

Alexandria Gazette Packet

SERVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JULY 2, 2026



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Anass Yahyaoui, Hjarman Cordero, Arely Morales, Patrick Coye and Ru Toyama at the June 30 opening of the Flags for Heroes display at Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

Visitors view the Flags for Heroes display June 30 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant. The project is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Alexandria to support local charities and will remain on view through July 11.

Courage, Sacrifice, Service

Flags for Heroes on display at Cedar Knoll.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Hundreds of American flags were unfurled overlooking the Potomac River to kick off the 9th annual Flags for Heroes display June 30 on the grounds of Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Alexandria, the Flags for Heroes project provides community members an opportunity to dedicate a flag to honor a hero in their life. A card attached to each flag bears the name of the hero – a friend, family member, veteran, health-care worker, first responder or other hero -- along with the name of the individual sponsor.

“These flags not only recognize our heroes but also support multiple local charities,” said Rotary Club past president Jim Carmalt. “This includes scholarships for Scouting troops and STEM programs to develop outstanding leaders.”

Area volunteers, Scout troops and members of the nonprofit Cornerstone Craftsman joined the



Rotarian Colin Tridone, left, works with a Scout volunteer and Rotarian Anass Yahyaoui in erecting more than 200 flags as part of the Flags for Heroes display June 27 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

Alexandria Rotary Club earlier in the week in positioning the flags at the restaurant’s location along the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

More than 200 flags were unfurled to set up the display, which will remain in place through July 11. Donations will also be accepted through that date.

“A QR code is available at Cedar Knoll for anyone interested in sponsoring a flag or wishing to donate directly to our cause,” Car-

malt added. “Donations can also be made through our website.”

This year’s Flags for Heroes program has so far raised \$30,000 which will benefit Alexandria Rotary Club community projects and provide direct financial support to more than 40 local charities and nonprofits.

Said Carmalt, “This project is representative of the very model of Rotary – Service Above Self.”

www.alexandriarotary.org



Rotarians Pete O’Dell and Anass Yahyaoui set up some of the more than 200 flags as part of the Flags for Heroes display June 27 at Cedar Knoll Restaurant.

Broad Relief for Virginia Families Coming July 1

From rent, paychecks, and medical bills to boosted school funding, here's how the new budget could impact everyday costs.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

A wide-ranging slate of new state programs to fill gaps in housing, workforce, healthcare, and education for Virginia families took effect July 1.

From rent, paychecks, and medical bills to increased school funding, the new state budget addresses everyday costs and residents' pocketbooks through four key areas of newly enacted provisions — reforms that are vital to the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria.

"Today, by finalizing our budget, Virginia is charting a path toward a stronger, more secure, and more affordable future for every family who calls our Commonwealth home," said Gov. Abigail Spanberger in a statement issued June 29, highlighting how the finalized budget targets kitchen-table costs. "We are investing more than \$100 million to make housing more affordable, lower energy costs, and make sure every Virginian can build a stable future without being crushed by rising costs."

The implementation follows the General Assembly's final adoption of the governor's fiscal amendments on June 29, enacting the commonwealth's comprehensive \$207 billion spending plan for the 2026–2028 biennium. Introduced during the 2026 legislative session by Del. Luke E. Torian (D-Prince William), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, the measures — packaged as House Bill 30 — directly address cost-of-living strains.

Speaking from the House Appropriations Committee room in Richmond four months earlier on Feb. 22, Torian underscored the underlying philosophy of the legislative package. "This budget is not just about filling gaps," Torian said. "At its core, this budget is about affordability — and about whether Virginia is doing everything it can to help families not just survive, but build stable, secure lives."

1. Expanded Renter Protections and Housing Preservation

The Extended Eviction Grace Period (HB 15 / SB 48), championed by Sen. Aaron Rouse (D-Virginia Beach) and Del. Phil Hernandez (D-Norfolk), applies to all Virginia tenants. The Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) notes this update "provides tenants with a longer period to rectify nonpayment before a landlord can initiate eviction proceedings." The grace period expands to 14 days from five days.

The Virginia Eviction Reduction Program Expansion (HB 527 / SB 628) is backed by Del. Adele McClure (D-Arlington) and Sen. Mamie Locke (D-Hampton). Locke noted that the Eviction Reduction Program establishes a permanent, data-driven framework,

stating during its passage that the measure ensures Virginia is "moving away from a reactionary posture on housing instability and toward a sustainable, proven prevention infrastructure."

The Local Housing Authority Empowerments legislation (SB 4 / HB 867) was introduced by Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker (D-Alexandria) and Del. Rae Cousins (D-Richmond). According to the Virginia Housing Alliance, these updates focus on preserving buildings and expanding zoning options to scale up affordable inventory, rather than administering individual cash benefits.

2. Stronger Wage Protections and Labor Measures

The Pay Transparency & Salary History Ban (HB 636 / SB 215) was introduced by former Del. Michelle Maldonado (D-Manassas) and Sen. Jennifer B. Boysko (D-Fairfax). Gov. Abigail Spanberger said the law "will ensure that employees are offered the pay they deserve while promoting greater transparency in the application process."

The Minimum Wage Path (HB 1 / SB 1), patroned by Del. Jeion Ward (D-Hampton) and Sen. L. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth), codifies the current \$12.77 baseline and schedules incremental increases, hitting \$13.75 on Jan. 1, 2027, and \$15.00 by Jan. 1, 2028.

The Wage Theft Safeguards (HB 238), introduced by Del. Dolores McQuinn (D-Richmond), ensures workers are protected. The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) investigates claims for all workers, making it a crime for an employer to threaten to report a worker to immigration authorities or withhold earned pay.

3. Healthcare Affordability and Consumer Mandates

The Pharmacy Benefit Manager Crackdown (HB 625 / SB 161) and Prior Authorization Limits (HB 736) are led by Del. Rozia Henson (D-Prince William), Sen. Russet Perry (D-Loudoun), and former Del. Michelle Maldonado (D-Manassas). Enrolled individuals in commercial or employer-sponsored plans automatically receive these baseline benefits. Gov. Abigail Spanberger said, "These bills are a significant step forward to make sure that when your family needs care, you can get it."

4. Boosted K-12 Public Education Funding
Local School Division Support and English Language Learner (ELL) initiatives receive funding through the state budget (HB 30). Public school divisions are legally mandated to provide a free K-12 public education to every child residing within their district boundaries, regardless of immigration status.

School divisions are prohibited from inquiring about immigration status during enrollment, thereby ensuring immediate legal rights to ELL instruction, in accordance with policy guidance from the National Immigra-



A screen capture from the Fairfax County government website displays an updated warning regarding the local eviction process. Effective July 1, 2026, House Bill 15 replaces Virginia's standard five-day nonpayment notice with a mandatory 14-day grace period for renters across the commonwealth.



Alexandria City High School serves a student body in which nearly 40% of students require English Language Learner (ELL) support. Under Virginia's newly enacted 2026 state budget (HB 30), a new infusion of funding takes effect on July 1 to expand support for local school divisions and instructional programming.



A rental listing shows the Crystal Flats apartment building on Saturday, June 27. New tenant protection and eviction laws passed during the 2026 Virginia General Assembly session take effect July 1.

tion Law Center and the Oyez Project. This impact is felt statewide, including in Alexandria City Public Schools, a system where

the division reports that students come from 118 countries and 37.5% to 38% of the student body requires English Learner support.

Fair Winds and Following Seas



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

The U.S. Maritime Museum Foundation is in talks to establish a national maritime museum at 1 Prince Street across from Waterfront Park in Old Town.

New maritime vision takes shape in Alexandria.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

An ambitious effort is underway to establish a National Maritime Museum in Alexandria, an initiative that aims to celebrate the city's seafaring heritage while creating a new cultural destination in the Washington, D.C. region.

The project, still in its early stages, has rapidly gained momentum over the past year. Organizers began formal planning only recently, with significant groundwork such as securing a potential site and forming a nonprofit foundation occurring largely out of public view until just weeks ago.

Supporters of the initiative argue that Alexandria is uniquely suited to host a national maritime museum. Once a thriving

colonial port, the city predates Washington, D.C., and played a key role in early American commerce and naval history. Today, advocates say, that legacy remains underrepresented at the national level.

The proposed museum would seek to change that by telling a broader story of the United States as a maritime nation connecting Alexandria's local history to global trade, naval power and exploration.

"We have to make the case that Alexandria is the right place for a National Maritime museum," said Marion Smith, president and CEO of the United States Maritime Foundation.

Organizers also point to the success of waterfront attractions like the Tall Ship Providence, which drew visitors and helped spark interest in maritime programming. While that project faced operational challenges, it demonstrated strong public interest in Alexandria's nautical heritage.

"Establishing a relationship with the tall ship could be a very nice accelerator for the project because the pier itself is top notch," Smith said. "It's excellently constructed and



PHOTO/VISIT ALEXANDRIA

The U.S. Maritime Museum Foundation is looking to partner with the Tall Ship Providence, which has ceased operations, as part of establishing the United States Maritime Museum along the Alexandria waterfront.

looks great and we could be operational immediately if we could make this happen."

Rather than a traditional artifact-heavy institution, planners envision a "destination-style" museum focused on immersive, technology-driven experiences. Interactive

exhibits, multisensory theater presentations and rotating digital programming would allow visitors to engage with maritime history in dynamic ways.

SEE FAIR WINDS, PAGE 13

Tall Ship Providence Foundation: Will Suspend Educational, Tour Programs Effective June 26, 2026

Tall Ship Providence Foundation has announced that it is suspending its educational and tour programs effective June 26, 2026.

The decision to suspend these operations was not made lightly, and the Foundation's board and staff share in the sadness felt by the community that has supported this mission so faithfully.

During this period of suspension, the Foundation intends to evaluate possible

strategic alternatives to maintain operations consistent with its non-profit mission. The board remains hopeful that a path forward can be identified that honors Providence's legacy and the community it has served. These alternatives include an accelerated merger with the United States Maritime Museum proposed for Alexandria's waterfront, adjacent to the Foundation's facilities and Tall Ship Providence at Waterfront Park. However, if no viable alternative consistent

with the Foundation's mission can be identified, the Foundation will be forced to shut down operations permanently.

The Foundation's Pier Bar will continue to operate during this suspension period as a means of generating funds to support ship maintenance and other basic operating expenses.

Founded in 2017, the Foundation has been dedicated to celebrating the nation's maritime heritage and educating visitors on

the important role Providence played in the American Revolution. Tall Ship Providence was recognized for three consecutive years as a top tourist destination by Traveler's Choice for its Living History Tours and has served thousands of local students through its Field Trip Program, which provided free educational programs for Title One Schools. These achievements reflect the extraordinary generosity of donors, volunteers and visitors who believed in the Foundation's work.

OBITUARY

Joe Reeder

Preservationist who gave Alexandria its past dies at 99.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Charles Joseph “Joe” Reeder II, a longtime Old Town resident whose passion for history helped preserve one of the city’s most important 18th-century homes, died June 24 at Paul Spring Senior Living. He was 99.

Reeder lived a life defined by motion, always moving across continents, careers and centuries-old floorboards. But he is remembered most for what he chose to save.

Born Feb. 13, 1927, in Carthage, N.Y., he was raised in the North Country alongside his younger brother, Samuel. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1945 and served through the end of World War II. Called back to service during the Korean War, he was commissioned as an officer and served in overseas combat operations.

In the years after the armistice, Reeder embarked on an adventure that hinted at the independence that would define him: Traveling across Europe on a Lambretta scooter, earning meals and lodging by working odd jobs in towns along the way.

Back in the United States, he settled in Washington, D.C., working as an aerial reconnaissance photography analyst for the Office of Naval Intelligence. But his real passion soon extended beyond intelligence work to something more tangible: buildings, objects, and the quiet stories they hold.

With a sharp eye and a willingness to do the work himself, Reeder began acquiring and restoring properties across Washington with his longtime partner, Alfred Winstead. By the 1960s, the two had made their home in Old Town, where their interest in historic structures deepened into expertise.

Reeder later worked for Hargrove, Inc., serving as an event design coordinator for presidential inaugural balls, an unusual role that blended precision, creativity and an ap-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Joe Reeder, a longtime Alexandria resident and preservationist, died June 24 at Paul Spring Senior Living. He was 99 years old.

preciation for setting the stage for history.

Yet his most enduring contribution would come with his purchase of 517 Prince Street.

In 2000, Reeder purchased the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House, a modest but extraordinary 18th-century dwelling that is among the oldest and least-altered homes in Northern Virginia. Where others might have seen limitations, he saw authenticity. Reeder devoted decades to restoring the house using period-appropriate materials and filling it with antiques that reflected everyday colonial life.

He approached preservation not as nostalgia, but as stewardship. In 2017, he reached an agreement with the City of Alexandria to transfer ownership of the property while re-

SEE JOE REEDER, PAGE 7



PHOTO COURTESY AT HOME ALEXANDRIA

Joe Reeder with former Mayor Allison Silberberg at a reception for At Home Alexandria at Reeder’s Old Town home in 2019.



PHOTO COURTESY REEDER FAMILY
Joe Reeder, left, during a hunting excursion in an undated photo.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FORUM

The yard of the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House at the corner of Prince and S. St. Asaph streets in Old Town. The 0.3-acre lot, which contains a 1770s timber-frame and brick dwelling and a small garden, was one of the few buildings in existence in the area during the American Revolution.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

The Murray-Dick-Fawcett House is one of the earliest homes in the city and possibly the least altered 18th Century home in Northern Virginia.



PHOTOS BY ALLISON SILBERBERG

Retired Navy Capt. Eugene “Red” McDaniel, seated, poses for a photo with Scout troop members and leaders June 20 at American Legion Post 24 in Old Town. McDaniel, considered one of the most brutally tortured POWs during the Vietnam War, was a featured speaker during an open house celebrating the nation’s 250th birthday.

‘Scars and Stripes’

Post 24 hosts POW hero “Red” McDaniel.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Retired Navy Capt. Eugene “Red” McDaniel was a featured speaker at an open house hosted June 20 by American Legion Post 24 to celebrate the nation’s 250th birthday.

McDaniel, considered by Time Magazine as one of the most brutally tortured POWs of the Vietnam War, was held in captivity for more than six years at the notorious Hanoi Lò Prison, known as the Hanoi Hilton.

He had been shot down in May of 1967 while flying his 81st mission in an A-6A In-

truder aircraft. He was considered MIA until 1970, when it was confirmed that he was a prisoner of war. He was released in 1973.

Audience members included Scout troops as well as veterans and local residents who heard stories of McDaniel’s captivity and survival, which he credited to his unwavering Christian faith. McDaniel, now 94 years old, is the author of “Scars and Stripes,” which chronicles his life growing up as the son of a sharecropper in North Carolina to his storied military career.

Named a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2019, McDaniel was accompanied by his son, retired Navy Capt. Michael McDaniel.



Retired Navy Capt. Eugene “Red” McDaniel, left, speaks during an open house June 20 at American Legion Post 24 in Old Town. McDaniel, considered one of the most brutally tortured POWs during the Vietnam War, was accompanied by his son, retired Navy Capt. Michael McDaniel.

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 11a.m. to 5 p.m.
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For questions or reasonable disability accommodation, contact felicia.parks@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.3303, Virginia Relay 711.



DEPARTMENT OF **COMMUNITY & HUMAN SERVICES**

ELECTION NOTICE - CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Dual Primary Election - Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Voter Registration Information

The deadline to register or update an existing registration in advance of this election is

July 24, 2026

Eligible citizens who will be 18 or older by November 3, 2026 may apply to register to vote (or update an address) online, by mail, or in person.

- ★ **Online** at vote.elections.virginia.gov, prior to 11:59 p.m. on July 24, 2026.
- ★ **By mail** by downloading an application at alexandriava.gov/elections or calling 703.746.4050. Applications must be postmarked by July 24, 2026.
- ★ **In person** at our office prior to 5 p.m. on July 24, 2026:

Office of Voter Registration and Elections
132 N Royal St, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
703.746.4050

Same Day Registration

Available to individuals who missed the standard registration period. Find more info at alexandriava.gov/elections.

Early Voting Information

Find a full schedule of dates and hours on our website: alexandriava.gov/elections. To apply for a ballot to be mailed to you, visit vote.elections.virginia.gov or contact our office. The deadline to apply for a by-mail ballot is Friday, July 24 at 5 p.m.

OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
132 N Royal Street, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.746.4050 ★ Fax: 703.746.4540 ★ Email: voters@alexandriava.gov
alexandriava.gov/elections



OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION & ELECTIONS

LIVING LEGENDS OF ALEXANDRIA

David Mercer

Strength, recovery and new beginnings.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

David Mercer has been initiating projects and expanding them into meaningful life changing events for others all of his life whether it was establishing his own traveling soccer team, helping write the landmark Condominium Act of Virginia, or setting up alcoholism rehab education and clinics for lawyers. “It’s easier to start something; you can call the shots,” he says.

Mercer was born and raised in Alexandria where he excelled at sports and made significant contributions. He remembers it all

“If I hadn’t gone into rehab, I wouldn’t have this life today.”

— Living Legend of Alexandria
David Mercer

goes back to fifth grade at George Mason Elementary School where he gravitated to football.

He says, “I think I picked football because I’m blind in my right eye and don’t have depth perception but if they handed you the football, you just ran.” He says he played basketball until Junior Varsity but then he just wasn’t tall enough. But he said he was also a sprinter, another sport that worked with just one eye.

But he does remember one game against Groveton High School. “I think I got the ball on the kickoff. I got hit hard and got a concussion. I ran in the wrong direction and scored for the other team.”

But Mercer went on to become a multi-variety sport letterman and captain of the track and football teams. He went on to Hampden Sydney College where he started on the varsity team as a freshman.

Mercer’s three children carried on the sports tradition with his daughter Kelly attending college on a track scholarship, “and



PHOTO BY STEVEN HALPERSON/TISARA STUDIOS

Prominent attorney David Mercer is a Living Legend of Alexandria.

she still holds the record for the 800 meter in high school.” Kristen played soccer at Mary Washington, and Clark was a goalkeeper at TC Williams and a punter at Yale. Mercer’s wife Nell was a synchronized swimmer and on the field hockey team.

Mercer carried on his interest in sports as an adult where he coached the Alexandria youth soccer team for seven years, and he started his own travel soccer team where he served as the team coach and administrator. Mercer was asked to be an inaugural member of the City of Alexandria Athletic Hall of Fame Committee due to his accomplishments.

Mercer began his legal career in 1973 and again took the lead in another direction as a key drafter of the Condominium Act of Virginia where he took a niche industry to becoming a commonplace organization. He led again by initiating the conversion of the Parkfairfax Apartments to condominiums in the 1970s, quite an achievement since it was the largest apartment to condominium conversion in the United States. He worked with the city to put on pro bono clinics which helped many to be able to own their own first homes.

Mary Horner, Division Chief, Landlord Tenant Division for the City of Alexandria

says, “David Mercer’s long-lasting significance stems not only from his professional achievements but also from his unwavering commitment to serving others and giving back to the city and beyond.”

Along the way Mercer says in early 1986 he was asked by his law practice to do something about a problem he had with alcohol. “So I checked into an alcohol rehab center for 30 days. I knew I needed help but when I reached out to the Virginia Bar Association, they had no information on what to do for mental health issues or alcoholism.”

He says, “I realized one of the parts of the rehab program that was critical was to think less of yourself and more of others. It sounded easy to me, and I said ‘I know what I can do.’” He started Lawyers Helping Lawyers speaking at law schools, holding clinics and providing information. “We’ve come a long way since we started with 40 that first night.” He adds, “It’s now a professionally run organization.”

He says his law firm joins the annual food challenge for all law firms in Virginia, and they are always an award winner. “We get our clients to contribute food. You find where you have a soft spot, where you have passion. The food bank is mine.”

Mercer is also proud of breaking a glass ceiling at the Campagna Center, which he says is traditionally a female-led organization. “I was the first male president of the Campagna Center. It’s a perfect organization that helps families who can’t take care of their kids.” He says reading at schools was his favorite thing. “It’s unarguable where you should give your time and money. It’s a real pleasure.”

When asked what he is proudest of, Mercer says, “That’s easy. It’s my wife and family. Nell has stuck with me through thick and thin and my three kids each in their own way are successful and involved with their own children. They are loving and caring and they have a lot going on but we get together — we have seven grandkids. We babysit, drive them.”

Mercer says thoughtfully, “If I hadn’t gone into rehab, I wouldn’t have this life today.”

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at Connection-Newspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or email to calendar@connectionnewspapers.com

FREE INDEPENDENCE DAY LYFT RIDES

WRAP, a local nonprofit organization, announced that free safe Lyft rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this weekend’s Independence Day celebrations.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2026 Independence Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, July 4th (Independence Day) and operates until 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 5th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this high-risk holiday.

During this 12-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide code in the app’s ‘Payment’ tab (under the ‘Add Lyft Pass’ option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP’s 2026 Inde-

pendence Day SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4th on www.SoberRide.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.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE> Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League’s programs touch the

lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org. Join Friends’ Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City’s most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volunteer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria’s top mental

health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com. STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association of Science’s STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school

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OBITUARY

Joe Reeder

FROM PAGE 4

taining the right to live there for the rest of his life. The arrangement ensured the house would be preserved as a public museum and educational resource long after he was gone.

City leaders later called the acquisition one of the most significant additions to Alexandria's historic preservation portfolio in decades, a testament not only to the house itself but to the man who safeguarded it.

But Reeder's life was far from anchored in one place. He maintained a lifelong connection to his family's camp near Stillwater Reservoir in Northern New York, missing only one year of visits in nearly a century due to his service overseas during the Korean War.

In his later decades, Reeder traveled extensively, visiting places as diverse as Alaska, Machu Picchu, Egypt and the American Southwest. He fished in distant waters, stalked game in western mountains and enjoyed simpler pleasures closer to home including bridge games with friends, evenings with a glass of inexpensive bourbon and conversations that ranged easily from history to daily

life.

One of Reeder's greatest passions was the preservation of his family's camp near the Stillwater Reservoir in Northern New York. It was in the Adirondacks that Reeder learned to hunt, fish and enjoy the outdoors. It was there that he met Larry Dolhof, who was his closest lifelong friend. Together with Dolhof, Reeder acquired five year rights to a 1.1 million acre forest area in British Columbia, including a seven-bedroom log cabin lodge, where they hunted moose, elk, bear and other large North American game. In the last 20 years of his life, Dolhof and his sons, Matt and Mike, were among Reeder's most faithful hunting and fishing guides.

Reeder had countless friends in Northern New York, including many longtime members of the Stillwater Club, founded in 1893. His close friends in Northern Virginia included his attorney, James Turner, his Realtor, Paul Anderson, friends Ricky and Ana Rivera, David and Edith Rivera, and longtime neighbors Joan Goehler and Bob Joseph.

Well into his 90s, he remained engaged, curious and deeply social, maintaining close friendships across Virginia and his beloved North Country. In his final days, he spent time with longtime bridge

partners, a reflection of the relationships that sustained him.

Reeder is survived by his cousin Sue Collyer and her husband, John, of New York; nephew, Tim Reeder, wife Sue and children Sam and Catherine; niece, Molly Chamberlain, husband Douglas and sons Thomas and Charles; great nieces Elizabeth Cherkis and Sarah Reeder; and many friends who were like extended family.

A celebration of life is planned in Alexandria the week of July 13, with a private memorial to be held in Northern New York, where he will be laid to rest in the fall. Tributes and donations in Reeder's memory may be made to the American Chemical Society's Project SEED, a scholarship program Reeder helped underwrite throughout his life.

Reeder often shared his historic knowledge of his longtime home. In the end, his greatest legacy may be that he understood something rarer than the price of antiques or real estate: the value of preservation itself.

Because of Reeder, future generations will walk through the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House and encounter not just an artifact of the 18th century, but a living connection to the past and to the man who made sure it endured.

The RESIDENCE at COLVIN RUN
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BEST MEMORY CARE
US News
2026

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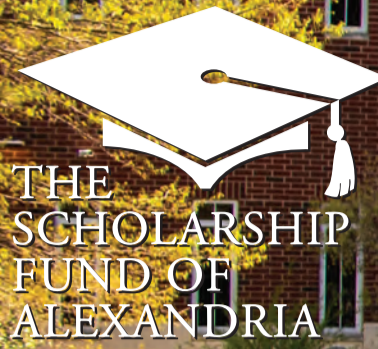
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THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF ALEXANDRIA

Our warmest congratulations and best wishes for your future. Thank you Alexandria City and all our advocates!



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Keeping History Alive

D-Day tribute transforms Carlyle Square.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The City of Alexandria hosted its 16th Annual D-Day Commemoration at John Carlyle Square Park, continuing a long-standing tradition of honoring the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II. Held on May 31, the event marked the 82nd anniversary of D-Day, a pivotal turning point in the liberation of Western Europe.

The commemoration took place at John Carlyle Square after being relocated from Market Square due to construction at City Hall.

Despite the change in venue, the event retained its central mission: to honor the sacrifice of Allied troops and educate the public about this historic moment.

Reenactors included Alexandria resident Steven Diatz, who portrayed a WWII-era British cameraman and photographer. Air Force veteran Miles Hamby portrayed

“When you are part of an interactive way of learning it makes history so much more exciting.”

— D-Day Reenactor
Debbie Wise

his father, WWII veteran Lt. Col. Henry G. Hamby Jr., as part of the event.

Debbie Wise and her husband Darrell Henning were part of the WWII Jeep display.

“I am a sergeant with the women’s army corps,” said Wise. “I am with the airborne division and would have been working behind the scenes.”

The event was designed as both a remembrance ceremony and a community celebration, offering a wide range of activities for attendees including World War II reenactors and historical displays, live 1940s jazz music and swing dancing, educational exhibits and children’s activities, military demonstrations and performances and a formal commemorative ceremony with officials and veterans.

Organized by the Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee, the event reflected Alexandria’s connection to Caen, France, located near the Normandy landing sites.

The ceremony also included



Air Force veteran Miles Hamby, right, portrays his father, WWII veteran Lt. Col. Henry G. Hamby Jr. as he explains a display at the city’s D-Day commemoration May 31 at John Carlyle Square Park.



A military drill team performs May 31 at John Carlyle Square Park.

participation from local officials, U.S. Armed Forces representatives, veterans’ organizations, and diplomats from Allied nations, emphasizing the enduring international importance of D-Day.

D-Day, June 6, 1944, remains the largest amphibious invasion in military history, with more than 156,000 Allied troops landing in Normandy.

Alexandria’s annual commemoration serves as a reminder of the courage and sacrifice of those who fought and helps ensure their legacy is remembered by future generations.

“Doing events like this really makes history come alive,” Wise said. “When you are touching it and being a part of an interactive way of learning makes history so much more exciting.”

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Debbie Wise and Darrell Henning participate in the D-Day commemoration May 31 at John Carlyle Square Park.



Alexandria resident Steven Diatz portrays a WWII era British cameraman.



Members of Alexandria’s VFW Post 609 talk to visitors at the D-Day commemoration May 31 in John Carlyle Square Park.

Potential for Extreme Heat – Prepare Now

The National Weather Service has issued a Heat Advisory for Wednesday, July 1, until 8 p.m., and an Extreme Heat Watch from 11 a.m. Thursday, July 2, through 8 p.m. Friday, July 3.

The Heat Advisory period could have heat index values up to 106. For Thursday and Friday, the Extreme Heat Watch, dangerously hot conditions with heat index values up to 112 are possible. The expected hot weather increases the risk of heat-related illnesses, like heat exhaustion and heat stroke, for those who are more sensitive to heat.

Drink plenty of water before temperatures rise to prevent feeling sick from dehydration.

COOLING STATIONS will open at

the following locations:

- ❖ DASH Cooling Bus, King Street near City Hall (in front of 417 King St.), Wednesday, July 1 through Sunday, July 5 at 4 p.m.

- ❖ Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, July 3, and Saturday, July 4.

- ❖ Patrick Henry Recreation Center, 4653 Taney Ave., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, July 3, and Saturday, July 4.

Protect yourself by learning about the signs of heat illnesses.

If you notice signs of heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting, and dizziness, you may be experiencing heat exhaustion.

If you notice an extremely high

body temperature, confusion, hot and dry skin (no sweating), a rapid, strong pulse, or become unconscious, you may be experiencing a heat stroke.

Take action by moving to a cool location, including City facilities, and rest and drink fluids. If symptoms of heat stroke occur, immediately call for medical assistance. Learn more from the Alexandria Health Department.

For nonemergency questions about cooling locations or other City services, residents can call 311 or 703-746-4311. Call 911 for police, fire, or medical assistance.

For the most up-to-date information about weather, city operations, and cooling locations, please visit alexandriava.gov/Alert.

City of Alexandria Metered Parking Fees and Fines Change July 1

New rates for parking meter fees and parking fines will go into effect this week as part of changes approved by the Alexandria City Council during the FY 2027 Budget process.

Beginning Wednesday, July 1:

- ❖ Parking meter rates will increase to \$2.75 per hour
- ❖ Parking fines and citations will increase to \$55 per violation

The rate changes will apply to all metered parking spaces in the City of Alexandria. Most metered spaces require payment Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and are free on Sundays and state holidays.

The City regularly patrols and enforces regulations for parking, stopping, and standing on City streets.

This includes both posted parking restrictions and City Code requirements that support safety, accessibility, and traffic flow. Following parking regulations helps keep streets safe and accessible for everyone.

Visit the City's parking meter information page www.alexandriava.gov/parking/parking-meter-information

Judicial Standoff: Virginia Gun Law

Virginia judge's preliminary injunction halts state's new restrictions on semi-automatic firearms days before they were set to take effect.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

Lancaster County Circuit Judge John Martin issued a preliminary injunction on Thursday, June 25, blocking a law that would ban the sale and manufacturing of certain semi-automatic firearms and large-capacity magazines. Because of the ruling, the weapon ban does not take effect as scheduled on July 1.

The legislation made it a Class 1 misdemeanor to import, sell, manufacture, purchase, or transfer certain semi-automatic firearms — often referred to as assault weapons — and high-capacity magazines holding more than 10 to 15 rounds.

Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim, D-Fairfax, and Del. Dan Helmer, D-Fairfax, introduced identical



HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT VIA FACEBOOK

The Herndon Police Department posted on Facebook that a weapon, described as a Norco MAK-90 Sporter, a Chinese semi-automatic AK-47 variant, was seized along with two 30-round magazines containing a total of 51 rounds of ammunition. Officers responded to a restaurant in the 100 block of Elden Street around 2:30 a.m. Saturday, June 6.

bill, Senate Bill 749 and House Bill 217, which the General Assembly passed and Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed into law. Supporters

say the restrictions comply with the Virginia Constitution, while opponents challenge their constitutionality.

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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

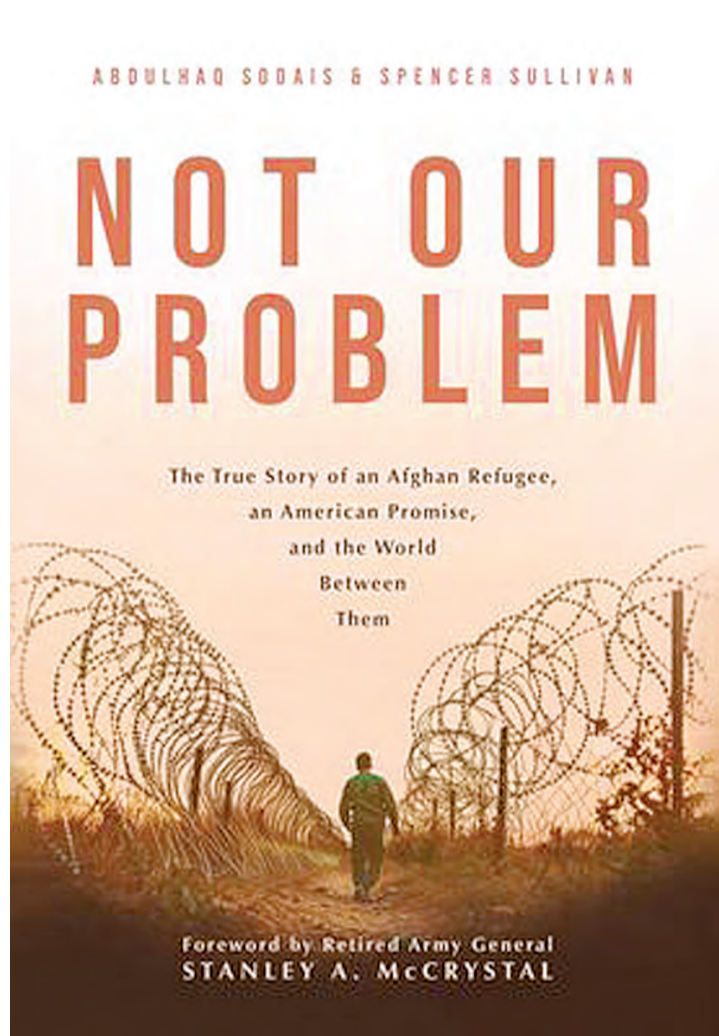
Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every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



Author Spencer Sullivan will speak on Monday, July 27, 2026 at Kingstowne Regional Library.

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.
- 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.
- Live on Top of The Hill Concert Series Ages 18+ Friday, 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.

NOW THRU JULY 26

Story Cloths and the Book: Work by New Image Artists. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artists' Reception: Sunday, June 14, 4 - 6 p.m. In Story Cloths and the Book, New Image Artists explore their relationship with reading, writing, meaning and process by pairing narrative textiles and mixed media with unique artist's books. A story cloth is a textile that contains a narrative that is community oriented, personal or historical in nature. The history of narrative textiles predates the invention of the printing press and books as we think of them today. The broad range of subjects interpreted in this exhibition includes an author of a classic mystery series, individual identity, family histories, the joy of summer

and memories of well-loved books.

JUNE 25 TO SEPT. 17

Summer Concerts at Carlyle Crossing. 6-8 p.m. At Carlyle Crossing, 2455 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. Beginning June 11 and continuing through Sept. 17, the free outdoor series will bring an eclectic lineup of local and regional musicians to the plaza on select Thursday evenings, creating a lively gathering place for residents, visitors, and the surrounding community.

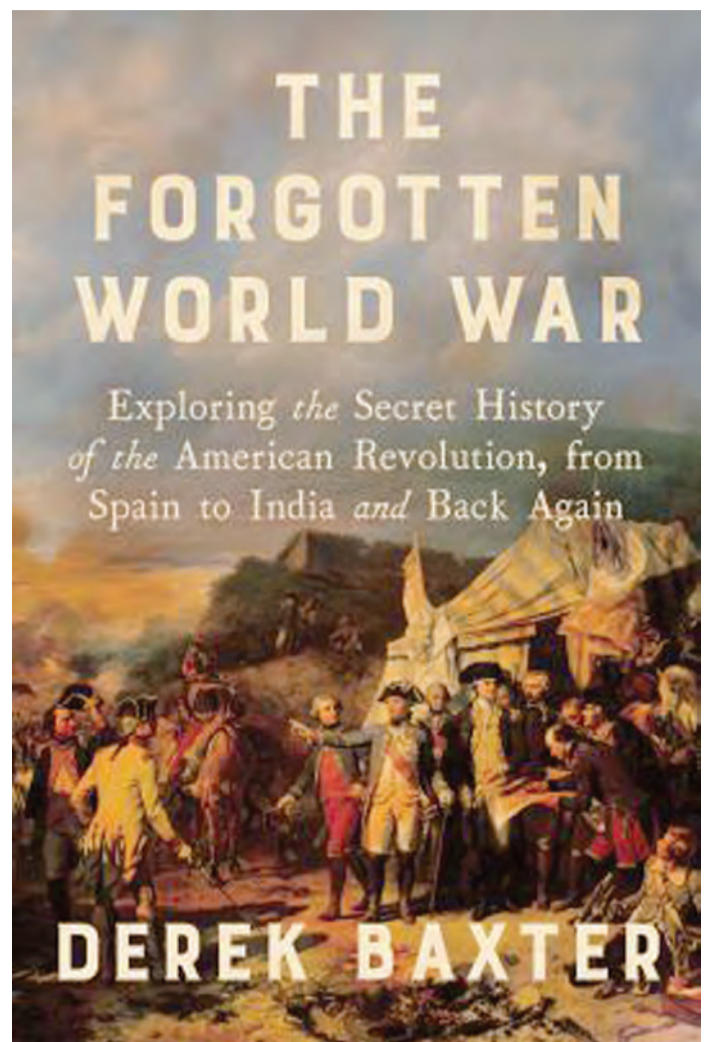
Concert dates:
 July 9 - Patty Reese (Award Winning Americana & Roots Rock)
 July 23 - Tobago Bay Calypso Band (Caribbean, Soca Steel Drums)
 August 6 - Eric Scott (Modern Soul, Funk & Groove)
 August 20 - Seneca Creek (Bluegrass)
 September 3 - Femi and the Foundation (Funk, Rock, Hip-Hop, R&B)
 September 17 - Sol Roots (Funk, Blues, Soul & Rock)

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN PHILHARMONIC ASSOCIATION

The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) is proud to present its 36th annual Lyceum Chamber Music Series. Each concert is held on Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, in Old Town Alexandria. Tickets are not required (suggested donation of \$25). View the full schedule at wmpamusic.org/lyceum.

Main Street Players, Sunday, July 5, 3 p.m. Main Street Chamber Players features Laura Kobayashi on violin, Stephanie Knutsen on viola, Kenneth Law on cello, Barbara Fitzgerald on double bass, and Kent McWilliams on piano. Program includes Piano Quartet in A Minor by Josef Suk, Morpheus for Viola & Piano by Rebecca Clarke, and Quintet for Violin, Viola, Cello, Contrabass, & Piano by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

Music to Celebrate America @ 250, Sunday, July



Author Derek Baxter will speak on Monday, July 6, 2026 at Kingstowne Regional Library in Alexandria.

12, 3 p.m. Music to Celebrate America @ 250 features Crystal Lee on flute, Brittany Pemberton on clarinet, and Elizabeth Hill on piano. Program includes works by Price, Muczynski, and Peterson.

Keith Wright & Sam Runolfson Concert, Sunday, July 19, 3 p.m. This performance features Keith Wright on flute and Sam Runolfson on cello. Program to be announced.

Maxim Pakhomov Piano Concert, Sunday, July 26, 3 p.m. Join us and listen to the amazing Maxim Pakhomov perform on piano. Program includes Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major by Ludwig van Beethoven, Scherzo (Op. 54) by Frederic Chopin, Annees De Pelerinage, Sonetto 104 del Petracca, and Etude Transcendental in F Minor by Ferenc Liszt, and Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4 by Heitor Villa-Lobos.

MONDAY/JULY 6

Author Derek Baxter. 7 to 8:30 p.m. At Kingstowne Regional Library, 7130 Silver Lake Blvd., Alexandria. Join writer Derek Baxter for a discussion about his book The Forgotten World War: Exploring the Secret History of the American Revolution, from Spain to India and Back Again.

JULY 11-12

Del Ray Artisans' Summer Art Market 2026. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. An indoor event featuring original creations by local artists in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, glass, jewelry, mixed media, photography, and more. Shop original work from local artists at Del Ray Artisans gallery at 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Perfect for gifts or treat yourself! Different artists each market day, so visit both days! Details at DelRayArtisans.org/summer-art-market-2026

SATURDAY/JULY 11

Celebrate America at 250. 6 p.m. ASO; downbeat at 8:30 p.m. At Oronoco Bay Park, 100 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Madison Street, Alexandria. Followed by Fireworks and featuring the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra; Victoria Gau, conductor, Danielle Talamantes, soprano.

SATURDAY/JULY 11

Write Like A Woman Networking Workshop.

1-3 p.m. At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Founder and Facilitator, KaNikki Jakarta, welcomes you to year 10 of the Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. This popular workshop invites amateur and professional women writers of all genres ages 18 – 100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles through writing prompts and encouragement. Space is limited, please RSVP to greatpublishing@yahoo.com

SATURDAY/JULY 11

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.

SATURDAY/JULY 18

"Alexandria's Patriots Remembered." 10 a.m.

At the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 South Fairfax Street, Old Town Alexandria. Alexandria Historical Society Presents "Alexandria's Patriots Remembered: A Revolutionary Walk Through the Old Presbyterian Meeting House." Presented as part of the Alexandria Historical Society's History Behind the Scenes series and Alexandria's 250th celebration, this tour will explore one of the city's most significant founding era landmarks: the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, its 18th-century burial ground, and the men and women whose lives connected the congregation directly to the American Revolution and the early republic. Tickets are \$25 for non-members and \$20 for Alexandria Historical Society members. Additional information and tickets are available at https://www.alexandriahistoricalandsociety.org/events/opmh_tour.

THURSDAY/JULY 23

Coffee & Connections 8:30 to 9:30 am. At United Way Worldwide, 701 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria. Sponsored by The Chamber



Enjoy Fourth of July fireworks on July 3-4, 2026 at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

ALX's Professional Women's Network. Kick off your morning with the Professional Women's Network at the July event—featuring coffee, conversation, and valuable connections with professionals from across the region. Omoiye O. Kinney, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of United Way Worldwide, will share insights from her leadership journey in global marketing and communications.

MONDAY/JULY 27

Author Spencer Sullivan. 7 to 8:30 p.m. At Kingstowne Regional Library, 7130 Silver Lake Blvd., Alexandria. Not Our Problem, a war memoir and refugee story revealed in alternating voices, follows an Afghan refugee and an American soldier across borders and continents, tracing the long

distance between a promise and its keeping—interrogating a world in crisis while celebrating how friendship can outlast the war that created it.

THE BIRCHMERE

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

JULY

Mon. 6: Jason Newsted & The Chophouse Band \$35.00
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Thu. 9: Peter White \$49.50
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Sat. 11: An Evening with Shovels & Rope \$45.00
Sun. 12: Taj Mahal & the Phantom Blues Band \$79.50 **SOLD OUT!**
Thu. 16: Lyfe Jennings \$75.00
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Sat. 18: The Second City "The Best of The Second City" \$55.00
Sun. 19: An Evening of Conversation with Stewart Copeland \$49.50 **SOLD OUT!**
Fri. 24: The Australian Bee Gees – A Tribute to The Bee Gees \$45.00
Sat. 25: Marion Meadows & Alex Bugnon \$55.00
Mon. 27: Hindley Street Country Club \$49.50
Fri. 31: Pat McGann \$45.00

Fair Winds and Following Seas

FROM PAGE 3

This model would require less physical storage space than conventional museums, while offering greater flexibility and appeal for repeat visitors, school groups, and tourists.

Organizers emphasize that the goal is to create a community-centered attraction, one that serves both local residents and national audiences.

The effort now faces a critical fundraising phase. Leaders suggest that approximately \$2 million must be raised in the near term to secure a waterfront property and advance design and planning work, with a larger target of \$10 million within the following year.

To achieve this, the project has engaged a professional fundraising firm with experience supporting major museum and memorial initiatives. Initial

contributions totaling several hundred thousand dollars have already been secured, but organizers acknowledge that broader local and regional support will be essential to attract national backing.

"There is strong interest nationally," Smith added, "but donors are looking first for evidence of commitment from the Alexandria community."

While city officials and elected leaders have expressed support, project advocates stress that the initiative is likely to succeed only through a citizen-led, public-private partnership.

Organizers argue that relying solely on government leadership could slow progress and instead emphasize the importance of independent fundraising, private initiative and community engagement to drive the project forward.

A key challenge will be shaping public

perception, particularly in light of the Tall Ship Providence experience. Project leaders are working to frame the museum as a continuation rather than a replacement: a way to build on lessons learned while introducing a more sustainable model.

They hope the narrative will resonate with residents who supported past maritime initiatives, positioning the museum as the next step in preserving and expanding Alexandria's waterfront story.

With a potential site identified at 1 Prince Street across from Waterfront Park and early planning in place, organizers believe this is a rare opportunity. It is unusual, they note, for a project of this scale to secure a location before launching a full public campaign, giving Alexandria a head start that could prove decisive.

Still, timing is critical. Momentum could fade without swift progress and competing

priorities in the region mean that public attention and donor interest may be limited.

For now, supporters are focused on building awareness, securing funding and turning a long-discussed idea into a lasting institution.

If successful, the museum could not only preserve Alexandria's maritime past but also position the city as a national center for telling America's story as a seafaring nation.

"Alexandria existed when Georgetown was still a fishing village," Smith said. "We have a story to tell and it's crucial to the identity that America is a maritime power — the greatest on earth. It's got to be done now."

For more information on the U.S. Maritime Foundation, visit www.united-statesmaritime.org

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Obituary



Daniel John Spigai, 93, passed away peacefully on May 27, 2026, at his home in Alexandria, Virginia. Born on March 4, 1933, in the Bronx, New York, he lived a full and accomplished life marked by dedication to his family, faith, and career.

Daniel (Dan) graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx before earning his degree from Manhattan College. His education laid the foundation for a distinguished career as a civil engineer. He worked at HNTB for over 35 years, where he rose to become a partner in the firm during the 1970s. His expertise and leadership extended beyond his professional role; he served as president of the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) and contributed as a board member for the Conference of St. Mary's in Alexandria, Virginia.

A devout Catholic, Dan was deeply committed to his faith and attended Mass every Sunday at 7 a.m. at St. Mary's Basilica in Old Town Alexandria. His involvement with his church community was an integral part of his life. Dan's personal passions brought him great joy throughout his years. In his youth, tennis was his sport of choice, but in his thirties, he discovered golf—a pastime that became a lifelong pursuit. He also enjoyed playing poker three times a week, finding camaraderie and enjoyment around the card table.

Family was central to Dan's life. He is survived by his beloved wife of 68 years, Jacqueline; his children Victoria Spigai, David Spigai, and Daniela Spigai (Chris); six cherished grandchildren: Alexander Perez, Jacqueline Tilley, Yvonna Spigai, Julia Spigai, Lily Spigai Pfeifer, and Zane Spigai Pfeifer; and his brother Robert Spigai (Lorraine). He was predeceased by his daughter Lisa Spigai-Perez.

Dan's legacy is one of dedication—to his profession, faith, family, and the activities that brought him happiness. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him and serve as an enduring inspiration.

Funeral services will be held at St. Mary's Basilica in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on Monday, June 22nd at 10:30 am. Interment will follow at St. Mary's Cemetery.

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Big Boating Weekend Ahead Brings out Life Preserver Enforcement

Boaters on the Potomac should be ready for an inspection.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

A nest full of ospreys watches a police boat pull out for the first day of “Operation Dry Water,” checking life preservers and cracking down on boating under the influence.

These officers from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Law Enforcement Division in partnership with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators are monitoring alcohol use and making sure everyone is wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket that’s in good condition that fits every occupant of the boat, including children, the DWR said.

So far this year, there were five deaths and six serious injuries in boating incidents in Virginia and the July 4 holiday is a big boating day on the Potomac River.

When heading out on the water, the first step is to let someone on shore know where you’re going and when you’ll be back, followed by the life jacket count. Before that, consider taking the MV-gb-GumSprings-Juneteenth2026 mk.

In the course, they list ages, required equipment, personal watercraft rules, dams, and age requirements. All personal watercraft operators 14 and older and all operators of motorboats with a 10 hp or greater engine need to take a boating safety course. “Personal water crafts” are the jet skis, Sea Doods, Wave Runners, and other similar crafts, the DWR said.

<https://www.boat-ed.com/virginia/>



Ospreys keep an eye on the water.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE



Officer Roger Palmisano with a certified life vest.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or donaldrea@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 pre-teens are seeking volunteer mentors. SOHO, which stands for “Space of Her Own,” and “Space of His Own,” serves vulnerable fifth graders in Alexandria. The programs pair men and women with youth in need of positive adult role models, to help support and guide youth in making healthy choices and succeeding in school and in life. Visit www.spaceofherown.org and www.spaceofhisown.org. For more information on how to become a SOHO mentor, contact Sarah

Maroney at sarah.maroney@alexandriava.gov or phone at 703-746-4687.

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

Postpartum Support Virginia sponsors a free, bi-monthly support group for women suffering depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. Meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at Inova Alexandria Hospital, Health Education Center, rooms 1-2, 4320 Seminary Road. Contact co-moderator Susan Doyle at suzjdoyle@gmail.com or 571-403-0673.

The Parkinson’s Disease Support Group of Alexandria meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. At the Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 109, 1500 Shenandoah Road. All Parkinson’s patients and caregivers are welcome.

A Bloody Business



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I was reminded a few weeks ago about something in my life which I hardly need reminding about: my thyroid cancer diagnosis and my chronic kidney disease, both stage IV; two for the price of one (one of which would be plenty, two is overkill, literally). The reminder came when one of the levels in my monthly lab work was higher than (A) It needed to be and (B) higher than it has ever been. Not exactly cause for celebration (certainly not ringing a bell at any infusion centers announcing a cured patient). However, after 17+ years of this, I’m fairly well-prepared in how one reacts to such cancer-related abnormalities. However, this time, the measure generated an email from my nephrologist’s dialysis coordinator acknowledging this recent elevated level. He asked me if I was experiencing any symptoms (and he listed them: fatigue, poor sleeping, disinterest in food, hiccups, et cetera) relating to my kidney disease. The complicating factor is treatment of my thyroid cancer exacerbates my kidney disease and managing my kidney disease is at cross purposes with how I treat/live with my thyroid cancer disease. The classic “damned if you do ...” scenario.

Fortunately, none of the disease-related symptoms had manifest themselves. Moreover, my levels declined enough in my special-ordered two-week later lab order (instead of the usual four) so I was sort of “off the clock,” as my friend Sean would say. As a result, all the interested parties retreated from their presumptive brinks. I was advised to hydrate more and to schedule my next lab in its customary four-week slot. And so, the medical professionals will be closely monitoring my lab work to evaluate if this higher-than-normal level was an outlier or the long-awaited, probably anticipated beginning of the slide (I can’t say “end”). Nevertheless, diagnosis to date, my cancer life (diagnosed late Feb. 2009) has mostly been lived on easy street, with a few unexpected turns and a couple of potholes along the way. If I was to complain I’d be an expletive deleted (although that catheter that was inserted in the hospital when I was admitted with a collapsed lung in 2015 was kind of a problem).

Still, this kind of mental anguish is what “dropping the other shoe” is all about. On the one hand, I think about my cancer situation/predicament all the time with intermittent interruptions. On the other hand, I think about my cancer situation/predicament during those intermittent interruptions. As you can read, it matters not which hand or which compartmentalized part of my brain is working, it’s all working on cancer stuff. And ignoring it all is the method to my madness unless and until I get a jolt - like lab results. It is these lab results which are on the frontline of my coexistence with cancer. When something happens/dare I say, portends, it will likely be the lab work that does its indicating. And right now, and in early June when I’m back “labing” every four weeks, I will be in a heightened state of anxiety. But since there’s only so much I can do to impact these future results, I have to tell myself to “act naturally” (as Buck Owens and Ringo Starr sing) and not overreact. There’s no real reason to do so now anyway. There’s no advantage in being miserable and uptight in advance of my next lab work. If those results are disappointing, shall I say, then my life will become more complicated. As such, there’s no reason to complicate it now. Bad news travels fast enough. I don’t need to hurry it along. And anticipating it likewise serves no purpose. It will be bad enough when it’s fact. Until then I can live with the fiction.

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

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