Alexandria Gazette Packet

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November 5, 2026

Days Leading to Election Night Results for Virgina

Unofficial results as of Election Night.

By Mercia Hobson
The Gazette

Early statewide voting results in Virginia as of 8:20 p.m. Nov. 3 showed, Democratic candidates held big leads for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, voters approved three constitutional amendments.

In the City of Alexandria, there were two offices, U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives 8th District, and the three constitutional amendment questions on the ballot only.

Voter turnout was about 56 percent with 66,637 ballots cast out of 119,263 registered voters, according to the Virginia Election Night Reporting.

Just more than 26,426 voters cast their votes via early voting, more than 8,250 mailed in their ballots and more than 31,600 voted on Election Day.

In the statewide race for the U.S. Senate as of 8:35 p.m., incumbent Democratic Sen. Mark Warner held an expected lead in his bid for a fourth term, ahead of Republican challenger Bert K. Mizusawa, a retired Army major general. With 1,544 of 2,529 precincts reporting, Warner, a City of Alexandria resident, led the contest with 1,017,644 votes (58.42 percent) to Mizusawa's 724,244 votes (41.58 percent). Warner won more than 84 percent of the votes cast in Alexandria.

Tuesday night, Warner posted, "Thank you, Virginia. It's the honor of my lifetime to serve you. Here's to six more years fighting for you."

In Virginia's 8th Congressional District — covering Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and eastern Fairfax County — incumbent Democratic Rep. Don Beyer Jr. surged ahead in the multi-candidate field with 133,876 votes (82.32 percent) as of 8:40 p.m., with 113 of 172 precincts reporting and 60,496 early votes remaining, and declared victory. Republican challenger Tony Sabio followed with 24,751 votes (15.22 percent), while independent candidate Tim S. Sharman garnered 2,172 votes (1.34 percent) and Libertarian candidate Shelly Arnold received 1,829 votes (1.12 percent).

In statewide returns as of 9 p.m., Virginia voters showed strong support for all three constitutional measures on the ballot.

For Question 1, concerning the right to reproductive freedom, "Yes" led with 1,344,030 votes (61.8 percent), while "No" received 830,723 votes (38.2 percent). On Question 1, 84.19% of Alexandria City voters voted yes.

For Question 2, concerning the right to same-sex marriage, "Yes" led with 1,249,885 votes (51.21 percent), while "No" received 934,856 votes (42.79 percent). On Question 2, 82.54% of Alexandria City voters voted yes.

For Question 3, concerning the right to vote and restoration of voting rights to those who have completed their sentences, "Yes" led with 1,207,671 votes (53.39 percent), while "No" received 972,548 votes (44.61 percent). On Question 3, 78.4% of Alexandria City voters voted yes.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Surovell touted the historic night for Virginia:

"Virginians ratified three constitutional amendments by margins of 10 to 20 points, with those margins expected to grow as mail ballots are counted over the next five days.

"They enshrined reproductive freedom in the Constitution of Virginia, ending the era when politicians in Richmond could threaten a woman's right to make her own decisions about pregnancy," Surovell said in a statement. "That fight is over.

And we won. They removed the last constitutional barrier to marriage equality, affirming that every Virginian has the right to marry the person they love. And, for the first time in our nearly 400-year history, they enshrined the right to vote in our Constitution and guaranteed the restoration of voting rights to those who have completed their sentences.

Tonight, we finally removed the stain of Jim Crow from the founding document of the Commonwealth that gave America its Bill of Rights."



Screen grab via Facebook

Incumbent Democratic U.S. Sen. Mark Warner won his bid for a fourth term as U.S. senator. He made his final campaign pitch in Alexandria on Monday, Nov. 2, 2026.

Beyer Statement

Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA), who represents a Northern Virginia district in the U.S. House and serves as the Senior House Democrat on Congress' Joint Economic Committee, issued the following statement on Wednesday, Nov. 4:

"Donald Trump and J.D. Vance were elected on promises to lower prices and end wars. Instead, they plunged the country into an endless nightmare of inflation, corruption, and illegal military aggression. They embarrassed our good name abroad, embracing our adversaries and alienating our allies, and put our economy in a vice grip with disastrous tariffs. They dismantled the people's government, took a chainsaw to the federal workforce, and brought violence and mayhem into peaceful communities while putting violent criminals back on the street. They gutted health care and food assistance for millions while lining their own pockets and the pockets of their families and donors. Republicans in Congress were willing participants in the Trump-Vance debacle, surrendering the constitutional prerogatives of the Legislative Branch to serve as a rubber stamp. …

"People want a Congress that will listen to them, work for them, and fix their problems. … Democrats will answer that call, with a majority that fights for American values and the good of all Americans. We will fight to end Trump's illegal war, repeal his price-raising tariffs, and undo his cost-increasing health care cuts that left millions without coverage. And we will bring accountability to the most corrupt administration in American history."



Photo contributed

Kitty Porterfield, founder of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, died Oct. 16 following an 18-month battle with breast cancer. She was 85. OBITUARY, page 3.



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Agenda:Alexandria November Program: Zoning for Housing

Per its website (Zoning for Housing/ Housing for All | City of Alexandria, VA), the City of Alexandria has implemented a comprehensive zoning reform called Zoning for Housing, aimed at increasing housing production and affordability while reducing historical barriers to equitable housing access.

To learn more on this issue and what's next for the second phase of implementation, you are invited to a panel discussion comprised of varying perspectives on City housing dynamics:

❖ Paul Stoddard, Alexandria Planning & Zoning Director. Paul Stoddard joined the City as Planning & Zoning Director in 2025, following a similar role in Falls Church.

❖ Jenn Ayres, Executive Director, ALIVE! ALIVE! provides comprehensive support to help our neighbors through difficult times with dignity and compassion as the largest organization preventing food and housing insecurity in the City.

Monday, Nov. 16, 2026

6:30 p.m.: Social
7 p.m.: Panel begins, ending by 8:30PM
Location: Minnie Howard Campus of Alexandria City High School, 3775 W Braddock Rd

❖ Roy Byrd, Coalition for a Livable Alexandria. CLA's mission focuses on quality of life, government transparency, and ensuring resident participation in major City policy and development decisions.

❖ Mark Jinks, Retired City of Alexandria City Manager/Chair, Board of Commissioners, Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority.

Admission is free for current Agenda:Alexandria members, and $10 at the door for everyone else.

Membership costs $50/year for individuals and $80/year for families and can be found at https://agendaalexandria.org/give -- and it is tax-deductible.

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.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.

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL
NOV 13–15, 2026

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ALEXANDRIA FILM FESTIVAL

Obituary

Titanic Loss

SFA founder Kitty Porterfield dies at 85.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

Few people leave a mark on a community that can be measured in thousands of lives changed. But Kitty Porterfield, an educator, advocate, philanthropist and founder of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, did exactly that. Named a 2025 Living Legend of Alexandria, Porterfield died Oct. 16 following an 18-month battle with breast cancer leaving behind a legacy of opportunity, compassion and unwavering dedication to the youth of Alexandria. She was 85.

Katherine "Kitty" Burnett was born April 24, 1941, in Albany, N.Y., to the Reverend Brewer L. Burnett, a Presbyterian minister, and Katherine Burnett (née Howland). She grew up in Scranton, Pa., then continued her education at Radcliffe College of Harvard University graduating with a degree in government in 1963. That same year she married Jovan Porterfield of Waxahachie, Texas, and moved to Alexandria, where they raised three children and built a life centered on service.

For more than three decades, Porterfield dedicated herself to public education, serving as communications director for both Alexandria City Public Schools and Fairfax County Public Schools. At Fairfax County, she played a pivotal role during critical events such as September 11th and the 2002 Northern Virginia sniper attacks, earning accolades from the U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security for her exceptional crisis communication efforts, including the prestigious National School Public Relations Gold Medallion.

Yet it was one simple question that would become her life's defining contribution. While helping her daughter navigate college applications and financial aid forms in the early 1980s, Porterfield wondered how families without similar resources managed the process. Rather than simply moving on when her own child's paperwork was complete, she set out to help others. That vision led to the creation of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria in 1985.

"While tending to my own children, I knew many of their peers also needed that same care and feeding," said Porterfield when named a Living Legend of Alexandria. "So I essentially replicated the process I went through with my own children."

What began with a handful of scholarships has grown into one of Alexandria's most influential nonprofit organizations. Since its founding, the fund has awarded nearly $25 million in scholarships to more than 6,000 graduates of Alexandria City Public Schools, helping young people pursue college and career opportunities that might otherwise have been out of reach.



Kitty Porterfield with husband Jovan Porterfield at the first SFA gala on the Bradley family lawn.



Kitty Porterfield with granddaughter Catherine Klipstein.

Porterfield's civic involvement extended far beyond scholarships. She served on the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, the Northern Virginia Community College Board, Hopkins House and the US Rowing Board of Directors.

> "I don't know where she found the time to give so much to the community and still be a dedicated and loving mom to our family."
> — Deborah Porterfield on her mother Kitty

"I remember Kitty going back to work during my childhood," said Deborah Porterfield. "Still when I look at her CV I don't know how she did it all. I don't know where she found the time to give so much to the community and still be a dedicated and loving mom to our family."

During critical years when a new boathouse project was being approved and constructed, Porterfield was serving as the President of the Alexandria Crew Boosters at TC Williams High School. The result, The Dee Campbell Rowing Center, was dedicated in 1986 and remains the only high school boathouse owned by a public school system in Northern Virginia.

In addition, Porterfield served as the Founding Chair for the Mid-Atlantic Erg

See Kitty Porterfield, Page 15

Photos contributed



Kitty Porterfield, center, at a recent Scholarship Fund of Alexandria Gala with niece Sandra Dixon, son Mike Porterfield, and granddaughter Kirby Porterfield.



Kitty Porterfield at a family gathering in Massachusetts.



Kitty Porterfield, right, during the SFA Telethon. L-R. Susan Yowell, then SFA Ex Dir., Gwen Mullen, former Ex Dir of SFA, and Julie Carey of NBC4.

‘Till Death Do Us Part

Halloweddings adds a spooky twist on saying “I do.”



Photos by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

New officiants gather for a group photo after being sworn in by Greg Parks Oct. 31 at the Athenaeum.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

Love was in the air, along with a little Halloween spirit, as Greg Parks, Clerk of the Circuit Court for the City of Alexandria, hosted the city’s popular “Halloweddings” event on Oct. 31. The unique celebration offered couples a fun and affordable way to tie the knot while embracing the costumes, creativity and festive atmosphere of Halloween.

“I have always loved Halloween ever since I was a little girl,” said new bride Adria Crannell who married Anthony Spain. “It’s a lifelong love of Halloween. We had been planning a fall wedding and saw this opportunity and jumped at it.”

Held at the historic Athenaeum in Old Town, the event featured wedding ceremonies officiated by Parks and members of his staff, who donned period costumes for the occasion. Couples were encouraged to arrive in costume themselves, transforming traditional wedding attire into everything from superhero ensembles to classic Halloween characters.

> “We had been planning a fall wedding and saw this opportunity and jumped at it.”
> — New bride Adria Crannell

In addition to performing the weddings, members of City Council and other elected officials were sworn in as officiants, with Mayor Alyia Gaskins performing the wedding ceremony for Danna and Alex Tucker.

“Halloween is her favorite holiday so I thought it would be so special if we could share our anniversary on her favorite holiday,” said Alex Tucker after the ceremony.

The Halloween-themed weddings have quickly become a local tradition. According to Parks, the event returned after receiving an enthusiastic response from participants in its inaugural year. Each ceremony included refreshments, wedding cake and commemorative gift bags, creating a memorable experience for newlyweds and their guests.

For couples seeking an unforgettable wedding day, the event offered a whimsical reminder that there is more than one way to say “I do.”



Greg Parks marries Anthony Spain and Adria Crannell during Halloweddings Oct. 31 at the Athenaeum.



Mayor Alyia Gaskins in her new role as a wedding officiant marries Danna and Alex Tucker Oct. 31 at the Athenaeum.



Photos by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

Sheriff Sean Casey, right, hands out candy during the annual Public Safety Trunk or Treat Halloween celebration Oct. 29 at Police Headquarters.

Trunks and Treats

Public Safety Trunk or Treat highlights community connection.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

Families from across Alexandria gathered on Oct. 29 for the annual Public Safety Trunk or Treat event at Alexandria Police Headquarters on Wheeler Avenue. Hosted by the Alexandria Police Department in partnership with local public safety agencies and supported by the Alexandria Police Foundation, the free community event provided a safe and festive Halloween celebration for children and families.

Children dressed in costumes collected candy and treats from creatively decorated police vehicles, fire trucks, school buses and emergency response vehicles. The event also gave residents the opportunity to meet police officers, firefighters, emergency communications personnel and other first responders who serve the Alexandria community.

Beyond the Halloween fun, organizers said the event was designed to strengthen relationships between public safety agencies and the community. By providing a welcoming and family-friendly environment,

See Public Safety, Page 5



Alexandria Police Foundation board members Charlotte Hall, Janet Barnett and Gordon Kromberg enjoy the Public Safety Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters. The Foundation was a sponsor of the community event.

Public Safety Trunk or Treat Highlights Community Connection

From Page 4

the Trunk or Treat encouraged positive conversations and connections between residents and the professionals dedicated to keeping Alexandria safe.

With costumes, decorated vehicles and plenty of treats, the Public Safety Trunk or Treat offered a memorable evening that combined holiday excitement with community engagement, highlighting the strong partnership between Alexandria's residents and first responders.



Photos by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

Assistant Police Chief Tina Laguna with a young attendee at the Public Safety Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters.



Young princesses enjoy Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters.



Attendees enjoy Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters.



Captain Tony Moore, left, and Lt. Ali Asonglefac, center, with friends at the Public Safety Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters.



A young attendee sits atop a police motorcycle during the Public Safety Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at APD headquarters.



Dispatcher Leslie Lewis at the Public Safety Trunk or Treat Oct. 29 at Police Headquarters.



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Adrienne Terrell Washington and Gerald Wanzer

Protecting the legacy of African Americans at Fort Ward.

By Char McCargo Bah
Special to the Gazette Packet

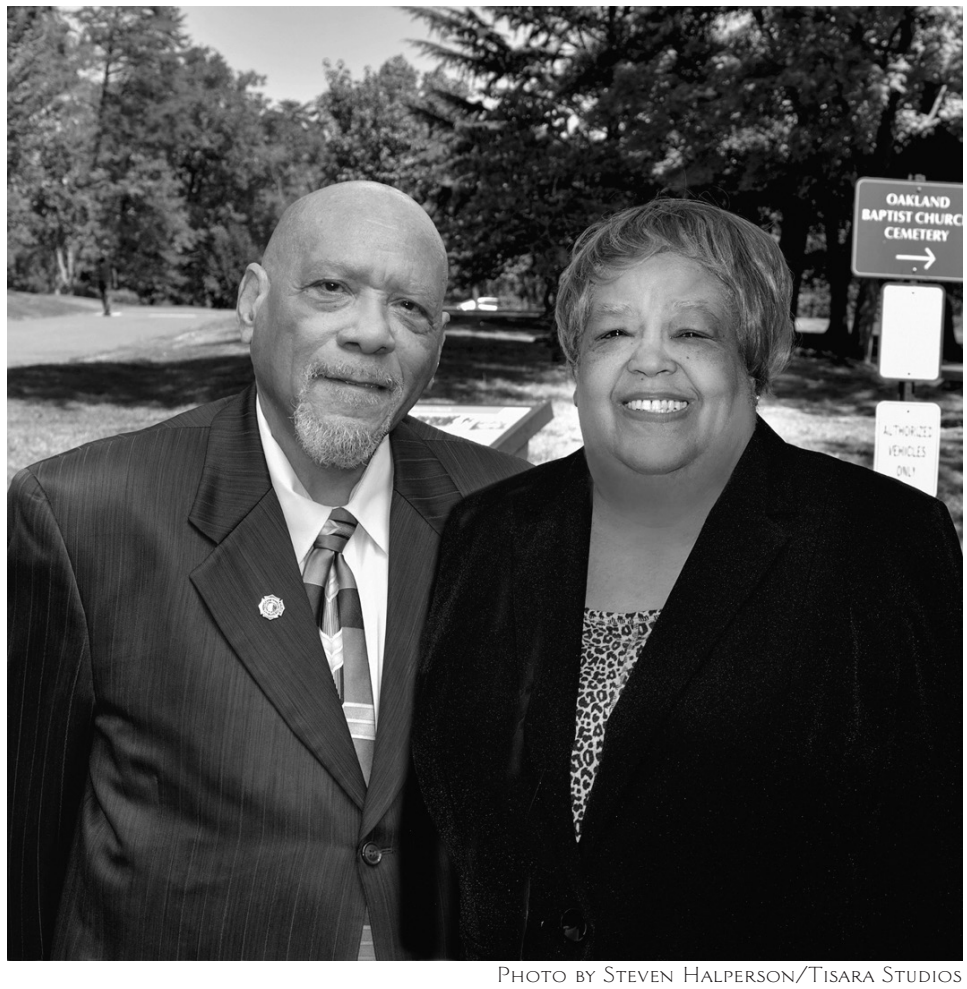


Photo by Steven Halperson/Tisara Studios

Gerald Wanzer and Adrienne Terrell Washington were selected as 2025 Living Legends of Alexandria for their efforts in preserving the history of African Americans at Fort Ward.

Adrienne Terrell Washington's calling was clear from the moment she was born. Her mother, Gwendolyn Wilhelmina Terrell, delivered her in 1950 at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C. instead of Alexandria Hospital, which had limited accommodations for African Americans. As a child, she grew up in the historic neighborhoods of Fort Ward and Seminary Communities, surrounded by her parents, grandparents, siblings and extended family where she often heard stories of her family's presence in the community during the Civil War.

Washington earned a degree in journalism and prepared for her career. She worked for several newspapers and television stations including The Washington Times and the NBC news station. Throughout her career she held leadership roles as a Deputy Metro Editor, District Bureau Chief and Columnist, earning multiple awards. Washington is the mother of two adult children, Mario and Misti Washington.

In 2009, Washington and several others received an email from Dave Cavanagh requesting, "We need your help in protecting the African American experience at Fort Ward." This call to action sparked the organization of the Seminary and the Fort Ward African American community. Washington started recruiting and organizing people in her community and beyond. The group named itself the Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society. The Society elected Adrienne Terrell Washington and J. Glenn Eugster as its co-presidents.

The mission of the Descendents Society is to "describe, interpret, protect and celebrate the living legacy of African Americans who contributed to the defenses of Washington, D.C. at Fort Ward in an effort to win their own freedom which has led to a more perfect Union."

After the Civil War, a neighborhood known as The Fort grew up around Fort Ward, one of the Union forts built as part of the Defenses of Washington. But in the 1950s and 1960s, the City moved the residents out of the area to establish the Fort Ward Park and Museum.

The primary goal of the organization is to share the history of African Americans in order to describe the role they played and the contributions they made during the Civil War at Fort Ward and in helping to create the Seminary community. African Americans were crucial to the war effort; and that the war is best understood not just as a military phenomenon, but as a social and political one as well.

To achieve success in creating significant positive changes at Fort Ward, the group focuses on its members' expertise. Washington, a descendant with strong leadership abilities, played a key role in organizing the Society, engaging all descendants, collaborating with the City of Alexandria, securing media coverage, and serving as the Society's voice and face. She helped write Fort Ward's brochure and contributed information and pictures for a publication titled "Finding The Fort: A History of an African American Neighborhood by Dr. Krystyn R. Moon, June 2014."

Eugster, the co-president of the Society, retired from the federal government at the National Park Service in the National Capital Region. His expertise was in helping communities and park managers revive economies and ecosystems. Eugster's contributions to the Society included working with the City of Alexandria and engaging City Council members about Fort Ward. He was an authority on Fort Ward and managed several websites related to the Fort and the Seminary.

Together, Washington and Eugster built their board with help from other descendants who shared their expertise: David Cavanagh, who lived near the Seminary area, helped establish the Society's legal status through the bylaws and articles of incorporation; Brenda Adams, a descendant of the Seminary and Fort Ward, provided important research and information about the Fort; and Alfonzo Terrell, a descendant, volunteered his time to work with the City Archaeologist to identify community graves.

Washington enlisted Gerald Amos Wanzer, a descendant of Fort Ward and Seminary, to create and manage a Society Facebook page that documents the Society's achievements and provides photographic history. He has been running the Society's Facebook for over a decade. As a descendant, his family has lived in the Fort Ward and Seminary area since the Civil War. Wanzer is the father of four adult children: Craig I. Wanzer, Edward Brown, Jessica Wanzer, and a deceased son named Aaron G. Wanzer.

With help from Washington, Eugster and Wanzer, they encouraged community elders to share their histories with city officials. Most of those elders are no longer alive, but their stories are preserved thanks to the hard work of this society.

Before the Society's involvement, parts of Fort Ward were used as a dumping ground, and the descendants' family gravesite was deteriorating due to heavy rains and falling trees. The Society focused on restoring the gravesite and working with the City to improve the conditions of the Fort.

Today, the African Americans whose families once lived in Fort Ward are acknowledged and documented. The Fort's appearance has improved since the Society's involvement, and the graves are in better condition than before.

For their efforts at preserving the history of African Americans in Alexandria, Washington and Wanzer were named 2025 Living Legends of Alexandria.

'Catching Pinecones'

Climbing pioneers Jan and Herb Conn started around the DMV, including Carderock and Great Falls.

Alexandria Film Festival

The Alexandria Film Festival has selected "Catching Pinecones" by Director Chad Heddleston to kick off its 20th annual event featuring 80 film screenings – a festival record.

The feature documentary profiles Jan and Herb Conn, pioneers of the climbing and caving worlds who started out in the D.C. area on crags like Carderock and climbs in Great Falls. Armed with just two pairs of Keds, a loose rope tied around their waists and a bohemian spirit, the Conns made over 230 first ascents. The film screens at 6:30 pm (doors open at 6 pm) at Patagonia Old Town on King Street in Alexandria and will be immediately followed by a Q&A discussion with Heddleston. Tickets ($15) can be purchased now or at the venue.

In "Catching Pinecones," Heddleston, a climber himself, knits together the various chapters of the Conns' remarkable life together.

The idea of a film began to germinate in 2015, when Heddleston visited Jan at her home in South Dakota (Herb had passed away in 2012), the first of many trips to learn about her and Herb's adventures. Ten years later, with the help of many collaborators as passionate about the project as Heddleston was, "Catching Pinecones" emerged.

"We are thrilled to be able to share the Conns' story and philosophy with audiences in the D.C region and around the world," says Heddleston.

"We hope you will fall in love with this fun-loving couple as we have, and catch a pinecone of your own."

The Alexandria Film Festival is Nov. 13-15, 2026.

Information on "Catching Pinecones" and nearly 80 other films in the festival is available at alxfilmfestival2026.eventive.org.



Photo by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

QUEER VIRGINIA – Recently retired Sheriff's Office public information officer and local historian Amy Bertsch hosted a debut of her new book "Queer Virginia: New Stories in the Old Dominion" Oct. 14 at the Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library. Bertsch highlighted the story of Hannah Nokes, an African-American transgender woman who made headlines in 1933 when she testified in a high-profile murder trial. Several stories are featured in the book that exposes the treatment of gay and transgender Virginians throughout the years.

Legals

Legals

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
SECOND HALF 2026 REAL ESTATE TAX, REFUSE FEE, AND STORMWATER UTILITY FEE ARE DUE NOVEMBER 16, 2026

The second half 2026 Real Estate tax, Refuse fee and Stormwater Utility fee must be paid by Monday, November 16, 2026, to avoid late payment penalty and interest.

Pay by credit card or eCheck on the City's website at alexandriava.gov/Payments. Real estate tax payments can also be mailed to City of Alexandria, PO Box 34750, Alexandria, VA 22334-0750.

Pay in person at the West End Finance Office, 4850 Mark Center Drive, Suite 2011, between 8AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday.
Pay using our drop box in Old Town. Payments may also be placed in the blue and silver drop box outside the lobby doors at 100 North Pitt Street in Old Town, available 24 hours a day. Payments must be deposited by midnight on November 16, 2026, to be considered on time.

General Real Estate tax information is available on the City's website at alexandriava.gov/RealEstateTax. Detailed assessment, tax balance and payment information is available at realestate.alexandriava.gov.

For payment questions or to request a tax bill, please call the Treasury Division at 703.746.4800, or email payments@alexandriava.gov. For assessment questions or to change a mailing address, please email realestate@alexandriava.gov. For questions on refuse fees or stormwater utility fees, please call Alex311 at 703.746.4311 or submit questions online at alexandriava.gov/Alex311.

For information on the City's Real Estate Tax Relief Programs for elderly, disabled, and military-disabled residents or surviving spouse, please contact the Revenue Division by email taxrelief@alexandriava.gov or by phone 703.746.4800.

City Hall and Market Square are being renovated. Sign up for eNews updates at alexandriava.gov/eNews and choose the "City Hall Renovation" topic. Find out more about department moves at alexandriava.gov/CityHall.



The Sisters Bruin Would Not Sell

By David Heiby

On November 8, 1848, two teenage sisters walked out of a slave jail on Duke Street in Alexandria as free women. Mary and Emily Edmonson had spent months behind its walls. Their story would soon reach Harriet Beecher Stowe and help turn the North against slavery.

Their father, Paul Edmonson, was a free Black man who farmed forty acres near Silver Spring, Maryland.

Their mother, Amelia, was enslaved, and under the law her children were enslaved too. Paul managed to buy the freedom of four older daughters. The estate that held the family refused to sell him Mary and Emily, and the girls were hired out to work in Washington households.

On the night of April 15, 1848, Mary, Emily, four of their brothers and more than seventy others slipped aboard the schooner Pearl on the Washington waterfront. The plan was to sail down the Potomac and up the Chesapeake Bay toward freedom in New Jersey. Two days later, armed men aboard the steamer Salem overtook the Pearl near Point Lookout. On the morning of April 18 the captives were towed back upriver past Alexandria, and crowds on the wharves cheered.

The Alexandria slave dealer Joseph Bruin, of the firm Bruin & Hill, bought the six Edmonson children for $4,500 and locked them in his jail at 1707 Duke Street. A woman Mary had once worked for offered $1,000 for her freedom. Bruin turned her down. He expected far more in New Orleans, where the sisters were to be sold as "fancy girls," young women sold for sexual exploitation. According to Stowe, even Bruin's own daughter begged him to spare them. In May the sisters were shipped south from Baltimore.

In New Orleans, an outbreak of yellow fever gave Bruin reason to bring the girls back to Duke Street. Meanwhile, Northern abolitionists led by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher were raising money to buy their freedom. Bruin set the price at $2,250 and threatened to send the sisters south again if the money came slowly. It was paid on November 7, and the next day they were free.



Photos by David Heiby

The building at 1707 Duke Street, once Joseph Bruin's slave jail, is one of the few such structures still standing in the United States.



Erik Blome's ten-foot bronze of Mary and Emily Edmonson stands outside 1707 Duke Street, where the sisters were held in 1848. It is visible from Duke Street, across from Whole Foods.

The sisters went north to school and spoke out against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. That law was sponsored by Senator James Murray Mason, who now lies in Christ Church Cemetery on Wilkes Street. In 1854 Stowe told their story in The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, the book she wrote to prove her novel was drawn from life.

Mary died of tuberculosis in Oberlin, Ohio, on May 18, 1853, at the age of twenty. Her grave in Oberlin's Westwood Cemetery has been lost. Emily married Larkin Johnson and settled near Frederick Douglass in Washington, where she died in 1895. Her cemetery was cleared in 1967, and where her remains lie today is uncertain.

Bruin kept trading in human beings until the Civil War, when he fled Alexandria and was later held in Washington's Old Capitol Prison. He died in 1882. He rests in the Methodist Protestant Cemetery on Wilkes Street, beneath a marble obelisk carved with his family's names.

So the slave dealer has his monument, and the sisters have no known graves. But outside 1707 Duke Street, Erik Blome's ten-foot bronze of Mary and Emily Edmonson stands beside the building where they were held. Their story is also a stop on the Gravestone Stories From Enslavement to Justice walking tour.

David Heiby is an independent historian, founder of Gravestone Stories (gravestonestories.com), and Superintendent of the Presbyterian Cemetery & Columbarium. He is Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society and of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation, which owns the Lee-Fendall House Museum, and a member of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission.

The Man Who Sent Francis Scott Key

By David Heiby

Each time the national anthem is sung, a grave in Alexandria is part of the story.

In late August 1814, after the British burned Washington, a few redcoat stragglers were arrested by local citizens led by Dr. William Beanes as the army withdrew toward its ships at Benedict, Maryland. The British came back for the elderly doctor and carried him off to their flagship, HMS Tonnant. His friends turned to a young lawyer named Francis Scott Key. Key's mission needed official sanction, and it came from General John Mason, the nation's Commissioner General of Prisoners.

Mason appointed Key to accompany John Skinner, the American prisoner-of-war agent, under a flag of truce.

Key and Skinner found the fleet near the mouth of the Potomac. General Robert Ross agreed to free Beanes after reading letters from wounded British soldiers praising the care they had received from Americans. But the Americans had seen too much of the preparations against Baltimore. They were held under guard through the bombardment of Fort McHenry on Sept. 13 and 14. At dawn Key saw the flag still flying, and he wrote the verses that became "The Star-Spangled Banner." Congress made it the national anthem in 1931.

Mason was born April 4, 1766, a son of George Mason of Gunston Hall. After his father died in 1792, John inherited land on the Virginia shore opposite Georgetown. He also inherited Analostan Island, now Theodore Roosevelt Island, where he built a country home and ran the ferry to Georgetown. He commanded the District of Columbia militia as a brigadier general from 1802 to 1811 and became president of the Bank of Columbia in 1798.



Library of Congress

Francis Scott Key at dawn on Sept. 14, 1814, pointing toward the flag still flying over Fort McHenry.

His family runs through Alexandria's history. His daughter Sarah Maria married Samuel Cooper, who became the highest-ranking Confederate general. Readers of this column met Cooper's father, the Boston Tea Party patriot, in August. Another daughter, Anna Maria, married Sydney Smith Lee, elder brother of Robert E. Lee. His son James Murray Mason became a U.S. senator and wrote the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.



Photo by David Heiby

The obelisk of General John Mason (1766–1849) and his wife, Anna Maria, in Christ Church Cemetery, part of the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex. Mason authorized the 1814 mission that put Francis Scott Key within sight of Fort McHenry.

On October 17, 1824, 202 years ago last month, Mason was among the dignitaries who sailed with Lafayette aboard the steamboat Petersburg to visit Washington's tomb at Mount Vernon.

His fortunes did not last. Losses in land speculation beginning in 1825 forced him to borrow against his island and his Arlington lands. In 1833 the Bank of the United States foreclosed. Mason retired to Clermont, his farm in the Cameron Valley west of Alexandria. A series of strokes beginning in 1846 left him disabled, and he died there on March 19, 1849.

Clermont had a hard end. It was sold to naval officer French Forrest, who went south in 1861, and federal authorities seized it. The house became a smallpox hospital for contrabands, people who had escaped slavery to Union lines. In 1865, while the army was burning beds and furniture to disinfect it, the house caught fire and was destroyed. Clermont Elementary School stands near the site today.

Mason's obelisk stands in Christ Church Cemetery, part of the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex. It is shared with his wife, Anna Maria, who outlived him by eight years.

David Heiby is Superintendent of the Presbyterian Cemetery and founder of Gravestone Stories (gravestonestories.com). He serves as Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society and of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation, and teaches at the Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia.

ACPS Honors Athletic Greats

Hall of Fame class of 2026 inducted at ACHS.

By Jeanne Theismann
Gazette Packet

The Alexandria community came together on Oct. 10 to celebrate athletic excellence, as Alexandria City Public Schools inducted a new class into its Athletic Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the school's King Street Campus Main Gym. Families, alumni, school leaders and community members gathered to recognize athletes, coaches, teams and supporters whose accomplishments have left a lasting impact on ACPS athletics.

The 2026 Hall of Fame class featured nine inductees representing decades of athletic achievement and community pride. Honorees included the 1954 George Washington High School Boys Crew Team, the 1993 T.C. Williams High School Boys 4x100 Meter Relay Team, and standout athletes Thomas Boggan, Claire Constant, Jesse Gipson, Roland Scott, Tyrone Shaw and Verna Wyatt. Legendary coach Louis Johnson was also recognized for his contributions to student athletics.

"It's a great honor to get this award," said Tyrone Shaw, who captained the 1984 T.C. Williams basketball team. "I am so happy to receive this honor surrounded by my family, who came from around the region to be here."

During the ceremony, speakers highlighted the inductees' achievements both on and off the field. School Board Chair Christopher Harris described the Hall of Fame as a signature ACPS event that inspires current students to pursue excellence. ACPS leaders praised the inductees for demonstrating leadership, teamwork, accountability and perseverance throughout their lives.

Among the most notable honorees was Claire Constant, a former T.C. Williams soccer standout who went on to play professionally and help Haiti qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup. The ceremony also celebrated historic teams whose accomplishments brought national recognition to Alexandria athletics.

Established in 2014, the ACPS Athletic Hall of Fame preserves the legacy of the school division's most accomplished athletes, coaches and teams. As the newest inductees took their

place among Alexandria's athletic legends, the ceremony served to inspire future generations of student-athletes.



Photos by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

With their former coach Aly Kahn Johnson, left, members of the 1993 T.C. Williams Boys 4x100 relay team celebrate their induction into the ACPS Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 10 at Alexandria City High School. With Johnson are Bryan Drummond, Anthony Holley, Carlos Samuels and Dewand Lowery.



ACPS Athletic Hall of Fame chair Kamilah Lawson, left, introduces members of the 1993 T.C. Williams Boys 4x100 relay team at the induction ceremony Oct. 10 at Alexandria City High School. Shown are Anthony Holley, Bryan Drummond, Carlos Samuels and Dewand Lowery.

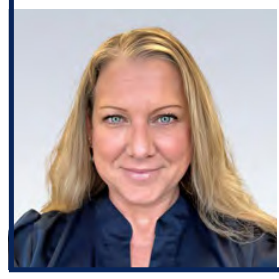
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Music Soothes the Sheltered Creatures

Wild Tunes brings music to animal organizations around the country, including Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

By Ashley Simpson
Gazette Packet

Ask 13-year-old musician Yuvi Agarwal what he loves most about performing for shelter animals, and he'll tell you about Penelope — a sick dog who cowered in the presence of almost everyone she met.

"Penelope had this really bad skin condition and an animal shelter had saved her from a situation where she would have been euthanized," Yuvi, of Houston, recalls. "When I first met her, she was still so sad and shy, and didn't trust anyone. But when I played the keyboard for her, it would really calm her down. After I played for her a few times, I saw that she really warmed up to people. She went from refusing to come out of her kennel to licking my face and being happy to see me. She was adopted and has a happy life now."

Stories like this keep Yuvi playing music for animals through his non-profit organization, Wild Tunes. With the help of his mother, Priyanka Agarwal, Yuvi established Wild Tunes in 2023 to bring music to animal organizations at no cost. Wild Tunes pairs musicians of all skill levels with local animal organizations for regular "concerts."

While the music started with Yuvi himself, Wild Tunes today works with close to a thousand volunteer musicians, who collectively perform at animal shelters across the United States, including in Alexandria and Arlington.

Playing the ukulele and keyboard piano for all kinds of animals — dogs, cats, donkeys, horses, goats, guinea pigs, and more — Yuvi has watched live music settle many animals' nervous systems. He says he can often feel their trust for humans grow as they take it all in.

"Playing the radio or recorded music for pets at home is good, but the reason we put an emphasis on live music is because the experience of a human being around and doing something positive for the animals helps their anxiety and calms them down," Yuvi says. "When you have a person in the room playing it, animals begin to associate those good feelings with the people making the music. It just makes animals trust that good things can come from people."

The idea for Wild Tunes came after a fourth-grade Yuvi had participated in a book reading program for a local animal shelter in Houston. The reading aloud certainly seemed to sooth the animals, but Yuvi couldn't stop thinking of the even greater effects that his piano playing had on his own dog, Bozo, at home.

"When we first got Bozo, he was so rambunctious and would jump around and be into everything constantly," Yuvi's mother Priyanka said. "But whenever Yuvi sat down to practice his keyboard, Bozo would instantly settle, lay by his feet, and just listen. Around November of 2022, when Yuvi was just nine years old, I remember the moment he turned to me and said, 'Mama, I want to play music for the animals at the shelter. Remember how much Bozo calms down?'"

> 'It's an unexpected — but very pleasant — surprise to find someone serenading our cats or playing violin for our dogs."
> — Erin Shackelford, Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Although Priyanka thought it was a compelling idea, she didn't expect Yuvi to follow through with the prolonged zest and dedication he has.

"In March of 2023, Wild Tunes came alive, and since then, we haven't looked back," Priyanka says.

Yuvi borrowed a ukulele from school to perform for his pilot audience: a group of rescue dogs and cats at the Houston Pets Alive! shelter in Texas. Since that first session, Yuvi has acquired a traveling keyboard, and he and Priyanka have recruited volunteers to bring music to shelters across 11 states — including the Animal Welfare Leagues of Arlington and Alexandria.



The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, the organization that provides animal sheltering, control, and pet support services to the City of Alexandria, is home to one of Wild Tunes's most active programs.

"We have been impressed with the Wild Tunes program and how easily it integrated with our existing volunteer schedule," says Erin Shackelford, Senior Manager of Communications & Marketing at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. "We find that the Wild Tunes volunteer shifts are consistently filled and have brought new volunteers to our shelter. The music continues to bring joy and comfort to our shelter animals, as well as to our other volunteers and AWLA staff. It's an unexpected — but very pleasant — surprise to find someone serenading our cats or playing violin for our dogs."

One of the reasons Yuvi loves playing for these mostly canine and feline crowds is that they don't mind if you stumble over notes or play an original song instead of sticking to the greatest hits.

"It is a lot less pressure because when you are playing for a human audience, you have to make sure you don't play a wrong note, but for the animals, I could walk in and play random, soft notes on my keyboard and they would like it," Yuvi says. "Most of the time, I am improvising on the spot, which has really helped me as a composer. That's when the best ideas come to you, when you are improvising."



Photos courtesy of Agarwal family

Yuvi Agarwal, 13, loves performing for shelter animals.

Come for the animals and stay to hone your talents: Wild Tunes is always looking for animal lovers with musical skills, so long as your instrument won't startle sensitive creatures.

"Close to 1,000 people — from

See Music Soothes, Page 11

Music Soothes the Sheltered Creatures

From Page 10

ages 8 to 80 — are already making a difference here," Priyanka says. "It's the most rewarding way to use your abilities, no matter your skill level. If you have even an iota of musical talent in you, performing for the animals is the best possible use of your time, passion, and heart."

There is a set of videos that Priyanka plays on her phone from time to time. Every time she watches it, she can't help but smile:

"Yuvi was playing keyboard alongside an adult flutist, and the first 45 minutes were complete mayhem," she recalls. "But then you look at the 'after' video, 90 percent of the dogs actually laid down and fell fast asleep. And that's just one video; we see that calming transformation again and again."

To learn more about becoming a Wild Tunes volunteer musician, or about bringing the program to a shelter you have in mind, please reach out to info@wildtunes.org or visit www.wildtunes.org. Wild Tunes has created a structured framework for implementing the program for any shelter with any kind of space for a musician.





Photos courtesy of Agarwal family

Yuvi Agarwal, 13, loves performing for shelter animals.

Bulletin Board

From Page 2

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 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

See Bulletin, Page 13



Photo by Janet Barnett/Gazette Packet

ABOVE AND BEYOND - Alexandria Sheriff Sean Casey, center right, was presented with the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award by the Alexandria Host Lions Club Sept. 14 at LaPorta's Restaurant. The award is one of the Lions Clubs International Foundation's highest honors recognizing outstanding humanitarian service and dedication to helping others. Presenting the award to Casey are Rodney Louis, Col. Jim Paige, Mark Larsen, former APD chief Don Hayes and Lions Club president David Rosenbloom. www.alexandriahostlionsclub.org

Barbie Stars in Richmond Exhibit

"Barbie, a Cultural Icon Exhibition"

By Glenda C. Booth
The Gazette



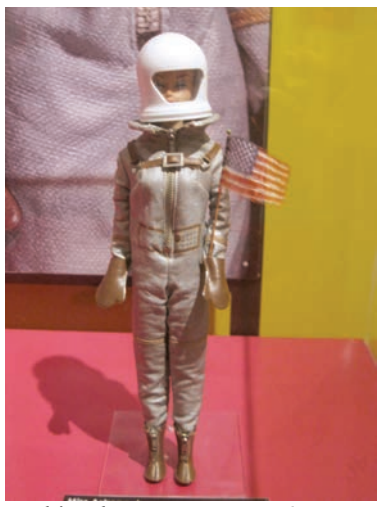
Pennant promoting the exhibit, the first Barbie, 1959.



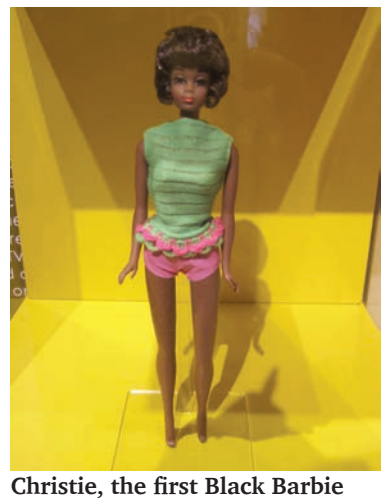
The George Washington Barbie.



Becky, Barbie's friend.



Barbie, the astronaut, 1965.



Christie, the first Black Barbie doll, 1968, Barbie's friend



The Malibu surfers, Ken, Christie and Barbie.1973.



Ken, Barbie's boyfriend, is ready for the beach.



In 1962, Barbie wore a replica of the dress that First Lady Jackie Kennedy wore on a trip to India.



Some of the 92 Barbie hairstyles.

Our image of Barbie is likely that sleek, fashion-conscious, curvaceous, 11-½-inch doll with ruby red lips. But a tour of "Barbie, a Cultural Icon Exhibition" at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond can dispel that stereotype.

With over 250 Barbie dolls displayed amid bright pink walls and girl anthems resonating, the exhibit is a retrospective of social change. Visitors can see Barbie the athlete, the entertainer, the elected official, the doctor, the scientist, the astronaut and more. For 65 years, Barbie has evolved, today with nine body types, 35 skin tones, 52 hair colors and over 94 hairstyles.

Barbie's creator, Ruth Handler, who co-founded Mattel, Inc., with her husband, Elliot, came up with Barbie after seeing that her daughter, Barbara, played with dolls focused on mothering and caregiving, while her son's toys encouraged him to be a firefighter or doctor. "My whole philosophy of Barbie was that through the doll, the little girl could be anything she wanted to be. Barbie always represented the fact that a woman had choices," Handler said.

Creating a Barbie requires a 10-member team, including fashion designers, makeup artists, hair stylists, sculptors, graphic and packaging designers and marketers. They also create her clothes and accessories, like miniature shoes, hats, purses, jewelry, athletic equipment and other accoutrements. A life-size replica of Barbie's hot pink Corvette offers a tempting photo op.

Barbie over the Years

A pony-tailed Barbie debuted in 1959 at the New York Toy Fair wearing a black-and-white, zebra-striped swimsuit and white-rimmed sunglasses. In 1961, her boyfriend, Ken, showed up, and they frolicked in the California surf. In the 1960s, more workplace opportunities for women emerged and Barbie became a flight attendant and even Miss Astronaut in 1965, four years before man landed on the moon.

In 1968, Christie, a talking Black doll, hit the stores, Barbie's friend. Hippies popularized denim, a fabric originally favored by working men, so Barbie donned tight blue jeans with flared bottoms, bib overalls and a denim bra and skirt.

With the feminist movement gaining steam in the 1970s, bolder Barbies wore groovy skirts – minis, midis and maxis. Mattel introduced multi-cultural Barbies and for the first time, her blue eyes faced forward. More jobs opened up and Barbie went to boardrooms and courthouses wearing power suits.

One Barbie became a chief executive officer and donned a straight skirt and power pink blazer. The first Black Barbie and the first Hispanic Barbie emerged in 1980.

In the 1990s, voters elected three women to the U.S. Senate. Barbie followed suit and in 1992 a Barbie for President doll arrived. The Dr. Jane Goodall Barbie in 2022 ventured out with binoculars. In 1997, Mattel created Barbie's friend with disabilities, Becky.

Barbie is the most diverse and inclusive doll line in the world, promoters tout.

A Virginia Angle

The exhibit spotlights several Barbie Virginians, including Katherine Johnson, a mathematician known as "the human computer" at NASA's Langley Research Center. Also Norfolk-born singer Ella Fitzgerald, including the actual steel helmet she wore on World War II tours. There's a George Washington Barbie and his actual silver shoe buckles are on loan from Mount Vernon.

"Barbie has always been more than a doll — she's a snapshot of what people wore, what they imagined and what they believed was possible," said Elizabeth Klaczynski, curator of the exhibition. "This exhibition invites visitors to enjoy themselves and create memories, while experiencing how pop culture can serve as both an illuminating time capsule and a vivid magnifying glass."

Wikipedia reports, "The original Barbie doll retailed for three dollars and her first range of clothes consisted of 22 ensembles priced at between $1 and $5 US dollars. Mattel designed Barbie to drive ongoing garment sales after the initial doll purchase."

An online search shows that Barbies today cost from $14 to $44, with original vintage dolls priced in the hundreds. Mattel has sold over a billion Barbie dolls.

The exhibit closes on Jan. 18, 2027. Visit www.virginiahistory.org.

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.

OCT. 17 TO NOV. 7

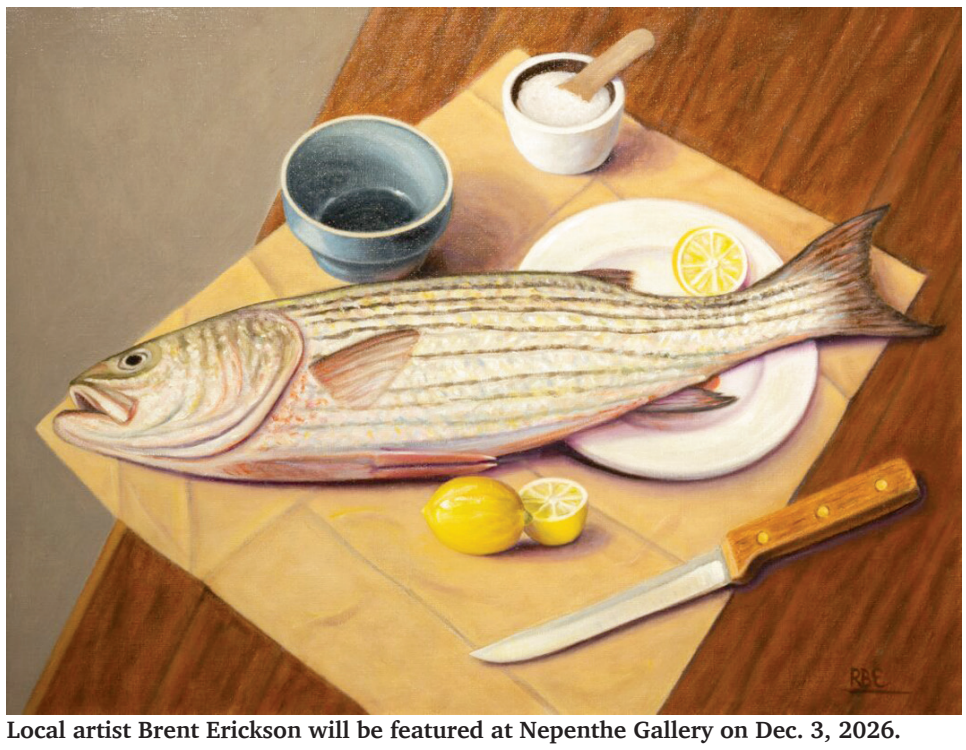
"She Loves Me." At The Little Theatre of Alexandria. In 1934 Budapest, co-workers Georg and Amalia seemingly despise one another at Maraczek's Parfumerie. After both respond to a "lonely hearts ad" in the newspaper, they now live for the letters that they exchange, not knowing that the stranger they're falling in love with is their own worst enemy. Based on the play, Parfumerie, which inspired the films The Shop Around the Corner, In the Good Old Summertime, and You've Got Mail and from the creative team behind Fiddler on the Roof, many theatre-goers feel this effervescent, witty, romantic show is the perfect little musical. Show times Thursdays to Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinee at 2 p.m.

NOV. 6-29

Del Ray Artisans "$125 & Under" exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. The exhibit showcases members' artwork all priced at $125 or less. The art is sold on an art-to-go basis. The gallery walls are packed with great art at prices all art-lovers can afford. Opening Reception: Friday, Nov. 6, 7-9 p.m. Open Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving Day. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits.

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

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.



Local artist Brent Erickson will be featured at Nepenthe Gallery on Dec. 3, 2026.

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

The Chamber ALX's CareerCon: A Post-Grad Masterclass, presented by Virginia Tech. 10 a.m.-1:15 p.m. At Virginia Tech's Academic Building One, Alexandria. CareerCon is a guide for high school and undergraduate students in their pursuit of professional goals. Meet and hear from pros in the industry of your choice and learn skills that never appear on the syllabus. Attend the entire event and you'll be eligible for scholarships totaling $4,000. Winners will be selected at random during the closing session.

NOV. 7-8

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: Pictures at an Exhibition. Conductor Chia-Hsuan Lin and pianist Dinara Klinton join the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra for a program filled with color, energy, and imagination. Lin leads ASO through music by Polina Nazaykinskaya, Sergei Prokofiev, and Modest Mussorgsky, while Klinton takes center stage for Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3.

- Saturday, Nov. 7 at 7:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall;
- Sunday, Nov. 8 at 3 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial.

THURSDAY/NOV. 12

The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network. 5:30 to 7 p.m. Evening of Perfect Pairings: Wine + Chocolate, Women + Business. At Goodwin House Alexandria. Get ready for an evening of wine, chocolate, delicious bites, and great connections at this Perfect Pairings event. Featuring wines and perfectly paired bites inspired by destinations across the globe—all while celebrating the connections, accomplishments, and possibilities that make our business community so special. Raise your glass. Expand your network. Indulge a little. Celebrate a lot.

FRIDAY/NOV. 13

Northern Virginia Community Orchestra - Stories in Sound. 7:30 p.m. At Thomas Edison High School, 5801 Franconia Road, Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Community Orchestra presents its annual Fall Concert, Stories in Sound. The orchestra will present a night of narrative music where the instruments leverage their natural storytelling qualities. The concert is free and open to the public. Goodwill donations are graciously accepted.

SATURDAY/NOV. 14

Ashes, Sacrifice & Remembrance: The History of the Firemen's Monument Lecture. 1 p.m. At Ivy Hill Cemetery, 2823 King Street, Alexandria. The lecture, presented by Catherine Weinraub, will explore the devastating fire that claimed the lives of seven firemen and the community's efforts to honor their sacrifice. The tragedy left a lasting mark on Alexandria, prompting an outpouring of grief and a determination to ensure that the men who lost their lives in service to their community would not be forgotten. The Firemen's Monument stands as an enduring reminder of their courage and the dangers faced by those who answered the call to protect the city.

EVENTS AT NEPENTHE GALLERY

The Nepenthe Gallery, located at 7928 Fort Hunt Road in Alexandria, had a grand re-opening last week with almost 200 people in attendance. The December Art, Wine and Cheese events are scheduled:
December 3 : Local Artist Brent Erickson
December 10 : Opening of Holiday Art Market. Open until December 22nd.
December 17: Holiday Bluegrass with Dogwood Hollow

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Parade starts at 5:30 p.m.; Dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m. At Old Town Alexandria Waterfront. Illuminated boats will cruise along the Potomac River waterfront as part of Alexandria's annual holiday celebration. Public viewing information, participating-boat details, and the final event schedule will be posted shortly.

SATURDAY/DEC. 5

2026 Alexandria Scottish Walk Holiday Parade. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. In Old Town Alexandria. The Alexandria Scottish Walk Holiday Parade started as a community event more than 50 years ago to highlight the city's Scottish heritage and support the mission of the Campagna Center, then known as the Community Y. The Campagna Center partnered with St. Andrew's Society Washington, DC, Old Presbyterian Meeting House and the City of Alexandria to produce the parade and associated events led by Junior and Supporting Friends of the Campagna Center. In 2026, to elevate this signature event as an ongoing source of civic pride and celebration of Alexandria and its communities, the City of Alexandria took on the role of lead parade producer, with additional support by the Campagna Center and Visit Alexandria.

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.

NOVEMBER
Wed. 4: Ashley Monroe & Charlie Worsham $35.00
Thu. 5: Euge Groove $45.00
Fri. 6: Paula Poundstone $59.50
Sat. 7: Paula Poundstone $59.50
Sun. 8: Jake Shimabukuro $49.50
Wed. 11: Jamal Roberts $59.50
Thu. 12: Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives $80.50
Fri. 13: Chante' Moore $89.50
Sat. 14: Chante' Moore $89.50
Sun. 15: Hiroshima $59.50
Mon. 16: Rachael Yamagata w/ Will Dailey $39.50
Tue. 17: Judy Collins: Sweet Judy Blue Eyes – Farewell Tour, with Oakland Rain $79.50
Wed. 18: Judy Collins: Sweet Judy Blue Eyes – Farewell Tour, with Oakland Rain $79.50
Thu. 19: Jesse Cook $49.50
Fri. 20: Trae Crowder $49.50
Sat. 21: Trae Crowder $49.50
Sun. 22: Marshall Crenshaw w/ Sarah Borges & Eric Ambel $49.50
Fri. 27: An Evening with The Seldom Scene $45.00
Sat. 28: The Manhattans featuring Gerald Alston $69.50

Bulletin Board

From Page 11

Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403- 5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

ONGOING

Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program. The City of Alexandria has reinstated its sewer Backflow Preventer (BFP) Assistance Program for homeowners in designated areas that historically experience basement back-ups or flooding. The program reimburses homeowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of installing a BFP device by a licensed plumbing contractor, up to a maximum of $2,000. The current program period is through Dec. 31, 2019. Alexandria homeowners should call the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services at 703-746-4014 or visit www.alexandriava.gov/tes.

Robust Walking. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m. at Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Free 55+ robust walking 1-hour exercise class (with chair exercise option). No class on holidays. Contact jjkingconsulting@yahoo.com.

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

Senior and Job Programs. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Queen of Apostles Church, 4650 Taney Avenue, Alexandria. St. Martin de Porres Center offers senior and job placement programming Monday through Friday at the parish. Email Kathryn Toohey, ktoohey@ccda.net.

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Mount Vernon Author Combines History, Childhood Figures and Familiar Locations in Fiction

By Mike Salmon
Gazette Newspapers

When Pete Reilly graduated from Bishop Ireton in 1974, the country around him was in turmoil with the end of the Vietnam War in sight, gas prices skyrocketing, (from $0.39 to $0.53 per gallon) President Nixon's issues and rock music evolving from the peace generation to something else. All these tidbits of history had an impact on Reilly, and they never really were exhausted so he put them in a book called "Don't Drive Left Lane in Alexandria," which he published in September.

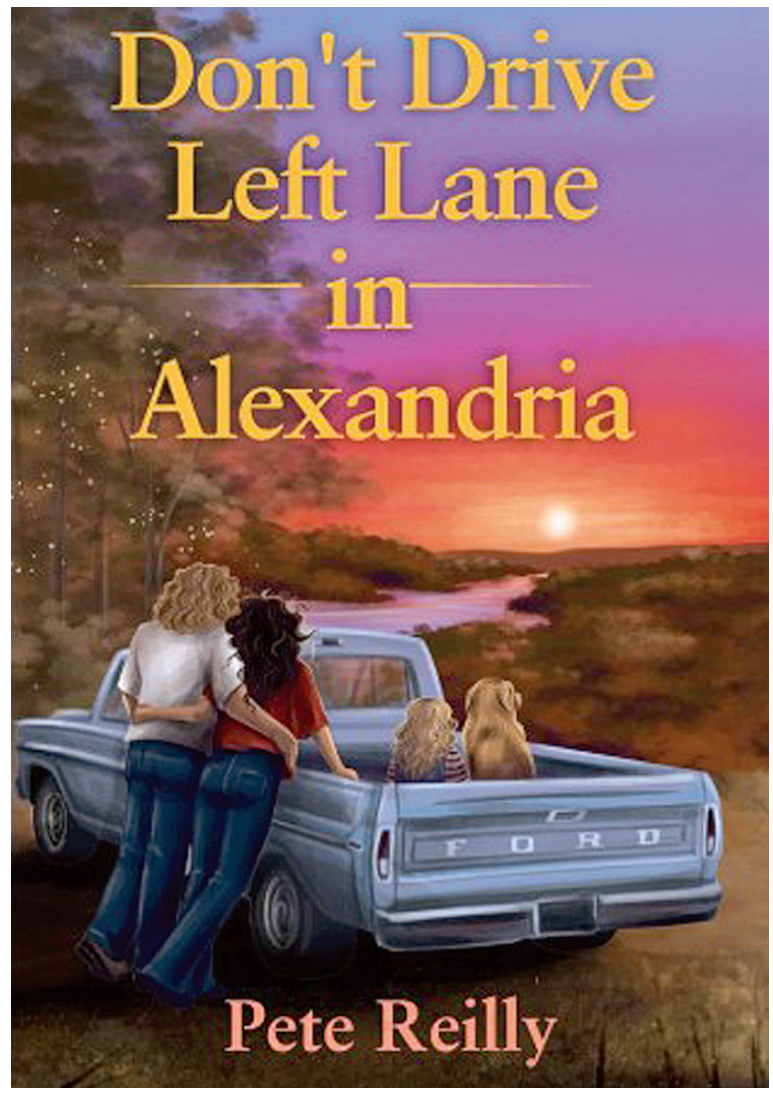
He describes it as a "blend of historical detail, family drama, friendship, romance, and nostalgia, 'Don't Drive Left Lane in Alexandria' is both a portrait of a city and a tribute to a generation coming of age during uncertain times."

"The plot basically follows a lawsuit," Reilly said, and ties it to a set of friends from Bishop Ireton and the power company that brings together two families when one of the lineman is fatally electrocuted. At the center of the story is "Cowboy Murphy," a rising senior at (then) T.C. Williams High School, whose world revolves around friendships, basketball games at "the Pitt," music, first love, and the uncertainty of a rapidly changing America.

Meanwhile, Cowboy's mother, Brigid Murphy, refuses to give up hope that her other son missing in Vietnam will one day return home. Across town, attorney Scott Jacob and his family become deeply connected to the lawsuit and the shifting cultural tensions shaping the era.

Reilly is part of the Virginia Writer's Club and that's where he met Elizabeth Merck, who ended up editing it. Merck has an editing business and noted that it's common for authors to write about what they know, so it's not unusual for someone to write about their childhood, the area they grew up in, people they knew, etc.

"Peter's book is historical fiction, which is a whole genre in and of itself," said Merck. "It's when a fictional story is crafted using a real time and place. In Peter's case, he's written a coming-of-age tale set in Alexandria in the 1970s. I think he did a great job at scene setting and creating that nostalgia many readers will feel," she said.



Photos contributed
The drive-in theater was a Mount Vernon staple back in the day



Author Pete Reilly graduated from Bishop Ireton in 1974.

Reilly's writing career is just getting started with this book. After high school, he graduated from Marquette University's School of Business where he focused on accounting. From there he spent more than 40 years with the public accounting firm Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell (CBM). His career included uncovering fraud involving international humanitarian organizations and leading the successful acquisition of numerous CPA firms.

If you go …

Book signing on Feb. 4, 2027
Nepenthe Gallery, Hollin Hills
7928 Fort Hunt Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22308

Reilly is also a swimmer and he has completed the demanding 4.4-mile Great Chesapeake Bay Swim 23 times.

But somewhere in there, he had this story and the characters coming to fruition. In 2023, he sat down in front of his computer and it all poured out.

He lives with his wife, Crissy, in Fort Hunt and are parents of three grown children, one who played baseball as a child on a team coached by Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon).

Reilly is just getting the book off the ground, and this starts with promoting it on social media as well as word of mouth, but so far he only has one event planned, a signing at the Nepanthe Gallery in Hollin Hills on Feb. 4, 2027.



Photos contributed

Kitty Porterfield, a lover of classical and jazz music, outside the Kennedy Center.



Kitty Porterfield at a high school graduation party for her two grandsons, Nicholas Klipstein and Braden Porterfield.

SFA Founder Kitty Porterfield Dies at 85

From Page 3

Sprints — still presented annually by the Alexandria City High School Crew Boosters. This event is recognized as a premiere rowing event as well as serving as a key fundraiser for the ACHS crew programs and still follows closely the format Porterfield first implemented at the inaugural event.

Porterfield was an enthusiastic traveler, exploring every corner of the globe, from Kathmandu to Tasmania. She loved sharing her passion for travel with her mother and grandchildren, and later enjoyed exploring new places with her companion, Bruce Miller.

"Mom was a lover of Sante Fe, Native American history and crafts," Deborah Porterfield added. "She made multiple trips with her mother and found shared interests with each of her grandkids, taking each one on a special 5th grade trip."

An avid supporter of the arts, she held season tickets for Arena Stage for many years and was a regular attendee at jazz concerts throughout the DC area. Other passions over the years included photography, rowing and collecting antique prints and maps and Native American pottery. She devoted herself to a number of causes including Sibshops, which support siblings of children with disabilities.

"As we are going through mementos at our childhood home I am struck by the number of passions and interests my mother had," added Deborah Porterfield. "She loved sharing these passions with my father and then with her friend Bruce after my father died."

Porterfield was predeceased by her husband Jovan Porterfield in 2006. She is survived by her brother, John Burnett, of Rochester, N.Y.; her children, Karen Porterfield and her husband Steve Gamble, of Washington, DC; Deborah Porterfield, MD, MPH, and her husband, Christopher Klipstein, MD, of Chapel Hill, N.C.; and Michael Porterfield and his wife, Emily Porterfield, of Alexandria; her five grandchildren, Keely Porterfield Harrah and her husband MacGreggor Harrah, Kirby Porterfield, Nicholas Klipstein, Braden Porterfield, and Catherine Klipstein; and her longtime companion Bruce Miller.

A celebration of life will be held on Dec. 5, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church on Russell Road in Alexandria. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria or Jazz at Meade (Meade Memorial Episcopal Church).

Porterfield's influence can be found throughout Alexandria in the accomplishments of former scholarship recipients, educators, community leaders and families whose futures were changed because she believed every young person deserved a chance to succeed.

Her legacy is not simply the organization she founded, but the generations of Alexandrians who walked through doors she helped open.

Said Deborah Porterfield, "It really helps our family to know that so many are supporting us and sharing in our grief."

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Kenny Lourie's column will return in the Nov. 18 editions.

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