

Seeing Double

Alexandria delegate is one of four House members whose name will be on the ballot twice.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

The ballot for the Democratic primary in June might cause you to do a double take. Del. Mark Levine (D-45) will be on the ballot twice, once running for reelection against primary challenger Elizabeth Bennett-Parker and then again against seven other candidates for lieutenant governor. Levine and three other House members will be doing double duty, asking voters to reject their primary opponents for seats they would vacate if they win stateside office. It's a tricky balancing act caused by an unprecedented situation that will require nuanced messaging to voters.

"When a candidate runs for two offices at the same time, they're sending two messages: I want something better than what I have and I'm not sure I'm going to be able I'm going to get it," said Stephen Farnsworth, political science professor at the University of Mary Washington. "I suppose a politician can say, 'I'm so good you can vote for me twice.' But I'm not sure many voters are going to receive that message all that enthusiastically."

Levine is not alone. In the race for lieutenant governor, Del. Elizabeth Guzman (D-31) has three opponents in the primary for the House seat she would leave if elected lieutenant governor. Del. Lee Carter (D-50) has two primary opponents for the House district he would be resigning from if elected governor. And Del. Jay Jones (D-89) has a primary opponent to keep the seat he would leave if elected attorney general. All four of these House incumbents will need to figure out how to sell themselves to voters twice for two different seats.

"These candidates are on the progressive end of the Democratic umbrella," said Quentin Kidd, a political science professor at Christopher Newport University. "In a very safe Democratic district, the risk they would run in a primary is someone on their left challenging them. But if they're far enough left themselves, it's probably a safe risk."

THE DUAL CAMPAIGN is a rarity in Virginia politics.



The Democratic primary on June 8 will include elections for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, House of Delegates and City Council.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/GAZETTE PACKET



Elizabeth Bennett-Parker



Mark Levine

Normally House members move over to the Senate before they attempt a statewide campaign. The current generation of House Democrats is particularly ambitious though, especially after unseating the Republican majority and seizing control of the General Assembly last year. Perhaps more importantly, though, the House incumbents who filed for statewide office in June were planning for a separate House primary in August, which is what happened 10 years ago during the last redistricting cycle.

"It's not what I planned. But I think I've been a damn good delegate, and I think my constituents agree," said Levine. "I plan to win both seats and then resign the delegate seat with plenty of time to have a special election before the next General Assembly session."

The Census data used to draw new districts for the House of Delegates was supposed to arrive by the end of March, providing for enough time for the new Redistricting Commission to draw new maps before an August primary. But delays caused by the pandemic have pushed the data delivery to the end of September, just a few weeks before the November general election. That compressed timeline forced all the House candidates running for statewide office into an unanticipated situation of appearing twice on the same ballot in June.

"This district deserves someone who is fully focused

SEE SEEING DOUBLE, ON PAGE 7

"This district deserves someone who is fully focused on them."

— Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker



JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson gives an elbow bump greeting to a student in the honors earth science class at T.C. Williams High School March 16.

Welcome Back

T.C. students resume in-person classes.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

One year after classes were abruptly suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students at T.C. Williams High School returned for in-person studies March 16 with social distancing practices now the new normal at the King Street campus.

Alexandria City Public

Schools Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings Jr. welcomed back the returning students, along with T.C. Principal Peter Balas, Mayor Justin Wilson and ACPS School Board Chair Meagan Alderton.

"It's exciting to see our students again and see so much of our staff back," said Balas, who noted that 475 T.C. students arrived that morning for in-person classes. "The students are getting used to their new environment but as time goes by it will be their new normal."

The return of students at T.C. was part of the final week of ACPS students resuming in-person classes with more than 4,000 students returning to schools across the city.

SEE WELCOME, ON PAGE 3



T.C. Williams High School teacher Cecelia Baggott, right, welcomes ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings Jr. and School Board Chair Meagan Alderton to her classroom during the return of in-person classes March 16.

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Happy 90th Birthday

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

On March 11 it was official: Charles Nelson became a nonagenarian celebrating his 90th birthday with family at his home in Alexandria.

“Granddaddy is a wonderful man,” said granddaughter Shaye Nelson. “He has always been there for the family and always put us as his priority. We call him the ‘GOAT’ because he’s the greatest of all time.”

Nelson’s daughter Gail praised her father and recalled his role as the “neighborhood dad.”

“Dad was a father figure in the neighborhood,” said Gail Nelson. “I remember he had this pick-up truck and all the little guys in the neighborhood would come and sit in the back and dad would just talk with them.”

So many of them didn’t have dads so he was the neighborhood dad and mom was the neighborhood mom.”

Gail Nelson also praised her father for his humble nature.

“My dad is a very humble man,” Gail Nelson said. “He grew up in humble beginnings and is still humble to this day. As a provider, father, teacher, guidance -- anything that you needed he was there

“We call him the ‘GOAT’ because he’s the greatest of all time.”

— Shaye Nelson on her grandfather Charles Nelson’s 90th birthday

to support his family.”

Nelson, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, was simple in his advice for others: “Obey your parents and stay out of trouble.”

Charles Nelson becomes nonagenarian.



Charles Nelson, center, celebrates his 90th birthday March 11 at his home in Alexandria with daughter Gail Nelson and granddaughter Shaye Nelson.

JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Welcome Back

FROM PAGE 1

“Today is the big test,” Hutchings said. “Today is the most number of students returning at one time. But we have put together a lot of health and safety mitigations that are working in our favor and believe we are providing a safe environment for our young people.”

Tuesday marked the return of general education students across all grade levels who have opted for the hybrid program including two days a week in-person schooling. They joined their fellow classmates who transitioned back to school buildings in the prior two weeks.

“Finally, we are back in our school buildings with most of our kids,” said Hutchings, who added that about 60 percent of staff returned to the buildings for in-person classes. “Not all are back right now but I am really looking forward to the rest of this year as more of our young people return. It’s exciting as we are beginning to do our planning for the summer and having conversations about what the fall looks like.”

Social distancing practices are in place for students as are internal procedures on how to respond should a student or teacher test positive for Covid-19.

“We have protocols in place that have made it possible for students and staff to return,” Hutchings said.

“If we have a positive in our schools, we know how to respond. Unfortunately, we did have a couple of students and staff members test positive in the past couple of weeks and we have been able to effectively put those protocols into practice.”



T.C. Williams High School opened its doors to students March 16 for in-person classes.

More than 15,500 students are enrolled in ACPS schools representing more than 145 countries and speaking 132 languages. The 18 city schools are comprised of two middle schools, two K-8 schools, a pre-K school and T.C. Williams High School.

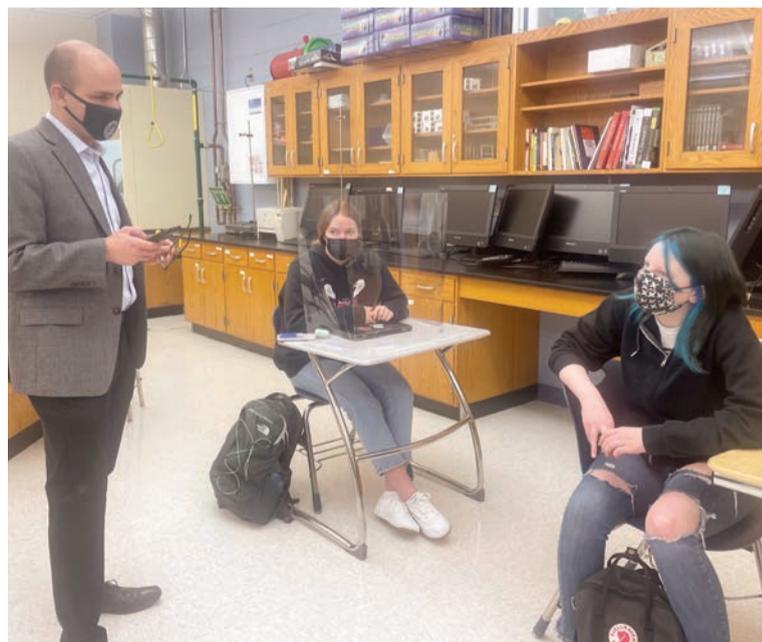
“It’s been a tough year for everybody,” said Wilson, whose two children attend ACPS schools. “It’s



T.C. Williams High School students return to campus March 16 after more than a year of virtual learning.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

been challenging for our students and a year of sacrifices. But today is a day of celebration and an opportunity for us to pay tribute to our educators, support staff as well as our families who have sacrificed so much over the past year.”



Mayor Justin Wilson talks with students in the honors earth science class March 16 at T.C. Williams High School.



ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings Jr. outside T.C. Williams High School on the return of in-person classes March 16.

Hard to Overstate Accomplishments

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

The General Assembly officially adjourned “sine die” on Monday, March 1, wrapping up a high-pressure session which caps one of the most progressive, accomplishment-filled two year legislative cycles in Virginia’s history. It is hard to overstate what the new majorities in Virginia have accomplished, and how much more work is needed to create a fair, safe, and successful Commonwealth for all. This year I passed five bills, which are headed to the Governor’s desk, and one Constitutional Amendment, which will need to pass again next year before being approved by the voters. These include:

❖ SB1215 - Statutory Penalties for Unlawful Evictions.

In order to address the stunning number of illegal evictions which occurred during COVID-19, I worked with the Virginia Poverty Law Center and Delegate Sally

Hudson to pass this bill to allow tenants to receive damages after an illegal eviction. The bill expedites the timeline in which hearings to remedy illegal evictions are heard, and allows for tenants to receive 4 months rent or \$5,000, whichever is greater as well as reasonable attorney’s fees.

❖ SB1309 - Flood Water Assistance Funding.

At the request of the City of Alexandria, I passed a bill to allow localities to use their local flood water assistance for short-term, stop-gap projects to protect neighborhoods and homes from inland flooding, provided that the projects are in alignment with the localities long-term flood mitigation plan.

❖ SB1178 - Repealing the Genetic Counseling “Conscience Clause.”

At the request of a constituent,



Ebbin

the ACLU, and NARAL Virginia, I introduced this bill to repeal a medically unnecessary and potentially harmful barrier to patient-centered-care for those seeking genetic counseling.

❖ SB1381 - Banning Guns in State Buildings and Capitol Square.

Working with Moms Demand Action, I passed a bill to codify a current state policy to ban firearms in state buildings and expand the ban to Richmond’s Capitol Square.

❖ SB1406 - Legalizing Adult Cannabis Use in 2024.

Eliminates penalties for personal possession of marijuana for those 21 and older in 2024 (it is currently a \$25 fine under legislation I passed last year), creates a regulated adult-use market for cannabis centered on building wealth for those damaged by the prohibition, expunges certain criminal records for the possession of marijuana,

and allows for resentencing and release of those convicted under the prohibition. Due to the short session and limited lead-up time, portions of this bill are subject to review this summer and a second vote next year.

❖ SJR270 - Same Gender Marriage Ban Repeal.

Repeals the now inoperable ban on same sex marriage in the Virginia Constitution and replaces it with an affirmative right to marry regardless of gender. The amendment must be passed again next year and then by the voters in order to go into effect.

Democrats passed additional legislation critical to moving Virginia forward, including:

SB1197, Locke, establishes the housing opportunity tax credit, which will help more low-income families obtain and maintain stable housing.

SB1387, Boysko/Lopez, requires higher education institutions to consider undocumented immi-

SEE HARD TO, PAGE 10

We Still Need Your Help

We all need community newspapers; community newspapers need your help.

A year later, Covid continues to be the most compelling, most local issue that we face.

Here at the Gazette Packet,

Covid has posed an existential threat to continue the community service that has been ongoing since 1784.

Every family has faced unprecedented disruption between schools being closed and the advent of distance learning; work is remote, except for those people who must go out to jobs and the risks that entails. Every business has been challenged; many have closed; some have been mortally wounded. Thousands of local people have died, with tens of thousands having been ill with Covid. We have produced dozens of stories about struggles of food insecurity,

learning to “pivot,” obituaries, how to get vaccinated and beyond. We bring you details about covid, testing and vaccination with a local and personal view. Recent column: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/johnson-and-johnson-jab-lubber-run-arlington-count/>

An election critical to Virginia is coming up this fall. Do you know that the Democratic primary is June 8? That Republicans choose their candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and some delegates at a May 8 convention? If you think state elections don’t matter, we’ll

try to convince you how important they are between now and then. Recent story on the race for Governor: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/mcauliffe-picks-support-alexandria/>

Perhaps you are more concerned about schools, teachers, students and holding elected officials accountable for your children’s education, teacher safety and returning to the classroom. Recent story on schools: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/03/person-and-home-class-one-community-reston/>

SEE WE STILL NEED, PAGE 10

Beyer Highlights American Rescue Plan Benefits

Last week, Representative Don Beyer (D-VA) voted to pass the landmark American Rescue Plan and send it to President Biden’s desk for signature. Today Beyer highlighted the legislation’s infusion of resources for Virginia families and communities.



Beyer

“This pandemic and the historic economic crisis it caused inflicted untold hardship, but help is on the way,” said Beyer. “On the day we passed it, I said my vote for the American Rescue Plan was the most consequential vote I had ever cast. Now people are beginning to see why we pushed so hard to get a big, ambitious relief bill through Congress.

The pain and suffering of this pandemic have not been evenly distributed, and the American Rescue Plan will get aid to those who need it most as quickly as possible. The assistance in this bill is going to be huge for communities in Northern Virginia, the whole Commonwealth, and across the country.”

The pandemic and economic crisis have had a severe impact on Virginia:

Since the pandemic began, more than 595,000 Virginians have been infected with COVID-19 and more than 10,000 have died;

The unemployment rate in Virginia is 5.3%, up from 2.5% before the pandemic, with 300,000 fewer Virginians employed

503,000 adults – 9% of all adults in the state – report not having enough food to eat, including 308,000

SEE BEYER HIGHLIGHTS, PAGE 5

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

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A Connection Newspaper

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



OPINION

Getting My Covid Shot: Proud To Be an Alexandrian

BY MARK S. ALLEN

The Republican in me was ready for everything to be screwed up. After all, I had registered weeks ago for a Covid-19 vaccine through the Alexandria Health Department. I had heard nothing. And when it was announced that all local health department lists had been merged into one statewide list, I was even more convinced that I had been lost in a bureaucratic maze.

I know folks who are more eager than me to get vaccinated as fast as possible. Trying other jurisdictions. Scouting out drugstore sites. Scouring the internet. I just figured my time would come. After all, my only qualification is that I'm 66 years old and slightly overweight. There are lots of first responders, front-line health providers and essential workers far more deserving than me.

But two weeks ago I unexpectedly received an email from the Health Department. It said I should "click here" to schedule a vaccine appointment. Surprised but still skeptical – worried that it might be a scam -- I clicked anyway, expecting to be told that an appointment might be available in a few weeks or months. But to my surprise, there was an appointment available in one hour. That's right: One hour. I jumped at the chance, printed the confirming email, and drove to George Washington Middle School.

There I was met by a one young volunteer who asked if I had a smartphone. Thankfully, she didn't ask how smart the operator of said phone was, but I sensed she suspected some degree of incompetence when she cheerily suggested that there were volunteers aplenty to help me. Determined to navigate the signup process on my own (and unwilling to concede my senior status) I managed to find the appropriate website and enter the requested information. My only trouble was the bright sun of a glorious late winter day and my own fat fingers typing on the tiny iPhone keypad (see reference to "slightly overweight" above). More than once I was approached by a happy young volunteer offering help, all with smiles as bright as the yellow vests they wore that looked as if they'd been borrowed from a construction crew.

The website asked a lot of personal questions. Once again the conservative in me awakened, questioning whether all of this personal information was really necessary. But the choice was simple: information or vaccination. The answer was clear. The government already knows everything about me anyway.

So with the questionnaire complete, I was ushered around yellow police tape to the entry doors of the school gym, with everyone carefully social distancing along the way. I did notice that the crowd was pretty much my age, as if I had stumbled into an AARP convention. The line, with folks separated by distance markers on the ground, moved quickly and efficiently. The process felt a lot like going to vote. As I got to the front (within two minutes at most) I was asked to give my name to another capable volunteer sitting behind a folding table. My name was not on "the list." Finally,

I thought, something was going to go wrong.

But not a problem to the man at the table. He called out to another volunteer to check the "other list," which turned out to be a list of names recently added to "the list." I suspected (though I don't really know) that I was the beneficiary of some doses that suddenly opened up. Hence the lucky email with the appointment in an hour that started this whole adventure.

I was handed an orange slip of paper and pointed to the school doors, which opened into the vast gymnasium. There were scores of people there, yet the place was neither crowded nor chaotic. The bleachers were packed away and the gym floor was covered with tables. It felt as if I had walked into a trade show. Maybe it was an AARP meeting after all. Then suddenly I remembered the last time I was in a school gymnasium to get a vaccine — back in the 1960s for my polio shot.

Upon turning in my orange slip, instead of being handed a ballot like on Election Day I was directed to table 27, where one volunteer was standing with arm raised to indicate readiness. I started to take a picture of the whole impressive operation but saw the "no photography" sign. Since I was directed to table 27, I know there were at least that many tables set up.

There I sat with two men wearing white shirts with patches from the Alexandria Fire Department. I had come prepared as instructed, so it was easy for the man on the left to roll up my left sleeve and prep my left arm while the other grabbed my attention. He firmly but in a friendly manner insisted that I look directly at him and the card in his hands. He must have sensed my fear of shots. Not a fear of vaccination: just a fear of the shot experience.

The man on the right focused me on my upcoming schedule. He said I would get a follow-up email soon offering appointments for the second shot. (The next day I did). He handed me the information card and let me know that I needed to wait around for 15 minutes or so to be sure I had no immediate adverse reaction. I didn't. I didn't even feel the "jab." Ninety minutes from getting the lucky email the whole process was over. The Band-Aid on my left shoulder and the card in my right hand were my only proof that the shot even happened.

As I worked my way out the back of the gym and around the police tape, I was met with yet another happy volunteer. This time I paid attention to the Alexandria Health Department identification card around her neck as she asked me if I needed help or direction. "No," I said. "I'm on the way out." But I couldn't help asking: "Are you a health department employee?"

"No," she said. "just an ordinary Alexandria citizen trying to help get the world back to normal." Hearing that still makes me want to cry – and swell with pride to be an Alexandrian.

Government gets a bad rap all the time. And there's plenty of reason to be critical. But we need to give credit when credit is due. Kudos to all who are helping to put shots in arms in such a methodical and efficient way. I'll see them again in a few days.

Beyer Highlights American Rescue Plan Benefits

FROM PAGE 4

adults living with children. 15% of all Virginia adults living with children report that the children in their household do not have enough to eat.

An estimated 267,000 Virginia renters or 14% of renters are not

caught up on rent.

An estimated 1,929,000 adults – 31% of all adults across the Commonwealth – report having difficulty covering normal household expenses.

President Biden's American Rescue Plan will save lives and liveli-

hoods with targeted state and local relief for Virginia families, communities, and small businesses:

\$4.431 billion in fiscal relief for the Commonwealth of Virginia;

\$2.913 billion in local fiscal relief to local governments, including SEE BEYER HIGHLIGHTS, PAGE 9

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Passing The History On – Lois Diggs Davis

Many African American families in Alexandria, have family ties back to pre-and- post-Civil War era. One of these families is the Diggs family.

BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

Back in 2014, the City of Alexandria honored the descendants of the Freedmen’s Cemetery located at Washington and Church Street. Most of the individuals that are buried there fled from slavery or persecution during the civil war. Some of the family members that came to Alexandria were William Henry Diggs, Lois Diggs Davis’ paternal second great-grandfather and his family.

THE OTHER ALEXANDRIA

During the research process in 2008, Lois and her brother, Frederick were interviewed about their family history. The family history interview had an impact on Lois. She decided to pursue her family history in order to bring her family together for family reunions. She also wanted to share the 150-year-old history of the Diggs family in Alexandria.

In 2012, Lois gave her first family reunion at Richard’s house – Lois’ brother.

There were about 65 people. Then the following year, another family reunion and 150 people attended. In 2014, there were 300



Lois Diggs Davis



Shavonne Diggs Perry

PHOTOS COURTESY LOIS DIGGS DAVIS

people. After the reunions, she put together family stories and pictures and produced a photo narrative book on their family. Out of her love for her family history, she posted their stories on social media. She received emails from unknown relatives throughout the United States that wanted to connect

their Diggs family to the Virginia family and to attend the Diggs’ reunions.

Now at the age of seventy-nine, Lois is training her great niece, Shavonne Diggs Perry, the granddaughter of Lois’ deceased brother, Julian Diggs and his deceased wife, Frances Euille Diggs. Frances is the cousin

of the former Mayor of Alexandria, William D. Euille. Shavonne will soon step into her great aunt’s shoes as the family historian. Although she lives in Atlanta, Georgia, she welcomes that role as the keeper of her Virginia family’s history.

Lois Diggs Davis was born on Dec. 18, 1941 to Julian Diggs and Mabel Gaskins. Julian had thirteen children: Lois, Thomas, Frederick, Irving, William, Richard, Michael, David, Norman Shanklin, Julian Jr., James, John and Mary. Lois’ family lived at several locations in Alexandria, which included 1445 Duke Street from the time Lois was born until she was five-years old.

Then her family moved to 1015 Quaker Lane and from there, they moved to the rear of 107 Woods Lane and then finally to their new home at 3407 Woods Ave., where Lois lived for fifty-seven years. She retired five years ago as director of corporate sponsorship and conventions of the National Community Pharmacist Association in Alexandria, Va.

After losing several of her siblings, Lois feels a strong need for their family history to be passed down to the next generation.

SEE PASSING THE HISTORY, PAGE 9



Alan & Barbara Anderson



AUTO-GRIP™



H. Arthur Sauer

Senior Services of Alexandria would like to thank all of our 2021 Gala, Raffle and Silent Auction sponsors, donors and volunteers for their generous support to making SSA’s first “Virtual” Gala an overwhelming success! Since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, we have all come together as a community to ensure that homebound, isolated older adults are receiving the services and programs they need to remain safe in their homes. We were pleased that we could pay tribute to our honorees – Barbara Anderson, Esq., Honorable William “Bill” Euille, and Eugene “Gene” Steuerle for their work in the community; and to Kate Garvey, Director of the City’s Community and Human Services for her leadership during the pandemic. A very special thanks to Vanessa and Warner Moore of Unwined and Revel for their special Raffle donation, the Westin Old Town Alexandria for their support in providing delicious dinner entrees, wine and signature cocktails to attendees, and to Creative Liquid for the production of the beautiful honoree videos.

SSA is grateful for this support in our 53rd year of service in the city of Alexandria for older adults!

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Off the Menu: Restaurant News and Notes

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

This week marks a year since Alexandria's covid-19 lockdown rules went into effect, sparking a year of pivoting, changing and adapting. Curbside and to-go orders sailed off the charts while in-person ceased, then slowly returned in the new world order. While things are certainly not yet "normal" again – far from it – time continues to march on, and the city's eateries continue to contour to fit the times. From openings to renovations to expanded menus, here are a few notes from around the city this month.

Yunnan by Potomac to Reopen March 20

The city's only Yunnan-style noodle house will reopen Saturday after a three-month closure for renovations. While the inside space has gotten a facelift, the outdoor seating area – a hidden gem



"...Where sweet meets savory!"
Uncle C's Chicken and Waffles, "Where sweet meets savory."

for al fresco dining in Old Town – will also be open for dining beginning this weekend, weather permitting. Bring some cold hard dollar bills – this soft reopening is cash-only. Not up for an in-person visit? Yunnan by Potomac will also continue offering takeout and delivery service. 814 N. Fairfax St.

Abyssinia Market and Café to Offer Lunch and Dinner

How about some injera to go with your cup of coffee? Abyssinia Market faithful, rejoice: Soon, a feast of Ethiopian food will make its way to the café. How soon? This weekend the shop will adjust

its hours to stay open later, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., and will offer lunch and dinner. What's more: The café recently procured its license to serve beer and wine, so lift a glass to Abyssinia's expanded menu (and hours) ... and then wash it down with a cup of joe. 720 Jefferson St.

Uncle C's Chicken and Waffles Opens on Richmond Highway

Since its opening several weeks ago, Uncle C's Chicken and Waffles has taken Richmond Highway by storm.

From a multitude of chicken and waffle selections to fried chicken with cornbread to a number of seafood choices, Uncle C's has you covered. Hankering for something sweet? Try the banana pudding, strawberry cheesecake or peach cobbler to cap off the meal. 6308 Richmond Highway.

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.



From Yunnan on the Potomac's Facebook page: Do you see that? "That's how high our level of excitement is for the reopening," Saturday, March 20.

Seeing Double

FROM PAGE 1

on them," said Bennett-Parker in a written statement. "I've been serving the residents of the 45th district on City Council and on regional bodies, and I want to keep serving them as delegate."

APPEARING TWICE on the same ballot is not unprecedented in American politics. Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman ran for reelection to his Senate seat while simultaneously running for vice president in 2000. Here in Virginia, Republican Del. Glenn Davis (R-84) was able to hold on to his House seat while running an unsuccessful campaign for lieutenant governor in 2017, although he did not face a primary opponent in that House election so his name did not appear on the ballot twice. Political strategists say the dynamics of waging a two-front political campaign are a nightmare.

"It's a very dangerous situation for them, which is why people haven't done it in the past. I'm not sure that anybody would have done it this year if they had known what the rules were at the start," said Democratic strategist Ben Tribbett. "Who wants to be asked to prom to be the second choice?"

Some House members have solved the problem by focusing

"I plan to win both races and then resign the delegate seat with plenty of time to have a special election before the next General Assembly."

— Del. Mark Levine (D-45)

on the statewide race and giving up their existing seat. Former Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2) resigned from her House seat to focus on her campaign for governor, and Del. Hala Ayala (D-51) is not seeking reelection so she can focus on her campaign for lieutenant governor. Del. Sam Rasoul (D-11) lucked out by not having a primary opponent for his House seat so far, which means his name won't appear twice on the ballot twice because of his campaign for lieutenant governor. For those House incumbents who are now forced into a difficult

SEE SEEING DOUBLE, PAGE 10

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NOTICE OF PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

This notice is required by State law. The City Council has authorized a proposed real estate tax rate for advertising purposes of \$1.130 per \$100 of assessed value. The tax rate may not exceed \$1.130, it could be less, and it will not be set until May 5, 2021.

The City of Alexandria proposes to increase the current property tax levies.

1. **Assessment Increase:** Total assessed value of real property, excluding additional assessments for new construction, or improvement to property, exceeds last year's total assessed value of real property by 1.66 percent.
2. **Lowered Rate Necessary to Offset Increased Assessment:** The tax rate which would levy the same amount of real estate tax as last year, when multiplied by the new total assessed value of real estate with the exclusions mentioned above, would be \$1.120 per \$100 of assessed value. This rate will be known as the "lowered tax rate."
3. **Effective Rate Increase:** The City of Alexandria proposes to advertise a tax rate of \$1.130 per \$100 of assessed value. The difference between the lowered tax rate and the advertised tax rate would be \$0.01 per \$100, or a 0.90 percent increase. This difference will be known as the "effective tax rate increase." Individual property taxes may, however, increase at a percentage greater than or less than the above percentage.
4. **Proposed Total Budget Increase:** Based on the proposed real property tax rate and changes in other revenues, the total budget of the City of Alexandria (including the General Fund and all Special Revenue grant funds and other sources) will exceed last year's by 8.0 percent.
5. The City proposes to continue an additional tax rate of \$0.20 per \$100 for all properties that have been classified in the Tier I Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Special Services District.

A public hearing on the effective increase will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. The hearing shall be open to the public. The governing body shall provide persons desiring to be heard an opportunity to present oral testimony within such reasonable time limits as shall be determined by the governing body.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the April 17, 2021 Tax Rate Public Hearing meeting of the City Council is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020 or Section 4-0.01(g) in HB29 and HB30, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly (Virginia Acts of Assembly Ch. 1283 and 1289), to undertake essential business. All the members of the City Council and staff are participating from remote locations through Zoom Webinar. This meeting is being held electronically, unless a determination is made that it is safe enough to be held in person in the City Council Chamber at 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA. The meeting can be accessed by the public through: Zoom hyperlink (below), broadcasted live on the government channel 70, and streaming on the City's website.

City Council Public Hearing:

The Webinar will open at 9:00 AM to allow individuals to join while the Public Hearing will begin at approximately 9:30 AM.

Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qr1F8U00RuK_7gi-yUUpHAQ

Webinar ID: 944 4159 8494

Webinar Passcode: 971241

Dial-in number: 301 715 8592

Speaker's Form: <https://survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/2020-VIRTUAL-City-Council-Speakers-Form>

Those wishing to address Council should submit a Speaker's Form. Submission of written statements is encouraged. Please sign up after the docket is created and you are able to verify the meeting date on the City's website. If the docket is not posted, you will have to return at a later date to complete the speaker's form in order to speak at a Council meeting.

Public Comment will be received at this meeting: All persons wishing to speak before City Council must complete a Speaker's Form (see link above). If you have a prepared statement or written comments for the record, you may email it to the City Clerk at gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov. Speakers are encouraged to submit their written comments to the City Clerk. When your name is called to speak, the Zoom host will prompt you to unmute your microphone. If you are participating via smartphone, press *6 to mute/unmute your microphone. You will be called on by your name or the last 4 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to speak. When you are finished speaking or at 3 minutes (whichever comes first), you will be muted again. If you would like to submit a written comment, you may use the "Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Input" form: <https://www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-FY2022BudgetInput>

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the City Council meeting may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at 703.746.4550 (TTY/TDD 838.5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made. City Council meetings are closed-captioned for the hearing impaired. Individuals requiring translation services should contact the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at gloria.sitton@alexandriava.gov or at 703.746.4550. We request that you provide 24 to 48 hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made. Please specify the language for translation when you make the request.

NEWS

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Transports 50 Cats

Rescue mission helps overwhelmed Texas shelters seeing a surge of surrendered pets.

On Saturday, March 13, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) brought in 50 cats from eight individual animal shelters in Texas, still recovering from the devastating February snowstorms and subsequent power outages. Many of these Texas facilities are now experiencing a surge of surrendered pets, and by transporting animals who were already in these shelters to Virginia, these organizations can better address the continued need for care and assist even more homeless animals.

"We received a request from the Human Animal Support Services (HASS) national network asking if shelters were able to take in homeless animals, to make room for Texas shelters to care for the influx of animals they were seeing," said AWLA Executive Director Stella Hanly. "We knew the plans were still coming together, but we also knew we had to help."

The biggest hurdle was making sure a vehicle could safely transport that many cats. While the AWLA owns several vehicles for day-to-day shelter use, none is equipped with fixed cages for that many animals. Luckily, one AWLA volunteer, a retired naval engineer, had the solution, and in a matter of days, he created a removable rig that could be placed in one of the AWLA's vans that could accommodate travel crates for up to 50 cats. Two additional AWLA volunteers offered up their time to make the 14-hour round trip drive to Tennessee, where they would meet with a HASS representative to pick up the traveling cats.

"This mission was quite the venture from the start," said Katie DeMent, AWLA's Director of Operations and liaison for this effort. "In less than two weeks, we'd connected with Texas shelter liaison, worked with other local shelters and rescues to determine who could take in cats, found volunteers ready to take on this long-haul drive and outfitted our van so we'll also be able to use it to help even more animals in the future. We asked a lot of our team, but they all worked together so that we'll be able to help these Texas facilities and all of these homeless cats."

In addition to facilitating the transport, the AWLA served as a local hub to connect many of the cats with shelters and rescues in the region. Twenty of the cats, ranging from 6 months to 5 years old, stayed



On Saturday, March 13, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) brought in 50 cats from eight individual animal shelters in Texas.

at the AWLA, where they will undergo general and veterinary evaluation before being made available for adoption. The remaining 30 cats have gone to other local shelters and rescues, including the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, Loudoun County Animal Services, Four Paws Rescue and Helping Homeless Felines.

To see the cats brought to the AWLA and learn how to meet them, either virtually or in-person, visit AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt.

After the return trip of more than seven hours, transport volunteer Kerin Ord said, "Seeing cats in their condos at the AWLA, kittens playing with toys, many cats just reaching out for pats and attention ... They seemed to realize that all was good from here on, and with the resilience of animals, had quickly gotten over their long journey."

Along with transporting these 50 cats on March 13, the AWLA also took in 40 dogs of varying ages and breeds, working with True & Faithful Rescue Mission to assist under-resourced shelters in Florida and Texas. Like the 20 cats, these dogs will also be made available for adoption once they undergo medical and behavioral assessments.

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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Passing The History On

FROM PAGE 6

Her second great-grandfather, William Henry Diggs was born around 1821, and made his way to Alexandria with his family from Prince William, Va., just before the civil war began. He made a better life for himself and his family. In 1865, he was listed in Alexandria's property tax list as paying fifty dollars on his house. Stories of William and his descendants in the last 156 years can now be shared among his twenty-first century descendants because of the work his second great-granddaughter Lois has done.

Her second great-grandfather took a great risk to be free before the Civil War. After earning his freedom, he became a property owner. William believed in educating his children. That was a great legacy to leave his family. William's descendants are proud to have him as their ancestor.

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

Beyer Highlights

FROM PAGE 5

ing an estimated

- \$59.38 million for Alexandria
- \$45.93 million for Arlington
- \$13.28 million for Falls Church
- \$222.56 million for Fairfax County

More than \$2.187 billion in relief for Virginia K-12 schools;

Economic impact payments of up to \$1,400 per person for more than 5,118,900 Virginia adults and 1,884,700 children. This is 82 percent of all adults in the state and 81 percent of all children in the state. Additional relief of up to \$1,600 per child through the Child Tax Credit to the families of 1,591,000 children, lifting 85,000 Virginia children out of poverty;

Additional relief of up to nearly \$1,000 through the Earned Income Tax Credit to 419,000 childless Virginia workers, including many on the frontline; and

Marketplace health insurance premiums that are \$1,503 lower per month for a 60-year old Virginia couple earning \$75,000 per year.

Beyer serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means, which drafted portions of the American Rescue Plan's legislative text.

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Obituary



Daniel, Marion E., age 97
DOB: 03/29/1923 in Alexandria VA
DOD: 01/20/2021 in Seaford, DE

On Wednesday, January 20, 2021 in Seaford, DE. Beloved mother of Ann Peterson(James), Garnett McKenzie and Greta Daniel; grandmother of Shaukim Smith (Eugene), Ann Dyer(Shelby), James Peterson, Jr, Valeria Craft(Carl) and Annamaria Coles(Rufus). She is also survived by great grandchildren, great great grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends. The Family will receive friends in the chapel of Greene Funeral Home, 814 Franklin St, Alexandria VA 22314 on Saturday, March 20, 2021 from 10am until time of service at 11am. COVID 19 restrictions including social distancing will be observed and masks are required. Interment in Arlington National Cemetery on April 22, 2021 at 1:00pm.

Obituary

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-Werner Heisenberg

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A Shot in the Arm



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Literally and figuratively. After a year or so living the pandemic life; staying at home/quarantining, wearing a mask, social distancing, washing my hands and watching the death toll from covid-19 top 500,000 - in the United States alone, I recently became of the lucky ones to have been injected with a vaccine. I have to wait another two weeks to get my second shot. No worries. I have some protection now, but according to Dr. Fauci, the second/follow up shot increases one's protection "tenfold." It wouldn't exactly be foolish to throw caution to the wind - and reintegrate back into society (depending upon where you live), but it seems premature and irresponsible to risk being stupid when in another two weeks, I could be smart.

My wife, Dina, also recently shot, has been very smart all along, especially as it concerns my actual standing in the world. (Moreover, she has no plans to step out until she receives her second shot.) Belonging in the special comorbidity group; presumably, a 66-year old with cancer/weakened immune system, I presented a very appealing target for the virus. I mean, my immune system is already compromised and with occasional breathing problems side-effected by my thyroid cancer medication, I was potentially easy pickins. As such, Dina refused to give me passage out of our house. Victor Laszlow had a better chance of leaving Casablanca than I did of leaving Burtonsville.

But soon it appears I will have my own "letters of transit." However, Dina has already informed me that I won't be returning to my former errand-running ways. She intends to continue ordering food online from the grocery store - and then drive to pick it up contact-less in their parking lot. Actually, I might be allowed to go that far since I'd be remaining in the car and still wearing a mask while popping the trunk and keeping my distance as the groceries are loaded into the boot. We'll see; we're still negotiating. But definitely not until I receive my second shot. In the interim, I imagine our lives will change very little. Thanks to the vaccine though, there is hope that once again, I'll be able to interact with people, places and things.

But return I shall and relieved I will be. However, having lung cancer, and/or thyroid cancer which has metastasized to the lungs, in the midst of a pandemic with a virus that often locates in the lungs and creates breathing/pulmonary problems - even with the two shots, is still as scary and risky as it gets, especially if you're of a certain age as I am. In two weeks, I'll have received my booster shot, and I'll have a lot less to worry about, thankfully. And for a cancer patient still undergoing treatment with a less than a "normal" life expectancy anticipated, being fully vaccinated is as good as it gets. And I suppose I can live with that, live being the operative word.

Having cancer, irrespective of the type, your diagnosis/prognosis, is pretty damn difficult. It impacts every facet of your life. The thought (your reality) is never far from your conscious mind. And once you become a member of this less than exclusive club (more every day, unfortunately), a club that nobody wants to join, there are more risks to your life than you ever imagined, and many more for which you have absolutely no awareness. Having an external complication, like a virus, with variants that seem to spread rapidly; which have now infected over 30,000,000 Americans, and an infection for which there's no specific cure, and seems to have its greatest negative impact on people exactly like me (age and disease) is about as foreboding as it could possibly be. And with no place to hide, other than in your own home - with no visitors allowed, a precaution most recommended (to invoke the syntax of Hercule Poirot, "the greatest detective in the world") has made many of us impatient and perhaps a bit tense. I can, as many healthcare professionals have said, almost see the light. Hopefully, it will be July 4th of this year as the President has suggested and not July 4th of next year.

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

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NEWS

Hard to Overstate Accomplishments

FROM PAGE 4

grants who qualify for in-state tuition to similarly qualify for any available financial aid and other educational benefits.

HB2040, Hudson, strengthens protections for persons receiving unemployment benefits.

SB1469, Barker/Herring, creates the Opioid Abatement Authority, which will be in charge of distributing funds received from lawsuit settlements, court orders, and other agreements to communities affected by the opioid crisis.

SB1165, Surovell/Mullin, abolishes the death penalty.

SB1261, Edwards, provides more judges on the Court of Appeals so Virginians can exercise their constitutional right to a speedy trial, as well as providing all cases with an appellate process.

HB1992, Murphy, removes the ability for convicted domestic abusers to own or purchase firearms for 3 years after conviction.

SJ272, Locke/Herring, restores voting rights to persons convicted of a felony once their sentence has been completed. The resolution will need to pass the 2022 General Assembly, then will head to a voter referendum.

SB1252, McPike, ends new coal tax credits on January 1, 2022.

HB1965, Bagby, establishes low emission and zero emission standards for vehicles starting in model year 2025.

All this work, and so much more was accomplished in a hectic six weeks. This year has been exceptionally challenging for everyone, with so many long-established inequities laid bare, and novel strains on our government and society. Even in this climate, we made bold strides forward, and will continue to listen to those we serve to do better, and root out those issues still yet uncovered and unaddressed in our Commonwealth.

We Still Need Your Help

FROM PAGE 4

You need local newspapers. Local newspapers still need your help.

We at the Gazette Packet/Local Media Connection are so grateful for the 500 people who have pitched in more than \$38,000 to get us this far. It has made all the difference. Many more people have helped by sharing our appeal, by telling us why our efforts matter to them. You send a letter to the editor here: www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/

We are more than \$10,000 short of our original Go-Fund-Me goal. And we are going to need more to keep going. Soon you will hear about our membership plan.

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— MARY KIMM

A few other recent stories that you might find of interest:

❖ Honoring Women on Front Lines of Pandemic <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/honoring-women-front-lines-pandemic/>

❖ Alexandria Republicans Expect Candidates to Declare Soon <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/15/alexandria-republicans-expect-candidates-declare-s/>

❖ Go Green, Go Native: Mow less, mow

high, grow more, choose nature.

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/15/go-green-go-native/>

❖ Fairfax County Planning Commission Recommends Denial of Flag Limitations <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/fairfax-county-planning-commission-recommends-denial/>

❖ Commentary: Step into Nature for Improved Health <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/opinion-commentary-step-nature-improved-health/>

❖ Should Lee District Be Renamed? <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/conversation-started-rename-lee-district-fairfax-c/>

❖ Faith Ringgold Monographic Exhibition to Open at Glenstone in Potomac <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/faith-ringgold-monographic-exhibition-open-glensto/>

❖ Who Is Getting Vaccinated in Montgomery County? <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/11/who-getting-vaccinated-montgomery-county/>

❖ Supervisors Foust and Alcorn on Years 1 and 2: COVID-19

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/10/fairfax-county-supervisors-foust-and-alcorn-years-/>

❖ Vice President Harris Visits Fibre Space in Alexandria <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/06/vice-president-harris-visits-fibre-space-alexandria/>

❖ Wellbeing: A Schedule Can Anchor Your Day

How creating a daily routine can ease anxiety during times of uncertainty <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/04/wellbeing-schedule-can-anchor-your-day/>

Seeing Double

FROM PAGE 7

situation, some strategists say the best strategy may be to localize the argument.

"If I were Mark Levine, I would say to voters that it would be good for Alexandria for me to become lieutenant governor," said Trevor Southerland, former executive director of the House Democratic Caucus. "But if I don't win that primary, it would also be good for Alexandria to still have my seniority in the House." Republicans have chosen against conducting a statewide primary, opt-

ing instead for a remote-voting convention on May 8 with three dozen polling locations across the state. As for the rest of the Democratic primary ballot, so far no candidates have stepped forward to challenge the incumbent mayor or the incumbent commonwealth's attorney. So those races will not appear on the ballot. Sean Casey is the only Democratic candidate to announce for sheriff so far, so that race won't be on the ballot either unless another Democratic candidate emerges before the March 25 deadline.

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