



## 'They Are Not Forgotten'



Members of the West Point Class of 1959 and classmates of Humbert "Rocky" Versace prepare to place a wreath at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial May 29 in Del Ray.



Former Miss Northern Virginia Caroline Weinroth performs at the Memorial Day ceremony May 29 at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

### Memorial Day ceremony honors fallen heroes.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria paid tribute to its fallen veterans May 29 with a Memorial Day ceremony at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

The names of Alexandria's 68 fallen and missing in action service members from Vietnam were read aloud as part of the annual ceremony at the site named for Medal of Honor recipient and Vietnam POW Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace.

The ceremony included a wreath laying by members of Versace's West Point class of 1959 and was attended by several Gold Star family members, including Bette Spengler Meuleners, widow of Capt. Henry Spengler, Curtis Versace, sister-in-law of Rocky Versace, and James Spengler, brother of Capt. Henry Spengler and Chief, Alexandria's Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities Department.

Kevin Rue of the Friends of Rocky Versace served as emcee and shared an email he had received just one day prior to the ceremony.

"The Friends of Rocky Versace received an email message yesterday out of the blue from a book collector in Albuquerque, New Mexico," Rue told the crowd. "I thought it would be appropriate to share a portion of what was written in that note."

SEE 'THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN', PAGE 4



West Point Class of 1959 classmates of Rocky Versace salute after placing a wreath at the Capt. Rocky Versace statue May 29 in Del Ray. Left to right: COL Art Bair, COL Charles Lynn, COL Ray Beurket, LTC Jack Bohman, COL Powell Hutton. Obscured - COL Al Phillips and LTC Mart Lidy.



Members of the St. Rita American Heritage Girls Troop 1381 pose for a photo at the Rocky Versace statue in Del Ray following the May 29 Memorial Day ceremony.



McArthur Myers, left, reads a loud some of the names of Alexandria's Vietnam War fallen May 29 in Del Ray.



McArthur Myers, left, poses for a photo with Gold Star family member Earl Valentine, third from right, brother of PVT Jeron F. Valentine, and Earl's children and grandchildren at the Rocky Versace Memorial in Del Ray.

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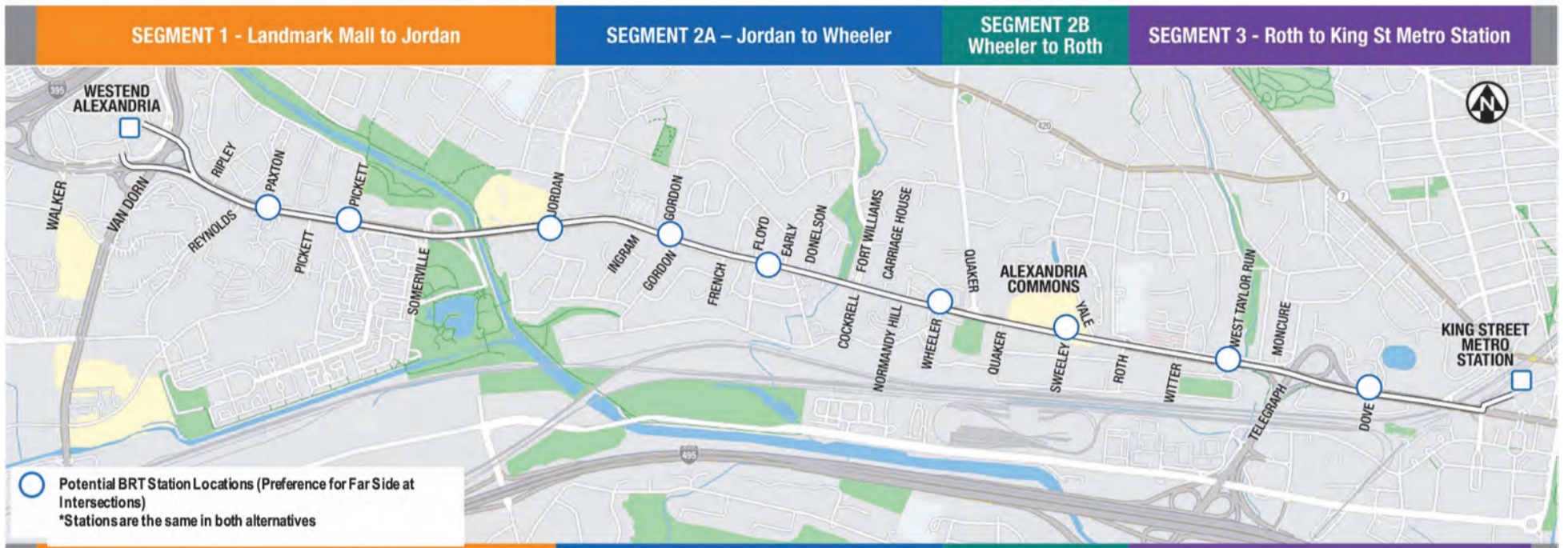
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# Corridor Stations



The Duke Street corridor currently has 20 stops for DASH bus riders. The current plans for bus-rapid transit along Duke Street call for eight eastbound stops and nine westbound stops.

## Dedicated Debate City Council to consider removing traffic lanes from Duke Street.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria’s most congested traffic corridor is about to get a new lease on life, potentially eliminating two traffic lanes on Duke Street in favor of a \$100 million project to dedicate center lanes for bus-rapid transit. It’s a debate that features critics who worry that nobody will ride bus-rapid transit and supporters who say a redesigned Duke Street will be less congested and better for everyone — including people who never set foot on a bus. The Alexandria City Council is expected to vote on the proposal June 27.

“Even if you are not riding the bus — if you are a pedestrian, if you are a driver — this is going to benefit you,” said Mayor Justin Wilson, a longtime supporter of the transitway. “We can get people through the corridor more quickly. We can create opportunities for folks to not have to rely on a vehicle, either as someone who is cutting through the city or as someone who lives here and is trying to get around the city.”

Options on the table for members of the City Council include center-running dedicated lanes and curb-running dedicated lanes, a choice that has roiled critics who are hoping to ditch the proposal and keep six lanes of traffic

for single-occupancy vehicles. Last week, the Duke Street In Motion Advisory Group recommended center running lanes, a recommendation that also has the approval of the Transportation Commission. Critics worry that removing traffic lanes for single-occupancy vehicles will create more congestion.

“It’s obvious congestion is an afterthought to all of this,” said Seminary Hill vice president Frank Putzu during a recent Agenda Alexandria discussion of the transitway. “This is about getting a dedicated bus lane. Period. End of story.”

### BUS-RAPID TRANSIT

is an idea that’s been around for more than 50 years, and Alexandria was home to the region’s first dedicated bus lanes along Route 1 now known as the “National Landing - Potomac Yard Metroway.” Since that time, Richmond has launched a BRT system along Broad Street known as the “Pulse,” which has been so successful that city leaders there are considering adding an extension westward as well as a separate north-south line. In addition to that, planning is underway to connect Mark Center to Tysons Corner with a BRT system known as “Envi-

sion Route 7.” Plus another BRT is planned along Richmond Highway in Fairfax County known as “The One.”

“Bus riders around the region tend to be those in our community who have the lowest income and are least likely to be able to afford a car,” said John Hillegass, director of regional mobility and infrastructure at the Greater Washington Partnership. “So I think it’s

“Even if you are not riding the bus — if you are a pedestrian, if you are a driver — this is going to benefit you.”

— Mayor Justin Wilson

really important to create reliable options for the people who work at our hospitals and our grocery stores.”

Planning for a transitway on Duke Street started back in 2008, when the City Council adopted a Transportation Master Plan that identified Duke Street as one of three high capacity corridors in Alexandria. That was followed by a feasibility study in 2012, followed by a \$12 million grant from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to help plan the transitway. In 2020, city leaders hit the

jackpot with a \$75 million grant from NVTA — a chunk of change from regional gasoline sales that will pay for the vast majority of the project. Last year, the city created an advisory group to help council members understand the options they’ll be voting on later this month.

“The long-term plan for the corridor should include center running bus lanes for the entirety of Duke Street with separate spaces for pedestrians and cyclists,” members of the advisory group concluded in their report to City Council last week. “This long-term plan would be partially dependent on redevelopment and available funding and should be assessed further during the Duke Street Small Area Plan process.”

**LINGERING OVER** the discussion of the Duke Street transitway is a sense of distrust and skepticism among some people about bike lanes on Seminary Road. In 2019, a narrowly divided City Council approved removing traffic lanes on Seminary to install bike lanes. Although the decision had many supporters, some people bitterly opposed the loss of traffic lanes. Now City Council members

are considering removing more traffic lanes along the city’s only east-west corridor, prompting an existential question about what kind of city Alexandria wants to be in the future.

“One thing that everyone can agree on, and we heard this in all of our outreach efforts, is that people don’t like Duke Street the way it is,” said Hillary Orr, deputy director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. “We’ve done a couple of rounds of community engagement to come up with concept plans that would provide better service for people riding the bus, better sidewalks and paths and also making sure that we’re moving our vehicles along the corridor.”

The stated goals for the Duke Street transitway are to improve bus service and cut down on carbon emissions that damage the environment. The environmental benefits of reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road are obvious, although improvements to bus travel are a bit murkier — especially the amount of time it will take bus riders to get from one end of the corridor to the other side of town. The Duke Street corridor currently has 20 stops for the existing DASH bus system. But plans for the transitway call for eight eastbound stops and nine westbound stops.

SEE DEDICATED DEBATE, PAGE 15

# Honoring the Sacrifice

Col. Davis is special guest at Memorial Day ceremony.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**M**edal of Honor recipient Paris Davis, an Alexandria resident and one of the first African American officers to lead a Special Forces team in combat, was a special guest at American Legion Post 24 for the organization's May 29 Memorial Day ceremony.

"Post 24 holds its annual Memorial Day service to honor and remember the great sacrifices made on the altar of freedom by our military men and women," said Post 24 Commander Mike Mixon.

Due to the threat of rain, the service was moved from Alexandria National Cemetery to the Post 24 ballroom adjacent to Gadsby's Tavern. The keynote speaker for the event was The Honorable Donald Remy, Former Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Davis, a retired Army colonel with 30 years of service, was the distinguished guest of honor. He was presented with the Medal of Honor by President Joe Biden during a ceremony at the White House in early March. Mixon pre-



The Hon. Donald Remy delivers remarks as the keynote speaker for the Memorial Day ceremony May 29 at American Legion Post 24.



Medal of Honor recipient Col. Paris Davis (ret.), right, receives a proclamation from American Legion Post 24 Commander Mike Mixon following the organization's May 29 Memorial Day ceremony.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

sented Davis with a proclamation honoring his service.

Chaplain Dick Evans provided the invocation and benediction; Civil Air Patrol Cadet Zoey Carlos sang the National Anthem; Timothy Park from Bugles Across America played Taps; Auxiliary Unit 24

representative Amy Soller recited Flanders Fields; Martin Menez representing VFW Post 609 provided brief remarks about the VSOs stationed at the Alexandria National Cemetery; and James Sanders from the VA's National Cemetery Administration at Quantico pro-

vided remarks about the significance of the Alexandria National Cemetery.

"Donald Remy and Col. Paris Davis remained after the service to meet those in attendance and pose for photographs," Mixon said. "It was an honor to have them with us."

Davis will be honored at a special ceremony June 17 at The Captain Rocky Versace Vietnam Memorial Plaza in Del Ray. The event is free and open to the public. It will begin at 11 a.m. For more information, email Kevin Rue at forv59@gmail.com.

## 'They Are Not Forgotten'

FROM PAGE 1

Rue shared the words of the collector, Alice St. John.

"A few weeks ago, I pulled from a box an annual, with a beautiful cover and quite heavy. The Howitzer, 1956. I'm kind of a military history buff, so I immediately began to turn through the pages of this West Point annual. As I looked through the annual, at all the handsome faces of these young men, I began to wonder how many of these young officers were soon to go off to Vietnam. I wondered how many of them came back, and just how many didn't.

"As I closed the book, a name in gold lettering at the bottom of the front cover caught my eye: Humbert R. Versace (Rocky). Out of idle curiosity and given my penchant for researching various topics which catch my interest, I did a quick internet search. I don't know what I was expecting to find, really. A name on the Wall, maybe, or something that

I might learn about the man to whom this annual once belonged. I was not prepared for what I learned about Humbert R. "Rocky" Versace on that day.

"Website after website after website, article after article after article about Rocky and his incredible heroism while in captivity in Vietnam. I just sat at my desk and sobbed. How could it be that I had in my hands, the West Point annual for a Medal of Honor awardee? How could it be that this beautiful book was sitting in a box on the floor, surrounded by 100 other boxes of books?

"I thought it would be fitting to reach out on Memorial Day weekend. Rocky is on my mind very much this year."

According to Rue, St. John will be donating the yearbook to the Friends of Rocky Versace for display at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.

"It has been such an honor and privilege to have had this come into my possession," St. John added. "For the past few weeks, it has been proudly displayed on the top



LTC Stephen Tracy plays Taps to end the Memorial Day ceremony May 29 at the Rocky Versace Plaza in Del Ray.

shelf of my bookcase, facing outwards, so that I can be reminded of the man for whom 'Duty, Honor, Country' meant so much. I recently ordered a memorial POW bracelet with his name engraved. I wear it every day."

Other Gold Star family members in attendance included: Susan Lily Harvey, sister of 1LT Lawrence E. Lilly, MIA; Earl Valentine; brother

of PVT Jeron F. Valentine; and Clare Ericson Barkovic, widow of 1LT William F. Ericson - a USMA 1968 classmate of CPT Henry Spengler.

Carolyn Weinroth, former Miss Northern Virginia, opened the ceremony with the National Anthem followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by members of the St. Rita American Heritage Girls Troop 1381. Bugler Lt. Col Steve Tracy (ret.) closed

the ceremony with Taps.

"Capt. Rocky Versace is the U.S. Army's only Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War whose remains have not been recovered and returned," explained Rue. "Rocky Versace and Alexandria's 67 other Vietnam War Fallen Heroes are on our minds this Memorial Day. They are not forgotten."



Recently married Curtis Versace, left, sister-in-law of Rocky Versace, with her husband John C. Hamel, USMA 1963. Hamel went to high school in Paris with Rocky's younger brother Stephen Versace.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

# Racial Equity Toolkit Event on June 8

The City of Alexandria's Race and Social Equity Office will release the Racial Equity Toolkit in a community event on Thursday, June 8 at 3 p.m., at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center (4850 Mark Center Dr.), Conference Room 1305. Register for the event by filling out the Racial Equity Toolkit Launch Registration Form.

For the past three years, RASE has been working to develop the Racial Equity Toolkit to promote equity. Now the City of Alexandria is now releasing the toolkit for use by City agencies and community organizations to support the design

of equity-driven policies, programs, and initiatives.

According to the City, the Racial Equity Toolkit helps users adopt tangible and sustainable practices that promote racial equity in programs, policies, and initiatives; recognize racial equity as both a process and an outcome; and more effectively engage historically marginalized communities across Alexandria in equity-driven decision-making. The toolkit could give insight into how City of Alexandria departments and agencies will evaluate equity.

SEE RACIAL EQUITY, PAGE 7

# Electric Vehicle Showcase

The City of Alexandria's Office of Climate Action will hold an Electric Vehicle Showcase on Sunday, June 4, at Chinquapin Park (3210 King St.) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Are you interested in potentially purchasing an electric vehicle (EV)? Are you curious to see what types of EVs the City of Alexandria has in operation? The EV Showcase

is a great opportunity to learn about different types of EVs we have in our community. Come by and talk to EV owners in Alexandria and take a look inside their vehicles, tour an electric DASH or Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) bus, and take a spin on an eBike or scooter!

The EV Showcase is an Earth Month event that was rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Please join us in thanking these retailers for participating in the Project Sticker Shock Campaign!

During this youth-led event, teams of youth and adults placed stickers on multi-packs of alcohol to highlight the legal consequences of providing alcohol to persons under 21.



**Thank you!**

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5725 Edsall Rd.  
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2 S. Jordan St.
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600 Franklin St.
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4515 Duke St.  
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1006 Madison St.
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621 E. Glebe Rd.  
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1476 N. Beauford.
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4105 Duke St.
- Department of Beer & Wine**  
2724 Richmond Hwy.
- La Feria Latina**  
3840 Mt. Vernon Ave.
- LA Mart**  
5730 Edsall Rd.
- Mason & Greens**  
913 King St.
- M La Tiendona Market**  
3836 Mt. Veron Ave.
- Mercadito Ramos III**  
4102 Mt. Vernon Ave.
- MOMs Organic Market**  
3831 Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Old Town Mini Mart**  
822 King St.
- Safeway**  
500 S. Royal St.  
3526 King St.  
299 S Van Dorn St.
- Shell**  
2922 Duke St.
- Target**  
3101 Richmond Hwy.
- Unwined**  
3690 King St.
- Uptown Market**  
2801 Park Center Dr.

To report concerns regarding the sale or provision of alcohol to persons under age 21, call the Alexandria Police Department's non-emergency number at 703.746.4444.

Learn more at [PreventItAlexandria.org](http://PreventItAlexandria.org)

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Alexandria City High School students are joined by instructors as part of the Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center's work-based CNA learning program May 11. Pictured are graduates (back l-r): Florence Debra, LNHA, RN; Myla Murphy; Maya Ortega-Solares; Maryam Mohamed; Donna Shaw, LNHA, RN; Lenhle Vilakati; Maryangel Ortiz Serrano; Josephine Bloodworth, MSNed, RN; ACHS Nurse Aide Program Coordinator & Primary Instructor; Dr. Laura Evans, ACHS Health & Medical Science CTE Lead. Not pictured Pam Hippolyte-Walter, MSNed, MHL, RN, ACHS Nurse Aide Skills Coordinator & Primary Instructor. Front Row (l-r): Caitlin Feehely and Jennifer Arlet Saravia Carcamo. Not pictured Pam Hippolyte-Walter, ACHS Nurse Aide Skills Coordinator & Primary Instructor.

# Woodbine, ACHS Students Honored

Partnership trains future CNA professionals.

**D**r. Laura Evans, Alexandria City High School Health & Medical Science CTE Lead, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Woodbine Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center on behalf of The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences & Alexandria City Public Schools in recognition of Woodbine's partnership in expanding work-based learning opportunity to students.

Director of Nursing Florence Debra, a 1992 graduate of the Alexandria City High School LPN program and Administrator, Donna Shaw, accepted the certificate on behalf of Woodbine on a visit to congratulate this year's graduating class of Clinical Nursing Assistants. Alexandria City High School and Woodbine have partnered in the clinical rotation for health students for over 25 years.

[www.woodbinerehab.com](http://www.woodbinerehab.com)

— JEANNE THEISMANN



Dr. Laura Evans, center, presents a certificate of appreciation May 11 to Florence Debra, LNHA, RN, and Donna Shaw, LNHA, RN, of Woodbine Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in recognition of the facility's work-based learning opportunities for high school students.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNews-papers.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.

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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

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# Racial Equity Toolkit Event on June 8

FROM PAGE 5

Residents will have series of opportunities to engage on forthcoming equity resources as the City moves toward a more “intentionally equitable future.”

Since hiring the City’s first Race and Social Equity Officer, internal and external contributors to the City’s equity commitment have begun engaging in equity training, identifying, and addressing inequities in their services and applying

an equity lens to their work to determine how to best serve all Alexandrians, according to the City of Alexandria release.

In 2021, City Council adopted the ALL Alexandria Resolution, the city’s commitment to race and social equity through increased knowledge, understanding and dynamic engagement throughout the Alexandria community. For more information about ALL Alexandria, visit alexandriava.gov/Equity.

# Police Give Body Worn Camera Update

On Thursday, May 25, the Alexandria Police Department (APD) discussed the progress of its recently launched Body-Worn Camera Program. The program, which started in April, is new for the department and features some of the newest technology on the market to aid in its mission to provide transparent community policing.

Since the April 17th launch of the program, officers have uploaded more than 1,700 body-worn camera videos for more than 500 hours of footage. In total, they have uploaded approximately 3,000 pieces of digital evidence to include audio files, photographs, and other digital evidence.

“We are excited to implement

body cameras as part of our standard operating procedures,” said Police Chief Don Hayes. “This is a significant step forward for our department in building trust with our community.”

City Council approval plus a \$600,000 grant in federal funding secured by U.S. Rep. Don Beyer made the implementation of body cameras possible.

Community members are encouraged to view APD’s Body-worn Camera Program policy online and learn more on how to obtain video footage through the Virginia Freedom of Information Act or the legal process of discovery. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/Body-Worn%20Cameras%20Directive%202.8.419.pdf>

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

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 assist 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

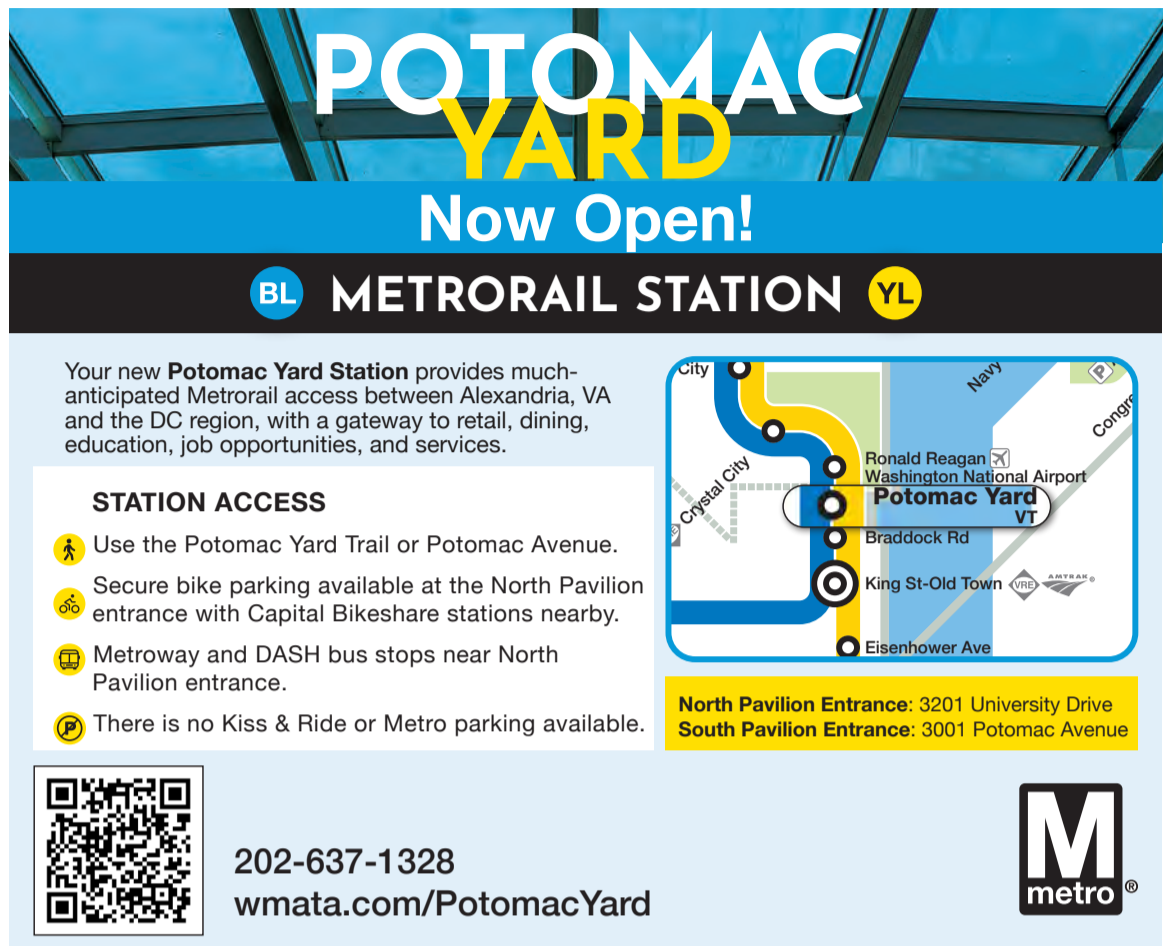
in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

**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. 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](http://cancer.org).

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14



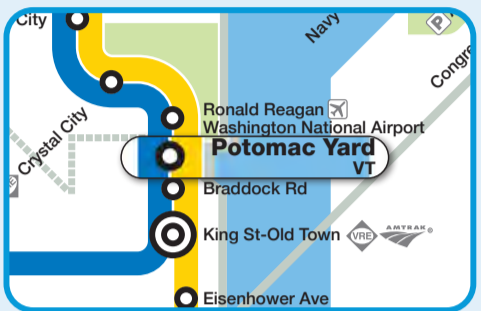
**POTOMAC YARD**  
Now Open!

**BL METRORAIL STATION YL**

Your new **Potomac Yard Station** provides much-anticipated Metrorail access between Alexandria, VA and the DC region, with a gateway to retail, dining, education, job opportunities, and services.


**STATION ACCESS**

- Use the Potomac Yard Trail or Potomac Avenue.
- Secure bike parking available at the North Pavilion entrance with Capital Bikeshare stations nearby.
- Metroway and DASH bus stops near North Pavilion entrance.
- There is no Kiss & Ride or Metro parking available.



**North Pavilion Entrance:** 3201 University Drive  
**South Pavilion Entrance:** 3001 Potomac Avenue

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## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF ALEXANDRIA AWARD RECIPIENTS!

Our deepest congratulations and best wishes for your future.

Photo: Scott Sidley Photography

1971 Original Titans Scholarship, Anna Shamseldin  
 21st Century University Scholarship, Deanna Kosinski, Douae Nouhi  
 A. A. Beiro Family Foundation Scholarship, Alexandra Bustillos Najera  
 Alexandria City High School Band Boosters Jazz Scholarship, Lucas Zahlan  
 Alexandria City High School Band Boosters Scholarship, Chidinma Ihezue  
 Alexandria City High School Culinary Arts Scholarship, Logan Eller  
 Alexandria City High School English Department Scholarship, Madalyn Ivy Schrouter Stevens  
 Alexandria City High School Lacrosse Boosters Scholarship, Roger McGraw, Aaliyah Royster  
 Alexandria City High School Orchestra Boosters Scholarship, Micah Craine  
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 Al Carter Scholarship, Joyce Mananika  
 Alexandria City Public Schools Employees Scholarship, Alhaji Bah  
 Alexandria PTA Council Scholarship, Ana Acevedo Acamo  
 Alexandria Crew Boosters—John Steve Carbonell Catilo Memorial Scholarship, Maxwell McCormack  
 Alexandria Crew Boosters Scholarship, Thomas McLenahan  
 Alexandria Gazette Packet Corporate Partner, Tigran Ceessay  
 Alexandria Jaycees Community Service Scholarship, Lillianne Krakowski  
 Alexandria Lacrosse Club/The Katherine "KK" Harris McCart Memorial Scholarship, Molly Hill

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 Aly Khan Johnson/Cross Country, Track and Field Scholarship, Morgan Fraser, Isaiah-Taji Kargbo-Owens  
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 Anthony L. Austin Memorial Scholarship, Fatima Arevalo Zambrano  
 Augusta "Dusty" Barbato Memorial Scholarship, Hazrat Bilal Safi  
 Barbara McBane Harper TCW '86 Memorial, Eleanor Lynch  
 Beth Lovain Scholarship, Karen Medrano  
 Bill Nichols Memorial Arts Scholarship, Betty Amron  
 BMW of Alexandria Scholarship, Ashley Chandler  
 Bonterra Scholarship, Tayshaun Moore  
 Bradlee Merchants Association Scholarship, Muhammad Abbas Stanikzai  
 Brandon D. Edwards Memorial Scholarship, Rosemond Johnson, Ominakhon Kobuljonova, Isis Morgan, Isaac Wessen  
 Brian and Michael Vaughan Memorial Scholarship, Dylan Rex  
 Caudron, Megary, & Blackburn Wealth Mgmt. Group Co., Hadia Hamnawa  
 Charles and Joel Carron Scholarship, Isata Sheriff  
 Charles Barrett PTA Scholarship Honoring Misty Boyd, Amor Harris  
 Chris Marshall Wrestling Scholarship, Bassem Siliti

Clash of the Titans, Class of 2001 Scholarship, Laura Nunez Pena  
 Class of 1965/Irving Lindsey Memorial Scholarship, Leah Devendorf  
 Class of 1983/Patrick Welsh Scholarship, Wiam Belfarh  
 Class of 1989 Scholarship, Steven Alberto Portillo, Bassmala Elgamal, Andrea Funes Quinones, Nina Yang, Lily Zheng  
 CloudAI Solutions Scholarship, Nahom Getachew  
 Commonwealth One FCU Alexandria City High School Scholarship, Jeneya Kamara  
 Courtney Smith Memorial Scholarship, Alayah Duncan  
 COVANTA Environmental Scholarship, Leah Desiderio  
 Dameron Family Scholarship, Safiyah Muhammad  
 Dana Lawhorne Scholarship, Sarah Ahmed  
 David J. Collison Memorial Scholarship, Sesen Gojela  
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 Del Ray Artists/John Hiller Memorial Art Scholarship, Katherine Radt  
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 Del Ray Citizens Association Scholarship, Kullen Robinson  
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 Departmental Progressive Club, Inc./James E. Henson Memorial Scholarship, K'lene Bowles  
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 Dr. Teh-Chang Shih Memorial Scholarship, Sakariya Ali  
 Fannon Scholarship, Yliana Pereira  
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 Foulger-Pratt Corporate Partner Scholarship, Kwadjo Boateng  
 Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association Scholarship, Peyton Prevost  
 Gallifrey Scholarship for Social Enterprise, Alvaro Sandi Alvarado  
 Galo S. Salvador-Vinueza TCW '04 Memorial Scholarship, Justin Garcia DelCid  
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 Hon. Robert L. Calhoun Scholarship, Christian Simon  
 Howell Brett Medley Scholarship, Rafael Lovo Gonzalez

Inova Alexandria Hospital Healthcare Career, Fehintola Akintola-Samuel  
 Irving and Shirley Rubenstein Memorial Scholarship, Fatimah Hameed  
 Irving Lindsey Mathematics Trust Scholarship, Emory Stouffer  
 J. Pondolfino/ Academy of Finance Scholarship, Miracle Gross  
 Jack Esformes Scholarship, Sada Seman  
 Jack Taylor Scholarship, Karla Grijalva  
 Jane Temoshok Memorial Scholarship, Zia Ahmadi  
 Janet Yeich Memorial Scholarship, Emma Toggia  
 Jean A. Beiro Memorial Scholarship, Fatmata Kanu  
 Jennifer B. Modlin TCW '74 Memorial Scholarship, Eli Speckart  
 Jerry "Sarge" Murray Scholarship, Nyla Eyob  
 Jim Moran Scholarship, Amel Mohdali  
 John Alexander Chapter NSDAR Scholarship, Amena Safi  
 John C. Albohm Memorial Trust Scholarship, McKenzie Hibshman  
 John Porter Scholarship, Nathan Desta  
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 Kara Mehman Scholarship, Jackson Snyder  
 KBR Foundation, Inc. Corporate Partner Scholarship, Joshua Davila  
 Kenneth A. Barnett Memorial Baseball Scholarship, Jason Gavri  
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 Kerry Donley Memorial Scholarship, Amarie Butler-Jones  
 Kitty Porterfield Scholarship, Chidebelu Ojukwu

Larry Trice PTSA/SCA Scholarship, Ruth Belay, Tiffany Guevara Fuentes, Jalid Salmeron, Erik Turcios  
 Loti Dunn Memorial Scholarship, Joshua Smith, Sana Sofizada  
 Lou Cook Scholarship, Marwan Abdou  
 Louis Kokonis Teaching Legend Scholarship, Tanzila Mayar  
 Lynhaven/Rosa Byrd Scholarship, Ciara Norfleet  
 Madelyn Anderson Memorial Scholarship, Reema Gaal, Diyana Mohammad  
 Maginniss + del Ninno Architects Scholarship, Annika Eelkema  
 Marcia L. Egge Memorial Scholarship, Lily Seestedt  
 Marco Henriquez T.C.W. '00 Memorial Scholarship, Alexandra Feeley  
 Marcus Family Scholarship, Yanelvis Gomez, Malik Kunata  
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 Michael S. Dixon Memorial Scholarship, Katherine Harbour  
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Nigusu Tefera Scholars Fund, Tsion Negussie  
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 Orzel Zahn "OZ" Scholarship, Heather Miranda  
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 PoD Squad Scholarship, Katherine Murillo  
 Rahmatullah Hotaki Memorial Scholarship, Katherine Hernandez  
 Ring Family Public Service Scholarship, Nawar Suha  
 Robert Eavenson Field Hockey Scholarship, Madeline Crowe  
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 Technomics Innovation Scholarship, Oumou Hardy  
 Timothy Schuyler Elliott Mem. Scholarship, Maria-Fernanda Cabrera Trigo  
 Titans 4 Scholars Scholarship, D'Aysa Grimes  
 Walter Scott Downs Memorial Scholarship, Alexandra Sarangay  
 Whitestone & Franklin Scholarship, Spencer Arnold  
 Yasmin Groehn Memorial Scholarship, Esther Herrera-Baldizon





When it rains, stormwater flows off impervious surfaces into streams and rivers.



The Woodrow Wilson Bridge spans the Potomac River, connecting Virginia and Maryland.



The Potomac River near Great Falls.

# The Potomac River: Progress Yet Problems

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

**T**he Potomac River, called by some “the nation’s river,” may seem to always be in the backdrop, especially in the public’s mind, but the health of the river and its tributaries is vitally important to four states and the District of Columbia. For starters, five million people in the greater Washington area depend on the river for their drinking water.

Is the river healthy? Yes and no. On May 16, the Potomac Conservancy gave the river a grade of B, up from a B- in 2020, a C in 2013 and a D in 2011. We have seen progress, Conservancy officials say, but more must be done.

In 1965, then-President Lyndon B. Johnson called the Potomac “a river of decaying sewage and rotten algae.” Since the 1972 Clean Water Act became law, some pollution has declined, mainly from what are called “point sources” like factories, sewage treatment plants and farms. But pollution is still a threat.

“Polluted urban runoff is the only growing source of pollution to the Potomac River,” according to the new report card. This stormwater runoff flows off hardened surfaces, like streets, parking lots and roofs and carries street oils, lawn chemicals, trash and even diluted sewage directly into streams that flow into the Potomac and into the river. “We must leave behind a 20th-century mindset where we pave over forests and deal with the consequences later,” said Hedrick Belin, Conservancy President.

## More Trees and Plants

The health of rivers depends in part on the lands that surround them. “Potomac River habitats are not improving as quickly as projected,” the report card concludes.

Forested shorelines earned a grade of D+. Trees near shorelines, called “forest buffers,” can hold sediment in place, absorb rainwater and slow down and filter runoff. The Conservancy did find that in 2020, “shoreline trees and plants doubled across the watershed when compared to 2018 and 2019,” but that represents 36 percent of the annual goal of 207 miles.

Water clouded with suspended sediments resulting from runoff, deforestation and poor sediment management blocks sunlight that underwater grasses or submerged



Canoeing and kayaking are popular on the Potomac River.



**Nancy Rybicki, an expert on submerged aquatic vegetation, explains that this vegetation is important for water quality and that ducks eat the tubers of wild celery, an underwater grass.**

aquatic vegetation need to grow. These grasses “are still having a difficult time expanding to acreage levels seen in the past. A goal of 3,581 hectares of underwater grasses (roughly the size of five Rock Creek Parks!) was set for the Potomac River watershed to reach healthy levels of underwater grasses. Unfortunately, as of 2020, the Potomac was only 33% of the way to reaching this goal,

## Potomac River Facts

The Potomac River Basin or watershed covers 14,670 square miles through five geological provinces. The river flows over 400 miles spanning Washington, D. C. and four states -- Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Its major tributaries are the Anacostia River, Antietam Creek, the Cacapon River, Catoctin Creek, Conococheague Creek, the Monocacy River, the North Branch, the South Branch, the Occoquan River, the Savage River, Seneca Creek and the Shenandoah River.

The river’s habitats have 1,400 native plants and animals, including 200 globally rare species. In the late 1500s, the average population density was 2.2 people per square mile. In 2020, it was 94.

analysts found.

In the tidal Potomac, the 100-mile-stretch from Chain Bridge to the Chesapeake Bay, harmful algae has increased in some places, which can put people and pets at risk. The report card maintains, “In the Potomac River, chlorophyll a conditions have remained poor as excessive amounts of algal biomass are recorded in the watershed. In 2020, Potomac chlorophyll a levels registered a score of 14%, indicating ‘very poor’ conditions, according to the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES).” That study gave the river a C-.

## Global Warming, More Harm

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses entering the atmosphere are trapping heat and warming the planet more than is natural, climate scientists contend. “We are

already experiencing the impacts of a warming climate” in the region, says the report card, and these impacts will worsen. Warmer atmospheric temperatures mean warmer water temperatures, which can adversely affect aquatic life, promote algal blooms and encourage bacteria growth.

“The region’s storms are intensifying and becoming more frequent and periods of drought are becoming longer,” thanks to a warming climate, the Conservancy reports. It rains harder here than it used to and extreme storms are becoming more frequent, conditions that impair water quality because drier soils cannot always absorb heavy downpours, driving more polluted stormwater off the land.

On the good news front, nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment are “on track” to meet 2025 pollution reduction goals, the report maintains. Some populations of fish and bald eagles and bottlenose dolphins have rebounded. Some parts of the river are swimmable at certain times during the year. More people are spending time around the Potomac. Sports fishing licenses quadrupled in 2020.

Belin challenged government decision-makers: “We can’t keep paving over our forests and putting nature last. Leaders at all levels must aggressively invest in nature-based solutions that reduce urban runoff and strengthen our community’s defenses against intensifying storms and other climate impacts.”

Visit <https://potomacreportcard.org/>

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY JOHN BORDNER/GAZETTE PACKET

## LET THE MUSIC PLAY

The Mount Vernon Concert Band, an all-volunteer ensemble under the direction of Linda Davidson, performed May 30 for residents at The View by Goodwin Living. The concert featured a variety of selections, from classical to jazz, to John Phillips Sousa, Carole King and excerpts from The Lion King. In addition to the Concert Band there are five other associated ensembles: the Mount Vernon Swing Band, the Mount Vernon Dixieland Band, Vernonberg am Potomak Volksmusik Blasskapelle (the Mount Vernon German Band), the Mount Vernon Flutes and the MV Brass. [www.mvbands.com](http://www.mvbands.com)

**THE CHAMBER ALX ANNOUNCES OUR 2023 40 UNDER 40 HONOREES**

- Eighth Class
- 40 Honorees
- 2 Youth Honorees
- Tickets are now available to celebrate our honorees at the 40 Under 40 Awards Celebration, presented by The Jen Walker Team on July 20!

Get your tickets at [thechamberalx.com](http://thechamberalx.com)



## Happy Birthday to Frank Lloyd Wright

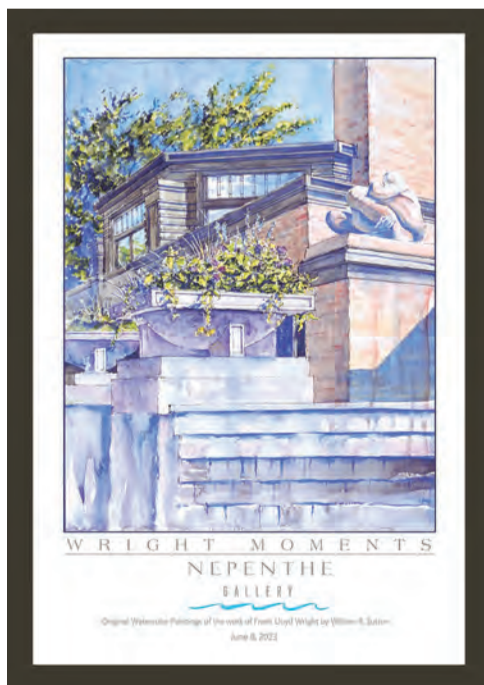
On Thursday, June 8, 2023 Nepenthe Gallery will celebrate Frank Lloyd Wright's Birthday with watercolors by William Sutton.

We plan to honor him with a birthday cake for everyone to share. We are featuring original watercolor paintings of Wright's architecture by Annapolis based architect and watercolorist William (Bill) Sutton.

For this show, Bill will be exhibiting his watercolors of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture: Pope-Leighey House in Alexandria, VA; Taliesin West in Scottsdale, AZ; Robert Parker House in Oak Park, IL; and Fallingwater in Mill Run, PA. He will also be signing "special event posters," giclée prints of some of his original works, and books.

Long-time guide Peter Christensen will discuss the history of the Pope-Leighey House.

<http://nepenthegallery.com>  
703-314-5399



Legals

Legals



### CITY OF ALEXANDRIA FIRST HALF 2023 REAL ESTATE TAX, REFUSE FEE AND STORMWATER UTILITY FEE ARE DUE JUNE 15, 2023

The first half 2023 real estate tax, refuse fee and stormwater utility fee must be paid by June 15, 2023, to avoid late payment penalty and interest.

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

Pay in person at the Treasury Division, City Hall, Room 1510, or at the new West End Finance Office, 4850 Mark Center Drive, Second Floor, between 8AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. A drop box on the Royal Street side of City Hall is available 24 hours a day. Payments must be in the drop box by midnight on June 15, 2023, to be considered on time.

General real estate tax information is available on the City's website at [alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax](http://alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax). Detailed assessment, tax balance and payment information is available at [realestate.alexandriava.gov](http://realestate.alexandriava.gov).

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email [payments@alexandriava.gov](mailto:payments@alexandriava.gov). For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email [realestate@alexandriava.gov](mailto:realestate@alexandriava.gov). For questions on refuse fees or stormwater utility fees, please call Alex311 at 703.746.4311 or submit questions online at [alexandriava.gov/Alex311](http://alexandriava.gov/Alex311).

## ENTERTAINMENT

# 4 Dates to Circle in June

BY HOPE NELSON

From beer festivities to Pride celebrations to a leisurely evening mansion-side, June has so much to offer Alexandrians in the way of food, drink and fun. Here are a few of our top picks.

### Grapes and Hops at Cedar Knoll, June 2

Enjoy a wine and beer tasting with hors d'oeuvres, all while helping Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services enrich the lives of schoolchildren. Cedar Knoll plays host to the event; bring a picnic blanket

or some chairs and sprawl out across the restaurant's extensive front lawn, taking in the river and all the sights. 9030 Lucia Lane. 6-9 p.m. \$80.

### First Annual Del Ray Beer Fest at Hops N Shine, June 3

Post up at Hops N Shine to celebrate summertime beer. Go local with featured breweries such as Denizens Brewing in Silver Spring, Kindred Spirits from Richmond and Potter's Craft Cider in Charlottesville, among others. With 52 beer lines, there will be something for everyone to enjoy – and toast to! 3410 Mount Vernon Ave. 3-8 p.m. \$35.

### APPETITE

### Pride Drag Brunch at King and Rye, June 10

Celebrate Pride Month in style with a robust Pride Drag Brunch at King and Rye. A powerful lineup of performers will delight you as you dig into a hearty brunch. Along with the entertainment, each ticket provides you with an entrée off King and Rye's brunch menu as well as a selection from the juice bar. Want to spice it up? Add a bottle of champagne and let the mimosas flow. 480 King St. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. \$45.

### Wright at Twilight at Woodlawn and Pope-Leighey House, June 16

Ring in the weekend with a glass of wine

and some complementary snacks as dusk falls at the Pope-Leighey House. Take a tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright construction, play lawn games, listen to music and watch how the changing light highlights the architecture. Bring a picnic and breathe in the spring air. 9000 Richmond Highway. 6:30-9 p.m. \$25.

*Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).*

### CALENDAR

#### 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 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.

#### NOW THRU JUNE 25

**Kandinski.** At Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery announces the opening of its juried show "Kandinsky," which will run from May 23, 2023-June 25, 2023, featuring fiber art interpretations of Kandinsky's paintings.

#### JUNE 1-AUGUST 31

**Creative Summer Programs.** At Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, mixed media, mosaic, jewelry, watercolor, and more from local artists. Dive into creative exploration solo or with friends. For children and/or adults, free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Visit the website: [DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer](http://DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer)

#### JUNE 2-25

**The "American Patchwork" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that highlights the diversity of cultures, landscapes, and artistic styles that make up the American experience. The exhibit broadly explores and captures the patchwork spirit of the United States and her people. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Reception: Friday, June 2, 7-9pm. Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

#### FRIDAY/JUNE 2

**Women's Work – Jane Franklin Dance: NVFAA at the Athenaeum.** 7:30 pm. At 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance returns to the Athenaeum with works that respond to the current exhibit Women's Work in coordination with the exhibition by visual



The Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair will take place on Saturday, June 3, 2023 in Alexandria.

artists Kirsty Little, Donna McCullough, Kathryn McDonnell. Visit the website: <https://janefranklin.com/performances>

#### MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS

Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria

#### JUNE

3 Wicked Sycamore (Contemporary Folk)  
10 Let it Flow Band (R/B, Soul)  
17 The Box Tops (Pop, Rock)  
24 Kadencia Orchestra (Bomba, Plena, Salsa)

#### JULY

1 Fast Eddie & The Slowpokes (Blues)  
8 Robin and Linda Williams (Folk)  
15 DuPont Brass (Soul)  
22 Rebekah Todd (Rock, Soul, Blues)  
29 Scott Kurt & Memphis 59 (Southern Rock)

#### AUGUST

5 Incendio (Latin)  
12 The Gibson Brothers (Bluegrass)  
19 Mariachi Estrellas (Mexican folklorico)  
26 The 19th Street Band (Country Rock)

#### SATURDAY/JUNE 3

**Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair.** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1 Prince Street on the Potomac River. Volunteer Alexandria is thrilled to present the Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair. The fair features local and regional artists and crafters who showcase their pieces across various mediums, including pottery, stationery, fabrics, paintings, jewelry, photography, and more. Visit the website <https://www.volunteerallexandria.org/events>

#### SATURDAY/JUNE 3

**Free Lecture, "A History of Burgundy."** 1:00 p.m.

At the Franconia Museum, inside the Franconia Government Center, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Historians Nathaniel Lee, Donald Hakenson and Carl Sell from the Franconia Museum will present a free lecture about the early history of the Burgundy neighborhood. Come hear about the colonial-era merchants that lived at Burgundy. Hear the account of Tom Fuller, the renowned "Alexandria Calculator." See General Howard's encampment of Union troops in the Civil War. Follow the earliest days of Burgundy Farm Country Day School... and so much more! Visit [www.franconiamuseum.org](http://www.franconiamuseum.org).

#### SATURDAY/JUNE 3

**Used Book Sale:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional>.

#### TUESDAY/JUNE 20

**Mapping Ancestor's Neighborhood.** 1-3 p.m. Via Zoom. Have you ever wondered where your ancestors lived, shopped, worked, attended church? Genealogy educator and lecturer Chuck Mason will discuss how a great deal of this information can be gleaned by matching genealogical records with maps printed during your ancestor's

time. Register for this FREE ZOOM event by emailing a registration request to the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society at [contact-us@mvgenealogy.org](mailto:contact-us@mvgenealogy.org). Find out more about this and other society events at <https://mvgenealogy.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](http://Ticketmaster.com). Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or [www.Birchmere.com](http://www.Birchmere.com).

#### JUNE

Fri. 2: Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy \$45.00 (Resched from 3/4/23)  
Sat. 3: Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes \$59.50  
Sun. 4: Leonid & Friends \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Tue. 6: RIOPY \$29.50  
Fri. 9: Marcus Miller \$69.50  
Sun. 11: TWEET \$45.00  
Tue. 13: America \$119.50 SOLD OUT!  
Wed. 14: America \$99.50 SOLD OUT!  
Fri. 16: NRBQ \$45.00  
Sat. 17: Atlantic Starr \$59.50 SOLD OUT!  
Sun. 18: Atlantic Starr \$59.50  
Tue. 20: Happy Together Tour 2023 featuring The Turtles, Little Anthony, Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, The Vogues, The Classics Iv, And The Cowsills \$99.50 SOLD OUT!  
Thu. 22: The Voice of The Moody Blues JUSTIN HAYWARD with Mike Dawes \$79.50  
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A volunteer vet and AWLA staff member providing vet care to a community member's dog at a Pets and People Community Wellness event.



An AWLA summer camper visiting with an adoptable kitten.

# AWLA: First Animal Welfare Organization Certified Autism Center

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

Throughout its history and evolution, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) seeks to provide an easy-to-cross bridge between animals and Alexandrians. Especially in recent years – since a global pandemic illuminated the importance of community – the AWLA has been hyper focused on eliminating any barrier that would prevent anyone from walking through its doors.

Whether you are going through the steps of animal adoption or are attending an educational program, the AWLA team wants you to feel at home.

Over the last several months, the AWLA has taken steps in a brand new direction to ensure that they provide the most “open arms” environment possible. Setting a precedent for animal rescue groups everywhere, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria last month became the nation’s first ever animal welfare organization to become a Certified Autism Center – a designation awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).

The IBCCES – an independent credentialing organization that provides specialized training and certifications to professionals who work with people who have autism and other cognitive challenges – officially awarded the AWLA with this accolade in April, following four months of training and preparation.

“Inclusion and access have long been priorities in the work we do, and for many years, the AWLA has worked to identify ways we can improve and develop our programs and events,” Joanna Fortin, AWLA Director

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Sensory bags put together by AWLA for shelter visitors with sensory sensitivity disorders



of Community Programs, said. “We began work on this project last year after learning of the Certified Autism Center designation program. And now that we’ve reached our goal, I can say the greatest benefit of being a Certified Autism Center is that we are better prepared to welcome, include, and support all members of our community.”

As a Certified Autism Center, the AWLA collectively has the knowledge and the resources to consistently meet the experiential needs of people with autism and other sensory sensitivity conditions.

Whether a neurodivergent individual is visiting the shelter or participating in one of the AWLA’s many educational or community programs, the Alexandria non-profit now has the strategies and resources in place to provide full support.

“While animal shelters can be fun, excit-

ing places where wonderful things happen, we are aware that there can be lots of sensory stimulation, such as dogs barking, smells of cleaning products, and lots of animals and people moving around,” Fortin said. “Our team feels better equipped to support sensory-sensitive and neurodivergent community members now, so visitors can feel confident that staff have been trained to accommodate their potential needs and that they are welcome to visit, adopt, foster, or volunteer with us.”

The AWLA leadership team reached out to the IBCCES last year to pursue this certification because they realized that there was a significant portion of the local population who, as a result of living with autism or other sensory processing disorders, couldn’t seamlessly access community animals.

The organization’s decision-makers could

no longer just sit back knowing that there were just too many hurdles – and fixable ones – between the AWLA and so many people who would make fantastic, loving pet owners.

There was excitement and enthusiasm on both sides when the AWLA first approached the IBCCES in December of 2022.

“The AWLA reached out to us to pursue certification because they recognized the importance of improving accessibility and inclusion at their location and wanted to better understand and serve the public as they work to achieve their mission,” Natalia Gonzales, IBCCES Marketing Manager, said. “We’re very excited for them to lead the way for this type of initiative for other organizations in their field.”

SEE AUTISM CENTER, PAGE 15

FROM PAGE 7

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 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 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, [ktoohy@ccda.net](mailto:ktoohy@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).

**Legals**

**LEGAL NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to members of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Association for Clinical Oncology that their Annual Business Meetings will be held in Chicago, IL, in room S103 of the McCormick Place Convention Center, 2301 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Drive, Chicago, IL, on Monday, June 5, 2023 at 12:00PM U.S. Central Time.

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# AWLA: First Animal Welfare Organization Certified Autism Center

FROM PAGE 13

The AWLA chose to pursue this particular certification because of the IBCCES's national reputation and influence.

"The IBCCES seems to be one of the more widespread programs and a lot of organizations who get credentialed through them are aquariums and amusement parks – so venues that see a lot of traffic and have great community engagement," Fortin said. "We also appreciate that they have a great, accessible website where families can search for organizations that are Certified Autism Centers."

The AWLA had to make procedural changes as well as certain adjustments to its facilities. Also the AWLA facility is also now fully stocked with the right tools and resources for potential new visitors.

"We worked to integrate options and accommodations throughout each visitor's experience," Fortin said. "We offer sensory bags with items that can help reduce overstimulation or sensory overload, such as noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, and fidget tools. We also provide low-sensory, quiet locations within our shelter where visitors can decompress and take a break from the excitement and noises of the shelter."

Fortin added that the AWLA is also committed to providing virtual meetings with adoptable animals when it is necessary.

To earn accreditation, the AWLA had to put 80 percent of its public-facing staff and volunteers through the IBCCES training and certification program. The AWLA did the IBCCES one better, though: 100 percent of its public-facing staff and volunteers participated, gaining in-depth understanding of how to best assist and relate to people with sensory sensitivity.

"Members of our team completed training of varying lengths and depth depending on their role," Fortin said. "Each training culminated in a quiz to confirm understanding of the material that the IBCCES presented.

Then, once everyone completed training, we were awarded the Certified Autism Center designation for a two-year period."

Fortin said that being a Certified Autism Center will bring indisputable benefits to the AWLA – and to everyone in the community. With more potential volunteers, adopters, and fosters out there, the animals in the AWLA's care has a greater chance of finding homes. Also, people with autism and related disorders now can either volunteer or simply visit with animals.

"We really hope this new development will increase adoptions," Fortin said. "One of the things we learned in our training is that a lot of families with someone on the autism spectrum must do a lot of planning before they act on any big decision. Hopefully we've made planning for pet ownership a lot easier for people ... Animals can provide a vast array of benefits for many individuals with autism, including connection and relationships that improve wellbeing, build social skills, and increase a person's sense of community."

The impact of the AWLA becoming a CAC has already rippled beyond Alexandria to make some big waves. The move has already started some important conversations among other animal rescue groups in Northern Virginia.

"We have already heard from a few regional partners that they have had conversations around it," Fortin said. "We hope to inspire others to do this, whether or not it is through this particular certification. As we continue to work through this and have people come in and utilize accommodations, we will be able to share these lessons with other people. We also hope to learn from others in general – to collaborate on a big scale to make animal shelters in general more available and welcoming to everyone. We want to be a part of the dialogue however we can be."

To learn more, visit <https://alexandrianimal.org>.

# Dedicated Debate

FROM PAGE 3

"Last year, DASH went through a big effort and was very publicly praised for increasing the number of stops so the buses were more accessible, especially to people with disabilities and people with kids," said James Lewis, chairman of the Alexandria Traffic and Parking Board. "So while there are definitely benefits in stop-consolidation, you also raise questions of is it equitable and is it accessible?"

**WITH THE CITY COUNCIL** vote expected before elected officials head into summer break, the June 27 vote is expected to be one of the more consequential decisions of the year.

Because next year is an election year for the mayor and all members of City Council,

it could end up being a dividing line for candidates in the Democratic primary next June.

Although some have expressed a desire to delay the vote until the fall, the mayor says city officials have engaged in an expansive outreach effort that has taken input from a wide variety of people to make sure that people have been heard.

"I think they've done a really good job of engaging with transit riders, which is something we don't typically do," said Wilson, who says he has not yet determined if he will run for reelection next year. "We do a lot of transit projects where we don't engage with transit riders, which is frustrating. But they've been out there at bus stops getting to folks who are actually riding transit on Duke Street."

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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.

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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.

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.

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# In-Laws or In Trouble



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I'm quite aware, as a longtime married man, that when one refers to in-laws, he or she is referring to the parents of their spouse. However, what does one refer to the parents of your nephew's wife? They're his in-laws, not mine, right? Regardless of what we call them, they're flying in from Kansas next week to sight-see in the nation's capital and we've been asked by our nephew to offer a helping hand. Though they're not staying at our house, they are nonetheless local and our guests, sort of, so we will be, as my friend Sean says: "pulling duty." Since Dina and I are both retired, as Curly of The Three Stooges said: "It shouldn't be a total loss."

Exactly how much time we'll be spending together is unknown. And neither are we aware of their expectations/interests/commitments, et cetera. What is known is that we are picking them up at Reagan National Airport Saturday night and driving them to their hotel in Old Town. (When they texted us about how they far/how to get to their hotel, we offered to pick them up. No problem.) After we confirmed that we'd be happy to pick them up and take them to their hotel, I was going to joke in our text back to them that we're less expensive than Uber. I decided to ask my wife, Dina if texting this text attempt at disarming humor was OKAY? She said, "Absolutely not! Sometimes humor doesn't come across in a text." And since I value our marriage, I omitted my joke.

Now we've only met these quasi-in-laws once, at our nephew's wedding to their daughter some 10 years ago or so and have never communicated/exchanged any information about the other (no phone numbers, no emails, no landline; nothing. We couldn't get a hold of them if our lives depended on it). And though the reception was outside at their home - in a comfortable and welcoming environment, I can't say Dina or I spent much one-on-one time with either of them. Nor would we have remembered their first names, or last name even for that matter until our nephew reminded us - in advance. Furthermore, we're not sure if we'll even recognize them at the airport, nor they us. So far, through multiple texts back and forth with one another, they've expressed their appreciation and good fortune - referring to us as "guardian angels" concerning our willingness to pick them up at the airport and "tour-guide" them around Washington, D.C. We're definitely off to a good start, I would say. Still, I'm going to keep my powder dry until I see the whites of their eyes - and to quote my late father: "the cut of their jib."

I imagine we'll get through the week relatively unscathed. As multi-decade "DVM-ers," having the opportunity to revisit the spectacular sites and Memorials in Washington, DC is worth any awkwardness that may ensue.

Certainly, we won't be discussing politics (they're from a red state in the Midwest) or religion/abortion (since they're regular church goers), so I won't be taking the name of the Lord in vain. And there won't be any swearing - on our part. We will try to seek some common ground and navigate the terrain - literally and figuratively, as carefully and respectfully as possible. Come to think of it, they may even be younger than we are, but we don't know that either (add it to the list of things what we don't know).

All we have in common is the simple fact that our nephew married their daughter. Beyond that we're clueless. On balance I would say however, that Dina and I are sort of looking forward to the week. We'll have to play the arrangements and mutual commitments by ear, so to speak, knowing as little as we do about them. And even though I'm a good listener and not a know-it-all control freak, the challenge will be integrating their expectations about Washington DC/the visit with our reality/availability and personalities. I have no doubt we'll get through the presumptive ordeal as we've experienced family members. Nevertheless, I must admit to being a bit anxious concerning our total lack of knowledge about who they are - really, and especially about the lack of any details about their reasons for coming to Washington, DC. And our exact role in any of it. Though we know visiting Washington, DC has world-wide appeal and is one of the great tourist destinations, we can't help but be curious about why now, why them? Their daughter, along with my nephew and their children visited us for July 4th holiday in 2022, perhaps that gave us a solid recommendation. If so, additional pressure may be on. Wish us well. We may need it.

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

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OPEN SUN 6/4, 2-4PM

**Old Town | \$1,087,000**

Built in 1820, living room has built-ins, a separate dining room, and an updated kit with a cozy, wood burning fireplace. Lot's of storage on upper level! Private patio for entertaining or quiet reading. Updates include a gas water heater (2018), washer, and dryer (2023). 423 S Pitt Street  
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**Riverside | \$1,075,000**

This stately, 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath colonial beautifully blends traditional style with updated modern elegance. Renovated last year, the updated kitchen opens to a spacious family room with a wood-burning fireplace & sliding doors leading to expansive yard. 2123 Rampart Dr  
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