

Opening of The Alamo

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OPINION, PAGE 2 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 5 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Thomas, bartender at Alamo Drafthouse bar, Departures, preparing his three aviation themed signature drinks. Each Alamo Drafthouse location has a theme; this one is aviation because of the cinema's proximity to Washington National Airport.

181 Saturday Speakers On Missing Middle

PAGE 3

Adoptable Lovebug

PAGE 4

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Jeopardy Night at Lubber Run 55+ Center, Thursday, Jan. 26, 6 p.m. Center staff supplies the answers., will you know the questions? Registration # 912600-17.

"The Life of Queen Elizabeth II," how she became the monarch and her lasting effects on the world, Thursday, Jan. 26, 2 p.m., virtual. Presented by Ashley Craig, Library of Virginia. Registration # 912400-16.

China's Increasing Threat, presented by Lt. Col. Christopher Wilson, U.S. Army War College, Thursday, Jan. 26, 1:30 p.m., virtual. Registration # 912400-18.

Movie showing to recognize Black History Month, "Just Mercy" (2019) (PG-13), Friday, Jan. 27, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912804-03.

Thrifting finds and tips, share favorite spots to thrift including online sites, Friday, Jan. 27, 1 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-09.

55+ Travel group will tour the new National Museum of the U.S. Army at Ft. Belvoir, Monday, Feb. 6. Cost \$10, Arlington resident, \$13, non-resident. Registration # 902302-02.

Jeopardy, America's favorite quiz game, Monday, Feb. 6, 2 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912600-16.

Reading buddies, participants pair up with children from Lubber Run's Creative Preschoolers Program and

read stories out loud, Monday, Feb. 6, 10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Books provided by preschool teacher.

Registration # 912301-11.

Learn to cook sweet and nutritious desserts for Valentine's Day, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 11:30 a.m., virtual. Presented

by Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Food Volunteer. Registration # 912890-11.

55+ Book Club members to discuss "For Whom the Bell Tolls" by Ernest Hemingway, Tuesday, Feb. 7,

1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in. Pair up with one of Lubber Run's preschoolers to create Valentine cards, Tuesday, Feb. 7. 10 a.m., Lubber Run

55+ Center. Registration # 912310-04 and Wednesday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m., registration # 912310-05. Supplies

provided.

Exploring "New School" Chat Rooms, discover online forums and how to use them and ways to keep safety in

mind, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 912403-07.

The study of words and history of English discussion, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 10:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center.

Registration # 912402-30 or virtual, registration # 912402-31.

Tips for aging in place from minor changes to home renovations, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+

Center. Registration # 912500-03.

Daintree Rainforest's Ecosystem, a far away ecosystem, discover if the plants, animals and fungus are more

familiar than expected, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 11 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912400-21.

History roundtable members to discuss the im-

SEE FLOURISHING, PAGE 5

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One More Step in the Missing Middle Drama

More than 180 speakers on Saturday, more on Tuesday.



Signs in support of Missing Middle housing.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Christian Dorsey, Chair of the Arlington County Board, moved on to Item 33 on the Board agenda Saturday, Jan. 21. It was the next step in the Missing Middle Housing Plan, the action to request authorized advertisement of a future public hearing on the proposed changes to general land use plan as well as the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to effectively effectuate expanded options for dwelling types in R 5, R6 R 8, R10 and R20 housing districts.

In simple terms, an action required by the County before moving forward on the Missing Middle proposal.

Missing Middle Housing is defined as housing choices between single family housing and high rise apartments. The efforts to review missing middle housing and whether and how it might work for Arlington began with the announcement on Dec. 18, 2019 of a three-phase study. Since then it has involved research, community conversations and public meetings and has generated more heated public debate than Arlington has seen since the streetcar debate in 2014.

As Dorsey looked around the room at the “Yes to Diversity,” “Protect the Tree Canopy” and “No Missing Middle” signs, he commented that the use of any non-audible signs to signify approval or applause was acceptable. “But if you are displeased, I invite you to suffer in silence so we can proceed judiciously.”

It was 10:55 a.m. and the county clerk reported they had a list of 198 speakers who had requested time on the topic. Dorsey announced he planned to recess by 6 p.m. and five minutes meant five minutes so heed the 30-second audible warning chime.

The first speaker was against allowing the Board to advertise and the last speaker of the day was for moving ahead. The hours in between were filled with arguments against lack of planning, potential destruction of the

tree canopy, environmental impact and developer behavior and arguments for diversity, availability of more housing options and affordability.

Speaker number one was Elinor Schwartz, a former Arlington Planning Commission chair and 10-year member who spoke against the proposal. She pointed out Arlington is almost entirely built out so this initiative depends on teardown of housing that may be more affordable, better constructed and have more bedrooms than their replacements. “The issue is affordability and it depends on the tear downs where construction costs will swamp affordability.”

Many hours later, speaker number 181 was Julius J.D. Spain, a 13-year Penrose resident in a single family home in an African-American neighborhood. He was the last speaker before the Board cut off for the day, moving the final 18 speakers to the Tuesday night Board meeting. Spain said he supports the proposal to move forward. “We are setting an example for others to follow. We should outlaw discriminatory housing and allow us to connect. This is a step in the right direction which I fully support.”

In between speakers such as Kit Norland asked how the proposal takes into account the environment that impacts every resident at every income level. She points out the current alarm at the loss of trees on private property, adding that the proposal threatens the tree canopy and reduces the quality of life.

Natalie Roy, a Lyon Park resident for 32 years, commented we need to do more to create diversity but there are no clear goals with this plan. “We should have explored, collected more data, evaluated the impact of this sweeping proposal.” She pointed out that currently the framework plan places its hopes on developers. “I do not find that credible.” She suggested a pilot project to evaluate impact and outcomes.

Others such as Richard Engel criticized the process. “The process by which we make decisions is as important as the decision itself.”



@THEOFORARL

Staff presentation on #MissingMiddle housing plan has concluded, now on to Planning Commission presentation.

Adam Theo: Co-Founder #YIMBYsOfNOVA. Former candidate for Arlington County Board. Vice-Pres of @ballstoncivic.

“There’s a long history between reformist movements and coffee houses. We’re at @forfivecoffee in Courthouse powering up before heading over to the Bozman bldg, #MissingMiddle signs in hand! #YIMBYsOfNOVA”

He said the County Board and staff failed to do due diligence in determining the actual cost and price impact on neighborhoods. Another speaker commented that the proposal had advanced quietly and under the radar during the pandemic.

Ann Holsinger expressed her support. “I want more people to be able to enjoy what Arlington offers.” She said there are few options between their current two bedroom condo and multi-million dollar houses. “I

SEE ONE MORE STEP, PAGE 4



VIA TWITTER @ASFVIRGINIA, ARLINGTONIANS FOR OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Arlingtonians concerned about rapid growth and urbanization.

ARLINGTON CONNECTION ❖ JANUARY 25-31, 2023 ❖ 3

LOST DOG

Gordon: Adoptable ‘Lovebug’

Lost Dog brings blind Gordon from Puerto Rico to find a forever home.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

After spending the first two years of his life fighting to survive on the streets of Puerto Rico, Gordon now enjoys life’s simple pleasures. Once a struggling stray dog who suffered crisis after crisis, he now lives for bedtime – when he can catch some peaceful ‘z’s while nestled against his foster mom.

“At night, he can’t wait to curl up into bed and just sleep with me,” Lori Whitehand, Gordon’s foster mom with the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation, said. “I think that’s his favorite time of day. He gets to jump into bed and snuggle with me for seven or eight hours. He’s just the sweetest and super affectionate once he gets comfortable with you. You can wrap your arms around him and he loves it. It helps him feel safe.”

Less than a year ago, the now three-year-old Gordon was homeless and living on the premises of an electric utility company in Ponce, Puerto Rico. And he just couldn’t catch a break.

As a puppy, he was attacked by a group of fellow stray dogs – known as “satos” in Puerto Rico – leaving him with both physical and emotional scars. Then, to add insult to injury, one day, Gordon was resting beneath a truck when a driver revved up the engine and began to drive. Gordon suffered a head injury, leaving him blind.

Finally, Mildred García took Gordon in and gave the resilient pup his first home. In a letter to LDCRF, Mildred described Gordon as “playful, sweet, and happy.”

There are hundreds of thousands of stray dogs like Gordon throughout Puerto Rico. There are also many Puerto Rican rescue groups that work hard to transport many of these dogs to the mainland United States, through both official and unofficial partnerships with stateside counterparts.

Mildred Garcia had ties to a local rescue group in Puerto Rico, which has a relationship with LDCRF. This Puerto Rican organization paid for all of Gordon’s early health-care and transportation to Virginia, where



Gordon, a 55-pound, mixed breed dog, is kind and snuggly.

Gordon arrived in early 2022.

After his first loving LDCRF foster mom, Ashley Dempsey, could no longer keep her cat and Gordon – who enjoyed chasing said cat – in the same home, Gordon landed in the equally loving home of his current foster mom, Lori Whitehand. He has been living with Lori – who has fostered many dogs with LDCRF – since mid-October of 2022.

“It didn’t take Gordon long to map out my house,” Whitehand, who had never before cared for a blind dog, said. “It took a little longer for him to develop trust, so patience was really the key. It was a very hard first ten days with him being very shut down, but he has since opened up beautifully.”

Now, Gordon is happy and overall relaxed in his new foster home while waiting for his forever family.

Under different circumstances, Lori herself would keep Gordon permanently, without question. However, after losing her husband to cancer, and then losing two beloved dogs – all in 2022 – she is now hoping to enter a new phase of life.

Lori also knows that Gordon would thrive in a home with a patient owner who has another dog – a guide dog of sorts – who would navigate him through the world that he understandably finds overwhelming at times.

“My hope would be for Gordon to find a home with another mature dog – one that is calm and can interact with him,” Whitehand said. “He’s so perfect and well-behaved ...

the one thing is, he is just so timid. That’s probably one of the things that another dog would help with, and that people would need to get used to.”

Gordon would be the perfect companion for a single person or a couple with a quiet household – and with another dog, of course. Owners with a fenced-in yard would also be ideal.

“They would have to be very patient and have pretty quiet lives – and not have cats,” Lori said. “Little kids who might be loud or make sudden movements around him would not be good, either. He always knows when someone new is in the house and will hide. When the person leaves, he emerges and will do a lot of sniffing to be sure he is safe.”

While Gordon is anxious, he’s certainly not reactive. He’s also happy to be home alone when Lori is out of the house for a few hours at a time.

Overall, Gordon is a low maintenance dog who just needs love, security, and serenity.

“He’s a really easy dog,” Whitehand said. “He doesn’t get into mischief. He likes to stay in places where he’s safe and secure. After three weeks together, we were good. After three months, we have a great bond. He’s just pure joy. He’s a lovebug and there’s just something about him. If you want a companion – someone who just wants to snuggle with you and doesn’t require long daily walks – he would be perfect.”

Lori also noted that Gordon’s blindness

shouldn’t intimidate potential adopters. His lack of sight does not stop him from doing anything that “normal” dogs do.

“Being blind is not a deterrent to him living a really good life,” Whitehand said. “It is not the cause of any problems he has with me. He mapped the house quickly. He loves to go outside in my backyard and is able to navigate steep stairs – he figured it right out.”

Aside from his blindness, Gordon – a 55-pound, mixed breed dog – is very healthy, according to an ophthalmologist that Lori brought him to in the hopes that some of his vision could be restored (which, unfortunately, could not).

Saying ‘goodbye’ to Gordon will inevitably be difficult for Lori, but she said she knows an even better home is out there for him.

In the meantime, she’s enjoying her time with the dog she says is one of the kindest souls she’s ever fostered – or even encountered.

“It was a hard year, retiring from my job to care for my dying husband, and also having two sick dogs,” Whitehand said. “But then it took me a matter of hours to fall in love with Gordon. He is the sweetest, most gentle, kind dog ever. Now I count on Gordon to fill my days with love.”

To learn more about Gordon and other dogs with LDCRF, visit www.lostdogrescue.org. To contact Lori Whitehand about Gordon, email lori.whitehand@lostdogrescue.org.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

One More Step in the Missing Middle Drama

FROM PAGE 3
want more options for families like ours.”

The next speaker Kathleen Willis opposes the proposal which “tears at the fabric of our neighborhood. Over-development of our neighborhoods will not bring down prices.”

Just as the day was winding down, Hank Street, a Planning

Commissioner for 10 years, said, “The Arlington Way is all about consensus. What have you heard here today? Discordance. We’re acting as if there is a denial of the Arlington Way.”

Eighteen speakers had agreed to hold their remarks until the Tuesday Board Meeting where the debate will continue — yes or no,

why or why not.

Dorsey said it will be two months before consideration of the amendments enabling everyone to understand which of the amendments in the staff report or the Board will be considered. A final vote is expected in March.

Signs in opposition to Missing Middle housing.



Restaurant Week Is Over

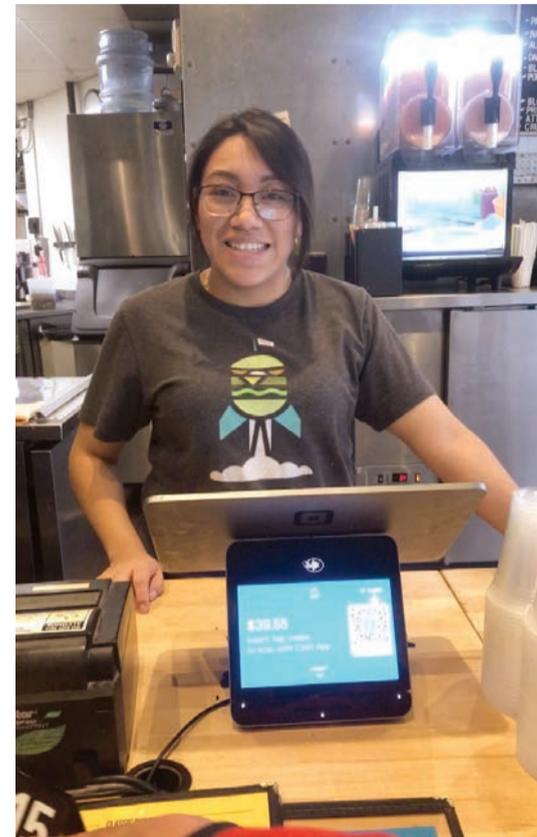
People come out to eat for the deals, and to try something new.



Big Buns “Grown in Arlington” sign.



Two burgers and fries. We would have saved about \$5 if we had come during restaurant week. The buns weren't that big, but they were brioche, the burgers scratched the itch, and the fries were 10 out of 10.



Maria Sanchez smiles as she takes an order. She said restaurant week was very busy.

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

BY EDEN BROWN
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Okay, I confess, I didn't actually make it to restaurant week. I looked at the list. I googled the participating restaurants. It made me hungry. I wanted to go to Wren, the Japanese restaurant, Spice Kraft in Clarendon, and the Big Buns in Shirlington, because I was headed to a movie there, and the pictures of burgers made me crave one. But in the end, the stars did not align. It was Sunday night. Wren was in McLean. The latter two were closed by 9 pm and that's just when I get

hungry. (I'm from New York).

So I went AFTER restaurant week to Big Buns, this time in Ballston, and despite the name, which I find short on inspiration, the spicy designer burger I chose definitely scratched my burger itch. The meat was very good. The french fries were perfect. The drinks by Maine Root were very good. The buns weren't bad either - brioche - but not that big. It's a functional, bare bones burger joint with somewhat jarring green decor, cement flooring, and bicycles hanging from the walls for no apparent reason except to make it more hip. It gets the job done, and if that sounds like faint praise, it's

not. This is a burger joint but oh so much better than most, and the helpful Maria Sanchez serving us with a nice smile made me glad I had been shown the way there by the restaurant week list.

The second pleasant surprise was Spice Kraft Indian Bistro, the Indian restaurant on the corner of Clarendon Boulevard and N. Highland Street. Again, the name baffles me, but “Taj Mahal” and “Star of India” were probably taken. And calling it a bistro turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. It has a bistro feel. Date night couples and old Indian hands were having fun in the churning, boisterous dining room.

Spice Kraft replaced another Indian restaurant in the same space,

Delhi Club, which we went to once or twice when we were desperate, back when Arlington didn't have many restaurants. This time, our hostess was clever enough to fit us in without a reservation, and she negotiated the very crowded dining room with something approaching joy. We told her we were new customers and had been to the previous place, and she said quite firmly, “Spice Kraft is so much better than that.” It was. The menu gave us a chance to construct our meal according to sauces and styles we liked, with the “protein” we liked, the spiciness we liked, and a generous dose of one of the reasons I love Indian food, Naan. The servers were adept, nimble,

and fast. It was almost like being in Delhi.

Restaurant week got me out to eat, highlighted some places I'd never heard of, and made me wish more restaurants in the area would sign up.

Spice Kraft Indian Bistro, 1135 North Highland Street, Arlington. 703-527-5666. Open lunchtime, 11:30 am-2:30 pm, evenings 5-9 pm and 9:30 pm on Friday and Saturday. Closed Mondays.

Big Buns:
4401 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22203
703-276-3032
Sunday - Thursday 11a - 9:05p;
Fri- Sat 11a - 10:05 p.

“FLOURISHING AFTER 55”

FROM PAGE 2

pact of maps in history, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 11:15 a.m., Virtual. Registration # 912402-12.
55+ Travel group will travel to Richmond to see “Storyed Strings: The Guitar in American Art” at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Thursday, Feb. 9. Cost \$37, Arlington resident, \$43, non-resident. Registration # 902302-03.
Author of “My Halls Hill Family,” Wilma Jones, to share stories and show how this once segregated community flourished, Thursday, Feb. 9, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Regis-

tration # 912899-06.
Library of Congress Reference Specialists will discuss narratives of enslaved Virginians interviewed in the 1930s, documented by the Library of Congress, Thursday, Feb. 9, 11:30 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912899-07.
The Magic of Yellowstone, the world's first national park, presented by a park ranger in real time from Yellowstone, Thursday, Feb. 9, 1:30 p.m. Presented on-screen via Zoom at the Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-19 or virtual, registration # 912400-20.

Beginner quilting class led by instructor Joni Leonardo. Learn to create images from coils of paper to decorate note paper, Thursday, Feb. 9, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912310-09.
Board game night at Lubber Run 55+ Center, Thursday, Feb. 9, 6 p.m. Card games, scrabble, rummikub and more. Registration # 912600-09.
Bunco Bunch, a fun dice game of luck, Friday, Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. No experience necessary. Registration # 912600-08.
Women and Girls in Science Day, a panel of women discuss working in the field of science, Friday, Feb. 10,

11:30 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. All are welcome; no pass required. Registration # 912400-29.
GranDay: Sweetheart Paint Along, open to all grandparents, grandchildren and grand-friends, Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., indoors at Fort CF Smith, 2411 N. 24th Street. Supplies provided; details emailed prior to event. Cost \$10. Registration # 730033-B.
55+ Travel group will visit the eight new galleries at the National Air and Space Museum in D.C., Saturday, Feb. 11. Cost \$9, Arlington resident, \$10, non-resident. Registration # 902302-04.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

-Werner Heisenberg

CALENDAR

FRIDAY/JAN. 27

Sustainable Landscape Design Part I: Putting Principles into Practice. 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Online. Sustainable landscape design builds on the unique conditions of your yard to create a healthier and more ecologically friendly outdoor space. Join Kirsten Conrad, Extension Agent for Arlington County and City of Alexandria, to learn basic design principles and techniques used to create harmonious, functional, and pleasing landscapes. These two classes build on each other and participants are encouraged to attend both of them. Part II will focus on problem solving. Attendees are invited to submit photos, some of which may be selected to discuss particular design challenges. Photos may be sent by email to vcprogram-responses@gmail.com by Monday, January 23 and must include name, contact info, photo of a problem area, and information about the problem along with your question. Those sending photos must also register separately for the class. Free. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/events/> to receive link to participate.

JAN. 30 TO FEB. 24

"Claim to Fame." At Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive, Crystal City Shops, Arlington. First Friday Opening Reception: Friday, February 3, 2023, 5-7 p.m. The Focus Gallery of Gallery Underground will present Claim to Fame, a National juried show. Juried by Felecia B McFail, an Arts Commissioner for Arlington County, Virginia and founder of From One Hand To Another -- a calligraphy business that turns the spoken word into visual art. This exhibit asked artists to submit the work they are most proud of, their personal Claim to Fame. With 50 pieces from artists across the United States, Claim to Fame showcases a variety of mediums and styles. For more information about the gallery: <https://www.arlingtonartistsalliance.org/gallery-underground>

FRIDAY/FEB. 3

Sustainable Landscape Design Part II: Landscape Problem Solving. 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Online. Sustainable landscape design builds on the unique conditions of your yard to create a healthier and more ecologically friendly outdoor space. In Part II of this two-part series, Kirsten Conrad, Extension Agent for Arlington County and City of Alexandria, will focus on solving landscape problems to help you create more harmonious, functional, and pleasing outdoor spaces. Attendees are invited to submit photos, some of which may be selected to discuss particular design challenges. Photos may be sent by email to vcprogramresponses@gmail.com by Monday, January 23 and must include name, contact info, photo of a problem area, and information about the problem along with your question. Those sending photos must also register separately for the class. Participants signing up for Part II are encouraged but not required to attend Part I. Free. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/events/> to receive a link to participate.

SATURDAY/FEB. 11

"Broadway, Spirituals and More." 7:30 p.m. At Gunston Arts Center - Theatre 1, Arlington. What can you say about a program that pairs Broadway show tunes with Spirituals and Moore? How much more is there? Featuring Aundi Marie Moore of the Metropolitan Opera of New York. She will perform selections by African American composers, songs from Broadway musicals and more. The concert will also feature violinist/Artistic Director Leo Sushansky and piano virtuoso Carlos Cesar Rodriguez.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [Connection-Newspapers.com/Calendar](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

SATURDAY/JAN. 28

Re-Opening of David M. Brown Planetarium. 11 a.m. Dedication. At 1426 N. Quincy Street, Arlington. Hands-on science activities exploring space, phases of the moon and constellations; full-dome planetarium programming; live music by Jim Thorne and the Moondiggers. Contact friendsoftheplanetarium.org.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Pet Food Bank. AWLA has established a Pet Food Bank to serve qualifying residents of Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In consideration of the effect financial obstacles have on a pet owner's ability to afford pet care, the AWLA Pet Food Bank program's goal is to keep family pets out of shelters. If you are an Arlington County or City of Falls Church resident and are in need of assistance in feeding your pet, follow this link and fill out a pre-registration form. Visit goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaY-WdZm4tPw2.

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We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784

Alexandria Gazette Packet
Publishing Since 1784

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THE CONNECTION Newspapers & Online
Mount Vernon Gazette
POTOMAC ALMANAC
CENTRE VIEW

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now ominous clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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Now What?



By **KENNETH B. LOURIE**

After nearly seven weeks of life since my brother, Richard, died, Dec. 3rd, and after two weeks of Richard-centric columns, I suppose, content-wise, I should try to write about the present and not drone on about the past. I imagine it will be easier for you all to move forward than for me.

Nevertheless, let's call this week's column transitional: one foot still stuck in brotherly loss and the other foot trying to advance the conversation somehow. It's a process (the five stages), I know, and unfortunately there's very little one can do to speed it up. Unlike a DVR, there's no fast forward button. Nor is there a stop or a pause. There's just real time, and time doesn't get any slower than the excruciating minutes and hours waiting for scan results.

And since I have an MRI, this week focused on another part of my body other than my lungs (liver and kidney) due to some troubling lab work results in my most recent monthly blood draw, focusing forward might be prudent given my lung-cancer-changed-to-thyroid-cancer predicament. Scheduled then is an early morning MRI (my wife, Dina insisted on first available) at 7:45, an hour or so away, bed to check-in. Not ideal, exactly, but In addition to its early morning appointment, a Friday scan likely means we won't get results until Mon. or even Tues. This means we'll both have the weekend to stew in our anxiety juices and push back against the familiar demons. The waiting is like having insomnia, with sleepless nights and there's very little you can do about it. Time/getting results is totally out of your control. There's no magic pill, prescription or otherwise, to stop all the conversations that you're having with yourself. The only relief/rescue is receiving results, which I'm fond of saying, with which you can live. And any guarantees went out years ago when we first learned of my diagnosis.

And I'm sure you regular readers can certainly appreciate the anxiety/stress one endures waiting for test results from your doctor. Ordinarily then, for this very reason, I try not scheduling scans on Fridays. Moreover, having been down this rather bumpy road more than a few times in the last 14 years as a cancer patient, I've been there, and done that. And though I'm not particularly agitated by the delay in getting results (the cost of doing business, you might say), still, the experience is hardly for the faint of heart. Unfortunately, this is often the process/timeline for patients having scans, biopsies, lab work, et cetera, to learn/confirm their medical hopes and/or fears.

This week's scan process, now that I think of it, will be the first time having one without my brother being the recipient of my second call (my wife, Dina being the first). And it's this exact kind of circumstance where I feel his loss most deeply. It leads me back to the discomfort I'm feeling even though I'm going through a very familiar process. This time however, I'm going through it without my wingman (think of the difficulties Tom Cruise's character, "Maverick" experienced in the original "Top Gun" after "Goose," his "intercept officer," died in a "flight training accident"). It took Tom Cruise nearly the entire movie to finally "engage". After "Goose" died, "Maverick" (Tom Cruise) just wasn't himself. I'm still myself, but I'm not quite whole. I'm not exactly fragmented. I'm more scared that I'm Humpty Dumpty and I've had a "great fall" and that I won't be able to reassemble all the pieces, specifically the ones that existed in their entirety when my brother was alive and an integral part of Team Lourie. Losing a foundational piece of your emotional wherewithal is sobering, and I don't even drink. And I'm trying very hard not to start. Fighting/surviving cancer requires all hands to the pump. Losing an irreplaceable "hand," especially during a possible crisis/transformational moment (possibly more cancer detected) doesn't fill me with confidence. It's not exactly dread that I'm feeling, but's a long way from business as usual.

And "business as usual" has kept me alive through my initial "13 months to two years" prognosis and through all the intervening years (nearly 14). My brother's support and encouragement were always the extreme positives amid a major negative (non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV). As a result, I feel a weakness in the force. And weakness in the face of cancer "ain't gonna" cut it.

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

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Opens in Arlington

Sit back, relax and enjoy your cocktail and truffle popcorn.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

It's movie weather. Good thing the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Crystal City has finally "taken flight." On opening night in October, Anthony Coco was excited to show invitees around the new cinema. "We did this deal five-and-a-half years ago," he said, referring to his company Cojeaux Entertainment, which holds the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema franchise for the D.C. region, "but the pandemic and the subsequent logistical problems with building materials meant we had to delay the opening to late October 2022."

The Crystal City location is the third Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in the Northern Virginia area: the first two are in Ashburn and Woodbridge.

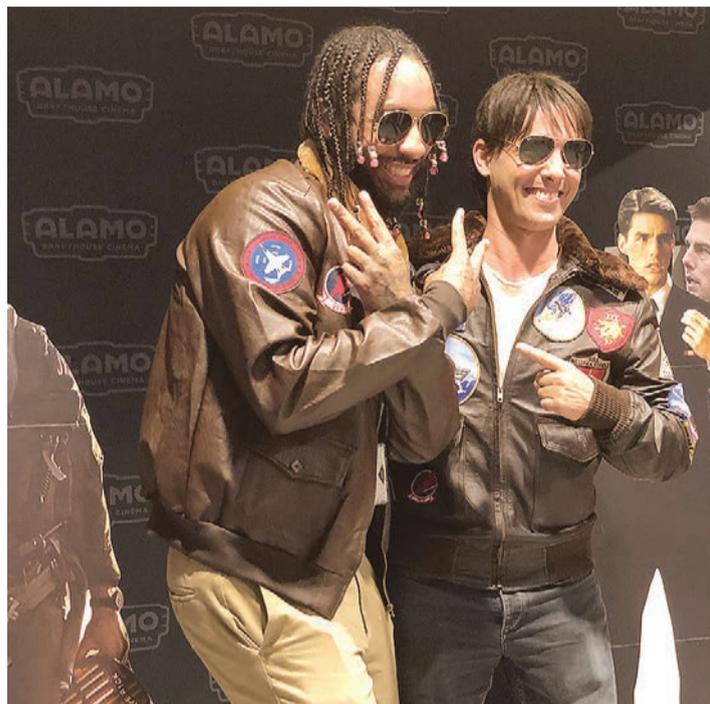
Those invited to the opening event were excited too. "I love the brand," said one journalist. "I love that the bar is aviation themed and that we are here to watch an aviation movie (the movie was *Maverick*, with Tom Cruise). I love that there are 70 or so vintage movie posters - collectors items - on the walls."

As the bar began to open, Coco noted, "The bar is open even if you aren't coming to the movie." The theater's bar, Departures, harks back to the heyday of air travel with flight related movie posters portraying some iconic moments of airplanes in the movies. Departures bar has a mix of local and national craft beers, wine, and a special drink menu of signature cocktails. It has an outdoor deck and a pretty view.

The Crystal City theater is one of the largest of the Alamo theaters with 915 seats. There are nine theaters, with the "Big Show" theater holding 237 seats with a 66 foot screen, and Dolby Atmos sound for an immersive experience. Each theater has accessible seats. Care has been taken to assure that every seat has a good view of the screen.

Coco continued, "One of the things that sets the Alamo cinema apart from other theaters is the programming mix. They do some free screenings of classic films, repertory cinema, a film club for cinéphiles, and we make custom buttons for them and we talk about the film afterwards. We do movie parties, like the *Rocky Horror Show* party. We do an Epic Sunday once a month, and we do relatively new releases that are visually interesting. We do private events once a week. Community outreach, charitable contributions, and private and corporate events set the cinema apart from others."

Coco emphasized the scratch kitchen aspect — the custom-designed kitchen includes state of the art equipment for the main menu which is 98 percent created in-house. In addition to a core menu of favorites, the kitchen also prepares meals to order by a team of cooks, and will do seasonal



"Tom Cruise" posed with invitees to the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema event, here with Geoffrey Moore of PlusUltra Entertainment. PlusUltra is self-described inclusive nerd space for the Black diaspora, collaborating with National Landing BID to put on a showing of *Wakanda Forever* at the Alamo.



Alamo Chairman Tim League celebrates the opening of the theater by showing "Tom Cruise" how to open a bottle of champagne with a sword. It is all part of League's "have fun" philosophy. His red jacket is a favorite: he had forgotten his suit jacket at an opening event years ago and dashed out to find this cast off at the last minute.

specials, specific specials for movie events, a kids menu and a vegan menu. They use real clarified butter on the popcorn. Chicken nuggets are hand-breaded, cooked there ... and addictive.

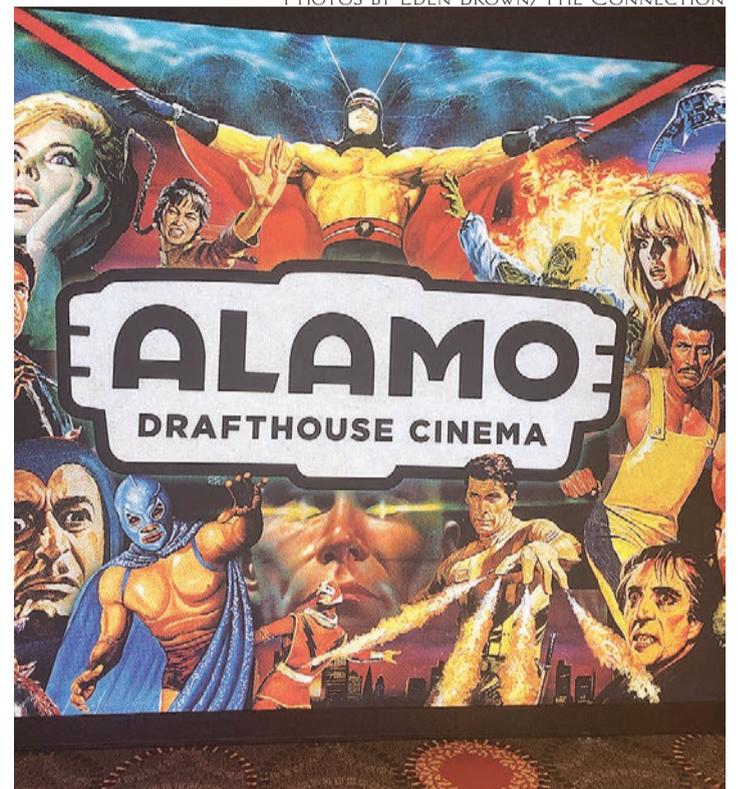
In the Big Show theater, some of the logistics of the movie experience à la Alamo include call buttons on the console in front of each seat for food ordering. There is a strict "don't talk, don't text" philosophy, so all phones have to be silenced. (Madonna was once kicked out of an Alamo theater for not adhering to that policy.) The rule reflects the Alamo's core value: enjoying the movie and having fun. You can't arrive late either.

The focus is on the film.

There were other aspects of the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema apparent at the event: guests included people like Karim Mowatt, whose film "*Lorton: Prison of Terror*," outlines Lorton's strange journey from utopian prison farm to reviled penal colony. Mowatt said he highly recommends the film *Saint Omer*, just arriving in U.S. theaters, a film by Alice Diop, the first black woman directing a feature film in France.

The crowd at the opening was young, hip, diverse, and excited that Crystal City and Arlington were joining hip towns like Austin and Denver with the advent of the Alamo.

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION



The mural on the wall of the Alamo. There are also vintage movie posters from the Alamo's collection throughout the theater.



Thomas, the bartender, preparing his three aviation-themed signature drinks for the crowd. Each Alamo Drafthouse location has a theme: this one is aviation, because of the cinema's proximity to Washington National Airport.

This was, after all, the original idea back when the Arlington County Board approved the first phases of a major redevelopment of Crystal City's central business district, to include the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, so residents would have places to shop, eat, and be entertained.

The location's development is located near the Crystal City metro station and offers garage parking directly below the theater with validation available to Alamo guests.

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, 1660 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202, <https://drafthouse.com/dc-metro-area/theater/crystal-city>