

Alexandria Gazette Packet



25 CENTS

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JUNE 27, 2024



McArthur Myers sits atop the bench dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center. Myers was a co-donor of the bench honoring the slain Civil Rights leader.



McArthur Myers, center, is joined by local dignitaries in unveiling a bench dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center. Myers and former George Washington Masonic National Memorial executive director George Seghers, third from left, donated the bench in memory of the slain Civil Rights leader.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

‘I Have a Dream’ MLK Jr. honored with bench dedication.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The City of Alexandria honored the memory of slain Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. with a bench dedication, part of a Civil Rights Appreciation Day ceremony June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

“Today we are paying tribute to the impact and the legacy of the Civil Rights movement,” said Mayor

“We must not let the great deeds of this truly great man slip into obscurity.”

— George Seghers on Martin Luther King Jr.

Justin Wilson of the ceremony that also honored the recently deceased Ira Robinson, the first African American elected to City Council since Reconstruction. “Ira Robinson was elected to the council

SEE MLK JR., PAGE 7



Mayor Justin Wilson, left, presents a proclamation honoring the late Ira Robinson, a former member of City Council, to Robinson’s daughter Cary and son Marcus June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.



Former congressman Jim Moran, left, with George Seghers, Rosa Byrd, Peter Lawson and McArthur Myers at the dedication of a bench in memory of Martin Luther King Jr. June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

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FESTIVAL

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Entertainers perform as part of the Alexandria Jazz Festival June 21 at Waterfront Park. The music festival was slated to kick off the Portside in Old Town weekend celebration, which was canceled due to extreme heat.



Stephanie Vanputten, left, enjoys the jazz festival with her family June 21 at Waterfront Park.

And All That Jazz

City hosts 46th annual Jazz Festival.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Jazz Festival celebrated 46 years June 21 at Waterfront Park as evening temperatures cooled enough for the show to go on while the remainder of the Portside in Old Town weekend of events were canceled due to extreme heat.

“There is nothing better to me than live music, being outside and being by the water,” said Stephanie Vanputten, who attended the festival with her family. “Tonight is the trifecta for me. There is actually a nice breeze so I am just enjoying the jazz and the people.”

Janet Barnett was coordinator for special events for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and a founder of the festival that was originally held in Market Square on Memorial Day.

“I can’t believe that 46 years have passed,” said Barnett, who retired as Deputy of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. “The Jazz Festival was created by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and is still as popular an event now as it was then. We had help from several city departments, including the police department.”

Vendors were on hand to provide refreshments while many attendees brought their own picnics to enjoy under the stars. Some were especially prepared for the extreme heat.



Soaring temperatures didn’t hinder the fun for friends at the Alexandria Jazz Festival June 21 at Waterfront Park.

“There is nothing better to me than live music, being outside and being by the water.”

— Stephanie Vanputten

“I have my own portable fan,” said Kolethia Clements, who was enjoying the evening with Shannon Strange. “It provides a misting of water as well so it keeps me cool.”

Added Strange with a laugh, “My lady is so smart.”



Kolethia Clements keeps cool with her portable fan while enjoying the jazz festival with Shannon Strange.



A young girl walks along the waterfront during the Alexandria Jazz Festival June 21 at Waterfront Park.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Janet Barnett was the director of special events for the city and helped establish the Alexandria Jazz Festival 46 years ago.

Celebrating a Century

Lois Brooks turns 100.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Lois Brooks was born in the midst of the Roaring '20s and the height of Prohibition. She was barely a year old when her family moved from Durham, N.C. to Alexandria, where she has lived ever since and where she celebrated her 100th birthday June 13 with family and friends.

"The first house I remember living in was at 1321 Wythe Street," recalled Brooks. "It was an all Negro area and we called it Colored Rosemont since the other side of the railroad tracks was where the white people lived. Our houses were built specifically for Black people."

Brooks attended Parker-Gray and Lyles-Crouch, graduating from Parker-Gray before going to business school to get clerical training.

"I worked for the government at the Navy building on Pennsylvania Avenue," Brooks said. "I didn't really take to typ-

ing or stenography so I was a messenger. For two years I carried around a lot of top secret documents."

It was during this time that Brooks, then known as Lois Cross, met her future husband, Courtney Brooks.

"We were in the same social circle and went to the same parties," said Brooks. "I was only 20 when we married and he went off to serve in the war."

Courtney Brooks served in World War II and returned to Alexandria in 1946. Together the couple had one son, Ronald.

"I was so used to living at home with a house full of people," said Brooks. "Growing up with my mother and father, by the



Lois Brooks, with granddaughter Kira Russell, celebrates her 100th birthday June 13, 2024.

PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/
GAZETTE PACKET



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Summer Fun

Sgt. Victor Ignacio and Sgt. Cassandra Branch of the Alexandria Sheriff's Office enjoy the Hello Summer water party with neighborhood kids June 14 at Armistead Boothe Park. The water festival for K-12 students and their families featured water slides, water balloons, bubble makers and all things water related to kick off summer following the end of the school year.

time my mother finished having babies there were 11 of us living in that house."

Brooks moved into her husband's home when he left the service.

"I never did get used to living in houses by myself, even though I have been on my own now for years," said Brooks, who has been living in her current home in Seminary since 1963. "I have so many happy memories of just being with my family."

Brooks has outlived her siblings and husband and lost her son Ronald in 2015.

"Of course it was hard when my sisters and brothers died on me," Brooks said. "Then my son died on me and then Courtney died on me. But still I try not to let anything worry me. If I can't solve it - if it is something I just can't do anything about I leave it alone."

Brooks attributes her longevity to good genes.

"My daddy and momma both had good genes," Brooks said. "People died very young back then. My father worked at a place called the brickyard. They did the hardest work but my mother and father were in their 70s when they died and that was a miracle given how hard they worked."

While she no longer drives on her own, Brooks has family and friends that she is able to spend time with.

"I have a granddaughter and grandson and lots of nieces and nephews," Brooks said. "They are very much in my life - all of them. I don't have anything to complain about."

Kira Russell helped celebrate her grandmother's milestone birthday.

"I have learned so much about life from her," Russell said. "She teaches me about how things were when she was growing up and how we have moved forward from then to now. She really is wonderful to talk to and I love her very much."

Brooks still enjoys getting out and seeing the changes in the city.

"I don't recognize Alexandria," Brooks said. "I ride around Alexandria like a tourist. It's so pretty but I don't recognize anything anymore. But I enjoy going to Old Town just to watch the people."

"I ride around Alexandria like a tourist. I don't recognize anything anymore."

— Lois Brooks, celebrating her 100th birthday

When asked if she had any advice for young people today, she recalled a message she recently heard from a special guest at a church service.

"There was a woman there who got the biggest applause when she repeatedly said 'don't get married,'" Brooks said with a laugh. "She told those young girls to go live your life and wait to get married. It was crazy that we got married so young back then. I'm not going to give advice to anyone but looking back I do wish I had choices that people have today."

OPINION

New Virginia Laws Effective July 1st

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

This week, I will continue my report to you on the new laws going into effect on July 1 that you may encounter in your daily life, including some that you might not know were even considered this session.

One law that garnered much amusement and quite a few puns throughout session was the "road-kill bill" brought by Del. Tony Wilt relating to claiming rights of deer, bear, turkey, or elk hit by motor vehicles. Current law allows only those who hit the animal with their vehicle to be able to claim the dead animal during the hunting season. This new law allows any person who discovers an animal to claim it for eating or as a trophy at any time of the year. If you happen to be in this position, make sure you still call to report it to law enforcement in the area!

The maximum duration of a DMV-issued temporary disabled parking placard will be extended from 6 to 12 months. The fee associated with the issuance of this placard has also been eliminated. The DMV fee for the issuance of an original, duplicate, reissue, or renewal special identification card without a photograph will be reduced from \$10 per year with a \$20 minimum fee to \$2 per year with a \$10 minimum fee.

Moving violations in highway work zones will now be punishable by a fine of not less than \$300 for the first offense and not less than \$500 for any subsequent offense. Another such offense in a 12-month period will be subject to a fine not less than \$750. Slow down and pay attention when driving through highway work zones. This is not only for your safety,



but to protect our hardworking road construction workers and others that you share the road with!

Relief is here for those who have been a victim of predatory towing. This new law will require a towing operator to post written notice on a vehicle providing at least 48 hours' notice to a resident prior to removing a resident's vehicle from the parking lot of a multifamily dwelling for the purpose of an expired registration or expired inspection sticker. Any towing operator who fails

to comply with these requirements shall be required to reimburse the resident for the cost of the tow and shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$100.

Localities in Northern Virginia will now have the ability to require written authorization of the owner of the property from which a vehicle will be towed, as well as to regulate the monitoring practices used by towing and recovery operators, to crack down on the use of "spotters" to enable "smash and grab" tows of vehicles parked for as little as 3-4 minutes. Victims of an unlawful tow are entitled to a payment of 10 times the total amount charged for removal, towing, and storage. Towing and recovery operators will also be prohibited from requiring an individual who appears to retrieve a vehicle towed to provide, in addition to payment of fees, any document not otherwise required by law before releasing the vehicle to the individual.

As always, you can find a full list of newly Chapterized laws on the General Assembly's Division of Legislative Services (DLS) website, as well as a more detailed review in the annual In Due Course chronicle prepared by the DLS.

LETTER

Veterans: Make elections in Virginia Peaceful

Dear Editor,

I served in the United States Navy and am part of a national coalition of veterans who value country over politics. As July 4th approaches, we urge all your readers of the Alexandria Gazette Packet to consider the mood of the country today.

The overwhelming majority of Americans -- Republicans, Democrats, and Independents fear this year's elections will again descend into violence.

Veterans from every state of this great Republic and every political background swore an oath to the Constitution and are proud and honored to have defended it.

Across the country we are asking everyone running for public office to pledge to:

❖ Renounce threats of violence and voter intimidation. Use all your platforms to do the same..

❖ Respect certified results of the election, and where necessary, the

verdict of the courts in adjudicating any election disagreements.

❖ All Americans running for office, please affirm that you will honor our history of peaceful transfers of power, as the framers intended.

No more January 6ths!

Alexandria - spread the word.

In Service,

Andrew A. Anderson, PMP
Alexandria
Veteran and
former Civil Servant

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To submit a letter to the editor, email editors@connectionnewspapers.com or via the following form <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/>

Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy.

Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Jeanne Theismann

jtheismann@connectionnewspapers.com
@TheismannMedia

Janet Barnett, John Bordner,
Mark Mogle

Contributing Photographers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Eden Brown, Bridgette Adu-Wadier,
Glenda Booth

Contributing Writers
gazette@connectionnewspapers.com

Hope Nelson

Food Writer
hope@kitchenrecessionista.com
@kitchenrecess

Michael Pope

Senior Reporter
michaelpope@gmail.com
@michaelpope

ADVERTISING:

For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Publisher

Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jverson@connectionnewspapers.com

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

Editor Emeritus:

Mary Anne Weber

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:

Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

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SENIOR LIVING

Herralink Brings Connection, Joy, to Senior Citizens

Centreville High grad is dedicated to improving their lives.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE GAZETTE

Isabella Solano is just 19, but she's owned her own business since October 2023. And her passion for improving the lives of senior citizens demonstrates how much good people can do when they truly care.

The 2022 Centreville High grad founded Herralink, a nonprofit volunteer organization that bridges the gap between generations by connecting high-school students with residents in retirement homes. The students receive community-service hours for school, and the seniors receive something even more valuable – companionship.

“The word ‘Herra’ has a Nordic background and means elder or senior,” explained Solano. “And ‘link’ is because we link elders with future generations to create connections that grow to feel like family. And our students are called Herralinkers, meaning elder helpers.”

When Solano was 16, she was recruited to work at a tech startup. But when it folded, two years later, she realized she was lonely. “I have an immediate family, but sometimes you need something more,” she said. “A friend at the time was a CNA [certified nursing assistant] at a retirement home and he told me that the seniors barely had any family nearby and never got visitors from the community.

“So that’s how I got interested in them, and they became my family. I felt warm and fuzzy and so happy that they welcomed me into their community. And I feel that warmth and love every time I’m with them – it’s never left me.”

Herralink now partners with four homes for seniors: the Dulles Health & Rehab Center in Herndon, Gainesville Health & Rehab Center in Gainesville, Potomac Falls Health & Rehab Center in Sterling, and Hunter Woods Fellowship House in Reston. The first three are skilled-nursing homes, and the one in Reston is a low-income, independent-living, senior community.

Herralink provides the student visitors and, together, they and the seniors enjoy one-hour activities such as arts and crafts, and light and art therapy, plus social-fitness



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
Isabella Solano.

events, including chair yoga and tai chi. They also do one-on-one meetings between the students and the residents, on weekends, at times convenient to the students. They’ll do things such as playing board games, doing jigsaw puzzles, watching movies or making jewelry together.

“We have almost 400 volunteers, but only eight in the one-on-one program, and I hope that number will increase,” said Solano. “These are the students who really want to connect with the residents and change their lives. To participate in the one-on-one, they go through a personality quiz and an interview with me and are then matched with a senior by me and the retirement home’s director of activities. It’s important that they have something in common, like their personality or a hobby. I match them so they both benefit.”

“The students create their own schedule of the days and hours they visit,” she continued. “Some come in for a few hours on the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ISABELLA SOLANO

Isabella Solano is flanked by (from left) Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, her parents Mario and Jessica Solano, and Supervisor Pat Herrity.

weekend and some visit monthly. The main thing is that their visits are consistent. The students and seniors decide how to spend their time together. The goal is to create authentic relationships that come to feel like family.”

Solano said the students often want to stay longer than they initially planned, and that’s fine. “It’s totally up to them,” she said. “It’s the most special part of Herralink and makes all the hard work worth it. Recently, one of the residents thanked me and told me she felt

like she had family. It almost made me cry because that’s all I want for them, and it makes me feel proud of what I do.

“Even if they don’t have real family, at least they know they have one person who’ll come in and show them the love they deserve. And there’s so much more I want to do; I’ve only just begun.”

Meanwhile, Solano’s work caught the eye of Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield), who praised her for connecting thousands of students with senior cit-

izens who, otherwise, would be alone. In May, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized volunteers throughout the county during its Volunteer Services Awards ceremony. Recommended by Herrity, Solano was honored as the Springfield District Community Champion.

In nominating her, he wrote, “Isabella discovered that 60 percent of retirement-home residents nationwide don’t have visitors. This motivated her to start her non-

SEE CENTREVILLE HIGH, PAGE 11



Herralink volunteers (from left) Ashnil Dasan, Mischa Cho and Kelsa Boodal help nonprofit Reston Strong create a market for neighbors and residents in nearby independent-living homes.



From left, Herralink volunteers Medha Unnava and Maya Ptak do arts and crafts together with senior citizen Alicia Mackin in Herndon.

MLK Jr. Honored With Bench Dedication

FROM PAGE 1

cil in 1970 in the aftermath of the unrest and extremely difficult period for our city. In the issues we work on today the legacy of Ira Robinson lives on.”

Wilson presented a proclamation to two of Robinson’s children who were in attendance.

“It’s an honor to be here knowing that this is where Daddy did his work and made so many changes in the city,” said Robinson’s daughter Cary, who traveled from California to attend the ceremony. “He’s our hero and a hero to Alexandria. He’s a trailblazer and always has been and I feel like he is here with us today.”

The centerpiece of the day’s ceremony was the unveiling of an engraved bench dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. The bench was commissioned and donated by McArthur Myers and George Seghers, the former executive director of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.

“Today is the result of a conversation between myself and brother Mac discussing the MLK birthday celebration and realizing that nothing in the city is dedicated to Rev. King,” Seghers said. “We must not let the great deeds of this truly great man slip into obscurity. We must remember and honor him and learn from what he said and what he did.”

Wilson praised the efforts of Seghers and Myers, a Living Legend of Alexandria.

“McArthur is a walking history book, a walking encyclopedia of Alexandria history,” Wilson said. “He is someone who doesn’t just talk about our history, he actually gets things done in an incredible way.”

Other dignitaries in attendance included Councilman Kirk McPike, City Manager James Parajon, Sheriff Sean Casey, and former Congressman Jim Moran.

“When I came to Alexandria in 1970, Martin Luther King had been assassinated, Bobby Kennedy had been assassinated,” Moran



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Tanya Wilkerson sings Sam Cooke’s “A Change Is Gonna Come” at the Civil Rights Appreciation Day ceremony June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

said. “After Martin Luther King had been assassinated, communities all over the country decided that they were not going to let this be the end of his mission. Men like Ira Robinson said we are going to stand up, we will take on that banner.”

Andy Evans was a close friend of Robinson and served as his campaign manager.

“Dr. King inspired me to be a community organizer,” Evans said. “His legacy inspired my work with Ira, who won as an independent candidate, the first African American elected to City Council since reconstruction.”

Moran, who served on City Council and as mayor prior to being elected to Congress, recognized the heroic efforts in Alexandria’s Civil Rights movement.

“There was a will that was determined to see justice for everyone, to make this a fully inclusive and diverse community,” Moran said. “I couldn’t possibly list all the heroic figures that stood up to make that difference. We are honoring some of them today but also honoring a movement – a movement that will be sustained. We point out heroes of the past to inspire the leaders of the future.”

Added Seghers, “At this tumultuous time in the history of our country, when we need his example and his knowledge more than ever, we can learn much from what Martin Luther King said and how he lived.”

Andy Evans gives remarks during a ceremony honoring Martin Luther King Jr. June 22 at Charles Houston Recreation Center.



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ENTERTAINMENT

POTOMAC HARMONY OFFERS HARMONY & LEARNING!

School may be out in June, but the learning gets started on Wednesday nights at Potomac Harmony chorus rehearsals! Learn the art of 4-part harmony treble singing while experiencing the joy of ringing chords! Together, guests and members will rehearse new music and create harmonies led by the expertise of our talented director Allison Lynskey. Potomac Harmony members are women and nonbinary individuals from all walks of life, live around the DMV, and have various levels of musical and singing experience. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings, 7-9 p.m., at The View Alexandria, 5000 Fairbanks Avenue, Alexandria. Questions? Contact Jackie Bottash, backrowlead@aol.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/>

34TH SEASON OF THE LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) announces the 34th season of its Lyceum Chamber Series, under the guidance of Music Director Laureate Ulysses James. Hosted at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, located at 201 South Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria, this series promises to offer an array of exceptional weekly performances throughout the summer. All concerts are at 3 p.m.; no tickets required. Suggested donation \$25.

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MUSIC SCHEDULE

August 4: Alexandria Baroque
Michael De Sapio, Baroque Violin
John Armato, Lute, Baroque Guitar
August 11: Tapestry Cello Ensemble
August 18: Quodlibet, Flute/Clarinet/
Bassoon
August 25: Samuel Runolfson, Cello
September 1: Michael De Sapio, Violin
September 8: Hai Jin, Piano
September 15: John Sutherland Earle:
Piano & Friends

LYCEUM CHAMBER SERIES SUMMER 2024 CONCERT SCHEDULE

June 30: Luke Ratcliffe, piano
July 14: Crystal Lee, Flute | Brittany



Del Ray Artisans Gallery presents "All About Love" for the month of June in Alexandria.

Pemberton, Clarinet | Eunae Han, Piano
Works by Emanuel, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, and Coleman
July 21: Sasha Beresovsky, Piano
July 28: Maxim Pakhomov, Piano
Works by Schubert, Dvorák, Poulenc, and Rachmaninoff

JUNE 1 TO AUG. 31

Creative Summer Programs is a series of workshops exploring the arts. Learn techniques in drawing, stone carving, jewelry, resin, mosaics, and more from local artists. Delve into creative exploration solo or with friends. Free and paid programs are offered. Sign up for what inspires you! Held at Del Ray Artisans (2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria) unless noted. Details: DelRayArtisans.org/creative-summer

MOUNT VERNON NIGHTS Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

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

JUNE

28 The Artimus Pyle Band - Honoring Ronnie Van Zant's Lynyrd Skynyrd (Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band)

JULY

5 Cecily (Soul, Jazz)
12 Strutman Lane (Funk/Pop)
19 Doc Robinson (Rock and Roll)
26 Bio Ritmo (Salsa)

AUGUST

2 Eastern Standard Time (Ska and Reggae)
9 Project Loceca (World Music)
16 Burn the Ballroom (Alternate Rock)
23 Deanna Bogart (Blues, R&B)
30 Melissa Qinn Fox (Country/American)

AT WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

JUNE

29 Workhouse Fireworks Festival (Ticketed event. Visit www.workhousearts.org)

JULY

6 EU Sugar Bear (Go Go/Funk)
13 Robin and Linda Williams (Folk)
20 Fast Eddie & The Slowpokes (Blues)
27 Bela Dona Band (Funk/Jazz)

AUGUST

3 The U.S. Air Force Strings (Alt-country/Roots rock)
10 Ocho de Bastos (Latin/Pop)
17 Alex Hamburger (Jazz)
24 The U.S. Army Band Country Roads (Country)

JUNE 6 TO AUG. 26

"Nature's Spirit." Nina Tisara's mosaics and Steven Halperson's photographs and etched copper will be exhibited in the Estate House at River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. The public is invited to an Opening Reception on Sunday, June 23, 2-4 p.m. (RSVP: ninat@ninatistara.com). The Estate House is open to the public 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday - Friday and 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Since the Estate House will occasionally close for rental events the public is encouraged to call 703-768-5780, ext. 137, to be certain the exhibit is open for viewing.

JUNE 7-30

"All About Love" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features art that explores love broadly: romantic love, love of family, love of pets, strong friendships, etc. Works by dozens of local artists will be on display and available for sale. Opening Reception: Friday, June 7, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

JUNE 29 TO JULY 21

"American Psycho." At Ainslie Arts Center, 3900 West Braddock Road, Alexandria. Monumental Theatre Company will stage Duncan Sheik and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's "American Psycho." Based on Bret Easton Ellis's 1991 novel of the same name, the musical follows protagonist Patrick Bateman. A



Historic Pohick Church in Lorton will host an Independence Day Program on Thursday, July 4, 2024. (Pictured): Rev. Tom Costa and his wife Susan of the Historic Pohick Church Docent Guild.

suave young Wall Street banker, Patrick enjoys the finer things by day with his elite friends, but as night falls, his taste for darker pleasures threatens to uproot his normal facade. Tickets are: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, and \$10 for students using code STUDENT (must show ID). Visit <http://www.monumentaltheatre.org>.

SATURDAY/JUNE 29

Fireworks at Workhouse. 6-10 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Bring a chair or a blanket to relax on the lawn and enjoy a display of vibrant colors, brilliant lights and ground-breaking explosions, while also providing amazing and fun entertainment for all ages. The DJ leads the party on the Workhouse Quad with special performances from local music and dance groups. Food trucks and beverage options (food, soft drinks, craft beer and wine available). Price starts at \$40 per vehicle in advance; \$45 on-site. <https://www.workhousearts.org/fireworks>

SATURDAY/JUNE 29

Fireworks, Food and Family Fun at Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Fun starts at noon, with fireworks starting at 9:15 p.m. Enjoy food trucks, live performances and fireworks at the annual celebration. The park will close to new arrivals at 8:45 p.m. Admission is free. Parking: \$15 ahead of the event date; \$20 at the gate. The park is the location of the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole. Tickets for the Water Mine, which will be open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., are sold separately.

SUNDAY/JUNE 30

Angels and Demons: Violin Masterworks performed by Michael DeSapio. 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Angelic sweetness and demonic fury have both been part of the violin's personality for ages. Violinist Michael De Sapio takes you down some lesser-known byways of the repertoire for solo violin. Hear works by Pierre Rode, Benjamin Godard, Arthur Honegger, Richard Rudolf Klein, and Eugène Ysaÿe's spectacular and haunting Solo Sonata No. 2 to mark the centenary of its composition.

THURSDAY/JULY 4

Independence Day Program. Noon to 1 p.m. At Historic Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Featuring a Special Reading of the Declaration of Independence. As part of the 250th Anniversary Celebration of Historic Pohick Church, the community is invited to a free public reading of the Declaration of Independence at Historic Pohick Church by historical re-enactor, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Costa, portraying the Rev. Mr. Massey, the Rector of Pohick Church in 1776. The reading will take place at 12 noon, with free docent tours of the Colonial church of George Washington, George Fairfax, and George Mason following the presentation. Visit the website at www.pohick.org.

SATURDAY/JULY 6

Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Selection of over 20,000 gently

ENTERTAINMENT



Workhouse Arts Center will have fireworks on Saturday, June 29, 2024 in Lorton.

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>.

THURSDAY/JULY 11
July Coffee & Connections. 8:30-9:30 a.m. Above ALX, 277 S. Washington Street, Penthouse, Alexandria. Presented by the Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network. Hear from ALX Community Founding Partner & COO Kelly Grant who will share her incredible story!

SATURDAY/JULY 13
Celebrate 275 years with Alexandria! The City of Alexandria will celebrate its 275th and the USA's 248th birthday at Oronoco Bay Park (100 Madison St., Alexandria). The event includes live music by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and ends with the grand finale -- a fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. Admission is free.

JULY 18-21
The Lost Weekend Exhibit. At Nepenthe Gallery, 7918 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Featuring the photography of May Pang, John Lennon's companion and lover. Few people knew John Lennon as intimately as May Pang. She was Lennon's lover during the infamous

"Lost Weekend" which lasted 18 months during late 1973 through 1975. During this highly creative time for Lennon, Pang took candid photos of Lennon in a comfortable, relaxed environment. Pang will be in attendance at the Nepenthe Gallery, meeting customers and telling stories behind these photos for sale of John Lennon. Thursday, July 18 from 6-8 p.m., artist talk and opening reception. Visit the website www.NepentheGallery.com

JULY 18-20
250th Anniversary of the Fairfax Resolves. History enthusiasts and patriots alike are invited to participate in the 250th Anniversary of the Signing of the Fairfax Resolves, a founding document authored by George Mason and adopted at a meeting chaired by George Washington on July 18, 1774. Events are hosted by the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and are scheduled to take place in and around Alexandria, Virginia, where the resolves were adopted.

Organized by the Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the SAR, events will highlight locations significant to the signers of the Fairfax Resolves document and will foster a deeper understanding of this document and its significance in shaping the United States as we know it today. For more information about specific events, visit www.fairfaxresolves-sar.org/public250

SCHEDULE:
Thursday, July 18th
9:30 AM: Gunston Hall – George Mason Plaque Dedication Ceremony
11:30 AM: Mount Vernon – Wreath

Laying Ceremony and Program at the Tomb of George Washington
3:00 PM: Pohick Church – 250th Commemoration of the Fairfax Resolves, Program and Plaque Unveiling Ceremony for the Signers with remarks by the historical figure Rev. Lee Massey
6:00 PM: Market Square in Alexandria, Virginia - Alexandria 250 Commemoration of the Fairfax Resolves, Virginia 250 Road to Revolution Plaque Unveiling for the Fairfax Resolves, Keynote by Virginia 250 Chair Carly Fiorina, Mayoral Proclamation, George Washington and George Mason interpreters, Fife & Drum presentation

Friday, July 19th
3:00 PM: Christ Church – Program, Plaque Unveiling for the Signers, and presentation of the Governor's Proclamation for the Fairfax Resolves 250th by the Secretary of the Commonwealth on behalf of the Governor of Virginia
Saturday, July 20th
10:00 AM: George Washington Townhouse Alexandria, VA – Program and George Washington Plaque Dedication Ceremony

SATURDAY/JULY 20
Second Annual Best of the West. 1-5 p.m. At Patrick Henry Recreation Center, 4653 Taney Ave., Alexandria. Best of the West is a community event showcasing West End Business Association members and restaurant tastings! This event is open to everyone. It is a great opportunity to enjoy a day out in the community, get to know local business owners, and sample some

of the best food that the West End has to offer.

SATURDAY/JULY 20
Mount Vernon Flea Market and Arts and Crafts Fair. 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At Mount Vernon Masonic Lodge #219, 8717 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. Up to 45 vendors, inside and outside, great variety, refreshments on site and inside the lodge. Crafters, Artisans, Antique, Vintage, Collectibles, and neighbors downsizing with practical items/household, furniture, misc. This event takes place every third Saturday of the month from March to December. Next Dates: July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21 (+ bonus holiday market Dec 7 or 14). Visit the website: <https://mount-vernnonfleamarket.wordpress.com/>

SATURDAY/JULY 27
Beats, Bites & Brews - Summer Extravaganza. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle St., Alexandria. Featuring Live Beats: Groove to the sounds of summer with live music performances that will set the perfect tone for your sun-soaked day; Delectable Bites: Indulge your taste buds with a variety of summer-inspired bites from local food vendors; Refreshing Brews: Quench your thirst with an array of cold beverages, including craft beers and refreshing summer cocktails in the Beer Garden; Summer Shopping: Explore local artisans and vendors offering a curated selection of summer goodies, from fashion finds to unique crafts.

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NEWS

Alexandria Volunteer Opportunities

Wednesday, June 26, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Tutor and Mentor Students -- Wright to Read connects an adult tutor with an elementary school student for one hour a week. They will host an information night on Wednesday, June 26 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. for interested volunteers.

Starting July 10, Volunteer Opportunities for Students -- Youth Engaged In Service, formerly BWI, is a chance for students - grades 6 through 12 - to learn about the issues facing their community and then act. Half-day programs are available in July.

Help with a STEM Summer Camp -- Fly Minds is looking for assistants for its Cybersecurity Summer Camp from July 8 through 12. Assistants will help plan courses, assist with classroom set-up, prepare workshop materials, maintain rosters, and engage students.

Be A Food Drive Team Captain -- Volunteer Alexandria is seeking team captains for its summer food drive to benefit the ALIVE Food Bank. Team Captains would coordinate with sites to pick-up food and drop it off at the ALIVE Food Warehouse.

Volunteer for a Girl's Summer Camp -- The Spitfire Club is looking for volunteers to assist with activities, operations, lead small groups, and be counselors-in-training. Attending a training session is mandatory for volunteers.

Teach English to Refugees this Summer! -- Teach English and literacy training to adult immigrants virtually or in-person for 1 - 3 hours a week for 6 weeks. No teaching experience required. Training will be provided.

Tutor Refugee Students this Summer -- Help give Afghan refugees a fresh start by providing basic literacy instruction to middle and high school students this summer. NOVA Raft is looking for volunteers to assist with English, math, or history instruction on either Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays.

Skills Connect Projects (Use your professional skills to help an organization with a short-term project).

Youth and Family Volunteer Opportunities -- for ages 6 to 18. Visit www.volunteerallexandria.org/youthandfamily. Register online: www.Volunteer-Alexandria.org

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Dedicated to Improving Lives

FROM PAGE 6

profit to connect an underserved population with high schoolers looking for service hours." Mentioning Herralink's four partnerships, Herrity said Solano organized several events for the seniors from short, one-hour gatherings – including craft making, game sessions and karaoke – to one, large, community event each month.

"These larger events have included a Halloween event with a bouncy house, balloon animals, face painting and a magician, and a Thanksgiving event where she recreated Cox Farms and brought farm animals like a baby cow, baby horse, chickens, goats, and pigs to the retirement home," wrote Herrity. "She also coordinated with service dogs to ensure bed-bound residents weren't excluded. She even held a masquerade ball at the Jim Scott community center [in Fairfax], which attracted over 200 people. Thank you, Isabella, for your incredible work."

The seniors are grateful to Solano, as well. Just ask Alicia Mackin and Erica McCorry, both residents at the Dulles Health & Rehab Center. "Isabella has a wonderful program," said Mackin. "She's altruistic, a beautiful woman inside and out. I can't express the growth in elderly activities because she draws in more people than she knows."

And, said McCorry, "I love my volunteers. They are so sweet, polite and fun. They enjoy a good discussion. We've done a lot of movie-watching, and I've even taught them to play Scrabble."

The residents at the Gainesville location are also pleased. Alex Afari considers Solano "the heart of this place," and Cynthia "C.C." Cabbage called her the "kindest, laughiest, smartest person in the world."

"Isabella helps people and is a nice person with a positive personality," said Mike Kelsor. And Connie Munczki is glad to see the volunteers Solano brought to them. "I like the high schoolers," she said. "They make me feel very happy because they come to visit and stay with us for a little while."

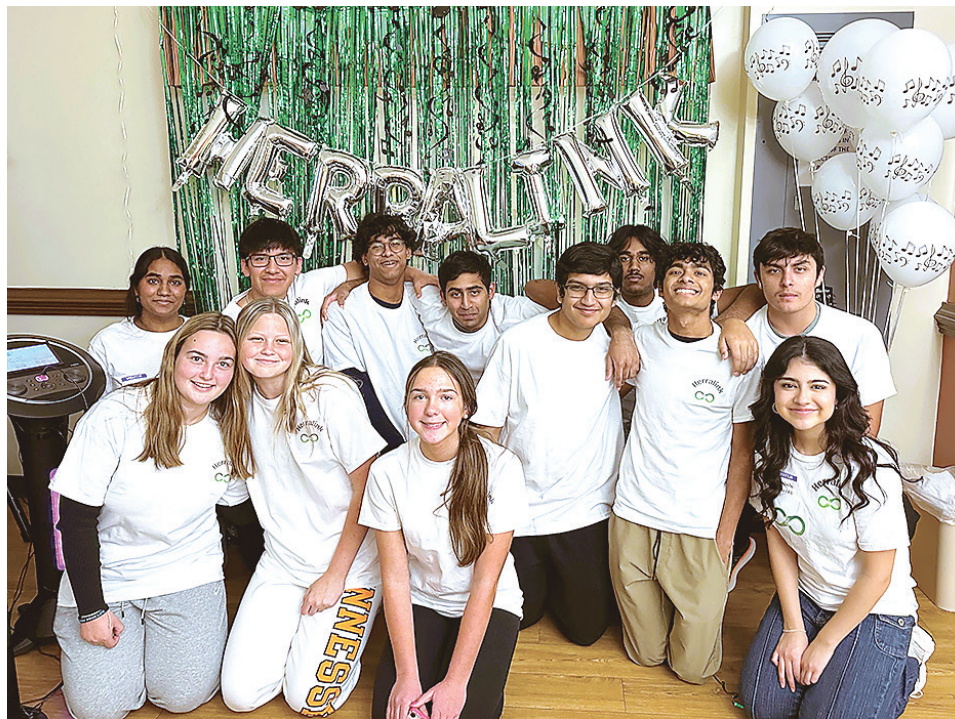
Volunteers such as sisters Kaelyn and Kelsa Boodal, both rising seniors at Paul VI High, are enjoying their experiences, too. "Herralink is a way for students to connect with senior citizens," said Kelsa. "Isabella hosts various events that aren't only fun for the seniors, but also for the volunteers."

"Herralink and Isabella have provided us with a wonderful opportunity to do activities with seniors that they wouldn't normally get to do," added Kaelyn. "Isabella makes volunteering fun and memorable for high-school students like me."

Solano said many teens and young adults don't realize they need real, in-person connections with other people. "The love of a community has so much strength and power, and so many people take it for granted," she explained. "But talking with older adults and learning about them gave me a purpose in this world."

I try to enrich their lives and will spend the rest of my life doing that."

She'd eventually like to study cognitive science with a focus on aging so she could someday design technology to enhance se-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ISABELLA SOLANO

udent volunteers pose for a group photo at a Herralink karaoke event at the Gainesville center. Top row, from left, are Karina Champaneri, Pierro Evangelista, Sidharth Dusanapudi, Ashish Sunkarapalli, Akarshan Anand, Milind Champaneri, Arnav Bhat, and James Garcia. Bottom row, from left, are Lauren Gniazdowski, Rylie Hurst, Piper Waddell and Isabella Solano.



Herralink took residents from Dulles Health & Rehab Center to the White House for the spring 2024 Easter Egg Roll. In back, from left, are Isabella Solano and AnaLucia Rojas; in front, from left, are Ruth Johnson and Alicia Mackin.

niors' lives. For example, it could be applied to help seniors find their room number, or the rooms of their friends, when they can't remember these numbers on their own.

Solano would also like the nursing assistants to realize that "if they'd interact more with the seniors as people, they'd both feel that warmth of human connection. The senior population is often an afterthought and ends up being dehumanized. But if you can do something to improve that, why not? Right now, I'm interacting with these people and learning as much as I can, so I can really help change their quality of life."

And the differences she's already made

for so many seniors are both obvious and welcome. "Isabella has created a remarkable nonprofit that bridges the gap between high-school students and nursing homes," said AnaLucia Rojas, activities director at Dulles Health & Rehab Center. "Through her organization, Isabella and her team of volunteers bring joy and warmth to our facility, enriching the lives of our residents with laughter, compassion and affection."

In fact, Solano has made such a positive impact there that, as of June, she's that location's new admissions director. For more information about Herralink, go to www.herralink.com.

"It Doesn't Have Me Yet"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

How I closed last week's column is how I open this week's. Why? Because attitude, anecdotally writing, is how I can - without offering any guarantees, control my universe and secure my future. Not hardly. However, if I don't think it, it surely won't happen. The dilemma/trick is rolling with the punches that cancer inevitably land and trying to shake them off somehow. And that 'somehow' is complicated by the fact that there's not exactly a neutral corner. Moreover, there's no place to hide, no place to run, and no place to go for a quick remedy for what ails you (meaning me). Which as you regular readers know is papillary thyroid cancer with chronic kidney disease on the side.

The problem/reality is that cancer isn't simply a disease - and often a terminal one at that; depending on the type of cancer you have and how far along (what stage) you are, it's a lifestyle, too. Moreover, it's the predicament which keeps on "predictamenting. It's like having the sword of Damocles hanging over your head, or for the more modern readers, it evokes Linus from the comic strip "Peanuts," having that dark cloud following him everywhere. Cancer is one seriously dark cloud. What's worse is that cancer permeates your entire body. It affects, in one way or another, your brain, your heart, your lungs, your entire being. In its own insidious way, cancer takes over and rearranges everything, figuratively speaking. And unfortunately, despite the best medical care, often, (once again, depending on the type and staging of the cancer) there's nothing - to invoke a classic baseball description: "You can't stop it. you can only hope to maintain it." I ought to know, I've been maintaining it for years.

My intention over these past 15+ years of being a cancer patient has been an attempt at being one for a long time. During this experience, I have been as "compliant" as the doctors would have wanted. I've never missed an appointment. I've always attended my miscellaneous scan appointments and such, I've always had ample supplies of medicine, among other responsibilities. In summary, I have done what the doctors have told me. They have described me as 'compliant,' a real compliment as I've come to understand. I figured that if I was going to take on something as daunting as cancer, I better be clear in my head as to how I was going to do it. And knowing there were no guarantees made it an even a greater challenge. Could I be "the one" (who survives) we asked my oncologist. "Sure, you could be the one." (Although I didn't take him literally. I have come to find out that cancer is a big dog who wants very much be the only one to on your porch. And though cancer survival rates are improving, thousands of people are still dying.)

Having been through the cancer wars, going back nearly 15 and half years, I do feel that experience does give me a sort of emotional foundation as we navigate yet again through this minefield of inevitability. And though I have mostly been there and done that, unfortunately, it doesn't give me much control. Just because I know the dos and don'ts and understand the perimeters of what's reasonable to expect, it doesn't mean I have any sort of advantage over my cancer. All I can control is how I respond to doctor's orders and the interpretations of the miscellaneous scans that I undergo. After all these years, these reactions/assessments are like muscle memory.

I've endured so much for so long; I can't help but wonder if my inventory of positivity and humor has been drained. To take on cancer requires your best effort. Any sign of weakness, however slight might be enough to open the floodgates. The body can only take so much. As I witnessed with my mother-in-law and with my own father, sometimes new complications are just too much for the patient to bare and the patient succumbs to their disease. That's what I worry about: succumbing. I don't even like the sound of it, let alone the meaning. I guess I'll just invoke Scarlet O'Hara from "Gone With The Wind" and "think about that tomorrow."

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

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