



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

West Point classmates and Special Forces colleagues of Rocky Versace salute following the May 31 Memorial Day wreath laying at the Captain Humbert "Rocky" Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

Home of the Brave

Remembering the fallen on Memorial Day.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

One by one, 68 names were read as Alexandria paid tribute to its local fallen and missing in action service members as part of the May 31 Memorial Day observance at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

The Plaza, named for Medal of Honor winner and Vietnam POW Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace, was the site of the ceremony that included a wreath laying by members of Versace's West Point class of 1959.

"We have to recognize our fallen heroes along with our serving heroes," said Tim Waters, a 32-year Army veteran who attended the ceremony with his wife Tracy. "My father was a Vietnam veteran and always taught me that it was those before us that led our lives so we have to remember and honor them."

The West Point Alumni Glee Club opened the ceremony with the National Anthem followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by members of the St. Rita American Heritage Girls Troop 1381. Bugler Lt. Col Steve Tracy (ret) closed the ceremony with Taps.

Family members of Alexandria's fallen attended the ceremo-



Friends of Rocky Versace organizer Kevin Rue, Rocky Versace's sister-in-law Curtis Versace, and Rocky Versace West Point classmates Tom Boyle, Mart Lidy, Powell Hutton and Jack Bohman gather following the May 31 Memorial Day ceremony at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

ny, standing near the Gold Stars etched in marble as the names of each of the fallen were recited. A photo exhibit of each of Alexandria's fallen Vietnam veterans was on display.

The Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in July of 2002 in front of the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, not far from where Versace grew up. With less than two weeks remaining in his second tour of duty, Versace and his unit were ambushed by the Viet Cong in the Mekong Delta. The story of his he-

roics that day and during his time in captivity as a Prisoner of War resulted in Versace posthumously being awarded the Medal of Honor.

Newly unveiled signage at the plaza tells the story of Versace's heroics, a collaborative effort of the Friends of Rocky Versace and the City of Alexandria.

"Remembering and honoring those who have served is an extension of military service," Waters added. "We have to remember those who gave us these freedoms and I think too many have forgotten that."

'Tis the Season

City opens pools, interactive water fountain.

The Potomac Yard Park interactive water fountain opened for the summer May 29 and will operate through Oct. 15. Outdoor pools operated by the City of Alexandria will be open June 26 through Sept. 6.

Located between Potomac Yard Park's two playgrounds at 2501 Potomac Ave., the interactive fountain features 36 water jets with programmed sequences and lighting for nighttime effects. For added public safety, the fountain features



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

The interactive water fountain at Potomac Yard Park features 36 jets with programmed lighting sequences.

a secondary ultraviolet water treatment system. Shoes must be worn while using the fountain, which is open daily from 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

The City's three outdoor pools will provide scheduled programming and opportunities for recreational open swim and lap swimming at the following locations: Old Town Pool (1609 Cameron St.); Memorial Pool at Charles Houston Recreation Center (901 Wythe St.); and Warwick Pool (3301 Landover

St.) For a complete list of City pools, operating hours, fees, and entry requirements, visit alexandriava.gov/Aquatics.

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities is now hiring lifeguards, pool operators, water safety instructors, swim team coaches, front desk leaders and managers on duty. Positions start at \$15.12 per hour and higher. Apply at alexandriava.gov/Jobs.

-JEANNE THEISMANN



Children play in the new Potomac Yard Park interactive water fountain. Located at 2501 Potomac Ave, the fountain is open now through Oct. 15

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PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Voters will be selecting Democratic nominees for governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general in the June 8 primary.

Democrats Decide

Voters to determine direction of party in June 8 primary.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

More Election Coverage

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/may/20/convention-done-primary-ahead/>
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/apr/15/running-second-command/>

The June 8 primary will determine the direction of the Democratic Party in Virginia at a critical time, when the commonwealth is emerging from the pandemic and trying to recast itself as something other than a party in opposition to former President Donald Trump. Opposition to the former president helped Democrats claim the trifecta — all three statewide offices, the House of Delegates and the state Senate. Now they'll be facing a Republican ticket that has racial diversity, gender diversity and geographic diversity.

"We have the momentum, energy, and grassroots organization to send good, solid Republicans to Richmond," said Rich Anderson, chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia. "And we're going to fight harder than ever to ensure we do just that."

Democrats head into Election Day likely to nominate white males from Northern Virginia as governor and attorney general, while the election for lieutenant governor remains wide open. Voters could end up selecting a Democratic ticket that is three white males from Northern Virginia. That's one of the reasons why Gov. Ralph Northam attempted to tip the scales by endorsing Del. Hala Ayala-

la (D-51) for Lieutenant Governor, a Democrat from Prince William County who identifies as an Afro-Latina-Lebanese-Irish woman. Campaign finance records show she's struggled to raise as much money as Del. Sam Rasoul (D-11) or Del. Mark Levine (D-45).

"Establishment Democrats clearly think that Hala Ayala is going to be the better candidate in the general election," said Quentin Kidd, a political science professor at Christopher Newport University. "But that doesn't mean that she would be, and that doesn't mean that she'll win the Democratic primary."

AT THE TOP of the ticket is the race for governor. Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe has an outsized lead in the polls and the fundraising, although it's extremely rare for a former governor to decide to seek a non-consecutive term. It hasn't been done since 1973, when former Gov. Mills Godwin was elected to a second non-consecutive term after a four-year absence from the Executive Mansion. In his first term, Godwin was a Democrat. But eight years later, he switched parties and became a Republican during a time when both parties

were experiencing an identity crisis.

"I was moved to run [again] because I love this state," Godwin said in 1973 during a campaign speech in Southwest Virginia. "And I don't want the liberal left to take over the state and lead us down the path of ruin, and I don't think you do either."

Now, almost half a century later, the Virginia Democrats are facing a different kind of identity crisis. Do they want to return McAuliffe to power at a time when Democrats control the General Assembly, or give the nomination to a new generation? Supporters of Sen. Jennifer McClellan (D-9) point to her long record of service in the House and Senate, noting that she's been in Virginia politics much longer than any other candidate including McAuliffe. Her campaign issued a fact-check after Del. Jennifer Carroll Foy (D-2), who served one full term in the House before resigning to run for governor, repeatedly called herself "one of the most effective legislators in Virginia history."

"Jenn McClellan is the most experienced and effective candidate

SEE DEMOCRATS, PAGE 9

Democrats On the Ballot June 8

In order as they appear on the ballot
Some voters will also have a
delegate race on their ballots.

Governor



Terry McAuliffe



Jennifer McClellan



Jennifer Carroll Foy



Lee Carter



Justin Fairfax

Lieutenant Governor



Hala Ayala



Sam Rasoul



Andria McClellan



Sean Perryman



Mark Levine



Xavier Warren

Attorney General



Jay Jones



Mark Herring

Remembering Travis Staats in Arlington National Cemetery

Since 2006, there has been an 86 percent increase in suicide rates among 18-34 year old male veterans.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

Deanna Muir sat with her husband, Daniel, her arm draped around the headstone of her brother, Travis Staats, the way a sister does, casually affectionate. Staats was a casualty of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. It was Memorial Day 2021 in Arlington National Cemetery, and the poignancy of this grave of a man born in 1987 and dead before age 30 was not lost on other visitors, who looked over and saw the family's grief, still fresh, of Staats' death in 2015.

He started out as a sniper in the U.S. Marines, serving in both theaters, and then joined the U.S. Army hoping to make it to the Green Berets. "He was always looking for the next challenge," said his sister. "He wanted to go as high as he could."

SPC Staats was a combat engi-

neer on a bomb squad, clearing a road of IEDs in Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan on November 26, 2011. The intelligence they had was sometimes right and sometimes wrong, and as Staats himself said, "sometimes the IED would be just an inch off of where it was supposed to be." That was the day Staats' luck ran out.

But Staats didn't die in Afghan-

or because as a man, he thought he should be able to handle this himself.

He left behind a wife, two toddlers, his sister, his family. None of them suspected he was suicidal. All of them had talked to him a day or two before he died, even the night he died, and he was upbeat and as always, the one in the family everyone turned to for strength and

a positive attitude. "He was the least likely person to do this," said Deanna. "We had no idea."

Staats tells about the day he was injured in a National Geographic Eyewitness War episode

called "Bomb Squad Boom." His Go-Pro follows the bomb squad as he tells his story — a young, confident, even humorous realist. "The route we were clearing led from our base, and had a lot of traffic from the base that was headed out to other areas; our job was route clearance so everyone else

"Travis didn't want to lose his job and his means to support his family. He loved his job and wanted to continue in the service. So he didn't get the help he needed. We should make sure you don't get penalized for seeking help."

— Deanna Muir, sister

istan. He took his own life, four years later, after returning to the U.S. to recover from the bombing of his Hummer. After feeling the full impact of his tours in the war zone, struggling with depression and PTSD, he was unable to ask for help, either because he was afraid to ruin his military record,



PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN

Deanna and Daniel Muir spent Memorial Day at her brother's grave in Arlington Cemetery. Travis Alan Staats, who had served in Afghanistan and Iraq, died in 2015. He tells about the day he was blown up in a video called "Eyewitness War, Bomb Squad Boom."

using the road stayed safe." But it was dangerous work, and Staats notes in the video that every time he went out "I knew in my head I might not come back."

His sensitivity about his role comes through when he also explains the Taliban in that area were there to kill U.S. personnel.

SEE REMEMBERING, PAGE 11

On Hallowed Ground Biden, Harris mark Memorial Day in Arlington.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

President Joe Biden honored the nation's fallen military during a visit to Arlington National Cemetery May 31, marking Memorial Day by placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The president was joined by first lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and second gentleman Doug Emhoff in the dedication to deceased service members whose remains have not been identified. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were also in attendance.

Following the wreath laying, Biden gave his first Memorial Day address as Commander-in-Chief.

"This nation was built on an idea, the idea of liberty and opportunity for all," Biden said. "We've never fully realized that aspiration of our founders, but every generation has opened the door a little

"We owe the honored dead ... our full best efforts to perfect the Union for which they died."

— President Joe Biden
at Arlington National
Cemetery May 31

wider. We owe the honored dead ... our full best efforts to perfect the Union for which they died."

Due to ongoing COVID-19 precautions, the assembled crowd was sparse and restricted to invited guests.

"Generation after generation of American heroes are signed up to be part of the fight because they

SEE BIDEN, HARRIS, PAGE 14



MARK MOGLE/THE CONNECTION

Rory Mogle, 9, with sisters Norah, 7, and Sarah, 10, mark Memorial Day with a visit to Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery where their great grandfather, Captain Silas Johnson, is buried. Johnson served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Local Alexandria Women Start Podcast To Interview City Council Candidates

Anyone in Alexandria who's been reading the paper, walking around the neighborhood, or checking their mail has seen the huge wave of political activity leading up to the June 8 democrat primary. There are thirteen democratic city council candidates, and we get six votes! It's overwhelming to do the research and figure out who to vote for.

A group of local Alexandria women set out to help, and launched the "Liberally Social" podcast as a way to get to know candidates - like actually get to know them, socially - via zoom interviews. Over the course of a few weeks this spring, they interviewed all 13 democratic city council candidates and released the chats as 45 minute podcast episodes. The self-proclaimed "nerd fun" covers fun get-to-know-

you questions like "Where's your favorite ice cream in Alx?" and more serious political questions like "How can we reduce carbon emissions in our city?"

Sandy Marks, the group's lead emcee and organizer, explains how it started and what the group is trying to accomplish: "The last four years have really shaken an already really informed electorate awake to the impact of not just what our leaders vote for, but who elected decision makers are as people. And with a 13-way race - just among the Democrats! - for six seats on the City Council, we knew it would take a different kind of format to really get at the heart of who these people are and what kind of Democrats they are. Now more than ever, people take their candidate choices really seriously and want to be informed - it's just a matter of the time and energy they have to devote in this particular moment.

A listen-at-your-own-pace podcast party with bite-sized episodes, hosted by the smartest Alexandrians I know seemed like a really fun and doable way for people to study up on the candidates.

And it's working—we hear from candidates and voters every day that the podcast is shaping their ballot decisions. People like to laugh and they like to be in-the-know. And we're helping with both."

So if you're interested in a different way to get to know these candidates before voting, give "Liberally Social" a listen. Available everywhere you get your podcasts, like Spotify and Apple: tinyurl.com/Liberally-SocialSpotifytinyurl.com/LiberallySocialApple

Marta Schantz
Co-Host of Liberally Social
Alexandria

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- ★ **Build a Covid-19 economic recovery** that supports small businesses.
- ★ **Save the forested environment** at Taylor Run, Strawberry Run, and Lucky Run. Protect our tree canopy.
- ★ **Restore transparency** and adopt meaningful ethics reform.



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Ebbin: Bennett-Parker Is Best Choice for Delegate

Democratic primary voters in the 45th House of Delegates District (parts of Alexandria, south Arlington and Mount Vernon) will choose their nominee for Delegate on Tuesday, June 8. I am endorsing Elizabeth Bennett-Parker because I need a partner in Richmond who will be an effective and collaborative Delegate.

Elizabeth has done the hard, often thankless work that makes government work for the people. Whether it's working with women re-entering society, delivering transportation solutions as chair of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Board, or on the City Council where she helped formulate the city's thoughtful pandemic response, particularly regarding

food insecurity, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker has already delivered real results in the 45th district and earned the respect of those who work with her.

Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker's personal, impactful record of results is the product of her attentive, forward thinking approach to leadership. You will rarely hear her take credit for these accomplishments because she is already on to the next pressing issue, listening to those she represents and doggedly fighting for their interests. This is reflected throughout her campaign, which has charted out a path to more affordable health-care, resilient local infrastructure, and stronger educational opportunities for every student.

The elected officials who know

the candidates best are joining me in supporting Elizabeth Bennett-Parker. She is endorsed by an array of local officials including former 45th District Delegates Rob Krupicka and Marian Van Landingham; Alexandria City Council Members John Taylor Chapman, Del Pepper and former Council Member Tim Lovain; former Mayor Bill Euille; Arlington County Board members Katie Cristol, Libby Garvey, and Matt de Ferranti; Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck and other community leaders like former Alexandria NAACP president Christopher Harris, former Fairfax Democratic Chair Dan Lagana and Former Virginia Deputy Education Secretary David Temple. These leaders know what it takes to be effective in Richmond and believe

Elizabeth to be an outstanding choice.

I know Elizabeth will continue to work hard for the people she represents, as she does in her current position as Alexandria's Vice Mayor, and be a strong, effective advocate for the progressive values of the 45th House District. I am respectfully asking 45th District voters to join me in voting for Elizabeth Bennett-Parker on or before June 8. She is the dedicated leader this district deserves, and the effective partner I need in Richmond to deliver meaningful results for the people of Alexandria, Arlington and Mount Vernon.

Adam Ebbin

Member, Senate of Virginia
Alexandria

Hopkins House Shares Public Policy Priorities and Candidates in Support

Dear Editor:

Earlier last month, Hopkins House invited candidates running for public office in the 2021 Democratic Party primary elections for the City of Alexandria to respond to a survey on early childhood and education issues. Both mayoral and council candidates were invited and all 15 responded.

A committee, composed of Hopkins House trustees, staff, and volunteers, received the survey responses and provided a summary analysis of the extent to which the responses from individual

candidates aligned with the organization's public policy positions on early care and education in the city.

Hopkins House thanks and congratulates all candidates running for Alexandria Mayor and City Council for illustrating that early childhood education is a priority. We also recognize Canek Aguirre, Sarah Bagley, John Chapman, Alvia Gaskins, Kevin Harris, Kirk McPike, and Meronne Teklu for submitting answers that illustrated support for and understanding of all six public policy priorities

championed by Hopkins House.

The summary analysis is being shared with the public and media. We encourage you to use this and other resources to educate yourself around these important public policy issues, consider which candidates most closely align with your own views around these issues, and vote in the June 8 primary election.

Read the full analysis: https://www.hopkinshouse.org/assets/1/7/2021_Analysis_of_Priorities_of_Alexandria_Political_Candidates.pdf

Elizabeth Partoyan

Board Secretary, on behalf of
the Hopkins House Trustees

Early Childhood and Education Public Policy Priorities of Mayoral and Council Candidates Running in 2021 Alexandria City Democratic Party Primaries

While Hopkins House does not engage in partisan politics, we do however seek to educate the public about the public policy positions of candidates running for political

SEE HOPKINS HOUSE, PAGE 8

June Is the Deadliest Month for Teen Drivers

Parental involvement urged to prevent underage drinking this summer.

Citing the facts that June is the single deadliest month of the year when it comes to teen driving and that summer's arrival also ushers in that contiguous period (May - August) when the greatest number of U.S. teen traffic deaths occur [i], a Washington-metropolitan area alcohol education group is urging parental involvement to combat both teen drinking and drunk driving this summer.

Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is providing area parents of teens with "Ten Tips for Prevents to Prevent Underage Drinking" (which are available as a downloadable and or printable pdf at wrap.org/tips2021.pdf).

WRAP's ten annual summer tips, designed to inform Greater Washington parents on how best to deter teen drinking during the dangerous summer months, include:

Understand the Dangers... Drinking underage not only increases the chances of dependency later on in life but also leads to short and long-term consequences as well as leading to other risky behaviors.

Know the Law...The District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia all have zero-tolerance laws, making it illegal to consume, possess or purchase alcohol under the age of 21.

Be a Role Model...Parents should be role models to their teens and make sure their own behaviors are appropriate. Use alcohol moderately, serve as a responsible host and never drink and drive.

Know your Liability...In most cases, its unlawful for parents to allow their children's friends to consume alcohol in their home. Parents or adults may face criminal charges later on if these same

"friends" are involved in a crash. "In 2019, an average of four-dozen teenagers died in U.S. motor

vehicle crashes every single day during the summer months (May

SEE JUNE 15, PAGE 7

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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A Connection Newspaper

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



OPINION

June Is the Deadliest Month for Teen Drivers

FROM PAGE 6

– August),” said WRAP President Kurt Erickson. “For too many parents, unfortunately, summer’s unstructured time may also be a deadly time for their teenage children and their friends.”

In 2018, 24-percent of young drivers (ages 15 to 20 years old) killed in U.S. crashes had been drinking (with a blood alcohol concentration [BAC] level of 0.01 grams/deciliter or higher according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). That same year, nearly one-in-five (19%) young drivers killed in U.S. traffic crashes has a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or higher.[ii]

According to the 2020 Monitoring the Future survey sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, alcohol remains the “substance most widely used by today’s teenagers.”

In addition, the most recent national survey of adolescent drug use reports increases in binge drinking amongst all three surveyed age groups (8th, 10th and 12th grade students).[iii]

In addition to its tips for parents to deter underage and drunk driving this summer, WRAP also encourages parents to be aware

of social networks which their children use. Party promoters often prey on youth via social media sites and by promising a good time and access to alcohol for a fee, according to WRAP.

“Make no mistake about it, parents play an integral role in when and if their children drink alcohol,” said Erickson. “These tips are simply meant to reinforce their efforts to foster a healthy and safe summer for them and their teenage children.”

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area.

Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area’s alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization’s popular free safe ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide®. For more information, visit WRAP’s web site at www.wrap.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On Council’s Action on School Resource Officers

To the editor:

The principal problem with the city council’s 4-3 vote against continuing to provide the Alexandria City Public Schools with school resource officers is that it usurps the elected school board’s primary responsibility for maintaining order and discipline in the schools. A case can be made that school resource officers are not the best way to achieve this objective, but that is the elected school board’s -- not the city council’s -- responsibility to make that decision. For decades, the city council has properly deferred to the school board’s judgment and provided the police resources the school board requested. Before voting to continue utilizing school resource officers, the school board listened to parents, students, and other community stakeholders and adopted a compromise arrangement.

Schools which do not maintain order and discipline are poor learning environments where, sooner or later, test scores suffer. Voters will hold their school board responsible for the direct and visible outcome of poor academic performance -- not its less visible potential cause rooted in poor discipline resulting from no longer having on-site school resource officers. The city council’s 4-3 vote against school resource officers saddles the elected school board, which is responsible for academic performance, with an unfair burden by tying its hands in matters of school security and safety.

The school board’s request to continue funding for school resource officers was not unanimous, so instead of taking out the funding for school resource officers, the city council should have continued the funding

through some date in February 2022 to allow the voters to decide, when they vote for school board members this November, whether school resource officers should be continued. The city council should have made funding beyond that February date contingent upon a request by the newly elected school board.

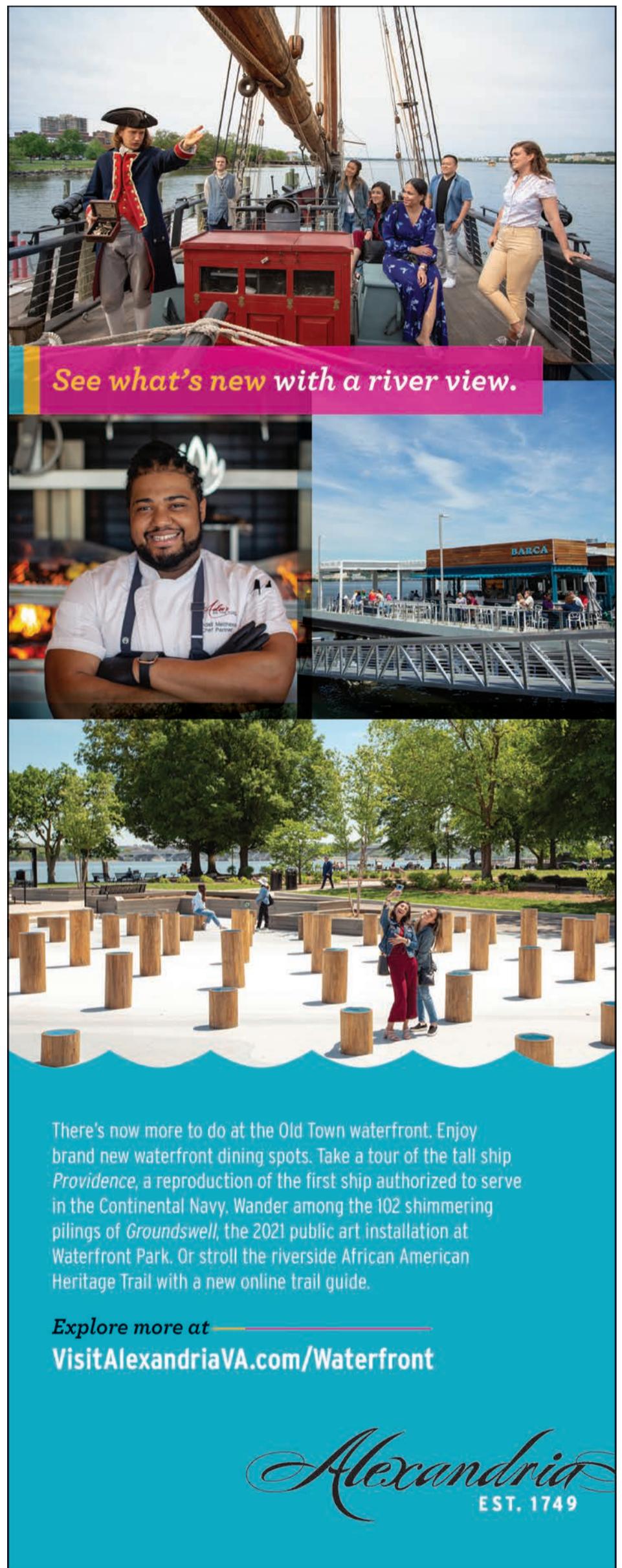
Decades ago, when the school board was appointed by the city council, it would have been appropriate for the city council to override the school board’s request, but for several decades Alexandria has had an elected school board due the deference of a co-equal elected body. The city council should not treat the elected school board as if it were still a city council-appointed board, like the Traffic and Parking Board or the Board of Architectural Review, whose recommendations and determinations the city council can and has overridden. Instead of substituting four city council members’ judgment for that of the elected school board, the city council should allow the voters to decide, when they vote for the next school board in November, how the matter of school resource officers should be handled.

Dino Drudi
Alexandria

Supporting Mark Levine for Lieutenant Governor

The rising sea levels on the shore continue to pose a real threat to our community. We need effective leadership in Richmond that will tackle the threat of climate change head-on, and not continue to give lip service to our concerns. And that is why I am supporting Delegate Mark Levine for Lieu-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8



See what's new with a river view.

There's now more to do at the Old Town waterfront. Enjoy brand new waterfront dining spots. Take a tour of the tall ship *Providence*, a reproduction of the first ship authorized to serve in the Continental Navy. Wander among the 102 shimmering pilings of *Groundswell*, the 2021 public art installation at Waterfront Park. Or stroll the riverside African American Heritage Trail with a new online trail guide.

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OPINION

Hopkins House Shares Public Policy Priorities and Candidates in Support

FROM PAGE 6

office and the extent to which those positions align with Hopkins House's early childhood education public policy priorities – with the goal to encourage voter participation in public elections.

Founded in 1939, Hopkins House operates education enriched preschool academies for infants and children, summer discovery camps for adolescents, and a college and career development institute for teens and adults, that help build the foundation for 21st century achievement and success in the new global economy.

Hopkins House's mission is to provide high quality, high impact educational programs and learning opportunities to children, youth, and their families, regardless of income, to help them achieve, in measurably effective ways, their full intellectual, economic, and social potential.

Early care and education programs have been hard hit by the economic impact of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, pandemic. As such, there has never been a more important moment for our local leaders to come together in support of the early education, safe-keeping, and well-being of the youngest members of our community.

Since the onset of the pandemic, 60% of childcare providers in Virginia have closed; some temporarily and others permanently. Families with young children face high childcare costs; those who are eligible for government childcare tuition assistance are often unaware or struggle to access those benefits; and, early childcare educators — who are most often women of color — suffer subsistence wages, long working hours, high stress, and considerable responsibility.

Public investment in childcare is critical not only to working parents and childcare professionals, but also to the economy.

Alexandria cannot repair the economic wounds caused by the pandemic — and cannot build back equitably — without a thriving and stable early childhood education system. The city's economic base depends on workers who, in turn, depend on childcare providers to keep their young children safe, learning, and developing.

This is an important moment in the life of the city, perhaps the most important moment in recent history. This is Alexandria's chance to build a public policy foundation for a strong and robust childcare system that endures, draws employers to our city, and leads with equity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 7

tenant Governor. Mark has been a champion for creating policies to address recurrent flooding and has made strides in the House of Delegates to combat climate change on a larger scale.

Since his first day in office, Mark has fought for what we need. From working towards reaching zero carbon emissions by 2045 through the Virginia Clean Economy Act to introducing a carbon cap and trade program to comply with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. These are the changes we need in the Lieutenant Governor's office.

Mark will continue to be a voice for all Virginians. We need an advocate in this position to address

With this in mind, Hopkins House developed a survey and invited all the candidates running in the 2021 primary for Mayor and City Council in the City of Alexandria to respond. Both mayoral candidates and all thirteen candidates for City Council responded.

The Hopkins House Public Policy & Advocacy Committee reviewed and analyzed the responses to determine how each candidate's public policy positions align most closely

with those held by Hopkins House:

- ❖ Support for increasing Alexandria's public investment in early childhood education programs;
- ❖ Support for Alexandria's investment in attracting and retaining high quality early care and education professionals;
- ❖ Commitment to ensuring that all children in Alexandria have access to high quality early care and education;
- ❖ An understanding of the importance of early care and education to Alexandria's families and the city's economy;
- ❖ An understanding of the value of a research-based early care and education curriculum; and,
- ❖ A focus on improving racial and social equity in early childhood education and throughout the educational continuum.

The fact that every candidate running for political office in the upcoming primary, along with the overall tenor of their survey responses, is clear and undeniable indication that investing in early childhood education is a shared priority of most candidates. It is the obligation of voters to hold those elected to office accountable for delivering on their promises.

Read the full analysis at https://www.hopkinshouse.org/assets/1/7/2021-_Anaysis_of_Priorities_of_Alexandria_Political_Candidates.pdf

The charts included summarize each candidate's responses to the Hopkins House survey. Also included are response highlights. Each candidate that submitted answers that clearly illustrate support and understanding of the individual public policy issues listed above received a gold star in the table below.

We encourage you to use these tools to educate yourself around these important public policy issues, consider which candidates most closely align with your own views around these issues, and vote in the June 8 primary.

Read the full analysis: https://www.hopkinshouse.org/assets/1/7/2021-_Anaysis_of_Priorities_of_Alexandria_Political_Candidates.pdf

Taxation without Representation

Our 2021 elections in Virginia are awash in money, coming from both sides of the aisle. To-date, according to the Virginia Public Access Project, candidates running for Governor have raised over \$30 million.

Spending by Republicans in anticipation of their recent Convention totaled over \$10 million, with two candidates, Youngkin and Synder lending their campaigns an aggregate \$11 million.

Enough is enough. Citizens in Alexandria and around the States

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Democrats Decide

FROM PAGE 3

for governor. Full stop,” said Del. Kathy Tran (D-42). “As a delegate, I’ve seen the difference between legislators who lead when the going gets tough and those who don’t. Jenn McClellan is a leader who lifts up all Virginians.”

THE RACE FOR lieutenant governor is the race that will determine the missing third of the statewide Democratic ticket. Sam Rasoul has raised and spent more money than any other candidate, a notable achievement considering he refuses to take money from special interest PACs or lobbyists. During a televised debate on WJLA last week, anchor Dave Lucas asked if Rasoul believed he could represent Virginians of all faiths. The televised question caused a firestorm because Rasoul is Muslim, and the question employed anti-Muslim tropes.

“Sadly, this isn’t what Virginians are wanting to hear about,” said Rasoul. “They’re wanting to hear about how we’re going to improve access to their health care, about broadband issues, how we are going to safely get kids back in school.”

WJLA eventually apologized, calling the question “inappropriate and disrespectful.” Meanwhile, Rasoul picked up new endorsements and gained a ton of free publicity. But he wasn’t the only candidate to seize on a moment from the WJLA debate. When the candidates were asked if critical race theory should be taught in Virginia classrooms, former Fairfax NAACP president Sean Perryman seized the moment to explain that the law-school concept wasn’t being taught in K-12 classrooms.

“Critical race theory is not even being taught in our schools,” said Perryman. “It’s a Republican dog whistle where anything they disagree with is critical race theory.”

ATTORNEY GENERAL Mark Herring is the only statewide incumbent seeking reelection. He’s being challenged by Del. Jay Jones

(D-89). Herring was the town attorney in Lovettsville and served on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors before being elected to the state Senate in a 2006 special election after Attorney General Bob McDonnell appointed Sen. Bill Mims (R-33) chief deputy attorney general.

Herring was elected attorney general in 2013, and he’s now seeking a third term in office. During his time as attorney general, he created a new Office of Civil Rights as well as a new conviction integrity unit and a new worker protection unit while also reorganizing the consumer protection section. He opposed Virginia’s ban on gay marriage, fought against Trump’s Muslim ban, and overruled Republican gerrymandering in the United States Supreme Court.

“I’ve transformed the job into a progressive powerhouse,” said Herring. “I have proven that I can win even the biggest fights.”

Jones was first elected in 2017, part of the first Democratic wave that began the transformation of the House of Delegates.

Since that time, he’s been seen as a rising star in the party. Jones says it’s time to hand the office to the next generation, and as an African-American man he says he would be able to bring his lived experience into conversations about criminal justice reform and equity. During a televised debate, he avoided answering questions about a bill he introduced that would have allowed predatory lenders to charge 350 percent interest — a point of distinction that provides contrast with Herring, who worked with lawmakers to pass the Fairness in Lending Act. Jones never withdrew his bill which died in committee, although he ended up voting for the bill that Herring supported.

“The attorney general knows that he and I supported the exact same bill,” said Jones. “I was happy to work with Delegate Bagby, the chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, who has endorsed my campaign.”

BULLETIN BOARD

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

JUNE 28 TO JULY 2

Media-Savvy Digital Movie Makers. Historic Alexandria has created unique virtual programs for rising 6th through 9th graders. Cost is \$130 per week, which includes daily live virtual instruction from 10-11:30 a.m. and additional activities to complete outside of class. Create your own commercial for good!

Participants will learn about media and its influence in our life through a tour of the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum’s collections, then use their media-know-how to create a Public Service Announcement on a topic of their choosing. From crafting a powerful message to storyboarding to digital movie tips, everyone will be prepared to create an amazing PSA of their own that will be featured during the final session. Scholarships available. To register and get additional information, visit AlexandriaVa.Gov/Shop.

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU JUNE 27

Timeless Tradition. 12-4 p.m. At The Athenaeum, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. The copyist program at the National Gallery of Art offers a unique opportunity for artists to study the techniques of old masters through intimate study in the galleries. This exhibit presents the work of members of

CALENDAR

this program alongside a color photo of the original and an artist's statement explaining why the work was chosen and what was learned through copying. Visit the website: www.nvfaa.org

MAY 25 TO JUNE 27

Birds of a Feather. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show "Birds of a Feather," which opens on May 25, 2021 and runs through June 27, 2021. The birds are back, and they are celebrating. Themed work will be eligible for recognition by the jurors. Non-themed work may also be exhibited. Visit the website: <http://torpedofactory.org/visit/>

CYCLEBOATS TO BEGIN OPERATION

Potomac Paddle Club is a pontoon pedal boat or "Cycleboat" in the nation's capital region that will begin service from

Old Town beginning May 28. This social adventure is the perfect way for friends to hop between waterfront locations and take in the sights. Passengers will be able to take a cruise from Old Town to National Harbor and back. Boats will dock at Old Town's Waterfront Park behind the Torpedo Factory. Visit www.PotomacPaddleClub.com.

JUNE 1 TO AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in painting, sculpture, collage, mixed media, sketching, and more from local artists. Delve into your creative consciousness solo or with friends. Online and in-person, for children and/or adults, free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA) unless noted. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/programs/creative-summer/

THURSDAY/JUNE 3

Secrets of D-Day. 7-9 p.m. Virtual. Dr. Kim Bernard Holien, U.S. Army Historian, retired will discuss D-Day secrets, known and unknown. A 'Rest of the Story' presentation about the secrets that made the Allies victorious on the 'day of days'. Website: https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/WN_c09H1FqNS8an-HYIEwqpYrA

THURSDAY/JUNE 3

"I Hear America Singing." 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. At The Secret Garden of the Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. The Secret Garden welcomes singers from the Choral Arts Society of Washington and Music Director Scott Tucker for a celebration of choral music by American composers, including a world premiere by B. E. Boykin celebrating Mary Church Terrell, an activist in the movements for civil rights and women's suffrage, commissioned by Classical Movements. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

THURSDAY/JUNE 3

First Thursdays in Del Ray. 6 p.m. Various locations in Del Ray in Alexandria. Held the first Thursday from April to September along Mount Vernon Avenue in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, First Thursday is a series of free outdoor street festivals that bring the community together around a fun theme, benefiting a local nonprofit.

JUNE 3-5

Celebrate Pride Workshops. June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month, and the Alexandria LGBTQ Task Force and Alexandria Library is hosting Celebrate Alexandria Pride Workshops online June 3-5. Twelve workshops will be offered over three days. Some workshops are creative and some are educa-

tional, but they all celebrate the resiliency and beauty of the LGBTQ+ community in Alexandria.

FRIDAY/JUNE 4

D-Day's Black Heroes. 12 p.m. Virtual. Linda Hervieux, Paris-based American journalist, photographer, and author of "Forgotten: The Untold Story of D-Day's Black Heroes, at Home and at War," the critically acclaimed story of D-Day's only African-American combat soldiers, who were effectively written out of the history of the Norman invasion. Website: https://zoom.us/join/register/WN_WkYEcl8BRBSfQ-g8EuaHEuA

FRIDAY/JUNE 4

Green Home and Garden Tour. 12-1:30 p.m. Virtual. This virtual tour features homes with energy-efficient technologies, solar panels, and green renovations; watershed-friendly gardens, native plants, rain gardens, rain barrels, and edible landscaping; videos highlighting each location, Zoom breakout rooms where you can interact with tour hosts and other local experts. The suggested donation is \$5 per household.

JUNE 4-6

12th Annual Taste of Del Rey. At various restaurants in Del Ray, Alexandria. Top area restaurants are slated to participate in the 12th Annual Taste of Del Rey, which will shift to a take-out format from Friday, June 4 to Sunday, June

6. Throughout the weekend, each participating restaurant will offer participants up to three select "tastes" for just \$5 each. Restaurants are also encouraged to offer cocktail pairings to complement their dishes. Online registration is \$5 and includes the exclusive menu of available tastes and specialty cocktails, plus a ballot for the People's Choice Award. Website: visitdelray.com.

JUNE 4-26

"The Naked and the Newt: Studies in Human and Herpeton Anatomy" art exhibit explores human and animal bodies, investigating conceptions of anatomy, texture, and conservation with our partner, the Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS). Special workshops taught by local artists and free talks by VHS are offered in conjunction with the theme. The exhibit runs June 4-26, 2021 at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Details at www.DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

SATURDAY/JUNE 5

Garden Tools and Perennial Maintenance. 10-11 a.m. (16-Adults) Join horticulturalist Karen Rexrode outdoors for an educational walk through the gardens focused on perennial maintenance and useful gardening tools to get the job

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Dates to Circle in June

BY HOPE NELSON
GAZETTE PACKET

A tasting tour of Del Ray, a beer garden with all the fixings and – get ready – yoga with cats. June is shaping up to start the summer season off right. Here are some of the city's best bets in the food-and-drink world this month.

Taste of Del Ray, June 4-6

Del Ray's famous food festival is back – in a pandemic-friendly way. The Taste of Del Ray event is switching things up a bit this year, extending to a weekend-long format and routing orders through the restaurants themselves rather than via a central hub of offerings. But through it all, the sentiment remains: The neighborhood's best and brightest restaurants are on display for all to taste, with a menu for everyone at the ready. Evening Star Café, Hops n Shine, Spice Kraft, Stomping Ground – more than a dozen eateries are on offer, just waiting for you to give them a try. Online registration is \$5.

Cat Yoga at Mount Purrnon Cat Café, June 6

Yoga. Cats. Yoga AND cats? May-



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mtpurrnoncatcafe.com

and click "Book Your Visit" at the top of the page.

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be it won't be quite the relaxing yogic experience you're used to, but it will certainly be entertaining. Mount Purrnon is offering its first ever Cat Yoga event on June 6. Haven't found your enlightenment yet? No problem. This yoga class is open to all experience levels. (The cats will teach you all you need to know.) 11 a.m.-noon. \$25.

North Payne Beer Garden, June 12
Rocket Frog Brewing is teaming up with The Loop Coworking to bring the beer garden ambiance to Old Town. This month, the reggae

will be pumping, the Soul Rebel food truck will be on hand to dish up some food and, of course, the beer will be flowing. Can't make it this month? The beer garden will be going strong once a month through September, so mark your calendar for June 12, July 10, Aug. 7 and Sept. 25. Noon-6 p.m. \$10 includes entrance and a beer.

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.
www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Remembering Travis Staats in Arlington National Cemetery

FROM PAGE 4

As he narrates the story, his squad watched a Predator kill two Taliban insurgents who had been placing an IED on the road.

“People say we are sick-minded, some people say we are crazy. But if the Predator hadn’t taken out the enemy, they would have gone on to put down another IED and kill us. You gotta tune your mind into things like this to help you cope.” The videos in the National Geographic series show how young these soldiers are, and how they carry on with the mission even when one of the hummers blows up and their squad members are medevaced by helicopter.

That day, Staats thought he had a few minutes before they got to the IED the intelligence had indicated and they would defuse, so he grabbed a meatloaf MRE (meals ready to eat) thinking, “Boy, this would be a terrible last meal!” That’s when his hummer went over an IED they didn’t know about. Staats sustained traumatic brain injuries and was hospitalized in Germany until he returned to the U.S.

“He was never the same after the war service,” said Deanna. But it was so subtle, no one noticed just how different he was. He recovered physically but mentally he was struggling. No one knew he was haunted by what he had seen and done in the war, by living every day on the edge. Staats was like many other war vets; he just didn’t talk about it.

WHAT WOULD his sister want done differently for those returning with PTSD and mental health issues from Afghanistan and Iraq?

“I’d definitely want to reduce the stigma of mental health issues,” she said. “People think if you have mental health problems you are weak, or unfit. No one wants to talk about it. And the second thing is, I would make sure the returning military get the counseling they need. Travis was scared of losing his security clearance if he sought help for his emotional issues. He didn’t want to lose his job and his means to support his family. He loved his job and wanted to continue in the service. So he didn’t get the help he knew he needed. So we need to make sure you don’t get penalized for seeking help.”

An organization called Stop Soldiers Suicide reports over 114,000 deaths by suicide of veterans since 2001, and since 2006, there has been an 86 percent increase in suicide rates among 18-34 year old male veterans.

Deanna and Daniel had another reason to visit the cemetery on Memorial Day. They are both in the Air Force. She is an Airman First Class who just finished basic training and has started her training as a photojournalist at Fort Meade; her husband has been in the Air Force about 8 years, and is a staff sergeant

with a radio engineering and SATCOM background.

They were separated for the pandemic, and now that they are both vaccinated, they were able to meet up in Washington for a long-awaited reunion. He coached her long distance through Basic, took care of the dogs and her car, and she got through training and went to a graduation full of empty seats. He drove up from their home state of Georgia to visit on this long weekend.

The grief of an untimely death aside, they are looking forward to their careers in military service as they also cherish the memory of Travis Staats. Serving their country, and honoring others who have served, is just part of who they are.

To hear and see Travis Staats talk about his time in Afghanistan, see “Eyewitness War,” streaming on Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/Caught-Outside-the-Wire/dp/B00ESB2M76/ref=sr_1_1?crd=X-PQ78XECPCY7&dchild=1&keywords=eyewitness+war+full+episodes&qid=1622477734&s=instant-video&prefix=eyewitness+war+%2Cinstant-video%2C156&sr=1-1

To learn more about suicide among returning soldiers, see: <https://stopsoldiersuicide.org/vet-stats>

Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair

**Saturday, June 12
10 a.m.-6 p.m.**

Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street,
Alexandria, VA 22314

Hosted by Volunteer Alexandria for 40 years, this event offers residents and visitors of all ages shop and browse the dozens of vendors. Art and crafts range from pottery and paintings to recycled jewelry and glass products, home & garden, clothing for people and pets, and much more.

Food and Moonshine Cocktails Available

The event is **FREE** to the public.



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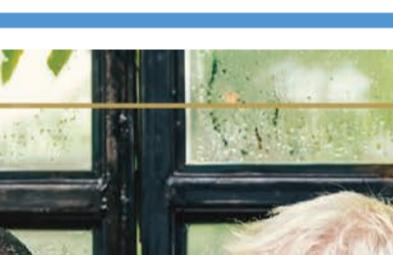
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Obituary

Obituary



Richard Rathborne Graham (Dick) Hobson, husband of Kathleen Stanton Hobson (Kay) passed away early in the morning on Sunday, May 23, 2021 in Alexandria, Virginia. By his side were his wife of 60 years, as well as all his children and one grandchild who gathered in person and by phone to share their great love for him.

Richard Hobson was born in Orange, New Jersey on July 28th, 1931, to Robert Archer Hobson and May Hartley Carmichael. He spent his early years at the Hobson family farm "The Forest" and "The Forest Lodge" in Goochland County, Virginia before moving with his immediate family to Alexandria, Virginia in 1940 where he attended Ft. Belvoir and Douglas MacArthur Elementary Schools, George Washington High School and Episcopal High School. After graduating from Episcopal in 1949, he attended Princeton University, as part of the school's Navy ROTC unit. Following graduation from Princeton in 1953, he served three years as a Naval officer in the Atlantic Fleet and with the Naval Bureau of Personnel. He then attended Harvard Law School (Class of '59), where he and three classmates won Harvard's prestigious Ames Moot Court Competition. Dick remained deeply grateful for scholarship opportunities that enabled him to enjoy an extraordinary education and lasting friendships made at these institutions.

During his time at Harvard Law, Dick met and fell in love with Kathleen Pittman Stanton (Kay) of Grosse Ile, Michigan who was working in book publishing with Houghton Mifflin. Even in his last days, he beamed at telling the story of how their love was meant to be! They were married in Grosse Ile on December 10th, 1960 and lived in Boston for the first years of their marriage while Dick worked for Arthur D. Little management consulting. In 1962, they moved to his hometown of Alexandria where Dick was the ninth lawyer to join a great group of colleagues forming Bauknight, Prichard, McCandlish and Williams, a firm that later became Booth, Prichard and Dudley, and then later still McGuire Woods. In 1976, he was elected by the people of Alexandria to serve in Virginia's House of Delegates where he served two terms until 1980. Dick was a devoted and energetic servant in local and state politics and civic organizations through his life, including chairmanships on the Virginia and Alexandria Democratic Committees, President and Board Member of the Seminary Hill Civic Association, President and Board Member of the Alexandria Library Company, President of the Board of Directors of Different Drum School, Trustee of the Virginia Historical Society, Trustee of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation, Inc. and a member of the American Law Institute and Lambda Alpha International global land economics society.

Faith in God was the foundation of his life and a driving force for his love and commitment to family and community. He was a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the Episcopal Church and active since the 1940's at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill where he served as Senior Warden and many terms on the vestry. He was also a devotee of Shrine Mont, an Episcopal church retreat center in Orkney Springs, Virginia where he and Kay have enjoyed an annual gathering of friends and family from the 1960's to this day.

Richard is survived by his wife, Kathleen Stanton Hobson, their children, Richard R. G. Hobson, Jr. of Alexandria, Henry Lee Stanton Hobson and his wife Ann of Dallas, Texas, Anne Hartley Hobson Wensing and her husband Kevin of Alexandria, and Kathleen Annette Archer Hobson Davis and her husband Mark of Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Dick loved and was so proud of his eight grandchildren, Ann Blake Hobson, Kathleen Vaughan Hobson, Henry Lee Hobson, Madeline Stanton Davis, Jonathan Trey Hobson, Ava Kathryn Hobson, Anderson Miller Davis and Grace Hartley Hobson Wensing. Dick was the consummate family man and considered his family to be his most important legacy.

The family would like to thank Richard's devoted caregivers, including Leslie Romero, Ishmail Kamara, Quinton Peacock and Prince Nti.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, June 2nd at 3:00 p.m. at Immanuel Chapel, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations may be made in Dick's memory to two of his favorite communities: Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill and Shrine Mont.

WELLBEING



PHOTOS BY CHAYA NEJAR PHOTOGRAPHY. COURTESY OF BRACHA GOETZ

Bracha Goetz, author of the book, "Searching for God in the Garbage", believes that the pandemic offered an opportunity to reconnect with one's faith. Here, she is reading to grandchildren.

Faith Sustained Many During COVID-19 Crisis

How a belief in a higher power helped some people cope with pandemic.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
GAZETTE PACKET

As she experienced the emotions and uncertainty around the coronavirus pandemic, Bracha Goetz turned to the tenets of her faith. As an Orthodox Jew, following the guidelines set forth in the Torah were already part of her daily life. As the outlook on COVID-19 begins to look more optimistic, Goetz says that she can reflect on the ways in which her faith helped safeguard her mental and emotional wellbeing.

"The basis of Judaism is gratitude, and gratitude is essential for enjoying life, said Goetz, a Maryland based author of the book "Searching for God in the Garbage." "When going through a difficult time, focusing on being grateful for just one thing can help to uplift us."

Like Goetz, more than a third of Americans say that the COVID-19 crisis strengthened their faith in a higher power and offered lessons from God, according to a report by Pew Research Center. Practicing those beliefs during a crisis can help support mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

"Religious faith or belief in a higher power gives personal meaning, explanations for world events. They may help us make sense of suffering and distress from our experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Jerome Short, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. "Belonging to a faith community can offer support from other members and reassuring rituals that soothe our distress."

The presence of a higher power can help believers feel that they are not alone, says Brian Flanagan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology at Marymount Univer-



Bracha Goetz says that gratitude is the basis of her faith and has sustained her during the coronavirus pandemic.

sity and author of the book, "Stumbling in Holiness: Sin and Sanctity in the Church." "Christianity teaches us about a God who is present, even in the worst of circumstances," he said. "But Christianity also proclaims a God who never abandons creation, and is present in our suffering in a way similar to that of a mother who suffers when her child is sick or hurting."

"Faith for me means trusting in a God who is close and not distant, and in a certain sense is closest to us when we most need divine comfort," continued Flanagan.

Belief in a higher power has long been linked to improved physical and mental health, such as a recent study by the Mayo Clinic. "Religious and spiritual practices are associated with greater life satisfaction, less anxiety and depression, and longer life," said Short.

The increase in the practicing of faith that occurred during the COVID-19 crisis offers religious leaders an opportunity to sustain that momentum. "We all got a huge push forward spiritually, as we have stopped taking so many things for granted that we may not have appreciated before," said Goetz. "Now that we have seen how many of the precious blessings in our lives can be gone in a moment, we have become more grateful people."

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Notice is hereby given to members of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc. and the Association for Clinical Oncology that their Annual Business Meeting will be held online on Tuesday, June 8 at 1:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time. Members will be emailed a link to use to access the online Annual Business Meeting in advance of the event. Members with questions can email nicole.medrano@asco.org or call 571-483-1317. This notice is issued at the direction of the Boards of Directors of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Association for Clinical Oncology.

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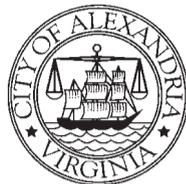
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The first half 2021 real estate tax, refuse fee and stormwater utility fee must be paid by June 15, 2021, to avoid late payment penalty and interest.

Pay by credit card or eCheck on the City's website at alexandriava.gov/Payments. Real estate tax payments can also be mailed to City of Alexandria, PO Box 34750, Alexandria, VA 22334-0750.

Pay in person at the Treasury Division, City Hall, Room 1510, between 8AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. A drop box located on the Royal Street side of City Hall is available 24 hours a day. Payments must be in the drop box by midnight on June 15, 2021, to be considered on time.

Real estate tax information is available on the City's website at alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax. Under Additional Resources, the Real Estate Tax History and Payments link provides detailed tax balances and payments.

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email payments@alexandriava.gov. For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email real-estate@alexandriava.gov. For refuse fee questions, please call the Solid Waste Division at 703.746.4410. For stormwater utility fee questions, please call the Stormwater Management Division at 703.746.6499, or email stormwater@alexandriava.gov.

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Nearly Nicked



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, I made the mistake of clicking on an email from an unfamiliar sender. It said "Membership Renewed," as in money had been spent by yours truly. But I hadn't spent any money renewing a membership that I knew of, and there is, I imagine, the axis on which some phishing scams are turning: By peeking your instinct to know where and what one's money is doing. Maybe I forgot something? Maybe my wife, Dina, paid for something and forgot to mention it? Maybe, maybe, maybe - so I clicked. The email looked as if it had been sent by "Geek Squad" with whom I have a service contract so I called to inquire further about this 'paid membership.'

The conversation began innocently enough. They confirmed my membership and seemed to have my pertinent data as well so I continued. When I couldn't recall this money being spent - and they couldn't tell me the last four numbers of the account which had been debited, I grew cautious, as I had been down this road once before. Nevertheless, I persisted. Since I had "Geeks" (or whomever, unbeknownst to me) on the phone, I figured I'd ask if they could fix a computer problem (no volume) and asked if the repair was covered by my service contract. They assured me that it was. And so, I gave them access to my computer so they could address the problem remotely. After computer fits and starts, and curious delays, they confessed that they were unable to fix the problem. So, and here it is, the hook: since they were unable to fix my computer, they wanted to refund me the 'membership' fee. That was excruciatingly familiar so I knew it was time to exit stage right.

What had happened to me previously is that I didn't get out soon enough. I didn't know then what I know now so I agreed to the refund and gave them the last four of my account, and sure enough they electronically deposited the money into my checking account (or so it appeared). I later learned that no actual money had ever been transferred. However, they made a mistake, they said. They deposited \$3,000 instead of \$300. They apologized profusely at their mistake and requested that I pay them back \$3,000, which I thought was odd; why not just withdraw the money the same way they deposited it? They said they couldn't and I needed to pay them back. When I refused to follow their directions on how to pay them back (again, since they couldn't withdraw the money/stop payment, whatever), by getting cash and then going to a Western Union office and sending it back that way, I knew I was hooked. Then they threatened to disable my computer unless I paid them back exactly as I had been instructed. Then they erased all the icons on my desktop as a last attempt to coerce me to pay up. At this point, it had been nearly two hours since I made first contact, and I could see/feel where the conversation was going, so I risked it and hung up. Sure enough, my computer was wiped clean and locked. I couldn't access anything. The next day, I called Best Buy and explained the problem and how it had happened. They suggested I bring in my computer tower for an analysis. Within a day, they had identified the problem and offered a solution. They could unlock my computer, no problem, but the computer would have to be reset to the way it was when I first bought it. It wasn't a total disaster as most data was retrievable. As "The Three Stooges" would have said: "It wasn't a total loss."

This recent caller was once again leading me down the garden path. A path which would have ended at a rabbit hole into which me and money would have disappeared. The caller tried desperately to keep me on the line. I said I was at work and had to go. I told him I didn't expect the call to last so long and I promised to call him back. He had access to my computer - remotely, so I was afraid he could cause similar computer trouble as had happened before under eerily similar circumstances. He confirmed - so he thought, that I had his phone number and so I hung up, cautiously optimistic that I hadn't earned his wrath. I never called him back but for the next four hours, he called me back several times, a number from Los Angeles. I never answered, obviously. If I had I might not be pleased with myself.

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

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NEWS

On Hallowed Ground

FROM PAGE 4

understand the truth that lives in every American heart: that liberation, opportunity, justice are far more likely to come to pass in a democracy than in an autocracy," Biden said. "These Americans weren't fighting for dictators, they were fighting for democracy. They weren't fighting to exclude or to enslave, they were fighting to build and broad-

en and liberate."

Following the ceremony, the Bidens made a visit to Section 12, one of the primary burial locations of service members killed overseas and repatriated to the United States after World War II and the Korean War. More than 400,000 service members are enshrined at Arlington National Cemetery.

Arlingtoncemetery.mil

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 8

recognize the need to address the two sides of the coin of getting big money out of politics through: 1) federal action to introduce a constitutional amendment to address the 40 years of wrong Supreme Court rulings,

including the 2010 Citizens United ruling which led to an explosion in election spending, and 2) getting it right in Virginia, one of only 5 states which has no limitations on campaign finance contributions. Yet bills introduced over the years in our legislature limiting campaign finance contributions always die.

Let's face it. Incumbents like their money. In the House of Delegates, the third largest fundraiser is Alexandria's own Delegate Charniele Herring. We appreciate her votes on democra-

cy related bills and criminal justice reform. But we don't understand why she rakes in the money, currently estimated at nearly \$500,000, with \$125,000 received from Dominion Energy. Meanwhile, her constituents, members of America Promise, a group calling for common sense campaign finance reform, have requested through her office numerous times a meeting to discuss the

need to pass legislation getting big money out of politics. No response, no meeting.

We wonder, do Dominion Energy lobbyists get a response if they call?

Let's get our democracy back by making legislators accountable to their voters and not be beholden to their corporate contributors. Enough is enough. We pay taxes and deserve to be heard.



Local Republicans Are Running, But Not in a Primary

As we approach the Democrat primary on June 8, the local Republicans have already selected our party's local nominees through alternative party nomination processes, which allowed for maximum party participation and saved the City the expense of an additional primary. The Alexandria Republican City Committee (www.AlexandriaGOP.org) succeeded in a big way this year in recruiting and training qualified candidates. The processes we used to identify our nominees were completed May 8 and resulted in the following list of outstanding nominees; nominees who you will see on the November ballot:

- ❖ Annetta Catchings for Mayor <https://www.annettacatchingsformayor.com/>
- ❖ Darryl Nirenberg for City Council <https://darrylnirenberg.com/>
- ❖ Justin "JD" Maddox for VA House of Delegates, District 45, <https://www.maddoxforvirginia.com/>

* ❖ Kyle Rooney for VA House of Delegates, District 46, www.Rooney46VA.com

The Republican party in Alexandria is proud that these local citizens are willing to step into the arena and seek bi-partisan, common-sense solutions to the urgent problems our residents and neighborhoods face: flooding, density, education, green space, and transportation, to name but a few. Given the extreme positions that the Democrats have taken -- and plan to take -- in lock-step on so many State and local issues, we believe that the time has come to end the single party monopoly of power, and develop true diversity of political thought. There is a real opportunity not only for Republicans in the November elections, but also for the citizens of Alexandria and of Commonwealth, to restore the two party system that has served our Nation so well.

Pete Benavage, Chair
 Alexandria Republican City Committee
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