its birth control doctrines. They join the all-male hierarchy of the Catholic Church in promulgating the birth control philosophy -- applicable to women.

In America, we have a right to expect that our Courts and their judges do not decide such cases on the basis of religion -- either theirs or anyone else’s.

The Constitutional mandate for the separation of Church and State does not have one set of rules for women and another for men. Maybe we will need a new Scarlet Letter tee shirt for women that proclaims: NCI, or Not Covered by Insurance.

Kathleen M. Burns
Alexandria

Citizen’s Expressions of Venom, Ignorance, and Unsupported Statistics

The Gazette published several articles in last week’s edition in which citizens expressed venom, hate, ignorance, and questionable conclusions unsupported by the statistics cited.

First, four T.C. Williams High School alumni who are members of Alexandria’s wonderfully civic-minded Departmental Progressive Club accused the school’s namesake, T.C. Williams, of being “an intentional segregationist and did a lot of harm.” Supporters counter that Superintendent of Schools Williams developed an extraordinarily successful school system in which every school met the State accreditation standards in each of his more than 30 years of service. Additionally, under William’s leadership, the State never once threatened to take over an Alexandria school as was Jefferson-Houston’s fate over a recent 10 year period under previous Superintendents.

Ironically, the “racist” accusations come from members of an organization that many accuse of being “sexist” as after 93 years of faithful service to the community, the organization in 2020, shockingly, still prohibits any women from being equal members.

Secondly, a forum whose membership, qualifications, diversity, and inclusiveness was not listed,

made a number of scurrilous accusations against both the citizens of Alexandria, its institutions, and its esteemed Police Department. The article indicated city leaders vowed to dismantle inequities, although few specifics were part of the discussion. However, our Mayor, who has been in and out of our city government for the past 13 years, claimed “racial inequality for hundreds of years,” “a hard-wired white supremacy for 350 years ... certainly in Alexandria.”

Finally, claims were made that, unjustly, “most arrests are of African Americans and almost half of the inmates at the Alexandria jail” are as well. Then statistics from 2015 indicate, a disproportionate share of the jail population is black; however, no facts indicate any incarcerations were unjust.

Ironically, the widely respected Earl L. Cook was Chief of Police from 2009 to 2016 and Assistant Chief or Deputy Chief since 1997. Are we to believe that Chief Cook, whose leadership was cited for Alexandria’s “historically low crime rate” during his tenure, led these purported inequities and racist incarcerations against his own people of color?

And why was this supposed “hard-wired white supremacy” permitted during Wilson’s previous terms as Vice-Mayor and City

Council member and under the tenure of Mayor Bill Euille during his administration from 2003 to 2015? Again are we to believe Mayor Euille and Police Chief Cook conspired against their own people to perpetuate this “hard-wired white supremacy”?

Perhaps too much political ambi-

BULLETIN BOARD

Announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

THURSDAY/JULY 23

Virtual lecture with Dr. John Maass. 7 p.m. via Zoom. Virtual lecture with Dr. John Maass, author of *The Battle of Guilford Courthouse, A Most Desperate Engagement*. This will be the third of four history lectures by local Alexandria historians that was interrupted this spring. Tickets are \$6. Once you purchase your ticket, an email with the Zoom meeting link, Meeting ID, and password will be sent in a confirmation email for the event. Tickets can be purchased at <https://shop.alexandriava.gov/>.

SATURDAY/JULY 25

Live Chamber Concert. 6-8:30 p.m. At The Secret Garden at the Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. “The Four B’s: Barrière, Bologne, Bartok and Beethoven,” members of the National Symphony Orchestra perform chamber music for cello duet and string quartet. At 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., rain date Sun-

tion, theatrical emotion, inflammatory television opinions, and a lack of careful consideration contributed to these outrageous claims unsupported by facts.

Perhaps Chief Cook and Mayor Euille are due apologies.

Gerald B. File
Alexandria, Va.

day. Cost is \$40. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Mount Vernon At Home is a community Village, providing support, services, and community to seniors in the area. Volunteers are needed for a variety of services, with transportation to medical appointments are greatest need.

They can also use help with in-home handyman work and handling IT problems. If you are interested in volunteering, contact info@mountvernonathome.org or call 703-303-4060.

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AT WOODLAWN
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The Show structure will be modified: Entry is by timed ticket, in smaller groups each half-hour, purchased online only. Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House is at 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309.



**Alexandria
Gazette Packet**

www.AlexandriaGazette.com

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

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jean Card

Production Editor
jcard@connectionnewspapers.com

Jeanne Theismann

jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner,

Mark Mogle
Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown, Michael Pope,

Hope Nelson
Contributing Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:

For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

Tara Lloyd

Display Advertising, 703-740-7128
tlloyd@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment

Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher

Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh

Production Manager:

Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:

Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

A Connection Newspaper

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

2018

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'Cancel Our Rent'

FROM PAGE 1

age Relief program, which is providing an additional \$450,000 for eligible Alexandria residents. This supplements \$4 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds designated for the city's Emergency Rent Relief Assistance Program and \$671,500 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds for affordable housing tenants.

State funding will provide one-time payments, and the option for renewal will be based on availability of funding, household's need for assistance, and eligibility. Eligible residents must have monthly rent or mortgage at or below 150 percent Fair Market Rent as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Gross household income must be at or below 80 percent of area median income.

According to the city's website, short-term emergency rental assistance through the CARES Act will be provided to assist Alexandria renters experiencing housing insecurity due to COVID-19 related loss of income. Funds in the amount of up to \$1,800 in a one-time payment will be provided directly to property owners on behalf of eligible tenants, who must be current in rent as of March 31, 2020.

The city has acknowledged that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color, and there will be targeted outreach to communities of color across Virginia.

Residents should take a self-assessment survey to see if they qualify, and then call 703-746-5700 to apply.

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A Senior Year Unlike Any Other

Recent high school grads, Class of 2021 face college uncertainty amid pandemic.

BY BRIDGETTE ADU-WADIER
GAZETTE PACKET

Senior year, 2020 T.C. Williams graduate Mikaela Pozo applied to 17 colleges. Despite the copious essays and application fees, she needed to cast a wide net. An immigrant and first-generation college student, Pozo depended on scholarships to realize her college dreams. So she applied to pricier private universities that could give her more grants as an international student.

But as college decisions came, Pozo's top choice rejected her. Most of the colleges that accepted her such as George Washington University and the University of Richmond gave her no financial aid.

She did receive a full-ride to George Mason University, which she will be attending in the fall.

"It's definitely not the school I thought I would be attending," said Pozo. "It was not a part of the plan. The reason why I chose George Mason was because it was the most financially feasible option."

She's just one student whose college plans differed from initial expectations. Other recent high school grads are also re-evaluating college options amid the pandemic and financial crisis.



Yulisa Morales, 2020 T.C. Williams graduate and SFA Scholarship Recipient. She's heading to Virginia State University in the fall to pursue social work.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF ALEXANDRIA (SFA)

The students behind them, the Class of 2021, are navigating a new college admissions landscape.

"Because of COVID-19, I had to think about what was the best option financially," said Pozo. "Hypothetically, if I did take out a loan and go to the University of Richmond while we have COVID-19 happening, my mom loses her job and can't help me pay for school. Would there be any opportunities for me to pay off the loan? I would be taking a risk."

Reopening plans for colleges don't make the decision making any easier. George Mason University plans to start its fall semester on schedule with a hybrid plan in-

cluding both online and in-person classes, but final decisions have yet to be made. Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) will continue most of its classes online.

For some students, the first year of college done remotely is anything but ideal.

María Areyán, a 2019 T.C. Williams graduate who took a gap year, is excited to start her first year of college at NOVA. However, she's not happy about the Zoom lectures.

"I'm not very good at online learning, which is something that I'm scared about," said Areyán. "I'm more functional in a classroom than I am in my room."

College plans aren't the only thing that's changed.

Commonly regarded as a rite of passage, the traditional senior year experience is now anything but. The Class of 2020 had their senior year upended with a virtual graduation ceremony, no prom, and a pandemic crashing it all.

"There was so much going on in the world, it was difficult to think about college when there were so many other things I had to think about and process," said Pozo.

The Class of 2021 will have to deal with the same thing, all on top of college applications, possible first days of school over Zoom and rising uncertainty as the pandemic continues.

"We know how hard it is, doing college apps, doing schoolwork and balancing everything," said Areyán. "But I think it's going to be harder now with the pandemic."

Fairfax and Loudoun counties have announced a complete virtual fall reopening for its students, as has Arlington. Alexandria is still deliberating, hosting public hearings to develop a plan that will be publicized by mid-August.

Kennetra Smith, a rising senior at Thomas Edison High School in Fairfax, feels uncertain about a new online school year. As a low-income student living in a small apartment with five other people, she struggled to balance

family responsibilities on top of schoolwork and scholarship applications.

"It's going to be really hard to make those connections with my new teachers this year," said Smith. "How do I put myself out there for my teachers and how do I engage?"

The pandemic is also causing a shakeup in college admissions. Several Northern Virginia schools have adopted pass/fail grading and taking college admissions tests like the SAT and ACT has become nearly impossible. In response, many Virginia universities such as University of Virginia and Virginia Tech have made test scores optional for admission.

Smith is anxious to get standardized testing over with. She registered to take the SAT in August but her testing location in D.C. canceled. She's now scheduled to take the exam in October at a school in Maryland, an hour and a half away from home.

Even with recent policy changes, a good test score can still bring scholarships and college affordability.

"Schools say they're 'test-optional,' but to what extent are they actually test-optional?" said Smith.

She's not the only one who might have to apply to college without test scores. T.C. Williams

SEE A SENIOR YEAR, PAGE 12

'Titan Oak' in Danger Residents rally to save 150-year-old tree at TC.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Concerned citizens and local activists gathered July 21 on the campus of T.C. Williams High School to protest the planned removal of a 150-year-old oak tree to make way for a new concession stand at the school's Parker-Gray Memorial Stadium.

"This is an amazing tree," said Boyd Walker, a TC graduate who is petitioning the city and ACPS to save the tree. "This oak has been here long before the city even stretched this far west and it has shaded every athlete and fan quenching their thirst. It also produces a few tons of oxygen a year while sucking out carbon from our atmosphere. Let's honor that tree and save it for our kids' future."

The tree is reportedly sched-

uled to be cut down this week and some of the residents have said they will tie themselves to the tree if necessary to halt its removal. Plans call for the tree to be replaced by a new concession stand, restrooms and storage space.

A city staff report issued in 2018 reads in part: "For the proposed new concession and restroom facilities, different options were explored in order to balance the applicant's design objective of moving structures away from property lines as far as possible, with the additional objective to create a public gathering place with good on-site circulation... Initial designs tried to save a large tree, but the resulting layout removes the tree in order to place the buildings furthest east away from property lines."

"The city arborist has already looked at the tree and reported that it is healthy and about 150 years old," Walker said. "There is

also the historic tree designation in the city ordinance so the city manager can save the tree by designating it as historic. We are asking Mark Jinks to do that before it is too late."

Because the tree is on school grounds, the School Board has the authority to reverse the decision on the tree subject to approval from City Council.

"If anyone wants to help save this tree, please contact members of the school board, city council and the city manager," Walker added. "This tree is in imminent danger of being cut down. Saving the tree will not prevent a concession stand from being built. It only needs to be relocated."

A 150-year-old oak tree on the campus of T.C. Williams High School is slated for removal to make way for a new concession stand.



PHOTO BY BOYD WALKER

Wins Special Award in African American History

Patrick Ostermann-Healey, a student at George Washington Middle School in Alexandria recently competed in the National History Day Contest, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, June 14-20. He received the special award in African American History sponsored by the National Park Service.



Patrick Ostermann-Healey

The 2020 contest theme was Breaking Barriers in History, and this year's unprecedented circumstances added an extra layer of meaning to the theme. Patrick joined more than half a million students globally who completed projects in one of five categories: documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Patrick created a paper project titled The 1939 Virginia Library Sit-In: Breaking a Barrier to Read at a Public Library. He was inspired by the Alexandria Library Sit-In Descendants Panel hosted by Alexandria City Public Libraries as part of the year-long commemoration of the 80th anniversary of

the event. Already an active volunteer with the Office of Historic Alexandria's Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Patrick also interviewed staff at the Alexandria Black History Museum as part of his research.

After completing a project, students compete in a series of contests beginning at the local level. The top students from all 50 states, D.C., U.S. territories, and international schools are invited to compete in the National Contest. Patrick's entry was one of five from Virginia recognized at the National Contest.

"To make it to the National Contest in a normal year is a remarkable achievement," said NHD Executive Director Dr. Cathy Gorn. "Given the added challenges facing students because of the coronavirus and nationwide school closures, I am even more impressed by what they have done this year. They have shown an incredible level of perseverance amid adversity, and I am confident we will

SEE WINS SPECIAL AWARD, PAGE 12

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Say Hello to Hank & Mitzi's This Month

BY HOPE NELSON

Soon, the aroma of rich Italian food will once more waft from the corner of Montgomery Street and St. Asaph Street. After a longer-than-anticipated wait, Hank and Mitzi's – formerly known as Hank's Pasta Bar – will reopen its doors near the end of the month at 600 Montgomery St.

APPETITE The original Hank's, which closed in October 2019, was only supposed to be shuttered for three to four months, said owner Chef Jamie Leeds. But the world had other plans. Between the Covid-19 pandemic and the usual construction delays that pop up with a project like this, the closure has stretched to 10 months.

The reason for the closure was simple, borne out of necessity when renovating on a large scale.

"I wanted to build a rooftop bar and catering event space on the middle floor," Leeds said. "...I had gotten a feasibility test done for the roof and the city was granting me access to the roof for 80 seats and I didn't want to pass that opportunity up."

Since the restaurant would have

to close for a few months anyway, Leeds thought it was a great time to rebrand the space – and include pizza when it reopened.

Enter Mitzi, aka Leeds' mother.

"My mom has always been the one that wanted me to do pizza -- she's a real pizza connoisseur," Leeds laughed.

And pizza will certainly be a star of the show. While the precise menu is still being finalized, Leeds says diners can expect an array of options for pies.

"We're going to have a simple margherita, a meat choice, a vegetable choice, a make-your-own," Leeds said. But the pasta dishes that Hank's has become famous for aren't going anywhere, either.

The signature mafalde is certainly making a return, Leeds said, with a bit more refinement than before.

"Everything's going to be very simple and straightforward," she said.

And some of the other Hank's favorites are coming back, too.

"We're definitely going to have our signature grilled octopus back that people love," Leeds said. "We're just going to give it a little boost with a nice lemon vinaigrette."



Chef Jamie Leeds

In this era of coronavirus, reopening a restaurant brings with it a few more nuances than it might have before. Leeds and team are

rolling with the punches – and making some options available to fit the times.

"We're starting right off the bat with family meals to go," Leeds said. Diners can choose from four entrees – including lasagna and eggplant Parmesan – as well as a Caesar salad, broccoli rabe side and optional dessert, all for carry-out. The family meals, which are aimed at families of four-plus, will be priced at \$69. The restaurant is also offering charcuterie boards to go.

And, naturally, those diners who opt to dine in – either in Hank & Mitzi's outdoor space or inside the dining room – can expect safety protocols that go "above and beyond," including masks and gloves for the staff, frequent cleaning of the space, frequent hand-washing and more.

Now that the reopening date is finally drawing near, does it feel like a relief for Leeds?

"Oh gosh, it really does," she said, chuckling. "I can't wait."

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

Help with Cinematic Tribute to Alexandria

Join the Alexandria Film Festival, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and Spark Media for a special cinematic tribute to Alexandria.

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Email us at info@sparkmedia.org and your video could be incorporated into this special film presentation, which will premiere at the Alexandria Film Festival, accompanied by a live performance of Aaron Copland's *Our Town* by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra. It'll be made available after its premiere for all to see.

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Show us what makes Alexandria **YOUR** town

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The orchestra will be performing when the film is shown, so we won't be able to hear anything. We want your video to Show, Don't Tell.

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The Irish Walk in Old Town will close its doors July 31.

Irish Walk to Close July 31

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Irish Walk, a landmark shopping destination in Old Town for over 50 years, will be closing its doors July 31, a casualty of a string of recent economic challenges.

"The last couple of years have been financially hard on all of us," said owner Patty Theobald in announcing the closing on the store's website and Facebook page. "From the government shutdown, to the summer closing of the Alexandria Metro stations, and now the pandemic, we all have suffered in ways we couldn't have imagined. The Irish Walk is one business in a long list of businesses that is finding it impossible to bounce back after this third financial hit."

Theobald became owner of the storied shop in 2008, following in the steps of the original owners, the Butler family, then Bernadette and Pat Troy. She went on to thank her longtime customers.

"We have fitted some of you with your first Irish dance shoes, ordered your wedding bands, watched your children grow, celebrated your anniversaries and helped you find the perfect gifts," Theobald said. "We have appreciated hearing about your trips to Ireland and your family's Irish histories and celebrating the big day with you -- St. Patrick's Day. It has been a joy."

The Irish Walk is currently offering 40 percent off on all in stock merchandise both in store and online.

The store will close its doors July 31. www.irishwalk.com

SENIOR LIVING

Discarded Electronic Equipment Helps Seniors in Need

Handheld devices keep the elderly in contact with healthcare providers, family and friends.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

On a recent summer morning, a group of college students gathered in Chantilly to sort and sanitize handheld devices ranging from smartphones to tablets. The equipment was given to a local medical clinic and then distributed to seniors who don't have the means to purchase their own, but need to stay connected to healthcare providers, family and friends.

"Through my work, I've seen seniors isolated at home," said Tanvi Nallanagula, a junior at the University of Virginia and an EMT (emergency medical technician). "This effort is important to me because I can't imagine being quarantined in my house without access to doctors or friends and family."

"Sometimes it's difficult for seniors to know how much medication to take, for example," she continued. "These devices will make it easier for them to ask for help and get the information they need."

The students, primarily college juniors with an interest in medicine, founded the Virginia State Telehealth Access for Seniors, a non-profit organization with a mission to collect and distribute handheld devices to low income seniors and veterans. Once they collect and sanitize the devices, they contact clinics that serve those populations.

"Clinics give us a ballpark of what they need and we tell them what you can reasonably deliver," said Sneha Thandra, a junior at Emory University and the Virginia State Lead for Telehealth Access for Seniors. "We've been talking



Northern Virginia college students collect and sanitize handheld devices to help seniors stay connected to health care providers, family and friends.

For More Information or to Donate

<https://www.telehealthforseniors.org/>

with INOVA because they have so many clinics all over Northern Virginia. Within a month we'll have devices to donate to them."

The group is in need of smartphones or tablets that have cameras and the ability to connect to the Internet.

"There are people who have devices in their homes that they no longer use because they've upgraded," said Thandra. "Older and low-income patients tend to be more vulnerable and have more complicated medical needs. These devices give them the opportunity to access care and prevent unnecessary medical complications."

"We're also collecting money from corporations, family, friends or through fundraisers to buy new ones," added Rachana Subbanna, a junior at the University of Virginia.

"Anything helps, even \$5. If someone doesn't have an old device to donate, but wants to donate \$40, that's enough money to buy a device." The organization was founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of Telehealth Access for Seniors, a national organization run by 120 volunteers in 26 states

In addition to devices, the student volunteers provide instructions and free tech-support. In order to continue providing this service in Northern Virginia, they need more volunteers and continued donations.

"An interesting approach is to focus on mental health," said Thandra. "We know that during this time a lot of seniors will be lonely so we wanted them to be able to connect with family and friends."

Seniors to Protest Via Zoom Online forum scheduled for July 27

An online protest for older adults is being planned via Zoom to allow seniors to "gather in solidarity and bring attention to the need to end systemic racism and push for police reform," according to the event organizers.

The event is scheduled for July 27 at 3 p.m.

"It is so impressive how quickly we have all adapted to the virus situation and hosting Zoom happy hours and other virtual gatherings," said former Mayor Allison Silberberg, a featured panelist of the event. "Given that most seniors have not been able to attend the peaceful protests, this virtual event would be one way for our seniors to connect and see about ways to affect social change."

In addition to Silberberg, other speakers in-

clude: Reverend Marcia Norfleet of Alfred Baptist Church, and Shawn Tarrant, former member of the Maryland House of Delegates. Kelly White Gibson, Clerk-Treasurer for the Town of Merrillville, Ind., will serve as moderator.

Organizers said the goal of the event is to enable a group of people to safely participate in the movement regardless of any physical boundaries or possible risk of exposing themselves to the coronavirus. Speakers will discuss the impact of structural systemic racism and how individuals can influence change.

To learn more or to register, visit bit.ly/virtuale-seniors.

-JEANNE THEISMANN

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A Senior Year Unlike Any Other

FROM PAGE 8

rising senior Fina Osei-Owusu is banking on taking her SAT in August after having her first one canceled in April. But there's no guarantee that it will happen.

"Everybody is in the same boat," said Beth Lovain of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. "Whatever challenges that they have, every student has."

Despite the pandemic, Pozo argues the barriers many disadvantaged students face when applying to college will persist.

"A lot of low-income people and undocumented people experience the college process a little bit differently," said Pozo. "The college process itself shows how inaccessible college education is."

The Scholarship Fund of Al-

xandria has taken new measures to connect with seniors over the summer and into the fall. The annual workshop for financial aid documents is scheduled to be online in October. Seniors will have access to a texting platform that gives reminders about scholarship and college application deadlines.

"We're very worried about the students," said Lovain. "But at some point, it all will go back to normal." But Osei-Owusu doubts things will return to normalcy anytime soon.

"A lot of things will change," she said. "Our lives will never be the same. Our senior year is going to be really different; I don't think it's going to be normal. I don't think anything's going to be normal."

FUN THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

ONLINE CODING

CLASSES FOR KIDS

CodeWizardsHQ is offering online after school coding classes for kids and summer coding classes for kids with a structured curriculum that is comprehensive, developmental, challenging, and fun. Students get to code a project in every class. Expect the most fun and effective live, teacher-led coding classes for kids with support, including live office hours and 24/7 access to their proprietary coding platform. Their teachers take a students-first approach to teaching Python, Java, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript that guarantees students will reach their potential. New summer classes are starting on August 3. Visit www.CodeWizardsHQ.com.

bring your ticket. Show starts at 8:30 p.m.
Friday, Aug. 14 -- "Aladdin"
Saturday, Sept. 12 -- "Mrs. Doubtfire"
Reserve your spot - space is limited.
Reservation and movie details are located at
<https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/Events>

DRIVE-IN MOVIES

AT WORKHOUSE

Address: 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079. Film starts at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$80. Visit the website: workhousearts.org.
Call 703-584-2900.
Schedule:
❖ Friday, July 24 -- "The Dark Crystal."
❖ Saturday, July 25 -- "Labyrinth."
❖ Friday, July 31 -- "Hot Fuzz."

DRIVE-IN MOVIES

AT SOUTH RIDING

South Riding Town Center in Chantilly will host a free Summer Drive-In Movie Series each Tuesday evening now through August 18. Attendance is limited to South Riding residents and advanced registration is required. Spectators

must remain in their car during the movie but may roll down their windows. South Riding Inn and Dominos will be available for delivery to vehicles and other food options are available for takeout. No alcohol. Registration is available on the events page at www.southriding.net. The movie begins at sunset and lineup for the summer is as follows:

July 28 -- "A Classic Underdoll Story"
Aug. 11 -- "Aladdin"
Aug. 18 -- "The Lego Movie"

MOSAIC DEBUTS OUTDOOR

DRIVE-IN MOVIES

EDENS Mosaic has launched a new outdoor drive-in movie series this summer. Located on the top level (7) of Market Garage across from Mom's Organic Market and Hyatt House. Check-in is on level 6. Address: 8295 Glass Alley, Fairfax. The films begin at 8 p.m. The lineup includes:

Friday July 24: "Toy Story 4" at 5:15 p.m.; and "Jurassic Park" at 8:45 p.m.;
Friday Aug. 28: To Be Announced
There is a \$28 fee to reserve a design-

SEE FUN THINGS, PAGE 14

Obituary

Obituary

FREDERICK JAMES LEES, CDR. USN (RET)



Frederick James Lees, 89, of Harrisonburg, VA, passed away peacefully on July 17 at Sentara RMH in Harrisonburg, VA. Born to John T. Lees and Helen Evans Lees on August 26, 1930, in Scranton, PA, Mr. Lees became a gifted scholar and an Eagle Scout who enjoyed baseball and track and field. He graduated from Central High School, attended University of Virginia on a Naval ROTC scholarship and graduated in 1952 with a B.A. in Physics. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy and served during the Korean War. After leaving active duty, he served in the Naval Reserves, retiring with the rank of Commander.

On December 19, 1953, he married Romayne Lloyd, his high school sweetheart and the love of his life.

Following his active service in the Navy, he was employed as a patent examiner in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. While working at the Patent Office, he earned his law degree from The American University Washington College of Law, graduating in 1961. Mr. Lees then joined the legal staff of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, practicing intellectual property law there during the heyday of space exploration. He served concurrently as the chairman/chief administrative judge of the NASA Board of Contract Appeals and chairman of the statutory NASA Inventions and Contributions Board. He was awarded an Exceptional Service Medal by NASA for his leadership and management abilities at the agency, from which he retired after a 24-year career.

In 1985, he joined the law school faculty at The George Washington University. He was appointed co-director of the Government Procurement Law LLM Program in 1993 and E.K. Gubin Professor of Government Contracts Law in 1995. An avid sports fan, Mr. Lees was a George Washington University basketball season ticket holder and had many happy memories of attending games with his wife during his tenure there.

While at The George Washington University, he also served as special master, ombudsman, arbitrator, neutral advisor, expert, and counsel in various government contract cases. His work took him around the globe and brought him great fulfillment. He retired from The George Washington University as E.K. Gubin Professor Emeritus of Government Contract Law in 2002, remained active in the field of alternative dispute resolution and continued consulting in both the public and private sectors for many years.

Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Lees was equally engaged in his local community. He served as a deacon at Westminster Presbyterian Church, where he was a member for more than 60 years. He was president of the Mt. Vernon Park Association, president of the Groveton High School Booster Club, a Fort Hunt Little League baseball coach and a basketball referee for the Fort Hunt Youth Athletic Association. In 2014, he moved with his wife Romayne from their home in Alexandria, VA to Sunnyside Presbyterian Retirement Community in Harrisonburg, VA, where he remained until his death.

Mr. Lees was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 63 years, Romayne Lees, his son, Frederick Lloyd Lees (Linda), his parents and his sister, Dorothy Davis.

Surviving are his daughter Susan Arnold (Kevin) of Harrisonburg, VA, daughter Lisa Lees of Reston, VA, son Jeffrey Lees (Leigh-Anne) of Harrisonburg, VA; loving grandchildren Timothy Lees (Denise), Allison Lees, Jessica Arnold, Evan, Gillian and Nathan Lees; and several nieces and nephews.

It is those people, along with a wide variety of friends, colleagues, and students, who brought him the greatest joys of his life. He loved couples bridge, playing competitive badminton at the Pentagon Officers Athletic Club, cheering on his children and grandchildren in their sporting events, attending Redskins football games, reading and sharing his Bethany Beach home - the setting of a lifetime of memories for his children, grandchildren and friends.

Mr. Lees was a strong patriot with a friendly spirit. He was exceptionally kind, intelligent, generous, patient, loyal, warm and witty. All who knew him will mourn his passing.

A memorial service will be held when it is feasible, and burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Sunnyside Retirement Community Fellowship Fund, The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg-Rockingham COVID-19 Community Response Fund, or The George Washington University Law School Government Contracts Program.

FROM PAGE 5

and at risk of eviction.

Mary Horner, Staff Attorney for the Legal Services of Northern Virginia, who handles these eviction cases for the City of Alexandria, breaks down the eviction situation into three phases. She says phase one eviction cases were filed pre-COVID where people had fallen behind in their rent prior to March. "Some judgments against them are pretty high because although the courts were closed the rental payments kept accumulating."

Phase two is people who have fallen behind in rent payments due to the impact of the coronavirus job loss. It is difficult to estimate how many cases are in this phase. Horner says these cases are much more manageable because the rents have not been accumulating so long.

She said the cases tend to be filed by lawyers in waves.

"Just yesterday there were over 100 cases, many from Southern Towers, a 4,000 unit complex." Horner says the number of cases filed for Southern Towers between mid-March to present is triple the number of cases filed between January to mid-March. Southern Towers is one of the few affordable housing that is not subsidized in Alexandria and thus not under the protection of the CARES Act on evictions. It is a less expensive place to live but quick to evict.

Horner says she anticipates phase three will come in about two months when the CARES Act protecting people from eviction has expired and the 60 day continuance period has run out. She says when people come to court because they have fallen behind in their rent there is a procedure available to delay action for 60 days but it requires people to fill out an affidavit. Legal Services has been successful in getting some tenants in danger of eviction to fill out the forms but a number of people are unaware of the law, terrified of

court or feel going to court is currently unsafe.

Horner says Legal Services usually has a table outside the courthouse Monday-Thursday offering general legal advice and information as well as information on food distribution. "We just helped 20-22 people fill out an affidavit to delay eviction. The 60-day continuance is good because it gives time to work on solving the problem, to get the unemployment benefits or to find a way to pay the rent."

Horner says she has been compiling court data since May. "This allows us to reach out. Horner says one of the relationships that is part of the Alexandria team effort is with the Sheriff's office.

"No one wants to be evicting people right now. Believe me.

The sheriff agrees to wait until the last minute so there is enough time to help solve the problem."

Horner says due to the rapid implementation of the new laws some attorneys are uninformed about the CARES Act protections for tenants living in subsidized housing. As a result they were able to get a dozen cases dismissed the last couple of days.

But she adds that unfortunately when tenants receive an eviction notice to vacate in 5 days (even if it was based on misinformation), many self evict and then they can't find them.

Gray says, "Reflect on what you might do. Every dollar counts."

Horner adds, "We have boots on the ground. We are triaging emergencies. This partnership with the City and faith-based community and non-profits is unique to Alexandria. It is the benefit of our size and our tight knit community. Everyone is on the same team."

Horner says, "I am blown away by our community's ability to act due to established relationships."

To donate to the ACT Now COVID-19 Response Fund: <https://www.givegab.com/campaigns/act-nowcovid19fund>

Wins Special Award in African American History

FROM PAGE 9

continue to see great things from all of these students. The critical thinking and research skills learned through competing in NHD, especially now, will help these students achieve success in college and their careers." More than 300 historians and education pro-

fessionals served as judges for the students' work, and as with all other aspects of the contest this year, the judging was conducted remotely online. More than 100 students from across the country were awarded cash prizes between \$500 and \$2,000, each, for superior work in particular judging categories.

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Obituary

Catherine Patricia Butler "Kay" Quinn July 24, 1928-July 7, 2020



Passed away peacefully. Kay's husband Leonard Martin Quinn predeceased her March 25, 2012 as did her parents Catherine Agnes and Joseph Patrick Butler who were Irish immigrants. Her children were with her-Maureen Patricia, Leonard Martin (Charlene), Edward Patrick (Elizabeth)Karen May (deceased), Marie (deceased), Kevin Frances, Colleen Marie (Stanley), Kathleen Maryann,(Carlos), Camille Marie (Eric)and Catherine Shannon Mary. Her grandchildren are

John Paul, Catherine "Cate", Megan, Erin, Ryan,Sara, Sean, Conor, Stanley, Quinn, Emily, Catherine and Keara. Great-grandchildren Hudson, Madeleine and Isla. Kay left Dedham MA to work for the Navy Department and moved to Alexandria VA where she met and married Lennie. Kay traveled the world, was an accomplished hostess and started a group called LL of Mt Vernon. She worked for US Air for 20 years. She is remembered for Holiday parties, backyard oyster roast and countless family gatherings. Funeral Services will be held Friday, September 4, 2020-1100am at Good Shepard Catholic Church, Mt Vernon Alexandria VA (of which she and Lennie were founding parishioners). Kay will be missed by her family and friends. May she Rest In Peace.

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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

Growing Pains



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After more than six months away from the infusion center, due to the treatment for my papillary thyroid cancer stage II, I make my return on Wednesday, July 22. My non small cell lung cancer stage IV for which I have been treated since early March, 2009, once again becomes front and center after having been back-burnered since early January while we addressed my thyroid cancer. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the risk of miscellaneous drug/treatment interactions, both cancers couldn't be treated simultaneously. Now we go forward in hope, just like we did 11-plus years ago..

Having completed the thyroid cancer treatment protocol after a recent CT scan showed no residual signs of cancer, I am now free - so to speak, to return to the scene of crime - to euphemise, and resume treatment for my underlying/pre-existing lung cancer. I am also returning for treatment because during the six month interval when I was not receiving any current lung cancer treatment, the lung cancer tumors grew. My oncologist was unable to characterize the growth, other than to say there was growth everywhere, (he didn't say a little; he didn't say a lot). For some context, he did read aloud some comparative tumor measurements written in the radiologist's report which were less than ideal. No matter. Cancer is by itself less than ideal so that's nothing new, really.

The theory of immunotherapy is that it trains your cells to fight the cancer regardless of whether the patient receives current treatment or not so the battle continues. Now whether my six months of not receiving treatment was responsible for allowing this growth or kept it from getting worse, my oncologist wouldn't say. What he did say/recommend was that we restart the opdivo (immunotherapy that I had been on for the previous year) since it had been effective for the year during which I was receiving regular bi-weekly infusions. However, I'm scheduled for my next CT scan in only two months instead of the usual three months so that my oncologist can make an assessment sooner rather than later. In the absence of any new symptoms before or at present, the scan becomes the arbiter of my destiny. (I imagine waiting for the results of that September scan will be stressful.) But this is life in the cancer world, and the longer I experience it, the luckier I'll be.

In the interim, I am happy to go forward and resume my treatment. Nearly all the medicine that has previously been prescribed for me has been successful at managing my cancer (keeping it stable) so I have a reasonable expectation that my next two infusions will yield encouraging results. Nevertheless, I am well aware that any guarantees left the building on Feb. 20, 2009. That is when I first received a phone call from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's lung tissue biopsy had indicated a malignancy.

Slow forward to the present (one does not go fast forward enduring cancer) and I will be back in a very familiar place: the infusion center. Though I don't view my return as one of a conquering hero, I am still alive and reasonably well after being treated for a second cancer while my original cancer was not in remission. (No small accomplishment.) Nor was it in hiding. To invoke one of my late father's favorite words: the treatment for my lung cancer had been held "in abeyance."

Now the 'abeyance' is over and I am back to being a garden variety non small cell lung cancer patient. The delay in my treatment caused some damage I presume but it doesn't really worry me yet (talk about naive). I'm glad to once again be current - and active, in my treatment and I continue to remain positive about the negative. My oncologist has referred to me as his "third miracle" (after having survived so long after an initial "13 month to two year" prognosis). However, that was then. This is now.

I don't think my ship has sailed but there does appear to be some activity down at the docks. No matter, I'm an excellent swimmer.

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

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FUN THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

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nated spot in accordance with the new social distancing guidelines. Tickets can be purchased at https://mosaicdistrict.com/events/event/drive-in-at-mosaic/?event_id=8599 Visit www.mosaicdistrict.com.

WORKHOUSE SUMMER CAMPS

Ready for in-person Summer Camps? The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton will be offering July and August Summer Camps for kids in-person on campus. They've got half-day and full-day camps for kids of all ages starting the week of July 20 and Aug. 3. Camps include the following:

Game Design Camp where campers learn about computer technology, visual arts, storytelling and music with creative and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. And the Game Design camps integrate all of the STEM core competencies in a fun and engaging way.

Young Writers Camp gives campers in grades 7-12 the chance to write creatively in a variety of genres, learn about new genres through mini-lessons and receive response to their work from writers.

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MCC'S SUPER SUMMER

SCAVENGER HUNT

Join your friends, family and community for McLean Community Center's Super Summer Scavenger Hunt. Beginning on July 1 and concluding on Aug. 17, this exciting and free virtual event allows you and a team of your choice to compete against other teams and win amazing prizes. The hunt is the perfect way to stay local and have fun with friends and family. The game is played on a smartphone and players must complete indoor and outdoor "missions" (or challenges). Missions include answering questions, taking specific photos or videos, finding a specific item, geocaching or completing specific tasks as given in a list provided by MCC. The scavenger hunt will take place in or around McLean. Participants work in teams up to 10 players. Team captains must be 16 years old or older. The hunt will have a maximum of 125 teams—so register early. The first 50 teams to sign up will receive a special gift bag to make the hunt even more fun. Registration is open now through Aug. 3. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. To register, go to www.mcleancenter.org. For more information, call the center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit the website, www.mcleancenter.org.

GRACE DIGITAL SUMMER CAMP

Registrations are currently open for Greater Reston Arts Center's (GRACE) Digital Summer Art Camp and the first session began this week. This year's program offers fun and engaging content centered around the visual arts for young campers to enjoy at home. Weekly camps run for six weeks starting now thru Aug. 7, 2020 and are designed for children ages 5-10. Exciting program highlights include:

A Camp-in-a-Box kit that includes special art supplies conveniently separated into day-of-the-week packages to help keep campers organized

A daily sketchbook to personalize and fill with drawings in response to themed prompts

Access to pre-recorded video lessons led by a professional arts educator

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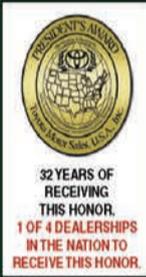
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