



Local R&B singing group Nu Era perform at Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

## Honoring Three Mentors

**Tribute is part of Black History Month.**

BY RIKKI GEORGE  
GAZETTE PACKET

Not everyone has the privilege of having a mentor, a person who guides one along a path of excellence. But here in Alexandria, mentorship has meant a great deal, especially among Alexandria's long-standing African-American sports community.

On the last Sunday of Black History Month, Feb. 26, the Alexandria Department of Recreation,



From left: Lawrence "Lucky" Elliott; William Chesley, deputy director of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; and Traverse Gray.

Parks and Cultural Activities celebrated more than 40 years of mentoring Alexandria's youth through public service with an awards event. It honored three African-American living legends: Lawrence "Lucky" Elliott, Traverse Gray and Jackie Mason.

Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center's 400-seat Kauffman Auditorium at 1108 Jefferson St. was full in celebration of these men. Dignitaries, such as the Judges Bruce Lee and Nolan Dawkins were present as were city officials including Councilmen John T. Chapman and Willie F. Bailey, Sr., and former Mayor Bill Euille.

"We haven't done enough for these three individuals who have decades of commitment," said William Chesley, deputy director, Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. "They put their heart and soul in their work. I see people, adults who still talk about the fondness and relations they formed and how they coached and mentored them."

Lawrence "Lucky" Elliott is known for encouraging words. "Lucky was always there," said Dewaine Terrell, who played football under Elliott and is now an Arlington County Social Services employee. "He taught us how to win, how to lose; he built character and self-esteem."

"I motivated kids to clean up the neighborhood," Elliott said. "I coached women's basketball." But that barely touches the surface of Elliott's accomplishments during his 33 years with the city's Department of Recreation, supervising youth city sports. It is Elliott who started the Alexandria Boxing Club. He recruited, trained and certified hundreds of volunteer coaches in various sports. He worked to obtain employment for teens. He held events to raise funds for scholarships. He-co

SEE HONORING THREE, PAGE 9

PHOTOS BY DRPCA/RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

## \$1 Million Assistance

**Faith coalition straining to help make housing affordable.**

BY DAN BRENDEN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Several institutions in Alexandria's faith community are pushing City Council to increase spending on affordable housing in the FY2018 city budget.

These organizations financially assist local residents who come to them for help. The Emergency Financial Providers is an informal coalition of the assistance ministries from 11 local churches and faith-based nonprofits. This coalition — which includes only a fraction of the city's faith community — gave away more than \$1 million in aggregate last year. "Almost all of the assistance was provided

for rent, utilities, and medical needs with the majority going towards rent," said Melanie Gray, who convened the coalition, in a letter to City Council.

Five of the participating churches and ALIVE! also wrote separate letters outlining the ways they have seen housing-related needs increase. A few indicate that the need has grown beyond their capacity to meet it sustainably. They ask the city to take further action.

Michelle Krocker of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, an advocacy nonprofit, initiated the letter-writing campaign. Krocker's letter, signed by 16 additional faith-based and secular groups, specifies two objectives. The first is that the city "[c]ommit to a base allocation of \$8 million annually to support one affordable housing development [per] year." The second is that the city "[c]reate a local rental subsidy program of \$250,000 to support

SEE COALITION, PAGE 19

## 'Character and Courage'

**Tilelli honors service of Washington, first responders.**

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Retired four-star general John Tilelli recalled the service and sacrifice of George Washington as he addressed the crowd gathered for the 243<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association.

Held Feb. 20 at The Alexandrian Hotel, the meeting serves as the traditional kick off to the city's George Washington Birthday celebration events.

"The character, courage and self-SEE 'CHARACTER', PAGE 7



Retired four-star general John Tilelli gives the keynote address at the annual Friendship Veterans Fire Association breakfast Feb. 20 at The Alexandrian Hotel in Old Town.

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# The Battle of Jones Point Park

PHOTOS BY  
VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE-PACKET

## Old Town gets Medieval.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

**D**ozens were left dead after an attack in Jones Point Park involving multiple knives and swords. Fortunately, there was only a 45-second respawn time.

The dead walked off the field, holding their foam swords above their head to avoid further injury. Behind them, the battle continued to rage, with the few remaining survivors from each side warily sticking together until reinforcements arrive from the respawn pool.

From teens wearing t-shirts and jeans to adults in their 40s wearing full chainmail, every Sunday between 20 to 40 members of Duchy of Rising Sun Station gather at Jones Point Park to go to war. The combatants are playing Amtgard, a live-action fantasy role playing game (LARP) that involves two sides fighting with foam covered me-

dieval weaponry.

While some of the combatants armed with bows and foam-tipped arrows like to pick off targets from across the field, Eli McMillian (her game name is Kailoreth, or Kai) is more of a frontlines archer. McMillian is rarely more than a few feet from her more heavily armored teammates that form the brunt of the assault. Like a quarterback, she uses her position to identify weak spots and quickly plan new tactics. When one target begins creeping around the corner of the battle, she calls out for a shield-bearing knight on the end to duck. He drops without hesitation, and a second later McMillian's arrow whistles over his head and strikes an enemy in his chest.

McMillian started playing at Jones Point Park two years ago, and says she's never looked back. Now, McMillian is a monarch, one of the Duchy's elected officials who run

SEE MEDIEVAL, PAGE 22



The Duchy of Rising Sun Station



Graham "Goose" Defibaugh staggers towards two combatants, on his knees after one leg was "chopped off" by a sword strike.



Eli McMillian takes aim.

## Protecting Witnesses

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

**B**ehind the Cora Kelly School in the Arlandria neighborhood is a wide field that slopes down to Four Mile Run. Nestled in the brambles and overgrowth between the field and the creek is a small drainage ditch. That's where two members of MS-13 decided to dump Eduardo Chandias Almendarez, a witness to a pending malicious wounding case, after stabbing him 96 times and eventually beating him to death in 2015.

During the prosecution of another murder case earlier in February against Rashad Lonzell Adkins, terrified witnesses tried to avoid questions from attorneys and repeatedly asked the judge if they could leave. All witnesses in the case had received death threats for testifying.

"This goes beyond just one trial, and beyond just Alexandria," said Commonwealth Attorney Bryan Porter. "[Witness intimidation] is a tangible problem right now."

During a City Council meeting on Feb. 14, Vice Mayor Justin Wilson briefly mentioned the need for the city to look into providing funding for a witness protection program.

"It's a real challenge to bring some of these cases to prosecution," said Wilson. "There's some things we can probably do to help alleviate that."

Wilson said there are a few options available, but said he and Porter were especially interested in a program out of Denver. Colorado's program was started in 2006 after the shooting of Javad Marshall-Fields and his fiancée Vivian Wolfe, days before Marshall-Fields was set to testify in a murder case.

"It's an intensive program of victim-wit-

## Spate of witness intimidations and a murder could result in new Witness Protection Program.

ness work, where you have people assigned to talk to witnesses and coax them into being comfortable enough to participate," said Wilson. "There's a high level of intensity that, right now, a lot of our detectives are called to do."

In the Adkins murder case, Porter said the prosecution was only able to find four witnesses though dozens had been in the vicinity of the murder when it happened.

"If that number gets to down to zero," said Porter, "people can commit violence with impunity."

Porter says a witness protection program could allow law enforcement to remain in contact with witnesses and be vigilant for potential intimidation.

"The idea would be: to bring a scaled down version to my office," said Porter. "It would probably involve hiring staff that

would be capable of addressing these concerns, staying in contact with victims and witnesses, and helping them deal with stresses of the case. Let's say there's a witness interviewed day after murder and is cooperative. If we don't have any contact and wait until a week or two out from the trial and find them again, then hit them with subpoena, they might freak out when reapproached. It's better to have contact with them, maybe even just a phone call, to make sure they're not being intimidated."

But the potential program is constrained by the realities of the city budget. Both Wilson and Porter noted that many of the more traditional witness protection services would be costly.

"Physical protection is extremely expen-

SEE WITNESS, PAGE 22





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## OBITUARY

# Virginia 'Bunny' Jacob Dies

Realtor, preservationist.

Virginia Lee Galloway Jacob, the longtime Alexandria Realtor, community activist and preservationist known as "Bunny," died Feb. 16 after an extended illness. She was 91.

Jacob married James H.L. Jacob, the trust officer of National Savings and Trust of Washington, D.C., in 1949 and the two moved to Alexandria in 1951 to begin investing in historic properties.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s Jacob was active in numerous historic and charitable pursuits. She was a founding member of the Alexandria YWCA (later the Campagna Center) with Betty Wright, Elizabeth Smith and Elizabeth Ann Campagna. She became president of the National Capital YWCA and ultimately of the national organization.

Upon her husband's death in 1969, she assumed the role of principal broker at Jacob and Roberts Realtors, until its sale to Rector Associates in February of 1996. She remained active in Alexandria real estate for over 46 years, finally retiring at age 89.

Jacob was a student of Alexandria and Virginia history and was involved in various capacities with the Alexandria Historical Society and the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review. Other pursuits included the Alexandria Library Company, Stratford Hall Plantation, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Hunting Creek Garden Club, the Old Town Civic Association, Belle Haven Country Club, the Washington Jun-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Virginia 'Bunny' Jacob

Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, and continued her graduate studies at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

She taught briefly and also worked as a flight attendant for Capital Airways, where her regular pilot was Charles "Chuck" Beatley, the late mayor of Alexandria.

She is survived by Anne G. Tyree of Ladysmith, James L. and Barbara B. Jacob of Alexandria, grandchildren Andrew and Tamara Tyree, Christopher Tyree, Erin Jacob, and Alex Jacob, and great-grandson Andrew Tyree Jr. She is survived by her brother, Dr. John A. Galloway of Duxbury, Mass.

Services were held Feb. 24 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where she was an active member since 1951. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

— JEANNE THEISMANN



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### WEDNESDAYS THROUGH APRIL 15

**Credit Counseling.** 6:30-8 p.m. at Alexandria Dept. of Community & Human Services, 2525 Mt. Vernon Ave. A volunteer will help access credit reports for free and offer confidential, one-on-one credit coaching. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS](http://www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS) for more information.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 2

**Community Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. at the Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke St. The City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) and community planners at Michael Baker International's Urban Design Studio will hold the first community meeting for the Cameron Run Park Planning Process to assist in determining the highest and best use for the Cameron Run Park on Eisenhower Avenue between Telegraph Road and the Eisenhower Connector. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/recreation](http://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation) or contact Dana Wedeles at 703-746-5491 or [Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Dana.Wedeles@alexandriava.gov).

### FRIDAY/MARCH 3

**Application Deadline.** Noon. The City of Alexandria's Office of Housing has announced that the application deadline for the final two Affordable Homeownership Set-aside units at Cambria Square will be March 3. Detailed information regarding the application process and required forms can be found at [bit.ly/2hFviJO](http://bit.ly/2hFviJO).

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## PEOPLE

# Hart Behind the Scenes

Delivering new trash cans, solving problems.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
GAZETTE PACKET

**E**xcell Hart checks the orders that have come in since yesterday. He will head out in “my Cadillac” to issue out a new trash container on S. Royal Street and deliver one on N. Alfred where they have never had one. He will probably get about 15 similar requests today. Hart has been a solid waste inspector for the City of Alexandria since 1997. Hart said to request services residents can use the city website or call CCC (call, click, connect.)

### PEOPLE AT WORK

Hart has a tab on his computer for requests and another for complaints. He may get about four complaints today. “It could be the neighbor putting out the trash before collection day or dumping trash in the alley.” Sometimes one neighbor has two trashcans and another neighbor doesn’t have one at all. “I catch a lot of them each day using a neighbor’s trash can.” But he says they have to comply with the rules. “I generate a lot of money for the city. I’m the trash police.”

One time he remembers a woman putting plastic trash bags in a parking space. “Maybe she didn’t know; maybe she did.” He goes to talk to them to work things out. And he has the details all recorded in the city database so he can sort things out by trash can number and address. Hart pulls out his badge. “This gets more respect.” He adds, “It’s better to be pleasant. I don’t want to escalate. I want to solve the issue.” He says he always goes back to monitor the issue to see if the person is in compliance.

Hart says the recycling cans come in 65-gallon, 30 and the “little bucket.” People may put in a request for a downsize if their kids go off to college or the garage is too cluttered or their alley is “way way too tight” for a bigger can.

He stops the truck for a moment. “Go ahead; I know you’re taking kids to school.”

Hart has a large ice chest sitting next to the driver’s seat. In the summer he fills it with bottled water and Gatorade and in the winter with hot chocolate. If he sees a city truck he offers the driver a drink. “We’re here to render service.”

Inspection of trucks — utility, dump and trash — is also part of the job. “Trucks have to pay \$300 if



**Excell Hart, solid waste inspector for the City of Alexandria, delivers a new trashcan to a townhouse on S. Royal Street. He gets about 15 similar requests on an average day.**

they are located in Alexandria and have to be inspected.” Hart says the most common problems are “the back-up alarm is bad or the tires mostly.” If they have 40-50 trucks like AAA, Hart goes to them but if they have 15 or fewer they bring the trucks to him.

Hart says people consider him a general problem solver. One woman waved his truck down and said she had a problem. “I wondered what it was.” A raccoon had gone through “that little pet door and the jugger was throwing stuff around.” Although it wasn’t part of his job, he called animal control and they took care of the problem.

Another woman had a battle with a tag team of raccoons getting in her can. One would open the lid and the other would sort through the trash. He told her his own remedy, which was wrapping the can with a bungee cord. “Then I put a little rag soaked with white vinegar around the bungee cord. “They can’t get over the smell.”

He pulls up to the S. Royal Street address and parks the truck over on the side so cars can get by. “Cars come around but they need to be careful. They don’t want to get too close because the back of the truck moves around a little. And I do a lot of stopping.” Hart gets out and walks around the yard to check for an existing can. “Sometimes people call in a replacement and then they find their trash can and don’t call back to report before we get here.” No can is in sight so he delivers number 105953 trashcans to the front yard. “I always put it in the front yard so they see it. People used to call and complain we hadn’t delivered their can because they hadn’t found it in the backyard yet.”

Hart says another service they offer is back door service. “For the elderly or pregnant or if they break a leg. We dump their garbage for them. They can request that we put the can back in a certain place.” Harts pulls up at an address on Sunset Drive. He says he has been doing this job for so long he knows the streets like the back of his hand. “I’m my own GPS.”

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/GAZETTE PACKET



## Teamesteem

**Teamesteem, a local entrepreneur group, sponsored a teen Retreat the weekend of Jan. 28-29, where 11 young women focused on personal growth, life enrichment, and academic success. See [www.teamesteemdream.com/](http://www.teamesteemdream.com/).**



## In Music Competition

**Lea Morris of Alexandria made the cut in the folk/acoustic, soul category and is now a finalist to perform in a live concert performed by the competition’s finalists on Friday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club, 7719 Wisconsin Ave. in downtown Bethesda. Tickets will be \$10 and \$15 and available at [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org). The winner will get a \$10,000 grand prize. In addition, another Alexandria resident, Calista Garcia, is a finalist in the Young Songwriter category and will also perform live and compete for \$2,500.**

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



## New Executive Chef at BRABO

**BRABO hired French native Sebastien Rondier as executive chef to its kitchen on King St. Rondier is classically trained in French cuisine and has expanded his culinary talent over the last 14 years in America, working at such restaurants as Adour at St. Regis in Washington, D.C.; miX On The Beach at W Retreat & Spa on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico; Benoit Bistro in New York City; and Le Louis XV in Monte Carlo, France.**



**Excell Hart heads to Sunset Drive from Royal Street with his truck full of new trash cans to be delivered. He says he has been doing this for so long that he is his own GPS.**





PHOTOS BY MARK MOGLE/GAZETTE PACKET

Alexandria law enforcement leaders gather at the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association breakfast Feb. 20 at The Alexandrian Hotel. From left are Police Chief Mike Brown, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, Fire Chief Robert Dube, and former police chiefs David Baker and Earl Cook.

## ‘Character and Courage’

FROM PAGE 1

less service of George Washington is what all presidents hope to emulate,” Tilelli said. “His legacy to this nation is our democracy and what America stands for around the world.”

Tilelli, one of only 216 people in the history of the U.S. Army to be promoted to the rank of four star general, honored the service and sacrifice of the nation’s military forces.

“Common men and women do uncommon acts of bravery all the time and we never hear about it,” Tilelli said. “They serve for this country. Some die for this country.”

They are our greatest resource.”

Former police chief Earl Cook was presented with the Rev. Ben Lynt Distinguished

Service Award by his predecessor David Baker.

“This is quite a surprise,” said Cook in accepting the award. “Alexandria is a very special city and this is a great honor.”

Alexandria Fire Chief Robert Dube, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Police Chief Mike Brown, who replaced Cook in January, were recognized as Tilelli praised the city’s community of first responders.

“Those serving our city as well as our nation put life and limb on the line and don’t get much for it,” Tilelli said. “We are lucky to have a young generation that volunteers to put themselves in harm’s way to serve

and protect. Let us all be grateful for the commitment of America’s sons and daughters to keep us safe.”


**“The character, courage and selfless service of George Washington is what all presidents hope to emulate.”**

— Gen. John Tilelli (ret.)



Former police chief Earl Cook, left, receives the Ben Lynt Distinguished Service Award Feb. 20 from his predecessor and Friendship Veterans Fire Association board member David Baker.

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**Alexandria West Rotary club president Nadia Mokhtar prepares to distribute books to students at John Adams Elementary School Feb. 23 in the school library. The club donated thousands of books to elementary schools throughout the city.**



**John Adams Elementary School Principal Jill Lee, left, is joined by Vice Principal Jasibi Crews and Rotarians Paul Kentes, District 7610 DGND Jonathan Lucas, Chris Wolforth, Alexandria West Rotary Club President Nadia Mokhtar and prospective members Ego Obioha and Rose Mgbojikwe to distribute donated books to the school's third and fourth grade classes Feb. 23 in the school library.**

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

## Shelf Confidence Rotary West club donates books to John Adams students.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

Students and teachers at John Adams Elementary School gathered in the school library Feb. 23 as representatives from the Alexandria West Rotary Club distributed hundreds of books to third and fourth grade students, continuing a club tradi-

tion to promote reading as well as the Rotary International motto of "Service Above Self."

"What we have done for the past few years is donate books to third and fourth graders at elementary schools around the West End of Alexandria," said Paul Kentes, a Rotarian and one of the organizers of the book donation. "The third graders receive an amazing dictionary, which contains

much more than the standard dictionary and the fourth graders receive chapter books. This year the fourth graders received the book 'Because of Winn-Dixie' by Kate DiCamillo, which we selected from the school's recommended student reading list."

The delivery of books to John Adams was the culmination of a program that saw the club distribute thousands of books to third

and fourth grade student at Samuel Tucker, Patrick Henry and James Polk elementary schools.

"On the 112th Anniversary of Rotary International, which was Feb. 23, the Rotary Club of Alexandria West set out to uphold the ideals of their organization," Kentes added. "We are committed to supporting the West End community of our city."

## Strategic Plan Part 3: Well-Managed Government

Plan calls for flexible funding and greater accessibility.

BY VERNON MILES  
GAZETTE PACKET

The governance of Alexandria should be accessible and accountable. According to the city Strategic Plan, by 2022 Alexandria's government should be responsive to the community and focused on improving quality of life. To this end, the strategic plan recommends a series of actions for FY2018.

- ❖ Expand the customer account and payment portal
- ❖ Seek financing opportunities for complex public infrastructure projects
- ❖ Successfully update the five-year financial planning model for FY 2018-2022
- ❖ Develop a city mobile application
- ❖ Establish a single point of contact for all non-emergency government services (such as a 311 number)

- ❖ Establish a new cable franchise agreement through an open process
- ❖ Implement Stormwater Utility
- ❖ Begin implementation of the Sanitary Sewer Long Term Control Plan
- ❖ Begin study of conditions and special maintenance requirements of city-owned museums and historic structures, including the newly acquired Reeder House.

According to Craig Fifer, director of the Office of Communications for the City of Alexandria, projects exploring alternative financing include a special tax district and regional grants for the Potomac Yard Metro Station and the stormwater utility fee that shifts the burden to property owners who contribute to stormwater runoff. The proposed stormwater utility fee is being considered as part of the FY 2018 budget. First payment on the fee would be due June 2018, if approved.

The Sanitary Sewer Long Term Control

Plan addresses sewer discharges from outfalls across the city. The original plan delayed work on the Oronoco Bay outfall but impending state legislation will likely force the city to accelerate those plans. According to Christina Melvin-DeWees, acting communications officer for the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, the city's revised plan has been submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality and is awaiting review.

Fifer also said beta testing has started on an app that would allow users to more easily report problems and request services through the Call.Click.Connect customer service portal. The app would provide users with additional news, emergency alerts, and calendar events related to Alexandria.

Next, the Strategic Plan lays out strategies for safety and emergency response in Alexandria.



**Outfall 001, source of sewage being dumped into Oronoco Bay.**

PHOTO BY VERNON MILES / GAZETTE-PACKET





By DRPCA/RECREATION SERVICES DIVISION

**Cora Kelly Recreation Center youth sing and dance on Sunday.**

## Honoring Three Mentors

FROM PAGE 1

founded the We Care Organization to combat the drug problem affecting city youth and young adults. He led the first Anti-Drug March in 1985 and Elliott built champions.

According to Michael Jones, a contemporary of the three honorees, "Mr. Traverse Gray was outstanding in baseball and taught in his neighborhood." Gray's career as a coach began in 1959 about the time he completed high school at Parker Gray. He later took on leadership roles at Cora Kelly Recreation Center and Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center where he led a robust program of activities, including out of town games.

Bailey recalled one such tournament trip to Philadelphia when he was around age 11. "It was like going to a different country," he said.

Gray was promoted to director of the Charles Houston Recreation Center in 1993 and remained there until his retirement in 2006.

For Harvey Gray, "the most priceless times were the times I spent with Jackie Mason." He is a "man with a big heart ... a great sense of humor. The light of the atmosphere." A native of Alexandria, Mason had a skill to manage large groups of children. As direc-



**William Chesley, deputy director of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and Jackie Mason.**

tor of Cameron Valley Recreation Center, he provided daily recreational activities for elementary and middle school aged children. He was later promoted to oversee the new Cora Kelly Recreation Center, which became a community hub for activities, meetings and special events. "Citizens knew they were always welcome," said Rosa Byrd.

Elliott, Gray and Mason "shaped the lives of thousands of kids," said Bailey. They were part of the family of many. They turned boys into men. But most importantly, they cared. In return, people wanted to be just like them.

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# OPINION

## Good, Bad and Missed Opportunities

### Results of the 2017 session of the General Assembly.

#### GOOD THINGS

Progress in funding mental health and addressing the opioid epidemic on multiple levels were among the successes of the 2017 General Assembly session.

❖ In addressing the opioid crisis, the General Assembly passed important steps, including Del. Tim Hugo's bill to limit opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply in most cases; increased access to naloxone, a drug that instantly reverses an overdose; needle exchange programs (to reduce the spread of HIV, viral hepatitis, and other blood-borne diseases); focus on infants born with opioid exposure.

❖ Increased funding for mental health included \$7.5 million to facilitate providing same-day access to mental health screening services by July 1, 2019. (The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board began offering same day, in-person screening for mental health/and or substance use concerns to adults in July 2015 and extended same day access service to youth. The official launch date for youth walk-in service was Feb. 1, 2017.) Also supports for discharge planning and services for people with serious mental illness being released from jail.

❖ The budget included 3 percent raises state employees, increase for teachers and a larger increase for state police.

❖ The Virginia Board of Corrections was given added authority and resources to review deaths in local and regional jails.

❖ Negotiation and legislation will accelerate the City of Alexandria's massive undertaking to fix its sewer system that dumps raw sew-

age into the Potomac River whenever it rains. Wendell Berry's version of the golden rule: "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you."

❖ Scott Surovell's bill requiring Dominion to provide better information on coal ash pollution, disaster preparedness, and recycling.

❖ Eileen Filler-Corn's bill requiring that insurance cover up to a 12-month supply of hormonal contraceptives when dispensed or furnished at one time.

❖ School boards are required to have anti-bullying policies that includes notifying parents that their student was involved in a bullying incident.

❖ Use of FaceBook Live allowed members to stream floor discussion, and report to constituents and answer questions directly.

#### BAD BILLS

Gov. Terry McAuliffe has already vetoed some of these, and is expected to veto some others.

❖ Expanded access to concealed weapons; vetoed by Governor. SB1362 would allow anyone with a military ID card to carry concealed weapon; HB2077 would allow guns in emergency shelters and prevents state police or others from prohibiting them for any reason

❖ End funding of Planned Parenthood, vetoed by Governor.

❖ Anti-Sanctuary City Law HB 2000 says no locality shall adopt any ordinance, procedure, or policy that restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

❖ As a reality check on the Virginia General Assembly, HB2025 would allow discrimination against LGBT community under guise of religious freedom, and passed 21-19 in the Senate and 57-37 in the House of Delegates.

❖ HJ 545 would allow special committees of the General Assembly to overturn regulations, upsetting separation of powers. Constitutional amendment (first resolution): "Provides that the General Assembly may suspend

or nullify any or all portions of any administrative rule or regulation."

❖ Photo identification required for absentee ballots.

#### MISSSED OPPORTUNITIES

❖ The biggest missed opportunity of the 2017 General Assembly session was the failure to advance any redistricting legislation, which passed in the Senate and died in the House of Delegates. It's clear that Virginia voters want an end to gerrymandering, but hopes for reform before the next census in 2020 are diminished.

❖ Mental Health in Jails: \$4.5 million was removed from the Governor's proposed budget that would have paid for desperately needed mental health screening in jails.

❖ Legislation to raise Virginia's threshold between misdemeanors and felonies from \$200 to \$500 failed. Virginia's threshold has not changed since 1981, unnecessarily focusing "police and prosecutors on minor crimes instead of violent crime while tainting thousands of Virginia's suffering from depression or drug addiction with felony charges for life," says Surovell.

❖ Ken Plum's bill to increase and index the minimum wage never made it out of committee.

❖ Bills to address student debt also died during the session, as did bills aimed at reducing student suspensions and expulsions.

❖ Republicans stripped language that would have brought \$6 million in federal funds to provide Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) to those at risk for unintended pregnancy at no cost to Virginia voters.

*Thanks to Ken Plum, Scott Surovell, Marcus Simon, Jennifer Boysko, Adam Ebbin and others whose columns and responses helped inform this editorial. We welcome opinions and additions to this list.*

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Looking from Both Sides

To the Editor:

Kerry Carter's commentary article "Love Tr—s Hate" really attracted my attention. Since the 2016 presidential election, there has been a lot of political tension in America and it has caused many people to have strong feelings of hatred. I agree that Alexandria should be a "hate free zone" however; asking people to change their beliefs is not easy.

What is making people have such hatred? Well in political terms the Democratic Party has hatred toward Trump because he doesn't have the same beliefs or actions as the Democratic Party, thus making that group of people "haters."

On the other side of the spectrum however, Republicans share the same ideas as President Trump. These beliefs go back many years and can be taught by demographics such as social class, race/ethnic groups, and sex/gender. These "haters" have been raised to believe in what they do and simply asking them to stop hating is not logical.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 12



STEVE ARTLEY/GAZETTE PACKET

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## OPINION

# Hitting the Road

## Looking back on 2017 General Assembly Session.

BY ADAM EBBIN  
STATE SENATOR (D-30)

Just as the frenetic pace of Session seemed to ebb, the activity picked up in the final week with a hustle and bustle of a different sort.

No longer is Senator Surovell (D-Mount Vernon) carrying his six-inch binder with scores of bills from committee to committee, stacks of bills replaced with piles of cardboard boxes stacked neatly next to gradually emptier offices. Gone are the days of Senator Petersen (D-Fairfax City) telling members of the Senate that, in no uncertain terms, they were not to send legislative aides to play in the annual Senate/House basketball game unless they were talented athletes. The pages still moved briskly throughout the General Assembly Building (GAB) not to deliver interoffice memoranda, but to collect mugs, office supplies and memorabilia for a “Garage Sale” to benefit the Central Virginia Food Bank.

With cars parked on the sidewalk loading up for the trip to home districts, legislators and aides stood huddled together at the entrance to the GAB for final group photos. And, as my office now sits empty, 14 years of legislative sessions somehow packed into just 11 cardboard boxes, we are preparing for the move to the Pocahontas Building — the temporary new home of the General Assembly, while the GAB is torn down and a new one is built to replace it. No tears were shed in the Senate for the GAB with its constant heating and air conditioning issues, water pipe breaks, asbestos, crumbling facades, and subcommittee rooms too small to accommodate all the members of the public — some of whom drive in for hours to testify or listen in on important hearings.

Like the end of a college semester, while tours of the Pocahontas building were taking place, Delegates and staffers (but not senators!) graffitied a wall or two of the soon to be demolished GAB. The perennial prank of making the Lieutenant Governor’s gavel “disappear” by hiding it inside a Freshman senator’s desk was upstaged when a senator actually left his handgun on a committee room chair!

Looking back, we have considered 3,201 bills — 35 of which I introduced — received over 2,600 constituent emails, and fielded hundreds of letters and phone calls, and visits to the office in just 46 days. I am lucky to represent such an engaged constituency and to have been assisted by my 2017 Richmond staff including my legislative aide Chris Leyen; my session aide, Kirsten Schlegel, a Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) alumna and Clinton campaign

organizer; my intern, Colton Powell, a University of Richmond sophomore and back office rock star; Austin Walker of VCU who assisted with media and communications; and a wonderful new addition this year, my administrative assistant, Sophia Stephens.

After the session ended last Saturday, my office kept working on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday to respond to constituent emails. Governor McAuliffe’s office continues to be abuzz with activity: reviewing, signing and vetoing legislation. Among these bills are my multi-year efforts to remove mandatory driver’s license suspensions for marijuana possession (SB1091) and to research and invest in energy storage (SB1258); and a new bill I introduced to make it easier for restaurants to navigate the Alcoholic Beverage Control licensure process (SB1382). As the senator representing Mount Vernon, it was my pleasure, and a fun break from more serious legislation, to pass a bill designating George Washington’s Rye Whiskey as the official spirit of the Commonwealth (SB1261).

Governor McAuliffe’s veto pen is slated to get a workout this year. Notable vetoes that have taken place, or are promised, include: bills that invoke the spectre of election fraud to investigate voters (SB1105); legislation to defund Planned Parenthood (HB2264) services, bills that require reports on the location and ethnicity of resettled refugees (HB2002), create unfunded mandates requiring local sheriffs to enforce federal immigration law (HB1791); and that ban sanctuary cities (HB2000). He also vetoed ineffective coal tax credits (HB2198) in favor of legislation that expands solar (SB1393, SB1258) — reflecting Virginia’s status that earned it top marks for private-sector clean energy procurement.

As we transition from the legislative season to the campaign season and the 2017 elections for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General draw closer, and hundreds of hopefuls run for seats in the House of Delegates, lots of constituents want to know the best ways to mobilize at the state, local, and federal level against harmful policies adopted by the Trump administration. I encourage you to stay active, stay involved, and carry that passion to the polls. First and foremost, I would encourage you to join your local Democratic committee. There are active organizations in Arlington, Alexandria, and the Mount Vernon and Lee Districts of Fairfax.

If you would like to get more involved on the policy side, I encourage you to research and support the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or Progress VA, advocate for nonpartisan redistricting with One Virginia 2021, support the LGBT community with Equality VA, defend animals with the Humane Society, and protect the environment by joining your local Sierra Club chapter. These are just some of the many progressive organizations out there.



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The Alexandria Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce that applications are now open for our [2017 40 Under 40 Awards!](#)

The 40 under 40 program was established in 2016 by the Chamber to recognize top men and women, age 40 and under, engaged in a variety of fields including business, technology, nonprofit management, civic life, public service, education, and the arts, who are shaping Alexandria for the future.

Our 2016 honorees represent a diverse group of individuals, all contributing to the thriving business and civic community in Alexandria. We look forward to celebrating the significant impact of another class of young professionals at the top of their respective fields in 2017.

All submissions and supporting documentation must be received in full by 5:00pm on Friday, March 10, 2017. Our chosen 2017 Honorees will be honored at our 40 Under 40 Awards on Thursday, July 27, 2017.

For more information on the eligibility requirements, and to access the links to apply or nominate an individual, please visit [www.alexchamber.com](http://www.alexchamber.com).

Questions, please contact Shari Simmans at [sholoudi@alexchamber.com](mailto:sholoudi@alexchamber.com)



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## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 10

These people who think that they can create a “hate free zone” are not looking at this from the other point of view. Some people have certain beliefs that are set through religious reasons. Just because someone of a different religion has a view on one issue does not mean that the other side is any less valid. These people need to look at everything from all different angles and perspectives.

**Paige Dunigan**  
Alexandria

## Time for A Change

To the Editor:

As a lifelong Democrat and progressive, I, and many of my neighbors, are pleased to see Del. Mark Levine challenged in his bid to represent us in the House of Delegates.

Karen Graf — or another qualified candidate — would be a welcome change to Mr. Levine's bombastic style and pie-in-the-sky focus on issues that are not a priority for the citizens of Alexandria. The citizens of Alexandria care about improving our schools, being a welcoming community, and maintaining our quality of life — particularly for our children. Spending time on zany proposals like marijuana legalization and in heated arguments with politicians on national TV does nothing to advance our local interests.

Levine should be commended for his public service thus far, but it's time for a change.

**Rafael Lemaitre**  
Alexandria

## Backyard Treasure

To the Editor:

Where's Waldo? Or maybe I should say where is Alexandria?

MetroStage is currently producing a Pulitzer Prize winning play with two acclaimed Washington D.C. actors who perform nationally as well as locally. “The Gin Game” first appeared on stage in 1977 and was most recently seen on Broadway last year. It has been performed continuously for the past 40 years so we were especially honored to receive a call from the playwright D. L. Coburn saying that he was so intrigued by the reviews, he would like to come see our production. So he will be flying in from Dallas in the next few weeks to see MetroStage's production of “The Gin Game.”

So I repeat where is Alexandria?

I look at our reservation book and see patrons coming from Bethesda and Upper Marlboro, Reston and Woodbridge, Olney and Waldorf, Leesburg and Potomac, Stafford and even Chester (Va.). Alexandrians, you have professional theatre in your own backyard. We appreciate the Alexandria neighbors and supporters who are regulars, but will the rest of you please come see our work?

If a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, who has probably seen hundreds of productions of “The Gin Game” over the past 40 years, is coming from Dallas, Texas, aren't you just a little curious about what all the fuss is about? Final two weeks. Friends and family discounts. And it doesn't even require a plane ticket or crossing a bridge!

**Carolyn Griffin**  
Producing Artistic Director  
MetroStage

## Experience Beau Soir

To the Editor:

For about the past decade and a half, the Old Presbyterian Meeting House has been hosting events called “Concerts with a Cause” several times a year. The concerts, which have featured a wide variety of musical groups from throughout the local metropolitan area, have been free and open to the public. At the intermissions, ushers have collected free-will offerings to benefit various worthy causes in and around Alexandria.

For example, on Sunday, Feb. 12, the Beau Soir Trio performed one of the best of these “Concerts with a Cause” in recent memory. While the individual instruments — flute, harp, and viola — can separately produce beautiful music, the outstanding abilities of the three artists combined the shimmering notes of the flute, the lyrical sounds of the harp, and the mellow tones of the viola to produce enchanting, harmonious melodies that were far more than just the sum of the parts. The musical selections ranged from the familiar, much-loved “Arioso for viola and harp,” by J. S. Bach, to “Slam Ahead,” by modern composer Don Davis. Each piece had been carefully selected to showcase the best of different combinations of the three instruments, and each was lovingly and beautifully rendered by the three accomplished musicians, who clearly enjoy performing together. The free-will offering collected at this event was donated

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 14

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## PEOPLE

# From 'DEAL' to 'Metal Coffins'

**Mike Vigil, author and former DEA agent.**

BY NATALIA MEGAS  
GAZETTE PACKET

**F**or the former undercover DEA agent Mike Vigil, retirement from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) the past 13 years has been busy. Giving lectures, consulting internationally, participating in documentaries and media discussions on the U.S. war on drugs are just a part of what he's been up to. He's also become a novelist.

Two years ago, he published his memoir "DEAL" after colleagues and friends persuaded him to write a book based on his experiences.

"At first, [writing a book] seemed very daunting," said Vigil who spent a year writing his memoir. "The hardest thing is getting started but once I did that, all of a sudden, I had 10 pages, then 50 pages, then 200."

Vigil's perseverance and ambitions shouldn't come as a surprise. "I was never one to give up. I. Never. Gave. Up," said Vigil, 66.

"Mike has an unbelievable work ethic," says former DEA special agent Brad Sosnowsky. "He's an amazing person and was an amazing agent."

Late last fall, Vigil published his first crime novel, "Metal Coffins: The Blood Alliance Cartel," book one in a series of three.

The story, based on actual events, follows the life of the DEA's top agent assigned to Mexico, Miguel Villa who launches an operation to take down the Blood Alliance Cartel before they become too powerful. If the comparisons between Vigil and his main character seem to be accidental, they're not.

"I share characteristics with Miguel Villa. Compassion for others, being decisive, going full force trying to dismantle drug trafficking organizations rather than sitting in the office all day," he said.

"He has traveled the world and worked in some of the most dangerous situations there are," said Mike McManus, former DEA chief of operations for Mexico and Central America, who worked with Vigil.

For all of Vigil's experiences, he was awarded Top Cop in 2000, an award that pays tribute to outstanding law enforcement officers across the country for



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE VIGIL

**Seizure of 30 tons of marijuana with the Colombian National Police in the Sierra Nevada mountains.**

actions above and beyond the call of duty. Vigil became chief of international operations responsible for numerous multinational operations, the largest involving 36 countries and developing global intelligence sharing platforms. Like Miguel Villa, Vigil spent most of his 31-year career as an undercover agent, living among drug traffickers.

Growing up in Espanola, a predominantly Hispanic and poor city in New Mexico, Vigil grew up with a lot of "pachucos," juvenile gang members of Mexican-American ethnic origins. Vigil says being surrounded by thug slang and mannerisms benefitted him later in his DEA career.

After high school, Vigil earned his Bachelor Degree from New Mexico State University in criminology, graduating cum laude. He was hired by the DEA straight out of college.

"I looked at the DEA as an adventure. It was not a monotonous job. A chess game of life," he said. "I very much enjoyed it."

For Vigil, he always knew he'd pursue law enforcement. "I used to watch movies as a kid. I was fascinated by movies like the 'Untouchables' and 'Dragnet,'" he said.

His undercover work meant penetrating drug rings and he eventually developed a sixth sense about threats.

He recalls the time he had got a fictitious driver's license for his cover right before meeting a distribu-

SEE ALEXANDRIAN, PAGE 20

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# Mild Winter Means Early Allergy Season

Experts offer suggestions to prevent and treat allergy symptoms.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET



**Allergist Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D. advises patients who normally have seasonal allergies to begin taking medication early.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
BARBARA MACKIE

**T**hose experiencing Itchy, watery eyes and seemingly endless sneezing know that spring allergy season is getting an early start this year thanks to this season's mild winter weather.

"Everything is blooming early because of the warm weather," said Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D., allergist, of Privia Medical Group in Vienna. "People are spending more time outside because the weather is lovely, but they're experiencing allergy symptoms."

One of the keys to surviving allergy season is staying ahead of it. When thermometers are rising above 60 degrees for more than three consecutive days, pollen from plants begins to move through the air. The tree pollen count has reached high concentration levels in the Washington, D.C. re-

gion, according to The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology's National Allergy Bureau Pollen and Mold Report.

"Most of the time seasonal allergies, whether it is spring or fall, are caused by pollens that are associated with grass, trees and weeds," said Dr. Victoria A Garrison, M.D. a Student Health Services physician and a professor in the School of Nursing at George Mason University in Fairfax. "In areas that are damp or humid, mold spores can also be a factor. When people have allergies to these substances, the immune system will react and cause symptoms like sneezing, watery, itchy eyes, runny nose, sore or itchy throat, congestion and fatigue."

"Mild winter temperatures cause plants to pollinate early," added Maureen Moriarty,

DNP, assistant professor of Nursing at Marymount University in Arlington. "This problem may be compounded by a rainy spring season, leading to increased mold levels that can drive allergy symptoms in sufferers through fall months."

Instead of waiting for full-blown symptoms, Mackie recommends beginning medications early. "What I usually tell patients who normally have seasonal allergies is to take their maintenance medications early so they're covered when allergy season hits," she said.

"Being prepared can often help slow down symptoms of allergies," added Kathy Grilliot, director of Clinical Education Respiratory Therapy Program at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Education Campus in Springfield.

"Before the season starts, it is a good idea to start taking a nasal steroid. This medication takes a few weeks to gain full effect so starting before the allergens are everywhere can really help to control symptoms.

Eyes can also have allergic reactions, so see a specialist to have a good eye drop for allergen control."

For those who might be perplexed by the distinction between allergies and a common cold: "If it's lasting more than three days with no fever, it's probably not a cold," said Mackie.

Some precautions that allergy sufferers can take to decrease their exposure to allergens include wearing a face mask when outside during times when the pollen count is high and resisting the urge to open car and house windows when the weather is warm, especially if the wind is blowing. "Take off your shoes when you enter your house so that allergens don't get spread around the house," said Grilliot. "Be aware where you place clothing that has been outside when



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE GAZETTE PACKET

**A mild winter has led to early plant blooming and an early allergy season.**

you enter your house to prevent allergens from entering your home."

"I advise patients to rinse their hair and take a shower to get the pollen off before going to bed at night," added Mackie. "Otherwise you're getting pollen on your pillowcase and sheets and breathing it in all night."

There are certain times of day when allergy sufferers should avoid being outside. "Mid-morning, afternoon and early evening are peak times for pollen," continued Mackie. "When it's windy, don't go out because of the pollen."

Pets can spread pollen as well. "Dogs get spring fever too and want to be outside, but they can bring pollen into the house," said Mackie.

"Wipe off their coats and paws when they come inside."

**"Everything is blooming early because of the warm weather. People are spending more time outside because the weather is lovely, but they're experiencing allergy symptoms."**

— **Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D., Allergist, Privia Medical Group**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM PAGE 12

to help support Neighborhood Health, an organization that provides affordable and accessible primary health care for people in Alexandria and neighboring communities.

Although it is unclear when the Meeting House may be able to schedule another "Concert with a Cause," anyone

wishing to experience the beautiful music provided by Beau Soir will have a number of opportunities to hear them play. On April 23, the group will perform at 2 p.m. at the Lyceum, at 201 South Washington St. in Alexandria. A full list of their forthcoming concerts can be found at [beauvoir.org](http://beauvoir.org).

**Hugh M. Van Horn**  
Alexandria



# ENTERTAINMENT



Carved birds and other artwork graces the plates alongside the food at May Island.



Tucked away next to a convenience store, May Island is a pleasant surprise.

## 3 Sushi Bars to Celebrate Springtime

BY HOPE NELSON  
GAZETTE PACKET

**T**he recent warm February weather has pushed the spring foliage to its budding point early, and the cherry trees are no exception. Cherry blossom time – that season where all the region’s cherry trees are bursting with pinks and whites – is nearly here, and the festival celebrating the United States’ relationship with Japan begins March 20. Here are three sushi selections to celebrate the occasion.

### May Island, 1669 North Quaker Lane

Tucked away in an unassuming strip mall, adjacent to a convenience store, May Island could easily be overlooked for more flashy locales. But to drive by without stopping in would be a mistake. Once you’re inside, a

menu of sushi delights awaits.

Peruse the menu of “fusion rolls” and it’s hard to miss some of the more exotic and festive of May Island’s options. The Godzilla, for instance, is a mix of spicy tuna and avocado, wrapped with seaweed on the outside and deep-fried. Or try the Dinosaur, which does not in fact contain any of our prehistoric brethren but instead sports shrimp tempura and is topped with avocado. Vegetarians, too, will be at home: May Island offers a number of unusual vegetable sushi selections, ranging from sweet-potato tempura to an avocado-cucumber-squash roll.

Is someone in your party not feeling the sushi love? No problem. May Island offers up a host of standard Asian dishes — teriyaki, lo mein, fried rice, and the like — to suit a host of palates.

### Momo Sushi, 212 Queen St.

The stalwart sushi restaurant in Old

Town, Momo Sushi has only strengthened its popularity in the years since it opened several blocks off of King Street, near the water.

It’s a rare evening that doesn’t find Momo teeming with diners (and takeout orders), and one taste will show you why.

Gravitate toward the combination plates to maximize your sushi sampling. The “roll combination” — which allows diners to select from a maki combo, a spicy combo, or a veggie-roll combo — will give you an easy round-the-bar taste of several of Momo’s favorites. Go a step further and share an entrée with a compatriot with the “deluxe” sushi and sashimi combination — a feast of sushi and sashimi options at the discretion of the chef, alongside a spicy tuna roll.

So often at sushi bars, the non-sushi menu options are lacking in punch. Not so at Momo, where the yakisoba remains a favorite from year to year. Order it or its noodle kindred the udon, and you won’t be

disappointed.

### Kyoto Japanese Restaurant, 3676 King St.

Two words reign supreme at Kyoto: Sushi boat. The sushi-laden monstrosity pulls into port with well more than two people can reasonably eat, but it’s absolutely worth the time (and the money). A generous offering of various rolls, teeming with fresh fish, it gives diners a veritable tour of Japan right from a wooden serving boat.

For those not quite so committed (or so hungry), the combinations for one are an excellent option, as is Kyoto’s a la carte selection. And don’t rule out the teriyaki and ramen selections, either — they’re always worth a second look (and another bite), especially while the weather stays cool.

*Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at [www.kitchenrecessionista.com](http://www.kitchenrecessionista.com). Email her any time at [hope@kitchenrecessionista.com](mailto:hope@kitchenrecessionista.com).*

## CALENDAR

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

### ONGOING

**UCM Raffle Tickets.** Ongoing, the United Community Ministries is raffling off a trip to Cancun at the ‘Give From the Heart’ Gala on May 6 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 600 Dulany St. \$175 admission, \$25 raffle ticket. Visit [www.ucmagency.org](http://www.ucmagency.org) for more.

**Convergence Arts Initiative.** Through March 4, Fridays 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at The Gallery @ Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. Highlights the artwork of students from Bishop Ireton, Episcopal High School, T.C. Williams,

and St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m. Email [danabh@ourconvergence.org](mailto:danabh@ourconvergence.org) or call 703-998-6260 for more.

**Ceramic Guild Show.** Through March 5, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. “Customer Appreciation: Welcome to our World” Ceramic Guild show at Scope Gallery. Visit [www.scopegallery.org](http://www.scopegallery.org), [www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope](http://www.torpedofactory.org/galleries/scope) or call 703-548-6288 for more.

**China Photography Exhibit.** Through March 6, various hours at the Bisdorf Building, NVCC, 5000 Dawes Ave. “China in my Eyes” photography exhibit. Artists reception: Saturday, Feb. 11, noon. Visit [www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/](http://www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/) or email [JJZelloe@aol.com](mailto:JJZelloe@aol.com) for more.

**Mixed Media Exhibit.** Through March 14, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the St. George Gallery, 105 North Alfred St. Inspirational approaches in mixed

media inhabit this art exhibit. Call 703-299-9495 or visit [www.StGeorgeofEthiopia.com](http://www.StGeorgeofEthiopia.com) for more.

### Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery.

Through March 19 at Torpedo Factory, Studio 29, 105 N. Union St. Cosmic Sights and Sounds, comes as the winter night sky’s grand collection of brilliant stars begins to give way to the vernal equinox. This show will also highlight the work of featured artists Carol Bodin, Mickey Kunkle, and Lynda Prioleau. Visit [www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com](http://www.Potomacfiberartsgallery.com) for more.

### The Hand Print Workshop.

Through April 2, various times at the Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Dennis O’Neil’s Hand Print Workshop exhibit features a wide representation of the prints created by these artists in his Alexandria studio, including some by William Christenberry and Renee Stout, as well as works by O’Neil himself. Opening Reception, Sunday,

Feb. 26, 4-6 p.m. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035.

**Costumes of Mercy Street.** Through Sept. 1, at The Lyceum: Alexandria’s History Museum, 201 S. Washington St. To learn more about The Lyceum, visit [alexandriava.gov/Lyceum](http://alexandriava.gov/Lyceum) or call 703-746-4994.

### Mercy in Alexandria Walking

**Tour.** Sundays at 1:30 p.m. at Alexandria Visitors Center, 221 King St. Experience an inside access tour of 19th century Alexandria. Inspired by the PBS mini-series “Mercy Street,” accompany a trained military historian through Civil War-era Alexandria and learn the actual history behind the TV show. Short tours are \$15, private tours for five are \$149. Visit [www.dcmilitarytour.com](http://www.dcmilitarytour.com) for more

**The Lyceum: 175 Years of Local History.** Ongoing, Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. On view in the museum’s

Coldsmith Gallery, the historical objects and images featured represent The Lyceum, the community at work, and commemorations and celebrations. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are invited to “be the curator” and think about why the various artifacts are in the museum’s collection, and about how tangible representatives of the past help tell the story of Alexandria’s history. Free. Visit [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org) for more.

**Pick-Up Hockey.** Ongoing, Wednesdays and Fridays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Mount Vernon Ice Skating, 2017 Belle View Blvd. Play hockey with other hockey buffs, hitting slap shots and learning puck handling skills that the pros use. Players must have full equipment. 16 and older. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mtvernon/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mtvernon/) or call 703-768-3224 for more.

**Medical Care for the Civil War Soldier Exhibit.** Ongoing at the



# ENTERTAINMENT

Fort Ward museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. ongoing exhibit which features original medical instruments and equipment from the Civil War period and information on Union Army hospital sites in Alexandria. Free. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/fortward](http://www.alexandriava.gov/fortward) for more

**Alexandria's Nurses and Hospitals During the Civil War.** Ongoing at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. An exhibit on the life of Clarissa Jones, a nurse at The Lyceum hospital during the Civil War. The true story of a nurse in Alexandria during the war, drawing parallels with characters portrayed in the PBS drama "Mercy Street," with references to the experiences of other nurses, such as Anne Reading, who worked in the Mansion House hospital, and Jane Woolsey, who served at the Fairfax Seminary hospital. Admission is \$2. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/lyceum](http://www.alexandriava.gov/lyceum) for more.

**Shield of Earth: Defending the Heart of the Union exhibit.** Ongoing, museum hours Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays, noon-5 p.m. at Fort Ward Museum, 4301 West Braddock Road. Highlights of the exhibition include military passes issued by Provost Marshal's Office, construction tools, and original photographs of some of Washington's defenders. 703-746-4848 or [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org).

**Who These Wounded Are: The Extraordinary Stories of the Mansion House Hospital exhibit.** Ongoing, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays, noon-4 p.m. at the Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Come see the site that inspired "Mercy Street," the new PBS' series inspired by real events that took place at Carlyle House. [www.carlylehouse.org](http://www.carlylehouse.org) or call 703-549-2997

**Color Disorder Exhibit.** Ongoing, Thursday through Sunday, noon-4 p.m., Sundays, noon-4 p.m. at the The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. A joint exhibition of artists Katie Baines and Amy Chan who use diverse painting materials such as acrylic, gouache, airbrush and screen print to build energized abstract paintings. [www.nfaa.org](http://www.nfaa.org) or 703-548-0035.

**Flamenco Show.** Wednesdays and Thursdays, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at La Tasca, 607 King St. Watch dancers and guitarists perform traditional flamenco. Free to attend. Call 703-299-9810 or visit [www.latascausa.com](http://www.latascausa.com).

**French Movie Night.** Every Thursday, 7 p.m. in the back room of Fontaine Caffe and Creperie, 119 S. Royal St. View a French film. Free, no reservation necessary. Call 703-535-8151 or visit [www.fontainecaffe.com/reviews.html](http://www.fontainecaffe.com/reviews.html).

**Their Fates Intertwined: The Lees of Alexandria in the War of 1812.** Wednesday- Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, 1-4 p.m. Lee-Fendall House and Gardens, 614 Oronoco St. A new exhibit on the experiences of the Lee family in Alexandria during the War of 1812 examines the contributions of Alexandria's citizens during the conflict that led to the writing of our national anthem through the lives of this iconic Virginia family. Visit [www.leefendallhouse.org](http://www.leefendallhouse.org) or call 703-548-1789.

**Alexandria Cars and Coffee** invites car enthusiasts to meet for coffee at Hollin Hall Shopping Center in front of Roseina's, 1307 Shenandoah Road. Owners of classic cars, hot rods, exotic cars, motorcycles and more meet to share car stories and drink coffee. Group meets the first Sunday of every month. 8:30-11 a.m.

**Fifty Years of Collecting.** Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays 12-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## Under the Sea

**Stephany Guadalupe stars as the evil Ursula, Christian Corpening as King Triton, Kyla Carney as Ariel, Audrey Shaw as Flotsam and Georgia Tritak as Jetsam in "The Little Mermaid," a series of performances starting Friday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. A musical from the SSSAS Cappies Award-winning Stage One Players. \$5. Visit [www.sssas.org/arts](http://www.sssas.org/arts) or call 703-212-2845 for more.**

5 p.m. Fort Ward Museum, 4301 W. Braddock Road. An anniversary exhibit of objects from the Fort Ward collection. Free. Visit [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org) or call 703-746-4848.

**Dinner for the Washingtons.** 12 p.m. at George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. A walking tour that goes behind the scenes to find out how food was prepared and served before the era of microwaves and TV dinners. \$5 in addition to estate admission. Visit [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) for more.

**Second Thursday Music.** Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. 7 p.m. Second Thursday of every month. Visit [nvfaa.org](http://nvfaa.org) to view concert calendar and listen to upcoming Second Thursday Music artists.

**The Monday Morning Birdwalk** takes place weekly, rain or shine (except during electrical storms, strong winds, or icy trails), at 7 a.m. (8 a.m. November through March), is free, requires no reservation and is open to all. Birders meet in the parking lot at the park's entrance at 3701 Lockheed Blvd. Direct questions to park staff during normal business hours at 703-768-2525.

**Civil War Sundays.** 1-5 p.m. at Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 North Union St., #327. Learn more about the Civil War as it occurred in Alexandria. Find dioramas, newspaper articles and more Free. Visit [www.alexandriaarchaeology.org](http://www.alexandriaarchaeology.org).

**Doggy Happy Hour.** Starting April 5, Tuesdays through October 5-8 p.m. at Jackson 20 and Hotel Monaco Alexandria, 480 King St. Doggy Happy Hour at Jackson 20 and the Hotel Monaco Alexandria offers specials on cocktails and beers plus treats and water for canine companions. Free, but drinks sold separately. Visit [www.monaco-alexandria.com](http://www.monaco-alexandria.com) for more

**Wake Up Wednesdays** featuring The Pop Up Cafe. 7-9:30 a.m. on Wednesday's near the King Street Tunnel - Carlyle Entrance located

near 2000 Duke Street near Motley Fool. The cafe will feature coffee, live music to help commuters start the day off right and donuts from Sugar Shack. [maurisapotts@gmail.com](mailto:maurisapotts@gmail.com)

### CAMPS, CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

**Community Dance.** 7:30-9:30 p.m. every third Friday at Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Road. Live music. Tickets are \$4. Call 703-765-4573.

**Life Drawing.** Del Ray Artisans offers a range of open life drawing sessions for anyone to develop life-drawing skills further. Drop-in for the session and bring supplies to draw or paint live models. Fee ranges from \$8-\$12. All skill levels are welcome. Del Ray Artisans is located at 2704 Mount Vernon Ave. Visit [www.TheDelRayArtisans.org](http://www.TheDelRayArtisans.org) for a schedule.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 2

**Childrens Jazz Band Concert.** 7:30-9 p.m. at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Fisher Art Gallery, NOVA, Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive. Free. Visit [www.nvcc.edu](http://www.nvcc.edu) or call 703-425-5839 for more.

**Alexandria GOP Committee Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. at Minnie Howard School, 3801 W. Braddock Road. Call 571-281-7042 for more.

### FRIDAY/MARCH 3

**Children's Concert.** 5-6 p.m. at Various hours at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Local musician, Achille, will be singing popular children's French songs. \$5. Email [AlexandriaSisterCities@gmail.com](mailto:AlexandriaSisterCities@gmail.com) or call 202-203-0177 for more.

**Whisky and Wine.** 7-10 p.m. at the Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington St. Alexandria Sister Cities Committee for Scottish Social of Scotch Whisky and Virginia Wines, includes a discussion and tasting instructions led by a Scotch whisky expert. \$45. Call 301-526-0873 or email

[roberthayjr@gmail.com](mailto:roberthayjr@gmail.com) for more.

**"The Little Mermaid."** 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. A musical from the SSSAS Cappies Award-winning Stage One Players. \$5. Visit [www.sssas.org/arts](http://www.sssas.org/arts) or call 703-212-2845 for more.

### SATURDAY/MARCH 4

**St. Patrick's Day Parade.** Noon-2 p.m. starting at Alfred and King streets. Day includes classic car show, 9-11:45, 100 N. Pitt Street; dog show, 10:30-noon, Market Square; Pre-Parade, 12:15, featuring winners of the dog show. Call 703-823-1801 for more.

**Watercolors in Workshops.** 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Botanical artist Dawn Flores discusses color, orchid anatomy, techniques and transfer practices to compose and paint watercolor orchids. \$88. Call 703-642-5173 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/) for more.

**Parade Open House.** Noon-4 p.m. at Carlyle House Historic Park, 121 N. Fairfax St. Open to all during the St. Patrick's Day parade. Free. Visit [www.novaparks.com](http://www.novaparks.com) or call 703-549-2997 for more.

**"The Little Mermaid."** 2 p.m. at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. A musical from the SSSAS Cappies Award-winning Stage One Players. \$5. Visit [www.sssas.org/arts](http://www.sssas.org/arts) or call 703-212-2845 for more.

**Senior Services of Alexandria Gala.** 6-10 p.m. at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, 5000 Seminary Road. Entertainment by Brothers Plus One. Black tie optional. \$150 [www.seniorservicesalex.org/](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org/).

**Country-Western Dance.** Lessons, 6-7 p.m. Open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St. Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association members \$10; non-members \$12;

children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Visit [www.nvcwda.org](http://www.nvcwda.org) or call 703-860-4941 for more.

**Hollywood Goes Choral IV.** 7 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E. Campus Drive. The Symphonic Chorus along with the Washington Symphonic Brass pay musical tribute to several films. \$40-\$15; Students with ID \$10; Children 4 and under free. Visit [www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org](http://www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org) or call 703-642-3277 for more.

### MARCH 4-APRIL 16

**The Mercy Walk Tour.** Saturdays and Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Tour starts at the Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King St. The Mercy Walk tour will give visitors and locals alike a feel for what it was like to live in an occupied city during the Civil War. \$13 adults; \$7 children; \$12 seniors Call 703-519-1749 or visit [www.alexcolonialtours.com/themercywalk](http://www.alexcolonialtours.com/themercywalk) for more.

### SUNDAY/MARCH 5

**The Provazak Youth String Quartet.** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. Part of the The "Bagels and Bach" Concert Series, light brunch included. \$10/Nonresident \$15, under 5, free. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/arts](http://www.alexandriava.gov/arts) for more.

**Women's History Tour.** 1-4:30 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, 134 N. Royal St. Tour will highlight the many roles women played in tavern life—from women as tavern owners and enslaved workers to participants in events and as overnight guests. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/](http://www.alexandriava.gov/)

GadsbysTavern or call 703-746-4242. **Choral Evensong for Lent.** 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt St. Will feature music by composers Ley, Walford Davies, Near, Batten, and Stanford. This is free to the public, with donations going to St. Paul's Lazarus Ministry, helping those in need. A reception will follow the evensong. Contact Grant Hellmers at 703-549-3312 or [grant@stpaulsalexandria.com](mailto:grant@stpaulsalexandria.com).

### TUESDAY/MARCH 7

**Conversation with Marcus Johnson.** 7-8:30 p.m. at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe St. The conversation with Marcus Johnson will include a reading of passages from his new book "For the Love Of..." Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/BlackHistory](http://www.alexandriava.gov/BlackHistory) or call 703-746-4356 for more.

### MARCH 8-25

**Nutt and Bolt Performance.** Various times at The Lab at Convergence, 1819 N. Quaker Lane. Nutt and Bolt are two robots who live in a junkyard. \$9. Visit [www.artsonthehorizon.org/nutt-and-bolt-buy-tickets.html](http://www.artsonthehorizon.org/nutt-and-bolt-buy-tickets.html) for more.

### THURSDAY/MARCH 9

**Opening Reception.** 6:30-8 p.m. at Studio 21 in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Heidi Nam's "Netted: Morphological State of Our Urban Space," a mixed media and collage works art show, March 8-April 2. Visit [www.theartleague.org](http://www.theartleague.org) or call 703-683-1780 for more.

**Forty+ Movement and Theatre.** 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. The program of works combines to a collective whole to traverse relationship, the inventiveness of situation, and the progression of life. Visit [www.nvfaa.org](http://www.nvfaa.org) or call 703-548-0035 for more.

**President In The Kitchen.** 7:30 p.m. in the Lecture Hall of The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. Director of

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Lincoln's Cottage puts an apron just as Lincoln did when he helped Mary in their Springfield, Ill., kitchen. \$10. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum](http://www.alexandriava.gov/Lyceum) or call 703-838-4994 for more.

**Tree Lecture.** 7:30-9 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. The George Washington Memorial Parkway All-taxa Biodiversity Inventory: Finding New Species near the Nation's Capital — A Talk by Brent Steury. Call 703-642-5173 for more.

## FRIDAY/MARCH 10

**2017 Women's Leadership Forum.** 7:30-10 a.m. at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St. A morning of inspiration and education centered around the theme of shaping tomorrow's leaders. \$60 for members, \$80 for non-members. Email [info@alexchamber.com](mailto:info@alexchamber.com) or call 703-549-1000 for more.

**Rosanne Cash Performs.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for more.

## MARCH 10-11

**"The Little Mermaid."** 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. A musical from the SSSAS Cappies Award-winning Stage One Players. \$5. Visit [www.sssas.org/arts](http://www.sssas.org/arts) or call 703-212-2845 for more.

## SATURDAY/MARCH 11

**Great Woody Plants.** 10-11:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Horticulturist Brenda Skarphol highlights flowering shrubs that grow well in Virginia home gardens. Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) using code 2901845501 or call 703-642-5173 for more.

**Yoga for Veterans.** 2-4 p.m. at 532YOGA, 532 N. Washington St., Suite 100. VEToga's mission is to provide yoga, meditation, and healing arts to military, veterans, their families, and communities. Free to veterans, service personnel and their families. Donations welcome. Visit [www.vetoga.org](http://www.vetoga.org) for more.

**Her Story: Women in Action.** 3-4:15 p.m. at the Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 S. Washington St. Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and their accompanying adults will participate in hands-on activities and add their own future goals to a timeline of Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low's story. \$6. Visit [www.alexandriahistory.org](http://www.alexandriahistory.org) or call 703.746.4994 for more.

**Best Bib & Tucker Ball.** 7-10 p.m. at Gadsby's Tavern, 134 N. Royal St. Doc Scantlin's orchestra and the songstress Chou Chou will be providing the entertainment for the

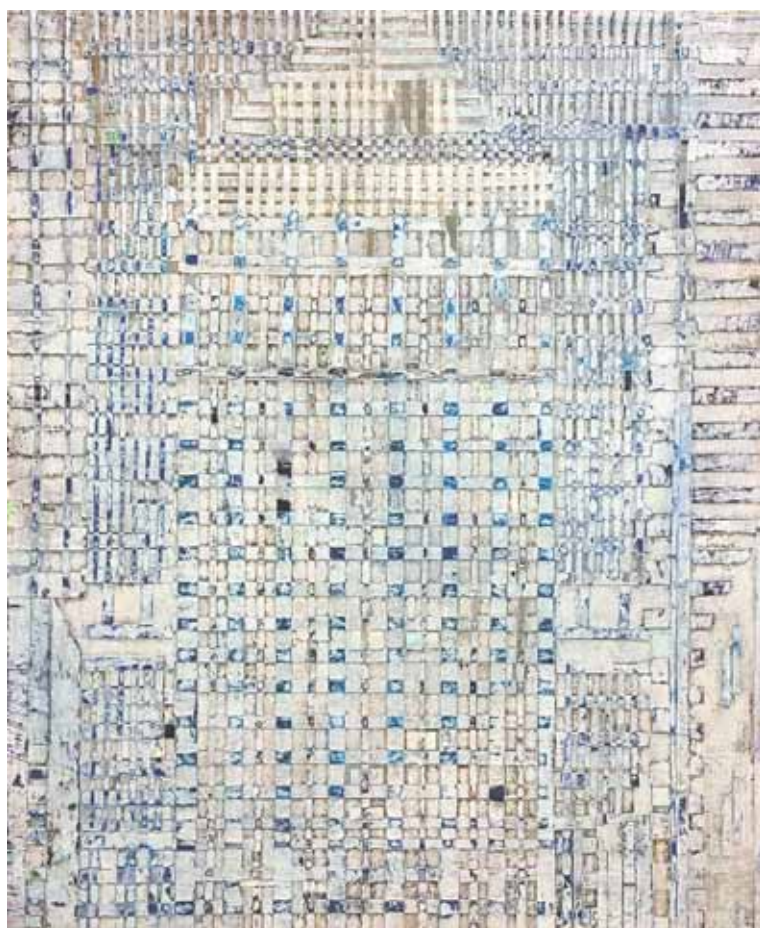


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

## 'Soaked in Blue'

**Heidi Nam's "Soaked in Blue" collage is part of her mixed media and collage works art show 6:30-8 p.m. at Studio 21 in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St. Visit [www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org)**

evening. \$150. Visit [www.alexandriava.gov/GadsbysTavern](http://www.alexandriava.gov/GadsbysTavern) or call 703-746-4242.

**Laurie Anderson in Concert.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave. \$39.50. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) or [www.laurieanderson.com/](http://www.laurieanderson.com/) for more.

## SUNDAY/MARCH 12

**Glasshouses and Conservatories.** 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. A talk on the history of greenhouses and conservatories by Dean Norton, director of horticulture at George Washington's Mount Vernon. \$10 in advance, \$12 at door. Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) using code 2901822201 or call 703-642-5173 for more.

## MARCH 12-13

**An Evening With Colin Hay.** 7:30 p.m. at The Birchmere, 3701 Mt.

Vernon Ave. \$39.50. Vocalist of 1980's group Men at Work. \$45. Visit [www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com) for more.

## WEDNESDAY/MARCH 15

**Philadelphia Flower Show.** 8 a.m.-8 p.m. leave from Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Highlights the wonders of Holland's innovative eco-design, modern urban greening and sustainability efforts. \$136/person includes motor coach and show admission. Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes) using code 2901923601 or call 703-642-5173 for more.

**Visit to Dyke Marsh.** 8:30-11 a.m. at Belle Haven Park, 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway. Dixie Sommers leads this walk to scope the waterfowl on the river and check out Haul Road for sparrows, kinglets, woodpeckers, and eagles. Sponsored by Northern Virginia Bird Club. Visit

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## PEOPLE

Twenty-five students, two faculty members, and the keynote speaker were honored at the annual induction ceremony of the T.C. William High School's chapter of the National English Honor Society.



### National English Honor Society Inductees

T.C. Williams High School held its annual induction ceremony of the school's chapter of the National English Honor Society (NEHS) on Jan. 31.

Twenty-five students, two faculty members, and the keynote speaker were honored at the event, which was attended by family and friends of the inductees as well as teachers and staff members.

The NEHS is open to high school students who have demonstrated exceptional ability in such areas as literary analysis, media studies, composition, linguistic study, and creative writing, and who have earned a cumulative 3.75 in their high school English courses, with a 3.75 overall grade point average.

The ceremony featured a keynote address by John Harris, journalist, author, editor, co-founder of Politico, and father to NEHS member, Liza Harris. In his speech to students and staff, Harris provided his three rules for writing beginning with the idea of letting the story be the star. Once one has decided on a point, they should state it clearly and let substance take precedence over stylistic concerns. Secondly, he instructed members to view writing as a type of music in which the writerly ear must be trained by playing it back in one's mind. And, finally, in writing, one should always endeavor to be accurate, fair, and honest.

The ceremony was led by the officers of the NEHS and the group's advisor, Kirsten von Topel. The officers for 2016-2017 are: President Emily Kiernan, Vice-President Peter LaBoy, Attendance Secretary Liza Harris, Recording Secretary Jay Falk, Treasurer Akie Kadota, and Historian Lily Morton.

The are the inductees: Veronica Araujo, Arsema Asefaw, Solomon Baah, Makdes Berhanu, Ellie Bernstein, Grace Breitenbeck, Charlotte Carey, Kelly Cen, Ana Chavez, Elspeth Collard, Bryce Cook, Zariyah Cope, Annabel Gleason, Chelsea Guevara, Kendall Huheey, Fara Islam, Jamal Jabati, Wintana Kiflu, Lane McCaslin, Suany Oliva, Catherine Sedgwick, Mariama Seydi, Tyra Symathong, Carlos Villarroel, and Bridget Williams.

The ceremony was led by the officers of the NEHS and the group's advisor, Kirsten von Topel. The officers for 2016-2017 are: President Emily Kiernan, Vice-President Peter LaBoy, Attendance Secretary Liza Harris, Recording Secretary Jay Falk, Treasurer Akie Kadota, and Historian Lily Morton.



### Del Ray Chili Cook Off

The chili and the competition were hot at the Del Ray Citizens Association's annual Chili Cook Off! Guest judges (from left) Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, Police Chief Mike Brown and Assistant Fire Chief Larry Schultz appreciated the fiery competition and the chance to visit with residents. Cook off winners were Sue Kovalsky, Micki MacNaughton and Patty Moran. Event sponsors were Homes of Alexandria and Port City Brewing. Chili Cook Off proceeds benefit the Del Ray Gateway Project, including Del Ray Splash Park and Nancy Dunning Memorial Garden.

### SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to [gazette@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:gazette@connectionnewspapers.com). Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

**Richard Rho**, of the St. Stephen's & St. Agnes Director of Technology Education and Innovation won a Virginia Association of Independent Schools Innovation in Education Award. The award recognizes teachers who are globally minded and encourage students to think beyond boundaries. He was recognized at the VAIS Leading Learning Conference in Richmond on Oct. 14.

**Isaiah Robinson** and **William Gomez-Palacios**, students from Patrick Henry Elementary School, along with their principal, Ingrid Bynum, and Lisa Piehota, Executive Director of Elementary Instruction, were invited to the White House to participate in the opportunity gap programs "My Brother's Keeper," and

the "What Works Showcase."

**Victoria E. Voellm**, of Alexandria, has been named Secretary of the R-MA Chapter of the National Science Honor Society at Randolph-Macon Academy. Victoria, a junior at Randolph-Macon, is the daughter of Michael and Rowena E. Voellm, of Alexandria.

**Col. Todd E. Key**, of Alexandria, has been named Military Alum of the Year at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Ala. He was honored during halftime of the university's homecoming football game on Oct. 29.

**Darby J. Philbrick**, of Alexandria, and a junior at Hamilton College, has been selected as a peer advisor in Hamilton's Career Center. Philbrick, a literature major at Hamilton, is a graduate of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School.



### STAR Award

Del Ray Business Association President Bill Blackburn and DRBA Board Member Gayle Reuter present the business association's 2016 STAR Award in the public service category to Alexandria Police Deputy Chief Dianne Gittins. Gittins, who serves as the police department's liaison to the Del Ray community, has been with the Alexandria Police Department since 1989; in 2014, she was the first woman to reach the rank of Deputy Chief.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO BY DEBRA BUSKER

### 'Mitten Tree'

The students of Grace Episcopal School in Alexandria give to the families of the New Neighbors English Language Learner (ELL) program by collecting cold weather gear for the "Mitten Tree." The "Mitten Tree" was decorated with brand new hats, scarves, gloves, socks, and mittens. Grace's youngest students in preschool through future middle-schoolers in grade five adorned the "Mitten Tree" as items were donated. From left are Marcia D'Arcangelo, director of New Neighbors ELL and Family Literacy Program; Grace Episcopal School students, and Patti Culbreth, Grace Episcopal School, Head of School.



# Coalition

FROM PAGE 1

10 units for extremely low-income households annually.” Representatives from some of the organizations that wrote letters have also scheduled follow-up meetings with City Council members.

The FY2018 city budget proposes \$2.9 million in new city funds for new affordable housing, says Eric Keeler of the Office of Housing. These include \$2.1 million from the Housing Trust Fund and \$0.8 from the General Fund.

A footnote in the budget says, “The FY2018 budget for the Office of Housing increases by 58.6 [percent] from FY2017 levels due to the allocation of \$4.4 [million] in bonds for affordable housing.” But this is not new money. “These bonds were authorized in the FY2017 budget and earmarked for spending in FY2018.” Another footnote says that an additional \$4.3 million for affordable housing is among “proposed options for additional capital project expenditures,” but only “if additional taxes are levied.” The budget allocates none of its proposed \$0.027 increase on the real estate tax for this purpose.

“[T]he Office of Housing has noted that projections for resources are estimated [cumulatively] to be \$12 million short to fund pipeline projects” through FY2021, said Krockner in her letter.

“We are dealing with more people need-

ing rent and utilities and an increase in the amounts needed for these items. ... Without our help, many of these families and individuals would become homeless,” said Gray in her letter about the Emergency Financial Providers. “[E]ach of our groups turned away families due to lack of sufficient funds.”

“We have been alarmed by a significant increase over the past year in the need for emergency financial assistance,” said the Rev. Donald Fest of St. Joseph Catholic Church in a letter. “The Catholic Church affirms that having a home is a basic human right, a pillar of human dignity and justice, and an essential for the integrity of the family. ... To date [in our fiscal year] we have already disbursed \$31,000, including rental assistance and security deposit money... That’s a \$20,000 (182 percent) increase from the same timeframe the previous year. ... We will soon have to divert funds from other ministries in order to continue to help care for those in need. But our present level of assistance is unsustainable, as well as symptomatic of a deeper social and civic poverty. ... As we have nearly tripled our assistance to meet our neighbors’ needs, we challenge the city do likewise for its citizens.”

“For over 25 years, Fairlington [United Methodist Church] has provided aid to those who require help in raising the rent security deposit needed to obtain subsidized housing,” said the Rev. Mary Beth Blinn in a letter. “Since the security deposit is usually the full market rate (\$1,000-\$2,000) amount of one month’s rent, these deposits

pose an insurmountable barrier to persons with little or no income... For the past two years, we have provided families with security deposit aid far beyond the amount that we have budgeted. Even then, Fairlington has not had sufficient funds to cover all those who have requested aid. In 2015, we provided \$18,000 in rent deposit assistance and served 65 households. In 2016, we spent \$14,000 and served 52 households. The reduction of service in 2016 was due to lack of funds, not fewer requests.”

“In 2016, we have assisted 555 individuals with their rent, utilities, and medical bills totaling \$96,783.38,” said Gray in a separate letter from Christ Church. “It is clear to us that the demands presented by the costs of rent are rising rapidly, and are making it impossible for low-income working people to remain in the city. In addition, the rate of eviction, and the immediacy with which landlords initiate eviction proceedings, is accelerating at a pace we have never seen. There is no possibility that the faith community can meet the needs of our low-income workers and families as housing costs continue to skyrocket. It is time for city officials to step up and face the reality that affordable housing is simply disappearing.”

“[Episcopal Church of the] Resurrection has consistently increased its outreach ministries to its neighbors in the West End over the past several years to respond to the increasing need as residents move from the Old Town area to the ‘more affordable’ West End,” said the Rev. Jo Belser in a letter. “Dur-

ing the first 10 months of operation [our ministry] helped 284 Alexandria residents with 338 bills; 63 [percent] of those were for assistance with rent. A total of \$68,985.72 was given toward bills... [T]he vulnerable families in our city must not be forgotten.”

“Rent assistance has always been the most significant portion of the financial help [our church has] provided,” said the Rev. Oran Warder of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in a letter. “Within the past year, we have seen an increase of 48 [percent] in rental assistance funding, including help in avoiding eviction. ... We strongly urge City Council to consider the impact of the loss of safe, decent affordable housing on the lives of our city’s families and children ...”

“[W]e have seen a steady increase in the amount of our funds that are dedicated to paying rent, with 43 [percent] of our funding dedicated to rent in FY12 increasing to 64 [percent] in FY16,” said Diane Charles of ALIVE! in a letter. “ALIVE! values its relationship with the city as we work together to address the housing needs of residents of Alexandria, many of whom are working full-time but [are] unable to afford the rising rents in the city. As a community, we have identified affordable housing as a top priority. We ask that the city build on that commitment by making additional investments in the FY18 budget to support affordable housing developments.”

Other local emergency financial assistance providers and who wish to participate can contact Krockner through the NVAHA web site (nvaha.org/contact-info).



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<p><b>Chantilly High School</b> <b>Saturday, March 18</b> 10 am to 12 pm Co-sponsored by Supervisor Kathy Smith, Chantilly HS STEM Academy, and Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p><b>West Springfield High School</b> <b>Saturday, April 1</b> 12 pm to 2 pm Co-sponsored by West Springfield HS Student Government and Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p><b>Oakton High School</b> <b>Saturday, March 18</b> 1 pm to 3 pm Co-sponsored by Supervisor Linda Smyth and Oakton HS Marketing Department</p>	<p><b>South County Secondary School</b> <b>Saturday, April 29</b> 11 am to 1 pm Co-sponsored by Supervisor Dan Storck, South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, South County Federation, and South County Secondary School</p>

To register as an employer or student, or for more information, please visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfair.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfair.htm)



# Alexandrian, Former DEA Agent, Pens Crime Novel

FROM PAGE 13

tor. As he was sitting in his parked undercover car with one of Colorado’s top 10 heroin distributor’s “Lieutenant,” a Denver police car asked to see their licenses.  
“When the cop handed the licenses back, the Lieutenant

stopped to look at mine,” said Vigil. “I could almost predict this was going to happen.”  
Another time things got dangerous was the night Vigil almost got shot.  
Vigil recounts the night he and a drug trafficker sat at a gas station restaurant in northern Mexico, waiting for Vigil’s infor-

mant and the trafficker’s henchman to return. “If you’re a federal agent, we’re going to kill you,” the trafficker said to Vigil. Meanwhile, Mexican law enforcement officers were waiting outside for the right time to make the bust. When that moment came, a Mexican officer put a gun to the trafficker’s chest. But the trafficker had more lever-

age, grabbing the barrel of the gun. The gun went off and hit the officer in the head. He then aimed it at Vigil.  
“I could feel the bullets go by,” said Vigil who added that he remembers the incident like it was yesterday. Vigil finally shot the trafficker in his chest who later died from his wounds. It was the first time that Vigil killed someone, something he prefers not to look back on.

“I can honestly tell you I was never afraid,” he said. “When the situation got really dangerous, I became very deadly calm. I didn’t get nervous, which is a good thing because when you get nervous, your mind starts to race and you’re thinking about so many things you can’t think clearly and make rational decisions.”

Vigil says that he learned to deal with stress from his father, who was a survivor of the Bataan Death march and a POW camp in Japan.  
“I learned to have courage under the most difficult times and adverse conditions,” he said.

At the beginning of “Metal Coffins” men’s bodies are discovered in oil drums filled with cement abandoned along a main highway. Vigil got the idea from one of South America’s leading drug lords, Amado Carrillo Fuentes who died after recovering from plastic surgery. Days later, Fuentes’ doctors were found stuffed into 55 gallon barrels filled with cement and strewn along the main highway between Mexico City and Acapulco.

When Vigil became chief of international operations for the DEA, he developed information sharing systems and at some point, brought as many as 36 countries together to share information.

“There was always a method to my madness,” he said. “I didn’t believe in the status quo ... Once I

saw that objective, it was taking that hill at all costs.”  
Just like Miguel Villa, Vigil thinks personal relationships are important.  
“He had the best relations with the Mexicans and Colombians during the height of the drug war,” said Sosnowsky, a 25-year DEA veteran who adds that Vigil was the most effective boss he’s ever had.

When asked about the current administration’s plans to build a border wall, Vigil says the Trump administration could benefit more by working on a collaborative strategy with the northern triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and encourages the administration to think the idea of the wall through.


“The wall will serve no purpose,” he said. “The drug cartels have made the southwest border a block of Swiss cheese, littered with tunnels. They’ll go under the wall, they’ll punch a hole through the wall, they’ll go over the wall. The wall will be an expenditure in ignorance.”

As for his stance on legalizing marijuana, he said, “We cannot have a policy of, do as I say, not as I do.”

“We can’t push these countries into drug campaigns at the great loss of manpower and funding that they don’t really have, and here we are, legalizing the drug. Legalizing drugs has international implications,” he said.

Vigil is part of a U.K. documentary called “Wildlands” about the realities of the international cocaine trade in Bolivia. The documentary will launch on Amazon Video, Google Play, and iTunes on March 6.

Vigil also has already started his second book in the series starring Villa and a Narco Queen. Vigil lives with his wife in Alexandria.



## City of Alexandria

### FISCAL YEAR 2018 PROPOSED BUDGET

A summary of the City of Alexandria's proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget is set out below.  
Notice is hereby given of a public hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget for the City of Alexandria. The hearing will be held in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia, on Monday, March 13, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.  
Persons wishing to speak on the proposed budget may sign up prior to the public hearing by calling the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at (703) 746-4550. Presenters are requested to provide a copy of their text to the City Clerk and Clerk of Council.  
Persons with disabilities who wish to request an accommodation for this public hearing should contact the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council at (703) 746-4550 (TTY/TDD (703) 838-5056) prior to March 13, 2017, if possible.

#### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2018

	General Fund Proposed FY 2018 (1)	All Funds Proposed FY 2018 (2)	Fy 2018 Capital Improvements (3)
City Council	\$593,694	\$593,694	
City Manager	\$2,092,779	\$2,092,778	
City Attorney	\$2,932,644	\$2,932,644	
City Clerk And Clerk Of Council	\$486,777	\$486,777	\$200,000
18th Circuit Court	\$1,687,662	\$1,687,662	
18th General District Court	\$147,191	\$147,191	\$60,00
Clerk Of The Circuit Court	\$1,713,984	\$1,778,984	
Commonwealth's Attorney	\$3,156,702	\$3,524,147	
Court Service Unit	\$1,581,527	\$1,707,516	
Juvenile And Domestic Relations Court	\$79,446	\$79,446	
Other Criminal And Justice Services	\$3,744,360	\$3,928,537	
Registrar Of Voters	\$1,202,289	\$1,202,289	
Sheriff	\$30,528,371	\$31,279,921	
Finance	\$13,267,569	\$14,055,516	\$145,000
General Services	\$14,306,413	\$14,626,913	\$26,761,451
Human Rights	\$832,502	\$872,555	
Information Technology Services	\$10,586,447	\$10,984,691	\$8,948,240
Internal Audit	\$421,642	\$421,642	
Management And Budget	\$1,277,459	\$1,277,459	\$753,558
Non-departmental - Debt Service	\$41,671,127	\$41,671,127	
Non-departmental - Contingent Reserve	\$747,981	\$747,981	
Non-departmental - Insurance, Memberships, Other	\$9,338,531	\$10,338,531	
Human Resources	\$3,709,947	\$3,709,947	
Communications & Public Information	\$1,434,573	\$1,434,573	\$550,000
Performance And Accountability	\$522,090	\$522,090	
Fire	\$52,278,661	\$54,074,424	\$1,664,400
Code Administration	\$24,000	\$7,607,698	
Emergency Communications	\$7,788,326	\$7,924,083	\$1,700,000
Police	\$62,517,186	\$64,847,869	
Health	\$6,872,216	\$6,872,216	
Community And Human Services	\$51,589,791	\$93,507,329	\$25,000
Other Health Activities	\$1,764,347	\$1,764,347	
Housing	\$2,644,313	\$4,122,179	
Economic Development Activities	\$5,436,986	\$5,436,986	
Project Implementation	\$1,842,548	\$3,159,555	\$8,645,000
Planning And Zoning	\$5,608,303	\$6,149,571	\$150,000
Historic Alexandria	\$3,048,786	\$3,961,063	\$100,000
Library	\$6,861,651	\$7,513,290	\$102,000
Recreation, Parks And Cultural Activities	\$21,905,104	\$24,286,949	\$11,756,500
Transit Subsidies	\$26,886,806	\$37,165,806	
Transportation And Environmental Services	\$38,035,303	\$54,268,420	\$69,704,255
Other Educational Activities	\$12,277	\$12,277	
Schools	\$242,592,022	\$312,231,568	\$19,000,000
Cash Capital	\$26,699,296	\$26,699,296	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$712,471,629</b>	<b>\$873,709,538</b>	<b>\$150,256,40</b>

Any person desiring to review the proposed budget may visit the City's website (alexandriava.gov/budget) or visit City Hall, Office of Management and Budget, Room 3400, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**PROPERTY TAXES**  
The proposed budget includes an increase of \$0.027 cents in the real property tax rate from \$1.073 cents to \$1.100 per \$100 of assessed valuation based upon an assessment ratio of 100% fair market value. It should be noted that City Council will set the maximum tax rate to be advertised at its March 14, 2017, meeting at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers and that Council may not adopt a rate that exceeds this tax rate, but may adopt an equal or lesser tax rate. The proposed budget includes no change in the current motor vehicle personal property tax rate of \$5.00 per \$100 of assessed value. All other personal property tax rates, including vehicles specially equipped to transport persons with disabilities, which are proposed to be taxed at the present rate of \$3.55 per \$100 of assessed value; Business tangible property, including office furniture, fixtures, computers and uncensed vehicles are proposed to be taxed at the present rate of \$4.75 per \$100 of assessed value and machinery and tools are proposed to be taxed at the present rate of \$4.50 per \$100 of assessed value; Privately owned boats and water craft that are used for recreational purposes only are proposed to be taxed at the present rate of \$0.01 per \$100 of assessed value, are unchanged. The amount of real estate tax rate dedicated for affordable housing and to support existing debt service related to affordable housing is 0.6 cents.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE VIGIL

Mike Vigil with Mexican Marines in Tamaulipas, Mexico.



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PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/GAZETTE-PACKET

Amtgard players charge into battle.

## Old Town Gets Medieval

FROM PAGE 3

the day-to-day operations.

"There's a camaraderie here," said McMillian. "These guys became instant friends. [The best part] is seeing them grow and change over time."

The Duchy of Rising Sun Station is about more than just combat. Unlike many LARP games, Amtgard is class based. While most of the players charge into combat with swords, a few move behind the lines "healing" and playing other magic-related roles. Others in the group weave and do other crafts off to the side of the field.

"There's something for everyone," said Lisa Jacobus, game name Celwyn. "Some people do garbing, like making the costumes. Others build props. Armor-working is popular," she said, gesturing over to a group of combatants in chainmail. "Some people host big medieval feasts."

McMillian said her favorite activity are the campouts the Duchy hosts five times a year. McMillian and others also said they also enjoyed some of the more traditional role playing games, like Dungeons and Dragons, that the group does when they aren't bashing each other with swords and clubs.

The Duchy spans from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. Some players are from Alexandria, many others like McMillian coming down from D.C. or Maryland. Nick Swisher (Fezzik), Leslie Harvey (Finny), Nathan MacCumbee (Homer) and Alexander Ryan (Thrash) are all part of a group called

## Intimidations May Mean New Program

FROM PAGE 3

sive," said Porter. "You'd need somebody who wanted police or physical protection in the first place. Even if you have someone willing to do that, you have to have the resources. Let's say we make an arrest on Jan 3, trial wouldn't be for at least four or five months. When does that start? How long do you go after the trial. [Physical security] costs \$2,400 a day. A traditional witness

Bitter Coast based out of the Community College of Baltimore County in Catonsville, Md. Each of the group members has been playing between 11 and 15 years. Harvey started in middle school with his dad, and later convinced Swisher to join him.

"You get some crazy stories," said Harvey. "I fell out of it when I was in college. I found it again [after I graduated] and got sucked right back in."

It was those crazy stories that hooked Swisher. On his first trip with a LARPing group, Swisher remembers gathering with others around a campfire and listening to their fun and outlandish war stories.

"The biggest thing is that you need to be OK with getting hit and hitting people," said Harvey. "After that, just keep playing. Keep practicing."

For Ryan, the biggest lesson of Amtgard is being OK with failure.

"You're going to die often, you're going to be frustrated, but keep going," said Ryan. "It's not some magical talent. It's learned over time."

While the game is usually played every Sunday, on March 5 many members will be travelling to Farmville to compete in a regional competition. On most days, the games start around 1 p.m. in a field at the southern end of the park. The knights with colorful shields are hard to miss. Most of the members bring their own weaponry and supplies, but basic foam swords are available for newcomers to borrow. There is no cost to play.

protection is even more expensive. Most witnesses don't want that either, as it requires them to leave their entire life and sign an agreement that you will never contact family or friends again."

"I will probably put in a budget memo request," said Wilson. "We may not be able to make it happen in this year's budget, but will help us see what it looks like. We can look for grants at a federal and state level to start it up."



3

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