

A Fond Farewell Officers, officials bid adieu to Chief Brown.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria Police Chief Michael Brown was feted as he made his final appearance at police headquarters June 25 to begin his retirement after 46 years in law enforcement.

“Every now and again you meet somebody in your career that is a godsend,” said Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman. “You don’t know what the relationship is going to be like and you have no idea what’s preparing you on your journey but Chief Brown has been a godsend to me.”

Pittman joined officers and city officials at the retirement reception, which included the presentation of a personalized Alexandria street sign to Brown by City Manager Mark Jinks.

Pittman presented Brown with a U.S. flag that had flown over the Capitol building in Washington.

“I met Chief Brown at a National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives conference not long after the 2017 Congressional baseball shooting,” Pittman said. “I introduced myself to him and he let me know he knew who I was. Since that time he has taken

SEE A FOND FAREWELL, ON PAGE 9



City Manager Mark Jinks, right, presents Police Chief Michael Brown with a personalized street sign during a June 25 retirement reception for Brown at police headquarters.

Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, center, with Police Chief Michael Brown and Brown’s wife Kirsten Knapp. Knapp recently retired from the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office.



Captain Jamie Bridgeman, right, congratulates Police Chief Michael Brown on his retirement at the June 25 send off reception at police headquarters.



Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman, right, presents Chief Michael Brown with a flag that was flown over the Capitol in Washington during Brown’s June 25 retirement reception at police headquarters.



Police Chief Michael Brown, left, chats with well wishers at his June 25 retirement reception at police headquarters.

Lee-Fendall House Wall Collapses

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

A 70-foot section of the brick wall surrounding the garden of the Lee-Fendall House, one of the most historic properties in Alexandria, collapsed without warning June 12 just minutes after the last visitor had departed the area.

“The wall fell down about five minutes after the last person left the garden,” said Martha Withers, Executive Director of the Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden. “We got a call from a neighbor – we didn’t hear anything inside – and came out to find about 70 feet



A 70-foot section of wall at the Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden collapsed June 12. The museum is facing \$125,000 in repairs.

of the wall on the ground.”

No injuries were reported but now the historic property is facing the financial challenge of rebuilding the wall, which surrounds the garden of the 1785 home at the corner of Oronoco and N. Washington streets in Old Town.

“The wall has been standing for about 220 years,” Withers said. “It is all handmade brick with stone laid under it to keep brick from absorbing water. At least one brick still has a thumb print in it – probably that of one of the enslaved workers.”

Lee-Fendall House is the city’s only privately operated history museum. It relies on donations and community support to maintain the property and provide tours

and educational programs. It has established a Repair the Wall campaign in hopes of raising the \$125,000 estimated to rebuild the wall.

“We are a small nonprofit,” Withers said. “Insurance is not going to cover this so we are counting on the goodwill of the community to help us.”

Withers said that the rebuilding will take place in phases.

“We first need to get everything stabilized,” Withers said. “We have to move and clean all of the brick and stone to preserve as much as possible and have an engineering firm working on plans for us for a new foundation. Then we will

SEE LEE-FENDELL, ON PAGE 13

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Baby Bust

Declining birth rates lead to shrinking Kindergarten enrollments.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Declining birth rates and the pandemic have conspired to send Alexandria's Kindergarten enrollment down 17 percent since 2018, a trend that school officials say will have a long-term influence on how the division operates and plans for the future. Some of the decline is driven by the pandemic as parents opted for private schools or kept their children in daycare rather than enroll them. But the long-term forecast for schools will be shaped one birth at a time.

"We recently converted an office building into a school. That could eventually be converted back into an office building," said Erika Gulick, director of capital programs at Alexandria City Public Schools. "When we build new school facilities, we're making sure to include community spaces as well as family resources so those programs can sort of ebb and flow."

In the short term, Kindergarten enrollment is expected to go up. School officials are predicting a Kindergarten enrollment of 1,560 this fall, the largest cohort in recent years. But that may end up being the beginning of the end for rising enrollments. Alexandria City Public Schools usually gets about 55 percent of babies born in Alexandria, a metric that school officials call the "K capture rate." Gulick says predicting enrollments for the future requires considering how many babies are born and how many of them will show up for school.

"If birth rates continue to go down but for some reason the K capture rate goes up, we may not see a decline in enrollment," said Gulick.

BIRTH RATES always fall during times of economic crisis. It happened during the Great Depression and again during the Great Recession. But the Baby Boom that happened after World War II didn't repeat itself when the economy recovered after the recession of 2008. Births in Virginia are now the lowest they've been since the late 1990s, and Virginia's population was 25 percent smaller then.

"Millennials are postponing children or just not having as many," said Hamilton

"Millennials are postponing children or just not having as many."

— Hamilton Lombard, research specialist at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

the opposite happened. The birth rate declined for the sixth straight year in 2020 as the pandemic accelerated the trend of women delaying pregnancy or deciding not to have children at all. Demographers say they'll be looking at what happens when the current crisis is over and millennials feel

more confident about the future.

"Are the women who didn't have children during the Great Recession and its aftermath, are they going to have them or not?" asks Kenneth Johnson, a senior demographer at the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. "After the Great Recession, things finally were coming back to normal and then COVID hits and yet another reason why people might be concerned about having children."

THE DROP IN BIRTHS is creating a shifting demographic landscape across the country, a trend that is contributing to the aging of the American population. Johnson looked at birth rates in all the states and found that 20 states now have more deaths than births for the first time in history. Virginia is not one of those states, at least not yet. But if current trends hold that won't be the case for long.

"Virginia continued to have more births than deaths, but the gap between the number of births and the number of deaths in Virginia dropped," said Johnson. "So although there were more births than deaths,

the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths was essentially cut in half between 2019 and 2020."

The declining enrollment in Kindergarten classes will lead to fewer people entering high school 15 years from now. That will lead to fewer people entering the workforce 20 years from now. That will lead to fewer people forming families and having children, a future that could end up looking very different from the present.

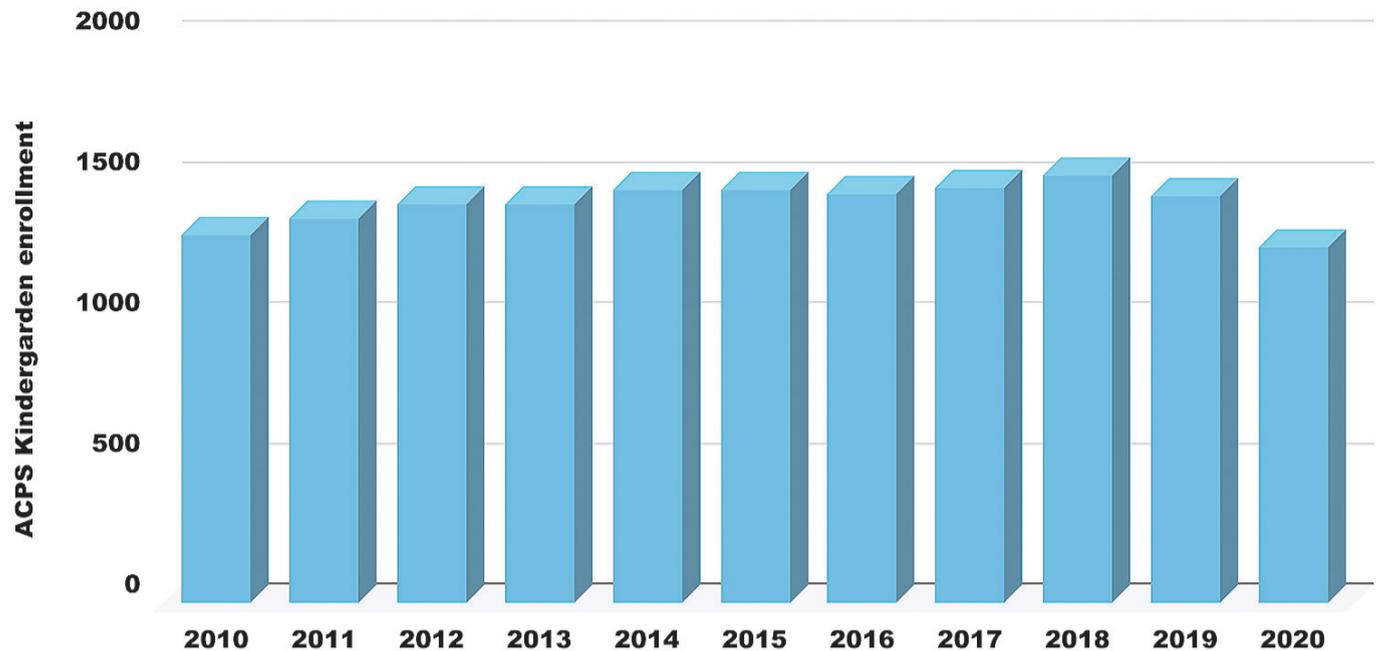
"That has really important implications for everything from transportation infrastructure to the types of facilities we need, whether it's schools or health care facilities," said Beth Jarosz, a senior research associate at the Population Reference Bureau.

At first blush, it's a trend that might seem frightening for things like the solvency of Social Security.

But Jarosz says there's also a potential upside to declining birth rates.

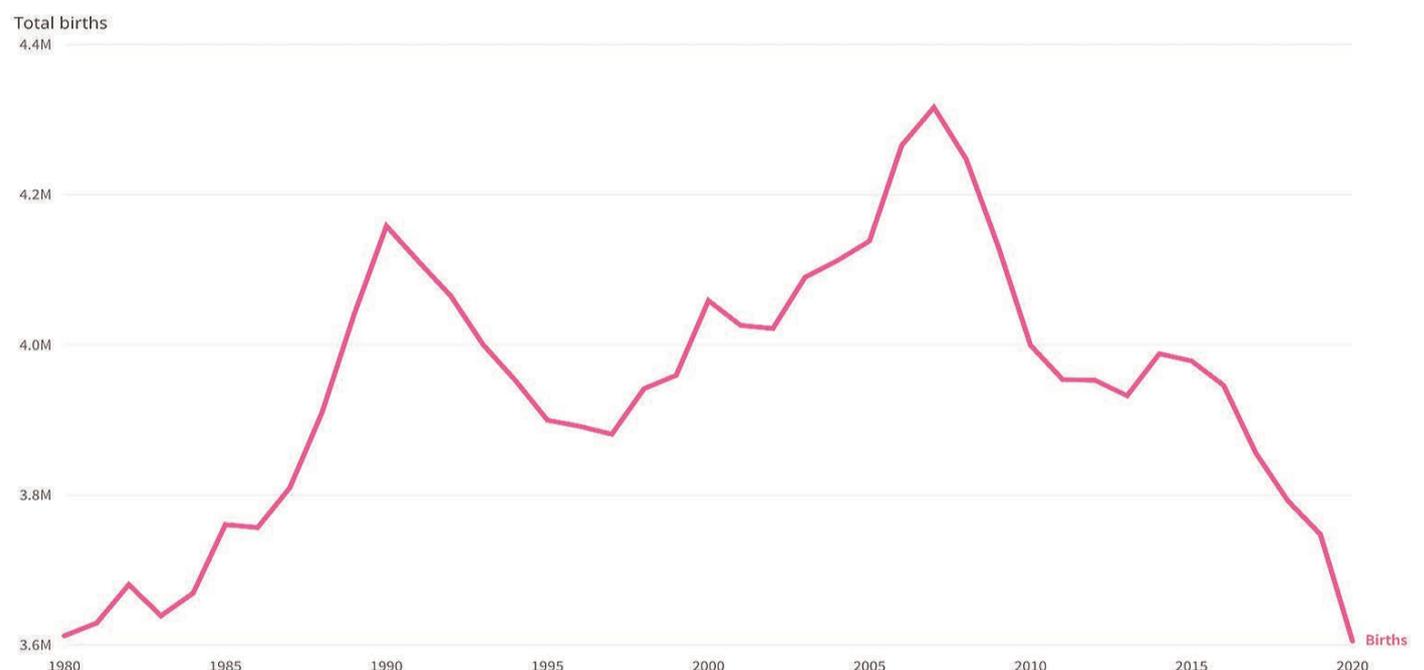
"As people have fewer children, the resources that are available for those children increases," she said. "Kids get more attention from their parents. They get better attention at school, and there can be positive outcomes from that."

Declining Kindergarten Enrollment



source: Virginia Department of Education

Kindergarten enrollment in Alexandria is down 17 percent since 2018.



The number of births in the United States declined by 16 percent from 2007 to 2020.

Lombard, a research specialist at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. "They're right in the prime age to have children, and they're not having nearly as many as Generation X has."

When the pandemic initially forced people into lockdown last year, some speculated that all that time couples spent hunkered down would lead to a baby boom. Instead,



Lorraine Lloyd, second from left, celebrates her retirement with Nancy Rosenbaum, MaryBeth Powers and Windy Christner June 23 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Lorraine Lloyd, left, with former Ramsey House Visitors Center director Barbara Barton and Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington June 23 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Ben Fiore-Walker, Alexandria's Town Crier, talks with Jon Miller at the June 23 retirement celebration for Lorraine Lloyd.

Bon Voyage Lloyd retires after 20 years with Visit Alexandria.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

For decades, Lorraine Lloyd has been a fixture in the City of Alexandria. Whether walking her dogs or enjoying the many restaurants and boutiques the city has to offer, the Old Town resident has seen the city grow from a sleepy small town into an international tourist destination. And for 20 years, Lloyd herself played a part in that transformation.

As the Senior Vice President of Meetings and International Marketing for Visit Alexandria, Lloyd helped implement and grow the city's robust tourism industry, which brought in a record setting \$859 million in 2019. Lloyd announced her retirement earlier this year and was celebrated June 23 by co-workers and friends at The Alexandrian Hotel.

"This is a bittersweet decision," said Lloyd, who officially stepped down June 30. "I love the people and love my team but after 20 years it is time to move on to the next chapter."

Among her many successes, Lloyd founded the city's signature Holiday Boat Parade of Lights on the Potomac River and the Doggie Happy Hours that originated at what was then the Old Town Holiday Inn and continues today at The Alexandrian Hotel.

"I guess you could say that Doggie Happy Hours are my claim to fame," Lloyd said with a laugh.

City Manager Mark Jinks, Hotel Indigo general manager Kate Ellis and Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington expressed their gratitude to Lloyd and spoke of her contributions to the city.

"Lorraine has been part of the heart and soul of Visit Alexandria," Washington said. "For 20 years she has been instrumental in the growth and success of our organization."

Washington noted Lloyd's hard work and dedication, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

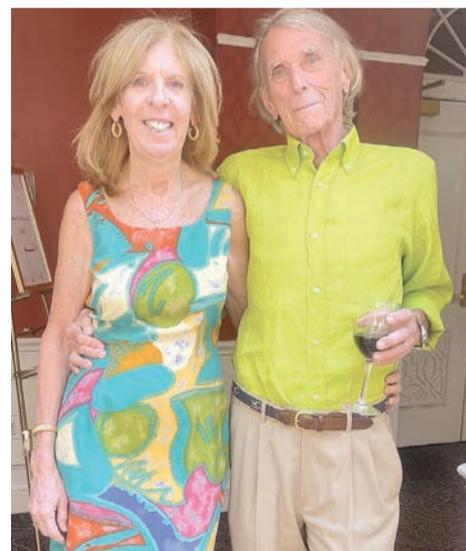
"In the year before COVID, Lorraine led the sales team to a record year where leads were up 36 percent," Washington said. "Even COVID could not stop her as she led the team to launch virtual platforms and tools to use when in-person site visits and



Lorraine Lloyd, center, celebrates her retirement from Visit Alexandria with co-workers Vita Fiore, Nancy Rosenbaum, Patricia Washington and Melanie Fallon June 23 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington makes remarks on the retirement of Lorraine Lloyd June 23 at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Lorraine Lloyd, with husband Richard, at Lloyd's June 23 retirement celebration at The Alexandrian Hotel.



Lorraine Lloyd celebrates her retirement from Visit Alexandria June 23 at The Alexandrian Hotel. Lloyd worked for the city's tourism organization for 20 years.

meetings were not possible. When restrictions eased, the team was ready to hit the ground running with a well thought out recovery strategy that is bearing fruit today."

Lloyd also conceived The Leadership Collection, which joined three Alexandria-based national leadership programs -- the McChrystal Group, Mount Vernon Estates and Building Momentum -- under one brand to position Alexandria as a destination for executive leadership meetings and team building programs.

"Lorraine has never stopped learning, adapting and embracing new ideas," Washington added. "Through technology and positioning strategies, she collaborated with team members and our stakeholders to enlist every idea and every asset to generate high-yield meetings and international tourism business for our city."

Lloyd and her husband Richard are avid boaters and will celebrate 27 years of marriage in August. Lloyd served three years as Commodore of the Old Dominion Boat Club and organized its year-long 125th anniversary celebration in 2005.

"I'm totally humbled by everyone's support," Lloyd said of the retirement celebration. "We've done some good things for the city but it's time for Richard and I to hopefully do some long range boating in Florida and the Bahamas."

"I love the people and love my team but after 20 years it is time to move on to the next chapter."
— Lorraine Lloyd of Visit Alexandria

Michael Pope, Gazette Packet Win Multiple SPJ Dateline Awards

The Washington, D.C., Pro chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists announced the recipients of its 2021 Dateline Awards for journalism excellence June 15 in a virtual presentation. Alexandria Gazette Packet took home five first place and finalist awards in the weekly newspaper division, by Michael Pope.

Pope's "Interrogating Inequality" in the Gazette Packet won the Non-Breaking News category. His "Crashing Economy," won the Business category. His reporting for the Gazette Packet made him a finalist in three additional categories: "Alexandria's Failed Experiment with Wards," was a finalist in Features; Pope's Criminal Justice Reform reporting was a finalist for Beat Reporting; "Disproportionate Policing" entry was a finalist in Investigative Journalism.

Pope also won three first-place awards for his radio broadcast work with Virginia Public Radio: He was winner of Non-Breaking News for Reporting on the Incarcerated; winner for Beat Reporting for Virginia General Assembly coverage; and winner for Business for "Unemployment in Virginia."



Michael Pope

"What a challenge the judges faced this year in selecting the best of the best," said Randy Showstack, president of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. "This has been a year when extraordinary events reared their heads, merged, and sometimes collided – a pandemic, urgent calls for social justice reform, a presidential election and ... an increasing concern about climate change. So, it is not surprising that our contest would receive a record number of entries, with so many of the entries displaying

the highest caliber of journalistic excellence."

The Alexandria Gazette Packet and its sister Connection Newspapers are lucky to have a reporter of Michael Pope's quality as a regular contributor, said Mary Kimm, editor and publisher of the newspaper group.

Awards were presented for excellence in TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, newsletter/trade publication, and online journalism, encompassing breaking news, business writing, commentary, photography, and more.

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Patriotic Pride

U.S. flags are displayed at the intersection of Rosemont and Commonwealth Avenues in Rosemont in celebration of the Fourth of July holiday. The Rosemont area of the city is a designated Virginia Historic Landmark by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources.

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Eviction Prevention Is Not Housing Investment

By Michelle Krocker

America has a housing crisis - an affordability crisis, as well as a housing supply crisis. Recently, the National Association of Realtors released a report showing that over the last 20 years new housing starts fell 5.5 million units short of long-term historical levels. "The scale of the problem is so large," said David Bank, senior vice president of Rosen Consulting Group and one of the report's authors. "We need affordable, we need market-rate, we need single-family, we need multifamily."

Our region is also experiencing a housing crisis. To address our unmet housing needs, elected officials from the District, Maryland and Virginia unanimously adopted the Council of Governments' regional goal of producing 375,000 net new housing units between 2015 and 2030. Housing should be located in activity centers near transit, with one-third of the units

serving low-income households and one-third for middle-income households. The regional goal translates into 25,000 net new housing units per year, so clearly we need to build more housing.

The eviction crisis created by the pandemic is unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetimes. Through multiple assistance programs, the federal government has responded with substantial tranches of funding to provide financial resources to prevent evictions by paying back rent, advancing rent for those impacted by COVID, and helping landlords remain solvent. However, the administrative process of getting that much money out the door has been daunting for state and local governments, resulting in bottlenecks to deliver relief assistance. With the end to the CDC moratorium on July 31 — with little hope for further extension — strategies for mutually beneficial agreements between landlords and tenants, with the help of trusted community part-

ners and continued rental assistance will be needed to stave off an eviction catastrophe.

Eviction Prevention Does Not Equal Housing Investment. It is imperative that this relief assistance not be construed as solving our pre-pandemic housing crisis. Eviction prevention does not solve the historic under-investment in housing production and preservation. We must have investments to end homelessness, provide permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities, create housing that's affordable for low and moderate income households, young families wanting to buy their first home, and seniors on fixed incomes who want to remain in their communities.

Over the coming months, the Virginia General Assembly and localities throughout the Commonwealth will make consequential decisions on how to spend the largess from the American Rescue Plan funds. With accounts of Virginia's better-than-expected finan-

cial recovery from the pandemic, housing advocates should be bold in their recommendations for how Virginia allocates the \$4.3 billion in federal funds. Having secured historic gains for the state Housing Trust Fund, permanent supportive housing, and the new Virginia Opportunity Tax Credit, it's time to build a housing trust fund that closes the gap of only four affordable units for every 10 households eligible for housing that's affordable.

It is also the time for Northern Virginia advocates to press local governments for the funding needed to meet their share of the region's housing goals as defined by the COG pledge. This is housing's moment to imagine a region and a Commonwealth that is fair, equitable, inclusive and provides housing for all. Let's not squander this unique opportunity.

Michelle Krocker is the Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance <https://nvaha.org/>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pay City Employees Fairly

The Alexandria City Government has a pay philosophy for its employees that salaries will "be competitive at a minimum with the average pay" of its comparators. Unfortunately, the salaries of most employees do not meet this criteria. This issue was true before FY21 and was exacerbated with the removal of merit increases and elimination of the proposed 1 percent raise due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An example of this pay issue: Alexandria Police is the lowest paid agency in the entire region, save for Manassas City. This makes it extremely difficult to recruit and retain employees.

Merit increases for all City employees were eliminated and a hiring freeze was instituted in the FY21 budget in an effort to protect funding for core City programs due to COVID-19. Employees understood the massive amount of uncertainty and we did not argue the changes to the budget. Instead, we provided the same level of high-quality service throughout the unprecedented, tumultuous time. It is worth noting that the work of those hundreds of frozen vacancies did not go uncompleted. The workload was instead picked up by other dedicated City employees so as to maintain seamless ser-

vice to Alexandria's residents and visitors. This added work caused burn-out and lowered morale as employees took on additional responsibilities.

We have since learned that due to these necessary and appropriate budget decisions, the City saved more than anticipated. Included in those savings was more than \$6 million that was created through the FY21 hiring freeze.

For this reason, we respectfully request that City Council use money saved in FY21 to reinstate the FY21 merit increases (cost of approximately \$3.5 million) and 1.5 percent adjustment (cost of approximately \$3.4 million) for the thousands of deserving City employees. Merit increases, by definition, are raises provided to employees for performing at or above expectations; the thousands of City employees certainly did this over the last twelve months.

Ben Saks,
President IUPA Local 5
Stephen Mackey, President
Alexandria Sheriff's Association
Josh Turner,
President IAFF Local 2141

Plant Clinic Needed in Climate Crisis

When I completed my Master Gardener training in 1981, several

of my classmates and I wanted to set up a plant clinic at the Alexandria Farmers' Market. It would be a free service to the city and staffed by volunteers, who could provide horticultural advice and diagnostic services to homeowners. But we needed a free spot at the market to set up. Needless to say, it took a lot of effort to get that spot, but eventually the plant clinic became a valuable service to the community for 30+ years.

This year, City Hall has decided that free horticultural advice is no longer needed, and the Plant Clinic can no longer have a seat at the market. I'm wondering who is making this determination, especially considering the environ-

mental impact of invasive plants, scorching summers, and the decimation of our valuable tree canopy to make way for things like snack bars at the high school athletic field.

Paula Coupe
Alexandria

Use Federal Rescue Funds to Pay Childcare Workers Fairly

To the Editor,
Alexandria is a city of families. We take pride in our strong school
SEE LETTERS, 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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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jeanne Theismann

jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner, Mark Mogle

Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier

Contributing Writers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Hope Nelson

Food Writer
hope@kitchenrecessionista.com
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope

Senior Reporter
michaelpope@gmail.com
@michaelpope

ADVERTISING:

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

Debbie Funk

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

Tara Lloyd

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

David Griffin

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

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher

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

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh

Production Manager:

Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:

Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

system, our beautiful public parks, and the many other resources we rely on to raise our children and connect with other families. But we also know that starting and supporting a family comes with unique challenges. Between basic needs like medical care, housing and clothes to extracurricular activities and college, the cost of taking care of our children can be substantial. Now imagine facing those costs while dedicating your life to taking care of other people's children and doing it while making poverty wages. This is the unfortunate reality faced by our early childhood education workforce.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) recently passed by Congress and signed by President Biden will provide \$56.4 million in childcare stabilization grants to the City of Alexandria. Early childhood educators are the backbone of our national education system, but their wages are too low, and their poverty rates are too high. ARPA funds offer the opportunity to give the members of an undervalued workforce the dignity and financial security that they have earned and deserve. The city should commit to using a portion of ARPA funds to provide premium pay and at least 14 days of paid leave for COVID-19 related needs for all early childhood education professionals.

For far too long, we have un-

dervalued our early childhood educators. According to last year's Early Childhood Workforce Index, early childhood educators earn an average of \$11 to \$14 an hour. This is a poverty wage. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, approximately 166,000 jobs in the childcare industry were lost, and those workers who did not lose their jobs were faced with considerable risk to their own health while making less than a living wage and receiving minimal to no health benefits.

Early childhood educators have one of the most important and difficult jobs in the country. The coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the essential role these professionals play in our daily lives. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They deserve much more than what we are giving them now.

ARPA funding presents a unique opportunity to invest in this crucial workforce. Early educators should not be expected to deal with the uncertainty of a global pandemic without a safety net of paid medical leave and adequate wages, and the ARPA funds provide an opportunity for Alexandria to create that net. We owe it to our children to ensure that the people we have entrusted with their care are paid fairly.

Julie Jakopic

Chair, Hopkins House
Public Policy and
Advocacy Committee

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.

KING STREET TROLLEY

RESUMES SERVICE

DASH and the City of Alexandria announce that operation of the King Street Trolley will resume on Monday, July 5. Free daily service along King Street in Old Town Alexandria will return, with the following service adjustments.

Trolley service will run from the King Street Metro station to Alexandria City Hall's Market Square.

The trolley will run every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days per week, including holidays. This simplified schedule will make the trolley more accessible to residents, workers and visitors.

A new trolley stop will be established at the southeast corner of Market Square on North Fairfax Street to serve passengers accessing the Potomac River waterfront. Due to the closure of the 100 block of King Street, the stops at Union Street and Lee Street will no longer be served. Visit dashbus.com/trolley for more information.

THURSDAY/JULY 15

JLNV Membership Event. 7 p.m. Virtual Event. Zoom call to learn more about membership in the Junior League of Northern Virginia.

Go to https://members.jlrv.org/?nd=vms_public_form&form_id=341 to RSVP.

Members will share their experiences and opportunities they've explored through the Junior League, and answer any questions you may have about

becoming a member. Applications are still open for the Summer 2021 New

Member class. Website: <https://www.jlrv.org/july-15th-jlrv-virtual-meet-and-greet/>

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil (Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) at 703-324-4547.

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Beloved Martha, Mary Wiseman, Looks Back with Joy

Mount Vernon's Martha Washington is hanging up the bonnet and dress after 20 years.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

For Mary Wiseman, historically portraying Lady Washington for nearly 20 years at the Mount Vernon plantation has branched out in ways she never could imagine back in the beginning. She's become an originator of "character interpretation," an expert on the life and times of the real Martha, a history teacher of sorts, and a character around the Mount Vernon community where she's lived for the past 15 years. Now she's passing the bonnet to a younger Martha character interpreter, and looks back with joy at her opportunities.

"I didn't intend to become the nation's grandmother, but I kind of did," Wiseman said, "it's been a joy for me."

For years, she'd wake up in her Belle View apartment, put on the authentic-looking bonnet and puffy dress and drive the short distance to the plantation where she'd smile, teach history and bring authenticity for the thousands that walked through the gate. The visitors would feel like they were talking to the real Martha. "I'm very proud of that," she said.

Wiseman and Martha shared many traits in real life, only coincidence, but it added to the portrayal. They were both of Welsh and English descent, both doting grandmothers, and both came from the same part of Virginia between Richmond and Fredericksburg. That's where Wiseman lives now in New Kent County. "I live about 10 miles as the crow flies from where Martha was born," she said. "I didn't plan any of it."

It all started in Williamsburg back in the 1970s where she was perfecting the skill of character interpretation on a variety of characters in Colonial Williamsburg. Martha Washington was one of the characters she studied, and years later, there was an opening in Mount Vernon, so she jumped on it, commuting for a while. In 2004, she moved to Belle View and took on the role, even though her contacts in Williamsburg couldn't believe she'd move to an area riddled with the congestion and traffic. The community of Belle View embraced her though, and at Primo's Restaurant, they know her order and the special salad she gets. "I became a fixture in that area," she said. Many times, she would leave on the bonnet and dress — and smile. "People could come and sit down with me and talk," she said.



Mount Vernon character interpreter Mary Wiseman as Martha Washington.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Mount Vernon character interpreter Mary Wiseman as Martha Washington poses with her grandson Zach, 15, who was her grandson in the Martha world when he was a baby.

"I didn't intend to become the nation's grandmother, but I kind of did. it's been a joy for me."

— Mary Wiseman as Martha Washington

From Mary to Martha

It took some studying at first though.

"In studying her character, I was impressed with how much she accomplished," said Wiseman.

Martha Washington was born Martha Dandridge, the oldest of eight children, in New Kent County, Virginia. She married Daniel Parke Custis in 1750 and gave birth to Daniel Parke Custis the son, in 1751, and then Francis Parke Custis in 1753. Her husband died in 1757, and she met George Washington a year later and the two got married in early 1759 and she moved into Mount Vernon. There were illnesses and deaths in the family, and a new grandchild of Martha's was born, and then she traveled up to Valley Forge in the winter of 1777 to be with George. In 1783, the Revolutionary War was over, George returned home, and became the first president in 1789.

George Washington died in 1799 and Martha died on May 22, 1802. "After he died, she really didn't want to go on," Wiseman said. "They were really partners."

As Martha, Wiseman has gotten to ride down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Memorial Day parades, rode in a GW Birthday parade in Old

Town, participated in July 4th celebrations, candlelight Christmas events, and met another famous Martha, Martha Stewart.

"I had the delight of giving Martha Stewart a recommendation," she said.

Other people she's met were Lady Gird Johnson, Kathleen Matthews, Jane Pauley, Katie Couric, and attended Sen. John Warner's birthday. In 1982, there was a George Washington mini series starring Jacquelyn Smith and, "I was their consultant," Wiseman said.

Over the last few years, she's trained Elizabeth Keaney to be the new Martha, and Keaney will be coming in to portray Martha, and also living in Belle View. Keaney started playing Martha's granddaughter years ago, and now "she sounds exactly like me," Wiseman said.

Wiseman's bonnet and puffy dress will still be in use though for an occasional appearance for a history class or guest appearance in New Kent County.

While in Mount Vernon this summer, Wiseman is filming a documentary of sorts on her life, and was surprised with a medal — a purple heart from her father who was killed in World War II right before she was born.

A Fond Farewell

FROM PAGE 1

en me under his wing as a friend, which speaks to the character he is as a person.”

Pittman praised Brown for the many times he did not hesitate to help her, “just like your fine police department never hesitated to come to our rescue in June of 2017 at the baseball field.”

Pittman continued: “Chief Brown, it has been my profound honor to work with you. You let me know that being a change agent for a police department is not easy, that there will be many days that you are going to go at it alone and you are going to ask God ‘Why me?’ I didn’t ask to be here. I didn’t ask to be in this acting chief of police role but one of the first calls I made was to my friend, Chief Brown, and for that I say thank you. It’s an honor to know you.”

Brown was joined at the event by his wife, Kirsten Knapp, who recently retired from the Alexandria Sheriff’s Office. As is a retirement tradition, the APD motorcycle division escorted Brown home for his final departure from police headquarters.



Police Chief Michael Brown, right, and his wife Kirsten Knapp listen to remarks at Brown’s June 25 retirement reception at police headquarters.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/CAZETTE PACKET



The motorcycle division of the Alexandria Police Department leads the traditional motorcade send-off from police headquarters for Police Chief Michael Brown.

“Every now and again you meet somebody in your career that is a godsend.”

— Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman on her friendship with Chief Michael Brown



Police Chief Michael Brown with City Councilwoman Amy Jackson.



Police Chief Michael Brown, right, with aide Sergeant Charlette Mitchell.

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Animal Shelter Volunteers: They Do It All

'Laundry List' does include laundry — and hugging bunnies.

BY BARBARA S. MOFFET
GAZETTE PACKET

How does the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) manage to show dozens of dogs and cats to potential adopters, create special treats for the animals, answer the phone, keep up with mountains of laundry and so many other tasks every week?

The secret: Volunteers! A recent calculation determined that the shelter's volunteers offer so much of their time that they contribute the equivalent of up to 12 staff members every year.

With more than 100 volunteers still working from home since the pandemic as well as those donating their time in person at the shelter, the volunteer corps is more critical than ever, said AWLA Manager of Volunteers and Community Events Echo Keif. Those volunteering from home continue to write bios about the animals, post information about them on the shelter website, create colorful flyers about animals in foster care, do data entry, sew kennel curtains, knit artificial nests to house dislodged birds and more.

New ways of volunteering that blossomed during the pandemic continue to reshape their duties, Keif said. Some volunteers do pet detective work from home as part of the AWLA's new Stray Support Squad. Volunteers post any stray animals who have come to the shelter on external sites such as Craigslist and Facebook; they also search those sites for any "missing" animals who match the description of strays currently in the shelter, and look for animals who might match lost animals reported to the AWLA. "We've found that so many volunteer duties can be carried out from home," Keif said. "That really has allowed us to stay connected with our volunteers."

Volunteers continue to be the heart of shelter operations on site too, many spending valuable one-on-one time with the animals. Adoption of pets wouldn't be possible without the daily support of volunteer Adoption Assistants. They work alongside the Adoptions staff to help show animals to potential adopters, in person and also over Zoom. "They do most of the showings and meet and greets," said AWLA Volunteer Coordinator Alli Holte. "They treat it like a full-time job and take it very seriously."

New AWLA volunteers are trained to work with animals



Volunteers ferry pets from cars to the AWLA shelter at a drive-in vaccine clinic.



PHOTOS COURTESY, AWLA

A specially knit nest, created by an AWLA volunteer, keeps a bird cozy. AWLA volunteers craft nests for AWLA Animal Services officers to use when a baby bird has fallen out of a nest or a nest has been destroyed.



PHOTO BY TERYE DAME

A rabbit enjoys some cuddle time with AWLA volunteer Terye Dame.

through a mentoring system with experienced volunteers. In the past year, the AWLA also has greatly expanded classes and workshops that are integral to the training process. A recent Zoom session featured Animal Services Chief Tony Rankin describing how to stay safe when working with dogs who might be more energetic or jumpy. Another class, required for all volunteers working with the shelter's small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, revealed how these species communicate and how the shelter uses their signals to better interact with them.

Irene Toporovskaya, a marketing manager for a medical company, started volunteering in late 2019, putting in several days of doing laundry, washing dishes and



PHOTO BY IRENE TOPOROVSKAYA

AWLA volunteer Irene Toporovskaya gets some love from adoptable dog Tyson.

preparing snacks for the animals. After the required training, she then began working with dogs and composing bios of animals for the website. Toporovskaya was not deterred when the shelter closed for the pandemic; she continued a variety of volunteering activities from home.

Now Toporovskaya does it all, both from home and at the shelter: taking dogs on outings, highlighting adoptable animals in videos and photographs, posting about newly adopted animals and transporting animals to outside rescues and wildlife rehabilitators. She considers her volunteer work a learning experience. "The training we've received as volunteers has been so valuable," Toporovskaya said. "I hadn't really interacted

with scared or hyper dogs before, and now I'm prepared to help them channel their energy and calm down." Toporovskaya even fell in love on one of her shifts — with a pitbull mix she decided to adopt.

Volunteer Terye Dame's favorite activity was interacting with the public at the front desk, but when the pandemic made that impossible, she transitioned to working with the shelter's small animals. She has petted bearded dragons and worked on target training with guinea pigs — and quickly has become the resident turtle whisperer. Watching turtles Beethoven and Mozart in their tank one day, she noticed that Mozart was sleeping with her front legs extended, which she mentioned to the AWLA's Animal Care team. This addi-

tional level of information helped staff realize that Mozart had limited vision, and they adjusted the tank she shared with Beethoven to make it more comfortable for her. Dame was appreciative that the extra attention she paid to the turtles resulted in changing the enclosure to better suit Mozart's needs.

But it was a young black rabbit named Jojo who stole Dame's heart. "He's the one I compare all other bunnies to," she said. "Most bunnies don't like to be held like babies, but Jojo would purr with his teeth and snuggle under my chin." Dame's cuddling was infectious, and she soon was attracting other volunteers to rabbit duty as well as adopters who had never considered a rabbit before.

Dame, a logistical analyst for a government contracting company, says her weekly volunteer shift at the shelter is critical to her own happiness. "You can always find me on a Friday night holding a bunny," she said.

About

Celebrating its 75th year, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria is a local 501(c)(3) organization that operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter. In response to the global pandemic, the AWLA has established a virtual adoption process and is operating a Pet Pantry that provides pet food and supplies to community members in need. The AWLA also offers assistance to Alexandrians with questions about wildlife and animals in the community. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org.

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CALENDAR

JULY 1-17

J.W. Hiller Retrospective Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans gallery, in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria: The John W. Hiller Retrospective Photography Exhibit showcases over four decades of photography from longtime member John W. Hiller. Works include Western landscapes, Japanese gardens, and contemporary experiential imagery.
<<https://delrayartisans.org/event/retrospective/>>

SATURDAY/JULY 10

City of Alexandria Birthday Celebration. 8:45 p.m. The City of Alexandria will celebrate its 272nd and the USA's 245th birthday on Saturday, July 10, with a performance by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra ending with a Grand Finale fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. To limit crowds and prevent the spread of COVID-19, this year's fireworks display has been repositioned to be visible from multiple vantage points along the Potomac River waterfront from Canal Center Plaza to Jones Point Park. To further reduce crowds, the event will not include the distribution of birthday cake or cannon support from the 3d United States Infantry Regiment.

Program Schedule:

8:45 p.m.—Opening and Welcome
Oronoco Bay Park (100 Madison St.)
9 p.m.—Performance by Alexandria Symphony Orchestra
Oronoco Bay Park (100 Madison St.)
9:30 p.m.—Grand Finale fireworks display
Vantage points:
Canal Center Plaza (Center Canal Plaza)
Rivergate Park (2 Montgomery St.)
Oronoco Bay Park (100 Madison St.)
Founders Park (351 North Union St.)
Waterfront Park (1A Prince St.)
Windmill Hill Park (501 South Union St.)
Fords Landing boardwalk (99 Franklin St.)
Jones Point Park (Jones Point Dr.)



Thursday/July 8

Outdoor Jazz Concert. 5:30 and 7 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess St., Alexandria. Retro, smooth, and timeless. Vocalist and front-woman, Ariana Harbin leads jazz quartet Sweet Something in favorite jazz tunes in tribute to such legendary performers as Etta James, Peggy Lee, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and more. Cost: \$42. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

George Washington Masonic Temple (101 Callahan Dr.)

Visit alexandriava.gov/Recreation for more information, or call the Special Events Hotline at 703-746-5592.

SATURDAY/JULY 10

Savory Soiree: "Liberté chérie: A Bastille Day

Celebration." 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. At The Secret Garden of the Rectory, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. Celebrate Bastille Day with fine food and a delectable musical program of French songs and opera arias by Jules Massenet, Georges Bizet, Pauline Viardot, Nadia Boulanger and more. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

[gardenconcerts/](#)

SATURDAY/JULY 10

Del Ray Vintage & Flea Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At the parking lot of 1900 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Hosted monthly by Del Ray residents and businesswomen, Lauren Fisher, PsyD, and Amy Eggers, the market is held on the second Saturday of each month. The goal of the market is to give community members a chance to participate in a grass-roots event, either as shoppers or vendors, with vintage/antique/flea market items they are hoping to sell or acquire. Items for sale range from vintage and like-new clothing to housewares, sports memorabilia, child and baby items, artwork and more. Visit delrayvintageflea.com.

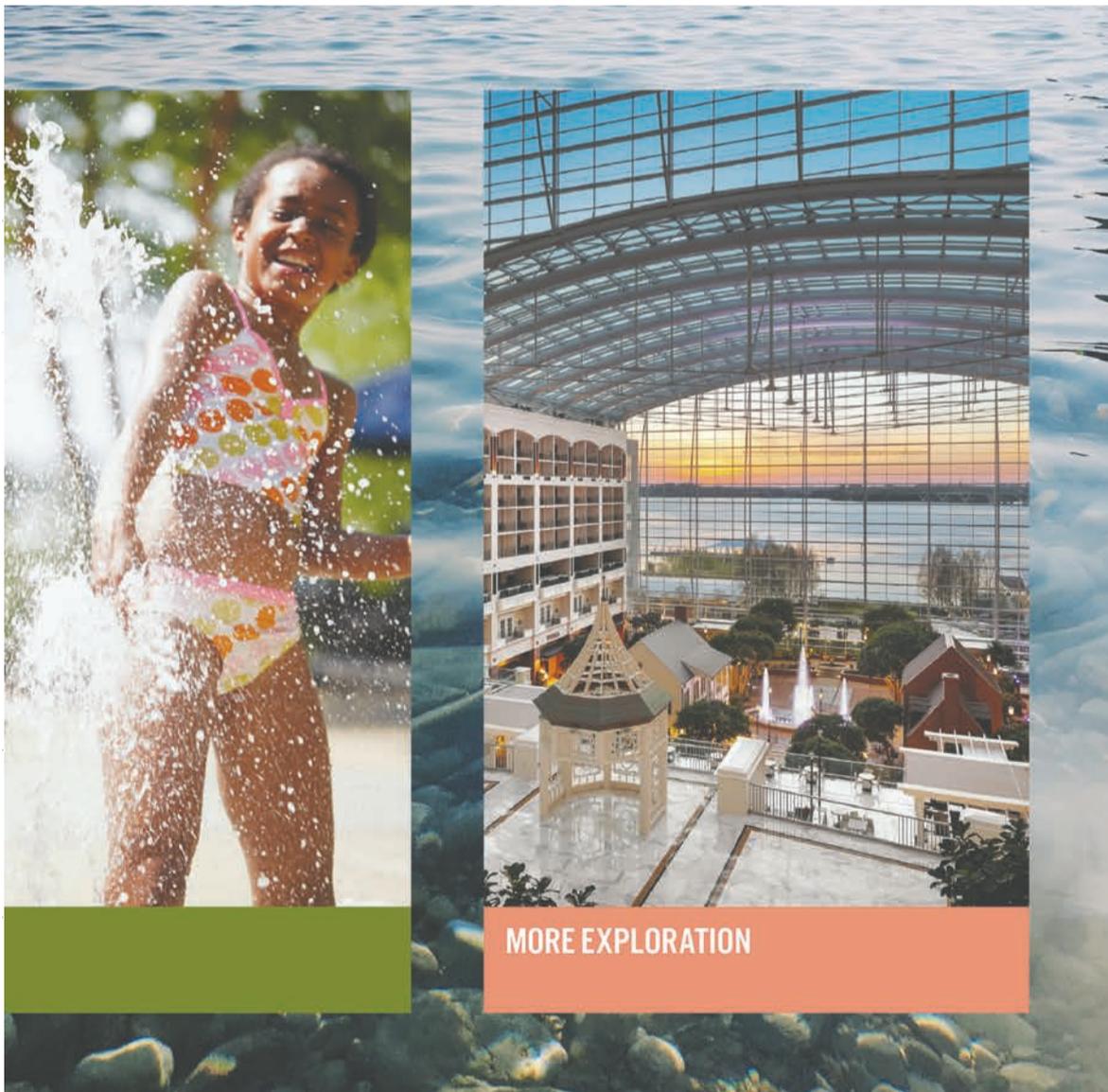
SATURDAY/JULY 10

Eco-Gardening Ideas: Evening Stroll at Green Spring. 5:30-7 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Take an evening stroll through the gardens at Green Spring with curatorial horticulturist Brenda Skarphol to see eco-friendly and sustainable garden ideas. Learn how to incorporate native plants that will attract more pollinators and wildlife to your garden, and ways to improve your soil to enhance water retention and manage runoff. \$18 per person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktaks (code NQN.P4JZ) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SUNDAY/JULY 11

The Crown: Fact or Fiction? 2-3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. (Adults) Season 4 of the lavish British monarchy series, The Crown, introduces Lady Diana Spencer to the drama that portrays the life of Queen Elizabeth II and her family in astonishingly intimate detail. Discover how much is fact and how much is dramatic license. A link to the virtual program

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12



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PHOTO BY R. KENNEDY/VISIT ALEXANDRIA

The free King Street Trolley is back in service as of July 5.

On the Road Again

Safety protocols in place as trolley service resumes.

After a more than a year-long pause in operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Alexandria's King Street Trolley resumed service July 5.

The free service will again shuttle riders along King Street with a few changes in service. The trolley will run from King Street Metro Station to City Hall's Market Square, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week, including holidays.

A new stop at the southeast corner of

Market Square on North Fairfax Street will serve passengers accessing the Potomac River waterfront. The stops at Union Street and Lee Street will no longer be served, due to the street closure on the 100 block of King Street.

All riders are required to wear face masks while on board and all trolleys are equipped with driver barriers. Smoking, eating and drinking are prohibited on the trolley and passengers with strollers must close strollers

before entering. The trolley stops at designated stops or at a safe location by request. Passengers must pull the cord to signal a stop.

The King Street Trolley is equipped with wheelchair ramps and bike racks as well as automated stop announcements.

To contact DASH (the trolley operator) about lost items or other inquiries, call (703) 746-3274 or visit www.dashbus.com/trolley

— JEANNE THEISMANN

Little Free Pantry

There's a new pantry in town: The Charles Houston Recreation Center at 901 Wythe Street is now host to a Little Free Pantry, Alexandria's first on city property, spearheaded by Hope Nelson, who is also food writer for Alexandria Gazette Packet. The pantry's motto is "Take what you need, give what you can," and serves as a handy go-to "kitchen cabinet" for nearby neighbors.



CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11

will be emailed up to an hour before the start of the program. Optional afternoon tea boxes prepared by our caterer will be available for pick up at Green Spring Gardens between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the day of the program. Tea boxes include savory finger sandwiches, pastries, scone with cream and jam, and tea bag. Lecture only: \$12/ Optional tea box: \$24. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktates (code B1A.XKPI) or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

TUESDAY/JULY 13

Summer Concert. 6-8 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Featuring music by Black Moon Tonic. Bring the whole family, a picnic, lawn chairs and a blanket to spread. Alcohol is not permitted. Call 703-642-5173 in the event of inclement weather.

TUESDAY/JULY 13

Queens on King Street Reunion Event. 6 to 8 p.m. At The Light Horse, 715 King St., Alexandria. After a hiatus of more than a year due to the pandemic, Alexandria's Queens on King Street group will reconvene. The occasion will also serve as the group's five-year anniversary. In 2015, co-founders Timothy McCue, Nathan Sell, and Alex Rodriguez-Rozic created Queens on King Street to provide a space for LGBTQ+ individuals that live, work, or just love to visit Old Town Alexandria.

JULY 16-18

Summer Wine Festival & Sunset Tour. 6 to 9 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Join Mount Vernon for the attraction's most popular event of the year. Taste unlimited samples of wines from Virginia's finest wineries. Admission: From \$43 for members and \$53 for general public; VIP tables are also available. Visit mountvernon.org.

AUG. 6-28

"Together" is an exhibit by Del Ray Artisans' outstanding volunteers and board members, who make Del Ray Artisans an organization that fosters community and promotes creative expression and artistic endeavors. Come celebrate their dedication and enjoy their artwork. The "Together" exhibit runs August 6-28, 2021 at Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays 12-6pm, Sundays 12-6pm (Closed on August 29). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THE BIRCHMERE

All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.
 Wed. July 7: Donavon Frankenreiter \$45.00
 Thu. July 8: Asleep at the Wheel \$35.00
 Fri. July 9: "Hotter Than July - Ladies Night Out!" A Tribute to the Music of Bruno Mars, Beyonce, Chaka Khan, Commodores, Gerald Levert, Johnny Gill, Keith Sweat, LTD, Stevie Wonder, Temptations, Luther Vandross, Teddy Pendergrass, and More! The Best of Funk, Soul, R&B! Starring Andre Jackson & Friends with Sudden M-Pac Band \$35.00
 Sat. July 10: The Quebe Sisters \$35.00
 Sun. July 11: Flatland Cavalry \$25.00
 Mon. July 12: Peter Rowan's Free Mexican Airforce feat. Los Texmaniacs \$35.00
 Fri. July 16: Tarriona 'Tank' Ball "Vulnerable AF Book Tour" with Sha'Condria "iCon" Sibley \$29.50



JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Lee-Fendall House Museum and Garden Executive Director Martha Withers stands among the rubble of the collapsed wall at the historic property.

Lee-Fendall House Wall Collapses

FROM PAGE 1

rebuild so that it looks like the original wall but instead of being four layers of brick thick, it will be a façade on the outside of something that is more stable.”

The organization is working closely with the Board of Architectural Review and with local firms specializing in historic masonry on a multi-phase plan to repair the wall. A temporary wall has been constructed for safety purposes and to enclose the area that is used for programs and private events.

Since its construction in 1785, the Lee-Fendall House has housed 37 members of the Lee family (1785–1903), hundreds of convalescing Union soldiers during the Civil War (1863–1865), the prominent Downham family (1903–1937), and powerful labor leader John L. Lewis (1937–1969). Throughout its history, the home was also lived and worked in by generations of enslaved and free African Americans.

The historic home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is now owned and operated by the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation. It is run as a museum to preserve the architectural and historic value of the house and gardens and to educate visitors through tours and interpretive programs.

“This will be a major project for the museum,” Withers added. “The wall managed to stand for 220 years. Now we need to get it back looking like it did and are hoping that we can rely on the Alexandria community to support this critical repair.”

For more information or to donate to the Repair the Wall Fund, visit www.leefendallhouse.org.

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I'm the Big Winner



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Not a cancer column.) For the past six months or so, I have been the email-recipient of \$50 gift cards to numerous to count/tally. They have run the gamut from Ace Hardware to Zappos.com and everything in between like CVS, Kohls, Walmart; you name it. I have rarely clicked on any of these "give-aways" because the one time I did, the answers required on the site - to claim my winnings, seemed a bit intrusive, as in what they were asking was none of their business. If they truly want to incentivize me to spend money at their store/site, they need to leave my personal business out of their equation. You don't need to know my mother's maiden name or the name of the city where I was born, to give me money, and you definitely are not getting my credit card number into which you'll make "the transfer." I've been down that rabbit hole before, and it's not good.

For a time, I was naively open and curious about these presumptive money/data grabs. I figured that in a pandemic world where millions of potential buyers are quarantining at home, and brick and mortar businesses are left fending for themselves, finding an alternate route to my wallet/credit cards while many of us were less inclined to go out and mix with the masses, a gift card teaser seemed prudent and reasonable. Moreover, given the very extenuating circumstances we've all endured these last 18 months, it was safe even; given our collective evolution in terms of purchasing goods and services online over the last decade to buy remotely. Throw in the same day service available with some vendors and there really is very little need to leave your house.

But after being nearly hooked and gutted by a phishing expedition once before, I've become extremely cautious about taking any bait/ tipping my toe in the figurative computer water, especially when the offers seem to be pulling at my heart's strings: free/easy money. Certainly I am mindful of the advisory: "If it sounds too good to be true, ..." yelled from the highest mountain tops in the past decade. However, the fraudulent pursuit of our almighty dollars are not being sent by idiots/ innocent target marketers. Hardly. These callers, with whom you eventually have to make verbal or online contact are quite proficient at answering your questions and/or allaying any fears that the about-to-be-extremely-unlucky mark is exhibiting. And once the caller/responder to your query has control of your computer - which you provided (it seemed like the logical thing to do to close/finalize the deal), the gift card party is officially over. The "free" money you had anticipated receiving is now going to cost you real money, as opposed to the offer you initially received which, as it happens, wasn't real/free at all.

Still, even with my previous near-death financial wipeout, I did click on a CVS offer. The site had all the CVS bells and whistles and colors which I've come to recognize and the offer seemed genuine: three choices to click on a box to win a \$50 gift card. And of course, it was the third and final red box on which I clicked that offered up my \$50. That was easy. Too easy.

As it soon became apparent, claiming the money was the problem. Once I answered a bunch of questions about my name, rank and serial number of where I live and so forth, I realized I was leading the caller down the garden path to my identity and all sorts of harrowing misadventures which I'd prefer not to experience first hand. Before it got too late/too personal on the sight, I politely backed out before any damage was done. As a result of this near calamity, I am no longer clicking on anything that seems the least bit enticing with unsolicited offers of direct payments/gift cards to me. If however, there are solicitations to me for gift cards to be mailed to my home without any preconditions or questions answered, I'd be happy to receive them. Otherwise, I won't bother. I've been shamed once, I can't afford, literally, to be shamed twice, then it is my fault (a fool and his money ...).

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

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WELLBEING

Back to Work

Angst, readjustment as employees return to the office.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

More than one year after the emergence of COVID-19 and the subsequent, work-from-home mandates, many employees are heading back to the office. After adjusting to that new normal created by the pandemic and experiencing the benefits that came with it, the reemergence of rush hour traffic, office politics, and a loss of freedom is leading to dread and angst among some workers.

"Most of the clients I'm currently working with are anxious about returning to work because of potential exposure to COVID, they're worried about losing flexibility and control over their workday and quality of life," said David Hansen, Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Career Counselor in Fairfax. "My clients are afraid of losing that, and right now there's a lot of anxiety because it's unclear to them what the expectations will be when they're back in the office."

Just as employees and employers had to make significant modifications abruptly, urgently and without precedent, some of the same kinds of adjustments will need to be made during the transition back to working in person. "Last March, it took people a while to adjust and figure out how to make working from home function properly, but over time, and even though it was hard, many working people and their families got into a steady groove, and even found that they could build in more quality time to take care of themselves and their families," said Hansen.

Losing those benefits has led to a reevaluation of goals and values.

"The success and power-driven environment that we live in was shaken by the pan-

dem. Many have seen that they can lead fulfilling lives with less," said Arlington psychologist Kerry Anderson, Ph.D. who transitioned her practice to video conferencing during the pandemic. "They may find that what they have is good enough and adding more may tip the scales back to stress and excess. Now more than before it's important to reassess your current values as your life stands today. What do you want the next three to five years to look like? What have you learned over the course of this year that you would like to maintain? What are you ready to let go of that has not served you well?"

Retuning without giving up all of the autonomy could be a solution, says Hansen. "I think that employees who want to retain some of their freedom and flexibility in their schedule can have open and honest conversations with their supervisor about maintaining at least one or more work-from-home days."

While some employees might be able to negotiate an arrangement that allows them to maintain at least part of the change in workstyle that resulted from the pandemic, others may not have that luxury.

"Workers should lower their self-expectations accordingly," said psychologist

Steven Thiesen, Ph.D. whose office is in Rockville. "They should expect to feel some level of discomfort, and they should not expect to handle it perfectly. They should expect that they will need a period of adjustment."

"I think that employees who want to retain some of their freedom and flexibility in their schedule can have open and honest conversations with their supervisor about maintaining at least one or more work-from-home days."

— David Hansen, career counselor

Creating a

plan can help reduce stress and anxiety, particularly for those who don't have the power to ask for flexibility. "I think one of the most important things employees can do right now as they're thinking about going back to work is identify, very specifically, what positive changes they've made since COVID that they want to hold onto," said Anderson. "Finding creative ways to maintain activities like exercising or spending time with family can give you something to look forward to and can reduce some of the anxiety over returning to work."

"The success and power-driven environment that we live in was shaken by the pandemic. Many have seen that they can lead fulfilling lives with less."

— Arlington psychologist
Kerry Anderson, Ph.D.

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