

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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JUNE 4, 2026

City Dedicates Memorial to DCA Crash Victims

Families gather to share grief, thank first responders.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Family members, officials and community leaders gathered June 1 along the Potomac River in Alexandria to honor the 67 lives lost in last year's DCA crash of American Airlines flight 5342 and an Army Black Hawk helicopter, a tragedy that continues to reverberate through families and communities across the country.

The memorial event, held near the crash site at Rivergate City Park, combined remembrance with reflection, as speakers shared deeply personal stories of loved ones and called for continued action to prevent future tragedies. The ceremony marked more than a year since the crash, yet for many, the grief remains immediate and profound.

"This space gives us an opportunity to remember they were more than just victims of that accident," said Sheri Lilley, stepmother to co-pilot Sam Lilley. "That day does not define who they were. They were parents, children, partners, friends, teammates, colleagues,

SEE CITY DEDICATES, PAGE 10



Flowers and memorabilia are left on a bench dedicated to the victims of the 2025 Potomac River mid-air collision during a dedication ceremony June 1 at Rivergate City Park.



Audrey Patel holds a photo of her husband Vikesh, who was killed in the 2025 mid-air crash over the Potomac River.



Tim and Sheri Lilley speak at the memorial dedication to victims of the mid-air collision June 1 at Rivergate City Park. Their son Sam Lilley was a co-pilot and was killed in the crash.



A group of American Airlines pilots gather June 1 at the dedication of a memorial to the victims of the mid-air collision at Rivergate City Park.



Mike and Mary Wigstrom lost their daughter Wendy in the 2025 mid-air crash over the Potomac River.



NTSB board chair Jennifer Homendy gives remarks at the dedication to the victims of the Potomac River mid-air collision at Rivergate City Park.



Audrey Patel, widow of crash victim Vikesh Patel, holds the son her husband never had a chance to meet.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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SENIOR LIVING

When the Past Still Echoes

Freedom Summer survivor uses PTSD Awareness Month to share her truth and says that healing is possible.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Laverne Carter moves through her days in Arlington with a quiet grace that belies the storms she has carried for decades. Even now at 82, the everyday sounds of her neighborhood — a screen door snapping shut, a bus rolling to a stop — can still transport her back to Mississippi summers when danger lived in every shadow, a reminder of how PTSD lingers long after the violence ends. It is a truth she rarely spoke aloud for most of her life. But in this PTSD Awareness Month, she is sharing the story of how those years marked her.

“Some sounds don’t mean danger anymore, but my body hasn’t gotten the message,” she says, “and that’s the part of PTSD people don’t see,” said Carter.

Her PTSD didn’t come from war, though

she says it often felt like one. It came from the long, blistering summers of the Civil Rights movement, when she was just 19 years old. She wasn’t an activist who joined sit-ins or marches, but she was there, taking notes and keeping lists of who needed help.

It was 1963 and as a volunteer at her church in her hometown of Greenwood, she traveled with a small group from her church delivering food to families evicted for trying to register to vote.

“We weren’t trying to be heroes,” Carter remembers. “We were just trying to help our people stay alive long enough to vote.”

Carter remembers those dates the way other people remember birthdays. “June of ’63 was when everything changed.” She recalls the March on Washington and listening to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech on a radio in the church basement with other women as they fried chicken, boiled collard greens and baked pound cakes.

But the evening that carved itself into her memory came in 1964, during Freedom Summer. She and other church volunteers were assembling meals and preparing them for delivery when a brick shattered one of the church basement windows. She still flinches at sudden noises.

“When you’re eighteen, you don’t realize how long a moment like that can live in-

SEE WHEN THE PAST, PAGE 14

ALEXANDRIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2026

The **Alexandria Youth Leadership Conference** empowers emerging young leaders by providing training opportunities and connecting them to resources in their community. Registration is open to all rising 9th-12th grade students in Alexandria.

 Tuesday, August 11 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.	 Wednesday, August 12 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.	 Thursday, August 13 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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DEPARTMENT OF **COMMUNITY & HUMAN SERVICES**

Never Forget Gold Star families among those honoring fallen veterans.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Gold Star families, local officials and residents came together in a solemn act of remembrance as the Friends of Rocky Versace held the annual Memorial Day Ceremony May 25 at the Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Del Ray.

Honoring those who gave their lives in military service, the memorial itself commemorates Captain Humbert Roque “Rocky” Versace, a Medal of Honor recipient and Vietnam War prisoner of war, along with 68 Alexandrians who were killed or remain missing in action during the conflict. Each year’s ceremony honors their sacrifice while also paying tribute to all fallen service members.

Inclement weather forced the event to be moved inside the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, where a display honored Versace and all of Alexandria’s veterans lost or missing in action in the Vietnam War.

The organization welcomed five Gold Star Family members whose loved ones have their names chiseled into the stone benches at the Versace Memorial: Jim Harvey (younger brother of Marine 1st Lt Cleveland “Butch” Harvey); Susan Lilly Harvey (younger sister of Army MIA 1st Lt Larry Lilly); Bette Spengler Meuleners (widow of former MIA Capt. Henry Spengler); Jim Spengler, former Alexandria Recreation and Parks Dept. Chief (younger brother of Capt. Spengler); and Earl Valentine (older brother of Pvt. Jeron Valentine).

Versace’s sister-in-law, H. Curtis Versace, was in the audience as were former Alexandria Mayor Allison Silberberg and city councilman Bill Cleveland. Additionally, three retired general officers participated in the

ceremony: Versace’s USMA 1959 classmate Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney; Maj. Gen. Kenneth Bowra; and Maj. Gen. George Alexander.

Joining the Friends of Rocky Versace for her third straight appearance as soloist was Catherine Cassidy from Bishop Ireton High School. She opened the ceremony with the National Anthem then honored the memory of the fallen with a stirring rendition of “America the Beautiful.” Cassidy also performed Versace’s favorite song, “God Bless America.”

The American Heritage Girls Troop #1381 from St. Rita parish led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Deacon Steve Dixon gave the Invocation and the closing prayer. Volunteers and Gold Star Family members read aloud the names of Alexandria’s 68 Vietnam War Fallen Heroes.

Friends of Rocky Versace representative Kevin Rue served as master of ceremonies. Rue read remarks from Prisoner of War James N. “Nick” Rowe that recounted the ordeal he and Versace faced as POWs from 1963-1965. Rue also recited a Tribute to Versace that Rowe included in his POW memoir, “Five Years to Freedom,” written after Rowe miraculously escaped from the Viet Cong following 62 months in captivity.

Seven of Versace’s USMA 1959 classmates presented a wreath at the statuette and Medal of Honor of Versace, saluting as bugler LTC Steve Tracy sounded TAPS.

“The Memorial Day ceremony at the Rocky Versace Memorial is more than a tradition, it is a deeply rooted expression of gratitude,” said Rue. “Through reflection, ceremony and community, the event ensures that Alexandria’s fallen heroes and all who have served are never forgotten.”

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



West Point Class of 1959 classmates of Rocky Versace salute after placing a wreath to honor Versace and all fallen veterans on Memorial Day at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center. Pictured are: COL Al Phillips; COL Charles Lynn; COL John McInerney; LTC Jack Bohman; LTC Mart Lidy; Lt Gen Tom McInerney; and COL Art Bair.



Attendees look over the displays featuring the 68 local veterans who were killed or are MIA in the Vietnam War.



Friends of Rocky Versace organizer Kevin Rue, left, with his class of 1976 West Point classmate Lt. Col. Ray Oden May 25 at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.



Members of the American Heritage Girls Troop #1381 from St. Rita parish lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance at the Memorial Day ceremony at Mount Vernon Recreation Center.



A family pauses at the statue of Medal of Honor recipient Rocky Versace at the Captain Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial May 25 in Del Ray. Versace is among 68 Alexandrians killed or missing from the Vietnam War.



American Legion Post 24 Commander Kelly Niernberger welcomes attendees to the Memorial Day ceremony May 25 at Alexandria National Cemetery.



Flags and flowers adorn 4,229 veteran graves on Memorial Day at Alexandria National Cemetery.



American Legion Post 24 veteran Donna Reuss leads the singing of God Bless America.

Remembering the Fallen

VFW, American Legion host Memorial Day ceremony.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The sacred grounds of Alexandria National Cemetery served as a solemn focal point for honoring fallen service members as part of the nation's Memorial Day ceremonies. Led by local veterans organizations, volunteers from across the city joined together as more than 4,200 interred veterans were individually honored.

Local veterans' organizations, scouts, cadets and civic groups participated in the "Flags-in-the-Ground" tradition May 23, placing American flags and flowers at every grave. This act of remembrance symbolized collective gratitude and ensured that each of the interred veterans was individually honored.

"In addition to each American flag, for three years running, we have been privileged to receive over 4,000 flowers for placement at each veteran's tombstone," said VFW Post 609 Commander Jerry Krueger. "These beautiful flowers come to us mainly from corporate donations and are delivered to us courtesy of the Memorial Day Flowers Foundation."

On the morning of May 25, commemorative activities continued with additional gestures of remembrance. Volunteers from organizations such as the Travis Manion Foundation placed symbolic tokens on selected graves, pausing to reflect on the lives and sacrifices of those buried there.

The official Memorial Day ceremony began at 11 a.m. led by American Legion Post 24. Held at

the cemetery's rostrum, the program included traditional elements such as wreath presentations and a gathering of veterans, families and community members.

Post 24 Vietnam Veteran Donna Reuss led attendees in singing God Bless America while Post 24 Auxiliary officer Amy Soller distributed remembrance poppies. Dr. Lynda C. Davis, Chief Veterans Experience Officer of the Veterans Administration, offered remarks.

Ramiro Penaherrera of the Memorial Day Flowers Foundation was on hand for the ceremony representing the flower growers in Ecuador and Colombia.

"I am very happy and pleased to provide the flowers for such a worthy cause," Penaherrera said. "It is heart-warming to see so many local citizens participate each year in such a patriotic gesture to remember their fallen heroes."

Added Joseph Mattera, Junior Vice Commander of VFW Post 609, "The members of our VFW Post are very appreciative of the enthusiastic support of our Boy Scout Troop 301 and Cub Scout Pack 301, as well as the Cadets from our local Civil Air Patrol Challenger 1 Squadron and UASF Auxiliary for their repeated involvement in this annual tradition. Kudos as well to members of local DAR chapters and church groups who repeatedly turn out to make these events a huge success."

The annual Memorial Day ceremony at Alexandria National Cemetery continued to embody the enduring purpose of the holiday: to honor the sacrifice of the nation's fallen heroes.



Volunteers from the Travis Manion Foundation pose for a group photo after placing remembrance tokens at the gravesites of fallen veterans May 25 at Alexandria National Cemetery.



A member of Boy Scout Troop 301 prepares to distribute flowers for placement at Alexandria National Cemetery.



Lynda C. Davis, Chief Veterans Experience Officer of the Veterans Administration, offers remarks on Memorial Day at Alexandria National Cemetery.

Said VFW Auxiliary member Jessica Krueger, "I look forward each year to distributing small take-

home American Flags and Buddy Poppies to so many visitors, especially the youngsters to whom we

try to teach the meaning of Memorial Day and the reasons why we do this each year."

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. Or email to calendar@connectionnewspapers.com

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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 donaledge@aol.com.

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org.

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

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident

and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Mentors Wanted. Two creative programs that help transform the lives of Alexandria's preteens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for "Space of Her Own," and "Space of His Own," serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

Farmer's Market Volunteers Needed. To volunteer for the Farmer's Markets, email Brian Morreale, brianmorreale@gmail.com

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13

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LIVING LEGENDS

Noah Lyles

Olympic champion sets the pace for success.

BY GREGG MURPHY
LIVING LEGENDS OF ALEXANDRIA
BOARD MEMBER

Noah Lyles is the reigning Olympic Gold Medalist in the 100-meter race and thus is widely regarded as the fastest athlete in the world. He followed that achievement by winning the 2025 World Championships in both the 100-meter and 200-meter events again. Noah's journey, culminating over a 10-year span in multiple World and Olympic gold medals in the 100-meter, 200-meter, and 4x100-meter relay events, including his gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics and reclaiming his 200-meter world title in 2025 after losing it at the Olympics due to COVID, is an extraordinary and lasting athletic achievement that began in Alexandria, boosting the community's pride and contributing to its quality of life.

Since 2017, Noah has dominated the World Championships and elite international competitions such as the Diamond League, earning 13 individual world championship gold medals, five relay gold medals, and a total of 32 international competition medals since 2013. His accomplishments have brought worldwide recognition to Alexandria and inspired countless young athletes.

However, Noah has been named a 2025 Living Legend of Alexandria for achievements that extend far beyond athletics. This honor recognizes his character, dedication, tenacity and ability to overcome adversity while serving as a role model for others. Through his openness about the challenges he has faced, including asthma since birth, depression, anxiety, dyslexia, and ADD, he has demonstrated that obstacles need not define a person's future. By sharing these struggles publicly, he has offered encouragement and hope to others facing similar challenges.

Noah's story provides deep inspiration because it demonstrates that greatness is often built in the face of significant adversity. As he overcame obstacles unseen by many of his fans, he earned the title of "Fastest Man in the World" despite battling breathing issues throughout his life. His journey reflects his longstanding belief that "I would rather die trying than not try at all," a philosophy that exemplifies determination, courage and resilience.

Noah has also helped reduce the stigma surrounding mental health



PHOTO COURTESY/NOAH LYLES

Olympic champion and Alexandria native Noah Lyles is a 2025 Living Legend of Alexandria.

by becoming one of the world's most prominent athlete advocates for mental wellness. He has openly discussed his struggles with depression and anxiety, which intensified under the pressures of elite competition and the disruptions caused by COVID-19. When his mother suggested medication, he described the relief as though "a humongous boulder was just taken off of my chest." By sharing his experiences publicly, Noah achieved his goal of being more than an athlete. As he explained, "I don't want to be Noah Lyles, the athlete. I want to be Noah Lyles, the influencer, the advocate, the community member." Through that vulnerability, he has provided an essential lifeline of hope to many, especially young athletes.

This native of Alexandria embodies the mission of the Living Legends organization not only

through athletic excellence but also through his commitment to community service and mentorship. Noah and his brother, Josephus, remain deeply connected to their roots, hosting Olympic watch

"I don't want to be Noah Lyles, the athlete. I want to be Noah Lyles, the influencer, the advocate, the community member."

—Olympic champion and Alexandria native Noah

parties at Alexandria City High School, organizing winter coat drives for those in need, and giving back through the Lyles Brothers Sports Foundation. Noah also credits his success to the camaraderie of his teammates at T.C. Williams

High School (now ACHS) and the guidance of Coach Rayshawn Jackson, who supported him both athletically and emotionally. He regularly returns to Alexandria to share the highs and lows of his journey,

encouraging students to realize that they can create their own path and achieve their own dreams.

Noah's vision for his sport further distinguishes him as a Living Legend. His well-known confidence and flamboyance are often misunderstood as arrogance, but in reality they represent a deliberate effort to elevate track and field, entertain and attract new fans, and create greater opportunities for fellow athletes. He believes that building the sport's popularity and creating a brand the fans can embrace benefits everyone through increased visibility, sponsorships and earnings.

This unwavering self-belief,

which he credits to his Christian upbringing and past successes, is essential to achieving seemingly impossible goals: "You have to have unwavering faith. And yet faith doesn't always make sense without discipline, confidence, and hard work, even if it means sacrificing some of oneself for others." To accomplish what few others have even dared to dream of, he has had to forgo some of the enjoyment of the youthfully fun adventures he might have had. Part of growing up as a world-class athlete, though, is yielding to the demands of fans and sponsors.

Consequently, this same commitment to empowering others led Noah to establish his own production company, giving athletes greater control over their image, stories, and careers. As he has regrettably noted, "As athletes we have no rights to anything that we do." His goal is that future athletes will have the tools and freedom to shape their careers both on and off the track. Those who know him best understand that beneath the public showmanship is a person known for humility, generosity, and genuine concern for others. Fellow competitors recognize the hubris as intentional to benefit the sport and them. Therefore, they consider him a friend first, and a competitor second, referring to him as a friend because they understand both his purpose and his true character.

Noah may be the fastest athlete in the world, but his true contribution extends far beyond speed. His compassion, generosity, perseverance, and commitment to helping others have made him a source of pride for the City of Alexandria and an inspiration to people everywhere.

He is a person who thinks of others before himself and refuses to let any obstacle hold him back, inspiring everyone to have the strength to face life's challenges. For that fortitude, he thanks his parents and siblings, whom he emulates in every way.

And lest anyone think he hasn't maintained a sense of humor as he navigated life's travails, when asked when he knew he was fast, he responded after giving some thought to the question, stating: "When I was five years of age or so, we played tag and I realized then I was fast because I was never 'it!'" For these reasons, and for his dedication to mentoring future generations, Noah Lyles stands as a true Living Legend of Alexandria.

Love on the Docks

Couples say “I Do” aboard the Tall Ship Providence.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Love was in the air as Alexandria Clerk of the Court Greg Parks hosted couples looking to say ‘I do’ aboard the historic Tall Ship Providence.

Held May 15, the initiative featured Parks officiating wedding ceremonies on the ship’s quarter-deck while docked at Waterfront Park. Dressed in an 18th-century sea captain’s uniform reminiscent of John Paul Jones, Parks embraced the vessel’s colonial heritage as he performed a wedding and a renewal of vows.

“We were just going to go down to the courthouse but saw this opportunity to do something unique,” said Reilly Brown, who exchanged vows with her fiancé John Dean.

The ceremony for Alexandria residents Brown and Dean was plan B after a snafu earlier this year.

“We had a splashy big wedding in Philadelphia back in February,” Brown said. “We had this amazing wedding, went off on our honeymoon and came back to find out that there was a clerical error with our marriage certificate so we were not legally married.”

While trying to figure out what to do next, Brown saw the announcement about the opportunity to get married on the Providence and jumped at the chance to get married – legally this time.

For Sally Porter and Robert Geb-



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Reilly Brown and John Dean exchange wedding vows May 15 aboard the Tall Ship Providence. Clerk of the Court Greg Parks officiated dressed as John Paul Jones, considered the founder of the U.S. Navy.

hard, it was an opportunity to renew their wedding vows.

“We were married back in 1992,” said Gebhard. “So it will be 34 years in September.”

The couple was joined by Pamela McNamara, who was Porter’s maid of honor, and Neal Cox, who served as a groomsman to Gebhard.

The Tall Ship Providence, a replica of the first naval warship commissioned by the Continental Congress in 1775, provided the couples with a distinct backdrop with sweeping views of the Potomac River.

Said Brown, “This is a special day for us.”



Sally Porter and Robert Gebhard, second and third from left, celebrate after renewing their vows May 15 aboard the Tall Ship Providence. With the couple is their maid of honor Pamela McNamara and groomsman Neal Cox with Clerk of the Court Greg Parks dressed as John Paul Jones as officiant.

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Tall Ships Coming to Alexandria Waterfront

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

“They are coming by water,” is one translation of the name Potomac, an indigenous Algonquin word. In June, three stunning tall ships will come by water to join the Providence, already docked on Alexandria’s waterfront.

The June 12-14 weekend will feature a stunning spectacle of sails and visitors can explore the historic Kalmar Nyckel, Sultana, Gazela-Barkentine and the Providence.

The ships are part of Sail250, a maritime celebration of the country’s 250th anniversary, a gathering of over 60 tall ships and military ships and 10,000 sailors from 20 countries sailing from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Norfolk, Virginia, and on to Boston, Massachusetts, with stops along the way.

Planners chose Alexandria because of its role in the nation’s founding, the town where George Washington, Revolutionary War general and the country’s first president had a townhouse and conducted business; and owned a riverside plantation nine miles south. Alexandria was where Washington and George Mason helped write the Fairfax Resolves rejecting British authority over the colonies.

Visitors can explore all four ships:

- ❖ The Kalmar Nyckel, a Dutch pinnacle, 93 feet long, a reproduction of a colonial vessel and a Swedish warship, today a floating classroom for teaching maritime history. In 1638, Swedish colonists arrived in the Kalmar Nyckel to to-



Gazela-Barkentine



Providence



PHOTO BY HANK MOSELEY

A crew and students climbing aloft on the schooner Virginia.



PHOTO BY HANK MOSELEY

The crew of Pride of Baltimore II adjusting the sails’ angle.

day’s Delaware.

- ❖ The 52-foot-long Sultana, a reproduction of a Royal Navy schooner that brought thousands of British troops to Boston to quell rebellious colonists in 1768.

- ❖ The Gazela-Barkentine, 140 feet long, was built in Portugal in 1883 and fished off Newfoundland, Canada, until 1969. Since the 1970s, this education vessel has been docked in Philadelphia.

- ❖ Alexandria’s “hometown ship,” the Providence, a sloop, is a 61-foot reproduction of one of the first ships in the Continental Navy, also a merchant ship, whaler and privateer.

Life on a Tall Ship

The original ships were powered by wind, when there was wind, and human brawn. Seamen nav-

SEE TALL SHIPS COMING, PAGE 6
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Tall Ships Coming to Alexandria Waterfront



Rats were common on ships like the Providence.

To See the Tall Ships

Alexandria's weekend festival, June 12-14, will feature ship tours daily from 12 noon to 6 p.m., music, family activities, art and more. Tourism officials strongly recommend buying timed ship tour tickets in advance for each ship. They cannot guarantee entrance for walkups. Visit <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/sails-on-the-potomac-ship-tours>.

Sail250, ports and schedule, www.sail250.org/

The Providence, living history tours every Saturday, <https://tallshipprovidence.org/>.

FROM PAGE 3

igated with sextants, compasses and the stars overhead and turned their vessels with a wooden tiller connected to a rudder.

Their crews' quarters down below were dank, dark and home to rats and rotting leftovers from slaughtered animals. Sailors slept on hammocks inches apart. Water, rum and dried fish were stored there in wooden barrels.

Today's crew members use both traditional and modern sailing techniques. "The physics and prin-

ciples of how a sail works are the same throughout history, cultures and the materials used to construct those vessels," said Hank Moseley, Director of Maritime Operations, Sail250 Virginia. "While some of the ships participating in Sail250 Virginia are re-creations of historic sailing vessels from the 17th or 18th century, the vast majority of them were built since the early 20th century and are designed from keel up as modern ships, albeit with historic sailing rigs. Those rigs require more crew

to work the sails and rigging than modern vessels and have limits on how they sail compared to a modern yacht or America's Cup boat."

Today's tall ships have modern equipment, like life rafts, radar, depth sounders and 21st-century communications technology. Some sailors also have traditional navigation skills like deduced reckoning and celestial navigation. "These methods have been in use for centuries and are still relevant today," Moseley said.

Kalmar Nyckel's Captain Sharon

Dounce said in an interview, "If a sailor from the 1600s came on board, he would know what to do, like how to use mechanical advantage to move a 3,200-pound wooden rudder."

The Providence

The original Providence was one of two first ships in the Continental Navy and Revolutionary War hero Captain John Paul Jones's first command. Jones is known as the father of the U.S. Navy. In the Revolutionary War, the Providence seized over 40 ships and escaped a

British blockade.

The ship came to Alexandria in 2019 and docked at the John Warner Maritime Heritage Center, 1A Prince Street.

On tours, today's land lubbers can learn all about rigging, lines, sails, spars, guns, masts and more and venture back to the glories of the nation's maritime history.

As Kalmar Nyckel's Captain Sharon Dounce put it, "You'll learn what it was like to live in the 17th century and see history off the TV and in your hands."



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

Will Downing portrays Captain John Paul Jones on the Providence, anchored on the Alexandria waterfront.



The crew's cooking stove "down below" on the tall ship Providence.



A tall ship Providence crew member demonstrates how 18th century crew members lit a gun on the ship.

City Dedicates Memorial to DCA Crash Victims



Audrey Patel, center, speaks with other family members of victims of the DCA crash over the Potomac River.



Bill and Renee Parente with pictures of their son Anthony, who was killed in the mid-air crash over the Potomac River.



Grieving friends and family members join together at the dedication of a memorial to victims of the mid-air collision June 1 at Rivergate City Park.

FROM PAGE 1

and servicemembers whose lives touched communities around the world.”

Among the most emotional moments were tributes from family members describing the lives and dreams cut short. One speaker recalled Wendy Wigstrom, a Minnesota native and chemical engineer,

“Their diligent compassion and respect for our loved ones so that we could bring them home one final time can never truly be repaid.”

— Tim Lilly, father of DCA crash victim Sam Lilly on the first responders

who had been traveling home to North Carolina to be with her young children.

“She just wanted to get home to her boys,” said Wendy’s mother Mary, recounting her daughter’s final words: “I love you, mom.”

Others spoke about lives filled with promise — engagements planned, careers advancing, families growing — all interrupted in an instant.

“Countless hopes, plans and futures were shattered,” said Sheri Lilley, noting that the tragedy affected not only immediate families but colleagues, neighbors, and communities “around the globe.”

A particularly poignant tribute came from Audrey Patel, who shared how her husband Vikesh’s wedding ring was recovered from the Potomac and returned to her.

“It was such a gift to be able to hold a symbol of our love in my hand,” Patel said.

Speakers also expressed gratitude for the first responders who worked through the night of the crash, emphasizing the compassion shown in recovering victims and supporting families.

“This memorial also stands as a tribute to the First responders who mobilized that night to answer that unimaginable call,” said Tim Lilley, father to Sam Lilly. “We were able to go out with the harbor patrol and

meet with the person who pulled our son’s body out of the wreckage. Their diligent compassion and respect for our loved ones so that we could bring them home one final time can never truly be repaid.”

The ceremony also included remarks from Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), who addressed both the emotional toll of the tragedy and the urgency of preventing similar incidents.

“No remembrance ceremony can give you what you deserve, which is to have your loved ones back,” Homendy said.

Homendy emphasized the scale of the loss and the ongoing responsibility to act on safety recommendations issued after the crash.

“On January 29th, the world lost 67 beautiful people who’ve been

missed every hour, every minute, every second since this tragedy occurred,” she said.

She also warned that delays in implementing safety measures pose continued risks.

“Every day that passes without implementation represents a continued and unacceptable risk to public safety,” Homendy said, noting that millions of passengers travel daily across U.S. airspace.

Throughout the ceremony, the

recurring message was one of remembrance beyond tragedy and focusing not only on loss but on the lives lived.

“They should be celebrating birthdays, holding their newborn babies, sharing joy,” Homendy said, reflecting on the everyday moments now missing from families’ lives.

As the event concluded, attendees stood in quiet reflection, many looking out over the Potomac River

where the lives of their loved ones were lost. The memorial, both physical and emotional, stands as a permanent reminder of a community changed forever and of a collective commitment to ensure such a tragedy is never repeated.

Added Tim Lilley, “We are deeply grateful to the city of Alexandria, to Mayor Gaskins and Congressman Beyer, for dedicating this memorial to the 67 extraordinary individuals we lost that evening.”



A memorial plaque is dedicated June 1 in Rivergate City Park to the victims of the 2025 mid-air collision.

SENIOR LIVING

Sundae School

MVAH hosts Ice Cream Social.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Warm weather provided the perfect backdrop for the annual Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social held May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Hosted by Mount Vernon at Home, an organization dedicated to helping older adults age independently and remain active in their community, the ice cream social drew members, volunteers and local residents. Tables were filled with an array of ice cream flavors and toppings, from classic vanilla and chocolate to fresh fruit and sprinkles, inviting guests to build their perfect sundaes.

Mount Vernon At Home is part of the Village network, serving local residents aged

55 and over who are choosing to remain in their homes and communities as they age. The Village to Village Network consists of over 300 villages across the country like Mount Vernon At Home.

Founded in 2007, Mount Vernon At Home now has 140 members plus 30 volunteers and offers a full array of activities and services. For more information on services offered or how to volunteer, visit www.mountvernonathome.org.

Carol Comlish, left, enjoys an ice cream sundae at the Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social event May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



Mount Vernon At Home raffle winners Catherine Wagner, Funeral Choices manager and event sponsor Jim Zalewski, Arlyne Goodweather and MVAH board member Steve Csontos at the ice cream social May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET
Brink Seward, Barbara Mann and Nancy Seward enjoy popcorn at the Mount Vernon At Home Ice Cream Social event May 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Coming Soon at Woodlawn: Friends Gather Here: A Legacy of Two Communities at Woodlawn

Open June 27, 2026 –
Dec. 30, 2026

A vital look at the ongoing American journey toward liberty and equality for all.

Friends Gather Here shares the stories of Quaker families from Pennsylvania and New Jersey who came to Woodlawn to build an antislavery community grounded in equality and nonviolence. They modeled these values through innovative farming and free labor, working alongside paid laborers to demonstrate an alternative to slavery in

Virginia. There, they settled among a small free Black community already living nearby. This exhibition explores the parallel lives, shared aspirations, and evolving relationships between the Woodlawn Quakers and their free Black neighbors.

"The Friends Gather Here exhibition highlights the courage, conviction, and complexity of two communities whose lives became intertwined at Woodlawn. Their stories challenge us to consider what community can mean today," said Executive Director Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar.

As part of the Virginia 250th commemoration, Friends Gather Here offers a vital look at the ongoing American journey toward liberty and equality for all. By exploring the

lives of Woodlawn's Quaker and free Black communities, this exhibition invites us to reflect on their quiet revolution and examine our nation's foundational ideals as we mark America's 250th anniversary.

WHEN: Opening Saturday, June 27, 2026, Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House are open Thursday-Monday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Free with suggested donation

WHERE: Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, Virginia 22309.

WHY: Woodlawn is a historic 126-acre plantation that was originally part of George Washington's Mount Vernon. The main Federal-style mansion was designed by the ar-

chitect of the U.S. Capitol, Dr. William Thornton. It is believed that enslaved people completed construction of Woodlawn by 1805 for Lawrence Lewis, and his wife, Eleanor "Nelly" Custis Lewis, Washington's nephew and step-granddaughter.

In 1846, the Lewis' son sold the property to Northern Quakers who subdivided it into small farms lots for free Black and other antislavery families to purchase.

For additional information please visit: www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/woodlawnandpopeleigheyhouse; Instagram: www.instagram.com/woodlawnandpopeleighey

ENTERTAINMENT

MEETS EVERY SUNDAY

Bird Walks. 8 a.m. At 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Friends of Dyke Marsh organizers lead bird walks every Sunday morning. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and everyone is welcome to join.

MEETS EVERY MONDAY

Monday Morning Bird Walk. 7 a.m. Meets at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard Alexandria. The Monday Morning Bird Walk is sponsored by the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and takes place every Monday at 7 a.m. April-September and 8 a.m. October-March. Following the walk, members of the group gather at the nearby Denny's for breakfast and to compile the morning's bird list. Call (703) 768-2525.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Wednesday Night Bingo. 7 p.m. At Atlas Brew Works, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase, the company that brings you some of the DC area's best events, is hosting an amazing night of everyone's favorite game at Atlas Brew Works Alexandria. Win prizes on every round, and the winner of the final round gets a \$50 Atlas Brew Works gift card for your next visit! There's also \$6 select Atlas drafts! Plus pizza served from the world famous Andy's Pizza! Email at capitalcityshowcase@gmail.com

MGNV PLANT CLINICS ARE OPEN

The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St., Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 7 - 9:30 a.m. Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 8:30 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N. 14th and N. Courthouse Roads, Arlington operates on Saturdays from 8 - 11 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, operates on Sundays from 9 - 11 a.m.

YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

Starting now through summer 2026, Alexandria will host major events and experiences commemorating America's 250th birthday. Located on the Potomac River just minutes from Washington, D.C. and George Washington's Mount Vernon, Alexandria, Virginia invites families, friends and history-lovers to stay in, explore and commemorate America's 250th birthday in a city older than the United States itself with a dynamic lineup of events and immersive experiences. Learn more and find additional details on these and other events at VisitAlexandria.com/250.

250th Events Itinerary:

- ❖ May-November: A temporary public art installation from artist Sandy Williams IV will commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence as part of the City of Alexandria's Time & Place public art series.
- ❖ June 12-14: Alexandria's major signature 250th event, Sails on the Potomac, will host iconic tall ships as a Sail Virginia 2026 Affiliate Harbor and will feature a weekend packed with activities including Alexandria Jazz Fest performances.
- ❖ June: A new exhibit will open at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum. Called Stories of U.S. Collections Capture our History, the exhibit will bring out objects from the collection that are seldom seen.
- ❖ July 3-4: Enjoy evening Fourth of July fireworks shows at George Washington's Mount Vernon on July 3 and 4, and a daytime fire-

The LIVE at the Lyceum: Luke Ratcliffe Piano Concert is Sunday, June 21, 2026 at The Lyceum in Alexandria.

- works show on July 4.
- ❖ July 11: Take part in the City of Alexandria's 277th/USA 250th Birthday Celebration complete with fireworks, music and more at Oronoco Bay Park along Alexandria's waterfront.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

From glow parties and jazz on the waterfront to family picnics and fireworks on the Potomac, there is something happening in every corner of our city. Grab your calendar. You are going to want to mark a few dates.

- ❖ Events are free unless otherwise stated.
- 48th Annual ALX Jazz Fest
Friday, June 12, 12-6 p.m.; Saturday, June 13, 12-9 p.m.; Sunday, June 14, 12-6 p.m. | Waterfront Park
- ALX Jazz Fest celebrates its 48th annual event as part of the Sails on the Potomac series honoring the USA's 250th anniversary, featuring three days of music: Americana Roots (Friday), American Jazz and Poetry (Saturday), and Future Sounds of America (Sunday).
- Juneteenth Block Party
Friday, June 19, 4-7 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center
- Come and celebrate the people, contributions, traditions and culture of Black Americans who have helped build and shape America. Enjoy food, live music, dance presentations, and recreation programming in celebration of this national holiday.
- Alexandria and USA Birthday Celebration
Sunday, July 12 | Oronoco Bay Park
- Celebrate Alexandria's 277th birthday and the USA's 250th with live music, food, and a fireworks finale over the Potomac River at 9:30 p.m. A can't-miss summer night.
- Kids and Teens

- Nerf the Turf
\$19, Ages 7-12
Friday, June 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Patrick Henry Elementary School
- Build teamwork and sportsmanship in this instructor-led foam dart showdown. Bring your gear; we'll provide the ammo.
- Parents Night Out
\$25, Ages 5-12
Friday, June 12, 6:30-8:45 p.m. | Mount Vernon Recreation Center
- Enjoy an evening out while your kids enjoy games and activities in a safe and energetic setting.
- Charles Houston Kiddie Cabaret
\$6, Ages 1-5
Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center
- Dress up, dance to kiddie favorites, enjoy lunch, and celebrate in style with a parent or guardian.
- Live on Top of The Hill Concert Series
Ages 18+
Fridays, June 27 & July 25, 12-3 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center
- Relax with live folk, cover, and mariachi music in a welcoming community setting.
- Top of The Hill Adult Social
Ages 18+
Friday, July 31, 6:30-9 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center
- Connect, unwind, enjoy games and themed nights, and meet new friends in this casual summer gathering.
- Explore full details and register at alexandriava.gov/RPCA/Events.

ALEXANDRIA ACES SEEK LOCAL HOSTS
The Alexandria Aces collegiate summer baseball team, the reigning heart of Alexandria's summer sports scene, is officially seeking local families to host student-athletes for the

upcoming 2026 season. Celebrating 18 years of premier competition in the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League (CRSCLB), the organization is looking for residents to provide housing for players from May 30 through July 25. Requirements for hosting are simple: families provide a private bedroom and access to laundry facilities. In return, families receive all-access season tickets for their household and an invitation to the team's annual Host Family Appreciation Night at Frank Mann Field. How to Apply: Interested families can find full program details and application forms by visiting the "Host Families" section at alexandriaaces.org. For more information, contact Maggie Crane, Host Family Coordinator, at 617-645-5860 or email her at maggiecrane19@gmail.com.

MAY 5 TO JUNE 28

"Catching the Light" 2026 Art Exhibition and Sale. At Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Artists Reception - Sunday, May 17 from 1-3 p.m. Potomac Valley Watercolorists presents "Catching the Light," the 2026 edition of their annual nature-focused Art Exhibition and Sale. Green Spring Gardens "Art in The Garden Program" sponsored by the Friends of Green Spring invites visitors to enjoy this local, creative event. This annual fine art show spotlights many of our region's most highly-skilled and well-known water media artists, and features more than 100 original framed works on display and available for purchase. Visit www.potomacvalleywatercolorists.org

NOW THROUGH JUNE 6

"The Drowsy Chaperone." At The Little Theatre of Alexandria. Winner of five Tony Awards, The Drowsy Chaperone is a playful tribute to the Golden Age musical — and one of Broadway's purely fun shows. The story unfolds when a man alone in his apartment puts on his favorite cast recording, and the 1928 musical magically comes to life around him: two lovers on the eve of their wedding, a bumbling best man, gangsters posing as pastry chefs, and one hilarious intoxicated chaperone. Director Kristin McGregor brings a warm eye to all the madcap delight, finding in the show's humor something genuinely moving — a reminder of why we turn to art in the first place, and why joy is always worth seeking.

JUNE 5-28

The "USA at 250" art exhibit celebrates our country's 250th birthday and captures the spirit of our nation, its past, present, and future, with artworks that highlight the splendor of our landscapes, people and history. View at Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria VA. Opening Reception: Friday, June 5, from 7-9 p.m. Hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

FRIDAY/JUNE 5

Wooden Hulls & Rag-Tag Fleets: From the Continental to the U.S. Navy. 7 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join in a combined Alexandria Historical Society and Athenaeum salute to the upcoming Sails on the Potomac when they host a panel of experts discussing an overview of the early days of the US Navy and its predecessor, the Continental Navy. The free, family-friendly Friday night prelude to Sails on the Potomac will include:

- Dr. Tom Sheppard, author of Commanding Petty Despots who will discuss the creation of the Continental Navy, its officer corps, and the accomplishments & struggles of the American Revolutionary war at sea.
 - Mr. Chris Martin from the Ships, Stations and Squadrons Histories Branch of the Naval History & Heritage Command, who will describe what some of the early Navy ships were like.
- Information on Alexandria's own Tall Ship Providence, a reproduction of the first Continental Navy ship, and the following week's Sails on the Potomac, part of Sail 250.

ENTERTAINMENT

SATURDAY/JUNE 6

Summer Palooza. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. This free, family-friendly event will include live music by local band Highway Legends, free food, a petting zoo with animals from Frying Pan Park, exhibitors with information about dogs and animals, the environment, County resources, local small businesses and much more. There will be a kids zone with arts activities by the MVD Arts Advisory Council (MVDAAC), bounce houses, lawn games and touch-a-truck opportunities.

SATURDAY/JUNE 6

First Saturday 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. Open every day, various hours. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

SUNDAY/JUNE 7

LIVE at the Lyceum: Piano & Friends Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Piano & Friends features Soprano Elizabeth Kluegel, Crystal Lee on flute, Laurel Kuxhaus on oboe, Brittany Pemberton on clarinet, Walter Wynn on bassoon, Eric Moore on horn, Erin Ryan on violin, Kenneth Law on cello, and John Suntherland Earle on piano. Program includes Summer Hours by Kenji Bunch, Lieder aus Jucunde, Op. 23 by Clara Schumann, and Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 67 by Dimitry Shostakovich.

SUNDAY/JUNE 7

Artist Talk with Marc Sirinsky. 2 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Walks in the Woods. Artist Statement: When I hit a mental and physical breaking point at my last corporate job, the Civil War battlefield near my home is where I retreated to contemplate my future – both immediate and long-term. In the following weeks and months, I found some solace in forested, natural environments and began documenting those "Walks in the Woods" through a series of instant prints. The resulting images reveal a desperation for peace; where shadows and darkness combine with the beauty of the landscape to narrate a period filled with complex emotions and challenges.

SUNDAY/JUNE 14

LIVE at the Lyceum: Alexandria Baroque Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S Washington St, Alexandria. Join Alexandria Baroque in an authentic baroque era experience with Michael De Sapio on baroque violin and John



"The Drowsy Chaperone" is playing now through June 6, 2026 at The Little Theatre of Alexandria.

Armato on baroque lute. Program includes Sonata in G Major for lute with violin by Bernhard Joachim Hagen, Sonata in D Minor for lute with obbligato violin by Friedrich Wilhelm Rust, and Suite in A Major for lute and obbligato violin by J.S. Bach.

SUNDAY/JUNE 21

LIVE at the Lyceum: Luke Ratcliffe Piano Concert. 3 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S Washington St, Alexandria. Witness Luke Ratcliffe perform two classic Romantic composers live! Program includes Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Fantasy in F Minor, Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Berceuse in D-flat Major, and Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major by Frederic Chopin, as well as Piano Sonata in F Minor by Robert Schumann.

SUNDAY/JUNE 28

Arts & Crafts Fair. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Tavern Square in Old Town Alexandria, 415 King Street. Presented by Volunteer Alexandria and Made in ALX. Discover a curated selection

of jewelry, pottery, soaps, home décor, and unique gifts while supporting local artists at this free event. This family-friendly gathering invites you to shop local and explore beautiful crafts in the heart of Old Town Alexandria at Tavern Square.

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.

JUNE

Wed. 3: HAPPY TOGETHER TOUR 2026 Featuring The Association, The Troggs, Chicago lead singer 1985-2016 Jason Scheff, Gary Puckett, The Fortunes, Ron Dante from The Archies and The Turtles, The Vogues and The Cowsills \$109.50
Thu. 4: Pete Yorn Solo Acoustic \$55.00 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 6: The Smithereens with guest vocalist Marshall Crenshaw \$45.00
Sun. 7: Our House: The Music Of Crosby, Stills,

Nash & Young, Performed By Steve Postell, Jeff Pevar, Kipp Lennon, Teresa James With Words & Images By Henry Diltz \$55.00
Mon. 8: Cowboy Junkies – Celebrating 40 Years & Beyond \$65.00
Wed. 10: Cowboy Junkies – Celebrating 40 Years & Beyond \$65.00
Thu. 11: Jazz Funk Soul feat. Everette Harp, Jeff Lorber, Paul Jackson, Jr. \$49.50
Fri. 12: A.J. Ghent & His Singing Guitar \$45.00 SOLD OUT!
Sat. 13: Tell Me Lies – The Fleetwood Mac Experience \$35.00
Sun. 14: Junior Brown \$39.50
Thu. 18: Big Bad Voodoo Daddy \$65.00
Fri. 19: Stacey Kent \$45.00
Sat. 20: Ohio Players \$79.50
Sun. 21: Tarsha Fitzgerald Presents VOICES OF MOTOWN Father's Day Celebration! \$45.00
Wed. 24: Amy Grant w/ Braden Hull \$95.00
Thu. 25: Stella Cole \$39.50
Fri. 26: Vincent Ingala \$39.50
Sat. 27: LEZ ZEPPELIN: The Song Remains The Same - 50th Anniversary Celebration \$39.50
Sun. 28: ÁSGEIR \$29.50

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

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.

Annual LGBTQIA+ Pride Fair

In recognition of World Pride Month, the City of Alexandria will hold the Annual LGBTQIA+ Pride Fair on June 27 from 2 to 6 p.m. at John Carlyle Square Park (825 John Carlyle Street).
Neighbors, friends, and allies will gather for an afternoon of music, creativity, and community including live performances, line-dancing, DJ., mobile art lab, local food vendors, and more than 100 Pride-affirming programs, organizations, and businesses from across Alex-

andria. Families are invited to experience Drag Story Hour, celebrating imagination, joy, and the freedom to be your authentic self.
Free and confidential health services will also be available throughout the event.
World Pride Month is recognized globally as a time to honor LGBTQIA+ communities, celebrate their cultural and social contributions, and raise awareness of the ongoing pursuit of equality and civil rights.
Visit alexandriava.gov/LGBTQ

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Employment

Small political advertising firm located in Old Town needs part-time help through the November election. 10 - 20 hours a week. Work is done in the office. Some clerical. Some light accounting. Please email interest to mediamav@aol.com.

Obituary

Obituary



Louise White, a clinical social worker in the Fairfax, VA public school system for many years, and then the Sussex County, DE school systems, passed away in her sleep at her assisted living home in Dover, Delaware. She had dementia, and had been content and happily cared for there for the last two years of her life. Louise was the proud mother of two daughters with her first husband Robert Burke, Debbie Blount and Michelle Walters. She is also survived by four grandchildren, Virginia and Mary Elizabeth Blount, and Robert and Kitty Walters. Her second husband, Bill Yoast, the football coach immortalized in the film "Remember the Titans," is also deceased. She was divorced from her third husband John Sykes, a Lewes, DE resident. Louise was born in the coastal Morehead City, North Carolina to parents Etta "Mae" Deane White and William (Mike) Marshall White, the youngest of three beautiful sisters, Ellen Fitzgerald and Anne Lewis (deceased). She grew up from a young age in Alexandria, VA, where she lived for the majority of her life. She was a proud graduate of Hammond High School '61, a cheerleader and a part time model at the Lord & Taylor Birdcage tearoom, and Garfinkel's department store, the preeminent fine goods store in Washington, DC. Louise had a fabulous sense of style, and while thrifty, her sartorial elegance included color, flair and stripes. She remained active with her Hammond high school reunion committee friends all her life.

Louise went on to study at Northern Virginia Community College, graduated from George Mason University and received her Masters degree in Social Work from Catholic University in 1982.

Louise was passionate about politics and voting rights and was a polling volunteer both in Virginia and Delaware most of her life. She was a keen traveler, and visited as many US state parks and monuments as she could, traveled internationally to Hong Kong to visit her daughter Debbie, and joined her St. Peter's Lewes DE church choir on several trips to Vienna, Scotland, and other UK destinations.

She was a keen supporter of the arts, always seeking refined cultural experiences from Broadway shows to art exhibitions to opera. She loved films and regularly attended both documentaries and always the latest Robert Redford or Paul Newman production. She was a member of a book group and always had a book in her handbag or beach bag to read. She even had a short career in the Possum Point Players, a community theatre group in Delaware.

Louise adored her two rescue cats Karma and Maggie who lived to the ripe old age of nearly 19 years. She was a devoted animal lover, and also had a rescue border collie mix named Leo for many years.

May we suggest a donation to a rescue animal provider in Louise's memory, or one to a mental health community, two of her passions.

Her family, community and friends will honor her memory with a musical concert at her beautiful and historic church in Lewes, St. Peters Episcopal later in the year. Visit Louise's Life memorial at <https://www.parsellfuneralhomes.com/>

Rosy Noguchi, Coordinator of Alexandria's Medical Reserve Corps, Chosen for 2026 Flora K. Casey Public Health Award

The City of Alexandria's Public Health Advisory Commission announced today that Rosy Noguchi will receive the 2026 Flora K. Casey Public Health Award. The award, named for the late Flora K. Casey, honors individuals or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to advancing public health and well-being for the people of Alexandria.

The Public Health Advisory Commission welcomes all members of the community to attend the Flora K. Casey Award Ceremony, which will be held on Tuesday, June 9, from 5-6:30 p.m. on the first floor of the Del Pepper Community Resource Center, located at 4850 Mark Center Drive.

Rosy Noguchi is the coordinator of the Alexandria Medical Reserve Corps, presiding in the Alexan-

dria Health Department's Office of Public Health Emergency Management.

In her role, Rosy manages hundreds of active Medical Reserve Corps volunteers — Alexandria residents with both medical and non-medical skills and a passion for public health. Each year, she deploys MRC volunteers to complete hundreds of hours of public health service by providing immunizations, promoting health initiatives, and even partaking in exercises that test our city's readiness for public health emergencies. Noguchi also ensures volunteers receive routine training on topics like infection prevention and basic life support. Many MRC volunteers cite Noguchi's dedication and personal support as key reasons they remain committed to public health

volunteering in Alexandria.

Having grown up in Alexandria and graduated from Alexandria City High School (formerly T.C. Williams), Rosy began supporting health as a parkour coach for older adults where she helped people move their bodies in new ways while connecting with their neighbors.

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Alexandria, Rosy began helping to coordinate vaccine clinics, quickly becoming an important part of our City's COVID response. Noguchi later became the coordinator for the MRC volunteer force, championing new trainings for volunteers — such as Stop the Bleed and hands-only CPR — and leading broad outreach efforts to bring in volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.

SENIOR LIVING

When the Past Still Echoes

FROM PAGE 2

side," she said.

Trying to escape the memories, Carter left Mississippi in 1968, after Dr. King's assassination, joining cousins who'd moved to Washington, DC. But she learned that trauma travels. For years she startled at slamming doors, avoided fireworks, and slept lightly, always listening for danger.

It wasn't until 1997, after a panic attack at work, that a psychiatrist at Howard University Hospital finally named what she'd been carrying: post-traumatic stress disorder.

Therapy followed, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), weekly sessions with a psychotherapist and a support group for survivors of violence. She learned grounding techniques, breathing work, and how to recognize when her body was bracing for threats that were no longer present.

Today, Carter manages her PTSD with rituals and community. She attends a weekly session with her therapist, journals each morning, walks the trails at Fort Barnard Park, and attends church. She practices yoga, is part of a faith-based healing circle and visits patients who have been diagnosed with PTSD, sharing a story that she wishes someone had told her decades ago.

"You don't have to be silent to be strong and healing is possible," she says.

"But the miracle for me is that I lived long enough to heal."



PHOTO COURTESY LAVERNE CARTER

Once a young church volunteer during the Civil Rights Movement, Laverne Carter visits those who have been diagnosed with PTSD, turning her own history into a path for others.

Reach Out

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), help is available 24 hours a day. PTSD symptoms can include intrusive memories, avoidance, hyper-vigilance, nightmares, and emotional numbness.

Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, where trained counselors provide free and confidential support and can connect callers to local resources.

Veterans can press "1" after dialing 988 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line, or text 838255 for specialized assistance.

In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

A formal diagnosis must come from a licensed mental-health professional

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Officials formally cut the ribbon marking the official opening of the Four Mile Run kayak launch May 9 at Four Mile Run Park in Arlandria.



Kayakers take the ramp to water at the new kayak launch May 9 in Four Mile Run Park.



Kayakers prepare to launch at the new public kayak launch May 9 at Four Mile Run Park.



Devin Reese enjoys the waters of Four Mile Run following the opening of a new kayak launch at Four Mile Run Park.



A kayaker eases into the water May 9 at Four Mile Run Park.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Public Kayak Launch Opens at Four Mile Run

Launch is the first ADA-compliant kayak access point in the D.C. region.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It was nearly a decade in the making but a new public kayak launch was officially opened with a ribbon cutting May 9 at Alexandria's Four Mile Run Park.

City officials and community members gathered to celebrate the new public kayak launch, a project aimed at expanding access to the water and creating more inclusive outdoor recreation opportunities.

The launch, located at 3700 Commonwealth Avenue in the Arlandria area of the city, is the first ADA-compliant kayak access point of its kind in the Washington, D.C. metro region, designed to make paddling easier and safer for residents of all abilities.

Developed in partnership with the Four Mile Run Conservancy, the new facility includes a raised boardwalk ramp with ADA-compliant slopes, a gangway leading to a floating dock, a wheelchair transfer plat-

form, and a roller system that helps users enter and exit the water.

City officials said the project represents a major step forward in improving public access to Alexandria's waterways while promoting equity and environmental engagement. The launch is open from dawn to dusk to non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks and canoes.

"This project is an example of what a strong public private partnership can do for the community with shared investment and shared goals," said Hashim Taylor, Director of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

Built along the tidal portion of Four Mile Run — a tributary of the Potomac River — the site offers calm, shallow waters ideal for beginners and connects directly to the Potomac River Water Trail. The improved access allows paddlers to explore nearby wetlands and natural areas that were previously difficult to reach.

The project has also drawn recognition at the state level. Earlier this year, the kayak launch received a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award, highlighting its role in promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable outdoor recreation.

Funded through a mix of public and private sources, the roughly \$600,000 project was supported by grants and local contributions, including the city's Community Matching Fund and several environmental

organizations.

"I really want to highlight the Conservancy for their efforts in championing this project all the way from 2017 until now," Taylor said. "They raised so many funds to get us to this point."

Kurt Moser, president of the Four Mile Run Conservancy, was on hand for the opening of the launch.

"I'm so happy to see people recognizing what a great natural resource we have and the access that we have to it," Moser said.

Beyond recreation, officials say the new launch will serve as a hub for environmental education and community programming. Planned activities include guided paddling tours, clean-up events, and youth learning programs focused on the local ecosystem.

The grand opening event featured remarks from city leaders, along with music and family-friendly activities. Many attendees brought their own kayaks and experienced the launch firsthand.

Community organizers say the project has been years in the making and reflects a broader effort to reconnect residents with local waterways.

Added Moser, "Four Mile Run is an extraordinary place for being a valuable biodiversity spot in the middle of the city and being able to have everyone enjoy it from the water is fantastic."

"Are You Talking to Me?"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though there were no television and no gun, I still felt what Robert Di Niro felt when he shot out the television in the 1976 film "Taxi Driver," when my wife Dina said to me earlier today: "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues left in the closet (our back-up area)?"

Now she couldn't have been talking to me (or rather needn't have been) because, after nearly 48 years of marital bliss, if she knows anything about me, my needs, my habits and especially my nose, if tissues are not the absolute last thing she need remind me about, it's certainly in the top five. Aside from inheriting whatever my late father had, which caused him to carry a handkerchief with him at all times, I've had years of infusion chemotherapy (there are pills now, depending). And if infused chemotherapy does anything, a side effect is thinning out the membranes in your nose (which often results in nose bleeds which can be so severe in some patients, treatments have to be stopped). Or if you're lucky, you don't experience nose bleeds, you experience a runny nose that's impossible to catch. As a direct result, I have boxes of tissues in nearly every room in the house and in both of our cars. Aside from needing to know where the closest bathroom is when we travel, I'm carrying tissues with me as well. I am forever finding balled up tissues in all of my pants' pockets where one would typically find coins and such. In fact, I might say, if coerced, that tissues (my need for them, actually) is the bane of my existence. I don't leave the house without knowing/preparing my tissue/runny nose options.

To that end, I know every minute of every day exactly what my in-house tissue inventory is. Now I'm not counting the numbers of individual tissues I have remaining and calculating how long before I'll need to replenish the stock. However, I am fully aware of how many boxes I have in reserve. And if I should have any doubt or need for assurance; I only need to open the closet door in our mudroom; that's where we keep our supply of paper products. For Dina to ask/tell me - out of the goodness of her heart, our tissue situation is almost grounds for divorce. To ask/tell me that question/comment after nearly 50 years of cohabitating, is to completely fail at the presumptive/familiarity with your husband's basic needs. I mean really! "Kenny, do you know you only have one box of tissues in the closet?" Well intended, unselfish, considerate, but nonetheless exhibiting a level of cluelessness about your husband that I didn't think was possible. I am either blowing my nose or needing a tissue to do so or buying them at the supermarket. I'm a "tissueoholic." And Dina is my sponsor, so to speak.

It's not exactly the elephant in the room, but if you were in a room with an elephant, you'd know it. And Dina has been with me in many rooms - and cars, public conveyances, et cetera, for nearly half a century now when I've been blowing my nose, during which oddly enough I've been told that I sound like an elephant when they "trumpet."

And finally, to add insult to injury, I do all the shopping, review all the circulars, click all the appropriate digital coupons - with a particular interest in tissues, among other paper products. As such, that there's simply no way I wouldn't know or hadn't planned their purchase (so I would never run out) way before Dina might notice their dwindling supply or ever feel the need to say to me what she said to me earlier that day. "Are you talking to me?"

"Are you kidding?"

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

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