

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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OCTOBER 12, 2023



Nurse Corrie Cyre dons her Oktoberfest attire at the Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.



Jane Hughes, Mitch Opalski, Donna Shaw, Mike Shaw and Irene Blair celebrate at Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.



Senior Services of Alexandria board chair Chris Wright, center, with Kate Garcia-Crouch and Peter Crouch at the Oct. 4 Oktoberfest at Port City Brewing Company.

Prost!

Senior Services of Alexandria raises \$40k at Oktoberfest.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The lederhosen and traditional dirndls were on display as Senior Services of Alexandria celebrated with its traditional Oktoberfest fundraiser Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.

"This is by far our biggest turnout yet," said SSA executive director Mary Lee An-
SEE SENIOR SERVICES, PAGE 4



Staff of event sponsor Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home pose with musicians Jessica Leggett and Michael Leggett at the SSA Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company. Pictured are Anthony Wilson, Andrea Espinosa, Brian Bosse and managing partner Jim Zalewski.



Attendees enjoy Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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Meet the Legends Reception to honor local legends to be held Oct. 18.

PHOTOS BY STEVEN HALPERSON/TISARA STUDIO



David Baker



Dana Lawhorne



Carolyn Lewis



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Nelson Greene Jr.

The newest class of Living Legends of Alexandria will be honored at the Meet the Legends reception Oct. 18 at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

The 2023 Legends include: David Baker, Dana Lawhorne, Carolyn Lewis, Nelson Greene Jr., Patty and Kate Moran, Gary Oelze, Jim Paige, Del Pepper, Jack Sullivan, Bill Vosbeck and Charles Wilson.

Each was selected for their contributions and service to the community, and a video presentation highlighting each Legend will be debuted during the program.

A reception will follow catered by the Home-Grown Restaurant Group and Alexandria Cupcake.

Tickets are available online at www.alexandrialegends.org

- JEANNE THEISMANN



Patty and Kate Moran



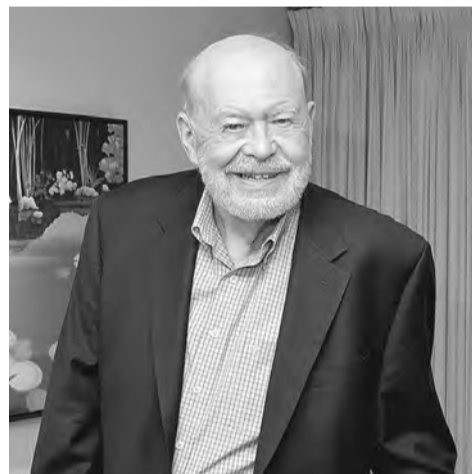
Gary Oelze



Jim Paige



Del Pepper



Jack Sullivan



Bill Vosbeck

PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT



Charles Wilson

BULLETIN BOARD

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

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

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, or visit www.alnv.org.

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a

chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 4



Arvette Reid, Douglas Buttner, Zainab Kabba and Jennifer Late enjoy the SSA Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.



SSA's director of community outreach Maryanne Beatty, Eva Donley, Gregg Murphy and Monica Murphy at the Oktoberfest fundraiser Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Senior Services of Alexandria Raises \$40k at Oktoberfest



Douglas Zafra of Cherry Blossom PACE samples traditional German fare at the SSA Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.



Sponsor Benchmark Senior Living's Bonnie Barella and Douglas Buttner and Douglas Zafra and Robb Hess of sponsor Cherry Blossom PACE at Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.

FROM PAGE 1

person. "We have 190 people here tonight, making it way bigger than we've ever had before."

The event was sold out and raised almost \$40,000.

"This is far more than we've ever raised before," Anderson said. "It's about \$8,000 more than we raised last year."

Attendees sampled traditional fare along with the best of local brewery Port City Brewing Company. Tours of the brewery were available throughout the evening and traditional Bavarian folk music was provided by M&J Volksmusik.

"I believe this year has grown so much because everyone knows it's a great party and it's supporting a great cause," Anderson said. "The money goes to support all our programs – Meals On Wheels,

"This is by far our biggest turnout yet."

— SSA executive director Mary Lee Anderson

Groceries to Go, Friendly Visitor, information and education programs. Tonight helps us help seniors across the city."

Anderson said that SSA is focusing on outreach to the immigrant population.

"We are doing a lot of community outreach, partnering with ALIVE! and Casa Chirilagua," Anderson said. "We have hired new staff so that these populations know what is available to them."

For more information, visit www.seniorservicesalex.org



Joe Fannon and Michael Fannon at Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest Oct. 4 at Port City Brewing Company.



Jay Thomas and Nancy Van Gulick Cooper at Senior Services of Alexandria Oktoberfest.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com.

STEM Professionals Needed.

Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, 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 donalrea@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 or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

Volunteer Drivers Needed.

Drivers needed by the American Cancer Society to take cancer patients to treatment in Northern Virginia. To volunteer, call 1-800-227-2345 or go to cancer.org/drive.

RSVP, a volunteer network

for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria,

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

BRIEFS

Hispanic Heritage Festival

Saturday, Oct 14, 2023 12 - 4 p.m.
Hispanic culture and community will be on full display at the William Ramsay Recreation Center's Hispanic Heritage Festival. Come and celebrate the end of Hispanic Heritage Month with dance and music performances, food, art, games, community resources, and more. All welcome. William Ramsay Recreation Center, 5650 Sanger Ave.

Fire Station Open Houses

All Alexandria Fire Stations will be open to the public on Saturday, Oct. 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During this free event, each station will open its doors to the community, providing family-friendly activities, station and fire apparatus tours and fire prevention information and materials. Personnel at each station will be available to answer questions about their facilities, equipment, and the Fire Department.
This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is "Cooking Safety Starts with You. Pay Attention to Fire Prevention." According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires and deaths. The Alexandria Fire Department

encourages the community to change the batteries in their smoke alarms every six months. Residents are also encouraged to take the necessary steps to help prevent cooking fires and burns.
"For the past four years, the City of Alexandria has not had any fire fatalities," said Fire/EMS Chief Corey Smedley. "In alignment with Fire Prevention Week, we're encouraging our community to remain diligent and alert when cooking your meals. Never leave food on the stove unattended and have conversations with your family about fire safety in your homes."

For fire station locations, visit www.alexandriava.gov/Fire.

Celebrate Archaeology Month

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources celebrates Archaeology Month each October. The City of Alexandria has a long history of archaeological stewardship, built on decades of community-based archaeological efforts. Events and programs around the city highlight important archaeological sites and resources from the West End to Old Town and everywhere in between.

For the full schedule of events and more information, visit alexandriava.gov/archaeology.

❖ Archaeology on the Waterfront
Saturday, Oct. 14, 12 - 4 p.m. (weather

SEE BRIEFS, PAGE 14

Drug TAKE BACK Day
DISPOSE OF UNUSED OR EXPIRED MEDICATIONS
OCTOBER 28 | 10 A.M.-2 P.M. Day

Pet prescriptions also accepted!

ALEXANDRIAVA.GOV/OPIODS | PREVENTITALEXANDRIA.ORG

SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS
The U.S. is experiencing an opioid epidemic and Alexandria is far from immune. The best way to fight this epidemic is to dispose of unused or expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medication. Individuals can drop off medication at these designated locations or year-round at a permanent drop box location. Never flush medication down the toilet or place down the sink! Unsafe disposal of drugs can harm the environment.
Everyone should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms. Individuals may choose to wear a mask at any time. Specific settings, such as health care and congregate facilities, may require masks.
To learn more about the importance of safe medication disposal, visit alexandriava.gov/Opioids.

Alexandria Take Back Day Drop-Off Locations*

Alexandria Police Headquarters 3600 Wheeler Ave.	The Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray 2204 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Alexandria Fire Station 210 5255 Eisenhower Ave.	Woodbine Rehab. & Health Center 2729 King St.
Goodwin House Alexandria 4800 Fillmore Ave.	

*NO NEEDLES ACCEPTED AT THESE SITES

Can't make it to Drug Take Back Day? Dispose of medications year-round at one of these permanent drug drop box locations!

The Neighborhood Pharmacy 2204 Mount Vernon Ave. Monday-Friday: 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Alexandria Police Headquarters 3600 Wheeler Ave. Just inside the entrance Available 24/7
Inova Alexandria Hospital 4320 Seminary Rd. Visitor's Lobby Next to the cashier's window Daily: 8 a.m.-11 p.m.	

NEEDLE DISPOSAL BOX ALSO AVAILABLE AT THIS LOCATION!

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Questions on Southside Express Lanes

This letter from City of Alexandria Director of Transportation and Environmental Services Adriana Castañeda to VDOT 495 Southside project manager Nick Nies is dated Oct. 1; the letter is shortened and lightly edited.

Dear Mr. Nies,

Thank you for the opportunity for the City of Alexandria to be involved in the Virginia Department of Transportation's I-495 Southside Express Lane ...

It is of utmost importance to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) that the selected alternative minimizes adverse impacts on our residents, businesses, and visitors such as increased noise or cut-through traffic on our local roads. It is T&ES desire that proposed alternatives are consistent with the goals of the City's Alexandria Mobility Plan and Environmental Action Plan 2040 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled in the City.

Based on our community's concerns, including the following:

1) The criteria provided, including continuity of the Express Lane system, seem to bias the selection of alternatives towards those that include new Express Lanes, rather than those that prioritize transit and transportation demand management measures.

2) Additional lanes may lead to additional demand on; therefore, increased traffic on the facility over time.

3) Reduction in congestion may reduce the number of crashes, but it could cause increased severity of crashes as vehicles are able to travel at higher speeds.

4) Express Lane options could add constraints on providing new transit, specifically Metrorail lines on this corridor and across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge in the future.

5) New access points from I-495 to and from Alexandria could cause increased traffic on City streets.

6) Right-of-way impacts have

not yet been identified, and project limits should be minimized to minimize the impacts on adjacent and nearby properties.

The City anticipates the opportunity for future Metrorail on the bridge will be preserved. Future Express Lanes should not interfere with the recommendations from the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Blue Orange Silver Line Study and should allow future transit improvements to be implemented on the recommended timeline. This would include avoiding requiring fees or negotiations with toll concessionaires. The City is seeking assurances

that agreements with toll concessionaires would not impact the City's ability to adjust City roads and facilities near the corridor in the future, including adjustments to road capacity. This is a major concern for the City, as this would impact the ability to address safety, transit, capacity, and other priority issues.

Additionally, VDOT has noted that potential improvements could include new or upgraded pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Staff are eager to see how VDOT will incorporate those facilities into this project and are supportive of measures that increase multimodal options for people in this area.

Coalition for Smarter Growth: Pause, Revise 495 Express Lanes Study

The Coalition for Smarter Growth submits the following comments [summary only reprinted here] on the Preliminary Alternatives and Screening Evaluation presented by VDOT in September 2023 for its 495 Southside Express Lanes study.

In summary:

❖ VDOT's purpose and need statement – “extend and provide continuity of the Express Lanes system” – is biased, leading to a foregone conclusion, and is inconsistent with the National Environmental Policy Act direction to evaluate alternatives.

❖ VDOT handicapped the Transit and TDM preliminary alternatives by only creating piecemeal, separate elements that were each evaluated individually, rather than also creating an effective and comprehensive Transit (facilities and service), TDM, and TSM alternative that would perform well in the screening evaluation. VDOT (and DRPT's study) also

failed to include transit-oriented land use and housing recommendations in regional/local plans that would be effective components of alternatives.

❖ VDOT is rushing its study before WMATA can complete its current study of Metrorail in the corridor.

❖ If VDOT advances only high-way expansion concepts, as its screening suggests, the public will not have information to compare the traffic and environmental impacts among alternatives for widening versus alternatives for transit and TDM.

We ask that VDOT pause the 495 Express Lanes study to revise the Purpose and Need; develop meaningful transit, TDM and transit-oriented land use alternatives; and allow WMATA to complete its ongoing study.

Stewart Schwartz,
Executive Director
Bill Pugh,

AICP CTP, Senior Policy Fellow
Coalition for Smarter Growth

Project Community Connect

Bridging the gap for Virginia families working hard, but unable to afford basics.

BY ROSIE ALLEN-HERRING

The number of households working yet still struggling to make ends meet in the D.C. region is concerning. The latest report by United Way of the National Capital Area, ALICE in the Crosscurrents (ALICE Report), sheds light on the financial hardship of the nearly 500,000 households in the National Capital Area working yet unable to afford the basics in their communities.

ALICE is a United Way acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed; and represents the nearly 500,000 low- and moderate-income households in our region who earn more than the Federal Poverty Level of \$26,500 per year but less than the basic cost of living for the county/state in which they live. This translates to an estimated 1.3 million adults and children living in the region who cannot meet the monthly minimum cost of household basics, such as food, housing, household bills, healthcare expenses and more.

Data from the ALICE report for Virginia counties, including Arling-

ton, City of Alexandria, Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William, Rappahannock, Culpeper and Fauquier, show that the total number of financially insecure households fell by 4% between 2019 and 2021 – contrasted to the 3% increase in the area's overall population. While ALICE households decreased by 8.5%, 15% of families fell into poverty. This means, in our Virginia counties, 217,000 households are ALICE, translating to an estimated 564,000 individuals. These are not just statistics. These are real people who need help to secure their financial stability. They are our neighbors, friends, and coworkers who are one unexpected expense away from a financial crisis.

Project Community Connect (PCC) is a United Way NCA annual signature event providing essential services to ALICE individuals, families, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Project Community Connect brings much-needed resources through in-person regional pop-up events where community partners and vendors offer free services.

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Alexandria
Gazette Packet

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OPINION

Project Community Connect

FROM PAGE 6

This year, Project Community Connect in Virginia will occur on Saturday, Oct. 28, at Gunston Middle School in Arlington from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will offer hundreds of residents free, high-quality services, such as workforce development opportunities, financial empowerment through United Way NCA's Financial Empowerment Center, rental and utility assistance, legal services, healthcare access, community engagement, support for veterans, and food assistance programs.

At the pop-up event, essential needs kits such as healthy snacks, general and feminine hygiene, and warm clothing for the cold months are distributed to attendees. These kits are also distributed to regional organizations serving those unhoused or experiencing domestic violence.

Project Community Connect is about more than just providing immediate help. These coordinated efforts are essential to United Way NCA's approach to reducing the number of ALICE households in the region, ensuring thousands of families achieve economic stability and security.

We can all play a role through volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word. We believe when none are ignored, all will thrive.

To learn more about Project Community Connect and how you can contribute, please visit <https://unitedwaynca.org/what-we-do/our-programs/economic-opportunity/project-community-connect/>.

ROSIE ALLEN-HERRING IS THE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF UNITED WAY OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA.

LETTERS

Add Lewis to the List

To the Editor:

Jeanne Theismann's compilation of Alexandrians who distinguished themselves as celebrities and athletes ("Star Search" article, Sept. 13), made for interesting reading; however, it fell somewhat short for its omission of Jimmy Lewis. In the '60s, Lewis emerged as an outstanding basketball player for Parker-Gray



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jimmy Lewis was a standout athlete and professional coach from Alexandria.

and Groveton high schools before entering West Virginia University. But what sets him apart from his contemporaries is his lengthy coaching career on every level imaginable: high school, college, and professional, including both men's and women's basketball.

Craig Taylor
Alexandria, Va.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

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.

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 and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at 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

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 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.

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Alexandria

Youth AND Caring Adult Summit

let's TALK

First Baptist Church of Alexandria
2932 King St, Alexandria, VA 22302
Thursday, November 9, 2023
4:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Attendees must be high school students or caring adults

Gift Card Raffle!

Why You Should Attend:

- Hear from youth about their lived experiences with mental illness
- Talk about mental health awareness and promoting youth safety and resilience
- Support youth leaders in impacting change in our community

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT ALEXANDRIAVA.GOV/GO/4871

09.25.23

Walk To Bust Cancer

Del Ray Café hosts kickoff for Oct. 15 Walk.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Breast cancer survivor and restaurateur Margaret Janowsky hosted the kickoff event for the upcoming Walk to Bust Cancer Oct. 5 at the Del Ray Café she shares with her husband Laurent. “The 8th annual Walk to Bust Cancer will take place Oct. 15 at Fort Hunt Park,” said Martha Carucci, the executive director of the National Breast Center Foundation. “The Walk is a very special day to celebrate survivorship, to honor and remember those we have lost to the disease and to support those women who are currently in the midst of the battle.”

The Walk is a 1.2-mile loop through the park. “It is an easy course so that women going through chemo and radiation can participate,” Carucci said. “We will have music,



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Martha Carucci, right, points to the poster describing “Mary’s Wings” as Laurent and Margaret Janowsky, Wendy Brown, Sandrine Janowsky and vice-Mayor Amy Jackson listen to the story Oct. 5 at the Walk to Bust Cancer kickoff event at the Del Ray Café. The Walk will take place Oct. 15 at Fort Hunt Park.

meditation – people bring their dogs, their kids. It’s really a family friendly event.” Carucci said that a new Circle of Strength will be featured this year. “The Circle of Strength will feature all warriors and survivors in a pink shirt and surrounded by supporters in black shirts and we will get a great aerial photo of that,” Carucci said. “We have commissioned from an artist a circle of strength image to capture that.”

Carucci noted that the Janowsky’s have placed a QR code in the Del Ray Café so that patrons can easily donate to the Walk. Carucci added, “Del Ray Café is hosting us today and made a special announcement that Margaret and Laurent will match donations that come in through the restaurant up to \$10,000.” For more information visit www.national-breastcenterfoundation.org.

ASC to Host St. James CEO Dixon Oct. 18



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Washington Capitals star Alex Ovechkin, center, is flanked by Craig Dixon, left, and Kendrick Ashton of the St. James Group at the groundbreaking of the St. James sports complex in 2017. Dixon will be the featured guest speaker at the Oct. 18 meeting of the Alexandria Sportsman’s Club at the Old Dominion Boat Club. The meeting is free and open to the public. www.alexandriavasports.org

Athletes of the Month to be honored.

Craig Dixon, the co-founder and CEO of The St. James, will be the featured guest speaker at the Oct. 18 meeting of the Alexandria Sportsman’s Club. With its Olympic-sized pool, FIFA-sized turf field, two NHL-sized hockey rinks, basketball courts, batting cages, squash courts, golf simulators, and more, The St. James is nurturing the next generation of athletes and promoting a love for sports. As the complex celebrates its 5-year anniversary, hear directly from Dixon on how he turned his dream into a reality.

A graduate of Episcopal High School and William and Mary, Dixon leveraged his passion for sports and business to create The St. James, a 450,000 square-foot sports, wellness and entertainment complex that local and professional athletes patronize. The Club will also recognize the High School Athletes of the Month and Alexandria Rec Department Athletes of the Month. The meeting will be held at the Old Dominion Boat Club, 0 Prince St. in Old Town. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with dinner and refreshments at 6:45 p.m. The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information visit www.alexandriavasports.org.

– JEANNE THEISMANN

SAVE THE DATE!
Mark Your Calendar for the

Project Discovery WALKATHON

8:30 a.m. Saturday, October 28, 2023
Fort Ward Park
4301 W Braddock Road

To learn more, sign up, or donate, visit:
alexandriava.gov/PDwalkathon

All proceeds benefit Project Discovery of Alexandria.

ST-J
Your Dog's Best Friends
Project Discovery of Alexandria
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NEPENTHE GALLERY

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BY A **WORLD-RENOUNDED ARTIST**

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HONORING DON SIMPSON, JR.
PRESENTED BY BURKE & HERBERT BANK

October 12, 2023 | 6-9PM
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FESTIVAL



Crowds line Mount Vernon Avenue for the 28th Art on the Avenue festival Oct. 7 in del Ray.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

A craftsman shows her wares to a customer during Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.

Art on the Avenue

Popular arts festival celebrates 28 years.

Drizzly skies did not deter the crowds as tens of thousands descended on Mount Vernon Avenue for the 28th annual Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.

Held the first Saturday of October on Mount Vernon Avenue between Hume and Bellefont Avenue, Art on the Avenue showcases hundreds of local artists against the backdrop of the vibrant Del Ray community. The event, considered one of the top arts events in Northern Virginia, is entirely volunteer-run, with support from the Del Ray Business Association and the local business community.

In addition to the artists and craftsmen, four entertainment stages featured live music from Blues to Bluegrass, Irish, Country and Rock and Roll.

Children's activities included paint-a-pumpkin, build-a-scarecrow, and a variety of craft activities led by local nonprofits.

Prizes were awarded in the ever-popular pie baking contest, which raised funds to benefit the local Domestic Violence Shelter.



Kids participate in a craft project during Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.



A woman and her dogs enjoy Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.

— JEANNE THEISMANN

ART ON THE AVENUE

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Shoppers check out homemade soaps and bath products during Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.



Umbrellas were a common sight during Art on the Avenue Oct. 7 in Del Ray.

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Wednesdays through Sundays in September at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Nightly in October at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for children; free for children under 6 years old. Tours meet at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King Street, Alexandria. Walk your way through the charming streets of historic Old Town Alexandria. Follow a colonial-costumed guide by lantern light for an engaging history tour on Alexandria's original Ghost and Graveyard Tour. During this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends, folklore, unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Visit alexcolonialtours.com.

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://tallshipprovidence.org/>

NOW THRU OCT. 15

Every Rock Has a Story – Anne Stine. At The Athenaeum Gallery, 201 Prince Street, Alexandria. Award-winning painter Anne Stine debuts her latest collection of encaustic works titled, Every Rock Has a Story, in September, at the Athenaeum Gallery. Her collection of 20 geological paintings explores the interconnection between Earth and humanity through representational and abstract imagery. "Every rock has a story", a popular geological phrase, meaning history is captured within the Earth's formations from the majestic mountains to the tiniest pebbles that reside beneath our feet.

OCT. 2-29

Cascades Art Exhibition. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Van Landingham Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center (Gallery 311), 105 North Union Street, Alexandria. The Van Landingham Gallery presents a solo exhibition from Gregory Logan Dunn entitled Cascades, a collection of oil and acrylic paintings created during his studio residency at the Torpedo Factory this past year. Original paintings and print reproductions of the artist's work will be available for purchase.

OCT. 3 TO NOV. 13

"The Spirit Within" Exhibit. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Drive, Alexandria. Mosaic artist Nina Tisara and artist-photographer Steven Halperson will exhibit their art work in the Fireplace Art Alcove. MVUC members and friends are invited to an artists' reception on Sunday, No-

vember 12, 2:30 - 5 p.m. RSVP: ninat@ninatisara.com.

OCT. 6-28

The "Curses! Foiled Again! The Art of Swords and Sorcery" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that evokes the fantastic and swashbuckling. Opening Reception: Friday, October 6, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on October 29, 2023). Details on the art exhibit and related creative programs at DelRayArtisans.org/event/curses-foiled-again

OCT. 10 TO NOV. 19

"Reflection Unknown" Photography Exhibit by Fred Zafran. At Multiple Exposures Gallery, Alexandria. Opening Reception: Sunday, October 22, 2023, 2 - 4 p.m. Fred Zafran has long been interested in photography as a distinctive means of storytelling. His work examines the artistic possibilities of photographs that combine the poetic with a representational view of the world. The resulting photo essays which Zafran calls "poetic narrative," are post-documentary in that the stories are open ended, subjective, rich in symbolism and metaphor, and encourage consideration and interpretation by the viewer.

THURSDAY/OCT. 12

Meet Dr. Carla Hayden. 7-8 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. The annual George Washington Leadership Lecture explores the Father of our Country's lifelong accomplishments, providing a better understanding of him as a person, as well as his remarkable leadership, professional achievements, and lasting legacy. This year's 10th anniversary event will feature a conversation with the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden. A reception with complimentary beer, wine, and hors-d'œuvres will follow the lecture.

THURSDAY/OCT. 12

Staged Readings of "The Laramie Project." 8 p.m. At the Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria. The LTA will present staged readings of "The Laramie Project," observing that it has been 25 years since the horrific abduction and death of Matthew Shepard. This is a play by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, written in response to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, in Laramie, Wyoming. Kaufman and the other company members visited Laramie on six occasions and interviewed residents, members of the police force, and Matthew's friends, to understand what happened, and why. Tickets are \$20.00. For further information regarding tickets, call 703-683-5778 (Ext.1).

THURSDAY/OCT. 12

Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. At City Hall's Market Square, 301 King Street, Old Town Alexandria. Sponsored by the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program, the event is



The Paws in the Park 2023 will be held Sunday, Oct. 15, 2023 at Oronoco Bay Park in Alexandria.

designed to raise awareness of domestic violence and create a space of healing through a visual memorial, which includes life-sized silhouettes of the people in Alexandria who have been lost to acts of domestic violence. The event will include a private viewing for families affected by domestic violence from 6- 6:30 p.m., followed by a public program and reception. To find out more about the Silent Witness Initiative, visit www.silentwitness.net.

OCT. 13, 14, 19, 26

Jane Franklin Dance Performance.

7 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1A Prince St., Alexandria. Jane Franklin Dance Performance in response to Temporary Public Art Installation "Two Boxes of Oranges and Admonia Jackson" by Nina Cooke John. The City of Alexandria's Office of the Arts was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to fund its community Artist Residency Program. The Artist Residency Program integrates visual and performing artists in the community to conduct interactive art engagements at the Waterfront Park public art initiative Site See. As part of the Artist Residency Program, Jane Franklin Dance was selected to bring interpretive movement pieces inspired by the artwork to the Waterfront Park.

SATURDAY/OCT. 14

Archaeology Along the Waterfront.

Guided tours: 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. (30 min. each). Celebrate Virginia Archaeology Month with Robinson Landing and Alexandria Archaeology! Archaeologists excavated a full city block prior to the construction of Robinson Landing. Learn what used to be at the site, including Hooe's 18th century warehouse and store, the 19th century steam-powered Pioneer Mill, and the remnants of three merchant ships. The event is free and open to the public, registration required for guided tours. Weather permitting.

SUNDAY/OCT. 15

StepALIVE! Walkathon. 2-5 p.m. At First Christian Church, 2723 King Street, Alexandria. For the last 42 years, the community has gathered together for a day of

action to support the work that ALIVE! does to provide a safety net for Alexandrians in need. Join supporters for an outdoor kickoff, a group walk through Old Town, and a post-walk celebration. The StepALIVE! walkathon on Sunday, October 15th not only raises the funds to provide food, shelter, and emergency financial assistance, it is a moment where 50 congregations from different faith traditions demonstrate their shared values. This event is an event for all ages and stages and open to all people who support ALIVE!'s work. Visit stepalive.org

SUNDAY/OCT. 15

Paws in the Park 2023. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, Alexandria. Paws in the Park brings together shopping, music, food and drink, and of course lots of adoptable animals. The event is free to attend. Additional activities include a silent auction and Family Fun Tent, sponsored by TTR Sotheby's International Realty. Event proceeds benefit the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. Find more details on parking, vendors, and more here: <https://pawsintheparkva.com/>

OCT. 17-23

Fall Book Sale – At Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria. The Friends of the Beatley Central Library will hold their Fall Book Sale from Tuesday, October 17 through Monday, October 23. Members' Preview on Tuesday, October 17, 3 p.m.-7:30 p.m. (\$15 memberships available at the door); Wednesday, October 18, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Thursday, October 19, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Friday, October 20, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, October 21, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, October 22, Half Price Day, 1-4:30 p.m.; Monday, October 23, \$10 Bag Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.. \$4 or less, unless specifically marked: hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books, and media. All genres. Charles E. Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA; info: 703-746-1702; www.beatley-friends.org.

TUESDAYS, OCTOBER 17, 24, 31 Simpson Park Demonstration Gardens, Tuesdays @ 10:00

- 11:30 a.m., Simpson Demonstration Gardens, 420 E. Monroe Ave, Alexandria. Meet and talk with Extension Master Gardeners in the Simpson Demonstration Gardens to learn the best uses for fallen leaves and other organic garden waste. Free.

SATURDAY/OCT. 21

Second Annual Chalk Walk. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. On sidewalks throughout Old Town North. Old Town North becomes an outdoor art studio as the Old Town North Alliance hosts the second annual Chalk Walk. Artists will be creating sidewalk chalk artworks throughout Old Town North, stationed throughout the neighborhood in 10 by 10 spaces, and will create new works of art in chalk. Attendees will be invited to stroll by each site and admire the artists at work or the finished work.

MONDAY/OCT. 30

Halloween Tales at River Farm. 6-7 p.m. At River Farm, 7931 E. Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Acclaimed local actor (and retired Arlington Judge) William T. Newman Jr. joins Classical WETA's Nicole Lacroix and ghost storytellers Nikisha Kozik and Jimmy Meritt at River Farm to narrate suspenseful (and slightly spooky) passages from the Old Town Mystery book series by local author John Adam Wasowicz. You'll hear passages from Daingerfield Island set on Halloween night along the Potomac River and from Gadsby's Corner as The Female Stranger helps solve a crime that occurs on 'Mystery in the Museum' night at Gadsby's. Admission is free for children and adults.

THE BIRCHMERE

At 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Tickets available at Ticketmaster.com. Contact The Birchmere at 703-549-7500 or www.Birchmere.com.

OCTOBER

Wed. 11: Eric Benet \$79.50
Fri. 13: Jeffrey Osborne \$95.00 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 14: Jeffrey Osborne \$95.00 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 15: Ottmar Liebert & Luna Negra \$39.50
Tue. 17: Chris Knight (Band) \$29.50
Wed. 18: Rodney Crowell w/ Rob Ickes & Trey Hensley \$59.50 (Rescheduled from 7/16/23)
Fri. 20: Phil Vassar w/ Martin & Kelly \$49.50
Sat. 21: Raven's Night presents "Masquerade" \$35.00
Sun. 22: The Secret Sisters w/ Amy Stroup \$29.50
Mon. 23: Gene Noble w/ Diamond Pynk \$35.00 (Rescheduled from 8/24/23)
Tue. 24: The Zombies: Different Game Tour 23 w/ Wendy Colonna \$59.50
Wed. 25: Euge Groove \$45.00 (Rescheduled from 6/7/23)
Thu. 26: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
Fri. 27: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 28: Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin \$129.50 SOLD OUT!
Sun. 29: Tom Paxton & The DonJuans and John McCutcheon \$45.00

PAWS IN THE PARK



Paws in the Park is Sunday, Oct. 15, at Oronoco Bay Park, 11-4



Paws in the Park is pet-friendly and family-friendly with a variety of entertainment.

Get Ready to Paw-ty At Paws in the Park

Alexandria's biggest festival for animal lovers — Paws in the Park — returns to Old Town Alexandria on Sunday, Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Oronoco Bay Park and promises to be bigger than ever.

This annual event celebrates northern Virginia's love for animals and offers attendees a free family and pet-friendly festival featuring vendors, lots of adoptable animals, and a variety of entertainment. Like years past, all proceeds from this event will benefit the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

Shop (and Adopt) 'Til You Drop

Along with many local artisans, nonprofits, and animal-focused businesses, Paws in the Park will host food and beverage vendors, too. Attendees can pack a picnic and also savor drinks and food from local cideries, breweries, wineries, bakeries, food trucks, and more while enjoying the day's entertainment and shopping.

If you've been looking to add a furry member to your family, the 10+ animal welfare organizations and rescues in Rescue Row will have adoptable animals available for attendees to meet. AWLA's mobile adoption unit Waggin' Wheels will also be there.

Entertainment and More

This year's entertainment, sponsored by the Alexandria Library Foundation, begins at 11:30 a.m. and includes repeat musical favorites like bilingual sensation Uno Dos Tres Andres, and new acts and stage events like musical duo Katie and Logan and a Dog (and Human) Costume Contest. The costume contest is open to everyone, and pre-registration is required. Each category winner will receive a cool prize.

There's plenty more fun to be had at both the Family Fun Tent and AWLA Tent. The Family Fun Tent, sponsored by TTR Sotheby's International Realty, will feature arts and crafts geared for kids of all ages, including decorating pet bandanas and collaborating on a pet-themed community "mural." Stop by the AWLA Tent to purchase your 2024 AWLA calendars and bid on items in www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

their silent auction. The silent auction will feature lots of unique items and be available online as well, so winners will not need to be present to participate or win. Items of note include a \$500 gift card to Wegmans, custom pet portraits, tickets to performances and sporting events, and so much more. The silent auction will be digital, so even if you can't attend the event in-person, you can still participate.

The first 1,000 attendees at Paws in the Park will receive a one-of-a-kind swag bag. Paws in the Park is open to leashed, well-behaved pets of all types.

Proceeds from Paws in the Park benefit the AWLA, which supports homeless animals in Alexandria, as well as pets and people throughout the community. Sponsorships are still available, and more information about attending or participating in this year's festival can be found at PawsintheParkVA.com.

About the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) has been a beacon of hope for animals and the people who love them. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, education, community service and outreach, the AWLA plays a key role in promoting responsible pet care across Northern Virginia. Additionally, the AWLA works with the City of Alexandria to provide animal care, control, protection and operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, an open-admission animal sheltering facility.

Events like Paws in the Park help them further their mission of caring for Alexandria's animals and people. Proceeds from Paws in the Park will go directly toward their many community programs, including their Pet Pantry which provides pet food and other supplies to pet parents facing financial hardship.

The AWLA is able to support pet families and at-risk animals thanks to the kindness of generous donors. You can learn more about the AWLA and find ways to support Alexandria's animals at www.AlexandriaAnimals.org/Support-Us.



Paws in the Park is Sunday, Oct. 15, at Oronoco Bay Park, 11-4



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FROM PAGE 5
dependent), 7 Pioneer Mill Way, Learn about the Robinson Landing site with a self-guided scavenger hunt or a guided tour. Register for a guided tour at shop.alexandriava.gov/events.

❖ Alexandria Forum, Friday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum, This day-long symposium will explore the theme of revisiting the history of the Alexandria Waterfront through new research lenses, technologies, excavations, and sources. Learn more and register at shop.alexandriava.gov/events. \$60/person and \$40/OHA members and students.

❖ Slip Into the Past at Art Safari, Saturday, Oct. 21, 12 - 4 p.m., Torpedo Factory Art Center, Experiment with 19th-century pottery slip designs, like marbling and dendritic patterns, and apply your own temporary tattoo in the style of transfer printed ceramic, while supplies last.

❖ Science Underground, Wednesday, Oct. 25, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, How do archaeologists study the past? Sort and identify artifacts. Recommended ages 4 - 7. Free, but limited to 20 participants.

Visit alexandriava.gov/archaeology for more information or call Alexandria Archaeology at 703.746.4399.

Alexandria To Welcome Pride of Baltimore II in October

Pride of Baltimore II will visit Alexandria Oct. 20- 22, as part of a partnership with the National Park Service tour of the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The ship will dock at the City of Alexandria Marina (0 Cameron St.) and will be available for free deck tours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during its three-day visit. Tickets are not required for the free deck tours and will include a chance to talk with deck crew and a National Park Service (NPS) ranger to learn more about the War of 1812, Thomas Boyle, privateers, and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

Learn more about Pride II's visit and the history of the ship. <https://pride2.org/come-aboard/>

Leaf Collection Begins Oct. 30

City of Alexandria will begin its annual leaf vacuuming and leaf

Palmieri Honored

Local attorney receives Presidential Medal of Honor from American University in Rome.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria attorney Andrew Palmieri received the Presidential Medal of Honor from the American University of Rome at a ceremony held Oct. 10 at the Italian Embassy in Washington.

Surrounded by university board members, alumni and supporters from around the world, Palmieri was lauded for his investment of time to the university for over 20 years, his leadership on the board, oversight of three presidential search committees, and negotiating the university's lease on its campus in Monteverde just outside of Rome.

A real estate specialist with Saul Ewing, Palmieri is well-known for his community service locally as a past board member of the Campagna Center and the past board chair of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, among others.

During the presentation, Palmieri was praised for his commitment to invest the time with university faculty, students, staff and alumni to better understand the benefits, concerns and challenges of the stakeholders that was praised as "game-changing" for the school and its board's strategy for growth.



Andrew Palmieri, at right, celebrates with his wife Denise and Logan Borland after receiving the Presidential Medal of Honor from the American University in Rome Oct. 10 at the Italian Embassy in Washington.

In his remarks, Palmieri said that winning awards and medals is not why he is committed to service.

"I serve to try to make a difference," Palmieri said.

Said managing partner Jason St. John in a statement, "Mission accomplished, Andrew. You make a positive difference with our clients, colleagues and in the community, and today we salute you."

can place paper leaf bags at the curb on their regular trash day. Free City paper leaf bags will be available at the following locations starting on Monday, Oct. 16:

- ❖ City Hall, 301 King Street (Main Lobby), Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- ❖ City of Alexandria Self-Serve Shed, Roth Street and Business Center Drive, Available 24/7
- ❖ Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St., Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sunday, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- ❖ Patrick Henry Recreation Center, 4653 Taney Ave., Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- ❖ Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave., Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- ❖ Chinquapin Recreation Center, 3210 King St., Monday - Thursday, 6 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday, 6 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Paper leaf bags are available on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last. There is a limit of 15 bags per resident, per visit.

BRIEFS

FROM PAGE I4

bag collection program on Monday, Oct. 30. Leaf collection is expected to continue into January.

Residents who receive City trash and recycling collection services may recycle leaves in three ways:

Raking leaves to the curb for vacuum collection

Placing leaves in paper leaf bags for collection (leaves in plastic bags are considered refuse, and are thrown away as trash)

Composting leaves and yard waste at home

Please do not mix brush or other items with leaves, as these items may injure City workers, damage equipment or private property, or cause delays.

Alexandria is divided into five collection zones, each with a specific start date. Each zone will receive three passes. Residents can access the Residential Leaf Collection Viewer (an interactive map) to look up assigned leaf vacuuming dates based on their home address.

For curbside leaf bag collection, residents

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Not Funny or Fun



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Rather, somber, and sad. Today, Sept. 23, I went to the cemetery to visit my parents. It is my deceased father's birthday. Born in 1919, he died in early Dec. 2006. He was a great father and my biggest booster. I miss him terribly, and for you regular readers, he's not totally unfamiliar to you as I often invoke his memory with miscellaneous memories/anecdotes. My mother lies beside him at the cemetery, having died almost exactly two years later to the day in early Dec. as well, in 2008. (As it coincidentally happened, my brother Richard died on the same day as my mother had 14 years before.)

Which brings me to the point/feeling behind this column being written. As of this past Dec. when Richard died, I am now the sole survivor of the immediate family of which I had been a part. With Richard's passing, today's visit was my first to the cemetery without any back-up. Previously, my brother or myself - or both, would make sure our parents were remembered on their birthdays with on-site visits (though we often remember them as we recall a lifetime of memories). But I'm by myself now. There will likely be no other visitors to my parent's gravesite (my brother was cremated) as their lives, as in their friends and family, were either in Massachusetts where they were born, or Florida when they moved south to retire. We moved them to Maryland - while they were still healthy, for them to be closer to us so we'd all be together.

Since neither Richard nor I had children, I really am the last in - and of, a line, extending back who knows how many generations in Russia/the former Baltic States. I only know about my grandparents, and not that much. Records of Jewish births and deaths were hardly respected and protected administratively in the former USSR. With Richard's death, yours truly (our respective wives notwithstanding, as I'm genetically referring here to blood relations) become the go-to-because-everyone-else-is-gone person (immediate family members).

And not that I haven't felt lonely since my brother died, last Dec. 3rd, but in visiting my parents today for the first time since then his passing, I really felt his loss since I am now the last man standing, so to speak. Richard wouldn't be coming by and leaving flowers as he often did, so it was just me - and my thoughts. And as I stood over my parent's graves, wishing my father a Happy Birthday and talking about Richard, his loss became even deeper than I had felt it previously. The reality of it his death hit me harder than it has in months. I'm all that's left.

This feeling, which manifests regularly, especially since my brother and I share so many interests and attitudes; none more than cancer as he had been diagnosed with colon cancer a few months before he died (and yet another subject we had in common; I have thyroid cancer) enveloped me at the gravesite. There I am standing over my parent's graves, talking about my brother having died; and the finality of our family's existence and of my position in it as being the sole survivor of the Louries (or whatever my paternal grandfather's names in the former USSR, was before he immigrated), after hundreds of years and who knows how many generations spanning across however many countries, nearly took my breath away. Heavy duty, man.

To summarize: once I was diagnosed with cancer in 2009 and given a "terminal" diagnosis (stage IV lung cancer), I never thought my brother would predecease me, even though he was almost five years older me. And I had certain feeling of security knowing I would/could always be able to count on my brother, especially since he was my second biggest booster - after my father. And now, having to live the rest of my life without the backstop of all backstops will be extremely challenging, and very unfamiliar. Losing the resource that you count on and rely upon the most, is more than just upsetting the applecart; it's destroying it. It's not exactly how I anticipated living the rest of my life. I'll just have to make the best of a bad situation. My brother wouldn't expect any less. And I certainly have no intention of disappointing him in death any more than I would in life.

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

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