



## ‘You Got This’ Kay-Wyatt named first Black female permanent superintendent.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

It's official. Following a nationwide search, the Alexandria City School Board announced May 4 that Melanie Kay-Wyatt will serve as the new permanent superintendent for Alexandria City Public Schools effective July 1.

Kay-Wyatt, who has been serving as the interim superintendent since September of 2022, is the first Black female permanent superintendent to lead ACPS. Her contract will run through June 30, 2027.

“I would like to thank the School Board for selecting me to lead such a division of diversity and commitments,” said an emotional Kay-Wyatt following the announcement. “I look forward to continuing the work that’s ahead of us for our students, for our staff and our greater community.”

Kay-Wyatt was selected from a pool of 35 applicants in a search launched in November 2022 with consultants McPherson & Jacobson, L.L.C Executive Recruitment and Development.

Five finalists were interviewed with Kay-Wyatt emerging as the



Interim ACPS Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt gets emotional after being named the permanent Superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools May 4.

**“The work we do is hard, but when we come together, everything is possible.”**

— ACPS Interim Superintendent  
Melanie Kay-Wyatt

top candidate. She follows Gregory Hutchings Jr., who abruptly an-

nounced his resignation in June of 2022, effective Aug. 31 of that year.

“At a time of uncertainty, at a time of difficulty, at a time where we see people leaving the profession in droves, she stayed,” said chair Meagan Alderton on behalf of the School Board. “I thank her for



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Melanie Kay-Wyatt, center, is congratulated by ACPS vice chair Ja-cinta Greene and chair Meagan Alderton following her appointment as ACPS Superintendent of Schools May 4.



ACPS Interim Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt is surrounded by members of the Alexandria School Board following the May 4 announcement of Kay-Wyatt as the permanent superintendent. She becomes the city's first Black female permanent superintendent.

stepping up to do this job. As we see superintendents running for the hills, she did not run. Thank you for deciding to dedicate yourself to the city of Alexandria, to the students of Alexandria. We believe in you. You got this.”

Kay-Wyatt was ACPS chief of human resources before her appointment as interim superintendent in August 2022; previously, she had served as acting chief of human resources and executive director of human resources. She joined the school division in July 2021.

Prior to ACPS, Kay-Wyatt worked in Human Resources at Spotsylvania Public Schools, served as a principal and assistant principal at Fredericksburg City Public Schools, and was a special education teacher at both Culpeper County Schools and Fredericksburg City Public Schools. She has also served as an executive coach and educational consultant, as well as a faculty member at the College of William and Mary and Shenandoah University.

Under Kay-Wyatt's leadership, the ACPS Department of Human Resources significantly increased recruitment and hiring, strengthened partnerships with universities, improved staff onboarding and elevated employee wellness and recognition. She was instrumental in designing and leading the staff vaccination and testing requirement process in Fall 2021 and ensuring that all schools and offices remained open throughout the 2021-22 school year with innovative strategies to identify and reassign staff as needed during critical staff shortages.

Kay-Wyatt has held various leadership positions in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, including as president and chair of the Board of Directors, and was involved in educational policy at the state and federal levels as part of the ASCD legislative committee. She holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Mary Washing-

SEE 'YOU GOT THIS', PAGE 5

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## Scholarship Fund of Alexandria Raises \$600K

2023 Annual Spring Benefit Gala and Auction was April 22.

Five hundred attendees gathered to raise money for need-based scholarships for students of Alexandria City High School. The black-tie affair featured a cocktail hour, elegant dinner, and dancing. Silent and live auctions featured many goods, services, and restaurants, which spurred lively bidding. A Paddle Raise led by former T. C. Williams principal John Porter garnered much excitement and thousands of dollars in donations.

Attendees were enthralled by moving speeches by two scholarship recipients of the ACHS Class of 2023:

Reema Gaal has attended Alexandria schools her entire educational life. She is the daughter of Somali immigrants and will graduate having completed 13 Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses. Her three older sisters are also Scholarship Fund of Alexandria scholarship recipients. She will attend the University of Virginia this fall to study Global Relations.

Diyana Mohammad's family fled Afghanistan and settled in Iran where Diyana was born and lived for the first 11 years of her life. As hardships mounted in Iran, Diyana and her mother and sisters escaped to Turkey. Just a few years ago the family immigrated to the United States. Diyana delivered her speech in English, her fourth language. She will attend Marymount University to study interior design.

Reema and Diyana both mentioned that they look forward to returning to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria as supporters and helping other students achieve their goals by establishing a life-changing scholarship. Both students received standing ovations following their poignant remarks.

The Gala also honored Kitty Porterfield, who was instrumental in helping to found the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria (SFA) in 1985. Along with Kitty, many members of the community came together to start the Fund as a source of college advising and scholarships for Alexandria's public high school students. Kitty served as the SFA's first executive director.

Alexandria Toyota donated a 2023 RAV-4 as a raffle prize to benefit the SFA. The winning ticket was drawn by Pete Balas, executive principal of Alexandria City High School. Mark Hinkle, a 1977 graduate of T.C. Williams High School was the raffle winner.

Kevin Jahns, Chair of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, said,



Featured student speakers and SFA recipients, L. Reema Gaal and R. Diyana Mohammad.



Scholarship Fund of Alexandria Gala attendees and Alexandria community honor Kitty Porterfield, here with her son Michael and daughter Deborah.

arship Fund of Alexandria's Board of Trustees said, "We are grateful for our volunteers and staff who put together a beautiful evening where once again our generous community showed incredible support of the SFA and the work being done for these students".

Since 1986 the SFA has raised and allocated over \$17.5 million in scholarships.

209 members of the ACHS graduating class of 2023 will receive scholarships from the SFA.

For information about volunteering or donating to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, contact Executive Director, Jasmine Milone at 703-824-6730; [jasmine.milone@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:jasmine.milone@acps.k12.va.us)



Titans 4 Scholars at the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria 2023 Gala.



The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria 2023 Gala cocktail reception.

# Senior Health and Fitness Fair

BY MARGARET SHETLER  
MANAGER OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**M**ental health is of crucial importance in every life stage, but particularly for older adults. Approximately 20-22% older adults may meet the criteria for some form of mental disorder (National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging), and social isolation contributes to and exacerbates negative impacts. According to the CDC, nearly one-fourth of older adults 65+ are socially isolated. Mental health and physical health are interconnected, and studies show that loneliness and social isolation can contribute to risks for dementia, heart disease, and stroke.

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness month in May, Alexandria's Successful Aging Committee is organizing the annual Senior Health and Fitness Fair with a focus on mental health to bring important information and resources to Alexandria's older adults.

Join us at the Senior Health and Fitness Fair on May 18th at 10 am at the Lee Center,

1108 Jefferson Street. The event will kick off with a presentation from Rhonda L. Rivera Williams, LCSW with the Department of Community and Human Services, titled "Springing Forward - With Emotional and Physical Well Being."

The fair will also feature a healthy cooking demonstration, blood pressure and glaucoma screenings, and meditation and exercises for older adults.

The Alexandria Health Department will be hosting a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for those looking to get the bivalent booster (for updated guidance, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/Vaccines](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Vaccines)).

Participating partners include the city's Recreation Department, Alexandria Health Department, Goodwin Living's "The View," the Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Woodbine Rehab & Healthcare Community, and the Virginia Hospital Center.

The Senior Health and Fitness Fair is free and open to the public. Please RSVP online at [seniorservicesalex.org](http://seniorservicesalex.org) or call (703) 836 4414 ext. 110.

The Successful Aging Committee is made



up of DCHS/ Aging and Adult Services; Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities; Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority; Catholic Charities; and Senior Services of Al-

exandria. The committee organizes annual events such as the Senior Health and Fitness Fair, Dance for All Ages, Robust Walkathon, and more!

**Thursday, May 18, 10 a.m.**  
**Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson Street**

## Expect the Unexpected — When Life Throws You a Curveball

BY ELIZABETH CREGO  
STAFF ATTORNEY,  
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

**I**n baseball and in life, there are pitches, or events, that we expect and planned on, and then there are the curveballs that we don't expect. Curveballs in life can be many things – the death or incapacity of a loved one, an accident, a medical diagnosis. There can be good events too, like a marriage or loved one moving closer. They can happen at any time in our lives, but the chances increase as we advance in age.

### SENIOR LAW DAY

To learn what you need to know to plan for the unexpected, please come to this year's Senior Law Day for the City of Alexandria on Saturday, June 3, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church on King Street.

The event is presented by Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association.

Our theme this year is "Expect the Unexpected – When Life Throws You a Curveball."

We will have four panel discussions on late marriage and divorce, estate planning, adult children, and housing. We will discuss the basic estate planning documents you should have in place to cover both the ex-

**Saturday, June 3, 2023**  
**8:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

**First Baptist Church, 2932 King St,  
Alexandria, VA 22302**

pected and unexpected, including Advance Medical Directives, General Powers of Attorney, and Last Wills and Testaments. For those of you marrying or divorcing later in life, we will discuss the financial tools you need and considerations for protecting yourselves and those you love.

Our panelists will also discuss adult chil-

dren with disabilities, adult children who won't launch, and adult children who become your caregivers.

Finally, the panel covering housing options will address different types of housing options for those who need extra care, whether you can age in place or need to leave home, and how to plan financially and legally for these options.

There will also be materials available from several organizations in Alexandria.

Senior Law Day is free and open to the public.

To register, visit <https://seniorservicesalex.org> or call 703.836.4414 ext. 110. We hope you will join us.

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### FAMILIES SOUGHT TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Families and individuals from the Washington, D.C.-metro region are being sought to become hosts for international students for 12 weeks, a semester, or an academic year. Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures, including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and more. AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange

for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world.

Those interested in hosting an AFS Exchange Student are encouraged to contact 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit [www.afsusa.org](http://www.afsusa.org) for more information. You can also get involved as an AFS-USA Volunteer. Visit [www.afsusa.org/volunteer](http://www.afsusa.org/volunteer) to get started or learn more about opportunities to make a difference.

<cal1>Volunteers Wanted  
<cal2>Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager

skills would be the ideal candidate. [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org)  
ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE>  
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](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).  
Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com).  
STEM Professionals Needed. Help as-

ist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).  
ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Sheriff Sean Casey, Jeremy Lenzner, President of the Alexandria Retired Police, Fire and Sheriff Association, and Police Chief Don Hayes salute after placing a wreath at the Fallen Officers Memorial May 9 at Waterfront Park.

# Never Forget

Wreath laying honors fallen officers.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A**tribute to Alexandria's fallen law enforcement officers was held May 9 at Waterfront Park as the region prepares for National Police Week events May 15-21.

Sheriff Sean Casey and Police Chief Don Hayes were joined by Jeremy Lenzner, President of the Alexandria Retired Police, Fire and Sheriff Association in placing a wreath at the Fallen Officers Memorial located within the park.

The memorial is inscribed with 16 names, dating back to Constable Elijah Chenault, who was the first reported officer killed in the city in 1823.

City Manager Jim Parajon attended the ceremony along with representatives from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Au-

thority Police and US Park Police in honor of the city's fallen police officers and sheriff's deputies.

Sponsored by the Alexandria Retired Police, Fire and Sheriff Association, the ceremony was followed by a memorial service at First Assembly of God Church on West Braddock Road.

The previous day, a wreath laying ceremony was held at police headquarters in remembrance of the city's 18 slain police officers.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as Police Week. Currently, tens of thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world converge on Washington, DC to participate in a series of events to honor those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. [www.policeweek.org](http://www.policeweek.org)

# 'You Got This'

FROM PAGE 1

ton College, a master's degree in education from Old Dominion University, a master of education degree in educational leadership from University of Mary Washington and a doctorate in educational leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. Among her awards and recognitions are the Jaycees Educator of the Year and the James Monroe High School Teacher of the Year.

ACPS serves more than 15,700 students who hail from more than 119 countries and speak 124 languages. ACPS has 18 schools, including two middle schools, two K-8 schools, one pre-K school and Alexandria City High School.

"We're in a city with so much history so to be sitting in this role before my colleagues, before students who look at me, it is truly an honor to serve as first black woman superintendent for Alexandria City Schools," Kay-Wyatt said. "You know you have my full commitment and all I can say is that I'm very proud and I'm honored."

The terms of Kay-Wyatt's four-year contract as ACPS superintendent include an annual salary of \$265,000.

"The work we do is hard, but what I do know is that when we come together, everything is possible," Kay-Wyatt said. "With your impact and your passion there are limitless possibilities ahead for all of us and especially for our students."

## 3rd Annual Art Festival

# ALEXANDRIA OLD TOWN

An Outdoor Springtime Art Festival on John Carlyle Square

**MAY 20-21**  
Saturday 10am-5pm  
Sunday 10am-5pm

**300 JOHN CARLYLE ST.**  
Alexandria, VA

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## How We Can Do More for ALICE in Alexandria

BY ROSIE ALLEN-HERRING  
PRESIDENT AND CEO, UNITED WAY  
OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

**A** new United Way of the National Capital Area (United Way NCA) report on Alexandria sheds light on the financial hardship of those who are working yet cannot afford the basics in the communities where they live. Of the 72,024 households in Alexandria, 27% had income below the ALICE Threshold of Financial Survival in 2021.

ALICE, a United Way NCA acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, represents the number of individuals and families working but unable to afford basic necessities, such as food, health-care, childcare, transportation expenses and more.

While the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) is updated yearly, the Census Bureau determines poverty status using Thresholds dating back to 1963. The antiquated FPL, the fact that ALICE households may not qualify for federal benefits or safety nets, and the increased cost of living over time, all contribute to the growing number of ALICE households.

To illustrate, a family of four with two parents working full time in two of the most common occupations (retail salesperson and cashier) earning a combined \$58,500 annually could not afford Alexandria's Household Survival Budget of \$107,544 in 2021, even with the \$20,800 in assistance through



the expanded Child Tax Credit, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, and the Economic Impact Payments.

ALICE is our district's childcare workers, home health aides and cashiers – those with little or no savings and one emergency from poverty.

The gap between wages and the cost of living is a structural economic problem that has worsened since the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, Wednesday, May 17, United Way NCA will host its annual Do More 24 For ALICE.

Do More 24 is a social movement that convenes nonprofits, private companies, and people of all ages committed to making a

difference in their community. This year during this 24-hour online day of giving, we ask our friends and neighbors to imagine for a moment what life would be like if you were unsure of how you would pay your rent, mortgage, or utility bills next month.

As the region's convener, collaborator, and catalyst, United Way NCA's goal is to create a more equitable society where everyone in our community has fair and equal access to health, education, and economic opportunity. We cannot do this work alone, so we're calling on the community to Do More for ALICE. We know that collectively we can make great strides to reduce ALICE households in our region. When none are ignored, all will thrive. For more information, please visit <http://domore24.org/uwnca>.

## Virginia Makes Strides Against Human Trafficking

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

**Content Warning:** Discussion of human trafficking and sexual exploitation throughout.

**H**uman trafficking is the business of stealing freedom for profit. Victims of trafficking are deprived of their basic human rights, dehumanized, brutalized, and objectified. Traffickers coerce their victims for labor or sex through force, fraud, and deception. The human trafficking business is estimated to generate \$100 billion annually, more than Apple, Starbucks, Microsoft, and Nike combined. Sex trafficking is a multifaceted problem involving law enforcement, healthcare providers, social workers, legislators, and the education system.

The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 49.6 million victims of human trafficking globally. This is a massive problem and unfortunately, we have found that there are countless victims, some only children, living in these horrific situations right here in our own country and even in our own communities. Victims of sex trafficking are often targeted because traffickers have identified them as vulnerable and highly susceptible to their sophisticated ploys. Victims often do not realize they are being trafficked because they form an emotional and psychological bond with their trafficker.

As a member of the Virginia Crime Commission from 2017 to 2022, I had the opportunity to

study firsthand the chaos and damage human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, has had on our Commonwealth. In 2021, the Human Trafficking Hotline reported 140 human trafficking cases in Virginia, 106 of which were sex trafficking cases.

To combat sex trafficking, a proactive and collaborative approach is needed to address all areas of this problem. This includes addressing preventative efforts such as identifying and providing intervention services to at-risk individuals as well as reducing recruitment and demand for prostitution services. Both of these preventative efforts can be accomplished through increasing awareness, education, and training. Furthermore, it is essential to properly identify, recover and treat victims so that they are able to assimilate back into society and live free, happy, and healthy lives.

While various localities, including Fairfax County, in Virginia have taken steps to combat sex trafficking in recent years, it was clear that a centralized point of contact at the state level or a statewide response plan was in dire need.

At the Crime Commission's recommendation, in 2019, I took the lead in creating a Sex Trafficking Response Coordinator within the Department of Criminal Justice Services through the passage of my bill HB 2576. Virginia was one of the first three states in the nation to create this position, I am proud



Krizek

to say. The coordinator organizes efforts, conversations, and training among all stakeholders and identifies gaps in service areas, treatment providers, and resources for victims to allow localities and organizations to establish comprehensive victim services across Virginia.

Also, this person serves as a liaison for governmental agencies, community members, and private organizations to identify victims of sex trafficking. Additionally, she tracks and monitors trends for prosecuting sex trafficking. Among other duties, the coordinator is required to produce a report summarizing relevant prior-year activities and making recommendations for addressing human trafficking in the Commonwealth, as needed, to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia annually. There are many organizations throughout the Commonwealth working to combat sex trafficking and this coordinator was a crucial first step Virginia needed to align efforts and create a statewide response plan that will save countless lives, many of them just young teenagers. And, indeed, with the leadership of the sex trafficking response coordinator, Virginia has made great strides in combating human trafficking since 2019. Next week's column will detail Virginia's success to date.

### 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.

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Aerial view of the RFP site.

## RFP for Sale, Redevelopment of 2 King Street

On Monday, May 1, 2023, the City of Alexandria issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the sale and redevelopment of a portion of City-owned surplus property located at 2 King Street (Parcel ID# 075.01-05-04).

This City-owned property is an 1,825 square foot area located at the foot of King Street directly adjacent to the City's Waterfront Park, shops and restaurants and is improved with eight asphalt-paved parking spaces.

The property is zoned WPR, Waterfront Park and Recreation and is located within the Old and Historic Alexandria District.

The City is seeking firms that have a proven combi-

nation of experience, financial capacity and expertise in the design, development and construction of infill developments including public-private partnerships, commercial development involving both office and retail development and development in historic districts to purchase and redevelop the subject property according to the provisions, terms and conditions determined by the City.

This RFP was issued on Monday, May 1, 2023, for a period of 90 days and will close on August 1, 2023. If you have any questions regarding the RFP please contact Alfred Coleman, Deputy Director of General Services at (571) 221-8514 or at [alfred.coleman@alexandriava.gov](mailto:alfred.coleman@alexandriava.gov).

### BRIEFS

## Audry Davis to Lead African American History Division

Audrey P. Davis is the new Director of the African American History division of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA). Davis joined the City in 1993, beginning as a part-time curator and most recently serving as the Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum (ABHM) located at 902 Wythe Street.

Since 1982, the role of the Office of Historic Alexandria has expanded beyond the walls of its museums to historic interpretation of the whole City. The African American History division is a part of a larger reorganization of OHA, which will prioritize resident outreach, improve visitor experience, and regularly engage residents in City initiatives. This new division will ensure the continued inclusion of Black History in City museums and public programming, as well as advancing the City's goal of building a welcoming community through equity and inclusion.

Davis has served as a public steward for the City's African American history nationwide and overseas. In 2021, the ABHM was awarded a prestigious grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) which is aiding in the digitization of the City's Moss Kendrix Collection. Recently, her work with the Freedom House Museum located at 1315 Duke Street was profiled in Preservation Magazine's Winter 2023 issue.

For more information, visit the Office of Historic Alexandria. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Historic>

## Budget Adopted

On Wednesday, May 3, the Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted a Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 General Fund Operating Budget of \$884.3 million, which represents a 5% increase from the FY 2023 budget. The FY24 budget was adopted without an increase in the real estate tax rate for City of Alexandria residents and businesses for the 7th straight year; fully supports Alexandria City Public Schools' (ACPS) operating budget; and funds two collective bargaining agreements for the Alexandria Fire Department and Alexandria Police Department.

The FY 2024 budget maintains the real estate tax rate of \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value. It also includes \$258.7 million in operating funds for ACPS — a \$9.9 million (or 4.0%) increase over FY 2023 funding. In addition, the FY 2024 budget contains significant capital investments for stormwater management infrastructure; educational facilities; and maintenance of existing City assets and facilities, totaling \$2.4 billion to be invested over 10 years in Alexandria's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

## Preservation Month in Historic Alexandria

Explore Alexandria for Preservation Month. During May, communities across the country celebrate local historic preservation. The City of Alexandria has been a leader in the field of historic preservation, from the creation of the country's third oldest historic district in 1946 to the start of Alexandria Archaeology in 1961.

SEE BRIEFS, PAGE 15

## CIVIL WAR

BOOKS, RELICS & MEMORABILIA SHOW

Saturday, May 20, 10:00 – 5:00

Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, Rt. 50, Fairfax, VA

Admission, \$5 Per Person

Vendors Welcome

703-389-1505 / 703-785-5294

## Something Country



Rockin' country that gets you dancin'

June 9th at the Electric Palm Restaurant

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# Remembering the Bravery of Nurses



Anna Lauks in WW1 nursing uniform. Anna Lauks is the paternal grandmother to Susan Laume.

## Lithuanian Teen Takes On WWI Nursing Role

Anna Lauks was born in a country with a long history of foreign occupations - Lithuania. Lauks was fourteen years old when Germans occupied her village, Marjanpol, near Vilnius in 1916, overtaking Russia's prior occupation. Food shortages that hit Germany from mid-1916 as a result of WWI actions, led to a humanitarian crisis within Lithuania, with increasing confiscations of harvests, food rationing and restrictions on free trade. One day, while out food shopping, Anna and her mother were arrested and held for nine months in a German prison. A short time after her release, still a teenager, she made her way to France to serve as a nurse. She was one of many volunteers with little or no medical training.

After the war, times were still difficult. She emigrated to America in 1920 with her mother and four siblings aboard the passenger ship Philadelphia, from Southampton, arriving in Philadelphia at the age of 18. She would meet and marry another Lithuanian emigrant in Philadelphia after the war. The man she married had escaped occupation and service in the Russian army, joining the U.S. Army as a path to citizenship. He served at and survived the battle at Meuse-Argonne. After marriage, the couple became farmers in a rural area outside the city and serviced an egg route in Philadelphia for many years, raising two children. Lauks did not continue her nursing career. She was one of many young women who heard the call for nurses and did her part to help.

— SUSAN LAUME

## Today's nursing shortages echo World War I.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE GAZETTE

This week the United States recognizes National Nurses Week (May 6-12), followed closely by Mother's Day (May 14). Perhaps it's no coincidence that the two periods of recognition are close, given the predominance of women in the nursing profession. Culturally, nursing has largely been considered a women's field, recognizing women's traditional role as caregivers. The U.S. has approximately 4.2 million certified registered nurses, 91 percent of whom are female. (2022 data). Although that is a large certified number, many have left the field following COVID-19's immense challenges for healthcare workers. As a result, Virginia and the U.S. is experiencing a significant nursing shortage. Today's understaffing and challenges for women in nursing prompted a look back at past challenges in the nursing profession to further appreciate all that American nurses have accomplished.

In 1914 and 1915, before the U.S. entered World War I, Americans were going to the Western Front to serve as soldiers, pilots, and ambulance drivers. As soon as fighting started, Red Cross doctors and nurses arrived. The American Red Cross had 8,000 nurses in its reserves at the time. "From 1914-1916 American civilian nurses volunteered with the American Ambulance Service in Paris and as nurses at a French Army field hospital in Belgium. American nurses also sailed to France with the American Red Cross 'Mercury Ship' expedition in 1915."

In contrast, although the Army Nurse Corps was seventeen years old when the U.S. entered World War I on April 16, 1917, the Corps was small at that point. They had only 403 nurses on active duty and 170 reserve nurses. Mobilizing quickly, six months after the U.S. entered World War I, nearly 1,100 Army nurses were serving overseas in nine base hospitals. One year later 2,000 Regular Army and 10,186 Reserve nurses were on active duty serving at 198 stations worldwide. By the end of the war the ranks of the Army Nurse Corps were at 21,480, with over 10,000 having served overseas. [Source: Army Nursing Corp]

The concept of military nursing was new at this point in history, and the U.S. was ahead of other countries at the time. The French were described as having "an almost medieval mindset" toward battlefield medicine; housing their wounded in cellars, barns, and railway cars. In prior years, to separate church and state, nuns in France were banned from serving in Army hospitals although they had been traditional caregivers and healers. Some worked outside government to open independent hospitals where they could. The Germans operated male-only hospitals in



WWI hôpital ward, LeHavre region, December, 1914.



Poster used in nurse recruitment.

their deep, multilayered trenches; even doing surgeries in some. The British had founded the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) in 1902. Similar to the American Army Nurse Corps, they had just under 300 trained nurses on their books when war broke out in 1914. At the start of the war, they were reluctant to take female nurses, with the belief that women could not cope in field or base hospitals. With an alarming number of casualties mounting, the British military changed their thinking, and by 1918 QAIMNS had over 10,000 trained nurses on its books. A large number of those British nurses were part of the Voluntary Aid

## Nurses Week Locally at Inova

Send a Message or Read Messages for Nurses Week

Inova says: "Nobody works harder or cares more for patients than our Inova nurses. We're so very grateful for their service and dedication, so please help us say thanks.

If you would like to send your message of gratitude to the nurses who have cared for you or anyone you love, click here: <https://foundation.inova.org/nurses-week/>

Detachment (VAD). Many volunteer nurses from all countries had previously been midwives or nurses in civilian settings; some had no experience beyond life as a domestic servant. Such experience did little to prepare them for the wounds and suffering inflicted on soldiers on the Western Front.

When World War I started in Europe, the nursing corps in the U.S. already had benefited from the establishment of several university nursing programs in the late 1800s following the Civil War. The first founded on the nursing principles of Florence Nightingale, was the Bellevue Hospital School of Nursing in New York City in 1873. Ten years later came the Medical University of South Carolina College of Nursing; and a few years later, the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. These early schools were hospital based programs. In 1909, the University of Minnesota offered the first university-based nursing

program. It offered a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and graduated the first bachelor's-degree educated nurse. By 1916, 13 American universities and three colleges had developed bachelor's nursing degree programs. Before the founding of these nursing schools, little formal education was available to train nursing students. Education was primarily based on an apprenticeship with a senior nurse who taught bedside care within a hospital or clinic setting.

From 1917 to 1918, the Army Nurse Corps sent 5,350 American nurses overseas to serve in France as part of the American Expeditionary Force. All of them were volunteers. Only unmarried women between the ages of 25 to 35 were accepted for foreign duty. They were stationed at camp hospitals and Casualty Clearing Stations near the front, in harsh conditions. Amputations, gas gangrene, shell shock, disfigurements, poisonous gas, and Spanish flu were common among their patients. An estimated 1,500 nurses from several countries died during the war from disease, accidents, and enemy action. Through their bravery working near the front, and nurses' care and attention in using antiseptic for wounds, the survival rate of wounded soldiers in the war was greatly increased.

The Army Nurse Corp summarized, "The U.S. nurses who served in World War I proved they could save lives and make a difference in patient care close to the battlefield. They provided skilled nursing care and improved patients' morbidity and mortality. Women could not only handle adverse conditions but they were necessary, and the Army recognized that with medals and rank."



Cora Elm

## Indigenous Nurses Serve in WWI

From the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian: In spite of racial barriers, 14 Indigenous nurses served in the Nurse Corps in the Army Medical Department during World War I.

Cora Elm, a member of the Oneida Nation, reached France on Christmas Day 1917.

She and her fellow nurses were assigned to a base hospital in Nantes in April 1918, after being split up to work at three three smaller hospitals until it opened.

The base unit admitted 9,100 patients in nine months and had a death rate of just over one percent. Before her foreign service, she had participated in a demonstration for women's suffrage at the White House. After the war, she was a nursing ward supervisor at Fort Bayard in New Mexico, and at Wood Veterans Hospital in Milwaukee

Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture was born on the Six Nations Reserve in Canada in 1891. She moved to the U.S. to pursue nursing training since few women, or indigenous people, were allowed to attend high school in Canada. Before leaving for her service at Buffalo Base Hospital 23 in Vittel, France where she was responsible for treating soldiers who were shot or gassed, she was given the special Mohawk burial clothing from her culture, in case she died in the war. She survived and returned to the Six Nations Reserve in Canada, where she continued to work as a nurse and a midwife at a hospital in her community.

## Girl Scouts Take on Ivy Removal to Save Trees

By GLENDA C. BOOTH  
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

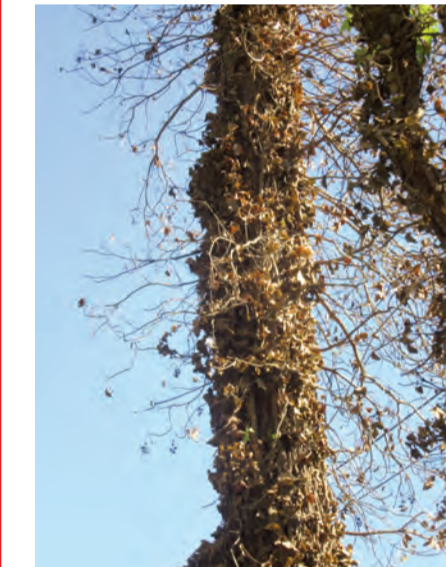
On May 7, seven Girl Scouts from Troop 791 working on their silver award tackled the invasive English ivy climbing up trees on National Park Service GW Memorial Parkway property near Mount Vernon Estate. The troop is based at the Mount Vernon-area Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Seventh graders, each girl must earn 50 hours of community service.

Melanie Welles Creamer, Mount Vernon's Senior Manager of Horticulture, welcomed their help to save some trees. Jim Gearing, a Friends of Dyke Marsh board member, conducted a training and showed the group how to use clippers,

loppers and handsaws. English ivy is an aggressive, non-native plant with aerial rootlets that attach to the objects it climbs. When it covers a tree's bark, this perennial vine blocks the sunlight the tree needs for photosynthesis and its rootlets can burrow under the bark, which encourages decay and disease.

Some trees can get weighed down with the vines and be more easily blown down during rain, snow and ice storms. When English ivy carpets the ground, it smothers and outcompetes more valuable native plants and reduces biodiversity. When it grows up walls, it can weaken masonry.

Visit <https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/hehe.htm>.



The goal, dead ivy, saving trees.



Rae Timmons worked on another tree.



Sophie Lankin and Clara Hyatt paired up to remove ivy from a tree.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



# Kluge Takes Helm of LSO

## Former ASO director to lead Loudoun Symphony.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**K**im Allen Kluge, a Living Legend of Alexandria and former longtime conductor of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, has been named the new Music Director of the Loudoun Symphony Orchestra.

The move signals a return to Northern Virginia for Kluge, who relocated to California with his family following his 2016 retirement from the ASO to work on projects in the film industry.

"It's so wonderful to be back on the East Coast amongst family and friends," said Kluge.

"My wife and composing partner Kathryn and I continue to work with filmmakers who share our passion for creating positive change in the world — but now from our East Coast studio."

Kluge, who held the baton for the ASO for 28 years, was selected by the Loudoun Symphony Association following an extensive search from more than 100 applicants. Four conductor finalists were selected with each preparing a concert for the Loudoun Symphony Orchestra's 2022-2023 season.



Former Alexandria Symphony Orchestra conductor and renowned music composer Kim Allen Kluge, has been named the new Music Director of the Loudoun Symphony Orchestra.

"Kim brings a wealth of knowledge and experience," said LSO board president Matt Banner. "His passion for music and community

**"It's so wonderful to be back on the East Coast amongst family and friends."**

— Maestro Kim Allen Kluge

were evident in his finalist concert. Kim's strong desire to collaborate makes for a bright future for the Loudoun Symphony and our entire community."

During Kluge's time with the ASO, he became a leader in the Washington Inter-Arts Movement to create many social justice arts

programs and projects including the first El Sistema program in the Washington, DC region as well as the Music Diaries Project, a grassroots inter-arts approach designed to bring greater diversity and inclusiveness to performing arts organizations.

Kluge and his wife Kathryn created the score for Martin Scorsese's movie "Silence," and have aligned themselves with filmmakers who share their passion for using art to build bridges of understanding between people.

"The LSO musicians that I had the honor to conduct on my 'American Stories' concert gave an absolutely transcendent world-class performance and are passionate

about making a difference in their community," Kluge said. "They share my mission and belief that music has the power to inspire, transcend, unite communities, and bring positive change to the world. Together we are planning programs and festivals that we hope will unleash the full potential and creativity of the entire region, to bring people together and bring about positive change."

Now in its 32nd season, the Loudoun Symphony Orchestra performs a full season of seven in-person concerts as well as virtual performances. The educational outreach program includes the Loudoun Symphony Youth Orchestra program, which provides performance opportunities for talented students through four

ensembles and intensive training through a week-long Summer Orchestral Institute.

Said Kluge, "I've already had so many amazing experiences as Music Director/Conductor of the Loudoun Symphony Association, which is going through a huge growth spurt — adding another orchestra this year to its existing four orchestras."

A valedictorian of Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Kluge pursued doctorates in piano and conducting from the University of Maryland and participated in the Tanglewood Music Center Conducting Program. In 2006, he received the Wammie Award for Best Conductor, given by the Washington Area Music Awards, and in 2015, the Washington Post called Kluge "a passionate advocate for music education."

"Alexandria was my 'first baby' and I miss it so much," said Kluge, who was still a young doctoral student when he was selected to lead what was then an amateur orchestra performing in the old T.C. Williams High School auditorium. In his second year, he professionalized the ASO and over the years attracted guest artists such as Branford Marsalis, Sarah Chang and Midori.

"I'm excited to be back in the DC area to work with my long-standing partners and friends throughout the region," Kluge added. "The LSO will be announcing our season soon—it would be so wonderful to see my Alexandria friends at the concerts and festivals."

[www.loudounsymphony.org](http://www.loudounsymphony.org)

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).

Volunteer Drivers Needed. Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to [cancer.org/drive](http://cancer.org/drive).

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign

up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit [www.spaceofherown.org](http://www.spaceofherown.org) and [www.spaceofhisown.org](http://www.spaceofhisown.org). For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at [sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov](mailto:sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov) or phone at 703-746-4687.

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale,

[brianmorreale@gmail.com](mailto:brianmorreale@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at [suzjdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:suzjdoyle@gmail.com) or 571-403-0673.

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson's patients and caregivers are welcome.

The Caregiver Support Group is facilitated by the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month

at the Adult Day Services Center, 1108 Jefferson St., 4-5:30 p.m. Participants are full- or part-time caregivers providing care locally or long distance to a family member or friend. Participants share their experiences, provide support for each other and receive resources to assist them with caregiving. The next Caregiver Support Group meeting is June 7. For more information or to register, contact Jennifer Sarisky at 703-746-9999 or email [DAAS@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DAAS@alexandriava.gov). FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.

❖ Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.  
❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center,

614 Four Mile Road. Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or [krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us) for more.

Divorce Workshop for Women. Second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King St. The workshops are designed to provide education on the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce in a logical, yet compassionate way. The workshop fee is \$25. Visit [www.novasecondsaturday.com](http://www.novasecondsaturday.com) for more.

### ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 12



**WABA's E-bike Showcase**

Come see the latest in folding, cargo and commuting e-bikes and more. We have a wide variety of models to select from so you can find what works best for your needs! Plus learn about some great trails around town while we show off these awesome bikes too!

**Saturday May 20**  
10am - 1pm

**Jones Point Park**  
1 Jones Point Dr.  
Alexandria, VA  
(under the Wilson Bridge)

**Participants**

- Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC)
- Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)
- Pedego
- BicycleSpace
- WMATA
- Lime
- Veo
- Strictly E-bikes
- YIMBY of NOVA
- Trek
- Conte's Bikes
- Capital Bikeshare

**Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

Curious about e-bikes? Come test ride a variety of e-bikes on May 20 at Jones Point Park. The E-Bike Showcase runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



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# ACHS 'Sister Act'

BY JULIAH PERDUE  
DUKE ELLINGTON  
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

The 1970s disco scene and inside the walls of a convent full of nuns are entirely different settings. So, what do you get when you combine two opposite worlds? Alexandria City High School answered this question with their musical production of Sister Act.

Sister Act the Musical is based on the 1992 film of the same name, with music by Alan Menken, lyrics by Glenn Slater, and a book by Bill and Cheri Steinkellner. The story follows a lounge singer named Deloris Van Cartier (Lilac Haynesworth), who is forced to hide in a convent after witnessing a murder. While there, she transforms the choir, brings new life to the struggling church, and learns many lessons about the importance of sisterhood. The musical premiered in 2006 in Pasadena, California, and has since been performed on Broadway and worldwide.

Lilac Haynesworth played the female lead, Deloris Van Cartier, with a fierce bubbly portrayal that made the acting enjoyable to watch. The song "Raise Your Voice," sung by Deloris and the outstanding ensemble of nuns, was the first glimpse of the talent of this particular ensemble.

As Deloris teaches the nuns how to sing, the harmonization and blending of voices create a perfect combination of the ethereal church style and funky soul. Lucas Trueblood portrays Curtis, Deloris' ex-boyfriend, with a gang of crooks who intends to find and silence her. This great lot of goons include TJ (August Taylor), Pablo (Kai Avilla), and Joey (Silas Adkins-Hooke). It was clear that each actor had a strong understanding of the mafia-like group they were playing and their characters. The group had fantastic chemistry and individuality, creating a hilarious group. The comedic moments were the absolute highlight of the musical, as they had the entire audience laughing out loud.

In addition to solid comedic skills, some performers had vocals that stole the show. Mariel Carr portrayed Sister Mary Robert and had a chance to display her voice in the song "The Life I Never Led." Carr took this chance and did not disappoint.

Eddie Souther, portrayed by Naeem Scott, is a strong character in the story. Scott's soothing vocals and incredible stamina engage the audience in "I Could Be That Guy," where he expresses his longing to be loved by Deloris.

Student director Abigail Gerstein directed and blocked Sister Act at Alexandria City High entirely. Her genius was displayed in this production as her magnificent



PHOTO BY MC FINEGOLD-SACHS, STUDENT AT ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL

## Lilac Haynesworth in Sister Act at Alexandria City High School

blocking and direction conveyed the message. On two occasions during act one, a follow light was used during chase scenes which uniquely added to the show and displayed the lighting director Virginia 'Jesse' Jones' brilliance. The

set design by Helen Russell, Nora Malone, Hope E. Bachman-Miller, and Abigail Gerstein was impressive and truly brought the story to life. The comedic moments were the absolute highlight of the musical, as they had the entire audi-

ence laughing out loud. Alexandria City Highschool's "Sister Act" is an ideal combination of music, comedy, and heartwarming moments that will leave you feeling uplifted and thoroughly entertained.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of \$2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit [www.alexandriava.gov/tes](http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes).

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+ robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact [jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com](mailto:jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com).

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit [www.computercore.org/contribute](http://www.computercore.org/contribute). Senior and Job Programs. 8:30

a.m.-1:30 p.m. Queen of Apostles Church, 4650 Taney Avenue, Alexandria. St. Martin de Porres Center offers senior and job placement programming Monday through Friday at the parish. Email Kathryn Toohey, [ktoohey@ccda.net](mailto:ktoohey@ccda.net).

Be Heard at the City's Monthly Public Hearings. A schedule of the meetings can be found at [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov). Voice opinions, speak about something on the docket or just speak about something you are concerned about. Sign up in advance to speak through the city's website. Anyone is welcome at any of the public hearings.

Public Space Recycling. Alexandria has placed more than 80 bright blue recycling containers next to public trash cans in the commercial districts along Mount Vernon Avenue and King Street, as well as other public spaces, including parks, recreation fields, and other high-traffic pedestrian areas. Visit [alexandriava.gov/Recycling](http://alexandriava.gov/Recycling).

Composting and Food Waste. Alexandria now has Resource Recovery Stations, located at the City's Farmers' Markets (Old Town, Del Ray) to collect food waste. More than 270 people have participated

in the food waste program over the last several months. Participants drop off items weekly, over eight tons of waste has been collected, to be composted to make a natural fertilizer. To learn more about composting visit [alexandriava.gov/YardWaste](http://alexandriava.gov/YardWaste).

English as a Second Language Class. Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, 5005 Duke St. Tuesdays and Thursdays, all levels 10 a.m.-12 p.m., intermediate workshop 3-5 p.m. All classes free. Call the information desk, 703-746-1702.

The Talking Book Service at Alexandria Library will now operate Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Patrons may also reach the service at 703-746-1760.

Digital Magazines. Patrons of Alexandria Library will have unlimited access to read digital magazines, which can be viewed on most Internet-enabled devices inside or outside of the library. Accessible through [www.rbdigital.com/alexandriava/zinio](http://www.rbdigital.com/alexandriava/zinio).

Eligible low income households can now use their SNAP benefits to buy local foods at the Old Town Farmers' Market. SNAP customers are able to use their electronic benefits

transfer cards to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables and other eligible food products at the market. The Old Town Farmer's Market is located at 301 King St., and is open on Saturdays, year round from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Opera NOVA has begun collection of used musical instruments. Any instruments welcomed, regardless of type. Snare drums, clarinets, and violins are just some of the instruments that could bring joy to a home or school. Any recorders donated will be sent to an orphanage in Haiti in order to build a musical presence there. Opera NOVA has tax-exempt status. Contact Miriam Miller at 703-536-7557 or [mcdm1@verizon.net](mailto:mcdm1@verizon.net) to arrange for delivery.

Free Medicare counseling is available for City of Alexandria residents through the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) to help individuals understand and navigate Medicare insurance programs. VICAP Medicare counselors will be available on Thursdays from 1-5 p.m., by appointment only, at the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, located at 2525

Mount Vernon Ave. Speakers are also available to present information on Medicare Basic to community groups. Call 703-228-1726.

The Military Officers Association of America's scholarship fund gives out loans and grants to children of military families. To learn more, apply or donate visit [www.moaa.org/scholarshipfund](http://www.moaa.org/scholarshipfund).

VCE Master Gardener Help Desk. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday-Friday. Bring fresh samples of problem plants, weeds or insects to ensure accurate identification. VCE recommends carrying samples in plastic bags or other clear containers. No live insects. All clinics and Help Desk are free. 703-228-6414 or [mgarlalex@gmail.com](mailto:mgarlalex@gmail.com).

Five-Star Toastmasters, Club # 9623. Tuesdays, 5:30-7 p.m. at the Pentagon Conference Center. Toastmasters can help participants sharpen their speaking skills, boost their confidence and energize their leadership skills in a team-ori-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13

# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU JULY 15

Alexander D'Agostino: "A Shrine for the Forgotten" Exhibition. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Baltimore-based solo artist exhibition recipient, Alexander D'Agostino, presents "A Shrine for the Forgotten." The work explores queer histories and images, through performance, installation, and reclaiming material from queer archives and other cultural resources related to the historic marginalization of LGBTQ people.

## NOW THRU MAY 27

The "Prints in May@DRA: Exploring the Possibilities" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans gallery features traditional printmaking techniques such as reliefs, intaglios, monoprints and handmade prints with mixed media, along with artworks created using computer graphics programs and other objects enhanced with block prints or imprints. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed May 28). Details: DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

## NOW THRU MAY 28

Tribute Art Exhibition. At The Torpedo Factory, Van Landingham Gallery, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Torpedo Factory Artists' Association's (TFAA) Van Landingham Gallery presents Tribute, a juried membership show featuring artworks that pay tribute to a cause, event, or subject that has special meaning to them personally. The following artists are participating: Diana Papazian, Samantha Shelton, Guido Zanni, Jon Kandel, Nancy Ramsey, Rebecca McNeely, Lisa Schumaier, Gregory Dunn, and Ileen Shefferman. Artworks include original hand pulled prints, original paintings, multimedia works, photography, ceramics, and sculpture.

## NOW THRU JUNE 11

Women's Work. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. In Women's Work three artists, Kirsty Little, Donna McCullough, and Kathryn McDonnell use non-traditional media to explore concepts related to the role of women in the arts and society. Each with a strong voice, the artists come together to offer a surprising and cogent statement about the place females have in our current world. Artist Talk: Sunday, June 11, 2 p.m.

## MAY 10-11

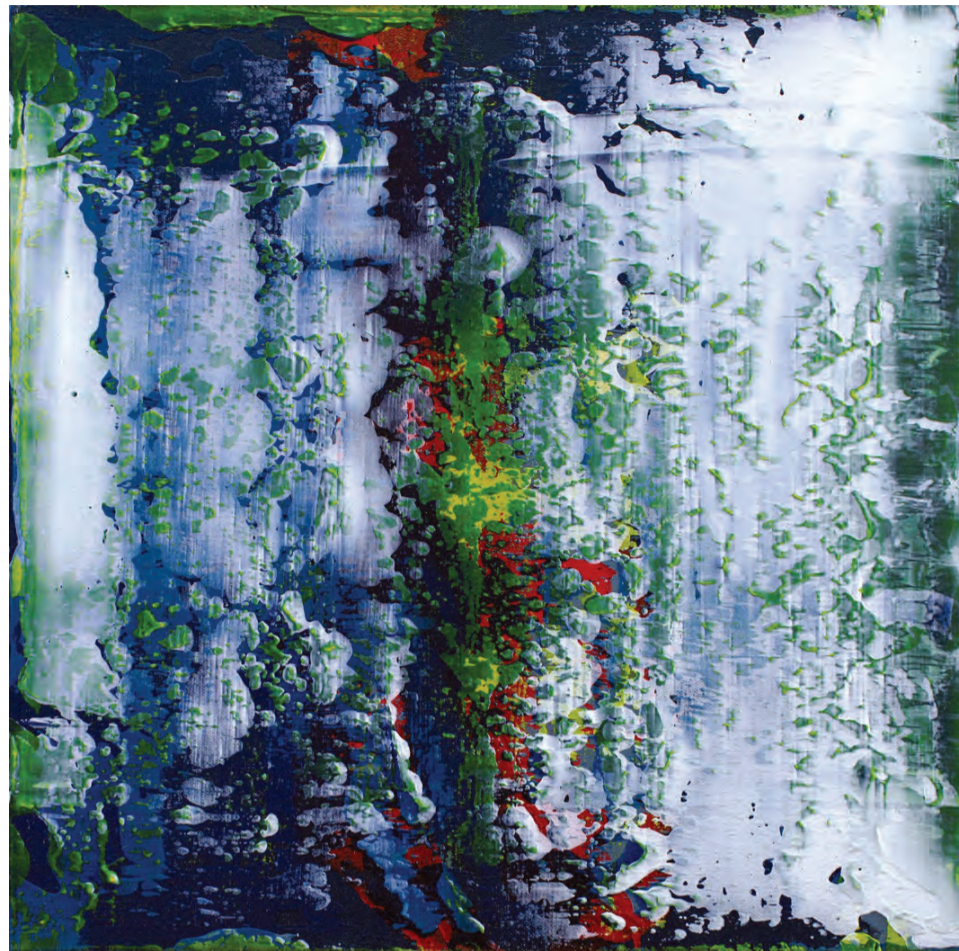
Free Career Fair and Resource Expo. Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) is hosting a free, two-day career fair May 10-11, 2023, with Virginia Chamber of Commerce's Hire Vets Now Foundation in partnership with Fort Belvoir, Virginia Department of Veteran Services, and Virginia Employment Commission.

In-person Career Fair and Resource Expo – Wednesday, May 10, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. EST, National Museum of the United States Army, 1775 Liberty Drive Virginia, Fort Belvoir 22060. Free headshots, resume guidance and access to upskilling resources will be available to set you up for success!

Virtual Career Fair and Resource Expo – Thursday, May 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m. EST, via online meeting portal, Premier Virtual. To find out more, visit [www.workinnorthernvirginia.com](http://www.workinnorthernvirginia.com)

## MAY 11 AND 18

2023 MVBA Free Offensive Development &



The Tribute Art Exhibition will be held at the Van Landingham Gallery at the Torpedo Factory now through May 28, 2023.

Shooting Clinic. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Walt Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parker Lane, Alexandria. For Boys and Girls ages 9-14 years old. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-mvba-free-offensive-development-and-shooting-clinic-tickets-626514380377>

## THURSDAY/MAY 11

The Chamber ALX City Council Breakfast. 8 - 10 a.m. At the Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King Street, Alexandria. Join in a conversation with members of the Alexandria City Council. Council members will discuss the City's recovery from the pandemic, the new budget, City projects and what's on the horizon for Alexandria's future. They will also answer your questions. Cost is \$50 for Members | \$60 for Non-Members

## SATURDAY/MAY 13

Civil War Hospital Tour. 2 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, Alexandria. Fendall House witnessed medical history, and how political divisions impacted those living here. Learn about how the Lee-Fendall House was confiscated during the Civil War and operated as a Union Army hospital. Explore what life was like in Union-occupied Alexandria. Call (703) 548-1789 or email [contact@leefendallhouse.org](mailto:contact@leefendallhouse.org).

## SATURDAY/MAY 13

Mother's Day BBQ in the Park. 12-4 p.m. At Montgomery Park, 901 N. Royal Street, Alexandria. D.C. metropolitan area Attorney Duane King is hosting the Mother's Day BBQ

in the Park: Recognizing Single Mothers. The event will feature world renown magician Max Major, author Kawanda Lamb, art, music, food and more. The event focuses on single mothers, also known as solo moms that are raising their kids and families. The goal of the event is to show appreciation for single moms, encourage the mothers and their kids, and have everyone leave the event feeling empowered and encouraged.

## SATURDAY/MAY 13

Launch Project Female Empowerment Summit. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at U.S. Patent Office Headquarters, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria. The Launch Project Summit is a one-day event designed to connect, inspire, and empower young women from around the world who aspire to become business leaders, entrepreneurs, and change-makers. This unique event will bring together 250 ambitious girls from middle school, high school, and college. The Launch Project is an international 501(c)(3) that has over 2,500 members and 42 chapters, spanning four continents. Its mission is to empower, educate, and develop girls to become tomorrow's female leaders, changemakers, and entrepreneurs. Programming specifically focuses on building critical skills and opportunities in the areas of business, politics, and STEM for all girls, regardless of socioeconomic differences.

## SATURDAY/MAY 13

Del Ray Artisans' Spring Art Market. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. At Colasanto Park, adjacent to Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave.,

Alexandria. The Spring Market is an annual outdoor event featuring original creations by local artisans in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, fiber, jewelry, mixed media, paper, photography, and more. Perfect gifts for your home, Mother's Day, or other occasions. Details at

[DelRayArtisans.org/spring-art-market](http://DelRayArtisans.org/spring-art-market)

## TUESDAYS, MAY 16, 23, 30,

Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, Tuesdays @ 10 - What Bugs You? 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. What can homeowners do that is kid safe, pet safe, environmentally responsible, and budget friendly to control those pesky mosquitoes, ticks, and other garden pests that emerge in the spring? And, what about those naughty invasive plants? Stop by the garden from 10:00-11:00 every Tuesday morning where you can get answers to these questions and more from Extension Master Gardeners. Each month, a different "garden of the month" will be highlighted that can inspire ideas for your own garden or even a favorite container.

## THURSDAY/MAY 18

Solo Lights. 7 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join composer-pianist Martin Graff (Trips for Piano) and singer-songwriter Tasha Estrada (Nostalgia Ajena) for a luminescent evening of original music made to move your soul and light your imagination.

## SATURDAY/MAY 20

Green Spring Garden Day – The Big Plant Sale. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens Park, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. What gardeners in the know call "THE big plant sale" – a highly popular event with over 40 vendors of popular, rare, and unusual plants including natives, edibles, and trees. Attendees also enjoy local artists, on-site food vendors, and a bountiful FROGS Bake Sale. Visit the website for a complete vendor list at [www.friendsofgreenspring.org](http://www.friendsofgreenspring.org)

## THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. 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](http://www.Birchmere.com).

## MAY

Fri. 12: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston \$59.50  
 Sat. 13: The Jerry Douglas Band \$35.00  
 Sun. 14: Redneck Mother's Day with THE GONZO COMPADRES – A Tribute to Jerry Jeff Walker \$45.00  
 Fri. 19: THE CURTIS MAYFIELD SOUNDTRACK SHOW -A Curtis Mayfield Tribute- featuring Shelton Price, Roger Chapman, Ignatius, Sonya Chichester, Sonja, Brigitte Johnson, Keith 'Showtime' Busey & The Unit Band \$39.50  
 Sat. 20: NAJEE \$59.50  
 Sun. 21: BoDeans \$35.00  
 Tue. 23: The Lone Bellow Trio "Love Songs For Losers Tour" w/ Lindsay Lou \$45.00  
 Wed. 24: Chrisette Michele \$69.50  
 Thu. 25: Chrisette Michele \$69.50  
 Fri. 26: Bela Dona Band \$39.50  
 Sat. 27: The Smithereens with Marshall Crenshaw \$39.50 (Rescheduled from 3/17/23) SOLD OUT!  
 Sun. 28: The Seldom Scene & Larry Keel Experience \$35.00

## BULLETIN BOARD

### FROM PAGE 12

ented atmosphere. Visit [fivestar.freetoasthost.com](http://fivestar.freetoasthost.com) or Club President Charlie DeWitt at 202-997-5087 or [Club\\_President@fivestar.freetoasthost.com](mailto:Club_President@fivestar.freetoasthost.com). Connect with T&ES on Facebook. The City of Alexandria's

Department of Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) is on Facebook. The T&ES Facebook page will share information on topics such as transportation planning, trash and recycling service, road work and maintenance, traffic, infrastructure and engineering projects, Eco-City Alexandria and

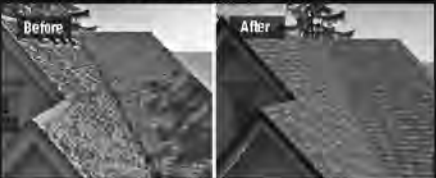
environmental initiatives, emergency cleanup efforts, and more. Visit [alexandriava.gov/SocialMedia](http://alexandriava.gov/SocialMedia). Training Courses. The American Red Cross in the National Capital Region will host training courses in CPR, First Aid, and AED in the Alexandria and Fort Belvoir offices. These classes offer a two-year

certification. Classes range from \$70-\$110 and will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Saturdays, dependent upon the participant's choice. Advance registration is required. To register for a class or find another class in your area, call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [redcross.org/takeaclass](http://redcross.org/takeaclass).

Internet Offered for Low-income Families. Internet Essentials is an adoption program designed to help close the digital divide for low-income Americans. A household is eligible to participate if it is located where

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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**Obituary** **Obituary**

**Michael Robert Heintz, 81**, of Alexandria, VA passed away peacefully on April 21, 2023, in Alexandria after a long illness.

Michael was born in Dayton, OH to Robert and Freda (Wildermuth) Heintz on September 2, 1941. He attended school in Dayton where he was active in the Dayton Boys Choir and the Dayton Music Club. He graduated from Oberlin Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor of Music. During his junior year at Oberlin, he studied at Mozarteum Akademie in Salzburg, Austria. He then pursued graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City earning a Master of Sacred Music, Magna cum Laude.

Michael was a dedicated and skilled church musician for nearly all his life – photographs show him at the organ console of Epworth Methodist Church preparing for a recital while still a high school student. For thirty-six years he was the Music Director at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria, and he maintained active memberships in the American Guild of Organists (AGO) and in the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM). At the time of his death, he was a member of Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, where he was a loyal supporter of the music program including the donation of a carillon.

Michael was preceded in death by John Charles Garverick, his life partner of more than fifty years.

Memorial gifts in Michael's name may be made to the Music Department at Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA.

A memorial service was held at Grace Episcopal Church (3601 Russell Road Alexandria, VA 22305) on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 1:30pm. Michael's final resting place will be at Glen Cemetery in Sidney, Ohio.

# NEWS

## 15 Years for Fentanyl Distribution Resulting In Death

An Alexandria man was sentenced today to 15 years in prison for conspiring to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl that resulted in the death of a young woman.

According to court documents, from around July 2020 through June 2021, Reza Hashemi, 34, distributed over 400 grams of fentanyl in Northern Virginia. Hashemi was identified following the Oct. 24, 2020, overdose death of a 22-year-old male, J.V., in Vienna. Hashemi admitted to distributing pressed counterfeit pills containing fentanyl to J.V. During the course of the investigation into J.V.'s death, law enforcement approached Hashemi and informed him of the death, but he did not agree to speak with them. Instead, Hashemi continued to distribute fentanyl.

On May 28, 2021, in Alexandria, Hashemi distributed an approximate 1-gram quantity of powder fentanyl to J.F., which caused J.F.'s death by accidental fentanyl poisoning. J.F. was 26 years old at the time.

Jessica D. Aber, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Kevin Davis, Fairfax County Chief of Police, made the announcement after sentencing by U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema.

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**CALENDAR**

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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |

Let us know about an upcoming event

[connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar)

# BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 5

Learn more about preservation in Alexandria. All tickets and reservations can be made at [Alexandriava.gov/Shop](http://Alexandriava.gov/Shop).

## Specialty Tour: Peeling Back the Paint Layers

Every Saturday in May 9:30 a.m.  
\$15 per person, \$12 OHA members

Explore Gadsby's Tavern Museum top to bottom, including spaces rarely opened to the public, and understand how the buildings have changed over time. Wear comfortable shoes and bring your camera! Tour begins in the shop of Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal Street.

## Lecture: Phase 1 of Murray-Dick-Fawcett Restoration

Tuesday, May 9, 7 p.m.

Free, but advance registration recommended.

Construction of the Murray-Dick-Fawcett house began in 1772, with additions in 1784, 1797 and 1854 and has changed very little since. It is one of the oldest, least altered wood-frame buildings in Northern Virginia and was acquired by the City of Alexandria in 2017 for use as a historic site and vest pocket park. This lecture by retired City Planner Al Cox will explain some of the physical and archival research that pre-

ceded the recent restoration of the exterior building envelope, show discoveries made during this phase of construction, and discuss the next steps for documentation and interpretation. Lecture will be held at the Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street. Doors open at 7 p.m. and lecture begins at 7:30 p.m.

## Walking Tour: Parker-Gray with Alexandrian Michael Johnson

Saturday, May 20, 10-11 a.m.

Free, but advance registration required.

Spend an hour on a walking tour through the Historic Parker-Gray neighborhood with Michael Johnson, a native of Parker-Gray. Parker-Gray is a historic African American neighborhood in Alexandria and home to many important Alexandrians. Johnson will share his personal history of this amazing neighborhood, giving details about the various important sites of the neighborhood. Tour begins in front of Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Visit [Alexandriava.gov/SelfGuidedTours](http://Alexandriava.gov/SelfGuidedTours) for walking tours of Alexandria. City of Alexandria residents can also tour any City-owned museum for free! Visit [Alexandriava.gov/Museums](http://Alexandriava.gov/Museums) for a list of City-owned museums and hours.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

Comcast offers Internet service; has at least one child who is eligible to receive either a free or reduced price school lunch under the NSLP; has not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the last 90 days; and does not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment. Any household that qualifies will remain eligible for Internet Essentials if at least one child eligible for either a free or reduced price school lunch remains living in the household.

**Plant Clinics.** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursdays at Alexandria Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. From late-April to late-October, the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia will be holding a plant clinic for the community. Gardeners also staff the Horticulture Help Desk, 9 a.m.-noon weekdays year-round at the VCE office in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. Contact 703-228-6414, [mgarlalex@gmail.com](mailto:mgarlalex@gmail.com) or [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu).

**At Home in Alexandria!** Those interested in becoming AHA! Friends should call AHA! at 703-231-0824 or download the application form from the AHA! website at [www.athomeinalexandria.org](http://www.athomeinalexandria.org). AHA! supports Alexandrians ages 55+ who prefer to remain independent in their own homes.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Energy Masters Training program, which trains volunteers in energy efficiency, water conservation, and community education and outreach, is seeking volunteers. Alexandria joins program partners Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE), Arlington Thrive, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE). The program is accepting applications for community and student apprentice volunteers for the fall training program, which starts in late September. The student apprentice program is open to college students and high school students ages 16 and over. Visit [www.ArlingtonEnvironment.org](http://www.ArlingtonEnvironment.org) and [www.VolunteerAlexandria.org](http://www.VolunteerAlexandria.org).

**Volunteers Needed.** The city has an ongoing need for volunteers. Visit [handsonconnect.volunteeralexandria.org](http://handsonconnect.volunteeralexandria.org) for a complete list of opportunities.

**Volunteer Program Professional.** This position is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the volunteer programs associated with the Department of Recreation, Parks &

Cultural Activities, the Office of Historic Alexandria, and the City of Alexandria Library. Organizes and conducts meetings, and provides technical guidance to agencies in volunteer development. The incumbent reports to the Director of RPCA. Visit [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org) or call 703-836-2176.

**Make Difference in a Child's Life.** Volunteer with The Child & Family Network Centers (CFNC) and help to provide caring, high-quality, free early education and related services to at-risk children and their families. Volunteers work alongside teachers in one of 10 classrooms across Alexandria. Read and engage in conversation with children. Support teachers in everyday activities. Volunteer five days a week or one hour a month and change lives for a lifetime. Visit [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org) or call 703-836-2176.

**Become a Volunteer English Tutor, Teacher and Classroom Aid.** The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia recruits and trains volunteer tutors, classroom teachers, class aides, and student assessment specialists to work with adult learners who need help with reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. LCNV also seeks committed office volunteers to assist with logistics, outreach, and data entry. Classrooms are in Alexandria, Annandale, Falls Church, Herndon, Lorton, and Springfield. Visit [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org) or call 703-836-2176.

Alexandria's Juvenile Court Services and Seaport Foundation seek adult male mentors for the new SOHO (Space of His Own) creative mentorship program. Seaport SOHO will meet throughout the school year on Wednesday evenings, from 5:30-8 p.m., at the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, 2 Duke St. Seaport SOHO will provide boys from fragile and fragmented homes with yearlong one-to-one mentoring through engagement in carpentry, fishing and sports activities. No mentoring or carpentry experience is required; SOHO is looking for enthusiastic and innovative men to serve as mentors. Email [ashley.snyder@alexandriava.gov](mailto:ashley.snyder@alexandriava.gov).

**Pets Bring Joy,** a local nonprofit animal rescue organization, is in need of temporary fosters. By offering a temporary loving home to a homeless cat, you are providing a critical link in their transition into a forever home. Email [info@petsbringjoy.org](mailto:info@petsbringjoy.org) if interested in becoming a foster. Visit [petsbringjoy.org](http://petsbringjoy.org).

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**We Need Your Help Again**

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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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 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. 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 our 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.

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 omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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.

## Number Us Among the Millions



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Just welcomed a new member, family friend, Sherrill, into the cancer club. And though it's a club nobody wants to join, it is never a loss for new members. If only there were dues (there's already plenty of don'ts). The accumulation of cash would rival the lottery. When you consider that now it's projected that up to half the population will likely be diagnosed with some kind of cancer over their lifetime, and an even higher percentage will know someone diagnosed with cancer, cancer is – and will continue to be, the dominant medical currency – a currency which often costs patients their lives. A life that becomes a daily struggle.

A struggle to endure the treatments, before, during and especially after the medication has been administered. I can still recall the worst pain I ever experienced. I was sitting in a Barcalounger at the Infusion Center psyching myself up to start my six-hour infusion which can only begin after the actual chemotherapy is prepared (it's not exactly off the shelf, it must be mixed/created chemically). Because chemotherapy is so expensive, the medicine is not available until after the patient has arrived at the Center and has been approved for treatment (this approval is a function of the preceding day's lab work, one's appearance that day and their on-site vitals). This wait/assessment occurs out of an abundance of caution as well as fiscal responsibility. If the infusion drug is prepared/mixed in advance of the patient's arrival/medical approval, and it happens for one of the reasons listed above that the patient is unsuitable for treatment that day, the medicine is wasted as it was specially prepared for this patient and can't exactly be undone and returned to inventory for the next patient. In effect, the money is spent with nothing to show for it.

As a result of this qualification period (for lack of a better description), patients must wait for their chemotherapy drug to be prepared and delivered to the Infusion Center. Moreover, given the volume of business many of these centers are experiencing (I was told "Obamacare" was responsible for increasing the numbers of patients; my center even has Saturday hours now), the wait can be up to an hour, so far as I've experienced anyway. And given the cost of these drugs, mixing them is hardly routine (anything but). Therefore, the process plays out very carefully. There's no hurrying it. You just must wait for your drugs, like it or not (and usually, not).

And what's to like? Everything that one equates with a cancer diagnosis/treatment: the hair loss, the nausea, the fatigue, the muscle weakness, the eating challenges, the neuropathy, the fear, the anxiety, the worry and on and on and on are unpleasant. Being diagnosed with cancer is all it's cracked up to be. Any help I've been given over the years to help me cope/understand/survive what is an ordeal, I am happy to pass it on. It's not quite paying it forward, it's more like prepaying. And every little bit of information helps when you consider the road ahead is long, hard, and extremely bumpy – with all sorts of obstacles and without any guarantees, generally. And by welcoming a new member, I hope to draw strength from their commitment. And all of us cancer patients need to draw strength from whomever and wherever we can find it. Encouraging and sharing experiences with new cancer patients as they begin their journey is beneficial to both.

As so I shared with Sherrill the worst pain, I ever experienced was at the Infusion Center. I was sitting in my Barcalounger. I was approved for my infusion. My oncology nurse put an intravenous line into my forearm (I've never had a port) and hung my medicine on the hook above the intravenous pump – through which the chemotherapy drips and ultimately moves its way into my arm/body. The nurse pressed several buttons on the pump which controlled the flow into my arm. One time, the nurse apparently must have hit the wrong flow speed and it increased the pace at which the drug went into my arm. It was like being attacked from the inside out, a burning sensation. I sort of screamed and within a few seconds the readjustment to the medicine's flow had been made. But for a second or two, I was at level 10-ish (patients are often asked to rate their pain on a scale of 1 – 10).

Sherrill understood and appreciated my chemo story. And she shared some of her experiences with me. This "the cancer talk", as friends have described it, is the bond that exists between us cancer patients. We all have a common enemy. I just hope there is strength in numbers because the numbers keep growing, exponentially it seems.

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

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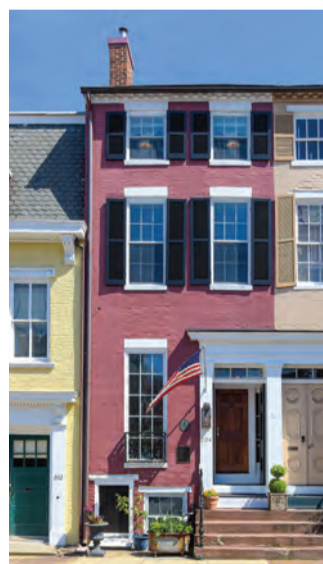
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