



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

A crowd of hundreds watch as a 40-foot tree is lit with 40,000 lights at the annual holiday tree lighting ceremony Nov. 18 at Market Square.

Let There Be Light

Holiday tree lights up Market Square.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Santa and Mrs. Claus were on hand to ring in the holiday season as elves and Alexandria officials officially kicked off the holiday tree lighting ceremony Nov. 18 at Market Square.

Arriving from the North Pole by the Old Town Trolley, Santa and Mrs. Claus made their way through the crowd of hundreds to join Mayor Justin Wilson and city officials in the countdown of the lighting of the tree.

"I'll start the countdown at 10," said Wilson, who led the countdown that ended with cheers from the crowd as 40,000 lights began to glow on the 40-foot artificial tree.

Entertainment throughout the
SEE HOLIDAY TREE, PAGE 4



Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive at the holiday tree lighting ceremony Nov. 18 at Market Square.

Men of Courage

Five honored for mentorship, service to youth.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It was a full house at the Oswald Durant Center as five individuals were honored Nov. 18 with the Men of Courage Lifetime Achievement Award.

Founded in 2013 by local boxer Anthony Suggs Sr., the event celebrated the service and mentorship to the youth of the City of Alexandria.

"The Men of Courage Award is an idea that came to my mind when thinking on the countless
SEE FIVE HONORED, PAGE 4



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Men of Courage Awards founder Anthony Suggs Sr., third from right, poses for a photo with past honoree Ratcliff Thomas, left, and this year's honorees Pastor James Gibson, Pastor Elwood Jones, Officer Bennie L. Evans Jr., Michael Johnson and Jeffrey "Steady" Johnson at the Men of Courage Lifetime Achievement Awards ceremony Nov. 18 at the Oswald Durant Center.



Attendees fill the Oswald Durant Center for the Men of Courage Lifetime Achievement Awards Nov. 18.

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NEWS

Forever Friends

Lawhorne, Knoernschild honored in Del Ray.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Del Ray community gathered to honor two native sons with the dedication of a park bench Nov. 12 in Del Ray.

Located at Commonwealth, Braddock and West Glendale Avenues, the bench honors retired Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and his childhood friend Tommy Knoernschild in appreciation for their service to the community. Knoernschild died in 2018 at the age of 58 but the dedication was attended by his widow and other family members.

“Dana and Tommy were lifelong friends growing up in Del Ray and often spent many hours at this corner which was the location of Tommy’s childhood home,” said Gayle Reuter, who welcomed the crowd to the dedication. “It really is a special occasion when you get to recognize and thank individuals

for all they have done for the community.”

The idea for the bench was proposed as a way to honor Lawhorne when he retired in 2022. A lifelong resident of the Del Ray community, Lawhorne insisted that Knoernschild’s name be included.

“Today is very special to me and my family,” Lawhorne said. “I spent my entire childhood pretty much at Tommy’s house. When I needed that extra boost in life, Tommy’s family and his parents were there for me. They taught me what it meant to support someone and what it meant to be a good neighbor. They taught me to never give up.”

Through tears, Knoernschild’s widow Lori thanked Lawhorne for adding his name on the bench, which bears a plaque that reads: “In honor of retired Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Tommy Knoernschild for their lifelong service to our community.”

SEE BENCH DEDICATION, PAGE 5



Retired sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Lori Knoernschild sit on the bench dedicated to Lawhorne and Tommy Knoernschild Nov. 12 in Del Ray. Tommy Knoernschild died in 2018 at the age of 58.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

StepALIVE!

Walkathon raises awareness and funds for community needs.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Hundreds turned out Oct. 15 for the StepALIVE! Walkathon, the 42nd annual fundraising event to benefit ALIVE!

“We are raising awareness about the need in our community for people who need the very basics,” said ALIVE! executive director Jenn Ayers. “There is a need for things like furniture, housewares, shelter and food. So we’re walking to raise awareness and also to raise funding for all of our programs.”

ALIVE! is the oldest and largest private safety net in the City of Alexandria dedicated to fighting poverty and hunger. Founded in 1969 as Alexandria Involved Ecumenically by 14 faith communities in response to rising levels of poverty, ALIVE! has grown to 50 member congregations.

The organization holds an annual day of action to support its mission to provide a safety net for Alexandrians in need.

Mayor Justine Wilson was on hand for the walk, which began at First Christian Church on King Street and worked its way through the street of Old Town.

Added Ayers said, “The StepALIVE! walkathon 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.”

www.alive-inc.org

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

“We’re walking to raise awareness and also to raise funding for all of our programs.”

— ALIVE! executive director
Jenn Ayers



Executive director Jenn Ayers, left, stands with her daughter Whitely and volunteers at the Oct. 15 StepALIVE! Walkathon.



Community Praise Church participants celebrate at the StepALIVE! Walkathon Oct. 15.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



First Christian Church team members pose for a photo at the Oct. 15 StepALIVE! Walkathon to raise awareness and funds for the nonprofit ALIVE!

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET ♦ NOVEMBER 23-29, 2023 ♦ 3

Holiday Tree Lights Up Market Square

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

FROM PAGE 1

evening was provided by the Alexandria Choral Society and the Silver 5 Brass Quintet. Santa himself led the crowd in a chant of "I believe."

A natural tree will be on display in Del Ray when a tree and menorah lighting ceremony will be held Dec. 3 in Pat Miller Neighborhood Square at the corner of Mount Vernon and E. Oxford avenues.

Hosted by the Del Ray Business Association, visitors are being asked to bring donations for Carpenter's Shelter.

According to DRBA, "In the spirit of the season, participants are urged to bring new full-size lotions, deodorants, and body wash; ground coffee; or flip flops/shower shoes in various sizes for Carpenter's Shelter."

Added Wilson at the Market Square tree lighting, "To all the many folks who give back to non-profit organizations who are in need of your contributions and your volunteerism during this holiday season, you are all who make our community an incredible place to be, not just during the holiday season, but year-round."



Mayor Justin Wilson, right, welcomes Santa Claus to the city's holiday tree lighting ceremony Nov. 18 in Market Square.



Santa and Mrs. Claus greet the crowd at the city's holiday tree lighting ceremony Nov. 18 at Market Square.

Five Honored for Mentorship

FROM PAGE 1

individuals who made a positive impact in my life and countless other lives," Suggs said. "Those men have held influential positions in the City of Alexandria and surrounding areas and have invested time and effort in shaping the character of youth and young people in the community."

The 2023 honorees include Pastor James Gibson, Pastor Elwood Jones, APD Officer Bennie L. Evans Jr., Michael Johnson and Jeffrey "Steady" Johnson. Keynote speaker was Dawud Rawlings, a longtime ACPS and recreation department employee. Also on hand were past honorees including former NFL player Ratchiff Thomas.

Suggs, a local boxing legend, was on track to make the 1988 U.S. Olympic team before drugs and jail torpedoed his career in the ring. In 1987, Suggs was a five-time Golden-Gloves Champion, National Golden Glove Finalist, Golden Gloves Outstanding Boxer of the year and Olympic Festival Gold

Medalist Amateur boxer which ranked him #1 in the country and #4 in the world by the USA Amateur Boxing Federation.

As an amateur, Suggs won 138 matches, 116 of which were knockouts. He lost only 12 times.

He shares his life story as a cautionary tale in his book "Da Beast Within -- Still the Champ."

In recent years he has devoted his work to the community, which includes honoring the Men of Courage who have been positive youth role models.

His efforts throughout the region were recognized Oct. 29 when he received the Presidential Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award at Harvest Assembly Baptist Church.

"I try to use my life story to help others," Suggs said. "I am a testimony that you don't have to stay down and even if you keep getting knocked down, keep getting up, keep the faith and never stop fighting until you get it right."



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Anthony Suggs Sr., founder of the Men of Courage Lifetime Achievement Awards, was honored with the Presidential Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Service Award Oct. 29 at Harvest Assembly Baptist Church.

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.volunteerallexandria.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.volunteerallexandria.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 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 for the Advancement 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 donaalrea@aol.com.

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distri-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Retired sheriff Dana Lawhorne, left, and Lori Knoernschild unveil a bench dedicated to Lawhorne and his childhood friend Tommy Knoernschild Nov. 12 in Del Ray. Tommy Knoernschild, whose childhood home is in the background, died in 2018 at the age of 58.

The families of Dana Lawhorne and Tommy Knoernschild gather for a photo on the bench dedicated to the childhood friends Nov. 12 in Del Ray.

Lawhorne Bench Dedication

FROM PAGE 3

“Dana and Tommy were lifelong friends,” Lori Knoernschild said. “Dana and Tommy spent many hours together and in recent years they volunteered together around Del Ray. Our family is honored to have Tommy’s name on this bench alongside Dana’s name.”

The bench was donated by friends of Law-

horne and Knoernschild.

“This community literally would not be what it has become without people like Dana and Tommy,” Reuter said. “If anyone needed help, Tommy and Dana were there. That’s what is so unique about Del Ray and Alexandria -- you have people like Dana and Tommy who care deep in their hearts. They could sense when there was a need and they

filled it.”

Lawhorne praised his wife Linda along with Lori Knoernschild for their support of the community.

“Lori and Linda deserve medals for how they supported not just us but the community as well,” Lawhorne said. “When I think about this bench, I think about the neighborhood and what it has done for me.

“This community literally would not be what it has become without people like Dana and Tommy.”

— Del Ray resident Gayle Reuter

I am so grateful to this city and to this community -- it made me who I am. I hope this bench will be a reminder to all of us what it means to be good neighbors.”

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Do Not Eliminate Single Family Zoning

To the Editor:
At the Nov. 18 City Council hearing I spoke out against the elimination of single-family zoning. Here are further thoughts in addition to what I have on the record.

I have recently spoken with dozens of Alexandrians and most have no idea that four City Council votes on Nov. 28 will effectively end single-family neighborhoods in the City of Alexandria that residents have known for close to 100 years.

Alexandria has an urban culture but also a suburban culture. When thousands of Alexandria families choose a single-family suburban lifestyle their expectation should be upheld and



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

A house on Janneys Lane advertises an apartment building site to call attention to the potential controversial change to single family zoning regulations.

protected by our City Council representatives.

If the City Council approves the elimination of single-family zoning, a four-unit apartment building can be built on any street and in any neighborhood previously designated as single-family.

For a city that prides itself on diversity and inclusiveness, residents don't want the City Council to tell thousands of single-family home owners that their single family suburban lifestyle is no longer welcome in Alexandria.

This is what can happen to every single-family lot in the city if this zoning change passes.

Frank Fannon

Former Alexandria City Councilman

Thank You and Big Challenges Ahead

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

On Nov. 7, 2023, the voters of the 34th Senate District cast 54,678 votes and elected me to a third term in the Senate of Virginia by a 40% margin (69.95% to 29.97%). Thank you for entrusting me to continuing to serve as your state senator. For the full election results for our area, visit:

34th District Election Results

Here are some other statistics:

- 34th District voters supported me in 46 of 47 precincts, ranging from 81.59% of the vote to 48.16%.

- 19,311 people voted early. In my last contested election in 2015, 1,994 people voted early. Early voting this year represented a 1,000% increase from 2015.

- 1,917 voters had their votes counted after the polls closed by mailing their ballots before the polls closed because of the new law we passed in 2020.

- 697 new voters participated in this election because they used same day registration.



- Early voting was up over 800% statewide compared with four years ago.

- 63% of ballots in my race were cast on Election Day.

Expanding the time for early voting has been a resounding success, as evidenced by voters' use of it. It has fundamentally changed Virginians' ability to participate in our democracy.

My opponent ran a civil campaign, which I thank him for and 16,538 people voted for him. I recognize their values and concerns and hope to continue to listen to everyone, incorporate many views and earn the trust of those who may not agree with me on everything.

Statewide, voters also affirmed the Senate Democrats' Blue Brick Wall and maintained our Senate Democratic majority which has rejected attempts to repeal the progress we made in recent years. Virginia voters also elected a Democratic majority to the House of Delegates which will enable a more united front and ensure more progress.

Protecting Our Progress

In terms of policy, here's what the election

results likely mean, based on the Youngkin administration's initiatives reported in the media:

- No 15-week abortion ban or further restrictions on women's reproductive healthcare. We will try to start the process of amending the Constitution of Virginia to permanently protect women's reproductive healthcare rights.

- Protecting our expansion of Virginians' ability and opportunities to vote.

- More adequately funding K-12 schools and higher education as Virginians expect.

- Protecting the progress Democrats made to address climate change and criminal justice reform.

- Reaffirming and expanding protections for LGBTQ Virginians.

- Protecting our progress and expanding our ability to prevent firearm violence.

- Protecting minimum wage increases, employee protections and civil justice reforms.

The state legislature could approve these policies because of your support.

In our community, Del. Mark Sickles will return as Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. Del. Paul Krizek will also serve as a senior appropriator and chair important sub

Children's and Teen's Gazette

Our annual Children's Connection, including the Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac, has been a long-standing tradition. We are once again welcoming contributions from children, youth, and teens in public and private schools, as well as homeschool, after-school care, and other programs, art and writing classes, and from individuals.

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more.

We welcome written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

Visit <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and scroll down to the Children's Edition to see last year's editions. Our plan is for the Children's Connection/Gazette to publish the week of December 20, 2023, with overflow possible in January 2024.

Submission Directions

Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format.

These can be submitted via Google Drive. Writing should be

submitted in text format (docx or Google Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

Identify each submission as follows:

<First Name> <Last Name>, <Age>, <Grade>, <Residence Location (Reston Herndon, Springfield, etc.)>, <Title of the Work>, <Medium or Type of Writing> | <School/Center Name>, <School Location>, <Teacher Name>, <Title>

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Springfield, Summer Morning, wa-

tercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS

Writing example

Martina Alvarez, 17, Junior, Alexandria, I'm Not Just a Teen, essay | Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, VA, Gratia Rodriguez, English Teacher, HS

Please email your submissions by 6 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023, [Earlier is Better] to Editor and Publisher Mary Kimm at kimm.mary@gmail.com and fill in the Subject Line as Children's Connection 2023



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NEWS BRIEFS

Civil War Christmas At Fort Ward

Learn how Christmas was observed during the Civil War at Fort Ward Museum's annual Civil War Christmas in Camp program on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023, from 12-4 p.m. This family-oriented event features a patriotic Civil War Santa Claus, reenactors in winter camp settings, and period decorations. The suggested donation is \$2 per person, and \$5 for families.

The program features a Civil War-era Union Santa Claus, based on an 1863 cover of Harper's Weekly by artist Thomas Nast, who will interact with the public, welcome children to the reconstructed Officers' Hut, and visit soldiers in camp. Reenactors will interpret army life in winter camps that are decorated for the season, and celebrate by opening Christmas boxes from home, singing carols of the period around the campfire, and preparing holiday meals. The Museum will be decorated with festive greenery and a Victorian parlor tree. Children can make a holiday card or ornament. A variety of Civil War books and stocking stuffers are available in the Museum shop. Fort Ward is the best preserved of the Union forts in the extensive system known as the Defenses of Washington. The Museum offers exhibits and public programs throughout the year. Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site is located at 4301 West Braddock Road in the City of Alexandria. For more information about this program, call 703-746-4848, or visit alexandria.gov/FortWard.



tion bonds "above the sovereign," because "the city can maintain better credit characteristics than the U.S. [government] in a stress scenario."

City to Host Stormwater Cleanup Day

The public is encouraged to help with a stream clean up event at Historic Holmes Run on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Participants will meet at the Charles Beatley Library parking lot at 5005 Duke Street for a sign-in and event briefing before walking to Holmes Run.

The cleanup event is held in recognition of the first annual National Stormwater Day that was on Nov. 16. Established by the National Municipal Stormwater Alliance (NMSA), National Stormwater Day is an opportunity to recognize and raise awareness of stormwater management practices and programs.

The City will provide gloves, bags, and first aid kits during the event. Participants are encouraged to dress appropriately, in long pants and covered footwear, and to bring water.

To register for the event or request more information, contact nolan.compton@alexandriava.gov.

Help protect water resources by picking up after your pet, reducing or eliminating fertilizer use, and using the Alex311 reporting system to notify the City if you notice anything suspicious in local waterways. Learn more about what you can do by visiting the City's website at alexandriava.gov/go/3120.

APD Assists Fairfax County Police Arrest Suspect Driving Stolen Vehicle

On Friday, Nov. 17 the Alexandria Police Department was alerted by Fairfax County Police that a man suspected of driving a stolen vehicle was entering the City of Alexandria. APD officers assisted Fairfax Police in apprehending the adult male outside of William Ramsay Elementary School at 5700 Sanger Avenue.

While there was no threat to students and faculty, the school was placed on a temporary "secure the building" status while the investigation concluded outside. There was a moderate police presence out-

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 9

Still AAA

S&P Global Ratings and Moody's Investors Service have reaffirmed the City of Alexandria's top bond ratings of 'AAA' and 'aaa,' respectively, helping the City achieve competitive, low interest rates.

"We are very proud that once again the City has been recognized for its economic development initiatives, extensive focus on environmental and social risks, and strong policies that govern our financial operations," said Mayor Justin Wilson. "Both ratings agencies acknowledged the City's efforts beyond our strong financial condition, including affordable housing initiatives and environmental protections."

In its credit highlights, S&P Global cited Alexandria's "robust economic growth, including new developments around a recently opened metro station alongside residential and commercial growth across four key growth areas in the City." Moody's credit analysis mentioned "ample reserves and liquidity, supported by adherence to comprehensive fiscal policies" as one of the City's credit strengths. Both opinions noted the City's efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing.

The City of Alexandria has maintained the highest grades from both major bond rating agencies since 1992, which allows the City to pay low interest rates on bonds issued to fund major projects. Later this year, the City will issue \$258 million of tax-exempt general obligation bonds to fund capital improvement projects. Significant projects include the Minnie Howard Redevelopment Project, the newly constructed Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, and infrastructure improvements for the redevelopment of West End, previously Landmark Mall.

S&P Global Ratings rated the City's general obliga-

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A Whole New World

Momentum Collective's Aladdin JR a magical success.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

There was magic in the air as children from across the city made their stage debut in the Momentum Collective production of Aladdin JR Nov. 16 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

Based on Disney's 1992 Academy Award-winning film and the 2014 hit Broadway show, Aladdin JR featured a cast of over 30 local youth between the ages of 8 and 16 in what is the city's first children's theater musical.

"Kids from different backgrounds came together in this production," said Momentum Collective founder and executive director Jason Ellis. "It was a beautiful thing to see — kids from different socioeconomic conditions, different parts of the city, coming together to do this production with all first-time performers."

In partnership with the city's recreation department and with seed funding from the Office of the Arts, Ellis both produced and directed the beloved musical, bringing to life the story of Aladdin and his three friends, Babkak, Omar, and Kassim, who are down on their luck until Aladdin discovers a magic lamp and the Genie who has the power to grant three wishes.

"I felt very well coming out of it," Ellis said. "Obviously we normally work with adults but I wanted to restart a children's theater. Our first stab at a children's production comes off the heels of our expansion of afterschool performing arts education to approximately 200 youth across the city of Alexandria. We aim to provide a positive outlet for youth while developing their artistic abilities and creative sensibilities."

For the last several years, Ellis and Momentum Collective have been working with a number of organizations within the city to leverage resources in order to continue to provide a host of supports and services to youth, at no cost.

"This was a big heavy lift on our end to get the cast ready," Ellis said. "It was their first time on stage and it was a wonderful process working in conjunction with the parents to support them in a way that they could be on stage confidently and give everyone a wonderful performance."

Ellis assembled a team of seasoned theater professionals to stage the production, with Kevin White as choreographer, Michelle Hogan as music director, Charnika Hayes as acting coach, Danielle Hatcher as stage director and John Van Voorhis as technical director.



Armarni Thompson, Leonard Charles and Derrick Grajkowski perform in the Momentum Collective production of Aladdin Jr. Nov. 16 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

soned theater professionals to stage the production, with Kevin White as choreographer, Michelle Hogan as music director, Charnika Hayes as acting coach, Danielle Hatcher as stage director and John Van Voorhis as technical director.

"On our end we wanted to make sure it was a well-produced event," Ellis said. "We didn't just want to throw a kids show together just

wards supporting future children's musicals as well as expanding the existing afterschool arts education programs.

"I hope to get more funding to keep this going," Ellis said. "I want to continue this and keep it going for the foreseeable future. My plan is to do at least two children's productions every year — one in the Spring and one in the Fall going forward. Nothing is set yet but I am looking at Once On This Island and also Annie as possible future productions."

Thanks to the efforts of Ellis and Momentum Collective, "a whole new world" of musical theater is opening for young Alexandria performers.

To learn more about Momentum Collective, visit www.momentum-cinc.org.

Thomas Kirch, Roxana Hernandez, Virginia Nahikian, Stella Cisney, Cana Zemariam, Karington Pratt, Lena McCord, Maeve Plunkett, Violet McMahan, Greta O'Hara and cast in the Momentum Collective production of Aladdin Jr. Nov. 16 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

PHOTOS BY
JANET BARNETT
GAZETTE PACKET



England Simpkins and Tahnya Brown leap in the air during a musical number in the Momentum Collective production of Aladdin Jr. Nov. 16 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.



Roxana Hernandez, Amy Hernandez, Greata O'Hara, Violet McMahan, Derrick Grajkowski (Aladdin), Thomas Kirch, Nickolas Pratt and Teddy Stoltzfus in the Momentum Collective production of Aladdin Jr. Nov. 16 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.



FROM PAGE 7

side the school.

The lead agency for this incident is the Fairfax County Police Department. If you have any information about this incident please call our non-emergency number at (703) 746-4444. Tips and information can be provided anonymously.

Affordable Rental Units Available

The Meridian 2250 at Eisenhower Station, a new apartment community located at 2250 Dock Lane, Alexandria, VA 22314, will be providing 15 new apartments under the City's Affordable Rental Set-Aside Program. Apartments are anticipated to be delivered between January and late Spring 2024.

Seven committed affordable apartments will be delivered as part of the first phase. Two studio apartments will be offered at \$1,470 (one of the studios features a separate sleeping area); four 1-bedroom apartments will be offered at \$1,544/month (two of the 1-bedrooms have a sunroom); and one 2-bedroom apartment will be offered at \$1,844/month. Residents are responsible for utilities, including metered water, sewer and electric. Units feature in-unit washer/dryers and programmable thermostats; additional amenities can be viewed on the property's website.

One of the 1-bedroom apartments with a sunroom is an accessible unit. This unit features lower kitchen countertops; an accessible refrigerator, microwave and range/cooktop; grab bars in the bathroom; and a side-by-side washer and dryer.

The application fee is \$50/applciant. No security deposit is required unless a guarantor is needed to meet the income requirements. There is a non-refundable move-in fee, \$237 for studios; \$254 for 1-bedroom apartments; and \$305 for 2-bedroom apartments. Parking fees are \$25/month for one car, and \$75/month for a second car. Separate pet and storage fees apply.

To qualify for a unit, an applicant's total household income may not exceed:

One Person	\$63,300
Two People	\$72,360
Three People	\$81,420
Four People	\$90,420

Minimum income limits will also apply.

Application process: Application requests will be accepted electronically by the property starting December 18. Application instructions will be sent via eNews and posted on the Office of Housing's website, under Current Availability, on December 15. When signing up for eNews, please make sure to select the "Affordable Housing" news option to receive updates from the Office of Housing.

For assistance requesting an application or for general information, please contact Anelva Corcos-Beltran or Mayra Jordan at the Office of Housing at 703.746.4990/text 703.405.7100.



A representative of Enigmatic Union explains to patrons the various ciders produced at the Charlottesville brewery during the Nov. 18 Lloyd House Cider Festival.

Celebrating Cider Festival returns to Lloyd House.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria celebrated Virginia Cider Week with a special Cider Festival Nov. 18 at historic Lloyd House in Old Town.

Hosted by the Office of Historic Alexandria in partnership with the Virginia Association of Cider Makers, the festival featured cider tastings, live entertainment and information on the history of cider in the City of Alexandria.

"This is my first time at the festival," said John Bateman, who attended with friends. "It has really been a good time."

Jay Paulette sampled the Potter's Craft Cider from a Charlottesville brewery.

"This is pretty good," Paulette said. "It's dry and kind of the way I like to drink cider."

Featured at the festival were Virginia ciders as well as some cider from France through the city's Sister City in Caen.

Cider was a popular beverage in 18th and early 19th century Alexandria and offered at area taverns. Thomas Jefferson cultivated 18 varieties of apples in his orchard at Monticello and today there are over 30 different apple varieties grown specifically for cider production throughout Virginia.

Cider is fermented like wine, not brewed like beer. One of the most common misconceptions is that hard cider is made in a single style rather than the many different styles that are produced. Virginia Cider Week was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2012 to recognize this growing segment of Virginia's economy.

Proceeds from the event benefit the Office of Historic Alexandria.



John Bateman, Samuel Parks and Jay Paulette enjoy the Lloyd House Cider Festival Nov. 18 in Old Town.



Ryan McCombie, Shannon McCombie Lauer and John Lauer enjoy a taste of craft cider at the Lloyd House Cider Festival Nov. 18 in Old Town.

One-Man Show Tackles The Christmas Carol at the Workhouse



John Hardy does it all for this holiday production.



John Hardy brings his one-man show of the Christmas Carol to Lorton Workhouse Art Center.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

It takes a certain amount of skill and finesse to put on a production of “A Christmas Carol,” with only one person. John Hardy has been doing this for the past 12 years and is taking his play to the stage at the Workhouse Art Center this holiday season.

“This is a great production, I use my body and voice,” Hardy said.

He plays over 40 characters to put on the production including Scrooge, Tiny Tim and all the rest using just stage antics and voice depictions. At first, it might seem he’s up there throwing on outfit after outfit, running around like a madman, but that’s not the case. “That’s not at all what I do,” he said.

The voices and expressions tell the whole story.

In order to pull off something like this, it takes a good story and the well known Charles Dickens’ tale of Scrooge and bah-humbug has been used in many forms. The Grinch could be called a “Scrooge,” and even the Charlie Brown Christmas story is similar – they couldn’t be happy and were

looking for the true meaning of Christmas.

Hardy is into the story too, and the turnaround that happens to Scrooge is a favorite moment of his. “It surprises me and if it surprises me, it surprises the audience,” he said. “They’ll laugh and cry.”

Acting and Writing Career

Over 35 years onstage, Hardy’s career in the professional theater has taken him in all directions.

He has worked all over the country and overseas. Over the course of his career John has directed over one hundred professional productions including Macbeth, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, Julius Caesar, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Oedipus the King, Man of La Mancha, The Taming of the Shrew and others. As an actor he’s played roles including Hamlet, MacBeth, Tom Wingfield in The Glass Menagerie, Teach in American Buffalo and many others. In 2009 John played George in a national tour of Of Mice and Men. As a playwright he has had over fifty productions



The Christmas Carol is just one of the productions on stage at the Lorton Workhouse Art Center.

If you go...

The Christmas Carol
Saturday, Dec. 2 at 7 p.m.,
Sunday, Dec. 3 at 1 p.m.

Workhouse Arts center
9518 Workhouse Way
Lorton VA 22079

For more, go to
workhousearts.org

of fifteen plays produced across the country and overseas.

Hardy has another one-person play called “Rattlesnake,” that he wrote and performs at theaters around the country. He plays 16 characters in that play.

The Workhouse Art Center in Lorton is having several holiday events over the next few weeks including a toy drive, a production of the Who’s “Tommy” featuring a pinball wizard, and Xanadu starring Jessica Barraclough.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

butions, 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, 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 SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

CAREGIVING CORNER



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Deborah Tompkins Johnson writes about advances in caregiving.

Can We Become Healthy Centenarians?

BY DEBORAH TOMPKINS JOHNSON
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE PACKET

Dear Caregivers: I have an enlightening resource to share with you that can benefit both you and your loved ones. It is just a matter of adapting and adopting some of the concepts of what one author-researcher calls Blue Zones.

I am thankful to a neighbor who told me about a Netflix series, Live to 100 – Secrets of the Blue Zones. The series is based on a book titled “The Blue Zones, Secrets for Living Longer, Lessons from the Healthiest Places on Earth,” by Dan Buettner. Buettner traveled to locations on various continents where his research led him to cities and towns that have the highest concentrations of centenarians, healthy centenarians. Fortunately, there is one Blue Zone in America: Loma Linda, California.

Other places he traveled to after learning of their high concentrations of centenarians included Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; and Nicoya, Costa Rica.

Diets and cultural practices in the Blue Zones are important for us in America to be aware of.

Researchers at U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective concluded that “People in the United States experience the worst health outcomes overall of any high-income nation.” And that “Americans are more likely to die younger and from avoidable causes, than residents of peer countries.”

Learning from the Blue Zones is worthwhile for us. For example, Okinawa has the longest living people in the world. Sardinia, Italy, had no nursing homes, and it boasts the highest concentration

of male centenarians in the world. Ikaria, Greece, had half the rate of cardiovascular disease. And Ikaria had no cases of dementia at the time of Buettner’s study.

The concepts — some new, others familiar — depict both lifestyle and diet practices, which include:

Moving naturally: They use their hands, working with animals, tools or gardening. And they are in constant motion, often simply walking instead of driving. And they walk up and down steep hills and stairs outdoors or in their homes.

Having a meaningful outlook: The centenarians, other elderly and younger people join together to unwind. Some practice a faith, regularly joining with others and they have a defined purpose for their life.

Eating wisely: Many believe in a mainly plant-based diet. They enjoy natural herbal teas. When one interviewer was asked the best tea, the elderly woman responded, “wine.” They eat their meals in moderation, meaning they stop eating before they are fully satiated.

Intentionally connecting with others: People in the Blue Zone communities commit to strong family relationships and create or embrace a village or tribe of people to socialize with and provide mutual help.

I could go on and on, but I won’t. And of course, I am not suggesting we all pack up and move. But I do hope I have piqued your interest enough for you to check out the book or the Netflix series. If we are willing to consider some of these practices, again some new and others similar or familiar, this could help us to enhance health and quality of life for our loved ones and for ourselves. We are all aging every day. Let’s do it well.

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Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk on Dec. 2

During Alexandria's Biggest Holiday Weekend, celebrate the return of top signature events, including the 52nd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade in historic Old Town Alexandria at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023. The parade is sponsored by Wegmans.

Taste of Scotland

The weekend kicks off on Friday, Dec. 1 with the Campagna Center's Taste of Scotland sponsored by The Goodheart Group, a festive cocktail party at The Atrium Building featuring top-quality Scotch tasting stations and paired cuisine. Proceeds from the event benefit Campagna Center programs.

For more details on the parade route, transportation alternatives and weekend happenings, visit ALXScottishWalk.com.

Parading

Dozens of Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans parade through the streets of Old Town, joined by pipe and drum bands, as well as terriers and hounds, community groups and more. Alexandria was founded in 1749 by Scottish merchants and was named after Scotsman John Alexander who owned the land that became Alexandria.

This year's Grand Marshals are Congressman Don Beyer and Director of the Office of Art in Embassies at the U.S. Department of State Megan Beyer.

Some highlights:

More than 120 parade units include nearly 35 Scottish clans from around the D.C. region and other parts of the U.S.



PHOTO BY E. PALLORINA FOR VISIT ALEXANDRIA

Bagpipers including the Kiltie Band of York and the City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums plus a bagpiping Santa closing the parade.

Scottish country and highland dancers from Northern Virginia Branch, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and Alexandria School of Highland Dance

More than 10 dog groups including Scottish breeds of West Highland Terriers, Gordon Setters and Scottish Terriers along with other rescues and clubs

Don't Miss

After the last parade unit has finished the parade route, participating pipe bands will reassemble at Market Square under the direction of City of Alexandria Pipes and Drums' Drum Major Joshua Cease to play a few tunes as part of a massed band concert.

Plan Ahead

Parade-goers and others should plan ahead to avoid traffic delays, taking alter-

native transportation and, if driving, parking outside of the immediate parade zone. The parade kicks off on S. St. Asaph Street at the corner of Wolfe Street and progresses north to Queen Street, east to Fairfax Street, south to King Street, and west to terminate in front of City Hall. For the best views, spread out along the one-mile parade route. For a map of the parade route, visit ALXScottishWalk.com.

CALENDAR

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/>



The 23rd Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights takes place on Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023 in Alexandria.

OCT. 19 TO NOV. 26
Fleeting Moments | Street Photography. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Fleeting Moments features

photographs that capture candid moments, revelatory interpretations, and brilliant reflections of the mundane — work commonly referred to as “street photography.”

In 1943 the New York Times referred to the street photography of Helen Levitt, as, “fleeting moments of surpassing lyricism, mystery and quiet drama.” Those qualities are

throughout Old Town and Del Ray will open their doors early on Friday, November 24th to participate in Plaid Friday - Alexandria's Small Business Black Friday. Come

the hallmark of the works selected for this show.

NOV. 3-26
The Housemates exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Exhibit showcases art from Del Ray Artisans members celebrating the beings we live with. Housemates may have fur, feathers, fins, scales, or be human. Opening Reception: Friday, November 3, 7-9 p.m.. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. (Closed on Thanksgiving Day). Plus bring in donations for cat and dog rescue groups. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/event/housemates

FRIDAY/NOV. 24
Plaid Friday in Old Town Alexandria. More than 50 participating businesses

patronize Old Town boutiques the day after Thanksgiving and enjoy great discounts, merriment and good cheer, all while shopping small, supporting local businesses and celebrating the plaid vibes that are iconic to Old Town Alexandria. Early shoppers will receive extra discounts. Early Bird Discounts: A special incentive to get up early the day after Thanksgiving are the early-morning deals offered by participating businesses: 6 AM - 8 AM: 30% off; 8 AM - 10 AM: 20% off; and 10 AM - Closing: 10% off!

DEC. 1-3, DEC. 8-10, DEC. 15-17
Del Ray Artisans 28th Annual Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Free admission. First three weekends in December (Dec. 1-3, Dec. 8-10, Dec. 15-17), plus bonus market days Dec. 22 & 23. Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays

Annual Old Town Holiday Outdoor Decorating Contest

The Old Town Walled Garden Club will hold the annual holiday outdoor decorating contest. Founded in 1959, this will be the 54th year the Old Town Walled Garden Club has sponsored this contest.

From traditional greens to more contemporary designs, Alexandria's decorations make Old Town a holiday destination. The contest recognizes the most striking holiday exterior decorations in the Historic District.

In keeping with Old Town's historic provenance, contest rules require that — except for festive bows and ribbons — the decorations should feature only natural materials. For the residential contest, the decorations must all be made by the homeowners themselves. Professionally-made decorations are not eligible for the residential contest. For the commercial contest, decorations can be professionally created, however decorations should only feature natural materials.

Judging criteria include originality of design, scale, color, contrast, and attractiveness from the street.

The first, second, and third place winners for the residential contest will receive gift certificates from local area restaurants or businesses.

Judges will consist of Old Town Walled Garden Club members and judging will take place sometime the week of Monday, Dec. 11 to Thursday Dec. 14, so we encourage everyone to start planning today.

The contest is free to enter. If you're interested in participating in the contest, please send an email to OTWGClub@gmail.com and provide your name, address, email address and telephone contact, and our judges will be sure to come by and check out your décor.

For additional information regarding the contest, contact the Old Town Walled Garden Club at OTWGClub@gmail.com.



FIRST PLACE LAST YEAR:

307 N Washington St. Owner: Brian Branton. A very traditional natural pine wreath decorated with yellow Belani nuts, dried pomegranate, lotus pods, dried quince and dried yarrow. The owner didn't neglect the transom window, even topping it off with a welcoming pineapple.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 12

6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Hours for Friday, December 22 are 3-9 p.m. Details: delrayartisans.org/holiday-market

SATURDAY/DEC. 2
23rd Annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. 5:30 p.m. At Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. More than 50 brightly lit boats cruise along one mile of the Potomac River shoreline from Canal Center to Ford's Landing Park. Head to Waterfront Park at the foot of King Street for festivities from 1 to 8 p.m. including a pop-up beer garden from Alexandria's Port City Brewing Company with hard cider from Alexandria's Lost Boy Cider. Also at Waterfront Park, from 1 to 5:30 p.m. enjoy hands-on activities from independently owned Alexandria businesses. Head to Canal Center on the Old Town North waterfront from 3 to 9 p.m. for the Canal Center Holiday Art Mart to enjoy family friendly festivities and watch the start of the Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights on the terrace with parade assembly anticipated between 5 and 5:30 p.m. At 3:30 p.m., Santa and Mrs.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2
52nd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade. 11 a.m. In Old Town Alexandria. Dozens of Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans parade through the streets of Old Town, joined by pipe and drum bands, as well as terriers and hounds, community groups and more. Alexandria was founded in 1749 by Scottish merchants and was named after Scotsman John Alexander who owned the land that became Alexandria. Today, the city continues celebrating its heritage with the iconic parade. This year's Grand Marshals are Congressman Don Beyer and Director of the Office of Art in Embassies at the U.S. Department of State Megan Beyer. The 2023 Master of Ceremonies is Ian Houston, an international non-profit leader in the Washington, D.C. area who is dedicated to promoting cultural links between Scotland and the U.S. For more details on the parade route, transportation alternatives

Claus will arrive by fireboat at the Alexandria City Marina before attending the annual Holiday Festival at Torpedo Factory Art Center, which takes place from 12 to 6 p.m.

and weekend happenings, visit ALXScottishWalk.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2
Tall Ship Holiday Boat Parade of Lights Viewing Party. 5-7 p.m. Guests are invited to experience exclusive access to view Alexandria's Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Guests can choose between two unique experiences: VIP Ticket (aboard Providence) \$85, includes glass of champagne upon boarding, onboard bar and food, TSP gift or General Admission Ticket (on dock) \$65, includes food and bar. Tickets at www.tallshipprovidence.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2
Classical Christmas Concert. 2 p.m. Featuring Barclay Brass and Adriano Spampinato. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria. The hour-long program will feature familiar carols, Classical masterpieces, and a few surprises, designed perfectly for families with young children, and the young-at-heart. Tickets are available through EventBrite. \$10 for individuals, capped at \$25 for a family of four. For more information: Lisa Eskew (703) 298-3901 or www.Stpaulsalexandria.com

SATURDAY/DEC. 2
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>.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA
"Breakfast with Santa" will take place every weekend in December, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in three locations in Alexandria: Joe Theismann's Restaurant, Mia's Italian Kitchen, Ada's on the River. Tickets range from \$0-\$65 and include a hearty and festive breakfast feast that will delight your taste buds. Children will receive take-home treats to continue the holiday spirit at home, while adults can indulge in some celebratory Prosecco. Tickets can be purchased here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/breakfast-with-santa-in-old-town-alexandria-by-arp-1039279>

DEC. 8-9
Holiday Pops Concert. Friday and Saturday from 7:30-9:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. At Washington Street United Methodist Church, 109 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Share your spirit for the season. In lieu of a physical gift drive, online donations can be added at ticketing checkout for Alexandria's Carpenter's Shelter. Visit www.Alexandriasingers.com.

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.

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 Wed. 29: Three Dog Night \$85.00 **SOLD OUT!**
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Obituary

Obituary

Patrick J. Reidy, 63, of Alexandria, VA, passed away on November 9, 2023. He was born in Chicago, IL to Patrick and Catherine "Kay" Reidy, nee Sullivan. Patrick served in the US Navy for almost 40 years on active duty, reserves, and as a contractor and civil servant. Patrick is survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Chris and Brian Bewley, his brother, Kevin Reidy, two nieces, fond uncles, cousins and an aunt, plus many wonderful friends. A visitation will be held on Thursday, November 30th from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Everly Wheatley Funeral Home, 1500 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on December 1st at 3:00 p.m. at Good Shepard Catholic Church, 8710 Mount Vernon Hwy., Alexandria, VA. His ashes will be interred at a later date. Please see <https://www.everlywheatley.com/tributes/Patrick-Joseph-Reidy> for more information.

Employment

Employment

Office of Pupil Transportation and Fleet Management

ACPS Transportation Careers Open House

**Friday, December 8th
10am-12pm**

**Pupil Transportation and Fleet Management Office
3540 Wheeler Avenue Alexandria, VA**

Participants will have the opportunity to:

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BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 10

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.

FACE Center Support Groups provide parents with a space to share their daily parenting frustrations and triumphs while offering new strategies for helping parents to cope, build positive parent-child relationships and best support their children's learning.

- ❖ Support Group in English, every Monday, 6-7:30 p.m. at ARHA Main Building, 401 Wythe St.
- ❖ Support Group in Spanish, every Wednesday, 6-7:30 p.m. at Community Lodgings Brookside Center, 614 Four Mile Road.

Registration not necessary. A light dinner and childcare services provided free. Contact Krishna Leyva at 703-619-8055 or krishna.leyva@acps.k12.va.us for more.

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

ONGOING

Seeking Donations. Computer CORE, which is dedicated to helping low-income adults become computer literate is seeking donations. Visit www.computercore.org/contribute.

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Horses make their way through town during a past Clifton Horse Parade.

Clifton Holiday Homes Tour and Horse Parade

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Let the holiday season officially begin – it's time for a full day of fun and merriment in the historic Town of Clifton. The festivities begin Saturday, Dec. 2, at 2 p.m. with a colorful horse parade, followed by the Holiday Homes Tour from 4-7 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DARAH CURRAN

The home of Dave and Jacquie Baciocco.

Parade participants are members of the Clifton Horse Society, and they and their horses will be all decked out in their holiday finery as they jingle down Main Street and loop through the town. Afterward, they and the attendees will gather together to enjoy cookies and other refreshments.

People are then invited to visit the charming shops and eat at Clifton's restaurants before immersing themselves in the town's storybook setting of twinkling lights, the sound of caroling and beautifully decorated homes awaiting them during the homes tour.

On display will be four houses in town, an RV, plus a bonus fifth house, just outside Clifton. "You will not want to miss this home's floor-to-ceiling decorations spanning three levels, which have been featured in a national magazine," said event Chairman Darah Curran. "This bonus house will open at 3 p.m. to accommodate the drive."

The rest of the homes will open their doors to the public at 4 p.m. Three of them are historic and one is a modern, arts-and-crafts style. "While the homes' walls might not be able to talk, as you walk through them, docents will share stories about the houses, their previous homeowners and some town history/gossip," said Curran.

One house stands on the rumored moonshine stills of the 1920s, another home

showcases stained-glass doors that were once part of a suite at the Clifton Hotel – and prior to that, served as the interior cabin-doors on a Trans-Atlantic steamship. The historic homes served many purposes; visitors will be able to learn about their former uses as a barbershop, grocery store, saloon, church, livery, etc.

In addition, the Clifton Caboose will be open for curious train enthusiasts of all ages to view. And all three town churches will have holiday performances over the course of the evening, and the public is welcome to attend, free of charge.

Except for the bonus house, the entire event is walkable throughout the town. Tickets for the homes tour will be available at these Clifton shops and restaurants: Main Street Pub, Little Villagio, Belle Jar and Virginia Mercantile, as well as at Pickett Fence in Burke.

The cost through Dec. 1 is \$25, adults; \$5, children. On the day of the event, tickets will be \$30 and \$5. Proceeds benefit the Town of Clifton and a designated, town charitable cause. Ticket booklets will contain each home's address, plus detailed information and histories about all of them.

– DARAH CURRAN

CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

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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.

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October 28, 2023
(In Case Anyone Missed it)



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sit and write this column on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, I do so with a heavy heart, heavier than usual I should say. And it is heavier than usual because today is my recently deceased brother's 74th birthday – or rather it would have been. We won't be celebrating it this year – or ever again. In fact, this is his first birthday since he died semi unexpectedly last Dec. 3rd. Another one of those firsts that survivors everywhere must endure when a significant person in their lives dies. And my brother Richard's death was very significant. A huge loss. He leaves a gaping hole in my life, as he does for his widow, Vanessa, and hundreds of his clients for whom Richard was more than simply an insurance broker. He was, as Father Mulcahy was on M*A*S*H, a caretaker of souls, sort of.

Do any of you remember where you were on Oct. 28, 2022? It was a Friday night. Ordinarily, recalling a random-ish day a year or so ago, maybe even a few months ago, is challenging as so often the days, weeks and months tend to blend and it all becomes a blur. Well, this is one date that will never be a blur to me. That's because the Friday night to which I refer was the last night I saw my brother, Richard alive. My wife Dina and I and Richard's wife Vanessa gathered at Richard's home for a surprise birthday dinner for him.

Back home finally, after two months in the hospital (six weeks of which were in the I.C.U.) followed by another two weeks in the adjacent rehabilitation center, Richard was thin and weak, understandably. But he was home at last and happily making progress rehabbing in his in-house exercise room. Slowly but surely becoming even ambulatory. If I'm not mistaken, Richard was driving a bit, with the help of a caregiver, of course. He boasted about walking around the Costco on South Dakota Ave, NW – with a walker. But he was up and at'em generally and improving. When he came down the inclinator (the stair lift), that early evening from his upstairs' bedroom and got into his downstairs' wheelchair, he then rolled into the dining room to his right, where we all were sitting at the dining room table eagerly awaiting his arrival: "Surprise," we all yelled. He had a huge smile. It was his birthday after all. But considering his month's-long ordeal, he wasn't quite ready for prime time. Nevertheless, we forced the issue and there we all were. That evening was the last time I saw my brother alive, and it's a memory that will never blur. I'll always know where I was on that date, his 73rd birthday. Though we spoke regularly over the phone in the weeks that followed, the timing hadn't presented itself to visit him again as he was busy with his rehab, - and tired from the exertion, and going to sleep early. And besides, he was home, having survived all those weeks in I.C.U., and was even receiving infusions for his colon cancer again. In naive truth, we all sort of figured he dodged/survived a bullet – figuratively speaking. And he did survive sepsis after all, as serious as that is, (as we learned from his physicians), so his progress was encouraging/ almost amazing. Though we all anticipated a long, slow recovery; all signs, generally speaking, were positive.

He was eating. He was walking. He was exercising/ rehabbing at home in his home gym. He was out driving occasionally. He was investigating buying a scooter so he would more mobile, and on the "q.t." on his phone, he was researching cruise lines as he was thinking about travelling with Vanessa in the spring. And then on the Sat. morning Dec. 3rd at 8:30 am, I received a call from Vanessa, crying, frantic, having found Richard laying on the floor by his bed, telling me he was "gone." Impossible for me to process, on such short notice, especially considering he had been doing so well that his doctor had restarted his colon cancer infusions to once and for all knock the remaining colon cancer out of his body. After two bi-weekly infusions, he seemed to be on track to a miraculous recovery which, given Richard's personality and determination, was what we had come to expect.

The few days after were a blur. Meeting with funeral parlor people, coordinating with Vanessa about an obituary, deciding the date and place for the memorial service, calling friends and relatives. The following Friday, we had Richard's service at Judean Gardens in Silver Spring. The packed house was a testament to the kind of person my brother was. I thought I knew him. But after hearing so many kind words from so many people in attendance, most of whom, I had never met before, I knew him even better. I realized Richard's loss even more than I had realized, and it made me proud to be his brother. RBL, we miss you terribly. Rest in peace, and please come to me in a dream. I want to see how you're doing. Love, KBL.

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



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