

# Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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AUGUST 24, 2023



Mayor Justin Wilson, along with city and school board officials, is joined by student ambassadors at the ribbon cutting dedication of the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School Aug. 18 on Janneys Lane.



Douglas MacArthur Elementary School principal Penny Hairston accepts a plaque from ACPS School Board chair Michelle Rief at the Aug. 18 ribbon cutting ceremony for the new facility.

## Back to School **New Douglas MacArthur ES welcomes students.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

**I**t was years in the making but the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary finally opened its doors Aug. 18 in time for the start of the new school year.

Alexandria City Public Schools and elected officials were joined by student ambassadors in cutting the ribbon at the new 154,000 square-foot facility on Janneys Lane.

“Our dreams are now a reality,” said Douglas MacArthur principal Penny Hairston. “A building such as this is an investment in our children and in our community. The sense of community and caring throughout this project has been strong and will continue to be felt as our students are welcomed into their new classrooms.”

Construction on the facility took two years to complete following several years of planning. The \$75 million project was funded through the FY2021 and FY 2022 Capital Improvement Program budgets.

“That is a testament to the community that supported this project,” said Mayor Justin Wilson. “The taxpayers of our city made significant sacrifices to make this building exist here today. That’s what we’re celebrating – the incredible amount of sacrifice that led to an incredible investment in the next generation.”

The new facility sits on the same site as the original building, which first opened in 1943

**“Our dreams are now a reality.”**  
— Douglas MacArthur principal Penny Hairston



Mayor Justin Wilson greets elected officials and families at the Aug. 18 ribbon cutting of the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School.

with only eight classrooms. The new building for pre-K through 5th grade is three stories and can accommodate up to 840 students in 30 classrooms. Approximately 600 students are attending the new school this year.

“This is a beautifully designed school and will truly be a beacon in the community,” said ACPS Superintendent Melanie Kay-Wyatt. “This building with its modern design and welcoming and innovative space will allow our

students to learn and grow and our teachers and staff to thrive in this new environment.”

The new school features state-of-the-art technology, music rooms and a new space for physical education. Construction on turf fields and a play area for students is expected to be completed by November.

A 30,000 square foot underground parking garage includes 80 parking spaces for staff.

The facility was originally scheduled to open in 2025, but in 2019 the School Board voted to use swing space at the former Patrick Henry Elementary School for Douglas



Julie Naranjo Uphan, left, and Liz Webber attend the Aug. 18 ribbon cutting dedicating the new Douglas MacArthur Elementary School along with their children.

MacArthur students beginning in 2020. The decision allowed ACPS to accelerate the construction timeline for Douglas MacArthur.

“When we work together as a community and stay focused on our goals our community can accomplish great things,” said School Board chair Michelle Rief. “This new building represents our city’s commitment to educating and empowering all of our students to thrive in this diverse and ever-changing world that we live in.”

Added Wilson, “Amazing things are going to happen in this building. Students are going to come out prepared to take on the world. That is the investment we all made as a community -- to make sure our kids have the best learning environments possible.”



# Wendy Santantonio

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## New! Speed Cameras in School Zones Where Limit Is 15 MPH

The City of Alexandria's new school zone speed camera program will go live for the 2023-24 school year. Speed cameras are placed:

- ❖ Francis Hammond Middle School, Seminary Road, between Kenmore Avenue and North Jordan Street;

- ❖ John Adams Elementary School and Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School, North Beauregard Street, between North Highview Lane and Reading Avenue;

- ❖ George Washington Middle School, Mount Vernon Avenue, between Braddock Road and Luray Avenue.

The City conducted a two-week warning period at the end of the 2022-23 academic year. Over 3,500 warning violations were issued to motorists in two weeks. An additional warning period is happening now, and the program will go fully live on Sept. 18.

The City selected the school locations using a process that considered factors such as crash history, traffic volume, vehicle speeds, and age and number of students.

Each school zone is approxi-

mately one-quarter mile in length and has a 15 MPH speed limit when school signs are flashing, which is when the speed cameras will be active. Clear signs are in place to inform drivers they are entering a speed camera zone.

The Alexandria City Council approved an ordinance authorizing the use of speed cameras in school zones and work zones in October 2022, and funding for five speed cameras was included in the Fiscal Year 2023 Approved Budget.

The City is committed to providing Safe Routes to School, and vehicle speed is among the top concerns cited by parents when asked about their children walking or biking to school. Speed cameras are a proven safety countermeasure that can reduce the number of crashes by more than 50%, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The speed cameras automatically record speed limit violations using radar technology. After a sworn law enforcement officer affirms a violation, a speeding citation will be mailed to the vehicle's owner, lessee, or renter. The maximum fine is \$100.



Legend: ■ Speed Camera Zone

The City of Alexandria's new school zone speed camera program will go live for the 2023-24 school year, placed in the school zones shown.

## Environmental Groups Sue to Stop Exit from RGGI

### Legal action calls for Virginia to remain in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and continue participation; challenging Youngkin administration action.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Aug. 21, the Southern Environmental Law Service filed a petition for appeal in Fairfax Circuit Court on behalf of a coalition of four environmental groups, including Reston-based Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. The suit challenges the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and Michael Roland, director of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, for plans to withdraw Virginia from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI (pronounced Reggie). The other petitioners are the Association of Energy Conservation Professionals, Virginia Interfaith Power & Light, and Appalachian Voices.

"The primary issue in this case, however, remains simple: Virginia's participation in RGGI is required by law. The Agency Respondents do not have the authority to contradict decisions of the General Assembly and in any event, cannot do so on this record, which lacks evidentiary support for the respondents' changed position," argued counsel for the petitioners, Southern Environmental Law Center.

The action requests the Court, among other things, "invalidate, vacate, and declare null and void the Agency Respondents' approval and issuance of the Final RGGI Repeal; (and that) this Court direct the Agency Respondents to take all necessary steps to reinstate the RGGI Regulation and continue participation in RGGI."

"The Director must continue selling carbon allowances, the state treasurer must continue distributing the proceeds from such allowance sales into specific accounts, and the responsible state agencies must continue filing annual reports about Virginia's participation in RGGI," states the petition.

The 2020 RGGI Act requires Virginia to participate in RGGI at least through 2030, according to the petition with the Air Pollution Control Board maintaining the RGGI Regulation.

From 2031 to 2050, the 2020 Utility Act "requires the Air Pollution Control Board to maintain a regulatory program to reduce power plant emissions but affords the Board some discretion in how to do so—including allowing the Board to keep the existing 2021 to 2030 RGGI Regulation in place," states the petition.

According to Andrea McGimsey, the executive director of Faith Alliance for Climate

Solutions, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has dramatically reduced pollution from power plants while protecting Virginians from the growing effects of climate change.

"RGGI helps us leave a better world to our children and grandchildren, and we will continue to vigorously defend Virginia's participation in this successful, bipartisan program," she said in a FACC Facebook post on Aug. 3. Virginia joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in 2021 after the General Assembly passed a law in 2020 requiring Virginia's participation in the regional program.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, established in 2005 by seven governors, includes twelve Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and one Southern state. These states are part of the mandatory, market-based Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which seven governors established in 2005. They are Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia.

The twelve individual state programs function as a regional carbon emissions compliance market. The initiative sets a cap on carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from

fossil fuel-fired power plants with a capacity of 25 MW or higher and allows sources to trade emissions allowances.

On June 9, 2023, carbon dioxide allowances were sold in the 60th RGGI Auction at a clearing price of \$12.73, according to RGGI, Inc.: "The auction generated \$280.4 million for states to reinvest in strategic programs, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, direct bill assistance, and GHG (greenhouse gas) abatement programs."

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative represents the first cap-and-invest regional initiative implemented in the United States. The program began "by capping emissions at current levels in 2009 and then reducing emissions 10 percent by 2018," according to the IEA, the International Energy Agency.

"It is critical that we continue our participation in RGGI, a proven climate solution," said SELC Senior Attorney Nate Benforado.

According to the Petition for Appeal, "Virginia has seen significant benefits since joining RGGI. Carbon dioxide emissions from Virginia power plants have declined by 16.8 percent in the first two years of participation. The RGGI auctions have also generated over \$650 million for Virginians, which have flowed to important flood resiliency and en-

SEE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS, PAGE 5

# ‘Mission Accomplished’ Deputy City Manager Collins retires.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A** familiar face around City Hall has left the building for the last time as deputy City Manager Debra Collins retired effective July 1 following nearly 20 years of service.

“Today is bittersweet,” said Collins at a reception in her honor held Aug. 17 at the Redella S. “Del” Pepper Community Resource Center in the West End. “It is bittersweet that we are all together and I get to smell the flowers when so many others have not had a chance to be celebrated when they can enjoy it. But it is also bittersweet because I am not ready to go.”

Undisclosed health challenges accelerated the retirement of Collins, who was hired by then City Manager Phil Sunderland in 2003.

“This retirement was unexpected,” said Collins. “We all have challenges and most of us think it is temporary and that we will get through it. But it is not fair to Jim [Parajon] and folks who were part of my team not being able to be 100 percent. The city deserves 110 percent and at the moment I can’t give you that.”

Alexandria City Manager James Parajon announced the retirement of Collins earlier this summer.

“This is both an amazing afternoon but also a problematic one,” Parajon said at the reception. “We get to celebrate Debra but it’s also sad to see her leave.”

Parajon highlighted the accomplishments of Collins over nearly 20 years with the city.

“Debra clearly has tremendous talents and she put those to use for people that needed her help,” Parajon said.

Collins joined the City in September 2003, as the Director of Alexandria’s Department of Human Services. She came to Alexandria after serving as the Second Deputy Commissioner for the Erie County Department of Social Services in Buffalo, N.Y. for eight years. Prior to that role, she spent several years in the nonprofit sector, focused on at-risk youth services, re-housing assistance, and transitional housing for people affected by domestic violence and substance use disorders.

During her career in Alexandria, Collins became Assistant City Manager after spearheading the con-



Kate Garvey, left, presents flowers to former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins at a retirement celebration Aug. 17 at the Redella S. Pepper Community Resource Center building.



City Manager chief of Staff Sermaine McLean, left, presents a city street sign honoring former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins, Aug. 17.



Former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins retired July 1 after nearly 20 years with the city.



Former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins, seated, is celebrated by City Manager Jim Parajon, Parajon’s Chief of Staff Sermaine McLean, Director of Human and Community Services Kate Garvey and former City Manager Mark Jinks at the Aug. 17 retirement reception at the Redella S. Pepper Community Resource Center.



Former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins, center, is flanked by her daughters Safiyya Quadir and Saara Kaudeyr at a retirement reception Aug. 17 at the Redella S. Pepper Community Resource Center.

**“Because of [Debra] things got done.”**

— Former City Manager Mark Jinks

solidation of three City agencies, including the Department of Human Services, into the Department of Community and Human Services. Later, she became a Deputy City Manager, responsible for the oversight of the City’s public safety agencies, including the Alexandria Police Department, Alexandria Fire Department, Department of Emergency Communications, DCHS, the Department of Human Resources, the Office of Human Rights, and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.

She served as the City Liaison to the Health Department, Commonwealth’s Attorney, Court Service Unit, the Alexandria Library, and the Sheriff’s Office. She was also responsible for all City grant funding to nonprofits and functioned as the City’s lead staff to the Alexandria City Public Schools.

“Basically she did everything,”

Parajon said.

Collins’ significant accomplishments include the recent consolidation and co-location of all DCHS into one facility in Alexandria’s West End to meet the needs of the community and the reinstatement of the City Schools Staff Group. Collins also worked, in partnership with ACT for Alexandria, to create the Center for Alexandria’s

SEE ‘MISSION’, PAGE 5

Assistant Fire Chief Michael Cross presents former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins with a city sweater at the Aug. 17 retirement celebration.





PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Attendees applaud former Deputy City Manager Debra Collins at her retirement celebration Aug. 17 at the Redella S. Pepper Community Resource Center.

## 'Mission Accomplished'

FROM PAGE 4

Children, an advocacy and education center for families, and the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations. Additionally, Collins was instrumental in the creation of ACT for Alexandria's Spring for Alexandria, an annual day of service, and Spring2Action, an annual day of giving in support of the City's nonprofit organizations.

"I had the privilege of working with Debra for nearly her entire 20 years in the city," said former City Manager Mark Jinks. "Sometimes we were the last two people in the office at night. That led to a lot of good conversations about what was going on in the city. Debra has the best ear of anyone I have ever met in public service for understanding what was going on in departments,

what employees were thinking."

Interim Deputy City Managers Kendel Taylor and Jean Kelleher will continue in their acting roles while a national executive search for a new Deputy City Manager takes place.

"This is a journey," Collins told well-wishers. "Don't feel bad for me. We are always a sum total of our life experiences and I am still part of the fight. The perspective I am gaining now I am hoping I can use to help others in the future."

Jinks added, "A lot of things Debra did have never been written about, the community doesn't know about. But they benefit from it immensely. Because of her things got done. Mission accomplished. Thank you, Debra."

## Environmental Groups

FROM PAGE 3

ergy efficiency programs, as required by the 2020 RGGI Act."

On June 7 this year, the Virginia state regulator, the Air Pollution Control Board, voted 4-3 to repeal Virginia's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. According to scientists, carbon emissions contribute to global warming, accelerating sea level rise, and worsening extreme weather. On the day the Virginia regulator voted for the repeal, Canadian wildfire smoke caused a local code-red air quality alert.

On Dec. 8, 2021, then-Governor-Elect Youngkin stated that one of his first executive orders would be to withdraw Virginia from the initiative, which he called a carbon

tax. "We're no longer going to be part of it," Youngkin said during a speech to the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce.

State law allows utilities to recover the costs of allowance purchases from their ratepayers. The Virginia State Corporation Commission approved on July 12 a modified reinstatement and revision of the rate adjustment clause, designated Rider RGGI. Residential customers will see an additional fee of approximately \$4.44 on their monthly electric bills beginning Sept. 1 to cover the utility's costs of participating in the market between July 31, 2022, and the end of this year. Previously, Dominion Energy added about \$2.39 to the average residential electricity bill.

## Book Events At Elaine's

Jeffrey James Higgins, author of "Furious" and "Unseen," will host a series of public book events in the upstairs library room at Elaine's on Queen Street over the next several months. At each event the author will discuss their book and be interviewed by Higgins followed by questions by the audience and a book signing.

❖ Saturday, Aug. 26, 1 pm Dana King, new crime novel "Spread." A Penns River crime novel.

❖ Sunday, Sept. 10, 5 pm Melissa Adelman, domestic thriller "What the Neighbors Saw." Gossip and greed...mind games and murder. Welcome to the neighborhood.

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# Dyke Marsh Volunteers Tackle Invasive Plants and Plant Natives

Photos by Glenda Booth



David Padilla helped pull up invasive stiltgrass.



Kathy Killian, Clarence Monteiro and Nancy Herrmann and others pulled up three big piles of stiltgrass on August 19.



Clarence Monteiro watered the native plants put in in 2023.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH  
THE GAZETTE

## More Information

In late summer and early fall, clusters of berries in vibrant hues, from aqua to pink to purple, dangle prominently from porcelain berry vines. But beware! Porcelain berry is a highly invasive deciduous vine that grows rapidly and smothers everything within reach. Each berry can have two to four seeds which birds and other wildlife eat and disperse in their droppings.

Two Saturdays a month in all weather, most recently on Aug. 19, Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM) volunteers tackle invasive plants, like porcelain berry, English ivy, mile-a-minute, stiltgrass, garlic mustard and bush honeysuckle in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Around 20 percent of the parkway's plants are not native, maintains the National Park Service (NPS), like the ubiquitous ivy climbing up trees.

## Invasives' Harm

Invasive plants are introduced species not native to an area and

likely to cause environmental and economic harm. They lack the natural controls of their native ranges so they can spread rapidly. They can displace native plants, compete with natives for soil, water, nutrients and light and form monocultures.

University of Delaware entomologist Douglas Tallamy explains in his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, "When a plant is transported to an area of the world that contains plants, animals and diseases with which it has never before interacted, the coevolutionary constraints that kept it in check at home are gone, as are the ecological links that made that plant a contributing member of its ecosystem."

Parkway Superintendent Charles Cuvelier says, "Invasive plants pose a threat to the biodiversity of Dyke Marsh. Through targeted treatments and community involve-

ment, we are making significant progress in our efforts to control these species and promote native plants. As stewards of Dyke Marsh, we recognize the importance of managing invasive plants. By working together with our partners and volunteers, we can ensure the long-term health and sustainability of this valuable ecosystem."

## Planting Native Plants

In 2018 and 2023, in partnership with NPS, FODMers cleared three areas overrun with invasive plants and planted around 4,100 native trees and plants. It appears that around 80 percent of the plants and trees are surviving.

Native plants are those that occur naturally in an area. "Plants and animals evolve together to cre-

ate unique natural communities, weaving a complex web of interrelationships," according to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. A balanced and healthy ecosystem depends on the interactions of species. "When you try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe," wrote conservationist John Muir.

Native plants that produce nectar, pollen and seeds are food for native birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife. Many insects, like butterflies, depend on specific plants, called "host plants," with which they co-evolved for their food and shelter. Monarch butterflies, for example, lay their eggs on milkweed; spicebush butterflies, on spicebushes.

The National Audubon Society's website points out that lawns, monocultures of typically non-native grasses, cover over 40 million U.S. acres and support minimal functioning ecosystems.

"By choosing native plants for your landscaping, you are not only helping wildlife, but you are creating a healthier place for yourself, your family and your community," says Audubon.

young. Arlington naturalist Alonso Abugattas put it this way in the latest Bay Journal: "It takes 9,120 caterpillars to raise a brood of three young chickadees." Caterpillars are very dependent on certain host plants.

What should people plant? Check out Plant NOVA Natives at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>. Abugattas calls oak trees the "grand champion native tree ... with more than 600 species of animals and insects relying on oaks to survive." He also recommends black cherry, serviceberry, dogwoods, elderberry and goldenrods. He notes that many birds eat seeds and berries, but he says, in choosing plants, "Consider planting native flora that bring insects to the table."

The National Audubon Society's website points out that lawns, monocultures of typically non-native grasses, cover over 40 million U.S. acres and support minimal functioning ecosystems.

"By choosing native plants for your landscaping, you are not only helping wildlife, but you are creating a healthier place for yourself, your family and your community," says Audubon.



Swamp milkweed planted in May by FODMers is now blooming.



The native bear's foot or leafcup plant attracts bees and other insects in the native plant area.



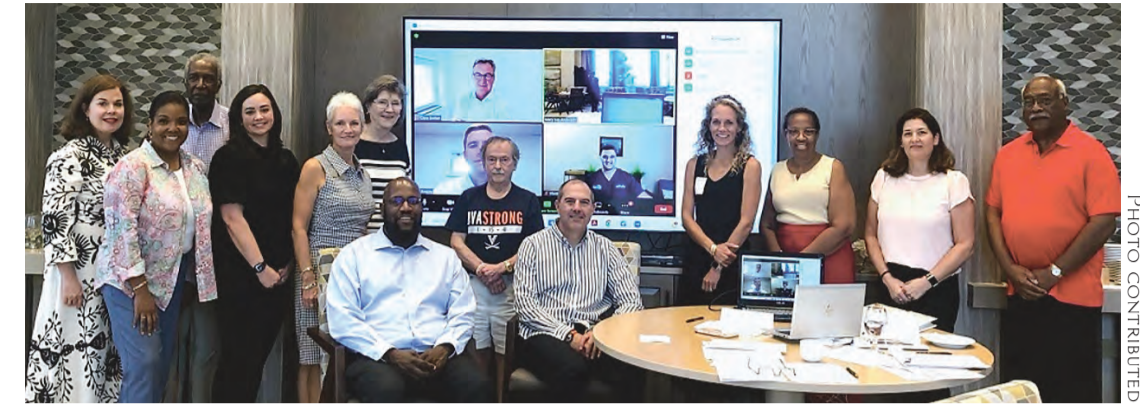
Native passion flower plants naturally returned after invasive plants were removed.



The multi-colored berries of invasive porcelain berry vines stand out in late summer.



PHOTO BY SU KIM



Senior Services of Alexandria will hold "Staying Safe for Seniors" -- Home Tips, Fall Prevention, Scams & Prescriptions, Oct. 19 at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

## No Matter What — Try Really Hard NOT To Fall

BY DEBORAH TOMPKINS JOHNSON  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE PACKET

Preventing falls has been, continues to be, and likely always will be so very important.

"Stats show us that one-in-four older adults over the age of 65 fall every year," according to Sara Pappa, Coordinator for the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance and assistant professor at Marymount University's College of Health and Education. "Those are the falls we know about. Obviously, not all falls get reported."

Between 850,000 to 950,000 hospitalizations occur every year due to falls for this age group. Falls are the leading cause of injury and injury-related deaths for people over age 65. Fifty billion dollars, yes, billion with a "b" is spent annually on falls.

We all have been told to make sure our loved ones (or we) do NOT fall. It is a simple statement to make, "Don't fall!"

"It is wise advice," continues Pappa. "And though we cannot control everything, there are measures we can take to help prevent falls."

Simple but important measures that many of us have heard, include holding on to bathroom grab bars and stairway handrails, getting rid of or securing throw rugs, making sure we have adequate lighting and even when indoors, wear shoes with adequate grips on soles.

Of course, preventing falls when we are outdoors is also extremely important. If the fall occurs on asphalt or concrete, our injury could possibly be more severe than an indoor fall. While we know falls can be unpredictable and sudden, the consequences are familiar: Recently, a friend fell on wet grass while taking garbage cans out. Outcome: Broken finger.

Another friend's mother fell several months ago while she was outside on her routine walk. Outcome: Several rehabilitation sessions.

But consider this from the New York Times, July 18, 2001: "Katharine Graham, who transformed The Washington Post from a mediocre newspaper into an American institution and, in the process, transformed herself from a shy widow into a publishing legend, died yesterday after suffering head injuries in a fall on a sidewalk on Saturday in Idaho. She was 84." Graham was healthy and active.

While circumstances of a fall vary, staying alert and aware are key mindsets. For example, simple as it seems, we need to pay attention as we approach and then step down from the curb to cross the street. Also, we should watch out for dips in the road or cracks in the sidewalk that could cause a trip, stumble and then yes, a fall.

There are medical and clinical considerations as well that might not be quite as familiar to us. The Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance recommends these five steps:

- ♦ Getting an annual medication review by a healthcare provider or pharmacist is crucial. Be knowledgeable of new medications and any changes in dosage. Have a professional check prescrip-

## Safety for Seniors

On Oct. 19, Senior Services of Alexandria will host sessions on Safety for Seniors — Home Tips, Fall Prevention, Scams & Prescriptions to be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church. [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org).

tions to ensure there is not an interaction that can create an increased risk of a fall.

- ♦ Get vision and hearing checked annually. All our senses contribute to our sense of balance and safety. If our vision is poor, we are more likely to trip over something. And hearing loss could mean we miss something coming from behind or in our periphery, where we might not move in time to get out of the way.

- ♦ A gait and balance assessment can be done by a health care provider or a physical therapist. There are also some materials on the Centers for Disease Control website that will help us conduct our own brief falls risk assessment and determine if we are physically susceptible to increased risk of falling.

- ♦ A home safety check can be conducted by private or non-profit companies or professionals like an occupational therapist. Also, organizations like AARP and the CDC have materials that can be used for self-assessments. These assessments explain how we can go room-by-room to check for possible hazards or situations that are not ideal. A few things included in these assessments suggest looking for any electrical cord that cuts across a room. Couch-chair-coffee table arrangements could put us at risk for a fall if there is not adequate space between the furniture pieces. If there is a threshold difference between two rooms where one is just a little taller than the other, consider a change or repair. Hallways and stairways need sufficient lighting and hand railings on both sides are good fall prevention features.

- ♦ Being physically fit and focusing on strength, balance and flexibility are important. Many organizations who work with older adults offer exercise and awareness programs that support our need for strength, balance and flexibility.

Through a federal grant administered by Marymount University, the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance offers these types of programs throughout our region. Localities served include Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Loudoun, Prince William and the District of Columbia. For example, A Matter of Balance and SAIL — Stay Active and Independent for Life classes are running, now. [www.novafallsprevention.com](http://www.novafallsprevention.com)

Additionally, on Oct. 19, Senior Services of Alexandria will host sessions on Safety for Seniors— Home Tips, Fall Prevention, Scams & Prescriptions to be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church. [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org).

And please always bear in mind that you can check with your locality's social services department or Area Agency on Aging for fall prevention and other programs for older adults.



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## ENTERTAINMENT



The Around the World Cultural Food Festival will take place on Saturday, Aug. 26, at Oronoco Bay Park in Old Town Alexandria.

**NOW THRU 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. Delve 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)

**WEDNESDAYS THROUGH SATURDAYS**  
Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center. 10 a.m. to 5

p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tall-shipprovidence.org/>

**JULY 25-SEPT. 17**  
**Captured: Plants and Places.** 1-4 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Step into the world of plants across the region and in still life at a season-spanning photography exhibit July 25 to Sept. 17 at Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center. The lyrical collection "Captured: Plants and Places" features botanical imagery drawn from the Washington area to Maine, including studio photos, intimate outdoor vignettes and landscape scenes. The photographers' varying visions and styles in color and black-and-white invite viewers to explore the wonder of wild and horticultural lands. An opening reception with the artists is July 30 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Atrium at Green Springs Gardens Horticultural Center.

**JULY 27 TO SEPT. 3**  
**Obscura: Tinam Valk Exhibit.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Reception on Sunday, Aug. 13 from 4-6 p.m. Tinam Valk's work explores the ambiguity of subjects such as oceans, rivers, landscapes, sometimes a combination of land and water, and figures or animals depicted within a land and water environment. Photographs, ranging from 60 to 100 years old in combination with sketches and memory and made-up environments, serve as a source for much of this work.

**AUG. 4-26**  
**The "Treasures of the DMV" exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that celebrates the wonders of DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Come see famous and overlooked regional gems from the perspective of local artists. Opening Reception: Friday, August 4, 7-9pm. Open Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm (Closed on August 27). [Del-RayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

**THURSDAY/AUG. 24**  
**Book Discussion and Signing.** 7 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. First-Ever Book Discussion and Signing with Four Finalist Authors for the Prestigious George Washington Literary Prize. The authors will discuss their important new books related to the founding of America. The event is free; attendees can submit questions and have their books signed. The 2023 George Washington Prize finalists are:  
Mary Sarah Bilder, *Female Genius: Eliza Harriot and George Washington at the Dawn of the Constitution*.  
Fred Kaplan, *His Masterly Pen: A Biography of Jefferson the Writer*  
Stacy Schiff, *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*  
Maurizio Valsania, *First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity*

**AUG. 25-26**  
**Colorful Begonias at Green Spring Gardens.** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday; Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. At 4603 Green Spring Road in Alexandria. Immerse yourself in the enchanting world of begonias, presented by the Potomac Branch of the American Begonia Society. Admire the kaleidoscope of begonia varieties as each boasts unique leaf shapes and colors that will leave you in awe. This free event offers a feast for the eyes and an opportunity for society members to guide you in selecting a stunning begonia to elevate your own garden. Call 703-324-8700.

**SATURDAY/AUG. 26**  
**Around the World Cultural Food Festival.** 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, Old Town Alexandria. The seventh edition of the Around the World Cultural Food Festival, the largest outdoor cultural food festival in the Washington D.C. metro area with 50 countries participating, is back at Oronoco Bay Park. Taste authentic traditional food from the food vendors while watching a diverse folk show with singers and dancers from countries around the world. The festival will be presenting ethnic cuisine from Cambodia, China, Colombia, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, Peru, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam and United States of America, traditional dance performances from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Iran,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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FROM PAGE 8

Ireland, Japan, Panama, Scotland, Turkey and United Kingdom, as well as artisanal items from Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, El Salvador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Turkey, United States of America and much more. Visit the website [www.aroundtheworldfestival.com](http://www.aroundtheworldfestival.com).

## SUNDAY/AUG. 27

**Second Summer Sunday with the Arts.** 1-4 p.m. At the 800 block of North Royal Street, between Madison and Montgomery Streets, Alexandria. Hosted by the Old Town North Alliance, this event will be larger than the first, with more than a dozen working artists displaying and selling their original works, from painted landscapes to textiles to concrete. Children's games and activities will be featured in the central area. The band Mars Video will perform. Civic organizations will provide snacks and beverages, as well as neighborhood informational displays. Lost Boy Cider will join the adjacent Farmers Market in Montgomery Park, and several of the other vendors will extend their hours. The public is invited to attend. Admission and children's activities are free. Parking is available on surrounding streets; follow local signage.

## TUESDAY/AUG. 29

**Simpson Park Demonstration Garden:** Tuesdays@10. 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Simpson Park Demonstration Garden, 420 E. Monroe Ave., Alexandria. When Mother Nature can't do it all....Simpson gardeners step in to offer a helping hand. Free. Contact [mgnv.org](http://mgnv.org) for more information.

## SEPT. 1-30

**The "Farther Afield" Exhibit.** At Del Ray Artisans gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Featuring art by local artists that takes the viewer on a journey, whether that is someplace an hour away from Alexandria or halfway across the world. Opening Reception: Friday, September 1, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 1). Details: [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**Memorial Benefit Concert.** 2 p.m. At Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Benefitting United Community and in memory of Phil Bolin, come to a Memorial Benefit Concert/Recital. Join in this enchanting performance honoring the memory of Phil Bolin featuring mezzo-soprano, Caroline Nielson, and pianist, Eddie Rothmel. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. All ticket purchases are non-refundable and will be donated to support United Community. Visit [unitedcommunity.org/concerts](http://unitedcommunity.org/concerts).

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**Virginia Arts & Music Festival.** 12 to 8:30 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Festival Program 12-2:30 p.m. — Magic of Color and Shape Visual arts exhibition

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opening with a complimentary reception. Featured artists: Karen Tyler, Tatyana Shramko, Iryna Smitchkova, Sermin Ciddi, Marcos Teixeira, Sarah Havah Theebaum, Dawn Shuler, Bugra Karaagac and a special tribute to Mirella Monti Belshé, who passed away this June.

3-4:30 p.m. — Poetical Insights: All the senses of the heart and mind Poetry and poetical story reading, featuring poems by Wayne David Hubbard, Sola Owonibi, Joseph Jablosnki aka 'The Walking Mall Poet', Margot Gotzmann (Sarah Havah Theebaum) and others, as well as poems and stories by Sufi masters.

4:30-5:15 p.m. — Lunch break — complimentary light lunch offered by organizers

5:30-6:30 p.m. — Exploring the Musical Journey: Towards the known and the unknown horizons — Lynne Mackey — pianist — classical music concert Looking both forward and back, the concert contains an eclectic mix of styles and music. Composers range from Charles Griffes, Henry Cowell and Sergei Rachmaninoff, to Tan Dun, Alexina Louie and Ann Silsbee, exploring the nature of known and unknown horizons.

7-8:30 p.m. — Documenting Beauty and Mystery: Oriental and western architecture and art in movie excerpts and comments — movie tasting

Visit the website [www.arts-and-hearts.org](http://www.arts-and-hearts.org)

## SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

**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>.

## SEPT. 10, 2023

**8th Annual George Washington Patriot 5K and 10-Miler Race.** 10-Mile race starts at 7:15 a.m. 5K race starts at 7:30 a.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Race in-person or virtually, and cross the finish line with George Washington's Mansion in view. The Finish Festival will offer each runner music, food and beverage concessions, and a complimentary beer. All participants will receive a commemorative George Washington Patriot Run T-shirt and a finisher medal engraved with George Washington's bust. Awards will be presented to first place overall, by age division, and for the military/first responder categories. Visit <https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/calendar/events/george-washington-patriot-run/>

## MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS,

### AUG. 25

**Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at Grist Mill Park,** 4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria. Aug. 25, Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)

## FRANCONIA NIGHTS

### CONCERT, AUG. 23

**Wednesday evening from 7:30-8:30 p.m.**

**At Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater,** 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria.

Aug. 23 Dave Kline Band (World Jazz Fusion)

## OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT MUSIC SERIES

**Free Concert.** Wednesday from 4-7 p.m. At Old Town Alexandria waterfront. Join in the Waterfront Wednesday Music Series. Bring a chair or simply stop by to enjoy some beautiful waterside beats. Free. Weather permitting. August 16 - Delta Spur

## SUNDAY SOUNDS

### ON THE PROMENADE

**Free Concerts.** 11:30-1:30 p.m. At 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Alexandria. Yellow Door Music Concert Series presents a musical lineup of artists on select Sundays.

Aug. 27 - Trifilio Tango Music On Aug. 27, in honor of National Dog Day that weekend, Robinson Landing encourages individuals to bring their dog out for a yappy social for play and fun for your furry ones. The full event schedule of Robinson Landing programming is located at [www.RobinsonLanding.com/WaterfrontEvents](http://www.RobinsonLanding.com/WaterfrontEvents).

## 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).

## AUGUST

Wed. 23: Steve Earle: Alone Again Tour – Solo & Acoustic w/ Danny Burns \$65.00

Fri. 25: Al Stewart with The Empty Pockets \$49.50 (Resched from 3/16/23)

Sat. 26: Kim Waters \$35.00

Sun. 27: The Robert Cray Band \$59.50

Wed. 30: Iris Dement \$45.00

Thu. 31: Black Violin – The Black Violin Experience \$90.50

## SEPTEMBER

Fri. 1: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00

Sat. 2: Raheem DeVaughn \$85.00

Thu. 7: CLANNAD \$79.50 SOLD OUT!

Fri. 8: Brett Dennen "Fool In Paradise Acoustic Tour" w/ Mon Rovia \$39.50

Sat. 9: 4th Annual DANNY GATTON Birthday Tribute \$45.00

Sun. 10: The High Kings \$59.50 SOLD OUT!

Mon. 11: Beth Orton w/ Ben Sloan \$35.00

Tue. 12: Ondara: The Rebirth Tour w/ Katacombs \$29.50

Wed. 13: Jonathan Coulton and Paul & Storm \$39.50

Thu. 14: James McMurtry w/ BettySoo \$39.50

Fri. 15: The Jayhawks w/ Freedy Johnston \$49.50 SOLD OUT!

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Fri. 22: Patton Oswalt: Effervescent \$65.00 SOLD OUT!

Sat. 23: 40 Fingers \$35.00

Sun. 24: Therapy Gecko Live! Lyle The Therapy Gecko \$29.50

Thu. 28: Yachtley Crew \$35.00

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## Obituary

## Obituary

### Francis J. Sullivan



**Francis Joseph Sullivan (Frank)**, a dedicated family man and public servant, died on August 16, 2023 in Alexandria, Virginia.

Frank was born on October 8, 1932 in Boston to Otilly and Francis Joseph Sullivan. Frank is survived by the love of his life, Patricia Hogan Sullivan, his wife of 68 years, as well as his five children: David Sullivan, Kathy (Lee) Terry, Martha (Robert) Jones, Patrick (Teresa) Sullivan, and Peter (Sheila Herriott) Sullivan. He was also the beloved "Papa" to eight grandchildren: Syd (Larkin Parker) Terry, Elizabeth (Ryan) Dolan, Sarah Terry, Christopher Jones, Carolyn (Jonathan) Rhea, Cathryn Jones, Nicholas Sullivan and Kathleen (Travis) Jones and two great-grandchildren Patch Dolan and Audrey Rhea. Besides his wife and family, Frank loved fishing, the Boston Red Sox (his first employer) and everything Irish. Frank was a lifelong Catholic with great faith in the hope of eternal life.

Frank attended Boston Latin School and received a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Boston College. His lifelong service to his country started with the U.S. Army, followed by work on the first use of military digital computers at Western Electric. Frank continued his public service with the U.S. Army Management Logistics Center, the Department of Defense and the United States Senate. He retired from Capitol Hill in 1989 after having served as Staff Director of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee and then the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee. He then served as a member of the Executive Panel for the Chief of Naval Operations, the Defense Science Board, the Defense Practices Board, the Board of Directors of the Stennis Center for Public Service and was a Senior Fellow with the Center for Naval Analysis.

Visitation is Monday, August 28 from 3:00 - 5:00 pm at Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home in Alexandria. A Funeral Mass will be offered on Tuesday, August 29, 2023 at 11:00 am, at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Alexandria. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to a charity of your choice.

## Obituary

## Obituary



**Lucy Hepburn Johnson**, a longtime resident of Alexandria, Virginia, passed away peacefully on August 1, 2023. She was 86 years old.

Lucy was born on March 27, 1937 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, daughter of Helen Bridget and William McGuffey Hepburn. Her father's deanship at Emory University law school brought the Hepburn family to Atlanta in the 1950s. She graduated from Catholic University in Washington DC in 1959. She was a thoughtful and loving mother and grandmother, and an active member of the Alexandria community as a teacher and an accomplished artist known for her sought-after pottery, sculptures, and paintings.

Lucy was an important member of the Alexandria artisan community and a fixture at the historic Alexandria Farmers Market, the oldest continuously operating farmers market in the U.S. since 1753. Over the course of 30 years she rarely missed a Saturday in the market square in front of City Hall showcasing her beautiful handmade pottery. She also had a studio for many years at the venerable Grey House Pottery Collective in Arlington, VA. Lucy was a respected art teacher who joyfully shared her pottery and glazing techniques to create both practical and beautiful stoneware enjoyed today in thousands of homes. Her works of art and handmade stoneware pieces are treasured keepsakes for many. Lucy's passion for her craft and dedication to passing on her artistic knowledge has been chronicled in various media outlets and will be remembered as part of her legacy.

Lucy was preceded in death by her daughter Helen Johnson Davies. She is survived by her sister Catherine Hepburn and sister-in-law, Alice Hepburn; her former husband Tony Johnson; daughter Cathy Johnson Hott and son-in-law Ed Hott; son Andy Johnson and daughter-in-law Denise Thrappas Johnson; son Frank Johnson and daughter-in-law Jamie Libertone Johnson; son-in-law Brian Davies; grandchildren Nathan Hott, Bridget Hott, Charlie Hott, Adrienne Johnson, Jack Johnson, Andrew Johnson, Evan Johnson, and Ronan Davies..

Family and friends are invited to attend a memorial service that will be held August 26 at 3:00 pm followed by a reception at Goodwin House Alexandria, 4800 Fillmore Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia, 22311.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that donations be made in Lucy's memory to support two programs at Goodwin House that were important to Lucy. These programs are part of the Goodwin Living Foundation. Please note in the comment section on the following link: "Staff Support Fund in Memory of Lucy Johnson" or "Hospice Fund in Memory of Lucy Johnson" <https://goodwinliving.org/giving/> 4800 Fillmore Avenue, Alexandria VA 22311

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**Obituary**

**DeLyle Bronte Medlin, Jr. (Bud)**

After a brief illness, DeLyle Bronte Medlin, Jr. (Bud) passed away in Beaver Falls, Pa. on July 6, 2023. Mr. Medlin was a native of Alexandria, Va. having graduated from GW High School and thereafter Emory and Henry College and The University of Virginia where he was awarded a Master of Education Degree. He taught elementary school for 32 years in Alexandria and retired to Columbia, South Carolina to be with family. He is survived by a sister, Karen (John) in Beaver Falls, PA., a brother, John D. Medlin, Esq. of Columbia, S.C., a niece, Ann Bronte Graff, Esq. of Pittsburgh, PA. and two nephews, John W. Graff, Jr. (Hannah and sons Tex and Theo) of Swampscott, MA. and Adam Medlin Graff (Brooke and children Ezra and Kyzer) of Beaver Falls, PA. A lifelong lover of animals, Mr. Medlin enjoyed the companionship of many pets throughout his life and the family wishes in lieu of flowers that any memorials in his honor be made to the Humane Society. A loyal and faithful son, brother and friend, he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

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# SENIOR LIVING

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIAN



Earl Brown, 95, says that he maintains his current level of fitness by working out with The Virginian's Fitness Director Maria Leonor Malca.



91-year old Leila Brown, a resident of the Virginian, works out with the community's Fitness Director Maria Leonor Malca three days each week.

## Fit After 90

Working out six days each week is what one couple attributes to their longevity.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE GAZETTE

On most days you are likely to find Earl and Leila Brown lifting weights, doing chest presses or using multifunction strength machines. What makes the feat remarkable is the Earl is 95 and Leila is 91.

Married for 70 years, the Browns credit engaging in a regular exercise regimen to maintain their physical wellbeing with their longevity.

Fitness plays a vital role in maintaining physical and mental health, especially for the elderly population. Many seniors struggle with health issues and reduced mobility due to age-related factors.

Earl and Leila Brown work out six days a week, with three of those days spent training with Maria Leonor Malca, the fitness director at The Virginian, the independent living facility where they reside.

"Working with Maria over the last few years has been extremely helpful with regards to keeping us strong and in balance which helps us with our daily activities," said Earl.

A lifelong commitment to staying fit has also played a role in the current state of health.

"I have been exercising doing calisthenics since I was in my 20s and continue to do so every day," says Leila. "We do our own exercises, but we go together."

Earl attributes his current health to a lifetime of physical activity. "I played sports all my life. Even through my 70s, I played volleyball."

A commitment to exercise and a healthy diet are foundational to maintaining fitness in older adults, said Malca. Her work with seniors at The Virginian includes focus on

improving balance, providing guidance on proper footwear, and encouraging her clients to consume lean protein with vegetables while practicing portion control.

Malca, who believes that 20 minutes of exercise a day is important, concentrates on four key components of longevity in her fitness programs: dynamic movement, breathing for wellness, pelvic training, and increasing muscle mass. The elements are tailored to meet the specific needs and capabilities of each person.

When a person is injured, a consistent exercise program is vital to their recovery process, stated Malca. "People who exercise regularly can recover from an injury much faster than someone who is a couch potato," she said.

The Browns say that their careers and continued engagement in the community also contribute to their overall wellbeing.

Earl, a Rear Admiral in the US Navy, served as a physician and psychiatrist. His Navy service included organizing and participating in sports activities, fostering a passion for physical fitness. After retiring from the Navy, he worked in private industry, focusing on health policy research.

A former medical technologist, Leila paused her career to raise their children before pursuing modeling at the age of 50. She worked for John Robert Powers Modeling School and participated in fashion shows in New York.

Passionate about art, Earl began taking oil painting lessons. His apartment showcases two of his paintings, while others were given to the couple's children and grandchildren.

Leila immersed herself in the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), conducting tours of historic period rooms and playing an active role in the organization. She joined the Capital Speakers Club of Washington D.C., teaching public speaking to women visiting the capital.

"I've been active always and that has helped with my longevity," said Leila. "A lot has to do with my genes, diet and exercise and willingness to participate in life – I want to live a life that's fulfilling."

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

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

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

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

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

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

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

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## And So "The Dance Begins"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So said my roofing contractor when I told him of the total amount my homeowner's policy/company has agreed to compensate us for the damage to our house caused when a tree crashed onto my roof on July 14. Not that I have much experience with such matters, but even though the adjuster was as understanding and reassuring as a homeowner in distress would hope, I realized after that initial Sat., morning "adjustment" when he arrived at my home and assessed the damage, that it matters less what he says and more what he/the company does (as in valuing the agreed-upon repairs/replacement and compensating me reasonably). At this juncture, all we do is wait and see. However, it doesn't make it any less frustrating. In fact, it kind of makes it worse. I don't want to push, or should I pull, or vice versa.

Sure enough, 15 days after filing the claim (Maryland law mandates that claims must be paid/settled within 15 days), I received a phone call from my adjuster (finally) advising me of the settlement. Given what we all had discussed on that first Saturday – and the damage done: one entire roof including gutters and downspouts, two central air-conditioning units, exterior whole house painted, one interior room painted, two rooms of wooden floors refinished, a new chandelier and associated electrical work to install/repair the chandelier and related switches in the den, and a 6 x 9 Oriental-type rug and pad, all adversely affected by the water leaking through the ceiling/electrical fixture – in Montgomery County Maryland in 2023, and \$38,500 "ain't gonna cut it." (Exactly what my wife, Dina said to me on concerning our presumptive fancy dinner plans to celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary all those many years ago.)

So now, apparently, the burden falls on me, according to my roofing contractor, to up the ante and present my evidence (estimates, and invoices already billed/paid – by us) to the adjuster/company and hopefully prove my loss. I didn't think the financial resolution was as simple as the adjuster seemed to indicate/say during his on-site visit on Sat. July 21, but his manner was so matter-of-fact/agreeable that a part of me was fairly hopeful/convinced that what has actually happened: very little, and an awfully low settlement to boot was not inevitable. Live and learn, or buyer beware; I'm not sure which. But I fear I may soon find out.

Though I'm hoping (expecting not so much) that once the company has reviewed the actual estimates and invoices I will have supplied, that all will be right in my homeowner's policy's world and the company will have no contractual recourse other than to pay what I've been led to believe – by experts, that I'm due. And the process/negotiation likely occurring from now until the damages are fairly valued and settled to my financial satisfaction (as in I and our house are made whole) are likely to be characterized by a series of ups and downs, and fits and starts; all absolutely consistent, as it so happens, with the last 14 and half years of my life as a cancer patient undergoing treatment for an originally-diagnosed-as-terminal, stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer. As such, if anybody can assimilate what I presume lays ahead – with respect to this moving-target-type homeowner's insurance claim, it would be me, my oncologist's self-proclaimed "third miracle." I have not only been there and done that, but I am still doing it going on nearly 15 years. I might even say that this kind of uncertainty is exactly how I roll. Still, I never completely know if I'll be rolling over a cliff as in cancer patients are rarely given guarantees about their future. In fact, my oncologist is usually hesitant to even discuss scenarios; he'd rather wait and see and then assess whatever presents. It's not ideal, but as I've said many times before: "It's a living and it sure beats the alternative."

However, I do have my limitations and the fewer hurdles and blips as possible would be preferred. I don't exactly have an unlimited capacity for such pursuits. I use most of it to withstand the vagaries of my current thyroid cancer diagnosis. After all, I didn't cause the tree to fall on my house anymore than I caused my original diagnosis of lung cancer by smoking cigarettes or generally neglecting my health, et cetera. Nevertheless, as much as one must accommodate a cancer diagnosis, I really don't want to do the same concerning a homeowner's claim. To the company/adjuster: please don't make a bad situation worse. Follow the evidence and follow the money. I'm simply a claimant. Don't make me a victim too.

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

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## Old Town | \$1,965,000

Rarely available, totally renovated home in Old Town's SE Quadrant. Over 2,000 sq.ft. with three exposures, sunlight abounds. Gourmet kitchen, separate dining room, spacious bedrooms each with en-suite, and an additional main level room which can be used as a home office, family room or bedroom. Expansive patio and side brick walkway are perfect for entertaining. Two blocks to the Potomac, four blocks to King of Street. Classic and elegant! 427 S Fairfax Street  
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OPEN SAT 8/26 & SUN 8/27, 2-4PM



## Yacht Haven Estates | \$950,000

This 4 level home with 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths, and 3,300+ SF of living space, was beautifully updated in 2019. Flat, fully fenced back yard with a patio and deck. Extra wide driveway & large 2-bay garage. Access to marina, pool, & more for annual fee. 4501 Tarpon Lane  
**Rebecca McCullough 571.384.0941**  
[www.RebeccaMcCullough.com](http://www.RebeccaMcCullough.com)

OPEN SAT 8/26, 1-3PM & SUN 8/27, 2-4PM



## Old Town | \$859,000

Light-filled 2-bedroom, 2-bath row house located in the SE quadrant. Main level living room with fireplace, dining area, updated kitchen, & sunroom overlooking the private back patio. Finished lower level & attic storage. Dedicated parking space. 403 Jefferston St  
**Lauren Bishop 202.361.5079**  
[www.LaurenBishopHomes.com](http://www.LaurenBishopHomes.com)



## The Jamieson | \$855,000

Splendid views from this 3-bedroom, 2-bath condo conveniently located between two Metro stations. Includes 2 parking spaces and a storage unit. Open floor plan with sleek kitchen. Full-size washer & dryer. CherieWilderotter.com. 2050 Jamieson Ave #1216  
**Donna Cramer 703.627.9578**  
**Cherie Wilderotter 703.371.3345**

OPEN SUN 8/27, 1-3PM



## Old Town | \$830,000

Charming 3-bedroom townhouse in the SW Quadrant ready for new owners! Updated interior while keeping the classics like hardwoods, crown molding and more. High walk score and close to Metro and highway access. 613 S Fayette St  
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[www.homeswithcolleenwright.com](http://www.homeswithcolleenwright.com)

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